

MOUNT FUJI IN EDO ART AND CULTURE

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Undoubtedly, Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) and Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) are the two most famous *ukiyo-e* (*ukiyo* means floating world, and *e* means painting) artists who chose Mt. Fuji as their major subjects. It is worth noticing, however, that so many other *ukiyo-e* artists in the Edo period (1603–1867) did the same. What made the mountain so popular as *ukiyo-e*'s subjects?

As *ukiyo-e* is also called *Edo-e*, one cannot answer this question without explaining Edo city, its historical and social conditions. Examining the relationship between produced artworks on the one hand and the producing historical period and social groups on the other, Harootunian¹ demonstrates how the townspeople in the Edo period established and practiced counter-hegemonic ideologies through their literature and *ukiyo-e* prints. He asserts that Neo-Confucianism, the official doctrine of the Tokugawa government, established a division of labor based on the primacy of the head (samurai) over the hand (the other castes of peasants, artisans, and merchants), and mental over manual labor. By making their daily life associated with manual labor and passion and desire constant subjects of their art forms, Harootunian argues, the townspeople engaged in counter-hegemonic practice. He mentions, “Bodily imagery in verbal and woodblock representations signified a different kind of social reality within an inverted scale of priorities for the Edo townspeople.”² Arguing in “Body matters,” his examination concentrates on representations of bodily imagery in art forms. Yet, how about imagery of landscape, more precisely that of Mt. Fuji? Can one read the same kind of practice in the mountain's imagery in *ukiyo-e* representations?

¹ Harry D. Harootunian, “Cultural Politics in Tokugawa Japan”, in: *Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints*, Sarah Thompson and H. D. Harootunian, eds., New York: The Asian Society, 1991, pp. 7–28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

This essay discusses the imagery of Mt. Fuji in *ukiyo-e* prints in relationship to the social group called the *Edokko* (Edo natives) and their counter-hegemonic practice. For this purpose, this essay will concentrate on three major ways in which *ukiyo-e* featured Mt. Fuji: Mt. Fuji as seen by ancient traveling poets; Mt. Fuji as worshipped by the *Edokko*; and Mt. Fuji as seen from Edo city. While shedding light on the mountain's cultural, religious, and social importance in the Edo urban culture and society, the essay discusses what these recurrent themes of the prints as shared discourse tell us about the sharing community of the *Edokko*, producers and consumers of the prints. The essay starts with explanation of the *Edokko*, followed by the examination of the three themes.

1. The *Edokko* and Their Culture

When Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the founder of the Tokugawa military government, was assigned to rule Edo in 1590 by order of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) who unified Japan, it was a small village. Yet, in the next hundred years, the city as the political headquarters of the government came to have a million people, compared to five hundred thousand in London in the same period.

The city's function as the political center determined its characteristics as samurai-oriented as well as male-dominated, both groups coming from other regions of Japan. Residential patterns in Edo reflected the samurai-oriented nature of the city; the samurai and the townspeople (merchants and artisans) were residentially segregated. While the former population occupied seventy percent of the urban area, located in or near the center of the city, the latter population of roughly the same size was squeezed into a mere fifteen percent of the land, with shrines and temples accounting for the remainder.³

These social settings of Edo city helped its townspeople nurture their distinctive identity and culture, especially in the second half of the Edo period. General understanding established among scholars of Edo studies suggests that the townspeople's identity awareness heightened in their daily encounters with various others such as both native and visiting domain samurai, and merchants from west Japan. From such contacts the Edo townspeople were confronted

³ Henry D. Smith, "The Edo-Tokyo Transition", in: *Japan in Transition from Tokugawa to Meiji*, Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rosman, eds., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 351–352.

with their inferior position; they were an underclass to the samurai in this samurai-oriented city, who could not compete with merchants from west Japan in terms of capital and sophistication of products.

To cope with this situation, the Edo townspeople emphasized that they were Edokko (Edo natives), born and raised in the capital of the shogun, and that they were macho like samurai, different from commoners from other regions. The Edokko began to establish this self-image in tandem with their growing economic power by the late 18th century, which was represented by the blustery acting style of the Ichikawa Danjūrō line in the kabuki theatre. Often playing contemptuous opposition to evil samurai, “Danjūrō could serve both as symbol of resistance to samurai, and as the samurai spirit itself.”⁴ That means the Edokko were a very cultural hybrid in the urban dynamic of samurai-centered Edo.

