

# **Japanese Art—Exhibition: Yoshitoshi 2020**

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# **Japanese Art—Exhibition: Yoshitoshi 2020**

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## **Cargill gallery: Yoshitoshi 2020**

**Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892)**

**Tsukioka Yoshitoshi was a prolific designer who produced more than 2,000 color prints for over 50 different publishers. He illustrated a small number of books and was also active as a painter; approximately 30 of his paintings have survived. Yoshitoshi died on June 9, 1892, at the relatively young age of 53. After his death, he achieved posthumous acclaim as the most significant Japanese print designer between 1850 and 1899, on account of the novel style he employed, which included dynamic angles.**

**This exhibition showcases Yoshitoshi’s sketches, drawings, and paintings, along with many printed masterworks. These works are on view for the first time in Minneapolis and are mostly part of the collection of Edmond Freis, which Mia acquired in 2017.**

### **Yoshitoshi’s Beginnings**

**Yoshitoshi lived during a time of drastic and disruptive social change, including the opening of Japan to global trade and the rapid adoption of foreign technology and knowledge. He was born into a merchant family in 1839 and in the early 1850s became a student of Utagawa Kuniyoshi, the leading print designer of warrior subjects. Yoshitoshi’s earliest print was published when he was 14 years old. At first, he designed beautiful women and actors in a traditional style, like all other artists at that time, but then shifted toward realism. He also studied with Kikuchi Yōsai (1788–1878), a master of historical painting. At age 19 Yoshitoshi became an independent artist and focused on historical subjects. He gained a reputation as a “war artist” because he often depicted violence. After recovering from what was described as a “nervous disorder” in 1873, he illustrated newspapers, a recent invention. In the 1880s, he became very successful through popular series like One Hundred Aspects of the Moon and Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors.**

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## Kanaki Toshikage

Japanese, active c. 1868–92

**Portrait of Taiso Yoshitoshi**, June 1892

Published by Akiyama Buemon

Woodblock print; ink and color on paper

The M. Boyd and Carol Burton Endowment 2019.23

This memorial portrait of Yoshitoshi, who used the pseudonym, or “art name,” Taiso from 1873 on, was created around the time of his death by Kanaki Toshikage, one of Yoshitoshi’s first pupils. Next to the portrait is the death poem (*jisei*) that was supposedly composed by Yoshitoshi himself shortly before dying:



## Study of a mountain goblin (*tengu*) dressed as a hermit (*yamabushi*), 1860s

Sketch; ink on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.249

Yoshitoshi was an excellent draftsman, and unlike many other print designers of his time, a fair number of his preparatory sketches and drawings have survived. This study of a *tengu*, or mountain goblin, was likely for a larger composition, since such supernatural beings were never featured in individual portraits. This mountain goblin is dressed as a hermit and carries a type of staff with metal rings that is often associated with hermits in Japanese art. Unusually, here the *tengu* holds it upside-down, apparently to use as a weapon. The *tengu* bares his teeth, probably because he is facing a hero who might slay him.



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**Moon: Actor Ichikawa Sanshō as Kezori Kuemon**, from the series *The Snow, Moon, and Flowers (Setsugekka no uchi)*, 1890

Published by Akiyama Buemon; carved by Wada Yūjirō

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.239

The Kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō IX (1838–1903) is portrayed as Kezori Kuemon, a real smuggler who became the subject of puppet and Kabuki plays. Kezori is the captain of a Japanese pirate ship and typically wears a Chinese-inspired costume decorated with dragons and jewels. He is depicted here in the moonlight waiting for a boat with illicit goods. Yoshitoshi emphasizes his power by setting his extravagant appearance on a plain background alongside a simple moon disk.



**Picture of the Heike Clan Sinking and Perishing at Sea**, 1853, 6th lunar month

Published by Kazusaya Iwazō

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.1a-c

This is the earliest known work by Yoshitoshi, published when he was just 14 years old. Three years earlier he had entered the studio of Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798–1861), at that time one of the leading print designers in Japan, especially sought after for his prints of warriors. It is therefore not a surprise that Yoshitoshi's debut would also be a warrior subject. What is unusual is that this debut was a full-size triptych, instead of a smaller-sized print, which was common for young artists.



