

EMA: DISPLAY PRACTICES OF EDO PERIOD VOTIVE PAINTINGS

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Abstract

Large-scale *ema* (votive paintings) were commonly found at Edo period religious sites, where sacred and secular activities mingled. Ema halls functioned as art galleries, providing almost unrestricted access to paintings for any member of society. While the genre is most frequently defined through the initial act of donation, the role of *ema* in Edo period society is rooted in their public display.

This dissertation examines the diversity of Edo period *ema* and contexts for their display within late Edo period society. Chapter 1 discusses the development of *ema* as paintings of horses in early Japanese history, including depictions in medieval handscrolls, and their role as examples of common religious practice in Japan, despite being usually described as Shinto religious objects. Chapter 2 focuses on the display and dissemination of *ema* during the Edo period. I examine Edo period literature about *ema* and how *ema* were understood by writers of the period. I also address the rise of *ema* halls and the increasing importance of *ema* displays within the early modern culture of public entertainment.

Chapters 3 and 4 use two popular Buddhist temples in the Edo region as case studies for *ema* donation and display. Chapter 3 surveys *ema* at Sensôji temple in Asakusa, Tokyo to highlight both the continued importance of horses as subjects of *ema* and also the expansive diversity of subjects beyond horses. Stories told during the period about the oldest *ema* at Sensôji (early seventeenth-century) reveal beliefs about the efficacy of *ema*. Other *ema* display connections to the public amusements found in the Sensôji district. Chapter 4 explores the associations between *ema* at Naritasan Shinshôji in Chiba prefecture and the Ichikawa Danjûrô family of Kabuki actors. These actors and their fans used *ema* both to express religious devotion and to promote themselves in more

secular ways. Naritasan was closely tied to Edo, especially through *degaichô* (public viewings of the temple's main statue) in the Fukagawa district of Edo, and many ema donations can be linked to the *degaichô*.

While not denying the importance of ema as religious objects, I seek to show how their importance as objects of display and advertisement complemented their spiritual functions. They were part of a spiritual and social exchange that donors performed for both the gods and the viewing public.

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Introduction

On a cool January day in Tokyo, I took the Chiyoda 千代田 subway line across the Kanda 神田 river to Yushima 湯島. Around the corner from the station is the famous Yushima shrine, which is celebrated for its plum blossoms in early spring. In January, however, most visitors to Yushima shrine were coming to offer prayers for their success in school entrance examinations. Following a centuries-old tradition, they purchased wooden plaques from the shrine, wrote their prayers on the backs, and hung them at designated spots throughout the shrine grounds in the hope that their prayers would come to fruition. The shrine was crowded with these plaques, called *ema* 絵馬, and new rows of ema quickly covered the older ones (fig. 1-1). Later, all of these ema would be burned and the open space filled with new ema the next year.

Broadly defined, ema are paintings on wooden plaques offered in a votive context at temples and shrines throughout Japan. The name means “painted horse” because the original subject matter of these paintings was horses. Often, they have a peaked top edge, which recalls the architecture of stables (fig. 1-2). In the Edo 江戸 and Meiji 明治 periods (1615–1912), there were two main types of ema: small and large. Small ema are usually defined as those less than thirty centimeters (11.8 inches) in their longest dimension. The distinction between these two types of ema was more significant than just size. Large ema were generally commissioned by donors from professional artists and hung in special halls within religious complexes. Small ema were painted by individual donors or by craftspeople who mass-produced ema for sale to shrine and temple visitors. In Japanese scholarship, the large ema are called *ôema* 大絵馬, while the small ema are called *koema* 小絵馬. The unmodified term “ema” refers to either.

In material and display, large scale ema differ from most other forms of Japanese painting. Unlike hanging scrolls or screens which are painted on silk and paper, ema are painted directly onto board. The boards are then surrounded with heavy lacquer frames that are usually black. The frames typically have metalwork fitted at each corner and the midpoint of the frames. Other traditional forms of Japanese painting are smaller and lighter, which enables them to be regularly rotated through periods of display and storage. Even large screens fold to a smaller size for storage, which ema do not. Small scale ema are also painted on board and often have a small frame, which may or may not be painted. Both small and large ema are decorated with a wide variety of subject matter. Some are specifically devotional in nature, such as the bodhisattva Kannon 観音 (Sk. Avalokitesvara) or the fox god Inari 稲荷, while others are less explicitly religious, such as sumo wrestlers or Kabuki actors.

Japanese paintings are commonly seen in a close viewing, either in a tokunoma alcove or near a folding screen. Small ema can also be viewed in this manner, but large ema are displayed at a greater distance from the viewer. Most commonly they are mounted above the viewers head, forcing viewers to tilt their heads back or to view the ema from across the width of a building. Unlike other traditional paintings that were regularly subjected to seasonal rotations, large scale ema were not removed from their display spaces. Religious institutions did not actively curate their collection of ema; the displays grew organically through unorganized additions initiated by the donor.

This dissertation focuses upon a specific period of ema's history and a specific type of ema. In the following pages, I will explore the practices surrounding large-scale professionally produced ema of the late Edo period (1615–1868). This study centers upon

ema from the Kanto region, but the practice appeared nationally. I will show how display of these paintings created some of the first public art galleries in Japan and provided advertising opportunities for donors and artists. Ema encapsulate many of the defining characteristics of art in the Edo period. They are religious objects as well as art objects and exemplify the mingling of the sacred and secular realms in early modern Japan. Ema provided donors, artists, and religious institutions with an opportunity to advertise piety, miracles, and their own skills.

Methods and Approach

This dissertation presents an overview of the issues and themes surrounding ema as a genre. While any individual ema benefits from close visual analysis and art historical study, I also strive to present a framework for addressing the larger issues of the genre. In their original contexts, ema were never viewed in isolation but were always bound in with their surroundings. Because of my concern with reading these images within a larger cultural context, my approach can be considered social art history.

Social art history as a method of study has perhaps been made most famous by T. J. Clark, with his *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the Second French Republic 1848–1851* (1973), and Michael Baxandall, who wrote *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (1972).¹ In Asian art history, Craig Clunas used the approach in his work *Superfluous Things:*

¹ T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the Second French Republic 1848–1851* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1973); and Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China (1991).² Clunas's subtitle reveals the alliance between social art history and material culture.

Social art history acknowledges the importance of aesthetic and iconographic concerns in the study of art but seeks to look beyond purely visual concerns about the object and to place works of art within a social and historical context. In chapter 1 of *Image of the People*, Clark expresses his interest in the artist as a social person, working within and reacting to the specific conditions of his time and place. He wrote, "The making of a work of art is one historical process among other acts, events, and structures—it is a series of actions in but also on history."³ Baxandall's work displays an interest in both the effect of social conditions on painting style and the corresponding ability to read social conditions through the style of painting.⁴ My approach to ema is similarly historical. While I am concerned with the visual nature of the ema, I am also interested in their place within a larger visual and social context.

Ema as objects occupy an unusual position at the intersection of art history and material culture studies. Jules David Prown, in his seminal article "Style as Evidence," wrote, "objects reflect cultural value in their style and that these values can therefore be apprehended through stylistic analysis."⁵ This is an argument for applying stylistic analysis to objects of material culture, which are often not considered works of fine art.

² Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

³ Clark, *Image of the People*, 13. Clark directly relates social art history to the study of the art a few sentences earlier: "The social history of art sets out to discover the general nature of the structures that [the artist] encounters willy-nilly; but it also wants to locate the specific conditions of one such meeting."

⁴ "This book began by emphasizing that the forms and styles of painting respond to social circumstance; much of the book has been given up to noting bits of social practice or convention that may sharpen our perception of the pictures. It is symmetrical and proper to end the book by reversing the equation—to suggest that the forms and styles of painting may sharpen our perception of the society." Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 151.

⁵ Jules David Prown, "Style as Evidence," *Winterthur Portfolio* 15, no. 5 (1980): 209–10.

Ema can be both fine art and folk art. In general, small ema have been studied by folk scholars, while large ema have been considered “fine art.” The Japanese folk studies scholar Nishigai Kenji 西海賢二 stated:

From the beginning of the Meiji period, the folk art movement started by Yanagita introduced folk art loving people in every area to regional small ema. Looking at ema from an artistic standpoint, we can see them as things to be valued as artistic material. Large ema in particular can be seen from the perspective of art historians, in which the subject matter and artists are approached as art historical material.⁶

My approach borrows from material culture methods in my desire to place ema within a larger cultural framework that looks beyond the frame of the painting to its context of display and the viewers’ interaction with it.

I have also been influenced by Igor Kopytoff’s notion of a “cultural biography” for objects.⁷ For Kopytoff, an object can undergo social transformation and status changes (like a person). Creating the biography of typical or extraordinary transformations of an object can explicate information about how the object is treated and used by members of its society. An important aspect of a cultural biography is the commodity status of the object. Objects used in any exchange are commodities. They rarely cease entirely to have exchange value but can become “singularized” through the cultural attributes given to them. A singular object has a very limited scope in which it can be exchanged. Some objects gain a status of “terminal commoditization” in which they cannot be exchanged for anything else.⁸ Kopytoff used the examples of medicine prepared by a medicine man for a specific patient and indulgences in the medieval

⁶ Nishigai Kenji 西海賢二, *Ema ni miru minshū no inori to katachi* 絵馬に見る民衆の祈りとかたち [Looking at ema: People's prayers and their form] (Tokyo: Hihyosha, 1999): 9.

⁷ Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization As Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁸ Kopytoff, "Cultural Biography of Things," 75.

Roman Catholic Church.⁹ Exploring how the exchange value and commodity status of an ema change over its lifetime can help us understand its cultural position.

Leaving aside the commercial aspect of ema production, as votive objects they are part of a spiritual exchange. In his work on Edo period religious practices, Robert Bellah describes one of the main actions as a return on blessings (*hōon* 報恩).¹⁰ Ema can be interpreted as a form of *hōon* when they are offered in thanksgiving. Once ema are used as *hōon*, they acquire a state of terminal commoditization, as they are no longer available for commodity exchange. This is particularly clear in the case of small ema, which are burned rather than sold or otherwise saved. While some large ema have been offered on the art market, they are usually held in temple and shrine collections. Even when they are exhibited in museum galleries, they are often on loan from the holding religious institution.¹¹ Ema continue to be intricately bound to their religious origins.

In the following chapters, I will examine ema from a mainly secular perspective. It is my position that while they begin as votive objects, the greater period of their biography is as objects of display. As the Edo period progressed, ema painters and donors began to create ema that were specifically intended for display.

Chapter 1 explores the background and development of ema as religious and artistic objects, as well as the significance of their use in both Shinto and Buddhist contexts. While two distinct religions, Shintism and Buddhism as practiced in Japan share

⁹ Kopytoff, "Cultural Biography of Things," 75.

¹⁰ Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 70. While the concept of *hōon* is rooted in Buddhist practice, Bellah discussed aspects common across various forms of Japanese religion.

¹¹ For example, Kano Sanraku's pair donated to Kaizuten shrine (see fig. 1-4 and discussion below) is still owned by the shrine but is regularly exhibited at the Kyoto National Museum. Other objects exhibited in Japanese museums are similarly owned by religious institutions.

common features. Ema originated in Shinto practices related to horses, but expanded beyond the strict confines of their initial context. This chapter includes a historiography that begins with images of ema in medieval handscrolls and continues to modern scholarly work.

Chapter 2 addresses the context of ema in the early modern period. The combination of increased size and more frequent donations spurred temples and shrines to create additional spaces for display. The resulting ema halls (*emadô* 絵馬堂) created a museum-like space within the religious complex where ema were on view to all visitors. Like ukiyo-e prints of the same period, ema (sometimes by the same artists) became a publicly accessible art form.

During the Edo period, information about ema circulated through books. Notable ema and ema halls were mentioned in travel books and other texts, including fictional references by Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693). Examining these sources helps us understand how early modern Japanese viewed ema. Several of these texts, including the two most famous, *Itsukushima ema kagami* (Model of ema at Itsukushima island) and *Hengaku kihan* (Canon of plaques), will be discussed.

Chapter 3 is a study of the ema collection at Sensôji temple in Asakusa. Sensôji temple and the surrounding area have long been a significant site of pilgrimage and a popular amusement district. The oldest surviving ema at Sensôji is thought to have been painted prior to the great Meireki 明暦 fire of 1657. The unsigned painting, whose composition was attributed to various Kanô artists by Edo period authors, frequently appears in texts of the period discussing Sensôji and ema. Stories circulated about the magical powers of this ema and its rescue from the great fire. Other ema from Sensôji are

well represented in Saitô Gesshin's 1862 *Bue hengaku shû*. This chapter will discuss the content of these paintings, such as historical narratives and bird-and-flower paintings, and the relationship of subject matter to donation. These seemingly secular images displayed within temples and shrines show the wide diversity of subject matter that became acceptable for ema donations.

Chapter 4 moves north from Edo to Naritasan Shinshôji 成田山新勝寺 in Chiba prefecture. Located a day's travel from Edo, Naritasan was a popular pilgrimage site that capitalized on its connection to the famous Ichikawa Danjûrô 市川團十郎 family of Kabuki actors. Several ema at Naritasan depict members of the Ichikawa family. These ema also resemble signboards hung on theaters to advertise Kabuki plays. This chapter explores the ema at Naritasan as a visual representation of the connections between the temple and Edo.

Ema were a vibrant part of the social and visual landscape of Edo period Japan. Artists of many types, from local town artists to the Kanô school patronized by the shogunate, produced ema for donation and display. Religious devotion and public amusements, which were widespread in Edo period Japan, meet in ema halls.

Chapter 1 Background and Development

Ema are so prevalent in the religious landscape of Japan that even foreigners regularly donate them while visiting shrines and temples. Most foreigners, and even Japanese, are not fully cognizant of ema's long cultural history. To many modern visitors at temples and shrines, ema represent one of several types of objects that serve as amulets or good luck charms.

The standard narrative for the development of ema claims that they arose from donations of live horses at shrines in ancient Japan. Horses were associated with the gods because they were vehicles of rapid transport. The chronicle of Japan's early history, *Shoku Nihon gi* 続日本紀, records the donation of two red horses at Ise shrine 伊勢神宮 and a dappled horse each at shrines dedicated to the gods Wakasabiko 若狭彦 and Hachiman 八幡 in 770.¹ A modern version of the practice can be seen at the Tōshōgū 東照宮 shrine in Nikko 日光.² Not all worshipers were able to donate live horses, so the custom of donating wooden or clay models of horses began. According to this traditional history, ema developed after the models as an even simpler donation. This legendary origin story is repeated throughout Edo period scholarship and into the twentieth century, but dates are never attached to the stages of development.

The earliest textual reference to ema appears in the Heian 平安 period (794–1185) compilation *Honchō monzui* 本朝文粹 (Written essence of our county), describing three

¹ Iwai Hiromi 岩井宏實, *Ema* 絵馬, *Mono to ningen no bunkashi* 12 (Tokyo: Hōsei University Press, 1974), 6–7.

² A white horse is kept in a stable on the shrine grounds. The famous sculpture of three monkeys (Hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil) decorates this stable. Monkeys are kept near stables or used to decorate them because monkeys were believed to keep horses calm. Monkeys also appear as grooms in ema images.

colored paper ema donated at Kitano 北野 shrine.³ Until the twentieth century, the earliest visual evidence for ema was in a handscroll from the late twelfth century. The handscroll, *Nenjû gyô emaki* 年中行絵巻, portrays an ema of a horse hanging on a building (fig. 1-3).⁴ The oldest surviving ema were from the fifteenth century. These relatively late dates, combined with evidence of live horse donations recorded in the *Shoku nihon gi*, suggest that painted ema began sometime during the Heian period. However, beginning in the early 1970s, archeological evidence revealed ema produced during the Asuka 飛鳥 period (552–710).⁵ Early ema were extremely small, less than 10 centimeters in either dimension. Their subject matter was a single horse. The discovery of these early ema undermined the traditional narrative of a lineal development from live horse donations and suggests that ema donation and live horse donation could have occurred simultaneously.

³ Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡. *Honchô monsui* 本朝文粹 [Written essence of our country]. Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai 新日本古典文学大系 27, ed. Ôsone Shôsuke 大曾根章介, Kinbara Tadashi 金原理, and Goto Akio 後藤昭雄 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 347.

⁴ *Nenjû gyôji emaki* 年中行事絵巻 [Picture scroll of yearly activity], ed. Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美, vol. 8, *Nihon no emaki* 日本の絵巻 (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1987), 60–61. See further discussion of this handscroll below.

⁵ Iwai Hiromi, "Inori no kinenbutsu: Ema" 祈りの記念物—絵馬 [Commemorations of prayer – Ema], in *Yôkai to ema to shichifukujin* 妖怪と絵馬と七福神, Play Books Intelligence (Tokyo: Seishun Shuppansha, 2004), 92. A mokkan wooden document depicting a red horse and dated 649 was excavated from the Naniwa Nagara Toyosaki Palace 難波長柄豊崎宮 site in Chûô 中央 district, Osaka. Another ema from roughly the same period was discovered at the Saragun jôri 讃良群条理 site in Neyagawa 寝屋川 City, Osaka. These are the two oldest excavated ema. The first ema to be discovered via excavation were at the Iba 伊場 archaeological site in Hamamatsu 浜松 city, Shizuoka 静岡 prefecture, in December 1972. Iwai Hiromi, "Iba iseki shutsudo ema wo megutte" 伊場遺跡出土絵をもめぐって [On ema excavated from the Iba site], *Fuzoku* 風俗 11, no. 2 (1973), and Sakamoto Tarô 坂本太郎, "Iba iseki zakkô" 伊場遺跡雑考 [Research on relics from Iba], *Iba iseki dai 6・7 ji hakkutsu chôsa gaihô* 伊場遺跡第6・7次発掘調査概報 6/7 (1975). They do not appear to have been donated at a formal shrine, but perhaps the area was considered sacred. Both Iwai and Sakamoto propose that the ema may not have been proper votive offerings but were talismans. Also see Joan Piggott, "Mokkan: Wooden Documents from the Nara Period," *Monumenta Nipponica* 45, no. 4 (1990), for a discussion of ema found with mokkan at a Fujiwara site. Seki Kazuhiko 関和彦, "Kodai no ema to kami no michi" 古代の絵馬と神の道 [Ancient ema and the way of the gods], *Kikan kokôgaku*, no. 87 (2004), lists 45 ema found at Nara and Heian period archaeological sites.

Today, ema can depict a wide variety of subject matter, but until the fifteenth century, there is no evidence for subject matter other than horses. As few ema survive from before this time, the evidence for horses as the exclusive subject matter for ema comes from archeologically evacuated ema, ema illustrated in medieval handscrolls, and textual references. The turning point in the development of ema is often said to be the fifteenth century, when ema became larger and subjects other than horses became common.⁶ In many ways, this expansion changed ema so fundamentally that later ema could be considered a different genre from ancient and medieval ema. Ema produced after the shift are substantially larger than those produced earlier and recorded in medieval handscrolls. Even over the course of the sixteenth century, there was a noticeable increase in the size of ema. A representative comparison can be made between a pair of ema painted by Kanô Sanraku 狩野山楽 and donated to Kaizu Tenjin 海津天神 shrine in Shiga 滋賀 prefecture in 1625 and an ema by Kanô Kyûen 狩野休円 (1622–1698) donated to Gokokuji 護国寺 temple in Tokyo in 1697 (figs 1-4 and 1-2). All three depict the traditional subject matter of horses, with compositions similar to those of many ema by Kanô school artists. Sanraku's pair each measure 25.2 by 29.5 in. (64.7 by 75 cm), while Kyûen's painting is 46.4 by 66.1 in. (118 by 168 cm). The value of large ema as objects of display became more prominent than it had been for small ema.

⁶ Iwai repeats this periodization in many of his essays. For example, see Iwai Hiromi, "Ema tenbyô" 絵馬点描 [Outline of ema], in *Ema hishi* 絵馬秘史, ed. Iwai Hiromi (Tokyo: NHK Books, 1979a), 24–33. He lists the major changes of the mid-Muromachi period as a widespread expansion of ema into Buddhist temples, the expansion of subject matters (including some Buddhist subjects), and the size of ema becoming larger. Kawada also discusses the growth and diversification of ema subject matter in the later fifteenth century. Kawada Tadashi 河田貞, *Ema* 絵馬, vol. 92, *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 (Tokyo: Shibundô, 1974), 40–47.

Some modern scholars, such as Kobayashi Hōnan 小林保男, who wrote in the 1980s, think that the development of large-scale ema in the Edo period owes more to the *hengaku* 扁額 tradition than to the ema tradition.⁷ Initially used in China, *hengaku* were plaques upon which the name of a religious institution or building was written and that were then hung within that building.⁸ The term “hengaku” is sometimes used interchangeably with “ema,” such as in the title of the Edo period text *Hengaku kihan* 扁額軌範.⁹ The hanging style of *hengaku*, which were suspended within the rafters of a building, resembles the mode of hanging ema that began in the fifteenth century. Some ema from the Edo period contain only text rather than images, and these have a close affinity with *hengaku*. The distinctions between ema and *hengaku* as they have evolved in Japan are not firmly established. Some modern catalogs of ema from exhibitions or specific collections consider plaques with calligraphy or other text to be ema, while other catalogs classify such objects in a separate category as *hengaku*.¹⁰ Thus, while the majority of basic discussions of ema offer a simple explanation of their development from live horse donations, the reality of that development is more complicated. Factors such as *hengaku* must have affected the way in which the genre became what we know today.

⁷ Kobayashi Hōnan 小林保男, “Itabashi no ema to hengaku” 板橋の絵馬と扁額 [Ema and hengaku in Itabashi], in *Itabashi no ema to hengaku* いたばしの絵馬と扁額, ed. Itabashiku Kyōiku Iinkai 板橋区教育委員会, *Bunka shirīzu* 文化シリーズ (Tokyo: Itabashiku kyōiku iinkai, 1986), 56–58 and passim.

⁸ The term *gaku* 額 when used alone can refer to something, usually a painting or calligraphy, hung for display or to a frame. Like ema, *hengaku* are usually surrounded by thick frames.

⁹ An alternate title for this book is *Miyako ema kagami* 都絵馬鑑 [Model of ema in the capital]. See the discussion of this text in chapter 2.

¹⁰ See, for example, Sensōji Ema Hengaku Chōsadan 浅草寺絵馬扁額調査団, ed., *Sensōji ema hengaku chōsa hōkoku* 浅草寺絵馬扁額調査報告 [Research report on ema and hengaku at Sensōji] (Tokyo: Tōkyōtō Kyōiku Chōshakai Kyōikubu Bunkaka, 1990). The second section is a survey of both ema and hengaku at Sensōji (2–10). The catalog includes a section devoted to calligraphic subject matter. These may be considered *hengaku* rather than ema.

Ema as religious objects

Although the origin of ema is strongly associated with Shinto practice, they appear at temples as much as at shrines. Nonetheless, despite documentary evidence from the medieval period showing ema at temples, Edo period writers regularly reference the origin of ema in Shinto traditions. Because ema were incorporated into both Shinto and Buddhist practices, I use the language of Ian Reader and George Tanabe, Jr., to discuss ema's religious positioning in Japan. Reader and Tanabe write of the "common religion" in Japan, which they define as practices that cross strict religious divisions.¹¹ This is related to the *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 belief which established a connection between Shinto and Buddhist deities, thus allowing the two religions to coexist without direct competition.¹² Furthermore, the modern division between Shinto and Buddhism emerged in the Meiji period, not when ema practices developed. The widespread presence of ema at temples, shrines, and other sacred sites, coupled with the lack of a doctrinal basis for the practice, shows that despite a probable Shinto origin, they are part of the common religion of Japan. Without denying their religious roots and context, I propose that ema are foremost an expression of Japanese common religion and ultimately Japanese popular culture, not Shinto holy objects.

¹¹ See Ian Reader and George J. Tanabe, Jr., *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).

¹² In the introduction to their edited volume of essays about *honji suijaku*, Mark Teeuwan and Fabio Rambelli discuss four stages of combinatory practices that coexisted at various times of Japanese history. The stages are (1) Buddhist deities treated as kami with a foreign origin; (2) Buddhist rituals offered for kami at "shrine temples" built near shrines; (3) kami, especially Hachiman, as protectors of (Buddhist sites at "temple shrines" built near temples; (4) kami as manifestations of Buddhist deities. See Mark Teeuwan and Fabio Rambelli, "Introduction: Combinatory Religion and the *Honji Suijaku* Paradigm in Pre-modern Japan," in *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 7–21.

To explain this position, it is necessary to address the fallacy of insisting upon a hard separation between Buddhism and Shinto during the Edo period. This subject extends well beyond the scope of my dissertation, but I will briefly address the main issues. Buddhism and Shinto are often described colloquially as being in opposition to each other yet coexist comfortably in modern Japanese life. The standard saying is that Japanese are born Shinto and die Buddhist.¹³ Shinto is the indigenous practice of belief in spirits of the natural world. Sacred sites in Shinto relate to spirits, called *kami* 神, who are believed to dwell there.¹⁴ Shinto became formalized in opposition to Buddhism, which entered Japan from Korea in the latter half of the sixth century. Buddhism is based upon the teachings of the Indian prince Siddhartha Gautama (ca. 563–483 B.C.). By convention, Shinto religious sites (*jinja* 神社) are translated into English as “shrines,” and Buddhist sites (*tera* 寺) are called “temples.” These translations bear no specific relationship to other uses of the terms in English. Through the concept of *honji suijaku*, discussed above, the two religions have been able to coexist and interweave in Japanese culture.¹⁵ Because of the widespread awareness of this doctrine, religious sites in the Edo period did not have to be concretely Shinto or Buddhist. In the Meiji period, with the introduction of State Shinto, ties between Buddhist and Shinto sites were severed and many Buddhist

¹³ Japanese babies are commonly presented to the gods at shrines, and funerals generally follow Buddhist rituals.

¹⁴ This form of Shinto should not be confused with the so-called State Shinto that arose in the late nineteenth century.

¹⁵ See Fabio Rambelli, “*Honji suijaku* at Work: Religion, Economics, and Ideology in Pre-modern Japan,” in *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, ed. Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

sites were closed.¹⁶ The duality can still be seen at religious sites today, where most large temple complexes include a shrine.

In addition to Shinto and Buddhism, there are two other religious or philosophical outlooks prevalent in Japanese history. The first, Confucianism, is difficult to call an actual religion, but it did present a moral philosophy for living that resembled religious teachings. Learned Confucianism, like learned Buddhism, involved intensive study and devotion. Confucian “shrines” were constructed. The most well known today is arguably the Yushima shrine founded by the fifth shogun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 徳川綱吉 (1646–1709).¹⁷ The other significant religious outlook was *onmyō* 陰陽, or Yin-Yang. Like Buddhism and Confucianism, it originated in China before entering Japan.

In the past, as now, participating in rituals based in one of these four “worldviews” did not prohibit participation in others. In fact, there were intentional exchanges between Shinto and Buddhism. Institutions known as *miyadera* 宮寺 (literally, “shrine temples”) were Buddhist temples dedicated to Shinto deities. They were staffed by Buddhist priests, but the Imperial Court regarded many as Shinto shrines for ritual purposes. From these examples, we can see that, broadly speaking, differences between religions in Japan have historically been fluid, not sectarian as they are in the West. Being Buddhist does not mean one cannot also be Shinto.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the Meiji period separation of Buddhism and Shintoism, see Martin Collcutt, “Buddhism: The Threat of Eradication,” in *Japan in Transition, from Tokugawa to Meiji*, ed. Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rozman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). For a study of how one site negotiated this change, see Sarah Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573–1912* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹⁷ This is not the same institution as the Shinto shrine discussed at the beginning of the introduction.

In the late Momoyama 桃山 and early Edo periods, Buddhism received state support as part of the effort to suppress Christianity, which was seen as a threat.¹⁸ In the early sixteenth century, as part of Tokugawa Iemitsu's 徳川家光 (1604–1651) new regulations designed to strengthen the shogunate's power, all Japanese were required to register with a temple. Those who did not were suspected of being Christians and were punished. However, membership in a temple did not preclude participation in Shinto observances. The syncretic nature of religion in the Edo period makes it anachronistic to refer to most practices at that time as exclusively Shinto or Buddhist.

The easy intermixing of religions was briefly halted in the early Meiji period. The new central government began a program of separating Buddhist and Shinto observances, which was an extension of anti-Buddhist sentiments in some quarters during the Edo period.¹⁹ In practice, this led to the elimination of Buddhism and Buddhist temples in some locations. Sarah Thal chronicled this process at Konpira 金毘羅 on Shikoku 四国 island and showed how the site chose to be Shinto by hiding some of its Buddhist aspects.²⁰ The rise of Shinto in this period is often called State Shinto because of its emphasis upon the emperor as the spiritual head of the country. The term also helps highlight the difference between imperial rituals and folk Shinto practices. The best example of State Shinto today is Yasukuni 靖国 shrine in Tokyo, where participants in World War II, including several war criminals, are enshrined. By 1877, the imperial

¹⁸ Militant Buddhism was also a threat to the government, as can be seen by Ota Nobunaga's 1571 destruction of the temple at Mount Hie. For more on the relationship between the shogunate and organized religion, see Peter Nosco, "Keeping the Faith: Bakuhan Policy towards Religions in Seventeenth-Century Japan," in *Religion in Japan: Arrows to Heaven and Earth*, ed. P.F. McKornicki and I.J. McMullen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁹ For an overview, see Collcutt, "Buddhism."

²⁰ Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods*.

government agencies directing the separation of Buddhism and Shinto (which, as a practical matter, promoted Shinto) were closed and the anti-Buddhism period ended.

In their book *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan*, Ian Reader and George Tanabe explore another side of the mixing of religions in Japan.²¹ They see in all Japanese religions aspects of what they call a “common religion.” To them, Japanese religious practitioners are not concerned with doctrinal specifics but rather are interested in what benefits religious devotion can bring to them. Belief in the efficacy of a place is more important in these contexts than commitment to a specific deity from either the Shinto or the Buddhist pantheon.

Reader and Tanabe argue that worldly benefits are the primary attraction of religious devotion. Ema easily fit into this model. Small ema in particular are used to make requests, but large ema are also offered with the desire of securing a beneficial outcome in this world. Furthermore, the bodhisattva Kannon is associated with worldly blessings, and the depiction of worshippers praying to Kannon is a common subject, particularly in nineteenth-century small ema.

Against this background of folk religious practice, large ema of the Edo period emerged as paintings with aesthetic value as well. As I will argue in subsequent chapters, the value of ema as objects of display rivaled their value as religious objects, yet information about them as display objects has survived to the present day, while knowledge about the religious feelings and rituals surrounding them has not. Ema concretely illustrate the mingling of the sacred and the secular at Edo period religious sites.

²¹ Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*.

Historiography

The first visual records of ema appear in handscrolls of the late Heian and Kamakura 鎌倉 (1185–1333) periods. These early ema were small drawings of horses, likely executed on paper. At this date, the distinction between small and large ema had not arisen. Information about the production and donation of ema like those seen in these scrolls is not available. In some cases, however, they were probably created specifically for use in the rites at which they are depicted.

The earliest extant visual record is in the *Nenjû gyôji emaki*, which is dated to the late Heian period, between 1156 and 1181 (fig. 1-3).²² This scroll depicts annual events in the Japanese imperial capital of Kyoto throughout the year. It was originally commissioned by Retired Emperor Goshirakawa 後白河院 (1127–1192) from Tokiwa Mitsunaga 常盤光長 (fl. ca. 1173); the most complete version of the scroll today is a seventeenth-century copy by Sumiyoshi Gukei 住吉具愛 commissioned by Emperor Gomizunô 後水尾 (1596–1680).²³ In the scroll a woman is shown dancing at the Imamiya 今宮 shrine festival in the fifth month while others watch, and several small ema depicting horses hang in a nearby shrine building.

A century later, in 1296, similar ema appear in the Tôji 東寺 scroll of *Tengu zôshi* 天狗草紙 (The tengu book) (fig. 1-5).²⁴ The ema are shown hanging in a small room within the cloister surrounding the temple, next to a gate, and a woman is visible seated in the room. The function and meaning of these ema are somewhat difficult to decipher.

²² *Nenjû gyôji*.

²³ Kawada, *Ema*, 30.

²⁴ *Tengu zôshi* 天狗草紙 [The tengu book], ed. Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美, vol. 26, *Zoku Nihon emaki taisei* 続日本絵巻大成 (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1993).

Read in a modern context, it would be easy to assume that the woman is selling ema, but that may be anachronistic. Iwai suggests this scroll is evidence of the expansion of ema into a Buddhist context.²⁵

Ema appear twice in the *Ippen shōnin eden* 一遍上人絵伝 (Illustrated life of the monk Ippen).²⁶ This hagiographic scroll was painted in 1299. In the first instance, ema are hung on the gate of a house that Ippen passes (fig. 1-6). This use shows ema treated like amulets or good luck charms. Rather than being left at the religious site, they were brought home. Presumably, they brought good fortune or protection to the new location. The second illustration of ema occurs in scroll five, which shows ema hanging in the small shrine where Ippen prays (fig. 1-7). This use is similar to that depicted in the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*.

The *Sannō reikenki* 山王靈驗記 (Record of miracles at Sannō) is also dated 1299.²⁷ This scroll relates the miracles of the Hie Sannō 比延山王 shrine near Mount Hie. Here three small ema are placed near other ritual objects for a worship service (fig. 1-8). Courtiers gather around the area outside the shrine building, and other sacred objects also fill the area. This scene depicts a ritual in progress. The exact role of the ema in this ritual is unclear, but they seem to serve a votive purpose.

Painted in 1309, *Fudō riyaku engi emaki* 不動利益縁起絵巻 (Illustrated handscroll of benefits from Fudō) tells the story of the monk Shōkū 証空 (1177–1247)

²⁵ Iwai, "Ema tenbyō," 26.

²⁶ *Ippen shōnin eden* 一遍上人絵伝 [Illustrated life of the monk Ippen], ed. Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美, vol. 20, *Nihon no emaki* 日本の絵巻 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1988).

²⁷ *Sannō reikenki* 山王靈驗記 [Record of miracles at Sannō], ed. Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美, vol. 12, *Zoku Nihon emaki taisei* 続日本絵巻大成 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1984).

and his mother's illness.²⁸ Three paper drawings that look like horse ema appear in a section showing the famous *onmyôji* 陰陽師 Abe no Seimei 安倍晴明 (921–1005) (fig. 1-9). Seimei sits before a ritual altar decorated with white paper streamers and the ema papers affixed to the front of the table. He reads from a scroll as part of the *taizan fukun* 泰山府君 ritual. This scroll, like the *Sannô reikenki* of 1299, explicitly shows ema as part of a request to the gods.

Ema appear in the scroll *Kasuga gongen genkie* 春日権現験記絵 (Miracles of the Kasuga deity), also from 1309.²⁹ Here, they can just barely be seen beneath the upper cloud border, hung on the main hall of the Shinto shrine (fig. 1-10). The traveling monk Hôzô 法蔵 (905–969) appears in the corridor. While there are two ema, they do not appear to be paired. Each ema shows a horse with two grooms.³⁰

Boki ekotoba 慕帰絵詞 presents another important example of the mixing of Buddhism with so-called Shinto actions (fig. 1-11).³¹ In this scroll from 1351, four pairs of ema depicting light and dark horses are hung in a tree. Two figures in the garb of Buddhist monks pray along with others before the tree. In modern times, we would call this a Shinto practice to hang the ema in a sacred tree. Because of the pairing of light and dark ema, this example is probably related to agricultural rites requesting sufficient rain and sun.

²⁸ *Fudô riyaku engi emaki* 不動利益縁起絵巻 [Illustrated handscroll of benefits from Fudô], ed. Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美, vol. 4, *Zokuzoku Nihon emaki taisei* 続々日本絵巻大成 (Tokyo: Chûh Kôronsha, 1995).

²⁹ *Kasuga gongen genkie* 春日権現験記絵 [Miracles of the Kasuga deity], ed. Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美, vol. 14, *Zoku Nihon emaki taisei* 続日本絵巻大成 (Tokyo: Chûh Kôronsha, 1982). For a textual study of this scroll and translation, see Royall Tyler, *The Miracles of the Kasuga Deity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

³⁰ This composition matches that of a wall painting at Kasuga. See chapter 3 for a discussion.

³¹ *Boki ekotoba* 慕帰絵詞, ed. Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美, vol. 9, *Soku Nihon emaki* 続日本絵巻 (Tokyo: Chûh Kôronsha, 1990).

The record of ema in handscrolls from the late Heian to the Kamakura period shows several features of ema use during this time. Because the ema were incorporated into the handscrolls as a matter of course rather than as exceptional objects, we can say that they were a well-established tradition. While textual sources do not give a date for the evolution from live horses to ema, handscrolls show that by the end of the twelfth century, ema were in a form recognizable to modern viewers. What may seem surprising to those modern viewers is the diversity of contexts in which ema were placed. Because we have only seven examples from a period spanning two centuries, it is difficult to say whether the differences are a result of transformation in ema practices or whether multiple uses existed simultaneously throughout the medieval period. Broadly speaking, these uses fall into three main categories: ritual, sacred space, and amulets.

The ritual use is the most distinct from current practice and can be seen in both *Sannô reikenki* and *Fudô riyaku engi emaki*. These emaki are from roughly the same time period (1299–1309) and may represent a specific use of ema in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. In both of these scrolls, ema are placed near an altar decorated with other sacred symbols such as *shide* 垂 papers. The ema appear to be part of the ritual, but their exact use is unclear. They probably represent a vestige of the practice of donating horses directly to the gods.

Ema were also used at sacred places. The most vivid instance of this type is in *Boki ekotoba*, which is also the latest of the handscroll examples. Similarly, *Nenjû gyôji emaki* and *Ippen shônin eden* show ema hung on the main halls of shrines. These cases are most like early modern and modern uses of ema but still do not reveal how the ema were used and donated.

Finally, the handscrolls show ema separate from a sacred space or ritual, displayed in a manner that leads us to assume they are performing a function similar to that of an amulet. In *Ippen shônin eden*, ema are hung on a house that Ippen walked past. This is a now rarely seen practice of taking ema home to hang in a private space. The Kamioka 上岡 ema in Saitama 埼玉 prefecture offers a modern parallel.³² The *Tengu zôshi* example of ema at Tôji may also be part of that tradition, if the depicted ema are in fact for purchase. Generally, these handscrolls show ema in Shinto contexts, but they also show that Buddhist practice was not exclusive of Shinto. Four of the seven scrolls—*Tengû no soshi*, *Ippen shônin eden*, *Fudô riyaku engi emaki*, and *Boki ekotoba*—are explicitly Buddhist in origin. Ema were part of a larger commingling of the two religions in premodern Japan, so it is a fallacy to label ema as solely Shinto.

During the Edo period, ema appeared in several texts, both illustrated and un-illustrated. I will address this in greater detail in chapter 2 but offer a brief overview here. Ema were discussed in books devoted exclusively to them, such as *Bue hengaku shû* 武江扁額集, by Saitô Gesshin's 斎藤月岑 (1804–1878),³³ and specific ema were included as objects of interest in books covering multiple subjects. City gazetteers such as *Edo*

³² At Kamioka, local residents buy ema at the annual festival held on February 19th. When the area was mainly agricultural, they took the ema home to hang in their stables as a protective amulet for their horses. Now, the ema are used as amulet for the family's health. Negishi Masanao 根岸成直, (head volunteer, Kamioka ema festival) conversation with the author, February 19, 2006. For a historical study of the festival, see Mitamura Yoshiko 三田村佳子, "Kôchô yori mita emakô no suii: Kamioka Kannon emakô," 講帳よりみた絵馬講の推移 [Progress of an ema organization by looking at the group's records: the Kamioka Kannon ema organization], *Kenkyu kiyô* 研究紀要 2 (1985).

³³ Saitô Gesshin 斎藤月岑, *Bue hengaku shû* 武江扁額集 [Collection of plaques in the Edo region], ed. Nakamura Yukihiro 中村幸彦 and Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 46, *Shinpen kisho fukuseikai sôsho* 新編希書複製会叢書 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1991).

kanoko 江戸鹿子 list *emaya* 絵馬屋 artists working in Edo.³⁴ The most commonly repeated information about ema is the traditional story about their development from donations of live horses.

The first English-language texts on ema were written by the American missionary John DeForest between 1880 and 1886.³⁵ In 1914, his daughter Charlotte DeForest compiled the articles written by her father into a small pamphlet titled “Ema: The Votive Pictures of Japan.” DeForest’s writings were addressed primarily to foreign residents of Japan, especially Americans,³⁶ and he explained the standard sacred horse history of ema. In order to encourage understanding of the subject matter of small ema among foreign residents, he explained the cultural significance of images such as foxes, snakes, and sake cups. The text is anthropological in nature and foreshadows the work of Ian Reader in the late twentieth century.

Early twentieth-century work on ema includes writings by both Japanese and foreigners. In 1910, Yamauchi Tenshin 山内天真 completed a small volume of ema, *Tôto ema kagami* 東都絵馬鑑.³⁷ He spent twenty years compiling it in conscious imitation of Gesshin’s *Bue hengaku shû*. The text includes many Meiji period ema and ema that were lost between 1890 and 1910. He saw the preservation of information about the lost ema as an important contribution of his text. Taniguchi Tôsen’s 1917 *Ema hyakushu* 絵馬百種 (One hundred kinds of ema) collected one hundred small ema with a

³⁴ Fujita Rihê 藤田理兵衛, *Edo kanoko* 江戸鹿子 [Dappled fabric of Edo], ed. Asakura Haruhiko 朝倉治彦, vol. 8, *Koita chishi sôsho* (Tokyo: Sumiya Shobô, 1970), n.p.

