Japanese Woodblock Prints from the Archives & Special Collections

nostalgic FEMININITY
The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery

from flowers TO WARRIORS
St. Catherine University Library

Curated by Christina M. Spiker, Ph.D.
with MaryJane Eischen ‘20,
and Nicole Wallin ‘19

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

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Acknowledgments

I did not know that I would be curating an exhibition, let alone two, when graduate student Heather Carroll MLIS ’18 approached me in 2016 about a series of prints that she discovered while working in the St. Catherine University Archives & Special Collections. What started as mere curiosity flourished into the exhibitions Nostalgic Femininity and From Flowers to Warriors. This work was accomplished with the help of many people over the course of several years.

Neither of these exhibitions would have been possible without the tireless work of my two curatorial assistants, MaryJane Eisien ’20 and Nicole Wallin ’19. Over the last year, MaryJane has worked with me through the Assistant Mentorship Program here at St. Kate’s. She assisted with the initial research and archiving of the print collection, and every photograph that graces these pages was taken by her steady hand. MaryJane is also responsible for the creation of the digital component for these exhibitions. Nicole joined this project in February 2019. Her eloquent words are woven through the pages of this catalog and she played an instrumental role in constructing didactics for both shows as well as writing the biographies of this very diverse group of Japanese artists.

This project is also the result of collaboration between many different entities on campus. Nicole Watson, Director of The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery, provided guidance and mentorship throughout the course of this project. I appreciated her careful eyes, her attention to detail, and the fact that her door was never closed to me. I also need to express my sincere gratitude to Kimberlee Joy Roth, Ann Buchen, and Jennifer Adam for their roles in organizing, installing, and supporting these shows from start to finish. From the
St. Catherine University Library, I must thank Librarians Lizzy Tegeler and Emily Asch for their willingness to engage in this interdisciplinary—and interdepartmental—project. They have been great collaborators on the other side of the quad. I am indebted to the staff of the Library’s Archives & Special Collections including Deborah Kloiber, Amy Shaw, and Rose Winter MLIS ‘22 for their help ensuring that these prints would be made visible to the entire campus community. And finally, thank you to my amazing colleagues in the Art and Art History Department. I’m grateful to Carol Lee Chase, Todd Deutsch, Amy K. Hamlin, and Monica Rudquist for their camaraderie during a very hectic semester.

The full scope of these shows could not have been achieved without the assistance of an initial Research & Creative Works Grant from the Academic Professional Development Committee at St. Catherine University. I am also thankful to Blick Art Materials in Edina, Minnesota, for sponsoring these exhibitions. Their generosity is a true gift and service to the University. My appreciation goes to General Manager Jonathan Jankowski and Framing Associate Carly Regner for their assistance.

In my final year as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History, this pair of exhibitions is my parting gift to St. Kate’s, an institution that welcomed and nurtured me for these past three years. These exhibitions are for you. 心から感謝申し上げます。

Christina M. Spiker, Curator
Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History
St. Catherine University

Yōshū Chikanobu, Cherry-blossom Viewing from the series Customs of the Inner Palace of Chiyoda Castle, 1894. Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper. Courtesy of the St. Catherine University Archives & Special Collections.
The woodblock prints in the exhibitions *Nostalgic Femininity* and *From Flowers to Warriors*, on view in The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery and the St. Catherine University Library respectively, are products of the artistic and cultural climate in Meiji-period Japan. To understand the visual content of the prints, it is necessary to situate them within their specific historical context.

The Meiji period (1868–1912) was a time of massive cultural and institutional transformation in Japanese culture. After the opening of Japanese ports in 1854 through the aggressive “gunboat diplomacy” of the United States, Japan was forced to begin trading with Western nations in port cities such as Yokohama and Hakodate. In 1868, just twelve years after the opening of the
country, Japan’s long tradition of rule by military dictators (shōgun) was brought to an end through the coordinated efforts of young samurai known as shishi, or “men of high purpose.” These men sought to restore the power and privilege of the imperial line to protect against the rapid encroachment of foreign powers. With the restoration of the emperor came the importation of new technologies and institutions, from gas lamps and steam trains to a bicameral legislature and art museums. Japan viewed westernization as equivalent to modernization, and by the end of the Meiji era, the country had successfully transformed itself into a major world power in the Western model.

