

Eight Views of Omi: Wild Geese Returning Home at Katata

Katata, on the western shore of Lake Biwa, is famous for the Ukimido Hall. This Buddhist structure is a wooden pavilion built on stilts on the lake, giving it the appearance of floating above the water. Generations of monks and visitors have prayed there for safe travel on the lake.

Most depictions of this scene include fishermen, and the Hoeido edition of Utagawa Hiroshige's (1797–1858) woodblock print has them sailing toward the shore at sunset. The Ukimido is visible, but the rest of the land, seen from the water, is largely in shadow, while the descending geese form a collection of small black shapes on the orange sky.

The Ukimido was rebuilt in 1937 after severe typhoon damage, but it has the same peaceful atmosphere as the original. Local fishermen still head out on the lake in search of a big catch, and flocks of wild geese can still sometimes be spotted in the evening sky. This image inspired a traditional sweet called *rakugan* that is still made locally.