Part 2: Thought

Chapter 6
The Buddhist World of Hokusai: Lotus Practices and the Religious Frenzy of Urban Edo

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The 1893 biography of Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) by Iijima Kyoshin (1841–1901) portrays the artist as interested in Buddhism and engaged in different types of devotional activity. In particular, it repeatedly points out that it was known to his contemporaries that Hokusai was 'a believer of Buddhism, who joined the Nichiren school, deeply venerated Nichiren [1222–1282] and every now and then went to worship at the sacred places related to Nichiren, [such as the temples] Ikegami Honmonji and Horinouchi Myōhōji'.[1] According to the information collected by Iijima, Hokusai kept a statue of Nichiren in his house, studied Buddhism with a Buddhist scholar and habitually recited a dharani from the *Lotus Sutra*, the main scripture of the Nichiren school. Other deities in which he put his trust, such as Myōken, were also deities venerated in Nichiren temples.[2]

While it is not easy to assess how reliable all the details of Iijima's account are, the art-names that Hokusai took throughout his career and some of his works, especially those produced in his late years, indeed suggest that Hokusai had developed a spiritual connection to the *Lotus Sutra*, Nichiren and the deities of this Buddhist tradition. Was Hokusai an eccentric believer, as it is hinted in Iijima's account? What did it mean to be a 'Nichiren believer' in the late Edo period and in an urban setting such as the city of Edo? What would Hokusai's life as a Hokke (法華) devotee have implied? This essay sets out to recover the atmosphere of religious Edo, probing the cults and places associated with the Hokke school (as today's Nichiren school was called in premodern times), in search of further evidence for Hokusai's Buddhist concerns.

Religious Edo

Edo-period Japan has often been characterised as a secular society. Yet, historical, literary and artistic sources amply demonstrate that Buddhism, in both its institutional and popular dimensions, developed exponentially throughout the period. By the time Hokusai was active, Buddhism had become entrenched in the life of Japanese people as it had never been before. This is spectacularly displayed in the life of the city of Edo. Religious frenzy is the term that best conveys the presence of Buddhism in Edo: crowds of devotees and monastics; a creative mix of ritual practices; a multiplicity of objects and voices, recounted and documented in written records, plays, paintings and prints. Women and men, old and young, rich and poor: all flocked to temples and shrines to pray for a wide range of benefits, told the stories of the deities venerated, paraded them in procession and checked the calendar to know which karmic connection they might celebrate and glean benefits from on each day of the month and of the year. Religion was palpable across the city. There were about one thousand temples and shrines in Edo in the late Edo period.[3] Popular urban temples were embedded in the fabric of society and temple visits and pilgrimages, expositions of sacred images, founder anniversaries provided copious occasions on which Edo dwellers could participate in the sacred landscape of the city and pray for good health and fortune.

Many of the deities celebrated and invoked had their place of origin in the provinces and some might have been connected to agricultural rites. However, once they were transferred to

Plate 6.1 Saitō Gesshin Yukinari (author, 1804–1878) and Hasegawa Settan (illustrator, 1778–1843), '*Eshiki* liturgies at Horinouchi Myōhōji temple' (*Horinouchi Myōhōji eshiki*), from *Tōto saijiki* (*Record of Annual Observances in the Eastern Capital*), vol. 4, 3 recto, 1838. Wood-block, height 23cm, width 16cm (covers). British Museum, London, 2001,1124,0.1, funded by Brooke Sewell Bequest

the capital, their primary appeal was the immediate, efficacious benefits that they could bestow on those who worshipped them: to repel diseases, to avert calamities and to elude malignant spirits were the key ingredients of Edo religiosity. Life was a risky affair in a large city and danger had to be exorcised in every possible way. More than from estates and family sponsors, in the late Edo period the wealth of temples in Edo came from casual offerings (*saisen*) and the sale of amulets,[4] tangible tokens to assure that the protective power of the deity worked on the petitioner's behalf.

Today Kannon, tomorrow Shichimen: Edo's religious calendar

Tōto saijiki (*Record of Annual Observances in the Eastern Capital*), compiled in 1838 by Saitō Gesshin Yukinari (1804–1878) and illustrated by Hasegawa Settan (1778–1843), provides extensive evidence of this religious effervescence (**Pl. 6.1**).[5] A veritable record of how urban dwellers criss-crossed the city to engage with their gods, the work can be read as a liturgical almanac of Buddhist Edo. The examples that follow show how popular karmic connection days (*ennichi*) dotted the year. The 3rd day of the first month was the day to pay respects to the memory of the tenth-century monk Gansan Daishi (Ryōgen, aka Jie Daishi, 912–985), famous for protection against illness and bad luck: a popular cult at Kan'eiji, the most important shogunate-sponsored temple in Ueno. The first horse day of the second month (an auspicious zodiac day) was when rice god Inari was to be visited, and this became a children's festival. The second month also saw celebrations of the Buddha's passing, marked by the hanging of large paintings of his parinirvana (*nehanzu*): temples with famous scrolls painted by renowned artists, such as those of the Kano or Hasegawa schools, were especially visited on the 15th of the month. The 21st day of the third month was *mieku*, devotions on the memorial day of Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi, 774–835), while the 8th of the fourth month was *kanbutsue*, the Buddha's birthday. On the 18th of the fifth month, the temple at Zōshigaya celebrated a great festival for the female deity Kishimojin. The 10th of the seventh month occasioned an all-night pilgrimage dedicated to the bodhisattva Kannon, which was said to be equivalent to 46,000 days of devotions (*sennichi mōde*). *Segaki* liturgies, performed to prevent hungry ghosts from returning to this world, fell in the middle of the seventh month: the service at Rakanji (Ryōgoku Ekōin) was extended and especially popular.[6] The eighth month was *higan*, when practices that benefited the dead were conducted at all Buddhist temples. In the ninth month, a special blessing month (*kitō getsu*) like the first and the fifth,[7] Hokke temples, in particular, were crowded: Kishimojin celebrations were on the 18th day; and

those for another female deity, Shichimen, on the 19th. On the 28th, King of Wisdom Fudō's karmic day, Ryūsenji in Meguro (commonly known as Meguro Fudōson) attracted great crowds and many people stayed at the temple, for this was quite far from the centre of Edo proper. Autumn was known for memorial days of founders and eminent monks. Liturgies for Tenkai (1536–1643) were celebrated in Ueno in the tenth month, as were those for Nichiren across town (**Pl. 6.1**). Shinran's (1173–1263) memorial day (*hōonkō*) was in the eleventh month, which saw Higashi Honganji thronged with worshippers. There were also star festivals in this month at shrines and temples, and in Hokke temples blessings focused on the bodhisattva Myōken were performed. Thus, some seasons were busier than others and some months were characterised by a particular type of ceremony: for instance, the months devoted to special blessings, mentioned above. In addition to karmic days, annual events are recorded that involved an entire neighbourhood, such as the three big Edo festivals (*matsuri*): in the third month, Asakusa's *sanja gongensai*; in the sixth month, *sannōsai* at Hiei shrine; and in the ninth month, Kanda's *myōjinsai*. Further, there were activities that did not take place on specific days but were typical of certain months: the circuit pilgrimages that took place in the first week of the year (such as that to the *shichifukujin*, the seven lucky gods) or in the second month (visits to six Amida buddhas, or six Jizō bodhisattvas) are a case in point. Finally, as if the many temples of Edo were not sufficient, city dwellers undertook longer journeys to see their gods at their original sites: much visited were places easily reached from the city by boat and road, such as Naritasan Shinshōji in Narita, promoted by kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō I, or Benzaiten Shrine in Enoshima; further afield, the sacred mountainous areas of Ōyama, Mt Fuji and Mt Minobu.

