

Zen and the *Floating World*:

Zen characteristics and Ideals in Japan's *Ukiyo-e* Prints

Venghour Than

The research is a testimony to the knowledge and spirit my asian art Professor provided me. I am indebted to your empathy, positivity, and encouragement.

Flourished in its fullest potential during the Edo Period (1603-1868) in the seventeenth century, the woodblock-printing art known as *ukiyo-e* was both the cultural and artistic focus in Japan. The mass production of the prints, from its efficient printing technique with wood blocks, presented multifarious images and aspects of the “everyday life” of Japanese society during the Period. The *ukiyo-e* prints were greatly commissioned by elites in the market, for instance, the *Daimyo* (Japanese magnates and feudal lords), samurai officials and retainers, along with other arts such as paintings.¹ From its prominence in capturing the daily-life scenes, the efficiency of printing technique, and the popularity in the elite markets, *ukiyo-e* thrived from the late seventeenth century until the nineteenth century. By definition, the literal meaning of the word “*ukiyo-e*” is “pictures of the floating world.” Specifically the word *ukiyo* means “floating world” while the *e* means “pictures.”² From this deconstruction of the word, *ukiyo-e* is an art that unfolds the everyday lifestyle. Yet, the everyday lifestyle presented in the prints are predominantly devoted in to the erotics³ and the pursuit of pleasure. More specifically, as cited by an art history author, Timothy Clark, in *The Dawn of the Floating World*, about the word *ukiyo* and its meaning,” the expression or the ethos of the “floating world” focuses on:

“Living only for the moment, turning our full attention to the pleasures of the moon, the snow, the cherry blossoms and the maples, singing songs, drinking wine, and diverting ourselves just in floating, floating caring not a whit for the poverty staring us in the face refusing the to be disheartened, like a go round floating along with the river current: This is what we call *ukiyo*.”⁴

¹ Carpenter, John, et al. “A Mirror on the Floating World.” *Designed for Pleasure*, edited by Donald Jenkins, Asia Society and Japanese Art Society of America, 2008, pp. 15-31.

² Carpenter, John et al. “A Mirror on the Floating World.” *Designed for Pleasure*, 15

³ By the description of ‘erotic,’ I do not intend to define it as out of ordinary nor strange. By ‘erotic,’ I directly mean the *ukiyo-e* prints are in relation to sex: sexual desire, sexual intercourse, sexual intimacy, and nakedness.

⁴ Clark, Timothy, et al. “Image and Style in the Floating World.” *The Dawn of the Floating World*, edited by Timothy Clark, Harry N. Abrams, 2001, pp. 10–31. See page 10, it is not Timothy Clark’s explanation of the word *ukiyo*. The quote about the meaning of the “floating world” is the quote Clark cited from a ‘*kana* booklet,’ a printed Japanese book that was produced primarily in Kyoto between 1600 and 1680, called ‘*Ukiyo monogatari*,’ which translated to *A Tale of the Floating World*, by Asai Ryōi (1612?-91) in Kyoto.

With this ideology or concept of the “floating world,” *ukiyo-e* print-makers and masters during the Edo Period were extremely interested in printing many types of images, styles, and themes. Hishikawa Moronobu (c.1618-1694), known as the first main artist, painter, and printmaker who popularized the art of *ukiyo-e* in the Period and an important figure in establishing the *ukiyo-e* school, presented numerous subject matters. In his books and collections of prints, the range of the subject matters is immense, including “legendary, historical and literary themes from China and Japan, Buddhist subjects, genre scenes (among them scenes of craftsmen), *kosode* pattern books, landscapes and gardens, birds and flowers, animals, warriors and erotica.”⁵ However, later in the Edo Period from Moronobu, more themes were added to the printing art like Kabuki theater⁶ and *Yoshiwara*.⁷

Initially, *ukiyo-e* prints were monochromatic, utilizing only black ink, but the vibrant and colorful ones were hand-painted after the printing happened. However, through the development of the printing technique, the hand-painted colors of the prints are no longer needed due the usage of many woodblocks or registers, printing on a paper one after another with different registers and colors, to produce one image. It is important to recognize that for one print or image to appear in the market, whether elite or not, there is a long, complicated yet simple process. By stating complicated, the production of the prints consists of various people with specific professions. It requires a strong collaboration between the wood or block-cutter, the artist, and the printer. In the process, the block-cutter needs to search for the ideal type of woods, usually the cherry blossom tree, to cut into blocks with smooth, mirror-like surfaces. The block-cutter would then start cutting the wood with the artist’s drawing placed on top after a long wait for the drawing and the block to stick together.⁸ After the cutting, it is the printer’s work to print images using a brush to spread color pigments onto the block surface. The printer uses the tool called *baren*⁹ to press, tease, and stroke the paper against the block while printing.¹⁰ Finally, a print is done. Therefore, the entire process of creating a ‘floating’ print to be in the market is undoubtedly laborious, requiring a sufficient

⁵ Clark, Timothy, et al. *The Dawn of the Floating World*, 49

⁶ Kabuki is a classical theater performance in Japan performed by all male actors with heavily-styled make-ups and costumes.

⁷ See Avery, Anne Louise. *Flowers of the Floating World: Geisha and Courtesans in Japanese Prints and Photographs, 1772–1926*, Sanders of Oxford & Mayfield Press: Oxford, 2006. *Yoshiwara* was a licensed, red-light district, a place of pleasure where the “water trade” happened during the 17th century, Edo Period, which involved Kabuki actors, dancers, painters, geisha, comedians etc.

⁸ Tinios, Ellis. “The Production of Woodblock Prints.” *Japanese Prints: Ukiyo-e in Edo, 1700–1900*, Lund Humphries, 2010, pp. 22–37.

⁹ See Tinios, Ellis. *Japanese Prints: Ukiyo-e in Edo*, 35. The *barren* is a round pad made out of long-fiber paper and thin bamboo sheath (as the handle) for smoothing and pressing paper on the wood block while printing.

¹⁰ Tinios, Ellis. *Japanese Prints: Ukiyo-e in Edo*, 33.

amount of patience and precision. *Ukiyo-e's* complicated process reflects its complexity and aesthetic of the images and themes in.

As previously mentioned, *ukiyo-e* art was a prominent artistic reproduction of prints during the Edo period. The prints presented numerous images from literary themes to landscapes and from birds and flowers to sexual scenes, which explains the 'floating-world' ethos and the everydayness in Japan. However, what mostly known to the world about *ukiyo-e* art is that it is an erotic art. The images of courtesans, beautiful women, *geisha*, and sexual intercourses are the evident to this view of eroticism seen by the world. At the same time, in Japan, Zen Buddhism is one of the main religions being practiced by citizens. It is reflected in the impressive, meditated ink paintings and gardens by Zen artists and simple-complicated tea ceremony by tea masters during the Muromachi Period (1392-1573). Zen Buddhism was formally established in Japan around the late twelfth century and early thirteenth century during the Kamakura Period by a group of Japanese Zen monks, who were priests trained in China.¹¹ Focusing on the religion's essence--both the themes and practices--Zen Buddhism does not focus on the physical being of the world or outside of oneself. Zen is about understanding and "experienc[ing]" "all things" of this world, animate and inanimate, from *within*.¹² It is the focus of being spiritual and conscious of your internal existence *within* yourself. Therefore, the ultimate practice of Zen is meditation, which is a process of detaching oneself from the physical world, beyond the external existence. Eventually, enlightenment is the goal of Zen practice and ideology: entering or manifesting "the absolute void (Chin. wu, Jap. mu) beyond all form and color, whether it is an abstract "dry landscape garden" made of rocks and sand, a spontaneously brushed, bold scroll of Chinese characters, a sparse ink painting, or a rough tea bowl."¹³ As stated by Japan's greatest Zen Master and religious philosopher Dōgen Kigen (1200-1253)

"To learn the Buddhist way is to learn about oneself. To learn about oneself is to forget oneself. To forget oneself is to perceive oneself as all things. To realize this is to cast off the body and mind of self and others. When you have reached this stage you will be detached even from enlightenment but will practice it continually without thinking about it. When people begin to

¹¹ See Brinker, Helmut, et al. "About the History of Zen." *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1996, pp. 25-28. The group of Japanese monks was "the reformer Myōan Eisai (1141-1215), who was fascinated especially with the ideas of the Huanglong (Jap. Ōryō) branch of the Rinzai school; the learned Risshuc master Shunjō (1166-1227), who had studied intensively the Yangqi (Jap. Yōgi) branch of the same school; and the religious philosopher Dōgen Kigen (1200-1253), who concerned himself above all with the tenets of the Caodong (Jap. Sōtō) school."