People’s daily lives also changed dramatically during this period, and prints by artists such as Yōshū Chikanobu (1838–1912) reflect the new tempo of modern life. As a son of a once-powerful feudal lord, Chikanobu himself remained faithful to the Tokugawa shogunate and fought against the reforms that brought about the Meiji Restoration, but his prints, such as Nobility in the Evening Cool (1887), nonetheless document the changing world around him.
Women of wealth abandoned their silk kimonos and trained their bodies to wear, move, and dance in the newly introduced bustle dress. Men of high rank and status cut the top-knot of their chonmage hairstyles—an act that was formerly shameful and disgraceful for the samurai—and donned tuxedos and top hats as new markers of their wealth and importance. These people and fashions were symbols of the new gentility intent on showing that they were on par, if not superior to, people of Western nations, who repeatedly denigrated Japan for its lack of civilization.

The transformation of their physical bodies and dress was also reflected in the urban landscape. Andō Hiroshige’s iconic landscape scenery of *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* (1833–1834), which illustrated towns along a major travel artery between the old and new capitals, or Katsushika Hokusai’s *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (c. 1829–1833), one of the most recognizable works of
Japanese art in the world, became powerful reminders of the Edo past (1603–1868). New prints emerged in their wake featuring the red brick buildings for which the Meiji period is known. They were embellished with freshly constructed fountains and gas lamps; scenes that were common in nineteenth-century Great Britain or Germany. These new modern structures became controversial symbols of Japan’s full embrace of westernization replete with hanging chandeliers and halls for evening soirées.

Printmaking—a medium of the people and popular entertainment—actively reflected these dramatic societal changes. When the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and Russo-Japanese War (1905–1906) broke out, artists used printmaking as the preferred medium for documenting both the battles and the victories. Images of delicate cherry blossoms are replaced by flying bullets and heated naval battle; beautiful women in garden settings are supplanted by scenes of military heroism. Many of the artists featured in Nostalgic Femininity and From Flowers to Warriors—Chikanobu, Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892), Mizuno Toshikata (1866–1908), and others—either found their start or developed their popularity through the production of war prints.

It is against this overwhelming image of the new that artists began to engage with a nostalgia for the old. Artists and viewers alike found comfort in the stable imagery of Japan’s Edo past. The prints on display in Nostalgic Femininity and From Flowers to Warriors reminisce on gender roles, landscapes, historical figures, and even famous battles of the past. Artists explored notions of tradition on paper, while they grappled with rapid visible changes in their waking world. Despite the overly idealized imagery of court women going about their day in the Chiyoda Palace or courtesans lounging in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, the bright pigments, particularly the vividness of the
synthetic aniline red dye, attest to imported technologies. The color betrays the illusion of historical romanticism, and the prints in these shows are certainly the products of a modernizing Japan.