Seeing the buddhas, making the sacred visible

Buddhist institutions catered to people's needs by making their capital and resources more visible than ever. Temples commissioned artists to recount the lives of their eminent monks in beautifully illustrated tales. Guidebooks and prints legitimised their status as 'sacred places' (*reijō*), conveying the miraculous accomplishments of their deities and locales. A great flood of images was produced of the deities of the vast Buddhist pantheon, the illustrious buddhas of the major scriptures, as well as a host of minor gods that had become popular due to the specific benefits they offered. Temple communities organised veritable advertising campaigns for their icons (*honzon*), so that more people would be attracted to visit the sites that housed such images. Religious events were also occasions on which to display the temple's artistic assets, both religious and secular. For instance, the seventh month was *obon*, when the rites for the dead were conducted, but it was also known as the month for the annual airing of temple treasures (*mushiboshi* or *kazeire*), a means to legitimise Buddhist sites through the visual display of their material history.[8] Lay supporters, organised in confraternities or religious fellowships (*kōjū* 講中), contributed to the visualisation of Buddhism by sponsoring many of the temple activities, and concomitantly partaking of their benefits. In fact, sponsorship of religious artefacts and religious practices, by all social classes and genders, was an extensive enterprise in the city of Edo (as it had been in Kyoto perhaps only in the Muromachi period [1336–1573]).

An important activity to make the sacred visible and trigger expectation of potential benefits was the exhibition of a deity's icon (*kaichō* 開帳), particularly if it was usually hidden from sight or resided in a faraway place. There were two types of such display: an exhibition in the home temple in Edo (*igaichō* 居開帳), or the exhibition of an image brought from another temple elsewhere (*degaichō* 出開帳, literally 'away from home'). This was a devotional viewing, recalling the exposition of an icon in the Catholic Christian tradition, which included bringing the effigy in procession on a named day. Celebrations for the display of an image could last as long as two months, to make the effort worthwhile. This was especially the case for *degaichō*, for which permission had to be requested from the shogunate and organisation was complex. A series of events were typically associated with the exhibition: liturgical performances, such as multiple recitations of texts with many monks performing for several days in a row; art-related events, from the display of temple treasures to performances by invited artists; and wider cultural events, such as *jōruri* puppet plays or kabuki theatre. Hokusai himself is known to have painted a gigantic image of Bodhidharma during a *kaichō* of the Kannon icon at Otowa Gokokuji in Edo, in 1804 (see **Pl. 1.5**).[9] Gokokuji, a Shingon temple founded at the end of the 17th century by the fifth shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646–1709) on behalf of his mother, by the 18th century had become famous for its lottery and for the religious 'entertainment space' within its precincts, which included a miniature replica of Mt Fuji.[10]

Considering its economic dimension, it is clear that from the temple side the exposition of an icon was primarily a fundraising event which generated entrance fees and donations to the host temple. In fact, *degaichō* often coincided with periods when repairs were needed to buildings or other material assets. From the Edo inhabitants' perspective, however, these were momentous occasions on which to enhance karmic connections and to benefit from the rewards that physical closeness to efficacious images could yield.

Hokusai and the practices of the Hokke school

Against this background, how can we recover Hokusai's beliefs and explore the nature of his connections to Hokke Buddhism?

Individual Buddhist schools had their own liturgical calendar, focused on days and deities that were of special significance in the history (actual and symbolic) of the school and reflected by its ritual practices. Hokke temples were held to be among the 'trendiest' (*hayari-dera*) in town. Thus, the deities that had emerged in the Edo period as devotional foci of the school ended up occupying an important place in the liturgical calendar of the entire city, beyond particular adherence to the teachings of this form of Buddhism. Four main deities were celebrated in Edo Hokke institutions: Kishimojin, the bodhisattva Myōken, Shichimen and Nichiren himself.[11] I shall explore here the last three, for these are relevant to a consideration of Hokusai's beliefs. While the central place given to Nichiren as the founder of

Plate 6.2 'Bodhisattva Myōken', from *Zuzōshō* (*Anthology of Buddhist Icons*), section on 'Tenbu' (Heavenly deities) 1. Handscroll, ink and colour on paper, height 28.6cm, 13th–14th century (this manuscript). Important Cultural Property, Shōmyōji temple, Kanagawa (loaned to Kanagawa Prefectural Kanazawa Bunko, Yokohama 484, 1–6)

the school is obvious, Myōken and Shichimen are otherwise considered to be minor deities at the margins of the Buddhist pantheon. Yet, their worship, originally confined to specific geographic areas, expanded during the Edo period and the two deities became crucial to the identity of the Hokke lineages, linked as they were to episodes in Nichiren's life and to places where he had been active in eastern Japan.

Myōken

Of the many different names that Hokusai used in his lifetime, at least two, Hokusai Tokimasa 北斎辰政 (literally, 'the dragon of the northern studio') and Taito 戴斗 ('receiving the Northern Dipper') expressed Hokusai's devotional interest in the deity that in Japanese Buddhism had come to personify the Pole Star (*hokkyokusei* or *hokushin*) and the Northern Dipper (*hokuto*), a deity known in Japan as the bodhisattva Hokushin, Sonshōō or, more often, Myōken.[12] In his old age, Hokusai also depicted the first star of the Northern Dipper in a dramatic painting.[13]

Myōken had a glorious pedigree in Japanese religious history as guardian of rulers and the state, as well as protector from natural calamities. It was an important star deity in esoteric Buddhism, with diverse iconographic renditions attested in many ritual manuals of the early medieval period. Of particular note is the iconography that associates the deity to a dragon, portraying it standing on one leg on a dragon, atop a cloud, in a similar manner to the water deity Suiten (**Pl. 6.2**).[14] Its worship was adopted into the Hokke school in the early medieval period, in connection with sponsorship by Chiba Tsunetane (1118–1201), lord of Shimōsa province (today's Chiba prefecture). This led to the construction of small halls dedicated to Myōken within the precincts of Hokke temples. A new iconography of the deity befitting a warrior clan was also created, which presented Myōken in the guise of a young boy dressed in armour, holding a sword in his right hand, while his left hand makes a gesture of command, his index and middle fingers pointing upwards (**Pl. 6.3**).[15]

