



Inamura-Ga-Saki Moon at Daybreak

Date

September 1886

Primary Maker

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi

Medium

woodblock print; ink, color, embossing, and burnishing on paper

Description

Loyal to the Emperor, Nitta Yoshisada (1301–38) offered his sword to the sea gods at the cape of Inamura-ga-saki, hoping they would lower the tides and grant his army safe passage to attack the opposing government's stronghold at Kamakura. The dragonflies on his robes symbolize quick striking ability and signal his impending success. They also make reference to the Japanese islands, whose shape resembles a dragonfly's body. The blackened area on the horizon caused by the oxidation of red lead pigments is suggestive of smoke-filled air and foreshadows the bloody battle to come at dawn.