



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

San Diego Public Library

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New Wangenheim Room Exhibit Displays Japanese Woodblock Prints of Hiroshige

SAN DIEGO – A new exhibit, *Artist of Mist, Snow and Rain: Hiroshige and The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō* is now open at the Central Library Wangenheim Room. This free exhibit located at 820 E St. in downtown San Diego is open to the public from March 2 through June 2, 2009. The Wangenheim Room is open Monday-Saturday, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Andō Hiroshige (1797-1858) was a Japanese painter and printmaker. He was one of the greatest and most prolific masters of the full-color landscape print and one of the last great *ukiyo-e* ('scenes of the floating world') print designers. Hiroshige was born under the name of Andō Tokutaro. He was the son of a fire warden, a position he later inherited from his father. In 1811 he started as an apprentice with the Ukiyo-e master Utagawa Toyohiro. It was on this occasion that he received the name Utagawa Hiroshige. Hiroshige later took his master's name, becoming Ichiyūsai Hiroshige.

Of all the many sets of prints produced by Hiroshige, whose total output is estimated at more than 5, 000, the finest is without question the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido*, published in 1833 and reprinted innumerable times ever since. This highway, which linked Edo (modern-day Tokyo) with Kyoto, was the main road of Japan and was used by officials, businessmen, pilgrims, and sightseers who enjoyed its magnificent scenery, for it was flanked by mountains on the north and the sea on the south. Hiroshige himself had traveled it as a member of an official party of the shogunate which had gone to Kyoto in 1832 to present the Emperor with a white horse. During this trip Hiroshige made many sketches, and upon his return he started the designs representing the wayside stations along the road. To the 53 stations he added a print showing the starting point of the journey at the Nihonbashi in Edo and another for the final destination at the Sanjo Ohashi in Kyoto.

In 1965, the Wangenheim Room acquired 30 Hiroshige Japanese woodblock prints of which 23 of the prints are the Hoeido Tokaido edition (published from 1833 to 1834) from one of Hiroshige's most famous series, of the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido*. The exhibit features these 23 prints.

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The Wangenheim Room, which holds collections of rare books and other valuable items, is on the third floor of the Central Library, located at 820 E St. in downtown San Diego. The room is open to the public from Monday through Saturday, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. For more information about the exhibit, please call Heidi Wigler at 619-236-5807 or visit our website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/locations/wangenheim.shtml>

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