



## A Little Something from Santa

I spoke last week about having a bath at the Post Office, but this past few weeks, I've had to go to the Post Office almost every day for a much more prosaic activity - sending out packages!

Most of my printmaking activities are aimed towards the design and production of my subscription prints, and as these take anywhere up to three months each to produce, I don't usually have to go to the Post Office all that frequently. But during the final two months of every year - beginning in late October actually - I have to make the trip far more often, as it is during this season that my Gift Prints become popular.

I have always made a special print to use as a personal 'new year card' present for friends and customers every year, but that was never for sale. A few years back though, I decided to select some of those woodblocks, which were still in perfect condition, and use them to make prints that would make excellent Xmas gifts - each one presented in a small nicely wrapped folder, ready for presentation.

Since then, these little prints have grown steadily in popularity among my customers, and many people come back every year to pick up a few of them for their gift-giving. Every year I add a new one to the list of designs available, so there is always something interesting for them to find. And I know that they are being enjoyed by the recipients, because some of these people themselves come the next year, to choose some for their own gift-giving!

I do though, have somewhat mixed feelings about this part of my business. I myself am not a Christian, and thus have no real reason to be involved with Christmas at all. It could be argued that I am being a hypocrite by advertising my prints for this gift-giving season; isn't my own motivation for doing so simply to get money? Xmas as a *holiday* though, has certainly spread beyond its religious connections, and as I have written before in these little stories when describing my own childhood, even non-believers deserve a joyous mid-winter festival too!

But there does seem to be no doubt that the Christmas gift-giving custom has become out of control for many people, with many of the gifts being passed back and forth being done so out of a feeling of obligation, rather than honest well-wishes. It is certainly possible that some of my prints are being selected by people who are thinking, "Perhaps this will do for Aunt Mabel; you *know* she never wears any of the clothes that we get for her ..." Well, if so, then it can't be helped; all I can hope is that Auntie Mabel will perhaps discover a new love for Japanese prints as a result of receiving the gift. Or perhaps many years from now, when that print is discovered in the back of a desk drawer, it may find its way into the hands of somebody who really does appreciate it.

Such things are completely out of my control of course; I simply make things that I myself find beautiful and interesting, and - happily for me - enough people out there share my tastes, and choose to make the prints part of their life. Although Christmas is no longer much a part of my own personal life, when I think back to the times when I was a child - being thrilled every year by the presents I received, and when I was a parent - having fun *giving* such enjoyment to my own children, I am happy that people are choosing my own products to be part of such pleasurable activity.

And these little prints do indeed bring pleasure. I wish I could hide a microphone in each package, so that I would be able to hear all the comments on Xmas morning ... "Oh, look at this - it's *beautiful!*" Music to my ears!

**David Bull**  
**Seseragi Studio**  
**Nagabuchi 8-4-5 Ome City**  
**Tokyo Japan 198-0052**  
**<http://astoryaweek.com>**