³⁵ J. H. DeForest, *Ema: Votive Pictures of Japan*, ed. Charlotte B. DeForest (S.I.: s.n., 1914).

³⁶ DeForest, *Ema*, 18.

³⁷ Yamauchi Tenshin 山内天真, *Tôto ema kagami* 東都絵馬鑑 (1910).

wide variety of subject matter from regions across Japan.³⁸ Taniguchi summarized the difference between large ema and small ema by saying, “For large ema, more than as a manifestation of the donor's belief, most represent the artist's skill. But small ema vividly show, while heavy tears flow, the traces of men and women offering vows of belief.”³⁹ His description is in keeping with the common position that large ema were art objects, while small ema were records of local and folk beliefs.

In 1919, the American anthropologist Frederick Starr delivered a presentation on his collection of small ema to the Asiatic Society in Japan.⁴⁰ He assigned ema to three categories: representative, symbolic, and magical.⁴¹ Representative ema represent the act of worship, such as a depiction of an offering of mochi (pounded rice balls). Symbolic ema illustrate the desired result of the act of worship, such as the image of a mother with flowing breast milk expressing the hope that the mother would be able to nourish her child. Magical ema cause the result to occur. Magical and symbolic ema are difficult to distinguish clearly; many ema may actually serve both roles. For example, some petitioners may think that the image of the mother with flowing breast milk actually causes the milk to flow. Like Taniguchi, Starr's emphasis was on ema as expressions of religious beliefs.

In 1938, Daniel Holtom, who wrote extensively on Shinto subjects, contributed an article on ema to the first issue of *Monumenta Nipponica*. He classified ema as symbolic, prayer-offering, and magical.⁴² His symbolic classification roughly matches Starr's

³⁸ Taniguchi Tōsen 谷口桃仙, *Ema hyakushu* 絵馬百種 [One hundred kinds of ema] (Osaka: Darumaya Shoten, 1917).

³⁹ Taniguchi, *Ema hyakushu*, 2–3.

⁴⁰ Frederick Starr, "Ema," *Transaction of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 48 (1920).

⁴¹ Starr, "Ema," 5.

⁴² D. C. Holtom, "Japanese Votive Pictures (The Ikoma Ema)," *Monumenta Nipponica* 1, no. 1 (1938): 157–58.

category of representative; it includes items related to worship, such as offerings, the petitioner, or the deity. Prayer-offering ema illustrate something related to the desired result, such as a body part that the petitioner would like healed. Finally, the magical category contains ema that are meant to function as charms. Holton added a subcategory to the magical classification in order to account for images that are visual puns, such as an image of a monkey (Jp. *saru* 猿), a pun on the verb *saru* 去る, meaning "to depart" (i.e., the monkey is a prayer that a negative thing will go away).⁴³ Holton addressed both small and large ema. While he emphasized Shinto beliefs about horses as part of the development of ema, he did not privilege Shinto use of ema over Buddhist use as many other early writers did.

Modern ema scholarship in Japan began with Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 (1875–1962), a folk studies scholar, who published widely on many aspects of Japanese folk culture. His diverse writings were foundational for modern scholarship on traditional Japan. In a 1930 article, “Ema to uma” 絵馬と馬 (Ema and horses), Yanagita questioned the application of the term “ema” to votive paintings.⁴⁴ Rather than using the Chinese characters for “painted horse,” he used the katakana syllabary and the old form of *ye* in place of the modern usage of *e* (エマ). This demonstrated linguistically and visually his belief that ema as they existed in the early twentieth century were not drawn only from the tradition of donating horses. To think of “ema” as only “painted horses” is anachronistic after the premodern period. Yanagita furthermore drew connections to other forms of donated objects, such as stone arms and legs donated at Akagami 赤神

⁴³ Holton, "Japanese Votive Pictures (The Ikoma Ema)," 158–59.

⁴⁴ Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男, "Ema to uma," 絵馬と馬 [Ema and horses], in *Yanagita Kunio zenshū* 柳田国男全集, ed. Kikuchi Akio 菊池明郎 (Tokyo: Mokushiki Shobō, 2001), 222.

shrine in Oga 男鹿, Akita 秋田 prefecture, and to Christian votives offered in connection to illnesses.⁴⁵ He also linked ema to Japanese scholarly interest in European cave paintings of the Stone Age because both paintings are part of the same human tradition.⁴⁶ His 1941 article “Itae enkaku” 板絵沿革 (History of panel painting) further explored the development of ema, and once again he questioned a clear path of evolution from donated horses.⁴⁷ While the title of the article refers to “panel painting,” the article is exclusively about ema. Despite using the Chinese characters for “ema” in the article, referring to ema as panel paintings in the title emphasized the material, not the subject matter, as their defining characteristic. Throughout the article, Yanagita stressed the changing uses of ema during their history and the expansion of subject matter as evidence of their evolving nature.

Yanagita’s 1930 article about ema was published in the October issue of *Tabi to densetsu* 旅と伝説, which was dedicated to ema. Yanagita established this magazine devoted to folklore studies in 1928. The ema issue contained more than twenty articles that focused mostly on aspects of small ema. A study by Nakayama Tarô 中山太郎 explicated examples of horses used for donation and sacrifice.⁴⁸ Nakayama observed that the idea of the gods riding horses is a folk belief not found in ancient texts.⁴⁹ Arisaka Yotarô’s 有坂興太郎 article discussed Emaya Tôsai 絵馬屋東齋, who was the seventh

⁴⁵ Yanagita, "Ema to uma," 222.

⁴⁶ Yanagita, "Ema to uma," 223.

⁴⁷ Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男, "Itae enkaku" 板絵沿革 [History of panel paintings], in *Yanagita Kunio zenshû* 柳田国男全集, ed. Kikuchi Akio 菊池明郎 (Tokyo: Mokushiki Shobô, 2003), 442–44.

⁴⁸ Nakayama Tarô 中山太郎, "Ema genryû kô" 絵馬源流考 [Thoughts on the source of ema], *Tabi to densetsu* 旅と伝説 3, no. 10 (1930).

⁴⁹ Nakayama, "Ema genryû," 5.

head of a family who made ema.⁵⁰ Arisaka ended his article with a comment that ema no longer were about belief but were merely interesting objects.⁵¹ This issue of the magazine is indicative of a strong interest in ema studies during the early Showa 昭和 period (1926–89).

In the postwar period, Iwai Hiromi 岩井宏實 was the doyen of ema studies. Beginning in the 1960s, he wrote and edited numerous texts on ema and their development.⁵² His major work on the topic is the 1974 book *Ema*.⁵³ This text includes a general history of ema, a study of small ema, and a study of large ema. Iwai located three important changes for ema in the late Momoyama 桃山 (1573–1615) and early Edo (late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries) periods.⁵⁴ These changes are ema donations at temples as well as shrines, expansion of subject matter beyond horses, and an increase in size. These features are an important aspect of Edo period ema but cannot be entirely dated to the late Momoyama and early Edo periods.

As the illustration in *Tengu zôshi* shows, ema were present at Buddhist sites from an early period. Iwai conflates the expansion of ema to temples with the beginning of ema halls at temples.⁵⁵ This is part of an overall expansion of ema in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Art of all kinds experienced broad changes in patronage

⁵⁰ Arisaka Yotarô 有坂興太郎, "Emaya Tôsai ha kataru" 絵馬屋東齋は語る [Emaya Tôsai speaks], *Tabi to densetsu* 3, no. 10 (1930).

⁵¹ Arisaka, "Emaya Tôsai," 38.

⁵² See especially Iwai Hiromi, "Kodai nôma no fûshû: Ema hensenshi no tame no jôshô" 古代納馬の風習：絵馬変遷史のてめの序章 [Classical donated horse custom: An introduction to historical change in ema], *Fûzoku: Nihon fûzokushi gakkai kaishi* 5, no. 2 (1965); Iwai Hiromi, *Ema wo tazunete* 絵馬を訪ねて [Visiting ema], vol. 4, *Hyôgo furusato sanpô* (Kobe: Kobe Shinbun Shuppan Sentâ, 1980); and Iwai Hiromi, ed., *Ema hishi* 絵馬秘史 [Secret history of ema], vol. 339 (Tokyo: NHK Books, 1979). Many of Iwai's essays reiterate the same information presented in his early works.

⁵³ Iwai, *Ema*.

⁵⁴ Iwai, *Ema*, 40–1. See also Iwai, "Ema tenbyô," 24–32.

⁵⁵ See chapter 2 for a discussion of ema halls and displays.

and production after the reunification of Japan in the Momoyama period and the rise of the merchant class during the Edo period. As gold leaf was used to indicate wealth and power in objects such as Toyotomi Hideyoshi's 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598) gold teahouse and screen paintings such as those by Kano Tan'yû 狩野探幽 (1602–1674) at Nijo 二条 castle in Kyoto, gold leaf was also used as a background on ema. Sanraku's 1625 pair of ema at Kaizu Tenjin shrine, discussed above, have a gold leaf background, as do early-seventeenth-century examples at both Gokokuji 護国寺 and Sensôji 浅草寺. The first direct evidence of professionals producing ema also dates to this time. Professional production was probably a significant factor in the expansion of subject matter. While Iwai suggests that the changes in ema could have had a religious basis after more ema were donated at temples, I believe these changes have a cultural rather than a religious explanation.

Carol Gluck identified an "Edo boom" in Japanese scholarship during the 1980s. She defined this boom as a renewed interest in the history and culture of the Edo period among historians and other scholars. Within this new scholarship, researchers began to see the Edo period as a time of pleasure and relaxation.⁵⁶ The increase in ema scholarship during this same period can be attributed to the general increase in Edo period scholarship. Local municipalities began to produce catalogs and hold exhibitions of their surviving ema. The first of three catalogs of the Sensôji ema appeared in 1978 (the others were published in 1980 and 1990).⁵⁷ Like many ema catalogs, the 1978 catalog begins with a brief introduction to the genre and then accompanies illustrations of a selection of

⁵⁶ Carol Gluck, "The Invention of Edo," in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 274.

⁵⁷ Kinryûsan Sensôji 金竜山浅草寺, ed., *Kinryûsan Sensôji ema zuroku* 金竜山浅草寺絵馬図録 [Catalog of ema at Kinryûsan Sensôji] (Tokyo: Kinryûsan Sensôji, 1978).

ema with a brief text. Many of the fifty-six ema presented in this catalog were restored in 1973.

Throughout the 1980s, regional catalogs from municipalities such as Sugunami 杉並 ward (1982), Gumma 群馬 prefecture (1983), Itabashi 板橋 ward (1986), and Adachi 足立 ward (1987) appeared.⁵⁸ These small catalogs are useful as a record of the surviving ema but usually do not include serious scholarship. One important exception is the catalog produced by Itabashi ward. Kobayashi Hōnan's introduction includes an unusually nuanced discussion of the development of ema.⁵⁹ While he presents the standard narrative of ema developing from live horse donations via donations of models, he also suggests that ema may have developed from the practice of hengaku. Separating hengaku from ema is an important distinction not made in many of these catalogs. Kobayashi quotes Suzuki Chūkō's 鈴木忠候 *Kansō zuihitsu* 閑窓随筆 from 1821 and Nishizawa Ippō's 西沢一鳳 *Kōto gosui* 皇都午睡 from 1850 describing ema's role as artistic objects taking precedence over their function as ritual objects.⁶⁰ Kobayashi's essay is unusual among regional ema catalogs because it focuses on ema primarily as

⁵⁸ Adachi kuritsu kyōdo hakubutsukan 足立区立郷土博物館, ed., *Ema minshū no inori tenzuroku* 絵馬民衆の祈り展図録 [Ema, people's prayers: Exhibition catalog], vol. 1, *Adachi kuritsu kyōdo hakubutsukan kiyō* (Tokyo: Adachi Kuritsu Kyōdo Hakubutsukan, 1987); Gumma Kenritsu Rekishi Hakubutsukan 群馬県立歴史博物館, ed., *Ema: Sono sugata to shinkō* 絵馬：その姿と信仰 [Ema: Form and belief] (Gumma: Gumma Kenritsu Rekishi Hakubutsukan, 1983); Itabashiku Kyōiku Iinkai 板橋区教育委員会, ed., *Itabashi no ema to hengaku* いたばしの絵馬と扁額 [Ema and hengaku in Itabashi], vol. 48, *Bunkazai shirīzu* 文化財シリーズ (Tokyo: Itabashiku Kyōiku Iinkai, 1986); and Suginamiku Kyōiku Iinkai 杉並区教育委員会, ed., *Suginami no ema* 杉並の絵馬 [Ema of Sugunami], *Bunkazai shirīzu* 27 (Tokyo: Suginamiku Kyōiku Iinkai, 1982).

⁵⁹ Kobayashi, "Itabashi no ema to hengaku."

⁶⁰ Kobayashi, "Itabashi no ema to hengaku," 52. Nishizawa Ippō 西沢一鳳, *Kōto gosui* 皇都午睡 [Afternoon sleep in the imperial capital], 3 vols. (1850); reprinted in *Shingunsho ruiju* 新群書類従, (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906.), and Suzuki Chūkō 鈴木忠候, *Kansō zuihitsu* 閑窓随筆 [Window of leisure essay], 2 vols. (Nakamura Sachizō 中村屋幸蔵, 1821). For a discussion of these texts, see chapter 2.

works of art rather than as anthropological objects. In 1990, Itabashi ward held a second ema exhibition of a collection of six ema that depict farming techniques, which returned to the anthropological model of study.⁶¹ Five of the ema are from the Edo period (from a site in Saitama 埼玉 prefecture), and the other ema is from the Meiji period. This catalog illustrates how ema can be used as sources for historical research, and their use as records of everyday life in the past.

In addition to regional catalogs, several comprehensive works about ema have been published in the last thirty years. The Equine Cultural Affairs Foundation of Japan produced one such catalog, devoted to early modern large-scale ema from across Japan.⁶² The catalog included a “special contribution” by Iwai Hiromi explaining the history of ema. Other catalogs of note about ema include Sensôji’s extensively researched 1990 volume, which contains information about 245 ema from the Edo and Meiji periods.⁶³ In 1993, Fukui 福井 prefecture, located on the coast of the Japan Sea, produced a catalog of ema in the region.⁶⁴ Unusually, this catalog is divided chronologically, rather than by subject, and has a section on the numerous ema produced in Osaka before they were transported to Fukui for donation. Unfortunately, this catalog did not include a scholarly essay.

⁶¹ Itabashi Kuritsu Kyôdo Shiryôkan 板橋区立郷土資料館, ed., *Ema to nôgu ni miru kindai: Tokubetsu ten* 絵馬と農具にみる近代—特別展 [Special exhibition on modern ema and agricultural tools] (Tokyo: Itabashi Kuritsu Kyôdo Shiryôkan, 1990).

⁶² Baji Bunka Zaidan 馬事文化財団, ed., *Kinsei no ôema* 近世の大絵馬 [Early modern large ema] (Yokohama: Baji Bunka Zaidan, 1979). The Equine Cultural Affairs Foundation is best known for its horse museum in Yokohama.

⁶³ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*.

⁶⁴ Fukui Kenritsu Hakubutukan 福井県立博物館, ed., *Ema: Ema Gallery* 絵馬—Ema Gallery (Fukui: Fukui Kenritsu Hakubutukan, 1993).

In 1999, Nishigai Kenji 西海賢二 published the results of his two-year study (in 1991 and 1992) of ema from Odawara 小田原, near Tokyo.⁶⁵ Nishigai is a scholar of folk studies who teaches at Kasei University 家政大学 in Tokyo. His approach to the ema is informed by his folk studies background, and he concluded that ema are expressions of personal feeling.⁶⁶ While ema are often studied as folk objects, as in Nishigai's study, he explicitly states that large ema are also works of art.⁶⁷ His brief overview of ema studies highlights the importance of the 1972 excavations at Iba 伊場 for revealing that ancient ema practices were similar to modern practices.⁶⁸

More recently, in 2003, Harada Yoshiko 原田佳子 surveyed the ema at Itsukushima 厳島 and created a modern *Itsukushima ema kagami* 厳島絵馬鑑.⁶⁹ Her work also includes information about the nineteenth-century *Itsukushima ema kagami*.⁷⁰ Other modern exhibitions include the one held at the Kawagoe 川越 City Museum in 2006 with an accompanying catalog.⁷¹ This exhibition included glass ema, a regional form produced in Kawagoe.⁷² These ema were painted primarily in the Meiji period, using oil paint. The subject matter was often landscapes or people praying. Individual

⁶⁵ Nishigai Kenji 西海賢二, *Ema ni miru minshû no inori to katachi* 絵馬に見る民衆の祈りとかたち [Looking at ema: People's prayers and their form] (Tokyo: Hihyosha, 1999).

⁶⁶ Nishigai, *Ema ni miru*, 56.

⁶⁷ Nishigai, *Ema ni miru*, 9.

⁶⁸ Nishigai, *Ema ni miru*, 10–11. He also emphasized that Yanagita developed his theories about ema development before the excavations, when the oldest known ema were from the Kamakura period. Nishigai suggested Yanagita would have viewed the development of ema differently if he had been aware of ema from the Nara period. See note 5 for information about the Iba excavations.

⁶⁹ Harada Yoshiko 原田佳子, *Itsukushima Heisei ema kagami* 厳島平成絵馬鑑 (Hiroshima: Itsukushima Heisei Ema Kagami Kankôkai, 2003).

⁷⁰ See chapter 2 for a discussion of this text. Chitosên Fujihiko 千歳園藤彦, *Itsukushima ema kagami* 厳島絵馬鑑 [Model of ema at Itsukushima Island], 5 vols. (Hiroshima: 1831).

⁷¹ Kawagoe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan 川越市立博物館, ed., *Kawagoe no ôema: Egara ni takusereta hitobito no negai* 川越の大絵馬—絵柄に託された人々の願い [Large-scale ema of Kawagoe: People's requests as image] (Kawagoe, Japan: Kawagoe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan, 2006).

⁷² Kawagoe Shiritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Kawagoe no ôema*, 10.

ema regularly appear in museum exhibitions, both as examples of objects at religious institutions and as paintings valued without relationship to their votive context.⁷³

Contemporary scholars have used ema as a way to access information about cultural practices and society in previous eras. Close readings of subject matter and donation practices can be combined to help understand the views held by donors or their social conditions. Two particular examples are *mabiki* 間引き (infanticide) ema and ema depicting Empress Jingû 神功. Ema have also been used to study economic trends for a time period during which economic records were limited.

In his case study, Richard Anderson used ema of the legendary Empress Jingû as a text to “read” attitudes toward the Korean invasion among people who lived in Fukuoka 福岡 and Yamaguchi 山口 prefectures during the late nineteenth century.⁷⁴ The classical texts *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 and *Kojiki* 古事記 describe Empress Jingû’s invasion of Korea in the fourth century. Toyotomi Hideyoshi used her invasion and a purported Japanese colony on the Korean peninsula to justify his own invasion attempts in the late sixteenth century. The ema Anderson studied were generally donated by groups of people in the farming or village communities. Anderson identified two motifs of ema depicting Empress Jingû: one of her crossing the sea to invade Korea, which he reads as bellicose, and one with her infant son after the invasion, which he reads as representative of a more

⁷³ In late 2005 and 2006, the following exhibitions included ema: “Hokusai” at the Tokyo National Museum (one ema from the Seianzan Fudôin 清安山不動院 in Ibaraki 茨城 prefecture was included); “Art of Dogs and Lucky Omens” at Tokyo National Museum (celebrating the year of the dog; Sakai Hoitsu’s 酒井抱一 “Western Dogs” ema from Nishiarai Daishi Sôjiji 西新井大師総持寺 in Adachi 足立 ward, Tokyo was included); “Kyoto’s Kiyomizu-dera” at the Sogô Museum in Yokohama (ema of a horse and monkey groom attributed to Kanô Motonobu); and “Japanese Shrines—What Is a Shrine?” at the National Museum of Japanese History (four ema from Itsukushima were included).

⁷⁴ Richard W. Anderson, “Jingû Kôgô Ema in Southwestern Japan: Reflections and Anticipations of the Seikanron Debate in the Late Tokugawa and Early Meiji Period,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002).

moderate approach to Japanese-Korean relations.⁷⁵ He argued that the prevalence of one motif over the other at different times reflects attitudes at those times toward Japan's relationship with Korea. In particular, debate over whether or not Japan should invade Korea was a significant issue for the early Meiji government. In 1873, several members of the Meiji government resigned, partially over policy toward Korea. Anderson used that year as a dividing point and found that in Fukuoka 福岡 after 1873, ema of Empress Jingû with her son become more popular than images of Empress Jingû invading Korea, which implies that the local population grew less interested in an invasion.⁷⁶ Anderson did not explain how images of Empress Jingû were connected to the donation prayer. In this study, as in others, donors seem to have not linked the composition of the ema with the reason for offering it.

Others have studied the depiction of infanticide in ema. Infanticide was performed during the Edo period to control family size, especially during times of famine. This practice was seen not as the outright killing of children but rather as sending them back to the gods if the family did not need or want additional children. The "thinning out" of families was sometimes done on a gender-selective basis. While modern ema are usually offered to the spirit of the child returned to the gods by abortion or lost due to stillbirth, Edo period large ema were donated and displayed as warnings against the practice.⁷⁷ A standard composition of such an ema showed the mother suffocating the child. Often her shadow took the form of a goblin with horns, and occasionally she was depicted as a goblin herself. Sometimes, a small figure of Jizô 地藏 (Sk. Ksitigarbha), usually

⁷⁵ Anderson, "Jingû Kôgô Ema in Southwestern Japan," 258.

⁷⁶ Anderson, "Jingû Kôgô Ema in Southwestern Japan," 260.

⁷⁷ Muriel Jolivet, "Ema: Representations of Infanticide and Abortion," in *Consumption and Material Culture in Contemporary Japan*, ed. Michael Ashkenazi and John Clammer (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 92–95.

associated in Japanese culture with prayers for dead children, was shown crying, and there is at least one known example in Chiba 千葉 prefecture of Kannon as the crying figure.⁷⁸ This ema is dated 1840 and was offered at a temple dedicated to Kannon. These ema not only record how infanticide was commonly performed, but they also reveal that the practice was considered a social problem at some locations in the late Edo period.⁷⁹ The purpose of these ema was centered not on the act of donating them but on their usefulness as didactic material when displayed.

Fujino Shozaburô 藤野正三郎 used a study of ema donation rates to trace economic cycles in the late Edo period.⁸⁰ He compared the number of ema donated in the Kumatani 熊谷 region of Saitama prefecture during the Meiji period with known economic indices and found that the rate of ema donations closely corresponded to economic activity. In strong economic times, ema donations increased and showed a corresponding decrease when the economy was weak. The correlation was so strong that he used ema in combination with price information from the Edo period to theorize about economic cycles between 1830 and 1867, for which modern-style records do not exist. He also noted that many ema commemorated pilgrimages to locales such as Ise 伊勢 or Mount Fuji 富士山. In the late Edo period, these pilgrimages were a leisure activity and

⁷⁸ Morikuri Shigekazu 森栗茂一, "Reigai toshiteno kinsei mizugo kuyô" 例外としての近世水子供養 [Exceptional early modern memorial ceremonies for deceased infants and fetuses], in *Fushigitani no kodomotachi* 不思議谷の子供たち (Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 1995), 27.

⁷⁹ Iwai notes that viewing *mabiki* ema inspired Yanagita Kunio to enter the folk studies field; Iwai, *Ema*, 273–74.

⁸⁰ Fujino Shozaburô 藤野正三郎, "Ema ga kataru keiki junka: Kantô chiiki no keiki junka, 1831–1905" 絵馬が語る景気循環—関東地域の景気循環：1831年—1905年— [Business cycles narrated by ema: Business cycles in the Kantô region, 1831–1905], *Keizaigaku kihô* 48, no. 2 (1999).

thus also indicate the economic security of the donors.⁸¹ For Fujino, ema fill in important gaps in historical records.

Documentary and surviving examples show that the custom existed in a variety of forms throughout Japanese history. Growing from religious roots, their decoration and display could also be used to express intentions not directly linked to religious devotion. Today, surviving individual ema and collections of these paintings can be used to interpret cultural, historical, and religious history.

⁸¹ Fujino, "Ema ga kataru," 29.

Chapter 2 Display and Dissemination

By the middle of the seventeenth century, ema and ema halls were common sights at both temples and shrines throughout Japan. Edo's rise as an urban center had begun, accompanied by a flourishing of religious institutions. Printing, both in book publishing and ukiyo-e images, also expanded in the seventeenth century.¹ This chapter focuses on the dissemination of ema images and information, including both increased display of ema at temples and shrines and published material. Although the donation of ema may have been motivated by private, religious feelings, their display and dissemination shows that they had a public life as social objects.

In the previous chapter, I discussed pre-Edo primary sources for information about ema. The last of the handscrolls depicting ema is *Boki ekotoba* 慕婦絵詞 from 1351.² A gap of more than three hundred years separates the handscroll and the first dated Edo period source, *Edo kanoko* 江戸鹿子 (Dappled fabric of Edo) of 1687.³ The lack of texts in the Muromachi period does not have an immediately obvious explanation but could indicate a loss of material rather than a lack of production. If texts about ema were not produced in the Muromachi period, we can hypothesize that renewed interest in ema

¹ For an overview, see Henry Smith, "The History of the Book in Edo and Paris," in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Merriman, and Kaoru Ugawa (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994). Smith uses the comparison between France and Japan both to illuminate what research is needed on the Japan side and to bring non-European examples to scholarly discussions of early modern print culture. For a more detailed study of the importance of printing to Japanese culture in the Edo period, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

² See discussion in chapter 1.

³ Fujita Rihê 藤田理兵衛, *Edo kanoko* 江戸鹿子 [Dappled fabric of Edo], ed. Asakura Haruhiko 朝倉治彦, vol. 8, *Koita chishi sôsho* (Tokyo: Sumiya Shobô, 1970).

accompanied expansion in their size and subject matter.⁴ Once the change in ema size and display practices described by Iwai Hiromi 岩井宏實 became standard, authors and illustrators had a rich variety of ema from which to draw as source material. Surviving sources about ema span the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with a concentration in the first half of the nineteenth century. As the Edo period progressed, books and printed matter became increasingly important as a way of circulating knowledge about the country.⁵ Tourism also began to rise, usually under the guise of pilgrimage, helping to create a need for guidebooks and other compilations of useful information. Examples of ema appear in some of these texts. Taken as a group, published references to ema show an ongoing interest in the topic throughout the Edo period.

A close reading of Edo period sources reveals several reoccurring themes in the treatment of ema. The most frequently addressed theme is the subject matter. Several of the sources are compilations devoted to ema from a single site or several sites, emphasize descriptions of the ema's subjects, and usually include illustrations.⁶ Discussion of the religious nature of ema is intertwined with consideration of their subject matter because of the connection between horse donations and the development of ema. Information about artists is also frequently included. Meager information about ema donations is a glaring lacuna in the historiography.

⁴ Iwai argued for this expansion in many essays. See especially Iwai Hiromi 岩井宏實, "Ema tenbyō" 絵馬点描 [Outline of ema], in *Ema hishi* 絵馬秘史, ed. Iwai Hiromi (Tokyo: NHK Books, 1979). Alternately, the expansion in subject matter could have been driven by a renewed general interest in ema.

⁵ For a discussion of the "library of public information" available through books in Edo period Japan, see Berry, *Japan in Print*. Berry argued that the wide availability of common knowledge created a national public.

⁶ As rule, the entries for each ema focus on explaining the subject matter and did not discuss the display location of the ema or other issues. In narrative ema, the story behind the illustration and its source is addressed at length. In other ema, the meaning of the subject receives the bulk of the attention. In this regard, the texts are very much like catalogs of ema from the 1980s. As such, these books can be called the first exhibition catalogs in Japan.

Subject matter

One of the most important texts on the preservation and dissemination of ema compositions is *Hengaku kihan* 扁額軌範 (Canon of plaques), compiled in 1819 by Hayami Shungyôtsai 速見春暁齋 of the Bunshûdô 文集堂 bookstore in Kyoto.⁷ This book is well known as a record of the paintings but has not been extensively studied. It contains reproductions of thirty-nine ema along with numerous details and supplementary images. Of the ema reproduced, eighteen are from Kiyomizu 清水 temple in Kyoto, seventeen are from Gion 祇園 shrine (now called Yasaka 八坂 shrine), two are from Kitano 北野 shrine, one is from Seiwain 清和院, and one is from Hôkôin 宝光院. The first reproduced ema shows a black horse tied to a post accompanied by a monkey. Other subjects include Chinese and Japanese legendary figures, city scenes, and landscapes. Descriptions of the images are brief in the first volume but lengthen considerably in subsequent volumes. Entries for larger ema, such as one at Gion shrine showing the shrine's festival (reproduced in volume 3), also provide details with notations of the paint colors.

The artists Aigawa Minwa 合川珉和 (d. 1821) and Kitagawa Harunari 北川春成 drew the reproductions that illustrate the book. According to the introduction, Shungyôtsai took the two artists to Kiyomizu to view ema and the skyline of the city. While there, he encouraged them to collaborate on *Hengaku kihan*. The visit is described in the introduction:

The Bunshûdô head said to the artists, the views in Kyoto of nature and religious institutions are supreme. There are also these hengaku left behind

⁷ Hayami Shungyôtsai 速見春暁齋, *Hengaku kihan* 扁額軌範 [Canon of plaques], ed. Noma Kôshin 野間光辰, vol. 8, *Shinshû Kyoto sôsho* 新修京都叢書 (Kyoto: Rinkawa Shobô, 1968).

by people from the past. There are many books that show the landscapes and the religious institutions and enable people who live elsewhere to know about Kyoto, but regrettably these people don't know about the *hengaku*. How would it be if the two of you made reproductions for people who can't see the *hengaku*?⁸

Shungyôtsai had two motivations for producing the book. During the Edo period, there was a proliferation of guidebooks introducing visitors and armchair travelers to sites and business establishments in cities such as Kyoto and Edo. Shungyôtsai wanted to include *ema* in the wealth of printed knowledge about Kyoto, especially so that those who learned about Kyoto only from books would know about the *ema*. He also felt it was important to preserve a record of the images. *Ema* were often hung in areas where they were exposed to the elements. The resulting damage is clear today on many *ema*, and it is noteworthy that even at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Shungyôtsai was interested in their preservation.

The thirty-nine *ema* reproduced in the five volumes of *Hengaku kihan* purportedly represent 20–30 percent of the *ema* at Kiyomizu temple and Gion shrine at the time of publication. The introduction to volume 1 explains that the artists “chose two or three of every ten to reproduce.” The first volume contains 22 *ema*, which suggests that Gion shrine and Kiyomizu temple together had between 74 and 110 *ema* in 1819.⁹

Another of the most significant texts on *ema* is *Itsukushima ema kagami* 巖島絵馬鑑 (Model of *ema* at Itsukushima island), which was published in 1831, shortly after *Hengaku kihan*.¹⁰ Itsukushima island, also known as Miyajima 宮島, is located in Hiroshima 広島 bay, and Itsukushima shrine is famous for its dramatic location at the

⁸ Hayami, *Hengaku kihan*, 331–32. See the appendix for a complete translation of the introduction.

⁹ Kiyomizu temple currently has fifty-one *ema* that it classifies as “large *ema*.”

¹⁰ Chitosên Fujihiko 千歳園藤彦, *Itsukushima ema kagami* 巖島絵馬鑑 [Model of *ema* at Itsukushima island], 5 vols. (Hiroshima: 1831).

water's edge. During high tide, the water comes past the torii 鳥居 gate up to the main shrine building.

The notes assert that the ema selected for reproduction are among the most artistically significant at the shrine. The ema were hung in long galleries that connected the main hall to other sub-buildings. According to the notes at the beginning of the book,

There are unknown thousands of ema hanging at this shrine. And items that have fallen from above the beam once are not rehung. To be sure, things that are like old paintings or outstanding calligraphy are gathered and taken into the possession [蔵む] of the shrine.

In other words, the shrine did not actively curate the collection of ema. As at many other sites, ema were hung jumbled up against one another. No particular effort was made to preserve most of the ema, but those that were deemed important were saved. These ema make up the collection now held by the shrine. The shrine has 170 ema, with the oldest dated to 1552.¹¹ Seventy-one ema were included in *Itsukushima ema kagami*; the two oldest are from 1515 and 1520.¹² Hundreds of ema have probably been donated to Itsukushima shrine since its founding in 1168.

Like *Hengaku kihan*, *Itsukushima ema kagami* is structured as a series of illustrations and descriptions across five volumes. Also like *Hengaku kihan*, there is little discernible organization to the volumes. Five of the last six ema depicted in volume 5 contain text rather than visual images, but subjects are intermixed within the volumes. Many of the images also contain notes about the precise location of the ema at Itsukushima shrine. Tourists and pilgrims could have used *Hengaku kihan* and *Itsukushima ema kagami* as guides to the ema collections at these sites, as travel

¹¹ Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan 国立歴史民俗博物館, ed., *Nihon no kamigami to matsuri: Jinja to wa nani ka* 日本の神々と祭り : 神社とは何か [Japanese gods and festivals: What is a temple?] (Sakura, Japan: Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan, 2006), 137.

¹² Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan, ed., *Nihon no kamigami to matsuri*, 137.

increased among the general population during the Edo period. Inclusion in the texts was a sign that the ema was valued by the authors and publishers. It also would have increased these ema's cultural value to the public by making information about them more widespread.

In 1862, Saitô Gesshin 斎藤月岑 (1804–1878), the great chronicler of late Edo customs, compiled a manuscript titled *Bue hengaku shû* 武江扁額集 (Collection of plaques in the Edo region).¹³ In the introduction, he directly cited *Hengaku kihan* and *Itsukushima ema kagami* as models for his project. He was particularly concerned with the condition of the ema in Edo, noting that only Sensôji 浅草寺 temple in Asakusa 浅草 had ema from before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Like Shungyôtsai, Gesshin saw his text as a way to help preserve the ema. He suggested that the illustrations in his book could be used to restore the ema at a later date.¹⁴

In the late eighteenth century, Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈 (1717–1784), a samurai scholar best known for his *Sadatake nikki* 貞丈日記 (Sadatake's diary), addressed ema in his compilation *Sadatakeô ema zukô* 貞丈翁絵馬図考 (Old man Sadatake's thoughts on ema) and in *Sadatake zakki* 貞丈雑記 (Sadatake's miscellaneous notes).¹⁵ He observed that horses in ema were often depicted adorned with the same decorations as live horse donations, such as sacred paper and branches attached at the prescribed places. He

¹³ Saitô Gesshin 斎藤月岑, *Bue hengaku shû* 武江扁額集 [Collection of plaques in the Edo region], ed. Nakamura Yukihiro 中村幸彦 and Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 46, *Shinpen kisho fukuseikai sôsho* 新編希書複製会叢書 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1991).

¹⁴ In Japanese, he wrote “他日繕写すべし.” For more about this text, see chapter 3.

¹⁵ Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈, *Sadatake zakki* 貞丈雑記 [Sadatake's miscellaneous notes]. Tôyô bunko 453, ed. Shimada Isao 島田勇雄 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1986), and Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈, *Sadatakeô ema zukô* 貞丈翁絵馬図考 [Old man Sadatake's thoughts on ema] (mid-eighteenth century).

expressed the view that horses, not the diverse subjects that were commonly found during his time, were the only proper subject for ema.

... ema with the form of sacred horses became less common. It seems incorrect [あやまりなり] to paint birds, animals, human figures, and many other subjects.¹⁶

Sadatake's introduction to *Sadatakeô ema zukô* also explains that the common sayings affixed to the ema have become words of comfort¹⁷ and may function like rote prayers or meditation chants for the believer. Despite the brevity of his discussion of ema, Sadatake's texts are particularly relevant for the study of ema because his references to donation practices and subject matter are unusual for the period, as discussed below.

Asaoka Okisada 朝岡興禎 (1800–1856), in *Koga bikô* 古画備考 (Notes on old paintings), his text about visual art, borrowed Sadatake's text directly for the first part of his entry on ema, describing their history.¹⁸ Okisada goes on to mention references to horses and ema in other texts, including *Sadatake zakki*.

In 1749, Nishimura Genroku 西村源六, of Edo's Honchô 本朝 district, and Nomura Chôbê 野村長兵衛, of Osaka's Takashikabashi 高鹿橋 district, compiled *Buyû ema hinagata* 武勇絵馬雛形 (Pattern book of valor ema), a small book illustrating ema.¹⁹ Unlike the other compilation texts discussed above, this book depicts samples that artists and patrons could use to select subjects and images, not actual donations. An initial

¹⁶Ise *Sadatake zakki*, 453: 205.

¹⁷Ise, *Sadatakeô ema zukô*, n.p.

¹⁸Asaoka Okisada 朝岡興禎, *Koga bikô* 古画備考 [Notes on old painting], ed. Haga Noboru 芳賀登 et al., vol. 63, *Nihon jinbutu jôhô taisei* (Tokyo: Koseisha, 2001).

¹⁹Nishimura Genroku 西村源六 and Nomura Chôbê 野村長兵衛, *Buyû ema hinagata* 武勇絵馬雛形 [Pattern book of valor ema] (1749). The surviving volume in the National Diet Library is severely moth eaten, and some of the text in the introduction and conclusion is obscured. The text survives in a 1930 transcription by Ôtô Tokihito 大藤時彦. See Ôtô Tokihiko 大藤時彦, "Ema ni kansuru bunken" 絵馬に関する文献 [Literature about ema], *Tabi to densetsu* 旅と伝説 3, no. 10 (1930): 65.

illustration showing the canonical form of a horse ema spreads across two pages. The illustration bears a common inscription on ema — “Donated before the deity.”²⁰ The date given is “1749, month, day” 寛延二己巳年月日 (because this is a pattern book, the specific month and day are not listed, and the words “month” and “day” serve as place holders). They focused particularly on illustrations of legendary warriors, such as Susanô no Mikoto 素戔鳴尊 and Sanada Yoshitada 佐奈田義忠 (1155–1180). Most pages have four ema compositions on each two-page spread with the subjects inscribed on the outer margins. All the ema are depicted with elaborate wooden frames. This text does not include descriptions of the ema or any information about them other than the titles. Model books such as this were common for kimono patterns during the Edo period,²¹ when clients used them to select patterns for their kimonos. Perhaps this book was used in a similar way by ema donors.

In the brief introduction, Nishimura and Nomura describe the standard history of ema as follows:

From the beginning in the past, ema were things donated to shrines. Well-placed families would donate live horses, while common people who could not donate live horses would perhaps donate painted ones. Yet, when did figures, landscapes, flowers and trees, birds and animals become separate subjects of donation?²²

This is one of several comments in Edo period texts, including Sadatake’s above, questioning the use of non-horse subject matter in ema. These comments reveal that despite the expansion of ema subject matter, the genre was still closely associated with horses.

²⁰ “Hôkai gotakara mae” 奉掛御審前.

²¹ For example, see Iwao Nagasaki, “Designs for a Thousand Ages: Printed Pattern Books and Kosode,” in *When Art Became Fashion: Kosode in Edo-Period Japan*, ed. Dale Carolyn Gluckman and Sharon Sadako Takeda (New York: Weatherhill, 1992).

²² Nishimura and Nomura, *Buyû ema hinagata*, 1, and Ôtô, “Ema ni kansuru bunken,” 65.

Suzuki Chûkô's 鈴木忠候 1821 text *Kansô zuihitsu* 閑窓随筆 (Window of leisure essay) addresses the topic of ema and their wide variety of subject matter.²³ He mentioned numerous ema subjects, such as the god Daikoku 大黒 neck wrestling with a prostitute, poetry ema, and ema depicting geometry problems (called *sangaku* 算額).²⁴ He suggested that some ema are donated to shrines without the shrines' permission. Chûkô did not find these ema to be proper donations to the gods and said of the donors, "These people don't honor the gods; they borrow the front of the shrine for a brush war to boast of their skills."²⁵ I interpret this to mean that, at least in some cases, the donors commissioned the ema to show their own social prestige. For them, the display of the paintings, not the act of donation, was the most important feature. The context of display was relevant for all ema, even those whose donors had been motivated by sincere religious conviction. The advantages of display accrued especially to the artists because their names are written so prominently on the ema. Chûkô made explicit the connection between the subject matter of ema and their religious function. He condemned those who used ema for decorative purposes rather than to honor the gods.

In *Kôto gosui* 皇都午睡 (Afternoon sleep in the imperial capital) of 1850, Nishizawa Ippô 西沢一鳳 raised the same questions about non-horse images.²⁶ Ippô observed that artists paint what the donor wants, so he criticized donors who request non-horse subjects. He said,

²³ Suzuki Chûkô 鈴木忠候, *Kansô zuihitsu* 閑窓随筆 [Window of leisure essay] (Nakamura Sachizô 中村屋幸蔵, 1821).

²⁴ For more on *sangaku*, see Mark Ravina, "Wasan and the Physics That Wasn't: Mathematics in the Tokugawa Period," *Monumenta Nipponica* 48, no. 2 (1993).

²⁵ In Japanese, he wrote "是等の人には神を尊敬して奉納するにあらず、其芸術にはこりて社頭を借りて筆戦をなすものなり." Suzuki, *Kansô zuihitsu*.

²⁶ Nishizawa Ippô 西沢一鳳, *Kôto gosui* 皇都午睡 [Afternoon sleep in the imperial capital], 3 vols. (1850); reprinted in *Shingunsho ruiju* 新群書類従, (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankôkai, 1906.).