The motif is the defeat of the Heike (Taira) clan in the Battle of Dan-no-ura, a decisive sea battle fought in 1185. The image captures the drowning of the leading Heike members, with Tomomori (1152–1185)—who tied himself to an anchor once he saw defeat was unavoidable—in the center.

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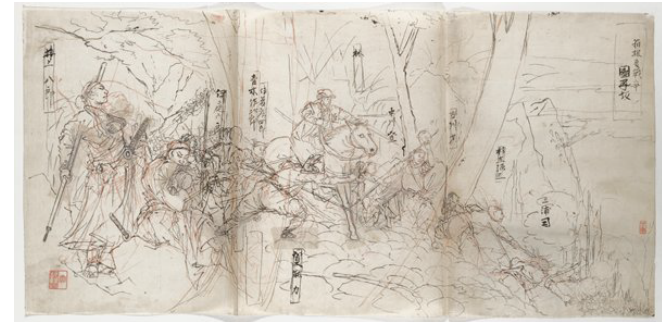
## **The Summer Battle at Hakone, c. 1874**

Preparatory drawing for a print; ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.125

This drawing is for a triptych that was never published. The initial sketch was executed with red ink, and then later Yoshitoshi drew over it with black. He authenticated this drawing by putting his seals in red at the left and right margins, suggesting that this particular one was important to him.

The scene shows a group of men about to storm down a slope at Hakone in the summer of 1868. Lord Hayashi Tadataka (1848–1941) is in the center on horseback. He was the leader of guerilla fighters who fought against the imperial army in the Boshin War (1868–69). On the far left is Iba Hachirō (1844–1869), who was a member of the shogunal guard and one of the leading figures of the rebellion.



## **Study of a warrior wielding his sword, 1860s**

Sketch; ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.248

This sheet of paper gives us a peek at Yoshitoshi's design process. It contains several unrelated elements: At center, a warrior grasps his sword, while above a wind blows out a candle and ruffles a curtain. Below are two bound packages, also unconnected to the other elements. The warrior might be an early idea for the nearby triptych of Taira Koremochi Ason. Neither the red nor the black ink can be erased, so Yoshitoshi attached a small piece of paper at the warrior's head to provide a clean surface for a new drawing.



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## **Monsters Jumping out of a Box, Scaring a Man**, late 1880s

Preparatory drawing for a print; ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.250

The size of this drawing, as well as the lines that divide the space, indicates that this design was intended for a book and would have been printed in a double-page spread. Most of the books that carry illustrations by Yoshitoshi were published from the late 1870s until 1891. The circular red seal in the center is the collection seal of Mizuno Toshikata (1866–1908), Yoshitoshi’s foremost student, who probably received this work during his time in his teacher’s studio. Like most of the successful print designers, Yoshitoshi operated a studio with several students working with him at the same time. We don’t know exactly how many students he had, but his memorial stone lists 47 names. None achieved anywhere near the same fame as Yoshitoshi.



## **Kō Musashi-no-kami Moronao**, second half of the 1860s

Preparatory drawing for a print; ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.244

This drawing was likely meant to be part of a series of half-length portraits of famous men. The several that survive are all the same size and contained within a frame; they all carry the same signature. Yet Yoshitoshi either was not able to find a publisher to take on this project, or the publisher he did work with decided against a production, since no published prints of this series are known.



This portrait shows Kō Moronao (d. 1351), who was deputy to the first shogun of the Ashikaga, Takauji (1305–1358), and in that role had a reputation of being a villain.

