Public Spectacles, Personal Pleasures
Four Centuries of Japanese Prints from a Cincinnati Collection
September 2 to December 17, 2006
Docent Study Packet

Public Spectacles, Personal Pleasures features eighty-three Japanese woodblock prints from the Joel and Bernice Weisman Collection. The Art Museum hopes visitors will understand some of the favored subjects and stories used in Japanese prints, what they mean, how they relate to Japanese history and why they were used for imagery. In addition, this broad and very personal collection of prints can help the visitor understand the general aesthetics of Japanese prints, as they relate to color, line, composition and spatial depth.

This free exhibit is in the Schiff Gallery (G234). Docents are encouraged to use the exhibit for school tours, such as Learning To Look and Literature in Art. To respect visitors viewing the exhibit, please do not use the gallery as a "walk-through."

There are eight sections in this packet that follow the main themes of the *ukiyo* prints created from the Edo Period (1615-1868) through the modern era in Japan. A gallery guide to woodblock prints will be available to visitors. In each section of this guide, terms are defined in context. Many highly talented artists created ukiyoe, often specializing in one area; information about them is also included in the appropriate section.

This study packet will assist docents as they prepare for tours of *Public Spectacles, Private Pleasures*. Thank you to Kristin Spangenberg who selected the prints to highlight and provided the committee with many valuable materials. Touring Strategies committee members Judy Bausher, Carolyn Honkomp, Helen Rindsberg, Judy Stein, Dee Thompson and Sandy Williams prepared this packet.

Introduction to *Ukiyo-e*

Japan's artistic heritage began over 11,000 years ago with the development of the world's first ceramic artworks. Over the centuries, Japan has been greatly influenced by its neighbor, China. But Japanese artists have also created unique styles and pushed the boundaries of various artistic media. We don't know the cultural or social spark that shaped the dynamic Jomon flame cord pottery from 2500 – 1500 BC. But we do know that the *ukiyo-e* woodblock artists were driven by the desires of their patrons, the newly wealthy *chonin* (townspeople) culture of Edo Japan (1615 – 1868).

During the Kamakura and Muromachi periods (1185 – 1573) Japan suffered through nearly constant warfare among the *daimyo* (great lords) who controlled various regions of the country. Finally during the Momoyama period (1573 – 1615) three powerful daimyo consolidated power and eventually the daimyo Tokugawa Ieyasu brought unity and peace to the country in 1615.

While the Emperor retained his role as spiritual leader of Japan, he appointed Tokugawa Ieyasu the *Shogun* (Barbarian Quelling General 1543 –1615/1616), the political leader of Japan. Ieyasu created the *bakufu*, a rigid bureaucracy that brought economic stability and tightly restricted the activities of the country's other 230 *daimyo*. The peace held, cities rebuilt and trade flourished across the country. A vibrant urban society grew with a very literate population.

Ieyasu established his capital in Edo (modern Tokyo) over 300 miles east of the emperor in Kyoto. He ordered the daimyo to build him a magnificent castle and administrative complex as well as their own mansions on huge estates assigned by the bakufu. Each *daimyo* had to

maintain a certain number of samurai in Edo and in their home province. While the *daimyos'* families were hostage in Edo, the samurais' families had to remain in their home province. Tokyo became a sprawling metropolis of over one million residents by 1750. The great majority of them were men. A merchant and artist class grew rich serving the needs and wants of the *daimyo* and samurai.

The newly wealthy merchants and artists became known as the *chonin* (townspeople). Merchants ran the teahouses, restaurants, and theaters that entertained the samurai and chonin. Artists crafted sumptuous textiles for flamboyant Kabuki costumes and stunning courtesans' kimonos. They created understated tea ceremony utensils and lavish paintings, screens and decorations for the daimyos' homes. With their newfound wealth, the chonin had the money and leisure time to pursue their private pleasures; they demanded artworks that reflected their tastes.

In 552 AD a delegation from the Korean Paekche Kingdom introduced the Buddhist religion to Japan. *Ukiyo*, the root of the word *ukiyo-e*, first appeared in the context of Buddhism, where it was used to describe the impermanence of the world of humans – the sense that all things are illusory and ephemeral – a floating world. But in the Edo period the word took on a different tone; now this ephemeral character was to be savored with gusto by a society devoted to sensual pleasures all the more exciting for their constantly changing nature.

Ukiyo was specifically used by the Japanese to refer to the demimonde of the pleasure district – a quarter of the city which housed courtesans and the theaters, where Kabuki and Bunraku were performed. In Japanese, the suffix "e" means "picture of." *Ukiyo-e* means "pictures of the floating world." *Ukiyo-e* showed the most popular teahouses and brothels of Edo and Kyoto and their patrons. Prints of popular courtesans in the newest fashions were the "Vogue" magazine of the times. Kabuki actors were the "rock stars" of Edo and Osaka. Fan clubs commissioned prints of their favorite actors in the most dramatic scenes of the season's hits.

Ukiyo-e were distributed through bookstores, popular gathering places in all major urban centers. Amongst the novels, literary classics, travel guides and "how-to" manuals, bookstores sold the latest *ukiyo-e* prints. The most boldly colored prints were displayed in trays or suspended on strings across the shop facades. The prices varied, but many prints could be purchased for the price of a moderate lunch ($5 in today's currency). The publisher might issue up to 8,000 copies of a popular subject. One modern scholar estimated that 300 million prints were made between 1765 and 1844. Hiroshige's popular "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido" reportedly sold 200 copies in three hours; with 55 prints in the set, it was an expensive purchase.

During the Edo period, Japan isolated itself from the rest of the world. As Tokugawa *Ieyasu*, the first shogun, was consolidating power he was suspicious of outsiders. At that time, missionaries from Spain and Portugal were not only in the business of converting, but also controlled much of the profitable trade. The *shogunate* considered Christianity to be extremely destabilizing. In 1614, the Christian Expulsion Edict was announced in which the practice of Christianity was banned and all Christians were expelled. In 1624 and 1629, thousands of Christian converts were executed along with 120 missionaries. The Spanish were expelled in 1624 and soon after the Portuguese were expelled as well. The entire Japanese population was required to register at a shrine (Shinto) or temple (Buddhist).

In 1633, Tokugawa Iemitsu (grandson of the first shogun) officially isolated Japan from the rest of the world. Japanese were restricted from traveling outside Japan and if they did, they were banned from returning. Construction of ocean going ships was prohibited. The Dutch East

India Company and China had conducted trade with Japan and were permitted to continue since they posed no threat of Christian conversion. However, their trade was limited to a special area at the port of Nagasaki, which is located on the extreme southern part of Japan. Other Europeans who landed on Japanese shores were put to death without trial.

During the period of isolation, the shogunate instituted *Rangaku* (Dutch Studies). A select group of scholars translated and carefully studied of books obtained from Dutch trade. These books revealed technological advancements being made in the West. Soon, various factions in the shogunate feared that these new technologies could work against them and encouraged a more open policy. In the early 19th century, western intrusions into Japan increased. Russian traders and warships encroached on nearby islands. A British warship entered Nagasaki harbor searching for enemy Dutch ships. Trading ships and whalers from the United States also arrived on Japanese shores seeking provisions or a place to repair their ships.

