330 *Takiyasha the Witch and the Skeleton Specter*, from *Soma dairi* (*The Palace of Soma*), by Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *c.* 1845. Polychrome woodblock print on paper triptych; each ōban size: 14 ⅝ x 10 in. (37.3 x 25.5 cm). Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas (Weare-West Fund). (84.32a, b, c).

331 *The Barrel-maker of Fujimihara*, from *Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji*, by Katsushika Hokusai. *c.* 1830. Polychrome woodblock print on paper; horizontal ōban size: 9 ⅛ x 15 in (23.2 x 38.1 cm). Tokyo National Museum.

332 *Sarayashiki*, from *Hyaku monogatari* (*One Hundred [Ghost] Stories*), by Katsushika Hokusai. c. 1830. Polychrome woodblock print on paper, with embossing; *chūban* size: 10 x 7 ½ in. (25.4 x 19 cm). Tokyo National Museum.

1799, Hokusai struck out on his own, in spite of the financial losses that entailed, and for the next thirty years he worked steadily and single-mindedly to develop a personal style.

His most popular achievement was a series of forty-six prints entitled *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, begun in 1823 and completed around 1831. Several of the illustrations are studies of the volcano under various atmospheric conditions, but the majority depict Fuji as a backdrop against which common people, such as a barrel-maker at Fujimihara, are shown engaged in everyday activities (Fig. 331). In Hokusai's hands the routine task of barrel-making is treated with a typically Japanese light-hearted humor as a tiny man kneels inside an enormous barrel, smoothing the joints between the planks. Behind him is a parched and cracked rice field, and in the far distance, the tiny snow-covered tip of Mount Fuji. The circle of the barrel encloses all: the craftsman and his world, the bareness of the soil, and the beauty of the natural landscape seen in the distance.

Just as Hokusai reflected the contemporary taste for romantic, untroubled views of nature, he also had a flair for the bizarre. About the same time he finished the *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, he began a series titled *Hyaku monogatari* (*One Hundred [Ghost] Stories*). A then popular game involved placing one hundred lighted tapers in a shallow oil dish and telling ghost stories. Each time a tale was finished a taper would be extinguished, until the room in which the raconteurs were assembled was completely dark, and the spirits summoned by the storytelling swirled around those present. For some reason, after Hokusai had executed five prints in the series he stopped. Nevertheless, several of his designs are truly memorable for their bizarre and ghostly quality, none more so than *Sarayashiki* (*House of Plates*) (Fig. 332). In this tale a young girl serving in the house of a wealthy samurai is falsely accused of breaking one of a set of ten valuable blue-and-white porcelain dishes. She is thrown into a well by her enraged master and drowned. Thereafter her voice is heard in the night, counting slowly up to nine and then wailing pitifully. Hokusai depicts the top of the well, its vertical wooden planks bound by stout vines, and, against a deep-blue midnight sky, a woman's head rising from the well on a curving neck of blue-and-white dishes. From her mouth emerges a thin trail of white smoke, suggesting the sound of her counting. These prints are among the finest of Hokusai's work in terms of the technical quality of carving and inking the block as well as the drama and eerie beauty of the design.

Totoya Hokkei

The pupil of whom Hokusai was fondest was undoubtedly his daughter, Katsushika Oi (act. 1818–54), who gained a great deal of fame in her lifetime as a painter of *ukiyo-e* subjects such as *bijin*, but also in subjects taken from Chinese popular mythology and literature. However, Hokusai's most distinguished pupil in print design was Totoya Hokkei (1780–1850), a fishmonger turned professional artist. Although he designed book illustrations and some commercially published, single-sheet prints, he is best known today for his *surimono*, or limited editions—sometimes no more than a single sheet—of elegantly printed, small-size woodblock prints, used most often for announcements or to be included with a New Year's gift. Usually a poem or two, either the seventeen-syllable haiku or the thirty-one-syllable humorous form called *kyōka*, accompanies the design, as in Hokkei's 1821 surimono of *Mount Fuji and the Island of Enoshima, from the Shichiri Beach* (Fig. 333).