This is the form of Myōken enshrined at Hosshōji, in modern Katsushika ward: the halo decorated with seven circles alludes to the seven stars of the Northern Dipper; a tortoise and a snake at its feet recall the *genbu*, the mythical animal that stands for the northern direction in Chinese cosmology. Popularly known as Yanagishima Myōkendō, Hosshōji perhaps was the most famous of the Myōken halls in Edo. It was established in 1492 as an affiliated temple (*matsuji*) of a temple in Chiba and later became the centre of widespread worship: 'Come, come to pray at Myōkensama', intoned a popular song. Iijima's biography of Hokusai attests that the artist was a frequent visitor to this site and notes that he drew an image of the 'epiphany tree' (*yōgō no matsu*) in its precincts.[16] In fact, the temple is depicted in many views of the city, and diverse illustrations focus on a tree that stands in front of the worship hall, rather than the hall itself. A design of 1863 from Utagawa Hiroshige II's (1826–1869) series *Edo meishō zue*, for instance, portrays it as a giant pine about 9m high just outside the *torii* gateways on the approach to the main worship hall.[17] Hokusai's drawing, which he sketched as a young artist while he used the name Shunrō, also puts the tree in the foreground, as if metonymically standing in place of the hall, which is not depicted at all (**Pl. 6.4**). Two women and a young man converse in front of the pine, its holy nature conveyed by a sacred rope (*shimenawa*) and the fence that encloses it, on which hangs a box for offerings (*saisen*). The prominence given to the tree in these depictions of the hall reflects, I would argue, an important devotional aspect of the cult of Myōken in Hokke temples. The text of the gazetteer *Edo meisho zue* reminded its readers that the tree was known as the place where the deity manifested (*yōgō*). (This same passage is inscribed on the Hiroshige II print mentioned above.) Myōken was said to have descended here, giving the tree its popular name of 'falling star pine' (*hoshikudari no matsu*).[18] According to the temple origin narrative, one day the monk Nissen dreamt of the bodhisattva. Having heard that when the Northern Star appeared in a dream the pine at Yanagishima became

mysteriously illuminated, he went to Yanagishima, set up an altar and started reciting the *Lotus Sutra*. Halfway through the scripture, the pine suddenly emitted a bright light: a glittering star was on a branch, which revealed itself to be the bodhisattva Myōken, a sword in the right hand and a wish-fulfilling jewel in the left.[19] This legend not only provided the background for Hokusai and other artists' depictions of Yanagishima Myōkendō, but also furnished a precise link to Nichiren. One episode in Nichiren's hagiographies tells of a falling star, shining miraculously on a plum tree in the garden of a local samurai's residence, where Nichiren was kept under guard awaiting exile.[20] Later, this star would be identified with Myōken, making the focus on the tree at Yanagishima another way of remembering Nichiren's miraculous life.

Hokke temples celebrated Myōken's karmic connection day three times a month, on the 1st, 15th and 28th days. Furthermore, one extra day every month was dedicated to the deity's 'descent' (*kōrin nichi*), and on this occasion those visiting the shrine would gather around the tree. Both *Edo meisho zue* and *Tōto saijiki* report an increase in visitors to the hall on each connection day.[21] Especially in months recorded as a 'blessing month', Myōken's statue would be displayed, prompting even more people than usual to visit. The monthly karmic days were also characterised by the performance of a liturgy known as the 'ten-volume dharani', during which monks recited the spells included in the 'Dhāraṇī' chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* at very high speed. Devotees, too, were encouraged to repeat the dharani a thousand times to fulfil their wishes at this hall. As we shall see, this practice was performed over and over again on the karmic days of other Hokke protective deities, confirming its exorcistic and apotropaic role.[22]

As a star deity, Myōken subsumed the function of astral bodies other than the Pole Star, such as an individual's personal star (the star that determined one's destiny) and was thus invoked to increase good fortune and prolong life. Hokusai, too, according to Iijima's biography, prayed for long life at Yanagishima.[23] He had made a vow to make a pilgrimage there for 21 days and it was after completing this vow, while he was returning home, that the artist was struck by lightning, an event said to have changed his fortunes. Another particular purpose often mentioned in Edo-period sources was the healing of eye diseases, a benefit that draws on both esoteric Buddhist beliefs and the very ideograms that compose Myōken's name, *ken* 見 being the character for 'seeing' (*miru*).

Shichimensan

Shichimensan myōjin is the female deity of the homonymous 'Mountain of Seven Peaks' situated behind Mt Minobu, in today's Yamanashi prefecture. The Minobu area was a place of great significance for the Hokke school, for there Nichiren spent the last years of his life and there was his grave.[24] Perhaps less known today, Minobu was among the most important pilgrimage sites of the Edo period. Most pilgrims reached it from Edo via the Kōshū kaidō highway. A striking documentation of the pilgrimage is a triptych woodblock print of 1863 by Hiroshige II that depicts Hokkeshū confraternities crossing Shinōhashi bridge over the Sumida

Plate 6.3 Kitao Masayoshi (Kuwagata Keisai, 1764–1824), *Bodhisattva Myōken and Two Deva Kings*, early 1800s. Hanging scroll, ink and light colour on silk, height 84cm, width 29.5cm. British Museum, London, 1881,1210,0.39.JA (ex-collection William Anderson)

Plate 6.4 Hokusai (Shunrō), 'Picture of Myōkendō worship hall, Hosshōji temple, Yanagishima' (*Yanagishima Hosshōji Myōkendō no zu*), from the series *Elegant Points around the Eastern Capital* (*Fūryū tōto hōgaku*), c. 1785–7. Block-ready drawing, ink on paper, height 18.9cm, width 25.7cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, E.5087–1910

River in Edo, and setting out for Minobu (**Pl. 6.5**). Each group carries emblems or papier mâché icons inscribed with the name of their guild and featuring a model of an important object of worship for Hokke followers. In the foreground of the centre sheet there is an image of Shichimensan, carried by a 'women's guild', followed by a 'two-deity guild' with an image of Nichiren exorcising spirits.

Shichimensan was first incorporated into the cultic activity of Hokke Buddhism as the tutelary deity of Mt Minobu. Nichiren's hagiographies recounted the wondrous encounter of the founder with the deity. One day Nichiren climbed to the summit of Mt Minobu and, seated on a rock, started preaching to a group of followers. A beautiful young woman joined the group and listened attentively to his sermons. Because one of his followers felt uncomfortable with her presence, Nichiren addressed the woman and commanded her to disclose her true identity. The woman asked for some water and as soon as Nichiren sprinkled it onto her, her body suddenly turned into an enormous seven-headed dragon, revealing itself to be the deity of the mountain. The deity vowed to protect Minobu and Nichiren's followers. It also pledged to prevent calamities caused by water, fire and weapons.[25] Sectarian traditions drew on the story to transform the sites where this episode took place into sacred spots that pilgrims could visit: the rock on which Nichiren preached, for instance, which would come to be known as the 'dharma-wheel rock' (*hōrin seki*). Shichimensan acquired importance in its own right, and when the base of Hokke communities shifted to Edo, several Minobu-affiliated temples (*matsuji*) across the city adopted the deity and built dedicated halls, often connected to a pond, as was common with dragons and other water deities. Among the most important sites were Saikyōji in Oshiage, Shōgakuji in Asakusa Shinteramachi, Kōmyōji in Komagome, Yanaka's Zuirinji and Ichigaya's Shugyōji. The image of Shichimensan at Saikyōji was said to be the same as that enshrined in Minobu, while it was claimed of the one at Takada (today's Takadanobaba) Ryōchōin that it had been made from the same wood as the statue in Minobu.[26] Origin tales (*engi*) of the deity were compiled and printed several times in the Edo period. Even as they focused on the icon of a specific temple in Edo, for instance Ryōchōin, and proclaimed the miraculous deeds of the deity, the narrative reiterated the connection with the original site of worship in Minobu. These tales were conveyed or distributed to devotees during celebratory events for the deity, or when the statue of Nichiren was taken to Edo from Minobu, an occasion on which the icon of Shichimensan was also displayed. Shichimensan was the first deity to be exhibited by the Hokke temples: the earliest *kaichō* at a home institution took place in 1733 at Hōzenji in Ōkubo.[27] In addition, origin tales linked Shichimensan and Myōken by suggesting that Shichimen was one of the stars of the Northern Dipper, or that the Dipper was considered its 'original essence' (*honji*), a connection probably triggered by the number seven: the seven stars of the Dipper, the seven peaks of Mt Shichimen and the seven dragon heads of the deity.