In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry's squadron of four ships arrived in Edo Bay. The emperor wanted to keep foreigners out, while the shogun wanted to go to war. As a compromise, two ports were opened to American ships. Five years later, more Japanese ports were opened.

The end of the Tokugawa dynasty occurred in 1868 and the emperor was restored as the political ruler. The period is known as Meiji (*enlightened rule*) Period. The new government aimed to make Japan democratic. The social classes of the Edo period were gradually broken down. Human rights and freedom of religion were established. Japan focused on catching up with the west in the military, business, and industrial sectors.

The Weisman Collection

"We have thoroughly enjoyed collecting and viewing our prints. Not only have we obtained pleasure from the aesthetic qualities of the images, but we have also had the pleasure of vicarious participation in a society which has now disappeared." Dr. and Mrs. Weisman

From Kristin Spangenberg's introduction to the catalog *Public Spectacles, Private Pleasures*:

The Weismans have eclectic interests and have explored in many directions. One of their joint passions is privately printed *surimono*. Mrs. Weisman is partial to prints that include cats and has assembled her own collection. The Weismans hope that the planned gift of their collection to the Museum will give future generations of Cincinnatians and scholars alike the same joy of looking at and studying Japanese prints.

The Japanese Woodblock Printing Process

Background: Woodblock prints are relief prints, the earliest and the simplest form of printmaking. An image is created on a flat surface of wood and areas not to be printed are gouged out. Ink is applied to the raised surfaces and paper is pressed onto the block transferring the image. This process permits multiple copies to be made of the same image.

The exact time of the first woodblock prints is unknown, but woodblock images date back to at least the 7th century CE. Buddhists in China used woodblock prints for devotion and to propagate their beliefs. Buddhist missionaries introduced woodblock printmaking into Japan in the 8th century.

It wasn't until the Edo period (1615–1868) that this technique was used to produce secular images. *Ukiyo-e* soon became a popular art form and woodblock printing allowed production of multiple copies. By using inexpensive paper and pigments, the cost was reduced making these prints affordable.

Early prints were printed in black ink only. Soon color was added by paintbrush. By adding a type of glue to the black ink, a glossy lacquer effect could be achieved. As time went on, more colors were added to the palette. However, this hand painting raised costs and slowed production. Printing colors instead of hand painting was started in the late 1740's. However, the colors were limited to rose-red and green until 1765 when prints with a wide range of colors (*nishiki-e* – brocade prints) appeared.

The Making of Japanese Woodblock Prints: Woodblock prints made in the old tradition required the teamwork of four different persons – the **artist**, the **carver**, the **printer** and the **publisher.** Each needed several years of apprenticeship followed by practical experience. An artist generally spent at least four years with his master while a carver could spend up to ten years.

The Artist: First a preparatory sketch was done with ideas often supplied by the publisher. Alterations to the sketch required gluing new paper over the areas to be changed. The artist's drawing would be given to a block copyist who made a final copy on very thin, translucent paper. The completed drawing was shown to official censors who needed to approve the image before sending it to the carver.

The Carver: The woodblock was prepared from aged white mountain cherry wood that is fine grained yet soft enough to allow carving. The size of the blocks was limited because larger blocks were prone to warping. In order to produce larger images, multiple prints would be linked together as diptychs, triptychs, etc.

The artist's drawing was pasted onto the block and dampened with oil to make it transparent. Using a very sharp knife, the carver carefully carved along the lines of the design. The most delicate lines had to be done in one continuous move. A master carver (*atami-bori*, or "head carver") would do the detailed areas and a trainee (*do-bori*, or "body carver) would do the rest. If the artist made sketchy lines, it was the carver's responsibility to carve the best line. The next step was to gouge out those areas not to be printed using chisels made for this task.

On this block, the carver put alignment devices called *kento.* On one corner of the block, was a raised "L" shape (*kagi*) where the corner of the paper would fit. On one of the sides, a raised bar (*hikitsuke*) was placed which went to a corner. This block became the "key block," which would be used to produce the black lines in the print. The alignment markers would also be printed. This exhibition includes a key block and modern impressions from the Art Museum's permanent collection.

The Printer: The block was given to the printer who rubbed ink on the raised lines and made several proof copies. These copies were given to the **artist**. Using one copy for each color, the artist indicated the areas on the print for each color. These copies were given back to the ***carver*** who carved a separate woodblock for each color. On each color block the alignment devices would also be carved.

The printer used paper made from the inner bark of the mulberry tree mixed with pith of certain vines and reeds. This paper was very tough, yet flexible, contained no chemicals and did not deteriorate very readily. The printer was skilled in making inks using both vegetables and

minerals. Each color was kept in a separate porcelain bowl and just before use a few drops of water would be added to achieve the right consistency. The case with the keyblock shows a few vegetable and mineral materials used to make inks. By 1860, the traditional inks were replaced with aniline dyes imported from Germany.

The colored ink was applied to the appropriate block using brushes (*hake*) made from a horse's mane. Moistened paper was then laid onto the block and the ink was rubbed onto the paper using a special tool called a *baren,* a large circular flat pad. Generally, the printer would do a number of sheets with one color. When the ink was dry, the process would be repeated using the specific block for the next color. *Kento* assured that each color would be aligned appropriately. Generally, light colors were printed first, then dark colors and finally dense blacks. The keyblock was printed last since dark colors could obliterate thin black lines.

The printer was also a master of applying inks, especially to achieve shading effects (*bokashi*). This could be done by wiping the blocks with a cloth after the ink was applied; using inks with varying color intensity and moisture level, or rubbing the block with a damp cloth before applying the ink. Because the printer could vary the amount of *bokashi* from one print to the next, prints from the same blocks could look completely different.

The average number of prints from a set of blocks was about 200. Popular designs may have been printed as many as 20,000 times which would require carving new woodblocks.

The Publisher: This person was an entrepreneur who oversaw the production of the print. He either employed or contracted with the other skilled personnel. The publisher was responsible for the finances and the commercial success. The publisher often supplied the artist with ideas. Printmaking became an incredibly competitive business. Therefore, publishers sought to create new and innovative images to catch the eye of the consumer.

Publishers vied to develop special printing techniques, including:

- Embossing (*karazuri* – empty printing): this technique raised areas in the print. A pattern was carved into a special block. Damp paper was pressed into the pattern using a piece of ivory or bone. This technique was often used to depict white-on-white patterns as in flowers.
- Mica printing (*kirazuri*): Mica is a silicate mineral and when added to prints, makes them sparkle. The areas of the print to have this treatment were brushed with egg white or rice paste to make the mica flakes stick.
- Metallic printing**:** Similar to mica printing but metals such as brass or even gold was used.
- Burnishing (*tsuyazumi* – gloss black): This was achieved by printing two dense layers of black ink mixed with animal glue. These black areas were burnished with a piece of ivory or tooth until it reflected the light.
- Spattering: White pigment (*gofun*), made by pulverizing the shells of oysters and clams, was spattered onto the finished prints. This was done by flicking a brush with the *gofun* or spraying the pigment through a straw. This technique was used to depict snow or a spray of water.

