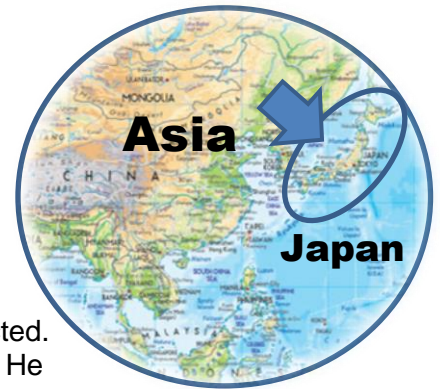


Katsushika Hokusai

(cot-soo-shee-ka ho-koo-sigh)
Japanese Painter

1760 – 1849

88



Wood block printing – is the oldest form of printing, mainly used to make books. Japanese artists were the first to make prints in multiple colors. Ukiyo-e (“picture of the floating world”) were picture prints made from wood blocks that could be sold inexpensively and collected.

Hokusai was born in Edo, which is modern day Tokyo. He had a passion to be an artist from very young. At **eighteen** he got formal training by working in Shunshō's studio, and published his first prints of Kabuki actors in 1779 (**19**).

Hokusai was expelled from the studio after Shunshō's death by Shunshō's chief disciple. He concluded that the event was inspirational. "What really motivated the development

of my artistic style was the embarrassment I suffered at Shunshō's hands." He moved from images of courtesans and actors (traditional ukiyo-e subjects), to focusing on landscapes

and the daily life of Japanese people from a variety of social levels, a breakthrough in both ukiyo-e and in Hokusai's career.



He became increasingly famous, both due to his artwork and his talent for self-promotion. During a Tokyo festival in 1804 (**44**), he created a portrait of the Buddhist priest Daruma said to be 600 feet (180 m) long using a broom and buckets full of ink. Another story places him in the court of the Shogun Iyenari, invited there to compete with another artist who practiced more traditional brush stroke painting. Hokusai's painting, created in front of the Shogun, consisted of painting a blue curve on paper, then chasing a chicken across it whose feet had been dipped in red paint. He described the painting to the Shogun as a landscape showing the Tatsuta River with red maple leaves floating in it. He won the competition.

Self-Portrait, 1839 (79). Kiyonaga - Learning Brush Painting, 1783 (23). The Dragon of Smoke Escaping from Mt Fuji. Two Courtesans. Carp Leaping up a Cascade. Fuji from Eijuri, c. 1823-1839 (63-79).

Drawing of Hokusai painting the Great Daruma, 1817, artist unknown - taken from a temple brochure.



During the 1820s (60s) Hokusai reached the peak of his career. His most famous work, *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, including the famous *Great Wave off Kanagawa*, dated from this period.

Hokusai was married and widowed twice, giving him a chance to have two sons and three daughters. His youngest daughter Sakae, also known as Ōi, became an artist.

Hokusai changed addresses (he moved 93 times – more than once every year. Sometimes just because a home got too dirty.) and names (at least 30) frequently. The use of multiple names was common for Japanese artists, but the number of Hokusai's changes was extreme. His name changes are often related to changes in his artistic style. Hokusai was the name he kept the longest, meaning "Star of the Northern Constellation".

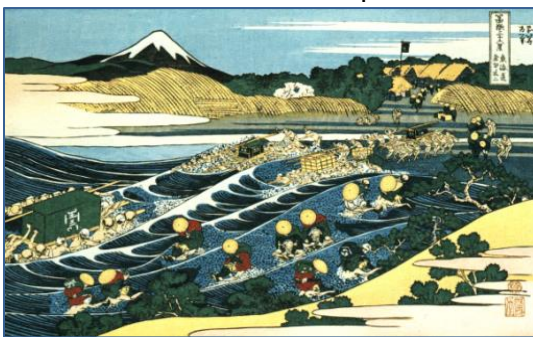
In 1834 (74), Hokusai used the name "Gakyō Rōjin Manji" (The Old Man Mad about Art) and produced *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji*. He added to the original 36 views because of the popularity of the series.

In 1839 (79), disaster struck as a fire destroyed Hokusai's studio and much of his work. But Hokusai never stopped painting, and completed *Ducks in a Stream* at the age of 87. Constantly seeking to produce better work, he apparently exclaimed on his deathbed, "If only Heaven will give me just another ten years... just another five more years, then I could become a real painter."



Ducks in a stream, 1847 (87).

Main Source of document: Wikipedia. *N



*The Strong Oi Pouring Sake. Mishima Pass**, 1823-1829 (63 - 69).



*The Great Wave at Kanagawa**, c. 1830 (70). *Red Fuji**, c. 1830 (70).

A Hokusai book block found in **Claude Monet's** collection. *Travellers Crossing the Oi River**, c. 1830. *Hodogoya on the Tokaido**, c. 1830.

Suwa in the Shinano province. (*) are from *Thirty-Six views of Mt. Fuji*.

