# LIFE IN EDO

# RUSSEL WONG IN KYOTO

ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM

神戸新聞社 THE KOBE SHIMBUN

**Russel Wong Photography**

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# RUSSEL WONG IN KYOTO

Clement Onn
with essays by Christine Guth and Charmaine Toh

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*Life in Edo x Russel Wong in Kyoto* is a milestone exhibition for ACM. It is the first exhibition following the completion in 2020 of an almost seven-year renovation and refresh of our permanent galleries, in support of a new mission and brand. Today's ACM is Singapore's National Museum of Asian Antiquities and Decorative Art. We aim to be a museum of our times, one that creates and presents groundbreaking perspectives on Asia's global connections. We also aim to celebrate Asian aesthetic excellence and the work of master-craftspeople and artisans.

It is in the spirit of furthering this new mission that we chose the radical approach of presenting this exhibition as a double bill. *Life in Edo* features ukiyo-e woodblock prints from the Edo period (1603–1868), providing a window into life in Edo-era Tokyo. *Russel Wong in Kyoto* is the premiere of the Singaporean master photographer's thirteen-year ongoing project that has seen him shooting the streetscapes, architecture, natural environment, and people of Japan's former imperial capital of Kyoto.

Curatorial themes for the *Life in Edo* section were decided upon by ACM Senior Curator Clement Onn in discussions with the staff at Kobe Shimbun, who have assisted with logistics of this project. Though the woodblock prints are all more than a hundred years old – and many more than 200 – the curatorial themes are contemporary, reflecting topics of popular interest today – beauty and fashion, food and festivals, travel and tourism. Conversely, scenes presented in *Russel Wong in Kyoto* capture an age-old face of the city – one that is fleeting, transient, and possibly in danger of disappearing. A highlight of this section is the intimate portraits of the lives of the *geiko-* and *maiko-san* in Gion. These are contemporary "pictures of a floating world" – a direct translation of the Japanese term *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵.

Taken together, both parts of the exhibition challenge the visitor to consider the question, *what is modernity?* While the woodblock prints are ostensibly traditional and historical, they demonstrate how Edo-era Tokyo was an extremely modern and fashionable place. Conversely, Russel Wong's contemporary photographs lovingly explore and present Japan's ancient traditions and landscapes.

This exhibition is the first major international exhibition ACM presents in the COVID era, and I thank staff of Kobe Shimbun for their assistance in all matters during these extremely challenging times, when national borders are closed and travel is restricted.

The exhibition would not have happened without the faith and support of two very important people. Special thanks go to collector Nakau Ei for believing in ACM's work, and for allowing us to display his collection of woodblock prints to audiences in Singapore for an unprecedented period of five months (a rotation of prints occurs halfway through).

Special thanks go also to Russel Wong for allowing us to premiere this personal project; one of great passion and beauty. It has been my personal dream to work with Russel on an exhibition at ACM – and I thank him so much for allowing this dream to come to fruition!

I am grateful to the staff at the Japan Creative Centre and the Embassy of Japan in Singapore for the help rendered unstintingly in the course of us putting this exhibition together. My immense gratitude goes to Principal Supporters Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation and The Fullerton Hotels and Resorts, and Supporters the Japan Foundation and Takenaka Corporation (Kobe Branch Office), whose generous gifts made this exhibition possible.

Finally, I wish to thank my colleague Clement and the brilliant team at ACM who have worked so hard to make this exhibition happen.

This exhibition celebrates the 55th anniversary of Singapore-Japan diplomatic relations. In the midst of travel still being curtailed, I hope our visitors take the opportunity to come travel Japan at ACM. I am sure they will enjoy the journey.

**Kennie Ting**
Director, Asian Civilisations Museum & Peranakan Museum
Group Director of Museums, National Heritage Board

I am very pleased that this ukiyo-e exhibition is being held in Singapore. Ukiyo-e is a genre that depicts the lives and lifestyles of the people of the Edo era, which started around 320 years ago and lasted for 200 years. These images were published as hand-pressed woodblock prints that circulated among common people.

More than 130 years ago, by the time of the 1890 Exposition Universelle in Paris, ukiyo-e prints had somehow found their way to Europe and were being exhibited outside of Japan. Because of the unique Japanese lifestyles, customs, and fashions displayed in them, they quickly became a sensation. Distinctive hairstyles, *chonmage* topknot styles for men and large chignons for women, kimono and elevated wooden sandals, sumo wrestlers, samurai warriors, courtesans and kabuki actors – all these gave viewers an exciting culture shock. Europeans were impressed by the advanced and precise technique of the woodblock prints paired with their explosive myriad colours, and these created a Japonism boom that began ukiyo-e's popularity, which remains today.

Having said that, ukiyo-e is surprisingly not so well known in Southeast Asia. Perhaps this exhibition is, in fact, the first full-scale ukiyo-e exhibition in Singapore.

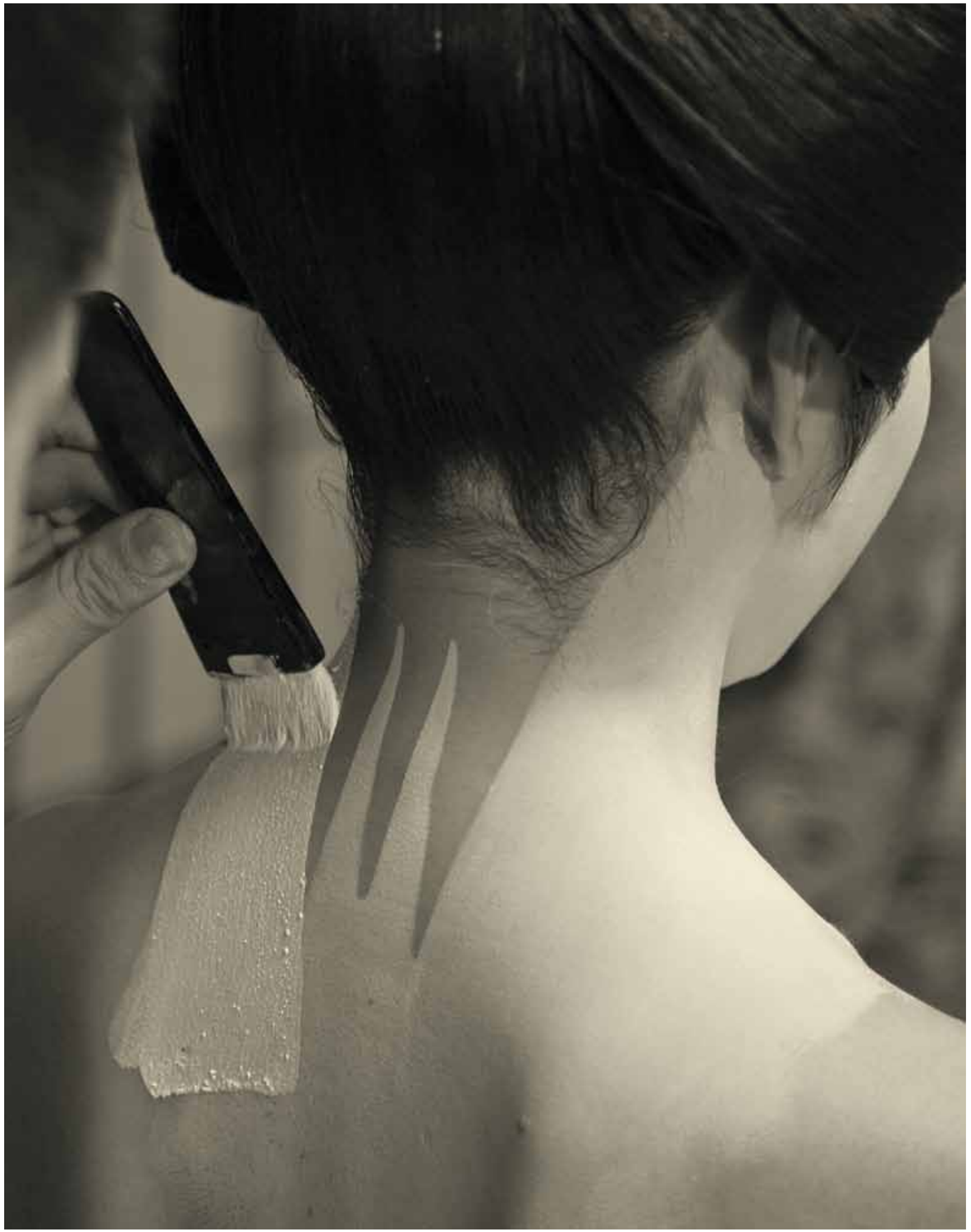
The ukiyo-e portion of this exhibition is divided into the following key topics to better understand the lives and lifestyles of the people in Edo. These prints were made at a time when the country was closed and isolated from the outside world and was enjoying a long period of peace and prosperity.

* Travel tourism to visit Mount Fuji, castles, and other famous sites around Japan
* Chic fashion and women's make-up
* Growing trend of owning a pet to soothe the soul
* Eating and drinking in daily life; comfort food and gastronomy
* Horticultural vogue stemming from hobbies such as bonsai
* Seasonal scenery, including cherry blossoms, the mid-autumn moon, powdery white snow, clam digging, and fireworks

Take a peek into blossoming romances, human relations, leisure activities, and entertainment of the Edo era through ukiyo-e.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Asian Civilisations Museum for holding the exhibition, the Kobe Shimbun for coordination and planning, and all those who have given their support.

**Nakau Ei**
Executive Director of the International Ukiyo-e Society





Kyoto entered my world when I worked with actor Watanabe Ken on his publicity for the movie *Memoirs of a Geisha*. I, like everyone, was intrigued, and when I dug deeper, there seemed to be a different story than what had been revealed to the world through the book and the movie. There was disagreement and an utter disdain from the Geiko community and the Japanese public. This set me off to get the story right! Maybe my photographs could be some sort of a historical document of life in the millennium of this floating world, since photos don't lie. I wanted to give voice to the community that hardly spoke and is seldom seen. It is a culture that prides itself on discretion and exclusivity that can't be bought by money. In this day and age, that is very rare. Like they say in Kyoto, your face is your name card and we can't be bought.

Furthermore, it was what I had been preparing for all my life – this moment. Little did I know. It drew from my fashion photography, my landscape photography, my architecture photography, and my time on movie sets. Kyoto would thread all these different genres all into one amazing project!

It was too good to be true when I first set eyes on Kyoto in the spring of 2008. This was the beginning of my journey in search of the truth. The *sakura* trees greeted me for a couple of weeks before the delicate petals fell. It was beautiful because they were there for a fleeting moment and you had to appreciate it there and then and take it all in. Like in life, live for the moment, they say, and that is what Kyoto did to me. I learned fast.

Kyoto always seems to be a mythical place where time stands still, untouched by the modern forces, both physically and culturally.

As a photographer, I have always craved to shoot the past, and this presented me the opportunity to do so. Wooden *machiya* houses lining the narrow alleys and wet cobbled streets. Women in kimono floating across the *kagai* amongst red lanterns. Temples that stood there for hundreds of years. Soba shops 600 years old. Sakura trees placed in the most picturesque locations, like in ukiyo-e prints.

When you live and breathe in Kyoto, even as a visitor, you can't help but become Kyoto. It has that effect on you. The way you talk, the way you eat, the way you place your shoes at the entrance of the temple before entering amongst the lit lanterns. Kyoto sculpts you. Every corner you turn presents itself as another masterpiece – another rock garden by a master designer or a perfectly manicured azalea bush. Details are there for you to appreciate in the most subtle ways; after all it is all about details in Kyoto. This is what I crave in my images.

Kyoto taught me patience. I learnt to wait for the moment, for the magic light that only exists for fifteen minutes every day. It paid off by allowing me to capture the city at her best. They told me before I came not to push. When the right moment comes, it would be presented to me in the most stunning way. This was very true.

So, after thirteen years of shooting Kyoto and using it as my canvas, I now try to share these moments I treasure so much and the beauty it has shared with me; never in an obvious way but like a whisper.

I finally became Kyoto.

**Russel Wong**
Singapore

# Capturing Current Trends and Chasing Nostalgia:

# Ukiyo-e and Contemporary Photography of Japan

Clement Onn

Ukiyo-e – literally, "pictures of the floating world" – is the name given to images of the pleasure quarters of Japanese cities from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century. In these mysterious districts of Osaka, Kyoto, and Edo (today's Tokyo), theatres, brothels, and entertainment establishments were officially allowed to operate. These playgrounds of the wealthy merchant class also provided rich material for artists. And despite their low status in the strict social hierarchy of the time, geishas, courtesans, and actors emerged as style icons of their day, and their fashions spread to the general population via inexpensive woodblock prints.

Ukiyo-e was enormously popular in the Edo period (1603–1868), but its market dropped sharply with the rise of photography and the printing press later in the nineteenth century. At the same time, another life began for ukiyo-e with its discovery by Western artists and collectors, as part of a wider movement known as Japonisme.[1] This enthusiasm has continued unabated in our own time, and the past few decades have seen a plethora of ukiyo-e exhibitions in Japan, Europe, and the United States. Moreover, new research on the artists' lives, their networks, and collaborations with artisans such as woodblock carvers and publishers has enabled us to better understand the art of ukiyo-e in its social context.

Some ukiyo-e images have become global icons. The most famous of all is Katsushika Hokusai's (1760–1849) *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* (*Kanagawa oki no namiura*), usually just called "The Great Wave". Instantly recognisable, the print has contributed to the way we visualise ocean waves even today.[2] With the growth of the internet and world of e-commerce, "The Great Wave" has given rise to innumerable variations, parodies, products, and placemaking signs in Japan and around the world. Like other famous works of art such as Michelangelo's *David*, Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, and Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, "The Great Wave" has taken on a new life completely divorced from Hokusai's original intent. But this afterlife is an important consideration, as we shall see. Other ukiyo-e prints have also gained international fame, if more slowly, including Kitagawa Utamaro's *Three Famous Beauties*, Utagawa Kuniyoshi's *Princess Takiyasha and the Skeleton Spectre*, Tōshūsai Sharaku's kabuki portraits (Cat. 37), and Utagawa Hiroshige's series of the *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* (Cats. 8–13, 118).

For contemporary viewers, ukiyo-e evokes an unfamiliar social environment, informed by values far removed from old Edo. But a visually compelling ukiyo-e work produced by an artist (or rather a team of artists and artisans) helps us understand the Edo audience's response to ukiyo-e, even if we know little about the individual objects depicted. This phenomenon is similar to how many of us engage with social media platforms today. The works presented here are intended to allow viewers to experience the excitement and novelty of lifestyle trends in Edo-period Japan. In this exhibition, the prints have been categorised into the themes of travel, beauty, pets, food, gardening, and seasonal festivals. We hope that by exploring these familiar activities, we can provide a glimpse into the rich and colourful world of Edo.

## The Artistic Landscape in Edo Japan

Until the sixteenth century, artistic patronage in Japan had been the exclusive preserve of the imperial court, the shogunate, samurai lords, and religious institutions. Because of this, artistic

choices were largely dictated by political ideology and religious dogma. In the Edo period, the phenomenal growth of urban centres with large concentrations of wealthy *chōnin* – literally "townspeople", a social class of merchants and craftsmen – challenged the ruling elite's centralised control over artistic production. The economic power of the bourgeoisie, especially in Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka, not only undermined the shogunate's artistic hegemony but, by enabling aesthetic choice, contributed to a new artistic diversity.[3]

Edo's rapid growth was not simply a function of its status as the nation's political and administrative centre, but also because of a peculiar outgrowth of the politics of centralisation. This was the system of "alternate attendance" (*sankin-kōtai*), established by the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1634–35 to control the daimyo (feudal lords). These local lords were required to live for a year in the shogunal capital (Edo City), then for a year in their home domains (*han*).[4] Details of the policy changed over time but in general daimyos were required to travel regularly between their home and Edo. Moreover, their wives and families were required to remain in Edo as hostages while they were away. The expense of travel and maintaining two lavish residences placed financial strains on the daimyos, rendering them incapable of waging war.

This policy of alternate attendance had the additional result of fostering economic and artistic growth outside Edo. In order to facilitate trade and travel by the lords and their extensive entourages, the Tokugawa government built a vast network of highways and waterways centred on the nation's three major cities: the shogun's headquarters at Edo, the old imperial capital of Kyoto, and the merchant city of Osaka. These centres were linked to regional towns and ports. The regulated travels of the daimyo, as well as the increasing movement of merchants, peddlers, and pilgrims along these networks, created a two-tiered system of culture. As distinct regional identities began to develop, so did an increasingly integrated national culture – all made possible by these new networks of travel.[5]

The experience of travel within Japan was important for many artists of the Edo period. Urban artists discovered new subject matter by visiting famous spots, retracing the steps of famous poets or monks, or contemplating the beauty and wonder of the natural world. In the nineteenth century, the growing numbers of wealthy and literate farmers prompted urban artists to travel to remote areas in search of patronage, contributing in the process to the blurring of the boundaries between urban and rural culture.

## Art of Everyday People

The origins of ukiyo-e date to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; or rather, what came to be known as ukiyo-e began as hand-painted scrolls and screens with scenes of everyday life. Paintings depicted popular recreations enjoyed by commoners such as street dancing, cherry blossom viewing, and festivals. Beautiful women often appear engaged in leisurely pursuits. Previously, most painters had been commissioned by the aristocracy and the samurai class to depict religious subjects, literary themes, or seasonal scenes. In contrast, the new ukiyo-e style greatly appealed to the *chōnin* – townspeople. In order to respond to a growing market for such images, at the end of the seventeenth century, ukiyo-e images began to be printed with carved wooden blocks, which enabled mass-production and cheaper prices.

It is no surprise therefore that the development of the ukiyo-e style was closely tied to the development of the printing industry in Japan. Woodblock printing came to Japan during the eighth century and rose to become the primary method of printing from the eleventh through the nineteenth century. As in China, the technology was first used to reproduce Buddhist texts and later books of Chinese origin. Since literacy was considered essential for business, the rise of the merchant class resulted in a significant growth in the reading community. It was not until the 1500s that books written originally in Japanese began to be printed. Black-and-white illustrations were a part of these early texts. These were sometimes coloured by hand, and eventually coloured prints appeared around 1765 as printing techniques improved. The first coloured prints in Japan were original works of art (not copies of paintings), which soon led to the publishing of the popular, single-sheet ukiyo-e.

Mass-produced for sale to commoners, single-sheet prints were sold by publishers and bookshops. As people's lives became more comfortable and they could afford to enjoy more leisure activities, ukiyo-e became the most sought-after art form among the townspeople. While the shogunate was able to control the themes and styles of official art through its patronage, it was not able to impose this canon of taste on merchants, artisans, and farmers, or even its feudal vassals. Samurai lords could not ignore the official canon in the decoration of their residences, but they could follow their personal tastes and interests by commissioning works for private enjoyment.

The growth of this popular art form led the government to attempt to control the tastes of the merchant class. Occasionally, edicts were issued restricting the size, themes, and materials of ukiyo-e. After 1799, some prints were censored to ensure that subject matter was not immoral or politically subversive.

In this market-driven art form, styles quickly changed to meet shifts in taste. The earliest prints were black and white, while hand colouring was gradually adopted. Because colouring by hand was too time-consuming to produce in large quantities, techniques were developed to block print simple two- or three-colour images. By 1765, artists like Suzuki Harunobu were designing polychrome prints called "brocade pictures" (*nishiki-e*), a term which suggests their elaborate complexity of design and palette. The addition of more colours resulted in prints that were increasingly realistic and expressive. The pigments employed in these prints were water-based vegetable dyes that produced soft tones and a subtle range of shades – which often faded with time. In fact, most prints that feature soft tones today do not reflect the original colours. Artists and printers collaborated to produce even more sophisticated effects, such as the nuances of reflections in water and mirrors or seeing objects through gauze textiles (Cat. 44). Powdered mica was sometimes added to produce a shimmering surface (Cat. 37). By the time of Hokusai and Hiroshige, ukiyo-e prints were produced with up to twenty different colours, each requiring its own carved block. This technology spurred creative competition as artists constantly tried to outdo each other in their prints, not only with beautiful colours but also through creative compositions.

The prints were mass-produced by competing publishers, whose distinctive trademarks often appear on the prints. The artist was not usually involved in the printing process but was responsible only for drawing the designs ordered by the publisher. Once the drawing was completed, it would be turned over to other employees: professional engravers who carved the woodblocks and then printers who mixed the inks and executed the final print. The aesthetic impact of the resulting print was thus a collaborative team effort, dependent on the skill of these craftsmen as well as the beauty and originality of the original concept. The finished prints were sold, either as single sheets or in sets, by street vendors or in the city's many bookstores. Prices varied considerably according to size and quality of printing.

During the Edo period, Japan was in a state of semi-isolation from the outside world. In the 1630s, distrust of the activities of European merchants and missionaries – aggravated by uprisings in Kyushu – resulted in a harsh crackdown on Christianity and the expulsion of all Europeans except the Dutch, who were interested in trade and not proselytising. For more than 200 years, the only countries with which Japan maintained formal diplomatic relationships were Korea and the Ryūkyū Kingdom (today Okinawa), while informal trade was permitted only with the Netherlands and China. Foreigners were restricted to the port city of Nagasaki, and the Japanese were not permitted to travel abroad at all. During this period, Japanese knowledge of the outside world came almost entirely from imported goods and books. And only a few privileged few had access to foreign books.

The forced opening of Japan to the West in 1858 brought dramatic changes to all aspects of Japanese life, ukiyo-e included. Prints made in Yokohama in 1860 and 1861 show the exotic manners and customs of the foreign merchants at the newly opened trading port (Cats. 128, 130). During the Meiji period (1868–1912), traditional subjects became overshadowed by prints illustrating current events, such as Japan's wars with China and Russia, or the many fascinating technical and cultural developments introduced during Japan's rapid modernisation. By the early twentieth century, with the increasing popularity of photography, ukiyo-e was virtually extinct, and Japanese artists turned instead to European styles of printmaking.

## Edo Life Seen through the Genres of Woodblock Prints

Woodblock prints in Edo-period Japan often had practical functions. They could serve as advertisements, souvenirs, theatre programmes, posters, and travel guides. Because the prints, like modern posters or programmes, were generally regarded as disposable, relatively few first-edition prints have survived, and fewer still in good condition.

Ukiyo-e prints are valuable visual documents that help us understand certain aspects of life in Edo society. The subjects range from images of beautiful women, theatre scenes, and portraits of actors to lovers' tales, erotica and pornography, legends and supernatural folklore, and simple scenes of the everyday activities of townspeople. By the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, travel guides, instructional manuals, and texts introducing famous landmarks and restaurants became extremely popular. The popularity of landscape views continued beyond woodblock prints and inspired many early photographic images of Japan.

The most popular woodblock prints, such as views of the Tōkaidō Road, could be reprinted many times in different variations. Publishers and artists collaborated to determine the kind of pictures people were eager for, work out compositions, and decide how to render them in colourful prints. These products were packed with visual devices for catching the eye of potential buyers. The market for ukiyo-e was highly competitive, and artists and publishers worked tirelessly to track interests and invent pictures that might capture attention.

The most common subject matter till around 1800 drew on the two great attractions of the era: the Yoshiwara licensed pleasure district and kabuki theatres. Early prints included many explicit erotic scenes, but from the 1720s, prints of this sort were technically illegal. The law was never strictly enforced, however, and erotic prints continued to be produced and could be acquired under-the-counter.[6] Legal prints focused on the glorious costumes of leading courtesans and popular kabuki actors, who became the fashion trendsetters of the city.

## The Yoshiwara Pleasure Quarter

Yoshiwara, the licensed brothel district in Edo, was far more than just a place of sexual activity; it also set fashion trends for the entire city and was a place of inspiration for musicians, poets, novelists, playwriters, and painters. The status of a man in Yoshiwara (or its counterparts, Shimabara in Kyoto and Shinmachi in Osaka) was determined by money and sophistication, not by hereditary social position in the four-class system of samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants, which was theoretically in effect at the time, though becoming increasingly blurred. With the increased demand for images of beautiful women (*bijin-ga*), courtesans became muses for artists.[7] Courtesans (*yūjo*), of which *oiran* were the highest in rank and the most expensive, were trained in arts of calligraphy, poetry, and painting, so that an affluent client could imagine that he was a prince or aristocrat surrounded by cultivated noblewomen.[8]

During the Edo period, a heterogenous group of entertainers – not all of them women – were closely associated with the brothels and teahouses of the pleasure quarters. Among these, were geisha, who at first were all men who entertained clients at parties in the Yoshiwara. In the mid-eighteenth century, female dancers and musicians borrowed the appellation and began to offer their services at gatherings in various city neighbourhoods. By the nineteenth century, women had claimed the geisha profession for themselves. These geishas possessed at least a minimal level of artistic accomplishment. Most were indentured to geisha houses (*okiya*), while some were independent and lived in the town; and there are reports that some geisha engaged in prostitution.

The geisha is an elusive, often problematic, figure in the history of modern Japan. In some media, her image as a symbol of Japan, tradition, and "Oriental" femininity has a strong presence in popular culture. Several recent scholarly studies have examined how the figure of the geisha was constructed in movies, novels, paintings, and prints in Japan as well as abroad. But real-life geisha – reported to be around 80,000 in 1925, with about 600 currently active today – rarely appear as protagonists in historical scholarship on modern Japan.[9] In both the vast literature on their image and the smaller body of scholarship on their history, geisha are positioned as the antithesis of ordinary, matronly women or as keepers of traditional performing arts.[10] But geisha in the Edo period were not always so easily categorised.

Because brothel keepers in Yoshiwara feared that geisha would poach their clients, geisha in that quarter were forbidden to sell sexual favours. But in unofficially sanctioned districts like Fukagawa and other areas, where the brothel keeper associations were less powerful, geisha were notorious for blurring the lines between prostitution and entertainment.[11] As the craze for female banquet entertainers caught on across Japan in the nineteenth century, the difference between courtesans and geisha could be difficult to discern. Today, geisha are respected artists who entertain with classical Japanese dance, music, and other performing arts at banquets held at the teahouses.

## Kabuki: Theatre for the People

The kabuki theatre originated in Kyoto at the beginning of the seventeenth century, founded by Okuni, a female dancer. During the course of the century, kabuki underwent many changes, with women banned from the stage in 1629, while their successors, adolescent boys, were banned in 1652. In the latter half of the seventeenth century, kabuki took on its mature form, with sexy song-and-dance routines replaced by intricately plotted dramas of wrenching emotional conflict. A more flamboyant, macho style of acting became popular in Edo in the 1690s, and this led directly to a huge demand for prints of actors in their roles as dramatic heroes and heroines, the latter played by male actors. Throughout the eighteenth century, the recognisable portrayals of actors' faces and bodies became increasingly popular. With the work of the mysterious Sharaku in the 1790s, depictions extended past realism into caricature, resulting in striking close-up portraits that are still greatly admired (Cat. 37).

The colourful world depicted in ukiyo-e prints and paintings also found expression in three-dimensional form in the costumes and personal accessories treasured by well-dressed city dwellers. Though simple in basic construction, kimono during the Edo period were highly elaborate in decoration, as can be seen in many of the prints. Dyeing and embroidery were often combined to create lavish effects in costumes for both men and women, though fashions for commoners were technically restricted by sumptuary laws.

## Tokugawa Tsunayoshi and his Edicts on Compassion for Living Things

Depicting animals in paintings and prints has a long history in Japan. In the sixteenth century, there were paintings and folding screens documenting exotic animals that arrived in Japan, including elephants, peacocks, dogs of Mediterranean origin, among others.[12] The exotic animals were undoubtedly diplomatic gifts from European merchants for the shogun or feudal lords. As can be seen in many prints in this exhibition, cats, dogs, and even goldfish were much loved by ordinary Edo people. Given the large number of ukiyo-e prints depicting townspeople's interest in and relationships with domestic pets, one peculiar policy implemented during the Edo period perhaps is worth mentioning.

In 1680, the fifth shogun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646–1709), took charge of state affairs and had considerable success in promoting agriculture and academic development. He also sought to protect all living beings. In 1687, Tsunayoshi issued the first in a series of laws collectively known as Edicts on Compassion for Living Things (*shōrui awaremi no rei*). A total of 135 of these edicts were issued during his reign; it is said there were so many because people did not abide by them. In his edicts, living things referred to a wide range of creatures, including dogs, cats, birds, fish, shellfish, and even insects. Forty of these edicts, the largest number, were issued for birds alone, followed by thirty-three for dogs and cats, and seventeen for horses.

Some historical records portray Tsunayoshi as a tyrant who killed people for the sake of protecting dogs and describe his edicts as the worst laws in Tokugawa history. On the other hand, some Japanese textbooks laud the "dog shogun" for his compassionate politics.[13] Recent studies have tried to show that these laws were not issued simply to protect animals, but had a wider moral purpose, namely that Tsunayoshi wished to foster a spirit of benevolence by ordering his people to treat all animate creatures with care and gentleness.[14] It is important to note the role of Buddhism in Japan. Since the seventh century, there were already laws against eating animals, long preceding Tsunayoshi's edicts. In this line of tradition, we can see that Tsunayoshi's outlook was also heavily influenced by Buddhist philosophy.

The edicts were primarily intended as moral injunctions for the protection of the weak and helpless – orphans, old people, the sick, and the abandoned. There were provisions, for example, that called for the execution of anyone who stole the clothing of a traveller or who threw a child into a river. The edicts urged people to take in an abandoned child as their own, and to give a child to someone who would care for it rather than going to the authorities. Towns were instructed to register abandoned children, and facilities were built to take in poor and destitute travellers.

The reason for so many edicts concerned dogs, particularly prohibitions against abandoning dogs and requirements for registering dogs, was probably because wild dogs proliferated in the streets of Edo and dog attacks occurred with great frequency. Tsunayoshi came to be known as the dog shogun because of these edicts, which were probably the first legal measures for the protection of animals anywhere in the world. It is difficult to find an equivalent until laws protecting animal rights were enacted in Britain in 1911. Tsunayoshi's reputation has recovered in recent years through new areas of research.[15]

## Russel Wong in Kyoto

Hiroshige's woodblock print of the Nihonbashi Bridge in Edo and a contemporary photograph of the Sanjo Bridge in Kyoto are the elements that have inspired this project, *Life in Edo x Russel Wong in Kyoto*. Shown with the ukiyo-e woodblock prints are the photographs of Kyoto made by Singaporean photographer Russel Wong.

Wong visited Tokyo in 2005 to shoot publicity photographs for Watanabe Ken, who was starring in *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Kyoto, the key location of the film, came up during their conversations and this led to Wong's passion to dig deeper. The film received mixed reviews, and mostly met with disapproval and disdain from the geisha community in Kyoto. Nonetheless, *Memoirs of a Geisha* has contributed to new interest in *geiko*, as geisha are called in Kyoto. Wong feels his photographs might give voice to the geiko community – one that hardly speaks and is seldom seen – for an international audience.



Wong returned to Kyoto in 2008 to begin his personal project. He was warned that the geiko community is a closed group and that the traditional system of "turning away first-timers" (*ichigen-san okotowari*) still applied nearly everywhere. With much patience and sheer luck in convincing local contacts, he finally got into the community. According to Wong, it took him five years to gain access to the geiko communities in Kyoto.

In making this body of work, Wong was inspired by Edo-period woodblock prints by Kitagawa Utamaro, Katsushika Hokusai, and Utagawa Hiroshige. Most of his photographs for this exhibition were printed in the conventional *ōban* size (approximately 39 x 26 cm), as a nod to the ukiyo-e prints. He was particularly drawn to the compositions of the prints, how the elements of the image work together, and by the silhouettes and portraits of the women depicted in them. Wong's photographs are infused with his own sense of nostalgia. He compares the actual streets and teahouses in Kyoto to those built to scale on a movie set. And his experience working with actors on film sets enabled him to create a cinematic quality in his photographs.

Familiarity with the ukiyo-e prints also prompted Wong to make a conscious effort to shoot other places featured in the prints or places identified with seasonal themes – but he focused specifically in Kyoto (most of the famous prints depict Edo). He fondly recalls Hiroshige's series *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*. He remembers that it starts with the Nihonbashi Bridge in Edo (Cat. 8) and despite some variations in the selection of post stations in later editions, Hiroshige would always end with the Sanjo Bridge in Kyoto. While documenting the geiko and *maiko* (geiko in training) in Kyoto, Wong was able to find the spot where he imagined Hiroshige would have visualised his image of the Sanjo Bridge depicted in the print he made (Cat. 13).

The old Sanjo Bridge (Sanjō Ōhashi) depicted by Hiroshige is no longer there: the current bridge was built in 1950. Also gone are the processions of samurai on the bridge, replaced by modern vehicles. The traditional houses in the background have also vanished with the passing of time, and in their place are modern multi-storey buildings. But locals and travellers today still cross the Sanjo Bridge, the Kamo River still flows beneath it, and the mountains still rise in back. Kyoto remains the eternal capital of Japan.

As images, both ukiyo-e prints and photographs remind us of the past and present of Japan. Many traditions and practices of Edo-period Japan are still celebrated, if not officially observed, and those practices influence modern life in subtle ways. Some of the famous travel spots and important landmarks remain untainted but have undergone preservation and upgrading to allow better accessibility for the public. These sensory experiences are what draw most travellers today to Japan. Those who love Japan can still appreciate the customs and trends captured in ukiyo-e prints – viewing cherry blossoms, witnessing fireworks in the summer festival, cultivating bonsai and flowers, or dining on regional specialities. One wonders if by looking at the ukiyo-e prints and standing on the same spot today, would we gaze upon the view with the same emotions as the people of Edo once did?

## Note to the Reader

Asian names are given in their original order, that is, surname followed by personal name. Many artists adopted the surname of their master or teacher, and some took on the personal names too. The same names do not necessarily indicate that the artists are related. For instance, Hiroshige II worked with Hiroshige, but was not related to him, except through marriage for a while.