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**Key block drawing and final print of *Toki Daishirō***, from the series One Hundred Tales from Japan and China (*Wakan hyaku monogatari*), 1865, 2nd lunar month  
Text by Kikuyōtei Rokō (dates unknown); published by Daikokuya Kinnosuke  
Drawing (*hanshita*); ink on paper; and woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.56-57

One Hundred Tales from Japan and China was Yoshitoshi's first print series to explore the world of the supernatural. The title refers to "one hundred tales," the popular storytelling game that was played in a room lit by one hundred oil-lamp wicks, one of which would be blown out after every story. Here the hero Toki Daishirō is wrestling with a *vajra* warrior, a large wooden statue that usually guards Buddhist temples but has come to life.

This is a rare, nearly final drawing for the key block (the block that prints the black outlines and main details), and it shows the lines almost exactly as they would later be carved. Some of the areas to be printed in gray have been indicated as such with an ink wash, and the reverse sections of the green band wrapped around the *vajra* warrior are indicated with yellow. Most likely this drawing was executed by one of Yoshitoshi's students and not by the master himself, since it represents a technical step within the production process.





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**Nine-Tailed Turtle Tao Zongwang**, from the series Heroes of *The Tales of the Water Margin* (Gōketsu suikoden), 1868, 7th lunar month

Published by Ōhashiya Yashichi

Preparatory drawing for a print; ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.92

Tao Zongwang and Zhang Heng are members of the band of rogue heroes whose adventures form the core of the popular Chinese novel from the 1300s called *The Tales of the Water Margin* (*Shuihuzhuan*; Jap.: *Suikoden*). In the summer of 1868, Yoshitoshi produced an unknown number of designs for a series of portraits of these heroes that Ōhashiya Yashichi then published. These two hand-colored drawings are not among the nine that were printed. The publisher might have stopped further production because sales were underwhelming.

**The Boatman Zhang Heng**, from the series Heroes of *The Tales of the Water Margin* (Gōketsu suikoden), 1868, 8th lunar month

Published by Ōhashiya Yashichi

Preparatory drawing for a print; ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.93



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**Preparatory drawing and final print of *Sumoto Sakyō***, from the series *Biographies of Valiant Drunken Tigers* (*Keisei suikoden*), February 1874

Text by Takabatake Ransen (1838–1885); published by Masadaya Heikichi; carved by Katada Chōjirō

Preparatory drawing for a print; ink and color on paper; and woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.119-120

Sumoto Sakyō (the figure on the right wearing the light yellow jacket) was a participant in the Shimabara Rebellion (1637–38), an uprising in southern Japan against drastic tax increases and the prohibition of Christianity. This was the largest civil conflict during the Edo period (1603–1868), and the rebel forces of around 30,000 men, most of them peasants, were defeated by an army of 125,000 soldiers sent by the Tokugawa shogunate.

The red underdrawing reveals that Yoshitoshi was originally thinking of positioning Sakyō's feet in the front in a different way. Even greater deliberation went into the design of his left hand, which is trying to remove the grip of his opponent. Yoshitoshi placed a piece of paper over the area so he could draw it again.



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**Preparatory drawing and final print of *High Priest Kōmyō***, from the series  
Biographies of Valiant Drunken Tigers (Keisei suikoden), February 1874  
Text by Takabatake Ransen (1838–1885); published by Masadaya Heikichi  
Carved by Shimada Tomekichi

Preparatory drawing for a print; ink and color on paper; and woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.121-122

The text by Takabatake Ransen, a writer of light prose as well as a journalist, explains that the person pictured is the high priest Kōmyō (Kōmyō-ajari), who supposedly lived at the end of the 1100s. Kōmyō was a follower of the general Minamoto Yoshinaka (1154–1184) and fought with him against the rival Taira clan. Notice the changes and choices Yoshitoshi made in the design process. The red ink indicates the first draft, and there the lance is sketchy. The preparatory drawing also includes an element of some sort in the bottom left corner that Yoshitoshi later discarded. The black ink came next and completed the design.