During the Edo period the episode of the miraculous apparition of the deity at Mt Minobu was illustrated in various media. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861) recorded it in a colour woodblock print series of 1835 dedicated to Nichiren's life, *Concise Illustrated Biography of Monk Nichiren* (*Kōsō ichidai ryakuzu*) (**Pl. 6.6**). The image depicts Nichiren seated behind a desk in a formal setting furnished with the paraphernalia and decorations of a temple. The deity is shown at the moment of its transformation into a dragon, in front of a frightened audience who start back from the hall.[28] These motifs set by the hagiographic tradition are reiterated by Hokusai in a late painting of 1847, a dramatic and dynamic composition that seemingly transposes the assembly into the sky. It portrays Nichiren, still and concentrating on the sutra that he holds open, indifferent to

Plate 6.5 Utagawa Hiroshige II (1826–1869), *View of Shinōhashi Bridge and Crowds on a Morning Pilgrimage to Mt Minobu* (*Minobusan asamairi gunju Shinōhashi no kei*), 1863. Colour woodblock, triptych, height 36.2cm, width 74.7cm. Tokyo Metropolitan Edo-Tokyo Museum

the gigantic dragon that surrounds him and causes such alarm among his followers (**Pl. 6.7**). The assembly that crouches huddled in awe in the empty space suggests the violence of the emotion generated by the sudden transformation.

Kuniyoshi, himself a Hokke believer, had produced his print series as a temple commission to commemorate the 600th anniversary of Nichiren's death. More research is needed to understand whether Hokusai's painting was sponsored by a temple or by a private believer. A few hypotheses may be put forward here, taking into account the form that the Shichimensan cult took in the city of Edo.

In Edo, worship of Shichimensan appears originally to have been linked to the shogunal house, in particular to its women. A 1717 version of the origin tale *Shichimen daimyōjin engi*, compiled by Ryōchōin's abbot, attests the multiple connections at this site.[29] Shichimensan was venerated by the wet nurse of the fourth shogun, Tokugawa Ietsuna (1641–1680), while the shogun himself is said to have kept an image of the deity as his protective icon (*mamori honzon*). Further, the temple received patronage from the women of the inner shogunal quarters (*ōoku*). The cult of Shichimensan in the inner quarters began with Lady Oman (1580–1653), concubine of the first shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), who is said to have climbed Mt Shichimen, even though the mountain was normally out of bounds to women. The women of the inner quarters favoured exorcistic blessings (*kaji kitō*) and requested many talismans for protection against poisons, insects, eye disease and other problems, for which Shichimensan offered excellent remedy. Shogunal regulations forbade the inhabitants of the inner quarters from visiting temples other than the shogunal ones, Zōjōji in Shiba and Kan'eiji in Ueno. However, records of the palace supply evidence that they often summoned Ryōchōin's abbot to the palace to perform exorcistic prayers.[30] Could Hokusai have painted Shichimensan to the commission of such elite women?

By the late Edo period, Shichimensan had become popular among townspeople. At one point there were in the Takada district of Edo 18 exorcists (*kitōshi*) to serve the burgeoning needs of city dwellers. According to *Tōto saijiki*, on the 19th day of every month, Shichimensan's karmic day, large confraternities devoted to the practice of the *daimoku* (the recitation of the title of the *Lotus Sutra*) gathered in Oshiage to recite and listen to sermons. In the first, fifth and ninth months, the blessing ritual months, liturgical reading (*tendoku*) of the 'Dhāraṇī' chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* took place and the icon of the deity was displayed, as seen above in the case of Myōken.[31] Hokusai might have produced the painting for one of these confraternities.

Outside of the city, Shichimensan was also invoked as a dragon god for rainmaking. This cult probably started around the lakes that are located near the top of Mt Shichimen, but it expanded together with the worship of Shichimensan across the countryside. A custom developed during the Edo period of climbing Mt Shichimen when rain was needed and getting water from one of the seven lakes near the top of the mountain.[32] In the Noto peninsula a statue called *amagoi no Shichimen* ('Shichimen who brings rain') was cherished.[33] This benefit, if not the origin of Hokusai's work, may explain the devotional purpose to which the painting was put. Now loaned to the Tokyo National Museum, the painting was previously preserved at Myōkōji, a temple in Koga city, in today's Ibaraki prefecture, where it was known as the 'rainmaking icon' (*amagoi honzon*). A narrative about the image – a rare case of an origin story for a painted image, much more usually created for statues – tells that whenever the painting was unrolled and hung, it had the efficacious power to bring rain.[34] Undoubtedly this use was triggered by the motif of the dragon, associated to rainmaking; indeed, there are other examples of Buddhist images used for this purpose because they depicted dragons.[35]

But is Hokusai's painting about Shichimen or celebrating Nichiren?

Plate 6.6 Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861), 'Manifestation of the Shichimen deity at Mt Minobu in the ninth month, 1277' (*Kenji sannen kugatsu Minobusan Shichimenjin jigen*), from the series *Concise Illustrated Biography of Monk Nichiren* (*Kōsō ichidai ryakuzu*), 1835. Colour woodblock, height, 25.1cm, width 37cm. British Museum, London, 2008,3037.12106, given by the American Friends of the British Museum (Prof. Arthur R. Miller Collection)

Nichiren, the founder

The cult of the founders was another cultural intersection where popular belief met sectarian Buddhism in Edo. Of all the eminent monks who were celebrated as initiators of a school or lineage, or as important figures in a school's history, Nichiren seems to have been the most popular, especially in the later Edo period. If one considers the exposition of an icon to be a metric of popularity, the regular *degaichō* of Nichiren's effigy suggests this: statues from Okunoin and the Kobutsudō in Minobu travelled to Edo 10 times between the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries. Nichiren was lauded as one of the 'four heavenly kings' of Edo *degaichō*, second only to Kannon.[36]

An important input to the cult of a founder came from temple sponsorship of the representation of his life in biographical narrative (*soshiden*), often illustrated, as well as in paintings, prints and even in performances. For instance, starting with a work by Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724), several plays were written to recount episodes in Nichiren's life (*Nichirenki mono*) and performed as *jōruri* puppet theatre, kabuki theatre and *rakugo* storytelling.[37] These served the propagation agendas of the sectarian establishment and provided entertainment on the occasion of a *kaichō* or an annual festival.[38] Nichiren's dramatic life – a succession of exiles, ambush, life threats – undoubtedly lent itself to the Edo taste for wondrous events around disastrous happenings: episodes such as light that stopped the sword that was going to behead Nichiren, or the apparition of Shichimensan, were significant evidence of the power of invisible forces. These episodes, as we have seen with Shichimensan, could be connected to the protection offered by specific deities, which in turn were invoked for a variety of practical benefits. In fact, hagiographic narrative emphasised such benefits together with the extraordinary deeds of the founder, more than any abstract principles of faith. Visual representations of the lives of eminent monks drew on medieval models (such as illustrated handscroll paintings), but the sheer multiplicity of media available in Edo allowed for an exceptional circulation of such stories. We have seen an example in Kuniyoshi's exquisite colour woodblock print series, *Kōsō ichidai ryakuzu*. Other formats existed, such as less expensive, often uncoloured, paper scrolls that grouped together important events from the life of the founder. These could be acquired by pilgrims and followers to be taken home after a temple visit (**Pl. 6.8**).[39]