The term *ōban* (large print), the most common of several standard sizes for commercial ukiyo-e prints, indicates that a print is about 39 x 26 cm; the orientation can be either vertical or horizontal. *Chūban* (medium-size print) is about 26 x 19 cm. *Nishiki-e* (brocade picture) describes a sheet that has been block-printed in full colour, using five or more colour blocks in addition to the black outline block. *Surimono* (printed thing) prints were privately commissioned and not sold in stores, but ordered directly from the publisher.

Endnotes

1 A French term referring to the popularity and influence of Japanese art and design in western Europe in the nineteenth century following the forced reopening of trade of Japan in 1858.
2 Guth 2015.
3 Guth 1996, p. 11.
4 *han* – a historical term for the estate or domain of a daimyo in the Edo and early Meiji periods. In 1868, the Tokugawa Shogunate was overthrown in the Meiji Restoration by a coalition of pro-imperial samurai. One of the main reasons for the anti-Tokugawa movement was the support and push for modernisation and Westernisation in Japan. The domain system was abolished in 1870s.
5 Guth 1996, p. 14.
6 Thompson 2008, p. 137.
7 Even in the rank of *oiran*, there were different hierarchies – with *tayū* being the highest rank amongst all *oiran*. There were also different classifications and names of lower-level courtesans (*yūjyo*), breaking them into different groups: those who were affiliated with licensed brothels in the various pleasure districts versus other sex workers. See Andō 2018.
8 Thompson 2008, p. 134.
9 Ito Masami, "Japan's geisha battle to protect their future", *The Japan Times*, 25 Nov 2017.
10 Stanley 2013, pp. 539–62.
11 Tanaka 2016.
12 Browne 2013, pp. 61–70.
13 It is a well-documented fact that Tokugawa Tsunayoshi was born in the Year of the Dog and this, together with his Edicts on Compassion for Living Things, earned him the nickname "dog shogun".
14 Bailey 1985, p. 167.
15 Nishina 2019.

# LIFE IN EDO

# TRAVEL

1. Utagawa Toyokuni I. The peak of Mount Fuji and procession of beauties, mid-Bunka era (1804–18).

After the Tokugawa Shogunate built and maintained the Gokaidō (“five routes”) – Tōkaidō, Kisokaidō (aka Nakasendō), Nikkō dōchū, Oshū dōchū, and Kōshū dōchū – connecting Edo City to the outer provinces, a vibrant travel industry soon developed within Japan. Stations along each route provided services for travellers. People prospered by offering these services or selling merchandise. Many inns and shops sold specialty products and souvenirs. They played a major role in spreading local cultures as tourism emerged in areas of historical interest along the routes.

The rise of tourism stimulated publication of route maps and guides, as well as travel memoirs and stories. Edo citizens visited nearby destinations such as Narita, Oyama, and Enoshima, and some would dream of making a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Ise Grand Shine or the Konpira Shrine on Shikoku Island. These itineraries are still popular today for both local and international travellers.

Sights and stories from the Gokaidō captured the imagination of artists, who in turn produced beautiful prints and paintings that have captivated the attention of people across time and space.



2. Katsushika Hokusai. Shinagawa, 1801–04.

3. Katsushika Hokusai. Fuji view plain in Owari province, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, around 1831.

4. Katsushika Hokusai. Miya, from the series *Spring Enjoyment of Fifty-three Stations*, 1804.

5. Utagawa Hiroshige. Procession of children passing Mount Fuji, early Tenpō era (1830–44).


6. Utagawa Hiroshige. Seto River, from the series *Shank's Mare on the Tōkaidō Road*, mid-Tenpō era (1830–44).


7. Utagawa Hiroshige. Shirako on the side road to the Ise Shrine, from the series *Shank's Mare on the Tōkaidō Road*, mid-Tenpō era (1830–44).


8. Utagawa Hiroshige. Nihonbashi: Morning scene, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, around 1833.


9. Utagawa Hiroshige. Mishima: Morning mist, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, around 1833.

10. Utagawa Hiroshige. Fukuroi: Tea stall, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, around 1833.


11. Utagawa Hiroshige. Yoshida: The Toyokawa River Bridge, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, around 1833.

12. Utagawa Hiroshige. Shōno: Driving rain, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, around 1833.


13. Utagawa Hiroshige. Kyoto: The Great Bridge at Sanjō, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, 1833–34.


14. Keisai Eisen. Fujieda, from an untitled series of the fifty-three stations of the Tōkaidō Road, around 1842.




15. Utagawa Hiroshige. The Ōi River between Suruga and Tōtōmi provinces, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, 1858.

16. Utagawa Hiroshige. View of Ōi River, from the series *Collection of Rivers on the Tōkaidō Road*, around 1851.

17. Utagawa Hiroshige. Hot spring by the river in Hakone, from the series *Collection of Rivers on the Tōkaidō Road*, around 1851.


18. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Kuwana, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, late Bunka era (1804–18).




19. Utagawa Sadahide. Lord Mashiba Hisayoshi builds the Castle of Himeji in Harima province, 1862.

# BEAUTY


20. Kitagawa Utamaro. Hair dressing, from the series *Scenery of Famous Places and Twelve Aspects of Beauties,* around 1801–03.


21. Kitagawa Utamaro II. Eastern fashioned willow by the river, 1804–18.

The Edo period was an age of social restrictions. Strict rules regulated dress, hairstyles, and use of cosmetics according to social class, age, occupation, regional background, and marital status. Yet women – and men – still found ways to express their individuality through fashions, make-up, and accessories. Changes in women's hairstyles and fashions reflected new ideas of beauty, and the vibrant Edo culture. Before Edo, women's hairstyles were either long and unbound or tied loosely at the back. During Edo, hundreds of different styles emerged. Hair accessories became a profitable business. Women traditionally wore combs and hairpins to decorate their hair.

Kabuki actors, courtesans, and geisha became trend setters; each new style became popular with the larger public. In cosmetics, a palette of three basic colours emerged: red for lips, cheeks, fingernails; white for face powder; black for teeth, eyebrows. Teeth blackening and painted eyebrows were linked with life events – adulthood, marriage, and childbirth. For example, blackened teeth indicated a woman was an adult or married. She would shave her eyebrows upon the birth of her first child.




22. Torii Kiyomine. Boys Festival, from the series *Elegant Five-Needled Pine*, 1804–18.

23. Utagawa Toyokuni I. Woman wiping her face in front of a mirror, early Bunsei era (1818–30).




24. Utagawa Kuninao. Summary, from an untitled series of the four seasons, mid-Bunka era (1804–18).


25. Utagawa Toyokuni II x Utagawa Kunihiro.
Hair dressing: Monkey, from the series *Elegant Eastern Fashion: Twelve Zodiac Animals*, late Bunsei era (1818–30).


26. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. The careful type, from the series *Thirty-two Aspects in the Modern World*, early Bunsei era (1818–30).




27. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Looking Cool, from the series *Thirty-two Aspects in Modern Style*, 1859.

28. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Woman applying rouge to her lips, from series *Mirrors of Modern Make-up*, mid-Bunsei era (1818–30).

29. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Woman blackening her teeth, from series *Mirrors of Modern Make-up*, mid-Bunsei era (1818–30).



30. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Woman tweezing her eyebrows, from series *Mirrors of Modern Make-up*, mid-Bunsei era (1818–30).


31. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Kunihisa II.
Imagawa-bashi, from the series *One Hundred Beautiful Women at Famous Places in Edo*, 1858.




32. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Woman with a razor, from the series *Women in Benkei-checked Fabrics*, around 1845.

33. Keisai Eisen. In front of a mirror: Woman dressing her hair, early Bunsei era (1818–30).


34. Keisai Eisen. Woman brushing her teeth, from the series *Modern Figures*, 1830–44.


35. Ochiai Yoshiiku. Comparison of slender hips like willows in snow at the Yanagiya Bathhouse, from the series *Annual Customs of the Present Day*, 1868.


36. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III.
Parody of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*: Actors Ichikawa Ichizō III, Nakamura Shikan IV, and Kawarazaki Gonjūrō I, 1860.


37. Tōshūsai Sharaku. Actor Arashi Ryūzō II as the Moneylender Ishibe Kinkichi, 1794.

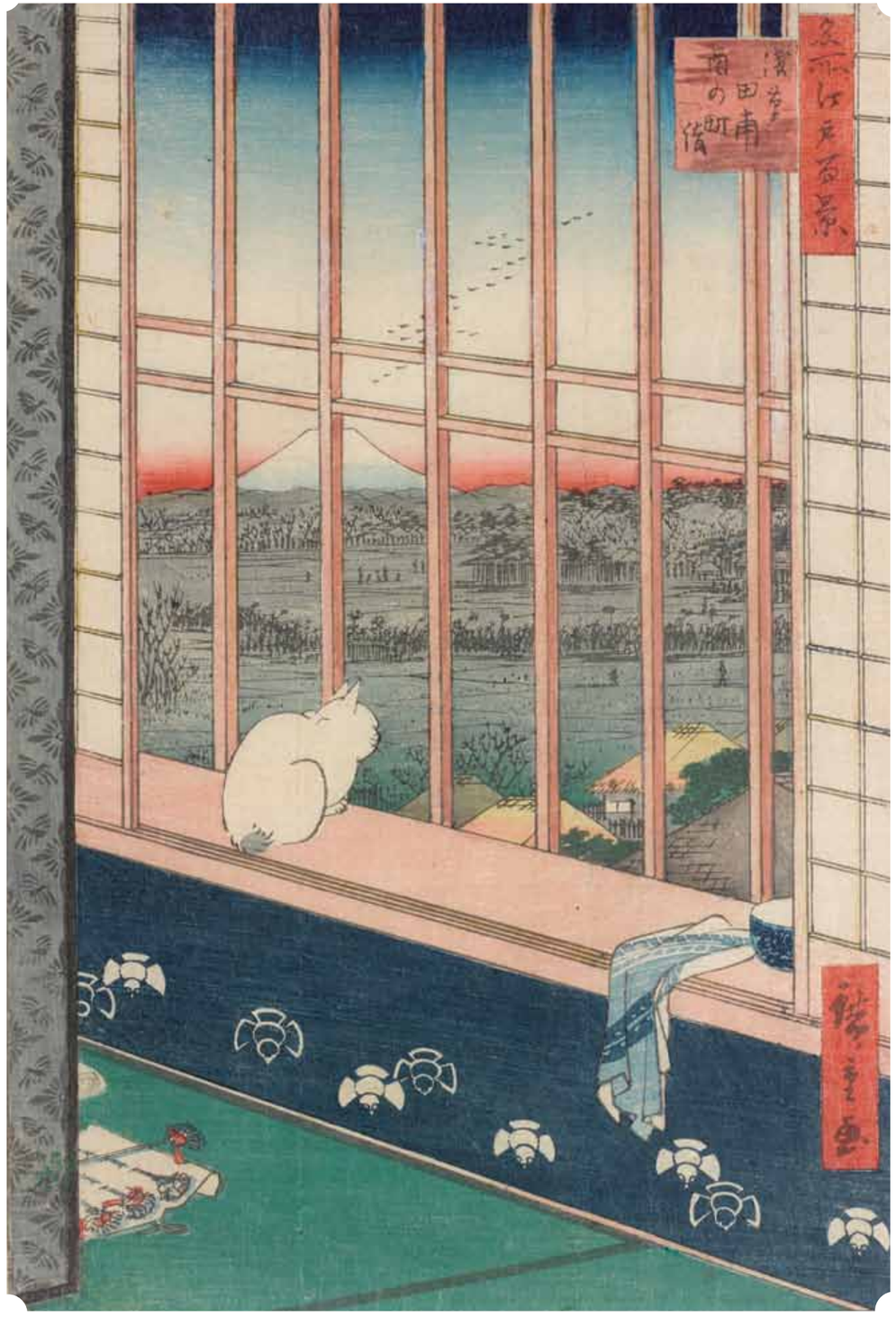
# CATS

38. Suzuki Harunobu. Twilight snow on the *nurioke,* around 1767–68.

39. Kitagawa Utamaro. Servant boy dreaming of a monster cat, around 1794–95.

Like today, Edo people loved pets. Japanese people have had a long relationship with cats. The imperial diary of Emperor Uda (867–931) devotes an entry to his black cat, noting physical characteristics and humorous behaviours. The *Pillow Book* (*Makura no Sōshi*), from the early eleventh century by Sei Shōnagon, mentions a cat kept by Emperor Ichijō. Keeping cats as pets was popular with samurai and ordinary households – they were good for killing rats. Stray cats roamed the streets. Ukiyo artists Utagawa Kuniyoshi and Utagawa Hiroshige often depicted cats in their works. Pet cats usually wear a collar, stray ones do not.





40. Utagawa Hiroshige. Asakusa ricefields and Torinomachi Festival from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, 1857.

41. Utagawa Toyokuni I. Actors Iwai Hanshirō V as Dote no Oroku and Aburaya Osome, and Matsumoto Koshiro V as Kimon no Kihei, 1813.





43. Keisai Eisen. Courtesan Hanaōgi of the Ōgiya Brothel, 1830–44 .

44. Utagawa Kunimaru. Women in Summer, around 1811–14.

45. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Tub and element metal: Brazier and element fire, from the series *Characters of Women Influenced by Five Elements,* mid-Bunsei era (1818–30).

46. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Blackening teeth and element metal: Gargling and element water, from the series Characters of *Women Influenced by Five Elements,* mid-Bunsei era (1818–30).



47. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Sean of Horikawa, from the series *Humorous Matching Pictures,* late Bunsei era (1818–30).

48. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. The Tenth Month, from the series *Elegant Twelve Months*, late Bunsei era (1818–30).



49. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Woman playing with a cat, from the series *Fabrics to Order in Current Taste*, around 1844.


50. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Cherry blossoms at Genji's Rokujō Mansion, 1854.

51. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Amusement of the first snowfall, around 1847–50.

52. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Beauties with a cat by the goldfish pond, around 1851.


53. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. The habit of listening to gossip, from the series *Forty-eight Habits of the Floating World*, around 1847–48.




54. Utagawa Kuniyoshi x Utagawa Torijo. Wanting to pull down the back collar of kimono to show her nape: Eel from the Sunomata River in Tōtōmi province, from the series *Auspicious Desires on Land and Sea*, 1852.


55. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Belated gratitude gift, from the series *Falsehood and Truth: Both Sides of the Heart,* around 1847–48.




56. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Morning sleep makes waste, from the series S*ixteen Wonderful Considerations of Profit,* around 1846.


57. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Master sculptor Hidari Jingorō, around 1847–50.

58. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. The amazing phenomenon of popular Ôtsu-e paintings, around 1847–48.







59. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Hazy moon: *The Tale of Cats*, vols. 3, 4, and 6, 1845, 1846, 1848.

60. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Amusement for precious children: Imitating Ebisu and Jurojin, around 1842.



61. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Lily, from the series *Elegant Selection of Six Flowers*, around 1843.


62. Utagawa Yoshiharu. Courtesan Kiyokawa of the Okadaya Brothel,
from the series *Assortment of Beauties of the Highest Popularity in Temporary Quarters in Fukagawa*, 1865.




63. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi. Looks annoyed: Appearance of girl in the Kansei era, from the series *Thirty-Two Aspects of Women*, 1888.

64. Utagawa Kunisada II. Courtesan in Matsui-chō, from the series *A Collection of Modern Beauties*, 1855.



65. Katsushika Hokusai. *Sketches by Hokusai*, vol. 14, date unknown.

# DOGS

66. Suzuki Harunobu. Renshi, from the series *Five Elegant Colors of Ink*, around 1769.

67. Utagawa Toyokuni I. Hydrangeas, from the series *Six Selected Flowers*, mid-Bunka era (1804–18).

68. Utagawa Kunimaru. Woman holding a Japanese Chin, 1818–30.

69. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III.
Young woman carrying a child on her back, from the series *Starlight Frost and Modern Manners,* early Bunsei era (1818–30).



The ancient hunter-gatherer Jōmon people of Japan kept dogs as companions and gave them respectful burials. Folding screens of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries depict dogs. Edo-period woodblock prints and paintings show dogs were cared for as pets and cherished as faithful companions. Small dogs, particularly Japanese Chin, were extremely popular with aristocrats, samurai, and women of wealthy families.

70. Utagawa Kunimaru. In front of the bathhouse, 1818–30.

71. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Street musician, from the series *Street in Spring,* mid-Bunsei era (1818–30).




72. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III.
Poem by Suō no Naishi: Shirai Gonpachi, from the series *Ogura Imitations of One Hundred Poets by One Hundred Poets*, around 1846.

73. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Spring night, 1843–45.



74. Keisai Eisen. Reading books, from the series *Eight Favorite Things in the Modern World,* around 1823.

75. Utagawa Hiroshige. Peeping into the bath/Boys fighting, from Hiroshige's Comic Prints, late Tenpō era (1830–44).




76. Utagawa Hiroshige II. French woman, her child, and pet dog, 1860.

# GOLDFISH


77. Isoda Koryūsai. Shirotae of the Ōkanaya Brothel, from the series *Models for Fashion: New Year Designs as Fresh as Young Leaves*, mid-Anei era (1772–81).


78. Kitagawa Utamaro. Summer: Woman and her child playing with goldfish, 1789–1801.


79. Kitagawa Hidemaro. Young couple with goldfish, 1804–18.



Brought to Japan by Chinese traders, goldfish were first sold to aristocrats and samurai as exotic pets. Soon they became more broadly popular. In the heat of summer, Japanese festivals still include *kingyo-sukui* – a traditional game where players scoop up live goldfish with a paper ladle. Fancy glass and ceramic bowls to keep and admire goldfish were produced.

Goldfish were especially popular in woodblock prints. Their elegant movements well represented the "floating world". Some were bred to have long, elegant fins to enhance that floating aesthetic. Utagawa Kuniyoshi is well-known for goldfish in his pictures.


80. Utagawa Toyokuni I. Actors Onoe Matsusuke II as Kingyoya Kinpachi and Ichikawa Ichizō I as Ukiyodoko no Matabei, 1814.

81. Utagawa Kuniyasu. Goldfish, from the series *Elegant Amusements for Girls*, around 1811–14.



82. Keisai Eisen. Young woman holding a goldfish bowl, 1830–44.

83. Kikukawa Eizan. Woman and her child looking at a goldfish bowl, 1804–18.

84. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Modern version of *Tales of Ise*, 1849.


85. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. The Seventh Month, 1849.

86. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Scene from the play *Genji Moyō Furisode Hinagata*, 1851.


87. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Imaginary scene of summer: Actors Ichimura Kakitsu as Water Vendor and Nakamura Kanjaku as Goldfish Vendor, late Tenpō era (1830–44).


88. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Mitsuuji and women enjoying a winding stream party, 1852.


89. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. The Sixth Month, from the series *Genji in the Twelve Months*, 1856.


90. Utagawa Sadahide. Courtesan Azumaji of the Kadoebiya Brothel, late Tenpō era (1830–44).




91. Utagawa Sadahide. French woman looking at a goldfish bowl in the Foreign Merchant House in Yokohama, 1861.

92. Utagawa Kunisada II. The Fifth Month, from the series *The Five Festivals Represented by Eastern Genji*, 1855.

# OTHER ANIMALS

93. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. The Third Month, from the series *Five Festivals,* early Tenpō era (1830–44).

94. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Falconer, early Tenpō era (1830–44).



Animals less perceived as pets also appear in woodblock prints. Falconry (*takagari*), hunting with birds of prey, was a popular pastime for samurai. Monkey trainers (*sarumawashi*) performed tricks for entertainment and profit. Cattle and horses were used for farming and transportation in the countryside. Parrots, camels, and elephants were depicted as exotic animals imported from foreign lands. Various exotic animals have been recorded entering Japan, including: ostrich (1658), canaries (1709), crocodile (1780), orang-utan (1792), white bear (1799), and lion (1865). Many of these were sent by foreign rulers to be presented to the shogun.

95. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Glass Dutch ship, imported birds, and glass lantern at the Craft Show, 1819.


96. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. View of Kanbara, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, early Tenpō era (1830–44).


97. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. The Devoted Son Yoji, from the series *Twenty-four Japanese Paragons of Filial Piety*, around 1843–45.


98. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Okane of Ōmi province, from the series *Suikoden of Japanese Heroes*, around 1844–45.




99. Utagawa Yoshimori. Russian on horse, from the series *Five Nations*, 1860.

100. Utagawa Kunimasa IV. Parody of *Hauta,* early Meiji period (1868–1912).

101. Utagawa Yoshitoyo. Giant elephant imported from overseas, 1863 or later.


102. Artist unknown. Camel imported by Europeans, 1867.

# SOUL

103. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi. Looks heavy: Appearance of waitress at Fukagawa in the Tenpō era, from the series *Thirty-Two Aspects of Women*, 1888.

# FOOD

104. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi. Looks delicious: Appearance of courtesan in the Kaei era, from the series *Thirty-Two Aspects of Women*, 1888.


105. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Hiroshige.
The Matsu-no-Sushi Restaurant: Actor as Sushiya Musume Osato, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*, 1852.



The Gokaidō highways made it easy for regional products to be brought into Edo, allowing everyone to enjoy new foods and inspiring new cuisines. Fresh seafood was sourced along the north bank of Nihonbashi River. The fish market there set up in the early seventeenth century served the people until the Tsukiji Market opened in 1935.

When it comes to Edo "soul food", what comes to mind is soba (buckwheat noodles) and *nigirizushi* ("sushi") – fresh fish served over vinegared rice, with or without nori seaweed. Soba gained popularity for the simplicity of its ingredients and the many ways to enjoy it. Every neighbourhood in Edo City had one or two soba shops. The style of today's sushi became popular by the 1820s–30s. In those days, there were already a mix of high-end sushi restaurants and plenty of food stalls also serving sushi, as well as eel kabayaki and tempura.

A surge in fancy restaurants specialising in rare and luxury ingredients lead to the establishment of *kaiseki-ryōri* (traditional Japanese multi-course haute cuisine). Many of these restaurants were in the outskirts of the city and some had second-floor seating overlooking a garden. The highly competitive food industry was supported by gourmets and travellers, and they generated demand for guidebooks. Prints and paintings by ukiyo artists played a major role in spreading gourmet culture.


106. Katsushika Hokusai. Fujieda: Yellow rice dyed with gardenia, from the series *Spring Enjoyment of Fifty-three Stations*, 1804.



107a, 107b. Katsushika Hokusai.
Ishiyakushi: Eel shop and Akasaka: Noodle shop, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road: Picture Book of Courier's Bell*, mid-Bunka era (1804–18).



108a, 108b. Katsushika Hokusai.
Kuwana: Baked clam shop and Yokkaichi: Bean paste bun shop, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road: Picture Book of Courier's Bell*, mid-Bunka era (1804–18)


109. Utagawa Kuniyasu. Prosperity of the fish market at Nihonbashi, late Bunsei era (1818–30).

110. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III.
The Tenth Month: Streetwalkers in the First Snowfall, from an untitled series of the twelve months, late Bunka era (1804–18).

111. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Flower viewing party: Grilled tofu with miso glaze, early Bunsei era (1818–30).


112. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III.
Actor Ichikawa Ebizō V and his family having a calligraphy and painting party: Sushi from the famous sushi shop Matsu-no-Sushi, 1852.

113. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Dance performance at the New Year party, 1854.


114. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III.
Tomoe Gozen and her son Asahina Yoshihide eating a confection, from the series *Biographies of Famous Women, Ancient and Modern*, 1859.


115. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Hiroshige.
The Sakurai Restaurant: Actor Ichikawa Kodanji IV as Asakura Tōgo, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*, 1852.


116. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Hiroshige.
The Tagasode Restaurant: Actor Iwai Kumesaburō III as Yaoya Oshichi, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*, 1853.



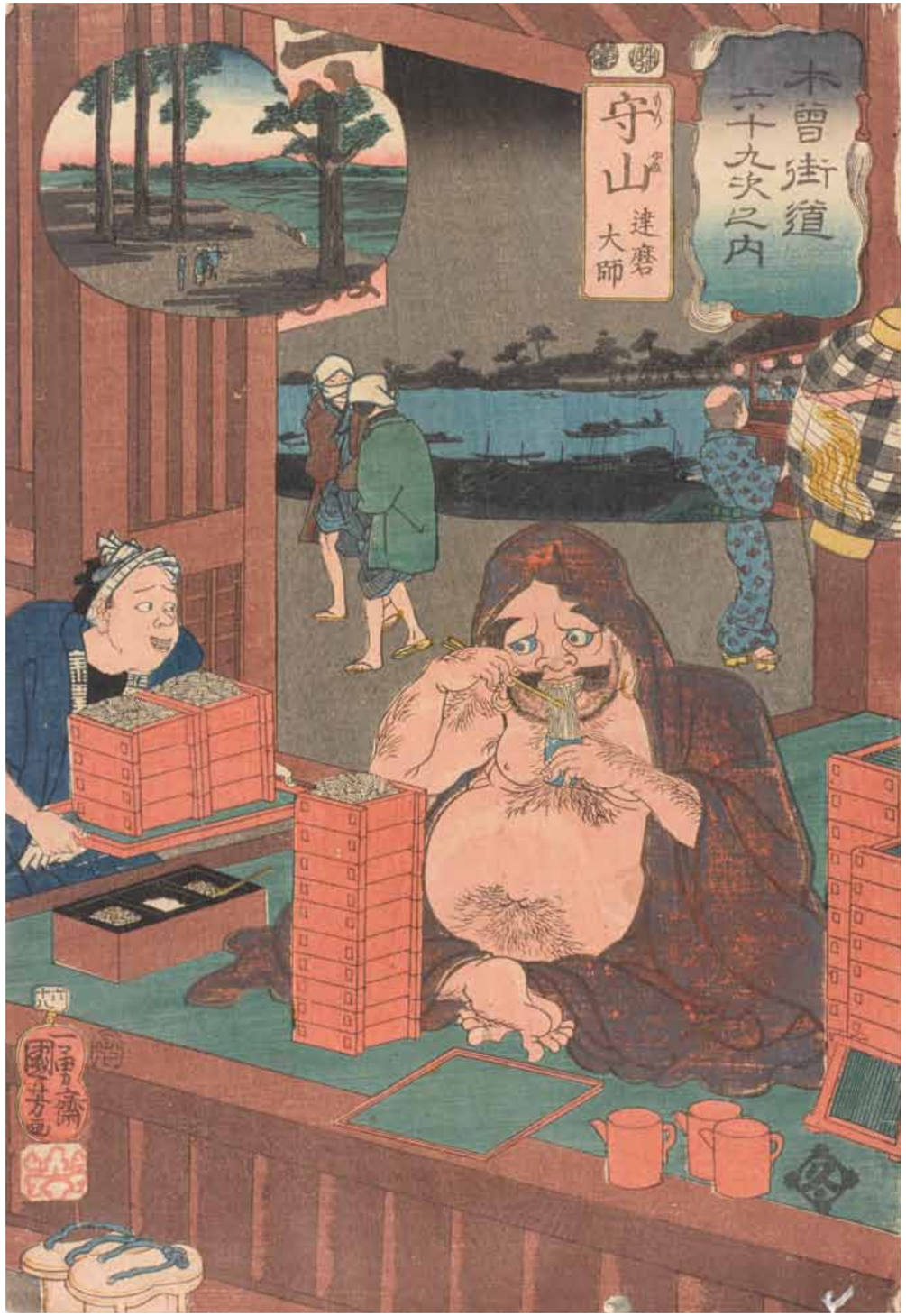

117. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Hiroshige.
The Hyakusekirō Restaurant: Actor Ichikawa Kodanji IV as Nakamaro, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*, 1853.

118. Utagawa Hiroshige. Mariko: Famous tea shop, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*, 1853.


119. Utagawa Hiroshige. Grilled eel: Characters from plays as merchants and customers, from the series *Flourishing Business in Balladtown*, 1852.




120. Utagawa Hiroshige. Bush warbler rice cakes: Characters from plays as merchants and customers, from the series *Flourishing Business in Balladtown*, 1852.




121. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Moriyama: Bodhidharma eating soba noodle, from the series *Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaidō Road*, 1852.




122. Utagawa Kuniyoshi x Utagawa Torijo. Wanting to eat: Mimasaka province, from the series *Auspicious Desires on Land and Sea*, 1852.


123. Utagawa Kuniyoshi.
Sawarabi: Masaoka and her son Senmatsu eating poisoned confections, from the series *Genji Clouds Matched with Ukiyo-e Pictures*, around 1846.

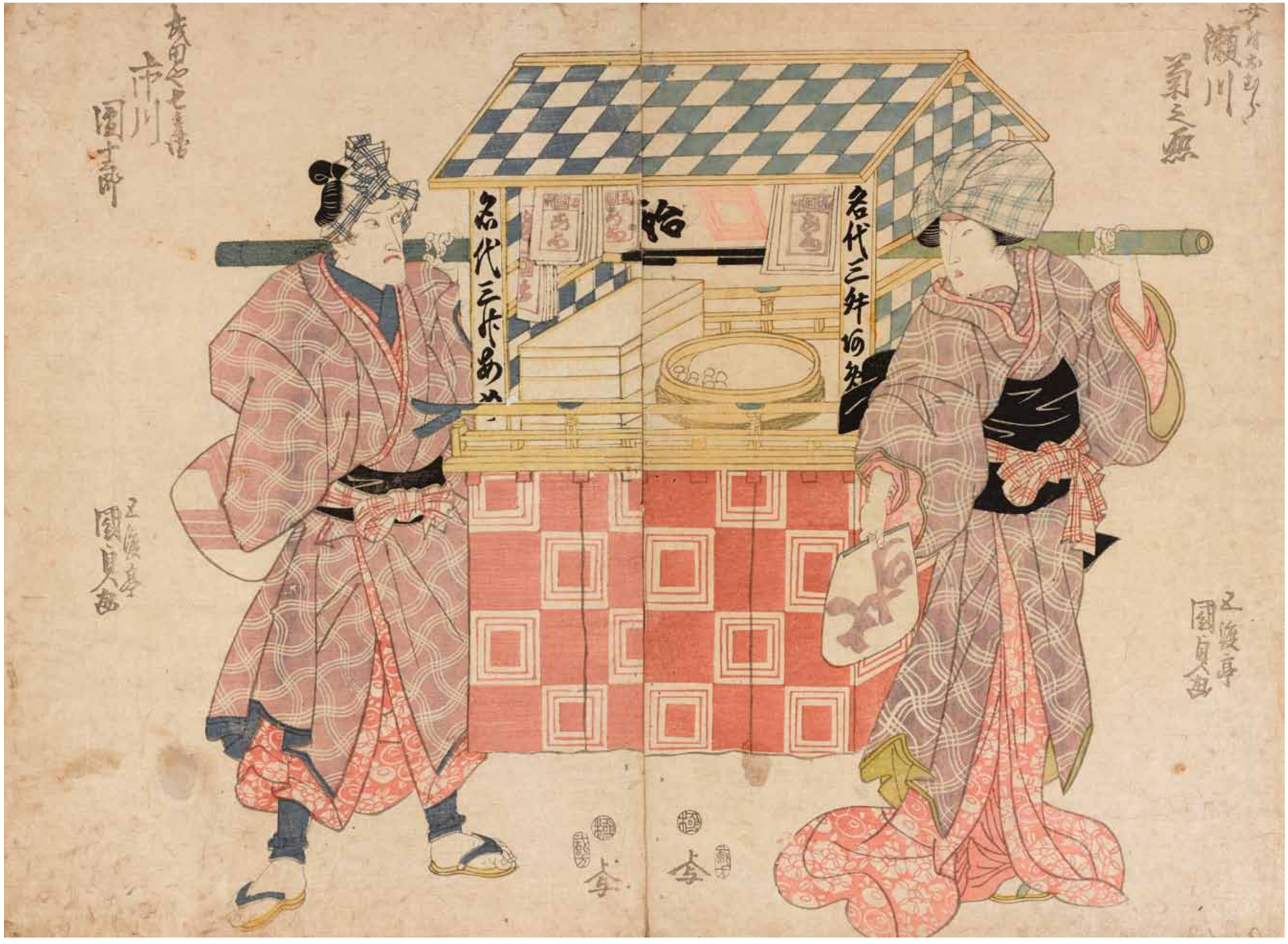



124. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Waitress, View of the Eitaibashi Bridge, from the series *Modern Tie-dyed Fabrics of Edo*, around 1833–35.


125. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Soba noodle of Shinano province, from the series *Collection of Famous Products of Land and Sea*, around 1831–32.



126. Utagawa Sadakage. Lottery, 1818–44.




127. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Candy vendors: Actors Segawa Kikunojō V as Omura and Ichikawa Danjurō VII as Naritaya Shichibei, 1819.


128. Utagawa Yoshitora. Foreigners enjoying a party, 1861.



129. Utagawa Yoshitoyo. American men at the teahouse, 1860.

130. Utagawa Yoshikazu. Foreigners' residence in Yokohama, 1861.


131. Artist unknown. Present-day sesame rice cakes, 1868.


132. Artist unknown. Earthquake catfish print: Grilling a giant catfish, 1855.

# GARDENS

133. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Plum-blossom viewing party on a spring evening, around 1849–51.

134. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Kannon Temple: Sponge gourds, from the series *Mirror of Fine Views*, mid-Bunsei era (1818–30).



With the political stability of the Edo period, a gardening culture developed. Led by the samurai class, who managed daimyo estates, gardening was quickly taken up by the general public. Three generations of Tokugawa (Ieyasu, Hidetada, and Iemitsu) were great lovers of flowers – especially camellias. Chrysanthemums, autumn-blooming flowers, are extremely popular in Japan. A symbol of longevity, since the Kamakura period they have been associated with the imperial family. Gardeners collected plants and some became obsessed with rare curiosities or finding just the right vessel in which to cultivate a plant. Illustrated books documented special collections. The sight and sound of plant and flower vendors became a common sight across the city.

By early Edo period, flower viewing (*hanami*) excursions had become popular. Daimyō held large lavish events, including the famous Daigo-no-hanami, a cherry blossom viewing extravaganza at Daigo-ji Temple in Kyōto. Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune (reigned 1716–45) planted areas of cherry trees for the people to enjoy, kickstarting what would become an international spring craze.

135. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III.
Autumn: Actors Iwai Kumesaburō III, Ichikawa Danjūrō VIII, and Bandō Shūka I, from the series *Comparisons of Flowers of Four Seasons*, 1853.

136. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III.
Actors Ichimura Takenojō V as Wakatake no Kame, Bandō Shūka I as Yamatoya Osen, and Ichikawa Danjūrō VIII as Takinobori no Kichi, 1851.

137. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Chrysanthemums of one hundred varieties grafted together, around 1845.

138. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Earth: Tokonatsu, from the series *Comparisons for the Five Elements*, around 1851–52.


139. Utagawa Yoshitora. Fashionable assortment of chrysanthemums: Elephant, 1844.



140. Utagawa Kunimori II. Rooster-shaped corn exhibited at Shinagawa, 1845.

# SEASONAL FESTIVALS

141. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Scene at low tide: Gathering shellfish, late Bunsei era (1818–30).

Seasonal festivals and leisure activities, enjoyed by people from all walks of life, offered inspiring subject matter for ukiyo artists. Today, many of these festivals still take place and woodblock prints serve as valuable historical records, showing how traditions and customs endure or evolve. The five seasonal festivals held at the Japanese imperial court, “Gosekku” in Japanese, were made official holidays during the Edo period. Based on the idea that certain days in the lunar calendar have importance to one’s life, these events were celebrated with seasonal food and flowers. In addition, other seasonal activities were popular. In spring, viewing of cherry blossoms could double up with a sightseeing trip to the mountains. In March or April, clam digging at lowtide was a favourite pastime. In the summer, when rivers widen, many look forward to the Sumidagawa Fireworks Festival. In late December, pounding rice for mochi is another longstanding Japanese custom that marks the end of the old year and the beginning of a new one.



142. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Cherry blossoms at Tsukiji Honganji Temple, 1853.

143. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. The Twelfth Month: Making rice dumplings, from the series *Twelve Months*, 1854.

144. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III. Enjoying the Doll Festival, 1861.


145. Yōshū Chikanobu. Boys Festival, from the series *Sands of Edo*, 1885.

146. Utagawa Hiroshige. Fireworks at Ryōgoku, around 1849–51.

147. Utagawa Kunisada II. Tanabata Festival, from the series *The Five Festivals Represented by Baicho Genji*, 1858.

# ORIGINAL PAINTINGS

148. Motohiro. Beauty and cat, 1830–44.

149. Mihata Jôryû. Beauty and dog, 1830–44.

Though woodblock prints captured the attention of the Western world, the artists who made them almost always thought of themselves primarily as painters. They often signed both their prints and paintings with “from my brush”. Some artists gave up designing prints in favour of painting full-time once their reputations were established.

An artist who became popular might receive special commissions directly from a collector or through an agent. Usually these orders would be for hanging scrolls. Rarer commissions included paintings on wood or on folding screens. Accepting a commission was thought to be the real test of an artist’s skills. They could fully express themselves in fine brushstrokes, play with different shades and tones, and decide how abstract or realistic to paint the subject.

In Japan, this type of painting is called *nikuhitsuga* (original paintings). Today the term is broadly applied to brush-drawn genre paintings of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, as well as modern works by *nihonga* (traditional Japanese painting) artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



150. Tani Bunchō x Komatsubara Suikei x Kita Busei. Butterfly, peony, and cat, early Tenpō era (1830–44).

151. Artist unknown (Attributed to Katsushika Hokusai). Monkeys with Gohei, 1804–18.



152. Mihata Jôryû. Beauty under cherry blossoms, 1820–44.

153. Kouno Bairei (1844–1895). Parody of *Onna San no Miya* (The Third Princess), 1868–72.



154. Utagawa Kunimune. Strolling shamisen player and woman at the face powder shop, 1830–44.

155. Kikukawa Eizan. Child holding a dog, mid-Bunka era (1804–18).

156. Nagamasa. Bust portrait of a beautiful woman, 1818–30.



157. Bansai Madaki. Woman brushing her teeth, 1830–44.

# RUSSEL WONG
# IN KYOTO

158. Sanjō Bridge. Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2020.

Japan, particularly Kyoto, has always drawn and inspired local and international photographers. Russel Wong's interest in photographing Kyoto and its geisha community began during a visit to Tokyo in 2005 to shoot publicity photographs for Watanabe Ken when he was starring in the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Kyoto came up during their conversations, and this rekindled Wong's passion to dig deeper. Despite its controversies, the film has contributed in recent years to public perceptions of and curiosity about Japanese geisha (called *geiko* in Kyoto; *maiko* are geiko in training). Wong feels that perhaps his photographs can give the geiko community – which hardly speaks and is seldom seen – a voice for an international audience.

The geiko community in Kyoto is a closed group and the traditional system of *ichigen-san okotowari*, "turning away first-timers" still rules in most teahouses today. It took Wong five years to gain access to the geiko communities in all five *kagai* (geisha districts, also known as *hanamachi*) in Kyoto.

In making this body of work, Wong was inspired by Edo-period woodblock prints by Kitagawa Utamaro, Katsushika Hokusai, and Utagawa Hiroshige. He was particularly drawn to the compositions, how the elements of the image work together, and by the silhouettes and portraits of the women depicted in them.



159. Shinnyodō Temple Pagoda with *sakura* flowers. Kyoto, Sakyo ward,2011.


160. Sannenzaka. Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2020.

161. Kiyomizu-dera (Kiyomizu Temple). Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2011.

162. Yasaka-no-Tō of Hōkan-ji (Yasaka Pagoda of Hokan Temple). Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2019.

163. Hōjō Garden in Tōfuku-ji (Moss garden in Tofuku Temple). Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2015.



164. Hōjō Southern Garden in Tōfuku-ji. Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2013.

165. Togetsu-kyō Bridge in Spring. Kyoto, Ukyo ward, 2011.

166. Sagano Bamboo Forest at night. Kyoto, Ukyo ward,2013.

167. Moss garden of Kōinzan Saihō-ji. Kyoto, Nishikyo ward, 2014.

168. Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion). Kyoto, Kita ward, 2020.


169. Interior of Katsura Imperial Villa. Kyoto, Nishikyo ward, 2012.

170. Gion Shirakawa. Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2010.

171. Gion traditional footwear shop. Kyoto, 2013.

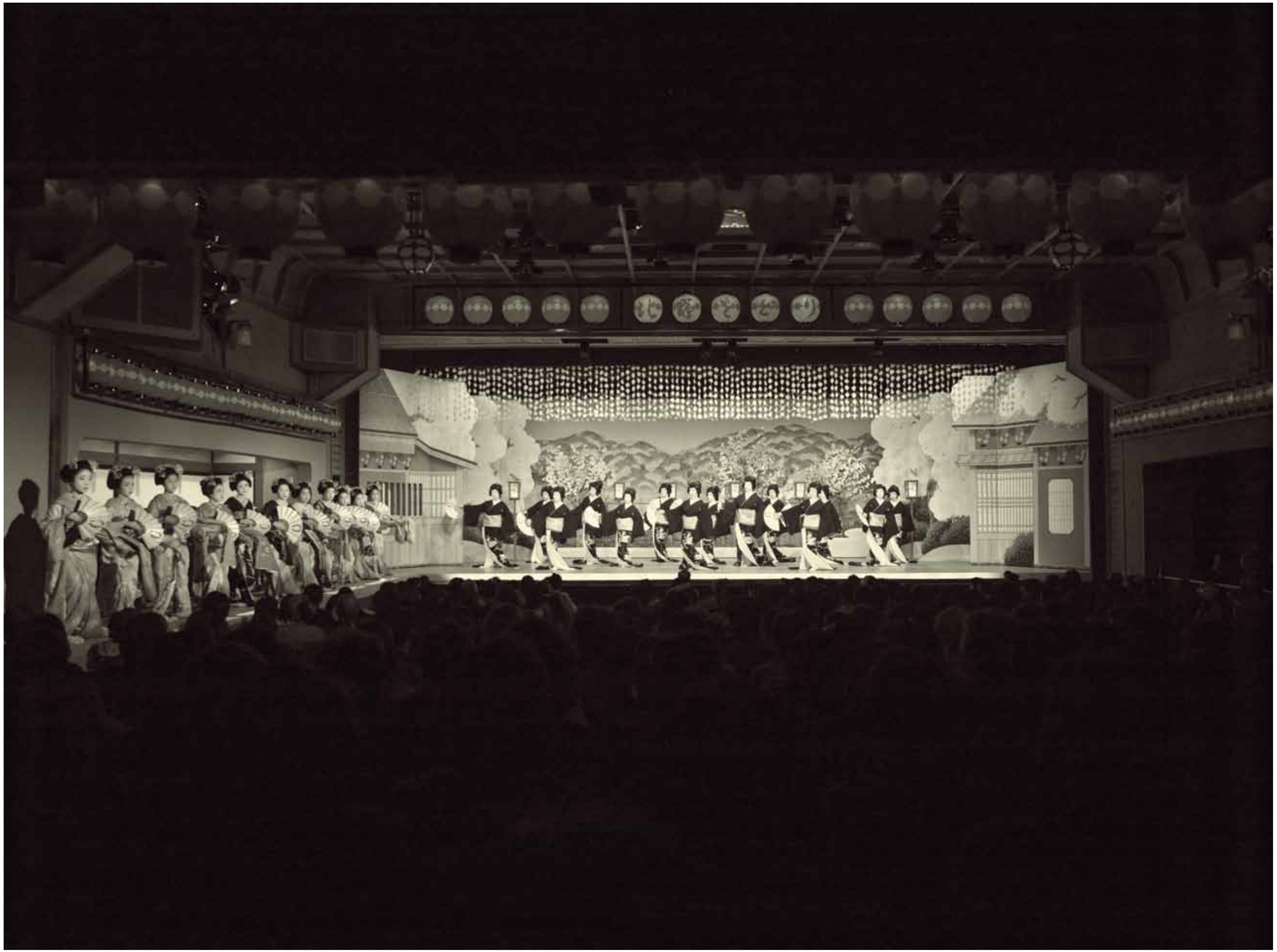

172. Kagai life in Miyagawa-chō. Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2010.

173. Geiko Sayaka. Kyoto, 2014. Large format, combining 4 x 4 prints in ōban size.


174. A maiko going to her appointment in the kagai. Kyoto, 2015.

175. Geiko and maiko on their way to the teahouse in winter. Kyoto, 2014.

176. Gion Matsuri performance. Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2010.



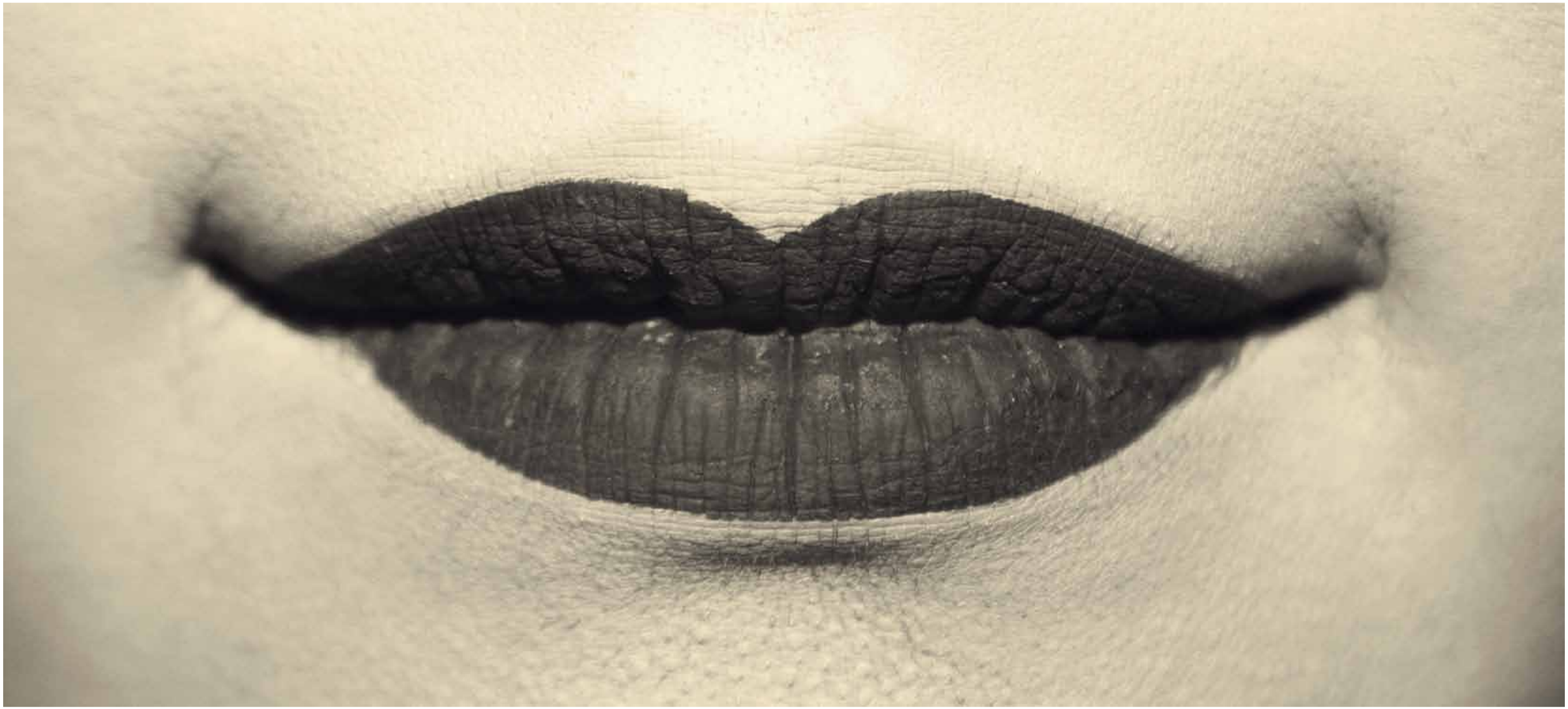
177. Kitano Odori performance. Kyoto, Kamigyo ward, 2012.

178. Tea ceremony at Nashinoki Shrine. Kyoto, Kamigyo ward, 2020.

179. Geiko Fukune folding her *fukusa*. Kyoto, Nashinoki Shrine, 2020.



180. Geiko Fukune purifyng the bowl before making tea. Kyoto, Nashinoki Shrine, 2020.



181. Lips. Kyoto, 2020.

182. Geiko Fukune with her tea bowl from the Waraku Kiln. Kyoto, Nashinoki Shrine, 2020.



183. Face. Kyoto, 2020.

184. Maiko Fukukana and Fukuna sharing a light moment over tea. Kyoto, Nashinoki Shrine, 2020.

185. Maiko Fukukana and Fukuna playing a game after tea. Kyoto, Nashinoki Shrine, 2020.

186. Maiko at Shimogamo Shrine. Kyoto, Sakyo ward, 2010.

187. Three maiko in Miyagawa-chō kagai district off to work. Kyoto, Higashiyama ward, 2017.

188. Maiko Sayaka performing her dance during the Erikae ceremony. Kyoto, 2011.

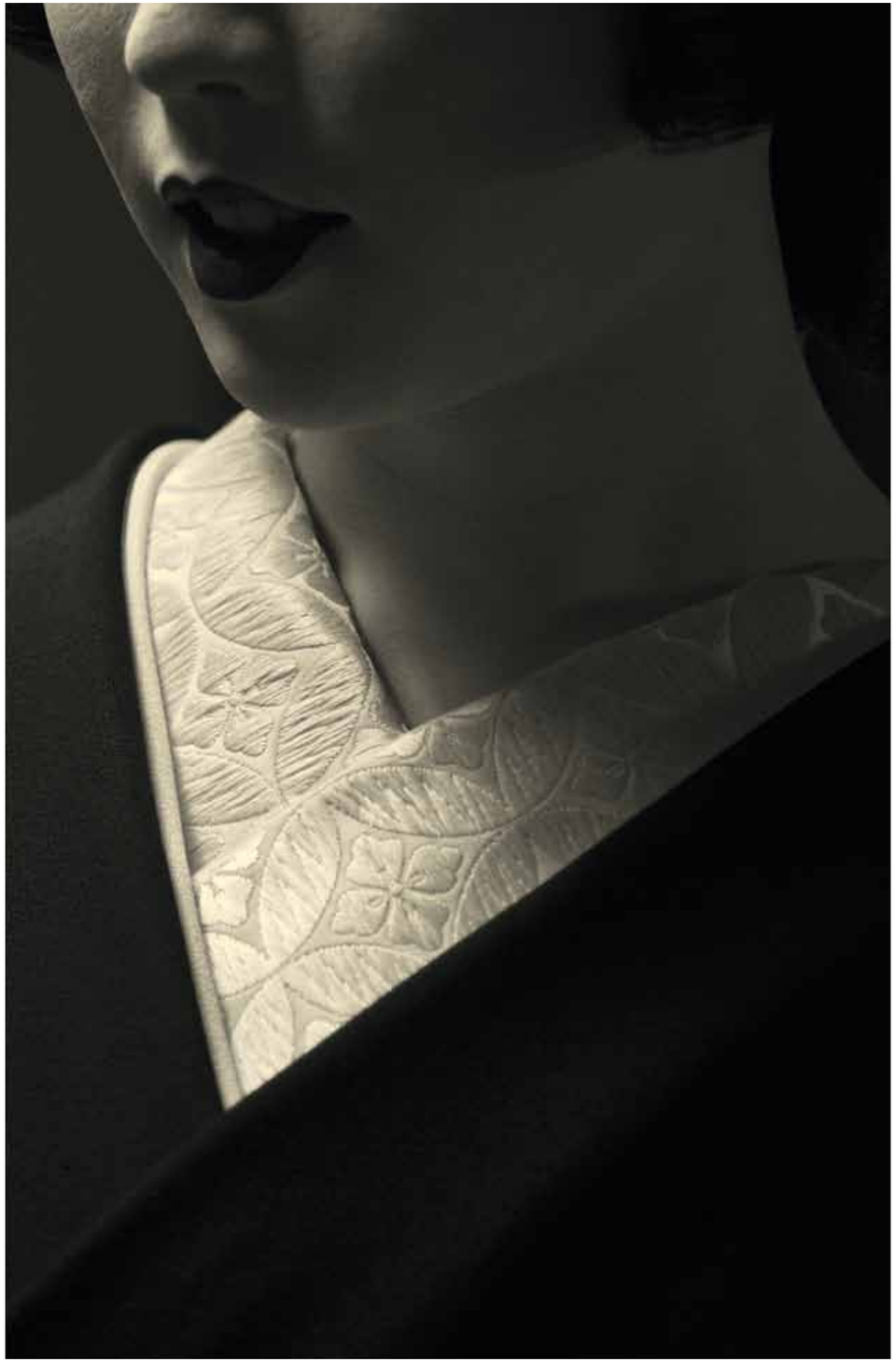
189. The Tsurui Ochaya's okāsan cutting the new geiko's hair during Erikae. Kyoto, 2011.



190. Maiko Sayaka preparing for the Erikae ceremony. Kyoto, 2011.

191. Geiko Sayaka after her Erikae ceremony. Kyoto, 2011.





192. The white kimono collar worn by the geiko. Kyoto, 2011.

193. Maiko having her nape of her neck painted with the *sanbon-ashi* design for formal occasions. Kyoto. 2011

194. Tanaka-san, head of the ochaya, has a chat with the geiko and maiko and wishes them luck on their first day. Kyoto, 2011.

195. Geiko and maiko visiting the other ochayas to introduce themselves on their first day. Kyoto, 2011.

196. Maiko Satsuki celebrating her first day as a maiko. Kyoto, 2011.

197. Geiko Sayaka helping maiko Satsuki with her *kanzashi* (hair ornaments). Kyoto, 2011.



198. Maiko Satsuki on her first day. Kyoto, 2011.



199. Geiko Sayaka. Kyoto, 2011.

# Picturing Travel, Shopping & Local Specialties in Tokugawa Japan

Christine M.E. Guth



It is daybreak and the gate is open, as if to welcome the viewer into the city of Edo. A feudal lord's procession led by standard bearers and porters laden with boxes crosses the arched bridge to leave the city, just as a group of men carrying fish in large baskets prepare to enter the bustling fishmarket nearby (fig. 1). At sixty-seven metres in length, Nihonbashi was hardly Japan's longest bridge, but as the beginning and end of journeys to and from the shogunal capital, it was the definitive reference point for all Tokugawa era (1603–1868) travel. It is no surprise, then, that "The Bridge of Japan" opens Utagawa Hiroshige's acclaimed print series depicting the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*, the most heavily travelled of the country's roads.[1]

Japan was undergoing a domestic travel boom when Hiroshige's series appeared during 1833–34. (To distinguish it from later series, this one is commonly known as the "Hōeidō Tōkaidō" after its publisher Takenouchi Magohachi, aka Hōeidō.) His vision of the sights and experiences (real and imagined) that a traveller might encounter on the coastal road linking Edo (modern Tokyo) and Kyoto, the seat of the imperial court, was so alluring that the prints were immediate bestsellers. It helped that, at a cost of not much more than a bowl of noodles, most anyone could afford to buy at least one print.[2] Indeed the subject was so popular that Hiroshige went on to publish many more versions with only slight variations, and other print artists wanting to capitalise on the theme, including Keisai Eisen (1790–1848), and Kunisada (aka Utagawa Toyokuni III; 1786–1864), issued series of their own. Earlier, between 1805–10, Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) had also created views of the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō* but these lack the experiential quality of Hiroshige's vivid representation of the changing seasons, climate, topography, and people along the way. This is perhaps because unlike Hiroshige, Hokusai had not personally travelled the road. Hiroshige's sensitivity to the rigors of travel is in dramatic evidence in his view of Shōno, where travellers struggle to climb a steep slope in a driving rainstorm (fig. 2). Nevertheless, like their counterparts, which numbered in the tens of thousands, the prints in these series enabled viewers to participate vicariously in the experience of travel, to structure future journeys, and to be reminded of past pleasures.

Hiroshige's justly celebrated *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō* exemplifies the way that woodblock prints tapped into the hopes and dreams of people from all walks of life. Prints spoke in a variety of voices – male and female, real and fictional, lofty and mundane. And, at a time when prosperity made it possible for samurai and commoners alike to enjoy leisure activities, these aesthetically appealing and inexpensive pictures served as popular promotional vehicles. Many provide varied and compelling evidence about travel, shopping, and specialty products. Print production was market driven, and like television programs or films today that promote a particular product by incorporating it into their storylines, woodblock prints delivered commercial information in a way that was designed to encourage consumer desire.[3]

## A Culture of Travel

Forbidden to go abroad, Japanese of the Tokugawa period made the most of domestic travel across all four islands of the Japanese archipelago, from Hokkaidō in the north to Kyushu in the

1. Hiroshige. Nihonbashi, Morning Scene, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road* [detail, Cat. 8].

south. Curiosity about ethnic others could be satisfied by observing the customs of the indigenous Ainu inhabitants of Hokkaidō or the Chinese, Koreans, and Dutch living in Nagasaki. The display of exotic animals such as camels and elephants (Cats. 101, 102) offered further tantalising glimpses of the world beyond Japan's shores: in 1728 a pair of elephants, gifts for the shogun, proceeded from Nagasaki to Edo, to the amazement of all those enroute. While historically and culturally specific in many ways, travel then, no less than today, provided a thrilling escape from routine, and combined opportunities for education and recreation. By defining canonical sights and local products, prints helped to visit, reimagine, and consume both the past and the rapidly changing present. The words *fūryū*, "stylish" or "fashionable," *tōsei* "present-day," and *imayō*, "modern style" in the titles of many prints underscores the importance of being up-to-date.

The Tokugawa government maintained an infrastructure of roads, bridges, river crossings, post-stations, and barriers as well as a network of coastal sea routes for transportation and communication. The "arms and legs of the realm" were the five main highways called Gokaidō, of which the Tōkaidō saw the heaviest traffic. Next came the inland Kisokaidō (aka Nakasendō)

2. Hiroshige. Shōno: Driving Rain, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road* [detail, Cat. 12]

passing through the mountains of central Japan, the preferred route for women between Edo and Kyoto because there were far fewer river crossings than on the Tōkaidō. Travellers on that road had to cope, among other challenges, with the treacherous crossing of the Oi River, marking the boundary between Suruga and Tōtōmi Provinces (modern Shizuoka, Nagano, and Yamanashi Prefectures), where no bridge could be built because of the raging torrents. Ferry boats were not allowed and travellers were either carried precariously on piggyback or on wooden platforms (Cat. 16). A popular humorous verse had it that "Even if one is carried across on a wooden platform, what lies below is still hell."[4] The three other roads, the Kōshū dōchū, Ōshū dōchū, and Nikkō dōchū, connecting Edo with the northern reaches of Honshu were less travelled and, with a few exceptions, their scenic sights less frequently celebrated in prints.

Post-stations where weary travellers could find food, lodging, shopping, and recreation were conveniently situated at uniform distances between four and twelve kilometres along the five major highways. Some post-stations, such as Shōno, were small settlements, others grew into commercial hubs with over a thousand inhabitants, and a few, such as Yoshida, Okazaki, and Odawara, boasted feudal castles (Cat. 11). Over time each developed a distinctive identity by association with literature, historical events, religious institutions, or local gastronomic and craft specialties. Mass-produced illustrated guidebooks and woodblock prints both shaped and reflected the consolidation and diffusion of these identities.

The Gokaidō were used for official traffic and communication, for commercial transport, as well for tourism and pilgrimage. The system of alternate attendance instituted in 1635 meant that the daimyo and their retainers were required to go back and forth from Edo to their domains every year. (Their wives and children remained in Edo as hostages when they were away.) These processions, playfully enacted by children in a print by Hiroshige on view in this exhibition, could involve thousands (Cat. 5). Official messengers working in relays made the trip between Edo and Kyoto on the 488-km (307 miles) Tōkaidō in a mere three days. Tourists, who generally travelled on foot, or if they could afford it, in palanquins carried on the shoulders of porters, took weeks. Wheeled traffic was forbidden, probably because it would have contributed to congestion and accidents.[5]

Most goods were transported by packhorse or by ship, following the coast northeast from the city of Osaka to Edo. Until the nineteenth century when production developed in the Kantō region around Edo, the Kansai region around Kyoto and Osaka supplied the shogunal capital with essential goods including cotton cloth, vegetable oil, sake, soy sauce, rice, charcoal, fish oil, salt, firewood, and miso paste. With a population of about one million inhabitants, making it the most populous city in the world, Edo's needs were substantial.[6] Because of official restrictions on travel, pleasure trips were often undertaken under the pretext of pilgrimage. To share the substantial costs of travel, those for whom pilgrimage was a serious religious activity frequently travelled as part of a religious association. In 1830 some five million people are said to have participated in mass pilgrimages to Ise Shrine, dedicated to the sun goddess Amaterasu, the mythological ancestor of the imperial family.[7]

## The Pleasures of Shopping

Over the course of the Tokugawa period, a growing market economy led shopping to become a major pastime and commodities increasingly to frame the way that people saw themselves and their world. This outlook was not confined to the inhabitants of Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo, the country's largest cities, where roughly 15 per cent of the population lived. Travel exposed those living in rural areas to consumer culture as well. The commodification of culture was reinforced by sumptuary laws issued by the shogunal and daimyo authorities that dictated lifestyle choices according to status. In the Tokugawa social hierarchy, warriors (samurai) were at the top followed in declining order by farmers, artisans, and merchants. Class and rank within it determined the scale and design of gateways, the number of stories of residences, and even the choice of woods and other materials used in their construction and decor. They determined the materials, colours, and patterns of garments worn by both men and women. They even determined the number of courses and kinds of foods permitted in banquets.[8]

The circulation of illustrated books, promotional handbills, and colour woodblock prints mediated between lived experience and imagination by publicising goods available throughout the country. In a chapter devoted to artisans, the popular *Encyclopedia of Humanity* (*Jinrin kinmō zui*, 1690), for instance, identifies the best makers of sewing needles, among them the Mizubariya, a shop on Kyoto's Sanjōdori that is still in business today.[9] *Famous Products of Mountain and Sea, Illustrated* (*Sankai meisan zue*, 1799) promotes regional comestibles ranging from honey and tree mushrooms from the mountains of Kumano, and abalone from Ise, to flounder from Wakasa.[10] A *Directory to Shopping in Edo* (*Edo kaimono hitori annai*, 1824) caters to those seeking reliable information about locations, goods, and the best brands.[11] As cultural historian Gerald Groemer has observed, "By the nineteenth century even the most isolated farmer knew the names of celebrated shops in the capital, while Edo residents appreciated the attributes of rural specialties sold in the city or obtainable on order."[12]

Fierce competition for market share led many producers and shop owners to advertise their wares in the form of mass-printed handbills (*hikifuda*) that might be pasted on the walls of public places like a bathhouse (Cat. 35). From its desirable central location at Surugachō, near Nihonbashi, Echigoya revolutionised shopping in the shogunal city by pioneering the principle of selling for cash only at fixed prices (*genkin, kakene nashi*), thereby eliminating the lengthy haggling often entailed in making purchases. It announced its pioneering sales tactic in handbills, some 50,000 to 80,000 of which were distributed in 1683, when it instituted this practice.[13] By the end of the eighteenth century, producers began to hire well-known authors to write advertising copy to promote commonplace necessities like tooth powder. Hiraga Gennai (1728–1779), an inventor and author of witty popular fiction, is thought to have been the first to put his hand to this, and in so doing is widely regarded as the father of modern advertising. His humorous campaign for Sōsekikō tooth powder, packed in a box with twenty individual bags, an innovation at the time, emphasised that this superior product whitened the teeth and removed odors, and urged customers to spread the word and send others to the shop, where the owner would personally fill their orders.[14]



3. Keisei Eisen. Woman Brushing Her Teeth, from the series *Modern Figures* [detail, Cat. 34].

Colour woodblock prints promoted everything from toothbrushes, toothpaste, and cosmetics to the latest in textile design through product placement, celebrity endorsements, and association with beautiful women (fig. 3). Product promotion was incorporated into early woodblock prints by Suzuki Harunobu (1725?–1770), such as "Ofuji of the Motoyanagiya with a Customer".[15] Ofuji was one of the celebrated beauties of Edo in 1769, when this print depicting her grinding toothpowder in a mill placed next to a display case of toothbrushes and other toiletries was issued. The willow tree behind her provides the clue that helps to identify this as "The Original Willow Shop" (Motoyanagiya), owned by her father, situated on the grounds of Edo's Asakusa Temple.

Kunisada's series *Mirrors of Modern Make-up* (*Imafu keshō kagami*) titillates the viewer by offering intimate views of beauties at their toilette as reflected in the mirror. The prints included in this exhibition portray them applying rouge to their lips, blackening their teeth, and tweezing their eyebrows (Cat. 30); blackened teeth and shaved eyebrows were the norm among married women. White skin was a mark of feminine beauty, and dangerous lead-based cosmetics were widely used to achieve this desirable trait. Bi'en senjokō – "Radiant fragrance of female immortals", a whitening powder applied to the face, neck, and chest, was the leading brand in early nineteenth-century Edo. At a cost per packet of about two to three times that of a woodblock print, it was an expensive necessity for fashionable women. It was often promoted by Kabuki actors specialising in female roles. A print by the prolific Kunisada, for instance, shows the actor Iwai Hanjiro V (1776–1847) strolling in his garden, holding in his hands a round fan inscribed with the poem, "No matter how you look at it, snow is darker than Senjokō" (*Dōmitemo, yuki wa kurugere, Senjokō*).[16] Kunisada also depicted a stylish housewife and geisha with packets of this make-up.[17] It is possible that Mr Sakamoto, the manufacturer of this product, subsidised the many prints issued during the 1820s and 30s that feature Bi'en senjokō.[18] One may speculate that he too was behind the painting by Utagawa Kunimune (active 1818–30) of a strolling musician and woman inside a shop prominently displaying a signboard for Bi'en senjokō (Cat. 154).

The latest fashions served as framing devices for series by many print artists. Isoda Koryūsai's *Models for Fashion: New*

*Designs as Fresh Young Leaves* (*Hinagata wakana no hatsu moyō*), was among the earliest of this genre, and like many that followed, it involved cross-promotion of the most popular courtesans – themselves commodities – and textile patterns of the day.[19] They were so successful that between 1776 and 1782 Koryūsai produced some one hundred and forty designs for this series. The term *hinagata* in the title links these prints to sample books of kimono design patterns, *hinagatabon*, an important source of guidance for women wanting to dress in the latest fashions. Unlike Harunobu's prints, where viewers were challenged to identify the subject on the basis of assorted visual clues, the title of each of Koryūsai's prints includes the name of the courtesan and the brothel where she worked. The work in the present show is identified as "Shirotae of the Ōkanaya" (Cat. 77). This label is necessary since the beauties are represented in such a conventionalised manner that it is nearly impossible to distinguish among them. The matching checked robes worn by Shirotae and her two attendants, now pink, but probably originally red, reflect the fashion for checks at the time. In his monograph on Koryūsai, Allen Hockley has suggested that the small crests appearing on some of the garments in this series may advertise fabric merchants who helped to underwrite publication of the series.[20]

Like modern fashion magazines, woodblock prints helped to popularise fashion trends through association with the theatrical world. A bold check pattern was cross-marketed with the twelfth-century Benkei (1155–1189), a monk-hero who figured in many Kabuki plays. The woman with a razor from the series *Women likened to Benkei, wearing Checks*, a series by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798–1861), alludes to a scene in the play *The Subscription List* (Kanjinchō), in which Benkei shaves his head (Cat. 32).[21] Consumers of these prints would have derived as much pleasure from the challenge of matching the female subject with a Benkei play as they would from the varieties of checked patterns on their garments. Theaters, brothels, and manufacturers were inextricably bound up with the flowering of Edo print culture.

4. Kunisada and Hiroshige. The Sakurai Restaurant: Actor Ichikawa Kodanji IV as Asakura Tōgo, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital* [detail, Cat. 115].

5. Kuniyoshi. Moriyama: Bodhidharma Eating Soba Noodle, from the series *Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaidō Road* [detail, Cat. 121].