Signatures and Seals: The production of woodblock prints was a team effort of artist, carver, and printer. Even though the carvers and printers did the lion's share of the work, generally only the artist signature or seal appeared on the print. From the mid 19th century a carver may have been acknowledged for an intricate design, but the printer was still seldom acknowledged. (See example of catalogue No. 17.)

Since the publisher was responsible for the overall production of the print and assumed the financial risks and legal responsibility, they were generally identified on the print by a seal, name, address, or graphic symbol (*mon*). Sometimes publishers added inscriptions to the print that served as advertisements for their business (such as catalog # 22 *Ogino Isaburo as samurai and Narumi Goroshima as his retainer* by Okumura Masanobu – an artist and publisher who on some prints claimed to be the originator of the *ukiyo-e* print).

Some prints required a censor or *kiwame* (thoroughly investigated) seal. At various times, laws were enacted intended to encourage morality, financial responsibility, and societal stability. These laws affected the printmaking industry. For example, edicts from the early 18th century banned explicit erotica. Some publishers continued to produce these prints without their signatures. Late in the 18th century, publishers were required to submit their works to a board of other publishers for approval that was indicated by the *kiwame* seal. In the early to mid 19th century, edicts were passed during an economic slump, to curb spending on luxury goods. Publishers were only permitted to use 8 colors and no prints larger than triptychs could be made.

Section One: Bijinga – Prints of Beautiful Women

Bijinga were one of most popular categories of ukiyo-e. *Bijinga* can be translated as a "picture of a beautiful woman" but practically their subjects included the geishas, courtesans, prostitutes, and waitresses who worked in the licensed pleasure districts of Edo. Edo was a male-dominated city and the government kept strict control on the activities in the "red light" district.

Bijinga were a way for any *chonin* to participate, at least in fantasy, in the exotic world of the pleasure quarters. The prints idolized the *geisha* (highly skilled entertainers) and fawned over the fashions of the courtesans and their attendants. They also exposed the love intrigues and public scandals that hid under the glamorous exterior. Buyers of *bijinga* could peek into the lavishly decorated quarters and perhaps copy the expensive kimono and exquisite coiffures. *Bijinga* prints also taught ordinary viewers the refined manners and artistic tastes of the courtesans – the pop idols of their times – and their patrons.

Bijinga could be straightforward portraiture that might be lyrically romantic or highly realistic, depending on the trends that year. They could also be "stage sets" that reported more on the trappings of wealth and taste – flower arrangements, screens, musical instruments, and furnishings – than on individual women. There is an interesting variation in the *mitate,* prints that elevated popular culture by connecting prints with literary allusions. With *mitate*, artists linked the participants in the pleasure districts with the poetry and history of Japan's classical culture (see catalog # 3 as an example).

Bijinga were the fashion illustrations of Edo era Japan. Just as now, hair and clothing styles changed frequently. The upswept hair graced with lacquered combs in style one season was out the next, replaced by hair decorated with pins. Kimonos were an especially rich source of change and this was reflected in each season's editions of *bijinga*. Kimono fabric – silk, cotton, wool – and design – flowers, patterns, colors – gave a broad palette for textile designers and dyers. Dozens of companies vied to create the richest colors, the most luxurious textures and the most labor-intensive (and thus more expensive and desirable) fabric treatments.

Because kimono fashions were such a common part of *bijinga*, let's take a closer look at its history. The graceful, colorful Japanese kimono has its origins most likely in Han Dynasty China (206 BC – 220 AD). In Japan it may have been a garment originally worn by the common

people, but by the Heian Era (794 – 1185 AD) the imperial court had embraced it. During that time it was fashionable to wear 15 to 40 layers of unlined kimono. The colors of each layer were carefully coordinated. Today that style is generally reserved for coronation ceremonies.

During the Kamakura Period (1185 – 1333) women's fashions became simplified. The outer layers were gradually discarded, leaving the undergarment, which developed into the kimono of today. An outer robe, the *uchikake*, was always more richly decorated with embroideries featuring favorable symbols. The "three winter friends," pine, plum and bamboo (*sho*, *chiku*, *bai*), representing hope and good luck, remain popular today; the evergreen pine represents fortitude, the plum which blooms in late winter represents perseverance and the bamboo which bends under the snow represents flexibility.

During the Muromachi Period (1392 –1573), a time of nearly constant warfare, the *samurai* (warrior class) began decorating their kimono with bold naturalistic designs like the commoners. Kyoto was the center of textile production and suffered from the destruction of war. Artists fled the city for safer, regional towns, spreading the refined artistic motifs of the capital. Even during these disruptions, artistic endeavors continued. Complicated resist-dye techniques, such as *yuzen* (multi-colored), and paper stencils were developed. The Japanese created a method of tie-dyeing called *shibo*ri that resulted in tiny pinch patterns.

During the peaceful and prosperous Edo Period (1615 – 1868) wealth spread to the middle classes who used fashion to flaunt newly acquired riches. The earliest promoters of fashion were the peddlers, traveling around the country with fabric, news and gossip. Soon the rich merchants in the cities demanded more sophisticated sources. Weavers, dyers and seamstresses began working together, much like our modern department stores and publishers issued pattern books. Famous artists were commissioned to paint original works of art on kimonos for wealthy customers.

A new style, *ji-nashi* (kimono with no blank space), caught the public's fancy. But then Kabuki actors began wearing wide, stiffened sashes made from brocade and elaborate knots. Artists began to change the designs so that a new style, *ma* (blank space), emerged to accommodate the *obi*. Courtesans often tied their *obis* in front, perhaps because they were quicker to undo. Married and unmarried women tied their o*b*is in back (compare catalog #3 with #13). The government instituted a rigid, hierarchical class system: in descending order – samurai, farmers, artisans and merchants. The "floating world" courtesans, actors and entertainers were outside that system. Policies dictated what clothing each class could wear. Of course, everyone tried to beat the system and fashion flourished.

In 1854 Japan's period of isolation ended with the arrival of the American fleet. Western fashions began to influence kimono. A delegation of Japanese weavers traveled to Lyon, France to study the Jacquard loom in 1871. Six years later they demonstrated the looms at a fair and displayed the rich fabrics they produced. In 1886 the empress appeared in public in Western clothing for the first time.

The earlier prints in this section show the traditional soft-colored vegetable and mineral dyes and the brocades that were produced on hand-worked looms. Prints after the 1850's begin to show the more complex brocade patterns made possible by the Jacquard loom. Also in the last half of the 19th century, aniline dyes made a much wider variety of colors available.

As you enjoy the fashions in the *bijinga* and the compositions in all the prints, you will notice the Japanese love of asymmetry. It is an appreciation of the imperfect in life, reflected in the Buddhist philosophy that life is impermanent – everything dies and decays, life is constantly

changing and rearranging itself. *Ukiyo* – the ephemeral character of life was to be savored with gusto; it was all the more exciting for its constantly changing nature

Catalog # 6
Suzuki HARUNOBU (ca. 1720 – 1770)
Scene in a Yoshiwara Brothel
Series: *The Spell of Amorous Love*
ca. 1766–70

This print was in a series of *shunga* (literally 'spring pictures') album prints organized thematically and served as a prelude to more explicit references to sex in the following images. The plum branches in the background show that this is the first in a twelve-month series. It was customary for a courtesan to greet her client beautifully and fully dressed. As she changed into less formal attire, a young serving girl entertained the customer. It appears that while the courtesan was changing, the dandy was trying to seduce the girl. The man wears a striped kimono, perhaps made of cotton, as required by the sumptuary laws of the early 18th century. All three figures appear to be wearing red under-kimonos, thought to have medicinal properties.