The second significant factor in the popularity of Nichiren was the performative dimension of his cult. Nichiren's 'founder pilgrimage' (*soshi mōde*) was an important moment in Edo's religious life. The main one took place around the 10th day of the tenth month, close to the memorials for Nichiren's demise on the 13th day of the same month. There were 10 famous places in Edo for the cult of Nichiren, known as the 'ten great [temples for] the founder' (*Edo no jū dai soshi*). Of these, three temples are recorded in *Tōto saijiki* as particularly popular for the *oeshiki*, the extravagant procession to mark the anniversary of Nichiren's demise: Ikegami Honmonji, Horinouchi Myōhōji and Jōonji. Interestingly, all three sites of Nichiren's cult

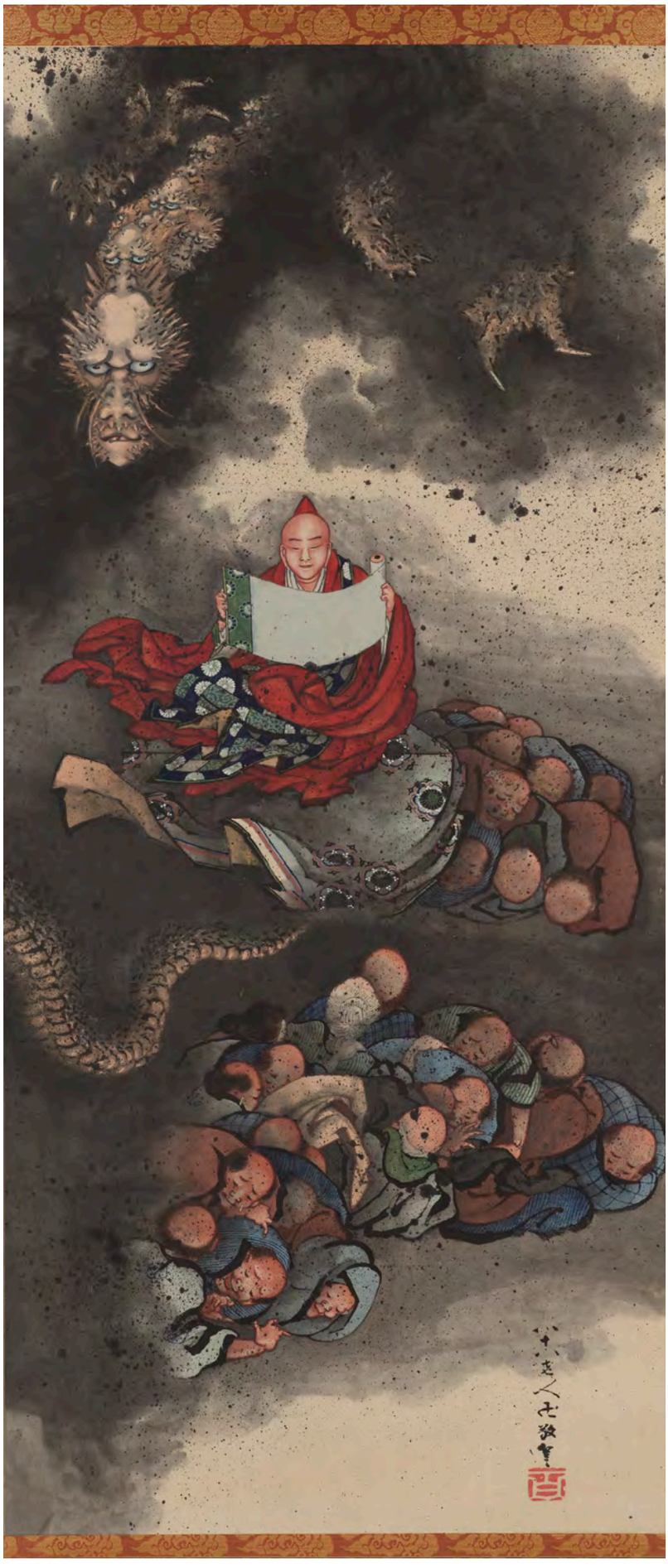

Plate 6.7 Hokusai, ***Monk Nichiren and the Seven-Headed Dragon Deity of Mt Minobu***, **1847. Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, height 132.3cm, width 59.3cm. Myōkōji temple, Koga (loaned to the Tokyo National Museum)**

Plate 6.8 Artist unknown, *Portrait of Nichiren at the Sites of the Seven Hardships* (*Shichinansho miei*), 1835. Woodblock print mounted as a hanging scroll, height 48.7cm, width 33.4cm. Harvard-Yenching Library Cambridge, MA (Bruno Petzold Collection, 12748915)

have a close connection to Hokusai. We have already encountered Ikegami and Horinouchi in Iijima's biography as places that Hokusai used to visit. It is therefore worthwhile to explore these temples more closely.

Honmonji, in Ikegami (today's district in Tokyo), was perhaps the most famous, as it was the temple established on the site where Nichiren passed away.[40] The *oeshiki* here, the first to have been held, was depicted in many versions of the gazetteer *Edo meisho zue*. Devotees attended to enjoy chanting, receive blessings and view the image of Nichiren, a wooden statue said to have been carved on the seventh anniversary of his death. Even more, the *oeshiki* was an occasion to experience and share the drama of Nichiren's life through physically being in the space where his last moments unfolded, to see the pillar on which he rested his head or the cherry tree that blossomed at his death despite it being autumn.[41]

In the late Edo period other sites, perhaps less known today, became popular for the cult of the founder. One such temple was Horinouchi Myōhōji in today's Suginami ward of Tokyo. One illustration in the *Tōto saijiki* shows crowds gathering to listen to the liturgies for the *oeshiki* (**Pl. 6.1**). Banners in the temple precincts bear names of the confraternities such as the so-called 'confraternity of the thirteenth day' (*jūsannichikō*), the thirteenth day being the 13th of the tenth month, the day of Nichiren's passing. Other banners indicate connections to samurai women and sake shops.[42] The temple was widely represented in popular prints. Hiroshige, for instance, dedicated two views in two different series to depicting pilgrimages to the founder there.[43] Hokusai, too, recorded the pilgrimage in a printed book illustration that linked Horinouchi to Zōshigaya, another important Hokke temple in Edo.[44] The temple was renowned for the benefits that a wooden statue of Nichiren it enshrined could grant. Such was its power that 'every day, windy or rainy, cold or hot, noble and lowly from the city and the countryside visited it'.[45] Although Myōhōji originally had no relation to Nichiren, the statue had been moved there in the Genroku era (1688–1704). Said to have been carved by his disciple Nichirō (1245–1320) when Nichiren was exiled in Itō in Izu province, it was regarded as a veritable image of Nichiren who, on seeing it, had rejoiced and consecrated it himself, pronouncing it imbued with his spirit and empowered to benefit all beings for a long time to come.[46] A story also circulated of a talisman that Nichiren had given to a sick fisherman in Itō, whose powers had cured him. The statue was said to afford protection from diseases and heal sickness, and thus the temple become a miraculous spot (*reijō*) for the cult of Nichiren, here known as 'the founder who guards against evil' (*yakuyoke ososama* 除厄けおそっさま [お祖師さま]).[47] A pilgrimage to Myōhōji could have been the occasion when Hokusai acquired the statue of Nichiren that his biographer recounts the artist always kept in his house (see **Pl. 4.1**).

