A traditional Japanese woodblock print illustration. The scene is framed on the left by a dark, curved shape, possibly a window or a scroll. In the foreground, a dark, slender branch with small, pinkish-red blossoms or buds extends from the left towards the center. Below it, a small boat with a white sail is on a blue body of water. In the middle ground, a larger boat with a person is visible. The background features dark, silhouetted mountains under a sky with a warm, orange and red glow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. A flock of birds is flying in the upper right. On the right side, a vertical wooden frame with several rectangular compartments is visible. The overall style is characteristic of Edo-period Japanese art.

**Japanese
Impressions
Color
Woodblock
Prints
from the
Rodbell
Family
Collection**

Japanese Impressions

This exhibition is the first exhibition at the Clark to focus on the institute's permanent collection of Japanese prints. The exhibition spans over a century of Japanese color woodblock printing as represented by three generations of artists who produced prints from the 1830s to the 1970s.

The first generation of artists worked in a tradition known as *ukiyo-e*, which translates to “scenes from the floating world.” Two of the most influential figures of nineteenth-century *ukiyo-e* printmaking, Katsushika Hokusai and Utagawa Hiroshige, worked with wood-



carvers, printers, and publishers to create brightly hued woodblock prints. Their style was marked by dramatic depictions of space, which included asymmetrical compositions and bird's-eye viewpoints. The subjects they chose ranged from images of fashionable women and actors to landscapes and scenes from literature.

Japanese printmakers of the second generation, working in the 1920s and 1930s, made up two related but different groups. Each strove to revitalize the *ukiyo-e* genre, which declined following Japan's industrialization in the last half of the nineteenth century. The *shin-hanga* or "new print" movement maintained a division of labor between artist, printer, and publisher. The artists of this movement, including figures like Kawase Hasui and Yoshida Hiroshi, drew inspiration from the Impressionists and marketed their prints to a largely Western audience.

In contrast, the *sōsaku-hanga* or "creative print" movement encouraged artists to cut and print their own woodblocks as a means to foster self-expression. Both schools favored traditionally Japanese subject matter, especially landscapes with bridges and reflective water. Growing out of the *sōsaku-hanga* sensibility, Kiyoshi Saitō represents a third generation of woodcut artists who balanced tradition and innovation in his contemplative prints of Buddhist architecture.



2



3



Rodbell Family Collection

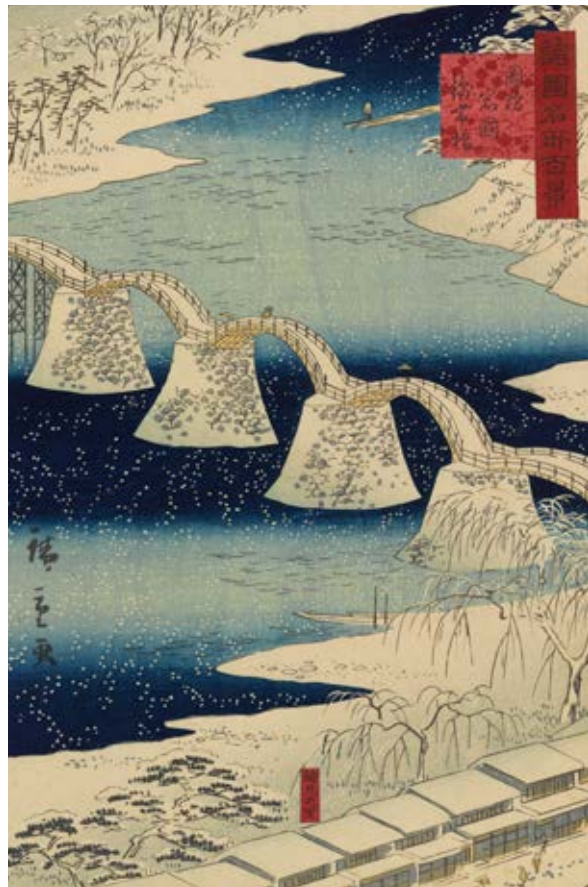
In 2014 Adele Rodbell, of Richmond, Massachusetts, gave the Clark sixty-three Japanese color woodblock prints from the Rodbell Family Collection. This transformative gift greatly enhanced the institute's then modest holdings of Japanese prints.

Rodbell and her late husband Donald first became interested in Japanese art while living in Japan between 1969 and 1972. When Donald was appointed a scientific representative for the research laboratory

at General Electric, the family of five moved to Tokyo and traveled extensively throughout the country. During this period, Adele took courses in both the history of Japanese art and Japanese calligraphy. It was then that the family also began to collect their first Japanese prints and ceramics. Upon returning to the United States, they maintained their passion for Japanese art and continued to collect prints and ceramics in the coming decades.

Adele Rodbell has been a docent at the Clark for over thirty-eight years. When thinking about where this collection should permanently reside, she considered a number of museums whose Japanese print collections were already well established. But given her long-term relationship with the Clark, she knew the collection was expanding into new areas and that the institute's holdings in Japanese prints were sparse. When she

began as a docent at the Clark, Adele learned how greatly Japanese woodblock prints had impacted late nineteenth-century artistic developments in America and Europe. In this gift to the Clark, the Rodbell family has contributed to the continued study of these works, thereby encouraging future generations to admire Japanese art and history.



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



Plates

1. Toyohara Chikanobu
Japanese, 1838–1912
Garden in Spring, from Ladies' Etiquette Pictures
c. 1893
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.19.1–3
2. Utagawa Hiroshige
Japanese, 1797–1858
Awa Province: Naruto Whirlpools, from Famous Places in the Sixty-odd Provinces
1855
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.6
3. Utagawa Hiroshige
Japanese, 1797–1858
Horikiri Iris Garden, from One Hundred Famous Views of Edo
1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.11
4. Utagawa Hiroshige
Japanese, 1797–1858
View from Massaki of Suijin Shrine, Uchigawa Inlet, and Sekiya, from One Hundred Famous Views of Edo
1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.12
5. Utagawa Hiroshige II
Japanese, 1826–1869
Kintai Bridge at Iwakuni in Suō Province, from One Hundred Famous Views of the Various Provinces
1859
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.17
6. Kawase Hasui
Japanese, 1883–1957
Snow at Kiyomizu Hall, Ueno
1929
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.28
7. Kawase Hasui
Japanese, 1883–1957
The Kaminohashi Bridge in Fukagawa, Tokyo, from Twelve Scenes of Tokyo
1920
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.21
8. Yoshida Hiroshi
Japanese, 1867–1950
Fujiyama from Gotemba
1929
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.36
9. Torii Kotondo
Japanese, 1900–1976
Applying Makeup
1929
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.40
10. Kiyoshi Saitō
Japanese, 1907–1997
Solitude, Kyoto
1948
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.53
11. Kiyoshi Saitō
Japanese, 1907–1997
Gion in Kyoto B
1959
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.55
12. Hashimoto Okiie
Japanese, 1899–1993
Young Girl and Iris
1952
Color woodblock print
Gift of the Rodbell Family Collection, 2014
2014.16.52

Japanese Impressions: Color Woodblock Prints from the Rodbell Family Collection is on view at the Clark from December 10, 2016–April 2, 2017. Major underwriting for the exhibition is provided by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation in honor and memory of Mary Griggs Burke.

**THE
CLARK
ART
INSTITUTE**

Williamstown
Massachusetts 01267
clarkart.edu

