

Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism



Edited by Jacqueline I. Stone and Mariko Namba Walter

*Death and the Afterlife
in Japanese Buddhism*

Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism

EDITED BY

Jacqueline I. Stone

AND

Mariko Namba Walter



University of Hawai'i Press
Honolulu

© 2009 University of Hawai'i Press
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America

14 13 12 11 10 09 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Death and the afterlife in Japanese Buddhism / edited by Jacqueline I. Stone
and Mariko Namba Walter.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8248-3204-9 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Funeral rites and ceremonies, Buddhist—Japan. 2. Future life—
Buddhism. I. Stone, Jacqueline Ilyse. II. Walter, Mariko Namba

BQ5020.D43 2008

294.3'43880952—dc22

2008010428

University of Hawai'i Press books are printed on acid-free
paper and meet the guidelines for permanence and
durability of the Council on Library Resources.

Designed by University of Hawai'i Press Production Staff

Printed by The Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group

*In memory of our mothers,
From M. Reiter and Itakura Hakui*

Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction	1
1 <i>Mukaekō</i> : Practice for the Deathbed <i>Sarah Johanna Horton</i>	27
2 With the Help of “Good Friends”: Deathbed Ritual Practices in Early Medieval Japan <i>Jacqueline I. Stone</i>	61
3 Beyond Death and the Afterlife: Considering Relic Veneration in Medieval Japan <i>Brian O. Ruppert</i>	102
4 Collective Suicide at the Funeral of Jitsunyo: Mimesis or Solidarity? <i>Mark L. Blum</i>	137
5 At the Crossroads of Birth and Death: The Blood Pool Hell and Postmortem Fetal Extraction <i>Hank Glassman</i>	175
6 Funerary Zen: Sōtō Zen Death Management in Tokugawa Japan <i>Duncan Ryūken Williams</i>	207
7 The Structure of Japanese Buddhist Funerals <i>Mariko Namba Walter</i>	247
8 The Price of Naming the Dead: Posthumous Precept Names and Critiques of Contemporary Japanese Buddhism <i>Stephen G. Covell</i>	293
9 The Orthodox Heresy of Buddhist Funerals <i>George J. Tanabe, Jr.</i>	325
Glossary of Chinese and Japanese Characters	349
Contributors	363
Index	365

Acknowledgments

NO COLLECTION OF essays sees publication without the help of many people. We are grateful, first of all, for the unflagging cooperation of our contributors, who have worked with us through multiple rounds of revision and patiently supported this project despite unforeseen delays. We would also like to thank the many colleagues and other individuals who, at various stages of the project, have offered helpful advice and assistance. These include Gail Chin, Jessey Choo, Fujii Masao, Lorraine Fuhrmann, Sinead Kehoe, Yasuko Makino, Mark Rowe, Stephen (“Buzzy”) Teiser, Mimi Yiengpruksawan, Stuart Young, Jimmy Yu, and others. We thank in particular the two anonymous manuscript reviewers whose thoughtful suggestions have much improved the quality of this study. Two of the essays included here represent revisions of parts of earlier published work; we would like to thank University of California Press and University of Hawai‘i Press for permission to include them here. We gratefully acknowledge Chion’in, owner of the *Amida nijūgo bosatsu raigōzu* (Descent of Amida Buddha with twenty-five bodhisattvas), for permission to reproduce this image on the volume’s cover. We are indebted to Kyoto National Museum for kindly making a copy of this image available to us, and to the photographer, Morio Kanai. We would also like to acknowledge Princeton University for funds that helped support manuscript preparation.

Our most sincere thanks go to Patricia Crosby, executive editor of University of Hawai‘i Press, for her guidance and encouragement throughout. We also extend our appreciation to other members of the University of Hawai‘i Press’s outstanding staff; to Keith Leber, our managing editor; to Margaret Black, our copyeditor; to Wendy Bolton, our proofreader; and to Mary Mortensen, who prepared our index.

Lastly, on a more personal note, we would like to acknowledge our mothers, memories of whom are for both of us bound up with our interest in studying death and the afterlife. Mariko Walter recalls: “My mother took me on my first funeral procession (*nobe okuri*) when I was eight years old. While waiting for her at the desolate town crematory, not understanding, I amused myself by playing in a large pit filled with bones and ashes. Several years later, after her death from cancer, it was with very different emotions that I helped gather up my mother’s own cremated remains for interment in our family tomb.” During

the compiling and editing of this project, Jacqueline Stone was acting as trustee for her elderly mother, who was ill and no longer competent—an experience, she says, that “never allowed me to lose sight of death as a human reality while absorbed in it as a research topic.” Stone’s mother died a few days after we learned that our manuscript had been accepted for publication. To our mothers, we dedicate this volume.

Introduction

The historian of death must not be afraid to embrace the centuries until they run into a millennium. The errors he will not be able to avoid are less serious than the anachronisms to which he would be exposed by too short a chronology. Let us, therefore, regard a period of a thousand years as acceptable.

—Philippe Ariès

PROVIDING FUNERAL and memorial services represents the major social role of Buddhist priests and temples in Japan today. For many people, death may be the only occasion when they turn to the family temple, or, indeed, learn much of anything about Buddhism. In his introductory study of contemporary Japanese religion, Ian Reader recounts a conversation between two university professors of his acquaintance; queried by one about his family's Buddhist sectarian affiliation, the other replied, "I do not know: no one in our household has died yet."¹ Japanese scholarly histories of Buddhist mortuary ritual have often taken a teleological approach, attempting to show just how this present association of Buddhism with death came about. They also tend to be informed by a modernist critique of Buddhist institutions that targets temples' reliance on funerary and mortuary rites as a symptom of decline.² The locus classicus of this approach is of course Tamamuro Taijō's influential *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Funeral Buddhism), first published in 1963 and still in print, which traces the growth of Japanese Buddhist institutions from the standpoint of their funerary rites. No previous scholar had framed the entire history of Japanese Buddhism in this way, and the data Tamamuro presented, if read critically, remain useful today. Yet his underlying question was clearly one of how the present, and in his view, deeply problematic, state of Buddhism had come about. Tamamuro writes that he chose his particular focus because, of the three avenues by which Buddhism had once appealed to the populace—healing, granting good fortune, and mortuary rites—only mortuary rites still remained influential. But even these no longer answered modern needs. "The issue facing [Buddhism] today," he wrote, "is to purify its funerals of ancient, feudal, and magical

elements, as well as those pertaining to ancestor worship, and [instead] create funeral rites that [simply] comfort and commemorate. But Buddhist leaders close their eyes to this reality and wander vainly in a world of illusion. Herein, I suspect, lies the cause of the confusion in the Buddhist world.”³ Tamamuro’s study not only reflected ongoing debate over the continued relevance of Buddhist funerary rites but also helped literally to define its terms, as the title *sōshiki bukkkyō* quickly became a catchphrase encapsulating stereotypes of ossified Buddhist institutions, out of tune with people’s spiritual needs in this life and preoccupied solely with death.

We, the editors of this volume, have no interest in pursuing the modernist critique (except as an object of study), and while we find the roots of the contemporary Buddhist near-monopoly on death rites to be a fascinating subject, we do not necessarily read their history as a trajectory of Buddhist decline. Bracketing Tamamuro’s modernist assumptions, we find the story outlined in his *Sōshiki bukkkyō* to be a remarkable one, worthy of further inquiry and historical interpretation. For more than a millennium, despite moments of fierce competition from Shinto, Confucianism, Nativism, and, more recently, the secular funeral industry, Buddhism has dominated Japanese rites for the dead. No comprehensive understanding of Japanese religion or culture for any period following Buddhism’s introduction would be possible without some knowledge of its death rituals and views of the afterlife and their impact on social practice. Nonetheless, no book-length English-language study presenting an overall history of death in Japanese Buddhism has yet appeared.⁴ Cognizant of this lack, Mariko Walter organized a paper session on this topic for the 2000 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, which became the impetus for the present volume. The nine essays gathered here include studies by both established scholars and younger voices in the field and display a range of approaches, including not only Buddhist Studies but also art history, literary criticism, ritual studies, gender studies, sociology of religion, and ethnographic fieldwork. They are presented in chronological order of their subject matter, beginning with the Heian period (794–1185), and collectively cover a period of roughly a thousand years—coincidentally, the very length of time deemed appropriate by historian Philippe Ariès for a proper study of death. As Ariès suggests in the epigraph above, the perspective of the *longue durée* does indeed make possible an overview of persistent patterns as well as significant shifts in approaches to death. While we make no claim to comprehensiveness (nor even to so detailed a treatment as Ariès’ own monumental study of the history of Western attitudes toward death), we are confident that each essay included here addresses issues vital to an

understanding of death and the afterlife in Japanese Buddhist thought and practice and that, taken in conjunction, the studies presented here will provide a more thorough picture of this topic than has hitherto been available. Our hope is that this volume will not only benefit scholars and students of Buddhism and Japanese religion but also interest those focusing on other areas of Japan studies or religion and culture more broadly. As coeditors, we asked our contributors to make clear the connections among their individual essays by highlighting one or more of three themes: (1) continuity and change over time in Japanese Buddhist death-related practices and views of the afterlife; (2) the dual role of Buddhist death rites in both addressing individual concerns about the afterlife and at the same time working to construct, maintain, and legitimize social relations and the authority of religious institutions; and (3) Buddhist death rites as a locus of “contradictory logics,” to borrow a felicitous phrase from Duncan Williams’s chapter, bringing together unrelated, even opposing ideas about the dead, their postmortem fate, what the living should do for them, and what constitutes normative Buddhist practice. These three sets of interrelated issues are of course by no means limited either to Japan or to Buddhism. To introduce our essays most effectively, then, let us first offer some background and then contextualize the individual chapters by providing a brief historical overview of death in Japanese Buddhism.

“Entrusting the Afterlife to Buddhism”

We have only fragmentary information about the multiple concepts of the afterlife existing in Japan before the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century. The spirits of the dead were thought to reside in mountains, or cross over the seas to the “eternal world” of Tokoyo, or descend to the bleak “land of Yomi” of the Yamato myths.⁵ The first dynastic histories make reference, in connection with the system of double burial practiced among the nobility, to notions of a spirit (*tama*) requiring mourning and pacification; early on, Buddhist monks and nuns were incorporated into the rites surrounding the *mogari no miya*, or place of temporary interment, to perform services for deceased imperial family members.⁶ Over time, however, explicitly Buddhist models displaced this earlier ritual complex, coming to dominate the death-related practices of the aristocracy. The chief site for memorializing the dead shifted from the *mogari no miya* to Buddhist temples, and funerary ritual for *tennō* or emperors gave way from eulogies read by courtiers before their tombs to Buddhist rites of merit transference.⁷ According to the *Nihon shoki*, Urabon ceremonies for the

deceased were first sponsored by the court as early as 606.⁸ By the Heian period, Buddhist ritual had come to be understood, at least among the nobility, as the preeminent spiritual technology for consoling and pacifying the dead. Buddhist rites were not only performed to memorialize the dead collectively but were also sponsored by families for the sake of deceased relatives. For this purpose, Buddhist mantras, dhāraṇīs, and other invocations such as the *nenbutsu* were chanted, and *goma* rites, repentance rituals, and other ceremonies were conducted. Buddhist concepts of the afterlife, including the forty-nine-day interim period between death and rebirth, rebirth in the six realms of samsaric existence, and the possibility of salvific birth in a pure land were spread through preaching and doctrinal writings as well as visual representations, songs, poetry, and didactic tales. The reception of Buddhist death rites in turn stimulated a thriving religious culture supporting sūtra transcription, ritual performance, production of Buddhist images, and construction of mortuary chapels on a lavish scale. Buddhist cosmology shaped not only the memorializing of the dead but also individuals' own postmortem aspirations, and specific Buddhist rites were increasingly adopted to insure one's personal well-being in the next life. These included the "deathbed tonsure" (*rinjū jukai*, *rinjū shukke*), first adopted at court by Emperor Ninmyō (d. 850), which conferred the soteric benefit of enabling one to die as a Buddhist monk or nun and perhaps represented the earliest symbolic association in Japan of death with monastic ordination;⁹ the *gyakushu* or "preemptive funeral," performed for oneself or another prior to death, such as the grand ceremonies sponsored by the courtier Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027) described in *Eiga monogatari* (A tale of flowering fortunes);¹⁰ and "deathbed rites" (*rinjū gyōgi*) or ritual practices aimed at focusing one's thoughts at the last moment so as to escape samsaric rebirth and be born into a pure land. An attitude of "entrusting the afterlife to Buddhism" was forged during the Heian period and, despite vicissitudes and transformations, has persisted to this day.¹¹

But why should Buddhism in particular have come to be entrusted with the afterlife? It has often been noted, and thus scarcely needs restating, that Buddhism at the time of its introduction possessed a systematic doctrine, an institutional organization, and a stunning ritual repertoire unequalled by any other religious tradition represented in Japan, and thus it rose quickly to prominence. Yet we gain some further insight by detailing more specific reasons for Buddhist preeminence in the realm of death. While others could be adduced, three such reasons merit mention here. One lies in Buddhism's intellectually compelling doctrine of an ethicized afterlife, in which individuals are reborn in pleasant or painful circumstances according to their deeds.

This doctrine provided both an incentive for virtuous behavior and assurance that the structure of reality is a moral one, in which, ultimately, good conduct is rewarded and wrongdoing punished. Yet, while cognitively satisfying, it was also profoundly disturbing, in that one could never be sure of having performed enough meritorious deeds to offset the sins of prior lifetimes.¹² Thus in Japan, as elsewhere in the Buddhist world, the doctrine of karmic causality became inextricably intertwined with an opposing yet interdependent logic by which merit transference on the part of the living could ameliorate or even eradicate the postmortem suffering of the dead.¹³ One might say that teachings of karmic causality generated the problem of possible retribution in the afterlife, while rituals of merit transference provided a solution. In the magnetic tension generated between these two perspectives, Buddhism acquired and held its dominance over death throughout the premodern period.

A second factor contributing to Buddhism's ascendancy in the realm of death lies in its well-known capacity to assimilate and refigure elements from other traditions. In particular, notions of a totalizing, integrated cosmos characteristic of the Japanese Mahāyāna—exemplified by teachings about skillful means tending toward the one vehicle, the myriad dharmas manifesting the true aspect, or all forms in the visible universe being the body of the cosmic buddha—encouraged and legitimized the redefining and incorporating of local religious elements as aspects of Buddhist truth. Recent research has illuminated, for example, the “combinatory logic” by which *kami* or local deities and other gods of continental origin were recast as the provisional forms of buddhas and bodhisattvas, and their worship, integrated into a Buddhist ritual and institutional framework.¹⁴ Though seldom as explicitly schematized, similar processes occurred with death-related matters. Buddhist ethical norms of compassion and rites of merit transference to the deceased were mapped onto ancient concerns about the need to pacify unhappy or vengeful spirits. Notions of the afterlife from a range of traditions—eternal Tokoyo, the “Land of Roots” (Ne no kuni), the island of Mt. Penglai, and various Daoist heavens and immortal realms—were assimilated to the topological paradigms of Buddhist pure lands.¹⁵ In every period, Buddhist rituals for the deceased have incorporated features of local religious culture, which is why a comprehensive study of death in Japanese Buddhism should include the approaches, not only of Buddhist Studies per se, but also of social history, folklore studies, literature, and anthropology. One might well argue that the Buddhist near-monopoly on death practices has stemmed, not only from Buddhism's own compelling teachings about the afterlife and the perceived efficacy of its rites, but

also from its capacity to absorb and refigure elements from a range of traditions.

Third, Buddhism has provided a class of religious specialists perceived as capable of managing the dangers and defilement of death and of mediating between this world and the next. It has sometimes been assumed that Buddhism gained its preeminence in death rites by stepping in, as it were, to fill a gap left by the “native” tradition of *kami* worship that shunned death pollution (*shie*). But the historical situation proves far more complex. In the Heian and early medieval periods, Buddhist monks involved in court ritual or rites for the protection of the nation were expected to maintain ritual purity by observing the same avoidances or taboos (*imi*) surrounding the worship of *kami* (*jingi saishi*) associated with the imperial cult, and not all Buddhist clerics routinely conducted funerals.¹⁶ It was often those monks practicing outside the formal structures of temple administrative posts and the clerical career path—such as *hijiri*, or thaumaturgical recluses—who most frequently attended deathbeds or provided funeral rites for lay devotees. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, monks of the emergent Zen and Ritsu orders began regularly to perform funerals for lay patrons.¹⁷ But not until the Tokugawa or early modern period (1603–1868) did the great majority of Buddhist monks—or priests, as Western scholars tend to refer to them especially from that period on—come to perform funerals as part of their routine ritual obligations, a situation that still obtains today. The topic of Buddhist ritual and death pollution is a complex one and calls for further investigation. While some Japanese Buddhist discourses have dismissed the notion of death pollution as soteriologically irrelevant, others have maintained or even actively promoted it, as a foil over and against which the thaumaturgical power of Buddhist adepts could be displayed.¹⁸

Aspirations for the Pure Land and the Moment of Death

By around the mid-ninth century, Japanese elites were not only performing and commissioning Buddhist rites for the welfare of the deceased but had also begun to envision their own postmortem fate in Buddhist terms. Increasingly, people aspired to achieve *ōjō*, or birth after death in a pure land or other superior realm, such as the Tushita Heaven (Tosotsuten), abode of the future buddha, Maitreya (Miroku); the bodhisattva Kannon’s Potalaka realm (Fudaraku); Sacred Eagle Peak (Ryōjusen), where the eternal Śākyamuni Buddha preaches the *Lotus Sūtra*; or—the most sought-after of all postmortem destinations—the buddha Amida’s western Pure Land of Utmost Bliss (Gokuraku Jōdo). It is Amida’s realm to which the terms *ōjō* and “Pure

Land” most commonly refer. From a doctrinal standpoint, birth in the Pure Land was equivalent to reaching the stage of nonretrogression on the bodhisattva path; once born in that realm, one would no longer fall back into the realms of samsaric rebirth but was certain to gain enlightenment. There, conditions for practice and realization were said to be ideal, and after achieving awakening in the Pure Land, one could return voluntarily to the realms of suffering as a bodhisattva, in order to assist the liberation of others. For many, however, Amida’s Pure Land was simply a postmortem paradise, where the sufferings of this world would be transcended. While trained meditators might have visions of the Pure Land in this life, for most, *ōjō* represented a goal whose achievement was by definition mediated by death. Those who could focus their thoughts on the Buddha at the time of death would be welcomed by Amida himself, who would descend together with his holy retinue to escort that person to the Pure Land. Thus death underwent redefinition as the moment of success or failure in achieving *ōjō*.

This was before the rise of the exclusive *nenbutsu* movements of Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262), and birth in the Pure Land was often deemed extremely difficult to achieve—“the most difficult of all difficult things,” as the monk Kakuchō (953/960–1034) is said to have declared¹⁹—requiring sustained efforts in meditation or devotional practice. Yet this sense of the difficulty of achieving *ōjō* coexisted with the subversive logic of the deathbed rite, by which even the most sinful persons could achieve birth in the Pure Land by right contemplation in their final moments. The treatise *Ōjō yōshū* (Essentials of birth in the Pure Land) by the scholar monk Genshin (942–1017) was the first work compiled in Japan to set forth instructions for deathbed contemplation. Deathbed practices such as it describes were first formally adopted by the Nijūgo zanmai-e or Samādhi Society of Twenty-five, an association of monks formed in 986 at the Yokawa retreat at the great Tendai monastery on Mt. Hiei, in which Genshin took an active part.

The heightened attention accorded to life’s last moments in Pure Land practice forms the context for the first two essays in this volume. The first, by Sarah Horton, explores the role of visual imagery in the spread of Pure Land devotion and the reconception of death as a liberative opportunity. This reconception, Horton suggests, was made possible more than anything else by the image of Amida’s welcoming descent (*raigō*), that is, Amida’s arrival, accompanied by his holy retinue, to receive the dying and escort them to his Pure Land. Her essay explores the textual basis of the *raigō* concept and its early representations, with particular attention to the role of Genshin, whom Heian sources credit with initiating the tradition of Japanese *raigō* painting.

While modern scholarship has concentrated on Genshin's contributions to Pure Land thought, Horton suggests that his role in the development of *raigō* imagery may have contributed far more immediately than did his doctrinal writings to the spread of Pure Land aspirations. In particular, Horton focuses on the *mukaekō* or ceremony of welcome, a dramatic enactment of Amida's descent to welcome the dying, using music, bodhisattva costumes, and masks. The *mukaekō*, possibly Genshin's innovation, was instrumental in disseminating hopes for the Pure Land among persons of all classes. Its visually stunning performance, Horton argues, helped alleviate fears of death by representing it as a joyful occasion of salvific encounter with the Buddha.

The second chapter, by Jacqueline Stone, offers a contrasting argument. Stone suggests that, while hopes for the Pure Land may have encouraged a reconceiving of death as joyful, the importance placed on right-mindfulness in one's last moments also provoked fears. If correct meditative focus at the moment of death could transcend the sins of a lifetime and secure one's birth in the Pure Land, the reverse was likewise true; under the liminal influence of life's last moments, it was said, even a single stray delusory thought could obstruct the merits of one's prior practice and send one tumbling back down into the painful realms of rebirth. Thus whether or not one would be able to die with one's thoughts focused calmly on the Buddha became a new source of anxiety and a problem to be ritually addressed. Examining instructions for deathbed practice produced from the late tenth through early fourteenth centuries, Stone traces the increasing importance of the "good friend" or *zenchishiki*, here meaning the religious advisor or ritualist in attendance at the deathbed, who exhorted dying persons in right-mindfulness, guided their deathbed visualizations, and assisted their chanting of the *nenbutsu*. Over time, Stone argues, the dying person's "success" in achieving *ōjō* came to depend less on the deathbed practice of the dying person per se than on the ritual actions of the *zenchishiki*, who might also assume responsibility for postmortem rites. The emergence of the *zenchishiki* at the deathbed as a formal ritual role, she suggests, marked a significant step in the growing influence of Buddhist clergy over death-related practices.

Death and the Persistence of Worldly Ties

In a 1907 landmark essay based on his study of Malay funeral practices, anthropologist Robert Hertz argued an inseparable relationship between the treatment of the corpse, the presumed journey of the deceased spirit to its new abode, and the mourning rites observed by the community. Through proper disposal of the body and performance of

funerary rites, Hertz noted, the deceased is led through three stages: separation from world of the living, transition through a dangerous liminal realm, and reincorporation with a new status into the social world of the survivors.²⁰ Subsequent research has refined Hertz's insights and also shown their broader relevance to other cultural spheres. Chapters 4 through 6 of this volume, ranging in chronology from the eleventh through the sixteenth centuries, focus on the roles played by Japanese Buddhist ritual, discourse, and institutions in reintegrating the dead into the world of the living and, in the process, defining the contours of that world. As Maurice Bloch has observed, "Death as disruption, rather than being a problem for the social order, as anthropologists have tended to think of it, is in fact an opportunity for dramatically creating it."²¹

At first glance, claims about the ongoing relationship of the living and the dead might seem incompatible with the Buddhist message of transience and nonattachment. However, it is important to note that while Buddhist doctrine does indeed characterize death as emblematic of the truth that all is impermanent, Buddhist ritual has just as often been understood as affirming the persistence into the afterlife of this-worldly bonds—social, familial, and affective. This emphasis on continuance and stability should be seen neither as a corruption of an originally pure Buddhist doctrine nor as an accommodation to uneducated lay persons, but as an influential strand of Buddhist thought in its own right, present in virtually all Buddhist traditions from a very early date and coexisting, although in tension, with normative teachings about impermanence and nonattachment.²² Death is, as we have said, a site uniting contradictory logics, a major theme of the essays collected here.

Brian Ruppert's chapter concerns the funerary and mortuary dimension in premodern Japan of the worship of relics, said to be the physical remains of the historical Buddha. The account of the Buddha's cremation (and Buddhist cremation more generally) has didactic value as a dramatic performance of impermanence, the body of a once-living person being reduced to smoke and ashes before the viewers' eyes. Yet at the same time, cremation has an equally significant if opposing purpose in generating enduring physical relics for enshrinement and veneration.²³ Recent scholarship has shed light on how buddha relics have been understood as prolonging the career in this world of Śākyamuni Buddha, whose spiritual powers were understood to still inhere in his remains.²⁴ Buddha relics, then, in effect transcend the boundary between life and death and thus came to represent the ongoing possibility of enlightenment even in an age of decline. Ruppert shows that relic worship in medieval Japan, as on the Asian continent,

was bound up in a multivalent “thematic complex” involving indebtedness to the Buddha, the soteriological value of self-sacrifice in repayment, and the legitimation of rulership—in imitation of King Aśoka, who was said to have built 84,000 Buddhist stūpas or reliquaries. But it was in connection with death, he argues, that relic veneration in Japan acquired a secure niche in the repertoire of Buddhist ritual. Central to Ruppert’s discussion is the role played by relic veneration in the development of family mortuary ritual, especially in elite families, as seen, for example, in the rites sponsored by the regent Kujō Kanezane (1149–1207) and his sister, the former imperial consort Kōkamon’in, on behalf of their deceased forebears. Ruppert notes also the extension of the category of “relics” to encompass the remains not only of the Buddha and Buddhist saints but of deceased persons more generally, purified by secondary burial or cremation. In connection with beliefs about the death-transcending power of relics, enshrinement and veneration of remains of family forebears came to be regarded as a source of lineage prosperity. The preservation and veneration of bones or cremated remains, previously shunned as impure, led to the formation of family gravesites and mortuary temples (*bodaisho*), such as Jōmyōji, built by Fujiwara no Michinaga at the northern Fujiwara clan gravesite at Kohata in Uji. These shifts in burial practices helped reshape kinship structure, contributing to the emergence of the patrilineal extended family (*ie*), and laid a foundation for early modern notions of reincorporating the dead into the social world as protective ancestors.²⁵

While the dead could be reintegrated via mortuary rites into the community of the living, the living could, by birth in the Pure Land, be reunited with their beloved dead. This idea would seem to have little canonical warrant: Pure Land sūtras suggest that inhabitants of Amida’s land are largely nondifferentiated, describing them as “all the color of genuine gold” and “the same in their appearance.”²⁶ Some sūtras even explicitly state that there are no women in the Pure Land.²⁷ The religious imagination, however, is seldom constrained by normative scripture, and the conviction that, in Amida’s land, one could rejoin deceased loved ones—parents, children, lovers, or religious teachers—was a major source of Pure Land appeal at all social levels. Longings for postmortem reunion in the Pure Land were also cited as a motive for religious suicide, as discussed in Mark Blum’s chapter. Blum investigates the suicides of Jōdo Shinshū adherents, perhaps as many as thirty-three, following the death of the abbot Jitsunyo (1458–1525), the *monshu* or head of the powerful Shinshū Honganji organization. The practice of “relinquishing the body” has always held an ambivalent position in Buddhist traditions, being alter-

nately condemned and valorized, and recent scholarship has expanded on its multiple significances in specific Buddhist cultures: as both a selfless gift and an exchange of one's corruptible body for the adamant body of an enlightened one; as an imitation of the Buddha; as an act of protest when the ruler persecutes the dharma; or as sacrifice on behalf of others.²⁸ Drawing on both Buddhist canonical sources and the history of this practice in East Asia, Blum analyzes the complex ideological heritage underlying the suicides attending Jitsunyo's death. They drew, he argues, on both the Pure Land ideal of *jigai ōjō*, or "achieving the Pure Land through suicide"—the most common motive given for Buddhist ascetic suicide in Japan—as well as on Confucian traditions, appropriated into the warrior ethos, of loyalty suicide (*junshi*) to accompany one's lord in death. Jitsunyo, who presided over an immense organization that was at once political and religious, united in his person the roles of Buddhist teacher and feudal daimyō or warrior lord. The suicides accompanying his death, Blum concludes, were acts both of mimesis, replicating Jitsunyo's act of achieving the Pure Land, and of solidarity, expressing loyalty to Jitsunyo and at the same time conveying to outsiders that the unity of Honganji followers transcended life and death.

One of the many tensions that surface in death-related contexts is the opposition between Buddhist ideals of world renunciation and the persistence of familial bonds. A growing body of scholarship has begun to take note, in multiple Buddhist cultures, of the ongoing involvement of monks and nuns in the affairs of their natal family and of distinctively Buddhist discourses of filial piety, especially directed towards one's mother.²⁹ The theme of death and mothers is addressed in Hank Glassman's chapter, which investigates how death-related Buddhist ritual and thought in medieval Japan both mirrored and helped effect a gradual shift in kinship and gender definitions that accompanied the emergence of the patriarchal household (*ie*), first among nobles and samurai, and eventually, all classes. From late medieval times, women were increasingly defined in terms of motherhood, and a woman's reproductive capacity came to be seen as a resource belonging to her husband's family. The sufferings of women subordinated as child-bearers to the patriline are reflected in disquieting tales of women dying in pregnancy who give birth in the grave and care for their infants as "child-rearing ghosts"; in the *nagare kanjō* rites performed for the salvation of women who died in childbirth; and in the cult of the apocryphal Blood Bowl Sūtra (*Ketsubonkyō*), introduced to Japan from the continent in various recensions around the fifteenth century. According to this text, women as a group are condemned after death to a gruesome Blood Pool Hell, where they are tormented for the sin of

polluting the deities of heaven and earth with the blood of menstruation and childbirth; this fate can be avoided, however, by ritual use of the text. Glassman shows how the Blood Bowl Sūtra was first copied and recited by men and women alike for the postmortem salvation of their mothers and other female relatives; later it was used preemptively by women to ensure their own postmortem well-being; and eventually, in an interpretive twist perhaps unique to Japanese *Ketsubonkyō* reception, it was employed by women talismanically, in order to undo temporarily the pollution of menstruation and participate freely in *kami* shrine worship and other activities requiring ritual purity—a development also addressed in Duncan Williams’s chapter. Glassman additionally details the emergence of the Buddhist rites performed for women who died in late pregnancy and childbirth, deaths regarded as especially dangerous because the dead woman’s lingering attachment to her child was thought to prevent her liberation. Such rites gave some spiritual reassurance to women facing the threat of death from complications in pregnancy or childbirth, a frequent occurrence in premodern times, and also relieved the community of the threat of dangerous ghosts.

As Glassman notes, faith in the *Ketsubonkyō* was spread initially by networks of nuns who acted as preachers and fundraisers for Zenkōji, Kumano, and other major religious centers. For contemporary readers, women’s active involvement in propagating a text that defined them as sinful and polluted is not easy to understand. We must be careful, in our concern for gender egalitarianism, not to leap too quickly to a reading that would dismiss late medieval or early modern female engagement in the *Ketsubonkyō* cult as an indication that women had internalized misogynistic views of the female body or were complicit in their own subordination. It seems likely that the Blood Bowl Sūtra spoke vividly to the reality of women living under the constraints of the *ie* system and on intimate terms with the danger of death in childbirth, and that its rites, even while reinforcing their subordinate status, offered hope for a salvation in the afterlife that was not otherwise seen to be available.³⁰

Early Modern Shifts and the Rise of the “Traditional Funeral”

Before the medieval period, Buddhist funerals and memorial rites were largely confined to urban populations and to elites. There was little in the way of prescribed ritual format; the mantras invoked, buddha images or sūtra transcriptions commissioned, and specific rites performed were determined by precedent or by the sponsors’ devotional preferences. Standardized funerals began to appear only in the late

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with the introduction from Song China of Chan (Zen) funerals for temple abbots, which had incorporated elements of Confucian ancestral rites. These new funerals were conducted for the influential patrons of Zen temples, such as the former shogunal regent Hōjō Tokimune (1251–1284), and spread first among ranking warriors; in the early modern period, they were held for people of all classes. The adaptation of an abbot's funeral to lay persons required their postmortem transformation into monastics, and symbolic ordination was accordingly incorporated into the funeral sequence. Still central to Japanese Buddhist funerary practice today, the elements of posthumous ordination, the granting of a precept name (*kaimyō*), and the use of the *ihai* or ancestral spirit tablets have their beginnings in these late-medieval Zen-style funerals.³¹

As Duncan Williams notes in his chapter, the spread of standardized Buddhist funerals in the Tokugawa or early modern period gained momentum from the temple certification system (*terauke seido*), implemented as a form of population surveillance, in which local temples annually certified that their parishioners were not Christians or members of other proscribed religious groups. All families were required to affiliate as *danka* (parishioner households) of a Buddhist temple, which became the site of their family grave, and to sponsor Buddhist funerals and memorial rites for family members. This was how the Japanese came near universally to acquire a hereditary Buddhist sectarian affiliation and, as the contemporary expression has it, to “die Buddhist.”³² Some scholars have stressed the coercive nature of the early modern *danka* system and its mandatory funerary rites, and academic discourses of institutional Buddhist decline typically take the Tokugawa *danka* system as their starting point.³³ Yet without overlooking this oppressive aspect, one may also note that the spread of Buddhist funerals gave greater spiritual assurance to the average Japanese for the well-being of their deceased relatives than had earlier, local funerary practices, which had centered chiefly on removing death pollution from the living.³⁴ In the expanding monetary economy of the early modern period, Buddhist funerals and the building of family graves also became occasions for extravagant display to advance family status, often in defiance of government sumptuary laws.³⁵ Even ghosts of the neglected dead, possessing mediums to demand proper memorial treatment, sometimes insisted on a funeral “conducted splendidly, in the manner of people who die these days, with a Zen priest officiating, and with a coffin, banners, and a canopy in procession with gongs and drums.”³⁶

The new style of funerary rites and their near-universal adoption via the *danka* system reoriented the Buddhist funeral, in effect

“redefining the process of death as one of spiritual fulfillment of the Buddhist path,” to use William Bodiford’s expression.³⁷ No longer did the funeral aim simply at transferring merit to aid the deceased in achieving a better rebirth; rather, the funeral performance by the Buddhist priest was said actually to accomplish the deceased person’s enlightenment. In the context of the *danka* system and the patrilineal family organization that it sustained, this meant transforming the dead into protective ancestors. As Nam-lin Hur writes: “The task of saving one’s soul through one’s own religious actions, which had been a mainstay of medieval Buddhism, gave way to a family-centered ritualism designed to elevate the deceased to the status of an ancestral deity or *sorei*.”³⁸

Williams shows how, during the Tokugawa period, the Sōtō school of Zen was able to spread in the provinces and entrench itself in village life by incorporating local customs and concerns into its death rites, thus creating a Zen funerary culture that, *mutatis mutandis*, was soon embraced by other sects as well. Outside academic circles, Westerners tend to think of Sōtō Zen in connection with its emphasis on seated meditation and the profoundly original writings of its founder Dōgen (1200–1253), but its most pervasive influence on Japanese culture lies in the development of what are now called “traditional” lay Buddhist funerals. Williams shows how Sōtō Zen priests sought to unite all matters pertaining to the dead under their ritual authority by means of a twofold logic. First was a “logic of buddhahood,” in which the deceased was said to be immediately translated to the realm of enlightenment by the Sōtō priest’s performance of the funeral rite, including the conferring of a posthumous name and lineage chart connecting the deceased to the historical Buddha. The custom of referring to the dead as *hotoke*—“buddhas”—has its origins here. But this logic of buddhahood was accompanied by a second, “logic of spirit taming,” in which the deceased were a priori assumed to be volatile spirits, burdened by karma, in danger of falling into the hells, and thus needing a protracted sequence of memorial rites—eventually elaborated into Thirteen Buddha Rites over a thirty-three-year period—to guide them toward the stable state of an enlightened spirit or protective ancestor. The twin logics, Williams notes, coexisted without a felt need to reconcile their mutual inconsistency. They were united in the priest’s ritual authority to save the dead and together laid the basis for the funerary and mortuary rites that economically sustained most *danka* temples.