CAM Connection: Gerard ter Borch (1617 -1681), *The Music Party*, c. 1675; 1927.421

Catalog # 9
Isoda KORYŪSAI (1735 – 1790)
Cleaning the Ashida
late 1770s

This fine example of a "pillar print" shows the popular theme of two lovers together under a snow-laden umbrella. It suggests an egalitarian love relationship as the male stoops to clean the snow between the struts of the woman's *ashida* (high clogs for rain or snow). Notice his brown plaid kimono. The Japanese name for brown is *cha iro* – literally "tea color." It is the soft brown of roasted tealeaves. As the custom of tea drinking became popular among the common people, the "color of tea" became popular in textiles as well.

CAM Connection: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880 – 1938) *Dodo With A Large Fan*, 1910;

Catalog # 17
Ichiyūsai KUNIYOSHI(1797 – 1861) and Utagawa YOSHITORI (active mid-19th century)
Ouch!: Giant Octopus of Mamerikawa in Etchū Province
Series: *Affectionate Feelings for Mountains and Seas*
1852, lunar calendar

Kuniyoshi designed the *bijinga* image while Yoshitori, his daughter, designed the landscape. (Kuniyoshi taught both his daughters how to create woodblock prints.) The exact relationship of the two images is unknown. The province of Etchū was famous for octopus. In this print, the fisherman appears to be cutting off a tentacle of an octopus that's trying to swamp the boat. Perhaps Kuniyoshi is comparing that action with the overly affectionate cat. The textiles are exquisite: the woman wears yellow and red printed kimonos under a deep blue and white outer kimono and her *obi* could be either a brocade or *yuzen* dyed fabric. Even the cat has a jaunty patterned tie around his neck. On this print you can see Kuniyoshi's personal seal, the paulownia, a flowering tree with pale violet or blue blossoms. In earlier years this was an imperial insignia.

(A more complete history of the kimono is available in PDF on the exhibition web site.)

Section Two: Theater Prints (Edo)

Kabuki is one of Japan's traditional theatrical arts**.** It initially began in 1603 as a form of entertainment by women dancers who performed small plays about ordinary life. The performances by these women were often suggestive and many of the dancers were prostitutes. The authorities banned female performers in an effort to curb prostitution and protect public morals. Young men took over these roles but were also banned because of similar problems. After 1653 only mature men could perform kabuki. O*nnagata,* men who specialized in playing women, perform all female roles, even today. In the mid seventeenth century kabuki progressed to a theatrical form with complex plots, clever dialogue, music and elaborate staging. Plots were garnished from medieval tales, historical incidents, sagas, ghost stories, literature, romances and commentary on contemporary events. The success of the play depended on the interpretation of the individual actor. A very large portion of Japanese woodcuts depicted the plays, this stage world and the actors.

Thick make up, exaggerated poses, dramatic percussion, singing and synchronized dance pieces all compose the world of Kabuki and are represented in actor prints. These next prints feature Edo Kabuki actors who specialized in the *aragoto* method of acting. *Aragoto* is the rough stuff of acting! It is known as a style created by the Danjuro acting family who still perform in Tokyo today.

Catalog # 23
Torii KIYOMITSU (1735–1785)
Ichikawa Danjūrō IV as Kagekiyo
ca. 1763

Torii Kiyomitsu was born as Kamejiro and lived in Edo (Tokyo). His strength was in depicting the theater-scenes with *onnagata* (men playing female roles). He also produced placards, playbills, and illustrations for popular novels. He was a leading artist for the ukiyo-e world during the 1760's.

This print depicts a key scene from the play *Momo chidori oiso kayoi*. The main character is Kagekiyo (died 1186). The dramatic appearance of the actor playing the part of Kagekiyo is extreme and details a scene in the play, well known by the Japanese audiences. His scowling face and violent action toward the placard of his likeness reminds the audience that he is an outlandish hero, showing his outraged feelings and letting them get the best of him. Danjūrō IV, a famous Edo Kabuki actor, was tall and had a large stage voice (*koseki)* that thrilled audiences. The common man avidly collected prints of Ichikawa Danjūrō IV. Note the Danjūrō *mon* or heraldic crest (three nested boxes).

CAM Connection: Simon Vouet (1590-1649) France 1629 *The Toilet of Venus;* 1970.459

Catalog # 27
Katsukawa SHUNKŌ (1743–1812)
Segawa Kikunojō III in a Female Role
Late 1780s

Shunkō was an important artist whose best-known works were portraits of Kabuki actors. He had a large output and his works are not too rare. His signature is sometimes in the form of a jar seal. His portraits of actors are frequently in a *hoso-ye* format (a vertical double square).

This print is of the famous actor Segawa Kikunojō III (1751–1810). Born in Osaka, he became one of the most famous actors in the history of Kabuki. He excelled in princess or courtesan roles. He was rumored to b e one of the highest paid actors of the time. He was also a noted dancer. The artist shows us a tall slim female dressed in elegant clothes but still retaining masculine features. We do not know what play this print represents, but the subject is extremely elegant and definitely depicts a beautiful Japanese female. Katsukawa Shunko made many prints of Segawa between 1774 and 1781 highlighting his famous acting and dancing roles.

CAM Connection: John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) U.S. 1882 *A Venetian Woman* 1972.37

The next prints highlight another distinctive style of Kabuki acting, *wagoto*, first produced in the region around Osaka and Kyoto. *Wagoto* is best known for delicate and gentle movements portrayed by men. These actors are also gifted dancers.

Catalog # 30
Utagawa KUNIYOSHI (1797–1861)
Two Cats Representing Nakamura Utaemon IV and Onoe Baikō IV as the lovers Denpei and Oshun Series: *Fashionable Cats at Play*
1847

Utagawa Kuniyoshi is known as one of the last great *ukiyo-e* artists. He was from the Utagawa School and did theatre prints, but did not become successful until later. At one time he sold tatami for a living. In 1827, he created a series, *One Hundred and Eight Heroes of the Suikoden* and this was his commercial and artistic breakthrough. Later he became quite successful in other genre: ghost stories, comic prints, and landscapes.

His contemporaries reported that his favorite animal was the cat, and it was said he always had many cats in his studio when drawing. He was arrested in 1842 on a morals-based crackdown, but escaped with a fine. He had a taste for the bizarre, and his style could sometimes be ghoulish. The dialog written around the cats, telling the story of their love suicide is most unusual and is portrayed humorously.