¹² Brinker, Helmut, et al. "About the Essence of Zen." *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, pp. 11-14

¹³ Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 11

seek the Dharma [outside themselves] they are immediately far removed from its true location. When the Dharma has been received through the right transmission, one's real self immediately appears.”¹⁴

From the explanations of *ukiyo-e* art and concert and Zen Buddhism, it is evident the two topics are the ‘clash’ of conflict. *Ukiyo-e* is mostly-viewd as erotic art. Zen is about the detachment of the physical world, which intuitively clarifies the forsaking of human pleasure. Though they are conflicting on the level of concept--attachment versus detachment of the world--it is important to realize that the word ‘floating world’ (*ukiyo*), rather than an arbitrary concept of everydayness, was initially expressed from the Buddhist concept, reflecting the “transitory nature of life”¹⁵ Besides, *ukiyo-e* is an art form that utilizes the technique of woodblock-printing, which was started in China before it migrated to Japan. When Zen Buddhism was established in Japan during the Kamakura Period, woodblock printing was carried out by Zen monasteries, for instance printing Buddhist texts, from the early thirteenth century to the sixteenth century.¹⁶ Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the connection between Zen and *ukiyo-e* is sufficiently-formed. Zen art, especially the ink paintings, is meditative and transcending of the physical world. During the Muromachi Period, well-known Zen artists painted myriads of themes (Buddhist figures, Zen masters, landscapes, moments, etc.) to reflect the Zen essence. As a result, the observation of paintings allows the characteristics of Zen art (compositions, styles, and impressions)¹⁷ and crucial Buddhist figures to be understood. This research attempts to reveal that in some *ukiyo-e* prints, though seen as erotic, there is a presence of Zen art characteristics. Specifically, asymmetry of composition, the austere sublimity of subjects, and the tranquility of the landscapes. Furthermore, the Buddhist deities such as Hotei and Kannon and the Zen master Daruma--the first Zen patriarch--still appear in *ukiyo-e* prints. Last, the Zen theme of enlightenment-related moments is expressed in the prints as well via the observation of conversation and subjects looking up--potentially to the universe. For

¹⁴ Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 11. The precise description about Zen by Dōgen Kigen above is quoted by Brinker from Kigen’s writing called *Genjōkōan* or *Actualization of Enlightenment*. I realized this description of what Zen is, in great manner, explains the nature of Zen, which will be helpful for this research paper since the concept and the manifestation of Zen and *ukiyo-e* are apparently-opposing. However, the art of Zen can be seen as inspiration to many *ukiyo-e* prints by various artists during the Edo Period.

¹⁵ Department of Asian Art. “Art of the Pleasure Quarters and the Ukiyo-e Style.” In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/plea/hd_plea.htm (October 2004) Also see https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/plea/hd_plea.htm, the article explains the *ukiyo* is a Buddhist concept that expresses an “attitude of *joie de vivre*” and “glorious life.”

¹⁶ Needham, Joseph, and Tsien Tsuen-Hsuei. *Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology; Part 1, Paper and Printing*. Third printing, e-book, vol. 5, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p338. The Zen temples during the time were located in Kyoto and Kamakura known as *Gozanji*.

¹⁷ Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 38. There are seven main characteristics of Zen arts such as “asymmetry, *fukinsei*; simplicity, *kanso*; unadorned loftiness, *kokō*; spontaneity, *shizen*; spiritual depth, *yūgen*; unworldliness, *datsuzoku*; inner serenity, *seijaku*.”

comprehending the Zen art characteristics in *ukiyo-e*, there are comparisons of paintings by Zen artists during the Muromachi Period and prints by printmasters during the Edo Period. Intriguingly, some printmasters' works were inspired and influenced by Zen artists from earlier periods.

Asymmetry of Compositions

In Zen ideals of art, symmetry is a characteristic that reflects formality, which represents the rigid convention. As an example, paintings from Pure Land Buddhism are presented with expressively symmetrical composition, projecting hierarchy, holiness, and perfection: “flawless, distant, and otherworldly.”¹⁸ This orthodoxy of artistic practice is what Zen artists must not obey since the Zen concept, as described, is about the ‘detachment’ of the world, where institution, instruction, and the *formal* style are the representation of not letting go of the physical world. This characteristic of asymmetry also expresses the concept of iconoclasm in which paintings attributed to Zen masters, monks, artists show the rejection of institutional teaching like *The Sixth Patriarch Huineng Chopping Bamboo* by Liang Kai (Fig. 1). In Zen art, many examples of paintings by Zen painters demonstrate this composition of asymmetry. For the comparison in this section, there is a specific type of asymmetry observed: one-sided angle. It is an angle, where the composition starts from the bottom corner to the top corner, showing a diagonal perspective. This one-sided angle asymmetry is observed in the work of a Muromachi Zen painter-monk, Tenshō Shūbun (active ca.1423-1460). Later on, in the Edo Period, the characteristic still persists in the work of a famous *ukiyo-e* artist, Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849).

One of the recognized works by Shūbun, *The Ten Oxherding Pictures Jūgūyūzu* (Fig. 2) from the 15th century, expresses the one-sided angle in painting's composition. It is a complete set of ten chronological, rounded paintings narrating the journey of a herder finding his missing ox. Intriguingly, in Zen Buddhism, these paintings, depicting the herder's journey, as “similes” in which they present “the steps on the steep road toward enlightenment.”¹⁹ In the collection of these ten paintings, mostly monochromatic, some of the paintings show Zen characteristic of asymmetry. Specifically in the third painting of the entire collection, the one-sided angle is expressive and evident in the work's composition.

¹⁸ Hisamatsu, Shin'ichi, and Gishin Tokiwa. “Zen Aesthetics.” *Zen and the Fine Arts*, Kodansha International, 1982, pp. 28–44.

¹⁹ See Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 234. Here are the ten descriptions describes/translated by the author of the herder's journey of finding his ox in according to each labeled number of each paintings (from 1 to 10): Looking for the Ox (1); Seeing the Footprints of the Ox (2); Seeing the Ox (3); Catching the Ox (4); Herding the Ox (5); Returning Home on the Back of the Ox (6); The Ox Forgotten, the Man Remains (7); Both Man and Ox Forgotten (8); Returning to the Fundamental, Back to the Source (9); and Entering the City with Hands Hanging Down (10).

The third painting “Seeing the Ox,” (Fig 2.1) reveals the scene where the herder finds his ox, and starts chasing it. In the circle’s left side and its left corner, the ox, with its tail flying, runs away from the herder, who chases behind. The ox’s hindlimbs are seen while its front body is hidden behind the mountain side and falling tree branches with angular brush lines.²⁰ The left side and corner are very detailed compared to the vast, empty background. They set a one-sided angle, expressing diagonal perspective; the tree branches provided a pointed down perspective. Together, they offer a focus on the event in the center (fig 2.1.1). In the fourth (Fig 2.2), seventh (Fig 2.3), and tenth (Fig 2.4) paintings, they present the same perspective, the asymmetry that is unbalanced and uneven.

The asymmetry observed above can be found in the most iconic *ukiyo-e* print from the early nineteenth century (c.1830). The print *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*²¹ by printmaster Katsushika Hokusai (Fig. 3) reveals a splendid view of Mount Fuji covered in snow in the center in the distance. In the foreground, an immense, pigmented-blue and white wave, assumed tsunami, rises to the sky, about to swallow three boats in front of it. Compared to Shūbun’s *The Ten Oxherding Pictures Jūgūyūzu*, the asymmetry of one sided-angle is noticeable in the viewer’s reading. Like on the left side and its corner in the third painting “Seeing the Ox,” where there are details of the mountain side, tree branches, and the ox’s hindlimbs, the wave, on the left side, is intricate. There are distinguished shades of light and dark blue stripes, the curvy white cape of the wave, small circular dots of water splashes, and wooden boats. Furthermore, the great wave with the white top or cape of the great wave creates a diagonal line and pointed-down perspective, which guides the viewer’s attention directly to the center subject in the distance--the peak of Mount Fuji (Fig 3.1).²² This is evidently an exact demonstration seen in Shūbun’s *The Ten Oxherding Pictures Jūgūyūzu*. Asymmetry, a Zen-art characteristic observed in Zen artist’s work, still persists in *ukiyo-e*. It is interesting to note that Hokusai embodied the tranquil and contemplative nature as a Zen artist. Possibly, there was “this deep, Zen-like communion with the essential form of things that enabled him to endow his subjects with the vibrance and substantially of living, organic matter.”²³ Study also revealed that in many of his works, Hokusai was influenced by a monk artist, Sesshū

²⁰ For the study of Zen characteristics in paintings and prints in this research, like asymmetry, I do not intend to describe the different details by artists, such as brush styles and other intricate details (colors), since they are not the main focus of the topic. However, I acknowledge the importance of the details since they present the artistic history and contribution to the entire piece.

²¹ *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* is from the series *Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji (Fugaku sanjūrokkei)*.

²² See John Michael Dudley, Véronique Sarano, Frédéric Dias. *On Hokusai’s great wave off Kanagawa: Localization, linearity and a rogue wave in sub-antarctic waters*. Notes & Records of the Royal Society, 2013, 67, pp.159 - 164. 10.1098/rsnr.2012.0066.hal-00908667. The study further discusses the diagonal perspective observed in Hokusai’s *Great Wave off Kanagawa* in relation to the effect of linear and non-linear lines. The effect creates “the essential concentration of energy,” which allows the focus on Mount Fuji.