**Preparatory drawing and final print of *Picture of the Gojō Bridge from the Chronicle of Yoshitsune***, 1881

Published by Morimoto Junzaburō

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.146a,b-145a-c



It is extremely rare that preparatory drawings for woodblock prints survive, since the final versions were pasted on the key blocks to guide the carving of the black lines and were thus usually destroyed during the production process. Such drawings were more detailed and exact than the initial sketches and therefore offered a better representation of the final print. The outlines were the most important part, and some repetitive areas were only indicated but not fully executed—the wooden boards of the

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bridge or patterns of textile, for example. These drawings could also include coloring instructions. The spacing was not yet finalized in this drawing, since in the finished print the image is spread over three sheets instead of two.



### **Yoshitsune and Benkei on the Gojō Bridge**, March 1886

Published by Yokoyama Ryōhachi

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.189

This image is nearly identical to the nearby triptych. The three-panel print must have been a great success because Yoshitoshi was commissioned by another publisher to create an almost identical version as a fan print five years later. The survival rate of fan prints is considerably lower than other formats, because they were intended to be cut out and glued onto the ribs of fans. This was the case with this print as well, and if you look closely you can see faint lines that indicate its intended purpose.



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## Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors

Yoshitoshi rarely designed prints of beautiful women, even though it was a very popular subject of the time. The series **Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors** (*Fūzoku sanjūnisō*) is his most important and best-known work in this genre. Published in 1888, the series was inspired by the many half-length beauty prints of Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806) and his successors, whose prints sold very well. Yoshitoshi's series presents different behaviors, as observed in various types of women over the previous 100 years, including court ladies, housewives, businesswomen, and servants; almost half the portraits are of courtesans and prostitutes of different ranks. As with almost all beauty prints, the women are generic and not identified by name. Their facial expressions, however, present a greater level of realism than in previous times.

**Appearing Warm: Behavior of an Urban Widow of the Kansei Era**, from the series *Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors* (*Fūzoku sanjūnisō*), March 1888

Published by Tsunajima Kamekichi

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.195

On a cold winter day, a lonely widow is tucked under a heavy kimono, seeking warmth from a *kotatsu*, a low, wooden table covered by a blanket with a charcoal brazier underneath. Unique to Japan, this source of heating is still used today, albeit the heat source is now electric. The widow is absorbed in a novel and about to turn a page. Her cat lies next to her on top of the *kotatsu*, enjoying the warmth as well. The time period this portrait refers to is the Kansei era (1789–1801), when married women had their eyebrows shaved off as a sign of dedication to their husbands.



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**Appearing Inquisitive: Behavior of a Maid of the Tenpō Era**, from the series *Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors (Fūzoku sanjūnisō)*, April 1888

Published by Tsunajima Kamekichi

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.205

According to the title, this portrait refers to the Tenpō era (1830–44), and the woman is an *okoshō*, a maid in the service of a samurai family. She would have been sent there to learn good manners as part of her education. Ironically, Yoshitoshi captured her peering through slatted bamboo doors as if she were spying, perhaps on members of the family she serves.

The black-on-black peony pattern of her sash (*obi*) was achieved through a polishing technique called *shōmen-zuri*, in which the block with the pattern was placed behind the paper, and then the surface was rubbed with a hard polisher, such as porcelain.



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**Appearing Embarrassed: Behavior of a Girl of the Meiji Period**, from the series Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors (Fūzoku sanjūnisō), November 1888

Published by Tsunajima Kamekichi; carved by Wada Yūjirō  
Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.221

This scene is supposed to show how a girl at the time this print was created behaved when embarrassed or shy. A contemporary Japanese viewer would have detected a subtle eroticism embedded in this design in the way the girl bites her sleeve and because a lock of her hair has escaped her coiffure. She must be from an affluent family, since she wears a fashionable kimono of checkered yellow silk cloth called *kihachijō*, which was traditionally made on Hachijō Island, about 180 miles south of Tokyo.