CAM Connection: Glenn Ligon (1960-) *Untitled I Am An Invisible Man,* 1993, U.S. 2000.225

Theater Prints (Osaka)

Catalog # 37
Gosōtei HIROSADA (active ca. 1819-1863)
Jitsukawa Ensaburo as Mashiba Hisatsugu, Nakamura Utaemon IV as Sutewakamaru, and Mimasu Daigoro IV as Mashiba Hisayoshi
From the play: *Chigo Deeps and the White Waves of Love*
1850, lunar calendar

Hirosada is known for his exciting depictions of heroes and action myths from well-known plays as well as his prints of kabuki actors. This is a three-part print and one worth a closer look, for the gold metallic pigment and highlighted foam and spray applied with a blowpipe. Notice also the graded gray washes that provide a sharp contrast with the areas exposed by the lantern. The play is based on a 12th century legend and tells a story of love, suicide and revenge – favorite themes of the Japanese townspeople who packed the kabuki theaters.

CAM: Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) *Samson and Delilah,* 1609, 1972.459

Catalog # 38
Gosōtei HIROSADA (active ca. 1819–1863)
Jitsukawa Ensaburō as Inuzuka Shino (upper right), Kataoka Gadō II as chief of police Inukai Kempachi (lower left) with three of his men
Play: *The Eight Buds of Plum Blossoms,* early 1850s

This print is fascinating because of its shape (a triptych arranged at an angle) and its story telling - *The Legend of the Eight Dog Warriors*. This famous kabuki play has eight warriors born to a princess and a sacred dog that she was forced to marry. Each warrior represents one of the eight Confucian virtues (filial piety, brotherly love, loyalty, trust, propriety, righteousness, integrity, and humility) which were important to every samurai. The story tells how all eight warriors are fated to restore the honor of the Satomi clan. This print shows the most famous scene – the story of two of the warriors confronting each other on the roof and balcony of Koga Castle before they recognize their shared heritage and future.

CAM Connection: Nicolas Frances (1434-1468) Spain ca 1440 *The Fall of the Angels;* 1959.20

Catalog # 42
Mori YOSHIYUKI (1835–1879)
Ōtani Tomomatsu as Tamiya Iemon and Jitsukawa Enjaku I in the triple role of the ghost of Oiwa, the ghost of Osaragi Kohei and Sato Yomoshichi
Play: *Ghost Stories of Yotsuya Along the Tōkaidō*
ca. early 1860s

Yoshiyuki was an Osaka artist who created this unusual artwork depicting the actor Jitsukawa Enjaku I who played three parts in this famous ghost play. Enjaku was most famous for delighting audiences with the quick changes called for in this play. There are two moveable panels in this print – rare and costly additions to an actor print. One panel has the ghost of Oiwa, a murdered woman on one side and when folded, we see her murdered servant, Kohei, on the other. The left panel slides up to reveal Yomoshichi, the man who killed the murderer of Oiwa and Kohei. The Japanese believed that viewing ghost stories during the hot, humid summer months helped them cool off.

CAM Connection: *Bowl with Dancing Dervishes*, Sultanabad Ware Iran 14th Century, 1948.123

Section Three: Literature and Legend

Publishers, in order to keep interests in prints alive, expanded the subject matter to appeal to a wider audience with material from literature (novels and poetry) and legend. One of the most popular novels was the 600 year old *Tale of Genji* and one of the most popular warrior legends was *The Forty-seven Ronin*, based on a contemporary scandal, memorialized in the Kabuki play, *Chūshingura*.

Catalog # 44
Nishimura SHIGENAGA(ca. 1697 – 1756)
Number 17: Genji, The Picture Competition
Series: Fifty-four Illustrations of the Tale of Genji
ca. 1735

The *Tale of Genji* was written in the 11th century by an unknown woman of the imperial court, popularly named Murasaki Shikibu after a character in the novel. It is considered one of the greatest works of Japanese literature and is considered the world's earliest novel. There were works similar to this that predate it in the narrative form called monogatari, but its complex story, psychological tension and multiple plot lines allow it to be described as the world's first novel. It was written for the women of the aristocracy.

The novel tells the story of Prince Genji, the son of Kiritsubo, one of the lowest concubines in the royal court, and an ancient emperor. She died when Genji was three. The emperor showed a liking for Genji and brought him to court to be raised in his company. The tale concentrates on his romantic life but demonstrates that he is a mater of poetry, speech, manners and music. His most important personality trait is his loyalty to all the women in his life. One of his greatest loves is the Lady Fujitsubo. After the death of Genji's mother, the emperor finds Lady Fujitsubo who resembles Kiristubo and takes her as a concubine. Initially Genji loves her as a stepmother, but then he falls in love with her. Their love is a forbidden one, but eventually he meets her secretly and they have a son. The emperor dies and the boy becomes the crown prince and Lady Fujitsubo the empress. Genji has many other illicit and scandalous affairs, takes numerous wives and concubines and has multiple children. His son with Lady Fujitsubo becomes emperor and Genji finishes his imperial career at the highest level.

As early as the 12th century, the tale was the subject of a scroll comprising 10 – 20 rolls and covering all 54 chapters. Print 44 is from a series of 54 illustrations from *Tale of Genji* by Nishimura Shigenaga (26 prints) and Torii Kiyomasa II (28 prints).

Genji would like his ward, Princess Akikonomu, to marry the emperor. Tu no Chujo would also like his daughter to wed the emperor. In this scene, known as The Picture Competition, Genji and his rival, Tu no Chujo submit paintings from their collections to the emperor who is partially hidden by the screen. Genji has also included some of his own sketches following the advise of Lady Murasaki, advice which helps him win the competition. There is a poem at the top of the print recalling the conversation between Genji and Lady Murasaki.

The print is in the shape of a fan. These types of prints were frequently mounted and displayed in the homes of the wealthy. The gold background was used in many Genji prints to convey the luxury of the court and enhance the visual appeal.

Nishimura Shigenaga (1697? –1756) produced prints of beautiful women, kabuki actors, parodies, classical themes, flowers, birds and landscapes. During his career he was a competitor with Masanobu, one of the originators of the perspective print. Shigenaga mastered new techniques and worked in the genres of perspective prints (*uki-e*).

CAM connection: *Don Quixote*, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot

Catalog # 47
Katsushika HOKUSAI (1760–1849)
Act 11
Series: Syllabary of the Storehouse of Loyal Retainers (Kanadehon Chūshingura)
Ca. 1801

The scene in this print is based on a very popular play *Kanadehon Chushingura* based on the story of *The Forty-seven Ronin***.**

The story began in 1701, a time when Japan, isolated from the rest of the world, was ruled by the Shogun in Edo (Tokyo). Although the emperor was the hereditary and spiritual leader of Japan, he was little more than a figurehead. It was a time of decadence and corruption with once honorable samurai losing their status by drinking, gambling and attending kabuki plays. Lord Asano of Ako, an honorable man, was called to Edo by the Shogun to meet with envoys from the emperor. Kira Kozukenosuke was assigned to be his instructor in court etiquette and in turn expected a large bribe. Lord Asano failed to bribe him properly. Angry, Kira constantly insulted him. Finally, Lord Asano could take it no longer and following one especially nasty insult unsheathed his sword and attacked Kira in the Shogun's palace, an action punishable by death. Lord Asano was forced to commit ritual suicide. His castle was confiscated, his family ruined and his retainers dispersed becoming *ronin* (master less samurai).

