

Characters of 大 and 小 are keys to picture calendars in the Edo period?! Let's Decode Calendars by Hokusai and Others!

Exhibition held by The Sumida Hokusai Museum (Sumida City, Tokyo)

from December 18, 2024 to March 2, 2025

!! The Edo Calendars are so stylish and full of fun. !!



Until Japan adopted the solar Gregorian calendar in 1873, it used a lunar-solar calendar (commonly called "the old calendar") that was different from the calendar we use today. The months had 30 or 29 days (long or short months), and the number of days in each month changed each year. Since it was important, in everyday life, to know which months were long or short that year, small privately commissioned calendars, woodblock prints that concealed the designations of long or short months amidst their witty, humorous designs, were produced. Known as picture calendars (*egoyomi*) or long-shorts (*daishō*), these calendars were vastly popular in the Edo period. This exhibition presents the *daishō* in our collection, introducing one aspect of the flourishing Edo-period calendar culture. Please decipher where the long and short months are hidden and enjoy the clever ideas and techniques applied in what were, after all, quite small works.

◎The Name of Exhibition : Let's Decode Calendars by Hokusai and Others!

◎Term : Wednesday, December 18, 2024 – Sunday, March 2, 2025

1st term: December 18, 2024 – January 26, 2025

2nd term: January 28, 2025 – March 2, 2025

*Some exhibits will be changed during the period.

◎Closed : Mondays

* Open: Friday, January 3, Mondays, January 13 (holiday) and February, 24 (holiday)

Closed: December 29, 2024 - January 2, 2025 and Tuesdays, January 7, 14 and February 25

◎Organizers : Sumida City, The Sumida Hokusai Museum



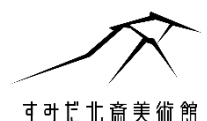
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The Sumida Hokusai Museum

Global Public Relations

TEL 03-6658-8991

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- ◎Venue : 3rd floor Exhibition Room in The Sumida Hokusai Museum
- ◎Hours : 9:30 am -5:30 pm (last entry 5:00 pm)
- ◎Admission: Adults ¥1,000, Students (high school and college) ¥700, 65 and over ¥700, Students (Junior high) ¥300, Disabled visitors ¥300, Children in primary school and younger Free
- ◎Website : <https://hokusai-museum.jp/EdocalendarEN/>
 - Visitors can also enter AURORA (Permanent Exhibition Room) and Permanent Exhibition Plus on the same day.
 - Identification card is necessary to get a discount ticket.
 - Admission for disabled visitor is also available for one accompanying person with a disabled person.
 - Please see the latest information about the starting date of ticket sales and online tickets and the way of purchase for same-day tickets and other discount tickets on our website.

Press Release of The Sumida Hokusai Museum Exhibition : Let's Decode Calendars by Hokusai and Others!

■ Key points of the Exhibition

- ◆Key point 1⇒ The *Daishō* were created by necessity! The calendar at that time changes every year, and the system was more complicated than that of today.
- ◆Key point 2⇒ Boom in the Edo period! People began to distribute the calendars to their clients and friends like new-year's cards today.
- ◆Key point 3⇒ Many "stylish" works were produced! People got to order more gorgeously designed calendars to professional painters.

■ Composition

- ◆ 【Section 1 To Enjoy the *Daishō*】
 - 1 The Edo Calendar
 - 2 Patterns Used in the *Daishō* Calendars
 - 3 *Daishō* Indicating the Months Without Numerals
- ◆ 【Section 2 Katsushika School *Daishō*】
- ◆ 【Section 3 The *Daishō* Challenge】

■ Highlights of Each Section

☾☼ 【 Section 1 To Enjoy the *Daishō*】 ☼☾

Until Japan adopted the solar Gregorian calendar in 1873, it used a lunar-solar calendar (commonly called "the old calendar"). Under the old calendar, which were the long months (with 30 days) and which the short months (29 days) changed every year. To help people keep those months sorted out, privately commissioned prints with images that indicated the long and short months were produced. Those prints are now called picture calendars (*egoyomi*) or *daishō* (large-small, i.e., longer and shorter months). The *daishō*, far from simply indicating the number of days in each month, were created with clever admixtures of humor. To enjoy those *daishō*, very unfamiliar to us today, first we need to introduce the Edo period calendrical system. Next, we will categorize these calendars by the way that which months were long or short was concealed, to display them in an easy-to-understand way.



