Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Sudden Shower Over Ōhashi Bridge and Atake,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. C.M. Cooke, Sr., 1932
(06445)

Regarded as one of the masterpieces of this series, this print has often been cited as influential in the compositional development of French impressionist landscapes. It also inspired postimpressionists such as Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), who painted an oil version of this work.

Atake was an informal place-name for the area shown on the far bank, named after a gigantic governmental ship, the 1500-ton Atake-maru, which was moored in front of the shōgunal boathouses. The boathouses, barely visible here to the far left, were damaged by the Great earthquake of Ansei in 1855. By the time of this print's publication, the boathouse had been restored. Depicting any subjects related to the government was banned. However, Hiroshige was able to suggest the specific place by using a specific angle and certain motifs such as the bridge and thousands of lines of rain executed by a carver.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Fukagawa Plain at Susaki,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1959
(14516)

This dramatic composition shows the desolate coastlands and the Fukagawa Plain. A large golden eagle dominates the top of the composition as it descends towards the icy waters below. This sharp contrast between the flat, expansive land fading into the distance and the extreme close-up is a device Hiroshige repeatedly uses in this series.

The double-peaked mountain on the far right is identified as Mt. Tsukuba. Its unique shape suggests a connection to the sacred Buddhist mountain *Ryōjusen* (Sanskrit: *grdhrakūta*, literally, "Sacred Eagle Mountain"), where Shakyamuni is said to have preached. Shiba Kōkan (1747-1818), a Western-style painter of the Edo period, depicted the mountain in his work, which Hiroshige might have seen, as having double peaks.

In *The Lotus Sutra,* Buddha states that even after he leaves, should any natural disasters such as a great fire occur, this mountain will remain filled with tranquility. After the disastrous earthquake and subsequent fire, perhaps Hiroshige wished for peace for the city of Edo.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Kinryūzan Temple at Asakusa,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1856
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1979
(17509)

In the tenth lunar month of 1855, the Great Earthquake of the Ansei era devastated the city of Edo, five months prior to the publication of this series. An estimated 9000 people died in this terrible natural disaster. In addition, many famous buildings were damaged, and the destruction of the nine-ring (*kurin*) finial of the pagoda at the Asakusa Kinryūzan Temple was especially shocking.

The finial was repaired eight months later, and Hiroshige's print of *Asakusa Kinryūzan Temple*, part of the series, was published two months after the restoration. Consequently, Hiroshige's print commemorates the recovery of this famous temple.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Iris Garden at Horikiri,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22345)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Clearing after a Snowfall at Nihonbashi Bridge,
from the series
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1856
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22689)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Ekōin Temple at Ryōgoku and Moto Yanagibashi,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22693)

Ekōin Temple was established in 1657 for the dead from the Great Fire of Meireki. It also became a burial place for victims of the Ansei earthquake. This print was made two years after the earthquake occurred.

It depicts a wooden tower where the announcements of sumō tournaments were made. Sumō matches were usually held as charitable events to collect money for renovation, construction, or the creation of new Buddhist sculptures for associated temples. It was one of the most popular forms of entertainment for Edo townspeople. This print may represent the recovery and renewal of the city of Edo, two years after the devastating Ansei earthquake.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Hatsune Riding Ground at Bakurochō,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22695)

The Tokugawa shogunate originally used this area for horse corrals, but by Hiroshige's time it had already become a center for dyeing fabrics. The raised wooden structure in this print was a fire watchtower. The bell on the left was rung to warn the community—once, for a fire at some distance; twice, for one not so far away; and continuously, for one at their very door.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Suruga Street,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1856
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22697)

Because Mt. Fuji dominated Tokugawa leyasu's Suruga Province (present-day Shizuoka Prefecture), the district around Nihonbashi in Edo that offered a fine view of Mt. Fuji was named Suruga-chō. In Hiroshige's day both sides of the street were owned by Mitsukoshi Dry Goods. Today, the left side of the street is the famed Mitsukoshi Department Store, whereas the right side is Mitsui Bank. In recent times smog and buildings have obliterated the view of Mt. Fuji.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Plum Garden at Kameido,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22721)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Massaki Viewed from Suijin Woods on the East Bank of the Sumida River,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1856
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22726)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
A View from near Masaki of Suijin Shrine, Uchikawa River and the Village of Sekiya,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22727)

This is probably a view from one of the numerous teahouses and restaurants in the area of Masaki, located in downtown Tokyo. The circular window functions as a picture frame. Hiroshige often used this device, known as a "picture within a picture."

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Dawn in the Yoshiwara,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22730)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Cherry Blossoms on the Bank of the Tamagawa Channel,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1856
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22734)

In Japan, it was traditionally thought that natural disasters (such as the Ansei earthquake) could be a sign of the coming of a new age, based on ancient Buddhist apocalyptic beliefs. By the mid-nineteenth century, Japan's Confucian-based society and economy could no longer maintain political and economic stability. The Tokugawa shogunate's power was diminishing.

