

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library
Division of Conservation Paper Collection
Condition Report and Treatment Proposal

DATE: February 19, 2024
ACCESSION #: N/A
OWNER: Winterthur Museum Study Collection
ARTIST/AUTHOR: Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)
TITLE/DESCRIPTION: Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97 from One Hundred Famous Views of Edo
DATE: 1856
MEDIUM: Woodblock print
SUPPORT: Laid Japanese paper
SIZE (H x W): **Overall:** 36.3 cm x 23 cm.
Plate: 34.3cm. x 22.1 cm.
Image: 34.3cm. x 22.1 cm.
IDENTIFYING MARKS: Graphite inscription, recto, top left corner



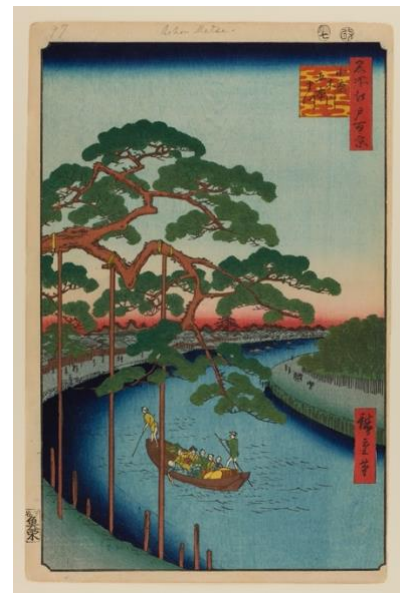
Five Pines, Recto, Normal light

Examination and Report Prepared by
Brittany Murray, Second Year WUDPAC Fellow

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) is a master of the ukiyo-e woodblock printing tradition. Hiroshige created 8,000 prints inspired by scenes of daily life and the landscape of Edo-period Japan. His distinct style, *bokashi*, or varied gradient printing, is exemplified in his most famous series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (1856 – 1858) (Art Institute of Chicago, n.d.). *Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97*, from *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, depicts a large pine tree hanging over the Onagi Canal in Gohonmatsu. Originally there were five pine trees planted on the Kuki estate of the daimyo of Ayabe, but four had died, leaving behind the large, majestic pine (Brooklyn Museum).

Other prints of *Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97*, can be found at the Brooklyn Museum, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College, and the Worcester Museum. The Winterthur print was donated by Murray Lebwohl, a paper conservator, artists, and book collector in 2002.



Utagawa Hiroshige. *Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97* from *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, woodblock print, 1856. Brooklyn Museum, New York Gift (30.1478.97)
<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/121711>

CONDITION OF OBJECT UPON RECEIPT

Support

Description

The support is a long fibered Japanese paper with laid and chain lines visible in transmitted light. Fiber inclusions are most visible on the verso of the print. The right side of the sheet has been cut as part of the print is lost.

Condition

The support is in stable condition. There is foxing and discoloration throughout, with a defined tideline on the bottom right corner of the print. Yellowing is concentrated along the right and bottom edge, as the print was likely in contact with acidic matboard. Losses along the top and bottom edge are likely due to pest activity. An 8-centimeter tear extends from the center of the right margin into the image, in addition to two small circular losses. Noticeable abrasion is visible on the verso due to the presence of rolled and twisted fibers. Pale paper residue is present across the verso, perhaps from a previous backing. Slight planar distortion is present, and there is a fine layer of surface grime.

Media

Description

A woodblock print, the wood grain from the block is visible in the top half of the image. Blue, black, brown, yellow, and red printing inks are present. The date and censor seal are printed in black ink on the top margin, followed by a graphite inscription.

Condition

The media is in stable condition, with significant bleed through visible on the verso of the print. The red and yellow printing inks have faded significantly.

TESTING AND ANALYSIS

Solubility Testing: The red, blue, yellow, brown, and black printing inks were tested for solubility in water, ethanol, and a 1:1 mixture of water and ethanol. The inks were tested at 5 second, 30 second, and 1 minute intervals and were stable in all the three solvents. Water readily beaded on the surface indicating a moderately absorbent, sized paper.

Longwave UV Radiation:

The print was viewed with a Model Q-22 Long Wave UV handheld light. The recto did not fluoresce, however, paper fibers from the previous backing on the verso fluoresced brightly, perhaps due to adhesive or an optical brightener.



Fluorescent fibers on verso of print

TREATMENT RATIONALE

Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97 from *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, is in the student study collection at the Winterthur Museum. The print is a second-year paper minor treatment. The goal of the project is to stabilize the print for future handling by reducing staining and mending tears and losses.

TREATMENT PROPOSAL

1. Take before and after treatment photographic documentation.
2. Surface clean the print with cosmetic sponges and a soft brush to reduce surface grime.
3. Wash the print using a controlled aqueous method to reduce staining and discoloration using pH adjusted water. Ethanol will likely be used to promote even wetting.
4. Mend tears with toned mulberry paper and a mixture of wheat starch paste and methyl cellulose to prevent further damage.
5. Fill losses with toned pulp fills to prevent further damage.
6. Consider humidification and flattening to reduce planar distortion.
7. Rehouse print in an archival folder of appropriate size.

HOUSING AND PREVENTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental conditions should fluctuate as little as possible to best preserve works on paper. Ideally, the temperature should be no higher than 70°F, and the relative humidity should be between 40% - 65% during the summer and 30% - 55% during the winter. The print should be housed in an archival folder and stored flat when not on display. If exhibited, the print should not be exposed to more than 50,000 lux of light per year. UV radiation is detrimental to light sensitive paper and fugitive pigments and should be limited if not completely removed from the exhibition space.

REFERENCES

Art Institute Chicago. n.d. "Utagawa Hiroshige". Accessed February 19, 2024.
<https://www.artic.edu/artists/34946/utagawa-hiroshige>

Brooklyn Museum. n.d. "Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97 from One Hundred Famous Views of Edo". Accessed February 19, 2024. <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/121711>

TREATMENT REPORT

1. The print was surface cleaned with a soft brush and cosmetic brushes to reduce surface grime.
2. Stains were first reduced on a suction table with sodium citrate, and then using a 0.5% sodium borohydride solution cleared with agarose gel on Tek Wipe.
3. Tears and losses were mended with medium weight dry-tear strips and wheat starch paste.
4. Toned pulp fills were applied as a slurry to the pest damage along the top and bottom edge.
5. The damp print was dried in a blotter stack under heavy weight overnight to flatten the print.
6. Dried fills were toned with Stabilo color pencils.
7. The top right corner of the print was filled using dried pulp and toned with Stabilo color pencils.
8. The print was rehoused in a hinged mat-board system.

Treated by: Brittany F. Murray

Date completed: April 22, 2024



Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97, Recto, Normal Light, Before Treatment, February 19, 2024



Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97, Verso, Normal Light, Before Treatment, February 19, 2024



Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97, Verso, Raking Light, Before Treatment, February 19, 2024



Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97, Recto, Normal Light, After Treatment, April 25, 2024



Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97, Verso, Normal Light, After Treatment, April 25, 2024



Five Pines, Onagi Canal, No. 97, Verso, Raking Light, After Treatment, April 25, 2024