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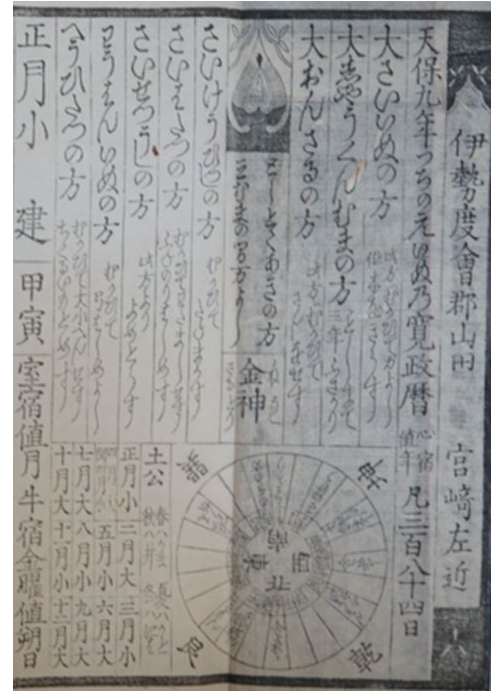
1 The Edo Calendar

Here we introduce the very different calendrical system used in the Edo period and the calendars based on it.



Ise Calendar, private collection (all terms)

This regional calendar was issued by the calendar master at the Ise Grand Shrine. The shrine's *oshi* priests distributed it along with amulets to supporters of the shrine throughout the country. It thus became the most typical calendar of the Edo period. The *oshi* were low-ranking priests who performed prayers for believers and helped those on pilgrimage to the shrine with lodgings and served as guides. This example begins with notes on the lucky and unlucky directions of that year and which months were longer or shorter. Starting with the first month, this calendar gives the zodiac sign for each day and information on the good or bad fortune associated with each direction that day.



2 Patterns Used in the *Daishō* Calendars

Distinct patterns were used to conceal the number of days in each month in the *daishō* calendars, which indicated the long and short months. Here we classify them into five types: A. *Daishō* with the names of the months used to draw the motifs; B. *Daishō* with the names of the months turned into texts; C. *Daishō* with images containing the names of the months; D. *Daishō* with the months in order; E. *Daishō* with the names of the months in texts. Knowing those five patterns, you will find it easy to decipher the *daishō* displayed in this exhibition.



Unknown, *Tsuno Daishi*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (all terms)

Decode!

Tsuno Daishi is drawn with the characters 正, 三, 五, 十, 八, 六 (1, 3, 5, 11, 8, 6). Those are the shorter months in 1786. (A. *Daishō* with the names of the months used to draw the motifs)

Tsuno Daishi ("the Honorable Horned Priest") is the early Heian period Tendai sect priest Ryōgen, who grew horns and looked like a demon. Legend has it that during a plague epidemic, Ryōgen grew those horns, producing a demon-like appearance, to drive out the disease and save the people. As a result, amulets with depictions of *Tsuno Daishi* are regarded as warding off disease and other disasters.



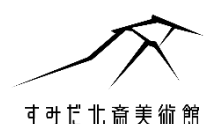
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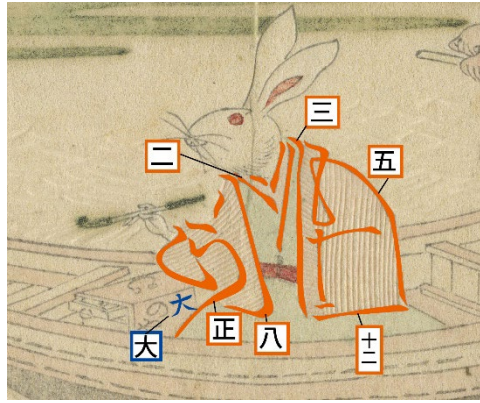
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Kubo Shunman, *Rabbit Passenger on a River Taxi*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (2nd term)



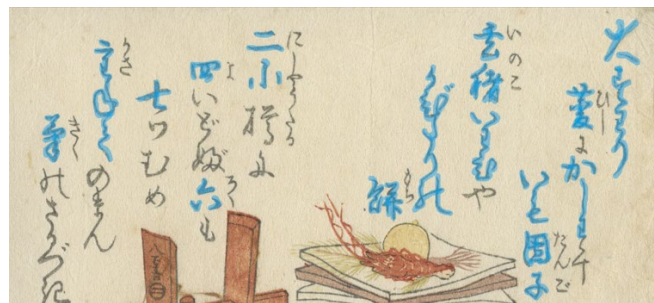
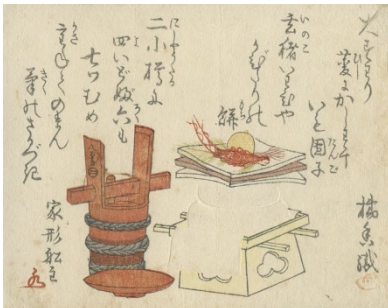
Decode !