²³ Neuer, Roni, and Susugu Yoshida. “Images of the Floating World.” *Ukiyo-E: 250 Years of Japanese Art*, Gallery Books, 1978, pp. 9–48.

Tōyō (1420-1506) in the Muromachi Period.²⁴ In fact, Sesshū was “a pupil of Shūbun,” studying with him at a young age at Shōkoku-ji.²⁵ Therefore, the ‘organic’ matter Hokusai expressed in *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* with asymmetry clearly proves the persistence of Zen characteristic in *ukiyo-e* print via personal influence, which allows this plausible comparison.

Austere Sublimity of Subjects

Austere sublimity in Zen art is mostly challenging to perceive. The best effort to explain this Zen characteristic is the “dryness” in the visual form and the expression of Zen painting. One of the perfect examples is Liang Kai’s *Shakyamuni Emerging from the Mountains* from the thirteenth century (Fig. 4). Shakyamuni’s weariness and dryness after a long meditation are presented in his curly and overlapping robes and the crooked and uncomfortable environment he is in. Mostly, it is his facial expression of looking down, self-consciousness, worry, and confusion with the support of the growing thick hair and beards. These observations illustrate the essence of austere sublimity. The “dryness” “signifies the disappearance of childishness, unskillfulness or inexperience, with only the pith or essence remaining.”²⁶ It is the expression of seriousness, stoicism, and perseverance, which are important in the concept of Zen Buddhism of pragmatism, in searching for enlightenment in daily life unlike the holy journey taught in Pure Land Buddhism.

Connecting with the facial expression of austerity of Shakyamuni, in Hokusai’s print *Fisherman and Woodcutter* (19th century) presents the characteristic as well (Fig. 5 & Fig. 6). It is a set of two long vertical prints printed on silk. The two prints, the Fisherman and the Woodcutter, are placed next to each other. Focusing on the Fisherman, the characteristic of the dryness from his facial expression is conspicuous to the one from Shakyamuni.²⁷ Furthermore, the texture of his hair and beards resembles Shakyamuni’s hair and beards as well, which support the seriousness of the subject’s facial expression. The Fisherman sits on his fishbasket, crossing his leg and looking far in the distance that has only layers of mountain range and emptiness. Same with the Woodcutter, he wears a dry facial expression with support of his thick growing hair, eyebrows, and beards. Unlike looking up and staring far in the distance

²⁴ Daniel Atkison and Leslie Stewart. "Life and Art of Katsushika Hokusai" in *From the Floating World: Part II: Japanese Relief Prints*, catalogue of an exhibition produced by California State University, Chico.

²⁵ Munsterberg, Hugo. “Zen Painting in Japan.” *Zen & Oriental Art*, Tuttle Publishing, 1993, pp. 61–90.

²⁶ Hisamatsu, Shin’ichi, and Gishin Tokiwa. “Zen Aesthetics.” *Zen and the Fine Arts*, Kodansha International, 1982, 31.

²⁷ See Hisamatsu, Shin’ichi, and Gishin Tokiwa. “Zen Aesthetics.” *Zen and the Fine Arts*, 31. It is challenging to find austere and sublime qualities within the much later period of Zen paintings, especially by artists in the Muromachi Period. In many studies, *Shakyamuni Emerging from the Mountains* by Liang Kai is the most appropriate and perfect example for studying and observing this characteristic.

as the Fisherman, the woodcutter, holding his long ax, stares down to the ground. These gestures of looking up and down by the two subjects are important expressions in Zen concept in relation to self-awareness and detachment, which will be discussed at the end of this research. Though the Fisherman and the Woodcutter do not wear a robe as Shakyamuni, the overlapping of their apparels and rolling sleeves evokes similar effect of their stoicism and determination in their activities: fishing and cutting woods.

Another observation about the two prints is the composition of mountains in the background, which reflects the personal influence Hokusai had in his artworks.²⁸ As already realized, Hokusai was influenced by Sesshū's works. The mountain in the print of the Woodcutter, its style and composition are noticeable and analogous to the mountain style in Sesshū's most impressive Zen painting of the *Landscape*²⁹ during the Muromachi Period (Fig. 7) and his *Landscape of four Seasons: Fall* (Fig. 8) in 1489. The visual form of the mountain by Hokusai and Sesshū is in the style of 'fading' and 'revealing', known as the *p'o-mo* style. The 'fading' is where the viewer cannot identify the start or the base of the mountain. It is hidden in the clouds and fog. While for the 'revealing,' the pointed top of the mountain is shown.

Therefore, the sense of "dryness," which refers to the seriousness and perseverance expressed in the painting of Liang Kai and the prints on silk by Hokusai, like asymmetry, communicates the persistence of Zen austere sublimity. This characteristic is crucial in the Zen art as it explains the realness of achieving enlightenment in which it is not a supernatural or holy journey. Enlightenment in Zen is fundamentally austere (avoiding sensuality and sentimentalism) and way of living: confront confusion and hardship. Zen masters, monks, disciples, practitioners, and viewers can comprehend this experience from *Shakyamuni Emerging from the Mountains* after committing to asceticism but also in the *Fisherman and Woodcutter*--from their hard work in finding fish and cutting woods.

²⁸ This paragraph about the background composition of the mountain is just a minor discussion to the observation of the two prints. I intended to emphasize the strong connection and inspiration Hokusai had with the Zen monk artist Sesshū. However the observation of the background is not a part of analyzing the Zen characteristic of austere sublimity, but it is still worth mentioning as a part of the construction of the artworks.

²⁹ See Munsterberg, Hugo. "Zen Painting in Japan." *Zen & Oriental Art*, 68. *Landscape* by Sesshū' is deemed as a "powerful work, it is one of the most remarkable of Japanese sumi-e scrolls, and many critics would rank it as the single greatest Japanese painting."

Tranquility in Landscapes

This is the seventh characteristic of Zen art that highly depends on the ‘mood’ and the manifestation of calmness. Tranquility can be both expressed and received through the meditation of studying and observing Zen paintings embedded by abstraction of distinguished brush strokes or sitting in front of Japanese Zen gardens, from the Moss garden in Saihō-ji to the Dry Landscape Garden at Ryōan-ji. Also, there are paintings discussed earlier in the papers presenting this tranquil quality of Zen. In Shūbun’s *Ten Oxherding Pictures Jūgūyzu* (Fig. 2), specifically in the seventh painting of “The Ox Forgotten, the Man Remains” (Fig. 2.3), the herder looks up to the distance, where there are mountains and hills. It is a moment in which the environment the herder is in obtains the mood of tranquility. He realizes his journey of finding the missing ox no longer matters. This moment is also a manifestation of the man forgetting and detaching his consciousness of desire for the ox. The vastness of the landscape in front of the herder, with mist, clouds, and mountain tops, provides the calm essence. It is as if the herder is imagining or dreaming his next journey. Another example studied earlier is Sesshū’s *Landscape* (Fig. 7). Looking closely into the painting, the viewer can identify or notice the numerous individualized brush strokes, which are abstract.³⁰ They allow the viewer to meditate in finding or imagining their journey in the space the painting revealed and the brush movements--quick and untrammelled--and tones of the monochromatic ink, forming different imagery or pictures the viewer perceived. From these examples that demonstrate the characteristic of tranquility, it is clear that the “journey,” the meditative and imaginative kind, is an essential aspect. In *ukiyo-e* world, Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), a particularly well-known artist for his collection of landscapes,³¹ who often traveled during the Edo Period,³² printed countless landscape work. In those works, tranquility is manifested: Hiroshige’s reference in compositional style of previous Zen landscapes was apparent.

Hiroshige’s landscapes demonstrate the “journey.” Specifically, according to every landscape print he produced, Hiroshige was interested in his personal expression, yet it is still universal to the world to understand his works. His landscapes “reveal an emotional response to the poetry of the place that found resonance both among city dwellers, who increasingly viewed the countryside nostalgia, and

³⁰ Munsterberg, Hugo. “Zen Painting in Japan.” *Zen & Oriental Art*, 69. From the *p’o-mo* brushwork in his *Landscape*, “the result is a work which is at once spontaneous and controlled—in which, with a few strokes of the brush, the heart of the matter is seized.” This is another critical aspect of Zen thinking, the quickness of enlightenment at the speed of those brush movements in daily life. This is known as *satori*.

³¹ Hiroshige’s most prominent collection is called *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*.