In actual feudal society, however, acting up against samurai might cause literally deadly results; only in fantasies of kabuki plays and the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters where social equality was fictitiously realized – samurai could not wear their swords, and the Edokko’s economic power spoke loudest – could they contend with their rulers. In other words, the Edokko’s cultural and economic capital was good only in fantasies of kabuki plays and the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters. Still, such play with their incapability and/ or avoidance of dealing with political reality can be regarded as counter-hegemonic action or resistance in the broadest sense because Confucianism was a system of ethical precepts for the management of society based on an understanding of “proper” relations in hierarchy. Therefore, it is no wonder that the kabuki theater and the pleasure quarters were called “evil places” (*akusho*) where people forgot the eight most important virtues of Confucianism (*bōhachi*).⁵

Besides the kabuki theaters and Yoshiwara, there developed cultural networks known as *ren* and *kumi*, in which people could share interests regardless of their social ranks, served as breeding grounds of Edo popular culture in such forms as literature, poetry, music, and *rakugo* (comic story-telling).⁶ In other words, although usually referred to as the townspeople or commoners’ culture, Edo popular culture was not created by them alone – rather, it was often created from class-crossing.

⁴ Henry D. Smith, “The Floating World in Its Edo Locale”, in: *The Floating World Revisited*, Donald Jenkins, ed., Honolulu: Portland Art Museum, University of Hawaii Press, 1993, p. 34.

⁵ Tatsuya Naramoto, *Chōnin no jitsuryoku*, Nihon no rekishi, vol. 15, Chūōkōronsha, Tokyo 1974, p. 391; Donald H. Shively, “Bakufu Versus Kabuki”, in: *Studies in the Industrial History of Early Modern Japan*, John W. Hall and Marius B. Jansen, eds., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 241.

⁶ Yuko Tanaka, *Chōnin Edo no sōzōryoku*, Chikuma Shobō, Tokyo 1992[1986], pp. 75–131.

A case in point is the invention of polychrome woodblock (*nishiki-e* or “brocade picture”) printing techniques in 1765, which is attributed to a salon led by shogunal retainer Ōkubo Jinshirō, known by his *nom de plume* Kyosen. His salon traded privately-made calendars, since the government prohibited their public production. The invention resulted from Kyosen’s collaboration with print artist Suzuki Harunobu (1724–1770), and ex-domain samurai and famous Dutch studies scholar Hiraga Gen’nai (1728–1779), in an effort to make better calendars. Again, their cultural activities and products themselves may not have been particularly political, but their commitment to these activities can be interpreted as such.

2. Mt. Fuji as Viewed by Ancient Traveling Poets: Cultural Seal of Approval

Such *ukiyo-e* repeatedly featured, referred to, or made parodies of Mt. Fuji, as viewed by ancient poets while traveling the region. They are not any poet but a very few famous ones who represent *tanka* (31-syllable classical poems) even today. These poets include: Yamabe no Akahito (fl. 724–736); Ariwara no Narihira (825–880); and Saigyō (1118–1190). While the three lived in different times, leading different social lives, *ukiyo-e*’s visual treatment of the poets with Mt. Fuji was somewhat similar. Some examples from the Feliks Jasieński Collection can prove this point.