The forty-seven ronin decided to plot vengeance against Kira. These 47 men led by Oishi, disguised their appearance and on December 14, 1702 attacked Kira's home and took it completely by surprise. They found Kira hiding in a shed. They offered Kira the chance to commit suicide. He refused and Oishi cut off his head with the same sword his master used to commit suicide. The 47 ronin took the head and placed it on Lord Asano's grave at the Sengaku Temple.

The Shogun did not know what to do with the 46 ronin (the 47th ronin, the youngest, was allowed to return home). Although he admired their loyalty to their master, they disobeyed the laws of the Shogun. In the end they were allowed to commit suicide.

Over the next several decades many variations of the story were written and told. During the Tokugawa regime (1603–1868) it was forbidden to use the true names of persons of high rank when dramatizing history. The authors would change the time period, the names of the characters and add a certain amount of fiction, often setting the story in the fourteenth century to avoid censorship. In 1748 an eleven-act play "Kanadehon Chushingura" was written. The play bears little resemblance to the true story but the heroic message of the "against all odds struggle" and triumph comes through.

Kanadehon Chūshingura is one of the best known of the kabuki plays and is the subject of many series of prints. It is seen nostalgically as the manifestation of true samurai ideals of loyalty and resolute action. It had everything the audience loved: deceit, death, avenging warriors, wives, spies and a villain. Playwrights wrote on this theme for kabuki and puppets before and after the classic *Chushingura*.

Many artists did wood block prints of this story/play and many artists including Katsushika Hokusai did several series of the story of the 47 Ronin. This is not a theatrical print. The characters are not actors who played the parts in the kabuki theater and the print was not based on a particular production of the play. There are no personal crests on the clothing that would identify kabuki actors. These prints feature the historical characters with a background free from the stage. This print is of act XI, the ronins' attack on the castle. The attack was in mid winter at a time when Moronao (Kira) was off guard.

Katsukawa Shuncho depicted Act 7 of the play in Catalog # 10. One of the ronin, in an effort to convince spies working for Moronao that he is not planning revenge, turns to a life of drinking and debauchery. He received a letter from his co-conspirators and in this scene, the fiancée of a disgraced ronin, now a prostitute, reads the letter from the balcony above. Below is the spy, Kudayu who is trying to learn about the letter.

The Tale of the 47 Ronin was passed on orally and through written work. We might compare this story to legends we learn about in our culture including Robin Hood.

CAM Connection: Benjamin West (1738-1820) *Ophelia and Laertes*, 1792; 1882.230

Katsushika HOKUSAI (1760–1849)
Hokusai was born October 31, 1760 in Honjo, on the eastern outskirts of Edo. The prestigious artisan family Nakajima Ise, mirror makers who supplied the shogun, adopted him in childhood. As a boy he was an apprentice to a woodcarver. He serious training began in 1778 when he entered the studio of Shunsho, a designer of kabuki prints. He stayed for 15 years and did portraits of actors and illustrations of serial stories under the name of Shunro. He later studied with Yusen. He studied Dutch engravings and western principles of art including light, perspective and scale. Only the Dutch were allowed to trade with the Japanese through a single port, Nagasaki during this period of Japanese isolation. In his prints he was able to achieve three-dimensional scale by using light and dark shadows and the principles of perspective. In 1798 he took the name Hokusai and began to focus on landscapes, for which he is best known (*One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji* and *Thirty-six Views of Mt Fuji*), abandoning prints of beautiful women and actor. He produced several landscapes using fantastic and classical themes from legends and poetry. His series of the popular pabuki piece *Chushingura* combined traditional interior scenes (walls and roof removed) with spacious western style landscape backgrounds (low horizon, western perspective). Despite his successful and prolific career (estimated 30,000 works) he was burdened with a profligate son and grandson and fought poverty throughout his life, often unable to afford warm clothing in winter. He lived a very long life dying at the age of 89, at a time when the life expectancy was 50 years.

Section Four: Landscape and *fukei-ga*

Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu instituted the policy of *sankin kotai* and it had consequences far beyond his original intention to control the daimyo. *Sankin kotai* decreed that all daimyo had to spend one year in Edo serving the shogun then travel back to their home province for a year to administer their region. To facilitate travel, there were eight national highways, maintained by the local daimyo. Daimyo were assigned the times to travel: if you were in favor, you traveled in good weather; if you were out of favor, you slogged through mud and snow.

The government decreed certain towns as stations along each route where there were a set number of porters, couriers, horses, restaurants and inns to serve travelers. Traffic was heavy on the roads, as daimyo were required to travel with appropriate escorts – often in the thousands. Travel became safer and pilgrims, merchants and commoners joined the throngs. Regions specialized in seasonal foods and souvenirs to lure tourist yen. In the early 1800's, landscape prints became a popular way for travelers to remember the wonderful sights and unusual stories along their journey.

The two greatest Japanese landscape artists were Katsushika Hokusai (1760 – 1849) and Utagawa Hiroshige (1797 – 1858). They developed a style of landscape design in which the common man was an integral part of the wonders of the natural world. Each had a gentle empathy for the foibles and vanities of man that appealed equally to *chonin*, pilgrim and commoner alike. Many of their images remain popular today in Japan and around the world.

Catalog # 58
Katsushika HOKUSAI (1760 – 1849)

Under the Great Wave off Kanagawa From the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*
ca. 1831–32

This is probably the most recognizable Japanese print in the world. It has been used and abused as a tangible illustration of the unique Japanese "spirit" and in pedestrian advertising campaigns. Mt. Fuji has been a sacred mountain since pre-history. It rises isolated and majestic out of a plain that rolls gently up from the Pacific Ocean. Clouds, mist, sunlight, moonlight and imagination play games across its perfect snow-capped cone, visible on a clear day from fifty or more miles away. In Hokusai's times, it was easily seen from anywhere in the city of Edo.

Shintoism is Japan's native religion. It holds that the creators of the world sent *kami*, heavenly beings to reside in sacred places around Japan to guard and protect its people. Each village has its own *kami* and every place of great beauty has its *kami*. Mt. Fuji is the most sacred beautiful place and it was believed that the *kami* on its peak guarded the elixir of eternal life hidden there by the gods.

The *Great Wave* is the most famous print from Hokusai's series *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*. The series was so popular that Hokusai designed another ten prints and it was reprinted in several editions. In the series, Mt. Fuji is shown in all types of weather and at all times of the day. Here the eternal Fuji anchors the composition as the giant waves roil across our view. Japanese "read" their artworks from right to left. Follow the waves in that direction to get a better idea how the original viewers appreciated the dynamics of the colors and lines. Three fishing boats are caught in the troughs of the waves, their passengers riding out the storm perhaps protected by the sacred mountain.

Religious cults known as *Fuji-ko* (children of Fuji) centered on the worship of Mt. Fuji. During Hokusai's times, there were tens of thousands of members of these cults. Some cults built scale models of Mt. Fuji in Edo to allow those who normally were unable to climb the mountain – women, children and the infirm – a chance to reap the spiritual rewards of a pilgrimage. The mini Mt. Fuji's also became popular pleasure spots as they were built with spectacular views of Mt. Fuji and reverence for the holy mountain was nearly universal.