Warrior images without relation to kami or Buddha are unclear about the state of the donor's heart... Although the artists painted what the petitioner wants, [I] am worried about what kind of heart these donors have.²⁷

Ippô's comments, especially about the history of ema's development and the questionable appropriateness of non-horse subject matter, show that even as late as the mid-nineteenth century, the traditional view of ema was still that they were strongly connected to Shinto and sacred horses. Ippô objected to non-horse ema because they did not seem pious. He agreed with Chûkô about the importance of an ema's subject relating to its religious purpose. Ippô also stated that ema texts, specifically *Hengaku kihan*, serve an important role in sharing ema and teaching artists about them.

Religious roots

References to the inappropriateness of non-horse ema throughout these texts reveal an underlying tension about the nature of ema in Edo period cultural and religious life. The narrative of the development of ema from Shinto horse donations is repeated regularly in Edo period texts, showing that ema were still strongly associated with Shinto despite the broadening of their use beyond horse images at Shinto shrines. This is surprising for two reasons. First, contemporary scholarship on religion in the early modern period sees strong syncretism among Japanese religious traditions, primarily Buddhism and Shintoism.²⁸ During the early modern period, many sites were affiliated with both

²⁷ “其神佛にも拘はらぬ武者絵などは頭主の心いかがあらん覚束なし... 畫師は願主の好によつて描く畫けども奉納せる人はいかなる心にか有けんいぶかし。” Nishizawa, *Kôto gosui*, 572.

²⁸ See a longer discussion of this subject in chapter 1.

religions.²⁹ Today, we date the firm separation of the two religions to the early Meiji period and the establishment of state-sponsored Shinto.³⁰ The ongoing emphasis on the Shinto origins of ema practices by Edo period and modern writers shows that although the two religions may have been practiced in parallel, there was still a strong sense of the divisions between them.

Second, these texts show that ema were commonly found at Buddhist as well as Shinto sites. Perhaps rather than a sign that ema were integrated into Buddhist practice, the continued insistence on ema's Shinto roots is an expression of the syncretism present at Japanese religious sites during the early modern period. If this model is correct, ema at Buddhist sites were not in fact part of Buddhism or of a common religion; instead, they were an example of Shinto practices existing at Buddhist sites. This may be the origin of the ema custom at Buddhist temples, but a sophisticated understanding of the subtle differences between ema as Shinto ritual at Buddhist sites and ema as an aspect of Japan's common religion was likely beyond the grasp of the average worshipper. Furthermore, in the introduction to their collected volume on *honji suijaku* 本字垂迹, Mark Teeuwan and Fabio Rambelli argue that Shinto kami were essentially subsumed under Buddhism in order to allow both to exist simultaneously.³¹ If this is the case, any argument over whether ema are Shinto or Buddhist is moot. George Tanabe and Ian Reader would probably also find the effort to identify ema as Shinto or Buddhist irrelevant, as ema can easily be explained as part of the common religion of Japan.

²⁹ For a detailed discussion of this in practice at a specific site, see Sarah Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573–1912* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

³⁰ See Martin Collcutt, "Buddhism: The Threat of Eradication," in *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*, ed. Marius Jansen and Gilbert Rozman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

³¹ Mark Teeuwan and Fabio Rambelli, "Introduction: Combinatory Religion and the *Honji Suijaku* Paradigm in Pre-modern Japan," in *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

The religious nature of ema is addressed most directly in *Shintô myômoku ruijushô* 神道名目類聚抄 (Annotated collection of Shinto terms).³² This text, compiled in 1699 and published in 1702, introduces a variety of Shinto terms, including “ema.” The text describes ema with the standard history and is regularly cited by later writers.

Model horse [造馬]: Those who could not bring a sacred horse to donate, donated a horse made of wood.

Ema: Those who could not even donate a model horse, painted and donated a picture of a horse. Now, living horses are not donated and various images are donated.³³

As seen from this description, in the early eighteenth century, ema were clearly believed to be derived from live horse donations.

Questions about the subject matter of ema and their history as Shinto objects are intertwined in these texts. When the subject is a horse, particularly one with sacred decorations (as described by Sadatake in *Sadatake zakki*), the Shinto connection and the appropriateness of the subject are self-evident. While some of the texts specifically identify ema as Shinto objects (especially *Shintô myômoku ruijushô*), none engages the question of whether or not ema are proper at Buddhist temples. The presence of ema at Buddhist sites was accepted without question in *Hengaku kihan* and *Bue hengaku shû*. No other authors raised objections to ema at temples, even when they objected to non-horse subject matter. This shows a common acceptance of ema at both Shinto and Buddhist sites, despite the perception that their historical roots were in Shinto practice. For example, in *Hengaku kihan*, the text does not specifically address the selection of both a Buddhist site and a Shinto site, and the introduction places more emphasis on the

³² Saeki Ariyoshi 佐伯有義, ed., *Shinto myômoku ruijushô* 神道名目類聚抄 [Annotated collection of Shinto terms] (Tokyo: Ôokayama Shoten, 1934).

³³ Saeki, ed., *Shinto myômoku ruijushô*, 81.

Buddhist Kiyomizu temple than the Shinto Gion shrine. The authors of *Hengaku kihan* did not identify ema as Shinto objects, and this text portrays the practice as firmly established at both Buddhist and Shinto sites.

In *Kôto gosui*, Ippô also traced the origin of ema to live horse donations. He made the obvious yet rarely articulated observation that there was no advantage for an institution in receiving more horses than it could use or support. He wrote, “Since there were some number of horses which weren’t ridden, this can’t have been beneficial.”³⁴ Perhaps shrines and temples were motivated to encourage donations of ema rather than live horse in order to relieve pressure on their resources.

The undated *Edo meisho ema awase* 江戸名所絵馬合 (Competition of ema from famous places in Edo) demonstrates other ways in which ema were used in a Buddhist, rather than a Shinto, context. It appears to be a record of a competition or exhibition of ema held at Jôenji 常円寺 temple in Yotsuya 四谷.³⁵ This intriguing text raises more questions than it answers but hints at a rich social context for ema during the Edo period.³⁶

The introduction states that sixty-four ema were included in the competition, which might have been held in conjunction with a kaichô 開帳.³⁷ The book illustrates twenty images, identified by location. Most locations are parts of Tokyo, such as Shinobazu 不忍, Fukagawa 深川, and Yoshiwara 吉原. The text does not explain how the competition functioned or the source for the ema. They could have been donated by

³⁴ Nishizawa, *Kôto gosui*. See appendix for full translation.

³⁵ Jusanjin 寿山人 and Enteishu 円亭主, *Edo meisho ema awase* 江戸名所絵馬合 [Competition of ema from famous places in Edo] (n.d.).

³⁶ Unfortunately, the temple no longer has any records that could reveal more about this text. Jôenji temple, personal correspondence, October 26, 2006.

³⁷ See chapter 4 for more information about kaichô.

groups of residents from the areas listed. The lack of information implies that such ema contests were common enough that a reader would have understood the context. Because measurements are not included, it is not possible to say definitively whether these ema were small or large. The ema's size can not be deduced from the subject matter, as the subjects depicted (including arrows, sutra scrolls, and landscapes) appear on both small and large ema. The number of landscapes and the degree of detail within their composition lead me to speculate, however, that the ema were large scale.

The unquestioned acceptance of ema at Buddhist temples by so many Edo period writers seems to conflict with the same authors' repeated references to the Shinto history of ema; however, the theories of honji suijaku and Japanese common religion offer models of understanding Japanese religion that can resolve this conflict.³⁸ Regardless of the doctrinal position of ema (or lack thereof), they were an integrated part of worship practices at both shrines and temples during the Edo period.

Artists

In addition to their interest in subject matter, several authors discussed the artists who created the ema. Some texts, such as *Edo kanoko*, which contains extensive information about businesses and sites in Edo, including two listings of ema makers, could be used to find an artist to paint an ema.³⁹ The workshops are listed as *emumaya* ゑむまや, using an old form of the word "ema." Both are in the Kayachô 茅町 district of Asakusa, near

³⁸ See chapter 1 for a discussion of honji suijaku.

³⁹ Fujita, *Edo kanoko*, 284.

Sensôji temple.⁴⁰ The two workshops, Osakya 大阪屋 and Otaya 太田屋, were listed only by their addresses, so it is unclear if these are makers of small ema or large ema. However, I have been unable to locate the name of the workshop on existing ema, and most makers of large ema at that time are referred to as artists rather than emumaya. Thus, it seems most likely that these workshops produced small ema for donors to take to shrines and temples. Other artists, including two sons of Kanô Tan'yû 狩野探幽 (1602–1674), are listed earlier in the text as *eshi* 絵師 (painter). In 1697, ten years after the publication of *Edo kanoko*, *Kokka manyôki* 国花万葉記 (Myriad leaves of national flowers) was published and includes essentially the same information.⁴¹

In *Jinrin kunmôzui* 人倫訓蒙図彙 (Illustrated encyclopedia of humanity) of 1690, a man identified as an *emumashi* ゑむま師 is shown painting a large-scale ema with what appears to be a landscape (fig. 2-1).⁴² Behind him are an ema of a horse and another depicting a man in Heian period dress who is probably a poet, based on the lines of pseudo-calligraphy on the panel. Note the difference between the term “emumashi” used here and “emumaya” used three years earlier in *Edo kanoko*. The *shi* character is the same as the one used in *Edo kanoko* in the term “eshi.” The text of *Jinrin kunmôzui*, which also illustrates members of other professions at work, reports that these artists are called “emumashi” because in the past they painted horses. It states specifically that “In

⁴⁰ Kayachô is now part of Yanagibashi 柳橋. It is located on the northwest bank where the Kanda 神田 river joins the Sumida 隅田 river. The Asakusabashi 浅草橋 train station is nearby.

⁴¹ Kikumoto Yoshiyasu 菊本賀保, *Kokka manyôki* 国花万葉記 [Ten-thousand leaf record of the provincial flowers] (Osaka: Kariganeya Shôbee nado 雁金屋庄兵衛等, 1697).

⁴² Gen Zaburô 源三郎, *Jinrin kunmôzui* 人倫訓蒙図彙 [Illustrated encyclopedia of humanity], ed. Masamune Atsuo 正宗敦夫, vol. 3, *Nihon koten zenshû* 日本古典全集 (Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshû Kankôkai, 1929).

temple towns, they are in the space between the second and third block (條)⁴³ but does not mention shrines. This may suggest that ema were readily available for purchase only near temples, which would be unexpected, given that writers of the period usually connect ema to Shinto. It may also indicate that ema shops were regularly located near temples but not near shrines. The beginning of the section does clearly reference both temples and shrines as places where ema can be found.

In *Hengaku kihan*, Shungyôtsai lists four schools as being particularly proficient at ema: Hasegawa 長谷川, Kanô 狩野, Tosa 土佐, and Bessho 別所.⁴⁴ The Bessho school of artists is obscure and is not mentioned in most of the standard reference books about ema or painting in general. Most other listings of four top artistic schools include the Unkoku 雲谷 school or the Kaihō 海北 school instead of the Bessho school. The Bessho school was based in Kyoto and does not seem to have worked in Edo.⁴⁵ Very few of its works survive. In his introduction to *Sadatakeô ema zukô*, Sadatake lists Tosa, Kanô, Hasegawa, and Kaihō as the four primary schools for painting ema. Of the twenty-five images, four are attributed to a Hasegawa artist, four to a Kaihō artist, and three to a Kanô artist. Because Sadatake was based in Edo, it is not surprising that he substituted the Kaihō school for the Kyoto-based Besshō in his list.

A recurring debate in the texts is the identity of the painter of a magical ema at Sensōji temple that was believed to come to life. Gesshin was the first to discuss this ema

⁴³ Gen, *Jinrin kunmôzui*, 242. See appendix for a full translation.

⁴⁴ Hayami, *Hengaku kihan*, 394.

⁴⁵ For example, see the listing of thirteen Bessho artists in Mori Senzō 森銚三 and Nakajima Masatoshi 中島理壽, *Kinsen jimei rokushûsei* 近世人名録集成 [Catalog of early modern names] (Benseisha, 1978), vol. 5: 149. I would like to thank Yoshida Eri for her assistance with this citation.

in *Bue hengaku shû*, and the ema is also reproduced in *Edo meisho zue* 江戸名所図会.⁴⁶

The painting has historically been attributed to Kanô Motonobu 狩野元信 (1476–1559).

In 1790, Ôta Nanpo 大田南畝 and Sena Sadao 瀬名貞雄 addressed the debate in *Raiden mondô* 瀬田問答 (Raiden questions and answers).⁴⁷ The questions came from Nanpo, and Sadao supplied the answers. Nanpo edited the original edition. The name Raiden is a combination of the first character from Sadao's name with the second character from Ôta's name, read with the Chinese pronunciation. The question regarding ema in this volume is about the magical ema at Sensôji (discussed in chapter 3).

Donation

The only Edo period author who specifically addressed the method for donating an ema is Ise Sadatake in *Sadatake zakki*. Sadatake's comments are particularly helpful because he discussed an aspect of donation that most authors ignore.

There are people who say there is a ritual [法式] for donating ema. I don't have a personal memory of a ritual. The shogunal family and others don't have [use?] a ritual. The shogunal family and daimyo donate sacred horses. People who don't donate horses in place of sacred horses donate paintings of sacred horses. This is called ema. This is done informally; there is no established ritual.⁴⁸

He goes on to explain that just as a donor's name is not attached to a sacred horse, it does not have to be attached to an ema. This helps to explain why so many ema lack a donor's name even though the artist's name is often prominently recorded. Sadatake explains that

⁴⁶ Saitô Chôshû 齋藤長秋, *Edo meisho zue* 江戸名所図会 [Illustrated famous places in Edo], ed. Ichiko Natsuo 市古夏生 and Suzuki Ken'ichi 鈴木健一 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1996–97). See chapter 3 for more information.

⁴⁷ Ôta Nanpo 大田南畝 and Sena Sadao 瀬名貞雄, *Raiden mondô* 瀬田問答 [Raiden questions and answers], ed. Nihon zuihitsu taisei henshûbu, vol. 3 no. 12, *Nihon zuihitsu taisei* 日本隨筆大成, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1977).

⁴⁸ Ise *Sadatake zakki*, 453:205.

inscriptions on ema should read “Donated and hung before the treasure of the god of the horse stables.”⁴⁹ This is virtually equivalent to the phrase used on the first sample ema in *Buyû ema hinagata*, “tatematsuri kaki gotaka mae.”⁵⁰ Because phrases on the front of ema are standardized and the donor’s name is not usually recorded there, information about the donor is most often gained from inscriptions on the reverse. Sadatake notes another phrase commonly found in ema inscriptions, *keihaku* 敬白, which is a humble way of saying “to speak.” It is generally used to indicate the conclusion of a letter. In a similar usage, it appears at the end of ema inscriptions. This supports Ian Reader’s description of ema as letters to the gods.⁵¹

The persistent lack of concrete information about the donors of ema raises questions about the donors’ relationship to the display of ema. In chapter 4, I discuss several ema in which the prominent display of the donor’s name or implied references to his identity creates a context in which the ema’s display plays an important role for the donor. These particular cases, however, seem to be exceptions. When the donor’s identity is revealed only on the reverse of the ema, it is unknown to the general public. The donor’s role for such an ema seems to end at the time of donation. Thereafter, the ema is associated with the artist and the temple or shrine.

⁴⁹ “Tatematsuri kaki, ema kami go takara mae” 奉掛/生馬神御宝前. Ise *Sadatake zakki*, 453:219. Note especially the name given to the god of the horse stables. It is written with the characters for “living” and “horse,” which Sadatake writes should be read as “ema.” This is particularly noteworthy because “living” does not commonly have the reading of “e.” The more expected way to read the combination would be “shôma” or “seima.”

⁵⁰ The first two characters, *tatematsuri kaki*, can also be read as a compound word, *hôkai*. “Tatematsuru” is an honorific verb that indicates the speaker is doing something in relation to someone of a higher station. In the case of ema, the donor is subordinate to the gods.

⁵¹ See Ian Reader, “Letters to the Gods: The Form and Meaning of Ema,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 18, no. 1 (1991).

Ema in fiction

Ema also appear in fictional accounts of the Edo period. In two of his books, *Nippon eitaigurai* 日本永代蔵 (The way to wealth) and *Saikaku oridome* 西鶴織留 (Some final words of advice), Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693) mentions the concept of an “ema doctor” (*emuma isha* 絵馬醫者).⁵² These are doctors who did not have enough patients, so they visited ema halls to occupy their time.

As it did not seem quite the proper thing for him to stay at home all the time without a patient, every morning, from the time when patients might have been expected to call, he used to go out and look at the votive pictures of horses at the *Shinomiya Shrine*.⁵³

If a doctor makes house calls on foot, he can always laze away his slow days by looking at *ema* pictures.⁵⁴

These stories suggest that ema connoisseurs did exist during the early Edo period and reveal some ways in which ema were observed and appreciated. In *Saikaku oridome*, Saikaku goes on to describe how people talk about specific details in ema paintings and how ema become significant for an artist’s career.

Generally speaking, since *ema* paintings are noticed by so many people, they can become quite important. In most cases their importance is only short-lived, but this is not always true. For example, in the Kiyomizu Temple in the Capital hangs an *ema* painting by Hasegawa Nagakura [Hasegawa Kyûzô 長谷川久蔵 (1568–1593)] that shows the famous battle between Soga Goro and Asaina Yoshihide. Just above the fold on the inner thigh of Asaina’s trousers, Nagakura carelessly drew in a crest of the Dancing Crane pattern. This mistake, when discovered by a servant girl in

⁵² Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴, *Nippon eitaigura: The Way to Wealth*, trans. Soji Mizuno (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1961); Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴, *Nippon eidaigura* 日本永代蔵 [The way to wealth], ed. Asô Isoji 麻生磯次 and Fuji Akio 富士昭雄, vol. 12, *Ketteihan taiyaku Saikaku zenshû* 決定版対訳西鶴全集 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1975); Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴, *Saikaku oridome* 西鶴織留 [Some final words of advice], ed. Asô Isoji 麻生磯次 and Fuji Akio 富士昭雄, vol. 14, *Ketteihan taiyaku Saikaku zenshû* 決定版対訳西鶴全集 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1976); and Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴, *Some Final Words of Advice*, trans. Peter Nosco (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1980).

⁵³ Ihara, *Nippon eitaigura*, 58.

⁵⁴ Ihara, *Some Final Words of Advice*, 163.

a dyer's shop on Inokuma Avenue, became the absolute talk of the Capital, and it haunted Nagakura for the rest of his life.⁵⁵

This and the other stories Saikaku tells of details and mistakes in ema reveal that ema could be taken very seriously by some, especially in Kyoto. Saikaku is a writer of fiction, but the presence of these stories within his fiction shows that there was a rhetorical space for ema viewing as a leisure activity and that they were the objects of close observation. Saikaku's stories are parodies, but they are firmly rooted in the real conditions of his time. Although this anecdote is probably not literally true, it indicates that ema on display in ema halls were widely viewed and discussed.

In Saikaku's satire, the juxtaposition of religious and secular actions contributes to the comedy. Ema were a particularly fertile source for this comedy because of the inherent tension between their dual aspects of devotion and entertainment. Ema could function in two ways, as both votive object at the time of donation and work of art at the time of display.

Taken as a whole, these texts allowed information about ema to circulate. Although the objects themselves rarely, if ever, left their donation sites before the creation of modern museums, knowledge about them could travel throughout the archipelago. A reader in Kyoto could know many details about the magical ema at Sensôji without ever visiting Edo. Reproductions of the ema ensured both that the composition survived beyond the life of the ema and also that the ema became known to those who never viewed it.

⁵⁵ Ihara, *Some Final Words of Advice*, 160.

Ema in ukiyo-e

Ema were depicted in ukiyo-e prints, which provided another way of disseminating information about them. Ukiyo-e prints were widely circulated during the Edo era and were an inexpensive means by which any member of society could possess artistic works. Unlike ema, ukiyo-e prints were usually viewed in an intimate setting. Many of the same artists who designed ukiyo-e images also painted ema.⁵⁶ Some artists took ema as the subject of ukiyo-e, while others used ema as visual devices.

In addition to ema themselves, ema halls appeared in prints. A triptych by Chôbunsai Eishi 鳥文齋榮之 (1756–1829) of an unidentified ema hall (fig. 2-2) and Kubo Shunman's 窪俊満 (1757–1820) 1786–89 print of the Mimeguri 三囲 ema hall (fig. 2-3) show visitors enjoying actual ema halls.⁵⁷ These prints depict fashionable people viewing ema as a leisurely pastime. Shunman also depicted an imaginary ema hall in the seven-part surimono series *Hisakataya shichiban no uchi* (Seven pictures for the Hisakataya) (fig. 2-4).⁵⁸ The series includes twenty-two separate ema that reveal some of the diversity in subject matter. The ema depict poets, actors, birds and flowers, and a pagoda made of coins mounted on a panel.⁵⁹ Shunman depicted ema in other prints as well. An 1811 example in the Chester Beatty Library shows a small ema of an octopus with a millet cake (fig. 2-5). These ema were donated at a temple in Meguro 目黒, where

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the Torii school, see chapter 4.

⁵⁷ Narazaki Muneshige, ed., *Ukiyo-e Masterpieces in European Collections: Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1987), vol. 9: cat. no. 79.

⁵⁸ Roger Keyes, *The Art of Surimono: Privately Published Japanese Woodblock Prints and Books in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin* (London: Sotheby, 1985), vol. 2: 364–65.

⁵⁹ For surviving examples of ema decorated with coins, including pagoda designs, see Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadon 浅草寺絵馬扁額調査団, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku 浅草寺絵馬扁額調査報告* [Research report on ema and hengaku at Sensôji] (Tokyo: Tôkyôtô Kyôiku Chôshakai Kyôikubu Bunkaka, 1990), 41–45. The authors claim that ema of this type are characteristic of Sensôji (Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadon, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku*, 41).

octopus ema accompanied prayers to cure warts.⁶⁰ Ukiyo-e depictions such as these serve as records of contemporary ema and practices surrounding them. The small ema illustrated with octopi would have been among those burned yearly; Shunman's print preserves it in the same way *Hengaku kihan* and *Itsukushima ema kagami* preserve the compositions of large-scale ema.

Other artists used ema as cartouches within prints. For example, Utagawa Kunisada's 歌川国貞 (1786–1864) 1823 series “On-atsurae ema zukushi” 御詠絵馬盡 (Commissioned ema) shows ema at the upper third of the vertical-format print (fig. 2-6).⁶¹ The distinctive frame around the ema is the only visual indication that these are ema, not another form of cartouche. The ema are attributed to actual religious institutions, such as Mimeguri Inari shrine in the above example.⁶² Kunisada also used ema at the top of prints in his *Kannon reikenki* 観音靈驗記 (Miracles of Kannon) series (fig. 2-7),⁶³ depicting the ema's mounting brackets beneath the cartouche area. The ema in this series show the grounds of Kannon temples. Some ema depict the grounds of the religious sites to which they were donated, such as an 1899 ema at Sensôji.⁶⁴ These examples, along with numerous others of ema and ema halls in ukiyo-e prints, show that ema were an integrated part of the visual landscape in Edo period Japan.

⁶⁰ Keyes, *The Art of Surimono*, 356.

⁶¹ Jan van Doesburg, *What about Kunisada?* (Dodewaard, Netherlands: Huys den Esch, 1990), 62–63.

⁶² van Doesburg, *What about Kunisada?* 62–63.

⁶³ Sasagawa Rinpû 笹川臨風, ed., *Kunisada, Kuniyoshi* 国貞、国芳, vol. 17, *Ukiyoe taika shûsei* 浮世絵大家集成 (Tokyo: Taihokaku Shobô, 1931), n.p.

⁶⁴ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku*, 27. For a longer discussion of these images, see chapter 3.

Display and dissemination

Ema frequently appeared in books and prints, but the primary means of sharing information about them was through display of the ema themselves. Initially, ema were displayed in main halls and worship halls at temples and shrines. The original installation customs survive today at sites such as Gokokuji 護国寺 and Mimeguri shrine in Tokyo.⁶⁵ At Gokokuji, seventeen ema from the Edo period hang within the 1697 Kannon Hall. These ema have likely hung in the same location since the Edo period, within the rafters, above the transom line in what would be the second story.⁶⁶ At Mimeguri, the ema are hung on the walls of the worshipper's hall (*haiden* 拝殿) of the shrine. These spaces could hold only a limited number of ema. As noted above, there does not appear to be a set manner of donation for ema. In his comments on ema, Ise Sadatake claimed there was no ritual. The shrine head at Mimeguri, whose family received ema donations at the shrine for generations, said that the shrine's only requirement was that there was a place for the ema.⁶⁷

Ema were not commissioned by the religious institution itself but by their donors (or artists acting as donors). The donation process would begin with a donor, either an individual or a group, deciding to offer an ema to a specific site. This might have been occasioned by a visit to the site or by some other motivation unconnected to an immediate visit to the temple or shrine. For example, Ronald Toby wrote about a group

⁶⁵ An ema hall at Mimeguri was destroyed during World War II. It is depicted in a triptych by Kubo Shunman in the collection of the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels. Narazaki Muneshige, ed., *Ukiyo-e Masterpieces in European Collections*, cat. no. 79. The ema that survive at Mimeguri were either installed in other buildings or had been removed from the ema hall for exhibition, such as one by Hanabusa Itchô that was included in an exhibition at the Mitsukoshi department store. Nagamine Kôichi 永峯光一, chief priest, Mimeguri shrine, in discussion with the author, September 27, 2006.

⁶⁶ Kawai Masatomo 河合正朝, professor emeritus of Japanese art history, Keio University, in discussion with the author, September 5, 2004.

⁶⁷ Nagamine, personal communication, September 27, 2006.

of villagers from Kishi Sakurai 喜志桜井 (in modern-day Osaka prefecture) who donated an ema depicting a Korean delegation's visit to Japan thirteen years earlier.⁶⁸ Toby speculates that the ema may have been donated as a commemoration. At Naritasan Shinshôji 成田山新勝寺 in Chiba 千葉 prefecture, the inscription on the back of an ema reveals that it was donated by a mother who wanted her son to give up his profligate life and return home.⁶⁹

As ema grew in size and popularity during the sixteenth century, the need for an ema hall in which to display them logically followed. The first ema hall is usually attributed to Kitano 北野 shrine in Kyoto and is said to have been donated in 1608 in the name of Toyotomi Hideyori 豊臣秀頼 (1593–1615). As Andrew Watsky has shown, cultural patronage was an important part of the Toyotomi clan's political maneuvering during this time, between the death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598) and the clan's defeat at the Battle of Osaka in 1615.⁷⁰ A newer ema hall still stands at Kitano and contains ema from the Edo period and later (fig. 2-8).⁷¹ Other sites in Kyoto, such as Imamiya 今宮 shrine, also had very early ema halls (fig. 2-9). An early-seventeenth-century date for the emergence of ema halls corresponds to Iwai Hiromi's dating for the expansion of subject matter and size of ema. However, even after the introduction of ema

⁶⁸ Ronald P. Toby, "Carnival of the Aliens: Korean Embassies in Edo-Period Art and Popular Culture," *Monumenta Nipponica* 41, no. 4 (1986): 439–41.

⁶⁹ Ogura Hiroshi 小倉博, "Bunchô no ema" 文晁の絵馬 [Ema by Tani Bunchô], *Museum Chiba*, no. 2 (1973). For a longer discussion about ema at Naritasan Shinshôji, see chapter 4.

⁷⁰ Andrew M. Watsky, *Chikubushima: Deploying the Sacred Arts in Momoyama Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004). Toyotomi Hideyori was the second and only surviving son of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. When Hideyoshi died in 1598, Hideyori was only five years old. Hideyoshi left in place a regency structure in which five regents were to rule for Hideyori until he came of age. Tokugawa Ieyasu was one of the regents and eventually took control of Japan from Hideyori. Hideyori committed seppuku after Ieyasu defeated his forces at Osaka Castle in 1615.

⁷¹ Reminiscent of the teahouses in ema halls during the Edo period, the modern Kitano ema hall contains vending machines and space for sitting.

halls, temples and shrines without such halls continued to display ema in other buildings of the religious complex.

Ema halls share some similarities with exhibition galleries and are frequently compared to museums and galleries in the secondary literature. One of the most apt comparisons is to exhibitions at department stores in modern Japan, where fine art exhibitions are offered as a respite from the usual activity of the place.⁷² Unlike other halls at temples and shrines, ema halls are unenclosed. They are usually one or two bays wide and three to five bays long. They have long eaves, which help to protect the ema that are hung on the exterior of the building. Ema are suspended above the lintel on solid walls both inside and outside. The open space of the ema hall allows unrestricted access to viewers. When ema were hung in main halls, worship halls, or Kannon halls, they might have been less accessible to visitors; when hung in ema halls, although they were removed from direct worship space, they were still connected to the devotional mission of the religious site. At Myôhōji 妙法寺 temple in Suginami 杉並 ward, Tokyo, many of the ema depict religious subject matter. Ward historians have specifically noted the proselytizing capability of these ema.⁷³

The introduction of ema halls changed the nature of the display and appreciation of ema. Once moved out of the worship space, they were able to function in a system that was not strictly intertwined with religious activities. I do not mean to imply that ema were severed from their religious context when placed in an ema hall, but the space of the hall allowed more freedom of interpretation and appreciation. I would also speculate that

⁷² Suginamiku Kyôiku Iinkai 杉並区教育委員会, ed., *Suginami no ema* 杉並の絵馬 [Ema of Suginami], *Bunkazai shirîzu* 27 (Tokyo: Suginamiku Kyôiku Iinkai, 1982), 15. Many of these museums have closed in the last ten years, but major department stores in large Japanese cities often have exhibition space on one of the top floors, where they regularly host museum-quality exhibitions.

⁷³ Suginamiku Kyôiku Iinkai, ed., *Suginami no ema*, 29.

the introduction of ema halls encouraged the expansion of subject matter beyond horses and other religious subjects. Non-religious subject matter would have seemed less incongruous in ema halls than in the main hall or the worshippers' hall. Placing these objects in a specialized location devoted to them foregrounded their relevance as items of display. The viewer was able to consider these objects as primarily works of art. This attitude was most clearly described by Saikaku but can be seen in other period sources as well. Furthermore, the ema were more readily viewable as objects in the open air of the ema hall than in the dark space of worship halls.

A triptych by Chôbunsai Eishi (1756–1829) in the collection of the Ota Memorial Ukiyo-e Museum shows how visitors might have experienced an ema hall during the Edo period (see fig. 2-2).⁷⁴ The setting of this particular print seems to be a temple. In the right panel, the steps leading up to the main hall are visible. Men and women are depicted strolling the grounds in the background. All the people shown in the ema hall are women, not because only women could view ema but because the print is a beautiful women image (*bijinga* 美人画). In the central panel, a seated beauty receives tea from a girl, and in the left panel, a stand with other tea equipment can be seen. All around the ema hall, beautiful women are looking at the paintings, with the two on the right discussing what they see. Only the bottom portion of the large-scale ema can be seen, along with three small-scale ema. The subjects are typical—a horse, a flower painting, a warrior image, and an undetermined subject that is probably a historical narrative. This triptych depicts

⁷⁴ I would like to thank Hinohara Kenji of the Ota Memorial Ukiyo-e Museum for introducing me to this print and providing a reproduction of it.

ema viewing as a fashionable activity and served to circulate the idea of ema halls and ema viewing.⁷⁵

During the Edo period, religious sites became more obviously sites of cultural, not just religious, activity. Pilgrimage to temples and shrines was the first permitted form of widespread tourism in Japan. By the eighteenth century, guidebooks openly acknowledged the touristic aspect of traveling.⁷⁶ Ema halls were among the sites local and regional visitors could see while stopping at a temple or shrine. Guidebooks to ema halls could have served as exhibition catalogs. They would have highlighted the most important paintings, leaving the others for visitors to discover.

Ema halls were unique within the display culture of the Edo period because they allowed anyone to view original paintings at any time. Japan's earliest museums were founded in the Meiji period, under the influence of Westerners in Japan.⁷⁷ At the beginning of the Edo period, works of art were displayed in private homes, public spaces in the residences of daimyo and other high-ranking officials, and the worship spaces or residences of clergy at temples and shrines. In wealthy households, handscrolls and hanging scrolls had been a common form of art since the Heian period. Along with painted screens, these objects would be brought out in small groupings for display as seasonally and socially appropriate. Less wealthy households used prints in place of paintings. While there were public viewings of specific religious objects for limited

⁷⁵ The emado Eishi depicts is not at all unusual. Written around the same time, Matsudaira Kanzan's *Sensôjishi* (Sensôji intentions) discusses the emado at Sensôji. Matsudaira Kanzan 松平冠山, *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺志 [Sensôji intentions], (Tokyo: Sensôji Shuppanbu, 1939–42). He says that there were teahouses at two locations within the emado, which gave people a chance to relax.

⁷⁶ Berry, *Japan in Print*, especially chapter 6.

⁷⁷ Kornicki has shown that Meiji period exhibitions drew on precedents from the Edo period. Peter F. Kornicki, "Public Display and Changing Values: Early Meiji Exhibitions and Their Precursors," *Monumenta Nipponica* 49, no. 2 (1994).

periods of time (such as *kaichô* and *etoki* 絵解き), public art displays were not common prior to the Edo period. During the Edo period, literary salons and other activities that provided access to culture through money or education became common. Paintings were often displayed at celebratory *shogakai* 書画会 banquets held in restaurants, for which viewers purchased tickets.⁷⁸ The increased availability of art-viewing opportunities in the later Edo period represents a democratization of culture and is a distinctive feature of Edo period life.

Edo period society has long been understood to have been divided into a strict class or estate system. The four-class system is drawn from a Chinese Confucian model but was adapted to suit Japanese society.⁷⁹ The categories in descending order of rank are samurai, farmer, artisan, and merchant.⁸⁰ The groupings are not classes in the Marxist sense because they are not related to economic power. Especially in the late Edo period, an individual's economic standing was not necessarily linked to his or her status group, and, while there was only limited mobility between status groups,⁸¹ members of different groups were able to mingle at public entertainments and salons.

⁷⁸ Andrew L. Markus, "Shogakai: Celebratory Banquets of the Late Edo Period," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53, no. 1 (1993).

⁷⁹ Hall argues that Confucian thought was used to justify, but not to develop, the status groups. See John Whitney Hall, "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1, no. 1 (1974): 48.

⁸⁰ As is frequently noted, these four groups leave out other members of Japanese society. The court nobility in Kyoto are not part of any of these groups, nor are clergy or the so-called *burakumin*, or "untouchables." Most Tokugawa records group merchants and artisans together as townspeople (*chônin* 町人), so in cities there were functionally only two status groups. For more information about status groups in Edo period Japan, see Daniel V. Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005); David L. Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and Hall, "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan."

⁸¹ Previously there was thought to be no mobility among groups, but David Howell argues that such mobility was possible, although not common. See Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*.

One of the distinctive features of Edo period culture is the wide array of public entertainment available, particularly in the city of Edo. The ubiquity and general availability of this entertainment, regardless of status group, were factors in the gradual flattening of social hierarchies in the Edo period and the commingling of people from different status groups. Temples and shrines were common locations for this commingling.⁸² Street performers, temporarily constructed theaters, permanent theaters, exhibitions of wondrous things (*misemono* 見世物), and shopping districts were all considered public entertainment and were often located near temples and shrines.⁸³ The Nakamise 仲見世 shopping district at Asakusa temple in Tokyo still has stalls lining the main approach to the temple, as during the Edo period. While the stalls along the primary path to the temple are now geared chiefly toward domestic and foreign tourists, other shops in the area cater to Tokyo residents.⁸⁴ Kaichô were another popular type of exhibition during the Edo period.⁸⁵ These temporary displays of temple treasures were used to raise money and drew crowds together. Ema were different from other forms of Edo period public spectacle because their display was permanent. This makes ema halls more like modern museums and galleries, compared to other Edo period displays.

Many historians have engaged the issue of identifying the shift to the modern in Japanese culture. The Edo period was previously considered “premodern,” but more

⁸² Nam-lin Hur has written extensively about this phenomenon at Sensôji. See Nam-lin Hur, *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensôji and Edo Society*, vol. 185, Harvard East Asian Monographs (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

⁸³ For more on these “public spectacles,” see Andrew L. Markus, “The Carnival of Edo: Misemono Spectacles from Contemporary Accounts,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45, no. 2 (1985).

⁸⁴ The area is particularly known for fans, kimonos, and accessories for traditional Japanese dance.

⁸⁵ See chapter 4 for a longer discussion of kaichô.

recent scholarship classes it as “early modern.”⁸⁶ This linguistic variation is relevant to understanding the culture of the Edo period. The profound social changes that occurred during this period affected Japan’s growth in the modern period. Two elements of that change—urbanization and the leveling of social classes—are relevant to my discussion of how ema functioned.

Because of the permanent nature of their display and their accessibility, ema were a form of Edo period public art that existed within a Habermasian public sphere.⁸⁷ Habermas’s conception of the public sphere, which is characterized by public discussion and debate, was rooted in the decline of feudal society and the rise of more democratic forms of government.⁸⁸ He emphasized the political public sphere but acknowledged other forms, referring specifically to the literary public sphere. Craig Calhoun has written that “The importance of the public sphere lies in its potential as a mode of societal integration.”⁸⁹ It is in the breakdown of feudal society and social integration that I find Habermas applicable to an understanding of early modern Japanese culture in general and ema in particular. Saikaku’s story of a mistake in an ema becoming a popular topic for public discussion and evidence in printed books and ukiyo-e of the public consumption of ema outside their display spaces imply the presence of an artistic public sphere in which works of art such as ema could be discussed.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Carol Gluck explores Edo’s alternate positions as “modern” and “past” in “The Invention of Edo,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁸⁷ Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere,” in *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A reader*, ed. Steven Seidman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989). For a discussion of the nature of the early modern public sphere in Japan, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, “Public Life in Authoritarian Japan,” *Daedalus*, 127, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 144–155.

⁸⁸ Berry argues that a public sphere in Japan can be separated from democracy. Berry, “Public Life,” 133.

⁸⁹ Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 6.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of printed books and ukiyo-e in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century public discourse, see Katsuya Hirano, “Social Networks and the Production of Public Discourse in Edo Popular Culture,” in

As we can see from the record of printed books and woodblock prints, ema halls were a common part of the cultural landscape in Edo period Japan. In the early modern period, religious sites commonly became gathering places for the public. Because of this, other attractions such as shopping and misemono also clustered around temples and shrines. In the Meiji period, the first exhibitions of arts and industry in Japan were held at temples. Ema halls were a kind of public gallery and precursors to the Meiji events.

Early scholarship on ema regularly asserts their origin as religious objects. By the eighteenth century, however, ema were strongly established as objects of display as well. Unlike other traditional Japanese art forms, they were on view for extended periods of time and widely available to the general public. Ema and ema halls were a common part of the Japanese visual landscape. More than religious objects, ema took on lives as social objects in an increasingly urbanized culture.

Acquisition: Art and Ownership in Edo-Period Japan, ed. Elizabeth Lillehoj (Warren, CT: Floating World Editions, 2007).

Chapter 3 Horses, Warriors, Temples, and Legends: Ema at Sensôji

Crowded together in the main hall, boards overlapping, a profusion of ema once decorated the main hall at one of Edo's premier temples, Kinryûsan Sensôji 金龍山浅草寺 in Asakusa 浅草. The nearby ema hall offered another visual feast of votive plaques. The abundance of ema styles and subjects at Sensôji shows that while horses and religious subjects remained important to the genre, in the early modern period a wide variety of ema types were commissioned, donated, and, most importantly, displayed at religious institutions.

Throughout the Edo period, Sensôji attracted patronage from both the commoner and elite classes. The temple and surrounding area provided these visitors and local residents with spiritual as well as recreational activities.¹ The collection of ema now housed at the temple reflects the multifaceted nature of Sensôji and offers an opportunity to explore the wide array of possible ema subjects available to artists and donors. Sensôji is not alone in the diversity it represents but is unusual for the large number of ema that have survived to the present day. The potential subject matter for ema was as broad as for other forms of Japanese visual culture, including ukiyo-e prints. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the genre could no longer be defined as "horse paintings."² The defining characteristics of ema became their origin in donation and their subsequent display to the public. Artists from almost every style and school in the Japanese painting

¹ For an extensive study of Sensôji's role in Edo society, see Nam-lin Hur, *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensôji and Edo Society*, vol. 185, Harvard East Asian Monographs (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

² The expansion of ema subjects beyond horses can be dated to the fifteenth century. See discussion in chapter 1.

tradition produced ema. This chapter uses examples from Sensôji to explore the range of ema and their prominence within a context of display.

Sensôji

Sensôji's grounds lie near the banks of the Sumida 隅田 river in what is now north-eastern central Tokyo. Villagers in the area founded Sensôji in the early seventh century after the miraculous discovery of a statue of Kannon 観音, the bodhisattva of compassion (Sk. Avalokitesvara) in the Sumida river, which was then known as the Miyato 宮戸 river. The most commonly quoted version of the story attributes the discovery to two brothers, Hinokuma Hamanari 檜熊濱成 and Hinokuma Takenari 檜熊武成, on the eighteenth day of the third month of 628. The brothers showed the statue to Haji no Nakatomo 土師中知, the head of their village, who recognized the statue as Kannon.³ Slight variations of the story exist. The seventeenth-century text *Edo meisho ki* 江戸名所記 (Record of famous places in Edo) records that the statue was found by three brothers, Hinokuma, Hamanari, and Takenari.⁴ *Edo meisho zue* 江戸名所図会 (Illustrated famous places of Edo), by Saitô Gesshin 齊藤月岑 (1804–1878), relates that the two Hinokuma brothers were fishing with Haji when the statue was found. The illustrations in *Edo meisho zue* depict three fishermen in the boat when the statue is found and the small riverside hut built to

³ This is the founding legend reported by Hur. He casts doubt on the accuracy of the 628 date but states that there is evidence for a temple at the location in the eighth century. See Hur, *Prayer and Play*, 5, 232.