Enoshima was believed to be the hiding place of an evil dragon who was eventually tamed by the goddess Benten (SKT. Saraswati) and turned into a companionable white snake. For this reason, the island was frequently used as a symbol for the year of the snake on printed New Year's greetings. Along the lower margin of Hokkei's print is a long sandy beach, the Shichiri (Seven League Beach), partially obscured by gray embossed cloud forms. In the white area of water above, embossed lines are used to suggest waves rolling toward the shore. At the base of the mountains, which rise sharply from the water's edge, is a village of pale red, thatch-roofed houses, and almost hidden in the olive-green forest above is a temple pagoda. Finally, in the upper right is the white triangle of Mount Fuji, a delicate embossed accent almost invisible

333. *Mount Fuji and the Island of Enoshima*, from *Shichiri Beach*, by Totoya Hokkei. 1821. *Surimono* polychrome woodblock print on paper, with embossing; *kaku* size: 8 ¼ x 7 ⅛ in. (21 x 18.2 cm). The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

against the pale beige sky. Two *kyōka* appear at the top of the print. This kind of New Year's card is surely one of the finest examples of the Japanese printer's craftsmanship, a quiet gem of pictorial expression.

Ando Hiroshige

The last of the great Edo-period print designers, Ando Hiroshige (1797–1858), achieved recognition as an artist almost overnight, with the publication in 1834 of a series of landscapes called the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*. Hiroshige had undergone a long apprenticeship under Utagawa Toyohiro and afterward tried his hand at standard *ukiyo-e* themes such as *bijinga*. However, in the summer of 1832, perhaps inspired by the success of Hokusai's views of Mount Fuji, or bewitched by the same gods who moved the haiku master Matsuo Bashō (1644–94) to undertake his journey to the northern provinces, Hiroshige set out for Kyoto along the Tōkaidō with a convoy escorting a group of horses, an annual gift from the shogun to the emperor. From his experiences on this trip and his knowledge of the Japanese landscape in general, Hiroshige produced a series of prints that combine a lyrical view of the countryside throughout the course of the four seasons with charmingly humorous depictions of the people and the local customs of each post station along the road.