The logic of spirit taming, Williams notes, in effect required, as it were, that the dead first be condemned in order to be saved. Structurally, this notion resembled the pairing in medieval Buddhist discourse

of karmic causality and its threat of possible postmortem punishment for sin with rites of merit transference, which could meliorate or even abrogate evil karmic retribution; in both cases, a Buddhist explanatory framework was used to construct death as a particular kind of problem, to which Buddhist rites were then provided as a solution. But the early modern “damnation” of the dead to which Williams refers represents a shift away from earlier notions of karmic causality, as postmortem punishment was no longer tied to individuals’ specific moral conduct but was assumed on general principles—as illustrated, for example, by Sōtō Zen temples’ promotion of the *Ketsubonkyō* cult, in which all women were assumed to be destined for the Blood Pool Hell unless the proper ritual intervention was performed. This conceptual shift served to move responsibility for one’s postmortem state from the individual to the surviving family, who sponsored the funeral memorial rites, and to the temple priests, who performed them. Ritual acts of preparation for the afterlife on the part of individuals that had flourished in Heian and early medieval times, such as the deathbed rite popularized by Genshin, continued to be conducted but were now clearly overshadowed in soteriological importance by the funerary and mortuary sequence; similarly, tonsure as a preparation for the afterlife shifted from a premortem rite requested by a still-living person to posthumous ordination. All these developments worked to solidify the comprehensive authority of Buddhist priests and temples over death-related matters. At the same time, because they were embedded in a system of family temple affiliation, Buddhist funerary and memorial rites came to be equated with reverence for family and ancestors. Thus today, even those without particularly strong Buddhist convictions nonetheless often hold Buddhist funerals and memorial services, because it is the socially established way to memorialize one’s deceased kin.

Contemporary Funerals and the “Funeral Problem”

The last three essays in the volume address Buddhist funerary culture in contemporary Japan, along with the challenges it now faces. Mariko Walter analyzes the structure of contemporary funerals and their doctrinal significance. Today, each of the major Buddhist sects has its own funeral procedures, which have become codified since the early modern period. Contemporary Buddhist funerals, Walter notes, incorporate several ritual forms dating back to the Buddhist funerals of Heian times: the incantatory language of the *nenbutsu* and mantras such as the *kōmyō shingon*; the sprinkling over the body of mantrically empowered sand; and the use of rituals such as the *Lotus* repentance rite, along with elements first introduced in the Zen funerals of later

medieval and early modern times, including posthumous ordination, the waving of the torch (*ako*), and the *indō* sermon for guiding the deceased. While each sect has adopted some distinctive ritual features, Walter identifies an underlying structure common to Buddhist funerals across sectarian lines. This structure consists, in rough outline, of an initiatory phase, posthumous ordination or its ritual equivalent, the sendoff of the deceased, and ongoing memorial rites. This shared structure, she argues, persists even in the abridged funerals conducted under the auspices of *sōgiya* or professional funeral homes. Walter finds that funerals today exhibit a “double logic” similar to that identified by Duncan Williams in the Sōtō Zen funerals of the Tokugawa period, in that they claim to bring about the enlightenment or salvation of the deceased through the ritual performance of the funeral itself and yet also entail ongoing memorial rites. But where the early modern priests in Williams’s analysis found no necessity to resolve this inconsistency—“Why perform memorial rites of merit transference if the deceased is already enlightened?”—sectarian spokesmen today evidently feel a need to reconcile these two disparate dimensions of funerary ritual. Walter offers a brief survey of doctrinal explanations currently put forth by the major sects to account for ongoing memorial rites: for example, in the case of Jōdo, they are said to assist the deceased’s ongoing practice in the Pure Land, or in the case of Shingon, to enable the living to join with the deceased in *samādhi* union with the particular buddha or bodhisattva who constitutes the *honzon* or ritual focus of the particular memorial rite. Significantly, however, none of these explanations makes reference to the need to help the deceased negotiate the hells or other realms of punishment in the afterlife. The requirement of “damnation before salvation,” noted by Williams as an underlying premise of early modern Buddhist memorial rites, seems to have fallen away, reflecting a broader, modern attenuation of literal belief in postmortem punishment.³⁹

The sharing of a common funerary structure across sectarian boundaries also leads Walter to reflect on the relationship between doctrine and ritual in Buddhist funeral rites. While the same structure clearly can and does support a range of doctrinal interpretations, she resists a reading that would see ritual as primary and relegate doctrine to the status of incidental overlay. She instead argues that doctrine and ritual have shaped one another. Buddhist conceptual frameworks, Walter says, are what have successfully drawn and held together the disparate elements of the funeral, including purification protocols and notions of pollution originally related to *kami* worship, Confucian ancestor rites, and features of local religious culture, welding them into a coherent funerary structure that has proved, not only remarkably du-

rable, but capable of supporting a number of differing sectarian interpretations. Despite changing times, in her view, the fundamental Buddhist funerary structure remains deeply entrenched and is likely to endure.

Nonetheless, Buddhist funerals continue to draw heated criticisms, internal and external. The media disseminates images of corrupt priests as purveyors of a Buddhist “death industry,” while priests themselves worry about the future of funeral-centered temple Buddhism. In clerical parlance, the “funeral problem” (*sōsai mondai*) has come to stand for “a broad range of doctrinal, social, institutional, and economic issues confronting the traditional sects of Japanese Buddhism” and centering around funerary rites.⁴⁰ As Stephen Covell explains in his chapter, urbanization, land shortages, displacement of the extended *ie* by nuclear families, and other factors have combined to challenge the Buddhist mortuary system. Funerals and memorial rites constitute the major social role, and source of income, for most Buddhist temples. If people were no longer to sponsor traditional Buddhist funerals, how would temples survive?

Covell’s chapter focuses specifically on issues surrounding the posthumous precept name (*kaimyō*) or dharma name (*hōmyō*). Donations to the temple for a posthumous name often constitute the single largest funerary expense and have become something of a lightning rod for controversy over traditional Buddhist funerals. Most people, he notes, no longer understand what precept names are for, and many now reject the idea that the postmortem well-being of the deceased depends on a priest’s ritual performance. While some *danka* members, especially in rural areas, still consider elaborate posthumous names an important family status marker, the use of *kaimyō* has been shown to have a tainted history, in that discriminatory posthumous names were formerly used to mark outcaste status—a wrong that many priests now deplore and strive to redress by removal of the offending names from gravestones and temple necrologies. Covell notes also a shift in patterns of religious affiliation, from the continuing ties of the *danka*-temple relationship toward a one-time-only “fee for service” model in which posthumous names are increasingly understood as a commodity for purchase, another factor undermining the social and religious networks in which traditional Buddhist funerals had their base. Whether or not Buddhist priests can successfully address the issues exemplified by contemporary criticisms of funerals and posthumous names, Covell argues, will determine nothing less than the survival of temple Buddhism.

In the concluding chapter, George Tanabe addresses another aspect of the “funeral problem,” namely, the conceptual gap between

assumptions of perduring spirits in need of pacification, which underlies the traditional Buddhist funeral, and the Buddhist doctrine of *anātman* (Pāli *anatta*, Jpn. *muga*) or not-self, which denies the ontological existence of a soul or other unchanging essences. Unlike widespread criticisms of the cost of funerals and posthumous names, detailed in Covell's chapter, anxieties over the "heretical" nature of funerals do not trouble most *danka* parishioners or even local priests but are confined chiefly to sectarian intellectuals. Nonetheless, the efforts of this small Buddhist elite to reconcile traditional funerals with doctrinal orthodoxy provides an illuminating glimpse of how some influential insiders perceive the problems confronting institutional Buddhism in defining its contemporary social identity.

The *anātman* doctrine is of course distinctive of Buddhist metaphysics. In Buddhism's Indian context, it played a crucial role in some forms of mental cultivation and scholastic analysis and also served as a Buddhist identity marker over and against the mainstream Brahmanic religion. Even so, it did not by any means "exhaust the range of psychological and behavioural concern of the individual Buddhist, however much of a meditative or scholastic specialist he might be."⁴¹ Certainly it did not hinder the development of Buddhist rites for the dead, which, far from representing concessions to an ignorant laity, were instituted by monastic professionals.⁴² While exceptions may be noted, for the most part, *anātman* doctrine has not figured prominently in Buddhist funeral contexts, where discourses of karmic causality and merit transference instead predominate. Across Buddhist cultures, ritual performance for the placation and benefit of the deceased has often assumed some form of personal continuity that was conventionally spoken of as a "spirit"; there is nothing new, let alone exclusively Japanese, about this. Yet critiques of funerals as a heterodox deviation from the principle of not-self occur but rarely in premodern Buddhist contexts. Why, then, has this become the focus of such concern among contemporary Japanese Buddhist intellectuals?

At least a partial answer that Tanabe provides lies in the Meiji scholarly construct known as "original Buddhism" or "primitive Buddhism" (*genshi bukkyō*), paralleling the rationalist "Protestant" Buddhism, devoid of ritual and superstition, assumed by the first generations of Western Buddhist scholarship.⁴³ In these modern constructions of early Buddhism, the not-self doctrine was inflated to the status of an all-encompassing normative standard for what is truly Buddhist, casting all other elements of the tradition in a problematic light. One suspects that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this served a Buddhist modernizing agenda shared by Asian Buddhist leaders and their Western sympathizers, as the not-self doctrine could be

used both to critique Christianity and to dismiss all “nonrational” and “unscientific” elements of the Buddhist tradition, including deities, spirits, ghosts, and demons, as adventitious accretions. However, this creation of a modern, rationalist Buddhism opened a profound disjuncture between those doctrines now held to define orthodoxy and traditional Buddhist ritual culture, especially its funerary and mortuary rites. Intersecting as it does the criticisms of contemporary funerals raised in Stephen Covell’s chapter, this disjuncture has assumed critical dimensions in the eyes of some sectarian leaders. Tanabe outlines a number of strategies by which some Buddhist theoreticians seek to explain the perceived gap: funerals appeal to the worldly truth, not ultimate truth; ideas about spirits are attributable to the incorporation of non-Buddhist elements, necessary to appeal to the laity; funerals address not Buddhist metaphysical realities, but the psychological or emotional reality of the memory of the deceased; and so on. In the end, Tanabe finds that “orthodoxy” and “heresy” are movable signifiers whose content shifts according to the standards one adopts. Currently, funerals may be deemed “heretical” by some, but in the medieval period, for example, Shin Buddhists were at one point condemned as heretical for *not* providing funerals. Tellingly, contemporary charges of heterodoxy have failed to curtail or modify Buddhist funeral performance, which is dictated, as Tanabe reminds us, not by doctrinal correctness but by the human need to remember.

Just how grave is the “funeral problem”? This question is difficult to assess, and observers seem divided about whether temple Buddhism is on the verge of dying out or is instead undergoing a major self-redefinition. (One advantage of a long-range historical perspective is that it shows such reinventions to be possible.) While still in the minority, a number of alternative forms have risen to challenge the traditional Buddhist funeral. Some, such as “natural funerals” (*shizensō*), or the scattering of ashes, have little or no Buddhist content; others, such as eternal memorial graves (*eitai kuyō baka*), maintained by voluntary funeral associations not tied to family, community, or sectarian affiliation, have been initiated by Buddhist priests themselves and are proving remarkably successful.⁴⁴ Apart from mortuary rites, some Buddhist institutions have instituted new death-related practices in response to distinctively modern concerns, as seen in the emergence of so-called *pokkuri* temples, where one may pray for protection from senility and the mercy of a quick death, and of Buddhist hospices for the terminally ill.⁴⁵ Whether the management of death will slip from Buddhist institutional control, or whether temples will succeed in refiguring their funerary and memorial rites to accommodate contemporary needs and sensibilities, still remains to be seen. What is

indisputable is the profound influence that Buddhist institutions, rituals, and concepts have exerted, over more than a thousand years, in shaping both Japanese attitudes and practices directed toward the afterlife and the social arrangements in which they have been embedded. While many detailed chapters in the story of “death and the afterlife in Japanese Buddhism” remain to be told, we hope that the essays in this volume will stimulate further inquiry.

Notes

Epigraph: The Hour of Our Death (L'Homme devant la mort, 1977), trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), xvii.

1. *Religion in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991), 3.

2. For an overview of these criticisms in both scholarly and popular publications, see Stephen G. Covell, *Japanese Temple Buddhism: Worldliness in a Religion of Renunciation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 11–22.

3. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Tokyō: Daihōrinkaku, 1963; rpt. 1977), 210.

4. There are, however, several important English-language studies of death in Japanese Buddhism during specific historical periods: in the course of this Introduction, we will cite these in the notes. In addition, there are a number of monographs and essay collections on other aspects of death in Japan, which include substantial treatment of Buddhist elements. See, for example, Maurice Pinguet, *Voluntary Death in Japan (La mort volontaire au Japon, 1984)*, trans. Rosemary Morris (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993); Elizabeth Kenney and Edmund T. Gilday, eds., *Mortuary Rites in Japan*, special issue of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, nos. 3–4 (2000); Hikaru Suzuki, *The Price of Death: The Funeral Industry in Contemporary Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Harold Bolitho, *Bereavement and Consolation: Testimonies from Tokugawa Japan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Susanne Formanek and William R. LaFleur, eds., *Practicing the Afterlife: Perspectives from Japan* (Vienna: Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004); and Andrew Bernstein, *Modern Passings: Death Rites, Politics, and Social Change in Imperial Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

5. On early views of the afterlife, see Nelly Nauman, “Death and Afterlife in Early Japan,” in Formanek and LaFleur, *Practicing the Afterlife*, 51–62; and Matsumura Kazuo, “Ancient Japan and Religion,” trans. Benjamin Dorman, in *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*, ed. Paul L. Swanson and Clark Chilson (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 131–143.

6. Gary L. Ebersole, *Ritual Poetry and the Politics of Death in Early Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 129.

7. Hori Yutaka, “Shi e no manazashi: Shitai, shukke, tadahito,” *Nihonshi kenkyū* 439 (1999): 3–41 (3–10); Mitsuhashi Tadashi, *Heian jidai no shinkō to shūkyō girei* (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 2000), 618, 647.

8. *Nihon shoki*, vol. 2, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 68, ed. Sakamoto Tarō et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965; rpt. 1974), 187; *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, trans. W. G. Aston, *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society, London*, Supplement I (1896), 2:134. Because the rite referred to here was held on 7/15, the traditional date of Urabon (Ch. Yulanpen), it is assumed to have been an Urabon ceremony. Later *Nihon shoki* entries refer to Urabon by name. See M. W. de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1935), 1:28, 58–59.

9. On the deathbed tonsure, see Takagi Yutaka, “Ōjōden ni okeru Hokke shinkō,” *Hokekyō shinkō no shokeitai*, ed. Nomura Yōshō (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1976), 451–484 (478–481); Mitsuhashi, *Heian jidai no shinkō to shūkyō girei*, 597–668.

10. *Eiga mongatari*, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei shinsōban*, ed. Matsumura Hiroji and Yamanaka Yutaka, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964–1965; rev. 1993), 2:112–113; *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, trans. William H. and Helen Craig McCullough, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 2:593. On the development of *gyakushu*, see, for example, Kawakatsu Masatarō, “Gyakushu shinkō no reikishiteki kenkyū,” *Ōtemae Joshi Daigaku ronshū* 6 (1972): 147–165; and Ikemi Chōryū, “Gyakushu kō: Chūsei shinkōshi no ronsho to jittai,” *Jōdoshūgaku kenkyū* 14 (1981): 113–135. “Preemptive funeral” is Willa J. Tanabe’s translation (*Paintings of the Lotus Sutra* [New York: Weatherhill, 1988], 40).

11. The phrase is Mitsuhashi’s (*Heian jidai no shinkō to shūkyō girei*, 597). On the “Buddhicizing” of death in the Heian period, see also Taira Masayuki, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to bukkō* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1992), 44–72. There is now a sizeable body of research in Japanese on funerary and mortuary practices among the Heian aristocracy and in medieval times. In addition to Tamamuro’s study cited in n. 3, see, for example, Haga Noboru, *Sōgi no rekishi* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1970; rev. 1971); Tanaka Hisao, *Sosen saishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1978); Suitō Makoto, *Chūsei no sōsō, bōsei: Sekitō o zōryū suru koto* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1991); Shintani Takanori, *Nihonjin no sōgi* (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 1992), 167–205; Ōishi Masaaki, *Nihon chūsei shakai to jūin* (Osaka: Seibundō, 2004), 256–285; Katsuda Itaru, *Shishatachi no chūsei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003) and *Nihon chūsei no haka to sōsō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2006); and Uejima Susumu, “‘Ō’ no shi to sōsō: Kegare to gakuryō, hijiri, zenshū,” *Kōkogaku to chūseishi kenkyū* 4: *Chūsei jūin: Bōryoku to keikan*, ed. Ono Masatoshi, Gomi Fumihiko, and Hagiwara Mitsuo (Tokyo: Kōshi Shoin, 2007), 127–163. In English, see Janet R. Goodwin, “Shooing the Dead to Paradise,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 16, no. 1 (1989): 63–80; and Hank Glassman, “Chinese Buddhist Death Ritual and the Transformation

of Japanese Kinship,” in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press), 378–404.

12. See William R. LaFleur’s classic discussion of this point in “In and Out the Rokudō,” chap. 2 of his *Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 26–59.

13. See, for example, John C. Holt, “Assisting the Dead by Venerating the Living: Merit Transfer in the Early Buddhist Tradition,” *Numen* 28, no. 1 (1981): 1–28. The tension between an ethic of karmic causality and merit transference is not limited to Buddhism but has a counterpart in Hindu tradition, where the teaching that the soul transmigrates in accordance with karmic law coexists with notions that the postmortem well-being of the deceased depends on rites performed by their descendants. See David M. Knipe, “*Sapindi-karaṇa*: The Hindu Rite of Entry into Heaven,” in *Religious Encounters with Death: Insights from the History and Anthropology of Religions*, ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Earle E. Waugh (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), 111–124.

14. See, for example, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, ed. Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2003).

15. This has been cogently argued by Cristoph Kleine. See his “Rebirth and Immortality, Paradise and Hell: Conflicting Views of the Afterlife in Ancient Japan,” in Formanek and LaFleur, *Practicing the Afterlife*, 63–98.

16. On pollution taboos at Buddhist temples and ceremonies, see Taira Masayuki, “*Sesshō kindan no rekishiteki tenkai*,” in *Nihon shakai no shiteki kōzo: Kodai, chūsei*, ed. Ōyama Kyōhei Kyōju Taikan Kinenkai (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1997), 149–171 (151–154).

17. For an overview of these developments, see Ōishi Masaaki, *Nihon chūsei shakai to jūin*, 207–255. On Ritsu monks and the management of death, see, for example, Hosokawa Ryōichi, *Chūsei no Risshū jūin to minshū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), esp. 1–40; Janet R. Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1994), 120–127; and Matsuo Kenji, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998), 118–125, and “*Chūsei ni okeru shi to bukkō*: Kansō, tonseisō taisei moderu no tachiba kara,” *Shiseigaku kenkyū* 2004: 8–34. On the rise of Zen funerals, see William M. Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1993), 185–216; Harada Masatoshi, “*Chūsei no Zenshū to sōsō girei*,” in *Zenkindai Nihon no shiryō isan purojekuto kenkyū shūkai hōkokushū* 2001–2002, ed. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo (Tokyo: by the editors, 2003), 129–143; and Duncan Ryūken Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 38–58.

18. For a preliminary study of this topic, see Jacqueline I. Stone, “The Dy-

ing Breath: Deathbed Rites and Death Pollution in Early Medieval Japan,” in *Heroes and Saints: The Moment of Death in Cross-cultural Perspectives*, ed. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 173–246.

19. *Zoku honchō ōjōden* 10, *Ōjōden, Hokke genki, Zoku Nihon bukkyō no shisō* 1, ed. Inoue Mitsuada and Ōsone Shōsuke (rpt. of the 1974 *Nihon shisō taikēi* 7; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 236.

20. Robert Hertz, “A Contribution to the Study of Collective Representation of Death” (“Contribution à une étude sur la représentation collective de la mort,” 1907), in *Death and the Right Hand*, trans. Rodney and Claudia Needham (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960), 27–86.

21. “Death, Women and Power,” in *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, ed. Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 218–219.

22. See the “Introduction” to Cuevas and Stone, *The Buddhist Dead*, esp. 3–8.

23. John S. Strong makes this argument with respect to the cremation of the historical Buddha. See his *Relics of the Buddha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 98–123.

24. *Ibid.*, esp. 5–8 and 229–230. Recent scholarship on relics is surveyed on 3–5. See also Brian Ruppert’s essay in this volume.

25. On the role of Buddhist burial practices in shaping kinship structure, see Glassman, “Chinese Buddhist Death Ritual.”

26. See the third and fourth of Amida’s vows, in *Wuliangshou jing*, T no. 360, 12:267c; trans. Luis O. Gómez, *The Land of Bliss, The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light: Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtras* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1996), 166.

27. See Paul Harrison, “Women in the Pure Land: Some Reflections on the Textual Sources,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 26 (1998): 553–572. Harrison finds that while some Pure Land sūtras explicitly deny the presence of women in the Pure Land, others are ambiguous. In recent work on medieval Japanese Buddhism, James C. Dobbins argues that, at the level of lived religion, both men and women expected that women would be born in the Pure Land as women (*Letters of the Nun Eshinni: Images of Pure Land Buddhism in Medieval Japan* [Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004], 74–106). A frequent modern interpretive move reads scriptural passages about the absence of women in the Pure Land to mean that gender distinctions and the sufferings they produce are altogether transcended in Amida’s realm.

28. On sacrifice of the body as both gift and exchange, see Reiko Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); as imitation of the Buddha, see Liz Wilson, ed., *The Living and the Dead: Social Dimensions of Death in South Asian Religions* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003),

“Introduction,” 4, and also Wilson’s essay in this volume, “Human Torches of Enlightenment: Autocremation and Spontaneous Combustion as Marks of Sanctity in South Asian Buddhism,” 29–50; as political protest, see James Benn, “Fire and the Sword: Some Connections Between Self-Immolation and Religious Persecution in the History of Chinese Buddhism,” in Cuevas and Stone, *The Buddhist Dead*, 234–265; and as sacrifice on behalf of the community, see D. Max Moerman, “Passage to Fudaraku: Suicide and Salvation in Pre-modern Japanese Buddhism,” also in Cuevas and Stone, *The Buddhist Dead*, 266–296.

29. See, for example, Gregory Schopen, “Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of ‘Sinicization’ Viewed from the Other Side” (1984), rpt. in his *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1997), 56–71; Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Hank Glassman, “The Religious Construction of Motherhood in Medieval Japan” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2001); Shayne Clarke, “Family Matters in Indian Monastic Buddhism” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2006); Reiko Ohnuma, “Debt to the Mother: A Neglected Aspect of the Founding of the Buddhist Nuns’ Order,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, no. 4 (2006): 861–901; and Matthew T. Kapstein, “Mulian in the Land of Snows and King Gesar in Hell: A Chinese Tale of Parental Death in Its Tibetan Transformations,” in Cuevas and Stone, *The Buddhist Dead*, 345–377.

30. This argument has been offered by Kōdate Naomi. See her “Aspects of *Ketsubonkyō* Belief: The *Ketsubonkyō* and its Transmission to Japan,” in Formanek and LaFleur, *Practicing the Afterlife*, 121–139.

31. For a concise account of the emergence of Zen funerals, see Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 185–208.

32. For an overview of Buddhist funerary and mortuary rites in contemporary Japan, see Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 77–106, and Kenney and Gilday, *Mortuary Rites in Japan*, 167–173, as well as Mariko Walter’s essay in this volume.

33. Recent studies of Tokugawa Buddhist funerals emphasizing the aspect of social control include Tamamuro Fumio, *Sōshiki to danka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999). Part of this study has been adapted as an independent English-language essay: “Local Society and the Temple-Parishioner Relationship within the Bakufu’s Governance Structure,” trans. Holly Sanders, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28, nos. 3–4 (2001): 261–297. See also Nam-lin Hur, *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asia Center, 2007).

34. Bodiford makes this point with regard to Zen funerals in the late medieval period (*Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 202).

35. Bernstein, *Modern Passings*, 32–40.

36. *Katakanabon inga monogatari*, quoted in Katsuda Itaru, *Shishatachi no chūsei*, 239–240.

37. *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 186.

38. *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan*, 20.

39. This is of course not limited to Japan. For example, in comparing reports of medieval and modern near-death experiences in a Western context, Carol Zaleski notes that “the most glaring difference is the prominence in medieval accounts of obstacles and tests, purificatory torments, and outright doom,” which are generally absent in their modern counterparts (*Otherworld Journeys: Accounts of Near-Death Experience in Medieval and Modern Times* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1987], 189). Formanek and LaFleur note official proclamations of the Catholic Church, beginning with Vatican II, warning against literalist readings of the concepts of hell and damnation (*Practicing the Afterlife*, 7–8).

40. Mark Rowe, “Where the Action Is: Sites of Contemporary Sōtō Buddhism,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004): 357–388 (358).

41. Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 70.

42. This has been clearly demonstrated by the work of Gregory Schopen. See, for example, his “Burial *Ad Sanctos* and the Physical Presence of the Buddha in Early Indian Buddhism: A Study in the Archaeology of Religions (1987), rpt. in his *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, 114–147; “On Avoiding Ghosts and Social Censure: Monastic Funerals in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*” (1992), rpt. in the same volume, 204–237; “An Old Inscription from Amarāvati and the Cult of the Local Monastic Dead” (1991), 165–203; and “Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrines of the Transference of Merit,” 23–55.

43. On “Protestant presuppositions” in early Buddhist Studies, see Gregory Schopen, “Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism” (1991), rpt. in his *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, 1–22. The modernist phenomenon known as Protestant Buddhism, however, is by no means a purely Western construct; see Gananath Obeyesekere, “Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon,” *Modern Ceylon Studies* 1, no. 1 (1970): 43–63.

44. For the scattering of ashes, see Mark Rowe, “Grave Changes: Scattering Ashes in Contemporary Japan,” in Cuevas and Stone, *The Buddhist Dead*, 405–437; and “Where the Action Is,” 369–383, for eternal graves and voluntary burial associations. See also Rowe’s “Death by Association: Temples, Burial, and the Transformation of Contemporary Japanese Buddhism” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2006).

45. On *pokkuri* temples, see Fleur Wöss, “Pokkuri Temples and Aging: Rituals for Approaching Death,” in *Religion and Society in Modern Japan: Selected*

Readings, ed. Mark R. Mullins, Shimazono Susumu, and Paul L. Swanson (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1993), 191–202; and Richard Young and Fuki Ikeuchi, “Japanese Religion in ‘The Hateful Years’: Reflections on Geriatric Rituals in an Aging Society,” *Kokugakuin kenkyū* 12 (1993): 31–47. On one Buddhist hospice, see Fuki Ikeuchi and Alison Freund, “Japanese Buddhist Hospice and Shunkō Tashiro,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 15 (1995): 61–65; and Shunkō Tashiro, “Thinking of Life through Death: A Question of Life,” trans. Akinori Imai, *ibid.*, 67–85.

1

Mukaekō

Practice for the Deathbed

SARAH JOHANNA HORTON

BELIEF THAT AT DEATH one could be born in the Pure Land of the buddha Amida (Skt. Amitābha, Amitāyus) became common in eleventh-century Japan and has remained so to the present day. This is a source of great comfort both to the dying and to those surrounding them. The popularity of the notion of Pure Land birth came about at least in part because of an increased focus on the welcoming or *raigō* scene, in which Amida and his attendants, including the bodhisattvas Kannon (Avalokiteśvara) and Seishi (Mahāstāmaprāpta), joyfully come to greet the dying person and escort her or him to the Pure Land. An important but almost completely overlooked reason for this focus was the spread of a ritual called *mukaekō* (welcoming ceremony).

Mukaekō are dramatic enactments of *raigō*. In Japan, they began as a practice of the Nijūgo zanmai-e or Twenty-Five Samādhi Society, a fellowship of monks with Pure Land interests that formed in the Yokawa sector of the great Tendai center on Mt. Hiei in 986. Genshin (942–1017), famous today as the author of *Ōjō yōshū* (Essentials of Pure Land birth), soon became the leader. The group's activities consisted of a monthly meeting during which members chanted the *nenbutsu*—the name of Amida—and took numerous vows, including one promising to be present at the deathbed of any member who became fatally ill and to assist him in his final contemplations.¹ At some point during the next thirty years, however, the Nijūgo zanmai-e also began to sponsor *mukaekō*.

No one is actually on the deathbed when *mukaekō* take place. These rituals are, rather, enjoyable rehearsals for the deathbed. *Mukaekō* are still conducted yearly in at least fourteen temples throughout Japan; the most famous is at Taimadera in Nara prefecture. This chapter, however, focuses on the early development of *mukaekō* in Japan and its basis in the idea of *raigō*.

The Background of the Term *Raigō*

Raigō, often translated in English as “welcoming descent,” is used in a Pure Land Buddhist context to refer to a buddha coming to welcome the dying person and escort her to a pure land. This theme is found only in sūtras that are thought to be apocryphal; therefore, there is no Sanskrit or Pāli word for *raigō*.² The same concept is indicated by the terms *gōshō* and *injō*.³ These three words are more or less interchangeable; in this chapter, I will use the term *raigō*, except when citing a text that uses an alternate term.

Many sūtras describe a buddha manifesting himself during everyday moments. Some even speak of a buddha appearing at the moment of death. Neither of these situations, however, actually constitutes a *raigō* scene, which must involve a buddha not only appearing at death but also escorting the dying person to a pure land. The *raigō* concept is therefore tied to Pure Land thought. Nevertheless, some of the earliest sūtras to mention pure lands contain no reference to it. For example, one of the first pure lands to be discussed in sūtras is that of a buddha named Akṣobhya. The *Akṣobhya-tathāgatasya-vyūha* (Ch. *Achu foguo jing*, Jpn. *Ashuku bukkokukyō*), compiled around the first century, tells how, while still a monk, Akṣobhya vows to create a pure land in the east, but the sūtra does not mention the concept of *raigō*.⁴

The most popular pure land by far, and the one usually referred to by the term *raigō*, is that of the Buddha Amida, called the Land of Bliss (Skt. *Sukhāvātī*) or Utmost Bliss (Jpn. *Gokuraku*). Nevertheless, even most sūtras that discuss Amida’s Pure Land do not speak of him coming to escort the dying to his realm. The locus classicus for the concept of Amida’s *raigō* is usually said to be the nineteenth vow of Amida in the *Sukhāvātīvyūha-sūtra* (Ch. *Wuliangshou jing*, Jpn. *Muryōjukyō*):⁵

May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe resolves to seek awakening, cultivates all the virtues, and single-mindedly aspires to be born in my land, and if, when they approached the moment of their death, I did not appear before them, surrounded by a great assembly.⁶

As this passage demonstrates, the word *raigō* does not actually appear in the text, nor is there any mention of precisely that concept, since Amida and his retinue are not said to personally escort the deceased to the Pure Land. This indicates that the sūtra, probably compiled in northwest India between the first and third centuries, was composed before the idea of *raigō* was fully formed.

The *Sukhāvātīvyūha* later enumerates three levels of gods and hu-

mans who desire birth in Amida's Pure Land, a concept related to that of *raigō*, and describes how the scene of Amida's welcome differs for those at each level. To the highest category, renunciants, Amida appears accompanied by a great crowd of attendants. Although those in the middle level are not renunciants, they engage in generally upright behavior, and when they die they will see Amida's transformation body (Jpn. *keshin*), which looks exactly like his real body, accompanied by a large assembly. Those in the lowest category have no virtues other than a strong desire to be born in the Pure Land, but at their death they are able to see Amida in a dream.⁷ However, this passage does not mention the term or the concept of *raigō* either.

The smaller *Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra* (Ch. *Amituo jing*, Jpn. *Amidakyō*), probably composed about the same time and place as the *Sukhāvativyūha*, touches on a related idea:

Śāriputra, if good men or good women hear this explanation of the qualities of the Buddha Amida, and embrace his name, and keep it in mind single-mindedly and without distraction, be it for one day, or for two, for three, for four, for five, for six, or for seven days, then, when their lives come to an end, the Buddha Amida, together with his holy entourage, will appear before them. At the time of their death, their minds free of any distorted views, they will be born forthwith in Amida Buddha's Land of Supreme Bliss.⁸

Yet again, neither the word *raigō* nor the idea of Amida and his retinue escorting the deceased back to the Pure Land is specifically mentioned. Two of the three sūtras that were later singled out in Japan as the main Pure Land sūtras, therefore, do not use the word *raigō* or address precisely that concept. The term found in both these sūtras for the appearance of a Buddha is *genzen* (Skt. *agratah*).

The concept of *raigō* probably formed by merging the idea of the appearance of a buddha (*genzen*) with that of birth in a pure land (*ōjō*). This idea thus seems to have taken shape considerably later than that of *genzen*. The *Guan Wuliangshou jing* (Jpn. *Kanmuryōjukyō*, Sūtra of contemplating the Buddha of Immeasurable Life) is the first sūtra dealing with Amida's Pure Land to present the idea of *raigō* and to specifically use this term. Although this sūtra is said to have been translated into Chinese in the early fifth century, most scholars now acknowledge that it was probably actually composed around that time, perhaps somewhere in Central Asia, placing it considerably later than the *Sukhāvativyūha*.⁹

The *Guan Wuliangshou jing* describes sixteen contemplations given by Śākyamuni Buddha to Queen Vaidehī. In the narrative, Queen Vaidehī, imprisoned by her son Ajātaśatru, begs the Buddha to teach her

how to be born in a world without suffering; in response, he teaches her the sixteen contemplations that will enable her to reach Amida's Pure Land. The last three of these contemplations enumerate nine levels, presented as three groups of three, of persons who can achieve birth in Amida's Pure Land. The three larger categories match those given in the *Sukkhāvativyūha*, but the nine levels do not appear in that sūtra. These nine levels correspond to the differing circumstances of aspirants' birth in the Pure Land, according to their merits: for example, persons of the middle grade of the upper level will be born in Amida Buddha's presence, and the lotus blossom in which they are born will open after only a day and a night, while those of the lowest grade of the lower level must wait twelve kalpas for their lotus blossom to unfold. But the nine levels also refer to differences in the composition of the *raigō* multitude appearing to the individual concerned. A person of the highest grade of the upper level will, on his deathbed, see Amida, Kannon, Seishi, and numerous apparition buddhas, together with a great assembly of a hundred thousand monks, disciples, and innumerable deities in seven-jeweled palaces, all coming to escort him to the Pure Land. Kannon and Seishi approach the aspirant, Kannon holding a lotus pedestal. Amida emits a great light that illuminates the aspirant's body, and he and his attendant bodhisattvas reach out their hands in welcome. Kannon, Seishi, and the bodhisattvas praise and encourage the aspirant, who is overcome with joy and begins to dance. Then he sees himself sitting on the lotus seat. Following the Buddha, he is immediately born in the Pure Land. The sūtra goes on to describe the *raigō* scene that appears to people in each grade of each level. Those who fall in the lowest grade of the lower level see at the end of life a golden lotus, like the disc of the sun.¹⁰

Although the concept of *raigō* is not unique to the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, it appears to be specific to contemplation sūtras, that is, sūtras whose Chinese titles begin with the character *guan* (Jpn. *kan*). For example, the *Guan Mile pusa shangsheng Doushuaitian jing* (*Kan Mi-roku bosatsu jōshō Tosotsutenkyō*, Sūtra on contemplating Maitreya Bodhisattva and achieving birth in the Tuṣita Heaven) states that even someone who has committed numerous evil actions, if she or he sincerely repents and wholeheartedly contemplates Maitreya, then, at the time of that person's death, Maitreya will emit a light from the white curl of hair on his forehead (*byakugō*), and, together with numerous heavenly beings, will come to welcome and escort (*raigō*) that person, who will at once achieve birth in Maitreya's pure land.¹¹ This sūtra is thought to have been composed at some point after 455.¹²

The *Guanfo sanmeihai jing* (*Kanbutsu zanmaikaikyō*, Sūtra of contemplating the Buddha's samādhi sea) uses the term *raigō shō* (welcome and lead) stating that numerous buddhas escort the dying person to

the buddha land.¹³ The *Guan Yaowang Yaoshang erpusa jing* (*Kan Yakuō Yakujō nibosatsukyō*, Sūtra of contemplating the two bodhisattvas Yakuō and Yakujō) explains how the various buddhas of the ten directions will appear as part of the *raigō* multitude.¹⁴ No Sanskrit original for any of these sūtras has been found, and all the translators were from Central Asia. This suggests that the idea of *raigō*, as well as the term itself, arose around the fourth century with the practice of contemplating buddhas, during the height of the popularity of Pure Land thought in Central Asia.