⁴ *Edo meisho ki* 江戸名所記 [Record of famous places in Edo], ed. Edo Sôsho Kankôkai, vol. 2, *Edo sôsho* (Tokyo: Meicho Kankôkai, 1964), 29.

house the statue (figs. 3-1 and 3-2). A Shinto shrine on the grounds of Sensôji honors the three founders, Hinokuma Hamanari, Hinokuma Takenari, and Haji no Nakatomo.⁵

From this modest beginning, Sensôji grew to become a large complex that is still one of the most visited temples in Tokyo. The temple received land grants from both the founder of the Kamakura 鎌倉 shogunate, Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–1199), and the first Muromachi 室町 shogun, Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–1358).⁶ Hôjô Ujitsuna 北条氏綱 (1486–1541), whose family controlled the region from nearby Odawara 小田原 for most of the sixteenth century, supported the rebuilding of the temple in 1539 after a fire in 1535.⁷ As with many institutions in the Kantô 関東 region, Sensôji's importance increased with the arrival in Edo of Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1542–1616). Ieyasu took control of the region as a vassal to Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598) in 1590 after the defeat of the Hôjô. Ieyasu chose Sensôji as a prayer temple dedicated to his family's well-being.⁸ In 1625, the shogunal family established Kan'eiji 寛永寺 as a new prayer temple.⁹ Sensôji technically became a subtemple of Kan'eiji, and Kan'eiji audited all of Sensôji's financial arrangements.¹⁰

⁵ This shrine hosts the large Sanja festival 三社祭, which is held every May. Because the festival ends at the main gate to Sensôji, where there is a wide intersection that allows many people to gather, the festival is often incorrectly linked to the temple, not the smaller shrine.

⁶ *Edo meisho ki*, 32.

⁷ Amino Yûshun 網野宥俊, *Sensôji shidanshō* 浅草寺史談抄 [Historical commentary on Sensôji temple], (Tokyo: Kinryûsan Sensôji, 1962), 310; and Kinryûsan Sensôji 金竜山浅草寺, ed., *Kinryûsan Sensôji ema zuroku* 金竜山浅草寺絵馬図録 [Catalog of ema at Kinryûsan Sensôji] (Tokyo: Kinryûsan Sensôji, 1978), n.p.

⁸ Hur, *Prayer and Play*, 1.

⁹ Hur, *Prayer and Play*, 13. Kan'eiji takes its name from the Kan'ei era, when the temple was established. The temple is located near Ueno 上野 park, and most of its buildings were destroyed during fighting when the Tokugawa shogunate fell in late 1867. The northern location of the temple was chosen to imitate Mount Hiei's 比叡 location to the north of Kyoto.

¹⁰ Nagashima Noriko 長島憲子, *Kinsei Sensôji no keizai kôzô* 近世浅草寺の経済構造 [Economic structure of Sensôji during the early modern period] (Tokyo: Iwata Shoin, 1998), 7–57.

As Nam-lin Hur has shown in his study of Sensôji, the temple served an important role in both religious and secular life for residents of Edo.¹¹ Although its Edo period prosperity began with Ieyasu's endorsement, by the end of the Edo period, Sensôji was recognized as a major gathering site for the townspeople. Its proximity to the Yoshiwara 吉原 pleasure quarters, which were farther north along the Sumida river, may have contributed to its rise as a space for social, in addition to religious, activities.

Hasegawa Settan's 長谷川雪旦 (1778–1843) *Edo meisho zue* illustrations of Sensôji depict a large, sprawling complex. The importance of Sensôji in the mid-nineteenth century is easily deduced from the relative length of Gesshin's entry on the temple. He devoted almost forty-two pages to Sensôji and its immediate vicinity, including discussions of the entertainments to be found there, and twenty-seven pages of illustrations. Modern visitors will recognize the basic layout of the temple grounds. Across ten pages, Settan guides the reader from the southern end of the temple precincts at the Kaminarimon 雷門 gate, along the Nakamise 仲見世 shopping road, through the Niômon 仁王門 gate to the main hall and the Okayama 奥山 district behind it.¹² Between the Niômon gate and the main hall, along the right-hand side of the path in an area now occupied by stalls selling temple fortunes, Settan drew an ema hall (fig. 3-3). The hall is four bays long and two bays wide, with the longest dimension along a north-south axis. Four benches and visitors can be seen within the hall. This hall is also depicted in Matsudaira Kanzan's (1767–1833) 1813 *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺志 (Sensôji intentions),

¹¹ Hur, *Prayer and Play*.

¹² For a modern description of Settan's illustrations, see Kawata Hisashi 川田壽, "Edo meisho zue" wo yomu 江戸名所図会を読む [Reading *Illustrated Famous Places of Edo*], (Tokyo: Tokyodô Shuppan, 1989), 250–63.

labeled as a *gaku* hall (fig. 3-4).¹³ The ema hall is seen even more clearly in Teisai Hokuba's 蹄齋北馬 (1771–1844) "Sensôji keidai zu byôbu" 浅草寺境内図屏風 (Screen of the Sensôji grounds), painted during the Tenpô 天保 period (1830–44) (fig. 3-5).¹⁴ This screen shows much of the same area as Settan's, from the Kaminarimon gate to the main hall. Hokuba's perspective is lower than Settan's, which gives the viewer less specific information about the various locales depicted. Hokuba's scene is even more crowded with people than Settan's; this screen may depict visitors to the temple on a festival day on the seventeenth of the first month.¹⁵

Hokuba's depiction of the ema hall attracts attention because the hall seems much larger relative to the other buildings than it does in Settan's illustration or Kanzan's plan of the temple grounds. The five-story pagoda, which in Settan's depiction is significantly larger than the Niômmon gate and the ema hall, is shown on the screen smaller and dwarfed by surrounding buildings. The three dominant structures on the left-hand screen are the main hall, the ema hall, and the Niômmon gate. On the exterior of the ema hall, four ema are hanging under the eaves. All are textual and without images. Paper lanterns hang beneath them along the transom. In the second bay, a woman near a tea kettle carries a teacup on a small tray. Kanzan reported that two tea shops were in the ema hall and that temple visitors were able to relax there.¹⁶

¹³ Matsudaira Kanzan 松平冠山, *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺志 [Sensôji intentions], 2 vols. (Tokyo: Sensôji Shuppanbu, 1939–42), 30–31. Matsudaira Kanzan was another name for the daimyo Ikeda Sadatsune 池田定常.

¹⁴ For more information about the screen, see Yasumura Toshinobu 安村敏信, "Teisai Hokuba hitsu Sensôji keidai zu byôbû" 蹄齋北馬筆浅草寺境内圖屏風 [Teisai Hokuba's screen of *View of the Grounds of Sensôji*], *Kokka* 国華 1138 (1990).

¹⁵ Yasumura, "Teisai Hokuba hitsu," 41–42.

¹⁶ Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 140.

Kanzan listed thirty ema hanging in the ema hall.¹⁷ Most donor names are not recorded. These ema are mostly from the eighteenth century, with a few from the late seventeenth century, although not all are dated. The earliest dated ema is from 1634, and the latest is from 1807, only four years before the publication of *Sensôjishi*. The subject of the ema vary widely, including images of gods of good fortune (such as one from 1689 showing Daikoku 大黒, Hotei 布袋, and Ebisu 恵比寿), Kannon sutras, and a depiction of the Heian 平安 period (794–1185) warrior Minamoto no Yoriyoshi 源頼義 (988–1075). None of these ema survive.¹⁸ The last known record of the ema hall, although not the ema themselves, is in an 1877 study by the city of Tokyo. The exact date of its destruction is unknown,¹⁹ and the ema listed by Kanzan were presumably destroyed along with the hall.

Tokyo meisho zue 東京名所図会 (Illustrated famous sites in Tokyo), published between 1896 and 1911, shows several ema hanging in the main hall. A view of the interior of the main hall depicts crowds of people looking at displays and other objects, which include several recognizable ema (fig. 3-6).²⁰ The ema include Kô Sukokei's 1803 illustration of the Shôjô dance 猩々舞, a horse from 1849 signed Nittôsei Tōei 日東齋等榮, an 1866 depiction of six famous Heian period poets by Yoshida Sôsuke 吉田惣助, and several that were donated during the Meiji period. Ema at Sensôji likely hung in both the main hall and the ema hall until the loss of the ema hall. Twelve ema are also singled

¹⁷ Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 140–41.

¹⁸ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan 浅草寺絵馬扁額調査団, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chōsa hôkoku* 浅草寺絵馬扁額調査報告 [Research report on ema and hengaku at Sensôji] (Tokyo: Tôkyôtô Kyôiku Chôshakai Kyôikubu Bunkaka, 1990), 7.

¹⁹ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chōsa hôkoku*, 9.

²⁰ *Tokyo meisho zue* 東京名所図会, ed. Asakura Haruhiko 朝倉治彦 and Tsuchida Mitsufumi 槌田満文, vol. 1, *Meiji Tokyo meisho zue* (Tokyo: Tokyodô Shupan, 1992), 31.

out for reproduction.²¹ These include a presumed seventeenth-century horse by a Kanô school artist (see below), two eighteenth-century ema, and eight nineteenth-century ema (two of which are from the Meiji period) (figs. 3-7 and 3-8). The twelfth cannot be identified and probably is no longer extant. In the reproduction, the twelve ema are assembled together in an almost overlapping fashion. In addition to the compositions themselves, the illustration also shows the ema frames.

Until the late 1920s, ema continued to hang in the main hall, and local residents counted viewing them as one of the pleasures of a trip to Sensôji.²² This hall was built in 1649 and survived the Meireki 明暦 fire of 1657 that destroyed three-quarters of Tokyo.²³ All of the ema with confirmed dates postdate this fire. Unfortunately, the 1649 hall was destroyed on March 10, 1945, during the World War II firebombing of Tokyo. Nonetheless, 245 ema from the Edo and Meiji periods survive.²⁴ Fortunately, they had been removed from the main hall for a restoration of the building from 1927 to 1933 and not reinstalled.²⁵ Now, casual visitors to Sensôji are usually unaware of the ema, which are housed in a gallery in the basement of the new concrete five-story pagoda completed

²¹ *Tokyo meisho zue*, 55–56.

²² Kawai Masatomo 河合正朝, professor emeritus of Japanese art history, Keio University, Tokyo, conversation with the author, Sept. 3, 2004; Kata Kôji 加太こうじ, "Edo Tokyo no ema" 江戸東京の絵馬 [Ema in Edo and Tokyo], in *Ema hishi* 絵馬秘史, ed. Iwai Hiromi 岩井宏實 (Tokyo: NHK Books, 1979), 174–84; and Morii Yoshigi 森井芳枝, "Kannon dô no gaku ema" 観音堂の額絵馬 [Gaku and ema in Kannon halls], *Tabi to densetsu* 旅と伝説 3, no. 10 (1930).

²³ On the Meireki fire, see James L. McClain, "Edobashi: Power, Space, and Popular Culture in Edo," in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Merriman, and Kaoru Ugawa (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 105. The main hall at Sensôji burned down and was rebuilt nineteen times; two of those fires occurred during the Edo period. After each of the Edo fires, in 1631 and 1642, Tokugawa Iemitsu paid for the rebuilding. For a chart summarizing constructions, renovations, and losses of the main hall, see Amino Yûshun 網野宥俊, *Sensôji shidanshō*, 308–11.

²⁴ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chōsa hōkoku*, 1.

²⁵ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chōsa hōkoku*, 8.

in 1973. Many of the ema underwent conservation treatment in the early 1970s,²⁶ and the temple published the results of a comprehensive cataloging project in 1990.²⁷ The ema gallery is periodically open for tours but normally is closed.

Sensôji also previously had a stable in which a sacred horse was kept. Kanzan described it as holding two white horses.²⁸ The most famous sacred horse stable is probably at the Nikkô Tôshôgû 日光東照宮 mausoleum for the first shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu.²⁹ The sacred stable at Sensôji may date to the time of the Nikkô Tôshôgû's construction, when many Tôshôgû shrines were built around the country.³⁰ The sacred horse was still present in the early Meiji period, when it was observed by the Frenchman Aimé Humbert (1818–1900),³¹ but is no longer a part of the Sensôji complex.

Horses

Among the diverse subjects represented at Sensôji, horses continued to play an important role. Four small ema that may be from the early seventeenth century offer an example of ema displayed in the main hall from an early date (fig. 3-9). The second and third shoguns, Tokugawa Hidetada 徳川秀忠 (1579–1632, ruled 1605–23) and Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604–1651, ruled 1623–51), supposedly donated the ema to Sensôji. They are small maki-e plaques with horses in raised gold. In Kanzan's time, they were

²⁶ Kinryûsan Sensôji, ed., *Sensôji ema zuroku*, n.p.

²⁷ The catalog is published as Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsdan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*.

²⁸ Matsudaira Kanzan 松平冠山, *Sensôjishi*, 343.

²⁹ For a brief description of the sacred stable, which includes a carving of the see-no-evil, hear-no-evil, speak-no-evil monkeys in the transom, see Naomi Okawa, *Edo Architecture: Katsura and Nikko*, trans. Alan Woodull and Akito Miyamoto (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1975), 64–65.

³⁰ Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 343.

³¹ Aime Humbert, *Japan and the Japanese: Illustrated*, trans. Mrs. Cashel Hoey, ed. H. W. Bates (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1874), 249. Humbert also noted many ema hanging in various buildings throughout the complex. These were probably both small and large ema. Humbert, *Japan and the Japanese*, 244–45.

hung at the far back of the main hall.³² These ema were so treasured by Sensôji that Kanzan illustrated them in his text.³³ In late-twentieth-century texts published by the temple organization itself, these plaques are included among the ema collection, and they are displayed in the ema gallery at the base of the pagoda.³⁴ The composition of the plaques, which are unsigned, matches the traditional style of tied horses. At each side of the frames are hooks and eyes in low relief through which cords are threaded to restrain the horses. In addition to the maki-e frame that is part of the composition, wooden frames with metal fittings typical of ema also surround the plaques. They deviate from the usual characteristics of late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century ema in that they lack a peaked roof and an inscription on the face of the composition. These plaques are treasured objects,³⁵ but we cannot confirm that they were actually donated by Hidetada and Iemitsu. If these ema are from Hidetada's and Iemitsu's time, they are the oldest ema at Sensôji. A much later and slightly larger ema with a similar composition was donated in 1840 by Sugiyama Hikohyôe 杉山彦兵衛 (dates unknown) (fig. 3-10).

Another notable example of a horse ema is the famed Kanô ema. The ema can be definitively dated to before the 1642 destruction of the main hall by fire. The exact identity of the artist is unknown, but he was probably a member of the Kanô school. The ema is currently so blackened that the image can not clearly be discerned;³⁶ however, its composition is known through later copies (fig. 3-11). Most notably, Matsudaira Kanzan included a reproduction of the ema in *Sensôjishi*, in which he stated that during the 1789

³² Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 66.

³³ Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 68–69. He called them *umagaku* 馬額 (or *bagaku*, horse plaques), not ema.

³⁴ Kinryûsan Sensôji, ed., *Sensôji ema zuroku*, cat. nos. 4 and 5; and Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 11.

³⁵ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 11.

³⁶ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 2.

restoration of Sensôji, Kanô Tôrin 狩野洞琳 painted a reproduction of this image.³⁷

Stylistically, the image follows early Kanô school models and is similar to maki-e ema discussed above. In 1743, the ema was repaired to reinforce the boards.³⁸

Several stories that circulated about this ema during the Edo period form the basis for its fame. The first story invokes the magical power of an ema. The original composition of the ema supposedly lacked a rope that would figuratively secure the horse in place. Not long after the donation of this ema, residents of the area around Sensôji would awaken in the morning to find that their crops had been eaten during the night. Despite the commercial activity around Sensôji, numerous fields still surrounded the temple in the early seventeenth century. The villagers identified the horse from the ema as the culprit because it had mud on its hooves in the morning. When a rope was added to the painting, purportedly by the sculptor Hidari Jingorô 左甚五郎 (fl. late sixteenth–early seventeenth century), the horse could no longer escape to the fields at night.

Most commentators attribute the horse's ability to come to life to the extremely lifelike way it was painted. The magical nature of this painting reveals something about the efficacy of ema. If a painting can come to life and behave like a real horse, then the ema is as good as a living horse as a donation. Donors would receive the same spiritual merit for donating ema that they would for donations of live horses. Here, the ema quite literally substituted for a horse because it became a living horse.

The legend of the Sensôji horse coming to life ties the painting and the temple to Japan's early history. The twelfth-century text *Konjaku monogatari shû* 今昔物語集

³⁷ The suggestion that Kanô Tôrin painted the image is problematic. The headnote in *Sensôjishi* gives Tôrin's death date as 1820, but Laurance Roberts lists Tôrin's dates as 1679–1754. Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 73, and Laurance Roberts, *A Dictionary of Japanese Artists* (Trumbull, CT: Weatherhill, 1976), 183.

³⁸ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 11.

(Stories from the past) includes a legend about a horse in an ema that could come to life.³⁹ A monk named Michikimi 道君 was returning to Osaka from a pilgrimage to Kumano 熊野. He slept beneath a tree one night and heard a mounted rider approach the tree and invite someone to join him. A voice replied that he could not come because his horse's legs were broken. In the morning, Michikimi found a statue and an ema that was broken at the horse's legs. Michikimi tied the ema back together and was later visited by a deity who thanked him for healing the horse.

A story of a horse eating crops also appears in the thirteenth-century text *Kokon chomonjû* 古今著聞集 (Collection of well-known stories from all times). The story involves a horse painting by Kose no Kanaoka 巨勢金岡 (late ninth to early tenth century) at Ninnaji 仁和寺 temple in Kyoto.⁴⁰ The horse in Kanaoka's painting stopped destroying the crops after its eye was poked out.⁴¹ The early date for this story of a painted horse becoming a living being offers an alternate explanation for how ema came to be reasonable substitutes for living horse donations. The stories also connect to a broader tradition of magical images that appears in many cultures.⁴² They relate most directly to stories about the Tang dynasty (618–906) Chinese painter Wu Daozi 吴道子 (680–740), who painted a dragon so realistic it came to life, and to another story about a

³⁹ The story appears in "Ten'ôji no sô Michikimi, Hokke wo shôshite saenokami wo sukû koto" 天王寺の僧道公、法華を誦して道祖を救う語 [How the monk Michikimi of Ten'ôji saved the guardian of travel by chanting the Lotus Sutra], in *Konjaku monogatari shû* 今昔物語集, ed. Nagadumi Yasuaki 永積安明 and Ikegami Junichi 池上洵一 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1966).

⁴⁰ Tachibana Narisue 橘成季, *Kokon chomonjû* 古今著聞集 [Collection of well-known stories from all times], ed. Nishio Kôichi 西尾光一 and Kobayashi Yasuharu 小林保治 (Tokyo: Shinchôsha, 1986), 28. I would like to thank Onishi Hiroshi for alerting me to this story.

⁴¹ Tachibana, *Kokon chomonjû*, 28.

⁴² For a discussion of magical images in biographies of artists, see Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, trans. Alastair Laing (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 71–84.

painted mule that was heard walking during the night.⁴³ In Western traditions of magical images and objects, realism was not the source of the images' power.⁴⁴ The opposite is true for Wu Daozi's paintings and Sensôji's magical ema; these paintings gain their supernatural power through the artists' skill.

The stories of Sensôji's magical ema and Kanaoka's horse also display the negative consequences of live horse donations, in terms of the feed necessary to maintain the animal. The negligible maintenance cost of an ema avoided this problem. This is an interesting inversion of the pun usually associated with horse ema. Horses eat grass, which is *kusa* 草 in Japanese. The word has a similar sound to the first two syllables of *kasabuta* 瘡蓋, meaning "scab."⁴⁵ The words can be punned to mean that horses eat scabs and, by extension, cure illness or other negative situations. In this case, however, the horse caused, rather than solved, the negative situation.

The second common story about Sensôji's magical ema discusses how the painting was almost lost in the fire of 1642. At that time, the ema hung in the main hall. A resident of Edo named Hyôbê 兵衛 (dates unknown) ran into the burning building to rescue the ema. His heroic act was immortalized in an inscription on the frame of the ema that reads, "At the time of the fire on the ninth day of the second month in the nineteenth year of Kan'ei (1642), Hyôbê of Kimura city, living in Edo, Bushû, removed [this]."⁴⁶

The rescue of the Sensôji ema from the flames further demonstrates the value high regard in which it was held in the seventeenth century. Of all the ema donated to

⁴³ Henri L. Joly, *Legend in Japanese Art* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1967), 560. Wu Daozi's dragon painting coming to life was a common motif in Japanese painting.

⁴⁴ "Whenever a high degree of magic power is attributed to an object ... its resemblance to nature is rarely of decisive importance." Kris and Kurz, *Legend*, 77.

⁴⁵ Amino Yûshun 網野宥俊, *Sensôji shidanshō shûi* 「浅草寺史談抄」拾遺 [Gleanings from *Historical Commentary on Sensôji Temple*], ed. Amino Yoshihiro 網野義紘 (Tokyo: Sensôji Kinzôin, 1985), 136.

⁴⁶ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 11.

Sensôji before the fire, the magical ema was the one Hyôbê risked his life to save.⁴⁷ In recognition, his name became linked to the painting via the text on the frame. In fact, his name is better known than the painter's.

Most texts that tell the story of the ema's rescue from fire also address the question of the identity of the original artist. The temple's own most recent scholarship on the ema does not attribute the painting to a specific artist, but the three artists usually proposed are Kanô Motonobu 狩野元信 (1476–1559), Motonobu's student Kanô Gyokuraku 狩野玉楽 (fl. 1550–90), and Kanô Naonobu 狩野尚信 (1607–1650). Kanô Motonobu seems an extremely unlikely candidate for many reasons. Not only would his authorship make the ema more than a century older than if Naonobu had painted it, but Motonobu worked in Kyoto, while Naonobu worked in Edo. Assigning the ema to Motonobu can be read as a device for raising the painting's prestige by giving it a more lofty provenance.

The 1732 guidebook *Edo sunako* 江戸砂子 (Edo sand) by Kikuoka Senryô 菊岡沾涼 (1680–1747) includes an entry for the “Kanô ema,” immediately associating the painting with its artist. Senryô stated that the artist was reported to be Motonobu.⁴⁸ In the 1790 text *Raiden mondô* 瀨田問答 (Raiden questions and answers), Ôta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749–1823) posed a series of questions to Sena Sadao 瀬名貞雄 (1716–1796).⁴⁹ Nanpo asked about the ema, referring specifically to the stories about it eating crops, and

⁴⁷ The literature does not address how the maki-e plaques supposedly donated by Hidetada and Iemitsu survived the fire.

⁴⁸ Kikuoka Senryô 菊岡沾涼, *Edo sunako* 江戸砂子 [Edo sand], ed. Koike Shôtârô 小池章太郎 (Tokyo: Tokyodo Shuppan, 1976), 65.

⁴⁹ Ôta Nanpo 大田南畝 and Sena Sadao 瀬名貞雄, *Raiden mondô* 瀨田問答 [Raiden questions and answers], ed. Nihon Zuihitsu-taisei Henshûbu, *Nihon zuihitsu taisei* 日本随筆大成, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1977), 236.

asked if Motonobu could have painted it. Sadao responded that there was no doubt that Naonobu, not Motonobu, had painted it. He went on to say that the power of the horse to come to life and eat grass was directly related to Naonobu's skill in painting it.

Despite Sadao's confidence in the artist's identity, seventeen years later, Kusakabe Toshimasa 日下部利政 (1743–1823) identified the artist as Motonobu, using the artist's posthumous name of Kohôgen 古法眼.⁵⁰ Like Sadao, Toshimasa also linked the quality of the painting to its magical nature. He suggested that although the painting was in the style of Motonobu, it could also have been painted by Motonobu's student Gyokuraku. Gyokuraku worked for the Hôjô 北条 in nearby Odawara, so he seems a likelier candidate than Motonobu. Toshimasa's reference to the brushwork (*hitsui* 筆意) implies that the painting was still in good enough condition to be viewed in the early nineteenth century.

In his two-volume study of Sensôji, Matsudaira Kanzan devoted several pages to reviewing many of the sources about the artist who painted the ema.⁵¹ He relayed both Senryô's and Sadao's assessments. The other sources include *Murasaki ippon* 紫一本 (1714), *Edo shi* 江戸志 (late eighteenth century), and Kagami Ensei's 加賀美遠清 (fl. late eighteenth century) *Asakusa Kannon dô ko ema kô* 浅草観音堂古絵馬考. Most of the sources link the quality of the painting to its ability to come to life. Gyokuraku, Naonobu, and Motonobu are all mentioned as possible artists throughout the texts. Kanzan did not offer a final determination about the artist's identity.

⁵⁰ Kusakabe Toshimasa 日下部利政, *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺誌 [Sensôji intentions], ed. Amino Yoshihiro 網野義紘 (Tokyo: Kinryûsan Sensôji, 1992), 30–31.

⁵¹ The following information is from Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 73, 78–83.

In Saitô Gesshin's *Bue hengaku shu* 武江扁額集 of 1862, the magical Kanô ema is the oldest ema depicted.⁵² By the time of Gesshin's writing, the ema was already too faded to be seen. He reported that only a trace of the rope and the hoofs were visible and specifically noted that the signature and the seal were illegible. Even after a century of discussion in publications about the identity of the artist, Gesshin found the question compelling enough to address. He specifically tackled Kanzan's review of Naonobu as the possible artist. Gesshin indicated that Naonobu was born in 1637 and would have been only three years old when Hyôbê rescued the ema from the main hall fire. However, Gesshin was incorrect; Naonobu was born in 1607. He would have been twenty-five when the main hall burned in 1642.

One other Edo period book deserves mention in this context. The mid-nineteenth *Shisô zashiki* 祠曹雜識 (Miscellaneous notes of a shrine officer) included a section on the magical Kanô ema at Sensôji.⁵³ The author, using the pseudonym Asatani Rôgu 麻谷老愚, traced other authors' opinions about the true painter of this work and concluded that Kanô Naonobu painted it. The author further suggests that the ema was donated after the 1631 restoration of the Kannondô 觀音堂 at Sensôji.

The textual evidence that this ema was painted by a Kanô artist seems compelling, and the late-eighteenth-century copy confirms that the composition follows earlier Kanô models in its broad outlines. The large size of the panel (69.2 x 96.0 inches), however, argues against either Motonobu or Gyokuraku being the painter. Most surviving

⁵² Saitô Gesshin 斎藤月岑, *Bue hengaku shû* 武江扁額集 [Collection of plaques in the Edo region], ed. Nakamura Yukihiro 中村幸彦 and Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 46, *Shinpen kisho fukuseikai sôsho* 新編希書複製會叢書 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1991), n.p.

⁵³ Asatani Rôgu 麻谷老愚, "Sensôji Kannondô ema" 浅草寺觀音堂絵馬 [Ema in the Sensôji Kannon hall] in *Shisô zashiki* 祠曹雜識 (mid nineteenth-century).

sixteenth-century ema, such as the pair by Kanô Sanraku 狩野山楽 (1559–1635), are smaller in size (see fig. 1-4). Rhetorically, however, attributing the ema to the most prestigious artist possible helped to substantiate claims about its magical power. The ongoing discussion about the painting's authorship throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shows that despite the unlikelihood of Motonobu being the artist, the fiction of his authorship was too useful and compelling to discount.⁵⁴

Into the nineteenth century, as other subjects were common for ema, some donors and artists continued to select horses. One such ema is by another great artist, Tani Bunchô 谷文晁 (1763–1840) (fig. 3-12). Bunchô studied many styles of art and drew from the Kanô school use of gold leaf for the background of this image. The horse is tightly enclosed in the space of the painting, and the two ropes holding it in place are attached to supports outside the picture plane. While most ema of horses in profile show the horse facing to the left, Bunchô's horse faces to the right. The horse is more rotund than Kanô examples and has finer detailing in the hair around the hooves. An extremely similar, but much smaller ema of about half the size is in the collection of the museum at Naritasan Shinshôji (see chapter 4 for a discussion of ema at Naritasan). Bunchô may have used the Naritasan ema, which was not donated to the temple until 1975, as a preparatory sketch for the Sensôji ema.⁵⁵

A second Kanô ema at Sensôji is by Tôhaku 洞白 (also read Dôhaku; 1772–1812) (fig. 3-13). For this ema, Tôhaku created a composition that drew less upon earlier Kanô

⁵⁴ There are ema by Motonobu at sites in the Kyoto region. See Kawada Tadashi 河田貞, *Ema 絵馬*, vol. 92, *Nihon no bijutsu 日本美術* (Tokyo: Shibundô, 1974), 46–47.

⁵⁵ Kinryûsan Sensôji, ed., *Sensôji ema zuroku*, n.p.; and Ôno Masaharu 大野政治 and Ogura Hiroshi 小倉博, *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema 成田山新勝寺の絵馬* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji] (Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979), 13, 80.

styles; instead, it resembled a wall painting from Kasuga 春日 shrine in Nara 奈良 (fig. 3-14). The Kasuga horse painting decorates the exterior of the main shrine between the third and fourth halls.⁵⁶ The wall painting existed at Kasuga from at least the thirteenth century. A member of the priestly family overseeing Kasuga, Nakatomi no Sukesada 中臣祐定 (1198–1269), mentioned the painting in a journal entry in 1236, and the edges of the painting can be seen in the *Kasuga gongen reigenki* 春日権現霊現記 (Miracles of the Kasuga deity) scroll of 1309 (fig. 3-15).⁵⁷ The current painting was repainted in 1862.⁵⁸ Both the ema and the wall painting show two men in *eboshi* black hats leading the horse. The horse wears an elaborate saddle. In the ema, sacred *shide* papers are mounted to the top of the saddle. These decorations match those described by Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈 (1717–1784) as customary for the donation of a sacred horse (see chapter 2). With this composition, the ema does not stand in for just a donation of a horse but depicts the ritual of donation itself.

These examples of horse ema show the persistence of the subject throughout the early modern period. Other ema at Sensôji show how the genre grew.

Bue hengaku shû

Saitô Gesshin, one of the great chroniclers of life in Edo during the end of the Edo period, captured some of the diversity of ema subject matter in his text on ema in Edo. In addition to *Edo meisho zue*, his well-known texts include *Tôto saijiki* 東都歳時記

⁵⁶ Between the second and third halls is a painting of Chinese lions and peonies. Kawada, *Ema*, 19.

⁵⁷ Kawada, *Ema*, 19. For information on the scroll itself, see Royall Tyler, *The Miracles of the Kasuga Deity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

⁵⁸ Kawada, *Ema*, 19, 22.

(Seasonal events in the eastern capital), *Bukô nenpyô* 武江年表 (Chronological record of the Edo region), and *Saitô Gesshin nikki* 斎藤月岑 (Saito Gesshin's diary).⁵⁹ All of these texts mention ema at least briefly, but the most comprehensive discussion of ema is in Gesshin's 1862 volume *Bue hengaku shû* (Collection of plaques in the Edo region).⁶⁰ This book circulated in hand-copied manuscripts and thus has multiple title variations. I have chosen to call it *Bue hengaku shû*, as this name was used in the 1991 Rinsen Shoten publication. The National Diet Library and the National Archives of Japan hold other versions. The variant titles are *Bue hengaku shukuzu* 武江扁額縮図 (Illustrations of plaques in the Edo region), *Bue ema kagami* 武江絵馬鑑 (Model book of ema in the Edo region), *Ôedo ema shû* 大江戸絵馬集 (Collection of ema from Edo), and *Edo ema kagami* 江戸絵馬鑑 (Model book of ema in Edo). The titling of this book offers another example of the words "ema" and "hengaku" being used as synonyms, just as they were in *Hengaku kihan* (see chapter 2).

In the introduction, Gesshin specifically refers to the early-nineteenth-century books *Hengaku kihan* and *Itsukushima ema kagami* as models for his own book. (One of the variant titles, *Edo ema kagami*, is a direct parallel to *Itsukushima ema kagami*.) He stated clearly that, unlike the situation in Kyoto, in Edo only Sensôji had old ema. Gesshin seems to have considered "old" to mean pre-nineteenth-century works. The first ema he discussed, at the beginning of the text, is the magical Kanô ema. In the main

⁵⁹ Saitô Gesshin 斎藤月岑, *Saitô Gesshin nikki* 斎藤月岑日記 [Saitô Gesshin's diary], ed. Tokyo daigaku shiryô hensajo 東京大学史料編纂所, vol. 4, *Dai Nihon koki roku* (reprint, Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shiryô hensajo, 2003); Saitô Gesshin 斎藤月岑, *Bukô nenpyô* 武江年表 [Chronological record of the Edo region], ed. Kaneko Mitsuhara 金子光晴, vol. 116:118, *Tôyô bunko* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1968); and Saitô Gesshin 斎藤月岑, *Tôto saijiki* 東都歳事記 [Seasonal events in the eastern capital], ed. Asakura Haruhiko 朝倉治彦, vol. 159:177:221, *Tôyô bunko* (Tokyo: Heihonsha, 1970–72).

⁶⁰ Saitô, *Bue hengaku shû*.

section of the book, he illustrates ten ema from Sensôji. Of these, two were no longer extant at the time of publication and one is presumably not extant today. The other seven are still in the collection at Sensôji. Gesshin's selection indicates which ema may have been considered particularly valuable or interesting at the time.

Gesshin's first selection is by Kô Sûkoku 高嵩谷 (1730–1804), shows Minamoto no Yorimasa 源頼政 (1104–1180) and Ino Hayata 猪早太 (dates unknown) killing a mythical creature called a *nue* 鵺 that had been terrorizing Emperor Konoe 近衛天皇 (1139–1155) at night (fig. 3-16).⁶¹ Sûkoku's ema depicts Yorimasa with the bow and arrow that he used to shoot down the creature, standing over Hayata, who then killed the *nue*. The *nue* had the body of a badger, the head of a monkey, the feet of a tiger, and the tail of a snake. Yorimasa was regarded as a hero after the *nue* was caught and later killed a second *nue* that disturbed Emperor Nijô 二条天皇 (1143–1165).⁶² An ema at Kiyomizu 清水 temple with similar subject matter and composition, by Kaihō Yûsetsu 海北友雪 (1598–1677), appears in *Hengaku kihan*.⁶³

As with many ema at Sensôji, the meaning of this donation is not readily apparent and the donor's name is unknown.⁶⁴ It has been considered one of Kô Sûkoku's masterpieces and, according to Takeuchi Makoto 竹内誠, ensured Sûkoku's status as a

⁶¹ The story appears in book 4 of *The Tale of the Heike*. For a translation in English, see *The Tale of the Heike*, trans. Hiroshi Kitagawa and Bruce T. Tsuchida (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975), vol. 1, 279–83.

⁶² *The Tale of the Heike*, 282.

⁶³ This ema was donated in 1625. Hayami Shungyôsai 速見春暁齋, *Hengaku kihan* 扁額軌範 [Canon of plaques], ed. Noma Kôshin 野間光辰, vol. 8, *Shinshû Kyoto sôsho* 新修京都叢書 (Kyoto: Rinkawa Shobô, 1968), 418–25.

⁶⁴ There is an illegible inscription on the reverse. Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 12.

painter.⁶⁵ In *Bukô nenpyô*, Gesshin explicitly states that the painting is of a quality that is unlike that of an ordinary artist's work.⁶⁶ That an ema could be the defining work for an artist underscores its value as an artistic object separate from its religious function as well as the importance of its display in enabling the formation of this judgment. In the 1930s, Sûkoku's ema was named an Important Art Object by the national government.⁶⁷

Takeuchi Makoto, a curator at the Edo Tokyo Museum and prominent scholar of the Edo period, included this painting in his chapter on ema within his larger study of the Asakusa and Ryôgoku areas during the Edo period. He suggests that the ema is a *mitate* 見立 (elegant parody) for the political situation at the time. *Mitate* is a device used in Japanese visual arts in which one subject stands in for another in order to create intellectual pleasure for the viewer.⁶⁸ During the Edo period, *mitate* was extremely common in various forms in woodblock prints. Government censorship forbade the depiction of current events, so *mitate* was used to disguise contemporary references.⁶⁹

The year 1787, when the *nue* ema at Sensôji was donated, was a transition-filled year in Edo. The Tenmei 天明 famine led to a particularly lean year in 1783 and again four years later in 1787. There was an outbreak of influenza and many riots. The senior councilor to the shogun, a role roughly analogous to prime minister, was Tanuma Okitsugu 田沼意次 (1719–1788). The disasters of 1787 caused his fall from power, and

⁶⁵ Takeuchi Makoto 竹内誠, "Sensôji hônô no ôema" 浅草寺奉納の大絵馬 [Large-scale ema donated at Sensôji], in *Edo no sakariba kô: Asakusa Ryôgoku no sei to zoku* 江戸の盛り場考：浅草両国の聖と俗 (Tokyo: Kyôiku Shuppan, 2000), 156.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Takeuchi, "Sensôji hônô no ôema," 156.

⁶⁷ Kinryûsan Sensôji, ed., *Sensôji ema zuroku*, cat. no. 31. For information about the governmental system of recognizing significant works of art, see Christine M. E. Guth, "Kokuhô: From Dynastic to Artistic Treasure," *Cashiers d' Extreme-Asie* 9 (1996–97).

⁶⁸ See Timothy Clark, "*Mitate-e*: Some Thoughts, and a Summary of Recent Writings," *Impressions* 19 (1997).

⁶⁹ For placing events in the past to circumvent censorship, see Sarah E. Thompson, "The Politics of Japanese Prints," in *Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints*, ed. Sarah E. Thompson and H. D. Harootunian (New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1991), 34, 38.

on the nineteenth day of the sixth month, one of the most important senior councilors of the Edo period, Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1758–1829), replaced Tanuma in the position. Sadanobu instituted the Kansei 寛政 reforms in an attempt to deal with the crisis.

The Sûkoku *nue* ema was donated in the fifth month, one month before Sadanobu took office. Takeuchi offers three explanations of why this image is a *mitate*, all related to the political upheaval.⁷⁰ In each case, the *nue* represents something negative, and Takeuchi proposes that the ema was donated in the hope that the negative thing could be overcome. The *nue* could be the famine itself, or it could be the merchants who controlled the rice market and were making large profits while the people suffered from a lack of rice. If Takeuchi's second interpretation is valid, we could view the entire scene depicted as a *mitate* for the riots that broke out throughout the country. Takeuchi's third interpretation is more nuanced, explaining that the *nue* is Tanuma's government and Yorimasa is Sadanobu, who ended the trouble the *nue* caused. As the ema was donated a month before Tanuma's ouster and the start of Sadanobu's government, the donor would have to have been a close shogunal insider in order to predict that turn of events. While this interpretation is quite attractive, it is probably false. Unfortunately, the inscription on the ema lists only Sûkoku, not the donor.

In *Bue hengaku shû*, Gesshin included another warrior image by Kikuchi Yôsai 菊地谷齋 (1788–1878), a depiction of the raid ordered by Minamoto no Yoritomo on his brother Yoshitsune's 義経 (1159–1189) house on Horikawa 堀河 avenue in Kyoto (fig. 3-17). One of Yoshitsune's defenders, Kisanta 喜三太 (dates unknown), dominates the

⁷⁰ The following relies on Takeuchi, "Sensôji hônô no ôema," 156–57.

middle of the composition, holding a long bow in his hand. Behind him, Yoshitsune lies sleeping while a woman rushes to wake him.⁷¹ Two gold clouds frame Kisanta and the sleeping chamber, but the gold has flaked away to reveal the bare wood underneath.⁷² Gesshin noted that the donor was a rice merchant from the Kanda 神田 neighborhood of Edo. Most donors are unknown to us now, but this information provides confirmation that members of the merchant class were responsible for some of the ema donations at Sensôji.

In addition to warrior images, Gesshin illustrated two ema related to traditional theater. Sûkoku's pupil, Kô Sûkei 高嵩溪 (1762–1817), painted a depiction of a Shôjô mai dance from the Noh theater, which was donated in 1803 (fig. 3-20). This dance represents a drunken sea spirit with long red hair and a face flushed from consuming alcohol. Gesshin's second theater ema is one of the oldest ema at Sensôji (fig. 3-21). This ema differs from the others because it is not painted but made of small sculptures mounted on a board. The donor, Nakamura Kanzaburô II 中村勘三郎 (1647–1674), was a Kabuki actor. The inscription bears the tradition phrasing "Donated before the deity" (*hônô go takaramae* 奉納御宝前), which became less common as the Edo period progressed. The sculptures were repaired in 1862.⁷³ Sensôji's ema collection does not contain any other works that are explicitly Kabuki related, although other ema refer to different forms of performing arts (discussed below).⁷⁴

⁷¹ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 18.

⁷² Gesshin's notes confirm that the bare area was originally gold. Saitô Gesshin 斎藤月岑, "Bue ema kagami," in *National Diet Library Rare Books Room* (Tokyo: National Diet Library Rare Books Room, 1862), n.p.

⁷³ Kinryûsan Sensôji, ed., *Sensôji ema zuroku*, n.p., and Saitô, "Bue ema kagami."