*Nostalgic Femininity*, the exhibition on view in The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery, brings together prints by Chikanobu with select examples by Miyagawa Shuntei (1873–1914), Utagawa Kunitada I (1786–1864), and others in an exploration of the relationship between nostalgia and gender in modern Japan. Many of the women featured enjoy each other’s company in several seasonal contexts, from Chikanobu’s *Snow in the Park* (1892) to his later *Cherry-blossom viewing* (1894). His works pay close attention to the textiles and patterns found within women’s fashion, occasionally embossing and burnishing details as seen in the delicate silver outlines of the woman’s kimono in *Depiction of an Official Hearing at Fukiage* (1897). The show also brings together representations of court women juxtaposed against their courtesan counterparts, showing various historical networks of female relationships, such as the one seen in *Scattering Gold in the Flourishing Pleasure Quarter: Tamagiku and Kinokuniya Bunzaemon* (1886). Several prints in the exhibition also explore the generational relationship between women and children. Yōsai Nobukazu’s *November* (1891) illustrates a woman teaching two young female apprentices the artistry of Japanese tea ceremony while Chikanobu’s *Parading of the Mochi (Rice Cakes)* (1895) shows a group of three older court women enjoying a winter festival procession alongside two younger girls. In an age when children were growing up in a world dramatically different from that of their parents, this focus on bringing up a young generation of women grounded in tradition has special resonance in the Meiji era. Overall, these prints package nostalgia in the female form, making women’s bodies the primary sites of Japanese tradition.
In comparison, *From Flowers to Warriors*, the companion exhibition on view in the St. Catherine University Library, contrasts the delicate petals of hollyhock, chrysanthemum, and cherry blossoms with the clash of swords and the heat of battle. This show brings representations of masculinity into the equation and looks at other themes found in nineteenth and twentieth-century printmaking, from beautiful women and the symbolism of flowers to warriors and mythological folk heroes. This exhibition also features a rare printed portrait of the Meiji Emperor and Empress by Chikanobu that simultaneously melds modern figureheads with the power and authority of their ancestors (1879). In contrast to *Nostalgic Femininity*, this exhibition forges connections between print genres to explore how themes of the past reemerge in the late nineteenth century. It questions artists’ preoccupation with traditional culture and imagery as a bulwark against change.
While the prints in these exhibitions demonstrate a longing for the past—and in some cases, a rejection of the present—it is also ironic how Chikanobu’s classical images of women became the de facto representation of Japanese femininity to Western audiences at the end of the nineteenth century. In line with movements of Japonisme across Europe, it was the woodblock print of the woman in the kimono and the samurai warrior that audiences wanted to see, not the new modern girl represented in Japanese oil paintings. While they looked back to the past for a domestic audience, these prints allowed viewers in the West to imagine Japan as a country both exotic and unchanging. This tension was emblematic of the period, with Japan’s government continually trying to prove its equal status as a world power, and the Western response that Japan was modernizing, but never modern enough. These prints thus contain different meanings for different audiences of the time.

All of the prints in *Nostalgic Femininity* and *From Flowers to Warriors* are in the collection of the Archives & Special Collections at St. Catherine University. At the present moment, it is unclear how this body of work came to the University. On the one hand, it is always possible that one of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet brought the prints back from one of several trips to Japan, as we have some records of other travel and purchases abroad. On the other, the prints could have been a generous gift from a donor to the University. Either way, the prints were forgotten in a flat-file drawer until their recent rediscovery three years ago. These exhibitions surely explore the myriad of themes described above, but they are also an act of reclamation and preservation for the community of St. Catherine University. We collectively hope that the imagery and stories found within these prints continue to inspire curiosity about Asian art and visual culture.
Works Cited


Unfolding the Tradition
The Production of *Ukiyo-e* Woodblock Prints

by Nicole Wallin ‘19

*Nostalgic Femininity* and *From Flowers to Warriors* conceptualize the schism between the feudal past and the modernizing present for the Meiji-period viewer living in the late nineteenth century. Through lighthearted imagery, the woodblock prints featured in these exhibitions draw inspiration from the momentary pleasures of the mortal world. The nostalgic images emphasize themes of *ukiyo-e*, or “pictures of the floating world,” made famous in the previous Edo period (1603–1868). This essay examines more than two centuries of print genre development, including the evolution from its early Buddhist roots to the modern prints found in these shows, and explores the evolving technical processes behind their creation.

Before Japanese printmakers began producing prints in the *ukiyo-e* genre, eighth-century craftsmen mainly used the medium of printmaking to
disseminate religious texts, which were often Buddhist scriptures. This text-focused approach changed somewhat abruptly after painter Iwasa Matabei (1578–1650) laid the early groundwork for the *ukiyo-e* genre during the Edo period by creating imagery that reflected a commoner’s approach to aesthetics. Iwasa is often known as a “man of mystery” (*nazo no jinbutsu*), and his approach to addressing themes from the lived world became a bridge between painting and what would become the *ukiyo-e* style of woodblock printmaking.