Therefore, neither the term nor the idea of *raigō* actually appears in any Indian sūtras, but only in ones composed in Central Asia and China. Moreover, it is not found in any other Indian Buddhist literature. A verse in Sāramati's *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga-mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra* (Ch. *Baoxing lun*, Jpn. *Hōshō ron*, Treatise on the essential import of buddha nature as discerned by the Mahāyāna), thought to date to the late fourth or early fifth century, contains a prayer that, by means of the merit accumulated through religious practices, one will be able to see Amida at death.¹⁵ This verse is also found in one of the Nijūgo zanmai-e's founding charters and in *Ōjō yōshū*; *Ōjō yōshū*, however, takes it from the Chinese teacher Jiakai's seventh-century *Jingtu lun* (Treatise on the Pure Land).¹⁶ Moreover, the verse does not go on to state that this merit will enable one to be born in the Pure Land. Rather, it explains that through it one will achieve the highest aspiration for enlightenment (Jpn. *bodaishin*). There is no mention of the Buddha's welcoming descent in one's final moments.

Raigō Thought in China

In the major Japanese Pure Land traditions, the monks Tanluan (Jpn. Donran, 476–542?) and Daochuo (Dōshaku, 613–681) are regarded as patriarchs. Neither monk, however, uses the term *raigō* as it is understood in Japanese Pure Land thought of the tenth century and after. The word does appear occasionally in texts by Daochuo, but in these cases it simply means “come.” For example, although he speaks in the *Anle ji* (Collection of passages on the Land of Peace and Bliss) of the *raigō* of Amida at the time of death, there is no implication that the Buddha leads the dying person to his Pure Land.¹⁷ An indirect but important contribution to the development of *raigō* thought was a commentary on the Four-Part Vinaya by Daoxuan (Dōsen, 596–667), the *Sifenlū shanfan buque xingshī chao* (Jpn. *Shibunritsu sanpan buketsu gyōji shō*), written around 660. Daoxuan outlines a procedure in which the dying person is transferred to a separate hall, where he dies in front of a buddha image, holding threads or cords attached to the image's hand.¹⁸ This passage is quoted in *Ōjō yōshū*. The Nijūgo zanmai-e

charters quote a similar section from Daoshi's *Fayuan zhulin* (668). Nevertheless, Daoxuan's text does not mention *raigō*, although the idea seems implicit in the ritual.

Shandao (Zendō, 613–681) is undoubtedly the most important Chinese figure in the development of the concept of *raigō*. In his commentary on the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, he singles out the last three of the sixteen contemplations, calling them meditative, in contrast to the first thirteen, nonmeditative contemplations.¹⁹ Such a division is his own innovation; it is not found in any writings prior to that time. As part of this discussion, he gives brief details of Amida's *raigō*, which he calls *shōin* (lead) or in some cases, simply *shō*. Here Shandao emphasizes that, according to the *Guan wuliangshou jing*, the *raigō* scene appearing to the dying differs for those in each of the three major levels of birth in the Pure Land.²⁰

Several texts state that Shandao himself drew 200 illustrations of the Pure Land (*jōdo hensō*).²¹ Unfortunately, because none of these paintings survive, it is impossible to know their content. Hamada Takashi surmises that they may have been similar to Japan's famous Taima mandala illustration, which was probably brought from China in the eighth century. He explains that most early Pure Land images depict the sixteen contemplations of the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* as a group, without singling out the last three as Shandao did. The Taima mandala, however, focuses on these three, portraying nine *raigō* scenes in a separate panel at the bottom, each corresponding to one of the nine grades of the three levels.²²

Shandao's *Guannian Amituōfo xianghai sanmei gongde famen* (usually abbreviated *Guannian famen*) also specifically mentions *raigō*. It explicitly lays out the ritual procedure that a dying person should undertake, in a passage that Genshin quotes in *Ōjō yōshu*. As part of these instructions, Shandao states:

... one must imagine with absolute conviction that one is bound for birth in the Pure Land and that the assembly bearing the flower pedestal is on its way to greet you and lead you [there] (*shōju raigō*).... If sins are successfully removed, the assembly of saints bearing the lotus pedestal will immediately appear before the dying person, to lead him to the Pure Land.²³

Tales of those who achieved birth in the Pure Land (Ch. *wangsheng zhuan*, Jpn. *ōjōden*) indicate the way in which *raigō* thought developed in China, although numerous questions surround the compilation of the surviving collections of such tales. Jiakai's *Jingtu lun*, to which Yoshihige no Yasutane (931–997) refers in his introduction to the *Nihon ōjō*

gokurakuki (c. 985) was compiled in the early seventh century.²⁴ The sixth chapter contains biographies of twenty people, both monastic and lay, male and female, who were thought to have attained birth in Amida's Pure Land. *Raigō* at the time of death is occasionally mentioned in some of the biographies, but again, the term is used only to mean "come." For example, Jiakai speaks of the "*raigō*" of clouds and fragrance from the western direction.²⁵

An early Chinese *ōjōden* that frequently mentions *raigō* is the *Wangsheng xifang jingtu ruiying zhuan* (Jpn. *Ōjō saihō jōdo zuō den*, Accounts of auspicious responses accompanying birth in the western Pure Land), compiled in the ninth century. It contains forty-eight simple biographies, the latest from the mid-Tang. Although the biographies are brief, they frequently mention the *raigō* of Amida and his attendants at the time of death.²⁶ The scenes are not described in detail, but it is possible that, in these cases, the term *raigō* does actually mean that Amida and his attendants lead the practitioner back to the Pure Land. Unfortunately, several problems surround the authorship of this text. The original burned in 1135, was more or less rewritten, and then was copied several times; the surviving copy dates to 1370.²⁷ It may, therefore, reflect later Chinese Pure Land thought, which would not have been an influence on Japan in the time period discussed here.

In summary, then, the *raigō* concept had its origins in the idea of a buddha appearing before a person (*genzen*), but it did not develop until the term began to be used in certain contemplation sūtras, including the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, the first extant document to describe the nine levels of birth in Amida's Pure Land and the accompanying *raigō* scenes. This development took place not in India but in Central Asia and China. These nine levels were not singled out for special attention until Shandao focused on them, emphasizing the different *raigō* visions that appear to persons at each level. Even then, however, the concept does not appear frequently in Chinese writing that dates to this period. Nevertheless, Genshin carefully read Shandao's writings, which had not previously received much attention in Japan. In large measure through the efforts of Genshin and the Nijūgo zanmai-e, the idea of *raigō* became popular, contributing greatly to the spread of Pure Land belief throughout Japan.

Raigō and Raigō Art in Japan before the Twelfth Century

Numerous terms are associated with Japanese Pure Land art that may or may not refer to *raigō* images. This presents a significant difficulty in determining the time period when such artwork became



FIGURE 1. Kannon bringing the lotus pedestal to the dying person. Taimadera, May 14, 2005.

prominent. For example, in the broadest sense, the term *jōdozu* refers to an illustration of the Pure Land and may include *raigō* scenes. *Ōjōzu* is a word that also appears frequently and seems to be synonymous with *jōdozu*. Because these terms do not indicate the textual basis, if any, for their depictions, there is no way to know in any detail from textual references to such paintings what the paintings themselves actually portrayed.

For an illustration technically to qualify as a *raigō* scene, it must show Amida, often accompanied by a retinue of bodhisattvas and other deities, appearing at the believer's deathbed specifically to escort her

to the Pure Land. Sometimes, but not always, the dying person is depicted in the picture. Often, the single characteristic that marks an illustration as a *raigō* scene is Kannon extending a lotus pedestal, upon which the deceased will sit and be transported to the Pure Land. In no other situation does Kannon hold such a pedestal.

Every mention of the nine levels of sentient beings (*kuhon*) who can attain birth in the Pure Land refers to the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*. As noted above, *raigō* imagery in Pure Land thought is necessarily connected to this sūtra. Therefore, because paintings referred to as *kuhon ōjōzu* and *kuhon jōdozu* clearly take as their textual basis the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, the odds increase that they incorporate some type of *raigō* imagery. Nevertheless, it is not a given that they do so. The only images that must necessarily depict *raigō* scenes are those described by that term or one of its equivalents, such as *gōshō*.

Raigō images first became important in Japan in the tenth century. The *Shoku Nihongi* (797) states that numerous illustrations of Amida's Pure Land (*Amida jōdo no ekata*) were made in 760 for the seventy-seventh-day anniversary of Empress Kōmyō's death, but it is not known whether they were based on the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*.²⁸ In any case, such early Japanese illustrations of the Pure Land were relatively rare and probably did not depict *raigō* scenes.²⁹

The famous Taima mandala, thought to have been imported from China in the eighth century, is clearly based on the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*.³⁰ As stated earlier, it depicts in its bottom panel the *raigō* scenes that appears to those in each of the nine levels. Nevertheless, the Taima mandala was almost unknown in Japan until it was discovered by the monk Shōkū in the early thirteenth century. Texts prior to the Kamakura period (1185–1333) do not mention Taimadera or its mandala.³¹ Its influence in the Heian period (794–1185), therefore, would appear negligible.

The first known Japanese Pure Land illustrations clearly based on the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* are mentioned in the *Sanmon dōshaki* (Record of the halls and shrines of the mountain), a fourteenth-century text containing brief histories, many based on earlier documents, of the temple structures of Enryakuji, the great Tendai Buddhist monastic complex on Mt. Hiei. It states that, in 883, the four inside walls of the Jōgyō zanmaidō (hall for the constantly walking samādhi) at Mt. Hiei's East Pagoda complex were painted with images of the nine levels of birth in the Pure Land (*kuhon jōdō*).³² The *raigō* concept did not, however, necessarily play a role in the particular form of Pure Land practice conducted in that hall. The original goal of the *jōgyō zanmai*, a meditational practice described in the *Mohe zhiguan* (Great calming and contemplation) by the Tiantai master Zhiyi (538–597), was to

realize the nonduality of the practitioner and the Buddha, not to have Amida come at the moment of death. On Mt. Hiei, the *jōgyō zanmai* developed an orientation different from the contemplative practice set forth by Zhiyi and did indeed come to be directed toward the goal of Pure Land birth. But whether or not it specifically encompassed *raigō* thought is unknown; therefore, the contents of the *kuhon jōdozu* of the East Pagoda Jōgyō zanmaidō remain a mystery.³³

Teishin kōki, the diary of Fujiwara no Tadahira (880–949), states in an entry for 945 that he requested that Yamashinadera, the clan temple of the Fujiwara family, later known as Kōfukuji, send him a *kuhon jōdozu*.³⁴ Unfortunately, the composition of this painting, including the presence or absence of *raigō* imagery, is unknown.

Beginning in the tenth century, numerous illustrations of the Pure Land based on the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* were made in Japan. Most of these no longer survive and are known only through textual references. Again, since the *raigō* concept plays an important role in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, it is possible that these illustrations included *raigō* imagery, but there is no means of ascertaining that this was the case.

In fact, Japanese texts do not use the word *raigō* until the mid- to late tenth century. Senkan (919–984), a disciple of Kūya (a.k.a. Kōya, 903–972), provides one of the first Japanese mentions of *raigō* in his *Jūgan hosshinki* (Ten vows arousing the aspiration for enlightenment, 962). The first vow expresses Senkan's resolve that he will experience *raigō* and be born in the highest grade of the upper level of birth.³⁵ Nevertheless, numerous contemporaneous works that might be expected to at least refer in passing to *raigō* do not mention it at all. The *Kuhon jōgi* (Meaning of the nine levels of birth in the Pure Land), a significant Heian Pure Land work attributed to Genshin's teacher Ryōgen (912–985), does not speak of *raigō*.³⁶ Minamoto no Tamenori, who belonged to the same social circle of lower-ranking aristocratic literati as Yasutane, wrote the *Sanbō ekotoba* (Illustrations of the three jewels) in 984 but never spoke of *raigō*. The idea of *raigō* became prominent in Japan through the actions and writings of Genshin and Yasutane, who had a close relationship for several years, during which time *Nihon jōgō gokurakuki* and *Ōjō yōshū* were written and the Nijūgo zanmai-e was founded.

Genshin was the first monk in either China or Japan to focus his attention on the *raigō* scene. A discussion of *raigō* forms an entire section of his *Ōjō yōshū* (985). The first section of the second chapter of *Ōjō yōshū*, “Gongu jōdo” (Longing for the Pure Land), is “Shōju raigō no raku” (The pleasure of the coming of the retinue). This is the first Japanese writing to stress Amida's welcoming descent. It states:

When a person who has committed evil deeds draws near the end of his life, the elements of wind and fire depart his body first, causing his movements to become agitated, and he suffers greatly.³⁷ When the person who has performed good deeds draws near death, the elements of earth and water depart his body first; his movements are slow and peaceful, and he does not suffer. How much more, then, will the person who has accumulated merit from the *nenbutsu*, and for many years has given his heart over to Amida's Pure Land, spontaneously be born with great joy [in the Pure Land]! Therefore, Amida Nyorai, by means of his Primary Vow, with various bodhisattvas and a gathering of a hundred thousand monks, emits a great light and appears clearly before the eyes [of the person about to die]. At that time, the compassionate Kanzeon [Kannon] extends his hands adorned with a hundred virtues, raising the jeweled lotus pedestal and arriving in front of the practitioner. At the same time, Seishi, with a numberless multitude of holy beings, offers praise and takes [the practitioner's] hands, welcoming him. The practitioner then sees with his own eyes what is happening around him, and rejoices deeply in his heart. His heart and mind are at peace, as though he were in a state of meditation. When, in his humble hut, he closes his eyes, he [finds that he] is sitting on the lotus pedestal. He follows behind Amida Buddha, among the bodhisattvas, and in one moment he has attained birth in the Land of Supreme Bliss in the western direction. (This is based on the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, the *Pingdengjue jing*, the *Denki*, and other texts.)³⁸

The pleasure [of living] a hundred million thousands of years in the Tōri Heaven (Skt. *Trāyastriṃśa*), and the pleasure of deep meditation in the palace of the Bon (Brahmā) Heaven, and other pleasures as well, still do not measure up to this pleasure.³⁹ This is because [, in those cases,] transmigration continues, and one has not escaped the suffering in the three evil paths. However, having been granted the jeweled lotus pedestal by the hands of Kannon, one forever crosses the ocean of suffering, and for the first time is born in the Pure Land. Words cannot express the joy in one's heart at this time.

As the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna said, "If a person plants good roots, yet harbors doubts, then the lotus [in which he has been born] will not open. For the person of pure faith, however, the flower will open, and he will see [the Buddha]." ⁴⁰

Nor is this the only portion of *Ōjō yōshū* that addresses *raigō*. The "Rinjū gyōgi" (Deathbed rituals) section refers to *raigō* several times. These passages were arguably even more important in the popularization of the idea of *raigō* and *raigō* artwork than the one quoted above, because they present concrete instructions on how to incorporate

practices based on the *raigō* concept into one's deathbed moments. Here, Genshin quotes Shandao's *Guannian famen*, saying:

Whether believers are ill or not, when their life is about to end, they should compose their mind and body using exclusively the *nenbutsu* meditation method described above. They should turn their countenance toward the west, concentrate their mind, and contemplate Amida Buddha. They should coordinate mind and voice with each other, and there should be constant chanting [of the *nenbutsu*]. They should generate the thought of being born in the Pure Land without fail and of [Amida's] saintly host coming with the lotus throne on which to usher them into the Pure Land.⁴¹

In the same section, Genshin instructs:

When the strength of the sick is about to dissipate at last, you should say: "The Buddha has arrived along with Kannon, Seishi, and his immeasurable saintly host. They are offering you the jeweled lotus throne, and they are guiding you, the follower of the Buddha, [to the Pure Land]." ⁴²

The *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*, written at almost exactly the same time as *Ōjō yōshū*, mentions *raigō* numerous times. For example, Yasutane says that Kūya was welcomed and guided to the Pure Land (*raigō injō*) by numerous buddhas and bodhisattvas at the time of his death.⁴³ The *Nijūgo zanmai-e* began the year after the *Gokurakuki* was finished; from this time on, *raigō* ideas and images start to be mentioned frequently. The *Hokke genki* (Record of marvels [attributable to faith in] the *Lotus Sūtra*, 1040–1044), for example, states in the biographies of several people that *raigō* occurred at the time of their death.⁴⁴

That this struck a chord with the larger populace may be partly due to conditions in Japan at that time. Death was an ever-present reality. In the beginning of the eleventh century, plagues were rampant in the city of Kyoto, or Heian-kyō. Fujiwara no Sanesuke notes in an entry for the fourth month, nineteenth day of 1015 in his diary, *Shōyūki*, "In recent days, there are extremely many dead people in the capital; they are placed at the head of the road. This causes all the more epidemics."⁴⁵ Numerous other problems also tormented Kyoto; almost every year, floods, earthquakes, and fires occurred. Since the threat of death was an immediate reality for everyone, hopes of the Buddha's welcoming descent provided the comfort both that one's dying moments would be bearable, or even pleasurable, and that birth in the Pure Land was then assured.

Strangely enough, neither the word nor even the concept of *raigō* appears in the Nijūgo zanmai-e's founding documents. At the time these texts were written, it apparently was not yet a major theme for the group. Over the next fifty years, however, *raigō* thought began to take center stage, recurring in the biographies included in the Nijūgo zanmai-e's *kakochō* (death register), sometimes in relation to a particular type of artwork.⁴⁶

Sudō Hirotoši, an art historian who has done extensive research on *raigō* imagery, argues that *raigōzu* began at Yokawa and then spread throughout the country.⁴⁷ In fact, the first known use of the word *raigō* to describe an illustration occurs in two biographies in the Nijūgo zanmai-e's *kakochō*. This one occurs in the biography of the monk Nenshō (d. 1011), which was probably written by Genshin:

[Nenshō] drew an illustration of the coming of Amida and his retinue (*shōju raigō sō*), which he always carried with him and embraced, sometimes opening it. When he opened it, he shed tears.⁴⁸

The *kakochō* biography of Genshin himself states that he kept a record of all his virtuous acts, including “such things as making images of the Buddha.”⁴⁹ It goes on to say:

In connection with this dream, I recall a past event concerning him [Genshin]. Some years ago, he personally studied passages from sūtras and drew a picture of the figure of Amida's coming (*Mida raigōzu*) [to lead *nenbutsu* practitioners to the Pure Land at the moment of death]. In that [picture] there were many *bhikṣus* but only a small number of bodhisattvas. A certain person asked him, “Why are there few bodhisattvas?”

Answer: “I only seek [birth in the Pure Land] on a lotus [dais] in the lower level (*gebon*).”

Question: “Why don't you seek [birth in the] upper level (*jōbon*)?”

Answer: “It is because I am mindful of my own station.”⁵⁰

This is the earliest biography of Genshin, and it was probably written by his close disciple Kakuchō (960–1034). The biography strongly supports the theory that he established a certain type of painting or perhaps sculpted image specifically connected with *raigō* ideas.

This biography also relates the important point that Genshin expected to be born in one of the lower of the nine levels. This is a distinguishing feature of the *raigō* thought of Genshin and the Nijūgo zanmai-e, and one which no doubt helped popularize Pure Land

Buddhism. Senkan, for example, had aspired to birth in the highest level and expected to see a corresponding *raigō* vision. After the time of Genshin, however, hope for birth in one of the lower levels became common. Yasutane says, in a poem included in the “Butsuji” (Buddhist matters) section of the *Wakan rōeishū*, a collection of Japanese and Chinese verse:

From among the buddha lands in the ten directions,
I long for the one in the western direction.
From among the lotus daises of the nine levels,
the lowest is appropriate and sufficient.⁵¹

The historical tale *Eiga monogatari* (A tale of flowering fortunes) provides a wealth of more or less contemporaneous information on *raigō* thought and images.⁵² In 1020, at the height of the courtier Fujiwara no Michinaga’s power, an enormous temple building called the Muryōjuin was built as part of his Hōjōji temple complex. Inside were nine three-meter (*jōroku*) Amida statues, as well as images of Kannon and Seishi. On the doors, *Eiga monogatari* states, were painted images of the lotus pedestals of the nine levels (*kuhon rendai no zu*). The “Tama no utena” (Mansion of jade) chapter of *Eiga monogatari* describes these paintings, stating clearly that they are *raigōzu*:

On all the east-facing doors at the north and south corners of the building, pictures had been painted with texts at the top, so high that one could barely see the characters set in colored-paper squares. The paintings illustrated the nine categories of birth in the Pure Land. Some showed the receptions granted (*Gokuraku no mukae o etari*) to those who had chanted the Buddha-invocations for many years, or had recited the sacred name ten times on their deathbeds, or had met good teachers (*zenchishiki*) as they lay dying, or had zealously sought to master the doctrines of the Greater Vehicle, or had zealously obeyed the precepts, each in accordance with the believer’s deeds. The purpose was apparently to represent the pleasure of being welcomed by the heavenly host (*kore wa shōju raigō raku to miyu*). Riding a cloud, Amida came to the believer in a burst of light. He was accompanied by Kannon and Seishi, who held up a lotus pedestal; and all the bodhisattvas and other members of the holy multitude joined in the joyous welcome, singing and playing their instruments. Secure in knowledge and wisdom, the believer was perfectly composed.⁵³

Michinaga’s son Yorimichi built Byōdōin’s famous Hōōdō or Phoenix Hall in 1052. In fact, the oldest dated surviving Japanese *raigō*

images, aside from those included in the Taima mandala, are on the doors and walls of this hall. The appearance of the Hōōdō paintings seems to match *Eiga monogatari*'s description of those in the Muryō-juin. Collections of *raigōzu* on the doors and walls of the Hōōdō are clearly meant to represent the nine levels of birth in Amida's Pure Land described in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*. The depictions here of the nine levels differ significantly, however, from the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*'s descriptions. Little distinction is made among the composition of the *raigō* multitude that appears to the dying in each of the levels. In the *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, those who break the precepts will be born in the lowest grade of the middle level. There, Amida himself is not seen; rather, bodhisattvas and manifestations of Amida appear on heavenly blossoms. On the corresponding Hōōdō panels, however, Amida himself appears with numerous bodhisattvas.⁵⁴ This indicates that the idea of Amida and his retinue escorting the aspirant to the Pure Land was deemed much more important than details regarding the nine levels.

Exactly when *raigōzu* began to be used in deathbed rituals in Japan is less clear. The practice of dying while holding threads connected to the hands of an image of the Buddha seems to be closely related to *raigō* thought; in fact, many of the paintings to which the threads were attached depicted scenes of *raigō*. In other cases, the threads were connected to a painting or statue of a buddha, creating a three-dimensional *raigō* illustration in which the dying person was an active participant. In many *raigōzu*, Amida appears to be gazing at the viewer, as in a famous illustration at Mt. Kōya.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, this effect is lost in photographic reproductions. This aspect of *raigōzu* would have made them extremely effective in deathbed rituals.

The sixth chapter of *Ōjō yōshū* outlines the proper deathbed ritual, including holding threads connected to an image of the Buddha. As mentioned above, Genshin relies here on Daoxuan's commentary on the Four-Part Vinaya, *Sifenlǚ shānfān buqūe xīngshì chāo*. In addition, both the Nijūgo zanmai-e founding charters dictate that this is the procedure to be followed. None of these texts, however, describe the image to be used at the deathbed in any detail: it is not identified specifically as a *raigō* image. It is not even clear whether it should be a statue or a painting.

The first account of a Japanese actually dying in this manner is related by Yasutane in his *Gokurakuki*. The chief abbot (*zasu*) of Enryakuji, Enshō, died in 964 in front of images of Amida and Sonshō (Butchō), an esoteric manifestation of Śākyamuni, his hands holding a thread fastened "to the Buddha's hands."⁵⁶ Mention of such threads does not then appear in any extant text until the Nijūgo zanmai-e's

kakochō. The *kakochō* biographies of Nenshō and Genshin do not indicate that the *raigō* illustrations they made were used at the time of death. The biography of Shōkin, however, relates the following story:

The night of his [Shōkin's] death, his disciple said that a light had appeared on a hanging mandala, and then immediately disappeared. The sick man attached a thread to the hands of the Buddha and himself grasped the other end. He then wrote a vow, faced west, and formed the concentration mudrā. He died as if he were entering into meditation.⁵⁷

It is not clear from this passage if the Buddha to which the threads were attached was in the mandala, nor do we know whether the mandala depicted *raigō* scenes. Nevertheless, the threads may have been attached to the mandala, which could have been a *gōshō* mandala (as mentioned earlier, the term *gōshō* is interchangeable with *raigō* and is often used when referring to mandalas depicting this theme).

Two early descriptions of the use of such threads indicate that the practitioner might hold them not only on his deathbed but also during everyday life, an act that prefigures performance of the *mukaekō* as “practice” for the deathbed. Such threads appear prominently in the Nijūgo zanmai-e *kakochō*'s narration of Genshin's own death. In the sixth month, ninth day of 1017, anticipating that he would soon die, Genshin tied a string to Amida's hand and grasped the other end himself. After reciting passages from various sūtras, he put the strings down and ate a meal. The next day, however, he again picked up the strings and began reciting the *nenbutsu*. He then died, grasping the strings attached to the hands of the Buddha.⁵⁸

Eiga monogatari tells of Michinaga also holding the threads at times during his everyday practice. This story also provides the first detailed description of images to which threads were attached. In this case, they were the statues found in the Muryōjuin:

There were also cluster-dyed lotus fiber braids that were threaded through the hands of the nine buddhas, brought together at the central image, and thence stretched eastward to the place where Michinaga intoned his pious recitations. His Lordship could avoid remissness in the invocations by concentrating on the braids, and he probably also intended to pull them at the hour of his death in order to ensure his birth in the Pure Land. He must have had the nine images made as symbols of the nine categories of birth.⁵⁹

According to *Eiga monogatari*, Fujiwara no Michinaga died, in the twelfth month of 1027, while grasping these threads. He faced Amida and listened to recitations of the deathbed *nenbutsu* (*rinjū nenbutsu*), holding the cords connected to the nine Amida images.⁶⁰

Michinaga probably did not in fact meet his death in quite such a felicitous manner, as Jacqueline Stone notes in Chapter 2 in this volume. Aristocratic diaries from that period indicate that as he grew older, he suffered from multiple illnesses, including blindness, which would have made it difficult for him to view the images, and that he died in a state of acute pain that would have prevented him from sitting peacefully in the Muryōjuin, holding threads attached to the statues.⁶¹ The account in *Eiga monogatari* is valuable not for providing an accurate description of Michinaga's death but rather for supplying evidence that, at least among certain circles, holding strings attached to an image of Amida was regarded as the ideal death.

The *Hokke genki* provides two further early examples of the use of threads attached to an image of Amida at one's deathbed. Here, the nun Shakumyō, as well as the monk Kyōmyō of Yokawa's Shuryōgon'in, die in this way.⁶² That one of these two was from Yokawa also indicates that, in Japan, the custom may have begun in this location.

Later Mentions of *Raigō* Imagery

More than a hundred years passed between the composition of Yasutane's *Gokurakuki* (c. 985) and that of the next *ōjōden*, *Zoku honchō ōjōden* (c. 1101), by Ōe no Masafusa. This was quickly followed by Miyoshi no Tameyasu's *Shūi ōjōden* (1102–1112) and *Goshūi ōjōden* (1134), Renzen's *Sange ōjōki* (1139), and Fujiwara no Munetomo's *Honchō shinshū ōjōden* (1151). Although these collections were composed considerably after the time of Genshin, they demonstrate that the concept of *raigō* continued to gain popularity in the intervening years.

Of particular significance in this context is the narrative of Taira no Kōreshige's death in *Goshūi ōjōden*, which states that Genshin made the first *gōshō* mandala in Japan. Here, details of Genshin's participation in the establishment of Japanese *raigōzu* are embellished, resulting in a complicated story. This biography tells how Kōreshige had an agreement with Genshin that at the time of Kōreshige's death, Genshin would act as a good spiritual friend (*zenchishiki*) to him, helping him to achieve Pure Land birth. When Kōreshige was ill and nearing death, Genshin made a *gōshō* mandala and gave it to him, instructing him to use it to assist in his contemplation of Pure Land birth. This was the origin, *Goshūi ōjōden* says, of *gōshō* mandala in Japan. It further

explains that Koreshige earnestly contemplated the painting with his palms placed together and rejoiced. He then died as if he were entering a state of meditation.⁶³

Stories of dying while holding threads connected to the hands of an image of the Buddha also appear more frequently in the later *ōjōden*. For example, in *Shūi ōjōden*, four people die this way; in *Goshūi ōjōden*, five do.⁶⁴ In addition, this type of image is found in poetry from that period. A song in *Ryōjin hishō*, a collection of popular songs or *ima-yō*, says:

Hail to Amida Buddha.
With this thread from the hands of the Buddha
I end [this life] in peace.⁶⁵

Mukaekō

Mukaekō, also pronounced *gōkō*, are enactments of Amida and his retinue coming to greet the dying person. As Willa Jane Tanabe has pointed out, works that date to the Heian period, including diaries and histories, are filled with references to Buddhist rituals. Unfortunately, for the most part, scholars have been slow in beginning to investigate them. Nonetheless, as she notes, “These rituals were at the heart of Japanese Buddhism and they reveal both the cultural conceptions of that religion and the uses to which the religion was put. Doctrinal formulations were not so important to the Heian aristocrat as were rituals.”⁶⁶

Many contemporary *mukaekō* performances commence with an announcement that a ritual originated by Genshin is about to take place. The most famous *mukaekō*, held at Taimadera in the town of Genshin’s birth, is attended not only by tourists but also by devout worshippers. It is easy to imagine how the deeply moving sight of what appear to be statues of buddhas and bodhisattvas come to life would have affected people one thousand years ago. Of course, *mukaekō* today may differ significantly from those conducted in the time of Genshin, although the oldest detailed depiction of a *mukaekō*, contained in the sixteenth-century *Taimadera engi*, provides an illustration of a ceremony that is quite similar to those held today.⁶⁷

A number of early texts support the claim that Genshin began the *mukaekō*. The first known use of the word *mukaekō* appears in the Nijū-go zanmai-e *kakochō* biography of Nenshō, mentioned above in connection with *raigōzu*. In fact, the full passage states:



FIGURE 2. Bodhisattvas proceeding from the Pure Land to the Shabadō. Taimadera, May 14, 2005.

He [Nenshō] composed the rules for participants in the *mukaekō*, and drew an illustration of the coming of Amida and his retinue (*shōju raigō sō*), which he always carried with him and embraced, sometimes opening it. When he opened it, he shed tears.⁶⁸

This passage suggests that *mukaekō* and *raigō* art were closely connected. It is impossible to say which first became prominent in Japan; however, participants in *mukaekō* who enacted the roles of bodhisattvas very likely were familiar with *raigō* painting and sculpture. This connection was to continue for a long time. For example, the twelfth fascicle of the *Honchō zoku monzui* (Further collections of writings from our country) contains a document stating that, in 1136, pictures of the nine levels of birth in the Pure Land (*gokuraku kuhon ōjō*), based on

the content of the *raigō* vision said to appear to persons at each of these levels, were painted on the four inner walls of Kyoto's Toba Shōkōmyōin.⁶⁹

The next mention of *mukaekō* is found in the Nijūgo zanmai-e *kakochō* biography of Genshin himself. According to this account, one of Genshin's disciples, Nōgu, had a dream in which he went to Genshin's room and found Genshin about to begin a long journey:

Monks were lined up on the right and left sides of the road. There were four boys, very beautiful in both appearance and dress. They were divided to the right and left, lined up with the monks. All in all, it resembled the *mukaekō* ritual of Yokawa. The bishop of Yokawa [Genshin] instructed, "Let the little boys go first and the big boys follow [and so forth]." After arranging themselves in accordance with his order, they began marching towards the west. In this dream, Nōgu thought, "It's strange that they're walking on the ground." Immediately they gradually rose up and (began to) walk in the sky. They intoned out loud, "We have transcended the Triple Realms (*sangai*)."⁷⁰ In-toning this repeatedly, they disappeared to the west. . . .

When Nōgu reported this dream to others, they informed him that Genshin had died the same night he had the dream. Nōgu's dream, then, was a vision of Genshin's actual birth in the Pure Land, which resembled a *mukaekō*.

In both these accounts, the writer assumes that his reader knows what the *mukaekō* of Yokawa is. The only concrete information provided is that rules were given for participants; it involved a representation of the coming of Amida and his retinue; and there was some type of procession to the west down a road, which was lined by numerous monks and four younger boys. In addition, it seems to have taken place outside, in contrast to most rituals, which were conducted within the confines of a hall, thus limiting the number of people who could view them.

The next reference to *mukaekō* occurs in Genshin's biography in *Hokke genki*. This passage states:

Genshin prepared a representation of Amida coming to greet the dying person (*Mida gōshō no sō*), revealing the ceremony of welcome to the splendor of the Pure Land (commonly called the *mukaekō*). Those who gathered to observe the ceremony included the young and the old, priests and lay people, the vagrants and the ignorant. All shed tears, wished for birth in the Pure Land, knelt and bowed their heads

to the ground in worship, and planted the seeds for their future enlightenment.⁷¹

This account provides a crucial detail: it was not only monks who observed the ceremony. Even the “vagrants and the ignorant” were in attendance, although it is not clear to whom this refers. Another important element is the description of a highly moving scene that gave rise in observers to a desire for birth in the Pure Land. Unfortunately, this passage does not state whether *mukaekō* took place at Yokawa, bringing lay people to Mt. Hiei, or whether it occurred at a location outside Enryakuji.

Genshin Sōzu den, a biography written by Ōe no Sukekuni before 1061, which is still within about forty years of Genshin’s death, contains a much more detailed account:

In the fifth month of that year [1004], Genshin was appointed to the position of *gon shōsōzu* (supernumary lesser bishop), but he retired from it the following year. After that, he did nothing for that position. He secluded himself on Mt. Hiei and devoted himself to practices that would lead to birth in the Pure Land. To the southeast of Ryōgon’in, he built a small hut and there enshrined a three-meter gilt image of Amida. He named the hall Kedaiin. On this land, he organized gatherings for practitioners who hoped to see Amida coming to their deathbed (*raigō gyōja no kō*). [These enacted the coming of Amida to greet the dying person.] Bodhisattvas and other deities walked around to the right and left, and music was played. Those who participated included clerics and laity, high and low. They felt as though they had been born in the Pure Land.⁷²

This passage provides the remarkable detail that lay people, including the lowly, actually came to Kedaiin, which was located in Yokawa, for the *mukaekō*. Mt. Hiei in general, and Yokawa in particular, had been off limits to lay people since the time of Saichō (767–822). That they were allowed to attend the *mukaekō* speaks to the desire of Genshin and other members of the Nijūgo zanmai-e to communicate their beliefs to those beyond Mt. Hiei and to provide them with comfort in the face of death. The attendance of lay people also demonstrates their own considerable resolve. They would have had to walk to Yokawa from the city of Kyoto, a demanding journey of several miles, much of which was up a mountain.