## Famous products – Meibutsu

Travel before the Tokugawa period was often driven by the desire to see scenic places celebrated in poetry, *meisho*, but by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the appreciation of such historical, cultural, and devotional landmarks came to be mediated less by literature than by the consumption of gastronomic specialties or purchase of crafts identified as *meibutsu*, literally "things with names" or "famous things". *Meisho,* "places with names" or "famous places", had been pictorialised in screen and scroll paintings since the twelfth century, and continued to feature in woodblock prints but often with a new twist. In a series of prints created jointly by Kunisada and Kunihisa (1832–1891), for instance, beautiful women engaged in commonplace activities such as hair-washing are paired with smaller framed views of famous places in Edo (Cat. 31). Depictions of "famous restaurants" (*kōmei kaiseki*) were another creative variation on this time-honored theme. In the 1820s, Kunisada was among the first to devote an entire series to Edo restaurants. Like the above-mentioned *meisho,* these foregrounded beautiful women, with celebrated restaurants as small vignettes above them. When Hiroshige took up this theme between 1838 and 1840, he focused instead on expansive views of the restaurants and their scenic surroundings in various seasons. These two approaches are combined in a later series of 1852, *Collection of Famous Restaurants in the Eastern Capital* (*Tōto kōmei kaiseki zukushi*), a collaboration between Kunisada and Hiroshige (fig. 4; see also Cats. 115–117).[22] Here, Kunisada portrayed famous actors while Hiroshige provided insets with views of the restaurant and its famous dishes.

Woodblock prints are veritable catalogues of the dizzying varieties of tasty foods and regional crafts that could be purchased for oneself or for gift-giving in Edo, Kyoto, or in the course of a journey on the Tōkaidō or Kisokaidō. *Meibutsu* were particularly suitable as gifts because this label certified their prestige status, differentiating them from other products of the same type. In a culture of material abundance and product diversification, shoppers outside of their familiar surroundings needed guidance in making choices, and these were safe purchases with a known value. Most were specialties associated with a particular locale. Polychromatic woodblock prints, known at the time as *nishiki-e* (brocade pictures), for instance, were widely recognised as Edo *meibutsu*. The main shops of Tsutuya Jūzaburō (1750–97) and Nishimuraya Yohachi (dates unknown), two of the leading publishers of prints of beautiful women by Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806) and other illustrious artists, were strategically located in Nihonbashi's commercial district to capitalise on the market for these popular tourist souvenirs (Cat. 20). When the German physician Englebert Kaempfer (1651–1716) observed that "One thing is certain; nobody travels through the city without buying some goods made in Miyako [Kyoto] to take home for himself and others", he also underscored the importance of place-branding: "...goods made at Miyako are famous throughout the country because they are labeled as having been made in *kyō*."[23]

The designation and proliferation of regional *meibutsu* (or alternatively, *meisan*, famous product) over the course of the nineteenth century went hand in hand with the growth of tourism and print culture.[24] This label was not determined by any one authority but by the collective public impact of publications listing noted products by region, such as the above mentioned *Famous Products of Mountain and Sea, Illustrated* (*Sankai meisan zue*, 1799). Woodblock print series with similar titles, such as Kuniyoshi's *Collection of Famous Products of Mountain and Sea* (*Sankai meisan zukushi*), from which "Soba noodles of Shinano Province" is exhibited here (Cat. 125), further contributed to the diffusion of this kind regional branding.

*Meibutsu* are prominently featured in print series dedicated to the major highways. Every post-station along the main highways, however small, had its specialty. Hokusai tells us that the seasonal culinary claim to fame of Fujieda, a castle town and the twenty-second post-station on the Tokaidō, was a yellow rice dyed with gardenia (Cat. 106), while Utagawa Kunihisa claims dumplings wrapped in oak leaves as the specialty at Nigawa, another post-station on the same road. Even Buddhist deities such as Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism, were enlisted in the promotion of *meibutsu*, as in Kuniyoshi's celebration of the soba at Moriyama, a station on the Kisokaidō (fig. 5).

Alongside gastronomic delights, many post-stations also offered locally made crafts. Of these, a kind of folk painting known as, Ōtsu-e, after the town of Ōtsu, the last stop on the Tōkaidō before Kyoto, achieved particular renown. A triptych by Kuniyoshi offers a multilayered, imaginative, and witty take on this *meibutsu*. Created by locals without any formal artistic training, Ōtsu-e depicted subjects drawn from legends and popular Buddhist belief, but in this print, Kuniyoshi, his face hidden by a picture he has painted, is surrounded by the demons, itinerant monks, and warriors of Ōtsu-e that have come to life (fig. 6). In portraying himself in this way, Kuniyoshi draws on the myth of the artistic genius who, by taking inspiration from nature rather than learning through formal training, creates art that is "alive", a common theme in Chinese and Japanese legend.

Travel, shopping, and consumption of regional products and the print culture that shaped and reflected these activities reconfigured space as place. As people gained real and imaginative experience of different parts of Japan, they began to develop awareness of regional difference. Yet by the same token they also began increasingly to recognise the Japanese archipelago as a physical place inhabited by a people with shared cultural values – a place that by the end of the Tokugawa period was commonly referred to as Nihon.[25]

6. Kuniyoshi. The Amazing Phenomenon of Popular Ōtsu-e Paintings [detail, Cat. 58].

Endnotes

1 Traganou 2004.
2 Akai 1991, p. 184.
3 Pollack 2008.
4 Vaporis 1994, p. 48.
5 Vaporis 1994, p. 30.
6 Hayashi 1994.
7 Yokoyama 1978.
8 Shively 1965.
9 Asakura 1990, p. 175.
10 Hase 1982.
11 Nakagawa 1824.
12 Groemer 2019, p. 343.
13 Minowa 2014, p. 261.
14 Minowa 2014, pp. 265–66.
15 Philadelphia 1970, p. 153.
16 Tinios 2005, pp. 43–44.
17 Izzard 1993, pp. 93, 103.
18 Tinios 2005, p. 51.
19 Hockley 2003, pp. 87–132.
20 Hockley 2003, p. 124.
21 Schaap 1998, figs. 9.1–9.10.
22 Thomsen 2002.
23 Kaempfer 1999, p. 322.
24 Cwiertka & Yasuhara 2020.
25 Berry 2006, pp. 218–28.

# Japanese Women in Kimono: Whose Bodies, Whose Photographs?

Charmaine Toh



In *Views of Japan*, a nineteenth-century photography album by Felice Beato in the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, there is a fascinating entry titled *Yakunin's concubine* (fig. 1). The photograph of a Japanese woman, a supposed concubine, is accompanied by the following letterplate note on the facing page:

> Concubinage is universal in Japan; and the law or custom therof seems not unlike that of Turkey. From the highest to the lowest the number of concubines seems only to be limited by the means of purchasing and the willingness to support them.
>
> The wife, who is the acknowledged head of the house, seldom feels jealousy or chagrin at these additions to the establishment; or if she sometimes feels it, she usually has the good sense to refrain from giving utterance to her thoughts; although frequent dissensions are engendered in the domestic circle by their introduction.
>
> From the days of King Solomon to those of Abdul Medjid, the late Sultan of Turkey, whose harem contained three hundred of the most beautiful women that Circassia and Georgia could produce, the effects of concubinage have been the same. The greatest curse fell on Solomon in his declining years, when he was turned from the path of virtue, and the worship of his God, by his numerous concubines. The cause of the imbecility of the late Sultan, was the unbridled indulgence in the society of the "lights of the harem;" and doubtless now, the increasing effeminacy of the higher Japanese, may be traced to the same cause.[1]

The caption was written by James William Murray, a British government official in Yokohama, and brings together several elements of what we now acknowledge as the orientalist fantasy – from the acceptance of polygamy and the easy availability of multiple females to the obedient Japanese wife who sensibly accepts her husband's proclivities. Simultaneously, Murray warns his reader about this immoral lifestyle, which is to be blamed for increasingly effeminate Japanese men. The image and its caption operate on multiple levels – presenting a sexually available young woman, the titular "concubine", satisfying prurient curiosity regarding a foreign scandalous practice, establishing the superiority of the Europeans vis-à-vis the feminised Japanese, and drawing a connection between Japan and other parts of the subdued Orient, whose characteristics had earlier already been established. On a broader level, this image and its caption reveal the complexities of female representation, its appropriation for the European male gaze, and its embroilment in imperialism.

This essay will consider these issues, through the work of various photographers, including the well-known Beato, who had a huge influence on the practice of commercial photography in Japan. Female bodies in general and the geisha, in particular, occupy a central position in visualisations of Japan. I look at how such bodies have been represented in photography, and the medium's potential as a site for multiple desires, including those of the women themselves. I extend the discussion to consider photographs of overseas Japanese in Singapore, and conclude by reflecting on contemporary photographer Russel Wong's approach to the subject.

## Photography in Japan

The medium of photography has played a significant role in creating a demand for exotic sights by an international audience. The rapid development of photographic technology in the second half of the nineteenth century allowed photographs to be quickly and easily reproduced, and coincided with the rise of the tourist industry, leading to an explosion in the circulation of photographs. It was common for travellers to buy numerous photographs at every stop of their trip. As a result, photography studios proliferated in port cities like Singapore, Batavia (present-day Jakarta), and Yokohama, accumulating thousands of images in their stock, ready for sale to the American or European traveller who would then bring them home as proof of their encounters with foreign places and peoples. These photographs typically fell into two categories – "views", which described landscape photographs, and "types", which described portraits of

1. Felice Beato. *Yakunin's concubine*, 1866–67. Hand-coloured albumen silver print, 27.9 × 20.8 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles [84.XO.613.29]. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

people. It is worth noting that the latter were not considered traditional portraits, given that the subjects were often anonymous and their identities considered less important than their function as an example of a foreign native or an illustration of an occupation or craft.

Photography arrived in Japan in 1848 via a daguerreotype camera on a Dutch ship.[2] However, it was with the start of the Meiji period in 1868, when Japan opened its doors to the world, that Japanese photographers were able to easily obtain the latest information and technology. The Japanese public embraced photography. Archival documents show that by 1877, there were "about 240 photographers in the capital alone, beside an immense number in nearly every town throughout the interior..."[3] By the 1870s, photographs had come to replace ukiyo-e (pictures of the floating world) woodblock prints as the primary source of visual imagery of Japan.[4] In addition to making formal portraits, many studios supplied photographs of samurai, jinrikisha (rickshaw pullers), and of course, courtesans and geishas. This period also saw the rise of Japonisme, which further fed the demand for Japanese souvenir photography. Well-heeled clients could order entire albums from Japanese studios, which would be delivered to their homes overseas, without them ever stepping foot in Japan. The Japanese themselves also ordered such albums as gifts for important clients or close friends, adding to the circulation of these photographs.[5]

Female imagery formed a large part of this growing archive of Japanese photographs entering public consciousness, and the figure of the geisha caught the imagination of many. Of course, the appreciation of such photographs did not develop in a vacuum, but rather was part of a longer history of fascination with Japanese femininity. Kelly Foreman has identified the first introduction of geisha to the European world in the form of two paintings of Edo geisha sent by the Japanese *bakufu* (shogunate) to Paris in 1866 for the International Exposition. In 1887, Louis Marie Julien Viaud wrote *Madame Chrysantheme*, inspiring John Luthur Long's *Madame Butterfly*, which in turn led to David Belasco's play in 1900 and Puccini's opera in 1904.[6] In London, Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* opened in 1884, and was their longest-running work, with 672 performances. Its revival in 1896 saw over one thousand performances.[7] The stereotyping of Japanese women as objects of sexual desire was reinforced in many plays and operas in London.[8] Geishas and courtesans were also a

2. Felice Beato. *Sleeping Beauties*, 1866–67. Hand-coloured albumen silver print, 21.7 × 26.8 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles [84.XO.613.73]. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

frequent subject of the ukiyo-e prints which found their way to collectors in the West.

The emergence of the photographic print was a gamechanger, however, both in its ability to circulate and in its relation to realism. Since its invention, the power of photography has been deeply tied to a discourse of "truth" due to its ability to capture a perfect, never-seen-before likeness.[9] The indexical quality of photography lent it an authenticity that has been embedded in its reception as a record or document of things, more so than in plays or paintings. The existence of souvenir photography followed these lines – as evidence of foreign lands and peoples but also as a substitute for them. Japanese women, in particular, played a central role in this emerging visuality, as though they were, as Mio Wakita has written, "predestined to signify alleged 'national' femininity, or even the symbolic identity of Japan itself."[10] So despite the fact that the majority of these photographs were staged in the studio with a model who could be dressed or undressed, viewers were happy to participate in the fantasy of the encounter with the coy Japanese beauty. There was pleasure to be found in the act of looking – what Sigmund Freud termed "scopophilia" in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) – and photography fulfilled this desire.

Scholars have pointed out that these souvenir photographs were created for Euro-American consumers and produced and marketed to appeal to their tastes. Allen Hockley has noted that "the potential sale and by extension, the intended consumer, projected a powerful presence during production."[11] Sebastian Dobson has further described such photographs as "pandering to nineteenth century Western notions of exoticism."[12] Even while acknowledging that many of these photographs were produced by Japanese photographers, John Dower has also argued the photographers still conformed to the interests of Western customers.[13] In Michel Foucault's terms, these subjects were disciplined and silenced in the making and collecting of photographs. To buy a photograph was also to take possession of its subject.



## Felice Beato's Japan

Perhaps the most well-known European photographer who made souvenir images of Japan is Felice Beato (ca 1834–ca 1909), whose album I discuss at the start of this essay. His photographs are in public and private collections around the world, including that of National Gallery Singapore, and he has been acknowledged as a key figure in nineteenth-century photography by numerous scholars. Prior to arriving in Japan, Beato had already travelled widely to the Crimea, India, and China, accompanying British troops and assigned to photograph various conflicts and expeditions. He arrived in Yokohama in 1863 and enjoyed an active photographic career there until 1877.[14] Despite having to operate his studio, Beato also managed to join an expedition to Korea in 1871. He finally left Japan in 1884, joined another expedition to Sudan, and subsequently moved to Burma in 1886, where he operated a successful photography studio until around 1908.[15] Throughout his photographic career, his works received much prominence, not only circulating as physical prints and albums, but adapted and reproduced in various other formats such as books and magazines. As such, he had a tremendous influence on the way many countries and events were perceived.

Beato's time in Yokohama saw a distinct development of his photographic aesthetic, away from records of conflict and events to an emphasis on the creation of genre scenes, many within the space of his studio. In fact, Eleanor Hight has suggested he was influenced by the sorts of everyday subjects represented in the Japanese ukiyo-e prints that were already popular in the United States and Europe.[16] This could have been a simple business strategy – to produce images that he knew would appeal to collectors. Hight further noted:

> Like the ukiyo-e prints, the photographs of Beato and his followers combine artifice with realism in representing various aspects of life in the pleasure quarters. Yet, because of the widespread belief in photography's objectivity, for the nineteenth-century collector these photographs appeared to represent real life more credibly.[17]

3. Felice Beato. *Musical Party*, 1866–67. Hand-coloured albumen silver print, 23.7 × 29.5 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles [84.XO.613.92]. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

4. Felice Beato. *Courtesan*, 1866–67, Hand-coloured albumen silver print, 27.6 × 20.8 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles [84.XO.613.23]. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

To understand Beato's production, it is useful to consider his magnum opus published in 1868, which includes *Yakunin's Concubine*. A larger version of the album in the Victoria and Albert Museum has the following title plate: *Photographic Views of Japan by Signor F. Beato, with Historical and Descriptive Notes, Compiled from Authentic Sources, and Personal Observations During a Residence of Several Years*.[18] There are different versions of this album due to pages being dis-bound and reassembled over the last century, as well as variations in the handiwork. Nevertheless, each image is typically accompanied by a letterpress note on the facing page written by James William Murray that attempts to explain to readers Japanese customs and lifestyle via the photographs. By 1868, Beato was already a well-established photographer with an excellent reputation. He had also lived and travelled in Japan for four years by the time of publication and worked with British colleagues for many more. It is therefore interesting that he had Murray to write the text for the album. While the reason is unknown, it would be a fairly reasonable assumption that Beato would have approved the text at the very least, and possibly provided direction for some of it as well.

The majority of Murray's captions exhibit anthropological pretensions, sometimes at odds with the photograph. For example, in *Sleeping Beauties* (fig. 2), he chooses to describe the hollow wooden pillows, the construction of the quilt and mattress, and the nightlight within a Japanese bedroom. Yet the image itself is clearly voyeuristic, depicting a scene of two recumbent Japanese women in a private bedroom setting, which would certainly not have been accessible to a photographer of the time. Instead, Beato staged such interior scenes to stimulate viewers' interest. The title itself is telling, placing the image within the context of desire and display. Similarly, in *Musical Party* (fig. 3), Murray's letterplate note focuses on descriptions of the three instruments depicted: the koto, the biwa, and the shamisen. However, the photograph itself presents four women in a simulated performance. The instruments are mere props and not the focus of the scene, comparable to the painted Japanese screen behind

5. Singapore, *Japanese Lady*, 1900s. Lim Kheng Chye Collection.
Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore [31723]


the women and the tea set in front of them, all trappings that served to create an attractive scene.

In the album, Beato restricted himself to only one photograph of a courtesan (fig. 4), whose accompanying text tells the reader that "The social evil in Japan may be regarded as a National Institution, the handsomest buildings in large towns are often occupied by Courtesans", followed by another anthropological-style description of the girls who are "sold [in] such a scandalous way". Yet other than the letterplate note, the *Courtesan* photograph is indistinguishable from *Two Sisters* or *Aristocratic Young Lady* or any of the other photographs of young Japanese women included in the album. The notes from "authentic sources" and "personal observations" were ostensibly to inform Western clients of life in Japan, but visually, a large part of the album seems to be presenting female bodies. Beato's photographs depict women departing the bath, applying make-up, tying their obi, playing musical instruments, or out for a walk.

In her study of Beato's photographs, Hight unequivocally declares that, like ukiyo-e prints, "the primary aim of [...] the photographs was to present sexually available women in an aesthetically pleasing manner".[19] Although these models were typically prostitutes of the lowest social levels (the only ones willing to entertain foreign men) within the photographs they were transformed into exotic beauties. To this end, the photographs were carefully composed to form interesting displays with backdrops and props, and beautifully hand-tinted for added realism and greater aesthetic value. The images of the musicians are particularly interesting, as they conflate female bodies with entertainment in a single tableau. The performance setting allows a natural connection to placing these bodies on display – the imaginary audience of the musical performance also becomes the audience for this photograph. Like music, these bodies are being presented for the enjoyment of the viewer. The foreign instruments further operate as ready signifiers of a different culture, as well as markers of allure and sexuality.

## Japanese Women in Singapore

Beato's album was significant for establishing the typology of photographs of Japan and influencing important photographers, including Baron Raimund von Stillfried (1839–1911), who took over Beato's studio, and his former Japanese assistant Kusakabe Kimbei (1841–1934), who went on to start his own successful business. Both continued to produce the kind of genre scenes presented in *Views of Japan*, including those with women, and they have been studied by several scholars. But the production of photographs of Japanese women *outside* of Japan has yet to be discussed and would offer another perspective on the construction of Japanese femininity for an international audience. Singapore in particular, as a key port of call along the Asian shipping routes in the nineteenth century, saw the migration of a significant Japanese community as well as the development of a large tourist photographic industry.

Photography arrived in Singapore very early, a mere two years after the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839.[20] By 1843, Singapore had its first photography studio set up by an enterprising Frenchman, Gaston Dutronquoy, in his hotel.[21] A string of European photographers followed. In 1867, G. R. Lambert & Co. was established and went on to become the most prominent and prolific photography studio in Malaya, offering the most comprehensive collection of souvenir photographs in the region. Like the other European studios in Asia, G. R. Lambert & Co. produced the usual views and types, but what distinguished them was their extensive catalogue. By 1900, they were advertising a collection of some 3000 images. The firm also offered a choice of 250 postcards, selling an astounding 250,000 a year.[22] The wide variety of portrait types was unique to Singapore and possibly the most diverse in any British colony. This was because Singapore had large number of migrants – in 1897, there were more than 27 nationalities recorded living there; by 1911, there were 48 different ethnicities (counting Chinese and Indian as only one each).[23]

G. R. Lambert & Co.'s catalogue included photographs of Japanese women. Interestingly, I have yet to come across any photographs of Japanese men by any of the photography studios in Malaya, despite the fairly substantial Japanese population that lived there. The development of Singapore in the second half of the nineteenth century saw an explosion in the population of labourers, largely Chinese, but also Japanese. These were young single male workers who brought with them a demand for prostitutes, which sparked a corresponding migration of female sex workers.[24] By 1895, Singapore had become the centre of Japanese traffic in prostitution.[25] Therefore, in looking at these photographs, one needs to understand that the Japanese women in them were immediately identified by many viewers in Singapore as prostitutes. Nevertheless, these images joined the larger archive of photographs of Japanese women circulating around the globe, and it is doubtful that the international audience would have distinguished one from another unless explicitly stated on the postcard or print.

Prostitution was a booming industry in Singapore, with large and clearly defined brothel districts, which were accepted and regulated by the colonial authorities. The Japanese prostitutes congregated around Malay Street, which was one of the most accessible districts in the city; their clients included not only the local coolies but also the British soldiers and sailors as well as the business community. Their high visibility in the community also translated to their representation in the visual material produced in Singapore, and they appeared in tourist advertisements as well as numerous postcards. The Japanese women accepted photographers' requests to pose for such images because they were paid and it was also free advertising for them, potentially boosting their popularity with their prospective clients.[26] An example of such a photograph is *Japanese Lady* (fig. 5), which depicts a woman half-reclining on a chaise, looking to the right of the frame as though waiting for her customer. The pose, the backdrop, and the props all combine to create an elegant and appealing display of Japanese femininity. The Singapore situation also offered a different kind of photograph, however, and a different kind of circulation.

While acknowledging that such photographs shaped European stereotypes of these women, James Warren has also considered the agency of the women involved. As foreigners living in Singapore, the prostitutes had a desire to keep in touch with friends and family back in Japan. One way of doing so was to send them a photograph. In fact, there was a distinct desire by the women to document themselves photographically, which was not the case with the Chinese prostitutes. To save money – each photograph cost between six to seven dollars – they would ask for group portraits.[27] These photographs were mailed back to their families in Japan and could be shown by their parents to relatives or the rest of the village. The subjects were not the nameless models in the advertising postcards, but real people with real connections to other people, forced to leave their country to make a living overseas. These group portraits also depicted the new communities and links that developed in Singapore between the prostitutes themselves. They are proof that these women survived the often-nightmarish journeys to Southeast Asia. More than just anonymous bodies displayed for Western viewing pleasure, these photographs marked individual histories and lives.

Warren has identified *Japanese Women in Kimono* (ca 1886–88) as one such group portrait (fig. 6). The title of this essay is in fact drawn from the caption of this photograph, which was taken by Rudolf Jagerspacher, an Austrian who worked for G. R. Lambert & Co. in Singapore. Four women kneel on the floor in front of the camera, dressed in kimono with their geta sandals placed neatly next to them. A European-style backdrop is used together with a rather flamboyant leopard skin rug. While still clearly posed, there is a marked difference between this photograph and the previously discussed postcard of the reclining woman (fig. 5). In particular, the positions of the two women on the right reveal their own personalities and relationship – one has her head resting on the other's shoulder and their entire upper bodies are touching. This is not a genre scene, nor a "performance" the way Beato's photographs operate. The asymmetry of the composition, with the leftmost woman placed in an awkward and higher position, also suggests the photographer did not pose the women, but allowed them to settle as they wished. There is a solemnity in the portrait, which points towards how much importance the sitters themselves attributed to it, whether as a memento, gift, or a record.

6. Rudolf Jagerspacher for G. R. Lambert & Co. *Japanese Women in Kimono*,
1886–88. Albumen print on paper, 20.6 x 25.8cm.
Collection of National Museum of Singapore [2010-00598].

## Polysemous Images

Photographic meaning is always tied to specific contexts. It emerges and evolves beyond the visual to include social practices and the institutional relations which make the subject legible. Meaning is continually negotiated and defined, and representation is always political. Mio Wakata has argued that the souvenir photographs of Japanese women act as polysemous images, by also paying particular attention to the way Japanese producers and consumers might shape meaning, rather than simply focusing on Western producers and consumers.[28] Luke Gartlan has also pointed out the complexities of the shifting production of Japanese photographs, particularly as more studios started being operated by the Japanese themselves. He notes that the photography market was "never so neatly demarcated along the putative lines of "domestic" and "foreign" audiences and operators", and that "souvenir photography was a multifarious, cosmopolitan industry capable of the affirmation *and* contestation of Japanese cultural stereotypes."[29] While his study looked at jinrikisha photographs rather than those of geishas, it is nevertheless relevant in considering how photographs of Japan could offer alternative readings.

Jagerspacher's *Japanese Women in Kimono* offers this exact possibility as a portrait commissioned by the women themselves. While such portraits might sometimes end up entering the studio's catalogue and be sold as an anonymous "type" (intellectual property was not exactly an issue then), they also experienced an alternative life as a personal memento that travelled back to Japan, accompanied by a different narrative, possibly in the form of a letter. Copies could be kept by the subjects themselves as records of sisterhood, which substituted for family ties in the brothels. On the other hand, such polysemous meanings are often lost as these photographs enter contemporary museum collections, reverting to an image divorced from its conditions of production and consumption, and, depending on the context, framed through the lens of its formal qualities or ethnography.

Even the advertising images of the women might demonstrate a kind of agency on the part of their subjects, rather than simply catering to the male gaze. Wakita has traced the emergence of the geisha as a model of the Meiji feminine ideal by looking at the development of photography and the desire for photogenicity.[30] She suggests that the geisha's ability to pose for the camera translated to their success as commercial models. As dancers, they were already trained to display themselves in an aesthetic manner. Portraiture as commodity existed via ukiyo-e prints, and geishas and courtesans understood the potential commercial benefit of such photographic portraits. They subsequently took advantage of this market to craft for themselves an elevated identity, as "the very embodiment of stylishness and good taste".[31] To ignore the potential of these photographs as a stage on which women consciously engaged in self-fashioning is to ignore an important aspect of how they operated and the complexities of such photographs.

## Russel Wong's Geishas

The Japanese geisha continues to occupy a central position in visualisations of Japan and is the subject of Singaporean photographer Russel Wong's latest body of work. Wong is most known for his portraiture, particularly of celebrities such as Jackie Chan, Robert Downey Jr, Joan Chen, and Aishwarya Rai, people whose fame and personality often overwhelm any sort of alternative readings of the image. It is thus interesting to think about Wong's approach to a subject like the geisha, which operates in reverse – where the history and stereotypes of the occupation often obscure the individual personalities of the women.

Wong's interest in photographing Japanese geisha began during a visit to Japan in 2005 to shoot Watanabe Ken's publicity photographs for *Memoirs of a Geisha*, itself the film that has contributed most in recent years to public perceptions of the Japanese geisha.[32] It took him five years to gain access to the geishas in Kyoto – he spent much time cultivating the relevant relationships, socialising, and getting to know the individual women and their domain. However, the resulting photographs are not portraits that seek to convey the individuality of the women. Rather, they look like movie stills, carefully crafted and staged, reminiscent of the kind of publicity photographs Wong makes for movies. The choice to present the photographs in black and white makes them atemporal; each precisely composed frame seems to live outside time, in its own Gion bubble of kimonos and geta. Wong's ability to draw out the minute gradient of the silver tones in the prints contributes to the subtle elegance of this floating world fantasy. Interestingly, Wong has noted that the actual streets and teahouses in Kyoto are built on a scale that is similar to a movie set, intensifying the cinematic quality of the photographs.

For one set of images on the tea ceremony, Wong worked very closely with the tea master to choreograph and conceptualise the photographs. Another series focuses on the intricate details of the geisha's dress and make-up, the accoutrements and embellishments that come together to form the final "product" that is the Gion geisha. Perhaps it is Wong's experience with his celebrity subjects; he displays a clear understanding of how the image as commodity is constructed. From the doll-like, full-length portraits to the close-up shots of their unnatural lip contours and perfectly positioned collars, it is the performativity of the geisha that is highlighted in these photographs. The strict ritual that is observed in the photographs of the tea ceremony emphasises this sense of staging, operating similarly to the nineteenth-century photographs of musicians and performances I discuss earlier in this essay. When asked, Wong said that he did not depict the geishas out of costume because that was simply not how they were depicted, not in the ukiyo-e prints and not in photographs.

Wong's photographs illustrate the well-honed ability of geishas to display themselves for the camera. For over a hundred years, a geisha's entire livelihood revolved around her ability to entertain and perform, and this translated to a distinct visuality that developed and circulated via ukiyo-e prints and, subsequently, photographs and films. Her precise and repetitive acts in both dress and behaviour were uniquely suited to engaging in this sort of performativity of a specific type of female identity, which contributed to her successful and sustained engagement with public imagination. The development of such a resilient icon was the result of multiple visions, from the Japanese creators of the ukiyo-e prints to the Western consumers of tourist photographs, to even the Japanese prostitutes' demand for records, but also the geishas' own desire to self-fashion and market themselves. Wong's photographs continue the long fascination with this feminine ideal.



Endnotes

1 The Getty album, *Views of Japan* [84.XO.613], is fully digitised and available online [https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/32729/felice-beato-views-of-japan-english-about-1868/].
2 Ozawa 1981, p. 285.
3 Cocking 1877.
4 Hockley 2001.
5 Wakita 2009, pp. 209–10.
6 Foreman 2008, p. 6.
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# CATALOGUE ENTRIES

TRAVEL

1. Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825)
The peak of Mount Fuji and procession of beauties
mid-Bunka era (1804–18)
Series of five ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This image, made up of five prints, shows women and children in what is probably a wedding procession. Two women leading the procession carry small trunks covered with the character *kotobuki* ("longevity" or "happiness") over their shoulders. Several women follow holding standards wrapped in protective fabric. Four women carry a lacquered palanquin with a finely dressed woman seated inside.

This scene is thought to be a wedding procession for a princess. In the background, Mount Fuji is topped with snow. The inscription at the top right, *Fuji-bitai hana no gyōretsu*, literally means "a procession of beauties with Fuji-foreheads". Fuji-forehead refers to a graceful hairline shaped like Mount Fuji. This feature used to be a symbol of beauty.

The Nakasendō (central mountain route) was nicknamed *himekaidō* – "princess highway". It was favoured by court ladies and the daughters of high-born families. The Tōkaidō was flat, but it had a lot of river crossings without bridges. People had to wait to be ferried across, which cost time and money. The Nakasendō was longer, with indirect paths into the mountains but no river crossings, hence safer and easier to navigate.

2. Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
Shinagawa
Kyōwa era (1801–04)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The print shows a wide view of Edo Bay (today's Tokyo Bay). This location overlooking the bay was a popular spot for viewing the moon. The ragged oval in the upper right names the spot – Shinagawa, the first post town on the Tōkaidō out of Edo. There are other prints made by Hokusai with similar compositions, showing Ueno, Imatogawa, Kameido-kaichō, and other locations.

Several travellers sit or pass by. The woman on the bench wears an *agebōshi* (cloth headgear to protect the hair from dirt and dust); an ox rests from pulling a cart. During the Edo period, between Ōkido, Takanawa, and Shinagawa-juku, there was a town called Shibakuruma-chō, also known as *ushi-machi*. Travellers could deposit heavy luggage there with handlers who would transport it via ox carts.

3. Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
Fuji view plain in Owari province, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*
around 1831, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

Hokusai searched for subjects that would produce an unusual effect when combined with the image of Mount Fuji. In this print, he takes us to Owari (today's Aichi Prefecture), one of the western-most places from which Mount Fuji is visible. Having gone that far, Hokusai framed the mountain inside the walls of a huge barrel being constructed by a cooper. Thus the great symbol of eternity is amusingly reduced to a tiny triangle set within a large bottomless barrel.

By framing Fuji and the cooper in the barrel, Hokusai creates an intimate dialogue between the iconic mountain and the sinewy man. The juxtaposition lends grandeur to his honest labour and existence.

This print is one of Hokusai's most iconic works in the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji,* which depicts the mountain from various locations in Japan. Despite the 36 in the title, the series actually consists of 46 works; 10 additional images were added later due to the successful sales and popular demand.

4. Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
Miya, from the series *Spring Enjoyment of Fifty-three Stations*
1804, Bunka era
Koban woodblock prints

This print depicts three slender women who have arrived in Miya (today's Aichi Prefecture), 41st station along the Tōkaidō highway. Plum blossoms are blooming, which indicates this could be late winter to early spring. The next station (heading toward Kyoto) was Kuwana (today's Mie Prefecture). To get there, travellers had to take a ferry across Ise Bay. According to the *Gokaidōchū Saikenki* (Detailed travel map of the Gokaidō, 1858), the cost for the ferry was about 68 *mon* per person (approx. 1000 yen). On the left is Kuwana Castle.

It was difficult and inconvenient for women to travel in the Edo period. They were required to obtain special permits known as *tsūkōtegata* or *onnategata* before they could move around. The permit would usually indicate the traveller's identity, the number of people travelling with her, and if a vehicle or other mode of transport was being used. The man behind the women was probably hired as a porter (*ninsoku*) to carry their luggage.

5. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Procession of children passing Mount Fuji
early Tenpō era (1830–44)
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

Hiroshige playfully imitates with children the procession of a daimyo (*daimyō gyōretsu*) passing Mount Fuji. A popular subject for artists, it captures the pageantry of a grand procession of a daimyo and his entourage enroute from their home province to Edo City. During the Edo period daimyo were required, on a bi-annual basis, to travel to Edo, and take up residence there under the alternate attendance (*sankin-kōtai*) system, established in 1635.

Hundreds of retainers would transport weapons, ceremonial accoutrements, and personal effects that signal the daimyo's military and financial might. Some would be mounted on horses; the daimyo and certain members of his family carried in palanquins.

Typically for prints on this subject, three ōban sized papers in vertical format were used. Here, the three prints are in landscape format, further elongating the procession scene.

6. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Seto River, from the series *Shank's Mare on the Tōkaidō Road*
mid-Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print



7. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Shirako on the side road to the Ise Shrine, from the series *Shank's Mare on the Tōkaidō Road*
mid-Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

These two prints are based on Jippensha Ikku's popular comic novel *Tōkaidōchū Hizakurige* (Shank's Mare), published in serial format (1802–09). The story follows Yajirobē and Kitahachi on a journey of adventure and misadventure along the Tōkaidō from Edo to Kyoto. Their journey includes a pilgrimage to Ise Shrine. The novel was a phenomenal success and is credited with promoting the love of travel during the Edo period.

One print (Cat. 6) shows Yajirobē and Kitahachi at the Seto River, near Fujieda (today's Shizuoka Prefecture). During low tide, travellers could cross the river on foot or even hire porters to carry them across in a palanquin. Scenes of travellers fording the Seto River were popular with many ukiyo-e artists. Kitahachi falling in the river is not an episode in the book. Hiroshige must have invented it, perhaps inspired by other comical elements in the story.

The other print (Cat. 7) depicts Yajirobē and Kitahachi in Shirako, Ise (today's Mie Prefecture). Kitahachi rented a horse, and as he got on, the owner and a debt collector were having a heated argument. They got into a brawl and frightened the horse, which in turn threw Kitahachi off its back.

8. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Nihonbashi: Morning scene, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
around 1833, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

Nihonbashi was the starting point of the Tōkaidō in Edo City. The view is from the south end of the bridge, looking north, early in the morning. Official noticeboards can be seen on the left. A daimyo's procession is on the bridge, beginning its long journey out of Edo. Ahead of the group, at the open gates of the district, are the fishmongers who carry fresh fish from the nearby market into the city. On the north side, along the riverbank, was a fish market; Nihonbashi was one of the busiest areas in Edo.

Nihonbashi was the centre of not only the city but also Japan during the Edo period. All major highways converged at Nihonbashi and all distances were measured from it. The bridge was the starting point of the approximately 483-km journey from Edo to Kyoto on the Tōkaidō.

The delicate dawn sky rendered with clouds in pale colours and the bold composition – open wooden gates framing the entrance to the bridge – generate a dramatic atmosphere announcing the start of a long journey.

9. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Mishima: Morning mist, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
around 1833, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a scene at Mishima (today's Mishima, Shizuoka Prefecture), 11th station of the Tōkaidō. Silhouettes of travellers fade in the morning fog at left. In the centre, the focus is on a group emerging out of the fog. The composition and technique used here create an illusion of atmospheric perspective, playing with strong colours on the front group versus the dark shadowy silhouettes of people and architecture at the background. This effect must have been very alluring to viewers of the print.

One of the travellers is mounted on a horse, and the other is carried in a litter (*kago*). The torii (gate) of Mishima Taisha shrine can be seen in the background.

10. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Fukuroi: Tea stall, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
around 1833, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a tea stall at Fukuroi (today's Fukuroi City, Shizuoka Prefecture), 27th station on the Tōkaidō. A simple stand sells tea along the road, on the outskirts of town. To highlight its non-central location, Hiroshige has placed a post station boundary marker beside the tea stall and an official notice board on the opposite side of the highway. In the distance at right are probably buildings of the Fukuroi Station.

The people boiling water in a kettle hanging from the tree, a traveller taking a break, and the palanquin bearer all have a rustic air with no association to a specific place. The smoke from the fire was created with a technique called *karazuri* ("empty printing" or gauffrage), in which a carved woodblock is applied without pigment, so it embosses the paper, but does not colour it. This three-dimensional effect is difficult to see in a photograph of the print, unless glancing light from the side was used.

11. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Yoshida: The Toyokawa River Bridge, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
around 1833, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows Yoshida (today's Toyohashi City, Aichi Prefecture), 34th station of the Tōkaidō. On the right is Yoshida Castle, with construction work in progress. On the left is the large bridge across the broad Toyo River. The castle served as the Yoshida Clan's government offices in the Edo period. The bridge was known as the *Yoshida Ōhashi* (great Yoshida bridge) or *Toyokawa bashi* (Toyo River bridge). It spanned 218 metres. Together with Yahagi Bridge in Okazaki City and *Seta no Karahashi* in Ōtsu City, Shiga Prefecture, these were the three great bridges along the Tōkaidō Road.

On the opposite bank of the river, houses on low ground are depicted. The lower section in the foreground emphasises the castle's height, while the length of the bridge, one of the relatively few on the Tōkaidō, gives the composition a bold scale.

A closer look at the bridge reveals a daimyo procession in progress. The man up on the scaffolding looking into the distance adds an amusing accent to the print.

12. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Shōno: Driving rain, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
around 1833, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

One of the best-known scenes from the series, Shōno: Driving rain, demonstrates Hiroshige's genius at capturing the sensation of a violent rainstorm. Shōno (today's Suzuka City, Mie Prefecture) was 45th station of the Tōkaidō.

The dense lines indicate the rain pounding down, causing the palanquin bearers and villagers to cover their heads as they try to dash through the storm. The print gives a realistic sense of how fierce a sudden downpour must have been. The tops of the bamboos bending under the wind and rain, silhouetted in shades of grey, communicate a world turned suddenly dark and stormy.

Utagawa Hiroshige, one of Japan's foremost landscapists, designed two extremely popular series: *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road* and *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*.

13. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Kyoto: The Great Bridge at Sanjō, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
around 1833–34, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts the Great Bridge at Sanjō in Kyoto (Kyoto Prefecture), the end of the Tōkaidō Road. It was well-known because it served as one end of the journey on both the Tōkaidō Road and Kisokaidō (Nakasendō).

Hiroshige created various editions of the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road.* He often depicted different aspects of the post-stations in the new editions. Yet he always included the Great Bridge of Sanjō. He may have thought of the unity of each edition, starting with Nihonbashi in Edo, and bridges as a recurring motif, then ending in Kyoto always with the bridge. (In his series *Thirty-six Peaks of Higashiyama*, he included Mount Hiei as the print for Kyoto in all the editions.) Or, he may have chosen these motifs to clearly convey a typical image of Kyoto in the minds of *Edokko* (townspeople in Edo City).

This print depicts a grand view of the great bridge stretching across the Kamo River, with majestic mountains in the background, reminiscent of a Chinese landscape painting.

14. Keisai Eisen (1791–1848)
Fujieda, from an untitled series of the fifty-three stations of the Tōkaidō Road
around 1842, Tenpō era
Ōban size nishiki-e woodblock print

This print is set in Fujieda (today's Shizuoka Prefecture), 22nd station along the Tōkaidō. Perhaps surprising, women grooming or trimming their toenails is a relatively common subject in ukiyo-e prints. In this one, the woman is using grip scissors (*nigiri basami*) more commonly used for cutting threads.

15. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
The Ōi River between Suruga and Tōtōmi provinces, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*
1858, Ansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

For the defence of Edo City, it was a strategic decision to not build bridges across major rivers. In the case of the Ōi River, even ferry boats were forbidden. Travellers had to make their way across via various other means. Water level varied depending on the weather and the season: the usual level was about 2 *shaku* 5 *sun* (approx. 76 cm), but it could rise as high as 4 *shaku* 5 *sun* (approx. 136 cm). A traveller would have to wade across getting wet or hire palanquin bearers or porters to carry them and their belongings across. In the worst-case scenario, one could wait for low tide before crossing. Because of this, the Ōi River was regarded as the most difficult part of the Tōkaidō. A well-known song goes, *Hakone hachiri wa uma demo kosu ga, kosu ni kosarenu Ōigawa* ("Even horses can cross eight *ri* (approx. 31 km) of Hakone, but the Ōi River is hard to get over in any way").

The series from which this print comes, *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji,* was one of Hiroshige's last projects; it was published shortly after his death in 1858. His second on the subject, it depicts Mount Fuji in differing seasons and weather conditions, from a variety of different places and distances. In his first Fuji series, published by Sanoya Kihei in 1852, the prints are in landscape orientation using the chūban format. Prints in this 1858 series are in portrait ōban format and published by Tsutaya Kichizō. The same subject had previously been dealt with by Hokusai in two of his own series: *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (1830–32), and the three-volume *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji* (1834–49).

16. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
View of Ōi River, from the series *Collection of Rivers on the Tōkaidō Road*
around 1851, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

Similar to the previous print (Cat. 15), this one shows travellers crossing the Ōi River. Here different modes of ferrying services can be seen: the flat platforms require at least four bearers, whereas the platforms with raised handle supports seem to require at least six bearers. At the top of the centre print, a daimyo in his palanquin is ferried across by many more bearers. The prices differed drastically across each option.

All women seem to be wearing dustcoats over their kimono, perhaps to prevent it from getting wet. At the top of the right print, some travellers crossed the river on bearers' shoulders.

17. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Hot spring by the river in Hakone, from the series *Collection of Rivers on the Tōkaidō Road*
around 1851, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

From the same series as the previous print (Cat. 16), this one shows women at the hot spring by the river in Hakone. Each woman occupies her own print, and together they form a triptych image. This is a typical format. On the left the woman carries her *yukata* (light cotton kimono worn in the summer or as a bathrobe) and slings a towel over her shoulder, preparing to head to the hot spring. The woman on the right wears her yukata, which falls open at her chest. She seems to have just finished her bath.

In the early Edo period, people went to Hakone's hot springs for their healing properties. Later it became a popular attraction and even today, Hakone draws local and international tourists. In *Busō Meisho Tabi-e Nikki* (*Hiroshige's Travel Journal of Famous Spots*, 1852), Hiroshige mentions that he enjoyed his visit and time in the hot springs of Hakone.



18. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Kuwana, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
late Bunka era (1804–18)
Uchiwa-e fan print

This print depicts Kuwana-juku (today's Mie Prefecture), the 42nd station along the Tōkaidō. To get to Kuwana, a traveller had to take a ferry across the bay from Miya. On the left is Kuwana Castle. The shape of the paper suggests this print was designed for a fan (*uchiwa*). The figure posing by his palanquin admiring the castle is probably a kabuki actor.

19. Utagawa Sadahide (1807–1878/79)
Lord Mashiba Hisayoshi builds the Castle of Himeji in Harima province
1862, Bunkyū era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

In 1580, daimyo Oda Nobunaga ordered his vassal Hashiba Hideyoshi (later Toyotomi Hideyoshi) to attack the Chūgoku region. After he conquered Harima province, Hideyoshi was presented Himeji Castle by the Kuroda clan. In 1581, Hideyoshi significantly re-modelled the castle with the help of Kuroda Yoshitaka, building a three-storey keep.

After the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu granted Himeji Castle to his son-in-law Ikeda Terumasa as a reward for his help in the battle. Ikeda demolished the three-storey keep, and completely rebuilt and expanded the castle from 1601 to 1609, adding three moats and transforming it into the castle complex that is seen today.

This print shows the 1581 re-modelling of Himeji Castle under Hashiba Hideyoshi's orders. To explain the name in the title, "Mashiba Hisayoshi" was the kabuki name for Hashiba Hideyoshi. The scaffolding is in place to add the three-storey keep. At the horizon, Awaji Island is depicted.

## BEAUTY

20. Kitagawa Utamaro (ca 1753–1806)
Hair dressing, from the series *Scenery of Famous Places and Twelve Aspects of Beauties*
around 1801–03, Kyōwa era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

As the scroll at the top of the print indicates, this is from the series *Scenery of Famous Places and Twelve Aspects of Beauties*. Twelve famous places are paired with images of beautiful women portrayed in different activities. The woman helping the younger woman set her hair has her own hair set in *marumage*, a common hairstyle in Edo period for married women. In the mid-Edo period, some married women blackening their teeth; and after delivering a child, would shave their eyebrows. The older woman here has eyebrows, and her teeth are not blackened. Perhaps Utamaro was trying to emphasise the beauty of her youthfulness.

Utamaro was the premier designer of *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women) during the 1790s and early 1800s. He developed a typology of the female face and form that became a new style and had an iconic impact. *Binjin-ga* celebrate both real and idealised women. At first the images featured high-ranking courtesans, but soon included historic figures, geisha, courtesans, fictional characters, notable townswomen, and other everyday women.

21. Kitagawa Utamaro II (unknown, active 1789–1830)
Eastern fashioned willow by the river
Bunka era (1804–18)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print is by the first disciple of Kitagawa Utamaro, who inherited the name of his teacher upon his passing. Here Utamaro II depicts two courtesans preparing themselves. One has a roll of paper under her chin, while her hands are busy with setting her hairpins.

22. Torii Kiyomine (1787–1868)
Boys Festival, from the series *Elegant Five-Needled Pine*
Bunka era (1804–18)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows a mother and a child. We know she is a mother because she has shaved her eyebrows and her teeth are blackened. The child seems to be begging for a ride on her back. Kiyomine depicts the appearance of a gentle mother who comforts a boy who is interfering with her make-up routine.

During the Edo period, white powder was applied not only to the face, but also around the neck and across the chest. But when breast-feeding, it was advised to apply a thin layer of white powder on the upper body. The mother is holding a cloth probably used to wipe down the white powder make-up on her breasts.

Torii Kiyomine was an artist of the Torii school working in Edo. In his younger years he designed mainly *bijin-ga*. In 1815 he became the leader of the Torii school, and changed his artist name to Torii Kiyomitsu II.

23. Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825)
Woman wiping her face in front of a mirror
early Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a courtesan wearing a long undergarment (*nagajuban*). She sits in a relaxed posture with her breast and leg partially revealed. This suggests that she has just taken her bath. Behind her is her kimono, decorated with small *manji* (swastika) symbols, which she took off before her bath. Courtesans usually took their bath in the morning. She wipes her face with a cloth and is about to put on her make-up, as suggested by the implements on the dressing table.

24. Utagawa Kuninao (1793/95–1854)
Summer, from an untitled series of the four seasons
mid-Bunka era (1804–18)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

Utagawa Kuninao was a disciple of Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825) in Edo. At the top of print the character, "summer", indicates it must be part of a series (untitled) with other prints depicting activities of the four seasons. This one shows a woman washing her hair while a child tries to cling on to her. It may seem to be a scene of daily activity between a mother and a child, but perhaps Kuninao was trying to draw the viewer's attention to the beauty of the nape of the woman's neck – in the mirror's reflection.

Edo people often made use of the public bathhouses. But it takes a long time to wash away the oil (*bintsuke-abura*) commonly applied to the hair. Out of convenience, hair washing

would sometimes be done in the garden. In early Edo, one washed hair only several times a year; by the mid-Edo period, it increased to once or twice per month.

25. Utagawa Toyokuni II (unknown, probably 1802–1835) x Utagawa Kunihiro (active 1818–44)
Hair dressing: Monkey, from the series *Elegant Eastern Fashion: Twelve Zodiac Animals*
late Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

As the title suggests, *Elegant Eastern Fashion: Twelve Zodiac Animals*, this print pairs a zodiac animal with a fashionable woman. It is a collaborative work by two artists. The principal figure of a beautiful woman attempting to set up her hair was drawn by Toyokuni II and the monkey was executed by Kunihiro, both of the same Utagawa school.

26. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
The careful type, from the series *Thirty-two Aspects in the Modern World*
early Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This series, *Thirty-two Aspects in the Modern World,* depicts half-length portraits of women doing various daily activities. The thirty-two aspects in the title is a reference to the "Thirty-two signs of a Great Man" described in Buddhist texts. *Shimahi,* inscribed within the mirror frame, describes what the woman is doing: "getting ready'" or "dressing oneself". On the mirror stand, a blue-and-white porcelain container holds a preparation of white powder mixed with water. The woman is likely a courtesan, and her body is partially bare so she can apply the white powder make-up. She uses a hand mirror and the mirror on the stand to double-check her application of the powder. Her hair is tied in *tsubushi-shimada*, a hairstyle made popular by the courtesans, geisha, and female kabuki characters.

27. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Looking Cool, from the series *Thirty-two Aspects in Modern Style*
1859, Ansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

As the title suggests, "looking cool" or "feeling refresh", Kunisada depicts a woman wiping herself with a towel. At the bottom right corner, behind her is a bucket of water. She wears an indigo tie-dyed yukata (summer kimono); the colour gives the cool vibes to the overall composition. On the right, the inscription tells the image is done by Kunisada. Next to it, another reads, "Yokokawa Horitake", which is the name of the woodblock carver (*horishi*). Take a closer look at the woman's hair and hairline. The fine details would not be possible without the work of a skilful woodblock carver.

From late Edo period onwards, some master woodblock carvers started to include their names on the blocks, and because of that we know who the artisans were. Unfortunately, this is not the case for printers *(surishi*). These artisans were as much a part of the process of making a print as the artist.

28. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Woman applying rouge to her lips, from series *Mirrors of Modern Make-up*
mid-Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

29. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
Woman blackening her teeth, from series *Mirrors of Modern Make-up*
mid-Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

30. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
Woman tweezing her eyebrows, from series *Mirrors of Modern Make-up*
mid-Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

These three prints (Cats. 28–30) by Kunisada belong to the same series of ten prints depicting young women reflected in black lacquer-framed mirrors as they apply make-up to their face and body. Some of these mirrors were made with a sliding panel in the handle for storage of toilet articles. This series, with striking framing device of the mirror, is one of the most representative works of Kunisada.

All three women wear tortoiseshell combs and hairpins (*kushi* and *kanzashi*). One (Cat. 28) tidies the rouge on her lips with a piece of cloth. Another (Cat. 29) is blackening her teeth with a brush. Her eyebrows are not shaved, which suggests that she is married but has not yet given birth. Yet another woman (Cat. 30) plucks her eyebrows with tweezers. Her hair is set in the *shimada-mage* style and decorated with even more precious tortoiseshell combs and hairpins. This suggests she could be a high-ranked courtesan.

31. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864) x Utagawa Kunihisa II (1832–1891)
Imagawa-bashi, from the series *One Hundred Beautiful Women at Famous Places in Edo*
1858, Ansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

Prints in this series are a collaboration between two artists. The top image by Kunihisa depicts Imagawa Bridge, one of the famous spots in Edo. During the Edo period, there were many ceramics and Chinese export ware traders in that neighbourhood. Kunisada drew the woman washing her hair in a large basin of water. She has folded down the upper part of her kimono to avoid getting wet.

32. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Woman with a razor, from the series *Women in Benkei-checked Fabrics*
around 1845, Kōka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows a dishevelled woman shaving part of her hair into a tonsure around her top knot. This is a one of the ten pictures of the series *Shimazoroi Onna Benkei (Women in Benkei-checked Fabrics)*. All the women are dressed in *shima-moyo* kimono, also referred as Benkei-style pattern (*Benkei-jima*), as the title suggests. This kimono design was very popular in Edo period.



Between 1840 and 1845, new censorship policies were implemented by the Tokugawa Shogunate. One of the changes included restrictions on depicting historical figures and events. Unfortunately for many kabuki actors and ukiyo artists – including Kuniyoshi, such figures were part of their usual repertoire and sources of inspiration. Looking for new subject matter became a challenge. Many artists turned to genres of travel reports, landscapes, and scenes of daily life.

In order to continue depicting historical figures and avoid breaking the rules, Kuniyoshi used the idea of *mitate-e* (analogues) for his prints. The historical character Benkei, was immensely popular among Edo people. He was a warrior monk and served as a retainer of the famous samurai warrior Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189). Benkei is commonly depicted as a man of great strength and loyalty. In the famous kabuki play *Kanjinchō*, Benkei's costume is in this checked pattern. Because of the play's popularity, this design became known as Benkei-checked fabric.

In this series of ten prints, each shows a different woman wearing a similarly checked fabric posed so as to allude to scenes from Benkei's life – and thus she becomes an "analogue" for Benkei, to get around depiction of a historical figure. Each print also includes a poem that refers to one of the legendary incidents in Benkei's life.

33. Keisai Eisen (1791–1848)
In front of a mirror: Woman dressing her hair
early Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows a woman biting on her comb while trying to tie her hair. Two hairpins (*kanzashi*) sit on the dressing table, and more combs (*kushi*) are in the drawers. She is probably a courtesan, and the young man beside her is likely her client. As his head is only partially shaven and his forelocks remain, the young man is a *wakashū*. He has not yet received his coming-of-age ceremony (*genpuku*), which marked the transition to adulthood. This print can be placed in the genre of *abuna-e* (literally "risky pictures"), erotic prints that omit explicit depictions of sex. Prints that do are called *shunga*.

Keisai Eisen was an artist who specialised in *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women). He produced *surimono* (prints privately issued), erotic prints, and landscapes. But Eisen is most renowned for his *bijin-ga* that portray the figures as more worldly than those depicted by earlier artists, replacing their grace and elegance with an understated sensuality.

34. Keisai Eisen (1791–1848)
Woman brushing her teeth, from the series *Modern Figures*
Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows a young married woman brushing her teeth in front of a mirror. She is holding a toothbrush (*fusayōshi*) with two ends: one end with a large brush and the other a finer brush for the smaller gaps between teeth. The red pigment on the brush is tooth powder. She holds the tooth powder packet in her left hand.

In late Edo period, from 1800 into the 1830s, there were many makers of toothbrushes and dental care products. By this time, Edo people were extremely conscientious about having healthy teeth.

35. Ochiai Yoshiiku (1833–1904)
Comparison of slender hips like willows in snow at the Yanagiya Bathhouse, from the series *Annual Customs of the Present Day*
1868, Keiō era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych print shows a scene in a bathhouse in the early Meiji period (1868–1912). One of the signs in the middle print lists prices for using the bathhouse: for an adult, it costs 40 *mon*, a child 32 *mon*, and an infant 24 *mon*. The left print shows a dispute between two women. Other women hurry to separate them or look on with concern.

A man at the top of the left print seems to be troubled by this commotion. He is the *sansuke* of the bathhouse. *Sansuke* is a male worker who stokes the boiler, checks the temperature of the bath water, collects fees, and provides scrubbing and grooming services to the customers. This attendant was the only person exempted from the gender segregation in bathhouses.

36. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Parody of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*: Actors Ichikawa Ichizō III, Nakamura Shikan IV, and Kawarazaki Gonjūrō I
1860, Man'en era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych shows a kabuki parody of a scene from the Chinese novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Chinese classic novels were very popular in Edo in the late nineteenth century and they were frequently adapted into Japanese settings.

On left print is Kawarazaki Gonjūrō I, with a large lion tattoo. In the middle is Nakamura Shikan IV depicted with plum blossoms tattoos. On the right print is Ichikawa Ichizō, with a dragon tattoo. Like the courtesans and geisha, kabuki actors were also lead fashionistas and celebrities during the Edo period. With their flamboyant costumes and dramatic make-up for the roles they played, they captured the imagination of the Edo people.

37. Tōshūsai Sharaku (active 1794–95)
Actor Arashi Ryūzō II as the Moneylender Ishibe Kinkichi
1794, Kansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The kabuki play *Hana ayame bunroku Soga* (Blooming Iris, saga of the Bunroku Era) by Matsui Yūsuke premiered in May 1794 at the Miyako-za theatre, in Edo City. The actor Arashi Ryūzō II specialised in villain roles, which is why in this print he is a moneylender enforcing the payment of a debt owed by the sick and impoverished rōnin Tanabe Bunzō and his wife Oshimizu, who gave their daughter over to the moneylender, into a life of prostitution.

In kabuki, the actor is the most important component; audiences come to see their favourite actors perform. In the Edo period, actors were stars, celebrities much like the idols and performers of today. Their acting, make-up, and costumes were flamboyant, complementing the characterisation so that spectators immediately recognised the character.

Sharaku was adept at capturing an actor's performance in his expressive portrayals of specific characters; he helped to make them theatrical celebrities of the late eighteenth

century. Shown here as a repulsive figure, devoid of all empathy, Arashi Ryūzō II plays a character that was by definition disliked by the audience – although here he is also somewhat comical. The actor uses his kimono to make an expressive gesture. The moneylender grasps his right sleeve to bare his forearm, displaying his readiness to fight. The eyes of this petty rascal, however, betray cowardice rather than bravery. Ishibe Kinkichi is the proverbial hard-hearted moneylender, and this conventional gesture expresses the cocky bravado of a bully's threat.

## CATS

38. Suzuki Harunobu (ca 1725–1770)
Evening snow on the *nurioke*
around 1767–68, Meiwa era
Chūban nishiki-e woodblock print

The famous Chinese landscape painting series *Eight views of Xiaoxiang* was painted in the eleventh century. Japanese artists were influenced by it and created similar series in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They adapted the theme to local geography, with titles such as *Eight Views of Edo* or *Eight Views of Kanagawa*. One of the earliest and most popular of these was *Eight views of Ōmi*, set in Ōmi province (today's Shiga Prefecture), which surrounds Lake Biwa, not far from Kyoto. Suzuki Harunobu made a classic set of *Eight views of Ōmi* and he further developed them into *mitate-e* (analogue or parody pictures). Harunobu replaced the natural scenery with domestic scenes and beautiful women and titled it *Eight Parlor Views*.

This rare print is a variation on one work in that series, *Nurioke no bosetsu* (Evening snow on the *nurioke*). That print in turn parodies *Kōten bosetsu* (River and Sky in Evening snow), one of the prints from the classic *Eight views of Ōmi*.

This print shows a youth (*wakashū*) sitting on a raised floor engaged in conversation with a beautiful woman. A cat sleeps beside the woman; probably a domestic pet based on the collar it wears.

The woman is taking a smoke with a *kiseru* pipe while pulling a bale of silk floss over a black lacquered tub (*nurioke*). The white silk is likened to the snow of the original print. The silk floss is represented by empty spaces on the Japanese paper, with no colour applied. To note further insider knowledge, the occupation of *watatsumi* (floss puller) had grey connotations in Edo society: some also provided sexual services.

39. Kitagawa Utamaro (ca 1753–1806)
Servant boy dreaming of a monster cat
around 1794–95, Kansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a young helper who has fallen asleep in a sitting position. The young girl on the left is playing a prank by doodling on his face. The woman on the right looks on, amused. Above is a scene from the boy's dream: an anthropomorphised cat wears a headcloth, loose kimono, and carries an umbrella. The style of dress on the humanoid cat and its standing posture allude to streetwalkers (*yotaka*). Also, the word *neko* (cat) was used for unlicensed prostitutes in the streets.

40. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Asakusa ricefields and Torinomachi Festival, from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*
1857, Ansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

A cat is perched on a window frame, glancing to the world outside. The inscription tells us the location of the print: Asakusa, and that the Torinomachi Festival is going on. Hiroshige here presents the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter on the single busiest day of the year. From the second storey of a brothel, however, the noise and activity must seem far away to this cat. In the distance, crossing the Asakusa ricefields, is a procession celebrating the Torinomachi Festival. On this day, Yoshiwara was open to everyone, including ordinary women. It was also a *monbi*, one of the special days on which each courtesan was required by tradition to take a customer or pay a fee to the brothel owner if she failed. A courtesan's accoutrements are casually arrayed in the room. The blue-and-white porcelain bowl and cloth appear to have been set out for morning washing. Peeping out from behind the border of a screen is tissue paper delicately known as "paper for the honourable act".

The cat is probably a pet kept by the courtesan. Perhaps Hiroshige is trying to show us the feelings of the courtesan through the cat. This print is part of his well-loved series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*.

41. Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825)
Actors Iwai Hanshirō V as Dote no Oroku and Aburaya Osome, and Matsumoto Koshiro V as Kimon no Kihei
1813, Bunka era
Uchiwa-e fan print

This fan print is based on a kabuki play, *Osome Hisamatsu Ukina no Yomiuri*, which debuted in 1813. The story involves the love between Osome, daughter of an oil seller, and Hisamatsu, a young apprentice in the shop. Iwai Hanshirō V, a famous *onnagata* (a kabuki actor who specialises in female roles), performed Osome in the premiere. He also managed to perform six other characters in the play, including Osome's lover Hisamatsu, by quickly changing costumes. This play is considered one of his masterpieces and is commonly referred to as *Osome no Nanayaku* (seven roles of Osome).

Osome is depicted in the red circle. She is glamorously dressed in fine kimono and well-adorned headdress, holding a pet cat.

The two main figures are Dote no Oroku (another of Iwai Hanshirō V's roles), and Kimon no Kihei, played by Matsumoto Koshiro V. Inscriptions between the characters is the dialogue of the characters, husband and wife in the play. Dote no Oroku is portrayed as an *akuba* (bad woman). She does bad things but has a sardonic, sensuous charm as well. The most important scenes feature Oroku and her husband, who is another charming villain. The play is powerfully written and depicts the lives of the lowest class of commoners in Edo City with great realism.

The shape of this print suggests that it was designed for an *uchiwa* (traditional fan) – probably a souvenir of the play.



42. Keisai Eisen (1791–1848)
Young woman holding a cat
around 1843–46, Tenpō or Kōka era
Series of two ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

In this print, a young woman holds a cat against her shoulder. The tall image is composed of two ōban size papers in vertical format, probably meant as a *kakemono-e* (hanging picture), similar to hanging scroll paintings. The young women, probably a daughter of a wealthy merchant, wears a fine kimono with maple leaf design and an elaborate headdress with hairpins, hair comb, and fresh flowers. A closer look reveals her reddish *juban* (inner kimono) is decorated with butterfly designs. The combination of cats and butterflies in paintings is an old tradition that is an auspicious symbol of longevity.

Keisai Eisen specialised in *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women). He was also known as Ikeda Eisen and wrote biographies of artists and ronin under the name of Ippitsuan.

43. Keisai Eisen (1791–1848)
Courtesan Hanaōgi of the Ōgiya Brothel
Tenpō era (1830–44)
*Aiban* nishiki-e woodblock print

What appears in this print is not a living cat, but a cat motif on the woman's obi (broad sash worn around the waist). It shows the back of a cat, looking upward at the butterflies and bunches of peonies. In Chinese and Japanese art traditions, a cat and butterflies together signify longevity. The pair alludes to the Chinese term *mào dié* (*bōtetsu* in Japanese), which means old age. It generally refers to people who are in their seventies or eighties.

The women who wore this boldly designed obi at the front is the famous courtesan Hanaōgi of the Ōgiya Brothel. The inscription on the right: *Kimi wa ima Komakata atari hototogisu* (By now you must be near Komakata, a cuckoo calls), is a farewell poem by Takao, another famous courtesan in Yoshiwara who bid farewell to her lover.

44. Utagawa Kunimaru (1793–1829)
Women in summer
around 1811–14, Bunka era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych features three women on an early summer morning. In the middle print, large white hydrangeas bloom in the garden behind. The woman at left is brushing her teeth. On the right, another woman under mosquito netting wakes up with her hair frayed and chest slightly bared. She is adjusting her hairpins. A cat escapes under the mosquito net. It has a collar with a bell attached, suggesting it is a pet of this household. Behind the mosquito netting there is a black-lacquered box, which is probably a case for a shamisen (a traditional three-stringed musical instrument).

45. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Tub and element metal/Brazier and element fire, from the series *Characters of Women Influenced by Five Elements*
mid-Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts two women and two associated elements based on the attributes shown – the basin represents metal and the brazier represents fire. In ancient Chinese tradition, it was believed that all phenomena of the universe could be explained by the interaction of the Five Elements (or five phases). Japan, since the fifth and sixth centuries, was heavily influenced by Chinese philosophies and also adapted these traditions into day-to-day life. The Five Elements (*Wuxing* in Chinese; *Gogyōshisō* in Japanese) are wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. This series depicts beautiful women with the associated elements.

A half-naked woman wipes herself with a cloth over a metal basin filled with water. This print is of the genre *abuna-e* (literally "risky pictures", erotic prints that omit explicit sex). The woman's eyebrows are shaven or plucked and her teeth are blackened, which suggests she is either married or is a lover. The black obi in the foreground probably belongs to her and the colourful obi in the background perhaps belongs to her husband or partner.

A *kotatsu* (low table frame covered by a futon, upon which a tabletop sits) is depicted behind the woman. Underneath would be a heat source – a charcoal brazier, built into the table itself. A calico cat, perhaps seeking a warmer space, is trying to get into the *kotatsu*. The inset image shows a woman carrying a small brazier – the fire element.

46. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Blackening teeth and element metal/Gargling and element water, from the series *Characters of Women Influenced by Five Elements*
mid-Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

From the same series as the previous print (Cat. 45), this one shows a mother carrying a child on her back. A calico cat is pulling and licking at the hem of her kimono, revealing her ankle. The child had been playing with the cat with his bamboo branch that has a strip of cloth tied to the tip.

The inset image shows a woman holding a dish of water, probably to gargle after brushing her teeth. In Edo period, married women often had shaven eyebrows and blackened teeth. The metal element is signified by the blackened teeth. The main ingredient was a dark-brown solution of ferric acetate called *kanemizu*, made by dissolving iron filings in vinegar. When the solution was combined with vegetable tannins from sources such as gallnut powder or tea powder, it would turn black and become non-water soluble. Coating the teeth with this liquid was thought to prevent tooth decay. The dye had to be applied once a day or once every few days. The water element in the smaller image is represented by the bowl of water used for gargling.

47. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Sean of Horikawa, from the series *Humorous Matching Pictures*
late Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows a woman wrapping a pillow cover over a pillow (*hakomakura*). Behind her, a cat with an arched back, looking directly at the viewer, seems threatened. The inset image shows a man and a monkey, probably a *sarumawashi* (dancing monkey performer).

The series of which this is a part, *Humorous Matching Pictures* (*Gi e-kyōdai*), connects two seemingly unrelated pictures in one print. This seemed like a good marketing technique, as a buyer would get to enjoy two pictures at the cost of one print. But viewers in the know would connect the pictures. The Japanese title of this print is *Horikawa no dan*, which is a scene from the kabuki play *Chikagoro Kawahara no Tatehiki*. The play centres around three characters – Oshun, a beautiful courtesan in Gion; Denbē, Oshun's lover; and Yojirō, Oshun's brother who is a monkey trainer living in Horikawa area of Kyoto. The inset image depicts Yojirō. The featured woman here is then probably Yojirō's sister, the courtesan Oshun. The threatened cat perhaps suggests the misfortune that is bound to befall Oshun in the play.

48. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
The Tenth Month, from the series *Elegant Twelve Months*
late Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This series titled *Elegant Twelve Months* has twelve prints; each depicts a beautiful woman playing with a child. Here a mother tries to tie a knot on the child's hair. The child seems impatient and is more interested to playing with the cat. But then the cat is seemingly trying to get away from the child. The Japanese title of this print is *Koharu* (late summer), which happens in the tenth month of the lunar calendar. At the top right is a sculpture of Ebisu, Japanese god of fishermen, luck, and wealth. Offerings of sake and *tai* (sea bream) have been placed before him. He is also one of the Seven Gods of Fortune (*Shichifukujin*).

During the Edo period, the 20th day of the Tenth Month was a festival dedicated to Ebisu. Merchants went to honour him and pray for business prosperity. They would also invite relatives and friends to their homes for a banquet. Supporting the festival was a dedicated market day, when vendors sold items such as fish, vegetables, and household shrines.

The mother's kimono is decorated with repeated bat designs. The sound on the second character of bat (*kōmori* in Japanese; *bian fu* in Chinese) resembles the sounds of the words for fortune and good luck. Bats, an auspicious symbol in Chinese culture (also adopted in Japanese culture), came to represent happiness and longevity. The child's kimono has a checkered design, with squares filled with a sickle (*kama*), a circle (*maruiwa*), and the Japanese hiragana character *nu*, which could be read as *kama-wa-nu* ("I don't care"). This was a popular design in early Edo period. It had a resurgence during the late Edo, when the kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō VII worn a kimono of similar design.

49. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Woman playing with a cat, from the series *Fabrics to Order in Current Taste*
around 1844, Tenpō era
Series of two ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

In this print, a woman plays with a cat, lifting it up as though it were a child. The collar and bell indicate that it is a pet. This print is composed of two ōban sized papers attached in vertical format, perhaps meant to be displayed as a hanging scroll.

As the title of the series suggests, each print shows a variety of fabrics then currently in fashion. The woman's kimono has auspicious designs, including the repeated rippling waves and paired mandarin ducks in the gray-green areas of her obi. The roll of cloth above her head has classic stylised scrolling cloud and peony design. The small red tab attached to the bottom of that cloth is inscribed: *atari*, signifying that the woman has won something. Perhaps this is reinforced by the excitement of her play with the cat.

50. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Cherry blossoms at Genji's Rokujō Mansion
1854, Ansei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This triptych depicts a spring scene from the publication *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* (False Murasaki's Rural Genji), a late Edo-period literary parody of the *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu (see also Cats. 51, 86, 88, 89, 92, 138, 147), Ashikaga Mitsuuji, the protagonist, adapted from the original Prince Genji, stands in the centre of the landscape composition holding a fan. Mitsuuji is participating in a cherry blossom viewing festival at the Palace of Flowers, residence of the Ashikaga family. The scene contains many elements mentioned in the story, from the sloping hills to the lake and its footbridge, which lies behind the mansion.

The women at the right, on a raised platform overlooking the garden, are an allusion to a passage with Onna Sannomiya (Third Princess, given in marriage to Genji) in the original. In chapter thirty-four of the novel, Sannomiya is spotted by Genji when she steps out onto her veranda to catch her cat, which had scurried out from behind the window blinds. In this print, the woman in a red floral kimono, with an elaborate cherry blossom ornament in her hair, and holding a cat on a leash is a playful reference to that part of the story. While in the *Tale of Genji*, the focus is on Genji catching a glimpse of Sannomiya, here the woman giggles in delight at the sight of Mitsuuji ("Genji" of the parody) distracted by his own folding fan.

51. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Amusement of the first snowfall
around 1847–50, Kōka or Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych shows a group of women constructing a snow cat as a young prince and his attendants look on. As with Cat. 50, this is a scene from *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* (False Murasaki's Rural Genji), a parody of the *Tale of Genji*. Here, the young boy at the left represents the son of Mitsuuji ("Genji" of the parody). The cat made of snow here is not as cute and whimiscal as those usually found in Kuniyoshi's images. But the large head seems quite realistically depicted.

Utagawa Kuniyoshi is mostly remembered for his portrayals of samurai and legendary heroes. But he also drew many landscapes and beautiful women. He was also a cat lover and often depicted cats in his works.

52. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Beauties with a cat by the goldfish pond
around 1851, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints



This triptych shows three women relaxing on a veranda in the evening. The background shows a garden with a large pond. Goldfish swim in the pond. The fish with the round bodies are perhaps *ryūkin* or *ranchū*. Ryūkin are said to be from Ryūkyū Islands (today's Okinawa Prefecture). Ranchū, also called maruko, are a hooded variety developed in Japan. The woman on the left is carrying her pet cat, which seems to be intrigued by the goldfish in the pond.

53. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
The habit of listening to gossip, from the series *Forty-eight Habits of the Floating World*
around 1847–48, Kōka or Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a woman who loves listening to gossip. Her body posture shows it: she leans forward, hands clasped together supported by the pipe in her lap, as though listening attentively to someone sharing a piece of gossip with her. Two similar cats play behind her. One is grooming for the other. On the right, there is a *nagahibachi*, a box-shaped heating device with a brazier and a fireside board. This is also known as *nekoita*, "cat's board", a favourite place for cats to warm themselves during the cold seasons.

On the top, the text gives responses of a listener to gossip: "I see...", "Is that so?", "What happened?" and more. The paragraph of text provides a long list of conventional responses to solicit replies, express agreement at intervals, and help to make the conversation go smoothly.

54. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861) x Utagawa Torijo/Yoshitorijo (born 1839)
Wanting to pull down the back collar of kimono to show her nape: Eel from the Sunomata River in Tōtōmi province, from the series *Auspicious Desires on Land and Sea*
1852, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print is part of Kuniyoshi's series *Auspicious Desires on Land and Sea*. The series introduces scenery and famous products of famous places across Japan, combining with *bijin-ga*, pictures of beautiful women. The inset at the top depicts a riverside scene of Tōtōmi province (today's western Shizuoka Prefecture). Two fishermen carry baskets, probably filled with large *hamaguri* (hard clams). The inscription on the yellow column refers to famous eel from the Sunomata River in Tōtōmi province. As another inscription suggests, the top image is executed by Utagawa Torijo (sometimes referred to as Yoshitorijo), daughter of Kuniyoshi.

The main image shows a woman revealing her neck and upper back while looking in a mirror. Two cats play on the floor below. The subtitle of the print is *eri wo nukitai* (I want to remove my collar). The nape of a woman's neck is considered sensual. During the Edo period, pulling the collar of a women's kimono back to reveal the nape was a fashionable sign of beauty. But if pulled too low, it showed a lack of class; if the collar was fitted too close to the neck, then it was not stylish. On the bottom right, there is a blue-and-white porcelain container filled with white powder. This was meant to be applied to the face, and also lower round the neck and onto the shoulders to enhance the beauty of the nape of the neck. The images pun on the sound of the words, *unagi* (eel) and *unaji* (nape).

55. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Belated gratitude gift, from the series *Falsehood and Truth: Both Sides of the Heart*
around 1847–48, Kōka or Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

Here, a beautiful woman is depicted twice; the main image shows a falsehood (*uso* or *tatemae*), the inset reveals the truth (*makoto* or *honshin*).

The image above shows a troubled-looking woman wondering about the intent behind a sudden gift of fresh fish from another woman who had not been in touch for some time.

The main image, however, shows the same woman looking down gleefully at the tray of fish and lobster she has accepted with full of gratitude. A snarling pet cat stands behind her, probably frightened by the large lobster.

56. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Morning sleep makes waste, from the series *Sixteen Wonderful Considerations of Profit*
around 1846, Kōka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In the series from which this print comes, *Sixteen Wonderful Considerations of Profit,* a beautiful woman is paired with a *rakan* (arhat or luohan, as they are known in China), an enlightened ascetic follower of the Buddha who is thought to have achieved an advanced state of spiritual development and so revered as a protector of Buddhism.

In this print, a woman who has been rising late and is making her toilette (freshening up after awakening). Beside the woman, a cat is grabbing onto the edge of her kimono. The top inset image shows a seated *rakan*, identified as Asane Sonja, holding a *uchiwa* (fan).

*Rakan* are referred to as Buddhist saints 尊者 (*sonja*). But in this series, Kuniyoshi plays a word pun and represents them as "damaged saints" 損者 (*sonja*). The print reminds us of the profits and the benefits of being a hard worker, who is rewarded for his or her work, and warns against being a lazy person.

57. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Master sculptor Hidari Jingorō
around 1847–50, Kōka or Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

As the title of the print suggests, the triptych depicts the legendary sculptor Hidari Jingorō at work in his studio. Though Hidari Jingorō might be a fictitious figure, many legends surround him. He was said to be a polymath who worked in many fields – as a sculptor, carpenter, painter, architect, comedian, actor, storyteller, and more. He is perhaps best known for his skill at carving Buddhist figures so convincingly that they were said to come to life. This triptych conveys a sense of his reputed animating power.

Hidari Jingorō, seated on the floor in the middle print, dressed in a heavy graphic kimono, is working on a figure of Prince Shōtoku (574–622). This figure is actually a self-portrait of Kuniyoshi, artist of the print. Kuniyoshi as Hidari Jingorō has his face turned away from the viewer, looking in the direction of the ferocious guardian masks. The towel slung over his right shoulder and the cushion he sits on have his paulownia crest (also used as a seal after his signature on each sheet), and he is accompanied by one of his numerous calico cats.

The sculpted figures depict various secular and legendary people, Buddhist figures, and various gods and demons. All these are probably portraits of kabuki actors. Due to the Tenpō Reforms of 1842, however, actor prints were illegal. Kuniyoshi thusly found a way to circumvent the regulations.

58. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
The amazing phenomenon of popular Ōtsu-e paintings
around 1847–48, Kōka era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

During the Tenpō Reforms, from late 1842 until late 1846, actor prints were completely illegal; but from the 11th month of 1846, they were officially permitted again as long as the actors' names and crests were not included. Kuniyoshi poked fun at the regulations by producing a number of humorous works in which the familiar faces of top actors appeared in surprising guises, as cats, goldfish, graffiti, or, as in this triptych, *Ōtsu-e* folk paintings.

*Ōtsu-e* (Ōtsu pictures) are small, quickly brushed works that were sold as good-luck charms to travellers passing through the town of Ōtsu (today's Shiga Prefecture), the last stop on the Tōkaido before Kyoto.

During the Edo period, the artist Iwasa Matabei (1578–1650) was thought to have been the founder of the ukiyo-e school, and to have painted Ōtsu-e. Neither of these claims is now considered to be true, but they became the basis for a popular kabuki play: *Courtesan's Spirit Incense* (*Keisei hangonkō*), featuring Matabei as the main character. In one scene his creations come to life and dance around him. Like the previous print (Cat. 57), this also has a self-portrait of Kuniyoshi. His face is hidden by one of the sheets of paper from which the figures have escaped. The fan beside him has his paulownia crest (also used as a seal after his signature on each sheet – more clearly seen here than in the previous print) and he is accompanied by one of his numerous calico cats; these are clues to his identity.

The actors and their roles have been identified as follows, clockwise from bottom left: Ichikawa Danjūro VIII as Benkei, Onoe Baikō IV as the Wisteria Girl, Seki Sanjūrō III as a blind man, Nakayama Bungorō as a drunken footman, Nakamura Utaemon IV as a demon converted to Buddhism, Iwai Kumesaburō III as Ushiwakamaru, Ōtani Hiroemon V as Daikoku, Ichikawa Kuzō II as a footman in a procession, possibly Onoe Kikujirō II as a falconer, an unidentified actor as a monkey trying to catch a catfish with a gourd, and Ichikawa Kodanji IV as a thunder god.

59. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Hazy moon: *The Tale of Cats*, vols. 3, 4, and 6
1845, 1846, 1848, Kōka era
Three bound volumes

This book titled *Oborozuki neko no sōshi* (Hazy Moon: The Tale of Cats), a light novel with pictures, was published in collaboration with one of the most popular authors of light novels during the late Edo period, Santō Kyōzan (1769–1858). Both Kuniyoshi and Kyōzan were cat lovers. In the novel, kabuki actors are impersonated by cats. Due to the Tenpō Reforms, the Tokugawa Shogunate prohibited the making of prints portraying real kabuki actors and courtesans. To get around the restrictions Kuniyoshi and Kyōzan recast the kabuki tales with cats as heroes, dressed in kabuki costumes. The content of the stories changed with humourous effect to reflect the actors' altered state.

The plot of the book is about the adventures of a personified female cat named Koma. She falls in love with a male tabby cat, elopes with him, gets separated from him, and becomes a pet of Princess Nadeshiko, an artistocratic woman from a distinguished family. This book was issued in seven parts between 1841 and 1849.

60. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Amusement for precious children: Imitating Ebisu and Jurojin
around 1842, Tenpō era
Aiban size nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows two children amusing themselves by imitating Ebisu and Jurōjin, two of the Seven Gods of Fortune. The child standing plays Ebisu, god of prosperity and wealth and patron of fishermen. He holds Ebisu's attributes – a fishing rod and a carp (in model toy form here). The seated child plays Jurōjin, god of longevity – holding a long bamboo staff with a scroll attached. The child also wears a long cloth headdress to create the image of the elongated head of Jurōjin. Instead of a deer, Jurōjin's conventional animal attribute, the seated child is cuddling a white cat, probably a pet.

61. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Lily, from the series *Elegant Selection of Six Flowers*
around 1843, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The Japanese title of the series, *Fūryū Rokkasen* 風流六花撰 (Elegant Selection of Six Flowers) is a play on the term *Rokkasen* 六歌仙 (Six Poetry Immortals), six Japanese poets of the mid-ninth century who were mentioned in the poetry anthology *Kokin Wakashū* (Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times). Kuniyoshi picked six different types of popular flowers and paired each with a beautiful woman. The flowers are potted in exquisite blue-and-white porcelain vases. In this print, the vase is planted with blooming lilies.

The woman is carrying a pet cat in her arms. The cat, perhaps attracted by the shiny surface of her *kanzashi* (hairpin), seems interested to climb towards her shoulder and get closer to it. Another similar cat without a collar is snarling at the woman.

62. Utagawa Yoshiharu (1828–1888)
Courtesan Kiyokawa of the Okadaya Brothel, from the series *Assortment of Beauties of the Highest Popularity in Temporary Quarters in Fukagawa*
1865, Genji era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In 1862, Kyō-machi ichichōme in Yoshiwara had a fire. Most buildings were badly damaged. The courtesans had to move to temporary quarters in Fukagawa to continue their work. In this print, the famous courtesan Kiyokawa of the Okadaya brothel plays with her pet cat. Kiyokawa's kimono is boldly decorated with butterflies dancing in the field of dandelions. Known as *tanpopo* in Japan, dandelions were one of the most favourite plants to cultivate for varieties of sub-species during the Edo period.



63. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892)
Looks Annoyed: Appearance of girl in the Kansei era, from the series *Thirty-Two Aspects of Women*
1888, Meiji era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This series *Thirty-Two Aspects of Women* depicts a chronological survey from the Kansei era (1789–1801) to the Meiji period (1860–1912) of women of different backgrounds and occupations, each associated with a particular mood or character trait.

The Japanese title of this print is *urusasau*, literally *urusasō* ("looks annoyed"). This may refer to the seeming look of annoyance on the cat being caressed by its owner. The woman is probably from a wealthy merchant family. The cat's collar is made of similar fabric as the women's *juban* (inner kimono).

64. Utagawa Kunisada II (1823–1880)
Courtesan in Matsui-chō, from the series *A Collection of Modern Beauties*
1855, Ansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a corridor scene in a *hikite-chaya* (a teahouse where a courtesan meets her guests). Guests would be escorted to a reception room where they would be entertained with food and performances by geisha, while waiting for the courtesan to arrive. At the bottom right, a stray cat is scavenging leftover food.

The courtesan puts her hand on the sliding door and looks at the cat biting on fish bones. A peek through the sliding door shows the back of a folding screen. A male kimono, probably the guest of the room, is draped over the screen.

This area, as the title indicates, is Matsui-chō (today's Sumida City, Tokyo). In the Edo period, across the Tate River, one could find the famous Kanjinzumō (public sumō bouts) and other places of entertainment. Around that neighbourhood was Matsui-chō, where there were many restaurants and specialised teahouses that worked with brothels.

65. Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
*Sketches by Hokusai*, vol. 14
date unknown
Bound book

*Hokusai Manga,* also known as *Sketches by Hokusai,* is a published collection of sketches made by the artist. Subjects include landscapes, flora, and fauna, everyday life, and the supernatural. There are thousands of images in the fifteenth volumes; the first was published in 1814, when the artist was 55. The final three volumes were published posthumously, two of them assembled by the publisher from previously unpublished material.

This spread shows a wolf and a cat. The cat is biting on a rat, and wears a loose collar, which suggests it was probably a pet. The wolf scratches its back. Although labelled as a wolf, it looks more like a wild dog. During the Edo period, there was a species known as Japanese wolf (*Nihon Ōkami*) or Honshū wolf. Today it is extinct.

## DOGS

66. Suzuki Harunobu (ca 1725–1770)
Renshi, from the series *Five Elegant Colours of Ink*
around 1769, Meiwa era
Chūban nishiki-e woodblock print

The woman sitting on a raised veranda is brushing her teeth. The black dog seated next to her is likely a domestic pet, as he wears a collar. Dogs used to be luxury, received in exchanges of gifts between Western and Chinese merchants and daimyo. Eventually, they were kept as pets by wealthy merchants and courtesans. Small dogs became favourite pets of daimyo and court ladies.

Morning glories bloom in the garden. The woman's kimono has a motif of an abstracted fully blooming morning glory flower. The poem above, about morning glories, is from *Goshikizumi,* a poetry anthology of the mid-Edo period. The verses here read: *Renshi, Asagao ya, fudan miteru, kao mo sate* (Morning glories, once again, the faces, I am always seeing by Renshi).

Harunobu presents the woman brushing her teeth on the veranda as the poet. Is the dog or the morning glories in the garden one of the "morning faces" she sees? Or is it her male companion, perhaps still asleep behind the curtain?

67. Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825)
Hydrangeas, from the series *Six Selected Flowers*
mid-Bunka era (1804–18)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The title of the series here, *Imayau Rokkasen* いまやう六花せん (Six Selected Flowers), is a play on the term *Rokkasen* 六歌仙 (Six Poetry Immortals), describing six Japanese poets of the mid-ninth century mentioned in the anthology *Kokin Wakashū* (Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times). For this series, Toyokuni I picked six types of popular flowers and paired each with a beautiful woman. In this print, the women carrying her pet dog is surrounded by hydrangea (*ajisai*). The little dog is probably a short-haired Japanese Chin.

68. Utagawa Kunimaru (1793–1829)
Woman holding a Japanese Chin
Bunsei era (1818–30)
Series of two ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This print is similar to the previous one (Cat. 67) by Toyokuni I. A woman holds her pet dog. The two dogs are quite similar, perhaps Kunimaru referred to the previous print for inspiration. Japanese Chin were thought to have been brought into Japan from China during the Nara period (710–94). The chin is a small dog, with large rounded broad head, large wide-set dark eyes, a short muzzle, ear feathering, and patterned facial markings. These dogs were extremely popular with Edo people.

The woman is probably a courtesan. Her hair is adorned with luxurious tortoiseshell hairpins and combs. Her lips are coloured with *sasabeni*, a branded, bright red type of lip application.

69. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Young woman carrying a child on her back, from the series *Starlight Frost and Modern Manners*
early Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a young woman babysitting a child while a dog tries to play with her. The boy wears a kimono with a *mimasu-tsunagi* design (three squares nested inside one another). It is the clan mon of Ichikawa Danjūrō, a famous kabuki actor family.

70. Utagawa Kunimaru (1793–1829)
In front of the bathhouse
Bunsei era (1818–30)
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych shows three women in front of a bathhouse. From the right, the women are described as Monnosuke *kidori*, Kumesaburo *kidori,* and Kikunojō *kidori. Kidori* means to imitate – these women are impersonating famous kabuki actors. Two stray puppies are depicted on the left print.

Famous kabuki actors were the movers and shakers of the fashion world, especially the *onnagata* (male actors who play female roles). Many women saw them as fashion leaders. The clan *mon* of Segawa Monnosuke III is a round cluster of four maple leaves; on stage, he is often seen in bright red maple leaf designs. The kimono of the woman on the right bears this design inspired by Monnosuke III.

Kunimaru was a painter and printmaker who studied under Utagawa Toyokuni I, and thus adopted the surname. He is thought to have been the son of a pawnbroker. Only a few of his works still exist. Either he did not produce many or they have not survived. In addition to drawing for prints, he was also a poet. Kunimaru is said to have studied haiku with a poet named Oryuan and wrote haiku under the name Ryubi.

71. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Street musician, from the series *Street in Spring*
mid-Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In this print, a mother and child are greeted at the entrance of their house by a dog. The dog is probably a stray from the streets. It appears to be well-mannered, however, and is sitting upright to greet them, perhaps hoping for a treat.

At the top right, there is a picture of a street performer couple. In the Edo period, it was a common sight in early spring to see a female street performer, in new kimono and woven hat, parading around town playing the shamisen for *Tori-oi Matsuri*, a bird-chasing festival. The festival is to pray for abundant crops and the health and wellbeing of the family, particularly children. Like today, these street performers received money for their performance and services.

72. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Poem by Suō no Naishi: Shirai Gonpachi, from the series *Ogura Imitations of One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets*
around 1846, Kōka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts the ronin Shirai Gonpachi, surprised by a dog while reading a long letter. A ronin is a wandering samurai, not or no longer affiliated with any daimyo. A full moon shines above the horizon, partially obscured by clouds, two palanquins and perhaps a farmer appear in silhouette below. The character Shira Gonpachi is from the scene "Suzugamori" (The Execution Ground at Suzugamori), in Tsuruya Nanboku IV's play *Ukiyozuka Hiyoku no Inazuma* (The Floating World's Patter and Matching Lightning Bolts). Shirai Gonpachi was a samurai of the Tottori fief in western Japan who fled to Edo after committing a murder. He was apprehended and sentenced to death. His distraught lover, the courtesan Miuraya Komourasaki, committed suicide at his grave.

Each print in this series compares an image from the kabuki play with one of the poems from the anthology *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* (The One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each). This print is inscribed with a poem and image of Suō no Naishi, a female poet of the late Heian period (794–1185): *Haru no yo no yume bakari naru, ta-makura ni kai naku tatan nakoso oshikere* (On a spring night, I laid my head on his arm, although it's just a one night dream, it's a shame to hear, people whispering behind their fans).

*Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* contains one hundred waka poems (court poetry), each written by a different poet from the seventh through the mid-thirteenth century, when Fujiwara no Teika, renowned poet and scholar, assembled the collection.

73. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Spring night
1843–45, Tenpō or Kōka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The print shows a woman walking in the streets on a spring night. A stray dog wanders past her. The print is paired with a waka song by late Edo period poet Ryūtei Kyōraku.

74. Keisai Eisen (1791–1848)
Reading books, from the series *Eight Favorite Things in the Modern World*
around 1823, Bunsei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In this print, a Japanese Chin leans over the shoulder of a woman reading. She is holding a folded letter; a stack of books is shown above her. The pile of books represents an opportunity for Eisen to promote his own illustrated books. The closed book on top is titled, *Kaido chazuke*, an abbreviation of the full title *Kaido chazuke hara no uchimaku*, published in 1823, written by Tori Sanjin (Hana Sanjin, 1790–1858) with illustrations by Eisen.

The open book below has a title along the right page, *Nanso Satomi Hakkenden* (The Eight Dog Chronicles), an epic tale by Kyokutei Bakin (1767–1848) in 106 volumes, which were published over 28 years; the first in 1814 and the last in 1842. The stories revolve around eight samurai who are half-brothers, all descendants of a dog and each with the word "dog" in their names. Most of the volumes were illustrated by Yanagawa Shigenobu (1787–1832), with contributions from Eisen beginning in 1823.



75. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Peeping into the bath/Boys fighting, from the series of Hiroshige's Comic Prints
late Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows two of Hiroshige's Comic Prints. The upper image depicts two men peeping into the bathhouse. Overly engrossed in the activity, one man has spilled a bottle of sake; the other has dropped an octopus leg, perhaps meant to go with the bottle of sake. A stray dog has taken the octopus leg, leaving unnoticed by the two men.

The bottom image shows two boys fighting in the street. Their belongings have fallen and have been scavenged by wild animals. The dog is biting on a *katsuo* (skipjack tuna) and the birds are picking on the *abura-age* (fried tofu).

76. Utagawa Hiroshige II (1826–1869)
French woman, her child, and pet dog
1860, Man'en era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows a French woman and child taking a stroll with their pet dog. The woman is wearing a crinoline to hold out her skirt, the fabric of which seems to be a type of printed chintz.

In 1858, the port of Yokohama was opened to the foreigners for trade. Within Yokohama, there were foreign quarters in which the Americans, Dutch, Russians, English, French, and the Chinese resided. Japanese people were curious about these foreigners, and they soon became a source of inspiration for ukiyo artists. Artists like Hiroshige II depicted these foreigners and their ways of living, which were much different from those of the local Japanese.

GOLDFISH

77. Isoda Koryūsai (1735–1790)
Shirotae of the Ōkanaya Brothel, from the series *Models for Fashion: New Year Designs as Fresh as Young Leaves*
mid-An'ei era (1772–81)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

*Kingyosodategusa* (A compendium on keeping goldfish, 1748) was a pioneer publication for promoting the breeding and taking care of goldfish as pets. In his preface, the author Adachi Yoshiyuki noted that goldfish were brought into Japan around 1502. He claimed that they first arrived in the ports of Sakai, gradually gained popularity, and then spread across the whole of Japan. Goldfish were often imported from China, their place of origin.

This print was made about thirty years after the publication of *Kingyosodategusa*. By then goldfish were kept as common pets among Edo people. This print depicts a group of courtesans admiring fishes in the stone pool. Within the pool, there are three-leaved arrowhead and other aquatic plants, creating a kind of biotope environment for the goldfish.

Isoda Koryūsai was a samurai in service to the Tsuchiya daimyo in Sagami province (today's central and western Kanagawa Prefecture). On losing his feudal masters, he moved to Edo, where he turned his hand to ukiyo-e. From 1768, while his friend and role-model Suzuki Harunobu was still alive, he called himself Haruhiro; it was not until 1771 that he assumed the name Koryūsai. Although his early works include many *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women), where the influence of Harunobu is marked, by the late 1770s he was creating ōban-size fashion prints in a style all his own, depicting urbane, naturalistic feminine figures.

78. Kitagawa Utamaro (ca 1753–1806)
Summer: Woman and her child playing with goldfish
Kansei era (1789–1801)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a mother and child. The woman sits in a relaxed manner, holding a *uchiwa* fan and her kimono is slightly open, baring her chest. As the title of the print at the top right indicates, it is summer. The child puts his hand into the basin to play with the fishes.

During Edo, it was a common sight to see peddlers on the streets selling goldfish in the summer. The costs could vary depending on various factors such as rarity, breed, and colour. Some goldfish could fetch as high as 3 to 5 *ryō*.

79. Kitagawa Hidemaro (active 1801–18)
Young couple with goldfish
Bunka era (1804–18)
Aiban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a woman with a *wakashū* (youth) holding a *kingyodama* (portable glass container for admiring goldfish). According to the *Wakan Sansai Zue* (Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia, 1712), glass containers like this, also referred to as *bīdoro* (originated from the Portuguese *vidro*), were first made in Nagasaki or Osaka. By 1750, there were glass workshops in Edo. By 1768, Edo shops were producing thermometers as well as these goldfish bowls.

A beautiful woman holding *kingyodama* and admiring the goldfish within was a favourite subject for many ukiyo artists. Similar prints by different artists can be seen in Cats. 81 and 82.

80. Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825)
Actors Onoe Matsusuke II as Kingyoya Kinpachi and Ichikawa Ichizō I as Ukiyodoko no Matabei
1814, Bunka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

By the late Edo period, keeping goldfish as pets had become common. During summer one could see peddlers selling goldfish; they would disappear once the cold of autumn set in. This print depicts a scene from *Hananokumo yayoi no irogoromo*, a kabuki play premiered at Nakamura-za theatre in 1814. On the right, the figure is Onoe Matsusuke II (1784–1849), acting as the goldfish peddler Kingyoya Kinpachi. On the left is Ichikawa Ichizō I (1777–1827), playing the role of Ukiyodoko no Matabei.

Kinpachi is holding a small *kingyodama* (glass container for admiring goldfish). The goldfish and glass container were sold as a set.

The artist Toyokuni I was born and worked in Edo. He was a son of a puppet sculptor. Entering the studio of Utagawa Toyoharu at the age of 14, Toyokuni drew inspiration from the famous artists around him, particularly Utamaro. Toyokuni produced elegant courtesans, actor prints, book illustrations, and paintings. He had a strong reputation during his lifetime and taught a host of talented students, including Kunisada and Kuniyoshi.

81. Utagawa Kuniyasu (1794–1832)
Goldfish, from the series *Elegant Amusements for Girls*
around 1811–14, Bunka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

82. Keisai Eisen (1791–1848)
Young woman holding a goldfish bowl
Tenpō era (1830–44)
Series of two ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

A beautiful woman holding a glass *kingyodama* admiring the goldfish within was a favourite subject for many ukiyo artists. See also Cat. 79.

83. Kikukawa Eizan (1787–1867)
Woman and her child looking at a goldfish bowl
Bunka era (1804–18)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

A mother and child admire goldfish in a footed pot. The child is wearing a kind of hood that was believed to be a lucky charm to avoid smallpox.

By the late Edo period, images of a woman and child admiring goldfish were a popular subject. And there were numerous publications on keeping goldfish as pets. New compendiums and instruction manuals on goldfish were published regularly.

84. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Modern version of *Tales of Ise*
1849, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych depicts an Edo-period re-telling of *Ise monogatari* (Tales of Ise). The man in the middle is the protagonist of the story. *Tales of Ise* is a collection of Japanese waka poems and stories from the Heian period (794–1185). It consists of 125 sections of short, fragmented episodes, each containing a poem or poems and an explanation of the events behind the poems. The running plot is the life story of a man believed to be Ariwara no Narihira, a prominent Heian period poet. It tells of his forbidden love affairs, such as with Princess Takaiko, who later became an empress, and Princess Yasuko, who served at the Ise Jingu Shrine, and his journey to the east after leaving the capital, Heian (today's Kyoto).

In this print, Narihira is with two beautiful women dressed in luxurious kimono. Above Narihari, there is a bird, probably a parrot imported by European merchants. On the right, is a finely decorated fish tank filled with goldfish. The production of large glass panels in Japan began during the Meiji period, in 1909. It is unlikely that such large panels were produced in the Edo period. This suggests that either they were imported or this is a product of imagination of the artist.

85. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
The Seventh Month
1849, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

*Fumizuki* (Seventh month) in the lunar calendar falls between end of July and early September and it signifies the arrival of autumn. By the riverside, we see the faint lights from fireflies, and silhouettes of autumn flowers like Japanese clover (*hagi*) and bellflower (*kikyō*).

Standing lanterns illuminate the interior and brighten the colours of the kimono the women wear. The ceiling is hung with a large *kingyodama* (glass container for admiring goldfish) decorated with colourful hanging tassels. It is unlikely that such large glass containers were produced in the Edo period. This is probably a product of imagination of the artist.

86. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Scene from the play *Genji Moyō Furisode Hinagata*
1851, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych depicts a scene from the kabuki play *Genji Moyō Furisode Hinagata*, which premiered at Ichimura-za theatre in 1851.

The play is based on the popular illustrated novel *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* (False Murasaki's Rural Genji), a late Edo period literary parody of the *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu. The parody, by Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783–1842), was published in a woodblock print edition with illustrations by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, in 38 volumes between 1829 and 1842. It was never completed, due to the death of the author.

In these prints, Genji has a unique hairstyle – *ebichasen-mage* (a topknot split at the front tip so it looks like the tail of a shrimp). Because of the popularity of the illustrated novel and the related prints, the kabuki play followed the same hairstyle for the character. The right print shows a similar large fish tank to the one seen in Cat. 84. This one must have also either been from the artist's imagination, or specially imported into Japan.

87. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Imaginary scene of summer: Actors Ichimura Kakitsu as Water Vendor and Nakamura Kanjaku as Goldfish Vendor
late Tenpō era (1830–44)
Series of two ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This diptych depicts two popular kabuki actors as summer street peddlers. On the left, Nakamura Utaemon IV (1798–1852), also known as Kanjaku, plays the role of a goldfish peddler. On the right, Ichimura Uzaemon XII (1812–1851), also known as Kakitsu, plays a water peddler. Between 1804 and 1830, a kabuki dance inspired by peddler-merchants selling various commodities was popular. It was well-received on stage and in turn inspired woodblock print artists to create series of prints depicting peddlers selling paper, water, insects, fans, flowers, plants, and many other commodities.

88. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Mitsuuji and women enjoying a winding stream party
1852, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych depicts Ashikaga Mitsuuji, the protagonist of *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* (False Murasaki's Rural Genji), surrounded by a group of women enjoying a winding stream party in a garden. The men in the stream are helpers who pick up the wine cups so that the finely dressed Mitsuuji and the women do not need to get wet. Mitsuuji is dressed in an overcoat decorated with goldfish designs. The background is filled with blossoming cherry trees.

Winding stream parties are an old Chinese custom, in which participants would sit by a winding stream and compose poems while waiting for their cups of rice wine to float down to reach them. This custom was adopted by the Japanese, as a party game among aristocrats.



89. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
The Sixth Month, from the series *Genji in the Twelve Months*
1856, Ansei era
Series of three ōban size nishiki-e woodblock prints

*Minazuki* is the traditional name of the sixth month in the Japanese calendar. It is also usually a period of rainy season. This triptych depicts a group of travellers crowding under a tree to take shelter from the sudden rain. A careful look reveals men and women of various occupations. On the right, Ashikaga Mitsuuji, the protagonist of *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* (False Murasaki's Rural Genji), is accompanied by his entourage. On the left, there is a courier (*hikyaku*) seated on his messenger box; a mother carrying a child on her back; and a monk looking towards the dark grey sky. In the middle, a young woman in *furisode* (long-sleeved kimono) glances at the handsome Mitsuuji. The woman beside her exchanges glances with a goldfish peddler.