Yamabe no Akahito

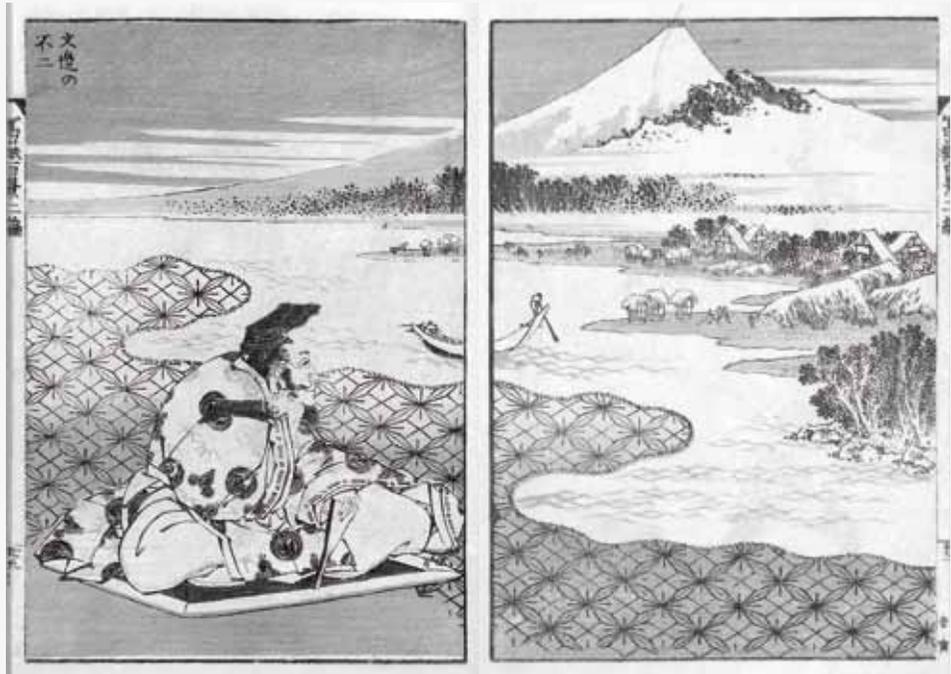
A courtier-poet of the Nara period (710–784), Yamabe no Akahito (fl. 724–736) composed many poems while traveling, especially during his journeys accompanying Emperor Shōmu between 724 and 736. Among a great many Japanese poems which took Mt. Fuji as their subjects, the most famous must be the one composed by him. The poem was compiled in *One Stanza from Each of One Hundred Poets* (*Hyakunin isshu*), an anthology of poems, compiled by the famous court poet Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), which has been very influential, representing court poetry, as well as constituting “the basic knowledge of Japanese poetry for most people from the early Tokugawa period until very recent times.”⁷ Akahito’s poem in this canonical anthology reads:

⁷ Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart*, New York: Henry Holt, 1993, p. 674.

*Tago no ura ni
Uchi-idete mireba
Shiro-tahe no
Fuji no taka-ne ni
Yuki ha furitsutsu.*

As I set out on
The beach of Tago, and look,
I see the snow constantly falling
On the high peak of Fuji,
White as mulberry cloth.⁸

1.
Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)
Literary Fuji (Bunhen no Fuji)
Album: *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji*
(*Fugaku hyakkei*)
Volume 2, Plate 57
Album signature: *saki no Hokusai litsu aratame*
Gakyō Rōjin Manji hitsu
Date: 8th year of Meiji, 12th month, 14th day [1876]
Publisher: Katano Tōshirō
Woodblock print in gray, black and white
22.7 × 28.4 cm
National Museum in Krakow
Item MNK VI-647/2
from the Feliks Jasieński Collection



⁸ Translation from: Joshua S. Mostow, *Pictures of the Heart: The 'Hyakunin Isshu' in Word and Image*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996, p. 152.

Hokusai’s visual interpretation of the poem appears in the second volume (1835) of his famous three-volume album *Fugaku hyakkei* (*One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji*). The print entitled “Fuji of Letters” (*Bunhen no Fuji*; Fig. 1) captures Akahito viewing Mt. Fuji. Between the two exist “mists” – a Japanese artistic convention, traditionally used to divide scenes. While many artists chose to depict Akahito viewing the mountain from the beach while traveling east, Hokusai showed the poet sitting comfortably on a court-style mat, recalling the view, perhaps for composing the poem. His print also offers a grandstand view of snow-covered Mt. Fuji from the beach where locals appear engaged in the regional industry of salt making and fishing in the contemporary style.

One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji is well known for its variety of unique compositions for which Hokusai used his great ingenuity to the maximum. Among various unique compositions, this particular one boldly divides the print into two parts: the viewer Akahito to represent elegant court culture in Kyoto, western Japan on the one hand, and viewed Mt. Fuji to represent natural beauty of eastern Japan on the other.⁹ This bold juxtaposition of the viewer and the viewed emphasizes “viewing” or gazing, both of which are necessary to admire the mountain culturally.

Ariwara no Narihira

Not as bold as Hokusai’s, still the composition of Katsukawa Shunshō’s (1726–1793) print “Journey to the East” (*Azuma kudari*; Fig. 2) shows a similar juxtaposition between Mt. Fuji and an ancient poet, thus emphasizing viewing. The poet in this case is Ariwara no Narihira (825–880), a poet and aristocrat in the Heian period (794–1185). Well known for his scandalous love affairs as well as great poems, he has been considered the model for the protagonist of *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari*), another classic of court poetry. Believed to be established in the tenth century, *The Tales* is comprised of 125 episodes, each of which combines one or more *tanka* poems and a brief narrative.