In addition, it is possible that women also attended *mukaekō* at Yokawa, breaking the rule established by Saichō that no female should enter the precincts of Enryakuji. Although there is no extant record

explicitly stating that women took part in the *mukaekō*, they did participate in a *Lotus Sūtra* group called the Shakakō, which Genshin organized at Yokawa in 1006. A sign-up sheet for participation includes the names of several aristocratic women such as Fujiwara no Michinaga's consort Rinshi, here referred to as Sadaijin-dono no kita mandokoro.⁷³ If Genshin allowed women to come to Yokawa to participate in the Shakakō, it is reasonable to assume that they may have attended *mukaekō* there as well.

The Nijūgo zanmai-e *kakochō* biography of Genshin makes clear that the *mukaekō* is taking place outside: monks line a road. In the *Genshin Sōzu den* account, however, it is uncertain whether the ritual is taking place inside Kedaiin or whether Kedaiin is being used as one location within a wider *mukaekō* ritual space. It is possible that the topography of the Yokawa area was used in early *mukaekō*, which would explain the remark that *mukaekō* took place "on this land." To the west of the site where Kedaiin seems to have been located stands a tall peak called Mt. Tanba. Those dressed as bodhisattvas may have come from Kedaiin and proceeded to the east. Then they would have led observers west, toward Kedaiin, Mt. Tanba, and the setting sun.⁷⁴ This theory is supported by an early fourteenth-century text, *Jukkai shō*, which contains a description of a *mukaekō* at Yokawa in which a statue of Amida was carried, with twenty-five bodhisattvas walking in front of and behind the statue. Participants approached Kedaiin while chanting the *nenbutsu*.⁷⁵

The uses to which Kedaiin was put were thus widened broadly, even during Genshin's life. Kedaiin is the hall referred to in one of the Nijūgo zanmai-e's founding documents as Ōjōin, which was to be the building where fatally ill members of the Nijūgo zanmai-e would be transported. Although all the Nijūgo zanmai-e members were monks, Kedaiin appears to have become the center of the *mukaekō*, which included both monks and lay devotees.

The *Sanmon dōshakū*'s article on Kedaiin gives the following history of that hall:

In 1001, [Kedaiin] was built by the Bishop of Eshin Hall (Eshin'in no Sōzu) [Genshin]. In the fifth month of the previous year, Eshin Sōzu, through the recommendation of his disciple Gonku, received the title *gon shōsōzu*. This year [1002], he retired from that position, secluding himself in a private place and building the hall Kedaiin, which was thatched with cypress bark. There he enshrined three three-meter images of Amida. According to a certain text, the image in the middle was commissioned by Myōun Shōnin. (It was made by the sculptors Songi, Kōjō, and Chōshin).⁷⁶ It is said that the north image was commissioned

by the Bishop of Eshin'in for use in the *mukaekō*.⁷⁷ The image in the south [of the hall] was commissioned by retired emperor Kazan (the sculptor was Chōkaku).⁷⁸

Myōun is probably a copyist's error made for the name Myōkū. The Nijūgo zanmai-e *kakochō* biography of Myōkū relates how Genshin advised him to have a three-meter image of Amida made in order to help him reach his goal of birth in the Pure Land. According to this account, Myōkū died before it was completed. The statue was later enshrined as the central image in Kedaiin.⁷⁹ A hall containing three golden three-meter Amida images must have seemed a natural site for *mukaekō*, despite the fact that Kedaiin had been built for use only by the members of the Nijūgo zanmai-e.

Other evidence supporting the theory that Genshin was influential in beginning *mukaekō* ritual is the existence of numerous traditional Japanese hymns (*wasan*) that are attributed to him. Although many such attributions are apocryphal, scholars believe that some, including *Jūroku wasan* (Hymns of the ten joys) and *Raigō wasan* (Hymns of Amida's coming), were actually composed by Genshin.⁸⁰ These may have been sung by people during the *mukaekō*.⁸¹ The *Hokke genki* biography of Genshin states: "He composed the *Wasan of the Eight Pagodas* for rural and urban, high and low, those who have never heard the Buddhist teaching, those who spread mistaken views, the ignorant, and children."⁸² This passage comes immediately before the one relating that Genshin began *mukaekō*, suggesting that *mukaekō* and *wasan* are closely related topics.

A further indication that *wasan* may have figured prominently in early *mukaekō* is found in the Nijūgo zanmai-e *kakochō* biography of Ryōchin Ajari. When he died at Mt. Hiei's East Pagoda complex, the text states, the "music of Yokawa could be heard."⁸³

From the middle of the eleventh century, *mukaekō* are frequently mentioned in various texts, including historical novels, diaries of aristocrats, temple origin narratives (*engi*), and *ōjōden*. These provide clues to the process by which *mukaekō* began to move off Mt. Hiei into the city of Kyoto and beyond. For example, the fifteenth chapter of *Eiga monogatari*, "Utagai" (Doubts), states: "He [Fujiwara no Michinaga] also made it a habit to attend *mukaekō* when there was a *bodaiikō* (enlightenment ceremony) at Rokuharamitsuji or at Unrin'in."⁸⁴ This passage provides crucial information: during Michinaga's lifetime (966–1027), *mukaekō* had already moved off Mt. Hiei and into the city of Kyoto. At this time, Rokuharamitsuji, along with Mt. Toribe to the east, constituted an enormous burial ground. In fact, Kūya had lived there for about ten years in the middle of the tenth century,

conducting ceremonies for the souls of the deceased.⁸⁵ This suggests that when *mukaekō* began to move off Mt. Hiei, they were conducted in locations associated with death.

Another important early mention of *mukaekō* is found in Minamoto no Toshifusa's diary, *Suisaki*. The entry for the tenth month, eighth day of 1080 states, "Today there was a *mukaekō* at Kiyomizudera (*kawara*)."⁸⁶ What he meant by the note *kawara* (riverbank) is unclear. One theory is that the procession went from Kiyomizudera to the banks of the Kamo River and then returned. If this is the case, they may have been going to the vicinity of Rokuharamitsuji and Mt. Toribe.⁸⁷

Later Accounts of *Mukaekō*

From the end of the eleventh century, accounts of *mukaekō* become common. Frequently, one basic story is elaborated upon in different texts. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss all such references, but I will briefly outline some of the more famous and significant narratives.

Konjaku monogatari shū (Collection of tales of times now past, early twelfth century) mentions for the first time one of the *mukaekō* stories that was to become a staple of later collections of tales (*setsuwa*).⁸⁸ Examination of this story reveals one of the ways in which *mukaekō* may have spread throughout Japan. The twenty-third section of the fifteenth chapter of *Konjaku monogatari shū* is entitled "The birth in the Pure Land of the holy man, who began the *mukaekō* in Tango province."⁸⁹ According to this story, the holy man, who is not named, had long desired to be born in the Pure Land. Every year, on the last day of the twelfth month, he would hand a boy a letter. That evening, the boy would return to his house, saying, "This is a letter from Amida Buddha in Paradise." The holy man, shedding tears, would receive the letter.

One year, Ōe no Kiyosada, a great admirer of this holy man, was sent to take over as governor of Tango province. The holy man informed him, "I would like to establish the ritual called *mukaekō* in this province, but it is beyond my power. Please assist me in doing this." Kiyosada agreed, and sent for musicians and dancers from the capital. On the day of the *mukaekō*, the holy man lit incense and remained in a hall called the Shabadō.⁹⁰ As the drama began, and the procession drew near the Shabadō, the holy man, deeply moved, actually achieved birth in the Pure Land.

This story is developed in further detail in later texts such as *Zoku honchō ōjōden*, *Kōjidan* (1212–1215), and *Shasekishū* (1283). According to *Zoku honchō ōjōden*, a monk named Kan'in was, in his youth, a disci-

ple of Genshin and an outstanding monk at Yokawa's Shuryōgon'in. Later, he left Mt. Hiei and traveled the country, ending up in Tango province.⁹¹ There is a strong possibility that the holy man mentioned in *Konjaku monogatari shū* is Kan'in.⁹² This would mean that one of Genshin's own disciples, who had likely participated in *mukaekō* at Yokawa, was responsible for spreading the ritual into the countryside. Nevertheless, because this tale was probably embellished numerous times, its reliability is questionable.

Another important discussion of *mukaekō* is found in the *Shūi ōjōden* biography of Eikan (or Yōkan, 1033–1111), which states that he conducted *mukaekō* at Yoshidadera in Nakayama in 1109 and made twenty costumes for bodhisattvas.⁹³ This shows that, by the early twelfth century, considerable effort was put into the appearance of the bodhisattvas in *mukaekō*.

Eikan is the author of *Ōjō kōshiki*, a liturgy that called for a monthly meeting similar to that of the Nijūgo zanmai-e, except members made no vows to be with each other at the time of death. They did, however, hope to see deathbed visions of Amida's welcoming descent.⁹⁴ Moreover, the monthly meeting was to take place in a hall where a *gōshō* or welcoming image of Amida was enshrined on the west wall.⁹⁵ *Ōjō kōshiki* also contains verses, which would originally have been put to music, for use in ritual gatherings such as the *mukaekō*.⁹⁶

The *Shūi ōjōden* story concerning Eikan is corroborated by a statement in Fujiwara no Munetada's diary, *Chūyūki*. The entry for the ninth month, fourth day of 1108 relates that Eikan sponsored a *mukaekō* at Higashiyama on that day.⁹⁷

Another major site for *mukaekō* was the temple Ungoji, which is no longer extant but was located within the precincts of Kyoto's Kōdaiji. *Goshūi ōjōden* tells the following story. On his deathbed, Abe Toshikiyo said, "I'm hearing music sometimes; this is like the *mukaekō* at Ungoji." The text then contains a note stating that he is referring to Sensai Shōnin's *mukaekō*.⁹⁸ Sensai, a monk from Mt. Hiei, built an enormous gilt Amida image at Ungoji in 1125. This temple was, then, a natural setting for *mukaekō*. Again, *Chūyūki* provides further information about this ritual. In the entry for the twenty-third day, sixth month of the year 1127, Munetada says that all beings under heaven, lay and monastic, male and female, took refuge in Sensai's *mukaekō*.⁹⁹ Sensai was a member of a prominent late Heian family of actors; his name appears frequently in texts from that time.¹⁰⁰ *Mukaekō* were in all likelihood highly dramatic affairs.

In addition, there is much art historical evidence that shows the importance and prominence of *mukaekō* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Numerous masks that were used in *mukaekō* are still extant,

the most famous being four masks that date to the Kamakura period and that were last used in the ceremony in 2004, after which they were retired. Masks made in the late Heian period also exist. The oldest surviving bodhisattva mask, kept in the Honolulu Museum of Art, is inscribed with the date Ōtoku 3 (1086). This is not long after Gen-shin's death, which suggests that such masks may have existed in his day, but there is no indication that this particular one was used in *mukaekō*.¹⁰¹

An ink inscription on a bodhisattva mask at Hōryūji states that it is a mask of Kannon, made in 1102 as one of ten such masks for use in *raigō-e*, yet another term for *mukaekō*. It does not, however, show any signs of having been used.¹⁰² Textual evidence also indicates that *mukaekō* were held at Hōryūji in the late Heian period. The *Kaihoin jūshō ge* (Explanation [for] resident monks at Kaihoin, 1111) states that *mukaekō* were held at Kaihoin in the years from 1069 to 1074. Around this time, the meditation hall (*sanmaidō*) of Kaihoin was moved to Hōryūji; the two temples must, therefore, have been closely connected.¹⁰³

Stories of *mukaekō* included in *Konjaku monogatari shū* and *Goshūi ōjōden* state that Amida appeared as part of the ceremony. For example, the *Goshūi ōjōden* biography of Minamoto no Toshifusa speaks of the “*Amida gōshō* statue” (*Amida gōshō no zō*) that was enshrined in a temple hall he built.¹⁰⁴ Recent scholarship has shown that a particular type of Amida image was made, probably from the Heian period on, for use in the *mukaekō*. One such image stands next to the mandala in the main hall at Taimadera. Until recently, this statue was not thought to be particularly unusual. It was discovered, however, that it is hollow, and is equipped inside for a person to enter and be able to move the statue, seeing out through the chest. Apparently, someone used to climb inside the image when *mukaekō* were performed, enabling Amida to appear as if he were bowing when the retinue returned to the main hall.¹⁰⁵ The scholar Seki Nobuko has done extensive research on this and similar images and dates the one from Taimadera to the mid-twelfth century.¹⁰⁶

Mukaekō thus have always taken numerous forms, which differed considerably from one temple to the next. Even today, for example, some use a bridge for members of the procession to cross, others not; some include various “deities,” others only bodhisattvas. No known ritual manual for premodern *mukaekō* exists. Yet they all share one main characteristic: bodhisattvas proceed majestically to the Pure Land while onlookers watch and pray. The performance looks very much like a *raigō* painting come to life, yet *mukaekō* communicates the joyousness of the occasion in a way that a static painting or sculpture cannot.

Although *mukaekō* are rehearsals for the time of death, the atmosphere is one of happiness. Those dressed as bodhisattvas dance while music is played or sung. Observing the *raigō* scene in everyday life relieves the inevitable fear surrounding death, replacing it with hopeful anticipation. This contributed greatly to the much-noted desire in late Heian and Kamakura Japan to be born in the Pure Land.

Traditionally, the spread of religious practices and beliefs has been attributed to what are now deemed “canonical” texts. In studies of the time period under discussion, Genshin’s *Ōjō yōshū* is ubiquitously cited as a major contributor to the rise of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. Yet in an era when most of the populace was illiterate, the direct influence of this text is questionable.¹⁰⁷ In recent years, many scholars have begun to turn to art historical evidence to search for clues to religious development. For this reason, *raigō* paintings have come under considerable discussion, yet even specialists in this time period often are unfamiliar with *mukaekō*. With this essay, I hope to bring attention to this important practice and to the critical role that performance art and ritual have played more broadly in shaping Japanese Buddhist understandings of death and the afterlife.

Notes

1. The word *nenbutsu*—literally, recollection of the Buddha—refers in a Pure Land context to either the contemplation of Amida or the invocation of his name, usually in the form “*Namu Amida butsu*.” An expression of reliance on Amida, the *nenbutsu* has often been seen by Pure Land Buddhists as an important factor in achieving birth in the Pure Land.

2. Nakamura Hajime lists the term *pratyudyāna* as the Sanskrit original of *raigō* (*Bukkyōgo daijiten* [Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 1975], 1403c–d). *Pratyudyāna* does not, however, mean *raigō* in the sense that Japanese monks such as Genshin were to use the term; in Sanskrit, it was merely used to refer to the appearance of a buddha and was sometimes translated into Chinese with the word *raigō* (Ch. *laiying*).

3. See Taya Ruishun, Ōshō Enichi, and Funabashi Issai, eds., *Bukkyōgaku jiten* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1974), 447, for a useful explanation of the word *raigō* and its equivalents.

4. *T* no. 313, 11:751–764.

5. See for example Taya et al., *Bukkyōgaku jiten*, 447.

6. *Wuliangshou jing*, *T* no. 360, 12:268a29–b5; translation adapted from Luis O. Gómez, *Land of Bliss, the Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light: Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvatīvyūha* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press and Honganji Shinshū Ōtani-ha, 1996), 168.

7. *T* 12:272b15–c10.

8. *T* no. 366, 12:347b10–15; translation adapted from Gómez, *Land of Bliss*, 148.

9. See the introduction to the translation found in Ryukoku University Translation Center, *Sūtra on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life As Expounded by Śākyamuni Buddha* (Kyoto: Kawakita Printing Co., 1984), xi.

10. These descriptions are found in *T* no. 365, 12:345a4–346a26.

11. *T* no. 452, 14:420b11–13.

12. Ono Genmyō, ed., *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten*, 13 vols. (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1932–1935; rpt. 1975–1978), 2:182.

13. *T* no. 643, 15:693b29–c2.

14. *T* no. 1161, 20:660.

15. *T* no. 1611, 31:848a12–13.

16. Typeset editions of the Nijūgo zanmai-e documents, including those in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* and *Eshin Sōzu zenshū*, are extremely problematic. The titles of the texts are frequently wrong, and mistaken characters are not uncommon. A thorough discussion of these problems, as well as both a photographic and typeset rendering of the earliest transcription of the society's founding documents, are found in Koyama Masazumi, “Tōdaiji Chūshōin shozō ‘Yokawa Shuryōgon’ in nijūgo zanmai Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi’ no saikentō,” *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 53 (Feb. 1997): 56–95. I have relied here on the critical edition of these texts that Koyama has included in his article.

17. *T* no. 1958, 47:21a20–21.

18. *T* no. 1804, 40:144a13–21. See also Koichi Shinohara, “The Moment of Death in Daoxuan’s Vinaya Commentary,” in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007), 105–133.

19. Shandao’s distinction here is based on the fact that the first thirteen contemplations are of the Pure Land and its inhabitants themselves. In contrast, the last three are, for the most part, descriptions of qualifications for birth in each of the nine levels. Scholars now acknowledge that because these last three contemplations are so different from the preceding ones, they were probably added at a later date; see Julian Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvātī: Shan-Tao’s Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang-Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1995), 47.

20. *Guan Wuliangshou jing shu*, *T* no. 1754, 37:301b16–19.

21. See, for example, the *Wangsheng xifang jingtu ruiying zhuan*, *T* no. 2070, 51:105c6–7.

22. Hamada Takashi, “*Raigōzu*,” *Nihon no bijutsu* 273 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1989), 30.

23. *T* no. 1959, 47:24b22–23, 27; translation adapted from Daniel B. Stevenson, “Pure Land Buddhist Worship and Meditation in China,” in *Buddhism*

in *Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 378.

24. *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*, Japan's first *ōjōden*, was compiled around the same time as *Ōjō yōshū*. At this time, Yasutane and Genshin both lived in the Yokawa sector of Mt. Hiei and were in close contact.

25. *T* no. 1963, 47:98a11.

26. *T* no. 2070, 51:104–108.

27. See the postscript to the text, *T* 51:108b415.

28. *Shoku Nihongi, Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* (hereafter *KT*) 2, ed. Kokushi Taikei Henshūkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1966), 272. *Shoku Nihongi* is the second of six official histories of Japan (*rikkokushi*). It recounts important events at court, year by year, from 697 to 791.

29. Nakano Genzō argues that the numerous illustrations of the Pure Land, such as those made for provincial temples, that are mentioned in Nara-period documents may have been based on the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* (*Raigō no bijutsu* [Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1985], 156). Without further evidence to support this contention, however, there is no reason to think this is the case.

30. For a detailed English discussion of the Taima mandala, see Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 13–32.

31. Nakano, *Raigō no bijutsu*, 162.

32. *Sanmon dōshaki, Gunsho ruijū* (hereafter *GR*), 19 vols., ed. Hanawa Ho-kiichi (1928; rpt. Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1960), no. 438, *Shakke bu* 24:487.

33. After the subsequent development of *raigōzu*, however, they began to be featured in Jōgyōdō, halls for the *nenbutsu* practice adapted from the *jōgyō zanmai*. For example, behind the Amida image in the Jōgyōdō at Mt. Shosha in Harima prefecture is a *raigōzu*.

34. Tengyō 8 (945), 7/18, *Dainihon kokiroku*, ed. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1956), pt. 8, 318.

35. A photographic reprint of this text, as well as a typeset rendering, are found in Satō Tetsuei, *Eizan jōdokyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1960), 161–220. The vow is on 195.

36. On the question of Ryōgen's authorship, see Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mt. Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 68–69. Notices of *Kuhon ōjōgi* in extant sources begin to appear around 1070.

37. In Chinese thought, the body is made up of four elements: wind (*fū*), fire (*ka*), earth (*chī*), and water (*sui*). Wind and fire are thought to cause activity and agitation; this is why the person for whom those depart first suffers.

38. The full title of the *Pingdengjue jing* is *Wuliang qingjing pingdengjue jing* (Jpn. *Muryō shōjō byōdō gakkō*, *T* no. 361, 12:279–299). By *Denki*, Genshin

perhaps means Yasutane's *Gokurakuki*. See *Genshin, Nihon shisō taikēi* (hereafter *NST*) 6, ed. Ishida Mizumaro (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 54n.

39. In Buddhist cosmology, the Tōri Heaven and the Bon Heaven are both located in this world system. Therefore, as Genshin notes, rebirth in either of them does not constitute an escape from the cycle of birth and death.

40. The quote is from the *Daśabhūmi-vibhāṣa-śāstra* (Ch. *Shizhu piposha lun*, Jpn. *jūju bibasharon*, *T* no. 1521, 26:43b18–19). This is a commentary, traditionally but probably erroneously attributed to the Indian monk Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250), on the first two of ten stages outlined in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*. It was valued by Pure Land monks for its ninth chapter, which is called “Easy Practice.” The translation of this portion of *Ōjō yōshū* is based on the text and notes given in *NST* 6:53–54, 336.

41. *Ōjō yōshū*, *NST* 6:376; trans. from James C. Dobbins, “Genshin’s Deathbed Nembutsu Ritual in Pure Land Buddhism,” in *Religions of Japan in Practice*, ed. George J. Tanabe, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 169. The original passage in the *Guannian famen* may be found at *T* no. 1959, 47:24b21–c28.

42. *NST* 6:378; trans. from Dobbins, “Genshin’s Deathbed Nembutsu Ritual,” 174.

43. *Gokurakuki* 17, *Ōjōden, Hokke genki*, *NST* 7, ed. Inoue Mitsusada and Ōsone Shōsuke (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 29.

44. See, for example, the biography of the elderly woman of the Dainichiji neighborhood, in *Hokke genki* III:120, *NST* 7:204. The author of the *Hokke genki* is Chingen, a monk known to have resided in Yokawa and participated in one of the religious groups that Genshin organized, although he was not a member of the Nijūgo zanmai-e. The work has been translated by Yoshiko K. Dykstra as *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan: The Dainihonkoku Hokekyōkenki of the Monk Chingen* (Osaka: Intercultural Research Institute, Kansai University of Foreign Studies, 1983).

45. *Shōyūki, Zōho shiryō taisei* (hereafter *ST*), 43 vols., ed. Zōho Shiryō Taisei Kankōkai (1965; rpt. Tokyo: Rinsen Shoten, 1975), 46:425.

46. Until 1043, the Nijūgo zanmai-e kept a list of members who were deceased, their death dates, and their age at death, with a total of fifty-one names. This document also contains short biographies of seventeen selected members. One theory holds that the first through the forty-fifth biographies were written by Genshin, while his close disciple Kakuchō recorded the forty-sixth through the fiftieth. Kakuchō’s own biography is number fifty-one. I have relied on the typeset version of this text found in Hirabayashi Moritoku, “Ryōgon’in nijūgo zanmai kesshū kakochō,” *Shoryōbu kiyō* 37 (1985).

47. *Kōyasan Amida shōju raigōzu* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1994), 24.

48. Hirabayashi, “Ryōgon’in nijūgo zanmai kesshū kakochō,” 46.

49. *Ibid.*, 49.

50. *Ibid.*, 50; translation adapted from Robert Rhodes, “Pure Land Practi-

tioner or Lotus Devotee? On the Earliest Biographies of Genshin,” *Japanese Religions* 23 (Jan. 1996), 66.

51. *Wakan rōeishu*, *Ryōjin hishō*, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter *NKBT*) 73, ed. Kawaguchi Hisao and Shida Nobuyoshi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), 201. *Wakan rōeishu* is a collection of poetry compiled in the year 1018.

52. The exact date of *Eiga monogatari*’s composition is unknown. Most scholars today accept that the first thirty chapters achieved their present form not long after 1028, the last date they mention, while the following ones were probably written somewhat later by a different author. The year 1028 is only eleven years after Genshin’s death. For a detailed discussion of the authorship and date of *Eiga monogatari*, see William H. and Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period*, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 1:38. *Eiga monogatari* sometimes refers to and frequently borrows from *Ōjō yōshu*. In this it is unique; no other contemporaneous work shows much evidence of *Ōjō yōshu*’s influence. This suggests that the unknown author of *Eiga monogatari* for some reason had access to a copy of *Ōjō yōshu*.

53. *Eiga monogatari*, *NKBT* 75 and 76, ed. Matsumura Hiroji and Yamanaka Yutaka (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), 76:83; trans. adapted from McCullough and McCullough, *Flowering Fortunes* 2:564–565. Much of *Eiga monogatari*’s description of the *raigōzu* is taken almost verbatim from the “Shōju raigō no raku” section of *Ōjō yōshu*.

54. This situation is discussed in Taguchi Eiichi, “Hōdō kuhon raigōzu chōsa hōkoku,” *Bukkyō geijutsu* 143 (July 1982): 107.

55. Sudō describes this effect in his discussion of his visit to Mt. Kōya to see its famous *Amida shōju raigōzu* (*Kōyasan Amida shōju raigōzu*, 110–111).

56. *Gokurakuki* 16, *NST* 7:28. The text is ambiguous here as to whether the threads were tied to the hands of both images or to Amida only; however, in later examples, the threads are used predominately with Amida images.

57. Hirabayashi, “Ryōgon” in *Nijūgo zanmai kesshū kakochō*, 48.

58. *Ibid.*, 50.

59. Matsumura and Yamanaka, *Eiga monogatari*, *NKBT* 76:87; trans. adapted from McCullough and McCullough, *Flowering Fortunes*, 2:569.

60. McCullough, *Flowering Fortunes*, 2:763.

61. For a discussion of Michinaga’s illnesses and their effect on his religious practices, as well as his death, see Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, “The Eyes of Michinaga in the Light of Pure Land Buddhism,” in *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience*, ed. Matthew T. Kapstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 247–248.

62. *Hokke genki* II:51 and III:99, *NST* 7:119, 181. Dykstra states that Shakumyō’s case represents the “first example in Japanese literature of an Amida devotee holding the five-colored threads . . . tied to the hands of Amida’s image.

...” (*Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan*, 121). In fact, however, Yasutane’s mention of this practice in his *Gokurakuki*, as well as that in the Nijūgo zanmai-e *kakochō* biography of Genshin, predate those in *Hokke genki*.

63. *Goshūi ōjōden* II:15, NST 7:659.

64. NST 7:402n.

65. Kawaguchi and Shida, *Wakan rōeishu*, *Ryōjin hishō*, NKBT 73:429. The *Ryōjin hishō* is a collection of *imayō* compiled by the emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192). The origin of *imayō* is not known. Some think that they were songs of the common people, many of them women. See Yung-Hee Kim, *Songs to Make the Dust Dance: The Ryōjin hishō of Twelfth-Century Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 4–16.

66. “The Lotus Lectures: *Hokke Hakkō* in the Heian Period,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 39, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 393.

67. A discussion of the *Taimadera engi*, as well as a sketch of its *mukaekō* illustration, may be found in Seki Nobuko, “‘Mukaekō Amida zō’ kō II: Taimadera no mukaekō Amida zō,” *Bukkyō geijutsu* 223 (Dec. 1995): 81. For detailed accounts of the modern *mukaekō* ceremony at Taimadera and other temples, see Sarah Horton, *Living Buddhist Statues in Early Medieval and Modern Japan* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 50–58.

68. Hirabayashi, “Ryōgon’in Nijūgo zanmai kesshū kakochō,” 46.

69. *KT* 29:2, 211.

70. Hirabayashi, “Ryōgon’in Nijūgo zanmai kesshū kakochō,” 50; trans. from Rhodes, “Pure Land Practitioner or Lotus Devotee?” 64.

71. NST 7:160; English translation from Dykstra, *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra*, 106, modified.

72. Hieizan Senshūin, ed., *Eshin Sōzu zenshū* (hereafter *ESZ*), 5 vols. (1928; rpt. Kyoto: Shibunkaku 1971) 5:665. The full title of this work is *Enryakuji Shuryōgon’in Genshin Sōzu den*. It is the first full-length separate biography of Genshin.

73. The text of the sign-up sheet is found in *Ryōzen’in kakochō*, *Heian ibun*, ed. Takeuchi Rizō (1964; rpt. Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1967), 11:262–273.

74. Kageyama Haruki, *Hieizanji* (Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1978), 130.

75. See Hayami Tasuku, *Genshin* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988), 211–212.

76. Kōjō, a famous Buddhist sculptor who was active between the years 990 and 1020, is said to be the originator of the *yosegi zukuri* style, and to be the father of Jōchō, the sculptor of the central image of the Hōōdō (Kageyama, *Hieizanji*, 120–121).

77. The character here is actually small (*shō*) rather than north (*hoku*). Hayami, however, states that this is probably a copyist’s error. This would account for the contradiction with the earlier statement that three three-meter images were enshrined there. In this case, the three images probably would

have been a central one, one to the south, and one to the north. Hayami speculates that they may have been lined up with their backs facing the west wall. He notes that Kedaiin would have had to be a fairly large structure in order to accommodate these images, although the Ōjōin mentioned in the Nijūgo zanmai-e texts appears to have been a much smaller structure (Hayami, *Genshin*, 210).

78. GR, *Shakke bu* 22:516. Kageyama, an expert on the history of Mt. Hiei's geography, speculates that Kedaiin was located on what is now Enryakuji's Hippōkan, the former site of Eshin'in. This is to the southeast of Ryōgon'in, which is now called the Konpon Chūdō, as the *Genshin Sōzu den* states. In addition, Kageyama surmises that after Genshin's death, Kedaiin became a *meidō* (image hall) for him, or what came to be known as Eshin'in (Kageyama, *Hiei-zanji*, 130).

79. Hirabayashi, "Ryōgon'in Nijūgo zanmai kesshū kakochō," 43.

80. *Jūroku wasan* may be found in *ESZ* 1:641–660, and *Raigō wasan*, in *ESZ* 1:661–666.

81. Satō, *Eizan Jōdokyō no kenkyū*, 149.

82. *NST* 7:160.

83. Hirabayashi, "Ryōgon'in Nijūgo zanmai kesshū kakochō," 46.

84. Matsumura and Yamanaka, *Eiga monogatari*, vol. 1, *NKBT* 75:45; trans. from McCullough and McCullough, *Flowering Fortunes*, 2:513. Unrin'in was a prominent temple on the outskirts of the capital. It is now in Murasakino, Kita-ku.

85. Gangōji Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed., *Nihon Jōdo mandara no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūkōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1987), 262

86. *Suisaki*, *Shōryaku* 4, *ST* 8:127.

87. Gangōji Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed., *Nihon Jōdo mandara no kenkyū*, 262.

88. *Konjaku monogatari shū* is a thirty-one-fascicle collection of *setsuwa*, compiled at some point after 1106. The compiler is unknown.

89. *Konjaku monogatari shū*, vol. 3, *NKBT* 24, ed. Yamada Yoshio et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961), 375–377.

90. In the modern *mukaekō*, as practiced at Taimadera, the procession moves from the main hall to a temporary structure that has been designated "Shabadō," presumably based on the *Konjaku monogatari shū* account.

91. *Zoku honchō ōjōden* 15, *NST* 7:239.

92. Gangōji Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed., *Nihon Jōdo mandara no kenkyū*, 260.

93. *Shūi ōjōden* III:26, *NST* 7:383. Yoshidadera was located in Kyoto's Kurodani.

94. *T* no. 2725, 84:882b4.

95. *T* 84:880b17.

96. Sudō, *Kōyasan Amida shōju raigōzu*, 93, n.59. The verses are scattered throughout the text of *Ōjōkō shiki*.

97. *ST* 11:388.

98. *NST* 7:658.

99. Taiji 2 (1127), 6/23, *ST* 13:312. This entry refers to it by the term *shōkō*, which was not commonly used.

100. Sudō, *Kōyasan Amida shōju raigōzu*, 91.

101. Tanabe Saburōsuke, *Gyōdō men, Nihon no bijutsu* 185 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1981), 58.

102. *Ibid.*, 2.

103. *Ibid.*, 30.

104. *Goshūi ōjōden* II:4, *NST* 7:655.

105. Seki Nobuko, “‘Mukaekō Amida zō’ kō IV: Mukaekō Amida zō zōryū no haikai to Jōdokyō geijutsu ni ataeta eikyō,” *Bukkyō geijutsu* 228 (Sept. 1996): 83.

106. Seki, “‘Mukaekō Amida zō’ kō II: Taimadera no mukaekō Amida zō,” *Bukkyō geijutsu* 223 (Dec. 1995): 92.

107. For more on this issue, see Sarah Horton, “The Influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* in Late Tenth- and Early Eleventh-Century Japan” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31, no. 1 (2004): 29–54.

With the Help of “Good Friends”

Deathbed Ritual Practices in Early Medieval Japan

JACQUELINE I. STONE

Child of the Buddha, do you realize that now is your last thought? This single reflection [on the Buddha] at death outweighs the karmic acts of a hundred years. If this instant should pass you by, rebirth [in *samsāra*] will be unavoidable. Now is precisely the time. Reflect on the Buddha single-mindedly, and you will surely be born on a seven-jewelled lotus pedestal in the pond of eight virtues in the subtle and wondrous Pure Land of Utmost Bliss in the west.

—Genshin

WITH SUCH WORDS as these, suggests the monk Genshin (942–1017), the dying should be exhorted to focus their minds on the Buddha Amida (Skt. Amitābha, Amitāyus), in order to escape the round of rebirth and instead achieve birth in the Pure Land (*ōjō*). Genshin’s treatise *Ōjō yōshū* (Essentials of Pure Land birth), completed in 985, has already been introduced in Chapter 1 by Sarah Horton. In addition to its role in popularizing Pure Land devotion, it is famous for its detailed instructions—the first ever compiled in Japan—on Buddhist deathbed practice (*rinjū gyōgi*). The form of deathbed practice described in *Ōjō yōshū* soon gained popularity in monastic circles and spread to lay elites and also commoners.

Genshin’s recommendations for deathbed practice marked the entry into Japanese Buddhist discourse of a concern with dying in a state of right-mindfulness and belief in the power of one’s last thoughts, ritually focused, to determine one’s postmortem fate. In the logic of deathbed contemplation, the moment of death was constructed as a liminal realm, transcending ordinary moral calculus of sin and merit, when a lifetime of wrongdoing could potentially be reversed and even

sinful men and women could achieve liberation. Horton's chapter has already suggested the immense hope conveyed by belief in this possibility of deathbed salvation. This hope was linked to broader arguments extending the possibility of birth in the Pure Land to "evil persons" (*akunin ōjō*) and gave promise of liberation even in an age widely thought to be degenerate and sinful. However, birth in the Pure Land was by no means a certain thing, and the discourse surrounding deathbed practices had its dark side, for the last moment was seen as pregnant, not only with immense salvific potential, but also with grave danger. If even a sinful individual who properly focused his mind on the Buddha at death might thereby reach the Pure Land, by the same token, it was thought that even a virtuous person, by a single distracted thought at the last moment, could negate the merit of a lifetime's devotion and fall into the evil realms. To die while unconscious, delirious, or wracked by pain thus came to be greatly feared, and the importance of ritual control over one's last moments was increasingly emphasized.¹ This essay will trace the development of written instructions for deathbed practice from Genshin's *Ōjō yōshū* on, focusing on the latter Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura (1185–1333) periods; their appropriation across sectarian lines and by an expanding range of social groups; their increasing emphasis on the difficulties of achieving right concentration at the last moment and consequent promotion of the role of the *zenchishiki* or "good friend," the person presiding over the deathbed ritual scene; and the eventual routinization of deathbed practices with their assimilation to the standardized funeral observances that began to emerge in late medieval and early modern times.