90. Utagawa Sadahide (1807–1878/79)
Courtesan Azumaji of the Kadoebiya Brothel
late Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts the famous courtesan Azumaji and a child looking into a small fish pot with the full moon in the background.

Yoshiwara was the largest and most famous licensed pleasure district in Edo. It was first situated near the eastern part of Fukiyachō, Nihonbashi. After the great fire of Meireki in 1657, Yoshiwara was relocated to Asakusa. In 1800 there was a brothel named Kadoebiya, the fame of which attracted ukiyo artists such as Keisai Eisen and Utagawa Kunisada. They were known to frequent the brothel and depicted several famous courtesans from the house. Like in Cat. 77, this square pot has a biotope environment to enhance its beauty and provide a more natural space for keeping goldfish as pets.

91. Utagawa Sadahide (1807–1878/79)
French woman looking at a goldfish bowl in the Foreign Merchant House in Yokohama
1861, Bunkyū era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In this print a French woman admires goldfish in a container in the foreign merchant house in Yokohama. In the inset image, a man admires her.

In 1858, the port of Yokohama and four other Japanese ports were opened to foreigner trade. Within Yokohama, there were areas where Americans, Dutch, Russians, English, French, and Chinese resided. The foreign merchant house was situated near Yamashitachō (also known as Yamate). In the early years, there were perhaps around 50 foreigners in the area. By 1863, there were about 170 foreigners. The number of French people in Yokohama is unknown. English merchants made up half of the population and the next largest group were the Americans.

After Japan was forced to re-open its ports and allow foreigners to enter, Japanese people were curious about them. Many ukiyo artists responded to the demand for information about the customs and appearance of these new people.

92. Utagawa Kunisada II (1823–1880)
The Fifth Month, from the series *The Five Festivals Represented by Eastern Genji*
1855, Ansei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych represents *Tango no sekku* (fifth day of the fifth month). It was also celebrated as *Ayame no hi* (Iris festival) at the imperial court. *Tango no sekku* also marks the beginning of summer and the rainy season.

The print depicts Ashikaga Mitsuuji, protagonist of *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* (False Murasaki's Rural Genji) and a child admiring goldfish swimming in a large blue-and-white porcelain fishbowl. The child, who is feeding the goldfish, wears a protective headband thought to ward off evil and illness. Hanging on the wall in the middle print is a *kusudama*, a bouquet of flowers and herbs meant to ward off evil spirits. It is probably made of *shōbu* (iris stalks) and *yomogi* (dried mugwort). On the floor at left is a hand-operated fan, comprised of six *uchiwa* fans.

OTHER ANIMALS

93. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
The Third Month, from the series *Five Festivals*
early Tenpō era (1830–44)
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych depicts a group of women boarding a ferry on the Sumida River. The torii in the background suggests it is near the entrance to the *Mimeguri-inari* shrine. An important shrine for rain and agriculture mentioned in *Edo meisho zue* (Guide to Famous Edo Sites), it is also famous for its beautiful gardens in spring. Along the banks of the river, peach and cherry trees blossom. The group of women must be leaving after their outing viewing the spring flowers.

A monkey dance (*sarumawashi*) trainer and her monkey sit in the ferry. They must have been performing in the garden. The tradition of *sarumawashi* began as early as the Kamakura period (1185–1333). By the Edo, it had become well-received and was a mainstream performing art, particularly during the New Year and other festival occasions.

94. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Falconer
early Tenpō era (1830–44)
Series of two ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This vertical diptych shows a *wakashū* (youth) of the samurai class holding a falcon. In his right hand he holds a straight whip called a *saku*. It is an important tool for tidying the feathers and cleaning the dirt of the falcon. On his left hand he wears a *takayukage* (leather hand guard) to protect himself against the falcon's talons. The bird's legs are tied with a string securely wrapped around the man's arm.

Falconry (*takagari*), hunting with birds of prey, was a popular pastime for samurai. Falconer was also a highly paid and respectable post during the sixteenth century. The job was temporarily suspended during the Edicts on Compassion

for Living Things (*shōrui awaremi no rei*) issued by the fifth shogun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (reigned 1680–1709), in 1687. The job of falconer and falconry as a hobby, keeping falcons as pets, was re-instated by eighth shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune (reigned 1716–45), who also authored a treatise on falconry.

Falconer pictures like this became popular motifs for *ōtsu* pictures. These were small, quickly brushed works sold as good-luck charms to travellers passing through the town of Ōtsu (today's Shiga Prefecture), last stop on the Tōkaido before Kyoto. Falconer *ōtsu* pictures were believed to be good luck charms for people who had lost things and were seeking to recover them. The format of this diptych suggests that it was meant to be used as a hanging scroll.

95. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Glass Dutch ship, imported birds, and glass lantern at the Craft Show
1819, Bunsei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych depicts some fine glass work on displayed in a handicraft show at Ryōgoku (today's Sumida district, Tokyo) in 1819. Coloured glass models of Dutch trading ships and large hanging lanterns were spectacular marvels that showcased Japanese glass cutting technology. Live exotic birds such mynah and parrots were also put on display. The ability of parrots to mimic the speech of humans brought amazement to Edo people.

In the middle print, from left to right, there is an *ōmu* (white cockatoo), a *shōjōinco* (chattering lory), and a *kyūkancho* (mynah).

96. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
View of Kanbara, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
early Tenpō era (1830–44)
Chūban nishiki-e woodblock print

This is a print from Kunisada's series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*. In his series, each print depicts a view of the station paired with an image of a beautiful woman. The snowy background in this print was inspired by Hiroshige's view of Kanbara in his Hōeidō edition series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road,* published in 1833. The main figure is a woman mounted on a bull or ox. Cattle were primarily reared to help in farm work and for transporting heavy goods. During the Heian period, bullock carts were the common mode of transport for aristocrats. In woodblock prints, the appearance of cattle often signals idyllic aspects of the rural countryside.

97. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
The Devoted Son Yoji, from the series *Twenty-four Japanese Paragons of Filial Piety*
around 1843–45, Tenpō or Kōka era
Chūban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts the devoted son Yojirō working as a monkey trainer to earn money to aid his sick mother. The story is based on a scene from the kabuki play *Chikagoro Kawahara no Tatehiki*. The play is centred amongst three characters – Oshun, a beautiful courtesan in Gion; Oshun's lover Denbē; and Yojirō, Oshun's brother, a monkey trainer living in Horikawa area of Kyoto.

The title of the series is derived from the *Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety*, by Chinese scholar Guo Jujing of the Yuan dynasty (1260–1368). His penname was Yizi, and he is known in Japan as Kaku Kyokei. The book recounts the self-sacrificing behaviours of twenty-four sons and daughters who go to extreme lengths to honour their parents, stepparents, grandparents, and in-laws.

98. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Okane of Ōmi province, from the series *Suikoden of Japanese Heroes*
around 1844–45, Kōka era
Chūban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a gallant woman subduing a wild horse. She has been identified as Okane of Ōmi province (today's Shiga Prefecture). According to various legends, Okane – a famous courtesan or a *sarashime* (cloth-bleaching girl) – was noted for her incredible strength. She stopped a rampaging horse by stepping on its reins, bringing it under control. Here she nonchalantly subdues the wild horse with one bare hand while holding her clothes under her other arm. She is biting on a *nugabukuro* (rice-bran bag) used for scrubbing the skin when bathing, and a bath towel is slung over her shoulder. Her hair is a little loose. All this suggests she has just finished her bath.

Her kimono is patterned with *uma no kutsuwa* (horse bridles), *sakura no hana* (cherry blossoms), and *kumo no su* (spider webs).

In Edo society, horses had relationships with people of all classes. They were important to the samurai class, who used them as military cavalry; they served as a general means of transport; and they worked on the farm. At shrines, they were taken care of as *shinme* (scared horses).

99. Utagawa Yoshimori (1830–1885)
Russian on horse, from the series *Five Nations*
1860, Man'en era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a Russian man mounted on a horse. He wears a hat with the symbolic double-headed eagle of the Russian Empire. At the top right a Russian ship is depicted. The inscription under the horse reads: *14300 ri* (miles) *from Yokohama*. 14,300 miles is approximately 56,000 kilometres. This perhaps differs drastically from modern-day calculations, but most likely this is the distance between Saint Petersburg, then capital of Russia, and Yokohama.

As with other prints in the book depicting foreigners, they appealed to Japanese people curious about these foreigners who had recently begun appearing in Japan.

100. Utagawa Kunimasa IV (1848–1920)
Parody of *Hauta*
early Meiji period (1868–1912)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts two humanoid rabbits. A male rabbit sings while playing music on a shamisen for his partner. The *hauta* mentioned in the title of this print is a short love song, usually accompanied by shamisen. *Hauta* were extremely popular from the late Edo into the early Meiji period.

The inscription is a parody of two famous songs, *Kintoki* and *Horetekayō* (I fell in love). The lyrics have been re-written, telling the story of an excited rabbit peddler who has gotten his hands on a rare and popular red-fur rabbit. He aims to raise it well and hopes to breed it with other pedigree rabbits to produce exotic rabbits to sell.

101. Utagawa Yoshitoyo (1830–1866)
Giant elephant imported from overseas
1863 or later, Bunkyū era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In 1863, the spectacle of seeing an Indian elephant brought crowds to an area near the Ryōgoku Bridge in Edo City. In this print, the elephant is described as being only three years old. It was 3.6 metres tall, weighed about 10 tonnes, and its body length stretched to around 6.3 metres; the trunk was about 2.4 metres long. To many people in Japan, this was a unique opportunity to catch a glimpse of a live elephant.

The artist Yoshitoyo was a student of Utagawa Kuniyoshi and took the Utagawa school name. He produced several prints of exotic animals and other views of this famous elephant.

102. Artist unknown
Camel imported by Europeans
1867, Keiō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In this print, two young boys play around a Bactrian camel. In 1867, crowds gathered at Osaka Namba Shinchi to see a Bactrian camel. It was reported that the camel was around 4 metres tall, weighed approximately 2 tonnes, and had a neck about 3 metres long (the reports might have been exaggerated). These measurements of the camel are printed in an inscription at the top of the print. Another inscription mentions the admission fee 72 *mon* (approximately 1,800 yen; $23 Singapore dollars today).

SOUL FOOD

103. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892)
Looks heavy: Appearance of a waitress at Fukagawa in the Tenpō era, from the series *Thirty-Two Aspects of Women*
1888, Meiji era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The Japanese title of this print is *omotasō,* literally "looks heavy". The print shows a waitress named Karuko who works at a restaurant at Fukagawa. She carries a tray set with fine enamelled porcelain dishes of food. In the red bowl, there seems to be a simmered dish with beans; the blue-and-white dish holds different types of sashimi, with condiments.

The word *fūzoku* ("customs", "manners", or "morals") appears in the Japanese title of all the prints in this series, which dates from the very end of Yoshitoshi's career, when he was about forty-nine years old.

104. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892)
Looks delicious: Appearance of a courtesan in the Kaei era, from the series *Thirty-Two Aspects of Women*
1888, Meiji era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print



Similar to the previous print (Cat. 103) from the same series, the Japanese title is *mumasō,* literally "looks delicious". Which probably is meant to describe the tempura she is eating. More pieces of tempura are in a blue-and-white porcelain dish, with dipping sauce in a cup nearby. In Edo, common tempura dishes included *tai* (sea bream), *anago* (saltwater eel), *shiba-ebi* (tiger prawn), *kohana* (dotted gizzard shad), and *kaibashi* (shellfish). Sesame oil was preferred for deep frying these ingredients.

105. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864) x Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
The Matsu-no-Sushi Restaurant: Actor as Sushiya Musume Osato, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*
1852, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The top images depict Matsu-no-Sushi, a restaurant in Heiemon-chō near Asakusa Dairokuten Jinja (today's Dairoku Tensakaki Shrine) famous for its sushi. Between 1804 and 1830, *nigiri* sushi was very popular. Matsu-no-Sushi, Yohē Sushi, and Kenuki Sushi were the top three most popular sushi restaurants.

In the foreground is the character Osato, a maiden in a sushi restaurant played by kabuki actor Iwai Hanshirō III (1829–1882). Osato appears in Act 3 of *Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees*, one of the three most popular plays in the kabuki repertoire.

The print tries to suggest the (loose) link between the restaurant and Osato, two popular subjects in Edo City.

106. Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
Fujieda: Yellow rice dyed with gardenia, from the series *Spring Enjoyment of Fifty-three Stations*
1804, Kyōwa era
Koban size double format

Between Fujieda-juku and Shimada-juku along the Tōkaidō one arrives at Seto village (today's Fujieda, Shizuoka Prefecture). It is famous for *someī* (dyed rice), a dish made by steaming glutinous rice mixed with gardenia, which gives it a yellow colour. It is then mashed, spread thinly into an oval, and dried at the teahouse. Gardenia (*Gardenia jasminoides*) is often used in traditional Chinese medicine. It was popular among travellers as it was thought to "drain fire": it is anti-inflammatory and reduces fever.

The signboard outside the stall indicates the shop name, *Fujieda honmachi Seto someī.* Two women sell round dyed rice on a table. When this print was made, the rice disks would have been yellow, but now are faded. The red fruits next to them are gardenia. There is a bamboo steamer behind the two women, to steam the cakes before serving when customers buy them. They were served wrapped in an oak leaf (*kashiwanoha*). The poet Kobayashi Issa (1763–1828) visited this place and left behind a haiku: "someī ya wareware shiki ga ao Kashiwa", highlighting the contrast between the yellow dyed rice and the green oak leaf.

107 Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
a, b Ishiyakushi: Eel shop and Akasaka: Noodle shop, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road: Picture Book of Courier's Bell*
mid-Bunka era (1804–18)
Chūban nishiki-e woodblock prints

One print (107a) depicts Ishiyakushi-juku (today's Suzuka City, Mie Prefecture). It received its name from the nearby Buddhist temple, Ishiyakushi-ji, and is the 44th stop along the 53 stations of the Tōkaidō. Two travellers stop in front of a teahouse with a lantern inscribed *unagi* (eel), indicating that the shop serves unagi cuisine.

The other print (107b) depicts Akasaka-juku (today's Toyokawa city, Aichi Prefecture), 36th stop along the Tōkaidō. A man and a woman take a break at a teahouse. The signboard reads *Undon*, which is actually what we call "udon" (thick wheat-flour noodles) today. Originally known as *konton*, referring to a Chinese dumpling made from wheat-flour with fillings. It is thought to have arrived in Japan during the Nara period (710–94) and by the Edo, it had evolved into the thick noodles we know today. In *Ryōrimonogatari* (1643), an Edo period cookbook, the description of how to make udon is the same as how they are still made. Vendors in Akasaka-juku, around the Mikawa region, were famous for making flat noodles.

108 Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
a, b Kuwana: Baked clam shop and Yokkaichi: Bean paste bun shop, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road: Picture Book of Courier's Bell*
mid-Bunka era (1804–18)
Chūban nishiki-e woodblock prints

The print depicts Kuwana-juku at Ise (today's Kuwana City, Mie Prefecture), 42nd stop along the Tōkaidō. The area prospered as a pier for ferry transportation. Grilled calms are famous in Kuwana. Upon arrival, towards Yokkaichi city, one would find teahouses selling grilled clams, just as Hokusai depicts in the print here (108a). The brazier is set outside; pinecones and pine needles are added to the fire to create fragrance to attract travellers to the stall.

The other print depicts Yokkaichi-juku, the 43rd stop. It is the pitstop before making one's way to Kyoto or to Ise Shrine. The stone column on the right, reading *Oiwake Sangu michi*, and the torii (gate, the tall man stands under it) indicate that this is a junction where the path splits. Travellers who are making their pilgrimage to Ise Shrine go off the Tōkaidō here. There are many teahouses along this path. The signboard inscribed *Meibutsu Manjū* indicates that the shop sells a traditional Japanese confection.

109. Utagawa Kuniyasu (1794–1832)
Prosperity of the fish market at Nihonbashi
late Bunsei era (1818–30)
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

These prints depict the bustling fish market at Nihonbashi. Nihonbashi district was a major mercantile centre during the Edo period. Its early development is largely credited to the Mitsui family, who based their wholesaling business in Nihonbashi and developed Japan's first department store, Mitsukoshi. Mount Fuji and Edo Castle can be seen in the background.

Nihonbashi's prosperity was referred to as the "trade of a thousand *ryō* in the morning", which went along with Shibai-chō's theatre performances in the afternoon and Yoshiwara's courtesan business in the evening. (*Ryō* is an old currency unit.)

*Nihonbashi Uogashi* (riverside fish market) played an important role to the culinary scene of Edo. Established on the northern shore between the Nihonbashi and Edobashi bridges, it was called the "kitchen" of Edo.

Sea bream, abalone, sea snail, squid, flounder, octopus, spiny lobster, and tuna were all sold in the fish market and are depicted here. The men with the carrying poles (at left) seem to be carrying a large *katsuo* (bonito, or skipjack tuna). *Katsuo* is one of the most important fish on the Japanese menu. In particular, *hatsu-gatsuo*, the "first catch" of *katsuo* in the late spring to early summer, was highly prized and a favourite of Edo people.

110. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
The Tenth Month: Streetwalkers in the First Snowfall, from an untitled series of the twelve months
late Bunka era (1804–18)
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

The theme of the print is *Kannazuki* – Tenth Month. *Sōka*, in an inscription, is referring to *yotaka* (literally "night hawk"), streetwalkers in the Kansai region. The series of prints depicts a sudden snowfall and women crowding around a soba peddler's stall for a bowl of hot soba. In Edo, the term *yotaka soba,* also refers to soba peddlers who operate their business at night. These soba peddlers were also called *fūrin soba* ("wind chime soba"); there is a wind chime hanging on the peddler's stall (partially blocked by the umbrella pole in the centre print). In the Kansai region, they were referred as *yonaki soba* (literally, "night calling soba").

At the right print, three women approach the stall; two are barefoot. A woman in the centre is enjoying her bowl of hot soba. At left, a woman returns an empty bowl to the peddler and a man fixes a clog for one of the women.

111. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Flower viewing party: Grilled tofu with miso glaze
early Bunsei era (1818–30)
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This series of prints depicts women preparing for a feast in a garden during springtime. The two wearing headcloths are making *dengaku tōfu*, grilled tofu with miso glaze.

On the right, the woman is cutting the tofu into rectangles and is about to skewer them. In the Kansai region, bifurcated skewers are commonly used. The woman in the middle is preparing the grill pit, fanning the flames. The blue-and-white porcelain jar probably contains miso paste mixed with sugar and mirin. In Edo, red miso was used and in Kansai region, white miso was preferred. The woman on the left carries a black lacquered tiered box probably meant for the dish.

Grilled tofu with miso was likely introduced from China during the Nara period (710–94). The recipe evolved across time. By the mid-Edo period, Matsusaki Inari, a famous teahouse from Kyoto, had established branches on the Sumida River, specialising in *dengaku tōfu*.



112. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Actor Ichikawa Ebizō V and his family having a calligraphy and painting party: Sushi from the famous sushi shop Matsu-no-Sushi
1852, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych depicts the fifth generation Ichikawa Ebizō with his family members and close associates. He was blessed with seven sons and five daughters. This series of prints depicts a calligraphy and painting party at Ichikawa Ebizō V's home, *Yāan*. Ebizō V is in the middle print holding a brush and the folding fan, in light-coloured checked kimono. His eldest son, eighth generation Ichikawa Danjūrō, is at the right, painting Sukeroku, the main character of a famous play in the kabuki repertoire who is strongly associated with the Ichikawa family.

At the far right, Ichikawa Kuzō, is holding a red tag pensively thinking of his composition. Iwai Kumesaburō III (also known as Iwai Hanshirō VIII), sitting at the left, is in his female role, wearing a red woman's kimono and holding a sake cup. At his back stands Arashi Rikan III. The man painting a red peony on a fan is the fifth son of Ebizō V, Kawahara Chōjūrō III. The other male characters depicted are also Ebizō V's sons; all wearing kimono of the same pattern, with shrimp design and longevity character (*kotobuki*).

At the top right print, the inscription reads: *Jyō, Atake no honten heiemon-chō sushi matsu, Kobukuchōsha sama* (Saluations, Matsu-no-Sushi from Atake shop, To Mr Kobukuchōsha). The array of sushi presented on a large platter includes prawn *nigiri* sushi, egg-rolled sushi, and others. "Sushi matsu" refers to Matsu-no-Sushi, one of the most famous sushi restaurants, which was in front of Asakusa Dairokuten Jinja (today's Dairoku Tensakaki Shrine). This restaurant originated in the Fukagawa Atake area. Even after it's relocation to Edo City, the shop continued to use the name Atake no Matsu-no-Sushi. "Kobukuchōsha" literally means "the one who is blessed with many children", and refers to Ebizō V.

113. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Dance performance at the New Year party
1854, Ansei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

At the New Year, kabuki actors (including teachers and students) traditionally gathered to celebrate and perform; these gatherings were called "*kabuki odori zome*". Students are picked for certain acts and younger child actors may get the chance for their debut. On the left, Soga Gorō is portraying the role of Ichimura Uzaemon III. This series of prints was published around 1854. In August of that year, the promising young actor Ichikawa Danjūrō VIII committed suicide. It was shocking news to the kabuki world. These prints show a gathering of rising actors celebrating the New Year with drinks, music, dance, and hoping for a better year ahead.

Celebratory cuisine includes red sea bream, long eaten in Japan to bring good luck. Its status as a celebration dish is supported by the fact that word *tai* (sea bream) rhymes with the expression *medetai* (happy). It was the custom to serve a whole red sea bream grilled with salt, as depicted here.

114. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Tomoe Gozen and her son Asahina Yoshihide eating a confection, from the series *Biographies of Famous Women, Ancient and Modern*
1859, Ansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In the print, a mother has fed her child sweets to keep him still while she shaves his head. "Yakko atama" is the hairstyle of the child, made by shaving all-round, but leaving some hair at the sides and back. It was a common hairstyle for children during the Edo period.

More specifically, the woman and child are supposed to be Tomoe Gozen (1157–1247), a famous female warrior, and her son Asahina Yoshihide. Although never proven to be historical figures, both Gozen and Yoshihide are extremely popular in literature and kabuki plays, as they were said to possess superhuman traits.

In this print, the child is eating *bōlo*, a Portuguese sweet made of flour, eggs, milk, and sugar. Portuguese sweets arrived in Japan at the end of Muromachi period (1338–1573). Foreign sweets like this were popular and widespread in the Edo period.

115. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864) x Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
The Sakurai Restaurant: Actor Ichikawa Kodanji IV as Asakura Tōgo, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*
1852, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

Kunisada and Hiroshige collaborated on this series of prints, *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*. Kunisada was in-charge of the principle figure and Hiroshige worked on the background image, including the inset featuring a scene from a popular restaurant in Edo City.

The red double gourd at the left of the top image is inscribed with "Yoshi Cho", which was a shop run by Sakurai Jingorō. A restaurant worker carefully transfers sashimi from a larger charger to smaller serving dishes.

The figure in the foreground is the character Asakura Tōgo, from the play *Higashiyama sakura zoshi*, acted by kabuki star Ichikawa Kodanji IV (1812–1866). The role is based on a village head named Sakura Sogo, who organised a protest on behalf of the suffering farmers of his village, even going so far as to petition with the shogun directly. This was a capital offence, and in some cases resulted not only in execution of the offender but of their family as well.

In the play, Orikoshi Dairyo Masatomo, lord of the village, has Tōgo's family killed and Tōgo himself is tortured and crucified. Tōgo returns as a vengeful ghost to haunt Masatomo. The play is based on a historical subject relating to an incident which took place in 1653. Due to the strict censorship of the shogunate government, names of the people and places were changed to (only slightly) obscure the source.

116. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864) x Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
The Tagasode Restaurant: Actor Iwai Kumesaburō III as Yaoya Oshichi, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*
1853, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The top images here depict the façade of Tagasode, a restaurant in Asakusa Kuramae, and a close-up of a sectioned box (*fuchidaka*) filled with a variety of bite-sized foods. Tagasode was on the west side of the Sumida River, near government-owned rice storehouses (*kuramae*) and rice brokers (*fudasashi*). Bite-sized foods are usually served before the beginning of a kaiseki meal. They could include meat, fish, boiled vegetables, grilled omelette, and fish cakes. Today these dishes are commonly seen in *osechi* – New Year dishes.

The figure in the foreground is the character Yaoya Oshichi, played by kabuki actor Iwai Hanshirō III (1829–1882). She is depicted in her *furisode* (long-sleeved kimono) beating a drum to sound the fire alarm on a watchtower. The tragic story portrays an actual incident involving a sixteen-year-old girl and her love for a temple page. Yaoya Oshichi was a daughter of the greengrocer Tarobei. She fell in love with Ikuta Shōnosuke, a temple page, during a great fire in the Tenna Era (1681–84). The next year she attempted arson, thinking that she could meet him again if another fire occurred. She was caught by the authorities and burnt at the stake in Suzugamori for her crime. The theme of someone dying for love was popular with Edo audiences, and there were many novels, plays, and dances based on Oshichi's tragic and youthful folly.

There is a play on words here, with Tagasode and Oshichi's *furisode*.

117. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864) x Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
The Hyakusekirō Restaurant: Actor Ichikawa Kodanji IV as Nakamaro, from the series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital*
1853, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The top images depict candle stands and a lantern inscribed "Oryōri Hyakusekirō", a restaurant in Nihonbashi Jinzaemon-chō (today's Ningyō-chō), which served kaiseki meals. As the restaurant's name suggests, it was probably built as a multi-storey building.

The character here is Abe no Nakamaro, played by kabuki actor Ichikawa Kodanji IV (1812–1866). Abe no Nakamaro was a Japanese scholar and poet of the Nara period (710–94). He was part of the Japanese mission (717–18) to Tang China, along with Kibi no Makibi and Genbō in. The latter two returned to Japan, but he did not. In China, he passed the civil-service examination and took up an official position in the Chinese court. Later, he served as the Tang governor (*jiedushi*) of Annam (today's Vietnam). He passed away in Chang'an in 770. He is thought to have been close friends with Chinese poets Li Bai, Wang Wei, Zhao Hua, Bao Xin, and Chu Guangxi.

Abe no Nakamaro was featured as a character in *Kinu-gyoku to wakoku no irifune* (The Golden Crow, Jade Rabbit, and the Ship that arrives from Japan), a kabuki play that debuted in 1852. In the play, the spirit of Nakamaro is trapped in a tower (read as both *takadono* or *kōrō*), but he manages to escape, then communicates the secrets of the Chinese almanac to his friend Kibi no Makibi.

There is a play of words here, linking *Hyakusekirō* (multi-storey restaurant) and *Kōrō*, the tower that trapped Nakamaro's spirit.

118. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Mariko: Famous tea shop, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*
1853, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The print depicts Mariko, 20th stop along the Tōkaidō. Mariko is more than a generic teahouse. In this print, the white signboard in front of the teahouse advertises the shop's *meibutsu* (speciality) – *tororo-jiru* (a soup made from grated mountain yam). This soup was immortalised in a haiku by Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694): "Plum blossoms and fresh leaves/ the yam soup at the lodging/at Mariko station".

Likewise, Mariko and its speciality are mentioned in the popular comic travel novel *Shank's Mare*. As seen in this print, travellers stopped by the teahouse to order *tororo-jiru* along with their tea. Though Mariko is just a simple hut on the road, Hiroshige's keen sense of composition brings alive the two travellers, happily eating while a serving woman with a baby sleeping on her back waits on them.

The signboard indicates that the teahouse also sells other types of food, including *ochazuke* (green tea or broth over cooked rice) and *sake-sakana* (Japanese rice wine and fish).

119. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Grilled eel: Characters from plays as merchants and customers, from the series *Flourishing Business in Balladtown 1852*, Kaei era
Ōban size nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a street corner crowded with small shops and vendors. The people are based on puppet theatre and kabuki characters. This print is a form of caricature. The stone signpost at the centre-left of the print is inscribed: *Setamae Kabayaki* (grilled eel from Setamae). Seta, Ōmi province (today's Ōtsu, Shiga Prefecture) is a famous eel producing area. A vendor to the left of the signpost is fanning her grilled eel as the man next to her works with a live one.

These characters are from *Keisei Hangonkō*, a well-known kabuki play. It tells the story of Matahei and his wife Otoku who pay a visit to his teacher Tosa Mitsunobu, an ex-court artist. They bring eel from Seta as gifts to the teacher. The stone pillar depicted at their store is also a crucial turning point in the play.

Next to the eel store, a man sells *Ishikawaya maruage* (Ishikawa's fried food). This man can be connected to another well-known kabuki character, Ishikawa Goemon, legendary outlaw hero who stole from the rich to give to the poor. The pot of hot oil for frying is related to Goemon's story. Upon his capture, Goemon was sentenced to death by being boiled alive in an iron cauldron along with his young son. He was able to save his son by holding him above his head while he perished in the oil. Ishikawa Goemon is the subject of many puppet theatre and kabuki plays.

120. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Bush warbler rice cakes: Characters from plays as merchants and customers, from the series *Flourishing Business in Balladtown*
1852, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print



In this print, similar to the previous one (Cat. 119), the figures are associated with plays. In the upper right, a woman sells *uguisumochi* (Japanese sweet) to a young man. This scene is based on the famous kabuki play *Mukashigatari Uguisuzuka*. In the story, the main character, Sasaki Gennosuke, saves a bush warbler (*uguisu*) taken care of by Umegae. They eventually fall in love and get married. In this print, the *uguisu* (bird) is not depicted but is replaced by the *uguisumochi,* the name of which sounds like the bird.

At the top, a bird picks away at a piece of fish meat and a fishmonger hides his knife at his back. This scene is based on another play, *Natsu Matsuri Naniwa Kagami*. It tells the story of the fishmonger Danshichi, newly released from prison. He soon gets in trouble again when he rushes to a woman's rescue and inadvertently kills his own father-in-law, Giheiji. The man with the knife represents Danshichi in his iconic pose and the older man behind him, holding a large dish, with fish meat fallen to the ground, is Giheiji.

121. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Moriyama: Bodhidharma eating soba noodle, from the series *Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaidō Road*
1852, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print is part of Kuniyoshi's series depicting stations on the Kisokaidō Road, introducing the surroundings and products of famous places along the route. Skilfully adding fictive characters and word play from stories and legends to his images, Kuniyoshi ingeniously depicted all the stations along this route.

The top image and the inscription show that the place is Moriyama, in Ōmi province (today's Shiga Prefecture). The background shows a lively evening in Moriyama by Lake Biwa.

The figure in the foreground is Bodhidharma, founder of Zen Buddhism in China. He is eating tray after tray of soba. The shop worker brings Bodhidharma extra steamed baskets of noodles, cracking a wry smile of disbelief.

The style of eating soba from steamed baskets, as shown in this print, is thought to have started in the Edo period. Before that, soba was often consumed as dumplings. The soba noodles seen here are "cut soba", served with finely sliced *negi* (Welsh onion) and *daikon oroshi* (grated radish). *Ryōri monogatari* (The Story of Food, 1643) is the book that introduced cut soba noodles.

Preparing soba with soy sauce first became popular in Shimōsa province (today's Chiba and Ibaraki Prefectures) in the nineteenth century. Soy sauce had a big impact on Edo food culture. It made soba dipped in soya sauce (mixed with broth and mirin – sweet, cooking rice wine) an enormously popular dish.

122. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861) x Utagawa Torijo (active ca 1850)
Wanting to eat: Mimasaka province, from the series *Auspicious Desires on Land and Sea*
1852, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print is part of Kuniyoshi's series *Auspicious Desires on Land and Sea*, which introduces scenery and famous products of places across Japan combined with *bijin-ga*, pictures of beautiful women. The frame is inscribed: *Mimasaka Takada Suzuri-ishi*. Takada, in Mimasaka province (today's Okayama Prefecture), is famous for *suzuri-ishi* (inkstones) – thus the quarry site in the inset image. The quarry was drawn by Utagawa Torijo (sometimes referred to as Yoshitorijo), daughter of Kuniyoshi.

The woman holds a lacquered tray (*suzuributa*) with dumplings. Looking closely, you can see they are made of rice. This is probably a meal for young children, as the title suggests, *mama ga tabetai* ("I want to eat" in a child's way of speaking).

123. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Sawarabi: Masaoka and her son Senmatsu eating poisoned confections, from the series *Genji Clouds Matched with Ukiyo-e Pictures*
around 1846, Kōka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts a scene from *Meiboku Sendai Hagi* (The Precious Incense and Autumn Flowers of Sendai), a play for traditional Japanese puppet theatre (*jōruri*) and kabuki, based on an actual event, the Date Sōdō (Date family disturbance), in 1671. The play was, however, set in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) with a wet nurse and her son as characters. The woman in this print is Masaoka, wet nurse of Tsuruchiyo, the young heir of the clan. In order to protect the young lord from rebellious retainers, she keeps men away from him, prepares his meals, and guards him with her own son Senmatsu, of similar age.

In the story, Sakae Gozen, wife of a high-ranking official who supports the rebellious retainers, brought sweets and offers them to Tsuruchiyo. The suspicious Masaoka cannot allow the young lord to touch them for fear of poisoning. But refusing the gift would be a severe breach of protocol. As she hesitates, Senmatsu rushes in and eats the sweets. He immediately suffers from pain, indicating that they were indeed poisoned. Senmatsu is accused of rude behaviour and is killed by the rebels to hide the evidence of poisoning. The child depicted here is probably Senmatsu. This scene is the climax of the whole play and shows that one protects his or her lord even by sacrifice of one's own child.