³² Neuer, Roni, and Susugu Yoshida. “The Poetry of Landscape.” *Ukiyo-E: 250 Years of Japanese Art*, Gallery Books, 1978, pp. 307–353. Hiroshige was incredibly famous for his collection of landscapes because he was a persistent traveler. During his life as an artist, Hiroshige “traveled along the Tokaido road, following in the footsteps of Hokusai. He depicted this journey of 490 kilometers, which he undertook on foot, in a series of prints which immediately won him a reputation as a master of landscape.”

among visitors from the provinces...”³³ This expression of ‘poetry of the place’ and emotional response signifies the Zen characteristic and the mood of tranquility. It is seemed as a reference to the *lyric journey*,³⁴ where tranquility is achieved through the journey of experiencing the view of a location or landscape, in a poetic manner. The poetry manifested in landscape paintings, which is calm, allows the expression of ordinary life.³⁵ It is “by presenting imagery and events as belonging to the poet’s lyrical experience and charging them with feelings, frequently a kind of nostalgia, as they around us flashes of recognition of their own past experiences.”³⁶ Many works that demonstrate this ideal of journey with tranquility are examples from literati landscape paintings³⁷ during the twelfth century of the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). There were three different styles or presentations for painters during the Southern Song to express the poetic journey and tranquility. However, one style that can be observed during the dynasty, which remains noticeable in Zen landscape works in Muromachi Period to *ukiyo-e* in Edo Period is “depicting the scene as if viewed through the poet’s eyes.”³⁸ In this case, the landscape print for this discussion is Hiroshige’s eyes.

From the explanation of history and details presented about tranquility, Hiroshige’s landscape print *Eight Scenic Views of Kanazawa under Full Moon*³⁹ (1857) (Fig. 9) is the most appropriate to study the persistence of the Zen characteristic. The landscape is a set of three triptychs⁴⁰, revealing a wide, horizontal view of Kanazawa Bay. The dark-blue mountain range lying across the triptychs is adorned with the last blush of sunset. The entire view is filled with all different-sized gray islands and cliffs floating on the soft blue water. In the right panel, fishermen on their boats are out, spreading across the water surface. Miniscule humans walk on the long, double-curve bridge that connects a small village to

³³ Guth, Christine. “Edo Artists.” *Art of Edo Japan: The Artist and the City 1615–1868*, Illustrated, Yale University Press, 2010, pp. 89–125.

³⁴ Cahill, James. *The Lyric Journey: Poetic Painting in China and Japan (The Edwin O. Reischauer Lectures)*. Illustrated, Harvard University Press, 1996.

³⁵ ‘Ordinary life’ aspect draws in the connection to Zen concept of enlightenment with *satori*, which is the sudden understanding in daily life. It also connects to the everydayness concept in *ukiyo-e* though it is designed for eroticism and pleasure, but there are other aspects too like landscapes presented by Hiroshige during his long walk.

³⁶ Cahill, James. *The Lyric Journey: Poetic Painting in China and Japan*, 7.

³⁷ It is important to recognize that literati landscape paintings can be seen in various expressions and deceptions. The landscape works could be observed in small-scene (in small size) known as *xiaojing* or in large and long horizontal scrolls.

³⁸ Cahill, James. *The Lyric Journey: Poetic Painting in China and Japan*, 26.

³⁹ See Harris, Frederick. “Landscapes.” *Ukiyo-e: The Art of the Japanese Print*, Hardcover with Jacket, Epub ed.. Tuttle Publishing, 2011, 259. “With the death of Hiroshige, landscape in the form of single-sheet prints came to an end. Although he had followers, the poetry was gone even though the scenery remained.”

⁴⁰ See Tinios, Ellis. *Japanese Prints: Ukiyo-e in Edo*, 103. *Eight Scenic Views of Kanazawa under Full Moon* is one of the works Hiroshige produced in the last year of his life. He printed this landscape that illustrate a poetic theme “Snow, moon, and flowers” in which different aspects in each panel represent the theme. Apparently, the middle panel represents the moon because there is a beautiful full moon.

another village in the extended peninsula in the middle panel. The peninsula stretches out into the distance, filled with trees, scattered rooftops, and boats at the shoreline, guiding viewers to admire the full moon and the flock of birds in zigzag formation. In the left panel, two small islands stand tall; two boats with their white mainsails open floats far in the distance. Lastly, there are also calligraphies and stamps incorporated with the print: right panel's top and bottom right corners and middle and left panels' bottom right corner.

From understanding the overall composition and intricate elements of Kanazawa landscape, Hiroshige proved his poetic nature and a lyrical journey. The observation of small fishermen boats, rooftops, the bridge, small-sized humans, trees, full moon, the flock of birds, and small and huge islands explains the lyricism of the/his journey. It is as if the viewer witnesses the scene from the perspective of Hiroshige during his travel, which is calm and relaxing; tranquil per se. The viewer can imagine they are there. In addition, the small elements in the landscapes--human and villages--allow the audience to imagine where they stand while looking at the view, which can possibly be from a mountain or hill top. It is also exquisite to realize that the widely spreaded composition of the scene with elongated and overlapping mountains, and individual islands is in the style of the Eight Views of the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers or Xiao and Xiang Rivers.⁴¹ For instance, the composition style can be attributed to Ch'an⁴² monk artists, Muqi and Yujian (Fig. 10 & Fig. 11). However, the landscape composition can be traced later to the Muromachi Period. Sesson Shūkei (ca.1504-ca.1589), who was a Zen monk painter, painted the *Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang* (Fig. 12). Sesson painted many versions of the Eight Views, but the particular one in this study is in the style of Yujian.⁴³ Moreover, in his life as a painter, Sesson worked in the style of Sesshū and studied the works of Shūbun, the artists discussed earlier.

The Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang Rivers were important sites in China. They were “landscapes full of poetry and characterized by atmospheric moods, by weather and light effects changing according to season, even according to the time of day, must have had particular appeal to the eyes and the spirit of Zen adepts.”⁴⁴ This matches with the poetic spirit and nature Hiroshige had with his landscape. Compared with Sesson's landscape, there are similar elements in the work: humans, rooftops, villages, trees (the branches and trunks are appealing), birds flying in zigzag lines, boats, and overlapping mountains and

⁴¹ There are different transliterations to the name, which can be XiaoXiang, Hsiao Hsiang, or Chiu Chiang.

⁴² Ch'an is the Chinese transliteration for Zen.

⁴³ See Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 322. It is believed that Sesson painted Eight Views in the inspiration of seeing the first set of the *Eight Views of the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers* painted Muqi and Yujian, which arrived in Japan in the second half of the fourteenth century.

⁴⁴ Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 190.

hills. The atmospheres are felt from both works as well, how Hiroshige's Eight Views is in the sunset while Sesson's painting had sunrise and sunset in the evening. Besides, like other previous Chinese monk artists, Sesson worked on the Eight Views with themes of eight seasonal changes.⁴⁵ For Hiroshige's landscape, though it seems that there is only one season depicted, arguably, it is the viewer's journey to imagine and identify the eight different views in Kanazawa, with different seasons. In a way, that is the Zen tranquility attempts to communicate.

Therefore, the Zen-art characteristic of tranquility still persists in *ukiyo-e*, in the theme of landscapes. The tranquility in Hiroshige's Eight Views suggests the maintenance of the mood and manifestation of calmness via the perspective of dreaming or imagining a journey. It is evident that the journey is supported by artistic decisions of landscape composition and many elements like human presence with the rooftops, boats, bridges, which are small but crucial. The attribution in Hiroshige's works to previous Zen monk's paintings sufficiently communicates the inspiration and reference. Also, it further proves the poetic nature of locations and landscapes Hiroshige had and always known for. The landscape of the Eight Views of Xiao Xiang Rivers does not only persist in *ukiyo-e prints* but also in other mediums like Zen gardens. The gardens still maintain the elements of boats, water, bridge, mountains, and islands and trees as well. In addition, the viewer's imagination or dream of the journey still continues in the practice of meditation in those gardens. Hence, tranquility speaks so much importance in Zen. It is manifested in the landscapes, which is nature and a place of reclusion--detachment. One can assume Hiroshige's travel of 490 kilometers, leaving the city of Edo, is a manifestation of this tranquil, Zen journey.

Buddhist Deities and Zen Master

Asides the Zen characteristics, themes and genres such as Buddhist figures (the Buddha, deities, patriarchs and masters) are critical in Zen thinking and practice for the journey to enlightenment. They are mostly presented in a specific way with an artistic precision that allows people to see them as historical figures. Rather shown as holy in a traditional way, Buddhist deities and Zen Masters were real, existed people. As studied earlier, the painting *Shakyamuni Emerging from the Mountains* by Liang is a great demonstration, with the subject, Shakyamuni stranded in austerity and stoicism. It encourages or inspires

⁴⁵ Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 190. The eight seasonal changes in Sesson's Eight Views are: 1. Mountain Market, Clear with Rising Mist; 2. Wild Geese Descending to Sandbar; 3. Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting; 4. Night Rain over Xiao and Xiang; 5. Evening Bell from Mist-shrouded Temple; 6. Returning Sails off Distant Shore; 7. Fishing Village in Evening Glow; and 8. River and Sky in Evening Snow.

Zen followers to imagine their journey to enlightenment is attainable too. In *ukiyo-e*, the presence of the Buddhist figures still remains, from ink painting to printing art. The distinctive iconography of each deity and the master are especially intriguing, showing the connection between the style of previous painters and later printmasters. However, at the same time, the prints provide an unprecedented perspective and stylistic composition of the deity. “Parody” of the Buddhist figure is the most recognizable, where the Zen world and the erotic world in *ukiyo-e* meet and appear in one image.