⁷⁴ See chapter 4 for a discussion of Kabuki-related ema at Naritasan Shinshôji.

Ikeda Koson 池田弧村 (1801–1866) and an unknown artist both painted extremely similar peacock and peony ema for Sensôji (figs. 3-18 and 3-19). Both compositions show a peacock and a peahen standing above a waterfall. Gesshin reproduced the unsigned, and not longer extant, work in *Bue hengaku shû*. He called the unsigned ema “masterful” (*migoto* 見事) and said it should be valued (*oshimu beshi* 惜しむべし).⁷⁵ Gesshin recorded the location of the work as the Kannon Hall (the main hall) but stated that the work could not be viewed at that time. He specifically warned viewers not to confuse this painting with the one by Koson. The compositions of the two images are so similar, differing primarily in the details of the background, that one must have been copied from the other. By selecting the unsigned work for inclusion in *Bue hengaku shû*, Gesshin implied that it was more valuable than Koson’s. An unsigned work is more commonly a copy of a signed work than the reverse, but Koson could have copied the unsigned work, which was particularly valued.

Koson’s image is the subject of a story similar to that told about the magical Kanô ema. Writing in 1930 from a personal as well as scholarly perspective, Morii Yoshigi claimed that stories once circulated about the peacocks in Koson’s painting being alive.⁷⁶ Observers noticed bird scat on the frame of the painting, as though the peacocks were coming to life. Morii acknowledged, however, that the scat was likely from pigeons entering the hall at night and lingering near the ema.⁷⁷ This story may explain why the unsigned painting was treasured by Gesshin if Morii attributed the story to the wrong ema. The unsigned painting was not on display in 1862 and could have been lost by the time

⁷⁵ Saitô, "Bue ema kagami," n.p.

⁷⁶ Morii, "Kannondô no gaku ema," 17.

⁷⁷ Morii, "Kannondô no gaku ema," 17.

Morii was writing. In that case, he would have associated the story with the peacock and peony painting that was on view, that is, Koson's. The stories about the peacocks and the horse coming to life show that the magical nature of ema continued to be a factor in public perception into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Other subjects

The grounds of the religious institution is a regularly occurring subject in ema at many temples and shrines. Sensôji has an example of this genre by Utagawa Kunihide 歌川国英 (fl. ca. 1818–44) (fig. 3-22), a student of Utagawa Toyokuni's 歌川豊国 (1769–1825).⁷⁸ Kunihide portrayed the main approach to the temple from the Kaminarimon gate at the lower right, through the Niômon gate, up to the main hall in the upper left. Above the strong diagonal created by the Nakamise shopping street and the path farther into the grounds, additional buildings such as the pagoda and a bell tower are shown. The Asakusa shrine sits nestled in a golden cloud beside the main hall. Beyond the buildings, the light blue trail of the Sumida river runs along the upper right. Some of the locations are identified by small white cartouches, but damage to the ema has rendered the cartouches largely illegible. One of the sites indicated on the northeastern shore of the river, in the upper middle of the painting, is probably the Mimeguri 三囲 shrine in Mukôjima 向島.

On his ema, Kunihide used gold clouds of the same style employed in capitalscapes screen paintings of Kyoto and screens depicting the city of Edo,⁷⁹ in which

⁷⁸ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsdan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 14.

⁷⁹ I use Matthew McKelway's term "capitalscapes" as a translation of *rakuchû rakugai* 洛中洛外. See Matthew Philip McKelway, *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval*

artists utilized gold clouds to frame specific views and downplay areas of lesser importance. On a full-size six- or eight-fold screen, the clouds brought order to what would otherwise have been an overwhelming amount of information about the city. Kunihide used the clouds to emphasize two zones at Sensôji. The first is the Kaminarimon gate, which appears directly beneath a cloud. The second is the Niômon gate and main hall. Kunihide painted both the main hall and the shrine directly against the gold cloud. An area of gold cloud obscures the lower left of the ema, in the region of the Denpôin 伝法院 subtemple. Significantly, the view of the Sumida river in the upper right is still plainly visible. The presence of the Sumida river emphasizes the Sensôji's specific geographic location within Edo.

Two additional Meiji period ema at Sensôji also show views from of the temple grounds. Both are significantly smaller than Kunihide's ema, which is 45.7 by 66.1 inches. The first is 29.1 by 41.3 inches and employs gold clouds to separate two views that could not be seen at the same time (fig. 3-23). It is dated 1881 but is unsigned. The right half of the ema shows the Niômon gate with the five-story pagoda behind it, viewed from a high angle. Figures in Japanese and Western dress are coming and going through the gate. The building on the left side of the image is framed by a gold cloud. The shop sells Ebisu mochi 恵比寿餅, one of the special products associated with Sensôji, and, according to the shop curtains, was located in front of the Kaminarimon gate. The donor

Kyoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), esp. 12–14. For screens depicting Edo, see Suitô Makoto 水藤真 and Katô Takashi 加藤貴, eds., *Edozu byôbu wo yomu* 江戸図屏風を読む [Reading the illustrated screen of Edo] (Tokyo: Tokyodô Shuppan, 2000); and William H. Coaldrake, "Metaphors of the Metropolis: Architectural and Artistic Representations of the Identity of Edo," in *Japanese Capitals in Historical Perspective: Place, Power and Memory in Kyoto, Edo and Tokyo*, ed. Paul Fiévé and Paul Waley (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 133–39.

was Matsumoto Tsugi 松本ツギ, who was likely the proprietress of the shop.⁸⁰ This is a clear example of the advertising potential of ema; viewers of the ema could easily purchase mochi from the shop before leaving the temple area. The second Meiji period image, also by an unknown artist, shows the area immediately in front of the main hall (fig. 3-24). The pagoda is in the background, but the ema hall, which may have been destroyed by that point, is absent. This ema was donated in 1899 by Tanaka Yuki 田中ゆき of Nihonbashi 日本橋 and is 20.3 by 33.2 inches.

In addition to providing the illustrations for *Edo meisho zue* and Gesshin's *Tôto saijiki*, Hasegawa Settan painted two ema that were donated to Sensôji. The first, donated in 1839 by the Ozeki 小関氏 clan, depicts a scene from the end of the Kemmu 建武 restoration (1333–36), when Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐 (1288–1339) briefly returned to the country to direct imperial rule (fig. 3-25). The two men depicted are Kusunoki Masashige 楠木正成 (1294–1336) and his son Masatsura 正行 (1326–1348). The men are parting for the last time before Masashige's certain defeat at the battle of Minato 湊 river. Masashige holds a scroll of military strategy that he gave to his son before sending Masatsura away from the battle. Masashige was an important figure for Confucian thinkers of the Edo period who revered his loyalty to Emperor Go-Daigo.⁸¹ The frame of this ema is also noteworthy because its maker, Miyashiro Nagakadojô (?) 宮代長門掾, is identified in an inscription on the back of the plaque. Unfortunately, he is not otherwise known.⁸²

⁸⁰ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 25.

⁸¹ See, for example, John Allen Tucker, "Quiet-Sitting and Political Activism: The Thought and Practice of Satô Naokata," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 29, no. 1/2 (2002): 117–21.

⁸² Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 14.

Nagakadojô also created the frame for the second Settan ema at Sensôji (fig. 3-26).⁸³ This ema was donated in 1840 by Fujita Shinbê 藤田甚兵衛 (dates unknown). Once again, Settan painted a warrior image (*musha-e* 武者絵), this time from the Genpei 源平 war (1180–85) between the Taira 平 and the Minamoto 源 warrior clans. The figure in the rear of the image is Taira no Kagekiyo 平影清 (d. 1196). He holds a pike in his left hand and grabs at the neck guard of the Minamoto warrior Mioya no Jûrô 美尾谷十郎 (dates unknown) with his right hand. This action, which is depicted among other warriors as well, is called “neck guard pulling” (*shikorobiki* 鋺引). The confrontation between Kagekiyo and Jûrô appears in Kabuki, but the style of this ema clearly depicts the two as historical warriors, not Kabuki actors. This ema is reproduced in *Edo meisho zue*.

Scenes from the life of Yoshitsune appear regularly in ema, such as the Yôsai image reproduced in *Bue hengaku shû* discussed above. Often, he is shown in the company of his retainer Benkei (d. 1189). Benkei is a popular folk hero known for his unusual strength. Two ema at Sensôji illustrate the first meeting between Benkei and Yoshitsune, when Yoshitsune was known by his childhood name of Ushiwakamaru 牛若丸. In an ema from 1847 by Minamoto Kazunobu 源一信 (1815–1863), Benkei dominates the middle of the composition, with Ushiwakamaru behind him on the left (fig. 3-27).⁸⁴ Kazunobu used only black sumi ink to indicate the railings and supports of the bridge where their encounter occurred. A second ema of the exact same subject was carved in relief by Suzuki Tôun (?) 鈴木桃雲, who is otherwise unknown (fig. 3-28).⁸⁵

⁸³ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 15.

⁸⁴ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 18.

⁸⁵ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 37.

Tôun's ema shows that the popularity of the subject extended into the Meiji period and also serves as an example of relief ema, which appear at other sites as well.

Chinese warrior images also appear in ema. A small collection of images at Sensôji depicts the three main characters of the fourteenth-century Chinese novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Jp. Sankokushi 三国志). The two Edo period ema depict the general Kanu 関羽. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is primarily a Chinese story but often appeared in Japanese art of the Edo period, including ukiyo-e prints and sword fittings. A play named after the general is one of the eighteen Kabuki classics of the Ichikawa family and was first performed in 1738 by Ichikawa Danjûrô II 市川団十郎 (1688–1758).⁸⁶ Torii Kiyomoto II 鳥居清元 (b. 1788), whose teacher Kiyonaga 清長 (1752–1815) was the fourth head of the Torii school,⁸⁷ painted one of the ema, which was donated in 1859 (fig. 3-29). Visually, however, this ema bears no relationship to the Kabuki imagery or beautiful women prints for which the Torii school is usually known. Kanu is depicted as a Chinese figure, not a Kabuki actor, seated on a black lacquer chair with a halberd resting on his head and a scroll in his hand. The painting, one of the later ema donated to Sensôji, is in excellent condition, with the gold leaf intact.

Other Chinese stories were also popular among donors of ema. In 1842, Irie Hokurei 入江北嶺 (fl. ca. 1840) painted the Chinese figure Yojô 豫讓 (fig. 3-30). Yojô was known for his loyalty to the Chinese emperor and is shown tearing apart the garment

⁸⁶ Gunji Masakatsu 郡司正勝, ed., *Kabuki jûhachiban shû* 歌舞伎十八番集, vol. 98, *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 日本古典文學大系 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), 20. See chapter 4 for a discussion of the Ichikawa Danjûrô lineage of actors.

⁸⁷ Kaneko Ban'u 兼子伴雨, "'Gekigashû' yori Toriike daidai no denki," 『劇雅集』より鳥居家代々の伝記 [From the "Gekigashû," biographies of generations in the Torii family], *Ukiyoe* 浮世絵 64 (1976): 40. The Torii school and their relationship to ema is discussed in chapter 4.

of the emperor's rival.⁸⁸ Tsutsumi Tôrin III 堤等琳 (ca. 1743–1820) painted a depiction of another Chinese legend and donated it to Sensôji when he succeeded to the name, during the period 1772–81 (fig. 3-31).⁸⁹ The ema shows Kanshin 韓信 (before 196), a Chinese prince living in hiding who submitted himself to the humiliation of crawling between another man's legs rather than fight someone who was beneath him. This painting supposedly inspired Katsushika Hokusai II 葛飾北斎 (dates unknown), a student of Katsushika Hokusai's (1760–1849), to become an artist.⁹⁰

In addition to ema depicting the grounds at Sensôji, other ema show aspects of life and activities in Edo. An ema of the releasing-of-animals ritual (*hôjôe* 放生会) shows some of the practices common at Sensôji during the Edo period. Komeya Kyûemon 米屋久右衛門 (dates unknown), of Nihonbashi Kawasesekichô 日本橋川瀬石町, commissioned this image from Kazan Tôshû 霞山等舟 (dates unknown) and donated it in 1823. The image shows monks releasing birds and fish near a small body of water. This Buddhist practice was observed at Sensôji on the twentieth day of the third month and the twenty-third day of the ninth month.⁹¹ The practice was also associated with the Shinto deity Hachiman 八幡.⁹² This ema offers a record of activity at Sensôji similar to that found in the depictions of the temple grounds and also serves as a stand-in for the ritual itself, much as the ema of horses represent live-horse donations.

⁸⁸ Joly, *Legend in Japanese Art*, 569.

⁸⁹ Kinryûsan Sensôji, ed., *Sensôji ema zuroku*, cat. no. 24, and Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 31.

⁹⁰ Takeuchi, "Sensôji hônô no ôema," 158–60. For ema by Hokusai, see Kishi Fumikazu 岸文和, "Hokusai ha ikanishite shinbutsu to kôshin shitaka: Ema no kaiga kô ron" 北斎はいかにして神仏と交信したか: 絵馬の絵画行為論 [How did Hokusai communicate with the deities? A pictorial acts theory of *ema*], *Bijutsu fôramu* 21, no. 10 (2004).

⁹¹ Sensôji Ema Hengaku Chôsadan, ed., *Sensôji ema hengaku chôsa hôkoku*, 13.

⁹² See Ross Bender, "Metamorphosis of a Deity: The Image of Hachiman in Yumi Yawata," *Monumenta Nipponica* 33, no. 2 (1978): 172.

Ema sometime depict figures of presumed donors praying to the deity of the temple or shrine. While most of these examples are small ema from the Meiji period, a large ema of this type from 1863, painted by an unidentified artist, showing a male and female supplicant beneath a figure of Kannon in gold is at Sensôji (fig. 3-32). Kannon descends from the right in a manner reminiscent of Amida's 阿弥陀 (Sk. Amitayus) *raigo* 来迎 descent to take deceased Buddhist believers to the Western Paradise. Golden rays connect Kannon and the worshippers. Nothing is known about the donor except the name (Kashima uji 加嶋氏), which is recorded on the reverse.

Classical Japanese culture is represented in images such as this depiction of the six immortal poets (*rokkasen* 六歌仙) (fig. 3-33). The six poets are Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 (825–880), Ono no Komachi 小野小町 (ninth century), Henjô Sôjô 遍照僧正 (816–890), Kisen Hôshi 喜選法師 (act. 810–24), Bun'ya no Yasushide 文屋康秀 (d. ca. 885), and Ôtomo no Kurnonushi 大友黒主 (ninth century). The only woman is Ono no Komachi. Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (ca. 868–ca. 945) established this group of poets by including them in the introduction to his poetry compilation *Kokin wakashû* (古今和歌集).⁹³

One of the largest ema at Sensôji shows the sumo wrestler Jinmaku Kyûgorô 陣幕久五郎 (1829–1903) (fig. 3-34). The ema depicts Jinmaku in the sumo ring with two other wrestlers and three referees. The composition of the ema is almost identical to that of a print issued the same year by the same artist, Ichiyûsai Kuniteru 一雄斎国輝 (1830–

⁹³ See Robert H. Brower and Earl Roy Miner, "Formative Elements in the Japanese Poetic Tradition," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 16, no. 4 (1957): 19.

1874) (fig. 3-35). This general arrangement of figures appears in sumo prints by Utagawa Kunisada 歌川国貞(1786–1864), who was Kuniteru’s teacher, and other students of Kunisada’s, including Kunisada II (1823–1880) and Kunimori II 国盛 (fl. ca. 1848–60).⁹⁴ This ema and the accompanying print were made to celebrate Jinmaku’s promotion to *yokozuna* 横綱 (grand champion) status. By placing the ema at Sensôji, Jinmaku and his managers were able to widely announce his prestigious rank. Takeuchi Makoto has argued that, at this time, the *yokozuna* was granted only within the wrestler’s stable, or training group.⁹⁵ Today, the rank is granted by the sumo association. Takeuchi argued that the ema and the prints (which were ordered by Jinmaku and his stable) were part of an effort by stable owners to promote the rank of *yokozuna*.⁹⁶ Display of this ema at Sensôji was clearly part of their marketing campaign. The title was added to the official rankings in 1909.⁹⁷ Today, a similar custom is still observed at the Sumo Hall in Tokyo. When a wrestler is promoted to the rank of *yokozuna*, a large portrait is hung inside the hall. Some of the portraits that have been removed can be seen in the Ryôgoku train station near the stadium (fig. 3-36).

Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳 (1797–1861) painted an ema donated in the second month of 1855 illustrating the horror story “The Lonely House” (Hitotsuya 一つ家), about an old woman who kills the guests at her inn (fig. 3-37).⁹⁸ There are several

⁹⁴ For examples, see *Edo sumo nishikie* 江戸相撲錦絵 [Edo sumo brocade prints], vol. 7, Van van sumokai (Tokyo: Bêsubôru Magajinsha, 1986), 60–65.

⁹⁵ Takeuchi, "Sensôji hônô no ôema," 164–65.

⁹⁶ Takeuchi, " Sensôji hônô no ôema," 165.

⁹⁷ Takeuchi, " Sensôji hônô no ôema," 164.

⁹⁸ Robinson described the ema and the later print in Basil W. Robinson, *Kuniyoshi* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1961), 21–22.

variations of this story, including one that places the inn near Sensôji.⁹⁹ Kuniyoshi's student, Utagawa Yoshimori 歌川芳盛 (1830–1884), published a print of the ema two months later (fig. 3-38). In both images, the old woman stands in the center of the composition, grasping a knife in her right hand and the neck of her next victim in her left. At the left sits a serene figure with her head resting on her right hand. That figure is Kannon, who saved the victim. Kuniyoshi placed the three figures on an empty field, without a surrounding context for the action.

The following year, in 1856, Kuniyoshi published a print depicting the same figures in a scene of the run-down inn. This print was part of the series “Selected modern life-sized dolls” (Tôsei mitate ningyô no uchi 當盛見立人形の内). The series illustrated so-called living-doll displays mounted at Sensôji by Matsumoto Kisaburô 松本喜三郎 (1825–1891) for the public's enjoyment.¹⁰⁰ The strong compositional similarity between Kuniyoshi's print and his ema of a year earlier suggests either that he did not actually illustrate Kisaburô's dolls but instead drew upon his previous composition or that the arrangement of the dolls was taken from Kuniyoshi's ema.

The great diversity of ema at Sensôji shows the wide range of potential subjects for ema. Some works, such as the magical Kanô horse ema and Tôshû's ema showing monks releasing birds and fish, exhibit an explicit connection to religious ritual. Other ema, like

⁹⁹ Hur, *Prayer and Play*, 89.

¹⁰⁰ Andrew L. Markus, “The Carnival of Edo: Misemono Spectacles from Contemporary Accounts,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45, no. 2 (1985): 522. These displays were regularly held at Sensôji. For more on Edo and Meiji period displays of living dolls, see Alan Scott Pate, *Japanese Dolls: The Fascinating World of Ningyô* (Tokyo and Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2008), 142–50. Robinson incorrectly dates the display including “The Lonely House” to 1855. Robinson, *Kuniyoshi*, 22. Other sources corroborate Markus's date of 1856. See Ono Takeo 小野武雄, *Misemono fûzoku zushi 見世物風俗図誌* [Illustrated record of spectacle display customs] (Tokyo: Tenbôsha, 1977), 374.

Kuniyoshi's illustration of "The Lonely House" and Kuniteru's depiction of the sumo wrestler Jinmaku, show a preoccupation with the activities and interests of the townspeople who frequented Sensôji. Warrior ema may have been part of a larger trend among ukiyo-e artists of the period who created such images as a way to poke fun at the samurai class that was no longer made up of active warriors.¹⁰¹ By the nineteenth century, the appropriate subject matter for ema had grown far beyond horses.

Ema also show the blending of religious devotion with secular subject matter. While most ema donations many have been grounded in a religious feeling of prayer or thanksgiving, the subject matter of the ema themselves does not reflect this. Some ema reflect the donors' and artists' awareness of the paintings' display after donation. This is obvious in Kuniteru's sumo ema and in the view of the Ebisu mochi shop as well as in inscriptions added to ema, such as the story of the Kanô ema's rescue from the 1642 main hall fire.

The range of artists represented at Sensôji also shows that ema production was not isolated to specific classes or workshops of artists. The Kanô school was widely patronized by high-ranking families, one of which may have commissioned the Kanô ema donated to Sensôji. Several ukiyo-e artists produced ema for Sensôji, both as painters and as donors. Even the Nanga artist Tani Bunchô is represented by an ema. Any artist who was available for other commissions was also available for ema.

As a genre, ema were linked by the display in the main hall and ema hall, which made their donation a public act and gave the paintings a public context. Post-donation, these paintings are important not for their devotional meaning but as objects of display in

¹⁰¹ Melinda Takeuchi, "Kuniyoshi's *Minamoto Raikô and the Earth Spider*: Demons and Protest in Late Tokugawa Japan," *Ars Orientalis* 17 (1987): 6.

a larger context of public entertainment in and near religious sites. Crowded, bustling Sensôji was a popular destination for all kinds of activities from the Edo period until the present day. The prominent display of ema in the main hall and nearby ema hall made ema part of the visual culture of Sensôji. Although donated as a sign of prayer, once displayed, these ema became another one of the many amusements available in Asakusa. Ema were a concrete blending of the activities of prayer and play at Sensôji.

Chapter 4 Patronage and Publicity: Ema at Naritasan

In 1814, Uematsu Chôbei 植松長兵衛 (dates unknown) commissioned Utagawa Toyokuni 歌川豊国 (1768–1825) to paint an ema of the famous Kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjûrô VII 市川団十郎 (1791–1859) performing the “Shakkyô” 石橋 (Stone Bridge) dance (fig. 4-1). Flanked by red and white tree peonies, Danjûrô VII is dressed in robes that repeat the peony motif. His face is brightly colored in the traditional *kumadori* 隈取り makeup used by his family. Toyokuni’s painting, which resembles a woodblock print he had made of the same subject a year earlier (fig. 4-2), was donated to the Shingon 真言 Buddhist temple Naritasan Shinshôji 成田山新勝寺 in Chiba 千葉 prefecture, where it was placed on public display.

Kabuki themes, and depictions of the Ichikawa Danjûrô lineage of actors in particular, are well represented among the ema at Naritasan. The Kabuki ema and other subjects show a strong connection to Edo. Furthermore, we can connect the donation of many ema, including Toyokuni’s 1814 ema, to public viewings of the Naritasan Fudô Myôô 不動明王 statue held in the Fukagawa 深川 district of Edo 江戸. Ema at Naritasan are visible evidence of both the temple’s success at publicizing itself to residents of Edo and the temple’s adoption as an advertising space by others.

This chapter will explore ema at Naritasan as a representation of the temple’s connection to the city of Edo. These paintings are closely related to ukiyo-e 浮世絵 prints. Many were made by ukiyo-e artists such as Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳 (1797–1861) and members of the Torii 鳥居 school of artists. Some of the ema compositions have direct parallels in ukiyo-e prints, such as the Toyokuni painting and print discussed

above. Naritasan's ema are also closely connected to the popularity of the actors in the Ichikawa Danjûrô lineage. In the nineteenth century, the ema hall at Naritasan was a place where fans could view images of the Danjûrô actors and participate in a cult of celebrity. Ema at Naritasan occupied a nexus that incorporated fame, prayer, and advertisement.

Naritasan

The round-trip between Naritasan and Edo took four days in the Edo period.¹ Naritasan's large complex includes numerous buildings (e.g., three former main halls, a library specializing in materials related to Buddhism, a Shinto shrine), a park, and a school.² Buddhist temples are dedicated to a specific deity, and each has a statue of that deity enshrined in the main hall. Naritasan's deity is Fudô Myôô, the Immovable One (Sk. Acalanâtha).

Depicted with a fierce countenance intended to combat evil, Fudô Myôô is the most popular of a group of five guardian deities known as the Kings of Light (Myôô). He

¹ A so-called mini-guide produced by the temple lays out three common routes between Edo and Narita. One was almost entirely by water. Naritasan Reikôkan 成田山靈光館, "Naritasan minigaido" (Chiba: Naritasan Reikôkan, n.d.), no. 11. See also Yamamoto Mitsumasa 山本光正, "Edo e no michi, Edo kara no michi"江戸への道・江戸からの道 [Roads to and from Edo], in *Ôedo rekishi no fûkei* 大江戸歴史の風景, ed. Katô Takashi 加藤貴 (Tokyo: Sansen Shuppatsusha, 1999), 26–29.

² The temple lies a fifteen-minute walk from Narita station, which is ten minutes from the airport and approximately an hour and a half from central Tokyo on a limited train. The area continues to be a popular regional tourist destination. Temples in Japan have two names but are usually known by the second name. This temple, however, is commonly known as Naritasan rather than Shinshôji. The Shingon sect of esoteric Buddhism was founded by the Japanese monk Kûkai (774–835) upon his return to Japan after studying in China. For more information about Naritasan, see Patricia Graham, "Naritasan Shinshôji and Commoner Patronage during the Edo Period," *Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 12, no. 2 (2004); Murakami Shigeyoshi 村上重良, *Narita Fudô no rekishi* 成田不動の歴史 [History of Narita Fudô] (Tokyo: Tôtsûsha Shuppanbu, 1968); Naritasan Reikôkan 成田山靈光館, ed., *Naritasan no rekishi* [History of Naritasan] 成田山の歴史 (Narita: Naritasan Reikôkan, 1999); and Ogura Hiroshi 小倉博, *Narita: Tera to machimachi no rekishi* 成田・寺と町まちの歴史 [Narita: History of the temple and town] (Tokyo: Jukai Shorin, 1988).

carries a rope in his left hand and a sword in his right hand. The mandorla behind his head is composed of flames, and he stands or sits on a rock. Fudô's fierce expression is intended not to intimidate worshippers but to protect them. When depicted as a central, throned deity, Fudô is accompanied by the lesser deities Kongara 矜羯羅 and Seitaka 制多迦 (fig. 4-3).

The original Fudô Myôô statue at Naritasan was initially enshrined at Jingoji 神護寺, near Kyoto, at the request of Emperor Saga 嵯峨天皇 (r. 809–23).³ In 939, during the Taira no Masakado 平将門 rebellion in modern-day Ibaraki 茨城 prefecture (in the Kantô 関東 region), Emperor Suzaku 朱雀天皇 (r. 930–46) sent the monk Kanchô 寛朝, along with the Fudô Myôô statue, to the area to pray for the success of imperial troops in putting down the rebellion.⁴ Kanchô performed rites in the area of the modern-day city of Narita, and after the suppression of the rebellion, Naritasan Shinshôji was built in 940. The name Shinshôji is a reference to the emperor's victory over Masakado; the characters mean "new" and "victory."⁵

Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康, the first shogun, or military ruler, of the Tokugawa shogunate, took control of the Kantô region in 1590. When the emperor appointed Ieyasu shogun in 1603, Edo (now Tokyo) became the effective capital of the country. Edo grew to have a population of more than one million people by 1700, making it the largest city

³ Naritasan Reikôkan, ed., *Naritasan no rekishi*, 1.

⁴ For more information on the rebellion, see Giuliana Stramigioli, "Notes on Masakadoki and the Taira no Masakado Story," *Monumenta Nipponica* 28, no. 4 (1973).

⁵ This story is described in *Illustrated Famous Places of Narita* as well as other texts. See Nakaji Sadatoshi 中路定俊, "Narita meisho zue" 成田名所図会 [Illustrated famous places of Narita], in *Nihon meisho fûzoku zue* 日本名所風俗図会, ed. Suzuki Tôzô 鈴木棠三 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1980).

in the world at that time.⁶ As the city developed, the region and its institutions gained greater prominence throughout the Japanese islands. Naritasan was part of this trend.

Few records remain of Naritasan from before the late sixteenth century.⁷ In the mid-seventeenth century, Shôzen 照禪 (who served as abbot from 1652 to 1672) restored numerous buildings on the grounds, but otherwise there was little activity of note at Naritasan throughout the seventeenth century.⁸ Narita's revitalization began in the early eighteenth century under the direction of the abbot Shôhan 照範 (1663–1724), who assumed that position in 1700. Shôhan was born near Naritasan, in Mito 水戸, and had previously been an abbot at Iôin 医王院, which is also located in Chiba prefecture.⁹

During the Edo period, Naritasan was a place of worship for both common people and members of the ruling elite. Every year, in the first, fifth, and ninth months, representatives from the heads of the three Tokugawa branch families would visit Naritasan. Other high-ranking shogunal officials, including Inaba Masamichi 稲葉正通 (1640–1716), from Mino 美濃 (part of modern-day Gifu 岐阜 prefecture), and Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1758–1829), supported Naritasan through visits,

⁶ In comparison, London had a population of 550,000, Paris's population was 500,000, Constantinople's was 700,000, and Beijing's was, 650,000. See Gilbert Rozman, "Edo's Importance in the Changing Tokugawa Society," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1, no. 1 (1974); James L. Merriman and John M. McClain, "Edo and Paris: Cities and Power," in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Merriman and Kaoru Ugawa (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 13–4; and Tertius Chandler, *Four Thousand Years of Urban Growth: An Historical Census*, 2nd ed. (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 516.

⁷ Hara Jun'ichirô 原淳一郎, "Kinsei meisho jiin no keiei to senden katsudô: Naritasan Shinshôji ni okeru Edo shomin to no setten" 近世名所寺院の経営と宣伝活動:成田山新勝寺における江戸庶民との接点 [Economic and publicity activity at early modern famous temples: Points about Edo commoners regarding Naritasan Shinshôji], *Chiba shigaku* 千葉史学 35 (1999): 57, and Naritashishi Hensan Iinkai 成田市史編さん委員会, ed., *Naritashishi chûsei kinsei hen* 成田市史中世・近世編 [History of Narita City medieval and early modern volume] (Narita: Naritashi Shihensan Iinkai, 1986), 687. For information about the successive abbots of the temple from the late sixteenth through the seventeenth century, see Naritashishi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Naritashishi chûsei kinsei hen*, 688–91.

⁸ Naritashishi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Naritashishi chûsei kinsei hen*, 689.

⁹ Naritashishi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Naritashishi chûsei kinsei hen*, 691.

hengaku 扁額 donations,¹⁰ and tax exemptions for portions of temple land.¹¹ During Shôhan's era, Keishôin 桂昌院 (1627–1705), the mother of the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi 綱吉 (1646–1709), was one of Naritasan's highest-ranking supporters. In 1703, the statue of Fudô housed at Naritasan was brought to Edo, and a special viewing was held at Edo castle for Keishôin.¹² Naritasan's ability to attract such prominent patrons as well as members of the commoner class contributed to its success throughout the Edo period.

Public viewings

One initiative undertaken by the abbot Shôhan profoundly changed the reputation of Naritasan and raised it to new prominence in Edo period cultural and religious life. Immediately after his appointment at Naritasan, Shôhan began construction of a new main hall, which was finished on the eighteenth day of the third month of 1701.¹³ To commemorate the erection of the hall, Shôhan held Naritasan's first *kaichô* 開帳, or public viewing. The term "kaichô" literally means "parting of the curtains"; it refers to opening the curtains that usually hide a temple's main deity from public view and placing the statue on display. *Kaichô* grew in popularity during the Edo period. These included those held at the statue's home temple, *degaichô* 出開帳 held at a single distant temple, and *junkô kaichô* 巡行開帳 held at multiple temples. The idea of *kaichô* originated in

¹⁰ See chapter 1 for a discussion of hengaku.

¹¹ See, for example, Naritashishi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Naritashishi chûsei kinsei hen*, 696.

¹² Keishôin also made donations to Naritasan at that time. Naritasan Shinshôji 成田山新勝寺, ed., *Shinshû Naritasanshi* 新修成田山史 [History of Naritasan, new edition] (Narita: Naritasan Shinshôji, 1968).

¹³ That building is now the Kômyôdô hall. It was replaced in 1858 by the building that is now the Shakadô hall. The current main hall was constructed in 1968.

ninth-century China, and the first recorded kaichô in Japan was held in Kyoto in 1235.¹⁴

Degaichô offered those who could not visit a temple the opportunity to pray directly to its deity. The fund-raising benefits for the temples became extremely important as well. In the case of Naritasan, these viewings not only generated funds for the temple but also inspired ema donations.

Naritasan's first degaichô was held in 1703. The money raised was used to fund additional construction projects at the temple.¹⁵ Naritasan held all its degaichô in the Fukagawa 深川 section of Edo, on land near Eidaiji temple 永代寺 and the Fukagawa Hachiman shrine 深川八幡神社.¹⁶ Naritasan held a total of twenty-three kaichô between 1701 and 1857.¹⁷ Ten of those were degaichô at Fukagawa. Another four were junkô kaichô for which the statue traveled to multiple temples. The remaining nine were held at Naritasan itself. Although kaichô in general were originally intended to raise funds for extraordinary expenses, they became necessary to meet the general operating costs of the temple as the period progressed.¹⁸ Naritasan was able to flourish in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in part because, at a time when other large temples suffered from the withdrawal of government support, it had already established an independent fund-raising

¹⁴ Ogura Hiroshi 小倉博, "Kinsei Narita Fudô no kaichô ni tsuite" 近世成田不動の開帳について [Regarding early modern exhibitions of the Narita Fudô], *Naritasan kyôiku bunka fukushi zaidan kenkyû kiyô* 成田山教育・文化福祉財団研究紀要 2 (1970): 142. The first kaichô was for the three Buddhas from Nagano's Zenkôji 善光寺. For information on the Zenkôji icons, see Donald F. McCallum, *Zenkôji and Its Icon: A Study in Medieval Japanese Religious Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

¹⁵ Naritashishi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Naritashishi chûsei kinsei hen*, 692.

¹⁶ A Fudô hall associated with Naritasan currently sits on land that was once part of Eidaiji. Eidaiji sits just outside the gates to the Fudô hall complex. The Fukagawa Hachiman shrine, which is a particular site of worship for sumo wrestlers, is adjacent to the Fudô hall site.

¹⁷ The longest gap between kaichô was twenty-five years between a junkô kaichô in 1764 and a degaichô at Fukagawa in 1789. The largest gap between viewings held at Fukagawa was thirty years, between 1703 and 1733. During the eighteenth century, degaichô were held four times at Fukagawa at roughly evenly spaced intervals. In the nineteenth century until 1856, six degaichô were held on average eleven years apart (including the gap between the last degaichô of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth century).

¹⁸ Hara, "Kinsei meisho jiiin no keiei to senden katsudô," 67.

base.¹⁹ Naritasan's peak period for degaichô was the Kasei period 化政 (1804–29), when seven public viewings were held. Three—in 1806, 1814, and 1821—were in Edo.²⁰

The degaichô held in Edo increased public awareness of Naritasan and were also a vehicle for bringing Edo culture into the Narita area. For the viewings in Edo, villagers from the area around Naritasan came to Edo to assist the temple priests.²¹ When they returned, they brought their experiences in the city back with them. This form of cultural transmission is comparable to that enacted by the constant rotations of samurai through Edo. During most of the Edo period, the shogunate forced regional rulers to maintain a residence in the capital and to live there on a regular, rotating basis. These rulers brought samurai from their home provinces with them to Edo.²² Similarly, in the late Edo period, agrarian villagers traveled to larger cities for pilgrimage or employment opportunities and brought their cultural experiences back to their home villages.²³ The Edo degaichô of the Naritasan Fudô gave local villagers an opportunity to make an extended visit to Edo. Naritasan was unusual for the level to which it involved local residents in temple management and kaichô.²⁴ All the males of Narita village, except for children and the

¹⁹ Hara, "Kinsei meisho jiin no keiei to senden katsudô," 61. The shogunate's withdrawal of subsidies from temples was part of a larger financial crisis that included increased taxes on the daimyo. See Tatsuya Tsuji, "Politics in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 449–51.

²⁰ For a chart of Edo period public viewings held by Naritasan, see Naritasan Reikôkan, ed., *Naritasan no rekishi*, 4.

²¹ Ogura, *Narita*, 20.

²² The system of alternate attendance in the capital, called *sankin kôtai* 参勤交代, required regional leaders to reside in Edo for one year followed by one year in their home territories. A large number of samurai vassals accompanied the leader on his trips to the capital but may have had few duties to perform when in residence in Edo. This left significant free time to explore the capital and its amusements. For more information about the practice of *sankin kôtai*, see Conrad Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 108–11, and Constantine N. Vaporis, "To Edo and Back: Alternate Attendance and Japanese Culture in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997).

²³ For more on rural culture, see Anne Walthall, "Peripheries: Rural Culture in Tokugawa Japan," *Monumenta Nipponica* 39, no. 4 (1984).

²⁴ Hara, "Kinsei meisho jiin no keiei to senden katsudô," 72.

elderly, participated in the degaichô.²⁵ During the eighteenth century, there were only about twenty resident monks at Naritasan;²⁶ however, the entourage of people accompanying the statue to Fukagawa numbered more than one hundred.²⁷ Without the participation of the villagers, degaichô on such a scale would not have been possible. The villagers' actions may have been motivated by devotion to Fudô or an altruistic desire to help the temple, but degaichô were beneficial to them as well. In addition, the fame of Naritasan brought more pilgrims to Narita, generating business for villagers who provided food, lodging, and other services to the religious tourists.

Fukagawa was a convenient place for the Naritasan degaichô because it was on the Narita side of Edo. Furthermore, numerous influential supporters of Naritasan lived in Fukagawa.²⁸ The Kabuki theaters were nearby across the river, near what is now the Ginza 銀座. Sumo wrestlers also lived nearby in Ryôgoku 両国 and had an established relationship with the Fukagawa Hachiman shrine. The Asakusa 浅草 amusement district and the Yoshiwara 吉原 pleasure quarters were just up the river. Fukagawa was a convenient site for members of Edo's floating world who wanted to see the Naritasan Fudô. Signboards were put up throughout Edo to advertise the degaichô and encourage people to come to Fukagawa.²⁹

Numerous ema at Naritasan can be traced to Fukagawa and the degaichô, through donation either at the time of a degaichô or from residents of Fukagawa. For example, Utagawa Toyokuni's 1814 ema of Danjûrô VII, discussed at the beginning of this chapter,

²⁵ Ogura, *Narita*, 27.

²⁶ Ogura, *Narita*, 27.

²⁷ Ogura, "Kinsei Narita Fudô no kaichô ni tsuite," 154–56.

²⁸ Ogura, "Kinsei Narita Fudô no kaichô ni tsuite," 145.

²⁹ Hara Jun'ichirô 原淳一郎, "Kinsei meissho jûin no keiei to senden katsudô," 67.

was donated during a Fukagawa viewing held that year (see fig. 4-1). With his elongated face and distinctive performance makeup, this figure is immediately identifiable as Danjûrô VII. The donor, Uematsu Chôbei, lived in Fukagawa. This image would have been hung at the degaichô site and transported to Naritasan after the degaichô closed. According to Asahi, this ema was well regarded within Edo.³⁰ We can assume that visitors to the degaichô would have been able to see the ema for the duration of the degaichô. Upon its transport to Naritasan, it would have been placed on public display in one of the halls of the temple.

Toyokuni's 1814 image is listed in *Hônô kôshu chô* 奉納講取帳 (Record of petition donations), which lists items donated at the degaichô of that year.³¹ In the sixty days of the degaichô, thirty-eight large ema were donated. Additional subjects included warriors and the life of the monk Mongaku 文覚 (1139–1203) (fig. 4-4), who is depicted in other ema at Naritasan.³² Of the thirty-eight ema donated at the 1814 degaichô, only the one by Toyokuni survives. This highlights the fact that ema donations were much more numerous than those visible today. Naritasan currently houses more than ten ema donated during kaichô at Naritasan and in Edo, but these represent only a small fraction of those donated during degaichô. Naritasan received so many donations of ema because of its popularity, which was encouraged by the Ichikawa Danjûrô lineage of actors.

Ichikawa Danjûrô

³⁰ Asahi Jusan 旭壽山, "Naritasan Shinshôji no ema" 成田山新勝寺の絵馬 [Ema at Naritasan Shinshôji], *Josei bukkyo* 女性仏教 24, no. 2 (1979): 82. Unfortunately, Asahi does not explain how the image's fame in Edo was spread.

³¹ Ôno Masaharu 大野政治 and Ogura Hiroshi 小倉博, *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* 成田山新勝寺の絵馬 [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji], (Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979), 75.

³² The monk Mongaku (previously known as Endô Moritô 遠藤盛遠, 1139–1203) sat under the Nachi 那智 waterfall as penance for accidentally killing his cousin. Fudô Myôô saved him from freezing to death.

One of the oldest ema at Naritasan is by Torii Kiyonaga 鳥居清長 (1752–1818) (fig. 4-5). Painted in 1813, it is thought to depict Danjûrô V (1741–1806).³³ The color has flaked off and only the sumi ink underdrawing can be seen.³⁴ The scene depicted is “Wait a Moment,” one of the most characteristic performances of the Danjûrô line and one that Danjûrô V made particularly famous.³⁵ This ema embodies two distinguishing features of many Naritasan ema: the Ichikawa Danjûrô line and the Torii school of artists.

The Ichikawa Danjûrô name has been given to twelve actors since the first Danjûrô took the name in 1673.³⁶ Like many actors of the time, Danjûrô was a playwright as well. He is credited with writing several plays related to Fudô Myôô, including *Narita bushin Fudô* 成田分身不動 (Another form of the Narita Fudô), which was performed at the Morita-za 森田座 theater during the 1703 degaichô. Later, other

³³ Danjûrô V had been dead for seven years when this painting was produced. The living Danjûrô at the time was Danjûrô VII, who was ten when he became Danjûrô. (Danjûrô VI, who was Danjûrô VII's uncle, died at a young age in 1799 after only four years as Danjûrô.)

