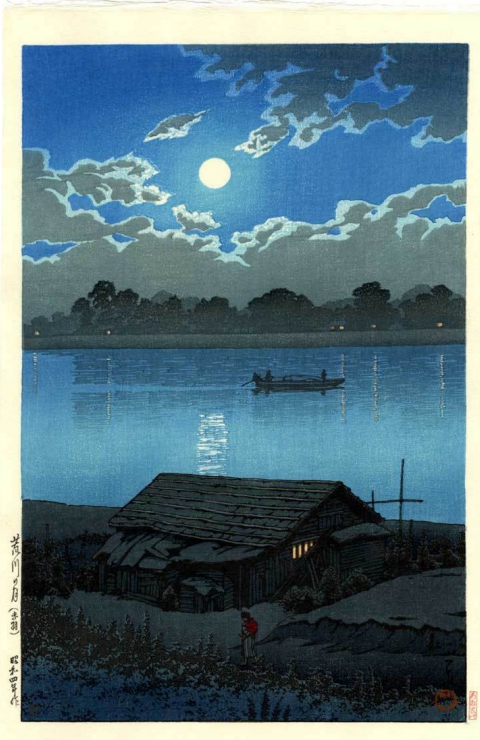




Famous as the moon



This story is based on a famous haiku by a Japanese zen priest:

*the thief
left it
the moon at my window
—Ryokan*

nusubito ni / torinokosareshi / mado no tsuki

A zen master, named Ryokan, lived a simple life in a little cabin near a mountain. One evening, when he left his house for his evening walk, a thief came into his hut. He looked everywhere to find something precious, but only discovered a simple mattress to sleep on.

Then Ryokan returned and found the thief. “You may have come a long way to visit me,” he told him. “You should not return empty-handed. Please take my clothes as a gift.”

The thief stood and stared at Ryokan. Who was this crazy man? Giving the only thing he owned? He took the clothes and left.

Ryokan sat down, naked, on his mattress. Through his window he saw the big, white, luminous full moon. He sat in its light and said: “Poor fellow, I wish I could give him this beautiful moon.”

Questions to Reflect on the story

- *What was the most beautiful part of the story for you?*
- *What would you like to ask Ryokan?*
- *Which things are, like the moon, beautiful but do not cost anything? Make a list of 10.*
- *Do you sometimes feel like Ryokan?*
- *Do you sometimes feel like the thief?*
- *Can you give the moon to someone?*