



Clear Weather after Snow at Kameyama (Kameyama yukibare)

Utagawa Hiroshige

Not on display

Title/Description: Clear Weather after Snow at Kameyama (Kameyama yukibare)

Artist/Maker: Utagawa Hiroshige (Artist)

Born: 1832 Approximate - 1834 Approximate

Object Type: Graphics

Materials: Ink, Paper

Technique: Woodcut

Measurements: Support and image h. 252 x w. 357 mm, secondary support h. 293 x w. 403 mm

Inscription: Artist's signature

Accession Number: 41457

Historic Period: Edo period (AD 1600-1868)

Production Place: Asia, East Asia, Japan

School/Style: Utagawa School

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) and publisher Takenouchi Magohachi (Hōeidō) issued 'Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō' (*Tōkaidō gojūsan tsugi no uchi*) in 1833-1834. The Hōeidō series was the first of many series inspired by the Tōkaidō highroad. In total, Hiroshige designed at least 15 Tōkaidō-themed series. This was no small feat given that 10 of these comprise 55 or more individual designs. [1]

Hiroshige captures the surrounding landscape at each of the 53 post stations along the length of the Eastern Coastal Road (Tōkaidō). Kameyama is sheet number 47 of the Hōeidō series, or post station number 46 on the route from Nihonbashi in Edo to Kyoto.

The Hōeidō series is distinguished by its horizontally formatted designs and a minimal use of text. The print carries the title and name of the post station in black script, while the evocative description, 'Weather Clearing After Snow' (*Yukibare*) is contained within a red, seal-shaped cartouche. A 'kiwame' censor's seal is usually situated in the bottom left-hand corner of the sheet, outside of the picture's frame. It is possible that the seal was trimmed off by a previous collector.

The woodblock print depicts a snow-covered mountainous path leading up towards the ramparts of a castle. Kameyama was a fortified town in Ise Province overlooked by the residence of the Ishikawa daimyo. [2] Bold, diagonal strokes add drama to a still winter scene. The eye picks out the yellow hats of the travellers as they emerge from the landscape on their treacherous uphill journey.

A piercing blue band at the top of the composition suggests sky after snowfall. This effect has been achieved by gradation printing (*J. bokashi-zuri*), when ink is applied to the woodblock and then partially wiped away. The warm pink glow of dawn creeping over the horizon shows how this same technique can be used to produce a more subtle effect.

The print is an earlier edition because the sky is printed blue, unlike later editions that have a red sky. [3] There is also a defect in the blue block that creates a distinctive narrow wedge at the top of the composition. These details help scholars to authenticate the print. [4] A similar impression can be viewed at the Victoria and Albert Museum (object number: E.1291-1922). [5]

Vanessa Tothill, May 2020

[1] https://www.hiroshige.org.uk/Tokaido_Series/Tokaido_Series.htm [accessed 22 May 2020]

[2] Matthi Forrer, *Hiroshige: Prints and Drawings* (Munich; London; New York: Prestel Verlag in association with Royal Academy of Arts, 1991, repr 2011), cat. no. 26.

[3] Matthi Forrer, *The Baur Collection: Japanese Prints*, 2 vols (Geneva: Collections Baur, 1994),

G451.

[4]Forrer, cat. no. 26.

[5] Victoria and Albert Museum, object number: E.1291-1922.

<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O423035/woodblock-print/> [accessed 22 May 2020]

Further Reading

Matthi Forrer, Hiroshige: Prints and Drawings, Royal Academy of Arts, (Munich; London; New York: Prestel Verlag, 1991, repr 2011)

Matthi Forrer, The Baur Collection: Japanese Prints, 2 vols (Geneva: Collections Baur, 1994)