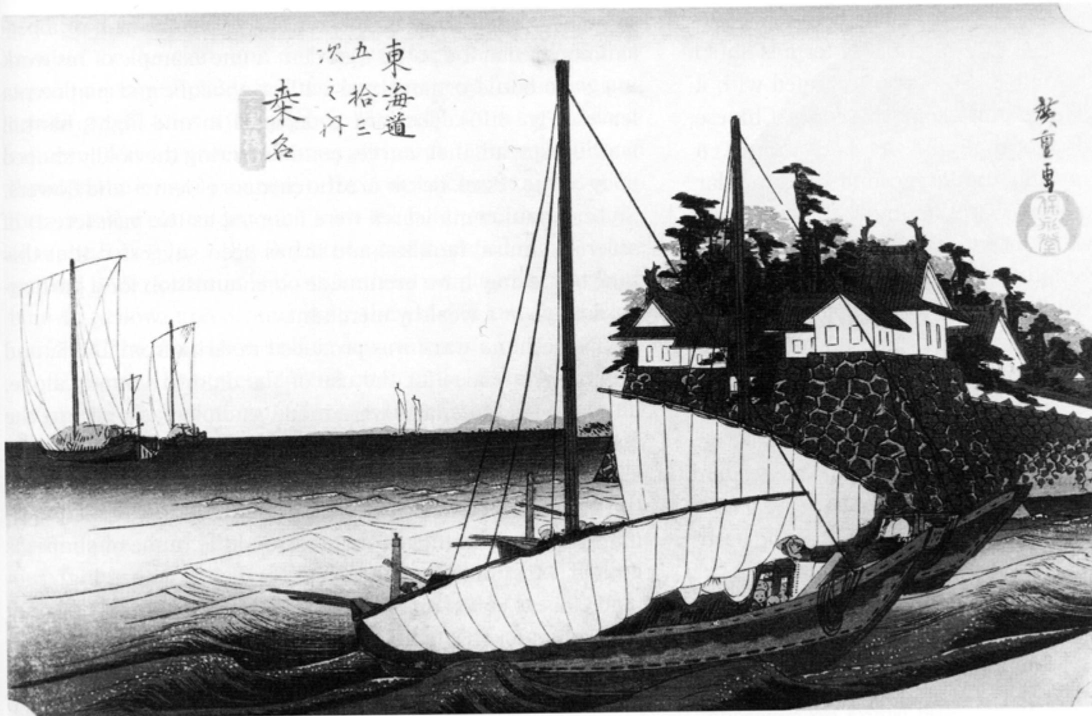
One of the most skillfully designed prints in the series presents the port town of Kuwana (Fig. 334). In the foreground are two ships, their sails lowered, having just completed the seventeen-mile (27.4 km) voyage across Ise Bay from Miya. Directly behind the boats is Kuwana Castle, and to the left, the bay dotted with sailboats stretches to the horizon. Not only does the print convey the essence of the scenery, the longest water passage along the Tōkaidō and also the most dangerous, but it also utilizes several elements of style, both classical and modern, that would appeal to *chōnin* of the early nineteenth century. Kuwana Castle is depicted in dark gray and white, as it should be, but the trees behind it are treated in black and pale gray, in the manner of a monochrome landscape. The left half of the print, on the other hand, has a distinctly Western feeling, the slightly tilted ground plane terminating in the far distance with the horizon line.

So popular was the Tōkaidō series that Hiroshige's reputation quickly eclipsed that of Hokusai. Hiroshige devoted most of the remainder of his artistic career to the production of landscape prints depicting two principal types of subject matter: post stations along the two main Kyoto–Edo highways, the Tōkaidō and the Kisokaidō, the inland highway through the Kiso Mountains, and famous scenic spots around the two major cities. For people living with the challenges and uncertainties of the end of the Tokugawa shogunate, Hiroshige's idyllic landscapes must have cast a romantic shadow over the realities of the times.

Decorative and Applied Arts

The Porcelain Revolution

In the 1590s Toyotomi Hideyoshi had launched two massive invasions of Korea, both of which ended in failure for the Japanese troops and devastation for the Korean people. For Japan the greatest legacy of the campaigns was probably the thousands of civilian prisoners of war taken back to Japan to work out their lives in indentured labor. Several of the daimyo accompanying the invasions, and particularly those from Kyūshū, who held business interests in the booming ceramic industry, had a special preference for Korean potters, and several hundred of these were brought back to their domains to work at their new lords' kilns. At this point in the late sixteenth century, the Chinese and Korean ceramic industries were leagues ahead of their Japanese equivalents in terms of potting and kiln technology. In the fourteenth century, the Chinese had perfected a particular type of high-fired ware made out of a white, kaolin-rich clay that was both highly malleable and, when fired, durable. This porcelain soon became one of China's major exports, rivaling silk's previously unchallenged position among the nation's commodities. From a massive kiln center set up at Jingdezhen, China began exporting porcelain wares all over the world, and not least to Japan. It was one of the most highly prized commodities that



334 *Kuwana, Shichiri Watashiguchi*, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*, by Andō Hiroshige. 1834. Polychrome woodblock print on paper; horizontal *ōban* size: 9 ⅛ x 15 in (23.2 x 38.1 cm). Tokyo National Museum.

East Asia had to offer to the European markets, whose traders in the sixteenth century had begun to arrive by the sea routes, and over the subsequent centuries it was one of the primary reasons that they kept on coming. Porcelain technology soon spread to Korea, and Korean wares quickly came to be as highly prized as those of China. Japan by the late sixteenth century was one of both Korea and China's major clients for porcelain; the closest the native ceramic industry came was the Karatsu ware developed by Korean potters in Kyūshū around 1590 (see Fig. 289). Although far from being true porcelain, the enormous success of this ware in the native Japanese markets had made the daimyo who sponsored and controlled these industries all the keener to create a Japanese product.