Figure 2 depicts Narihira’s “Journey to the East,” Episode 9 of *The Tales of Ise*. He composes a poem about Mt. Fuji, which appears at the top of the print, admiring snowfall on the mountain in mid-summer and its magnificent height, “as tall as twenty Mount Hiei’s piled on top of one another.”¹⁰ Note that Mount Hiei is the highest of all the mountains surrounding the Kyoto Basin, from where he was exiled.



2.
Katsukawa Shunshō (1726–1793)
Journey to the East (*Azuma kudari*)
Series: *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari*)
ca. 1772
Nishiki-e; 22.0 × 15.5 cm
National Museum in Krakow
Item MNK VI-840
from the Feliks Jasieński Collection

⁹ Akahito’s courtly elegance is even clearer when one turns the page of this album, as the next two pages depict *Bunhen no Fuji* (“Military Fuji”), a fearless samurai’s fight with a huge, wild boar, with Fuji in his background.

¹⁰ *Tales of Ise*, transl. by Helen C. McCullough, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968, p. 76.



3.
Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) and Utagawa
Kunisada (1786–1864)
The Monk Saigyō Viewing Mount Fuji from Yoshiwara
Series: *Fifty-three Stations by Two Brushes*
(*Sōhitsu gojūsan tsugi*)
Signatures: *Hiroshige ga, Toyokuni ga*
1854
Nishiki-e, ōban tate-e; 36.0 × 24.5 cm
National Museum in Krakow
Item MNK VI-2881
from the Feliks Jasieński Collection

In this print by Shunshō, the mountain takes a stylized, symmetrical triple-peak form, typically seen in paintings of Fuji since the Kamakura period (1185–1333). Also typical is the visual treatment of Narihira on horseback and his party on foot. Full of court attire, Narihira, his party, and even his white horse represent elegant court culture in Kyoto, while Mt. Fuji symbolizes the natural beauty of the wild East. Again, their juxtaposition tells us that the print needs to incorporate his viewing – a substitute for that of the print consumer-viewer – in order to grace Mt. Fuji. In other words, its natural beauty needs to be viewed, or culturally approved by Narihira for its existence.

Saigyō

Notice that Narihira sees Mt. Fuji on his left. On his journey, or exile from Kyoto to avoid being punished for one of his scandalous love affairs, he took the Tōkaidō Highway which went along the Pacific seaboard. When taking the highway eastbound, one can see the mountain on one's left, as Shunshō's print shows. That means that when taking the Highway westbound, one expects to see Mt. Fuji on one's right, except for some spots.

One such spot exists near Yoshiwara (in present-day Fujinomiya, Shizuoka prefecture), the fifteenth of the fifty-three stations of the Tōkaidō Highway, where it turns north, away from the Pacific Ocean. Legend says that while passing by the spot, the famous poet and Buddhist monk Saigyō (1118–1190) very much admired this unique view of the mountain, naming it *Hidari Fuji* ("Fuji on the Left"). That is well expressed in "The Monk Saigyō Viewing Mt. Fuji from Yoshiwara," among *Fifty-three Stations by Two Brushes* (*Sōhitsu gojūsantsugi: Yoshiwara*, Fig. 3). Each of the two artists from the Utagawa School contributed what he excelled at to the print: the landscape on the top by Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige, and the figure on the bottom by Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1864; signed as Toyokuni in this print). Like the previous two prints, this print also shows Mt. Fuji get undivided attention from the sitting monk, whose viewing is emphasized by their visual juxtaposition, a result of the division of the print.

Kokugaku Factors

Why did so many prints depict Mt. Fuji as seen by ancient traveling poets? Why do these prints of Mt. Fuji need the presence of great poets from the Ancient period? To answer these questions, one has to understand the remarkable development of both *ukiyo-e* and *Kokugaku* (National Learning or Nativism) in the second half of the eighteenth century, which was not a coincidence.

By the time when *ukiyo-e* as the technique of polychrome printing was developed, the Tokugawa government could have long realized political stability since its establishment in 1603. This stability facilitated Japanese growing self-confidence in their nation, as well as the rise of the townspeople's culture in the city of Edo, a representative of which was *ukiyo-e*. An important point is that the townspeople's growing self-confidence about the nation and themselves could easily turn to repulsion against Chinese culture, especially Neo-Confucianism which the government designated as its official doctrine, dominating in academia, as well as the townspeople's daily life. It was no wonder, then, Kokugaku as the study of the Japanese classics became popular among them. With ethnocentrism in their ideological stance, Kokugaku scholars aimed at revealing "ancient Japan," which often meant Japan as a primordial ideal, under the reign of the emperor or before absorbing the "foreign" influences of Buddhism and Confucianism.