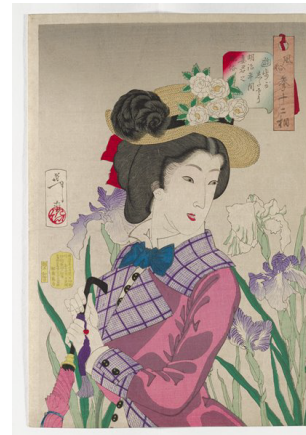


**Appearing as if Having Been on a Stroll: Behavior of a Lady of the Meiji Period**, from the series Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors (Fūzoku sanjūnisō), June 1888

Published by Tsunajima Kamekichi; carved by Wada Yūjirō  
Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.224

In the final print of this nostalgic series, Yoshitoshi presents the future in a very modern-looking woman of his own time period and the only one in the set dressed in Western clothes. This married lady of the upper class is set against tall, blooming irises, indicating that the portrait depicts her during the month of May. She epitomizes the height



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of Western fashion, complete with bustle, buttons, bow tie, and parasol.



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**Picture of Penance under the Waterfall at Mount Nachi**, 1859, 10th lunar month (center), 1860, 6th lunar month (left, right)  
Text by Nozaki Bunzō (1829–1894); published by Kakumotoya Kinjirō

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.3a-c

According to legend, after the young samurai Endō Morito (1139–1203) mistakenly killed the object of his love, Kesa-gozen, he became a monk and took the name Mongaku. As a penance for his crime, he decided to stand for 21 days under the icy waterfall at Mount Nachi which, with an uninterrupted drop of over 400 feet, is the tallest in Japan. There he continuously recited incantations to the deity Fudō Myō-ō. After seven days he lost consciousness but was rescued by the deity's child attendants, who helped him so he could complete his harsh task.

Yoshitoshi originally designed only the center sheet, which, very dramatically, shows only Mongaku's face and praying hands amid the water. Half a year later, the two flanking sheets were added to create a more panoramic view of the scene.



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**Picture of Masakiyo's Challenging Battle as Retold in the *Chronicle of the Great Peace*, 1866, 10th lunar month**  
Published by Yamashiroya Jinbei; carved by Tanaka Ushinosuke  
Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper  
The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.72a-c

Instead of depicting a standard battle scene with samurai fighting each other, Yoshitoshi captures the blast of an explosion in this unusual composition. The shock waves, rendered by black and gray swirls, whirl an uncountable number of warriors through the air.

Pictures portraying historical warriors from after the year 1573 (the end of the previous shogunate of the Ashikaga clan) were forbidden by the Tokugawa government. The title of this print therefore suggests that its source is the *Chronicle of the Great Peace (Taiheiki)*, a historical epic covering the period from 1319 to 1367. The captured warriors, however, are actually from a later period. The name of the warrior on horseback on the right is inscribed as Satō Kazue-no-kami Masakiyo, which is a fantasy name for Katō Kiyomasa (1562–1611). Kiyomasa was an ally of the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), who is regarded as Japan's second Great Unifier. Another ally was Kimura Shigenari (1593–1615), here called Shimura Masazō Katsutoyo. He wears green armor and appears at bottom left.



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**Danshichi Kurobei**, from the series Brave Men for the Twenty-eight Lunar Lodges, with Poems (Eimei nijūhasshuku), 1866, 12th lunar month

Text by Takabatake Ransen (1838–1885); published by Sanoya Tomigorō

Woodblock print (*nishiki-e*); ink and color on paper

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.76

Danshichi Kurobei had been imprisoned for injuring a man who then died, although from a different cause. He was released with the help of Lord Tamashima but exiled from his hometown. Later, Kurobei's cruel and greedy father-in-law, Mikawaya Giheiji, kidnapped the mistress of Lord Tamashima's son and demanded a ransom for her release, but Kurobei managed to intervene and free her. Giheiji was outraged since he had supported Kurobei's wife and child while the younger man was in prison and now demanded payment. When Kurobei was unable to make good on his debt, Giheiji began beating him with his sandal. A fight broke out, and eventually Kurobei lost his temper. He stripped off his clothes down to his red loincloth and killed Giheiji, in the mud, while begging for forgiveness for what he was doing.

The struggle between the two men became perhaps the most dramatic murder scene in Kabuki theater and a popular motif in prints. Yoshitoshi captured it in its full cruelty, with Kurobei's arms and sword drenched in blood while the dying Giheiji is barely visible in the mud.