³⁴ Asahi Jusan 旭壽山, *Naritasan bijutsushi: Ema to chûkô mono shinkô tokubetsu gô* 成田山美術史：絵馬と鑄工物新更特別号 [Naritasan art history: Special edition of ema and cast metal objects] (Narita: 1938), 9.

³⁵ Laurence R. Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki: Their Lives, Loves and Legacy* (New York: Kodansha International, 1997), 105. The first “Wait a Moment” scene debuted in 1697, with Danjûrô I as Fuwa Banzemon 不破伴左衛門 stopping the villain from removing an ema at Kitano 北野. Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 85.

³⁶ The line of Danjûrôs has not been continuous; the tenth received the name posthumously. The current holder of the name is Danjûrô XII (b. 1946), who assumed the name in 1985. The following relies upon dates and details as recorded in Ogura Hiroshi 小倉博, “Ichikawa Danjûrô to Naritasan Shinshôji” 市川団十郎と成田山新勝寺 [Ichikawa Danjûrô and Naritasan Shinshôji], *Hôdan* 法談 50 (2005). Danjûrô I was the son of Horikoshi Jûzô 堀越重蔵. Jûzô was born in Hataya 幡谷 village, which is now part of the city of Narita. Jûzô gave the family headship to his younger brother and moved his immediate family to Edo, where his son Ebizô 海老蔵, later Danjûrô I, was born in 1660. Even after the move to Edo, Jûzô's family maintained its connection to Naritasan and regularly worshipped there. When Danjûrô I did not have a son, he prayed to the Naritasan Fudô Myôô to be granted one. Danjûrô II was born in 1688, when his father was twenty-eight years old. Danjûrô II was known as a child who had been given by Fudô Myôô. Both father and son played Fudô in various Kabuki plays. The role became one for which the lineage was well-known. See Laurence R. Kominz, “Ichikawa Danjûrô V and Kabuki's Golden Age,” in *The Floating World Revisited*, ed. Donald Jenkins (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 106.

Danjûrô followed his lead in performing the role of Fudô during degaichô.³⁷ These plays reveal a detailed understanding of theology that is beyond the scope one would expect of a layperson, and Danjûrô I may have consulted with Naritasan's abbot Shôhan on the play's theological content.³⁸ Religious devotion was an important part of Danjûrô I's plays. Laurence Kominz explained, "What distinguished Danjûrô from other playwrights was the degree to which he incorporated his religious convictions into many of his plays."³⁹

During performances of *Narita bushin Fudô* at the time of the degaichô, members of Fudô devotional groups attended daily and threw money onto the stage, much as one customarily throws money toward statues of divinities at Japanese religious institutions. Danjûrô I served as a greeter (an important lay assistant role) at the degaichô on days when the theater was not open.⁴⁰ Danjûrô I's support extended beyond his help publicizing the degaichô; in 1697, prior to the beginning of Naritasan's degaichô activities, he led a group pilgrimage from Edo to Naritasan.⁴¹ Both the temple and the actor benefited from the cross publicity this relationship created. For the temple, its connection to the Ichikawa Danjûrô lineage brought worshippers (and donors) who would not otherwise have come. The actors raised their own prominence through their strong association with the role of Fudô Myôô.

³⁷ Laurence R. Kominz, *Avatars of Vengeance: Japanese Drama and the Soga Literary Tradition*, vol. 13, Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1995), 165, and Naritashishi Hensan Inkaï 成田市史編さん委員会, ed., *Naritashishi minzokuhen* 成田市史民俗編 [Naritasan folk customs] (Narita: Naritashi Shihensan Inkaï, 1982), 689.

³⁸ Asahi Junsan, quoted in Ogura, "Ichikawa Danjûrô to Naritasan Shinshôji," 53.

³⁹ Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 90.

⁴⁰ Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 93.

⁴¹ Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 91.

Other actors in the Danjûrô line continued Danjûrô I's involvement with the degaichô at Fukagawa. In his early-eighteenth-century essay "Hitorine" ひとりね (Sleeping alone), the artist Yanagizawa Kien 柳沢淇園 (1704–1758) reported that Danjûrô II's presence drew people to the 1733 degaichô.⁴² Danjûrô V performed in a play at a 1789 kaichô in Narita that also would have attracted visitors.⁴³ Ukiyo-e prints showing the actors attending degaichô further publicized them (fig. 4-6). In all of these ways, Danjûrô actors encouraged Edo residents to attend the degaichô, which also inspired greater donations to support Naritasan.

In keeping with the family tradition, Danjûrô VII (1791–1859) and Danjûrô VIII (1823–1854) were also active in support of Naritasan. Their fame was solidified in the public imagination by Danjûrô VIII's spectacular suicide in Osaka, which was depicted in numerous woodblock prints. This father-and-son pair mirrored the first and second Danjûrô in their devotion to the Narita Fudô, especially because both fathers attributed the births of their sons to Fudô. Like the first Danjûrô, the seventh had daughters before his son was finally born. Danjûrô VII even lived at Naritasan for about one year between 1842 and 1843, while he was exiled from Edo for disregarding sumptuary laws.

In 1821, Danjûrô VII donated one thousand ryô for the construction of an ema hall specifically designed to display large-scale ema.⁴⁴ Construction was completed in

⁴² Yanagizawa Kien 柳沢淇園, "Hitorine" ひとりね [Sleeping alone], in *Kinsei zuisô shû*, ed. Nakamura Yukihiro 中村幸彦, Nomura Takatsugu 野村貴次, and Asô Isoji 麻生磯次, *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), 154. Kien did not give the date of the degaichô or which Danjûrô was present, but it was most likely Danjûrô II in 1733. Also discussed in Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 93, and Hattori Yukio 服部幸雄, *Ichikawa Danjûrô daidai* 市川團十郎代々 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2002), 47.

⁴³ Danjûrô V's 1789 performance is recorded in an inscription on a box he donated to the temple in commemoration. Ogura, "Ichikawa Danjûrô to Naritasan Shinshôji," 66.

⁴⁴ Ôno Masaharu 大野政治, *Naritashi no meisho, iseki, bunkazai* 成田市の名所・遺跡・文化財 [Famous places, excavations, and cultural properties of the city of Narita] (Tokyo: Nikô Shoten, 1956), 127. The

1822, and the hall was decorated with carvings of peonies, Chinese lions, and characters from the Kabuki play *Gedatsu* 解脱 (Salvation), by an artist from Fukagawa.⁴⁵ Located next to the sutra hall and near the main hall, the ema hall measured fifty-one feet by thirty-one and a half feet. The bays were not enclosed by walls, and abundant space was available for hanging ema above the transom on both the inside and the outside. Above the entrance hung a sign carved from Danjûrô VII's calligraphy, which read "Place of entertainment" (*settai dokoro* せったい所) (fig. 4-7). The ema hall offered a place for temple visitors to relax after praying at various sites within the temple complex. Initially, Danjûrô VII paid to provide tea within the hall, and visitors were able to see the ema while lingering over refreshments.⁴⁶ The hall was alternately called the *mimasu* 三枡 hall after the Ichikawa family crest, which has three (*mi*) nested square measuring cups (*masu*).

By 1861, ema donations had increased to the point that the temple needed a second ema hall (fig. 4-8). Slightly larger than the first ema hall (at sixty-two feet by thirty-two and a half feet), the second hall was erected in a different area of the temple grounds. The 1861 hall sits next to the Kômyô 光明 hall, built in 1701 as the main hall and later moved to its current location. In 1965, an arsonist started a fire that destroyed the 1821 ema hall. Luckily, ema with artistic or historic value had already been removed

yearly salary for Danjûrô I and Danjûrô II later in their careers was 1,000 ryô. Danjûrô II earned 2,000 ryô in 1742, which was likely the highest Kabuki salary paid in the Edo period. See Kominz, *Avatars of Vengeance*, 181. This was the largest donation from the Ichikawa Danjûrô family to Naritasan. Kominz, *The Stars Who Created Kabuki*, 93.

⁴⁵ Naritasan Shinshôji, ed., *Shinshû Naritasanshi*, 126, and Ogura, *Narita*, 66. *Gedatsu* is one of the eighteen Kabuki classics of the Ichikawa Danjûrô family.

⁴⁶ The sources are unclear on how long Danjûrô provided refreshments. It may have been only during the initial celebration of the hall's construction in the fifth month of 1822, when Danjûrô and his students came to Naritasan. See Naritasan Shinshôji, ed., *Shinshû Naritasanshi*, 126–27.

to the temple museum.⁴⁷ Some ema still hang in the surviving 1861 ema hall, and one can get a sense of how it and the original hall must have seemed in the nineteenth century (fig. 4-9).

In addition to supporting the display of ema at Naritasan, Danjûrô VII and Danjûrô VIII had an important influence on the production of the paintings themselves. They not only donated ema but were the subjects of ema donated by others. Several surviving ema at Naritasan can be linked directly to these two actors.

In the fifth or sixth month of 1851, Danjûrô VIII suddenly took ill while performing and feared his life was in danger.⁴⁸ He prayed to the Naritasan Fudô and miraculously recovered. His father, Danjûrô VII, actually solicited funds from Naritasan and other sources to help pay for the expensive medication needed.⁴⁹ To commemorate his recovery, Danjûrô VIII performed in the play *Genji moyô furisode hinagata* 源氏模様振袖雛形 (Models of Genji designs for kimono) at the Ichimura 市村 Theater in the ninth month of the same year. The play includes an appearance by Fudô, who rescues the protagonist. At the same time, Danjûrô VIII donated an ema to Naritasan depicting this scene from the play (fig. 4-10). A print by Utagawa Toyokuni III 歌川豊国 (Utagawa Kunisada 歌川国貞 1789–1864) shows Danjûrô VII and Danjûrô VIII taking an ema that is likely this one to Naritasan by boat (fig. 4-11).

⁴⁷ Ôno Masaharu 大野政治, "Naritasan no hônô ema" 成田山の奉納絵馬 [Ema donated at Naritasan], *Hakubutsukan kenkyû* 42, no. 1 (1969): 31. Forty ema were removed in 1963 to prevent further damage from pollution. They were restored at the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, and most are currently housed in the temple museum. See also Naritasan Reikôkan 成田山靈光館, "Reikôkan ema hakuraku tome shûho hôkoku" (Narita: Naritasan Library for Buddhism, 1961).

⁴⁸ Ogura gives the date as the sixth month, although his collaboration with Ôno records the fifth month. Ogura, "Ichikawa Danjûrô to Naritasan Shinshôji," 96–97, and Ôno and Ogura, *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema*, 2. Ogura says Danjûrô VIII was so sick that *shini-e* prints were prepared in anticipation of his death. Ogura, "Ichikawa Danjûrô to Naritasan Shinshôji," 97.

⁴⁹ Ogura, "Ichikawa Danjûrô to Naritasan Shinshôji," 97.

The vertically oriented ema shows the Naritasan Fudô in the upper portion flanked by his usual companions, Kongara and Seitaka. In the lower third, the protagonist Hiranoya Tokubei 平野屋徳兵衛 clings to a rock amid turbulent water. One end of the rope Fudô carries in his left hand hangs down to Tokubei, who has grabbed it with his left hand while his right arm remains wrapped around the rock. Danjûrô VIII played both Fudô and Tokubei, so both figures have the Ichikawa family crest on their clothing. Also depicted, on Fudô's right, are Ichikawa Kuzô II 市川九蔵 (1836–1911) as Fudô's attendant Kongara and, on Fudô's left, Bandô Shuka I 坂東しゅか (1812–1855) as the attendant Seitaka. Kuzô's mimasu crest is visible by his left knee.

The ema was painted by Torii Kiyomitsu II 鳥居清満 (1787–1868), the fifth-generation head of a family who specialized in Kabuki-related images. It illustrates several characteristics of ema at Naritasan. First, the subject matter is clearly a specific Kabuki play. Visitors to Naritasan in the years after 1851 may not have immediately connected this ema with this particular performance of the play, but the actors' crests make clear that the ema depicts a scene from Kabuki. Hanging in the ema hall at Naritasan, the ema would not serve to advertise a particular performance the way a signboard would (see below) but would remind viewers of the Ichikawa family of actors and the plays its members performed. Torii Kiyomitsu II received high billing on this ema. His name appears just under the rightmost cloud, visible to viewers even when the ema was hanging above eye level. With this prominent placement of his name, the ema also promoted the artist.

In addition to the publicity, the ema display also gave Danjûrô VIII an opportunity to express his private devotion to the Naritasan Fudô. Like many large-scale

ema, this was an offering of thanksgiving to Fudô for curing Danjûrô VIII. Unlike many other ema, however, in this case the subject of the image is vividly linked with the intention of the donation. As Fudô rescued Danjûrô VIII from illness in real life, so he pulls Tokubei to safety in the image. Furthermore, Fudô initially gave Danjûrô life by answering Danjûrô VII's prayers for a son. Fudô favored the Ichikawa family, and its members showed their gratitude with numerous donations to Naritasan.

The Danjûrô actors' connection to Fudô Myôô was further expressed through their performance technique. Their *aragoto* 荒事 (rough) style of Kabuki derived from esoteric Buddhist beliefs, Shugendô practices, and Fudô Myôô's fierce look.⁵⁰ A 1774 source describes Danjûrô I's acting style as follows:

His eyes looked exactly like Fudô, frightening; the pupils would remain fixed for an extraordinarily long time. He was certainly inspired by the spirit of the god.⁵¹

The perception that the Danjûrô actors were inspired by Fudô shifted into a belief that they had obtained healing powers through Fudô. Danjûrô II purportedly cured a fellow actor of fox possession with his gaze:

Danjûrô seized the patient, glared at him in *aragoto* fashion, and shouted, "If you don't go away now, you'll have to deal with me!" The patient's face changed color, and he suddenly jumped from the second-floor balcony into the street. The leap was the fox spirit in flight, and the patient was cured.⁵²

⁵⁰ Kominz, *Avatars of Vengeance*, 153–59.

⁵¹ *Nihon shomin bunka shiryô shûsei* 日本庶民文化史料集成 [Collection of sources on Japanese popular culture], vol. 6: Kabuki (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobô, 1973), 122. Translated and quoted in C. Andrew Gerstle, "Flowers of Edo: Eighteenth-century Kabuki and Its Patrons," *Asian Theater Journal* 4, no. 1 (1987): 60.

⁵² Toita Yasuji 戸板屋二, *Kabuki jûhachiban* 歌舞伎十八番 [Eighteen Kabuki classics] (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1969), 29. Translated and quoted in Kominz, *Avatars of Vengeance*, 162.

Danjûrô II's power from Fudô was also effective through ukiyo-e prints used as protection against evil spirits in homes.⁵³ These beliefs in the healing power of Danjûrô have continued into the present day. According to Laurence Kominz,

Today, when Danjûrô XII goes to the countryside on tour, parents bring children to see him, hoping his touch will bring their children strength and good health.⁵⁴

In performance and image, the persona of Danjûrô merged with that of Fudô Myôdô. The actors were not only portraying Fudô but also channeling his power. In this respect, representations of Danjûrô as Fudô Myôdô can also be read as depictions of the divine being himself. Thus, ema of Danjûrô in the guise of Fudô simultaneously portray secular images of Kabuki performances and religious images of Fudô. This interpretation could also be extended to representations of the Danjûrôs as Soga Gorô 曾我五郎, another role they made famous (fig. 4-12). As Kominz concluded in his study of the Soga plays, "to Edoites Gorô became a surrogate of the deity Fudô."⁵⁵ The blending of religious devotion and celebrity worship is seen throughout the Danjûrô lineage's relationship to Naritasan in Danjûrô's depiction of Fudô onstage, ema, and pilgrimages to Naritasan by Danjûrô fans.

Danjûrô ema were not only given to Naritasan by members of the Ichikawa family. In 1823, a depiction of Danjûrô VII performing "Wait a Moment" (*Shibaraku* 暫) (fig. 4-13) was donated by a group including one Honmakiya Mantarô 本牧屋万太郎, who probably painted it.⁵⁶ Unlike the Torii artists, Mantarô was probably an amateur

⁵³ Kominz, *Avatars of Vengeance*, 163.

⁵⁴ Kominz, *Avatars of Vengeance*, 163.

⁵⁵ Kominz, *Avatars of Vengeance*, 175.

⁵⁶ Ôno and Ogura, *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema*, 22. The artist's signature is "Mantarô" with a seal identifying his family name as Arakawasai. The name Honmakiya is a business name.

painter.⁵⁷ The image has a simpler composition than other Danjûrô ema, and the face also bears little resemblance to other depictions of Danjûrô VII, both on ema and in woodblock prints (fig. 4-14). In keeping with other examples, Mantarô depicted Danjûrô VII with *kumadori* red and white face paint (fig. 4-15) and, rather than painting a realistic body, hid all but the actor's face in the large robes used to costume this scene.

This ema is unique among the Kabuki ema at Naritasan because it was donated by a group of people. In addition to Honmakiya Mantarô, several others are listed on the back as donors. The crests of these donors are painted around the frame of the ema. The inscription on the ema reads "Ichikawa—his fame is known on the three stages of Edo and throughout the world. A model of talent in the realm."⁵⁸ Although the purpose of this donation is not clear, it may have been a good luck talisman for Danjûrô's performances or a token of gratitude for the performances he had given to date. The donors may have participated in the ema commission as a group because they could not afford to make individual donations of large-scale ema or because the donation was specifically conceived as an activity for a group of fans.⁵⁹

Donating an ema of Danjûrô VII to his favorite temple was also a way for fans to draw close to him by enacting the same rituals he had performed. Their mimicking of his devotion at Naritasan was in itself an act of devotion to him. Furthermore, they knew that Danjûrô made visits to Naritasan and could have seen their ema himself. The ema almost

⁵⁷ Asahi, "Naritasan Shinshôji no ema," 82.

⁵⁸ "Kômei wa Edo sankai ni kakurenaki gei no kagami no tenka Ichikawa" 高名は江戸三階にかくれなき芸の鑑の天下市川. I would like to thank Yoriko Kobayashi-Sato of Mejiro University for her assistance with this translation.

⁵⁹ Fan clubs in Osaka were more formalized than those in Edo. For more, see Yôko Kaguraoka, "Osaka Kabuki Fan Clubs and Their Obsessions," in *Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage 1780–1830*, ed. C. Andrew Gerstle (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), and Susumu Matsudaira, "Hiiki Renchû (Theatre Fan Clubs) in Osaka in the Early Nineteenth Century," in *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*, ed. Samuel Leiter (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002).

functions as a fan letter in that respect. This aspect makes clear why placing the crests on the frame was so important; they were like signatures on a letter to Danjûrô VII. Through the abundance of crests, he would know that many fans had participated in the project, even though their names were hidden on the back of the ema.

In 1821, the same year in which Danjûrô VII provided the funds to construct the ema hall, students of the *kyôka* 狂歌 (comic poem) master Yadoya no Meshimori 宿屋飯盛 (Ishikawa Masamichi 石川雅望 1754–1830) donated an ema inscribed with their poems (fig. 4-30). Each participant contributed a line of verse that was written vertically on the ema with the author's name beneath it. This series of verses includes one by Danjûrô VII writing under the name Ishikawa Mimasu 石川三栞, asking Fudô Myôô for protection for his children and grandchildren.⁶⁰

In 1837, an unknown donor offered a second Kiyomitsu ema of Danjûrô VII, known as “Hanagumo kaneiru duki” 花雲鐘入月 (Month of the blossom cloud and bell entering) (fig. 4-16). The play it depicts, *Uwanari* 媿 (Jealousy), was revived the same year.⁶¹ Danjûrô VIII is depicted in the upper cartouche, while the two characters below are both played by Ichikawa Kûzô II.⁶² The frame of the cartouche mimics the Ichikawa family mimasu crest. The composition of this ema also resembles prints by the Torii school in which the mimasu crest appears at the top of the print, with an actor in performance role depicted at the bottom (fig. 4-17). The title, *Uwanari*, literally means “jealous wife.” It is a spirit possession play in which a man is possessed by his daughter's

⁶⁰ Ôno and Ogura, *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema*, 66.

⁶¹ The play was originally performed by Danjûrô I and Danjûrô II. It is one of the Eighteen Ichikawa Classics. Information about the play comes from Samuel Leiter, *New Kabuki Encyclopedia: A Revised Adaptation of Kabuki jiten* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 682.

⁶² Ôno and Ogura, *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema*, 24.

spirit on behalf of her jealous mother while the man is with his mistress. Although this ema was not donated in the year of a kaichô, it provided the same social benefits to Danjûrô and Kiyomitsu, advertising Danjûrô as a performer and Kiyomitsu as an artist.

The large number of Ichikawa-related ema at Naritasan represents an unusual collection. This group of ema served three purposes for the members of the Danjûrô lineage and the temple. First, for the Ichikawa family, they were part of a regular devotion to Fudô Myôô. Second, the ema also served as advertisements for the actors and their plays. They were not billboards in the modern sense, but they kept the memory and anticipation of Ichikawa Danjûrô performances in the minds of viewers. Third, the temple benefited from the public's interest in the Danjûrô actors. Having their ema regularly on display gave visitors whose pilgrimages to the temple were inspired by the Kabuki actors a location where they could experience the actors' connection to the temple. The ema halls could serve as a locus of celebrity worship.

Ema and the ema hall were not the only donations the Danjûrô actors made to Naritasan. In 1703, at the time of the first degaichô in Edo, the first and second Danjûrô donated an elaborately decorated mirror on a stand.⁶³ After the birth in 1823 of the boy who would become the eighth Danjûrô, Danjûrô VII donated to Naritasan the set of sake cups and stand used to celebrate the birth.⁶⁴ The stand is decorated with mimasu crests, and both the cups and the stand are inscribed. Ema donations were part of a larger set of devotional practices conducted by succeeding generations of the family. In this respect, the ema donated by the Ichikawa family maintained the devotional characteristic central to the original development of ema.

⁶³ Naritasan Reikôkan, ed., *Naritasan no rekishi*, 8.

⁶⁴ Naritasan Reikôkan, ed., *Naritasan no rekishi*, 9.

Illustrated signboards

Ema did not advertise specific performances, but they are related to a genre that did. Theatrical *kanban* 看板 (signboards) share many physical characteristics with ema, although the two are not interchangeable, and the literature on ema contains various references to kanban being hung at shrines as ema. Most of these references are anecdotal but show that kanban could be used as ema. In this section, I will explore the similarities between kanban and ema and the evidence for the same object playing both roles.

Kanban in the Edo period were produced in a wide variety of shapes and sizes.⁶⁵ During the late seventeenth century, kanban with text began to be posted on Kabuki theaters to advertise the productions.⁶⁶ The earliest definitive evidence of a painted signboard (*e-kanban* 絵看板) is from 1708, although they may have appeared earlier.⁶⁷ The ranking list (*banzuke* 番付), which listed the various actors performing for a season (fig. 4-18), is closely related to e-kanban.⁶⁸ Banzuke were posted during “face-showing” performances (*kaomise* 顔見世) held in the eleventh month of the lunar calendar, which marked the beginning of the theatrical season.

Kanban hung from the second story of Kabuki theaters as advertisements for the plays in repertory. At first, they were made up only of text, but images were later added. Kabuki theaters used several specific types of kanban and e-kanban, which were hung

⁶⁵ For an overview of the many types of kanban, see Dana Levy, Lee Sneider, and Frank B. Gibney, *Kanban: Shop Signs of Japan* (New York: Weatherhill, 1983).

⁶⁶ Nagano Yoshitaka 長野吉高, "Shibai ekanban no koto" 芝居絵看板のこと [Illustrated signboards for plays], *Engei gahô* (1932): 74.

⁶⁷ Akama Makoto 赤間亮, "Edo kabuki no ekanban to Toriha no katsudô" 江戸歌舞伎の絵看板と鳥居派の活動 [Picture signboards for Kabuki in Edo and the activities of the Torii school], *Kabuki: Kenkyû to hihiyô* 歌舞伎：研究と批評 14 (1994): 8.

⁶⁸ Banzuke were also used for other activities, such as sumo, and lists parodying their style ranked geisha and restaurants, among other establishments.

according to the conventions of the time. Kanban would list the play's name, the actors, and the theater owners. Some were specific to one play, while others, such as banzuke, were more general and applied to the troupe performing for a particular season.⁶⁹

E-kanban evolved from the textual kanban hung below the watchtower, or *yagura* 櫓, known as *yagura shimo* 櫓下 kanban (lit. "below the watchtower").⁷⁰ These originally had actors' names and later included pictures of them performing. The most common e-kanban was the so-called three-foot kanban (*sanshaku* 三尺), so named because of their width. Generally, they were about four and a half feet high. These kanban bear a strong resemblance to ema, especially to those at Naritasan.

By the late Edo period, the hanging order of e-kanban was formalized (fig. 4-19).⁷¹ The theater was decorated and title kanban hung on the twentieth day of the tenth month, which was considered a good day because it was also the day of a festival to the god Ebisu 恵比寿, celebrated by merchants.⁷² Face-showing kanban and banzuke were hung on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month or the first day of the eleventh month.⁷³

⁶⁹ Although there was some stability in the actors who performed at a given theater, they were not bound to a specific theater for longer than their contract for the season.

⁷⁰ Leiter, *New Kabuki Encyclopedia*, 276.

⁷¹ See Mimasuya Nisôji 三升屋二三治, *Sakusha nenchû gyôji* 作者年中行事 [Playwright's yearly activities], vol. 4, *Chinsho kankôkai sôsai*, (1915), 61–62, and summary in Deho Eriko 出穂英里子, "Edo kabuki ni okeru ekanban" 江戸歌舞伎における絵看板 [Illustrated signboards related to Edo Kabuki], *Butai geijutsu kenkyû* 舞台芸術研究 3 (1998): 16. Mimasuya Nisôji took the name "Mimasuya" because his mother's side of the family were fans of the Ichikawa Danjûrô lineage. Kawasaki Ichizô 川崎市蔵, "Mimasuya Nisôji to Kiyomoto Enju Dayû" 三升屋二三治と清元栄寿太夫 [Mimasuya Nisôji and Kiyomoto Enju Dayû], in *Enseki jisshu* 燕石十種, ed. Asakura Haruhiko 朝倉治彦 (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1979), 351.

⁷² Mimasuya Nisôji 三升屋二三治, "Mimasuya Nisôji gijô kakitome" 三升屋二三治劇場書留 [Mimasuya Nisôji's theater record], in *Enseki jisshu* 燕石十種, ed. Asakura Haruhiko 朝倉治彦 (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1979), 10.

⁷³ Mimasuya Nisôji 三升屋二三治, "Gijô kakitome," 10.

All vertical e-kanban came to be called “three-foot kanban” even if they were not exactly three feet wide.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the nineteenth-century author Mimasuya Nisôji 三升屋二三治 (1784–1856) states in his theater record that two kanban of this style were displayed at religious sites in Edo: an image of Ichikawa Yazoô 市川八百蔵 (1730–1759) as Sukeroku 助六 at the Benzaiten 弁才天 shrine (presumably the one at Ueno 上野) and an unidentified image that once hung at the Mejiro 目白 Fudô Hall.⁷⁵ The reference does not specifically equate these kanban with ema; however, the Sukeroku image is clearly hung within the shrine. In light of other texts with similar references, Mimasuya’s implication seems to be that these illustrated kanban were being recycled as ema.

By the time Mimasuya wrote his record of theater information, the Torii style of illustrated signboard was held to be the best.⁷⁶ The Torii school of painting is associated with theater prints (*shibai-e* 芝居絵) and images of beautiful women (*bijinga* 美人画) (fig. 4-20).⁷⁷ The first head of the Torii school was Torii Kiyonobu 鳥居清信 (1664–1729), whose father, Kiyomoto 清元 (1645–1702), was also a painter. Both men are thought to have been born in Osaka and to have moved to Edo in 1687. During the

⁷⁴ Mimasuya Nisôji 三升屋二三治, "Gijô kakitome," 20.

⁷⁵ Mimasuya Nisôji 三升屋二三治, "Gijô kakitome," 20. Nisôji does not indicate which generation of Ichikawa Yazoô is depicted in this ema, although he must have been one of the first five, as Nisôji died before the sixth Ichikawa Yazoô assumed the name. A 1776 Katsukawa Shunshô 勝川春章 (1726–1792) print of the second Ichikawa Yazoô as Sukeroku is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (acc. no. 21.4051).

⁷⁶ Mimasuya Nisôji, "Gijô kakitome," 12.

⁷⁷ For general information on the school, see Nihon Ukiyoe Kyôkai 日本浮世絵協会, ed., *Toriiha hachidai ukiyoeten: Kiyonaga hyaku roku jû nen kinen* 鳥居派八代浮世絵展：清長百六十年記念 [Ukiyo-e exhibition of eight generations in the Torii school: In honor of one hundred sixty years since Kiyonaga's death] (Tokyo: Nihon Ukiyoe Kyôkai, 1974).

eighteenth century, the Torii school had a monopoly on kanban for Kabuki.⁷⁸ Members of the school also painted several ema; many are listed in a 1920 family genealogy written by Kaneko Ban'u 兼子伴雨 (d. 1924), a student of Torii Kiyotada's 清忠.⁷⁹

Ema by Torii school artists were common, and in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, ema were one of the best ways for most people to view paintings by the Torii masters.⁸⁰ Ema painting was an important part of the Torii school's production. A print by Kiyotomo 清朝 (act. 1720s–40s) in the collection of the Honolulu Academy of Arts suggests that the school was producing ema as early as the first half of the eighteenth century (fig. 4-21).⁸¹ The hosoban 細判 print depicts two ema of Heian period warriors. The heavy framing of metalwork on these ema implies that they are depicted as large-scale ema, although the lack of any context to the images hints that they could be cut out and used as small scale ema. Kiyotomo's signature and the publisher's name, Nakajimaya 中島屋, are printed like signatures on the ema.

The formal similarity between e-kanban and ema, coupled with the Torii school's prominence in kanban production, makes their eventual expansion into ema production natural. The early Edo text *Gekijô junmô zui* 劇場訓蒙図彙 shows the front of a theater in Edo during the face-showing performances (fig. 4-19).⁸² In this depiction, the formal

⁷⁸ Mutô Junko 武藤純子, "Edo Kabuki no ekanban: Shôtoku nenkan ni chûmoku shite" 江戸歌舞伎の絵看板一生得年間に注目して [Edo Kabuki picture signboards: With special attention to 1711–16], *Kabuki: Kenkyû to hihiyô* 歌舞伎：研究と批評 17 (1996).

⁷⁹ Kaneko Ban'u 兼子伴雨, "'Gekigashû' yori Toriike daidai no denki," 『劇雅集』より鳥居家代々の伝記 [From the "Gekigashû," biographies of generations in the Torii family], *Ukiyoe* 浮世絵 64 (1976): 35, 37, 38. Kiyotada was interested in the history of his family and during the early twentieth century published several articles about the Torii school and its art.

⁸⁰ Kaneko, "'Gekigashû' yori Toriike daidai no denki," 35.

⁸¹ Howard Link, *The Theatrical Prints of the Torii Masters: A Selection of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century Ukiyo-e* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1977), 55.

⁸² *Gekijô junmô zui* 劇場訓蒙図彙 [Illustrated instructions in theater practice], ed. Asakura Haruhiko, vol. 22, *Kunmô zui shûsei* (Tokyo: Ôzorasha, 2000), 52–53.

similarities between kanban and ema are striking. At the far right, a horizontal kanban depicts what may be the pantomime scene. Several additional vertical kanban, probably the three-foot style, line the eaves along with textual kanban. At the far left, a textual kanban obscures additional e-kanban, in much the same way stacked ema obscure one another at temples.

The subject matter for e-kanban and ema is almost identical in these cases. They are designed to show the actors in their roles but not to specifically re-create the staging of the plays. This is most noticeable in the Danjûrô ema at Naritasan. The prominence of the actors' crests on their clothes signals to viewers that the actors are the main subjects, even more than the play or the characters. Furthermore, in examples such as "Month of the blossom cloud and bell entering" and "Models of Genji designs for kimono," a single actor is portrayed in multiple roles (see figs. 4-10 and 4-16).

Both kanban and ema were generally hung overhead, necessitating techniques that would draw the viewer's attention. Bright colors and bold details dominate in both genres; subtle painting styles would have been lost in this context. Furthermore, the paintings were hung with the tops angling away from the building, which made them easier for viewers to see. The media were the same for both kanban and ema. They were painted on wooden boards, often light wood such as paulownia or Japanese cedar, with thick, black-lacquered frames. Documentary evidence shows that kanban often had metalwork on the frames similar to that used for ema. For example, most of the e-kanban depicted in *Ehon shibai nengyô kagami* 絵本戯場年中鑑 (Illustrated model of yearly theater activities) of 1803 show the same general pattern of metal fitting seen on ema:

metalwork at the corners and the midpoint of each frame edge (fig. 4-22).⁸³ One can see how a painting could switch context from theater to temple with relative ease.

Furthermore, the paintings of both e-kanban and ema served multiple functions. E-kanban advertised the performances and actors but also made the theater district a destination even for those who were not attending a play. People would come to the theater district just to view the e-kanban on display, regardless of whether or not there was a performance.⁸⁴ E-kanban hung on a dark theater turned the theater into a gallery for the paintings. Just as ema halls at religious sites were display spaces that helped support other intentions for the paintings, the display aspect of painted illustrations was closely linked with its advertising purpose.

E-kanban were often the public's first view of a production. Few new Kabuki plays are being written now, but in the Edo period, plays were constantly being written or rewritten. A kanban illustrator would receive the text of the play approximately two months before the kanban were needed. He read through the script and developed the image. Because of this, kanban did not always match the actual staging of the play. Unsurprisingly, the painter was sworn to secrecy as to the plot of the play.⁸⁵

The circumstances under which an e-kanban was transferred from a theater to a shrine or temple as an ema is unknown. When an e-kanban was donated to a temple or shrine, the financial sacrifice associated with an ema donation was absent. Giving a

⁸³ Takamura Chikuri 篁竹里 and Utagawa Toyokuni 歌川豊国, "Ehon shibai nenchû kagami" 絵本劇場年中鑑 [Illustrated model of yearly theater activities], in *Shibai nenchû gyôji shû* 芝居年中行事集, ed. Kokuritsu gekijô geinô chôsashitsu 国立劇場芸能調査室 (Tokyo: Kokuritsu Gekijô Chôsa Yôseibu Geinô Chôsa Shitsu, 1976), 61.

⁸⁴ Torii Kiyotada 鳥居清忠, "Kanjinchô to hyôshie" 勧進帳と表紙絵 [Temple solicitation books and book cover images], *Engei gahô* 演芸画法 1 (1917): 120.

⁸⁵ This paragraph derives from Nagano Yoshitaka 長野吉高, "Shibai ekanban no koto," and Torii Kiyotada 鳥居清忠, "Jûhachiban to shibaie ni tsuite" [Regarding the eighteen classics of Kabuki and theater pictures], *Engei gahô* 十八番と芝居に就いて 1 (1928).

“used” painting to a religious institution seems like a minimal sacrifice because the object had lived out its useful life. Kanban could not be reused because different actors performed in successive productions of a play. Furthermore, the amount of space required to store a season’s worth of kanban year after year would have been prohibitive. The value in the act of donation of kanban as ema did not derive from the cost of their production but must have been linked to something else.

Donating the painting to a religious institution might have been a sign of respect to the artist. As I have demonstrated in earlier chapters, ema have an aura of supernatural power. Presenting a skilled painting of a dramatic scene to a religious institution was like bringing the performance there. Kabuki and other plays were regularly performed at religious sites. Danjûrô VII himself performed numerous times at Naritasan, especially during the year he spent there in exile.⁸⁶

Two banzuke that can also be connected to Kabuki and the Torii school were recycled as donations to Naritasan. The first was donated in 1823 by the actor Sawamura Shirogorô II 沢村四郎五郎 (d. 1832) (fig. 4-18). Approximately thirty actors from the Ichimura theater are shown in the lower half of the board surrounding Danjûrô VII, the main actor that season. The upper half contains a listing of their names in a standardized format that recognizes their relative rank in the theater for that season. Torii Kiyomitsu II painted this ema. A second banzuke was donated fifty years later, in 1873 (fig. 4-23). Unlike the Kiyomitsu image, this one does not portray the actors as if they are onstage. Instead, they are separated in squares usually containing only one actor. This ranking list seems less related to signboards than the earlier example. It is significant that these

⁸⁶ Ogura, "Ichikawa Danjûrô to Naritasan Shinshôji," 73–74.

banzuke were and are treated like the other ema at Naritasan. Although there is no specific evidence to indicate that any of the other Kabuki-related ema at Naritasan were originally painted as kanban, these banzuke show that such a donation was conceptually possible.

When kanban are recycled as ema, I postulate that they were used as objects of thanksgiving. If they were intended to provide good fortune during productions, it seems odd to donate them after the performance. If they were a token of thanksgiving for particularly successful plays, donating them after the performance or season makes sense. The only case for which we have definitive data is Danjûrô VIII's donation of the "Models of Genji designs for kimono" ema in 1851. This ema was donated in the ninth month, the same month that the performance was held. The exact date of donation is not recorded, so we can not know exactly when this was donated relative to the performance, but it does not appear to be a recycled kanban. The thanksgiving aspect of this donation seems to be the most important. In fact, the performance and the ema were both offerings to Fudô driven by the same motivation.

Beyond Danjûrô: Other Ema at Naritasan

The Danjûrô ema are the most distinctive group at Naritasan, ema with other subjects are also in the collection. Many of these ema were associated with degaichô and donors or artists from Edo. These ema demonstrate the strong relationship between Edo and Narita and show that commercial concerns were part of that interaction. It is not surprising that Edo artists would have been commissioned to paint ema for donation at distant sites; references to Edo artists painting ema for provincial sites appear throughout the literature.

Naritasan's case is noteworthy for the number of donors who were residents of Edo. Through these ema, we can see how Naritasan served a distant clientele and was as dependent upon Edo patronage as Sensôji 浅草寺 was.⁸⁷

One of the ema clearly intended for an Edo audience was painted in 1826 by Tani Bunchô 谷文晁 (1763–1840), a Nanga artist who painted in a wide variety of styles.⁸⁸ The ema is of a court music (*gagaku* 雅楽) dance called Ranryô 蘭陵王 (fig. 4-24). This ema, which dates to 1826, is one of the oldest ema that still survive at Naritasan and is in poor condition. The dancing figure is portrayed on a background of gold leaf, surrounded by an unusual red lacquer frame. The ema was well known after its donation and is reproduced in the *Illustrated Famous Places of Narita* of 1858.⁸⁹

This ema was donated by Hirasei 平清, a well-known restaurant in Fukagawa during the Edo period. Hirasei is among the top three Edo restaurants in an 1859 ranking list (fig. 4-25)⁹⁰ and is one of the restaurants Utagawa Kunisada 歌川国貞 (1786–1864) and Andô Hiroshige 安藤広重 (1797–1858) depicted in their series *Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital* (Tôtô kômei kaiseki tsukushi 東都高名会席盡) (fig. 4-26).⁹¹ The owners of the restaurant presumably knew of Naritasan through the degaichôat Fukagawa, if by no other means. A public viewing had been held in 1821, five years before the ema

⁸⁷ On Sensôji, see chapter 3.

⁸⁸ For more on Bunchô, see Frank L. Chance, "Fealty and Patronage: Notes on the Sponsorship by Matsudaira Sadanobu of Tani Bunchô and His Painting," *Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 12, no. 2 (2004).

⁸⁹ Nakaji, "Narita meisho zue."

⁹⁰ Shôji Kentarô 莊司賢太郎. "Zeitaku kômei hana kuraba" to ogiebushi shi 〔贅沢高名花競〕と荻江節拾遺 ["Comparison of famous and luxurious establishments" and gleanings of ogiebushi music] in *Sensu no aru hanashi* 31, <http://www.kyosendo.co.jp/rensai/rensai31-40/rensai31.html>. (accessed April 17, 2010).

⁹¹ For information on the series, see Charlotte van Rappard-Boon, *Hiroshige and the Utagawa School of Japanese Prints c. 1810–1860*, vol. 4, *Catalogue of the Collections of Japanese Prints* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1984), 98.

was donated. The restaurant was located in the area near Eidaiji temple and would have been in the thick of activity during degaichô.⁹²

The reason for the donation is not recorded, but the ability to commission a painting by an artist of as high a rank as Bunchô and to have it on gold leaf indicates that the restaurant proprietor had considerable wealth at his disposal. Bunchô's most famous patron was the shogunal minister Matsudaira Sadanobu.⁹³ The red lacquer frame on this ema was also unusual⁹⁴ and would have served to further draw attention to the ema. The name of the restaurant was carved into the left-hand side of the frame; therefore, any viewer would have known who donated it. When it was reproduced in *Illustrated Famous Places in Narita*, the restaurant's name was also listed. Through the inclusion of the donor's name, this ema could function as an advertisement for the restaurant. Advertising at Naritasan reinforced the restaurant in the memories of those who came to both the temple and the degaichô.

Another ema by Bunchô includes an inscription on the back that explains the motivation behind its donation (fig. 4-27). This image of a tethered horse from 1831 follows Kanô 狩野 models in compositional style (see fig. 1-4). It was donated by a mother whose son had left home and was living a profligate life. She donated the ema to pray for his return home. Although it has been speculated that the horse in the ema represents the son and the rope is the mother hoping to restrain him,⁹⁵ the composition

⁹² Then called Dobashi, the area is near the present-day Monzennakacho subway station on the Tôzai line, along Eitai-dori.