Japanese artwork was more conservative before *ukiyo-e*’s birth. Previously, two-dimensional works contained religious icons, expansive landscape scenes, and courtly references. In contrast, *ukiyo-e* was a popular genre that appealed to seventeenth-century artisans and merchants. It was known for its inked, wiry outlines and vibrant colors, which effectively transferred onto silk paper, hanging scrolls, hand scrolls, folding screens, and sliding doors through the use of carved inked blocks. Print artists worked efficiently, following the common *ukiyo-e* theme of capturing human expression during extraordinary events. Their work framed the experience of townspeople, courtesans, kabuki actors, folk legends, and warriors. These subjects often corresponded to short stories and novellas that gained popularity as townspeople became affluent in the seventeenth century. As *ukiyo-e* prints became popular, demand for them could be seen all around Honshū, the main land body in the Japanese archipelago, and more specifically, in the cities and towns along the Tokaidō Road, Ise Bay, and Lake Biwa.

The Japanese government did not approve of the conspicuous consumption of *ukiyo-e* among the merchant class. The government issued intermittent laws that restricted an artist’s available themes, subjects, sizes, and materials. To court officials, the new *ukiyo-e* style appeared lewd since they were an antithesis
to the traditionally commissioned religious and courtly artworks. While intent on censoring the print medium, these sporadic edicts from the early to the mid-nineteenth century had the opposite effect—such laws heightened artistic skill and ingenuity among print designers. Some artists, such as Utamaro Kitagawa (1753–1806), radically challenged the ruling authorities of the time by creating prints based on scenes from a forbidden novel.

While individual artists craftily navigated (and resisted) the censorship system, it is undeniable that printmaking was a medium for the people. Even at the height of their production from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, prints were produced by a team of artisans in a print shop rather than by an

Hishikawa Moronobu, *Two Lovers*, ca. 1675-80. Woodblock print; ink and color on paper. Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
individual artist in the atelier. Instituted by an underdrawing or foundational
drawing, *ukiyo-e* prints underwent a complicated formative process carried out by specialized workers. Underdrawing creators like Hishikawa Moronobu (1618–1694) became prolific artists, emerging from anonymity and stamping their names on works with alluring titles like *Two Lovers* (ca. 1675–1680). These artists collaborated with a publisher who functioned as an overseer or contractor for the entire production process. From start to finish, creating prints entailed hiring an artist, an engraver, and a printer along with all of their respective assistants.

These experts took production seriously. To start, a skilled lead engraver chose a high-quality woodblock, a small piece of single-petaled white mountain cherry wood void of any warping. Next, by placing the underdrawing atop the block and moistening its inked design, a reverse image of the drawing transferred to the block, which functioned as a stencil for carving the negative space in relief. For the most detailed prints, the engraver supplied the printer with six to ten different woodblock layers. The printer assigned the various newly carved blocks specific colors that transferred perfectly through a method of re-registration. The printer ensured correct registration by making use of raised wooden guides known as *kento*—a straight-line bar guide and an L-shaped right-angle guide. He then brushed ink onto carved blocks using a thick, flat horse-mane brush. The inked blocks were aligned using the *kento* and carefully blanketed with damp mulberry paper. After pressing, the printer would pull the paper from the block to reveal perfect, opaque lines or shapes. To avoid lag time, printers usually repeated that initial step, exercising a single woodblock through multiple papers. They would continue making multiple editions of the same block until the initial one dried, which prevented the color from bleeding into the print’s first layer when the next layer was applied. The use of layers added new intricacies to the prints, and as artists moved
forward into the Meiji era, they began to experiment with new designs and an expansive color palette.

