

Golden Dreams : Exploring Willow Bridge and Waterwheel

The genre “Willow Bridge and Waterwheel” became popular in Japanese painting around the early seventeenth century as suggested in the appearance of a pair of screens with this motif in the *Hōkoku Festival Screens* by Kanō Naizen (1570–1616), belonging to Hōkoku Shrine in Kyoto. The viewers of the time seem to have enjoyed the decorative use of gold and silver and the design of the large, diagonally expanding golden bridge.

Today, over twenty screen paintings depicting the motif of a bridge and a willow tree or trees with a waterwheel and gabions exist. The Kosetsu Museum’s pair of screens *Willow Bridge and Waterwheel* represents one of the most outstanding examples among these works. This pair of screens, each impressed with the red square “Tōhaku” seal, is also significant as it indicates the close connection between the bold composition of the screens and the Tōhaku’s Hasegawa school.

The motifs of a bridge with willows, waterwheel, gabions, and firewood boats captured in Willow Bridge and Waterwheel paintings signify Uji in southern Kyoto, a famous place recounted in classical Japanese poetry since ancient times. The motif is also layered with imagery from Japanese literary sources, such as the *Legend of the Bridge Maiden* (*Hashihime densetsu*) and the ten Uji chapters from the *Tale of Genji*, in which Uji appears as a stage. The golden bridge can also symbolize the path to the Pure Land and other Buddhist realms. Additionally, this motif has evolved into various designs in decorative artworks.

Featuring the Kosetsu Museum’s *Willow Bridge and Waterwheel*, this exhibition presents screen paintings and other associated works capturing this genre. Through these masterful works, we hope you will enjoy this golden dreamlike world.

In closing, we extend our deep appreciation to those who have loaned us their invaluable works for this exhibition. We also thank all those who have helped in making this exhibition possible.

Admission

Adults

¥ 1,100 (¥ 900*)

High school and university students

¥ 700 (¥ 500*)

Elementary and junior high school students

¥ 400 (¥ 200*)

*For groups of 20 or more



Album of Fan Paintings : Uji

Muromachi period, 15th-16th century

Nara National Museum

【10/26~11/21】



Willow Bridge and Waterwheel By Hasegawa Tōhaku (1530-1610)

Momoyama period, 16th-17th century

Kosetsu Museum of Art