The box is filled with colourful sweets known as *aruheito*, a kind of hard candy that was expensive for common people in Edo. This was one of the sweets delivered to Nagasaki from Portugal in the sixteenth century, together with castella (a cake) and others. The long thin sweet being eaten by Sen-matsu resembles the vegetable *warabi* (bracken fern). Warabi and warabimochi are famous products from Nissaka-juku, the 25th stop on the Tōkaidō.

124. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Waitress, View of the Eitaibashi Bridge, from the series *Modern Tie-dyed Fabrics of Edo*
around 1833–35, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In this print, a waitress delivers dishes of food on a large lacquered tray in a *ryōri-ya*. On the tray are a variety of dishes served in blue-and-white porcelain, richly decorated lacquered bowls, and tiered boxes.

In Edo period, *ryōri-ya* referred to a luxury restaurant that serve kaiseki ryōri (traditional Japanese multi-course haute cuisine). Some restaurants were multi-storey buildings with reception rooms and gardens. The waitress here has climbed up stairs to deliver the food. These are more than just places

for a quick meal. They also served as a place for scholars to gather and discuss paintings, calligraphy, haiku, and *rakugo* (comical storytelling).

The image framed at top left is like a view out a window of the restaurant. It shows the Eitaibashi Bridge, as the title of this print indicates. This restaurant was probably located near that bridge.

125. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Soba noodle of Shinano province, from the series *Collection of Famous Products of Land and Sea*
around 1831–32, Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows travellers along the Kisokaidō, also commonly known as Nakasendō. The background shows Mount Asama, an active volcano in central Honshū. The signboard of the teahouse reads: *Meibutsu Shinshū Ni Roku* (Famous product Shinshū Two-Six). Shinshū (today's Nagano Prefecture) is famous for its soba.

*Ni roku* (two-six) refers to the price of the soba noodles. It means one serving costs 12 mon (2 x 6; today approx. 198 yen). The usual price for a serving of soba is *ni hachi* (two-eight), which is 16 mon. In mid-Edo period, the publication *Soba Zensho* mentions that soba shops in Edo City were selling at the two-six price. Gradually, towards the end of Edo period, the prices of soba were inflated to 20 mon and 24 mon.

*Ni hachi* (two-eight) is also the ratio for making soba: with two parts wheat flour and eight parts buckwheat flour. Even today, many soba noodle makers keep to this traditional recipe.

126. Utagawa Sadakage (dates unknown)
Lottery
1818–44, Bunsei or Tenpō era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

Based on the attire and headdress, the standing woman holding pocket paper is possibly a courtesan (yūjo). On the floor, there is a *haisen* (a container filled with water meant to lightly rinse sake cups) and a tray of food. The contents of the blue-and-white porcelain bowl might include *fuki no nimono* (butterbur shoots), *datemaki* (sweet rolled omelette), and other snacks.

The inset image depicts winners of a temple lottery. A man in ceremonial dress (*kamishimo*) holds a wooden box filled with *koban* (oval gold coins). Another man, probably a monk, raises his hands in anticipation of receiving the *koban*. The man beside him holds up a red envelope.

127. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Candy vendors: Actors Segawa Kikunojō V as Omura and Ichikawa Danjurō VII as Naritaya Shichibei
1819, Bunsei era
Series of two ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This print is based on *Osome Hisamatsu Ukina no Yomiuri*, a kabuki play performed in 1819. The story is about the love between Osome, daughter of an oil seller, and Hisamatsu, a young apprentice. But this print depicts other characters – Naritaya Shichibei (played by Ichikawa Danjuro VII), a candy vendor, and his wife Omura (played by Segawa Kikunojō V). Their portable stall is inscribed: *Nadai Mimasu Ame* (Mimasu's famous candies). There are balls of sweets in the round bucket, and bags for the sweets hang from the roof. The paper bags include the family *mon* (crest) of Danjuro VII, also refer as *mimasu*.

The candy-vendor character Shichibei was inspired by an actual candy vendor in the mid-Edo period, of the same name. He was known to sell his candies walking around with his portable stall. Shichibei of Edo-Asakusa and his red and white *chitose ame* (chitose candy) became very popular. Some claim that this began the tradition of having chitose candy during Shichi-Go-San, a Japanese traditional rite of passage and festival day for three-, five-, and seven-year-old children, held annually on the 15th of November to celebrate their growth and well-being.

128. Utagawa Yoshitora (dates unknown)
Foreigners enjoying a party
1861, Bunkyū era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This print depicts a group of foreigners enjoying a party in Gankirō house, Miyozaki Yūkaku. In this brothel, there were various graded rooms – peony, chrysanthemum, plum blossom, sakura, etc. Of which, *sensu no ma* (Room of Folding Fans), depicted here, was the highest grade of luxury. Here two geisha play the shamisen and two men (one American; one Chinese) seem to be dancing to the tune. There are English, Dutch, Russian, French men seated around the dining table (each nationality labelled in an inscription above). One man pulls at a bunch of grapes; what might be bowls of bread and bottles of foreign wine are distributed around the table. At left, two courtesans seem to be just entering the room. On the right, the women in Western dress are probably wives of the foreigners.

The unexpected arrival of the American Commodore Matthew Perry (1794–1858) in Tokyo in 1853 astonished the Japanese people, who had been isolated from the rest of the world for more than 200 years, since the national seclusion act of 1639.

Rapidly following Perry's visit, the nation's doors re-opened to the world; the feudal government of the shoguns collapsed; and a new age was ushered in. Foreigners visiting Edo City from the "five nations" – England, Netherlands, France, Russia, United States – were restricted to living in Yokohama, a port city on Tokyo Bay. Gradually other ports were opened to foreigners, including Kobe and Nagasaki. Chinese merchants had always been present in these Japanese ports.

129. Utagawa Yoshitoyo (1830–1866)
American men at the teahouse
1860, Man'en era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

Yokohama was opened as a treaty port in 1859 and soon after, the Miyozaki Yūkaku (Miyozaki red-light district) was established. This district was populated with expensive brothels and teahouses. One of the most famous brothels was Gankirō, which had large gardens with arching bridges. Glass chandeliers were hung in the interiors. Today this area is known as Yokohama Park.

The print shows two Americans, an ambassador and a sailor, who has just lit his companion›s pipe. The interior in which they sit has elements of Western culture, including the high table, armchairs, and a wine glass.



130. Utagawa Yoshikazu (active 1844–70)
Foreigners' residence in Yokohama
1861, Bunkyū era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

Foreigners entering Japan were restricted to living in Yokohoma, a port city south of Tokyo on Tokyo Bay. Their physical appearance, apparel, and way of life were subjected to intense scrutiny, and they became a popular theme for so-called "Yokohama prints" like this. In this imaginary scene, a Western merchant's family relaxes in a European-style residence. Western ships like the ones that frequented Tokyo Bay can be glimpsed through the windows.

The right print depicts the kitchen. A man seems to be preparing pieces of meat with a large cleaver. Before the Meiji period (1868–1912), due to strong influence of Buddhism, consuming meat in Japan was extremely rare. Cows were not raised for consumption during the Edo period. The traditional ban on meat was lifted after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The meat depicted here was probably brought in or meant only for the foreigners.

131. Artist unknown
Present-day sesame rice cakes
1868, Meiji era
Series of two ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This comical print shows a monumental grinding bowl (*suribachi*) with a group of men working to grind sesame seeds. As the title of the print suggests, they are making *goma no ohagi*, a Japanese sweet rice cake. It is made with glutinous rice, regular rice (ratio of 7:3; or only with glutinous rice), and sesame seeds. On the stall at left, each plate holds five round pieces.

This print is a parody that tells the story of the Chōshū Domain, and how they formed the Satchō Alliance with their rival Satsuma Domain during the Meiji Restoration to overthrow the Tokugawa Shogunate.

132. Artist unknown
Earthquake catfish print: Grilling a giant catfish
1855, Ansei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

In 1854, the Great Ansei Earthquake struck Edo City, claiming thousands of lives and inflicting widespread damage. Within days, a new type of colour woodblock print known as *namazu-e* (literally, catfish pictures) became popular among Edo residents. These prints featured *namazu* (giant-sized catfish) that, according to popular legends, caused earthquakes by thrashing about in their underground lairs. In addition to providing humour and social commentary, many prints claimed to offer protection from future earthquakes.

The popularity of *namazu-e* exploded, and as many as one hundred different types became available within weeks. The phenomenon abruptly ended when the Tokugawa government, which maintained a strict system of censorship over the publishing industry, cracked down on production. Only a handful are known to survive today.

In this *namazu-e* print, the catfish is being exorcised by the Shinto god Kashima. The crowd on the left are victims of the earthquake.

GARDENING

133. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Plum-blossom viewing party on a spring evening
around 1849–51, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

The lavishly dressed women here are gathered to view plum blossoms. Under a plum-blossom tree, the garden is filled with many flowers and plants, including *tsubaki* (Japanese camellia) and *suisen* (narcissus) behind the green fencing. The double-tiered rack at right holds an array of potted plants and flowers such as smaller *ume* (plum-blossom), *nanten* (nandina), *goyōmatsu* (five-needle pine), *matsubaran* (whisk fern), *fukujusō* (pheasant's eye), all planted in blue-and-white porcelain. The party and all the associated flowers and plants suggest this gathering is to welcome the arrival of spring. On the floor, the women sit amidst an array of luxury items – black-and-gold lacquered boxes, candle stands, and sake drinking vessels.

134. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Kannon Temple, Asakusa: Sponge gourds, from the series *Mirror of Fine Views*
mid-Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

The prints in Kunisada›s *Mirror of Fine Views* series combine a beautiful woman and a view of a famous spot in Edo City. There are ten known prints from this series, depicting views of Asakusa, Ueno, Shinobazu, Surugamachi, Nihonbashi, Ryōgoku, Sakaichō, Yoshiwara, Mimeguri, and Takanawa.

Here, the inset image is inscribed "Kannon" (Bodhisattva of Compassion) and shows a view of the Sensō-ji Kannon Temple at Asakusa. The composition uses linear perspective, an influence from Western art. The main figure is a half-naked woman hanging her laundry beside a garden box with a large sponge gourd ripening.

135. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Autumn: Actors Iwai Kumesaburō III, Ichikawa Danjūrō VIII, and Bandō Shūka I, from the series *Comparisons of Flowers of Four Seasons*
1853, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

Edo people bought flowers and plants from roadside peddlers who set up temporary stalls in the manner of the ones depicted in this print. All the potted flowers and plants on the racks here represent the autumn season; thus the title of this print. More expensive plants, such as *omoto* (Japanese scared lily) and *matsubaran* (whisk fern), are already in ceramic pots on the shelves. Other autumn plants on the floor, *ominaeshi* (Eastern valerian; *Patrinia scabiosifolia*) and *suzuki* (a silvery grass; *Micanthus sinensis*), could be easily transplanted in one's garden or into pots after purchase.

In the foreground are three kabuki actors, from right: Iwai Kumesaburō III, Ichikawa Danjūrō VIII, and Bandō Shūka I. Both Kumesaburō III and Shūka I were famous *onnagata* (male kabuki actors who play female roles), hence they were usually portrayed in women's costumes. Their names are not inscribed in this print, but the attributes they hold – a fan

painted with *kakitsubata* (Japanese iris), a wallet with three diagonal stripes, and a tassel with the *hanakatsumi* crest – along with their likenesses here, would have signalled to viewers of the time who they were.

136. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Actors Ichimura Takenojō V as Wakatake no Kame, Bandō Shūka I as Yamatoya Osen, and Ichikawa Danjūrō VIII as Takinobori no Kichi
1851, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych depicts three kabuki actors in character from a play called *Shochikubai nagori no shimadai*, from right: Ichimura Takenojō as Wakatake no Kame, Bandō Shūka I as Yamatoya Osen, and Ichikawa Danjūrō VIII as Takinobori no Kichi. The play debuted in June 1851, at the kabuki theatre Ichimura-za. Danjūrō VIII was ill and could not performed that day. Ichikawa Kuzō was his replacement. Obviously this print was produced before the first show. The story is about a flower peddler played by Takenojō V.

Cultivating *asagao* (morning glory), seen on the pyramidal stands here, was popular during the Edo period. The main trend in cultivation was to combine many different species of morning glory with other flowers and plants, hoping to create newer variations. During the boom period, there were many publications (with illustrations and methods of cultivation) and exhibitions on rarer new species. The price of morning glory seedlings soared.

137. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Chrysanthemums of one hundred varieties grafted together around 1845, Kōka era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This triptych shows a large crowd pressing forward to see an enormous chrysanthemum plant bearing flowers of a hundred different varieties of chrysanthemums, each identified by name on the hanging label. This botanical wonder is said to have been created by carefully cutting and grafting different chrysanthemums onto a central stem – a technical feat made all the more extraordinary when all the flowers bloomed simultaneously.

Kuniyoshi's print is the only existing visual record of this "miracle" plant, which, according to the text at the top of the right-hand print, was the work of a garden specialist named Imaemon.

138. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Earth: Tokonatsu, from the series *Comparisons for the Five Elements*
around 1851–52, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This print is based on *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* (False Murasaki's Rural Genji), a late Edo period literary parody of the *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu. The parody, by Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783–1842), with illustrations by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, was published in a woodblock print edition. It shifts the timeframe from the Heian period to the Muromachi period, and replaces classic poetry with haiku. It was the best-selling example of the genre known as *gōkan*, a popular literary form that merged images with text.

With the popularity of the graphic novel, Kuniyoshi produced a series of prints titled *Mitate Gogyō* (Comparisons for the Five Elements). This triptych, *Earth: Tokonatsu*, is part of the series. The figures are also based on the graphic novel: on the right print is Genji; the woman on the left is Tamakazura, a girl adopted by Genji in the story.

In the garden, there are *nadeshiko* (carnations), potted in fine blue-and-white porcelain pots. Based on the glaze and design, the pots are probably from Seto (today's Aichi Prefecture). Seto ware was extremely popular and commonly found in Edo.

139. Utagawa Yoshitora (dates unknown)
Fashionable assortment of chrysanthemums: Elephant
1844, Kōka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print shows two women looking at an elephant made of chrysanthemums. During fairs and exhibitions in Edo, gardeners would create human or animal figures made of chrysanthemum flowers. *Mizugoke* (bog moss) was used to tie the different parts together; many small bunches of flowers form the shape of the elephant.

This spectacular floral sculpture was executed by Itō Kingorō, a gardener from Somei village (today's Toshima city, Tokyo) in 1844. Elephants were recorded as diplomatic gifts to important Japanese lords in the sixteenth century. But not many Japanese had ever seen a live elephant. Their knowledge of the animal was based on illustrations in books or magazines. In depicting the two beautiful women in the foreground, Yoshitora paid homage to his teacher Kuniyoshi.

140. Utagawa Kunimori II (active 1830–61)
Rooster-shaped corn exhibited at Shinagawa
1845, Kōka era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts an urban myth: the appearance of a rooster-shaped ear of corn in the house of a man named Kyūbē at Shinagawa. According to one report, Kyūbē's rooster passed away, and he buried it in his backyard. From there, a cob of corn matured and took the form of a rooster. This story grabbed the attention of the neighbourhood.

It is likely that the cob caught a fungal disease known as corn smut. The fungus causes leaves, fruit, and silk to form large galls that could perhaps appear like a rooster's comb and wattles.

## SEASONAL FESTIVALS

141. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Scene at low tide: Gathering shellfish
late Bunsei era (1818–30)
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

The triptych shows a busy beach at low tide. Three beautiful, stylishly dressed women gather shellfish. Two hold a pole supporting a basket full of *hamaguri* clams. At the back, fishermen return with their boats full of the catch of the day.

When spring arrives, two favourite pastimes come to mind for Edo people: viewing cherry blossoms and gathering shellfish. The book *Tōtosaijiki* (1838) mentions that the best time to gather shellfish is between March and April of the lunar calendar (today's April and May). During the day at lowtide, one can find an array of shellfish, including *hamaguri* (hard clams), *asari* (littleneck clam), and *sasae* (horned turban, a type of sea snail).



142. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861)
Cherry blossoms at Tsukiji Honganji Temple
1853, Kaei era
Ōban nishiki-e woodblock print

This print depicts the viewing of cherry blossoms at Tsukiji Honganji, a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temple located near the Tsukiji area today. The temple was mentioned as a famous spot to view cherry blossoms in the 1827 publication *Edo Meisho Hanagoyomi* (literally, "floral calendar and famous spots in Edo").

Today, most cherry blossom trees we see are the Yoshino cherry type. It is one of the most popular and widely planted flowering cherries worldwide since the Meiji period (1868–1912). During Edo, however, the popular cherries were *yae-zakura* (double-layered blossom), *bigan-sakura, and yama-sakura* (hill cherry, wild mountain variety). Depending on the type of trees, the season for viewing cherry blossoms is around the Vernal Equinox (20 or 21 March) through the end of April.

143. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
The Twelfth Month: Making rice dumplings, from the series *Twelve Months*
1854, Ansei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

In the final month of the winter season, preparations for New Year festivities are underway in this print as five women and a man make mochi (rice cakes) in a kitchen. Auspicious symbols of the coming year appear as small details: a turtle symbolising longevity is depicted on a fan at the left, and gourds, a symbol of good luck, decorate the sliding screens.

The publisher has included his mark on the lantern at the right as a form of self-advertisement.

*Twelve Months* is a series of triptychs depicting genre scenes (scenes of everyday life) in the Edo period. Seasonal activities, mostly performed by women, are the artist Kunisada's primary subjects. He alternates between mundane pursuits, such as the airing of clothes (The Sixth Month), with the preparation of mochi for the New Year holiday in this print. Together, the prints contrast the cycle of daily life (*ke*) with the more formal and special (*hare*) quality of religious festival days (*harebi*), thus highlighting the passage of time.

Until 1873, Japanese used a lunar calendar, in which the rotation of the seasons began with spring. New Year, which marked the first day of spring, usually occurred in late January or early to mid-February, as rendered with the solar Gregorian calendar.

144. Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
Enjoying the Doll Festival
1861, Bunkyū era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

The Doll Festival (*Hinamatsuri*), which celebrates young girls of a household, takes place on the third day of the third month, when flowering peach trees (*momo*) are in bloom. Peach blossoms are thought to ward off evil and bring good fortune to young girls.

During the Heian period (794–1185), Hinamatsuri began as a custom of praying for good fortune for many things during early March. It was believed that paper dolls could take away evil spirits. As a purification ritual, girls would brush paper dolls over their skin to remove impurities. These dolls would then be floated down the river or into the sea to take away the evil spirits, thus protecting the young girl's health and spirit. Much of that tradition has carried over through the centuries.

By the Edo period, Hinamatsuri was focused on granting health and good luck for young girls. It was celebrated with a display of dolls in the home. Each doll was elaborated dressed and accompanied with symbolic objects such as boxes, games boards, palanquins, and musical instruments decorated with black lacquer and gold. Due to the austerity measures implemented by the Tokugawa government, these luxuries were then curbed. Today, the manufacturing of these figurines remains a thriving example of traditional Japanese craftwork.

Other traditional items enjoyed during this period include various types of food, drinks, and flower blossoms thought to ward off evil and bring good luck. These include sake (a sweet, alcohol-free type of fermented rice called amazake is given to children), *chirashizushi* (sushi made with vinegared rice and fish), flavoured crackers, a salty clam-based soup, and mochi. Treats like candy dolls and other confections, are also popular. Some of these treats can be seen in the left print. The customary display of dolls and other miniature objects is shown on the right. In this case, it is a tiered arrangement of dolls dressed in ornate decorative robes representing the imperial court.

145. Yōshū Chikanobu (1838–1912)
Boys Festival, from the series *Sands of Edo*
1885, Meiji era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

In this print, the artist Chikanobu depicts the Boys Festival – Tango no Sekku – one of the five annual festivals during the Edo period. It is the Japanese version of a Chinese traditional holiday celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth month. Since Japan switched from the lunar calendar to the Gregorian, the festival has been observed on the fifth of May. Today this festival is commonly known as Kodomo no Hi (Children's Day), to include both boys and girls. In 1948, the government decreed this day to be a national holiday celebrating the happiness of all children and to express gratitude towards mothers.

The Boys Festival marks the beginning of summer, and on this day iris and artemisia leaves are hung in doorways to protect homes from evil spirits. People also eat rice cakes wrapped in oak leaves. The parents of boys display armour, as seen on the right print, and carp streamers are hung on the roofs of houses, indicating how many children live there. A black carp streamer represents boys, as seen in the upper right. Below the carp streamer, a group of young boys are being supervised in ritual combat. At the lower left, there is a banner with a representation of the mythological figure Shōki (Chinese: Zhong Kui) defeating a demon.

By the late 1880s, Chikanobu and many others were anxious and dismayed by the rapid changes they were experiencing in Edo. Feeling nostalgic for the old world of the

shogunate, Chikanobu throughout the 1890s produced a variety of prints that took as their subject matter the "traditional" aspects of Japanese culture he believed were being forgotten with industrialisation.

146. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Fireworks at Ryōgoku
around 1849–51, Kaei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

This print shows three women gathering at a pier to watch the summer fireworks near Ryōgoku Bridge; perhaps to avoid the crowds depicted in the dark background. A fashionable way of enjoying the fireworks was to rent a private boat cruise. Restaurants and other businesses along the riverbanks frequently sponsored dazzling fireworks displays during the 1850s. The pyrotechnics drew large crowds, who gathered atop the bridge, along the shore, in teashops, and on rented pleasure boats to enjoy the show.

Two years after the Great Fire of Meireki incident in 1657, which destroyed over half of the capital city of Edo, the Ryōgoku Bridge was built spanning the Sumida River. Its name means "two provinces", so named because it joined Edo (part of Musashi province) and Shimōsa province.

The tradition of summer fireworks at Ryōgoku lasted from 1733 to 1961, with only occasional interruptions. In 1978, it was re-introduced as the Sumidagawa Fireworks Festival, which is now held annually on the last Saturday in July.

147. Utagawa Kunisada II (1823–1880)
Tanabata Festival, from the series *The Five Festivals Represented by Baicho Genji*
1858, Ansei era
Series of three ōban nishiki-e woodblock prints

Tanabata, also known as Star Festival, takes place on the seventh day of the seventh month. It is said to be the one night of the year that Hikoboshi, the cowherd (the star Altair), and Orihime, the weaver (Vega), are reunited across the river of heaven (Milky Way). This traditional Chinese legend arrived in Japan during the Nara period (710–794). It was originally celebrated following the lunar calendar, but when Japan adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873, Tanabata came to be observed on the seventh of July, roughly a month earlier in terms of the cycle of seasons. Today Tanabata is celebrated in summer but for an Edo person, it was an autumn festival.

On the left print, bamboo branches adorned with long narrow paper strips of varied colours hang from above. The tradition of writing wishes on strips of paper and decorating bamboo branches with them has survived to this day.

This series *The Five Festivals Represented by Baicho Genji* is loosely based on the well-received book *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* (False Murasaki's Rural Genji) by Ryūtei Tanehiko, a late Edo period parody of the *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu. In this print, the main character stands in the left print under the bamboo. The artist Kunisada II lavishly detailed the patterns on each fashionable kimono worn by the characters.

## PAINTINGS

*Nikuhitsuga* (painting in the ukiyo-e print style) is done with a brush and coloured ink on paper or silk. Most works in the genre were produced by artists who also designed drawings for woodblock prints. Thus, many are close in subject and style to ukiyo-e prints. Today the term *nikuhitsuga* is broadly applied to brush-drawn genre paintings of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. It also describes modern works by *nihonga* (traditional Japanese painting) artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

148. Motohiro
Beauty and cat
Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ink and colour on paper scroll

149. Mihata Jyōryū (active 1830–44)
Beauty and dog
Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ink and colour on silk scroll

150. Tani Bunchō (1763–1840) x Komatsubara Suikei (1780–1833) x Kita Busei (1776–1856)
Butterfly, peony, and cat
early Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ink and colour on paper scroll

151. Artist unknown (Attributed to Katsushika Hokusai)
Monkeys with Gohei
Bunka era (1804–18)
Ink and colour on paper scroll

152. Mihata Jyōryū (active 1830–44)
Beauty under cherry blossoms
1820–44, Bunsei or Tenpō era
Ink and colour on silk scroll

153. Kouno Bairei (1844–1895)
Parody of *Onna San no Miya* (The Third Princess)
1868–72, Meiji era
Ink and colour on silk scroll

154. Utagawa Kunimune (active 1818–30)
Strolling shamisen player and woman at the face powder shop
Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ink and colour on paper scroll

155. Kikukawa Eizan (1787–1867)
Child holding a dog
mid-Bunka era (1804–18)
Ink and colour on paper scroll

156. Nagamasa
Bust portrait of a beautiful woman
Bunsei era (1818–30)
Ink and colour on paper scroll

157. Bansai Madaki
Woman brushing her teeth
Tenpō era (1830–44)
Ink and colour on paper scroll



## RUSSEL WONG PHOTOGRAPHS

For display in the exhibition, all photographs were printed at approximately 39 x 26 cm, matching the Japanese traditional ōban size, the most popular print format during the Edo period.

158. Sanjō Bridge
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Familiarity with the ukiyo-e prints prompted Russel Wong to make a conscious effort to shoot places featured in Japanese prints or places identified with seasonal themes – but he focused specifically in Kyoto (most of the famous prints were of Edo).

Wong fondly recalls Hiroshige's series of the *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*. He remembers that it started with the Nihonbashi Bridge in Edo and despite some variations in the selection of post stations in later editions, Hiroshige would always end with the Sanjo Bridge in Kyoto. While documenting the geiko and maiko in Kyoto, Wong was able to find the spot where he imagined Hiroshige would have visualised his image of the Sanjo Bridge depicted in his print.

159. Shinnyodō Temple Pagoda with *sakura* flowers (cherry blossoms)
Sakyo ward, Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

160. Sannenzaka
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

161. Kiyomizu-dera (Kiyomizu Temple)
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

162. Yasaka-no-Tō of Hōkan-ji (Yasaka Pagoda of Hokan Temple)
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2019
Archival pigment print on photo rag

163. Hōjō Garden in Tōfuku-ji (Moss garden in Tofuku Temple)
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2015
Archival pigment print on photo rag

164. Hōjō Southern Garden in Tōfuku-ji
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2013
Archival pigment print on photo rag

165. Togetsu-kyō Bridge in spring
Ukyo ward, Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

166. Sagano Bamboo Forest at night
Ukyo ward, Kyoto, 2013
Archival pigment print on photo rag

167. Moss garden of Kōinzan Saihō-ji
Nishikyo ward, Kyoto, 2014
Archival pigment print on photo rag

168. Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion)
Kita ward, Kyoto, 2020
Large format, combining 4 x 4 prints in ōban size
Archival pigment prints on photo rag

169. Interior of Katsura Imperial Villa
Nishikyo ward, Kyoto, 2012
Archival pigment print on photo rag

170. Gion Shirakawa
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2010
Archival pigment print on photo rag

171. Gion traditional footwear shop
Kyoto, 2013
Archival pigment print on photo rag

172. Kagai life in Miyagawa-chō
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2010
Archival pigment print on photo rag

173. Geiko Sayaka
Kyoto, 2014
Large format, combining 4 x 4 prints in oban size
Archival pigment prints on photo rag

This silhouette of Geiko Sayaka was taken in Tsurui, one of the ochayas (teahouses) in Gion Kobu kagai. Inspired by the Japanese prints in this exhibition, all of Wong's photographs were printed in *ōban* size (approximately 39 x 26 cm), the most popular woodblock print format during the Edo period.

174. A maiko going to her appointment in the kagai
Kyoto, 2015
Archival pigment print on photo rag

175. Geiko and maiko on their way to the teahouse in winter
Kyoto, 2014
Archival pigment print on photo rag

176. Gion Matsuri performance
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2010
Archival pigment print on photo rag

177. Kitano Odori performance
Kamigyo ward, Kyoto, 2012
Archival pigment print on photo rag

This traditional dance performance started in 1952 in Kamishichiken kagai to commemorate the Daimanto-sai Festival, which is held once every 50 years at the Kitano Tenmangu Shrine. The performance consists of dance drama and classical dance.

178. Tea ceremony at Nashinoki Shrine
Kamigyo ward, Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Tea ceremony is one of the most popular aspects of traditional Japanese culture. Tea is called *sadō* in Japan. It is a cruicial part of geiko and maiko training. Here, Geiko Fukune holds a bamboo ladle (*hishaku*) to scoop hot water from the iron pot (*kama*). The pot is placed in a fire pit (*ro*) built into the

floor of the tearoom. The frame, usually made of lacquered wood, that fits around the top is called a *robuchi*.

This tea ceremony was held at a tearoom in Nashinoki Shrine. The Shinto shrine is dedicated to Sanjo Sanetsumu and his son Sanjo Sanetomi, who both played major roles in the Meiji Restoration.

179. Geiko Fukune folding her *fukusa* (wrapping cloth)
Nashinoki Shrine, Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Geiko Fukune is folding her silk cloth (*fukusa*). It serves multiple purposes; primarily for symbolic cleansing of the tea ceremony paraphernalia. When not in use, the cloth is tucked into her obi (kimono sash). The size of the *fukusa* is often standard (approx. 30 x 30 cm), but there are different colours for men and women, for people of different ages or skill levels, for different ceremonies, and for different tea schools.

Geiko Fukune is from Chiba Prefecture. She began her training in Miyaki Ochaya, in

Miyagawa-chō kagai, at the age of 15 and debuted as a maiko when she was 16. She became a geiko at 21. Miyaki was built in the Meiji period. The current owners have kept the name but changed it to hiragana instead of the original Kanji characters 宮貴.

180. Geiko Fukune purifyng the bowl before making tea
Nashinoki Shrine, Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

181. Lips
Kyoto, 2020
Large format, combining 4 x 3 prints in ōban size
Archival pigment prints on photo rag

182. Geiko Fukune with her tea bowl from the Waraku Kiln
Nashinoki Shrine, Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Geiko Fukune is holding a tea bowl with Japanese maple leaf (*momiji*) design. It was made by Kawasaki Waraku, 7th-generation grandmaster of the Waraku kiln.

Waraku kiln has been producing raku wares in Kyoto since the late Edo period. The term *raku* comes from the site where clay was dug from in Kyoto in the late 16th century. It uses a similar Kanji character to the one that means “enjoyment”. Raku ware marked an important point in the historical development of Japanese ceramics. It was the first type to use a seal mark and the first to focus on close collaboration between potter and patron.

183. Face
Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

184. Maiko Fukukana and Fukuna sharing a light moment over tea
Nashinoki Shrine, Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Like Geiko Fukune, both Maiko Fukukana (right) and Fukuna (left) began their training at 15 years old and debuted as maiko when they were 16. They were both 20 at the time of this shoot. Maiko Fukukana is from Miyagi Prefecture and Fukuna is from Tochigi Prefecture. Both maiko are with the Miyaki Ochaya.

185. Maiko Fukukana and Fukuna playing a game after tea
Nashinoki Shrine, Kyoto, 2020
Archival pigment print on photo rag

186. Maiko at Shimogamo Shrine
Sakyo ward, Kyoto, 2010
Archival pigment print on photo rag

187. Three maiko in Miyagawa-chō kagai district off to work
Higashiyama ward, Kyoto, 2017
Archival pigment print on photo rag

188. Maiko Sayaka performing her dance during the Erikae ceremony
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

A maiko performs a dance called *kuro-kami* (literally, black hair) in front of clients before her Erikae (“turning of the collar”) ceremony. This dance and the ceremony mark the point at which a maiko becomes a geiko.

The Erikae ceremony often happens over the course of two weeks, as a maiko gradually prepares herself to become a geiko. During that time, she changes her hairstyle, blackens her teeth, receives her geiko name, then changes her collar (*eri*) from red to white.

189. The Tsurui Ochaya’s *okāsan* cutting the new geiko’s hair during Erikae
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Tanaka Okāsan of Tsurui Ochaya cuts the hair of the maiko. It is said that the hair-cutting ceremony marks the beginning of the Erikae. One difference between a geiko and a maiko lies in the hairstyle. A geiko usually wears a simple wig over her natural hair. A maiko styles her own hair into elaborate arrangements that vary depending on the stage of training she is in. Here the maiko has a Sakkō hairstyle. This will be the last time she wears this hairstyle.

The okāsan (manager) of an ochaya (teahouse) is the person who makes the decision to allow a maiko to graduate into a geiko, usually after 3 to 5 years of working as a maiko. There are many factors considered, including age, skills, popularity of the district, and desire to balance the number of geiko and maiko in the teahouse.

190. Maiko Sayaka preparing for the Erikae ceremony
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

191. Geiko Sayaka after her Erikae ceremony
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

192. The white kimono collar worn by the geiko
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag



The white collar marks the graduation from maiko to geiko. Maiko are not permitted to wear a kimono with a white collar.

193. Maiko having the nape of her neck painted with the *sanbon-ashi* (three-legged) design, for formal occasions
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

A maiko has a special staff to complete her make-up only on the day of her official debut as a maiko (*misedashi*). After this, she will have to do it by herself every day. A maiko wears red only on the bottom lip for the first year after *misedashi*. The three-legged design, painted on the nape of the neck with the help of a stencil, is only for formal or special occasions.

194. Tanaka-san, head of the ochaya, has a chat with the geiko and maiko and wishes them luck on their first day
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

This was a special occasion for Tanaka-san, manager of Tsurui Ochaya in Gion Kobu kagai. It was the first time in 30 years that a maiko transited into a geiko and another girl became a maiko within the same establishment on the same day.

195. Geiko and maiko visiting the other ochayas to introduce themselves on their first day
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Geiko Sayaka and Maiko Satsuki set off to make courtesy visits (known as *aisatsumawari*) in the neighbourhood.

196. Maiko Satsuki celebrating her first day as a maiko
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Silver hair ornaments are set on both sides of a maiko’s hair only on the day of her debut (*misedashi*).

197. Geiko Sayaka helping Maiko Satsuki with her *kanzashi* (hair ornaments)
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

198. Maiko Satsuki on her first day
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

Satsuki made her debut as maiko in February 2011. She then had her Erikae (transition from maiko to geiko) on February 2015, and her career as a geiko began.

199. Geiko Sayaka
Kyoto, 2011
Archival pigment print on photo rag

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