There are not many prints of Shakyamuni, who was the founder of Buddhism religion.⁴⁶ Though he will not be in the discussion, other deities, specifically bodhisattvas like Hotei⁴⁷ and Kannon⁴⁸ are in *ukiyo-e* prints. In addition, the first patriarch of Zen Buddhism Daruma⁴⁹ is presented in the works by a later print artist in late Edo period. About the “parody” of Buddhist figures, in *ukiyo-e*, Hotei is a common subject. In *Inside the Bag, the Pleasure Quarters* by Okumara Masanobu (1686-1764) (Fig. 13), expresses that parodic quality. Hotei in Buddhism is known as the “Buddha of the Future,” who is also in the painting by Shūbun observed earlier, *The Ten Oxherding Pictures Jūgūyūzu*. On the tenth painting titled “Entering the City with Hands Hanging Down” (Fig. 14). From every source, the iconographies of Hotei are his flamboyant facial expressions (depicted with laughing or huge grin), big belly, and immense beggar’s sack he always carries around. He walks and sleeps everywhere, along the roads, under trees, and loves joking and playing with children. What is noticed in all paintings and portraits of Hotei is that no one ever really knows what is in his huge bag besides hypothesizing random objects one can think of. Surprisingly, in *Inside the Bag, the Pleasure Quarters*, Hotei’s sack opens up, revealing what is inside, as read in the title, “the Pleasure Quarters.” Eroticism, as discussed at the beginning, is one of the themes in and the quintessential aspect of *ukiyo-e*. Hotei stands while opening the bag that covers his entire body, only his face, shoulders, fingers and toes are seen. He holds the bag with both of hands and his mouth by

⁴⁶ At least this is according to my entire journey of researching appropriate and ideal *ukiyo-e* prints for this study. Through reading and looking at pictures of prints from books and journal articles, I could not find figures of Shakyamuni. Though there are prints of the Buddha statues out there by well-known print artists, such as Kotozuka Eiichi and Gihachiro (1906-81) and Okuyama (1907-81), the artists are not from the Edo Period. Also, the Buddha statues present an unrelated mode of meaning and connection in terms of analyzing Buddhist figures as historical figures as Zen Buddhism intended. However, instead of stating “there is no,” I state “there are not many” to be aware to the prints of Shakyamuni existed or not found out there.

⁴⁷ In Japanese, it is Hotei. In Chinese, it is Budai.

⁴⁸ In Japanese, it is Kannon. In Chinese, it is Guanyin. See Neave, Dorinda, et al. *Asian Art*. 1st ed., Pearson, 2014. Interestingly, Bodhisattva Kannon or Guanyin was originally a male deity, started in India known as Avalokiteśvara. Throughout the history of Buddhism journey and transmission, when Buddhism arrived in China, and “by the late Ming dynasty, Guanyin had come to be perceived as female and held special relevance to women...” (2011). This also communicates “how influences and ideas from outside, like Buddhism, were often welcomed and adapted to meet local needs” (103). Parallel to this study, it speaks how the Zen-art character are being adopted to later periods in new art forms like *ukiyo-e*.

⁴⁹ He is also known as Bodhidharma.

biting on it. The iconographies still maintained: the sack, grinning eyes, and large bell, which is hidden by his bag but suggested his puff and spreaded shoulders. Inside the bag, the Pleasure Quarters, three courtesans in kimono stands, waiting for the man in front of them. It is a “miniature street scene in the Yoshiwara.”⁵⁰

The wider message nevertheless is the eroticism or the erotic world came into one with the Zen essence represented by Hotei. The parodic expression or joke from the print demonstrates a specific type of *ukiyo-e* print called *mitate-e* or *mitate* pictures, which is “likening one thing to another.”⁵¹ This style of print is also seen in other woodblock prints, involving courtesans and urban beauties but a different perspective related to embodiment. For instance, Lady Eguchi thinks of herself as Bodhisattva Fugen, riding on an elephant.⁵² A courtesan’s life is compared with the Zen patriarch Daruma’s.⁵³ These observations about Zen Buddhist figures like Hotei shows the importance of their role as bodhisattvas, who stay to guide those who have not enlightened. Yet, their presence is being transformed to cooperate with the changes of time and artistic medium like the erotic life in *ukiyo-e*.

Another essential Buddhist subject that needs to be studied is Kannon, who is a bodhisattva. She is recognized as the goddess of mercy. For the discussion of persistence of Kannon’s iconography, Tsukioka Yoshitoshi’s print *Kannon* from his collection *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*⁵⁴ (Fig. 15) in the 19th century, Edo period, presents many similar aspects to the Zen art depicting the goddess. One main aspect is the site where Kannon resides, in a sitting posture, during her meditation. She sits at the edge of a rock while white and light-blue waves brush in front her. The environment around her is wild and chaotic, like the waves, but Kannon, hugging her right knee and looking down, remains tranquil. The white robe she wears that is traced with untrammelled lines is a style of Liang Kai, for example, *The Sixth Patriarch Huineng Chopping Bamboo*. One contradicting aspect in this print though is the halo behind her head. Since the ideal depiction of Buddhist figures in Zen works requires the demythologization and humanization of the subjects, the halo incorporated in the print eliminates the historical perspective of Kannon. It presents her more as a holistic being like the one in Pure Land Buddhism. However, overall, the

⁵⁰ Carpenter, John et al. *Designed for Pleasure*, 64.

⁵¹ Timothy T. Clark, “Mitate-e: Some Thoughts, and a Summary of Recent Writings,” *Impressions* 19 (1997): 7.

⁵² Ikumi Kaminishi, “Skillful Means (upāya) of the Courtesan as Bodhisattva Fugen: Maruyama Ōkyō’s Lady Eguchi,” in Chiem and Blanchard ed. *Gender, Continuity, and the Shaping of Modernity in the Arts, 16th-20th Centuries* (Boston : Brill, 2017)

⁵³ Ikumi Kaminishi, *Skillful Means (upāya) of the Courtesan as Bodhisattva Fugen: Maruyama Ōkyō’s Lady Eguchi*, 132

⁵⁴ Harris, Frederick. *Ukiyo-e: The Art of the Japanese Print*, 351.

continuing presence of Kannon, the same for Hotei, delivers her significant contribution to the Zen religion that still remains in *ukiyo-e*.

Besides Kannon, Yoshitoshi also printed an image of a Zen master, *Daruma* (Fig. 16). Like the bodhisattvas, Daruma in Zen art had his own distinguished features or iconography, which allows the viewer to recognize him immediately. In his biography, Daruma was a Buddhist monk, specifically the twenty-eighth patriarch after Shakyamuni, but he was the first patriarch or founder of the Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism. He is from India, and traveled to China perhaps around the late fifth century and early sixth century to start and spread Ch'an Buddhism. However, it was unsuccessful for the founder due to the overpowering religion that was already established in China; Daruma, left with disappointment, decided to exclude himself from the society and began to meditate in a cave for nine long years, facing the [cave] wall at Shaolinsi on Mt. Song in Henan Province.⁵⁵ The "facing the wall" is also known as the first teaching of Daruma in Zen Buddhism. However, there was a monk named Huike, who heard about a monk meditating on Mt. Song decided to travel to meet Daruma. Huike asked Daruma to be his disciple, but he was rejected. Eventually, he cut his own arm and offered it to Daruma. As a result of sacrificial and determined gesture, Huike became the disciple and continued to be the second patriarch of Ch'an

The scene of Huike cutting his arm is revealed in an early painting from the thirteenth century by an anonymous artist in the Southern Song dynasty called *Bodhidharma Meditating Facing Cliff while Huike Awaiting* (Fig. 17). Daruma sits in his most poised sitting position. He wears his robe to his head, a main iconography of him. Both of his hands stay hidden in his robe, which serves "to avoid the otherwise inevitable choice of a Mudrā, i.e., a well formulated statement, words by means of a precise symbolic sign; thus, in the sense of Zen, it may well be appropriate to speak of a non-Mudrā, even an anti-Mudrā."⁵⁶ Zen is a non-institutional teaching that essentializes the heart-to-heart and mind-to-mind teaching, which rejects the textual- or book-based learning, Mudrā--the different Buddhist hand gestures--included. That is iconoclasm. Though it is not expressed in Figure 16, another iconography of Daruma is "the half-figure three-quarter profile view," the most iconic way to present the Ch'an founder.⁵⁷ The painting then inspired Sesshū to paint another version (Fig. 18), with a slight modification of the distance between Daruma and Huike, the cave setting, and the subject's facial expression in which

⁵⁵ See Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 149-150. In this section of his book, Brinker vividly discusses the story of Daruma arriving in China. There were explicit moments when Daruma met with the Emperor, and "he rudely offended the Liang Emperor." This story and other moments, invisibilized by the society in China, leads to the reason why he secluded into nature.

⁵⁶ Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 151.