CAM Connection: Claude Monet (1840-1926) *Rocks at Belle Isle,* 1886*;* 1985.282
Monet owned many of Hokusai's prints and there is speculation that his fascination with the effects of changing light was inspired by the series *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*.

Catalog # 62
Utagawa HIROSHIGE (1797 – 1858)
Bikuni Bridge in the Snow
Series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*
10 / 1858, lunar calendar

One Hundred Views was Hiroshige's most ambitious series, a scale never attempted before. The publisher committed to producing prints of exquisite quality, rich in color and elaborate in technique. Hiroshige was now in his sixtieth year and had nearly monopolized the field of landscape prints for over twenty years. Due to popular demand, the number of designs had reached 115. But the series was cut short by Hiroshige's untimely death in 1858. Shigenobu, Hiroshige's pupil and the future Hiroshige II, completed three more prints. With a later replacement by Hiroshige II and the table of contents, the entire series came to 120 prints, the largest single-sheet landscape series in the history of *ukiyo-e.* It is argued whether Hiroshige or Hiroshige II designed this print.

It could be said that Edo era Japanese were obsessed with *meisho,* "famous places" or "celebrated spots." They were originally a literary place with conventionalized poetic attributes linked to a particular season and associated with the ancient capital of Kyoto. But in the 18th and 19th centuries, *meisho* took on a new meaning. They were now places of relaxation and release from the rules and regulations of a highly ordered society. Hiroshige created 70 series of famous places to fill the popular demand.

Bridges figured heavily in this series. There were many in Edo, crossing the castle moats, canals and rivers that ran throughout the city. Areas around the bridges were cleared to serve as much needed firebreaks, but the populace embraced them as natural open gathering places between the crowded neighborhoods. Soon theaters, restaurants and other places of entertainment crept in to serve the strolling crowds.

Bikuni Bridge was near Hiroshige's boyhood home, in the outer ring of samurai quarters guarding the shogun's castle. The snow is falling at night on a peddler loaded with his wares crossing the bridge. To the right is a stall, erected each night, that sold roasted yams, still a popular winter favorite in Tokyo. To the left is a permanent restaurant serving wild meat, showing that the Buddhist prohibition against eating meat was breaking down. The bridge was named for a type of Buddhist nun, but also referred to low-class prostitutes who worked in this area.

CAM Connections: Childe Hassam *(1850-1935) Pont Royal, Paris*, 1897; 1899.68

Section Five: *Kacho-e* – Bird and Flower Prints

Ukiyo-e prints, woodblock prints from the floating world, can be divided into six categories: *Yakusha-e* (actors), *Bijin-ga* (beauties), *Fukei-ga* (landscapes), *Musha-e* (warriors), *Kacho-e* (birds and flowers) and *Shunga* (erotic).

Kacho-e includes birds, flowers and scenes from nature such as insects, reptiles and animals. *Kacho-e* were popular among the 18th century Torii school of printmakers and during the 1720s - 1750s prints of birds and flowers appeared more frequently. With the advent of full color prints in the mid 1760s, some splendid examples were created, primarily in the *chuban* (c. 9 x 8 ") format. The theme also appeared repeatedly in privately issued *surimono* (luxury prints) during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Catalog # 65
Kitagawa UTAMARO (1754 –1806)
Manchurian Great Tit and Japanese Robin (Shijukara to Komadori)
from album: *Birds compared in Humorous Verse (Momo chidori kyoka awase)*
1790/91 (first edition) or 1793 (second edition)

Utamaro was a pupil of the painter Toriyama Sekien while a child. He continued a relationship with the painter until Sekien's death in 1788. His first professional work was a cover for a Kabuki playbook at age 22. He seems to have been a principal artist for the Tsutaya publishing firm in the 1780s. From about 1791 he made half-length portraits of woman and went on to produce a famous series featuring women of the Yoshiwara district. In 1804 he published prints related to a banned novel, which got him into trouble with the *bakufu*. The prints, *Hideyoshi and his 5 Concubines*, depicted the military ruler Toyotomi Hideyoshi's wife and concubines. Utamaro was accused of insulting Hideyoshi's dignity. He was sentenced to 50 days in

handcuffs. This crushed him and he died two years later in 1806 at age 53 in Edo.

Kyōka, "Mad verse" or "crazy verse," is 31-syllable comic poetry in 'tanka' form especially popular during the late eighteenth century. The height of its popularity was from 1781 – 1789. *Kyōka* were not "crazy" in the sense of wild expressiveness, but rather were unorthodox by virtue of their breaking the classical rules of diction and subject matter used in conventional *waka* (traditional 31-syllable poetry). Many were actually somewhat serious in tone. *Kyōka* humor was set in puns and other types of word play, or in gentle spoofing of classical poetry. When applying the term kyōka to late eighteenth and early nineteenth century comic poetry, a less literal but more accurate translation would be "playful verse." The oldest known collection of *kyōka* is the *Kyōka on One Hundred Brands of Drinks*, attributed to a priest named Gyôgetsubô (1265-1328).

This print is from one of three anthologies that resulted from *kyōka* competitions among leading poets to compose poems on birds, insects and shells. The poets were highly respected and the prints were lavishly printed - raising respect for Utamaro's design work.

Section Six: Surimono – Luxury Prints

Surimono literally means "printed thing." These prints were:

- Privately commissioned and distributed
- Printed on thicker paper (*hosho*) which facilitated special printing effects
- Were adorned with poems which linked the verbal and visual imagery

Surimono displayed the wealth and the taste of the person or persons commissioning the work. For the artist, these were prestige commissions, carried out in close consultation with prominent connoisseurs, poets, and actors of the day.

Members of *kyōka* (crazy verse) poetry groups commissioned *surimono* prints and would swap them at poetry gatherings. Others were commissioned as personal greeting cards or mementoes of events to be given to friends and clients. *Surimono* with spring imagery or symbols of longevity were produced at New Year wishing good luck. Kabuki actors commissioned them to distribute among their fans and sponsors.

Catalog # 68
Utagawa TOYOKUNI (1769–1825)
Ichikawa Danjūrō VII (1791-1859) as Arajishi Otokonosuke About to Slay a Wild Boar
1803

Ichikawa Danjūrō VII plays the role of Arajishi Otokonosuke from a play about disputes in the Date clan. This play focused on fights over succession in this clan of samurai from a region north of Edo. The Date clan supported Tokugawa Ieyasu in his fight to become shogun and was granted much of north Japan by him. However, there was major infighting among the kinsmen resulting in ten years of violence and conflict reaching a climax in 1671 when a powerful Date relative, Aki Muneshige complained to the shogun about the mismanagement. Aki was summoned to Edo to present his case and retainers of the Date family were also called. While waiting to meet with officials, Aki and one retainer started with insults and progressed to swords; both were killed in the fracas. This along with other tales became a well known as *Date sodo* (Date disturbance).

We recognize Danjūrō VII since he wears a costume with the peony actor crest and with the family crest, the *mimasu*, which is also depicted on the sword hilts. In *Date sodo* plays, the Danjūrō character would have been beating a huge rat that represents the evil samurai Nikki Danjo, who could transform himself into this creature using his magical powers. Here, Danjūrō is depicted slaying a boar referring to the calendar year of 1803.