Deathbed Practices in *Ōjō yōshū* and the Samādhi Society of Twenty-five

Genshin's instructions for deathbed practice in *Ōjō yōshū* consist of two parts. The first part draws on the work of Chinese predecessors to explain how the dying should be cared for and encouraged in their final meditations.² Here Genshin quotes a passage from a "Chinese tradition" appearing in a Vinaya commentary by Daoxuan (596–667) in a section on "Attending to the Sick and Sending off the Dead," which purports to describe how the terminally ill were treated at the Jetavana monastery in India in Śākyamuni Buddha's time. According to its prescriptions, a dying person is to be removed to a "chapel of impermanence" (*mujōin*), so that the sight of his familiar surroundings and robe, bowl, and other possessions will not generate thoughts of attachment. A standing buddha image should be installed facing west; the sick person should be placed behind the image and made to grasp a

five-colored pennant tied to the image's hand to help him generate thoughts of following the Buddha to his pure realm. Those in attendance are to burn incense, scatter flowers, and promptly remove any vomit or excrement.³ Alternatively, Genshin cites the recommendation of Daoshi (d. 668?) that the buddha image should face east, and the sick person should be placed facing the image.⁴ If no separate hall is available, Genshin says, one should simply have the sick person face west, burn incense, scatter flowers, and offer various encouragements. Or one may have the dying person face a fully adorned buddha image.

Genshin also cites the instructions for deathbed practice given by the Pure Land master Shandao (613–681), who advises that dying persons should be made to face west, visualize the coming of the Buddha Amida to escort them to the Pure Land, and continually recite Amida's name. If the dying see visions of Amida and his holy retinue, they should describe this, and those in attendance should write down what they report. If, on the other hand, they see images of painful punishment, their companions should chant the *nenbutsu* with them and help them to perform repentance so that their sins may be eradicated. Relatives and other visitors who have recently consumed meat, alcohol, or the five pungent roots should be refused access, lest the dying lose correct concentration, thus falling prey to demons who will cause them to fall into the evil paths.⁵ Genshin also draws upon the words of Daochuo (562–645), who comments on the difficulty, in one's last moments, of sustaining ten reflections on Amida, deemed the minimum necessary to achieve *ōjō*:

To have ten uninterrupted reflections in succession would not seem difficult. But most unenlightened individuals have a mind as untamed as a wild horse, a consciousness as restless as a monkey.... Once the winds of dissolution arise [at the moment of death], a hundred pains will gather in the body. If you have not trained prior to this time, how can you assume that you will be able to contemplate the Buddha on that occasion? Each person should thus make a pact in advance with three to five people of like conviction. Whenever the time of death approaches [for any of them], they should offer each other encouragement. They should chant the name of Amida for the dying person, desire that person's birth in the Pure Land, and continue chanting to induce [in him] the ten moments of reflection.⁶

The “ten moments of reflection” here refers, on one hand, to the famous eighteenth vow of Amida, which promises birth in his Pure Land to all who aspire to this goal with sincerity and call him to mind “even ten times”;⁷ it also refers to the *Contemplation Sūtra*'s claims that even

an evil person, if he encounters a good friend (*zenchishiki*) who instructs him at the hour of death so that he is able to sustain ten thoughts of Amida, shall, with each thought, erase the sins of eight billion kalpas and be born in Amida's Pure Land.⁸ Exactly how these ten thoughts should be understood was a matter of considerable debate and was embedded in a larger controversy over the respective merits of the contemplative visualization of Amida or the chanting of his name. Genshin took "ten continuous *nenbutsu*" to mean reflecting upon Amida, aided by the invocation of his name in the formula "*Namu Amida butsu*." While Genshin's approach to Pure Land practice focuses on visualization and contemplation, he also held that, under the liminal influence of approaching death, the chanted *nenbutsu* becomes vastly more powerful than it is at ordinary times.⁹ After citing his Chinese predecessors, Genshin then proceeds to offer his own recommendations for encouragement to the dying. These comprise the second part of the *rinjū gyōgi* section of *Ōjō yōshū* and consist of ten exhortations, centering upon visualization of Amida's physical marks, his radiant light, and his descent, together with his holy retinue, to escort the practitioner to the Pure Land.

Genshin's interest in ritualized deathbed practice leading to birth in the Pure Land had Japanese as well as continental antecedents. For example, Senkan (919–984), a Tendai monk of the Onjōji line and an earlier Japanese Pure Land thinker, had expressed in a written prayer his hope that

[a]t the time of death, may I be at ease in body and mind, receive Amida's welcoming descent, and achieve the highest level of birth on a lotus pedestal in the Pure Land. And how could I wish this for myself alone? May all beings throughout the dharma realm, in their last hours, having known the approach of death seven days in advance, distance their minds from perversions and dwell in right-mindfulness, encounter the teachings of a good friend, chant ten *nenbutsu*, and, freed from all bodily and mental pain, alike be born in Amida's Pure Land.¹⁰

In addition to prayers for a good death, such as Senkan's, we also find notices of individuals prior to Genshin's time dying in a ritualized fashion that expressed their aspirations for *ōjō*. Early tenth-century sources record, for example, that Emperor Seiwa (d. 880) had monks attend him at the end and chant the Diamond Wheel (*kongōrin*) dhāraṇī, while he himself sat upright, facing west with his hands forming the meditation mudrā (*jōin*).¹¹ The former minister of the right, Fujiwara no Yoshimi (d. 867), is said to have died "seated upright, facing west and forming the fundamental mudrā of the Buddha Amida," and the

councilor Fujiwara no Yasunori (d. 895) is similarly said to have died with undisturbed mind, facing west and contemplating Amida Buddha.¹² The biography of the great Tendai master Ennin (Jikaku Daishi, d. 793–864) says that, at the time of his death, he washed his face and donned a clean robe, burnt incense, placed his palms together, and faced west; he also had his disciple Enchō chant, “I take refuge in and worship Amida of complete awakening” (*kimyō chōrai Mida shukaku*) while other disciples recited the names of various buddhas and bodhisattvas.¹³ While the biography certainly postdates Ennin, it would nonetheless appear to precede *Ōjō yōshū*. And Enshō (d. 959 or 963), chief abbot of Enryakuji, also mentioned in Horton’s essay, is said to have died holding a cord tied to the hand of an image of the Buddha Amida, as Genshin had recommended.¹⁴ Such notices suggest that embryonic forms of deathbed ritual practice were being practiced in Japan even before *Ōjō yōshū* was compiled. Genshin’s text, then, did not initiate deathbed practice so much as it helped to systematize, elaborate, and promote a practice that had already begun to emerge.

As Horton has explained in Chapter 1, the deathbed practices described in *Ōjō yōshū* were first formally adopted by the Nijūgo zanmai-e or Samādhi Society of Twenty-five, a *nenbutsu* association based at the Yokawa retreat on Mt. Hiei, with which Genshin was closely associated. The Society’s founding oath reads in part:

We pledge together to be “good friends” to one another and, at life’s last moment, to help one other contemplate the Buddha [Amida]. We hereby set the number of our Society at twenty-five. If one among us should fall ill, then by the power of the vow uniting us, without concern for whether the day be auspicious or not, we shall go to him and inquire after him and encourage [his deathbed contemplation]. And if he happens to achieve birth in [the Pure Land of] Utmost Bliss, then—whether by the power of his own vow or by relying on the Buddha’s supernatural powers, whether in a dream or in waking reality—he shall so communicate this to the Society. Or, if he has fallen into the evil paths, he shall communicate this as well. Our society shall at regular times perform together with like mind those practices leading to the Pure Land. In particular, on the evening of the fifteenth day of each month, we shall cultivate the samādhi of mindfulness of the Buddha (*nenbutsu zanmai*) and pray that we may be able to complete ten reflections [on Amida] in our last moments.¹⁵

Two extant sets of regulations for the Society stipulate that the members should devote the fifteenth of each month to *nenbutsu* practice

with the aim of achieving birth in the Pure Land; recite the mantra of radiant light (*kōmyō shingon*) for empowering sand to be sprinkled on the corpses of deceased members; nurse any members of the society who fall sick, removing them to a separate chapel called the Ōjōin (hall for birth in the Pure Land), to be established for this purpose; and establish a gravesite for members and perform funerals, centering around *nenbutsu* practice.¹⁶ The observances of the Nijūgo zanmai-e thus spanned a continuum from ordinary practice to funerary rites, within which practice at the moment of death played a pivotal role.

Deathbed protocols of the sort described in Genshin's *Ōjō yōshū* and practiced by the Nijūgo zanmai-e represent the earliest formal articulation in Japan of much older, similar practices attested on the East Asian mainland; they also have resonances, if not direct historical connections, with the traditional role of Buddhist monks and nuns in nursing the sick among them.¹⁷ Genshin's instructions in *Ōjō yōshū* in particular quickly became a model for conducting deathbed practices in Heian Japan. In a very early reference to the text, Genshin's disciple Kakuchō (d. 1034), who was active in the Nijūgo zanmai-e, recommends using its section on deathbed ritual to encourage and instruct practitioners during their final illness.¹⁸ This *rinjū gyōgi* section of the *Ōjō yōshū* circulated in a somewhat modified, *kana* version as an independent text.¹⁹ It also seems to have been read aloud on occasion to the dying. For example, when one member of the Society, Shōkin (a.k.a. Shōnen, d. 1015), fell ill, he reportedly "requested that worldly matters not be discussed in his presence but solely had the *rinjū gyōgi* section of the *Ōjō yōshū* read to him, learning its admonitions." On the night of his death, he again had his attendants read it to him, along with the "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathāgata" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and also had them chant the *nenbutsu*.²⁰ Within twenty years of the *Ōjō yōshū*'s appearance, hagiographies, literary sources, and court diaries begin to report individuals dying in accord with its prescriptions. The famous account of the death of the courtier Fujiwara no Michinaga depicted in *Eiga monogatari* is clearly based on *Ōjō yōshū*.²¹ As Horton has noted in her chapter, *ōjōden* or biographical accounts of those said to have achieved birth in the Pure Land frequently describe the ritually correct death of devout persons who die in the posture of meditation, facing toward the west, or who hold cords tied to the hand of a buddha image. Similar references occur in diaries of the court nobility. Prince Sukehito (d. 1119) is said to have passed away chanting the *nenbutsu* while holding a five-colored cord attached to an image of Amida; Nishi no Okata (d. 1120), adoptive mother of the courtier Fujiwara no Munetada, also died with the colored cords in her

hand.²² Some later examples from literature include the former imperial consort Kenreimon'in, whose exemplary death is described at the end of *Tale of the Heike*, or the defeated commander Taira no Shigehira, in the same epic, who is allowed to hold a cord tied to the hand of a buddha image and chant ten *nenbutsu* before the executioner lops off his head.²³ In addition to explicitly Buddhist soteriological rationales for deathbed practice, among the Heian nobility, the removal of dying persons to the *mujōin*—in aristocratic practice, often a private chapel or room at a temple or monastery where the dying individual might have patronage connections—also served the pragmatic purpose of isolating and confining the defilement of death, which had to be rigorously avoided by those involved in court ceremonials.²⁴

The historicity of accounts of exemplary deaths is not always easy to evaluate. For example, the diary of the courtier Fujiwara no Sanesuke (957–1046), a contemporary of Michinaga, describes him as dying in acute discomfort, plagued by painful boils, occasional delirium, and loss of bowel control—thus suggesting that the account given in *Eiga monogatari* may be somewhat idealized.²⁵ What we can say, however, is that the prescriptions in the “deathbed practices” section of Genshin’s *Ōjō yōshū* quickly became normative in elite circles for what an ideal death, one leading to liberation, was *supposed* to look like. At the same time, they formed the prototype for a number of subsequent *rinjū gyōgisho*, texts of deathbed ritual instruction or “deathbed manuals,” as they might be termed. Such works were compiled in considerable numbers from the latter Heian period through early modern times; however, the eleventh through thirteenth centuries seem to have witnessed the greatest innovation in instructions for deathbed practice. Early modern *rinjū gyōgisho* in large measure represent reworkings of this earlier material, and the present essay will focus on developments in the Heian and Kamakura periods. The majority of these texts adopt the basic features of Genshin’s instructions: the removal of the dying to a separate place; the enshrinement of a buddha image with a cord fastened to its hand for the dying person to hold; the offerings of flowers and incense; the shielding of the dying person from talk of worldly affairs or the intrusion of those likely to arouse strong feelings, either of love or aversion; and the need above all to create a quiet and dignified atmosphere conducive to contemplation in one’s last hours. Genshin’s exhortation to the dying person is frequently quoted: “You should not visualize any form except the features of the Buddha. You should not hear any sounds except the Buddha’s words of dharma. You should not speak of anything except the true teachings of the Buddha. You should not think of anything except birth in the Pure

Land.”²⁶ However, instructions for deathbed practice after *Ōjō yōshū* also reflect new developments, which will be summarized in the next three sections.

Appropriation across Traditions

Because of the popularity of *Ōjō yōshū* in later ages, Genshin has often been remembered primarily as a Pure Land teacher, and the sort of deathbed rituals he introduced have been assumed to be something peculiar to Pure Land Buddhism. However, scholarship has sometimes been too quick to read back into medieval times the clear-cut sectarian divisions of the early modern period and beyond. Aspiration for *ōjō* was a generic Buddhist goal, and the basic features of Genshin’s instructions for deathbed practice were soon assimilated across institutional and sectarian divides, becoming adapted to the specific practices, iconography, and teachings of multiple Buddhist traditions. An early example is the *Rinjū gyōgi chūki* (Notes on deathbed practice) of Tanshū (1066–1120?), a monk learned in Hossō doctrine and with close ties to the Nara temples Kōfukuji and Saidaiji. Tanshū explicitly cites the instructions of the “bishop of Yokawa” (Yokawa Sōzu, that is, Genshin), assimilating them within a Nara Buddhist framework. Like a number of texts on deathbed ritual compiled subsequently to *Ōjō yōshū*, *Rinjū gyōgi chūki* takes the form of a series of articles of instruction (thirteen, in this case). Tanshū allows for aspiration to realms other than Amida’s western Pure Land: if the dying person seeks birth in the Tuṣita heaven, he says, then an image of Maitreya should be substituted for that of Amida, and the dying person should visualize being born there. If death is not imminent, Tanshū suggests that a devotee of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*jikyōsha*) may expound its meaning for the dying person, or a companion in practice may read the *rishubun* section of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Reading the *rishubun* to the dying person would form a major component of deathbed ritual instructions with an esoteric orientation.²⁷ The dying person should also be encouraged to recite the bodhisattva precepts, or they may be recited for him, as an unrivalled source of merit. Tanshū further recommends performing the repentance rite of the bodhisattva Fugen (Skt. Samantabhadhra) to remove karmic hindrances that manifest at the time of death. His list of buddhas and bodhisattvas on whom the dying may rely for help in achieving right-mindfulness at the end include Śākyamuni, Maitreya, Yakushi, Fugen, Monju, Jizō, Kokūzō, Kannon, and Fudō.²⁸ Tanshū appears to have consulted Genshin’s Chinese sources and added excerpts from them to his *Chūki* that are not found in *Ōjō yōshū*. For example, he quotes Daoxuan to the effect that all the good practices that the dy-

ing person has performed—such as doctrinal study, meditation, sūtra recitation, teaching others, or commissioning buddha images and stūpas—should be enumerated and praised by those attending at the deathbed, in order to inspire that person's joy and confidence. Later deathbed ritual instructions sometimes mandate that lists of the dying person's prior good deeds should be written out and read, and *ōjōden* accounts include examples of people who died holding in their hands such lists of their virtuous achievements.²⁹

An important group of medieval deathbed ritual texts was produced within the Shingon *mikkyō* or esoteric tradition and represent that strand of thought retrospectively termed *himitsu nenbutsu*, or Pure Land esotericism. These texts assimilate Genshin's instructions to a *mikkyō* standpoint, typically identifying the deathbed *nenbutsu* with some form of ritual empowerment, and birth in a pure land, with realization of the nonduality of Amida and the *shingon* practitioner.³⁰ The earliest of these is the eight-article *Byōchū shugyōki* (Notes on practice during illness) by Jichihan (also Jitsuhan or Jippan, c. 1089–1144), who for a time was Tanshū's teacher.³¹ Jichihan interprets Genshin's instructions for deathbed visualization from an esoteric perspective. As noted above, in his own articles of exhortation to the dying, Genshin had stressed contemplation of Amida Buddha's radiant light; this light, emitted from the curl of white hair between Amida's brows, Genshin asserted, will envelop the dying practitioner in the Buddha's compassion, eradicate his sins, focus his contemplation, and thus enable him to achieve birth in the Pure Land. Jichihan for his part recommends that the white curl be visualized as a transformation of the letter *hūm*, endowed with Amida's four inseparable mandalas. He also equates the name "Amida" with the three fundamental meanings of the letter "A": *A* indicating the originally unborn; *mi*, the non-self that is the great self; and *da*, moment-to-moment accordance with suchness. Jichihan may have been the first to present the deathbed *nenbutsu* as a form of empowerment or ritual union with the three secrets of the cosmic Buddha (*sanmitsu kaji*): the practitioner's reverent posture corresponds to the secret of the Buddha's body; the chanting of his name, to the secret of his speech; and the contemplation of the name's meaning, to the secret of his mind. Jichihan also recommended reliance on the esoteric deity Fudō Myōō to protect the practitioner and thwart the obstructions of both karmic hindrances and demonic influences at the moment of death. This role of Fudō as protector in the hour of death would become a standard feature of esoteric *rinjū gyōgi* texts. Like Genshin's *Ōjō yōshū* and Tanshū's *Rinjū gyōgi chūki*, Jichihan's text urges repentance to remove karmic hindrances; as specific forms of repentance, he suggests giving away one's

clothing and other possessions or chanting mantras such as the Superlative Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Crown (Skt. *uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī*, Jpn. Sonshō *darani*), the *kōmyō shingon*, or the name of Amida. The monk Kakuban (1095–1143), later revered as the founder of “new doctrine” (*shingō*) Shingon, drew explicitly on Jichihan's *Byōchū shugyōki* in developing his own recommendations for deathbed practice. His nine-article *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* (Collection of secret essentials for life's end) also equates the *nenbutsu* with esoteric three secrets practice for union with the cosmic Buddha. He writes:

Amida is Dainichi's function as wisdom. Dainichi is Amida's essence as principle. . . . When one contemplates in this way, then, without leaving the Sahā world, one is immediately born in [the pure land of] Utmost Bliss. One's own person enters Amida and, without transformation of Amida, becomes Dainichi. One's own person emerges from Dainichi; this is the subtle contemplation for realizing buddhahood with this very body.³²

Both Jichihan and Kakuban stress union with the Buddha as the focus of the *shingon* practitioner's deathbed contemplation; in other words, the deathbed rite is recast in the model of an esoteric empowerment rite for realizing buddhahood through union with a deity. The deathbed scene in Kakuban's instructions is even arranged in a mandalic structure: four *zenchishiki* who assist the dying person's *nenbutsu* take up their positions around him so that together they reproduce the configuration of the five wisdom buddhas, the dying person occupying the central position of Dainichi.³³

An esoteric approach to deathbed practice is also seen in the *Rinjū yōjin no koto* (Admonitions for the time of death) by the Shingon master Dōhan (1184–1252), dated 1234. Dōhan, too, emphasizes deathbed contemplation of the letter A: “The syllable A as existence arising through conditions corresponds to birth. The syllable A as the emptiness of nonarising corresponds to death. Thus dying in one place and being born in another is nothing other than the syllable A. . . . This is why Vairocana takes this single syllable as his mantra.”³⁴ As deathbed invocations, Dōhan recommends reciting essential passages of the *Amida sūtra* or a range of esoteric mantras. One intriguing aspect of his ritual suggestions is that the practitioner face an image of the Shingon patriarch Kūkai (774–835) and invoke his compassionate aid in achieving birth in a pure land.³⁵

With the passage of time, instructions for deathbed practice also appear within the so-called “single practice” schools. Ryōchū (1199–1287), third patriarch of the Chinzei lineage of Hōnen's Jōdo sect, em-

phasizes in his *Kanbyō yōjinshō* (Admonitions in caring for the sick) the efficacy of simply chanting the *nenbutsu* at the last moment with faith in Amida's vow.³⁶ And in the early modern period, works appear in the Nichiren tradition stressing the unique deathbed efficacy of chanting the title or *daimoku* of the *Lotus Sūtra*.³⁷ The specific *honzon* to be enshrined at the deathbed scene, the texts to be read aloud to encourage the dying, and the incantations to be performed differ from one Buddhist tradition to another; so do understandings of the nature of the postmortem liberation being sought, which is variously represented as the realization of buddhahood or birth in a particular pure land or other superior realm. But the notion that a person's last hours should be ritually managed, as well as the basic techniques for so doing, cut across all divisions of "old" and "new," "exoteric" and "esoteric," in which we are accustomed to thinking of medieval Japanese Buddhism.

Elaboration, Interpretation, and the Production of Specialized Knowledge

Another characteristic of medieval deathbed manuals is an increasing elaboration, over time, of elements mentioned only briefly in Gen-shin's instructions. This reflects both an increased mining of Chinese Buddhist canonical sources for relevant passages and also, it would appear, an accumulation of both practical knowledge and specialized interpretation. For example, citing Chinese precedents, *Ōjō yōshū* says simply that the dying should be removed to a separate chapel (*mujojin*) or room to avoid the feelings of attachment aroused by the sight of familiar possessions and surroundings and be encouraged to hold five-colored cords affixed to the hand of a buddha image, which—depending on the source—may face either west or east. Later deathbed ritual instructions, however, discuss at length the arrangement of this separate room or chapel; how one should determine when the move is to be made and what advance preparations are necessary; the categories of attachment, whether two or three, from which the dying must strive to separate themselves by this relocation; how this transition to a liminal space should be understood; and how the dying should be cared for.

Tanshū already goes well beyond *Ōjō yōshū* in discussing advance preparations. From the time one becomes ill, he says, one should concentrate on accumulating merit. One should offer food, drink, and clothing to the three treasures and to the poor and ill; one should offer pure flax oil for lamps to the Buddha and to temples and stūpas. Sounding a note that would be echoed in several subsequent *rinjū gyōgi* texts, Tanshū warns against the use of *kitō* or prayer rituals to

extend life as a form of delusive self-attachment. “The span of this lifetime is fixed for everyone. If such prayers were efficacious, then why would anyone die?”³⁸ Jichihan and Kakuban, on the other hand, both recommend that if it is possible to prolong one’s life, one should seek medical help for illness—not out of self-love, but to extend one’s opportunity for Buddhist practice. However, once it becomes clear that death is inevitable, one should immediately cease all such efforts and single-mindedly practice for one’s last moments.³⁹ In contrast to the idealized accounts in *ōjōden* of devotees who foresee their death to the day and hour, some medieval *rinjū gyōgi* texts, beginning with Kakuban’s *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, frankly acknowledge that the approach of death may not be quite so obvious and recommend astrology or other forms of divination to determine whether one’s illness will indeed prove fatal.⁴⁰

As for the removal to the separate chapel, Kakuban says it expresses the intention to “abandon this impure, *Sahā* world and achieve the Pure Land of Utmost Bliss.” It is also time to part from one’s relations; one’s last wishes should already have been communicated. One’s only associates should now be three to five *zenchishiki*—presumably following Daochuo’s instructions, cited by Genshin in his *Ōjō yōshū*, that anyone intent on achieving the Pure Land should “make a pact in advance with three to five people of like conviction.” One should leave wealth, reputation, and family behind, just as Śākyamuni Buddha left his father’s palace, or as Kūkai entered into perpetual meditation, becoming truly “homeless” (*shukke*) in both mind and body.⁴¹ Kakuban identifies the dying person’s move to the *mujoin* with both the literal departure from this world that is death and the spirit of world renunciation inherent in the act of taking monastic vows. This homologizing of death to departure from the household life was also echoed in the practice, fairly widespread among Heian aristocrats, of deathbed tonsure (*rinjū jukai*, *rinjū shukke*), which was thought to aid one in the postmortem state.⁴² A set of deathbed instructions contained in *Kōyōshū* (Collection of filial piety), attributed to Kakuban but probably a Kamakura-period text, recommends that the dying look upon the move to the *mujoin* as leaving the burning house of the threefold world. If death is not imminent, the transition should be made at an auspicious day and time, and on arriving, the sick should wash their hands, rinse their mouth, and invoke the aid of all buddhas and bodhisattvas in escaping birth and death.⁴³

Virtually all of these texts follow *Ōjō yōshū* in recommending the burning of incense and scattering of flowers to create a dignified atmosphere, as well as the need to screen visitors, especially those who have recently consumed alcohol or any of the “five pungent roots,” and to

protect the dying person from the sight of objects or persons liable to arouse strong emotions. According to Genshin's text, the purpose of moving the dying to a separate place was to forestall the delusive feelings of attachment that may be provoked by the sight of familiar possessions and surroundings. This theme, too, undergoes considerable elaboration in later *rinjū gyōgisho*. Tanshū warns against the use of ornate clothes or bedding in the sickroom, lest they give rise to attachment. Two kinds of attachment, he says, bind people to the samsaric world: attachment to objects—such as possessions, wife, and children—and attachments to self; the dying should reflect on the impurity of the body and evanescence of worldly treasures.⁴⁴ The Pure Land teacher Ryōchū advises that, should no appropriate place be available, the dying person may remain in his own lodging cell, but it should be arranged in a manner different from usual, and he should be made to lie down before a buddha image.⁴⁵ *Kōyōshū* recommends for the death chamber a room that receives the light of the setting sun; if such is not available, a monastic cell or room in a lay household will suffice, but it should be purified and refurbished.⁴⁶ To the two categories of attachment warned against in Tanshū's deathbed instructions, the *Kōyōshū*'s compiler adds a third: that of attachment to rebirth in one or another of the various samsaric realms that may appear in visions to the dying.⁴⁷ This text is particularly graphic in warning against the dangers of thoughts of attachment in one's last moments. "In the past, there have been cases of flies or ants appearing in a dead person's face. These insects were produced from the person's body because of lingering self-attachment. There have also been persons who turned into white worms that emerge from a woman's nose; these are men who died with lingering attachment to their wives." Even sacred objects can become the focus of delusive clinging; a case in point is "people who wander through saṃsāra because of their heedless love of ritual implements (*butsugu*) or objects of worship (*honzon*), thinking that by the power of these things they shall reach [the Pure Land of] Utmost Bliss. No matter what roots of great good you may have planted, never let your mind adhere [in your last hours to the objects of attachment]!"⁴⁸

Once established in the chapel or room where he is to die, the sick person is to face west, either sitting up, if he prefers, or lying down with his head to the north, as the historical Buddha Śākyamuni is said to have done. As noted above, Genshin had cited variant opinions as to whether the buddha image should be installed facing west with the dying person placed behind it, as though following the Buddha to the Pure Land, or whether the image should face east, with the dying person directly facing it. Kakuban takes this to be a matter of personal

choice; the buddha image facing west represents the dying person being embraced and drawn up (*injō*) into the Pure Land, while the image facing east symbolizes the coming of the Buddha to receive him (*raigō*).⁴⁹ Ryōchū stresses that the image should be of a height such that the dying person can readily gaze at it while lying down.⁵⁰ *Kōyōshū* recommends positioning the buddha image five to six *shaku* from the dying person as an appropriate distance.⁵¹ Use of the five-colored cords also elicits considerable discussion in these texts. Kakuban says they should be prepared in advance and should measure one *jō* and two *shaku* in length each, totaling nine *shaku*. There is a method of preparing them, he notes, which should be conducted by someone who has received esoteric initiation (*kanjō*).⁵² The unknown compiler of *Kōyōshū* specifies that their threads should be spun in a purified room by a woman approaching eighty (and thus, presumably, free from sexual impurity),⁵³ dyed the five colors by a holy man (*hijiri*), and woven under the supervision of someone who has received esoteric initiation; this method is not to be disseminated to people at large.⁵⁴ Such injunctions suggest that these five-colored cords were the same as those sometimes employed in esoteric rites (*mikkyō shuhō*) of the same period, to demarcate the altar space or for other ritual purposes.⁵⁵ According to esoteric ritual instructions, such cords were to be woven of the finest threads, purified in perfumed water, and woven by a prepubescent boy or girl, or alternatively, by an aged nun, while the ritualist was to empower the threads of each color with the corresponding mantras of the five buddhas.⁵⁶

By reading medieval Japanese deathbed ritual texts chronologically, we can see in such elaborations the gradual production and accumulation of a body of specialized knowledge, both theoretical and practical, concerning deathbed practice. This development is closely related to another major characteristic of post-Genshin medieval *rinjū gyōgi* texts: the emergence of the individual known as the *kanbyō* (“one who attends the sick”) or more commonly the *zenchishiki* as a deathbed ritual specialist.

The Role of the *zenchishiki*

In general Buddhist usage, a *zenchishiki* (Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*, “good friend”) is simply a dharma teacher, one who leads another on the path of practice. But in medieval *rinjū gyōgi* texts, the *zenchishiki* (or simply *chishiki*) is specifically the one in charge of the deathbed scene, and the need for his presence and expertise is continually underscored by an emphasis on how difficult it is to maintain right thoughts at the crucial last moment, as well as the fearful consequences of not doing

so. This emphasis can already be seen emerging in Tanshū's eleventh-century *Rinjū gyōgi chūki*:

When one falls ill and approaches death, everything escapes one's control. . . . The winds of dissolution move through one like sharp swords, wracking one's body and mind. . . . The eyes no longer discern color and shape, the ears do not hear sound; one cannot move hands or feet or exercise the organs of sense. Even someone who is expecting this will find it hard to maintain right-mindedness; all the more so, those of feeble attainments! . . . Good or evil recompense [in the life to come] depends on one's single thought at the last moment. . . . Those who lose the advantage of this moment are very close to hell.⁵⁷

Read chronologically, medieval *rinjū gyōgi* texts suggest that, at least by their compilers, the correct performance of the *zenchishiki* as a deathbed ritual specialist gradually came to be seen as equally and in fact even more important than that of the dying person in ensuring that individual's successful negotiation of the final moment and achievement of birth in the Pure Land. Following Daochuo's recommendation, cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, that the practitioner should "make a pact in advance with three to five people of like conviction," several medieval *rinjū gyōgisho* recommend the presence of three to five *zenchishiki*; some, such as Kakuban's *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* or Ryōchū's *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, indicate a specific division of ritual and nursing tasks among several such individuals. In general, the *zenchishiki* was responsible for the physical requirements of nursing and for exhorting the dying in a proper attitude, such as "loathing this defiled world and aspiring to the Pure Land" (*onri edo gongu jōdo*) or maintaining their mental focus in the face of physical pain. He—the *zenchishiki* was usually a "he," a point addressed below—was responsible for reading religious texts to instruct the dying; for leading and maintaining the pitch and rhythm of the chanting that, regardless of its content, was central to virtually all deathbed practice; for interpreting the visions of the dying and warding off malevolent influences, including possessing spirits; for reading corporeal signs presaging the dying person's postmortem fate, and, if necessary, intervening ritually; and sometimes for conducting postmortem rites. Let us touch here on a few of these aspects.

Later Heian- and Kamakura-period deathbed ritual texts suggest a cumulative hands-on experience with nursing the sick and dying, not seen in *Ōjō yōshū*. Ryōchū's *Kanbyō yōjinshō* is especially detailed on the subject of nursing. Ryōchū recommends that a schedule of watches be set up and measured by burning incense, so that the *chishiki* may relieve one another. They should not relax vigilance because the illness

seems to improve; death can occur at any time. Thus until the very end, a *chishiki* must not remove his eyes from the sick person even for a moment. Even when off duty, he should rest in a place where he can hear the patient's breathing. At night, lamps should be lit so that the dying person can see the Buddha image and so that the *chishiki* can clearly observe the dying person's countenance, for illness often worsens at night. The dying should not be forced to get up to urinate or defecate if unable to do so. In such cases, screens should be set up between the dying person and the Buddha image while the bedding is being changed. However, if death is imminent, such concerns should be set aside. In addition, the dying person's mouth should continually be moistened with paper soaked in water, to facilitate his continued *nenbutsu* chanting.⁵⁸ Ryōchū also advises on how to deal with fractious and recalcitrant patients and with demands for inappropriate food, such as fish. One should never ask the dying, "Would you like anything?" as such questions can arouse desire and distract their thoughts from the Buddha. Conversation should be strictly curtailed and concern only liberation from the cycle of birth and death.⁵⁹

But the *chishiki* was far more than a nurse. His chief responsibility lay in helping the dying person to focus his or her thoughts so as to be able achieve right-mindfulness at the end and thus birth in the Pure Land. Texts after Genshin increasingly stress the gravity of this responsibility. Tanshū says:

As death approaches, one must depart from evil companions and seek out a good friend (*zenchishiki*). Master Daoxuan says, "The attendant (*kanbyōnin*) must never turn his back upon the sick person. Were he to do so, then deluded thoughts would arise furiously and in most cases destroy that person's right concentration." Moreover, the holy teachings expound, with regard to those persons [whose birth in the Pure Land is not yet settled] that by following a sage one enters into wisdom, and that by following a heretic, one enters into error. This is true throughout the course of life; how much more so at its end!⁶⁰

Kakuban specifies that at least one of the *chishiki* in attendance should "by all means be a person of wisdom, with aspiration for the way"; the sick person should think of the *chishiki* as the bodhisattva Kannon, who will lead him to the Pure Land, while the *chishiki* "should sit close by while observing his face and protect him by dwelling in the mind of compassion."⁶¹ Ryōchū writes, "Were it not for the power of the *chishiki*'s compassionate encouragement, how could the sole great matter [of birth in the Pure Land] be fulfilled? Thus the sick person should

think of the *chishiki* as the Buddha, while the *chishiki* should extend to the sick person the compassion one has for one's only child."⁶²

Among the *chishiki*'s chief tasks was to lead the deathbed chanting, to encourage right thoughts on the part of the dying person. Tanshū is among the first to recommend repeatedly striking the "chimes of impermanence" (*mujiō no kei*) to maintain rhythm. Kakuban recommends chanting in harmony with the dying person; Ryōchū urges that the *nenbutsu* be chanted at a pitch neither too high nor too low but audible to the dying person and in rhythm with his breathing, an admonition often echoed in later deathbed ritual instructions.⁶³

Yet however desirable it may have been thought to die with the *nenbutsu* or other holy mantras on one's lips, the harsh physiological reality is that many people lapse into unconsciousness before they die. What of dying persons who fall unconscious or become disoriented and are thus unable to chant? To my knowledge, the first deathbed ritual text explicitly to address this problem is Kakuban's *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*. In such instances, Kakuban says, the *chishiki* are to observe the dying person's breathing carefully and match their breathing to his, chanting the *nenbutsu* in unison on the outbreath, for a day, two days, a week, or as long as necessary until death transpires. "The rite for persons on their deathbed always ends with the outbreath," he warns. "You should be ready for the last breath and chant [the *nenbutsu*] together in unison." In this way the dying person can be freed of sins and achieve the Pure Land, because the power of Amida's original vow must inevitably respond to the invocation of his name. Moreover, the *chishiki* are to visualize their *nenbutsu*, chanted on the outbreath, as the six syllables *Na-mo-A-mi-ta-buḥ* in Sanskrit (Siddham) letters, entering the dying person's mouth with the inbreath, transforming into six sun disks, and dispelling with their brilliance the darkness of the obstructions of sins associated with the six sense faculties.⁶⁴

Here we see for the first time an explicit statement that, when the dying person can no longer mentally focus or falls unconscious, responsibility for both chanting and visualization practice immediately shifts to the *chishiki*, whose own actions at the deathbed then become determinative of the dying person's *ōjō*. Kakuban reflects that the *Contemplation Sūtra*'s statement about sinful persons achieving the Pure Land by meeting a "good friend" at the time of death must refer to just such cases. "If one could maintain right thoughts [at the last moment]," he says, "what need would there be for a *chishiki*? But when wrong or [even merely] neutral thoughts appear, the *chishiki* can [help the dying person and] save him from the suffering [that would otherwise confront him] at that time."⁶⁵

Kakuban's emphasis on chanting on behalf of the dying until the last breath would become a standard feature of subsequent instructions for deathbed practice.⁶⁶ Similar admonitions occur in Ryōchū's *Kanbyō yōjinshō*. Ryōchū places immense responsibility on the *chishiki* to encourage the dying person's chanting of the *nenbutsu* as the "foremost essential"; should that person become disoriented or lose consciousness, the *chishiki* should make every effort to rouse him by reciting *gāthās* in a loud voice and admonishing, "Don't you realize that these are your last moments?" But if the dying person can no longer chant, the *chishiki* must chant for him; so long as the aural faculty is still operative, simply hearing the *nenbutsu* alone will enable the dying to reach the Pure Land. Ryōchū urges that the *kanbyō* continue chanting for two to four hours after the breath has ceased, all the while transferring the merit of their *nenbutsu* to the deceased person. "By its virtue," he says, "he will achieve *ōjō*, even from the interim state (*antarābhava*, *chūu*)."⁶⁷ In such passages, the beneficial influence of the *chishiki*'s chanting is said to extend beyond the final moment into interim existence. At this point, deathbed practice begins to shade off into the realm of postmortem rites.