⁵⁷ Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 154.

brushworks are more intricate. Sesshū's version, specifically the stylistic composition of the cave, can be seen in Yoshitoshi's *Daruma*. It is the shape of a cave wall that is molded into the shape of Daruma's body after his nine years of meditation. In Yoshitoshi's, though Daruma sits facing outward, the rock of the wall is molded into his body shape. The duration of his long meditation is presented with different shades of black ink that is sort of creating an effect of Daruma's presence carved into the rock, which is noticeable in Sesshū's work as well. Last, Daruma's iconography of robe wearing to his head and the veiling of the hands remain. The only differences are Daruma's eyes looking downward--an interesting topic in the next discussion--and him facing outward.

“Looking Up”

For the purpose of the last contribution of the research, the observational study in this section does not focus on the overall composition of the works but the slightest aspect. It is an element, a gesture, an artistic precision, a moment, and the manifestation of Zen. Suggested by the section's title, that slightest aspect observed here is the “looking up” expression witnessed in paintings by Zen monk artists during the Muromachi period, and the viewer can still see it in *ukiyo-e* prints. Important questions to ponder on such as why subjects in the paintings are looking up to the vastness and emptiness of the sky or in the distance? What is the core message the viewer can receive from this simple yet beautiful and intricate gesture of looking up?

In the discussion of asymmetry, Shūbun, *The Ten Oxherding Pictures Jūgūyūzu* reveals the herder who is on a journey to search for his ox. Especially in the seventh painting (Fig 2.3), the herder looks up to the far mountain and empty sky. In another painting by him, which has never been mentioned, *Kanzan and Jittoku*⁵⁸ (Fig. 19), the two subjects, who are Buddhist holy figures, look up too. Similarly, one of the earliest great Japanese painters in the early Muromachi Period, Kaō (?-1345)⁵⁹ painted *Kanzan* (Fig. 20) with a tranquil and joyous mood. Then, in the works of Hokosai's *Fisherman and Woodcutter* (Fig. 5 & Fig. 6), the fisherman staring up and far to the distance, but the Woodcutter is instead looking down, which can be observed in the works by Yoshitoshi of *Kannon* (Fig. 15) staring down to the waves and *Daruma* (Fig. 16). These gestures of looking up and also looking down communicates immensely about

⁵⁸ They are also known as Cold Mountain (Hanshan in Chinese and Kanzan in Japanese), Foundling (Shide in Chinese, Jittoku in Japanese). Shakyamuni has two bodhisattvas--god of wisdom and goddess of mercy. Kanzan is believed to be the representation of wisdom because he is well-known for his poetry. Jittoku is the representation of kindness.

⁵⁹ See Munsterberg, Hugo. “Zen Painting in Japan.” *Zen & Oriental Art*, 62. Not much information about Kaō is known to the world. Most research studies are only able to study his works and artistic vision. However, Kaō and another great Japanese Zen painter Mokuan Reien, whose biography is known, were to be the same person.

Zen spirituality, the essence of enlightenment, and the journey to enlightenment. The fact that the “looking up” style seen in the Zen paintings from Muromachi Period still persists in *ukiyo-e* prints, Zen has an impressive influence. Connecting these paintings with the subjects staring up to the commemorating portraits of Zen masters in Japan, the “looking-up” is the “pupils as [they are] a sign that they had achieved enlightenment.”⁶⁰ In respect to the understanding, enlightenment is an immediate reach in Zen Buddhism that is instantaneous as a “streak of lightning; in the same way the purified Zen pupil will penetrate the ultimate truth.”⁶¹

The “looking up” in relation to the pupils illuminates the vision of the subjects in the paintings above and their experience. The herder looks up with his pupils into the distance, suggesting his progress of enlightenment of detaching himself from the earthly desire with searching for his Ox. It is why the title for the seventh painting is called, “The Ox Forgotten, the Man Remains,” and how his enlightenment journey continues to become “Both Man and Ox Forgotten.” Kanzan and Jittoku, the holy figures, look up because they are already realized so their job is to help those who are behind to reach enlightenment. While for Kanzan in Kaō’s work, he is in his most tranquil posture with hands hanging at the back. Kanzan stands tall and looks up with a great smile of joy as if he is in his moment. Now, in the print, the Fisherman, after a long day finding fish out in the ocean, sits in his basket and gazes upward into the empty distance. In that moment, the Fisherman had a conversation with the Woodcutter, contemplating on how to live beyond society. It is a perfect balance between the looking up of the Fisherman and the looking down of the Woodcutter--like Kannon and Daruma in Yoshitoshi’s prints--to reflect about the awareness of the surrounding world and the universe and the consciousness of oneself. Ultimately, like Zen Master and religious philosopher Dōgen Kigen said:

“To learn the Buddhist way is to learn about oneself. To learn about oneself is to forget oneself. To forget oneself is to perceive oneself as all things. To realize this is to cast off the body and mind of self and others. When you have reached this stage you will be detached even from enlightenment but will practice it continually without thinking about it. When people begin to seek the Dharma [outside themselves] they are immediately far removed from its true location. When the Dharma has been received through the right transmission, one's real self immediately appears.”

⁶⁰ Munsterberg, Hugo. “Zen Painting in Japan.” *Zen & Oriental Art*, 63.

⁶¹ Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, 56.

Both the herder himself and the ox are forgotten: nothingness and emptiness. The Fisherman and the Woodcutter will realize as the vast, empty distance in front of them is the answer. Thus, Zen ideals and concepts have remained persistent in *ukiyo-e*.

In Conclusion:

Ukiyo-e, which translates to the “image of the floating world,” carries an efficient woodblock-printing technique that has its origin in China. From the beginning of the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, *ukiyo-e*, with its developed technique of polychromatic print in one image, flourished to its fullest potential. Themes and subjects presented in the prints were incredibly varied; from legendary to Buddhist subjects; from landscapes and gardens to erotic scenes. However, *ukiyo-e* is widely perceived as an erotic art that is designed with pleasure, which is mostly seen with prints of courtesans, beautiful women, and sexual intercourse.

However, not every print is erotic. Prints by well-known artists in themes of landscapes and Buddhist figures are observed to reflect a different expression--tranquil--rather than erotic. In Japan, Zen Buddhism is an established sect, where meditated ink paintings are evident, demonstrating tranquility. Through observational and comparison studies of the artworks by Zen artists in the Muromachi Period and print artists in the Edo Period, important characteristics and figures in Zen art are noticed in *ukiyo-e* prints. Asymmetry in Hokusai's most prominent print presents the inspiration he received from earlier Zen monk painters such as Shūbun and Sesshū. The one-sided angle of the landscapes offers a diagonal perspective, which rejects the traditional practice of symmetry, projecting a non-hierarchical order. The austerity shown in the Fisherman and the Woodcutter reflects the most iconic painting of Shakyamuni, supported by the details of the hair, overlapping clothing, and stoic expression on face. Tranquility is another characteristic that continues in *ukiyo-e* landscapes. Hiroshige's Eight View is the mood and manifestation of the lyrical, tranquil journey, referencing the iconic scene work of Xiao Xiang Rivers. Besides the Zen characteristics, the presence of Buddhist deities and Zen masters are still seen in prints, however with a new twist in which the figures were in the parodic scenes. Intriguing, it is the moment where eroticism and Zen become *one* in a print. Last, it is the “looking up” shown by the Fishman that connects to many characters in Zen paintings studied previously in paper, how this gesture of the pupils suggests or explains enlightenment.

Overall, this never-studied-before topic between *ukiyo-e* and Zen Buddhist paintings opens a fresh perspective. One might think that they are a ‘clash’ of history, culture, concept, and practice in which

connection, inspirations, and parallelism cannot be established and understood. However, the research opens a new pathway for the two topics to interfere, testing every limit from techniques to themes and stylization of the artworks. By all means, the study does not suggest that *ukiyo-e* prints are Zen arts, just like the studied paintings by Zen artists, nor do they evoke the Zen spirit.

Illustrations



Fig. 1 Liang Kai (c.1180–1230). *The Sixth Patriarch Huineng Chopping Bamboo*. 13th Century.



Fig. 2 Shūbun (active ca.1423-1460). *The Ten Oxherding Pictures Jūgūyū*. 15th century, Muromachi period.