This *surimono* is a picture calendar for the year of the boar. The Tokugawa era calendar was divided into twelve months with either 29 or 30 days plus an intercalary month for the left over days. Every year the government rearranged the sequence of these months. This long-short (*dai-sho*) order was coded in the surimono design. The 13 vertically arranged *mimasu* motifs on the right side give the key to the months. The top motif contains the character for long in the white center. In addition, motifs 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12 also have white centered crests and therefore are long months. The second motif from the top has the character for *uru* representing the intercalary month. The motifs with red centers contain the character for short (*sho*) and therefore represent those months with 29 days.

The verse on the right reads:

Be prosperous during the extra month.
After the Doll festival, a hedge of rapeseed
And fringed pinks will come into bloom.
As summer cools, chrysanthemums appear,
And then trees are laden with rice cakes.

This poem contains references to seasonal festivals occurring at certain times. For example, the Doll festival occurs in the third month, rapeseed flowers bloom in the fourth month, fringed pinks in the sixth, chrysanthemums in the ninth and in the twelfth month rice cakes are hung from willow branches. The verse on the left refers to Otokonsuke and the year of the boar.

Catalog # 75
Utagawa TOYOHIRO (1773 – 1829)
A Lobster as a Treasure Ship
ca. 1810

This surimono was commissioned to be given at New Year. It is filled with symbols denoting longevity and good luck. The treasure ship (*takarabune*) brought prosperity. Here it is depicted in the form of a lobster, a food linked with New Years. The ship carries a hat and cloak of invisibility (*kakure-gasa* and *kakure-mino*) which protected against evil spirits, precious jewels (*nyoi-hoyu*) that could fulfill every wish made, scrolls (*makimono*) which brought success to the bearer, a lucky mallet (*uchide-no-kozuchi*) that could produce every kind of valuable goods that one could wish for, and other symbols of prosperity.

The design on the sail shows repeating stylized peony (*botan*) motifs and the character for good luck (*fuku*). The peony was the sovereign of flowers noted for its beauty. Surrounding the ship are *origami* turtles and cranes both symbolizing longevity. The species of turtle is called *minogame* that lives exceptionally long. As these turtles age, moss grows on their shells as depicted in this print.

Toyohira highlighted some of the elements of the print with special techniques. Embossing (*karazuri*) was used on the tail of the lobster, the sail, and the treasures in the boat. Gold colored metallic pigment was put on the *fuku* pattern of the sail and the *origami* cranes.

Kyōko verse by two poets also appears on this print. Sakuragawa Jihinari was a prominent writer in Edo and a supporter of Ichikawa Danjūrō VII, a famous Kabuki actor. References to

this Kabuki actor can be found in this print. One of Danjūrō acting names was Ebizo, which means storehouse of lobsters. The pattern on the sail of good luck symbols and the peony are part of his *fuku-botan* (good-luck peony) crest. The crest of the Ichikawa family, the *mimasu* (three concentric squares representing *masu* or rice measures), is subtly represented within the decorative design of the sail.

The poems suggest that this surimono may represent Danjūrō journey to Osaka and Ise in 1829-30. The verse on the left alludes to the pastime of viewing plum blossoms, flowers that were associated with Osaka suggesting that the actor may have been there when this was written. The other verse refers to the "lobster of Ise" which has set sail as a treasure ship. This print was designed in late 1829 and probably issued for the New Year of 1830 after the actor's death.

Section Seven: *Shin Hanga* – Creative New Prints

Twentieth Century Printmaking: The opening of Japan led to foreign trade and exposure to Japanese culture. Many westerners were drawn to the unique Japanese aesthetic and sought art and artifacts from this country. Many western painters drew inspiration from Japanese prints, which raised even more interest in Japanese art. These changes influenced print production in Japan considerably. Westerners started to collect woodblock prints; however, the demand for quality prints was far greater than the supply.

Watanabe Shozaburo (1885–1962) was a renowned publisher of the early 20th century. He produced a new genre of modern prints referred to as *shin hanga*, creative new prints. He wanted to contemporize traditional ukiyo-e both in production and in subject matter, while producing high quality prints at affordable prices. As Japan modernized, there was reminiscence for traditional culture. *Shin hanga* capitalized on this by producing images of geishas, temples and shrines, cityscapes of older neighborhoods, along with traditional flower and bird prints.

Catalog # 79
Kawase HASUI (1883-1957)
Honmon Temple in Ikegami
January 1931 (Showa, 6th year, first month)

This print depicts the pathway to Honmon Temple, which is located in the Ikegami district of Tokyo on the southern limit of Tokyo. At the time it was a small farming village with a few large shops along the main road, clusters of wooden farmhouses with thatched roofs, and fields of rice and vegetables. What gives Ikegami distinction is the vast temple complex known as *Honmonji*. This is the main temple site of Japan's strongest Buddhist order, the *Hokke* or "Lotus" sect that was founded by Nichiren in the 13th century. Construction of the first temple was completed in 1317. This temple has been rebuilt twice, once after a fire in 1710 and again after considerable damage during World War II.

Shin hanga artist, chose this site because of the idyllic nature of the scene and the popularity of this famous site. The temple itself is not shown, but the stone post and bridge railing identify the approach to it over the Reizen Bridge. The soft falling snow with just a few people walking on the footpath lends a sense of peace and tranquility to the scene. It gives one a wonderful escape from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Women, who were more likely to wear traditional Japanese dress, were featured in these prints. By this time, men were wearing more

westernized clothes; their images would have been contrary to the sentiment that Hasui, was trying to convey.

Kawase was one of the most exquisite and prolific of the early 20th century *shin hanga* artists. He produced over 600 works mostly landscapes. In 1930 and 1936, the Toledo Museum of Art had exhibitions of *shin hanga*; Hasui represented 32% of the total prints shown.

Catalog # 82
Ishikawa TORAJI (1875 – 1964)
Leisure Time, 1934

This print depicts a *moga*, short for *modan garu* which means modern girl. By the late 1920's in Tokyo, many young women were challenging the traditional rules of behavior and dress, adopting more western attitudes. In some circles, these women were called Japanese "flappers." They wore short skirts and had bob-cut hairstyles. This moga movement clashed with traditional Japanese femininity. They often had low-paying jobs and liked to socialize at bars and dance halls. They were criticized for being promiscuous and threatening cultural values.

Ishikawa Toraji did a series of ten nudes showing moga engaged in relaxing activities while in private. Ishikawa was probably influenced by popular art magazines available at the time. The bright art deco style and the overhead vantage point popularized by Degas are both evident in this print.

The print is titled, *Lusa Ome ,* referring to the classical text *Essays in Idleness)* that is a collection of 243 passages written by a Buddhist monk between 1330 and 1332. This title is an example of *mitate* used by Japanese artists to link works with recent or past history or events. It often suggested multiple or more profound interpretation of their work and was meant to engage the viewer on another level. Here the *moga* is leafing through a book of *ukiyo-e* depicting courtesans; she is in her own world. Sleeping behind her is a household cat, which may suggest a male presence. This series of prints, which displayed overt sexuality, made government authorities take notice. The series was banned and two of the blocks were destroyed.

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