Seeking the "ancient Japan" under the reign of the emperor, i.e., before samurai's military governments took it over, many studied the Japanese classics, especially the ones in the Heian period. *Ukiyo-e* artists were no exception; their major referential source was the Heian literature and poetry, as well as the Yamato-e style of painting. How these classics featured Mt. Fuji – and how Kokugaku interpreted them – helped establish and determine *ukiyo-e*'s treatment of Mt. Fuji as recurrent subjects.

In this term, not only the *ukiyo-e* artists but also the Edokko in general treated the poets as "their own" cultural authority. That is why all the above-mentioned *ukiyo-e* needed to incorporate the poets' "viewing" of Mt. Fuji, as read in their poems, which can be interpreted as their "gaze" as the discourse of power, politics, and knowledge. To put it differently, incorporation of the poets' viewing meant putting their cultural seal of approval on Mt. Fuji, which authorized *ukiyo-e* artists and the Edokko in general to culturally experience the natural beauties of Mt. Fuji, re-viewing the mountain through the eyes of the poets.

Note that, centuries before the Edo period, the Ancient period was when the imperial government was mostly based on western Japan, regarding the eastern half as its much wilder frontier, which the prints of Akahito and Narihira express in the contrast between their elegant court attire and Mt. Fuji. Yet, this cultural inequality is most succinctly expressed in the term *Azuma kudari*, the title of Episode 9 of *The Tales of Ise*. While typically translated as "Journey to the East," *Azuma* means the East and *kudari* going down, meaning going *downward* from the ancient capital as the cultural as well as political center.

From the Edo *ukiyo-e*'s point of view, therefore, the great poets had traveled all the way from the cultural center to the periphery in order to give "their own" Mt. Fuji the poets' cultural seal of approval. That is, the great ancient poets, their travel all the way from the imperial capital, their rare presence in the wild East, and their canonical poems and legend about Mt. Fuji – all of which had worked to culturally distinguish and contextualize Fuji, turning its natural presence to a cultural one with meanings. Within this cultural framework, *ukiyo-e* artists repeatedly created their own visual reinterpretations of Fuji.

3. Mt. Fuji as Worshipped by the Edokko

The Heian classic poetry was greatly influential on the way in which the Edokko culturally experienced Mt. Fuji. Yet, how about Mt. Fuji as their religious experience? The highest mountain in Japan, Fuji has been worshipped as a sacred mountain since the prehistoric times. In the mid-Heian period, *Shugendō* (the order of mountain ascetics) developed from native, pre-Buddhist mountain worship that eventually syncretized Buddhism, Taoism, and *Onmyōdō* (divination based on Chinese ideas of *yin* and *yang*). In the worship, sacred mountains were believed to be destinations of the dead souls who turned into ancestral spirits after thirty-three years of purification. The purified, thus deified, ancestral spirit was called the Deity of the Mountain, who in turn became the Deity of the Rice Paddy in spring. The Deity of the Mountain was also believed to be the Deity of Water – all the essentials for Japanese rice-centered agriculture. Believing in these supernatural beings in sacred mountains, ascetics, like shamans, tried to communicate with them, identified themselves with these beings, and eventually employed supernatural power they acquired by that identification for exorcism.¹¹

In the city of Edo where Mt. Fuji was highly visible, the order of mountain ascetics showed rather distinctive development, which came to be known as *Fuji-kō* (the Fuji cult) by 1757. While its founder Hasegawa Kakugyō (1541–1646) started this religious movement, Jikigyō Miroku (1671–1733) was the

¹¹ Ichirō Hori, "Nihon niokeru sangaku shinkō no gensho keitai", p. 78; Hitoshi Miyake, "Shugendō girei to shūkyō-teki sekaikan", pp. 279–344; Tarō Wakamori, "Sangaku shinkō no kigen to rekishi-teki tenkai", pp. 22–23, all published in: *Sangaku shūkyō no seiritsu to tenkai*, Tarō Wakamori, ed., *Sangaku shūkyō-shi kenkyū sōsho*, vol. 1, Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1975; Hitoshi Miyake, "Mountains, Worship of", in: *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, vol. 5, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983, pp. 259–260.

one who definitely changed its character from a shamanistic belief to social, practical ethics. In the early 18th century, the Japanese society constantly suffered from famines, peasants' uprisings, and exorbitant prices. Urban riot-looting that occurred in Edo city in 1733 let Miroku decide to save This World by sacrificing himself. In the same year, he fasted to death in a cave between the seventh and eighth of the ten stages of Mt. Fuji, while prophesizing the arrival of Maitreya, pronounced as "Miroku" in Japanese, to This World.