⁹³ For more information on the relationship between Sadanobu and Bunchô, see Chance, "Falty and Patronage," and Timon Screech, *The Shogun's Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States 1760–1829* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000).

⁹⁴ Ogura Hiroshi 小倉博, "Bunchô no ema" 文晁の絵馬 [Ema by Tani Bunchô], *Museum Chiba*, no. 2 (1973): 26.

⁹⁵ Ogura, "Bunchô no ema," 26.

regularly occurs in other ema. Another Edo period ema by Bunchô at Naritasan is virtually a mirror image of the ema of 1831 (fig. 4-28). The second ema may have been the study for an almost identical ema by Bunchô donated to Sensôji in 1831.⁹⁶

Numerous ema at Naritasan are associated with kaichô and degaichô by either direct or circumstantial evidence. Of the forty-eight surviving Edo period ema at Naritasan, five were explicitly donated at a Fukagawa degaichô, three were donated in the year of a Fukagawa degaichô, and three were donated in the year of a kaichô (1807, 1833, 1835). Of the donations made during a kaichô year, one was explicitly at the kaichô (1833) and all can be connected to donors or artists from Edo. Ema donated at deigaichô in Fukagawa had the additional benefit of being exhibited there before they were transported to Narita. Danjûrô ema not only served to market Edo Kabuki to the viewers at Naritasan but were also addressed to spectators at the temple with access to and experience in Edo. The audience for the ema was made up of both locals from the Narita area and pilgrims who came to Naritasan from Edo. Adult men from Narita could be expected to go to Edo during a degaichô, and the pilgrims would return to Edo.

The earliest surviving degaichô ema is Utagawa Toyokuni's 1814 depiction of Danjûrô VII performing the Shakyô dance (discussed above). During the same degaichô, Matsudaira Sadanobu donated an ema carved from calligraphy he had written. The ema reads "Issai kyôzô" 一切経蔵 (fig. 4-29), a reference to the complete Buddhist scriptures. Sadanobu's text is an appropriate choice for a high-ranking daimyô who was the most important chief counselor of the eighteenth century. The contrast between these two ema shows the spectrum of Naritasan's patronage. Toyokuni's vivid image of Danjûrô VII

⁹⁶ Ôno and Ogura, *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema*, 13. Unusually, the second ema was not actually donated to Naritasan until 1975. This supports the suggestion that it was painted originally as a model, not as an ema for donation.

was part of the floating world of Edo period recreation, while Sadanobu's belonged to a more rigid world.⁹⁷ Sadanobu's ema donation also illustrates the connection between Naritasan and the shogunal family, which was particularly strong at the time the shogun's mother, Keishôin, had a private degaichô at Edo castle in 1703 after the degaichô in Fukagawa.⁹⁸

At the 1833 degaichô, Wakukuniya Kazuyoshi 若国屋万吉 (dates unknown) of Edo's Honjô 本所 district donated an ema depicting the Heian period tale of the warrior Hirai Yasumasa 平井保昌 and the thief Hakamadare Yasusuke 袴誰保輔 (fig. 4-31). Yasumasa is shown walking through Kyoto playing his flute, with Yasusuke following him. Honjô is not far from Fukagawa; both are on the eastern side of the Sumida river. The artist Wakukuniya hired to paint this image, Oki Ichiga 沖一峨 (1798–1855), lived in Fukagawa.⁹⁹ Both donor and artist had a close geographic connection to the degaichô site.

Utagawa Kuniyoshi's ema of the same year was commissioned by the Sengumi 千組 firefighting brigade (fig. 4-32). The ema shows the brigade mustering for a fire with ladders, carried by those in the front, and the group's standard in the right third of the image.¹⁰⁰ Below the standard, a man with extensive upper-body tattoos is visible. Firefighters were popular figures in nineteenth-century Edo and an important symbol of

⁹⁷ Sadanobu was a cultural traditionalist. For an extended discussion, see Screech, *The Shogun's Painted Culture*.

⁹⁸ Sadanobu was a grandson of the eighth shogun, Yoshimune.

⁹⁹ Asahi, "Naritasan Shinshôji no ema," 85.

¹⁰⁰ For more on firefighting during the Edo period, see William W. Kelly, "Incendiary Actions: Fire and Firefighting in the Shogun's Capital and the People's City," in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Merriman and Kaoru Ugawa (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

the city's identity.¹⁰¹ Through this ema, the Sengumi group connected their romanticized role as heroes of the city with a devotion to Fudô Myôô.

At the 1835 kaichô at Naritasan, a resident of nearby Matsudo 松戸, Yonei Keijirô 米井啓次郎 (dates unknown), donated a depiction of the legend of the Chinese general Kanshin 韓信 by Hasegawa Settan 長谷川雪旦 (1778–1843) with calligraphy by Tsukien Sanezumi 月園真澄 (fig. 4-33). Settan created the illustration for *Edo meisho zue* 江戸名所図会 (Illustrated famous places of Edo), and examples of his paintings are rare.¹⁰² Kanshin, the son of a prince in hiding, is shown crawling between another man's legs, a humiliation he forced himself to undergo in order to avoid fighting someone he considered his inferior.

Four ema survive from the 1856 degaichô, the last one held during the Edo period. Two of these are by Utagawa Kuniyoshi. The names of those who donated these ema are not recorded. One ema shows the monk Yûten 祐天 (1637–1718) praying before Fudô Myôô. Fudô is accompanied by Kongara and Seitaka, but rather than flanking him, they are both standing to his left (the viewer's right) (fig. 4-35). Yûten kneels at the left side of the composition. Yûten is associated with the Naritasan Fudô because he prayed to Fudô to remove bad memories of his childhood.¹⁰³ This painting is described in "Honchô ukiyo gajin den" 本朝浮世絵画人伝 of 1899 as one of Kuniyoshi's masterpieces.¹⁰⁴ The other Kuniyoshi ema from this year is a depiction of the Soga revenge story (fig. 4-36). It shows the Soga brothers going on a night raid to avenge their father's death. After 1703,

¹⁰¹ Kelly, "Incendiary Actions," 327.

¹⁰² Asahi, *Naritasan bijutsushi*, 1.

¹⁰³ See Ôno and Ogura, *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema*, 16–17.

¹⁰⁴ Asahi, "Naritasan Shinshôji no ema," 87.

the Soga story became a popular way to disguise references to the Chûshingura 忠臣蔵 revenge incident in which a group of samurai killed the daimyô they blamed for forcing their master's death.¹⁰⁵ As discussed above, it was strongly associated with the Ichikawa Danjûrô lineage, which was famous for performing it.

The two other ema from 1856 represent the diversity of donated ema in other media. Irie Chôhachi 入江長八 (1815–1889) made a carved plaster ema of a chicken on an overturned mortar (fig. 4-37).¹⁰⁶ This ema was donated by a group of plaster craftsmen from the Nihonbashi 日本橋 neighborhood of Edo and may have partially been intended to promote the medium. In 1898, Chôhachi's successor, Irie Chôhachi II (dates unknown), came to Naritasan to repair the ema.¹⁰⁷

An 1856 calligraphic ema of Buddhist teachings is signed Urushien 漆園 (fig. 4-38). Along the top, the word “hônô” (donation) is carved in seal script and the text of the “Buddhist Teachings of the Sacred Fudô” sutra is painted beneath. The frame includes two metal wheels of the Buddhist law on each side. A donor name is not recorded for the sutra ema. These examples show that other types of ema were also donated in conjunction with degaichô.

The larger than normal audience at kaichô and degaichô could have encouraged an increase in ema donations at these times. This sizable audience helped reinforce the advertising benefits of donating ema at Naritasan. Many of these ema can be directly

¹⁰⁵ For more information on the Chûshingura story and its impact on Japanese culture, see Henry D. Smith II, "The Capacity of Chûshingura," *Monumenta Nipponica* 58, no. 1 (2003).

¹⁰⁶ For information about Chôhachi, see Asako Katsujirô 浅子勝次郎, "Kinsei shomin geijitsu bunka ni kansuru kenkyû: Irie Chôhachi no sakuhin wo chûshin to shite (Matsumoto Yoshio sensei koki kinen)" 近世庶民芸術・文化に関する研究：入江長八の作品を中心として（松本芳夫先生古希記念） [Study regarding early modern commoners' arts and culture: Centering on the works of Irie Chôhachi (In honor of Professor Matsumoto Yoshio)], *Shigaku* 36, no. 2/3 (1963).

¹⁰⁷ Asahi Jusan 旭壽山, "Naritasan ema gakumen shû" (Narita: Naritasan Library for Buddhism, 1938), 29.

linked to Edo through artists and donors, and ema at Naritasan provide visual evidence of the temple's close ties to Edo.

Ema at Naritasan were part of a web linking temple, metropolis, and individuals. The ema were one way of making Naritasan's prestige visible to visitors. By visiting the ema hall and observing both the ema themselves and the names of the painters and donors, viewers could literally see the breadth of Naritasan's reach, which was both religious and political. As we have seen, Naritasan was connected to the regional rulers, and the enshrined statue had also made an appearance at Edo castle. Despite subject matter that may have addressed Fudô Myô's power in this world, these ema were "about" Naritasan's ability to attract followers to itself.

Donations from the Danjûrô actors and others from Edo show that Naritasan was an important institution for Edo as well the villages surrounding Narita. Ema brought cultural experiences to Naritasan from the metropolis of Edo. Furthermore, the connection to the Fukagawa area through public viewings gave residents of the Narita area a chance to experience Edo culture directly.

Artistically, the ema at Naritasan show connections between ukiyo-e prints and ema paintings by some of the same artists. More directly, they allowed viewers to make those connections by providing a forum in which the paintings could be seen. The ema hall at Naritasan, like ema halls elsewhere, functioned as a public gallery. As the Edo period progressed, religious pilgrimage and recreational travel became increasingly conflated. The act of donating an ema may still have had a primarily religious connotation for some donors, but viewing them on display in ema halls was a secular and

social activity for the general public. This aspect of ema reception is especially visible at Naritasan because of the temple's strong connection with Edo and the Ichikawa Danjûrô lineage of actors.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I explored some of the roles ema played in Edo period popular culture. The temples and shrines where these ema were displayed, such as Sensôji 浅草寺 and Naritasan 成田山 (see chapters 3 and 4, respectively), were large institutions with long histories before the Edo period and notable for the large number of ema in their collections. Before concluding, I would like to discuss one final example of a much smaller and more unified collection. Gokokuji 護国寺 temple in Tokyo has an assembly of ema that offers a counterexample to the diverse and public collections discussed earlier.¹

The fifth shogun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 徳川綱吉 (1646–1709) established Gokokuji in 1681 for his mother, Keishôin 桂昌院 (1627–1705).² The temple was constructed on land that had previously been a garden of medicinal plants for the shogunal household. In 1697, a new Kannon hall was constructed at the temple. The hall escaped both earthquakes and fires in the intervening years and remains standing today.

A grouping of six ema hang in the Kannon hall along the wall above the main altar. These ema represent an unusual collection because they were all donated at roughly the same time, in 1697 upon the completion of the new Kannon hall. The two central ema, flanking a calligraphic plaque with part of the temple's formal name, are unusual for the inclusion of the Tokugawa family crest in the background (figs. 5-1 and 5-2). Both were

¹ The Gokokuji ema collection is catalogued in Bunkyôku Kyôiku Iinkai 文京区教育委員会, ed., *Bunkyôku no bunkazai: Shitei bunkazai no kaisetsu* 文京区の文化財—指定文化財の解説 [Cultural assets of Bunkyô ward: Description of designated cultural assets] (Tokyo: Bunkyôku Kyôiku Iinkai Shakai Kyôikuka, 1978).

² For a brief overview of the temple, see Patricia Graham, *Faith and Power in Japanese Buddhist Art, 1600–2005* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 42–44. For a more in-depth history, see Gokokuji Henshûinakai 護国寺史編集委員会, *Gokokuji shi* 護国寺史 [History of Gokokuji] (Tokyo: Gokokuji, 1988).

painted by the Kanô 狩野 school student Sonoda Dôsetsu 蘭田洞雪 (dates unknown).

The ema on the right depicts the theme of *Takasago* 高砂, an old man and woman representative of felicitous tidings. The ema on the left shows the folk god Hotei 布袋 with his bag of treasures and surrounded by children. Both of these themes are considered emblems of good luck or good fortune. Although their donor is unknown, the Tokugawa family crests suggest a contributor who was a family member or a close associate.³

An additional four ema, two on either side of the central ema, complete the assemblage. Three of the ema, like Dôsetsu's two ema, bear inscriptions dating their donation to 1697. These ema all depict black horses, which are portrayed in the traditional style I have previously associated with the Kanô school. Kanô Kyûen 狩野休円 (1622–1698) painted the ema to the right of Dôsetsu's Takasago ema (see fig. 1-2). The other two are signed by an artist named Tôsetsu 桃設 who is otherwise unknown (figs. 5-3 and 5-4). These ema are to the left of Dôsetsu's Hotei ema and to the right of Kyûsen's ema. Kanô Shunshô 狩野春笑 (1646–1715) painted the fourth ema of this group, a composition that includes two grooms (fig. 5-5). Shunshô's ema bears a 1698 donation date and hangs at the far left, next to one of Tôsetsu's ema. These six ema represent an atypical grouping because of their unity of theme, donation at nearly the same time, and deliberate installation. Unusually for the genre, they have survived to the present day in what is possibly the location of their original installation.⁴ These six ema were likely donated in conjunction with the completion of the new hall.

³ Bunkyo-ku Kyôiku Iinkai 文京区教育委員会, ed., *Bunkyo-ku no bunkazai: Shitei bunkazai no kaisetsu*, 34.

⁴ Kawai Masatomo 河合正朝, professor emeritus of Japanese art history, Keio University, Tokyo, conversation with the author, September 5, 2004.

The construction of the new Kannon hall in 1697 was significant for Gokokuji because it symbolized the opening of the temple to a more general patronage than its previous narrow focus on Keishōin and Tsunayoshi.⁵ Ceremonies to celebrate the completion of the new hall were held on the fourth day of the eighth month, and townspeople were permitted to attend.⁶ The Dōsetsu ema were donated on the eighteenth day of the eighth month and thus can be connected to the opening of the new hall. The other ema were all donated shortly thereafter, in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh months of 1697 and in the fifth month of 1698.

The thematic unity in these ema has several possible explanations. Dōsetsu's two ema were clearly donated as a pair and seem specifically intended to commemorate the new hall. The four later ema appear to be joining in these same good wishes. All display the conservative choice of a horse as subject. They are evidence of a general trend of horse ema being more common in the seventeenth century before being replaced by other subjects later in the Edo period. The use of horse ema seems particularly fitting for a temple strongly connected to the ruling shogun and not yet completely open to the public as Sensōji and Naritasan were. An additional 1697 donation further underscores the deliberate installation of these ema. Kanda Sōtei 神田宗庭 (d. 1702) painted an ema depicting the four accomplishments in a Chinese setting (fig. 5-6).⁷ Rather than hanging along the altar wall with the other six from 1697 and 1698, this ema hangs across the hall above an exterior wall. If the six ema on the altar wall had been installed there only by

⁵ Gokokujiishi Henshūinkai, *Gokokuji shi*, 36.

⁶ Gokokujiishi Henshūinkai, *Gokokuji shi*, 35–36. At this time, access to Gokokuji was restricted by the shogunal household.

⁷ This artist is of a later generation than the original Sōtei and served as *edokoro eshi* 絵所絵師 at Kan'eiji 寛永時 temple, which was also associated with the shogunal family (see chapter 2). Bunkyōku Kyōiku Inkaikai, ed., *Bunkyōku no bunkazai: Shitei bunkazai no kaisetsu*, 38.

virtue of their donation date, Sôtei's ema should have hung there instead of Shunshô's. Because it does not, the installation of the ema appears to have been made with consideration of the ema's subjects.

The similarity of the original six ema can be contrasted with eleven other Edo period ema that hang along the opposite wall with Sotei's. Later ema donations at Gokokuji maintained a conservative tendency but broadened the range of subject matter. Between 1699 and 1793, Gokokuji received nine additional ema. The images include three with trios of horses, two with Chinese narratives, and one with an unidentified battle narrative. The most unusual for the context is a depiction of one hundred hens dated 1786 and signed by the otherwise unknown Rinsen Minamoto Kyûhei 鄰川源久平 (fig. 5-7). Most of the artists responsible for the ema were connected to the Kanô school. These ema stand in marked contrast to the collection of ema at Naritasan, where ukiyo-e artists and related subjects predominate.

The ema of Gokokuji capture in a small space the shift in ema subjects. Standing at one spot within the Kannon hall, a viewer can observe both horse ema and Kyûhei's hens. Accepting the rich diversity of ema and the importance of their role as objects of display gives rise to the question of how non-horse subjects could function in a religious context. The ritual use of a horse ema is obvious on its face; the ema's image derives from a ritually acceptable donation and stands in for that object (a horse). Other subjects related to ritual or belief, such as depictions of deities or ritual activities, can also be closely related to ritual significance. Most ema subjects, however, cannot be related to doctrinal concerns. Nonetheless, these ema were still widely made, donated, and displayed.

The diversity in ema subjects reflects the emphasis on worldly benefits in Edo period religion and the lack of a strong separation between religious practice and daily life. The content of ema shifted away from horses in two directions. In the first direction, subjects remained tangibly connected to the intention of the donation, in the same way ema of horses had an obvious connection to live horse donations. Examples of this type of ema include Ichikawa Danjûrô's 市川団十郎 1851 donation of "Models of Genji designs for kimonos" (see fig. 4-12), commissioned in thanksgiving for his recovery from an illness, and the many examples of boat ema donated by shipping merchants in coastal areas, especially on the coast of the Sea of Japan.⁸ Depictions of deities, often Kannon, could also be considered part of this group.

In the second direction, the connections between the ema's subjects and the religious act of the donation were less explicit. Many warrior stories and legends, such as depicted in ema at Sensôji, are included in this group. Another example is the ema commemorating the Korean embassy donated in Kishi Sakurai 喜志桜井.⁹ While the subject matter relates to the reason for the donation, the donation cannot accurately be described as a votive act. Almost any subject that could appear in other forms of painting could also appear in ema. The depiction of beautiful women is a notable exception. A few examples exist of *onnagata* 女形 (male Kabuki actors dressed as women) images, such as an 1808 ema donated to Kibitsu shrine 吉備津神社 that shows an actor dressed as a

⁸ See chapter 4 for a discussion of Danjûrô's donation. For ema of ships, see Iwai Hiromi 岩井宏實, *Ema 絵馬*, vol. 12, *Mono to ningen no bunkashi ものと人間の文化史* (Tokyo: Hôsei University Press, 1974), 230–37.

⁹ Ronald P. Toby, "Carnival of the Aliens: Korean Embassies in Edo-Period Art and Popular Culture," *Monumenta Nipponica* 41, no. 4 (1986): 439–41. This ema is discussed in chapter 2.

woman performing the Dôjôji 道成寺 bell dance.¹⁰ However, these ema depict performances, not beautiful women as they usually appear in ukiyo-e. An ema at Kotohira 金刀比羅 shrine stands as an exception. This painting by Katsukawa Shunshô 勝川春章 (1726–1792) depicts the Third Princess and an attendant.¹¹ Shunshô painted the image on silk, like a hanging scroll, and it was later mounted to an ema board, so the painting may not have been created for use as an ema.¹² The wide variety of acceptable subject matter in ema attests to the fluidity between sacred and secular practices in early modern Japanese society. Ema were neither wholly devotional objects nor wholly secular objects.

When instigated by a donor, both small and large ema begin as a donation. This donation, whether votive or in thanksgiving, was made for the gods, not for the specific institution that received the ema. None of the period sources explain exactly how an ema was donated to a shrine or temple, but we know from Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈 that there was no specific ritual to mark the donation.¹³ In the introduction to *Itsukushima ema kagami* 巖島絵馬鑑, he specifically mentions that the shrine takes ema into its collection when they fall from their original hanging location. This suggests that the ema were not considered shrine property immediately upon their donation.

¹⁰ Reproduced in Waseda University Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, ed., *Kabuki ema* 歌舞伎絵馬 (Tokyo: Waseda University Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, 1986), 63.

¹¹ Reproduced in Daisuke Itô, "The Kotohiragû Collection: Dedications to the Kompira Deity," in *Acquisition: Art and Ownership in Edo-Period Japan*, ed. Elizabeth Lillehoj (Warren, CT: Floating World Editions, 2007), 59.

¹² Itô, "The Kotohiragû Collection," 58–59. Itô rejects this painting as an ema because it was not painted directly on the board. However, while rare, there are other examples of paintings mounted onto boards as ema. Moreover, the practice of mounting sutra scrolls to ema boards for donations establishes that the act of mounting another object onto a board is a legitimate way of creating an ema. Nonetheless, this unique example of the beautiful woman subject for an ema was produced differently from the vast majority of ema, which underscores its exceptional nature.

¹³ See longer discussion on ema donation in chapter 2.

An ema donation began with the donor's desire to pray for something, like the mother who wanted her son to return home (see fig. 4-27), or the donor's wish to commemorate something, such as Ichikawa Danjûrô's successful recovery (see fig. 4-12). The donor secured permission to install the ema from the temple or shrine, and it was placed in an ema hall or other suitable location. Because the act of donation lacked a public ritual, we can think of this stage as a private prayer on the part of the donor. Almost immediately upon donation, however, the ema shifted from a votive object to a display object.

Once installed, ema generally seem to have been left in place. The extreme crowding of ema at popular sites and the overlap between them suggest that ema were not regularly removed or rearranged and that the religious institution did not carefully manage their display. As noted above, Itsukushima shrine explicitly left an ema in place until the cord securing it weakened. Many ema were lost to fire during the Edo period; many that survive today would have been lost to fire in the twentieth century if they had not been removed from their original locations for conservation of either the paintings or the buildings. This includes the ema collections at both Naritasan and Sensôji. An ema of a hawk painted by Kawabata Gyokushô 川端玉章 (1842–1913) survived while the rest of the ema in Mimeguri shrine's ema hall were destroyed during World War II because it was undergoing conservation at the time.¹⁴

In the second, and longer, portion of their existence as objects for display, ema were more widely accessible during the Edo period than they are now. Before the

¹⁴ Nagamine Kôichi 永峯光一, chief priest, Mimeguri shrine, in discussion with the author, September 27, 2006. I was unable to view this ema during my visit to Mimeguri shrine because it is stored off-site. Kawabata's ema is one of four from this site that were included in Yamauchi Tenshin's *Tôto ema kagami* (see chapter 2) and is the only one that survived. Additional Mimeguri ema were included in Gesshin's *Bue hengaku shû*.

establishment of museums and at a time when religious institutions did not consider ema to be part of the institution's collection, the ema were left to hang where they had been installed. The move toward preservation in the twentieth century doubly ensured the protection of these objects. Now, however, ema of particular historical interest are generally removed from ema halls and held in museums or galleries, which restrict access. Some of the ema are held or displayed in museums separate from the religious institution itself. Kanô Sanraku's 狩野山楽 ema pair from Kaizu Tenjin 海津天神 shrine can be viewed at the Kyoto National Museum (see fig. 1-4). Imamiya 今宮 shrine's ema depicting late Edo period workers at looms is part of the historical display at the Nishijin Textile Center in Kyoto.¹⁵

Ema as a genre are usually defined by the first stage of their creation, as votive objects; however, for viewers who experience an ema after its donation, the state of display is more meaningful for understanding the object. In practice, the display function of ema carries greater significance than the original context of donation. Ema become public objects and enter the public discourse by virtue of being displayed.

Large-scale ema become terminal commodities through their display, and the condition of ongoing display allows information about the ema to become commoditized.¹⁶ Small ema, which are burned at the end of their efficacious period, did not have standing as commodities. Unlike large-scale ema, small ema did not have their status as objects altered by their display. Their meaning is entirely located in the act of donation. For large-scale ema, however, display in ema halls enabled their entry into

¹⁵ A reproduction of the ema is illustrated in *Imamiya jinja yuisho ryakki* 今宮神社由緒略記 [Brief history of Imamiya shrine] (Kyoto: Imamiya Jinja, n.d.), 23.

¹⁶ My discussion of ema as commodities is influenced by Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

public discourse and social networks.¹⁷ Once on display, they became available as sources of viewing pleasure and knowledge that eventually entered printed texts. Other objects or monetary donations could serve the votive function ascribed to ema. The unique aspect of large-scale ema is the constant and public nature of their subsequent display.

Ema now

Visitors to temples and shrines still actively donate small ema, but large ema donations declined during the Meiji period. Donations of all kinds of objects and materials to religious institutions decreased in the Meiji period and were replaced with monetary donations.¹⁸ Large-scale ema donations are unusual in modern times. One exceptional late-twentieth-century example was donated by the Japanese cosmonaut Akiyama Toyohiro 秋山豊寛 to Kotohira Shrine in 1990 in thanksgiving for his successful voyage.¹⁹ At most locations, however, large-scale ema remain only in their display function. They are historical objects, and new donations have not been added to most existing collections since the Meiji period.

Furthermore, the attention granted to collections of large-scale ema varies greatly. Naritasan is unusual for having most of its historically significant ema constantly on view in either the temple museum or the gallery at the base of the Great Pagoda of Peace (constructed in 1984). Sensôji's collection is well preserved in the pagoda gallery but is

¹⁷ On the importance of goods in social contexts, see Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods* (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

¹⁸ Sarah Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573–1912* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 231. For information about other types of donations to temples, see Alexander Vesey, "For Faith and Prestige: Daimyo Motivations for Buddhist Patronage," *Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 12, no. 2 (2004).

¹⁹ Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods*, 315.

rarely accessible. Sites with ema in the main halls, such as Gokokuji in Tokyo and Kiyomizu-dera 清水寺 in Kyoto generally do not draw specific attention to their collections, although any visitor to the temple may see them. At Yasaka 八坂 shrine (formerly Gion 祇園 shrine and the primary site for *Hengaku kihan* 扁額軌範 along with Kiyomizu-dera), parking spots have been placed immediately next to the ema hall, blocking access to it and deemphasizing its presence. Due to modern conservation concerns, ema have been withdrawn from public display and removed from their previous context.

Ema serve as ritual objects and as objects of popular culture. Drawing strict divisions between sacred and secular, as well as Buddhist and Shinto, for cultural and religious practices during the Edo period robs these practices of their rich multiplicity. In this study, it has not been my intention to remove ema from their Shinto or religious contexts but rather to return them to the full diversity of a context that embraces social practices as well as Buddhist thought. Through choices of subject matter and location, donors and artists could express a wide variety of intentions. Isolated objects may be read as Buddhist or Shinto, but the genre as a whole is more properly understood as a manifestation of popular culture.

In this dissertation, I have outlined the history of ema from their purported roots in horse donations to display practices in the early modern period. I have reviewed their appearance in texts of the Edo period and argued that they were part of the broad social discourse of the time. While ema are often regarded in both Japanese and Western scholarship as primarily religious objects, I have offered a parallel reading of ema as an expression of popular culture. Through examining the collections at Sensôji temple in

Tokyo and Naritasan Shinshôji temple in Chiba prefecture, I have shown the wide diversity of subject matter possible for ema and the opportunities they presented for artists and donors to promote their own interests. The ema halls constructed at temples and shrines provided a context for the display of ema and their integration into popular culture.

At Yushima 湯島 shrine in January 2006, I was struck by the sheer number of small ema that filled portions of the shrine's grounds. A short subway ride to almost any temple or shrine in the city would have allowed me to view a similar collection of wishes donated to the gods. And stepping inside many main halls, I could look up to see ema hanging near the ceiling. Sometimes forgotten and often overlooked, these ema survive as a testament to the ongoing dialogue between believer, deity, and the public sphere. Produced by artists working in every style and commissioned by people from differing status groups, ema show us today a concrete articulation of the deep intermingling between sacred and secular in early modern Japan.

Appendix
Translations of Edo period texts about ema

- Fujita Rihê 藤田理兵衛. *Edo kanoko* 江戸鹿子 [Dappled fabric of Edo]. 1687
- Gen Zaburô 源三郎. *Jinrin kunmôzui* 人倫訓蒙図彙 [Illustrated encyclopedia of humanity]. 1690
- Saeki Ariyoshi 佐伯有義, ed. *Shinto myômoku ruijushô* 神道名目類聚抄 [Annotated collection of Shinto terms]. 1702
- Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈. *Sadatakeô ema zukô* 貞丈翁絵馬図考 [Old man Sadatake's thoughts on ema]. mid. eighteenth-century
- Ise Sadatake. "Sadatake zakki" 貞丈雜記 [Sadatake's miscellaneous notes]. mid. eighteenth-century
- Nishimura Genroku 西村源六, and Nomura Chôbê 野村長兵衛. *Buyû ema hinagata* 武勇絵馬雛形 [Pattern book of valor ema]. 1749
- Kikuoka Senryô 菊岡沾涼. *Edo sunako* 江戸砂子 [Edo sand]. 1772
- Ôta Nanpo 大田南畝, and Sena Sadao 瀬名貞雄. *Raiden mondô* 瀬田問答 [Raiden questions and answers]. 1790
- Asatani Rôgu 麻谷老愚. "Sensôji Kannondô ema" 浅草寺観音堂絵馬 [Ema in the Sensôji Kannon hall]. In *Shisô zasshiki* 祠曹雜識, mid nineteenth century
- Kusakabe Toshimasa 日下部利政. *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺誌 [Sensôji intentions]. 1807
- Matsudaira Kanzan 松平冠山. *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺志 [Sensôji intentions]. 1813
- Hayami Shungyôsai 速見春暁齋. *Hengaku kihan* 扁額軌範 [Canon of plaques]. 1819
- Asaoka Okisada 朝岡興禎. *Koga bikô* 古画備考 [Notes on old painting]. 1820-1856
- Suzuki Chûkô 鈴木忠候. *Kansô zuihitsu* 閑窓隨筆 [Window of leisure essay]. 1821
- Chitosên Fujihiko 千歳園藤彦. *Itsukushima ema kagami* 巖島絵馬鑑 [Model of ema at Itsuku Island]. 1831
- Nishizawa Ippô 西沢一鳳. *Kôto gosui* 皇都午睡 [Afternoon sleep in the imperial capital]. 1850

Saitô Gesshin. *Bue hengaku shû* 武江扁額集 [Collection of plaques in the Edo region].
1862

Jûsanjin 寿山人, and Enteishu 円亭主. *Edo meisho ema awase* 江戸名所絵馬合
[Competition of ema from famous places in Edo]. n.d.

Fujita Rihê 藤田理兵衛. *Edo kanoko* 江戸鹿子 [Dappled fabric of Edo]. 1687¹

Emumaya

Asakusa Kayachô Itchome Osakaya

Asakusa Kayachô Itchome Otaya

Gen Zaburô 源三郎. *Jinrin kunmôzui* 人倫訓蒙図彙 [Illustrated encyclopedia of humanity]. 1690²

from Section 6: Jobs

Emuma shi³

At temples and shrines, ema are used for the successful completion of various requests. Perhaps they are called “emuma” because in the past they were paintings of horses. Now, [emuma shi] make and sell a variety of subjects. In temple towns, they are in the space between the second and third blocks.

¹ Fujita Rihê 藤田理兵衛, *Edo kanoko* 江戸鹿子 [Dappled fabric of Edo], ed. Asakura Haruhiko 朝倉治彦, vol. 8, *Koita chishi sôsho* (Tokyo: Sumiya Shobô, 1970), 242.

² Gen Zaburô 源三郎, *Jinrin kunmôzui* 人倫訓蒙図彙 [Illustrated encyclopedia of humanity], ed. Masamune Atsuo 正宗敦夫, vol. 3, *Nihon koten zenshû* 日本古典全集 (Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshû Kankôkai, 1929), 242.

³ The title of this section is written in *hiragana* syllabary using the archaic reading of horse as “muma.”

Saeki Ariyoshi 佐伯有義, ed. *Shinto myômoku ruijushô* 神道名目類聚抄 [Annotated collection of Shinto terms]. 1702⁴

Model horse

Those who could not bring a sacred horse to donate, donated a horse made of wood.

Ema

Those who could not even donate model horse, painted and donated a picture of a horse. Now, living horses are not donated and various images are donated.

Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈. *Sadatakeô ema zukô* 貞丈翁繪馬図考 [Old man Sadatake's thoughts on ema]. mid. eighteenth-century⁵

[Forward]

It is written that the four artistic schools of Tosa, Kanô, Hasegawa, and Kaihô serve the paintings that are placed here. [i.e. are the primary schools for ema]
Common sayings are affixed that become comfort for the world.

⁴ Saeki Ariyoshi 佐伯有義, ed., *Shinto myômoku ruijushô* 神道名目類聚抄 [Annotated collection of Shinto terms] (Tokyo: Ôokayama Shoten, 1934), 81.

⁵ This text is held in the National Archives of Japan.

Ise Sadatake. "Sadatake zakki" 貞丈雜記 [Sadatake's miscellaneous notes]. mid.
eighteenth-century⁶

Regarding ema

There are people who say there is a ritual for donating ema. There is no evidence for a ritual. The shogunal family and others don't have a ritual. The shogunal family and daimyo donate sacred horses. People who do not donate sacred horses donate sacred horse paintings in place of sacred horses. These are called ema. This is done informally; there is not an established ritual. Moreover, because the full name [of the donor] is not written and attached to the sacred horse, writing and attaching [the donor's name] to the ema also is not necessary. Sacred branches are attached to the sacred horse. At three places of hair – near the back, the mantle, the tail – sacred paper is attached. This can be seen in *Fûroki*.⁷ Isn't it true that ema are also painted like this? Afterwards, ema with the form of sacred horses became less common. It seems incorrect to paint birds, animals, humans, and many other subjects.

Calligraphy on ema

Regarding the writing on ema, it is written in *Ihon zuihei nikki* 異本隨兵日記 that the god of horse stables is Ema no Kami.⁸ Certainly ema should be hung. This horse is lead by a monkey. Written on the ema is “Donated and hung before the treasure of the god of the horse stables. Horse (lead by a monkey). Sincerely.⁹ / Era name, year, month, day.”

⁶ Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈, *Sadatake zakki* 貞丈雜記 [Sadatake's miscellaneous notes]. Tôyô bunko 453, ed. Shimada Isao 島田勇雄 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1986), 205, 210.

⁷ See Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一, *Fûroki* 風呂記 [Bath chronicle]. *Zoku gunsho ruijû*, ed. Ôda Tôshirô 太田藤四郎 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijû Kanseikai, 1959), 325.

⁸ “Ema” in “Ema no Kami” is written with the characters for “living” and “horse” and glossed as “ema.” This is an unexpected reading. Normally this combination of characters would be read as *shôma* or *seima*.

⁹ *Keihaku* This phrase is used to end formal letters.

**Nishimura Genroku 西村源六, and Nomura Chôbê 野村長兵衛. *Buyû ema hinagata*
武勇絵馬雛形 [Pattern book of valor ema]. 1749¹⁰**

From the beginning, in the past ema were things donated to shrines. Well placed families would donate live horses, common people who couldn't donate live horses would donate painted ones perhaps. Yet, from when did figures, landscapes, flowers and trees, birds and animals donors become separate? Among [these subjects], portraits of Japanese and Chinese bravery of merit are the two scrolls of *Buyû ema hinagata*. Children and fools' eyes are not happy for 1000 ri, like inlay in a catalpa tree.

¹⁰ A copy is held at the National Diet Library. The introductory text is reprinted in Ôtô Tokihiko 大藤時彦, "Ema ni kansuru bunken" 絵馬に関する文献 [Literature about ema], *Tabi to densetsu* 旅と伝説 3, no. 10 (1930): 65.

Kikuoka Senryô 菊岡沾涼. *Edo sunako* 江戸砂子 [Edo sand]. 1772¹¹

Kanô ema

In the main hall. Old ema said to be by Kohôgen (Kanô Motonobu). The horse is a tied horse. Because it is an excellent work, it leaves nightly and devastates nearby crops. The farmers can't chase it into the hall. When one looks at the horse the next morning, there is mud caked on all four hooves. At this, a sculptor called Hidari Jingorô did an honorable thing. This person, without going against the essence of painting or sculpture and resembling the essence of a sketch for his carving, attached a new rope [to the horse]. According to legend, after that those things [the horse destroying crops] didn't occur anymore.

Ôta Nanpo 大田南畝, and Sena Sadao 瀬名貞雄. *Raiden mondô* 瀬田問答 [Raiden questions and answers]. 1790¹²

Question: The ema at Sensôji, regarding the reason it ate grasses, what is commonly said of Kohôgen¹³?

Answer: Kohôgen did not paint this. Kanô Shume Naonobu¹⁴ certainly painted it. To explain eating the grass, Naonobu had a request for many years, he learned secret teachings of horse phrenology from Kurokawa-uji.¹⁵ After that, the horse was supposedly painted. It was the first living horse painted. Therefore, the happily donated horse ema, was said to be a living horse according to legends and the story of eating grass continued. ... The artist of this ema isn't known, but must be a person of the Kan'ei period.¹⁶ The explanation is clear on the back.

¹¹ Kikuoka Senryô 菊岡沾涼, *Edo sunako* 江戸砂子 [Edo sand], ed. Koike Shôtarô 小池章太郎 (Tokyo: Tokyodo Shuppan, 1976), 65.

¹² Ôta Nanpo 大田南畝 and Sena Sadao 瀬名貞雄, *Raiden mondô* 瀬田問答 [Raiden questions and answers], ed. Nihon zuihitsu taisei henshûbu, vol. 3 no. 12, *Nihon zuihitsu taisei* 日本随筆大成, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1977), 236.

¹³ Kanô Motonobu (1476-1559).

¹⁴ 1607-1650.

¹⁵ This is probably Kurosawa Mukonosuke, discusses in Matsudaira Kanzan's *Sensôjishi*.

¹⁶ 1624-1644.

Asatani Rôgu 麻谷老愚. "Sensôji Kannon dō ema" 浅草寺観音堂絵馬 [Ema in the Sensôji Kannon hall]. In *Shisô zasshiki* 祠曹雑識, mid nineteenth century¹⁷

Due to the difficulty of this text, the following is an outline rather than a full translation.

A miraculous work with vigor. Old ema said to be painted by Motonobu. Every night the horse left ema and ate grass. In the second edition of *Edo sunako* said to be painted by Gyokuraku¹⁸. According to Ôkubu Torisan and Ise Sadatake, Sadatake consulted books by Mokusuke Sadayuki that say artist was Naonobu. Sadayuki bases this theory on the style of the painting and word of mouth. He also reported story of the horse leaving the Kannon to eat grass. According to Sena Sadaô [in *Raiden mondô*], the ema was pulled from the 1642 fire in the Kannon hall by Hyôe from Kimura. The inscription has lightened and can no longer be clearly read. Naonobu, born in 1603 and died in 1649, would have been 40 at the time of the fire. The picture must have been by someone who was alive at the time. Even putting aside Sadanori's explanation, it seems to be by Naonobu. ... In *Soga nikki*, the 1642 fire is also mentioned. The hall was rebuilt on order from the shogun. The fire on second day of fourth month in 1631, and again on nineteenth day of second month in 1642 were misfortunes. Perhaps on the day of the restoration after the 1631 incident, Naonobu's ema was hung.

¹⁷ {Fukui Tamotsu 福井保, 1981 #503 @ 424-425} Fukui Tamotsu 福井保, ed. *Shisô zasshiki* 祠曹雑識. vol. 7, Naikoku bunko shosô shiseki sôkan (Tokyo: Shiseki Kenkyûkai), 424-25.

¹⁸ fl. 1550-1590.

Kusakabe Toshimasa 日下部利政. *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺誌 [Sensôji intentions]. 1807¹⁹

Kano ema. In main hall.

An old ema painted by Kohôgen.²⁰ The horse is domesticated. It is a great work and it nightly left and destroyed crops in the area. Farmers chased it, and it entered the hall. The next day one could see mud on this ema's four legs. The sculptor Hidari Jingorô²¹ did an honorable thing. He did not do anything inappropriate to the spirit of the sculpture. Matching the spirit of the sculpture's underdrawing, he drew an attaching rope. After that, these things stopped happening.

Regarding the artist, the method in which this ema is painted seems like Kohôgen. Perhaps it was done by Kanô Gyokuraku. Gyokuraku was a student of Kohôgen and a painter for the Odawara Hôjô family.

At the time of the fire in 1632 during the second month on the nineteenth day,²² a person called Hyôe from Kimura pulled the ema out of the fire. The head monk of the subtemple Chirakuin²³ praised this deed, and into the frame was carved, "At the time of the fire on the 19th day of the eleventh month of 1642, Hyôe from Kimurashi saved this."

¹⁹ Kusakabe Toshimasa 日下部利政, *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺誌 [Sensôji intentions], ed. Amino Yoshihiro 網野義紘 (Tokyo: Kinryûsan Sensôji, 1992), 30-1.

²⁰ Kanô Motonobu.

²¹ Fl. late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries.

²² Amino's headnotes in this edition say that the fire was actually on the second day of the fourth month of 1631. Kusakabe *Sensôjishi*, 31.

²³ This subtemple of Sensôji is now called Denpôin.

Matsudaira Kanzan 松平冠山. *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺志 [Sensôji intentions]. 1813²⁴

Horse plaque²⁵

On the wall at back of hall, two each on right and left. After this was donated by Tokugawa Iemitsu, gradually it became a contribution. See illustration.

Head note: It is said that two were donated by Tokugawa Hidetada and two were donated by Tokugawa Iemitsu.