Horinouchi Myōhōji was also famous for its liturgical assembly for one thousand recitations of the *Lotus Sutra* (*hokke senbue*) that occurred in the seventh month.[48] This liturgy lasted more than a week, from the 18th to the 27th day of the seventh month, with dozens of monks reciting the entire *Lotus Sutra*. It was initially established by the 16th head priest, Nisshō (n.d.), in 1766, probably to collect funds for the restoration of various buildings. It attracted great crowds from near and far and eventually all Edo confraternities are said to have flocked to Myōhōji. The temple was also the first stop on the pilgrimage route to Mt Minobu along the Kōshū kaidō highway.[49]

The practices for which Horinouchi Myōhōji was known and the benefits that its icon bestowed provide another link to Hokusai. Among the temple holdings is a large votive painting (*ema*) by Hokusai's leading pupil, Totoya Hokkei (1780–1850).[50] Dated 1821, the *ema* inscribes the *daimoku*, 'Namu myōhōrengekyō', surrounded by a group of people, one figure holding a brush in his mouth (**Pl. 6.9** and cover). Art historians have suggested that this figure may be Hokusai himself, with the group representing Hokusai's family and disciples. According to Naitō Masato, the *ema* might portray some sort of ceremony, which Hokusai might be leading.[51]

Yet the context of the *ema* is crucial to understanding its content. Votive tablets were offered at a temple as the material evidence of a request for practical benefits or to show gratitude for a benefit received (as with Catholic Christian ex-votos). Because of the specialisation of sacred sites, *ema* might include elements that identified the temple where the benefits were bestowed. In Hokkei's example the *daimoku*, depicted rising from the clouds flanked by sun and moon – a common iconographic motif in devotional paintings of the Hokke school – serves at once as a signifier for the Myōhōji through

Plate 6.9 Totoya Hokkei (1780–1850), *Augury Appears to an Old Man* (*Rōō kizui no zu*) (*?Portrait of Hokusai*), 1821. Votive painting (*ema*), ink and colour on wood, height 120cm, width 196cm. Myōhōji temple, Tokyo. Photo: 2003

the practice for which the temple was known, that is, the recitation of the *Lotus Sutra*, and as evidence of the efficacious outcome of its recitation. The composition thus makes the *ema* a kind of 'miracle image' (*reigen zu*), in which a wondrous apparition of the *daimoku* (perhaps triggered by the person with the brush who has written the characters?) engenders hope in its devotees. The gathered people, their hands raised in prayer, appear to give thanks for the man to the right (facing the image) of the figure with the brush, who was probably healed by the power of the *daimoku*. Recitation of the *daimoku* was the primary practice of lay devotees who attended the liturgical assemblies at Myōhōji, as well as at other Hokke temples. In fact, Hokke confraternities were often called *daimoku-kō* – and in some areas *senbu-kō* – because they would repeat the *daimoku* one thousand times. In the precincts of Myōhōji several stone pillars inscribed with the *daimoku* (*daimoku sekitō*) were erected, each bearing the names of the confraternities from various parts of central Edo that financed it. On the basis of these contextual elements one can suggest that the *ema* attests to a collective practice and its efficacy. The group of devotees could be members of a *daimoku* confraternity, which might have included Hokusai and Hokkei. The healing power of the practice is fundamental here. As recorded in *Edo meisho zue*, Myōhōji was also well known among the people of Edo for a talisman called *ohari gofū* 御張御符, distributed to those who visited the temple. It was believed that if a person who was ill received this talisman and affixed it on the wall or on a pillar by their bedside, they would recover completely by the 21st day.[52]

The last of the three great temples famous for the cult of Nichiren in Edo is Anryūzan Jōonji in Asakusa. Known as 'Dobudana's founder' (*Dobudana no ososhisama*), Dobudana being the popular name of Asakusa, this temple enshrined a statue of Nichiren that was brought from Kyoto in 1594 when the temple was established through the sponsorship of Oman no kata (Ieyasu's concubine, mentioned above). The statue was celebrated as having been made by Nichiren himself, as *Edo meisho zue* recounts in detail.[53] According to temple tradition, it was here, having seen this statue, that Hokusai painted a portrait of Nichiren (**Pl. 6.10**).[54] Hokusai depicted Nichiren against a dark background as if he were sitting on a rock suspended in the empty space, reading a scroll of the *Lotus Sutra*. The invocation to the title of the *Lotus Sutra*, 'Namu myōhōrengekyō', is inscribed in red at the top right corner, followed by the dedication, 'Nichiren daibosatsu' (The Great Bodhisattva Nichiren). Painted around 1811, it was consecrated by Anryūzan Nichiyō (d. 1840), the resident priest who would carry out reconstruction of the temple after it had been destroyed by repeated fires. Nichiyō's name is in fact inscribed at the bottom of the painting, together with his handwritten seal (*kaō*). Only two portraits of Nichiren by Hokusai are currently known: the painting of Nichiren and Shichimen discussed earlier and this image, originally held at Anryūzan Jōonji (now at the Hikaru Museum in Takayama). While the portrait of Nichiren and Shichimen is a much larger painting (132.3cm × 59.3cm), appropriate for a congregation commission, the Jōonji portrait is small and intimate (40.6cm × 20.3cm), its size suggesting a personal devotional object. The painting was probably commissioned by a devotee who would then have donated it to the temple, or by one of the temple monks, maybe Nichiyō himself, with whom Hokusai seems to have enjoyed close relations.

Epilogue: Buddhist Hokusai

Exploring the city of Edo while putting its gods and its temples at the centre reveals the extent to which Hokusai's

Plate 6.10 Hokusai, *Monk Nichiren*, *c.* 1811. Hanging scroll, ink, colour, gold and gold leaf on paper, height 40.6cm, width 20.3cm. Hikaru Museum, Takayama

life and artistic production were intertwined with Edo's sacred spaces and partook in the performative dimension of Edo religion, the movement(s) created around religious figures and the meaning produced by ritual actions.

Perusal of representative practices of the Hokke school in the late Edo period helps us visualise what form Hokusai's beliefs in Nichiren might have taken. For all that the artist was a lifelong devotee of Nichiren, the founder appears little in the production of Hokusai: there are only two portraits of the holy man. It has even been suggested that Hokusai did not use woodblock prints to depict Nichiren and Nichiren-related subjects because these were too popular a medium, not appropriate for the depth of his belief.[55] Yet, what can be retrieved of Hokusai's engagement with Buddhism shows that his interest in Hokke practices was articulated in diverse actions, which resonated with and reflected back the practices of his contemporary Edo dwellers. From visits to specific temples on dedicated days to keeping a statue of Nichiren at home as a *jibutsu*, from the belief in the efficacious deeds of the Northern Dipper deity to the apparition of Shichimen, the reliance on the *daimoku* and the repetition of apotropaic utterances, Hokusai's artistic and devotional practices document his personal faith as well as the popularity of specific forms of Hokke beliefs, which Hokusai shared with many of his fellow citizens.[56] Other aspects of Hokusai's production that could not be discussed here, such as his depictions of Shōki, the epidemic god, or the drawing of daily exorcistic images (*nisshin joma*; see **Pls 13.3, 15.3**), also resonate with broader trends in Edo's religious life.