Miroku's teachings during this 31-day fasting were dictated to a scribe. After compilation, they became a bible of the Fuji cult. His teachings as well as fasting to death implicitly criticized the government which failed in feeding the people properly. To realize that, he urged people to regard the four quasi-castes not as the hierarchy of the ruler and the ruled, but as the division of labor to help each other on an equal footing. Miroku also advocated gender equality, unconventional in those days.

Although the Fuji-kō devotees did not commit to any noticeably subversive actions, the Tokugawa government repeatedly issued prohibitions against the cult, without discernible success. As the term *kō* means confraternity, lay people who believed in this folk religion joined in confraternities to organize pilgrimage-climbing of Mt. Fuji, as well as to provide mutual financial support for the pilgrimage. The number of the confraternities increased to 92, including 300 subdivisions in 1842. For those who could not join the pilgrimage, members of these confraternities contributed volunteer work to construct many *Fuji-zuka* or Fuji-shaped hills all over the city, so that even women and children could experience a mock pilgrimage or just enjoy a better view of Mt. Fuji by climbing the hill. An important point is that the members also engaged in other kinds of volunteer, civil engineering work of repairing riverbanks and roads. Because of this social aspect of the Fuji cult, communal activity made possible by its popularity, the government must have let the cult survive, despite its anti-feudal sentiment.¹²

The Feliks Jasiński Collection has many prints to show various aspects of the Fuji cult, as discussed above. For example, a plate from *Scenic Views of Fuji by Hokusai (Zen Hokusai Fuji shōkei)*, "Climbing below the Summit" (*Shojin tōzan*) in the main catalogue (see cat. no. 32) shows pilgrims in white uniform, climbing the mountain with difficulty and resting in the very cave where Jikigyō Miroku

¹² Timothy Clark, *100 Views of Mount Fuji*, London: The British Museum Press, 2001, pp. 17–18; Hiroyuki Kanō, *Edo kaiga no futsugō na shinjitsu*, Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2010, pp. 187–213; Noboru Miyata, "Fuji-kō", in: *Kokushi daijiten*, vol. 12, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1991, p. 138.

4.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)

Pilgrims to the Display of Benzaiten at Enoshima, Sōshū Province

(*Sōshū Enoshima Benzaiten kaichō sanmō gunshū no zu*)

Signatures: *Ichiryūsai Hiroshige ga, Hiroshige ga*
1847–1850

Nishiki-e, ōban triptych; 36.5 × 76 cm

National Museum in Krakow

Item MNK VI-3117 abc

from the Feliks Jasieński Collection



fasted himself to death. A print with the same title crowns the series *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, one of the most representative works by Hokusai, who, the recent scholarship argues, might have been a devotee of the cult. The print differs from the others in the series, since it is the only one that does not show a grandstand view of Mt. Fuji.

Fuji-zuka also made print subjects. Hiroshige's renowned series *One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo* (*Meisho Edo hyakkei*) include two places in Meguro, each with an artificial Fuji-shaped hill (see cat. nos. 43B and 43A). The plate "The Original Fuji in Meguro" (*Meguro Moto-Fuji*), shows the older *Fuji-zuka*, built by enthusiastic confraternity members in the village of Meguro in 1812.¹³ The artificial hill was 12 meters high, and a shrine was built on its top for worshipping the real Fuji. The print shows people enjoying not only viewing the real, snow-covered Fuji but also pink cherry blossoms – representative spring flowers in Japan – at the foot of the hill. This means that religious activity on the one hand and sightseeing, leisure, and recreation on the other were not necessarily mutually exclusive in the Edokko's minds. Rather, both often went together.

While the pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji was a male-only event with some exceptions, a very popular destination for women was Enoshima, near Kamakura, where enshrined was Benzaiten, a Buddhist and Shinto female deity to whom the Hindu deity Sarasvatī was syncretized. Once in every six years, her statue went displayed, which gathered a great number of pilgrims from Edo. Probably

¹³ For more details of *One Hundred Famous Places in Edo*, see Henry D. Smith, *Hiroshige: One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, New York: George Braziller Inc., 1986.

referring to such an event in 1851, this triptych of “Pilgrims to the Display of Benzaiten at Enoshima, Sōshū Province” (*Sōshū Enoshima Benzaiten kaichō sanmō gunshū no zu*; Fig. 4) by Hiroshige captures Enoshima, an island in the middle, connected to the beach by causeway, and snow-covered Mt. Fuji on the right. From the emblems on the parasols, four groups of women in matching kimonos with parasols are identifiable as four major schools of music, active in Edo: Kineya, Kiyomoto, Tokiwazu, and Tomimoto. They came to pray to Benzaiten, famous as a deity of music, for their further improvement in their performance. The women, young and old, must have enjoyed this very rare occasion – once every six years – to go out of the city, out of their everyday life.