In 1853, the American Commodore Matthew Perry (1794-1858) arrived at the port of Uraga, forcing Japan to open itself to commercial trading with foreign countries for the first time in centuries. This event was a severe blow to the government, followed only two years later by the earthquake, crippling the Tokugawa shogunate's ability to maintain its authority. In reaction to these events anti-shogunate sentiment rose dramatically.

Accordingly, this new interpretation of Hiroshige's series places the prints against a background in which the people of Edo might have considered the earthquake to be a sign of the impending downfall of the shogunate, as destined by the Mandate of Heaven. Since cherry blossoms traditionally mark the start of spring and a new year in Japan, their prominent (and exaggerated) inclusion in Hiroshige's prints possibly suggests a hope for change.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Mannenbashi Bridge at Fukagawa,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22744)

Mannen Bridge was not a famous location. This print depicts a turtle hanging from the handle of a wooden bucket. The wooden frames on the right and bottom of the composition are supposed to represent the bridge's handrail.

The turtle is associated with a Buddhist ritual called *hōjōe,* in which devotees release trapped animals and other creatures, symbolizing wishes for a good after-life. The sunset in the far distance indicates that the direction is West, which could be connected to the Buddhist Western paradise, the place for the after-life. This print may well signify Hiroshige's desire for a good after-life for the earthquake victims.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Komagata Temple and Azuma Bridge,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22749)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Grounds of the Kameido Tenjin Shrine,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1856
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22751)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Suidō Bridge at Surugadai,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22758)

In this print, Hiroshige depicts a samurai residential area in the background. An impressive samurai procession crosses over Suidō Bridge on the lower right. The tall banners jutting up here and there (vertical *nobori* banners with celebratory inscriptions and portraits of Shōki, the demon Queller of Chinese legend) indicate that it is during the Boy's Day Festival, the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.

The three huge carp, by contrast, are marks of the townspeople's city and were used by commoners for the Boy's Festival in imitation of the military tradition. By this time the city of Edo had recovered enough (from the earthquake in 1855) to celebrate this event.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Tanabata Festival in a Prospering City,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22769)

Recent studies indicate that this print may depict the view from Hiroshige's home. A tower seen in the distance (to the right) marks the Yayosu barracks, a fire-station established by the government. The warehouses (visible below) were owned by merchants near Kyōbashi and South Tenma, which were just west of Hiroshige's residence.

In the bottom left corner, the intimate scene of a kimono hung to dry on a veranda provides further support that the view was from Hiroshige's own window. The area around his residence was severely damaged by fires resulting from the earthquake, and Hiroshige's prints may have been intended to show the impressive recovery of the town and its people.

Accordingly, it is now believed that many places depicted in the series became famous after the earthquake as symbols of the city of Edo's (present-day Tokyo) renewal. Since the prints could be mass-produced, this series may have functioned as a means of spreading the good news throughout the Edo community.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Silk-goods Lane, Ōdenma-chō,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1858
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22770)

Edo was a city filled with wooden buildings, in which fires were frequent and rebuilding was constant, especially after the earthquake. Carpenters were thus among the proudest and most powerful artisans of the city, as we sense from this boisterous procession, called "sending off the master carpenter" which followed the ridgepole-raising ceremony for a new building. To the left is the great dry goods house of Daimaru (present-day Daimaru department store).

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Dyer's Street in Kanda,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22771)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Fireworks at Ryōgoku,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1858
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22793)

This print was published about one month before Hiroshige's death, depicting the first Fireworks Festival after the earthquake at Ryōgoku. The festival was one of the most popular events amongst the people of Edo. Hiroshige may have been content to depict this scene as the last work in the series, as his home city of Edo had completely recovered from the devastating natural disaster.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
New Year's Eve Foxfires at Nettle Tree, Ōji,
from the series
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(22816)

The Oji Inari Shintō Shrine is located in northern Tokyo. All of the Inari Shintō shrines are sacred places for the deity *Ukanomitama*, believed to bless farmers with abundant crops. Two stone fox figures are placed on either side of the shrine's main gate. Foxes are thought to be the messengers of *Ukanomitama*.

A well-known legend about this shrine is that on New Year's Eve foxes put on formal costumes under a nettle tree and then gather at the shrine, where *Ukanomitama* offers them promotions in rank according to their yearly accomplishments. This print is Hiroshige's visualization of this legend, in which he evokes a serene and mystical mood.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
***Scenery at Shibaura Seashore,* from the series**
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1856
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1957
(28482)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Pagoda of Zōjōji Temple and Akabane,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(28489)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Red Maple Leaves, Tekona Shrine and Tsugihashi at Mama,* from the series *"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(24112)

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
Ferry at Kawaguchi and Zenkōji Temple,
from the series
"One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"
Japan, Edo period, 1857
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991
(25043)

Utagawa Kunisada (1786-1864)
Memorial Portrait of Hiroshige by Utagawa Kunisada
Japan, Edo period, 1858
Color woodblock print
Gift of James A. Michener, 1959
(14457)

A short biography of Hiroshige by Tenmei Rojin, a writer and *kyōka* ("mad" *tanka*) poet, concludes with the poem Hiroshige composed on his deathbed:

Leaving my brush behind
in the Eastern capital,
I shall travel
To see the famous places
In the Western Paradise of the Buddha.