Rabbit in the picture. "Usaki" suggesting Usagi, meaning a rabbit, in the *kyōka* poem. "大のや" in the tobacco tray. The kimono of the rabbit with "五、十二、三、二、八、十一、正". Among years of the rabbit, the months 1,2,3,5,8,11,12 were longer months in 1807, a fire-rabbit year. (A. *Daishō* with the names of the months used to draw the motifs)

Kubo Shuman is a student of Kitao Shigemasa and an *ukiyo-e* artist, known as a man of many talents who also worked on *kyōka* poem and *haiku*. The top of the *torii* gate can be seen beyond the bank in the upper left corner of the picture, which is Mimegri Shrine (Mukōjima, Sumida City) on the east bank of the Sumida River.

3 *Daishō* Indicating the Months Without Numerals

The five patterns for hiding the information about long and short months introduced thus far usually indicated which month was which using numbers, since, apart from the first month of the year (*shōgatsu*), months are named by number: month two, month three, and so on. Non-numerical approaches also exist, however, with special names for the months. The first month, for example, could also be called *mutsuki*. Annual events or other things clearly associated with certain months were also used in *daishō* to indicate the month: Girls' Day in the third month, Boys' Day in the fifth month, for example. Today, figuring out what scenes refer to what event in what month can be hard. Deciphering these *daishō* is often perplexing.



Unknown, *Kagami-mochi and Saké Barrel*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)

Decode !

The first of these *kyōka* verses uses the names of types of *mochi*, glutinous rice confections, served at specific holidays or events, to indicate the months. "Large." "seated," for "seated *mochi*," means *kagami mochi*, which signifies New Years. Lozenge (lozenge-shaped *mochi*) is offered at the *hina* doll display for Girls' Day (3rd month). *Kashiwa* (oak) implies *kashiwa mochi*, oak-leaf *mochi*, which signifies Boys' Day (5th month). *Imo dango* (potato dumpling) implies the "potato moon," the full moon on the fifteenth of the 8th month (8th month). *Gencho* is another name for *inoko mochi*, "day of the boar *mochi*," which is eaten when celebrating the day of the boar in the 10th month, under the old calendar (10th month). *Iwai* refers to *iwai mochi*, which may refer to *mochi* eaten in celebrating 7-5-3 in the 11th month. *Kabitari mochi* (dip in the river *mochi*) is prepared for the *kabitari* day of the water god festival, on the first day of the 12th month under the old calendar.

The second verse includes the *kanji* for 2, small, 4, 6, 7, and repeat (repeating 7, an intercalary 7th month), and chrysanthemum (symbolizing the annual holiday in the 9th month). A year with months 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, and 12 the longer months and 2,4, 6, 7, intercalary 7, and 9 the shorter months would be 1797. (E. *Daishō* with the names of the months in texts, with some not indicated by their numbers.)



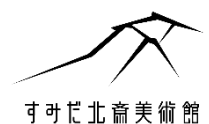
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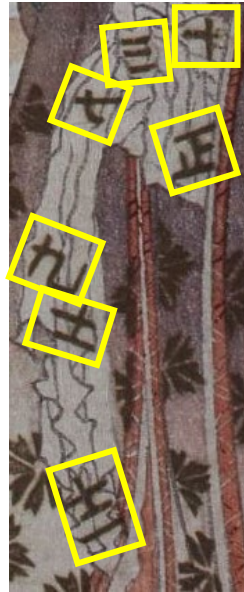


☀️🌕 【 Section 2 Katsushika School *Daishō* 】 🌕☀️

Early in the Meiwa era (1764-72), *daishō* became so popular that people held parties to exchange them. The person who came up with the idea for a humorous and witty *daishō* was probably not the artist who produced the design but the client who commissioned it. Ultimately, however, what sort of picture to use to express that concept was up to the artist, such as Katsushika Hokusai. During the ninety years of his life, Hokusai created most of his *daishō* between 1794 and 1804, in what is called his Sōri-style period. As you interpret these *daishō* by Hokusai and his students, please enjoy the ideas behind them.



Katsushika Hokusai, *Snowy Morning*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (all terms) *Different print of the same title is displayed in 1st term and 2nd term.

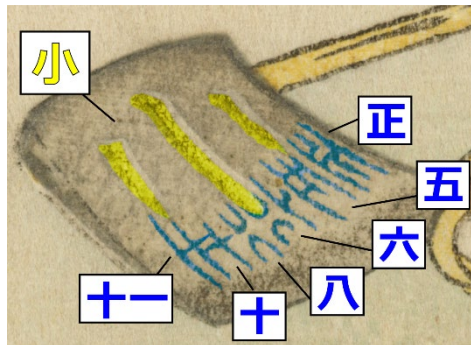


Decode !

The *kyōka* poem contains the word "rooster," one of the zodiac animals, and a rooster sits above the gate. The young woman's *obi* sash has the names of the months 十, 正, 三, 七, 九, 十一, 十二 (10, 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12) on it. A year of the rooster with the longer months 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12 was 1813, a water-rooster year. (C. *Daishō* with images containing the names of the months)



Katsushika Hokusai, *Kintarō Feeding a Japanese Bush Warbler*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)



Decode !