Fig. 2.1 *Seeing the Ox*

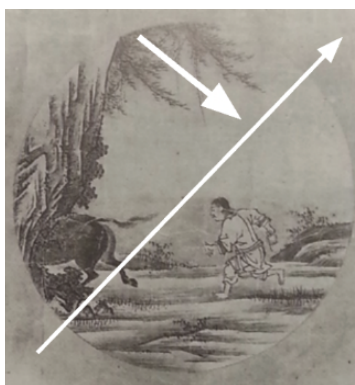


Fig. 2.1.1 *Seeing the Ox (Detailed)*



Fig.2.2 *Catching the Ox*

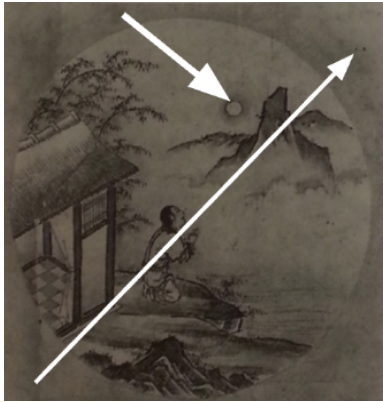


Fig. 2.3 *The Ox Forgotten, the Man Remains*



Fig. 2.4 *Entering the City with Hands Hanging Down*



Fig. 3 Katsushika HOKUSAI 北斎 (1760–1849). *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, from *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* 神奈川沖浪凱 (1826–31)

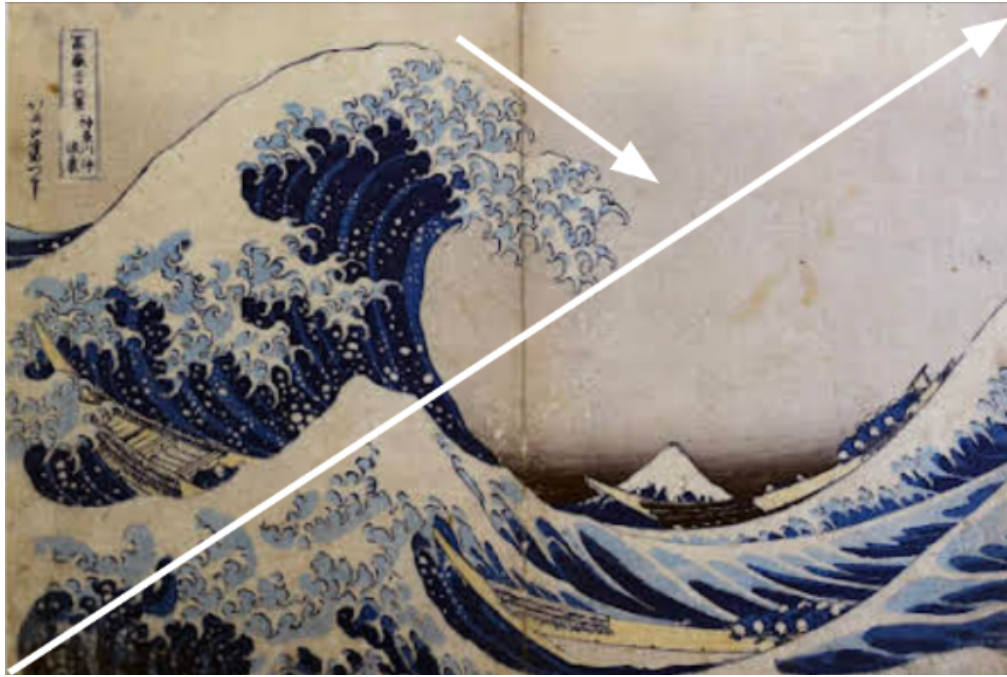


Fig. 3.1 *The Great Wave off Kanagawa (Detailed)*

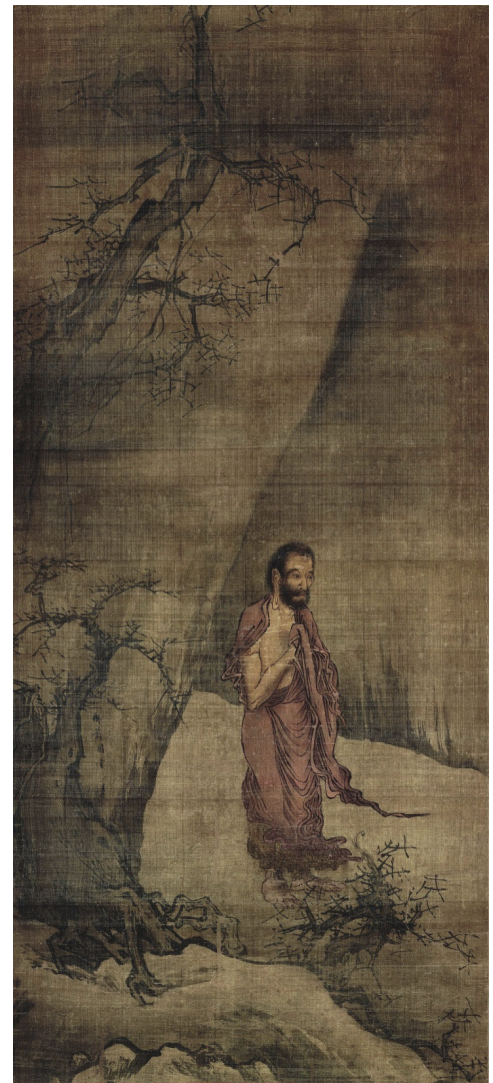


Fig. 4 Liang Kai (late 12th to early 13th century)
Shakyamuni Emerging from the Mountains.
 13th century, Southern Song period.



Fig. 5 Katsushika HOKUSAI
北斎 (1760–1849).
Fisherman.
19th century, Edo Period.



Fig. 5 Katsushika HOKUSAI
北斎 (1760–1849).
Woodcutter.
19th century, Edo Period.



Fig. 7 Sesshū (1420–1506.) *Landscape*.
1495, Muromachi period.



Fig.8 Sesshū (1420–1506.)
*Landscape of Four
Seasons: Fall*. 1486,
Muromachi period.

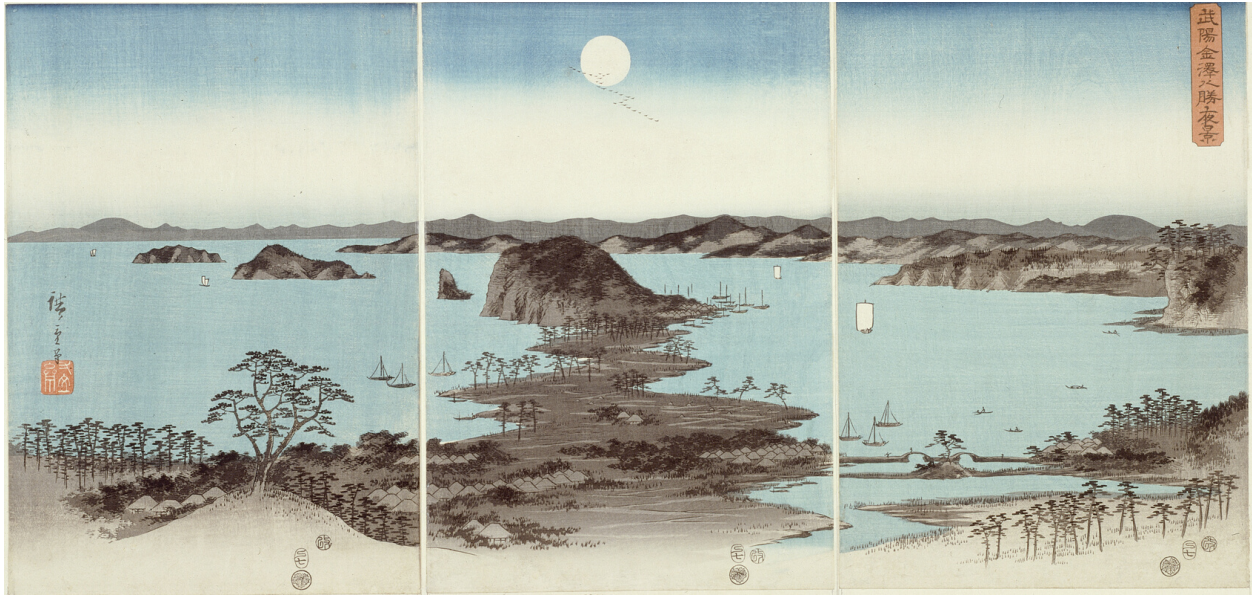


Fig. 9 Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川 広重 (1797-1858) *Eight Scenic Views of Kanazawa under Full Moon*, 1857, Edo Period



Fig. 10 Muqi (early to late 13th century). *Eight Scenes of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers*. 13th century, Southern Song dynasty.

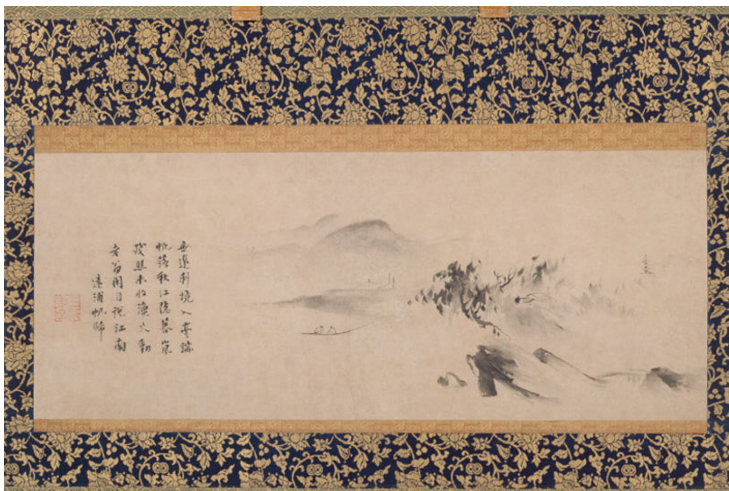


Fig. 11 Yujian (c. 1180s-1260s). *Returning Sails from Distant Shore* in *The Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang*. 13th century, Southern Song dynasty.