*From Flowers to Warriors* and *Nostalgic Femininity* embody the colorful palette that is emblematic of the Meiji era. The use of synthetic aniline colors attests to a persistent phenomenon of the nineteenth century: Japanese Westernization. The dyes, first synthesized in England, were imported into Japan in the 1860s, and Japanese artists embraced these new materials. Synthetic dye first appeared in *ukiyo-e* in 1864, and it was a purple hue called rosaniline. Aniline red quickly followed, making the vibrant colors once reserved for paintings more accessible to print artists and their consumers. During this time, printmakers applied these dyes to the depiction of Western subjects to represent their modern attitudes and perspectives. An excellent example of this revolution in printmaking can be found in Yōshū Chikanobu’s *Picture of the Japanese Imperial Line* exhibited in *From Flowers to Warriors*. It portrays Emperor Meiji in Western military attire juxtaposed with traditionally dressed emperors of the past. However, not all prints so clearly embraced the modern subject. The works on view in these exhibitions show a longing for the past in their illustration of scenes from earlier periods. Despite their reliance on nostalgia, the bright colors reliably orient us in Japan’s Meiji era.
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Utagawa Yoshitora, The Great Battle at Yashima (1184), 1847-52. Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper. Courtesy of the St. Catherine University Archives & Special Collections.
Artists & Prints

A Catalog of Works in *Nostalgic Femininity* and *From Flowers to Warriors*

by Christina M. Spiker

with Nicole Wallin ’19, and MaryJane Eischen ‘20

Artists are listed in alphabetical order.

Japanese names appear with family name followed by given name.

Works that appear in The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery’s *Nostalgic Femininity* will have a ◇ next to the title. Works that appear in the St. Catherine University Library’s *From Flowers to Warriors* have a △.

20
AOYAMA Masaharu
青山正治
1893–1969

Alternate Name: Aoyama Seiji

Aoyama Masaharu studied at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts and worked in the Imperial Household Museum. He belonged to the sōsaku hanga movement and produced self-carved woodblocks prints. However, some of his later works were printed with the assistance of publisher Ishiyama. His work was best acknowledged through the Teiten and Nihon Sōsaku Hanga Kyōkai exhibitions.

Hollyhock △
c. 1950 (Shōwa 25)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

HISHIKAWA Harunobu
菱川春宣
active 1875–1891

Alternate Names: Hishikawa Shunsen

Hishikawa Harunobu was primarily known for the many sumo wrestling prints he produced during his lifetime. There is limited documentation of his life, but his name implies membership at the Hishikawa school. He was known to work with the publisher Matsuki Heikichi. He created works such as The Wrestler (1875) and The Story of Momotaro (The Peach Boy) (1890), which is featured in From Flowers to Warriors.

The Story of Momotarō (The Peach Boy) △
1890 (Meiji 23)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper
MIYAGAWA Shuntei
宮川春汀
1873–1914

Miyagawa Shuntei studied woodblock print illustration under Watanabe Shōka and later, Tomioka Eisen. From 1895 until 1907, Shuntei produced magazine, book, and newspaper illustrations, which commonly included beautiful women and playful children. The scenes depicted in his prints do not show the lives of average Japanese people, as he chose to focus on the lifestyles of upper-class families.

First Month: Oibane (Battledore & Shuttlecock) ⊞
From the series Twelve Months of Beauties
1898 (Meiji 31)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

MIZUNO Toshikata
水野年方
1866–1908

Alternate Names: Ōsai, Shōsetsu, Mizuno Kumejirō

Mizuno Toshikata was known for his prints of beautiful women and the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95). He took inspiration from his teacher Tsukioka Yoshitoshi’s 1888 series, Thirty-two Types of Women. In response, he created the woodblock print series Thirty-six Beauties Compared in 1893, one example of which is on view in Nostalgic Femininity. He later studied under Yamada Ryūto, Shibata Hoshū, and Watanabe Shōtei to learn ceramics and Chinese literati painting (nanga).

First Warbler: Woman of the Manji Era [1658-1661] ⊞
From the series Thirty-six Beauties Compared
1893 (Meiji 26)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Shirabyōshi Dancer: Woman of the Kenkyū Era [1190-99] ⊹
From the series Thirty-six Beauties Compared
1893 (Meiji 26)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

TOYOHARA Kunichika
豊原国周
1835–1900

Alternate Names: Arakawa Yasohachi, Beio, Hoshunro, Ichiosai, Kachoro, Shima Sanjin, Sogenshi

Toyohara Kunichika began his career as an apprentice in the studio of
Utagawa Kunisada I and began publishing prints in the early 1850s. His progress is easily documented in the Saikenki, a guide that rated ukiyo-e artists, which ranked him at number eight in 1865. He ranked his highest, a four, in 1885. As an artist who enjoyed creating expressive subjects, he focused on triptychs as a way to create larger, more detailed expressions. Kunichika’s artistic lineage includes accomplished pupils Yōshū Chikanobu, Morikawa Chikashige, and a female student, Toyohara Chikayoshi.