The context of Hokusai's works brings to the fore the significance of the materiality of Buddhism: statues that produce miraculous effects, votive tableaux that attest to the intervention of the divine, viewing images, receiving blessings, buying talismans. Probing the origins of Hokusai's subjects makes clear that temples and shrines populated Edo gazetteers and visual illustrations of the city not because they were cultural assets, but because they played a crucial role in alleviating the anxieties of life and assuring Edo citizens of the presence of invisible forces that could help out. Concurrently, the material dimension of Buddhism points to the sponsorship of religion, which took on a grand scale in the Edo period: institutions, monastic and lay, and individuals, from the elite to the lower classes, contributed to the production and the maintenance of the material sacred. Without disregarding the individuality of Hokusai as an artist, it is thus indispensable to query how his paintings came to be conceived, who commissioned them, how well known the subject was and how these works were eventually used. Hokusai rendered intense emotions in his representation of the sacred, which may well be witness to his own faith. But one should not dismiss that the production of a Buddhist image in Edo Japan may also reflect the instructions of a sponsor.

The collective dimension of religious life in Edo needs more attention than it is often given. We should consider the possibility that Hokusai's devotional life was explicated as a member of a religious fellowship. Did Hokusai belong to a confraternity, as many Edo dwellers did? And if so, could that have been a confraternity devoted to Myōken? Or perhaps a *daimoku-kō*, as suggested by Hokkei's votive painting? Hokusai's beliefs in Nichiren were not apparently a family tradition, as attested by the fact that Hokusai's mortuary temple, Zuikizan Seikyōji in Moto Asakusa, was not a Hokke temple.[57] Hokusai might have been one of the many 'one-life Lotus' (*ichidai hokke*) believers of Edo, who were not officially registered at a Hokke temple as parishioners (*danka*), according to the system imposed by the government, but became devotees on their own (rather than inheriting the affiliation), perhaps after witnessing the efficaciousness of the exorcistic blessings for which Hokke temples were famous, or the miraculous powers of the *daimoku*.[58]

Thus, the image of Hokusai that emerges when we take into account the forms in which Buddhism expressed itself and was practised in Edo is the image of an urban dweller who participated fully in the religious landscape of Edo. His

was the pious life of a large city full of temples, deities and propitiatory deeds, buzzing with ritual actions recorded in gazetteers and illustrated in woodblock prints, a city that produced and distributed knowledge of the sacred in a continuous intersection of words and images, in an economy of the holy that yielded wealth and health to those who enacted it.

Notes

1 Iijima 1893, 2:11; Iijima 1999, 203.

2 Iijma 1893, 2:11–13; Iijima 1999, 203–8.

3 Hur 2000, 96–7.

4 Nam-lin Hur has demonstrated this for Sensōji in Asakusa, where more than half of the income in 1800 was from *saisen*. Hur 2000, 14–22.

5 British Museum, 2001,1124,0.1, all pages digitised at https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_2001-1124-0-1 (accessed 25 February 2022). See also Yamaji 2008. Nakao 1999, 184–91, includes useful charts of all Buddhist yearly events and of the monthly *ennichi*, as well as lists of rituals related to the zodiac days and multi-temple pilgrimages (*junrei*).

6 Depicted in *Tōto saijiki*. At the same time Ekōin was the site of a famous Fudō *degaichō*, also depicted in *Tōto saijiki* and woodblock prints.

7 These three months were originally dedicated to precepts (*saikai*) and were thus known as *saigetsu*.

8 These are also illustrated in *Tōto saijiki*, vol. 3, 3 recto. On temple airing in English, see Levine 2005, 226–54.

9 Gazetteers report that the painting was 18m tall and that Hokusai and his disciples used a broom and buckets full of ink to paint it. In 1817 Hokusai depicted another large Daruma in Nagoya, at the precinct beside Hongan-ji's Nagoya Betsuin.

10 Graham 2007, 42–3.

11 Nakao 1999, 161–72.

12 Iijima notes that the name Hokusai Tokimasa comes from Hokusai's belief in Myōken. See Nagata 2003b, 339–40.

13 *Bunshōsei zu*, dated 1843. Ink and colour on silk, 79.6cm × 28.2cm. Shimane Art Museum (Nagata collection). Nagata 2000, 107, no. 110. The painting was formerly in the collection of Kawanabe Kyōsai, who wrote the title 'Buntosei 文斗星' on the mounting. See also the Shimane Art Museum's website, https://shimane-art-museum-ukiyoe.jp/nagata/c-nagata/h13-01.html (accessed 27 January 2023).

14 See, for example, the images of the bodhisattva Myōken in *Zuzōshō (Anthology of Buddhist Icons)*, a compendium of rituals and accompanying icons originally compiled in 1139–40 in the Hirosawa lineage and traditionally attributed to Ejū (1060–1145). On the different forms of the cult of Myōken, see Dolce 2006; Faure 2016, 58–93.

15 Frank 1991, 245–6; Kyburz 2011, 257. One example of this iconography is the painting of the *Bodhisattva Myōken and Two Deva Kings* in the British Museum (**Pl. 6.3**), where Myōken is accompanied by two acolytes. Hosshōji's icon consists of a sculpture of the same triad. Nagata 2003b, 340–1.

16 Iijima 1999, 204.

17 'Yanagishima Myōken', from the series *Edo meishō zue*, National Diet Library Digital Collection,10.11501/1309920, at https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1309920?lang=en (accessed 4 February 2022). Hiroshige I and his pupil Hiroshige II devoted prints to this hall in several other series, such as *Tōto meisho* of 1839-1842 and *Edo meisho shijūhakkei* of 1860. See MFA 21.9911, accessible at https://collections.mfa.org/objects/237528, and MFA 11.20525 https://collections.mfa.org/objects/213207. Hiroshige I, too, depicted the temple complex in the series *Meisho Edo hyakkei* (published 4th month, 1857) and *Edo kōmei kaitei zukushi* of 1835–42. See MFA 11.36876.23, https://collections.mfa.org/objects/533995 and MET JP1159, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/45307.

18 *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 7, 18, 63 verso. The gazetteer adds that the tree was also known as 'thousand-year pine' (*sennen no matsu*). The image of the temple is on folio 65 recto/verso. British Museum, 1988,1015,0.3.1-20. See also Nakao 1999, 174.

19 Mochizuki 2015, 95.

20 See *Nichiren and the Falling Star in Echi* (*Nichiren shōnin Echi hoshikudari no zu*), late Edo period. Woodblock print, height 54.4cm, width 24.7cm. Petzold collection, Harvard-Yenching Library, at https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/ids:24260670 (accessed 4 February 2022) and Hanan 2003, 231–2. The episode is also in the illustrated biography *Nichiren daishōnin chūgasan*. Another occurrence of a falling star appears in the origin narratives (*engi*) of Seichōji, the temple where Nichiren was first trained in Awa province. Here, it is recounted that a tree (which in this narrative is an oak, *kashiwa*) near a dragon pond emitted a mysterious light; an old man appeared to the monk who had been practising nearby, announcing that he was Myōken and requesting that a statue of the bodhisattva Kokūzō should be made from the wood of that tree.

21 Nakao 1999, 174–5. The 12 'descent days' are recorded as: 7th day of the first month, 8th of the second month, 3rd of the third month, 4th of the fourth month, 5th of the fifth month, 7th of the sixth month, 7th of the seventh month, 15th of the eighth month, 9th of the ninth month, 21st of the tenth month, 7th of the eleventh month, 27th of the twelfth month.

22 Still today in the liturgy celebrated on Myōken day at some Nichiren temples, after the fast recitation of the sutra, *kitō* are offered to the attendees, as I have been able to observe at the Myōkendō of Chōmyōji in Kyoto.

23 Iijima 1893, 1:12.

24 Hokusai depicted the Minobu River in his colour woodblock print, 'Back of Mt Fuji seen from Minobu River' (*Minobu-gawa ura-Fuji*), from the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mt Fuji*, *c.* 1833; see, for example https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1937-0710-0-158. Colour woodblock, height 25.3cm, width 36.5cm.