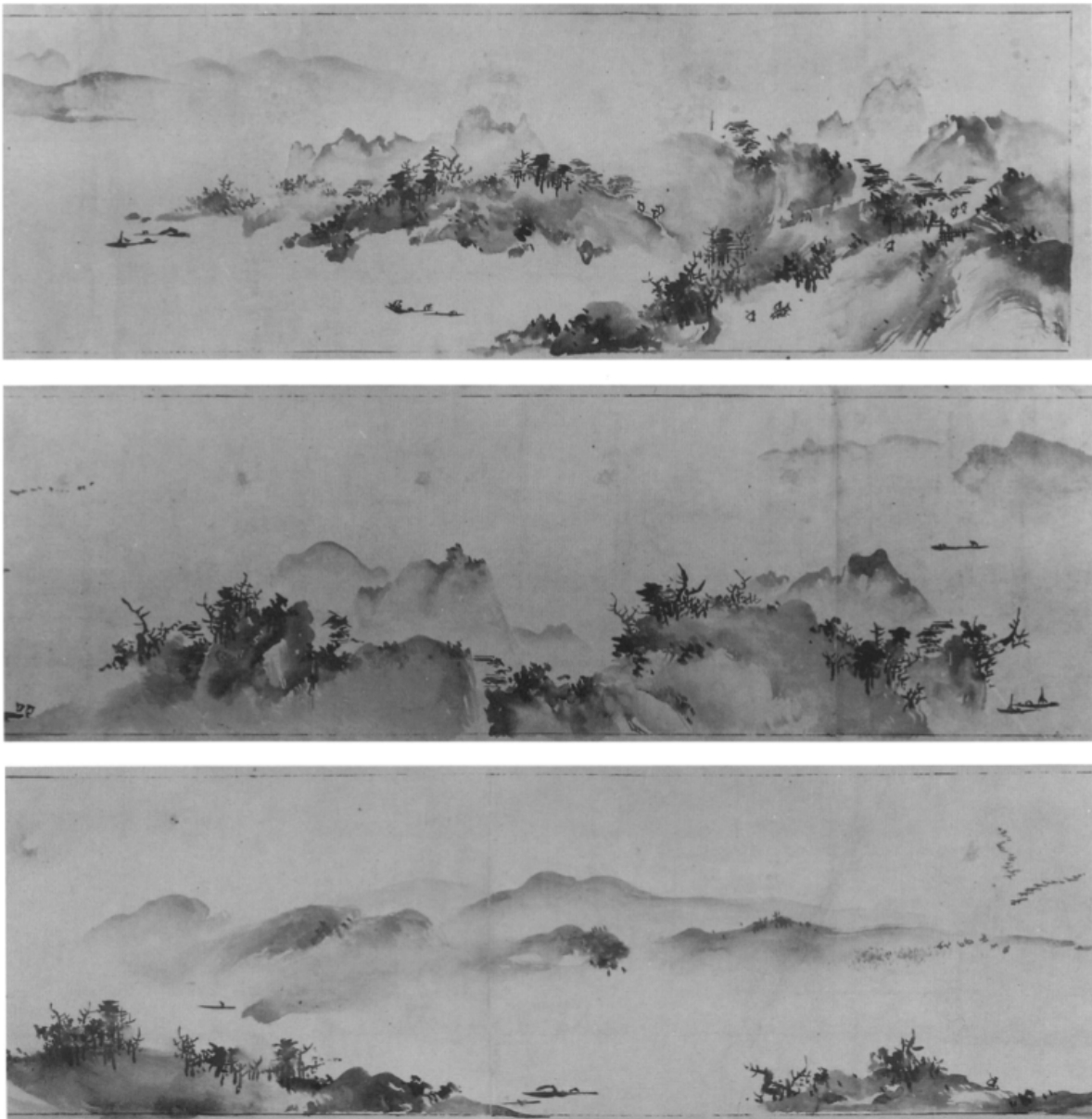


Fig. 12 Sesson Shūkei (ca.1504-ca.1589). *Eight Scenes of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers*. 16th century. Muromachi Period



Fig13. Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764).
Inside the Bag, the Pleasure Quarters. 1710s,
Edo Period



Fig. 14 Shūbun (active ca.1423-1460). *Entering the City with Hands Hanging Down In The Ten Oxherding Pictures Jūgūyū*.
15th century, Muromachi period.



Fig. 15 "Tsukioka YOSHITOSHI 芳年 (1839-92)

Kannon, from *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* 観音. (1888)



Fig. 16 Tsukioka YOSHITOSHI 芳年 (1839–92)
Daruma, from *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* 月百姿 達磨 (1886)



Fig. 17 Anonymous (13th century). *Bodhidharma Meditating Facing Cliff while Huike Awaiting*.
Late 13th century, Southern Song dynasty

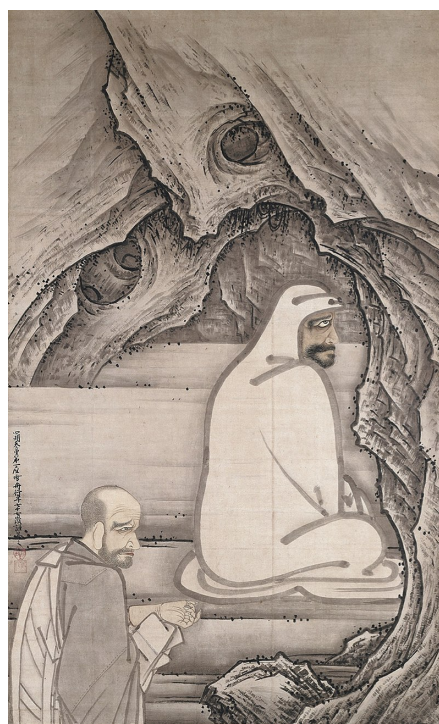


Fig. 18 Sesshū (1420–1506.). *Hui-k'o (Huike) Offering His Arm to Bodhidharma*,
Muromachi Period



Fig. 19 Shūbun (active ca.1423-1460). *Kanzan and Jittoku*. 15th century, Muromachi Period



Fig. 20 Kaō (?-1345). *Kanzan*. 14th century, Muromachi Period.

Bibliography

- Carpenter, John, et al. *Designed for Pleasure*, edited by Donald Jenkins, Asia Society and Japanese Art Society of America, 2008.
- Clark, Timothy, et al. *The Dawn of the Floating World*, edited by Timothy Clark, Harry N. Abrams, 2001.
- Avery, Anne Louise. *Flowers of the Floating World: Geisha and Courtesans in Japanese Prints and Photographs, 1772–1926*, Sanders of Oxford & Mayfield Press: Oxford, 2006.
- Tinios, Ellis. *Japanese Prints: Ukiyo-e in Edo, 1700–1900*, Lund Humphries, 2010.
- Brinker, Helmut, et al. *ZEN Masters of Meditation in Images and Writings*, Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1996.
- Department of Asian Art. “Art of the Pleasure Quarters and the Ukiyo-e Style.” In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/plea/hd_plea.htm (October 2004).
- Needham, Joseph, and Tsien Tsuen-Hsueh. *Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology; Part 1, Paper and Printing*. Third printing, e-book, vol. 5, Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Hisamatsu, Shin’ichi, and Gishin Tokiwa. “Zen Aesthetics.” *Zen and the Fine Arts*, Kodansha International, 1982.
- John Michael Dudley, Véronique Sarano, Frédéric Dias. *On Hokusai’s great wave off Kanagawa: Localization, linearity and a rogue wave in sub-antarctic waters*. Notes & Records of the Royal Society, 2013, 67, pp.159-164. 10.1098/rsnr.2012.0066.hal-00908667.

- Neuer, Roni, and Susugu Yoshida. *Ukiyo-E: 250 Years of Japanese Art*, Gallery Books, 1978.
- Daniel Atkison and Leslie Stewart. *From the Floating World: Part II: Japanese Relief Prints*, catalogue of an exhibition produced by California State University, Chico.
- Munsterberg, Hugo. *Zen & Oriental Art*, Tuttle Publishing, 1993.
- Guth, Christine. *Art of Edo Japan: The Artist and the City 1615–1868*, Illustrated, Yale University Press, 2010.
- Cahill, James. *The Lyric Journey: Poetic Painting in China and Japan (The Edwin O. Reischauer Lectures)*. Illustrated, Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Harris, Frederick. *Ukiyo-e: The Art of the Japanese Print*, Hardcover with Jacket, EPub ed.. Tuttle Publishing, 2011.
- Neave, Dorinda, et al. *Asian Art*. 1st ed., Pearson, 2014.
- Timothy T. Clark, “Mitate-e: Some Thoughts, and a Summary of Recent Writings,” *Impressions* 19, 1997.
- Ikumi Kaminishi, "Skillful Means (upāya) of the Courtesan as Bodhisattva Fugen: Maruyama Ōkyo's Lady Eguchi," in Chiem and Blanchard ed. *Gender, Continuity, and the Shaping of Modernity in the Arts, 16th-20th Centuries* (Boston : Brill, 2017)