Courtesan of Okamoto-ya, no. 7
From the series How to Master "Hauta" [Marginal Songs]
1862 (Bunkyū 2)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Morning Glory, no. 20
From the series The Fifty-four Chapters of The Tale of Genji in Modern Times
1884 (Meiji 17)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

TSUKIOKA Yoshitoshi
月岡芳年
1839–1892

Alternate Names: Gyokuuo, Gyokuurou, Kaisai, Ikkaïsai, Taiso, Sokatei, Tsukioka, Yonejiro

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi started his artistic journey under Utagawa Kuniyoshi, a leading printmaker in Edo (present-day Tokyo). Before his greatest success, Yoshitoshi suffered through depressive states rooted in the political unrest and general instability that led up to the Meiji Restoration of 1868. These unsettling changes mixed with the death of his teacher in 1861 left Yoshitoshi uninspired and impoverished. He later gained momentum in 1866 when he created the gruesome print series Twenty-eight Murders with Verse, a project that continued for two years. This series underpinned Yoshitoshi’s coming success, which was based on his ability to update the imagery and composition of woodblock prints while sustaining the ukiyo-e style. His work epitomized the nostalgic emotions of the Meiji period and is often described as the last boom of ukiyo-e in the Meiji era.

Mount Otowa Moon:
Tamura Myōjin
From the series One Hundred Aspects of the Moon
1886 (Meiji 19)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper
Bon Festival Moon △
From the series One Hundred Aspects of the Moon
1887 (Meiji 20)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Gojo Bridge Moon △
From the series One Hundred Aspects of the Moon
1888 (Meiji 21)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Shinobugaoka Moon, Gyokuensai △
From the series One Hundred Aspects of the Moon
1889 (Meiji 22)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

UTAGAWA Kunisada I
歌川国定
1786–1864

Alternative Names: Utagawa Toyokuni III, Yanagishima Toyokuni III

Utagawa Kunisada I was a leading print artist of the late Edo period. His earliest published work can be traced to 1807 when he created the series Twelve Hours of the Courtesans. He took up kabuki book illustration through his teacher Utagawa Tokyokuni. Due to restrictions of the Tenpō Reforms (tenpō no kaikaku), which banned certain kinds of frivolous content, Kunisada I shifted his subject matter between 1842 and 1843. Under this anti-luxury law, Kunisada I found artistic value in the anonymity of his female models. After the dismissal of the Tenpō Reforms in 1850, his work reached its apex through the inclusion of new techniques, such as the use of Western perspective. His work was followed by students Utagawa Kunisada II and Utagawa Sadahide.

Three Kinds of Drunks in the Modern World △
1853 (Kaei 6)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

UTAGAWA Kunisada II
歌川国定 二代
1823–1880

Alternate Names: Utagawa Kunimasa III, Utagawa Toyokuni IV, Baidō, Hōraisha, Ichijusai, Ichiyōsai, Baichōrō, Kōchōrō

Utagawa Kunisada II, formerly Utagawa Kunimasu II and keeper of over 200 different artistic pseudonyms, developed his craft under Utagawa Kunisada I. As a student, and later son-in-law, to Kunisada I, he illustrated over forty known print series featuring beauties and literary scenes. His earliest
known prints date to 1844 and grew in number and artistry until his peak popularity in the 1860s. In these years, Utagawa Kunisada II was praised by the Western public, including the notable artist Vincent Van Gogh. Toward the end of the Japanese artist’s career, he had worked for almost fifty publishers including Tsutaya Kichikō.

