

## Reading a Woodblock Print

On Japanese woodblock prints, there are blocks of writing which identify the print's title, series, artist, publisher, and other people involved in its production. These blocks are usually found in the same place, although their locations can vary. Japanese characters (kanji) are read from right to left, top to bottom.

Title of Print:  
"Yoshida on the Tokaido Road"

Title of Series:  
"Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji" Prints were often part of a series, which people would collect over time. Occasionally, a series would be continued with further editions of prints, depending on its popularity.

Artist's Signature:  
Hokusai



Publisher's Seal:  
The publisher was the most important person in the printing process. He decided on which designs to produce, hired the people for production, and marketed the prints. The artist would often incorporate the publisher's name in very clever ways in his design, as you see here.

The Japanese characters (kanji) for "Mount Fuji" are written as 富嶽  
Can you find them in the other prints from this series?

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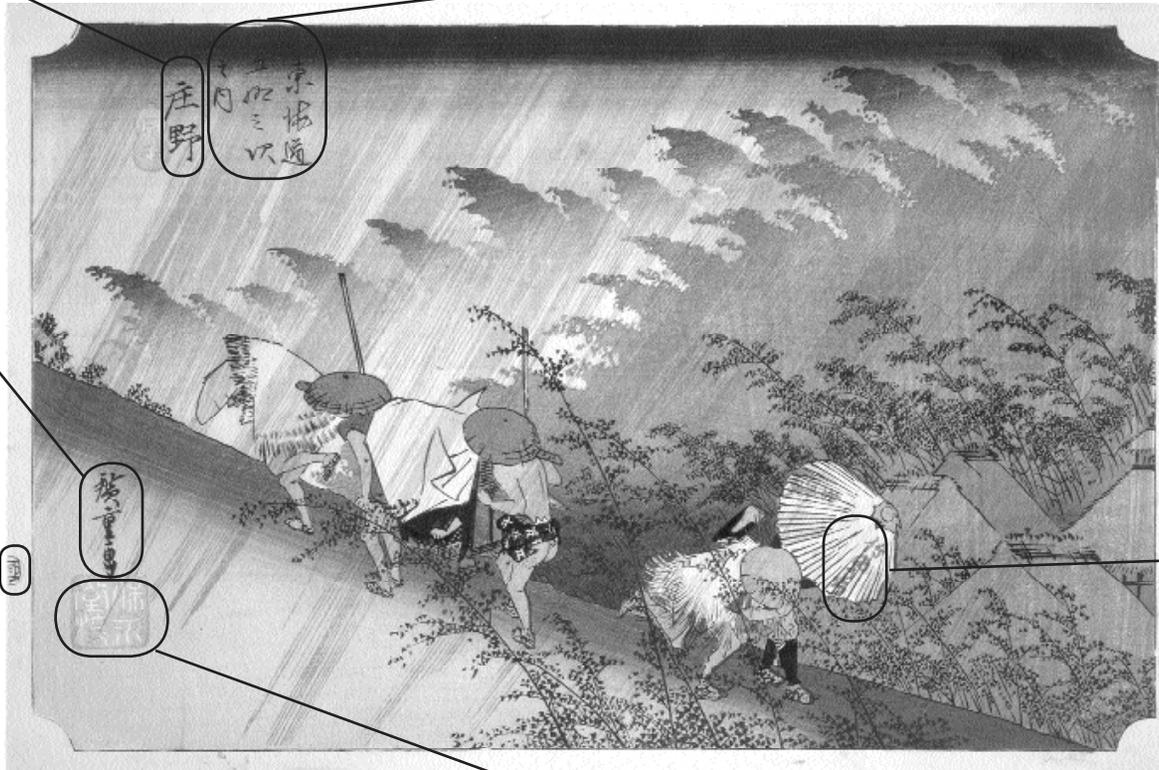
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Title of Print:  
"Driving Rain at  
Shono"

Title of Series:  
"Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido Road"  
Prints were often part of a series, which people would collect over time.

Artist's  
Signature:  
Hiroshige

Censor's Seal:  
After 1799,  
government  
censors had to  
approve each print  
before production,  
to ensure designs  
were not immoral  
or subversive. A  
censor's seal was  
usually round or oval.



Publisher's  
Surname

Publisher's Seal:  
The publisher was the most important person in the printing process. He decided on which designs to produce, hired the people for production, and marketed the prints. The artist would often incorporate the publisher's name in very clever ways in his design, as you see here.

The Japanese characters (kanji) for "Tokaido Road" 東海道  
Can you find these kanji on Hiroshige's other prints of the Tokaido Road?