Arita

They did not have long to wait. Among the potters brought back from Korea was Ri Sampei, who was taken by the daimyo Nabeshima Naoshige (1538–1618) to the Arita region of Kyūshū, where in 1616 he discovered a kaolin-rich clay that could produce porcelain. These indentured Korean potters also introduced to Japan a new type of kiln, the *nobori gama* (or climbing kiln), consisting of a series of ovens built along the incline of a hill. Both the segmentation of the kiln space and its arrangement in tiers along a slope permitted greater control of the temperature in any one oven. These first Japanese porcelains were unsurprisingly identical to Korean wares, but the Korean potters soon also began to copy the blue-and-white porcelain designs of China, which had long been a popular import on the Japanese market. Porcelain is fired at such a high temperature that few of the colored glazes traditionally used in stonewares, most famously the jade-like celadon, could survive the firing process. Two underglaze pigments, however, were discovered that could; these were cobalt, which produced a blue color, and copper oxide, which produced a red. The copper oxide was extremely sensitive to firing, and unless circumstances were absolutely right could instead turn out a flat, grayish hue. But cobalt much more dependably produced a rich blue color, which explains why the predominant type of Chinese porcelain has a clear white surface decorated with a pattern painted in cobalt blue underneath a transparent glaze. By the time the technology was transmitted to Japan, however, a double-firing process had also developed, by which a porcelain ware was first fired with a transparent glaze at high temperature, with or without a cobalt underpainted design. After cooling, the ware was then painted from a wider range of colors available in lead-fluxed pigments, and fired once again at a much lower temperature.

For more than a hundred years Arita held a virtual monopoly on the production of porcelain, making the Nabeshima one of the richest samurai clans in the country. Shipped out to eager markets all over Japan via the port of Imari, the porcelain of Arita became famous as Imari ware. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Nabeshima directly benefited from the suspension of activities at the Jingdezhen kilns in China in the chaos attending the switch from the Ming empire (1368–1644) to that of the Qing (1644–1911). European traders turned to the Arita kilns to fulfill their numerous orders for porcelain, and it was a market that Jingdezhen found itself unable totally to recover once it was back on its feet later in the century. Ko (Old) Imari is the name

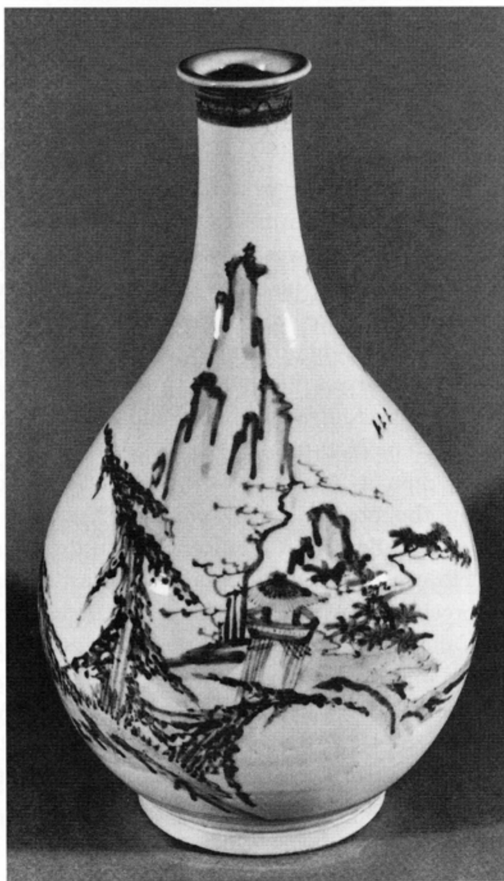
traditionally given to these early wares made between 1620 and c. 1670, although a more recent scholarly term is Shoki (Early) Imari. A typical example is a bottle decorated with a design painted in cobalt blue and clearly based on Chinese landscape motifs: a tall mountain in the background, a thatch-roofed pavilion, and in the foreground tall, angular pine trees (Fig. 335). Ko Imari wares are more thickly potted than later production, when the potters had perfected the clay mixture and firing techniques. They also not infrequently betray signs of hasty execution, even to the point of sloppiness, with imprints of the potter's fingers and sand grit on the foot rims after firing. On this bottle, the pine trees of the foreground seem to have been added as an afterthought, and the decorator was apparently unsure how they should follow the contour of the curved surface. However, such clumsiness often found a receptive audience amongst adherents to the *wabi* aesthetic of the tea ceremony, and Ko Imari wares have long been appreciated for their rustic and naive charm.

