

Selections from NDL collections

## From the series *Nihon meisho zue* (*Views of the Famous Sights of Japan*) "Tagonoura Coast," "Sumida River," and "Shinkyō Bridge"



Artist: Kobayashi Kiyochika  
 Publisher: Matsuki Heikichi  
 Published in: 1897  
 36 × 25 cm, three sheets  
 Owned by the National Diet Library, Japan  
 \* Available in the [National Diet Library Digital Collections](#).

These three *ukiyo-e* are from *Nihon meisho zue*, a series of woodblock prints by Kobayashi Kiyochika (1847–1915) depicting scenic landscapes from throughout Japan.

Tagonoura Coast, Shizuoka Prefecture (left): Since ancient times, the part of Suruga Bay farthest inland has been called Tagonoura and has been well known for its stunning view of Mt. Fuji. This *ukiyo-e* depicts the mouth of the Numagawa River near Yoshiwara Minato Port, now known as Tagonoura Port, where the picturesque combination of cargo ships entering or leaving port against the majestic background of Mt. Fuji was a common motif in many photographs produced during the Meiji era (1868–1912).

Sumida River, Tokyo (center): Cherry trees were first planted in the Mukojima neighborhood of Tokyo along the banks of the Sumida River during the Kyōho period (1716–1736). More and more trees were planted until the area gradually became a popular place to enjoy cherry blossoms in the spring. Depicted here at the foot of the river bank are boats full of cherry-blossom viewers, while

parasols carried by pedestrians walking under the trees can be seen at the top of the bank. The Azuma Bridge lies in the background on the right, in front of which are boats participating in a regatta, which were usually held here twice a year in spring and autumn.

Shinkyō Bridge, Tochigi Prefecture (right): Shinkyō means "sacred bridge" in Japanese and is the name of the bridge that serves as a gateway to the historical landmarks that comprise the Shrines and Temples of Nikkō World Heritage Site. Legend has it that a Buddhist deity named Jinja Daio transformed two snakes into a bridge to allow Shodo, a virtuous Buddhist priest who founded the shrines and temples at Nikkō, to cross the river. In the background of this scene is the original bridge, which was rebuilt with stone piers at the beginning of the Edo period. Since the original bridge could be used only for official ceremonies, a smaller, supplementary bridge for the daily use of residents and visitors was also built and can be seen in the foreground.

Kobayashi Kiyochika was known as one of the last *ukiyo-e* artists of the Meiji era. He created a style called *kosen-ga* (light-ray pictures), in which he elaborately depicted light and shadow. In his later years, he adopted a rather simple style of expression, yet continued to illustrate the transition from the Edo period to the Meiji era through his dynamic landscape drawings.