The ax contains the *kanji* for "small" and, at the tip of the blade, 正, 五, 六, 八, 十, and 十一 (the months 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11). In the year 1799, those were the short months. (C. *Daishō* with images containing the names of the months)



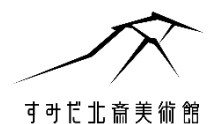
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☾☽ ● 【Section 3 The *Daishō* Challenge】 ●☽☾

Now you've encountered all sorts of *daishō*. Don't you wonder how to decipher them by finding where the number of days in a month are hidden? *Daishō* were provided in a specific year so that people could learn how many days were in each of its months. For us, figuring out the number of days in each month in a *daishō* also lets us determine the year in which it was created. Please take up the challenge of deciphering the names of the months hidden in the *daishō* and solving the problem of the year for which it was created.



Unknown, *Monkey Mask and Eye Mask*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (1st term)

Challenge!

This is the *daishō* of the fifth year of Kōka (1848) and the year of earth-monkey (*Tsuchinoe-saru*) in Chinese Zodiac. Therefore, the mask of monkey is depicted.
Which one is the year of 1848 among the following? Could you decode it from this work?

- ① Longer months 1,3,4,6,8,12. Shorter months 2,5,7,9,10,11.
- ② Longer months 2,5,7,9,10,12. Shorter months 1,3,4,6,8,11.
- ③ Longer months 2,5,7,9,10,11. Shorter months 1,3,4,6,8,12.

You can see the answer on display in the Exhibition Room during the 1st term.

■ The Exhibition Leaflet

Original leaflet filled with highlights of the exhibition will be sold from December 18, 2024.

- Full Color/A4 size/8 pages in all
 - Price : ¥ 350 (tax included)
 - Release Date : December 18, 2024
- Available at The Sumida Hokusai Museum Shop on the first floor.

■ Original AR Photo Spot by The Sumida Hokusai Museum

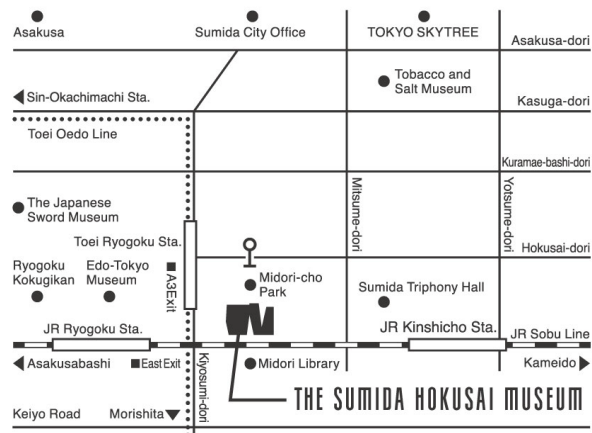
At the Photo Spot, you can enjoy AR picture related to one of works of Hokusai popping up when you scan the QR code with your smartphone.

Before or after viewing the exhibition, why not come over here to take a commemorative photo?

- Term: from December 18, 2024 to March 2, 2025 *Except closed days
- Location: Foyer on the third floor of The Sumida Hokusai Museum
- Fee: free (Admission Ticket or Annual Pass is required.)
 - *The data charges will be the visitor's responsibility while taking the AR photos.
 - *"QR code" is a registered trademark of DENSO WAVE INCORPORATED.

【The Sumida Hokusai Museum】

The Sumida Hokusai Museum was opened in 2016 in Sumida City, Tokyo where Ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) was born and where he spent most of his life. The museum has provided information about Hokusai and his artworks through the periodical exhibitions and educational events since then.



< Information >

- Open : 9:30am - 5:30pm (Last admission 5:00pm)
Closed : Mondays (The following day if it is a national holiday), New Year holidays (December 29 - January 2)
Address : 2-7-2 Kamezawa, Sumida-ku, Tokyo, 130-0014
Tel : 03-6658-8936 (9:30 am - 5:30 pm *except on closed days)
Website : <https://hokusai-museum.jp/>
Instagram : https://www.instagram.com/hokusai_museum/



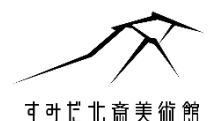
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The Exhibition "Let's Decode Calendars by Hokusai and Others!" Request Form to Use Images

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- The Exhibition "Let's Decode Calendars by Hokusai and Others!" flyer front page

- The Exhibition "Let's Decode Calendars by Hokusai and Others!" square visual (1080px×1080px)

- Unknown, *Tsuno Daishi*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (all terms)

- Kubo Shunman, *Rabbit Passenger on a River Taxi*, The Sumida Hokusai Museum (2nd term)

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