Ema plaque²⁶

Located south of the Goma Hall. It is signed Shotei. According to temple stories, it is said to be old Tosa style. Usually when “the Kano ema” is named, it is referring to this. As the years have past, the composition can’t be clearly seen. At the time of the 1789 restoration of the main hall, Kanô Tôrin created a reproduction.²⁷ Shotei was the artistic name of either a Tosa or Kanô artist. People who don’t know this story cherish the object. Explanations from various books are listed below, without regard to the mistakes [they contain].

In *Murasaki ippon* – This ema left night after night, and ate the crops in the Asakusa fields. The evidence was that in the morning when the horse was examined, all four legs had mud on them. It was bothersome to the people of the area; after a later Kanô artist attached a rope to the horse, this problem didn’t occur.

In *Edo sunako* – Painted by Kohôgen,²⁸ it is a very old ema. The horse is domesticated. Because it was a fine painting, every night it left and destroyed the nearby crops. The farmers chased it but it wouldn’t reenter the hall. When it was observed the next morning, there was mud caked to its legs. After that, the sculptor called Hidari Jingorô did an honorable thing. It was this. He did not do anything inappropriate for the essence of painting or sculpture. Connected to a resemblance of the resembling the heart of the sculpture’s underdrawing, he affixed a new rope. After that the activities [of the horse] no longer occurred.

In the second edition of *Edo sunako* – An artist. This ema probably wasn’t created by Kohôgen, maybe Kanô Gyokuraku. Gyokuraku was an official artist to the Odawara Hôjô family.

In *Edo shi* – This ema, more than being old, was already widely acclaimed by the time of the Kanei period²⁹ fire in the Kannon hall. A person from Kimura called Hyôe, hoping not to lose the masterpiece of painting in the fire, went into the flames and came out with the ema. The head monk of Chirakuin³⁰ acclaimed this good deed. To preserve the name, on the edge of the ema, it was written, “At the time of the fire on the nineteenth day of the eleventh month of 1642, Hyôe from Kimura saved this.” The inscription is still there.

²⁴ Matsudaira Kanzan 松平冠山, *Sensôjishi* 浅草寺志 [Sensôji intentions], (Tokyo: Sensôji Shuppanbu, 1939–42), 66, 73, 82, 83, 140, 343.

²⁵ Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 66.

²⁶ Matsudaira, *Sensôjishi*, 73, 78-79, 82.

²⁷ The headnote in *Sensôji* lists Tôrin’s death as 1820, but according to Laurance Roberts, he lived 1679 – 1754. Laurance Roberts, *A Dictionary of Japanese Artists* (Trumbull, CT: Weatherhill, 1976), 183.

²⁸ Kano Motonobu.

²⁹ 1624-43.

³⁰ This subtemple is now called Denpôin.

In *Kagami Enseï's Asakusa Kannondo ko ema kô* – Throughout *Edo sunako* there are two explanations given, both are mistaken. The person who painted this ema is Kanô Shume Naonobu.³¹ Shume's painting had deep intentions, with all the forms and customs of horses. At that time he was the student of the hatamoto equestrian masters named Kurosawa Mukonosuke³² and Abe Teiki.³³ He acquired equestrian skills and [knowledge of] one hundred forms of horses. The ema that was donated to Sensôji was his first. After that, on the nineteenth day of the eleventh month of 1642, at the time when the Asakusa Kannon hall burned, in the moving flames in the main hall, a man from the country called Kimurashi Hyôe, who knew Shume had one hundred forms painted one hundred horse figures, flew into the flames, saved the ema, came out with it, that body weary with injury. The head priest at one of the subtemples had Hyôe's name written on the edge of the ema, it is there now.

In *Raiden mondô* – There is said to be an ema at Sensôji that ate grass. Usually said to be by Kohôgen, is that true? Answer. It was not by Kohôgen. It was by Kanô Shume Naonobu. This is based upon the explanation of eating grass. For Naonobu's many years' earnest request, from Kurosawa, he requested a secret explanation of the horse's physique. After that horse was painted it was happily said to be the first living horse. Because the donated ema was a horse, from the adage that the horse was living, perhaps the explanation of the eating grass occurred. ... The artist of the ema is unknown. A person before the Kan'ei period.³⁴ There is an explanation that is written on the back.

Some concerns: it is wrong what both Kagami and Rana say about Naonobu definitely being the artist. Shume Naonobu was born in 1637, and when he was 24 died on the seventh day of the fourth month of 1650. At the time of the main hall fire in 1642, he was just six years old. Although from old there have been toddlers who have produced good works, to have mastery of horse physique to that point, a toddler probably can not. Even more if this ema was donated prior to 1642, at that time Naonobu could have been two, three, four or five. From this, we know that the explanation is wrong.

In *Musashi shiryô* – A poem by Kinoshita Katsutoshi³⁵ describes animals grazing in the fields around Asakusa. Looking at this the ema emerged, bring up the false report about the grass eating horse. Ema artists also think this.

In Sena Sadao³⁶ – Hidari Jingorô tightly tying [the horse] was probably done by another person. Hidari Jingorô didn't come to Kanto. He was said to have lived in Akashi, Harima-kuni.³⁷ ... He died on the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month of 1634, at age 41. His son was Hidari Sôshin, who died on the thirteenth day of the third month of 1702, at age 71. His son Hidari Katsumasa lived in the capital in Imadegawa-teramachi and died on the third day of the fifth month of 1727. His son was Hidari Hanjûrô. His son was Hidari Shôbei. His son was Hidari Kahê.

³¹ 1607-1650.

³² Dates unknown.

³³ Dates unknown.

³⁴ 1624-1644.

³⁵ 1569-1649.

³⁶ Sadao was one of the authors of *Raiden mondo*. It is unclear which text Kanzan quotes here.

³⁷ Modern day Hyôgo prefecture.

In *Kinsei kiseki kô* – Taken from *Jinrin kunmôzui* published in 1690. There was said to be a person named Hidari in Tenshō period.³⁸ Jingorō did not come to Kantō. He lived in Akashi in Harima-kuni.

In *Hinoki mae ijō* – The builder for the restoration on the nineteenth day of the third month of 1743 was Ôzuka Kiyorin. [Names of others involved in the construction.]

Some concerns: the above various explanations of grass eating are false stories probably taken from Kinoshita Katsutoshi's poem. Furthermore, it's hard to trace the story of the rope being painted on. This horse's body is not a distant horse. This can be understood by looking at the painting.

³⁸ 1573-1592.

Hayami Shungyôtsai 速見春暁齋. *Hengaku kihan* 扁額軌範 [Canon of plaques].
1819³⁹

Due to the difficulty of this text, the following is an outline rather than a full translation.

[Forward to first volume]

The head of the Bunshûdô bookstore took the artists Aigawa and Kitakawa to Kiyomizudera where they admired the view. They also viewed the many hengaku donated before the enshrined deity. The Bunshûdô head said to the artists, the views in Kyoto of nature and religious institutions are supreme. There are also these hengaku left behind by people from the past. There are many books that show the landscapes and the religious institutions and enable people who live elsewhere to know about Kyoto, but regrettably these people don't know about the hengaku. How would it be if the two of you made reproductions for people who can't see the hengaku? They both demurred saying, the people of the past invested their spirit in these paintings. We don't think we can reproduce them properly. The Bunshûdô head pressed them. Many years have past since these hengaku were painted and there aren't any that don't suffer from wear. When many more years pass, their form will be lost. Just reproduce their form. Each of you please think about this carefully. In the end they consented. They started with Kiyomizudera and Gion Shrine. From amongst the old hengaku, they chose two or three of every ten to reproduce and gave to the head of Bunshûdô. One day, the head of Bunshûdô came here and told me the above story. He asked me to write the introduction for this book titled *Hengaku kihan*. I use the allegory of the pine trees living for a thousand years and returned the forward to the Bunshûdô head in that format.

First day of the fifth month, 1819
Rekitei Kingo⁴⁰

[Conclusion to the first volume]

This is the end of *Hengaku kihan*. The book seller requested a statement from me. Among ema donated at Gion and Kiyomizu, starting with one by Kaihō Yūsetsu⁴¹ of Tamuramaru defeating the spirit at Mount Suzuka, excellent work by well-known artists can be compared. Also, the drama image from the Tenna era⁴² is the same. It is a source for how people looked at the time. People who like old things can learn from it. Many remain. Also around the capital famous shrines and large temples such as Kitano, Kurama, and Atago [have ema]. At smaller shrines and temples, if there was any high quality material, it has not survived. There was not time [for it] to be copied. It is regrettable that it couldn't happen at all. In this first book only some were documented and for now this will be published. These examples of painting have been treasured for five hundred years. Ema have been damaged by exposure to the elements. The damage

³⁹ Hayami Shungyôtsai 速見春暁齋, *Hengaku kihan* 扁額軌範 [Canon of plaques], ed. Noma Kôshin 野間光辰, vol. 8, *Shinshû Kyoto sôsho* 新修京都叢書 (Kyoto: Rinkawa Shobô, 1968), 331-34, 389-90, 393-96.

⁴⁰ 1788-1831.

⁴¹ 1598-1677.

⁴² 1681-1684.

this year is greater than the damage last year. Need to be quickly gathered, quickly copied, quickly published, quickly offered for sale, and quickly purchased.

Sugawara Yukiomi

[Introduction to the second volume]

Ema hung at temples were originally horses donated to the gods. (Giving horses to the gods is recorded as a tradition of the distant past. They were like presents. Long ago certainly horses were presents. For that reason can also be seen in *Uji shui*.⁴³) Later, paintings were made and donated. (In the tenth scroll of *Honchô monsui*,⁴⁴ three tri-colored ema from the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month 1012 are recorded. [Ema] probably existed before that. Donating before Buddhas can be seen at a very close time.) Ema of warriors of various kinds were probably first donated in the Tenbun and Eiroku eras.⁴⁵ Ema can be seen at places such as Kitano Shrine and Kiyomizu Temple. Ema hung at these places are by Kano, Hasegawa, Kaihō, and Bessho artists (From long ago these four houses painted exceptional ema), and such [artists] frequently painted auspicious [ema] using their specialized skill from generation to generation. For more than 200 years because it was difficult to separate boundless images and text, very regrettable things are remembered. Around this time, Kitagawa Harunari and Harumi made detailed carving. The reason the book was made is for people far away who do not know the capital, which is famous for superb paintings. This work is steeped in merit and happiness. I have tried to write just this one thing.

Ninth month, 1821

A person from the capital Shiogama shore
Yuasa Tunekuta

⁴³ A thirteenth century text.

⁴⁴ Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡. *Honchô monsui* 本朝文粹 [Written essence of our country]. Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei 新日本古典文学大系 27, ed. Ôsone Shôsuke 大曾根章介, Kinbara Tadashi 金原理, and Goto Akio 後藤昭雄 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 347.

⁴⁵ 1532-1555 and 1558-1570.

Asaoka Okisada 朝岡興禎. *Koga bikô* 古画備考 [Notes on old painting]. 1820-1856⁴⁶

Ema

There are people who say there is a ritual for donating ema. There is no evidence for a ritual. The shogunal family and others don't have a ritual. The shogunal family and daimyo donate sacred horses. People who do not donate sacred horses donate sacred horse paintings in place of sacred horses. These are called ema. This is done informally; there is not an established ritual. Moreover, because the full name [of the donor] is not written and attached to the sacred horse, writing and attaching [the donor's name] to the ema also is not necessary. Sacred branches are attached to the sacred horse. At three places of hair – near the back, the mantle, the tail – sacred paper is attached. This can be seen in *Fûroki*.⁴⁷ Isn't it true that ema are also painted like this? Afterwards, ema with the form of sacred horses became less common. It seems incorrect to paint birds, animals, humans, and many other subjects.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Asaoka Okisada 朝岡興禎, *Koga bikô* 古画備考 [Notes on old painting], ed. Haga Noboru 芳賀登 et al., vol. 63, *Nihon jinbutu jôhôtei* (Tokyo: Koseisha, 2001). 574.

⁴⁷ See Hanawa, *Furôki*, 325.

⁴⁸ The text continues by describing references to ema and ema-like practices in other texts.

Suzuki Chûkô 鈴木忠候. *Kansô zuihitsu* 閑窓随筆 [Window of leisure essay]. 1821⁴⁹

Horses donated to the gods were called sacred horses. People who couldn't donate sacred horses made horses of wood. People who couldn't even do this painted horses to donate. This is why they are called "ema." There are no horses in the afterlife; various types of things are painted and donated. Poetry ema are donated, types with female and male prostitutes, and Daikoku neck wrestling with a woman, etc. These are a painted and hidden group, displaying them would be extremely inappropriate. At a shrine in Settsu-kuni,⁵⁰ there is an ema of Ise Yoshimori pulling Taira Munemori out of the sea with a rake.⁵¹ The painting and hanging of an ema depicting someone with Munemori's bad reputation should be considered. Some types [of ema] shouldn't be painted and hung. Furthermore, supernatural things that are painted shouldn't be hung at shrines. And, raising a target and donating arrows at Ikido shrine is a custom these days. Donating arrows with various prayers attached was an old custom for warrior families. People active in gunnery would paint the body [of the gun] and display it. Families active in the arts of swords and spears would donate bamboo swords and wooden spears to be hung. Without any reason and without permission they would hang these things to disseminate their name in the world. Furthermore, difficult math problems were also hung at the shrine. The people who solved the problem would also hang that at the shrine. People like these don't make donations to honor the gods, they borrow the front of the shrine for a brush war to boast of their skills.

⁴⁹ Most of the text can be found in Iwai Hiromi 岩井宏實, "Ôema no gadai: Ema hensenshi no tamenô danshō" 大絵馬の画題: 絵馬変遷史のための断章 [Subjects of large ema: Fragmentary text regarding the history of changes in ema]. *Nihon hakubutsukan kyōkai kenkyū kiyō* 1 (1966): 12. The first four lines are transcribed from the copy in the National Diet Library Rare Book Room.

⁵⁰ An area in modern day Osaka and Hyogo prefecture.

⁵¹ This incident occurred during the Gempei war (1180-85).

Chitosên Fujihiko 千歳園藤彦. *Itsukushima ema kagami* 巖島絵馬鑑 [Model of ema at Itsukushima Island]. 1831⁵²

Introduction

The palace officials and the young female divers see the same moon and flowers, but for each person who sees these things, the light or the colors and scent are different. Their spirit can find the things either tasteful or not tasteful. Because of this, we often hear the saying “There is no accounting for taste.” For everything, tastefulness is a constraint of the humankind’s world. Since my childhood, I have judged tasteful images by my parents’ standards. Visiting near shrines and far temples, ema donated by various people came into my view ... At this time, I once visited Itsukushima’s shrine. In the spacious area of a cloister between the main palace and a sub-shrine, I saw painted gaku stacked and arranged on top of each other hanging in view. People of the island pray here. At times during the four seasons I cross the ocean. Turning to the left, standing on the right, although seeing one thousand times, one hundred times, I don’t lose interest in them. They are in my heart all the more. ... Looking at paintings by Tosa Mitsunobu⁵³, Kanô Mitsunobu,⁵⁴ [Kanô] Tadanobu Sakon,⁵⁵ there are very rare ink landscapes with detailed colors, for the always deeply felt story there are no words, there is nothing to compare. These brushstrokes from now on year after year are exposed the wind from the ocean, every year more and more they are hit by storms, broken and lost. Long ago without thinking the haiku master Atsu Oien⁵⁶ implied this. ... It is difficult to leave familiar tastefulness. Miraculous things were copied and donated to the shrine’s treasure house. Privately, the head of the bookstore listened to people with one thousand years of immortal skill and personal ambitions. He publishes the ema of the treasure house so that widely in the world people can together enjoy and adore in perpetuity this skill. ... The wise and foolish, old and young, city and country, sacred and profane, all together with untiring zeal can enjoy this. Moreover, past and present are mixed, yet the time-honored descriptions of the paintings is written and given to the book store owner in the first edition by Fujihiko of Hiroshima during the third month of the second year of Tenpô (1831).

Explanatory notes

- There are unknown thousands of ema hanging at this shrine. And items that have fallen from above the beam once are not re-hung. To be sure, things that are like old paintings or outstanding calligraphy and gathered and taken into the possession of the temple. Those are what appear in this book.
- A complete map of the shrine showing all four directions, where the statue is enshrined, and where people make their visit is here to serve as a guide to the places where ema are hung.

⁵² The entire text of *Itsukushima ema kagami* can be accessed at the Kanazawa College of Art Library Edehon Database, <http://www.kanazawa-bidai.ac.jp/tosyokan/edehon/main1.htm> (accessed May 15, 2010).

⁵³ Died approximately 1522.

⁵⁴ 1560/65-1608.

⁵⁵ 1597-1623.

⁵⁶ Unknown.

- [The images] appearing in this book, first of all delight the eyes of children and fools. For paintings and calligraphy the artists' brushwork is reproduced without difference.
- Starting with Motonobu, there are innumerable old paintings. When there are many by the same brush of the same image, different aspects are selected for the second and third volumes.
- There are many contributions by various noble houses, however those in which the name can not be read within the image are not illustrated.
- There are ema by unknown artists that have superb brush work, yet some of these annual old things appear here.
- These days, half of the ema are mixed for the purpose of comforting the eyes of pupils and fools and others who like that that style.
- Here and there, things such as traces of old brushes or writing or receptacles appear. They switch the viewer's impression of the images.
- Because some things by masters have received universal praise from people's mouths, one or two by gentlemen with the same interest are printed.
- Historical facts related to some of the paintings can be seen in this book by pupils and they can gain an understanding of the roots of the story. Therefore, whether the story is right or wrong, good or bad, without forcing the correctness, the rumors about the explanations are just given.

Nishizawa Ippô 西沢一鳳. *Kôto gosui* 皇都午睡 [Afternoon sleep in the imperial capital]. 1850⁵⁷

Images of ema

Donations of ema to shrines and temples originated with giving sacred horses to the gods; without rituals twelve times per year. Since there were some number of horses which were not ridden this can not have been beneficial. From donating drawings of horses or sculpted horses, the term “ema” came. Recently, in books such as *Hengaku kihan*, numerous old gaku appear from places such as Kiyomizu [temple] in Kyoto, Hase [temple] in Washû⁵⁸, and Miyajima [shrine] in Geishû,⁵⁹ and that old style is visible. This does not increase. However, for people who like them and for artists, this is a handy way to learn that road [i.e. the road of ema]. There are even ema hanging at Kiyomizudera of Tamuramaru defeating the spirit at Mount Suzuka,⁶⁰ which tells the miraculous origins of the temple. Warrior images without relation to kami or Buddha are unclear about the state of the donor’s heart. When gaku by the well-known calligrapher Kôbô Daishi are not given, and examples of the three styles of calligraphy, but in places without connection to gods of bows and arrows, ema of shooting with bows and arrows or other martial arts and ema of villains such as Kumasaka Chôhan and Hakamadare Yasusuke exist. Although the artist paints what the petitioner wants, [I] am worried about what kind of heart these donor have.

⁵⁷ Nishizawa Ippô 西沢一鳳, *Kôto gosui* 皇都午睡 [Afternoon sleep in the imperial capital] (1850; reprint, *Shingunsho ruiju* 新群書類従, vol. 1 [Tokyo: Kokusho Kankôkai, 1906]), 571-72.

⁵⁸ Modern day Nara prefecture.

⁵⁹ Part of modern day Hiroshima prefecture.

⁶⁰ This legend is part of the Noh play *Tamura* by Zeami.

Saitô Gesshin. *Bue hengaku shû* 武江扁額集 [Collection of plaques in the Edo region]. 1862⁶¹

[Forward]

There are many excellent gaku in Kyoto, however, with the passage of time, due to clouds and mist, and damp incense they have taken on a smell, and it is distressing that the masterful brushwork has been lost. In the Bunsei period,⁶² the Kyoto artists Kitagawa Harunari and Aikawa Minwashi carved and published reproductions of hengaku in shrine and temple outside Kyoto known as *Hengaku kihan*; now they have published a sequel with images by Harunari and attached stories by Hayami Shûngyôtsai. This has also been carried out in the world. (In the Genroku period,⁶³ there was a book of criticism of ema that was popular.) Furthermore, at the beginning of the Tenpô period,⁶⁴ a person named Fujihiko reproduced hengaku donated before the spirit at Itsukushima in a book called *Itsukushima hengaku shuku*⁶⁵ and published it. As for myself, I have the intention to reproduce and publish hengaku from shrines and temples in Edo. However, in order to not have poorly drawn images I asked an artist to produce them. This catalogue is not printed, however free time from a busy job was donated to the temples and shrines. The selection for inclusion made no distinctions between skilled and unskilled. [Section with unclear meaning about throwing out unskilled work.]

There are not old gaku in Edo. Only Sensôji's ema are old. Otherwise old ema were made 40 or 50 years ago. It is regrettable that [ema] have been damaged from rain and dew, lost in fire, destroyed in recent earthquakes, or disposed at the time of hall renovations, and the equivalent has not been given again.

Because ema aren't unusual, here I will give one or two examples. Many hengaku images are not the equivalent of hanging scrolls and screens. Some have detailed brushwork, such as Asakusa's chasing the nue ema and Kiyomizu hall's Kagekiyo ema that can commonly be seen. Asakusa's Kanshin ema and Kameido's garish Noma no Sukune ema are also among the stories [shown].

This design book is not arranged by physical size. Using these reproductions, damaged areas can be handled and some day the ema could be repaired.

Early winter, 1862
Gesshin

⁶¹ Saitô Gesshin 齋藤月岑, *Bue hengaku shû* 武江扁額集 [Collection of plaques in the Edo region], ed. Nakamura Yukihiko 中村幸彦 and Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 46, *Shinpen kisho fukuseikai sôsho* 新編希書複製会叢書 (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1991).

⁶² 1818-1839.

⁶³ 1688-1704.

⁶⁴ 1830-1844.

⁶⁵ This text is more commonly known at *Itsukushima ema kagami*.

**Jûsanjin 寿山人, and Enteishu 円亭主. *Edo meisho ema awase* 江戸名所絵馬合
[Competition of ema from famous places in Edo]. n.d.⁶⁶**

On the grounds of Jôenji in Yotsuya⁶⁷
Donations at a kaichô in the Founder's Hall

There is a picture competition at the top of the hall. At the kaichô there is a gaku competition. Among the sixty-four entries in the painting competition, here and there in the competition are known artists. Card game and bug competition combined in hand is Kanazawa. Joining together the lingering wisdom of the founder of a Shinjô⁶⁸ temple and not pulling one inch from the Edo spirit is joining the bird competition and Chinese paper with and eating competition. It is an invitation for a visit to bustle place. The treasure competition brings happiness.

Signed Jûsanjin and Enteishu

⁶⁶ This text is held in the Kaga Bunko special collection at the Tokyo Central Library.

⁶⁷ The temple is currently located in Shinjuku.

⁶⁸ This word is comprised of characters from “Shingon” and Jôdo” to major Buddhist sects. Jôenji is presently a Shingon sect.

Figures

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-1. Small ema donations at Yushima shrine, Tokyo, January 15, 2006. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-2. Kanô Kyûen, black horse ema, 1697, ink and color on wood, 46½ x 66 in., Gokokuji temple, Tokyo. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-3. Tokiwa Mitsunaga, *Nenjû gyô emaki* (Picture scroll of yearly activities), 1158–65, Edo period copy by Sumiyoshi Gukei, Tanaka collection. From Komatsu Shigemi, ed. *Nihon no emaki*, vol. 8. Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1987.

IMAGE REMOVED

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-4. Kanô Sanraku, "Pair of horses," 1625, polychrome on wood, 25 ½ x 29 ½ in. each, Kaizu Tenjin shrine, Shige prefecture. From Money L. Hickman, ed. *Japan's Golden Age: Momoyama*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p 139.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-5. *Tengu zôshi* (The tengu book), 1296, Tokyo National Museum. From Komatsu Shigemi, ed. *Zoku Nihon emaki taisei*, vol .26. Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1993.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-6. En'i, *Ippen shônin eden* (Illustrated life of the monk Ippen), 1299, Kankikôji, Kyoto. From Komatsu Shigemi, ed. *Nihon no emaki*, vol. 20. Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1988.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-7. En'i, *Ippen shōnin eden* (Illustrated life of the monk Ippen), 1299, Kankikōji, Kyoto. From Komatsu Shigemi, ed. *Nihon no emaki*, vol. 20. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1988.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-8. *Sannō reikenki* (Record of miracles at Sannō), 1299, Ōmi Hie shrine, Shiga prefecture. From Komatsu Shigemi, ed. *Zoku Nihon emaki taisei*, vol. 12. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1984.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-9. *Fudô riyaku engi emaki* (Illustrated handscroll of benefits from Fudô), 1336–92, Tokyo National Museum. From Komatsu Shigemi, ed. *Zokuzoku Nihon emaki taisei* vol. 4. Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1995.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-10. Takashina Takakane, *Kasuga gongen genkie* (Miracles of the Kasuga deity), 1309, Imperial Household Collection. From Komatsu Shigemi, ed. *Zoku Nihon emaki taisei*, vol. 14. Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1982.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 1-11. Fujiwara no Takamasa, *Boki ekotoba*, 1351, Nishi-honganji temple, Kyoto. From Komatsu Shigemi, ed. *Soku Nihon emaki*, vol. 9. Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1990.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 2-1 *Jinrin kunmôzui* (Illustrated encyclopedia of humanity), 1690, woodblock-printed book. From Gen Ziburô. *Jinrin kunmôzui* [Illustrated encyclopedia of humanity]. 1690. Edited by Masamune Atsuo 正宗敦夫. In vol. 3 of *Nihon koten zenshû*. Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshû Kankôkai, 1929, p 242.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 2-2 Chôbunsai Eishi (1756–1829), “Ema hall,” woodblock-print triptych, ôban size, Ota Memorial Ukiyo-e Museum.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 2-3 Kubo Shunman (1757–1820), “Mimeguri ema hall,” 1786–89, woodblock-print triptych, ôban size, Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels. From Narazaki Muneshige, ed. *Ukiyo-e Masterpieces in European Collections: Musée Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels*. 12 vols. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1987, vol. 9, fig. 79.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 2-4 Kubo Shunman (1757–1820), “Hisakataya shichiban no uchi” (Seven pictures for the Hisakataya), three of a set of seven, 1814–19, woodblock print, 8 1/16 x 7 3/16 in., Harvard University Art Museum/Arthur M. Sackler Museum. From Harvard University Library Visual Information Access.

IMAGE REMOVED

2-5 Kubo Shunman (1757–1820), “Ema and millet cakes,” 1811, woodblock print, 4 ¼ x 7 ¼ in., Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. From Roger Keyes. *The Art of Surimono: Privately Published Japanese Woodblock Prints and Books in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*. 2 vols. London: Sotheby, 1985, vol. 2, p 356.

IMAGE REMOVED

2-6 Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1864), “On-atsurae ema zukushi” (Commissioned ema), 1823, woodblock print, ôban size. From Jan van Doesburg. *What About Kunisada?* Dodewaard, Netherlands: Huys den Esch, 1990, p 62.

IMAGE REMOVED

2-7 Utagawa Kunisada, "Jôrunji temple," from the *Kannon reikenki* (Miracles of Kannon) series, 1859, woodblock print, ôban size, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. From MFA Collections Database.

IMAGE REMOVED

2-8 Ema hall, Kitano shrine, Kyoto. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

2-9 Ema hall, Imamiya shrine, Kyoto. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-1 Hasegawa Settan, from *Edo meisho zue* (Illustrated famous places of Edo), 1834–36. From Waseda University Library Kotenseki Sogo Database.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-2 Hasegawa Settan, from *Edo meisho zue* (Illustrated famous places of Edo), 1834–36. From Waseda University Library Kotenseki Sogo Database.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-3 Hasegawa Settan, from *Edo meisho zue* (Illustrated famous places of Edo), 1834–36. From Waseda University Library Kotenseki Sogo Database.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-4 “Map of Sensôji’s grounds.” From Matsudaira Kanzan’s *Sensôjishi* (Sensôji intentions), 1813. Reprinted by Tokyo: Sensôji Shuppanbu, 1939-42.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-5 Detail of Teisai Hokuba, “Sensôji keidai zu byôbu,” 1830–44, color on silk, eight-fold screen, 19 ³/₄ x 95 ³/₄ in., private collection. From Yasumura Toshinobu. “Teisai Hokuba hitsu Sensôji keidai zu byôbû” [Teisai Hokuba's screen of “View of the Grounds of Sensôji”]. *Kokka* 1138 (1990): 41-45.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-6 “Interior of Sensôji’s Kannon Hall.” From *Tokyo meisho zue* (Illustrated famous sites in Tokyo), 1896–1911. Edited by Asakura Haruhiko and Tsuchida Mitsufumi. In vol. 1, *Meiji Tokyo meisho zue*. Tokyo: Tokyodô Shupan, 1992, p 31.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-7 From *Tokyo meisho zue* (Illustrated famous sites in Tokyo), 1896–1911. Edited by Asakura Haruhiko and Tsuchida Mitsufumi. In vol. 1, *Meiji Tokyo meisho zue*. Tokyo: Tokyodô Shupan, 1992, p 55.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-8 From *Tokyo meisho zue* (Illustrated famous sites in Tokyo), 1896–1911. Edited by Asakura Haruhiko and Tsuchida Mitsufumi. In vol. 1, *Meiji Tokyo meisho zue*. Tokyo: Tokyodô Shupan, 1992, p 56.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-9 Top row: Anonymous, "Horse," 1632, lacquer and maki-e on board, 19 x 26 ½ in. each, Sensôji.
Bottom row: Anonymous, "Horse," 1651, lacquer and maki-e on board, 15 ½ x 21 ¼ in. each, Sensôji. Photographs by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-10 Genmyôtei Gyokusen, "Horse," 1840, lacquer and maki-e, 21 ½ x 30 in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-11 “Horse ema.” From Matsudaira Kanzan’s *Sensôjishi* (Sensôji intentions), 1813.
Reprinted by Tokyo: Sensôji Shuppanbu, 1939-42.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-12 Tani Bunchô, “Horse,” 1831, colors on board, 33 ½ x 35 ¾ in., Sensôji.
Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-13 Kanô Tôhaku, "Horse," 1821, color on board, 61 x 61 ¼ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-14 Wall painting at Kasuga shrine, repainted 1862. From Kawada Tadashi, *Ema*, vol. 92, *Nihon no bijutsu*. Tokyo: Shibundô, 1974, opposite page 1.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-15 Takashina Takakane *Kasuga gongen reigenki* (Miracles of the Kasuga deity), 1309. From Nara Women's University Image Database of Historical Resources of the Nara Region.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-16 Kô Sûkoku, "Chasing the nue," 1787, color on board, 105 ¾ x 140 ½ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-17 Kikuchi Yôsei, "Night raid at Horikawa," 1849, color on board, 70 ½ x 101 in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-18 Kô Sûkei, "Shôjô mai," 1803, color on board, 100 x 147 ¼ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-19 “Kyôgen Sarawaka ningyô,” 1664 (repaired 1863), colors on wood, 61 ½ x 87 ¾ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-20 Ikeda Koson, “Peacocks in peonies,” before 1847, colors on board, 81 ½ x 40 in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-21 “Peacocks in peonies.” From *Bue hengaku shû* (Collection of plaques in the Edo region), 1862, n.p.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-22 Utagawa Kunihide, “Sensôji grounds,” 1833, colors on board, 43 ½ x 66 in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-23 “In the vicinity of the Niomon gate,” 1888, colors on board, 23 ½ x 35 ½ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-24 “Sensôji grounds,” 1899, colors on board, 22 x 34 in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-25 Hasegawa Settan, "Cherry blossom well," 1839, colors on board, 42 ½ x 66 ¾ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-26 Hasegawa Settan, "Helmet pulling," 1840, colors on board, 72 ½ x 52 ¾ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-27 Minamoto Kazunobu, "Benkei on the bridge," 1847, colors on paper (mounted to board), 92 x 122 in., Sensôji. From Kinryûsan Sensôji, ed. *Kinryûsan Sensôji ema zuroku* [Catalog of ema at Kinryûsan Sensôji]. Tokyo: Kinryûsan Sensôji, 1978, no. 32.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-28 Suzuki Tôun, "Benkei on the bridge," 1897, relief, 69 x 125 ¼ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-29 Torii Kiyomoto, "Kan'u," 1859, colors on board, 72 ¼ x 54 in., Sensôji.
Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-30 Irie Hokurei, "Yojô rending the garment," 1842, color on board, 88 ¼ x 66 ¾ in.,
Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-31 Tsutsumi Tôrin III, "Kanshin," 1789-1818, colors on board, 62 ¼ x 91 ¼ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-32 Artist unidentified, "Couple praying," 1863, colors on board, 37 x 21 ½ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-33 Ranzan Soshi, "Six immortal poets," 1866, colors on board, 34 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 46 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-34 Utagawa Kunitaru, "Jinmaku entering the wrestling ring," 1867, lacquer and color on board, 72 x 140 in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-35 Utagawa Kunitaru, "Sumo wrestlers," 1867, ink and color on paper, ôban triptych, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. From MFA Collections Database.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-36 Sumo portrait in Ryôgoku station, Tokyo, September 2004. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-37 Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Lonely house," 1855, colors on board, 69 x 121 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., Sensôji. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 3-38 Utagawa Yoshimori, *An old picture of the Lonely House at Asajigahara*, 1855, ink and color on paper, ôban, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. From MFA Collections Database.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-1. Utagawa Toyokuni, “Shakkyô” (Stone bridge), 1814, polychrome on wood, 75 ½ x 57 in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 23.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-2. Utagawa Toyokuni, *Shakkyô* (Stone bridge), 1813, woodblock print, ôban size, Waseda University Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum. From the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum Digital Archives Collection.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-3. *Fudô Myôô with Kongara and Seitaka*, early fourteenth century; ink, color, and gold on silk, 72 x 45 in.; Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III Collection of Asian Art. From the Asia Society Collection in Context Database.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-4. Tadamichi, "Mongaku," 1825, polychrome on wood, 61 ½ x 87 ½ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 18.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-5. Torii Kiyonaga, “Danjûrô V,” 1813, sketch by Asahi Jusan from *Naritasan ema gakumen shû* (Collection of ema and images from Naritasan), 1838, n.p.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-6. Utagawa Toyokuni III, *Naritasan kaichô sankei gunshû zu* (Illustrated crowd of visitors at Naritasan viewing), 1856, woodblock print triptych, ôban size, Edo Tokyo Museum. From the Tokyo Digital Museum.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-7. Ichikawa Danjûrô VII, “Settai dokoro” (Place of entertainment), 1821, ink on wood, 87 x 13 in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 68.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-8. 1861 ema hall, Naritasan. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

4-9. Interior of 1861 ema hall, Naritasan. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

4-10. Utagawa Toyokuni III, *Orei mairi hiiki funa no zu* (Illustration of the fan club's visit), 1847–52, woodblock print triptych, ôban size, Edo Tokyo Museum. From the Tokyo Digital Museum.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-11. Utagawa Toyokuni III (Utagawa Kunisada), “Ya no ne Gorô” (Gorô the arrow sharpener), 1825, polychrome on wood, 56 ¼ x 30 in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 5.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-12. Torii Kiyomitsu II, “Genji moyô furisode hinagata” (Models of Genji designs for kimono), 1851, polychrome on wood, 77 ½ x 47 ½ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 24.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-13. Honmakiya Mantarô (attrib.), “Shibaraku” (Wait a moment), 1823, polychrome on wood, 71 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 47 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 22.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-14. Utagawa Toyokuni III (Utagawa Kunisada), *Danjûro VII*, 1829, woodblock print, ôban size, Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University. From the Ukiyo-e Kensaku Etsuran System.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-15. Utagawa Toyokuni III (Utagawa Kunisada), *Edo meisho zue 24: Shibuya* (Twenty-four famous places in Edo: Shibuya), 1852, woodblock print, ôban size, Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University. From the Ukiyo-e Kensaku Etsuran System.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-16. Torii Kiyomitsu II, “Hanagumo kaneiru duki” (Month of the blossom cloud and bell entering), 1837, polychrome on wood, 72 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 24.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-17. Torii Kiyonobu, "Ichikawa Kuzô in the Role of Miura Arajirô," 1718, woodblock print, 12 x 6 in., Honolulu Academy of Arts. From Howard Link. *The Theatrical Prints of the Torii Masters: A Selection of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-century Ukiyo-e*. Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1977, p 57.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-18. Torii Kiyomitsu, "Ichimura Theater Illustrated Ranking List," 1823, polychrome on wood, 49 ½ x 67 ¼ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 26.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-19. *Gekijô junmô zui* (Illustrated instructions in theater practice), nineteenth century, woodblock-printed book. From Asakura Haruhiko, ed. *Kunmô zui shûsei*, vol. 22. Tokyo: Ôzorasha, 2000, p. 52-53.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-20. Torii Kiyonaga, *Tôsei yûri bijin awase: Minami eki no kei* (Contest of contemporary beauties of the pleasure quarters: A scene of the southern station), ca. 1783, woodblock print, ôban size, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. From the MFA Collection Database.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-21. Torii Kiyotomo, "Legendary Historical Themes," 1720s, woodblock print, 13.3 x 6.1 in., Honolulu Academy of Arts. From Howard Link. *The Theatrical Prints of the Torii Masters: A Selection of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-century Ukiyo-e*. Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1977, p 80.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-22. *Ehon shibai nengyô kagami* (Illustrated model of yearly theater activities), 1803, woodblock-printed book. *Shibai nenchû gyôji shû*, edited by Kokuritsu Gekijô Geinô Chôshitsu, 33-77: 189-203. Tokyo: Kokuritsu Gekijô Chôsa Yôseibu Geinô Chôsa Shitsu, 1976, p. 60-61.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-23. “Illustrated ranking list,” 1873, polychrome on wood, 59 ½ x 84 in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 27.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-24. Tani Bunchô, “Ranryô,” 1826, polychrome on wood, 59 ¾ x 96 in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 31.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-25. “Ryôri chaya mitate banzuke” (Restaurant and teahouse ranking list parody), 1859, woodblock print. From Shôji Kentarô. “Zeitaku kômei hana kurabe” to ogiebushi shûi [“Comparision of famous and luxurious establishments” and gleanings of ogibushi music]. In *Sensu no aru hanashi* 31, <http://kyosendo.co.jp/rensai/rensai31-40/rensai31.html>. (accessed April 17, 2010).

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-26. Utagawa Kunisada and Ando Hiroshige, “Hirasei” from *Tôtô kômei kaiseki tsukushi* (Famous restaurants of the Eastern Capital), woodblock print, ôban size, Collection of Shitomi Kazuyoshi. From Matsushita Sachiko 松下幸子. “Hirasei” and ushirojiro “平清(ひらせい)”と潮汁. *Kabuki-za mail magazine*, 2002. Kabushiki Gaisha Kabuki-za, <http://www.kabuki-za.co.jp/info/magazine/no25020124.html>. (accessed 4/17/10).

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-27. Tani Bunchô, "Horse," 1831, polychrome on wood, 42 x 71 ½ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 13.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-28. Tani Bunchô, "Horse," ca. 1831, polychrome on wood, 17 x 18 ½ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 13.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-29. Matsudaira Sadanobu, “Issai kyôzô,” 1814, 36 ¼ x 67 in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 63.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-30. Yadoya no Meishimori (Ishikawa Masamichi), “Comic verses of the four seasons,” 1821, ink on wood, 31 ½ x 52 ½ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 66.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-31. Oki Ichiga, "Machi genya," 1833, polychrome on wood, 60 ¼ x 76 ¾ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 39.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-32. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Sengumi," 1833, polychrome on wood, 56 ¼ x 98 ½ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 50.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-33. Hasegawa Settan, "Kanshin," 1835, polychrome on wood, 58 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 34 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 42.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-34. Tani Bunji, "Eastern Dancing," 1849, polychrome on wood, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 33.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-35. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Yûten," 1856, polychrome on wood, 73 ½ x 106 in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 17.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-36. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Night Attack of the Soga," 1856, polychrome on wood, 84 ¼ x 108 ¼ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 38.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-37. Irie Chôhachi, "Chicken and Mortar," 1856, plaster, 29 ½ x 55 in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 55.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 4-38. Urushien, "Buddhist teachings," 1856, polychrome on wood, 131 x 86 ¼ in., Naritasan Reikôkan. From Ôno Masaharu, and Ogura Hiroshi. *Naritasan Shinshôji no ema* [Ema of Naritasan Shinshôji]. Narita: Naritasan Shiryôkan, 1979, p 62.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 5-1. Sonoda Dôsetsu, "Takasago," 1697, ink, color, and gold on board, 44 ½ x 68 in., Gokokuji temple, Tokyo. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 5-2. Sonoda Dôsetsu, "Hotei," 1697, ink, color, and gold on board, 44 ½ x 68 in., Gokokuji temple, Tokyo. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 5-3. Tôsetsu, "Horse," 1697, ink, color, and gold on board, 54 ½ x 69 ½ in., Gokokuji temple, Tokyo. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 5-4. Tôsetsu, "Horse," 1697, ink, color, and gold on board, 46 ½ x 66 in., Gokokuji temple, Tokyo. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 5-5. Kanô Shunshô, "Horse," 1698, ink, color, and gold on board, 60 ¼ x 71 in., Gokokuji temple, Tokyo. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 5-6. Kanda Sôtei, "The four accomplishments," 1697, ink and color on board, 59 x 137 ¾ in., Gokokuji temple, Tokyo. Photograph by the author.

IMAGE REMOVED

- 5-7. Rinsen Minamoto Kyûhei, "One hundred hens," 1786, ink, and color on board, 71 ½ x 145 in., Gokokuji temple, Tokyo. Photograph by the author.

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