4. Mt. Fuji as Seen from Edo: Cultural Territorialization

It is often said that the Japanese understand their life as going through consecutive phases which can be dichotomized between often festive, sacred time and space (*hare*), and profane, everyday reality (*ke*). After experiencing *hare*, people can go back to their normal life with a refreshed mind and body, or can go on to the next stage of their life. The previous section discussed how the Edokko, namely Fuji-kō devotees, religiously experienced Mt. Fuji, and how *ukiyo-e* captured their experiences. Yet, the Edokko could and did experience the mountain not only as events of *hare*, but also in their everyday life (*ke*), since Mt. Fuji was highly visible from the city of Edo. In this sense, the Edokko could order the city as their microcosm with the mountain as the *axis mundi*. This section, therefore, investigates how *ukiyo-e* captures Fuji as seen from various places in the city.

Ukiyo-e's depiction of cityscape started from that of fictitious, nameless places and the inside of rooms as backgrounds for beautiful courtesans and kabuki actors. However, it soon changed when the artists started experimenting with the Dutch-imported technique and notion of Western perspective, as well as technically improved coloring. One remarkable result was *uki-e*, literary translated as “floating picture,” because the three-dimensional perspective gave the effect of “floating,” compared to the preexisting *ukiyo-e* conventions. The floating pictures often caught identifiable cityscapes, including the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, theatre districts, prosperous main streets, and famous temples, all crowded with Edokko, which could tell us about their prosperity and pride in their urban culture.

Such *uki-e*'s popularity indicates the Edokko's developing interests in their cityscape. Beside growing feelings for their hometown, the Edokko as consumers of prints had some reasons to develop their interests in the city as landscape. Prohibited to engage in political activity, rich Edokko used their money for cultural activity; hobbies, travel and leisure became their serious concerns, which we could see in Figure 5. The city of Edo came to have "famous places" in relation to their cultural activities. That means that, as the ancient poets did with Mt. Fuji, the Edokko culturally "discovered" and categorized various sights of the city for inspiring poetic emotions and cultural experiences. That also led to establishment of seasonal events such as appreciation and viewing of plum blossoms in early spring, cherry blossoms in spring, fireworks in summer, chrysanthemums in fall, and colored leaves in late fall – each associated with a specific time and place. This could tell us why Hiroshige's *One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo* are grouped into four seasons. In short, Edo as a city came to be structured and encoded in the Edokko's eyes differently from the way it was in the samurai's.

This whole practice can be interpreted as "mapping out" the city in the Edokko's own terms. While the samurai arranged their social space with Edo Castle as its center, the Edokko set their own centers at the districts of Nihonbashi (the center of their business) and Yoshiwara (the center of their pleasure). Thus, a great number of prints with these places, their production and consumption, can be interpreted as counter-hegemonic practice to see "a different kind of social reality with an inverted scale of priorities for the Edo townsman," as Harootunian puts it.¹⁴

Development of the *uki-e* let later artists engage in observing their everyday environment in a fresh perspective and "discovering" scenic sights there, as well as in applying perspective at a more sophisticated level. Hokusai represents such trends at an extremely high standard. One good example is "A Simplified View of the Mitsui Stores at Suruga-chō in Edo" (*Edo Suruga-chō Mitsui-mise ryaku-zu*; see cat. no. 19) from the series *Fugaku sanjūrokkei (Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji)*. Walking a couple of blocks from Nihonbashi Bridge brought you to the Echigoya drapery store run by the Mitsui family (the present-day Mitsukoshi, a famous department store) at Suruga-chō. The name Suruga-chō derived from the fact that the place offered one of the best views of Mt. Fuji (in Suruga province) in the city. It also means that, while the mountain itself was not in Edo, its view was certainly regarded as a product of Edo. In the print, both sides

¹⁴ Op. cit., p. 27.