*Genji at Sugatami Bridge,*

**Twelfth Month ⬜**

From the series Twelve Months of Genji 1867 (Keiō 3)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

**UTAGAWA Yoshitora**

歌川芳虎
active 1836–1887

**Alternate Names:** Ichimōsai
Yoshitora, Ichimōsai, Kinchōrō
Yoshitora, Mōsai Yoshitora

Utagawa Yoshitora, taught by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, achieved respect as an artist for designing prints that spanned various genres. In 1836 he initiated his career with illustrations for *Story of Karasu Kanzaemon’s Loyalty*, and became controversial in the 1840s for producing the piece, *Funny Warriors: Our Ruler’s New Year’s Rice Cakes*, which contained banned content. His best works are in the genre of *Yokohama-e*, which depict the appearance of Westerners and their inventions in the port city of Yokohama in the 1850s. In 1873, he continued to pursue modern subjects in his prints, including designing *Famous Views of Modern Tokyo*, a project that he completed with Utagawa Yoshiiku and Kawanabe Kyōsai.

**The Great Battle at Yashima (1185) △**
c.1847-52 (Kōka 4–Kaei 5)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

**The Battle of Ichinotani (1184) △**
c.1847-52 (Kōka 4–Kaei 5)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

**YŌSAI Nobukazu**

楊斎延一
1874–1944

**Alternate Names:** Watanabe Nobukazu, Yōsai

Yōsai Nobukazu created many prints of warriors and the imperial court under the mentorship of Toyohara Chikanobu. His style is notable for its detailed and accurate figures with famous Tokyo regions serving as the backdrop. He is also known for his prints of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05).
**November**
From the Series Twelve Months in the Present Day
1891 (Meiji 24)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

**YŌSHŪ Chikanobu**
楊洲周延
1838–1912

**Alternate Names:** Toyohara Chikanobu, Yōshū, Hashimoto Chikanobu, Hashimoto Naoyoshi, Yōshū Naoyoshi

Painter and print artist Yōshū Chikanobu began his artistic career as a Kanō School painter and subsequently studied print design under the disciples of Keisai Eisen. At around seventeen years old, he entered the studio of Utagawa Kunisada I. In his early career, he mimicked his instructor’s style, though he soon progressed to embrace his own approach to printmaking. Chikanobu—who was the son of a once-powerful feudal lord—remained faithful to the Tokugawa shogunate even though rapid changes took place in Japan as a result of the restoration of the Meiji emperor in 1868. Despite this, his prints explored many of the modern changes that came with the restoration, while simultaneously embracing the traditional elements of Japanese culture that were being forgotten in this period of cultural upheaval. His use of color on slender figures with graceful gestures made him a competitive kabuki print artist in the mid-Meiji period, and he was actively competing with artists such as Toyohara Kunichika.

**Picture of the Japanese Imperial Line**
1879 (Meiji 12)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

**Spring-Colored Garden in Snow**
1879 (Meiji 12)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

**Scattering Gold in the Flourishing Pleasure Quarter: Tamagiku and Kinokuniya Bunzaemon**
1886 (Meiji 19)
polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

**Snow in the Park**
From the series Customs and Manners of Old Japan (Yamato)
1892 (Meiji 25)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper
Cherry-blossom Viewing
From the series Customs of the Inner Palace of Chiyoda Castle
1894 (Meiji 27)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Kabuki Theater Performance
From the series Customs of the Inner Palace of Chiyoda Castle
1895 (Meiji 28)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Parading of the Mochi (Rice Cakes)
From the series Customs of the Inner Palace of Chiyoda Castle
1895 (Meiji 28)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Depiction of an Official Hearing at Fukiage
From the series Chiyoda Outer Palace (Chiyoda Central Office)
1897 (Meiji 30)
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper.

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Japanese Woodblock Prints from the Archives & Special Collections

The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery
April 13 - May 26, 2019

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April 13 - May 26, 2019

Curator: Christina M. Spiker
Curatorial Assistants: MaryJane Eischen ’20 and Nicole Wallin ’19
Gallery Director: Nicole M. Watson
Librarians: Lizzy Tegeler, Deborah Kloiber, Amy Shaw
Gallery Technician: Kimberlee Joy Roth
Administrative Assistant: Ann Buchen
Scan for more information on the collection and these exhibitions.