25 See *Honke bettō bussō toki*, compiled in 1730 by Nitchō, 36th abbot of Minobu. Cited in Nakao 1999, 175–6.

26 For instance, the 1804 *Shichimen daimyōjin chinza engi* presented it as a 'split body' (*buntai*) from the Shichimen venerated at Minobu. This is also reported in 'Takada Shichimendō', in *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 4, 12, 58 recto. Ryōchōin appears with this name in maps of Edo's famous places. See ibid., vol. 4, 12, 59 recto.

27 Mochizuki 2015, 44. 'Shichimen daimyōjin no yashiro', in *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 4, 11, 6 recto and 10 recto, states that this was the first site of the worship of Shichimen in Edo. Image on 6 verso.

28 *Kenji sannen kugatsu Minobusan Shichimenjin jigen*, British Museum, 1913,0415,0.15.

29 Cited in Mochizuki 1996, 245.

30 *Teihon Edojō ōoku*, cited in Mochizuki 2015, 155.

31 *Tōto saijiki*, vol. 1, 17 recto. See also the entries for the '19th day, fifth

month', vol. 3, 9 recto and for '19th day, ninth month', vol. 3, 33 recto.

32 Nakao 1999, 298.

33 Ibid. 1999, 309. This is also the origin of a local dance called 'Shichimen odori'.

34 See Nakao 1981, 733.

35 This was the case with a set of scrolls depicting the three regalia in Buddhist form, which I have discovered in the Noto peninsula. Rather than for rites of consecration, these scrolls were used as the icons of rainmaking rituals, probably because dragons were inscribed in the representation of the sword.

36 Mochizuki 2015, 45. The four 'heavenly kings' of *degaichō* were: the Buddha of Seiryōji in Saga; Fudō myōō of Shinshōji in Narita; Amida of Zenkōji in Shinano province; and Nichiren's image from Kuonji on Mt Minobu (called Minobu shōnin).

37 For a short introduction in English, see Tamura 2013. The first work by Chikamatsu, *Nichiren shōnin-ki*, was performed in Osaka in 1719.

38 The illustration in *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 4, 12, 102 recto/verso of Zōshigaya's memorial celebrations for Nichiren shows a noh play performed in the temple precinct crowded with devotees, while other activities, from monastic blessings to a mechanical peep show (*karakuri*), take place at the same time.

39 One example is a print at the Harvard-Yenching Library, which portrays seven major hardships suffered by Nichiren during his life. Among these significant episodes, this print also features the apparition of a star on a tree while Nichiren was awaiting exile.

40 Honmonji is today the headquarters of the Nichiren school. The *oeshiki* are still conducted there on a grand scale.

41 Nakao 1999, 168–72.

42 *Tōto saijiki*, vol. 4, 3 recto. This gazetteer also includes an illustration of the *oeshiki* at Zōshigaya (vol. 4, 3 verso–4 recto).

43 'Pilgrimage to the Founder at Myōhōji temple, Horinouchi' (*Horinouchi Myōhōji soshi mōde*), from the series *Famous Places of Edo* (*Edo meisho*), *c.* 1848–52. Colour woodblock. National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, FSC-GR-779.123, at https://asia.si.edu/object/FSC-GR-779.123/ (accessed 4 February 2022). See also 'The Precincts of Myōhōji Temple in Horinouchi' (*Horinouchi Myōhōji keidai*), from the series *Famous Places in the Eastern Capital* (*Tōto meisho*), 1856. Colour woodblock. Museum of Fine Arts Boston Collection, 06.563, 21.9900, at https://collections.mfa.org/objects/176249 (accessed 28 January 2022). Among other artists, Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825) and Utagawa Toyohiro (1773–1828) depicted a 'New Year's pilgrimage to Myōhōji temple, Horinouchi' (*Horinouchi Myōhōji eho mairi no zu*), *c.* 1804, two sheets of a pentaptych of colour woodblock prints, ink and colour on paper, height 34cm, width 49.5cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, JP1005, at https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/54881 (accessed 28 January 2023); and Toyokuni III (Kunisada), 'Founder's Hall, Horinouchi' (*Horinouchi soshidō*), from the series *One Hundred Beautiful Women with Famous Places in Edo* (*Edo meisho hyakunin bijo*), 1857. Colour woodblock, National Diet Library, Tokyo, at https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1303836 (accessed 28 January 2023).

44 'Memorial pilgrimage procession at Zōshigaya [temple], Horinouchi' (*Horinouchi Zōshigaya eshiki mōde*), in *Fine Views of the Eastern Capital at a Glance* (*Tōto meisho ichiran*), vol. 2, 16 verso–17 recto, 1800, at https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/78633 (accessed 28 January 2023).

45 *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 4, 11, 24 recto/verso.

46 The details of the story are narrated in the entry on Nichienzan Myōhōji in *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 4, 11, 23 recto/verso.

47 Mochizuki 2015, 76–8.

48 *Tōto saijiki*, vol. 3, 13 verso. Recorded also in *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 4, 11, 24 recto. A woodblock print by Hiroshige I depicts the visit to the temple for the *senbu* liturgy: 'Going to the Senbu Ceremony in Horinouchi' (*Horinouchi senbu mōde*), from the series *Famous Places in the Eastern Capital* (*Tōto meisho*), *c.* 1840–2. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 21.9761, at https://collections.mfa.org/objects/237378 (accessed 28 January 2023).

49 Mochizuki 2015, 238.

50 Reproduced in Tokyo National Museum 2003, 182, fig. 144; Naitō 2017.

51 Naitō 2017, 18–19.

52 *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 4, 11, 23 verso.

53 *Edo meisho zue*, vol. 6, 16, 44 recto.

54 Suzuki 1996, cited in Nagata 2003b, 343–4.

55 This is suggested in Nagata 2003b, 342. In fact, early in his career, at the age of about 21, Hokusai created illustrations for a short popular novel, *Nichiren ichidai ki* (*Life of Nichiren*), *c.* 1780, using the art-name Shunrō. Attributed to him is also a preparatory drawing from *c.* 1830–44 in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA 11.9363; Clark 2017a, 251), in which Nichiren is shown writing the *daimoku* on waves, a scene that was also depicted by Kuniyoshi in his print series of 1835. Further episodes from Nichiren's life are included in Hokusai's illustrated books. For instance, *Ehon Wakan no homare* (*Illustrated [Heroes] of High Renown of Japan and China*, 1850), 17 verso–18 recto, depicts a disciple of Nichiren, Kudō Sae (Yoshitaka), who died of the wounds suffered in defending Nichiren during the so-called Komatsubara hardship. Here Hokusai inscribed the *daimoku* on the sword which Kudō holds, suggesting that it was thanks to its power that Nichiren was saved. *Ehon Wakan no homare*, ARC kotenseki database, https://www.dh-jac.net/db1/books/Ebio803/portal/19/.

56 Gods of epidemics (*ekijin*) were often represented in popular woodblock prints with exorcistic and apotropaic aims, to counter the frequent epidemics of the Edo period. Hokusai's Shōki (who was already in China a god of epidemics) is an *aka-e* to be used against smallpox (*hōsōgami*).

57 Seikyōji is a temple of the Jōdo school. However, Iijima in his biography of Hokusai claims that the temple belonged to the Nichiren school. Iijima 1999, 203.

58 On *ichidai hokke*, see Mochizuki 2015, 26–7.