A significant advance in decoration of Arita porcelain was achieved in the mid-1600s by the Arita potter Sakaida Kakiemon (1596–1666). From immigrant Chinese potters at the port of Nagasaki, he learned how to make the lead-fluxed overglaze enamels that added so considerably to the palette of porcelain decoration. Characteristic of wares made at his Kakiemon kiln are designs in bright hues including blue, black, green, yellow, occasionally purple, and a particular orange–red, said to be based on the color of the fruit of a persimmon tree in the potter's garden. A fine example of his work is a saké bottle ornamented with a phoenix and paulownia leaves (Fig. 336). The bird is depicted in mid-flight, his tail feathers spread, their curves complimenting the boldly shaped body of the vessel. Below are the clusters of leaves and flowers. Stylized paulownia leaves were adopted as the *mon* (crest) of several samurai families, and it has been suggested that this saké bottle may have been made on commission for a particular daimyo or a wealthy merchant.

Nabeshima ware was produced in Arita from 1625, and originally intended for the use of the daimyo's family alone, although presents of it were made as diplomatic gifts to the shogun in Edo. However, by the end of the Genroku era, the client base had expanded to include other samurai clans and the court aristocracy. This high-quality ware was made primarily for use at official functions, and the range of shapes is limited. Most numerous are shallow dishes with a high foot made in sets of ten and twenty. It is thought that the original inspiration for this type of plate was lacquerware. In order to maintain uniformity of shape, the clay was pressed into molds, and to ensure uniformity of decoration the motifs were transferred from a single sketch to the clay surface. Various sources were used, including textile patterns, subjects treated by the Kanō and Tosa schools of painting, and popular decorative motifs. The whole design was outlined on the plate in underglaze cobalt blue and, after the plate was fired, colors were applied in overglaze enamels, covering the blue outlines. A particularly striking plate combines a motif of a blossoming cherry tree with an abstract pattern suggesting the curtains set up outdoors to create a blossom-viewing enclosure (Fig. 337). The surface is further articulated by three color zones, pale blue, pale green, and dark chocolate brown.

Ko Kutani

The second major category of porcelains produced in the early Edo period was Ko Kutani, or Old Kutani wares, from the village of Kutani in Ishikawa prefecture on the main island of Honshū, to the southwest of the city of Kanazawa. The history of this type of ware is the most problematic of all the porcelains. The prevailing opinion is that the Kutani kilns were opened in the late 1650s, when clay appropriate for making porcelain was discovered in the area. The first daimyo of the Daishōji fief was a cultured man with a strong interest in the tea ceremony, but he was also credited with having a head for business. It is not unreasonable to think that when clay for porcelain was discovered he saw an opportunity to develop an official clan kiln like that of the Nabeshima in Kyūshū. The kilns are thought to have been closed at the turn of the eighteenth century, following the deaths of the second daimyo and soon after that of the man believed to have been in charge of



335 Saké bottle with landscape design, Ko Imari ware. 17th century. Porcelain; height 15 in. (38 cm). Umezawa Memorial Museum, Tokyo.