Another important function of the *chishiki* was to ward off evil influences. On this subject, *Ōjō yōshū* cites Shandao, who says only that if the dying see images of painful punishment, those caring for them should aid them in performing repentance until their sin is eradicated and visions of Amida and his retinue instead appear. Later Japanese deathbed ritual texts, however, greatly expand the *chishiki*'s responsibilities in this area. For example, he may have to interpret deathbed visions, which the dying themselves may not always recognize as inauspicious. This role of the *chishiki* is dramatized in an account from the tale collection *Hosshinshū* (Tales of religious awakening), attributed to Kamo no Chōmei (1155–1216), in which a *hijiri* or holy man serving as *zenchishiki* to a dying court lady guides her through a series of delusive deathbed visions. While he is encouraging her to chant the *nenbutsu*, she suddenly turns pale and appears terrified. "What are you seeing?" he asks. "Frightful persons are arriving with a fiery carriage," she replies. This of course is a clear omen of descent into the hells. The *hijiri* admonishes: "Firmly contemplate Amida Buddha's original vow and chant his name without slackening. By encountering a 'good friend' and saying the *nenbutsu* ten times [at the moment of death], even someone who has committed the five perverse offenses can reach the Pure Land. How much more is this true of someone [like yourself,] who has never committed such a serious sin!" Prompted by his instruction, the lady resumes her chanting. After a time, she regains her composure and appears delighted. Now she reports seeing a splendid

carriage approaching, adorned with jewels and filled with heavenly maidens playing music. The scripturally informed reader knows this, too, for a disguise in which the guardians of hell approach dying evil-doers, but the woman herself does not know it.⁶⁸ “You must not ride that carriage,” warns the *hijiri*. “Just continue to contemplate Amida Buddha and believe that he will come welcome you.” Later the woman reports a vision of a dignified, black-robed monk who approaches her and says, “Let’s go now. You don’t know the way, so I will guide you.” “Don’t even think of following him,” says the *hijiri*. “On the way to [the land of] Utmost Bliss, one has no need of a guide. By entrusting yourself to the Buddha’s compassionate vow, you will spontaneously arrive in that realm.” Eventually, thanks to her *zenchishiki*’s guidance, the woman is able to die chanting the *nenbutsu*, her mind calmly fixed on the Buddha.⁶⁹

Such delusive visions could be due not only to the dying person’s own past evil deeds, but to external malevolent influences. Kakuban recommends that one *chishiki*, a person with long training and experience, should stand at the dying person’s head and continuously recite the mantra of Fudō Myōō, to ward off demonic attacks.⁷⁰ From stories in *setsuwa* or medieval tales, we know that the dying were thought sometimes to fall victim to possessing spirits (*mononoke*), and the *chishiki* then had to double as exorcist.⁷¹ The *Kōyōshū* advises that while such spirits may deceive human eyes, they can readily be exposed by the simple expedient of hanging up a mirror, because *mononoke* are unaware of their own shadow.⁷² By the late Kamakura period, we find clear evidence of a belief that malevolent influences can even mimic the appearance of Amida Buddha himself, and detailed instructions are provided for distinguishing genuine manifestations of the *raigō* from deceptive ones. For example, unlike the Buddha in a true *raigō* vision, a demonic apparition will not arrive riding on purple clouds. The golden hue of its body will resemble the gilt of a painted image, rather than the pellucid, all-pervading light emanating from Amida himself. And a vision of the “real” Amida will be visible with the eyes open or shut, while a demonic apparition will not, and so on.⁷³ One can imagine that the content of a person’s deathbed visions, if known, might easily prompt others to draw conclusions about that individual’s postmortem fate. Perhaps for this reason, in a version of what today we might call patient confidentiality, Ryōchū warns: “Whether they are good or evil, a *chishiki* should never reveal these [deathbed visions] to others.”⁷⁴

Karmic hindrances indicative of an unfortunate rebirth could manifest at the time of death, not only as ominous visions but also as corporeal signs. Kakuban’s instructions specify which esoteric rites the

chishiki should perform and what mantras he should chant immediately after the person's death, should that person have manifested some physical sign presaging a descent into the lower realms. For example, should the newly deceased have evinced any signs of falling into the hells, Kakuban recommends that the *zenchishiki* act at once to save that person by performing the Buddha Eye, Golden Wheel, Shō Kannon, or Jizō rites; or by reciting the *Rishukyō*, the names of the fifty-three buddhas, or the Jeweled Casket or Superlative dhāraṇī, or the Mantra of Light; or by performing the Jeweled Pavilion (*hōrō*) rite or reciting the "Bodhisattva Preaching Verses" chapter of the *Flower Ornament Sūtra* or the *Lotus Sūtra*, and so forth. Here Kakuban cites from the esoteric Chinese scripture *Shouhu guojiezhū tuoluoni jīng* (Sūtra of dhāraṇīs for protecting the nation and the ruler), which gives fifteen signs that the dying will fall into the hells (such as crying aloud with grief or choking with tears, urinating or defecating without awareness, refusing to open the eyes, foul breath, lying face down, or refusing to follow the *zenchishiki*'s instructions [!]); eight signs of falling into the realm of hungry ghosts (such as burning with fever or suffering from continuous hunger or thirst); and five signs presaging a descent into the bestial realm (such as contorting of the hands and feet, foaming at the mouth, or sweating from the entire body)—all requiring the *chishiki*'s immediate ritual intervention.⁷⁵

As noted above, the protocols of the Nijūgo zanmai-e, which was formed as an association of monks dedicated to helping one another carry out disciplines leading to birth in the Pure Land, emphasize both encouraging the deathbed practice of fellow members and, after their death, performing on their behalf the ritual of the *kōmyō shingon*, sprinkling the corpse with mantrically empowered sand.⁷⁶ Kakuban's recommendations for ritual intervention to rescue the dying from the lower realms—like Ryōchū's directive that attendants should continue chanting after the individual's death to redirect that person's wandering spirit from the interim state to the Pure Land—similarly extended the *chishiki*'s role past the moment of death into the postmortem realm.

The thrust of medieval deathbed ritual instructions was increasingly to construct the *zenchishiki* as a sort of deathbed specialist. With him rested the ritual control of the final moment, with its brief window onto the possibility of escape from samsaric suffering. Soteriological control of one's last moments could thus be safely entrusted to an expert who knew what he was doing. Over time, it is he, even more than the dying person, who comes to be represented as ultimately responsible for that person's success or failure in reaching the Pure Land. Thus by the later Kamakura period, the compiler of *Kōyōshū* writes: "In most

cases, the fact that people achieve their aspiration for the Pure Land is due solely to the ability of the *zenchishiki*.”⁷⁷

Criticism of Deathbed Rites

Despite a growing interest during the medieval period in deathbed ritual, not all Buddhists endorsed such practices. Occasionally, criticism was raised, usually on doctrinal grounds. For example, the Shingon monk Kakukai (1142–1223) suggests that, for Buddhists, who should understand the emptiness and nonduality of all things, there is something improperly self-obsessed about fixing one’s aspirations on a particular postmortem destination:

When we calmly contemplate the arising and perishing of the dharmas, we cannot be attached to [Maitreya’s] Heaven of Satisfaction, nor to [Amida’s Pure Land of] Utmost Bliss. . . . If we simply purify the mind, we shall feel no distress, even if we should assume the forms of such [lowly] creatures as dragons and *yakṣas*. . . . Our partiality for the human form and our bias against the strange forms of other creatures are due to our lack of understanding. Regardless of transmigration, we shall suffer no discomfort. . . .⁷⁸

This position leads Kakukai to criticize the practice of relying on a *zenchishiki* in one’s last moments:

The circumstances of our final moments are by no means known to others, and even good friends (*zenchishiki*) will be of no assistance. Since one’s own and others’ minds are separate, even if they perform the same contemplation, another’s thinking is likely to differ from one’s own. And as for those whose thought differs from one’s own, it would be better not to have them around [in one’s last moments]. . . . I think it is quite splendid to die as did the likes of [the recluse] Gochibō, abiding in a correct state of mind with his final moments unknown to any others.⁷⁹

In his later years, Hōnen (1133–1212), founder of the exclusive *nenbutsu* movement, also minimized the need for the presence of a *zenchishiki*. Where Kakukai had objected to the false discrimination and lingering self-attachment implicit in attempts to control one’s last moments to soteric advantage, Hōnen saw reliance on the *zenchishiki*’s assistance as potentially undermining the devotee’s trust in the vow of Amida and in the power of the *nenbutsu* that he or she had been chanting even in ordinary times. In a letter to a daughter of the retired

emperor Go-Shirakawa, declining to act as *zenchishiki* at her deathbed, Hōnen admonished, “You should abandon the thought of an ordinary person (*bonbu*) as your good friend, and instead rely on the Buddha as your *zenchishiki*. . . . Who would [be so foolish as to] relax one’s reliance on the Buddha and turn [instead] to a worthless, ordinary *zenchishiki*, thinking slightly of the *nenbutsu* one has chanted all along and praying only for right thoughts at the last moment? It would be a grave error!”⁸⁰ Hōnen did not reject the *zenchishiki*’s presence at the deathbed, and at times even encouraged it, but did not see it as indispensable. “Because of the *nenbutsu* that you have chanted all along, even without a *zenchishiki* in your last hours, the Buddha will come to welcome you.”⁸¹ Such statements are consistent with Hōnen’s position that birth in the Pure Land comes about through wholehearted reliance on the “other power” (*tariki*) of the Buddha Amida, rather than the virtue of one’s own efforts (*jiriki*), and that only the *nenbutsu* is the practice according with Amida’s original vow. Thus for Hōnen, while the chanting of *nenbutsu* in one’s last moments remained vital, it was understood as an extension of one’s ordinary practice and did not necessarily require a *zenchishiki*’s ritual assistance. A more radical view was taken by Hōnen’s disciple Shinran (1173–1262), who is often said to have carried Hōnen’s emphasis on salvation solely through reliance on Amida to its ultimate conclusion. Shinran understood the certainty of salvation as occurring, not at the moment of death, when one would achieve birth in the Pure Land, but at the moment when, casting off all egoistic reliance on one’s own virtues and entrusting oneself wholly to Amida, one is seized by the Buddha’s compassion, never to be let go, and faith arises in one’s heart. This led him to reject the need for deathbed practices altogether. “When faith is established, one’s attainment of the Pure Land is also established; there is no need for deathbed rituals to prepare one for Amida’s coming,” Shinran wrote. He also said, “Those whose faith is not yet established are the ones who await Amida’s coming at the time of death.”⁸²

Criticism of deathbed ritual, like deathbed ritual itself, crossed sectarian lines; critics were to be found both among established traditions and new movements. These remained largely isolated objections and did not harden into sectarian positions. For example, despite Hōnen’s own admonitions against relying on a *zenchishiki* rather than Amida, some of Hōnen’s immediate and second-generation disciples understood the presence of a *zenchishiki* at the deathbed as absolutely essential. Benchō (a.k.a. Ben’a or Shōkō, 1162–1238), the second patriarch of the Pure Land sect, even wrote, “At the time of death, practitioners of the exclusive *nenbutsu* (*ikkō*) should make use of a *zenchishiki*. This is what Hōnen Shōnin instructed.”⁸³ And Benchō’s disciple Ryōchū,

as we have seen, was the author of the detailed deathbed instruction manual *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, emphasizing the importance of the *zenchishiki* in one's last hours. Despite occasional criticism from individuals in the Kamakura period and later, formal deathbed practices, including the employment of *zenchishiki* as ritual specialists, spread beyond monastic and aristocratic circles to reach a wider social range.

Who Were the *zenchishiki*? Some Preliminary Findings

Genshin's instructions for deathbed contemplation in *Ōjō yōshū* assume a monastic context; as we have seen, the sort of practices he recommends were first formally instituted within the Nijūgo zanmai-e, a society of renunciates. By the eleventh century, however, such practices were being adopted in aristocratic circles, and court diaries sometimes record the name of the cleric or adept summoned to act as *zenchishiki* for a particular noble. Who were these monks who served as deathbed attendants? Can we generalize in any way about their position in the monastic world, or about the social location of those who sought their services? While further research is needed, some tentative conclusions may nonetheless be proposed.

Court diaries suggest that, while monks who held temple administrative positions or high rank in the Bureau of Monastic Affairs (Sōgō) might occasionally perform deathbed rites for family members or aristocratic patrons, those monks summoned repeatedly to perform this service for court nobles tended not to be part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy but were rather ascetics or semi-reclusive monks, sometimes based at *bessho*, literally "places apart," retreats often affiliated with leading monasteries but on their outskirts or in other locations altogether. Referred to variously by such titles as *hijiri* ("holy man"), *shōnin* ("holy man"), or *ajari* (esoteric master), these monks were often *nenbutsu* practitioners and also skilled in esoteric rites; frequently they seem to have enjoyed a reputation for exceptional ascetic practice, spiritual attainments, or thaumaturgical powers.⁸⁴ Several such adepts find mention, for example, in *Gyokuyō*, the diary of the regent Kujō Kanezane (1149–1207). These include Honjō-bō Tankyō (or Honshō-bō Tangō, n.d.), of the Ōhara *bessho*, who served as *zenchishiki* at the deathbed of Kanezane's elder sister, the former imperial consort Kōkamon'in.⁸⁵ In 1185, when the Taira were defeated by the Minamoto, Tankyō acted as *zenchishiki* to both Taira no Munemori and his son Kiyomune, preaching to them before they were beheaded, an episode poignantly related in *Tale of the Heike*.⁸⁶ According to the historical record *Azuma kagami* (Mirror of the East), it was reported that "both took refuge in [Tankyō] Shōnin's preaching and gave up all

thought of resentment, dwelling in aspiration for the Pure Land.”⁸⁷ In this case, Tankyō as *zenchishiki* would have been responsible for ensuring that these defeated Taira leaders did not depart this life bearing grudges that could transform them into dangerous vengeful ghosts. Tankyō also provided his ritual services at the death of retired emperor Go-Shirakawa in 1192.⁸⁸ Another example is the adept Chizen, a *Lotus Sūtra* devotee (*jikyōsha*) also versed in the esoteric rites of Fudō Myōō, who served as a ritualist to Kanezane and his family.⁸⁹ In 1186, for example, he prayed for Kanezane’s consort to recover from illness, using the *senju darani* (dhāraṇī of the thousand-armed Kannon).⁹⁰ An accomplished mountain ascetic, he also made the Kumano pilgrimage on Kanezane’s behalf on multiple occasions.⁹¹ Chizen served in 1176 as *zenchishiki* at the death of Kanezane’s father and was also summoned at the death of his son.⁹² Still other examples include Ashō-bō Inzei (or Insai, n.d.), known as the “*hijiri* of Chōrakuji,” a temple in the Higashiyama area, who attended the deathbed of the retired emperor Takakura (d. 1181),⁹³ and the esoteric adept and *nenbutsu* monk Butsugon, who, like Chizen, served as preceptor, ritualist, and healer to Kanezane’s family. Butsugon acted as *zenchishiki* at the deathbed of Kanezane’s former wet-nurse, Mikushige-dono (d. 1171), and was among the monks summoned when Kanezane’s son died suddenly, administering the precepts to him posthumously.⁹⁴

As these examples suggest, monks who served the nobility as deathbed *zenchishiki* tended to be the same individuals who also provided them with prayers for safe childbirth and recovery from illness, who conducted exorcisms, conferred the precepts, and carried out memorial rites. In short, in court circles, by the end of the twelfth century, attendance as *zenchishiki* at the deathbed had joined the many ritual services that such monks typically performed for their highborn clients.

In another pattern, also datable to around the twelfth century, we find monks living in *bessho* or other mountain temples outside the capital who received dying patrons into their chapels, assisting their deathbed rites and sometimes also performing their funeral and seeing to the disposal of the body.⁹⁵ In one *ōjōden* account, shortly before his death, the former governor of Shinano, Fujiwara no Nagakiyo (1031–1096), speaks to his brother, the scholar-monk Gyōken, and announces his intention to die in the lodging temple of a “meditation monk” (*zensō*) of Sōrinji, with whom he had made a prior arrangement to this effect. This monk, he says, has also agreed to handle his burial.”⁹⁶ Significantly, Nagakiyo turns for this purpose, not to his brother, a scholar-monk following the clerical career track culminating in appointment to the Bureau of Monastic Affairs, but to a *zensō* or “medita-

tion monk.” Funaoka Makoto has identified such *zensō* as monks committed primarily to practice or ascetic disciplines (including but not necessarily confined to “meditation”), as opposed to the elite *gakuryō*, or scholar-monks. They were outside the status system of official monastic posts and appear to have overlapped the category of *bessho hijiri*, or monks practicing at retreats affiliated with but outside the major temples. Sōrinji, where Nagakiyo went to die, is said to have been a *bessho* belonging to the Tendai school and was located in Higashiyama, near the charnel grounds on the eastern edge of the capital. Both *zensō* and *bessho hijiri* also appear to have performed deathbed and funerary rites for a range of clients. It was because of pollution issues, Funaoka argues, that monks such as these, rather than career-track scholar-monks holding official clerical appointments, came to specialize in death-related ritual services, including deathbed practices and funerals.⁹⁷ Among those monks with aristocratic ties, the categories of *hijiri* and scholar-monk occasionally overlapped; for example, the adept Butsugon, mentioned above, was at one point the head of instruction (*gakutō*) for the Daidenbōin cloister at the Shingon monastery at Mt. Kōya.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, Funaoka’s distinction is a helpful one. Monks engaged in rites for nation protection had to observe the same strictures of pollution avoidance observed in worship of the *kami* or local deities, including an exorcistic period of purification (*imi*), usually thirty days, following the performance of funerals or other contact with death. Thus it was often monks outside the system of official temple posts or the scholastic career track culminating in Sōgō appointments who assumed the major responsibility for deathbed and funerary ritual.⁹⁹

Outside monastic settings, deathbed practices spread first among the nobility. In particular, the more elaborate forms of deathbed rites, involving multiple ritual specialists, were probably confined to elite circles. To have had three or four *zenchishiki* in attendance—as Kaku-ban recommends—for “a day, two days, a week, or as long as necessary until death transpires” would have required considerable financial outlay. *Kōyōshū* addresses the economics of such arrangements, where it says, “The presence of appropriate persons should be arranged in advance, and they should always be given donations and treated courteously, in recompense for their assistance at the time of death.”¹⁰⁰ Clearly, this would have been beyond the means of many people. Nonetheless, if we go by the evidence of *ōjōden* and *setsuwa*, even persons of very low status occasionally appear to have engaged in simple forms of ritualized deathbed practice, assisted by a *zenchishiki*. The early Kamakura-period tale collection *Senjūshō*, for example, tells of a lowly monk of Sagami who tends to a destitute widow when she falls

ill. He begs for money and food for her care and teaches her to chant the *nenbutsu*, thus presumably enabling her to achieve *ōjō*.¹⁰¹

As Imai Masaharu has noted, by the mid-Kakamura period, high-ranking warriors had begun to adopt formal deathbed ritual as part of a broader appropriation of aristocratic culture.¹⁰² Yoshitoki (d. 1224), the second Hōjō regent, had at his deathbed the assistance of a *zenchishiki* identified as Tango Risshi, who encouraged him in chanting the *nenbutsu*.¹⁰³ However, warrior appropriation of deathbed practices and the rhetoric surrounding them also exacerbated fears about the karmic hindrances of warriors as “evil men” (*akunin*). Jonathan Todd Brown has shed light on how Ta’amidabutsu Shinkyō (1237–1319), successor to Ippen as leader of the Jishū, skillfully secured this fledgling movement an institutional base among the *bushi* of the eastern provinces by emphasizing how hard it is for those professionally engaged in the sin of killing to reach the Pure Land, and thus the immense benefits to be gained by any warrior who supported a local Jishū practice hall, thus ensuring himself the presence of a *chishiki* in his last hours.¹⁰⁴ In time of armed conflict, warriors also had to be concerned about the dangers of being struck down on the battlefield by swords or arrows with no chance to think of the Buddha or to invoke his name. This led, in later medieval times, to the institution of “camp priests” (*jinsō*), who accompanied their warrior patrons to the battlefield and, in advance of the fighting, literally “conferred [on them] the ten *nenbutsu*.” This meant chanting “*Namu Amida butsu*” ten times on a single outbreath—that is, a performance of an ideal death that was ritually conferred by the monk on his patron in a truncated but nonetheless obvious extension of the *zenchishiki*’s deathbed role.¹⁰⁵

Was the *zenchishiki* necessarily a monk? Most commonly, yes, and especially where specialized prayer rites were sought, such as those stipulated by Kakuban to save a dying or newly deceased person from the evil realms, the services of a learned cleric or adept would have been required. But lay people may in some cases have played a role. *Kōyōshū* observes that “it is undesirable to have a lot of people around [at the deathbed] who are without understanding. Even if those present are monks, if they lack understanding and mill about, it will not be good. But even lay people should not be excluded if they understand what to do.”¹⁰⁶ Outside monastic communities, where the dying person was a well-to-do lay patron, it seems probable that other lay persons may have assisted the *zenchishiki* in a nursing capacity, even if they did not have major ritual responsibilities. It is also possible that, within medieval *nenbutsu* associations (*kessha*) that included lay followers, lay people may have encouraged one another’s *nenbutsu* chanting in their last hours, although determining this would require further research. To

what extent women may have served as *zenchishiki* at the deathbed also requires further investigation. Medieval *rinjū gyōgi* texts do not address this issue explicitly but often presume a male viewpoint, such as Ryōchū's *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, which admonishes, "Apart from two or three *chishiki* and nurses (*kanbyō*), others should not be permitted access [to the dying person], whether they are intimates or strangers. Above all, his wife and children should not be allowed to approach."¹⁰⁷ Here the issue is not the fitness of women to serve as *zenchishiki* but the need to avoid arousing thoughts of attachment in the dying person. In literary sources it is almost always women who are represented as hindering the deathbed contemplations of men, and not the other way around.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, a few scattered references in premodern sources show that women occasionally assisted ritually at the deathbed. Following the death of his consort in 1002, the courtier Fujiwara no Yukinari recorded in his diary that she had been attended in her last hours by himself and by the nun Shakuju, with whom she had a prior agreement.¹⁰⁹ Nishiguchi Junko has noted an instance in which two Jishū nuns in Kyoto, Kyōbutsu-bō and Gyōichi-bō, served in 1345 as *zenchishiki* at the deathbed of Zenni Kenshin, the widow of Nakabara Morosuke; these nuns may originally have been members of the Nakabara house, which would suggest that nuns may have assisted female family members in this capacity.¹¹⁰ By the early modern period, however, we find explicit prescriptions against women serving in the *zenchishiki* role. A manual for deathbed practice by the eighteenth-century monk Jikū (a.k.a. Shōken, 1646–1719), reads, "If he has the *bodhi* mind, anyone who can be of aid to the sick person should be permitted and employed [to serve as *zenchishiki*], even a man's own son. But a woman, even if she has faith, should never be so employed. This is because she is the source of the impurity of birth."¹¹¹ Such admonitions are not uncommon in *rinjū gyōgi* texts of Jikū's time and would seem to reflect increased fears about the polluting nature of female biological processes that emerged in the late medieval and early modern periods, as discussed in Hank Glassman's essay, Chapter 5 in this volume.¹¹²

Ōjō yōshū and other Heian-period instructions for deathbed practice are written in Sino-Japanese (*kanbun*). But beginning with Ryōchū's *Kanbyō yōjinshō* in the latter Kamakura period, such deathbed manuals tend increasingly to be written in the more accessible Japanese *kana majiri bun*. *Kōyōshū* cites passages from Chinese scripture and then immediately explains their meaning in Japanese, suggesting that its instructions were addressed to less highly educated ritualists than were earlier manuals of this kind. In the Tokugawa or early modern period (1603–1868), as described in Chapter 6, by Duncan

Williams, Buddhist temples were incorporated into the shogunal apparatus of social control, and families were required to affiliate with a local Buddhist temple that performed their funerals and memorial rites and also often housed their family graves. At this time, deathbed practices seem to have joined the standard repertoire of death-related practices that came to constitute the major social role, and economic base, of Buddhist temples. For example, a diary kept by the priest Ankokuin Nichikō (1626–1698) of the Nichiren sect contains such entries as: “Having heard that [our parishioner] Kinmaro’s present illness had suddenly worsened, I sent my disciple Heiroku Mon’ya to encourage him in the essentials for practice at the time of death, and at the earnest request [of his family], I inscribed a *honzon* [object of worship; in this case, the calligraphic mandala of the Nichiren sect] to be placed in the coffin.”¹¹³ Early modern *ōjōden*, revived as a genre following the publication in printed editions of their Heian precursors, also suggest that deathbed ritual, along with funerals and mortuary rites, may have become one of the standard ritual services provided by local temples. The devout men and women of these early modern hagiographies are frequently depicted as having the assistance of a priest or spiritual adviser in their last hours.¹¹⁴ By this point, however, the *zenchishiki*’s role was no longer performed chiefly by *hijiri* or other semi-reclusive adepts but had become a routine religious activity of village priests.

In Conclusion: A Note on Early Modern Instructions for Deathbed Practice

As deathbed practices joined the standard repertoire of ritual services offered by local priests to their parishioners in the Tokugawa period, one notes also a corresponding routinization in the performance of these practices. Early modern *rinjū gyōgi* texts cite extensively from their medieval precursors but contain few innovations in the treatment of the dying per se; on the whole, they seem much less concerned than earlier works of this kind with the details of how to fend off demonic influences, interpret deathbed visions, or accurately gauge the moment of the last breath. This may hint indirectly at shifts in the funerary practice of this era, whose development in Sōtō Zen is discussed by Williams in Chapter 6 in this volume. The early modern Buddhist funeral was understood not merely as transferring merit to the deceased to aid that person in the next life, but as actually effecting his or her enlightenment or birth in the Pure Land. Since the funeral proper had assumed such overriding soteriological importance and would in most cases be performed by the same priest who acted as *zenchishiki* at

the time of death, there may no longer have been the same perceived need to assess continually the portents manifested during the deathbed rite.

What does stand out as new in these early modern *rinjū gyōgisho* is a heightened attention to the treatment of the body after death and its preparation for burial, something rarely addressed in medieval deathbed ritual texts. This too may reflect shifts in Tokugawa Buddhist funerary practice. Premodern funerary rites—except for rituals accompanying cremation or the installation of remains—were usually conducted without the body of the deceased being present, but in the early modern funeral, the corpse held a position of central ritual focus.¹¹⁵ Tokugawa-period *rinjū gyōgi* texts often warn, for example, against touching the body while it is still warm (considered a sign that consciousness is still present), which is said to cause intolerable pain. To place a corpse while still warm in the coffin is equivalent to murder. *Chiyo migusa*, a seventeenth-century text of deathbed instructions in the Nichiren sect, strictly admonishes against touching the body for ten to twelve hours after death. “After twelve hours, you may wash [the body] and place it in the coffin.”¹¹⁶ The Shingon monk Jōkū (1693–1775) recommends forty-eight hours as the proper period to wait before encoffining. Like the authors of other Tokugawa-period deathbed instructions, Jōkū strictly enjoins against bending the limbs of a newly dead person to facilitate burial; instead, pouring a small amount of mantrically empowered sand into the mouth or on the chest of the corpse will prevent rigor mortis.¹¹⁷ These admonitions are echoed by the Pure Land monk Jikū, mentioned above, who also comments on the sin of preparing a body for burial while it is still warm. “If the body’s warmth has not yet dissipated, that means the *ālaya* consciousness has not departed. When you hurt the body [before consciousness has departed,] that becomes the karma of taking life. And if it is your parent, you commit the sin of killing a parent. This is absolutely to be avoided.”¹¹⁸ Jikū additionally voices opposition to a number of mortuary practices current in his day, such as use of the *kyō katabira*, a robe for wrapping the body on which sūtras, mantras, or other holy texts have been inscribed, or placing the body before the Buddhist altar prior to burial as though it were an offering. The corpse should be screened from the altar because of its impurity.¹¹⁹ Kaen (1693–1780), also of the Pure Land sect, additionally criticizes the contemporary practice of arranging the corpse in a formal pose to suggest an ideal death: “What value is there in placing the body [in the nirvāṇa position] with the head to the north and facing west? Some people have the hands of the deceased hold a cord or banner [tied to the hand of the buddha image], even after the spirit has departed.

This is like closing the gates after the robbers have left. And as for making the deceased hold a rosary: a rosary is a Buddhist implement for counting the *nenbutsu* [recited by living practitioners]. What merit is there in having a corpse hold one?"¹²⁰ Kaen's criticisms not only reflect the attention paid to the body in Tokugawa-period *rinjū gyōgi* texts but also suggest that specific bodily postures originally recommended as proper conduct for the dying (such as facing west or holding a rosary) were being transposed to the postmortem arrangement of the corpse.

As described in *Ōjō yōshū*, deathbed practice is a contemplation performed by dying persons to focus their last thoughts and thus achieve birth in the Pure Land, forever escaping the cycle of samsaric rebirth. For Genshin, the dying are the primary agents of their own liberation: the attendants' responsibility is merely one of encouragement. Sustaining "right thoughts at the last moment," however, is an extremely demanding goal, even for those trained in meditation; proper mental focus at the time of death could all too easily be subverted by physical pain; by fears, regrets, and emotional attachments; or by loss of consciousness. Especially as deathbed rites spread outside monastic circles and began to be performed as a religious service for lay persons, the role of the *zenchishiki* began to shift from an ancillary one to that of primary ritualist, a shift that, over time, increasingly strengthened the continuity between deathbed practice and funerary rites. In the development of instructions for deathbed practice from *Ōjō yōshū* in the late tenth century up through early modern times, one can trace a gradual process in which attempts to positively affect one's postmortem state by ritual means shifted first from the dying individual's own practice to the actions of the *zenchishiki*, and then from the salvific power of deathbed practice to increasing emphasis on that of funerary and mortuary rites. Although not all monks of the Heian and Kamakura periods routinely engaged in such activities, the emergence of the *zenchishiki* as a deathbed specialist represents a significant step in the larger process by which Buddhist monks came to dominate the performance of death-related practices.

Notes

Epigraph: *Ōjō yōshū*, in *Genshin, Nihon shisō taikei* (hereafter *NST*) 6, ed. Ishida Mizumaro (Tokyo: Iwamami Shoten, 1970), 214; trans. from James C. Dobbins, "Genshin's Deathbed Nembutsu Ritual in Pure Land Buddhism," *Religions of Japan in Practice*, ed. George J. Tanabe, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 174, slightly modified.

1. On the moment of death as embodying both hope and anxiety, see Jacqueline I. Stone, “By the Power of One’s Last Nenbutsu: Deathbed Practices in Early Medieval Japan,” in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 77–119.

2. As Alan Cole has demonstrated, Genshin’s sources were embedded in a larger, general body of Chinese Buddhist deathbed and funerary prescriptions that “was heavily dependent on Pure Land ideology and techniques of buddha-name recitation, even though it was not identified as Pure Land Buddhism” (“Upside Down/Right Side Up: A Revisionist History of Buddhist Funerals in China,” *History of Religions* 35, no. 4 [1996]: 307–338 [329]).

3. *Sifenlǚ shanfan buque xingshi chao*, T no. 1804, 40:144a, cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, NST 6:206.

4. *Fayuan zhulin*, T no. 2122, 53:987a, cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, NST 6:206, though Genshin does not mention Daoshi by name. Daoshi’s work contains a description of purported deathbed practices at the Jetavana monastery very similar to that quoted in Daoxuan’s commentary. Daoxuan refers to his source as a “Chinese tradition” (*Zhongguo benzhuan*), while Daoshi terms his a “Diagram of the Jetavana monastery in the western region” (*Xiyu Zhihuansi tu*), but they appear to have worked from a single source.

5. *Guannian famen*, T no. 1959, 47:24b–c, cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, NST 6:207.

6. *Anle ji*, T no. 1958, 47:11b, cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, NST 6:208; trans. from Dobbins, “Genshin’s Deathbed Nembutsu Ritual,” 170, slightly modified.

7. *Wuliangshou jing*, T no. 360, 12:268a.

8. *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, T no. 365, 12:346a.

9. *Ōjō yōshū*, NST 6:296.

10. *Jūgan hosshinki*, reproduced in Satō Tetsuei, *Eizan Jōdokyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1979), Part II: *Shiryō*, 195. On Senkan, see Robert F. Rhodes, “Bodhisattva Practice and Pure Land Practice: Senkan and the Construction of Pure Land Discourse in Heian Japan,” *Japanese Religions* 24, no. 1 (1999): 1–28.

11. *Sandai jitsuroku* (commissioned in 901), Genkei 4, 12/4, *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* (hereafter *KT*), 66 vols., ed. Kuroita Katsumi (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929–1966), 4:486.

12. *Sandai jitsuroku*, Jōgan 9, 10/10, *KT* 4:223; “Fujiwara Yasunori den,” in *Kodai seiji shakai shisō*, NST 8, ed. Yamagishi Tokuhei et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979), 72.

13. *Jikaku Daishi den*, in *Zoku Tendaishū zensho* (hereafter *ZTZ*, ed. Tendai Shūten Hensanjo (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1987–), *Shiden* 2:71–72. On the provenance of the text, see the accompanying *ZTZ Shiden* 2, *Kaidai*, 2–3, and Enshin Saitō, *Jikaku Daishi den: The Biography of Jikaku Daishi Ennin, Translation and Explanatory Notes* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1992), 16–19. Saitō estimates that this version of Ennin’s biography was compiled “around 970.”

14. *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* 16, *Ōjōden, Hokke genki, Zoku Nihon bukkyō no shisō* (hereafter ZNBS) 1, ed. Inoue Mitsusada and Ōsone Shōsuke (rpt. of the 1974 NST 7; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 27–28. *Gokurakuki* was compiled by Genshin's close associate Yoshishige no Yasutane (monastic name Jakushin, d. 1002) around 985, the year *Ōjō yōshū* was completed. Yasutane gives the date of Enshō's death as Tentoku 3 (959). However, both *Hokke genki* and *Fusō ryakki* give it as Ōwa 3 (963). It is not clear, of course, whether the detail of Enshō holding a cord tied to a buddha image is historically accurate or was added retrospectively.

