

## Foreword

The Ujiie Ukiyo-e Collection was founded based on the collection of Ujiie Takeo, who acquired a number of *nikuhitsu ukiyo-e* (paintings of the floating world) during his life time. In collaboration with Kamakura city, the collection became an incorporated foundation on October 1, 1974, and it is now kept in the Kamakura Kokuhokan Museum. The collection was formally transferred to the public interest incorporated foundation on April 1, 2012.

The distinctive feature of this collection is that all the art works are *nikuhitsu ukiyo-e*. Ujiie Takeo considered *ukiyo-e* the crowning glory of people's art of Japan, and he was particularly interested in *nikuhitsu ukiyo-e* from early on, taking action to protect and pass down the works. He also propagated the idea that Ukiyo-e paintings are important cultural properties. *Nikuhitsu ukiyo-e*, unlike woodblock prints, allows the viewer to see the delicate brush work and the nuanced use of colors of each painting. Not just because of its beauty, painting is important as a reference material as it gives us insights into each artist's painting skill and artistic idiosyncrasies.

Years ago, enormous numbers of ukiyo-e masterpieces were flowing out of Japan. Ujiie in particular understood what a catastrophe it would be to lose the *nikuhitsu ukiyo-e* masterpieces, since the numbers of these paintings are very limited and unlike print, which can be reproduced, every *nikuhitsu ukiyo-e* is an original. Therefore he decided to actively collect and protect the paintings. Around same time, the masterpieces of our collection were exhibited, not just in Japanese museums, but also the museums of France, Germany and China. Recently, some pieces from our collection were exhibited at a Hokusai exhibition at the Freer Gallery of Art, and they were highly acclaimed.

This exhibition celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Ujiie Ukiyo-e Collection. Along with the main artist Katsushika Hokusai, around 60 artworks including the masterpieces of Hishikawa Moronobu, Kaigetsudō Ando, Miyagawa Chōshun, Tsukioka Settei, Kitagawa Utamaro, Katsukawa Shunshō, and Utagawa Hiroshige are all exhibited. Covering a wide time period, from the artistic beginnings of ukiyo-e to the end of the Edo period, a number of ukiyo-e painter's representative works are exhibited. We believe this exhibition is greatly significant in deepening an understanding of the evolution of ukiyo-e painting, which flourished during the Edo period.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone whose support and contributions have helped make this exhibition possible.

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Ujiie Hisashi  
Director  
Foundation Ujiie Ukiyo-e Collection