5.
 Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
Suruga District (Suruga-chō)
 Series: *Famous Places in Edo (Edo meisho)*
 Signature: *Hiroshige ga*
Nishiki-e, ōban yoko-e; 22.2 × 34.9 cm
 National Museum in Krakow
 Item MNK VI-2171
 from the Feliks Jasioński Collection

of this main street of Edo's downtown are occupied by the impressive two-story stores, between which, Mt. Fuji appears above the terraced stonewalls of the Outer Moat of Edo Castle.

This print is filled with proud symbols of the Edokko: Echigoya (a symbol of their economic power), Mt. Fuji (a symbol of their geographic identity and the *axis mundi*), and the stonewalls of Edo Castle (a symbol of their political identity). Many prints depict the same place with these symbols. Yet, they mostly focus on the hustle and bustle of the busiest street in Edo, a good example of which can be seen in Hiroshige's "Suruga-chō" (Fig. 5) in the series *Famous Places in Edo (Edo meisho)*. Taking rather a perspective-oriented approach, not so different from *uki-e*'s, the artist apparently focuses on wealthy lady shoppers on the street. Compared to that, Hokusai shifts his focus to the tilers on the top of the roof, depicted bigger than Mt. Fuji. Like a camera, the print captures the instant when one of the tilers throws a bundle. Beautiful visual rhythm appears with repeated diagonal lines of: the trajectory of the bundle, the gabled roof whose pointedness is rather exaggerated, the shape of Mt. Fuji, and even the kites flying over the mountain.

Hokusai's choice of the tilers on the roof turns one of the most famous places in Edo, or rather in Japan in this term, to a job site. Yet, being at work did not prevent the workers from celebrating the beauty of Mt. Fuji. In fact, from



6.
Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)
The Dyers' District in Kanda (*Kanda, Konya-chō*)
Series: *One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo*
(*Meisho Edo hyakkei*)
Plate 75
Signature: *Hiroshige ga*
1857
Nishiki-e, ōban tate-e; 33.8 × 22.5 cm
National Museum in Krakow
Item MNK VI-1126
from the Feliks Jasieński Collection

the top of the roof, they could enjoy a view, privileged but different from the one from the ground level. The print seems to suggest, therefore, that not only rich customers of Echigoya but also ordinary people at work can (and should) participate in the cultural territorialization of the city in their own terms. In other words, the Eddoko ought to be the self-appointed authority for their cityscapes, including views of Mt. Fuji.

While Hokusai turns a sight to a site, Hiroshige did the other way around, truing a site to a sight in his “The Dyers’ District in Kanda” (*Kanda Konya-chō*; Fig. 6), in the series *One Hundred Famous Places in Edo* (*Meisho Edo hyakkei*). As the title indicates, many dyers – *konya* means (indigo blue) dyers – in Edo concentrated in a district of Kanda. The print shows a site distinctive for the trade with their end products, long strips of dyed cotton cloth for *yukata* (kimono for summer) and Japanese towels, hanging from high drying poles. The long strips wave in a soft breeze in autumn, and between the strips, Mt. Fuji in the distant background can be peeked.

Like Echigoya’s roof in Hokusai’s print, the high-rise construction for drying cloth could offer a great view of Mt. Fuji. That suggests that if one wished, one might be able to turn a job site to a sight famous for its view. What Hokusai’s and Hiroshige’s prints tell us, therefore, is that, with their wills and efforts, the Edokko can culturally territorialize anywhere in the city.

5. Conclusions

This essay discussed how the Edokko experienced Mt. Fuji culturally, religiously and socially, and how their experiences affected the ways in which *ukiyo-e* artists visualized the mountain. The reasons behind the prints’ recurrent themes vary: the Heian classic poetry and how Kokugaku interpreted it, the Fuji-kō’s popularity among the Edokko, and their cultural territorialization of the city. Still, repeated productions of all these themes can be interpreted as the Edokko’s counter-hegemonic practice, i.e. their attempts at creating a spatial reality different from the samurai’s. This practice strongly affected the imagery of Mt. Fuji in *ukiyo-e*, and vice versa, because the prints as a shared discourse certainly inspired further recognition of this spatial reality. The omnipresence of Mt. Fuji in the Edokko’s cultural, religious and social life certainly helped their sense of identity develop. With Mt. Fuji as recurrent themes and the *axis mundi*, the Edokko could orient themselves temporally as well as spatially. In other words, *ukiyo-e* as cultural production meant the Edokko’s “mapping out”

of their microcosm, following their cultural values, which eventually expanded to not only the entire city but also wherever they could see Mt. Fuji.

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