15. *Ryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai konpon kesshū nijūgonin rensho hotsuganmon*, in *Nijūgo zanmai shiki, Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho* (hereafter DNBZ), 100 vols. (Tokyo: Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan, 1970–1973), 49:31b. Though this text has been attributed to Genshin, his name does not appear on the list of founding members; thus this attribution may have been made retrospectively.

16. The two sets of regulations are an original set of eight regulations written in 986, attributed to Yoshishige no Yasutane (*Kishō hachikajō*, DNBZ 49:28c–30b; *T* no. 2724, 84:878b–880b), and the 988 twelve-article *Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kishō* (a.k.a. *Jūnikajō*), attributed to Genshin (DNBZ 49:27–30; *T* no. 2723, 84:876b–878b). The printed versions of these texts are all ultimately derived from a manuscript, possibly dating to the Kamakura period, held at the Chūshōin at Tōdaiji, but contain numerous discrepancies in titles, misprints, and other errors. These have been detailed in Koyama Masazumi, “Tōdaiji Chūshōin shozō ‘Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi’ no saikentō: Sōshobon no goshoku ni yoru mondaiten,” *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 53 (1997): 56–95. Koyama also provides a critical edition of both sets of regulations.

On the *Nijūgo zanmai-e*, see, for example, Richard Bowring, “Preparing for the Pure Land in Late Tenth-Century Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 25, nos. 3–4 (1998): 221–257; Robert F. Rhodes, “Seeking the Pure Land in Heian Japan: The Practices of the Monks of the *Nijūgo Zanmai-e*,” *The Eastern Buddhist* 33, no. 1 (2000): 56–79; and Sarah Johanna Horton, “The Role of Genshin and Religious Associations in the mid-Heian Spread of Pure Land Buddhism (Japan)” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2001).

17. On traditions of nursing in the monastery, see Paul Demiéville, “Byō,” *Hōbōgirin: Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises* (Paris: Hōbōgirin, 1974), III:236–240 (translated by Mark Tatz as *Buddhism and Healing: Demiéville's Article “Byō” from Hōbōgirin* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985]; see esp. 31–35), and “Kangogaku,” in Fukunaga Katsumi, *Bukkyō igaku jiten* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1990), 292–298.

18. *Ōjō gokuraku mondō*, DNBZ 41:148b–c.

19. *Rinjū gyōgi, Eshin Sōzu zenshū*, ed. Hieizan Senshūin and Eizan Gakuin, 5 vols. (Sakamoto-mura, Shiga-ken: Hieizan Tosho Kankōjo, 1927–1928), 1:589–600.

20. See *Ryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kakochō*, ZTZ, *Shiden* 2:285.
21. *Eiga monogatari* 18, ed. Matsumura Hiroji and Yamanaka Yutaka (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965; rev. 1993), 2:326–328; *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, trans. William H. and Helen Craig McCullough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 2:762–764.
22. *Chōshūki*, Gen'ei 2, 12/4, *Zōho shiryō taisei* (hereafter *ST*), ed. Zōho Shiryō Taisei Kankōkai, 45 vols. (Kyoto: Rinsen Shobō, 1965), 16:184; *Chūyūki*, Hōan 1, 9/19, *ST* 12:253.
23. *Heike monogatari*, vol. 2, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter *NKBT*) 33, ed. Takagi Ichinosuke et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1960), 440–442, 376–377; *Tale of the Heike*, trans. Helen Craig McCullough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 436–338, 399–400. A list of individuals appearing in Heian- and Kamakura-period accounts who are said to have died holding the five-colored cords appears in Tsuji Zennosuke, *Nihon bukkyōshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1944), 1:631–635. Tsuji regards this practice as reflecting an unfortunate trend toward increasing formalism in medieval Pure Land practice, an evaluation that reveals more about scholarly assumptions in Tsuji's time than about premodern understandings.
24. Nishiguchi Junko, "Where the Bones Go: Death and Burial of Women of the Heian High Aristocracy," in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), 417–439 (422). For a detailed discussion of pollution in its relation to deathbed practices, see Jacqueline I. Stone, "Dying Breath: Deathbed Rites and Death Pollution in Early Medieval Japan," in *Heroes and Saints: The Moment of Death in Cross-cultural Perspectives*, ed. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 173–246.
25. *Shōyūki* VIII, entries for Manju 4 (1027), 11/10–12/4, *Dai Nihon kokinroku*, ed. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), 37–46. See also G. Cameron Hurst III, "Michinaga's Maladies: A Medical Report on Fujiwara no Michinaga," *Monumenta Nipponica* 34, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 101–112; and Hayami Tasuku, *Jigoku to Gokuraku: Ōjō yōshū to kizoku shakai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998), 141–145.
26. *Ōjō yōshū*, NST 6:209; trans. from Dobbins, "Genshin's Deathbed Nembutsu Ritual," 170.
27. The *Rishubun* is one of several versions of the esoteric scripture *Liqu jing* (Jpn. *Rishukyō*, Sūtra of the guiding principle) and here appears to indicate fascicle 578 of the 600-fascicle *Dabore jing*, T no. 220. Reciting the *Rishukyō* was said to remove sins and karmic hindrances and to protect the practitioner from falling into the hells.
28. *Rinjū gyōgi chūki*, DNBZ 49:48–49. This work was discovered at the Chūshōin of Tōdaiji as part of a composite text, a transcription possibly dating to the Kamakura period, with the outer title *Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai*

Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi, consisting of Tanshū's instructions and the two sets of regulations for the Nijūgo zanmai-e given in note 16 above (Koyama, "Tōdaiji Chūshōin shozō 'Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi' no saikentō," 56–57). Its existence suggests a close connection between Tanshū's work and the deathbed protocols of the Nijūgo zanmai-e. Tanshū's authorship was determined by Ishii Kyōdō ("Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kisho ni tsuite," *Bussho kenkyū* 48 [1918]: 1–5).

29. For examples, see Ishida Mizumaro, *Ōjō no shisō* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1968), 249–252. Closely linked was the practice, chiefly attested in hagiographical literature, of holding in one's hand at the time of death a written vow to achieve the Pure Land (247–249).

30. For a more detailed discussion of esoteric versions of deathbed practice, see Jacqueline I. Stone, "The Secret Art of Dying: Esoteric Deathbed Practices in Heian Japan," in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 134–174.

31. *Byōchū shugyōki*, *Shingonshū anjin zensho* (hereafter *SAZ*), ed. Hase Hōshū (Kyoto: Rokudaishinbōsha, 1913–1914), 2:781–785. On Jichihan, see Marc Bunjisters, "Jichihan and the Restoration and Innovation of Buddhist Practice," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26, nos. 1–2 (1999): 39–82. I have followed Bunjisters in using the pronunciation "Jichihan."

32. *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, *Kōgyō Daishi zenshū* (hereafter *KDZ*), ed. Tomita Kōjun (1935; rpt. Tokyo: Hōsenji, 1977), 2:1197–1220. The quoted passage appears at 2:1214.

33. *KDZ* 2:1215–1216.

34. *Rinjū yōjin no koto*, *SAZ* 2:792–795. The quotation is at 793.

35. *Ibid.*, 792.

36. The *Kanbyō yōjinshō* (a.k.a. *Kanbyō goyōjin*, *Kanbyō yōjin*) is reproduced in Itō Shintetsu, *Nihon Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ryūbunkan, 1975), 447–461.

37. To my knowledge, the earliest Nichiren Buddhist *rinjū gyōgi* text is the *Chiyo migusa* traditionally attributed to Shinjōin Nichion (1572–1642) but possibly a slightly later composition. See also Jacqueline I. Stone, "The Moment of Death in Nichiren's Thought," in *Hokke bukkyō bunkashi ronso*, ed. Watanabe Hōyō Sensei Koki Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 2003), 19–56.

38. *Rinjū gyōki chūki*, *DNBZ* 49:48b.

39. *Byōchū shugyōki*, *SAZ* 781; *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, *KDZ*, 2:1198.

40. *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, *KDZ*, 2:1199.

41. *Ibid.*, 2:1199–2000.

42. On the practice of deathbed tonsure, see Takagi Yutaka, "Ōjōden ni okeru Hokke shinkō," in *Hokke shinkō no shokeitai*, ed. Nomura Yōshō (Kyoto:

Heirakuji Shoten, 1976), 451–484 (478–483), and Mitsuhashi Tadashi, *Heian jidai no shinkō to shūkyō girei* (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 2000), 597–668.

43. *Kōyōshū*, DNBZ 43:26c.

44. *Rinjū gyōki chūki*, DNBZ 49:48c–49a.

45. *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, in Itō, *Nihon Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 447.

46. *Kōyōshū*, DNBZ 43:26a.

47. This specific formulation of the “three categories of attachment” (*san'ai*) that obstruct one at the time of death are first enumerated in Senkan’s *Jūgan hosshinki* (Satō, *Eizan Jōdokyō no kenkyū*, 198–199). See also Kamii Monshō, “Rinjū ni okeru san'ai no mondai,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 41, no. 2 (1993): 318–321.

48. *Kōyōshū*, DNBZ 43:25b–26a.

49. *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, KDZ 2:1200. The distinction arises from variances in different Chinese accounts of deathbed practice at the Jetavana monastery. See ns. 3 and 4 above.

50. *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, in Itō, *Nihon Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 447.

51. *Kōyōshū*, DNBZ 43:26b.

52. *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, KDZ 2:1200.

53. Presumably for the same reason, Hōnen admonishes that the cords should be woven by a child (*Ippyaku shijū gokajō mondō*, no. 71, *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen Shōnin zenshū* [hereafter *HSZ*], ed. Ishii Kyōdō [Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1955; rpt. 1974], 658). It appears that the cords were sometimes cut up afterwards and the pieces distributed to establish karmic connections (*kechien*) conducive to *ōjō*. Hōnen, however, explicitly rejects this practice (*ibid.*, no. 103, 662).

54. DNBZ 43:26b.

55. One striking instance involves their use in a ritual directed toward the healing Buddha, Yakushi Nyorai (Bhaiṣajyaguru Tathāgata) and his six manifestations (*shichibutsu* Yakushi), to ensure safe childbirth or protect the dangerously ill. Revived by Genshin’s teacher Ryōgen, this became one of the four major esoteric rites of Mt. Hiei (Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mt. Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* [Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002], 87–88). In this ritual, forty-nine mantra-empowered knots are tied in the cord, which is then fastened to the head, hands, feet, or body of the person for whom the ritual is being performed (see *Kakuzenshō*, DNBZ 53:60b–c). The symbolism in this case was presumably to draw the person, not up into the Pure Land, but back from proximity to death into the world of the living.

One also finds scattered references to the use of cords in personal prayers not connected to the moment of death. The ninth-century *Nihon ryōiki* includes two such episodes: the ascetic Konsu prays for permission to receive Buddhist ordination while holding a rope fastened to the legs of a clay statue

of the deity Shūkongōjin (Vajradhara), an esoteric form of Kannon (II:21), and an orphan girl prays for relief from poverty while holding a rope tied to an image of Kannon (II:34) (*Nihon ryōiki*, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 30, ed. Izumoji Osamu [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996], 94, 113; trans. Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon ryōiki of the Monk Kyōkai* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973], 189, 207).

56. See, for example, the *Suxidi jieluo jing*, T no. 893c, 18:689a; *Dapiluzhena chengfo jing su*, T no. 1796, 39:627a; and *Asabashō*, T (zusō) 9:563a.

57. DNBZ 49:48a. The idea that inappropriate thoughts at the last moment can negatively affect one's rebirth can of course be found much earlier and is common to Indian religious traditions. See, for example, Franklin Edgerton, "The Hour of Death: Its Importance for Man's Fate in Hindu and Western Religions," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute* 8, part 3 (1926–1927): 219–249. Genshin paraphrases Tanluan (476–542) to the effect that one perverse thought at the last moment can lead to rebirth in the Avīci hell (*Ōjō yōshū*, NST 6:289). See also Tanluan's *Jingtu shiyi lun*, T no. 1961, 47:80a. In Japan, however, concerns about delusory thoughts obstructing one's attainment of the Pure Land do not seem to have become widespread until slightly after Genshin's time.

58. This suggests itself as an early precedent for what would later become the practice of offering *matsugo no mizu* or *shinimizu* ("last water" or "death water"), water used to moisten the mouth of a dying or deceased person as a parting service by friends and relatives; see Fujii Masao, *Bukkyō girei jiten* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1977), 164–165. For some historically recent accounts of this custom, see Kimura Hiroshi, *Shi: Bukkyō to minzoku* (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1989), 2–29.

59. *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, in Itō, *Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 447–451.

60. DNBZ 49:48a. The citation from Daoxuan appears to be a paraphrase.

61. *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, KDZ 2:1215.

62. *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, in Itō, *Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 447.

63. *Rinjū gyōki chūki*, DNBZ 49:49b; *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, KDZ 2:1215; *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, in Itō, *Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 448.

64. *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, KDZ 2:1216–1217. This represents Kakuban's esoteric reading of the *nissōkan* or contemplation of the [setting] sun, first of sixteen meditations leading to birth in Amida's Pure Land set forth in the *Guan Wuliangshou jing* (T 12:341c–342a). On esoteric understandings of the *nenbutsu* more generally, see James H. Sanford, "Breath of Life: The Esoteric Nenbutsu" (1994), rpt. in *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 161–189, and "Amida's Secret Life: Kakuban's *Amida hishaku*," in Payne and Tanaka, *Approaching the Land of Bliss*, 120–138, as well as Stone, "Secret Art of Dying."

65. *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, KDZ 2:1217.

66. See Ikemi Chōryū, “Rinjū nenbutsu kō: Kiku, kikaseru,” *Nihongaku* 10 (1987): 199–208.

67. *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, in Itō, *Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 454–456. The text has “one or two hours,” an “hour” corresponding to one of the twelve divisions of the day. A similar admonition occurs in the *Rinjū no yōi*, traditionally attributed to Jōkei (1155–1213), which also stresses that the *zenchishiki* should chant in rhythm with the dying person’s breathing and even continue to chant into his ear for at least two hours after the breath has ceased. “Although he may to outward appearances be dead, consciousness may remain, or the spirit may not have departed but be lingering near the dead person. Even if he should be destined for the evil paths, because he hears the name, he may be born in the Pure Land from the interim state” (*Nihon daizōkyō* 64:26b). If authentic, this text would predate Ryōchū’s by several decades. However, some scholars question Jōkei’s authorship.

68. See the *Guanfo sanmeihai jing* (*T* no. 643, 15:669a), which describes how the illusory gold carriage with its beautiful maidens (actually hell flames in disguise) lures evildoers to their retribution. Genshin quotes this passage in the last part of the *rinjū gyōgi* section of his *Ōjō yōshū* (*NST* 6:214–215), as does Ryōchū in his *Jōdo taii shō* (*Jōdoshū zensho* [hereafter *JZ*], 23 vols., ed. Jōdoshū Kaishū Happyakunen Kinen Keisan Junbikyoku [Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1970–1972], 10:722).

69. *Hosshinshū* IV:7, in *Hōjōki*, *Hosshinshū*, ed. Miki Sumito (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1976), 182–184. This story also appears in *Sangoku denki* IX:15 (*DNBZ* 92:317a–b). In that version, auspicious signs accompanying the woman’s death—purple clouds, fragrance, radiant light, and music—are described, indicating that she has undoubtedly achieved *ōjō*.

70. *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, *KDZ* 2:1215.

71. See, for example, *Goshūi ōjoden* I:8, *ZNBS* 1:647, and the death of Yoshida no Saikū in *Hosshinshū* VII:5, Miki, *Hōjōki*, *Hosshinshū*, 314–315.

72. *Kōyōshū*, *DNBZ* 43:19b–c.

73. These and other distinctions are appended to a transcription of Ryōchū’s text made by the Jōdo monk Ryūgyō (1369–1449), who gives them as citations from a work called *Nōsenshō* by one Rengedani Sōzu of Mt. Kōya and from another, unidentified account (*ichigi*). See Itō, *Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 445–446.

74. *Kanbyō yōjinshō*, in Itō, *Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 452.

75. *T* no. 997, 19:574a, cited in *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, *KDZ* 1:1217–1219. The sūtra itself merely lists these signs, while Kakuban prescribes specific ritual interventions. This sūtra passage seems to have been a popular medieval text for knowing about deathbed signs. A copy of it accompanies one extant transcription of Jichihan’s *Byōchū shugyōki* (see Ōtani, “Jichihan *Byōchū shugyōki* ni tsuite,” 44). It is also cited by Nichiren (1222–1282) in a passage dealing with the interpretation of corporeal signs at the time of death (“Myōhō-ama

gozen gohenji,” *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun*, ed. Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo [Minobu, Yamanashi prefecture: Minobusan Kuonji, 1952–1959; rev. 1988], 2:1535), and by Ryōchū, in his *Jōdo taii shō*, *JZ* 10:720–721.

76. This is specified in both sets of extant regulations for the Society, the 986 *Kishō hachikajō* (article 2), and the 988 *Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kishō* (article 4). See Koyama, “Tōdaiji Chūshōin shozō ‘Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi’ no saikentō,” 86–87 and 76. The use in Japan of mantrically empowered sand in funerary practices dates back at least to the ninth century and, as described in Mariko Walter’s Chapter 7 in this volume, still figures in Tendai and Shingon funerals today.

77. *DNBZ* 43:28a.

78. *Kakukai Hōkyō hōgo*, *Kana hōgoshū*, *NKBT* 83, ed. Miyasaka Yūshō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), 57; trans. from Robert E. Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism: A Minority Report* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1987), 99–100, slightly modified.

79. *Kakukai Hōkyō hōgo*, *NKBT* 83:57; trans. from Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism*, 100, slightly modified. The ascetic Gochi-bō Yūgen was a relative and disciple of Kakuban. He practiced in reclusion on Mt. Kōya, and there is indeed no record of his final moments.

80. “Shōnyo-bō e tsukawasu onfumi,” *HSZ* 545–546.

81. *Ōjō jōdo yōjin*, *HSZ* 562. See also the discussion of Hōnen’s views of the last moment in his biography *Enkō Daishi gyōjō ezu yokusan*, *JZ* 16:372–376; in English, see Harper Havelock Coates and Ryugaku Ishizuka, *Honen the Buddhist Saint: His Life and Teaching* (Kyoto: Chionin, 1925), 438–441.

82. *Mattōshō* 1 and 18, *Shinran chosaku zenshū*, ed. Kaneko Daiei (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1964), 580, 608.

83. *Shōkō-bō ni shimesarekeru onkotoba* 17, *HSZ* 747.

84. On the importance to the nobility of practitioners of this kind, see, for example, Hayami Tasuku, *Heian kizoku shakai to bukkō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), 147–154.

85. *Gyokuyō*, *Yōwa* 1 (1181), 12/1–4. Kanezane records that he and Tankyō chanted the *nenbutsu* with her, while an unidentified “repentance rite monk” (*senbōsō*) was summoned to chant from the other side of a screen. Sonchū Sōzu, Kōkamon’in’s half-brother, was also present at her side, reciting the Fudō mantra (12/4). The following year, Tankyō led a memorial service for Kōkamon’in; on that occasion, Kanezane referred to him as having acted as her *zenchishiki* (*Gyokuyō*, *Juei* 1 [1182], 11/18). See *Gyokuyō*, ed., Imaizumi Teisuke, 3 vols. [Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906–1907], 2:539–540, 581).

86. *Heike monogatari*, vol. 2, *NKBT* 33:368–371; McCullough, *Tale of the Heike*, 395–397.

87. *Genryaku* 2 (1185), 6/21, *KT* 32:161.1.

88. *Gyokuyō*, *Kenkyū* 3 (1192), 3/13, 3:798. Kanezane records that Tankyō acted as *zenchishiki*, together with Ninnaji-no-miya Shōken Sōjō (Shukaku,

1150–1202), who was Go-Shirakawa's second son. *Azuma kagami* mentions only Tankyō, who is referred to as Ōhara Honjō-bō Shōnin (Kenkyū 3, 3/16, *KT* 32:461–462).

89. See Kikuchi Hiroki, “Go-Shirakawa inseiki no ōken to jikyōsha,” *Meigetsuki kenkyū* 4 (1999): 165–184 (172–177).

90. *Gyokuyō*, Bunji 2, 4/19, 3:188.

91. Kikuchi, “Go-Shirakawa inseiki no ōken to jikyōsha,” 174–176.

92. *Gyokuyō*, Angen 2 (1176), 3/23, 1:564, and Bunji 4 (1188), 2/19–20, 3:499.

93. *Gyokuyō*, Jishō 5, 1/12, 2:464. On Inzei, see Ōtsuka Ayako, “Kenreimon'in Tokushi no kaishi Inzei ni tsuite,” *Bukkyō bungaku* 15 (1991): 65–78, and Muramatsu Kiyomichi, “Ashō-bō Inzei ni tsuite,” *Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo nenpō* (1993): 61–79.

94. *Gyokuyō*, Shōan 1, 7/20, 1:157, and Bunji 4, 2/19–20, 3:499–500. On Butsugon, see also Sakagami Masao, “Butsugon-bō Shōshin ni tsuite,” *Bukkyō ronso* 26 (1982): 145–149.

95. On monks ritually “opening” cemeteries and making them accessible to aristocratic patrons, see Katsuda Itaru, *Shishatachi no chūsei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003), 166–168.

96. *Shūi ōjōden* II:17, *ZNBS* 1:337.

97. *Nihon Zenshū no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), esp. 90–94.

98. *Kōyasan ōjōden* 13, *ZNBS* 1:700. See also “Kaisetsu,” 758.

99. On pollution taboos at major Buddhist temples and ceremonies, see, for example, Taira Masayuki, “Sesshō kindan no rekishiteki tenkai,” in *Nihon shakai no shiteki kōzō: Kodai, chūsei*, ed. Ōyama Kyōhei Kyōju Taikan Kinenkai (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1997), 149–171 (151–153). On monks without formal clerical appointments as the primary purveyors of death-related practices in the Heian period, see Stone, “The Dying Breath,” esp. 203–206; and Uejima Susumu, “‘Ō’ no shi to sōsō: Kegare to gakuryō, hijiri, zenshū,” *Kōkogaku to chūseiishi kenkyū* 4: *Chūsei jūin: Bōryoku to keikan*, ed. Ono Masatoshi, Gomi Fumihiko, and Hagiwara Mitsuo (Tokyo: Kōshi Shoin, 2007), 127–163.

100. *DNBZ* 43:27b. This represents a rare reference in *rinjū gyōgi* texts to the financing of deathbed rites.

101. *Senjūshō* VII:3, *Senjūshō zenchūshaku*, ed. Senjūshō Kankōkai, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2003), 204–210.

102. *Chūsei shakai to jishū no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1985), 357–358. Imai suggests in this regard that in *Tale of the Heike* one sign of aristocratic influence on the Taira clan is their desire to employ *zenchishiki* at the end. The most famous instance is of course that of Taira no Koremori, who in his determination to escape the realm of rebirth, drowns himself in the sea off Kumano. He has the novice Takiguchi Nyūdō accompany him in the boat and preach to him on the futility of worldly attachments and the certainty of

Amida's salvation (*Heike monogatari*, vol. 2, *NKBT* 33:280–284; McCullough, *Tale of the Heike*, 348–350).

103. *Azuma kagami*, Gennin 1, 6/13, *KT* 33:18.

104. Jonathan Todd Brown, “Warrior Patronage, Institutional Change, and Doctrinal Innovation in the Early Jishū” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1999), esp. 198–210, 401–407.

105. On the battlefield practice of Jishū clerics, see Imai Masaharu, *Chūsei shakai to Jishū no kenkyū*, 365–378; Ōhashi Shunnō, *Ippen to Jishū kyōdan* (Tokyo: Kyōikusha, 1978), 143–151; Sybil Anne Thorton, “Propaganda Traditions of the Yūgyō Ha: The Campaign to Establish the Jishū as an Independent School of Japanese Buddhism (1300–1700)” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1988), 76–111; and Brown, “Warrior Patronage, Institutional Change, and Doctrinal Innovation in the Early Jishū,” 444–450.

106. *DNBZ* 43:27b–c.

107. In Itō, *Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, 448.

108. See, for example, *Hosshinshū* IV:5, Miki, *Hōjōki*, *Hosshinshū*, 176–179, and *Shasekishū*, IV:5 and IV:6, *NKBT* 85, ed. Watanabe Tsunaya (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 188–190; trans. Robert E. Morrell, *Sand and Pebbles (Shasekishū): The Tales of Mujū Ichien, A Voice for Pluralism in Kamakura Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 146–147.

109. *Gonki* 1, *Chōhō* 4, 10/16, *ST* 4:274.

110. *Shishuki*, cited in Nichiguchi Junko, “Josei to mōja kinichi kuyō,” in *Hotoke to onna*, ed. Nichiguchi Junko (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1997), 219–246 (234–236).

111. *Rinjū setsuyō*, in *Rinjū gyōgi: Nihonteki taminaru kea no genten*, ed. Kamii Monshō et al. (Tokyo: Hokushindō, 1993; rpt. 1995), 168–169.

112. However, some instances from early modern *ōjōden* suggest that such injunctions were not always observed. For example, the pious Kintarō (d. 1860), third son of Fujiya Jūemon of Okazaki in Nukada village, Mikawa province, who died at age seventeen, requested that his grandmother, the nun Jōryō, act as his *zenchishiki* (*Mikawa ōjō kenki* 1, in *Kinsei ōjōden shūsei*, ed. Kasahara Kazuo, 3 vols. [Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 1978–1980], 1:359–360). It is not clear whether elderly women, especially nuns, would have been considered free from female pollution or whether such cases simply illustrate a gap between prescriptive standards and on-the-ground practice.

113. *Setsumoku nikka*, Jōkyō 3 (1686), 4/8, *Nichirenshū shūgaku zensho*, ed. Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo, 23 vols. (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1968–1978), 12:389.

114. For deathbed practice as reflected in early modern *ōjōden* and other sources, see, for example, *Nihon bukkyō* 39 (1976): *Tokushū: Kinsei ōjōden*; Hasegawa Masatoshi, *Kinsei nenbutsusha shūdan no kōdō to shisō: Jōdoshū no baai* (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1981), 186–198; and Kamii et al., *Rinjū gyōgi*, 435–463.

115. William M. Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 185–186.

116. *Kinsei bukkyō no shisō*, NST 57, ed. Kashiwabara Yūsen and Fujii Manabu (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 449. The text has “five or six hours,” one “hour” corresponding to one of the twelve divisions of the day. The *Rinjū no yōi*, attributed to Jōkei, also gives this same warning as “an admonition of people of old” (*Nihon daizōkyō* 64:26b). See n. 67 above.

117. *Jōbutsu jishin*, SAZ 2:828–829.

118. *Rinjū setsuyō*, in Kamii et al., *Rinjū gyōgi*, 170.

119. Ibid., 166, 170.

120. *Rinjū yōjin*, in Kamii et al., *Rinjū gyōgi*, 211–212.

Beyond Death and the Afterlife

Considering Relic Veneration in Medieval Japan

BRIAN O. RUPPERT

ALTHOUGH THE CULT of the saints in medieval Christianity is better known in the West, Buddhists likewise had their own saints.¹ Early Buddhism featured arhats (Jpn. *rakan*), who trod the eightfold path in the footsteps of the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni. Arhats, like the saints of Christian traditions, left bodily relics. However, while early Buddhists venerated the relics and reliquaries of arhats, their relic worship most commonly focused on the remains of the historical Buddha. In later, Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions, the remains of the Mahāyāna saints, or bodhisattvas, were also venerated, yet here, too, the worship of the Buddha's relics remained paradigmatic. Indeed, to understand relic veneration in the Mahāyāna, we must understand its connection to the bodhisattva career of Śākyamuni in his previous lives.²

In this study we will consider Buddhist relic veneration in Japan's early medieval era (about the late tenth through the fourteenth centuries). By examining relic veneration in this period, we can gain access to a world of ritual practice that directly intersected with concerns for the afterlife. We will consider how texts depicting Japanese relic veneration evoke not only ritual associations of relics with death and other worlds but also the topoi or themes in Buddhist traditions linking stories of earlier lives of Śākyamuni Buddha, the ritual act of relic veneration, and belief that the merit of such action will accrue to both the sponsor(s) of the rite and those for whom their prayers have been offered, namely, the deceased. Analysis of this thematic complex will enable us to better understand the relationships between the living and the dead in premodern Japan.

I would like to argue that Japanese of the early and medieval eras reimagined the afterlife and refigured mortuary practice precisely through such appropriation. Stories concerning the bodhisattva career of Śākyamuni and the struggle over his remains at the time of his

death; the legends surrounding the great faith and actions of the Indian King Aśoka, famed for erecting relic stūpas; and the depictions of relic veneration by Buddhist believers throughout Asia constituted a narrative nexus that would be mimetically reenacted by Japanese Buddhists in ritual patterns long known throughout the Buddhist world. Believers in early and medieval Japan often coveted relics and appropriated them in negotiating power relations.³ In so doing, they drew upon discursive practices that linked the stories of Śākyamuni's past actions of self-sacrifice as a bodhisattva, his relics, legends, pilgrimage narratives, and other representations of relic worship.⁴ However, their appropriations of this thematic complex rested implicitly on the inseparable relationship between these topoi and Buddhist concerns about death and the afterlife.

Relic veneration and its symbolism formed a ground of possibility for discursive practices and related imperatives to make or transfer merit toward a better afterlife, whether for oneself or for a loved one. The appropriation in the Japanese isles of a pan-Buddhist thematic complex involving relics, merit, and sacrifice opened new modes for conceiving of the afterlife and mortuary practice. Moreover, as we will see, the wealth of hitherto unexamined primary sources on this topic makes clear how relic veneration and its presumed connections to the afterlife were appropriated by those in sundry social groups in related ways—yet for ends that varied, sometimes dramatically, according to context. Fundamentally, however, relic veneration enabled people of Japan's early and medieval eras to find permanence in Buddhism—permanence beyond the instability (*mujiō*) of both sentient existence and the grave, tangible in the remains of the Buddha himself.

The Jātakas, Relics, and Self-Sacrifice in Early Japan

Early Buddhist traditions told numerous stories of the historical Buddha's earlier lives (Skt. *jātaka*, Jpn. *honji*) as a bodhisattva, in which he exemplified the perfection of giving through his offerings, not only of wealth, but ultimately of his own body through self-sacrifice. These actions are depicted especially in carvings on early stūpa reliquaries. Transitional scriptures associated with the emergence of the Mahāyāna also depict similar themes, such as acts of extreme giving on the part of bodhisattvas and their transfer of the resulting merit to believers. Many of these traditions, which began to develop in the early centuries BCE, depicted the bodhisattva, as do the Jātakas, as one who gives exhaustively to others, often with the added element that he undertakes the bodhisattva path in lifetime after lifetime for the sake of the salvation of the world.

The bodhisattvas depicted in the Mahāyāna sūtras are often figures different than the person who became the historical Buddha. The *Lotus Sūtra* (Skt. *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*, Jpn. *Myōhōrengekyō* or *Hokekyō*) describes how Bodhisattva Medicine King, in a prior existence as Bodhisattva Beheld with Joy by All Living Beings, engaged in the highest form of self-sacrifice in the presence of both a buddha and stūpas containing buddha relics. According to the sūtra, this bodhisattva wrapped himself in jewels and burned his body in offering to the Buddha Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon. In recounting this act, Śākya-muni Buddha praises it as the greatest of gifts: “Even were one to give realm and city, wife and children, it would still not equal [this gift].” Afterwards, the Buddha Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon entrusts the dharma, the Buddhist community, the world, and his own relics to the bodhisattva, enjoining him to distribute the relics in several thousand stūpas, for which he should arrange offerings.⁵ Beheld with Joy by All Living Beings now constructs 84,000 stūpas, but he is still not satisfied with a sacrifice of alienable possessions on behalf of Buddhism. Evoking the theme of absolute giving, depicted prototypically by the *Vessantara-jātaka*, he says to himself, “Though I have made this offering, at heart I am still not satisfied. I will now make still further offerings to the relics.” He proceeds to burn his arm in front of the 84,000 stūpas, continuing the offering for thousands of years, with great benefit to sentient beings.⁶ Inspired by such stories, Chinese Buddhists, both clerical and lay, later followed the patterns of offering and veneration established by Indian Buddhists since the era of Aśoka. Rulers and other lay Buddhists also evidently believed that constructing reliquaries and venerating relics would enable them to accumulate merit, which could then be transferred to others. Rulers sacrificed themselves by giving themselves up to the saṅgha for ransom, while others gave of their possessions or even sacrificed their own bodies like the bodhisattva depicted in the *Lotus Sūtra*. This of course should not surprise us, since the Chinese (and Japanese) inherited from Indian Buddhism not only narratives of bodhisattvas’ self-sacrifice but also, as Mark Blum notes in Chapter 4 in this volume, an “ambivalence in Indian Buddhist doctrinal sources about self-mutilation and suicide,” accompanied as well by Chinese (and Japanese) “monastic traditions valorizing suicide.”⁷ Indeed, while the clerical community profited through the gifts of the faithful, some of their own went so far as to offer bodily parts in veneration of relics.

How and when were such narratives incorporated into Japanese Buddhism? Buddhist literary influences that promoted worshipping relics and building stūpas were introduced quite early; moreover, Japanese Buddhist practices of venerating relics and constructing reli-

quaries were undertaken with knowledge of the topoi discussed above. That is, members of the Japanese aristocracy, if not of the larger population, were aware of the connection between such narratives and the veneration of relics and directed such practices toward the accumulation of merit, typically, to transfer merit to the dead.

First, the tales of Śākyamuni's former lives provided literary inspiration for the building of stūpas. Early evidence of their influence in Japan can be seen in their pictorial representation on the miniature shrine (*Tamamushi no zushi*) constructed at Hōryūji in the second half of the seventh century, which also depicts the worship of relics. The specific stories represented were those of the prince Mahāsattva (Śākyamuni in a previous life), who offered his body to a hungry tigress, and of a Brahman ascetic cultivating bodhisattva practice in the Himalayas (also a past incarnation of Śākyamuni), who offered his body to a demon in exchange for a Buddhist teaching. Both episodes are discussed in some detail in Blum's chapter.⁸

The late tenth-century *Sanbō ekotoba* (The three jewels) also indicates the extent to which members of the imperial court knew of the thematic and ritual connections between these tales of the Buddha's former lives and other literature concerning relic worship and stūpa construction. This collection of Buddhist tales and accounts of major Buddhist ceremonies was compiled in 984 by Minamoto no Tamenori (c. 941–1011), provisional governor of Mikawa province and great-great-grandson of Emperor Kōkō (r. 884–887), for the edification of the recently tonsured princess Sonshi. In it, Tamenori relates a series of Jātaka related to relic veneration, but we can focus on a few that specifically depict acts of memorializing relics through enshrining them in reliquaries. For example, one story tells of a lion who, as a previous incarnation of Śākyamuni, gives up his life to a hunter; after this a king, later to be born as Maitreya Bodhisattva, gathers the bones and enshrines them in a stūpa (*tō*).⁹ The tale of the sacrifice of Prince Mahāsattva to a hungry tigress is also recounted; his parents, the king and queen, are represented as taking the bones of the prince, who will be reborn as Śākyamuni, and enshrining them in a stūpa (*sotoba*).¹⁰

In each case, the remains of the Bodhisattva who has sacrificed himself—and who will later be born as Śākyamuni—are the object, not only of concern, but also of deposit as relics in reliquaries. Veneration at such a site, by implication, enables believers to requite their indebtedness to the Bodhisattva for the gift of his body by memorializing his sacrifice. Here, we understand that Japanese aristocrats demonstrated in aesthetic forms such as the seventh-century *Tamamushi no zushi* and the tenth-century *Sanbō ekotoba* their knowledge of the narrative and ritual nexus linking relic veneration with the effort to

memorialize the sacrifices made by the Buddha during his career as a bodhisattva.

