

RISD MUSEUM

Tokaido: The Lure of the Open Road in 19th-Century Japan, April 29, 2005-August 21, 2005

In his series of woodblock prints entitled "Fifty-Three Stages of the Tokaido," Hiroshige captures the myths and realities of the travel boom in 19th-century Japan. At this time, the notion of traveling caught hold of the popular imagination, and thousands of men, women, and children set out to sightsee and make pilgrimages, often combining both activities. Most travelers walked, but those who could afford it journeyed by horse or palanquin.

The Tokaido (Eastern Sea Route) was the most heavily traveled highway in Japan. The government regulated the road through a system of post stations and inspection barriers. Designed as the main artery between the great cities of Edo (modern Tokyo) and Kyoto, the Tokaido traversed many towns and sites of historic interest, scenic beauty, and religious importance. It is assumed that Hiroshige designed these prints after having himself toured the route in 1832-33 as a member of an official procession from Edo to Kyoto.

This series of scenes along the Tokaido was extremely popular both for its subject and for the artist's innovative style. By combining diverse landscape images with visual narratives of ordinary human activities, often humorously and always with compassionate understanding, the artist gives each station a distinct character and creates a sense of space, movement, and atmosphere that captivates and draws his audience into the images. Walk with Hiroshige's travelers through this unique vision of the Tokaido and experience what its travelers encountered along the way.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Dusk, Numazu (Numazu tasogare zu), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.13



A group of travelers including a Buddhist pilgrim treks through Numazu's Forest of a Thousand Pines beneath the light of an early evening moon—the only moon pictured in the *Tōkaidō* series. They are most likely journeying to the city of Shikoku, site of the Kōpūra Shrine, since one among the group carries the characteristic mask of Sarudahiko, god of the road, which is used in the Buddhist procession held at that shrine.

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Japanese
Geta, ca. 1900
Lacquered wood; silk velvet straps
Gift of Mary A. Newell 20.237

Shoes such as these were used when walking outdoors to elevate the wearer's feet above the mud and dust of the road. Travelers depicted in the *Tōkaidō* prints wear clogs of this type or sandals.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Tsuruya Kiemon, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Morning view, Nihon Bridge (Nihonbashi asa no kei), from the series
The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.1



Known as the "Bridge of Japan," Nihonbashi was located at the center of Edo and was the recognized starting point of the *Tōkaidō*. It was the main thoroughfare for feudal lords (*daimyō*), who were usually required to reside in the capital for half a year and spend half a year in their feudal domains. Here, the servants of a *daimyō* depart the city in procession as local fishmongers head to market in the early morning light.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Ferryboats, Arai (Arai watashibune no zu), *The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido*, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.32



All travel in Edo-period Japan was supposedly regulated by the government. The *Tōkaidō* highway was not a continuous stretch of road, and government checkpoints were sometimes deliberately located at places where travelers could not evade the main route by way of "scenic" shortcuts that circumvented check stations. Arai and Hakone, with its narrow mountain pass, were the two most important inspection barriers of this type. The ferry guided all travelers through the station at Arai, which made it difficult for those

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wishing to avoid government inspectors. The one-and-a-quarter-mile passage allowed time for a nap and for servants to enjoy a rest away from their lord in another boat.

Tsuruya Kiemon, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Changing porters and horses, Fujieda (Fujieda jinba tsugitate), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaidō, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.23



A group of porters has just halted at the government post house at Fujieda, and the official in charge is leaning over to address the first person in line. Not all of the fifty-three stations of the Tōkaidō were post stations, but those that were provided for the rental of horses, porters, and palanquins, as seen in the center rear of this composition.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Abe River, Fuchū (Fuchū abegawa), from the series *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaidō*, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.20



The scenery around Fuchū (modern Shizuoka) has inspired poets since ancient times. This print shows three ladies being carried across the Abe River by porters. It was the custom for rich people to ride in palanquins, but for ordinary people to ride piggyback. The three travelers are probably the daughter of a samurai and her two attendants. Compare this simple palanquin (kago) with the photograph in the case at the center of this gallery and with the more elaborate marriage palanquin (norimono) in the adjacent gallery.

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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Women soliciting travelers, Goyu (Goyu tabibito tomeonna), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaidō, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.36



The wealthy tourist, government official, or pilgrim could expect to find luxury inns to provide for his needs. In Goyu, Hiroshige presents a humorous scene in which a group of teahouse servants attempt to drag two unsuspecting travelers into their establishment. Among competitive inns and teahouses, this was in fact a common method of obtaining customers.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Scene at the boundary marker, Fujikawa (Fujikawa bohana no zu), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaidō, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.38



Outside Fujikawa station, commoners bow before a feudal lord's procession, while a puppy joins them in an attentive posture. The horses are being taken as gifts from the military dictator (*shōgun*), the real power behind the government, to the emperor, a figurehead whose cultural significance was still respected. In 1832, when Hiroshige himself traveled the Tōkaidō with a Procession of the Gift Horse, he gathered the material for this series.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Toyokawa Bridge, Yoshida (Yoshida toyokawabashi), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaidō, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.35



Yoshida was an important castle town as well as a station along the Tōkaidō. The man atop the scaffolding surrounding the castle in the foreground enjoys the panoramic view. Just as travelers admire the particular attractions of each station or site, local people appreciate

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the entertaining spectacle created by passersby, such as a feudal lord's (*daimyō*) procession on the bridge in the distance.

Japanese

Textile length, ca. 1900

Cotton; plain weave, tie- and stitch-resist dyeing (shibori)

Gift of Theodore F. Green 21.411

Fabrics such as this one were produced in the vicinity of Narumi, one of the stations along the Tōkaidō. Travelers would have purchased similar local products as souvenirs of their journeys. The characteristic dotted pattern is made by using plant fiber to tie or stitch small areas of the cloth into tight bundles. When the cloth is dipped in dye (in this case, indigo), the dye does not penetrate the wrapped sections, which retain the original ground color of the cloth. This form of resist-dyeing was and remains an important textile art in Japan.



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

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

Posting house with famous specialty, Kusatsu (Kusatsu meibutsu tateba), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.53



Travelers stop at the Ubumochiya teahouse in the rear to savor the famous rice cakes (*ubumochi*), but the commotion of the road is still visible in the foreground. Those on urgent business often hired a "fast palanquin," in this case with four bearers, from private messenger services. The experience was anything but comfortable. The passenger in this print clings to an interior grip in his palanquin for fear of being thrown from the cabin.

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Japanese

Kago, ca. 1870-89

Hand-colored albumen print

Museum Collection 1990.097

Photography was introduced into Japan in the mid-19th century with the opening of its ports to foreign trade. By the 1860s, there were numerous Japanese and foreign studios in the treaty ports, and photography was being used to record the fast-fading traditional aspects of Japanese culture. Photographs such as this staged scene of a woman in a palanquin were sold as souvenirs to foreign visitors, who found such premodern modes of transport exotic.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

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

The temple Yugyōji, Fujisawa (Fujisawa Yugyōji), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.7



Fujisawa is the site of the Yugyō-ji, a temple that marks the approach to Enoshima, where the goddess Benzaiten was said to have appeared in a cave. The island shrine at Enoshima is accessible on foot at low tide, and the road to the shrine is marked by the gate (*torii*) visible in the foreground. A group of sightless pilgrims halts to the left of the gate on their way to pray to Benzaiten, a protector of the blind.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

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

Festival at Atsuta Shrine, Miya (Miya atsuta shinji), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.42



At Atsuta Shrine at Miya, which is identified by its gate (*torii*), villagers participating in the Horse-Driving Festival end their nighttime chase through this very busy town at the temple.

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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Horse fair in the fourth month, Chiryū (Chiryū shuka umaichi), *The fifty-three stations of the Tokaidō*, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.40



Chiryū was famous for its spring horse festival. Hiroshige, who traveled the Tōkaidō in midsummer, would not have seen it himself, but because of its fame and visual appeal, he included this scene of grazing horses and grooms in his series. The horse traders are visible in the distance, beyond the expanse of open fields in the foreground.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Tsuruya Kiemon, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Sayo no Nakayama, Nissaka (Nissaka sayononakayama), *The fifty-three stations of the Tokaidō*, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.26



On a long-ago night, a pregnant woman from Nissaka was murdered while traveling to Kanaya to meet her husband. It is believed that when her blood fell onto a stone, it became the home of her spirit, which wept nightly. Hiroshige's print focuses on the Night-Weeping Stone, which was a famous attraction along the Tōkaidō.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Famous Arimatsu tied-dyed cloth, Narumi (Narumi meibutsu arimatsu shibori), *The fifty-three stations of the Tokaidō*, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.41



Narumi was known for its famous tie-dyed cloth, displayed here inside the stores along the road. Travelers on the Tōkaidō bought these famous local products as souvenirs or gifts for people back home.

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Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Tsuruya Kiemon, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Famous teahouse, Mariko (Mariko meibutsu chamise), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.21



At the Mariko station, two men rest and enjoy a bowl of yam soup (*tororojiru*), the regional specialty.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Tsuruya Kiemon, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Sunrise, Shinagawa (Shinagawa hinode), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.2



A modest roadside tea stall outside of Fukuroi offers the weary a restful stop. The owner heats water in a kettle, while a traveler rests on a bench and two porters with an empty palanquin stop to smoke pipes of tobacco.

Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Takenouchi Magohachi, Japanese, late 18th century-mid 19th century
Desolate winter, Hamamatsu (Hamamatsu fuyugare no zu), The fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833
Polychrome wood block print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.30



At a field's edge with village and town in distant view, a yellow-cloaked traveler pauses to look back at farmers gathered around a bonfire. One of the farmers has hiked up his jacket to warm his backside, while another squats and warms his hands. To the right of the traveler, a farmwoman carries a baby on her back.

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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

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

Inn with serving maids, Akasaka (Akasaka ryosha shofu no zu), The

fifty-three stations of the Tokaido, ca. 1833

Polychrome wood block print

Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 41.080.37



This print of Akasaka offers a look into the interior of a opulent inn. Men are shown returning from baths, being offered the services of a blind masseur, and awaiting the attentions of the women on the right. Goyu, Akasaka, and Yoshida were well known for their prostitutes, and these female entertainers may well have provided a variety of services to the inn's clients.