Moreover, the connection between indebtedness to Śākyamuni and the memorialization of his death and *parinirvāṇa* via the worship of his remains is reinforced in the section of *Sanbō ekotoba* on the annual relics assembly (*shari-e*) conducted at Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei, the center of Tendai Buddhism, located in the mountains on the edge of Heian-kyō (Kyoto). Tamenori's account focuses on the relics that the Tendai monk Ennin (794–864) acquired on his journey to China and quotes Śākyamuni as emphasizing that offerings made to buddha relics yield the same merit and benefit as offerings made to the living Buddha. Here, the Buddha, who is described as being eternal and void in his person, is said to have left his bones out of compassion for sentient beings. That is, he allows his indestructible body to be broken into pieces in order that beings may plant “good roots” (*zenkon*) through the act of venerating them—this in spite of the temporal distance from the smoke rising out of Śākyamuni's ashes.¹¹

How, in practice, did early Japanese Buddhists venerate relics in connection with death and the afterlife? Initially, in any consideration of the relationship between relic veneration and death practices in early Japan, one inevitably notices the one million miniature stūpas (*hyakumantō*) commissioned by the empress Shōtoku (r. 749–758, 764–770) to be offered in sets of 100,000 to each of the ten major temples of Nara and Naniwa (present-day Osaka): Daianji, Gangōji, Kōfukuji, Yakushiji, Tōdaiji, Saidaiji, Hōryūji, Gufukuji, Shitennōji, and Sūfukuji. In describing the offering of these miniature three-story stūpas in 770, *Shoku Nihongi*, second of the six governmental histories, depicts the context in which Shōtoku decided to have them constructed.¹² The text records that the construction was undertaken in fulfillment of a vow she made in 764 after the subjugation of the rebel Fujiwara no Nakamaro and his cohorts. Apparently it was also conducted in part as an act of repentance for the destruction of lives during the subjugation. In this case, written magical spells (Skt. *dhāraṇī*, Jpn. *darani*) were enshrined in the stūpas rather than relics as such, reminiscent of the practice of enshrining sūtras in the stūpas of temples in the *koku-bunji* or provincial monastery system.¹³ The empress and those around her probably believed that such enshrinement would evoke this association, with its implication of the centrality of imperial power, on the part of those who received her offerings.

Specific rituals employing relics also emerged, appropriating the perceived powers of relics to deal with crises or dangerous junctures such as death, drought, or the turn of the year, as well as for positive purposes such as the production of karmic merit. Initially, rituals

closely related to relics were those involving cremation and the burial practices of the imperial family. The first recorded cremation in Japan took place in the beginning of the eighth century. Dōshō (629–700), a Hossō monk who had received relics from the Chinese monk Xuanzang (Jpn. Genjō, 602–664), was cremated upon his death.¹⁴ Dōshō was also the teacher of Gyōki (668–749), the famous monk who would later be referred to generally as *bosatsu* (Skt. *bodhisattva*) because of his reputed deeds on behalf of the populace. Indeed, the inscription on the vessel in which Gyōki's bones were deposited referred to them as "relics" (*shari*; Skt. *śarīra*) and stated that the goal of his disciples was to place the relics in a "jeweled stūpa" (*tahō no tō = tahōtō*)—suggesting that cremated remains as such were sometimes referred to as "relics."¹⁵

It would seem, however, that the term *shari* at this early juncture referred only to remains of the Buddha or to someone of extremely exalted status, as in the case of Gyōki. One scholar, who has noted the discovery of a human tooth, together with a pearl, mirrors, swords, and jewels inside the knee of the great Buddha image at Tōdaiji, claims that the placement of the tooth inside the figure suggests its status as a relic; indeed, the tooth may have been that of Emperor Shōmu.¹⁶ Moreover, a text that describes the enshrinement of the remains of Prince Sawara (d. 785)—whose angry spirit became an object of such great concern that he was placated by being posthumously given the title of emperor (*tennō*)—refers to his bones at one point as *shari*.¹⁷

Given the motifs indicated by the *Tamamushi no zushi* and *Sanbō ekotoba*, it is clear that the topoi outlined above had become influential by the late tenth century. By that time, concepts of death and the afterlife in general were shifting in aristocratic society. Although multiple stūpas had been constructed as early as the 760s to memorialize those dead who had fallen in war, from the tenth century on, anxiety over the possible transformation of such dead into vengeful spirits (*onryō*) led to increased construction of stūpa reliquaries. In other words, the construction of stūpas, as well as the mortuary practices conducted at them, offered a means to cope with increasing worries about problems such as those raised by the vengeful spirit of the exiled Sugawara no Michizane (845–903). The classic narrative representation of the construction of multiple stūpas to settle Michizane's spirit is the legend of the monk Nichizō (905–985) and his journey to the afterlife. While touring the hells, Nichizō was reputedly told by the deceased Emperor Daigo, suffering there, to save him from his plight by telling the chancellor Fujiwara no Tadahira to construct a myriad reliquaries, thereby quieting the ghost of Michizane, whom Daigo had harmed in life.¹⁸ The narrative, which may date from as early as the tenth century,

presents stūpa construction and, by implication, stūpa veneration, as a form of Buddhist memorialization capable of resolving the plight of those suffering in the afterlife.

In this context, relics and stūpas in early Japan came to be increasingly associated with mortuary and funerary practices. Constructing reliquaries had already been associated with efforts akin to those of King Aśoka, who according to legend established 84,000 buddha-relic stūpas to requite his debt to the Buddha and also to atone for the sin of killing large numbers of opponents in war. Now stūpas were also appropriated for familial mortuary practice. From the late tenth century if not earlier, prominent aristocrats such as Fujiwara no Sanesuke (957–1046) recorded their erection of stūpas specifically on behalf of deceased family members or loved ones.¹⁹

Relics, the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the Pure Land

Associations between relics, death, and the afterlife were thus established at an early date. During Japan's Heian period (794–1185), these associations were becoming increasingly linked to growing aspirations for birth after death in a pure land or other forms of postmortem liberation. We find this, for example, in tale literature. The tale collection *Hokke genki* (Record of marvels [attributable to faith in] the *Lotus [Sūtra]*, a.k.a. *Dainihon Hokekyō kenki*), compiled by the Tendai monk Chingen (fl. 1040–1044), connects the appearance of relics with faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* and with the practice of self-sacrifice performed in mimetic re-enactment of scenes from the sūtra. The story of the lay believer known as Old Master (*okina wajo*) depicts his unwavering faith in the sūtra but also describes him as requesting a sign that he will attain *bodhi* or enlightened wisdom after death; upon his reciting the sūtra, a tooth falls from his mouth onto the sūtra text, and he realizes it is really a buddha-relic grain (*busshari ichiryū*). Later, confident of his salvation, Old Master dies in seclusion while reciting a line from the *Lotus Sūtra*'s "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathāgata" chapter ("Nyorai juyōbon").²⁰

The story of an anonymous monk of Satsuma, an upholder (*jikyōsha*) of the *Lotus Sūtra*, depicts his effort to purify his meritorious practice aimed at achieving birth in the Pure Land. His efforts culminate in his self-immolation, which the narrative describes as no different from that of the bodhisattva Beheld with Joy by All Living Beings, described in the *Lotus Sūtra* and discussed above, who immolated himself in the presence of a buddha-relic stūpa.²¹ Indeed, three days after the monk's self-sacrifice, his disciples find a large quantity of buddha relics, indicating the monk's piety and mysterious association with the

bodhisattva while at the same time illustrating the thematic association of self-sacrifice with the worship and acquisition of relics. The tale also metonymically draws together relics and Pure Land practice, perhaps suggesting that actions evoking the topos of relics also contribute to attaining birth in Amida's realm.

A growing connection between relic veneration and the promise of birth in the Pure Land is perhaps best expressed by Miyoshi no Tameyasu (1049–1139) in his preface to his large collection *Shūi ōjōden* (Gleanings of accounts of those born in the Pure Land). Tameyasu himself went to Shitennōji temple, where he chanted one million *nen-butsu* and venerated the buddha relics there. At the time, he made a vow to be born in the Pure Land and prayed that, if he were in fact to attain birth there, buddha relics would appear before him as a sign: sure enough, after his repetition three times of the vow, three grains of buddha relics manifested before him.²² Important for our purposes here is the fact that Tameyasu's faith in the vow was justified through the relics' manifestation, just as happened in the story of Old Master noted above. This indicates that Tameyasu and, presumably, others like him bred among the rural aristocracy—Tameyasu came originally from Etchū (present-day Toyama prefecture)—saw a connection between the manifestation of relics and verification of birth in the Pure Land. The same was undoubtedly true of aristocrats in the capital as well.

Along similar lines, the monk Ungaku (d. 1143) is depicted in Fujiwara no Munetomo's 1151 compilation *Honchō shinshū ōjōden* (New collection of hagiographies of those born in the Pure Land) as a monk of the Shingon temple Daigoji who resolves to help expound the Buddhist dharma in the present dark age, more than 2,000 years since the passing of Śākyamuni, by copying the Buddhist canon in 2,000 fascicles over the course of thirty years. Calling his cohorts together, Ungaku tells them his life will soon end and, after exhorting them to chant the Sonshō *darani* as well as the jewel name of Amida on his behalf, dies while sitting in front of buddha relics, contemplating Amida and forming with his hands Amida's samādhi mudrā.²³

The notion that veneration of buddha relics could lead to birth in the Pure Land was also incorporated into Japanese commentaries such as the iconographic manual *Kakuzenshō* compiled by the Shingon monk Kakuzen (1143–c. 1213). Kakuzen devoted a section of his chapter on relics to arguing that venerating relics and stūpas serves as a means for achieving birth in the Pure Land. Moreover, he also included a section of scriptural quotes claiming that such veneration would also guarantee birth in the future Buddha Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven; in another section he quoted other scriptures and commentaries

guaranteeing birth in a variety of heavenly realms, such as the Heaven of Thirty-three (Skt. Trāyastriṃśa, Jpn. Tōriten).²⁴

The variety of works and genres represented here indicates that the thematic nexus connecting relics and the afterlife was prominent in writings associated with the major traditions of the so-called *kenmitsu* (exoteric-esoteric) Buddhist establishment, as well as in those produced by both rural and urban aristocratic believers. By the medieval era, the topoi concerning relics thus seem to have spanned literary productions throughout the Japanese Buddhist community.

From the mid-Heian era on, funerary and mortuary practice, as well as rites conducted for purposes of a better afterlife, increasingly featured the veneration of buddha relics. Although we will examine such practices in greater detail below, here we can briefly take note of their character and institutional connections with temples of the day. Postmortem welfare was one aim of the popular relic assemblies (*shari-e*, *sharikō*), first conducted by the Tendai monk Ennin in 860. The powerful courtier Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027) buried buddha relics, along with the *Lotus Sūtra* and other sūtras related to the Buddha Amida and to the future Buddha Maitreya, at Mt. Kinbu in 1007. Although he did not explicitly mention the relics in his written vow, he emphasized that he had buried the scriptures with the hope of being transported to Amida's Pure Land and then returning to this world with the advent of Maitreya Buddha; his burial of the relics would thus also appear to have been associated with these aspirations.²⁵ Nakano Genzō has noted that, at least by the twelfth century, such practices and beliefs would become common among Shingon and Tendai monks as well as lay aristocrats.²⁶

While we do not know the precise content of the practices undertaken at the earliest relics assemblies, it is clear that by the twelfth century at the latest, they often included prayers for birth in, or other references to, Amida's Pure Land or Maitreya's Heaven, along with more general hopes for salvation. Such concerns are especially evident in the ritual texts associated with such assemblies, such as liturgies or *shari kōshiki* and the *gāthā* verses (Jpn. *kada*) accompanying them, as well as hymns (*santan*). While the authorship of the *kōshiki* for the relics assembly attributed to the Tendai Pure Land Buddhist monk Genshin (942–1017) is in dispute, those by later figures such as the Shingon monk Kakuban (1095–1144) often included prayers for birth in Amida's Pure Land. The second section of Kakuban's *Shari kuyō kōshiki* for the relics assembly (also called *Shari kōshiki*) specifically outlines an act of relic veneration with the prayer for future birth there.²⁷

Other extant liturgies for relics assemblies, however, focus on ask-

ing that the merit of relic veneration be applied to all sentient beings' equal attainment of buddhahood. The *Shari kōshiki* of the Kegon/Shingon master Myōe Kōben (1173–1232), for example, simply emphasized the hope that all sentient beings will attain the path to buddhahood.²⁸ The Hossō master Jōkei (1155–1213) produced several works by this title, of differing lengths as well as content, combining several of the themes just noted. In his two single-section *Shari kōshiki* texts, Jōkei included a verse promising that relic veneration would be rewarded by repeated birth in the heavens and eventual enlightenment, a recompense noted also in one of the extant versions of his five-section text. One of his single-section *Shari kōshiki* elaborates on this promised reward as birth on a lotus dais in the nine levels, a specific reference to Amida's Pure Land. At the same time, Jōkei's thought was not confined to aspirations for Amida's Pure Land but also emphasized the benefits of acts such as reciting Śākyamuni's name (Shaka *nenbutsu*) as well as belief in the future Buddha Maitreya. Especially in his five-section relics liturgies, he alludes to birth in both Amida's realm and Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven as the reward for those venerating relics.²⁹ On other occasions, Jōkei depicted relic veneration as offering birth in Kannon's Potalaka (Fudaraku) paradise, and at one point proposed a major relics assembly that featured relic veneration in front of an image of Maitreya.³⁰ We may therefore imagine that Jōkei believed that the veneration of buddha relics provided merit sufficient for birth in a variety of buddha and bodhisattva realms.

In short, didactic tale literature, vows and prayers, and also liturgical texts all suggest that, over the course of the latter Heian period, connections between relic veneration and death were becoming increasingly associated with hopes for rebirth in a superior realm. Now let us consider how such associations were appropriated by, or on behalf of, specific constituencies.

Women, Relics, and the Afterlife

One striking development in the early medieval period is the involvement of women in relic veneration, including its connection with mortuary rites and other afterlife concerns. The twelfth-century tale collection *Konjaku monogatari shū* (Collection of tales of times now past) suggests that, by the late tenth century, the Tendai relics assembly was sometimes performed on behalf of the monk officiants' mothers, who were not permitted to climb Mt. Hiei, where the rite was conducted. The text describes the Enryakuji monk Ryōgen (912–985) as having moved the relics assembly on behalf of his mother from Mt. Hiei to the area of Yoshida in the capital.³¹

Konjaku monogatari shū goes on to describe the relics assembly as practiced in the early eleventh century, apparently under the direction of the monk Ingen (954–1028):

After that, the abbot of the mountain [Hiei], () said, “It is extremely lamentable that the [relics] assembly does not [include] worship by any of the women of the capital.” When he brought the relics down [from Hiei] to the chapel Hōkōin for worship, monks, laity, men and women from throughout the capital prostrated themselves in worship and wailed without limit. It was the year (). Finally, on the ()th day of the fourth month, the relics assembly was performed in the temple Gidarinji. When the relics were transferred from Hōkōin to Gidarinji for worship, it was incomparably joyous.... Many jeweled trees³² were planted along the route [between Hōkōin and Gidarinji], and various flowers fell from the sky.... Since its construction, the adornments of Gidarinji were like those of the Pure Land. It is said that after that [relics assembly], the relics were also passed for worship to the emperor and his consorts before being returned to the mountain [Hiei].³³

Like Tamenori’s account in *Sanbō ekotoba*—which suggests that women enjoyed a special connection to the relic services performed at Kazanji and Tōshōdaiji because they were unable to participate in the relics assembly on Mt. Hiei—this passage from *Konjaku* similarly indicates that the temporary movement of the relics from Mt. Hiei to the capital was to give women the opportunity to worship them.³⁴ It also indicates that the worship of relics in the capital brought clerics together with lay men and women from throughout the capital area. Hōkōin, lying beyond the confines of the capital at the edge of the Kamo River north of Nijō Boulevard and east of Kyōgoku Boulevard, was formerly the residence of Fujiwara no Kaneie (929–990), one-time chancellor and regent and the father of Michinaga, who attended the procession and, presumably, the chapel services.³⁵ Gidarinji, formerly the residence of Fujiwara no Akimitsu (944–1021), was just to the north of Hōkōin.³⁶ Both were, in short, established as family chapels of the Fujiwaras, suggesting that the rites were conducted at least in part for mortuary purposes.

Stories in *Konjaku monogatari shū* and other tale collections of the early medieval era also indicate that women often bore witness to the manifestation of buddha relics. Although these collections also depict men acquiring relics, they point toward characteristics peculiar to women’s relic veneration and provide information about the active role of female members of the imperial family in relic-related practice, which was commonly mortuary in character or otherwise connected

with concerns about the afterlife. For example, *Honchō shinshū ōjōden* depicts the life of an elderly nun named Renmyō. She had always loathed the “five impediments” (*goshō*) attributed to women³⁷ and humbly rejoiced at the prospect of birth in the Pure Land. The reclusive nun went to Shitennōji at the end of the month together with others to worship the buddha relics there. On the final day of services, she witnessed three of the relic grains emitting a bright light. Renmyō, however, was the only one to see the light. She suddenly fell ill two days later and died facing the west while chanting the name of Amida Buddha.³⁸

This narrative represents one of several concerning a female figure who witnessed the wondrous properties of buddha relics. It also indicates a connection between the relics cult and Pure Land practice, suggesting that women of the era, like men, believed that the worship of relics could lead to birth in the Pure Land.³⁹ In particular, the rare reference to the “five impediments” in the tale (the only story to mention *goshō* in the entire collection) raises the possibility that veneration of relics, like recitation of the *nenbutsu*, helped women circumvent their supposed impurities or incapacities, allowing them access to a salvation that was otherwise deemed difficult to approach.

At the same time, it would seem that women’s involvement in relic veneration took a variety of courses. For example, the nun Myōkō, who, like other Kōzanji nuns, was the widow of a general killed in the Jōkyū War (1221), copied the scripture *Shijia wubai dayuan jing* (Jpn. *Shaka gohyaku daigangyō*, Sūtra of the five hundred great vows of Śākya-muni), a text based on the *Beihua jing* (*Hikekyō*), in her own blood in front of buddha relics in 1237, demonstrating knowledge of the association between practices of self-sacrifice and relic veneration.⁴⁰ Indeed, as discussed below, women of the imperial house were especially active in the cult of relics, worshipping relics in an effort to benefit their lineages while at the same time presumably aspiring for a better afterlife. Women of the court thus mediated the ritual and temporal intersection between the seemingly timeless powers of relics and the temporal power of the ruling families, a topic we will now consider in greater detail.

Relics, Mortuary Ritual, and Lineage

During the latter Heian period, members of specific family lineages increasingly incorporated relics into their mortuary rituals. For example, *Gyokuyō* (Jeweled leaves), the diary of the powerful aristocrat Kujō Kanazane (1149–1207), records that he and his elder sister Kōkamon’in (1121–1181) sponsored and participated in relics assemblies (*sharikō*)

on nineteen occasions before her death. Kanezane made note in his diary of the upcoming worship of relics (*shari-ku*) in 1167, apparently in connection with rituals conducted for the postmortem welfare of his recently departed father, the late regent Fujiwara no Tadamichi (1097–1164).⁴¹

In a later entry Kanezane suggested that the figure of the eternal Buddha, as represented in the *Lotus Sūtra*, was central to the relics assembly. He notes that, during the assembly, Enryakuji and Onjōji (Mii-dera) monks discussed the eternal character of the Buddha's existence as explained in the "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathāgata" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.⁴² This illustrates the prominence in the assembly of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is also suggested elsewhere, for example, by Kanezane and his wife reciting the sūtra in their carriage on the way home after the rite.⁴³ Such emphasis on the eternal Buddha illustrates how relics served to embody notions of the Buddha's continuity, despite the onset of the Last Age of the Buddhist Dharma (*mappō*). By means of the relics assembly, these same discourses of continuity were assimilated to the deceased and to the ancestral line.

Kanezane's and Kōkamon'in's sponsorship of the relics assembly was primarily related to their concerns over the spiritual destiny of their forebears. The relics assembly was held on a semimonthly basis on the nineteenth—the anniversary of the death of their father, Fujiwara no Tadamichi, the regent and chancellor who had died seven years earlier, in 1164. In other words, the rite was conducted at least in part to transfer merit to Tadamichi's departed spirit. After the death of Kōkamon'in in 1181, the location of the rite was moved from her quarters to the Kujō Hall (Kujōdō) of the Fujiwaras, and Kanezane suggested in his diary the reason why the rite had been conducted in Kōkamon'in's quarters prior to its relocation. The relics assembly, he wrote, had been conducted without fail each month in Tadamichi's time, and Tadamichi, before his death, had transmitted the practice to Kōkamon'in, who carried on the rite in his commemoration until she herself passed away.⁴⁴

Beginning in the 1180s, Kanezane and others began to participate in and sponsor the worship of relics on behalf of the departed spirits of Kōkamon'in and the late retired empress Bifukumon'in (1117–1160). In 1184 Kanezane participated in a relic rite (*shari kuyō*) at the grave of Kōkamon'in on Mt. Hiei to mark the anniversary of her death. The previous day, recitation of mantras and of the "Lifespan of the Tathāgata" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* were also conducted, illustrating again the intersection between the figure of the eternal Buddha and relic rituals conducted on behalf of the dead.⁴⁵

This development was related in part to the emergent practice of

enshrining and venerating the remains of members of the imperial family and the aristocracy on the grounds of temples, often on sacred mountains. The enshrinement of both males and females in temples was often related to the development of *bodaisho*, clan temples established for the salvation of lineage ancestors.⁴⁶ It was, of course, the remains of emperors that were first enshrined in stūpas, although extant texts do not use the term *shari* to refer to them. In 1129, following his cremation, the bones of the retired emperor Shirakawa were deposited in the temple Kōryūji; two years later, following his apparent deathbed instructions, they were interred in a stūpa at the Toba Rikyū detached palace.⁴⁷ The remains of Shirakawa's successor and grandson, the retired emperor Toba, were likewise interred in a three-level stūpa at Toba Rikyū in 1156. In this case, Toba does not seem to have been cremated, meaning that his remains were buried under the stūpa; thus in his case, the reliquary became the equivalent of the traditional *sanryō*, that is, imperial mausoleum.⁴⁸ In the case of both Shirakawa and Toba, Amida Halls (Amidadō) were constructed next to the stūpa for ongoing memorial practice, further suggesting the convergence of memorial stūpa veneration, worship of Amida or other buddhas, and the cult of the imperial dead.⁴⁹ In 1153, the Ninnaji prince-monk Kakuho died, whereupon his bones were enshrined in a stūpa on Mt. Kōya.⁵⁰ Five years later, Fujiwara no Tadamasa enshrined the bones of his mother inside an image of Dainichi Nyorai at Henjōin on the same mountain.⁵¹ In 1160, Tadamasa's brother, Tadachika, enshrined the bones of Bifukumon'in in a stūpa on Kōya, later to be joined by the remains of her son, the previously deceased emperor Konoe (1139–1155).⁵²

The practice of enshrining the remains of female aristocrats, empresses, and imperial consorts in sacred temples and funerary stūpas was contemporary with that of males. Enshrinement of the female dead occurred on Mt. Hiei from as early as the mid-eleventh century; in the area of Daigoji, as early as the late eleventh; and on Mt. Kōya, from the twelfth century on. In 1090 the aristocrat Minamoto no Masazane (1059–1127)—who later became the first prime minister (*daijō daijin*) of the Minamoto lineage—built Ichijōin at Daigoji to enshrine the remains of his mother. Those of Fujiwara no Kenshi (1057–1084), consort of Emperor Shirakawa, and her daughter, the retired empress Ikuhōmon'in (1076–1096), were enshrined under the buddha altar at Daigoji's Enkōin.⁵³

In 1194 Kanezane initiated an offering rite conducted at Mudōji Daijōin on Mt. Hiei on behalf of Kōkamon'in, for whose spirit this chapel had originally been built. The vow that Kanezane wrote for the occasion included the following words:

Kōkamon'in was the oldest daughter of the [Kujō] house and the queen of the realm....According to the vow of [Dengyō] Daishi [Saichō], this mountain abhors the ascension of women. Although one might say that this [presence of Kōkamon'in] invites the anger of holy spirits, because of her death, we have constructed her residence on this holy ground and established a buddha image as the main object of worship for her merit (*tsuifuku*). Truly, the holy spirit of this former retired empress has transformed into a man and, arming itself with the acts of the bodhisattva, attains enlightenment. In the ancient teaching on Vulture Peak [in the *Lotus Sūtra*], the dragon girl was immediately born into the world Undefined in the south. Now, with this good act on Hiei, "holy spirit" [Kōkamon'in] should be born in the realm of the western paradise (Gokuraku)....⁵⁴

This prayer offers us insight into the ironic transgression that takes place in the enshrinement of Kōkamon'in's remains on Mt. Hiei, which had long prohibited the presence of women. This is a transgression to the extent that it offers Kōkamon'in, a woman, access to the mountain, believed by many of the period to offer a gateway to the Pure Land. Kanezane wrote in his diary that they had relocated Kōkamon'in's former residence to this spot on Mt. Hiei, virtually ensuring the comfort of her spirit on sacred ground.⁵⁵ At the same time, it is only when she is already dead that she has access to this sacred space: Kōkamon'in has to become a relic herself in order to have access to the sacred space at the top of the mountain.⁵⁶ In fact, another portion of this prayer also notes that some of her hair had been placed inside the Amida image, the main object of veneration at Mudōji Daijōin.⁵⁷ Kanezane's vow also rehearses the *Lotus Sūtra* story of the dragon girl who in a moment transformed into a man and realized buddhahood, immediately appearing in the world. Undefined to the south, again evoking both the capacity and perceived limitations of women on the Buddhist path.

The prayer goes on also to request tranquility for the lineage as well as prosperity for its descendants. It recalls that the ancestor of the Kujō lineage, Morosuke (908–960), especially divined the correct spots on Mt. Hiei to construct both of the family chapels there. It also notes that the prosperity of the clan was made possible through Morosuke's (posthumous?) protection of the chapels, suggesting that establishment of the new chapel on behalf of Kōkamon'in will further ensure the future prosperity of the family.⁵⁸ The reference to lineage rhetorically traces the Kujō to the period of the preeminence of the Fujiwara regency/chancellorship (*sekkanke*) at the same time that it reminds the audience of the centrality of the male ancestor as the lin-

eage foundation. The worship of Kōkamon'in recognizes her powerful place within the line even while representing such power as being in the service of an androcentric lineage. It also takes the view, based on an "orthodox" interpretation of Amida's thirty-fifth vow, that her salvation can be assured only despite her gender—demanding that her spirit be transformed into a male figure to gain proper entry into the Pure Land.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, despite the ambivalence toward female members of the lineage represented by such a text, retired empresses and consorts increased their personal participation in and sponsorship of rites of relic worship that were mortuary in character. Near the end of the twelfth century, Hachijōin (1137–1211), the daughter of Bifukumon'in and Emperor Toba, began monthly performance of buddha relic rituals on behalf of her mother's departed spirit. The rite was conducted on the twenty-third of each month, marking the anniversary of Bifukumon'in's death on the twenty-third of the eleventh month, 1160. The diary of the well-known courtier and poet, Fujiwara no Teika (Sadaie), *Meigetsuki* (Bright moon), records that the rite was a relics assembly (*sharikō*).⁶⁰

Manuscripts of the scriptural treasury of Ninnaji temple suggest that Hachijōin conducted these services together with the prince-monk Shukaku and the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa.⁶¹ The manuscripts are entitled *Bifukumon'in ongakki shidai* (Order of the ceremony of the monthly anniversary of the death of Bifukumon'in), reiterating the mortuary character of the proceedings. The contents of these texts indicate the nature of the intersection between buddha relic veneration and memorial services of female members of the imperial line. The first of the two manuscripts preserved at Ninnaji is the more detailed, so we turn to it briefly. The very beginning of the text notes that this is a relic offering (*shari kuyō*) performed every month as an Amida *zanmai* (Skt. Amitābha samādhi), and mentions the presence of the retired emperor and of aristocrats. The ritual pronouncement (Jpn. *hyōhaku* or *hyōbyaku*) is especially informative, beginning with an invocation of the cosmic Tathāgata Mahāvairocana (Maka Birushana Nyorai) as well as the multitudes of deities and beings of the Diamond and Womb realm mandalas. It goes on to note the blessings bestowed by the adamantine relics of the Thus Come One Śākyamuni on the holy multitudes of believers. The pronouncement continues:

The blessed light [we] cannot see./The moon sinks into blackness/
closed by the gold coffin in Vulture Peak./Further, true are the words/
that we cannot hear the wind cry/or the white crane in the forest./The
cremation ends with ashes (*ikotsu*)./The incense proliferates widely/to

the Three Lands [*sangoku*: India, China, Japan]./ ... The relics of the Thus Come One are the whole body of Vairocana;/the form spanning the three periods [past, present, future] is already nirvāṇa!/The undifferentiated dharma body pervades the ten directions!/The essential virtues [of sentient beings], without moving, possess the seal of the [enlightened] wisdom of differentiation (*shabetsu chiin*) of the mandala/.... Carefully considering the immeasurable efficacy of the field of merit, as the seed of buddhahood,/[we] can never sufficiently praise its depth.

The former Bifukumon'in is thus in the shadow of this flourishing tree/.... Now, with the practice of the memorial service [*tsuifuku*]..../[On] this death day of each month, [we] respectfully establish the secret mantra of the *uposatha* service (*sai-e*), giving the delicate hundred varieties of offerings and implements for the practice of the Amida *zanmai*./The ceremonial sash, decorated with precious stones, is truly exquisite, as [we] bow to the relics (*dado*) in the secret place of practice/...⁶²

We note that early on the narrative invokes the debt of the multitudes to the historical Buddha, the implicit loneliness accompanying his death, and the assurance that his relics are not only permanent and diamond-like but are synecdoches of the cosmic buddha, Dainichi. The prayer then goes on to connect the assurance that the Buddha attained nirvāṇa, symbolized by the bodhi tree, with the fate of the former Bifukumon'in, who is in its shadow. In other words, she has access to the Buddha and his teaching and, therefore, the means to attain enlightenment herself—provided this and other memorial services transfer to her the requisite merit. In this way the memorialization of the Buddha—embodied in his relics—followed by that of Bifukumon'in, enables her to mimetically retrace the path of the Buddha's enlightenment by rehearsing the arc that extends from loneliness over his death to assurance of his nirvāṇa. That is, the words pronounced enable the mourners to progress from loneliness over loss of the empress to assurance of her enlightenment by means of envisioning her moving along the same spiritual path as that of the Buddha. Along the way, she is also able to escape from the impurity of this world through birth in the Pure Land. While the narrative may presume that she has to transform into a man before achieving birth there, it makes no mention of the necessity, which suggests that the impurity of her gender is not of particular concern in the rite.

While proclaiming the rite to be a form of Amida *zanmai*, the text focuses instead on the historical and cosmic buddhas. In fact, the only mention of Amida Buddha in the rite is as one of the five buddhas in-

voked later in the service. Even Bifukumon'in's birth in the Pure Land seems, more than anything else, a stepping-stone towards the status enjoyed by Śākyamuni. This ritual narrative subsumes Pure Land faith within the framework of esoteric Buddhism and the cult of the historical Buddha. The remains of the historical Buddha in particular evoke stories and ritual practices offering models for mortuary practice, and those mortuary practices provide further insight into the social roles, representations, and religious aspirations of the female gender within the cosmos of early medieval Japan.

The Bakufu, the Hōjō, and Piety in Death

We have thus far focused on the literature and practices associated primarily with aristocrats, especially those of western Japan. However, the early Kamakura Bakufu (shogunate) also had an interest, both in traditions associating authority with the construction of reliquaries as well as in the religious merit of reliquary construction and relic veneration. In fact, the members of the warrior government embarked on the construction and veneration of 84,000 miniature stūpas from very early on in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) and on numerous occasions. In constructing multiple reliquaries, the Bakufu followed the examples of the imperial house and the aristocratic society of the time, and perhaps even the twelfth-century warrior-rulers at Hiraizumi.⁶³ The number, of course, harkens back to the legend of Aśoka, who demonstrated his devotion to Buddhism as well as his largess by constructing 84,000 reliquaries. In Japan, although sponsorship of construction of 84,000 miniature stūpas was not limited to the reigning or retired emperor, it was always undertaken by figures at the very pinnacle of the imperial government, primarily members of the Fujiwara family. Thus the Bakufu could demonstrate both its piety and authority through such construction and also pacify the dead. In 1197 the first ruling shōgun, Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199), authorized the construction of 84,000 reliquaries to pacify the spirits of those who had died in the wars since the 1150s, beginning with the Hōgen conflict, by which warriors had risen to power. The extant account of the construction says that help was enlisted from local clerics of a temple in Tajima province and sets forth the reason for the construction in the following terms:

Violent conflict occurred between the Minamoto and Taira [clans], so the imperial law (*ōbō*) and the Buddhist dharma (*buppō*) became unsettled. . . . Minamoto Ason [Yoritomo] destroyed the enemies of the emperor [Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa] in accordance with the will of Heaven. . . . However, those he chased and punished and who

died young numbered tens of millions. Those Taira on horseback who headed to the north had their life-dew expire in the grasses of Shinohara, and the rebels who were said to have crossed to the south seas [actually] lost their floating lives in the waves of the eight isles. Thus does not their enmity which remains from their previous life cry out in its sadness in the other world (*meido*)? . . . It has been transmitted that when one responds to hatred with hatred, the hatred does not end for generation upon generation, but that when one responds to hatred with virtue, hatred is transformed into good will. Therefore, we search here for the ancient tracks of Āśoka, constructing 84,000 jeweled stūpas, and believing [in the promise of] the benefits of wealth [that is, wealth derived from the merit of ritual], copy the *hōkyōin darani* in all of the sites of spiritual power in the provinces [throughout the realm]. . . .⁶⁴

The text invokes Yoritomo's heroic character while at the same time alluding to a genuine concern of many inside and outside the Bakufu: the possibility that those warriors who died would wander in confusion between this world and the next, with no loved ones to pray for their welfare, possibly becoming vengeful spirits (*onryō*). It was written within several years after the conclusion of the Minamoto/Taira (Genpei) War, so the level of concern in this regard is not the least surprising. At the same time, the text indicates that Bakufu officials patterned their conduct on that of Āśoka, whose legend had long pervaded aristocratic society. The account represents Yoritomo, like Āśoka, as following a course from war to pacification, marking the transition by concern over the dead and the demonstration of his piety throughout the realm. The reference here to copying the *hōkyōin darani* mantra is also significant, not only because it is an early example of this practice, but also because it drew upon the powers of the relics of the whole bodies of all buddhas, not merely for material benefits but also to promote better rebirth—most commonly, birth in a pure land—and, eventually, buddhahood itself.⁶⁵

The Bakufu continued such offerings of 84,000 stūpas throughout the thirteenth century, especially following armed conflict, and the monks whose services they commissioned for this purpose were among the religious figures most active in the Bakufu's service. Hōjō Yasutoki, the shogunal regent, constructed 84,000 stone reliquaries (*shakutō* or *sekitō*) in the Takoegawara area in 1225, where many vanquished enemies had been executed during and after the Jōkyū War (1221)—including the four children of Miura Taneyoshi, who had fought against him. Yasutoki commissioned the prominent Shingon monk Jōgō (1152–1238) and his disciples to perform the service.⁶⁶

During the early 1240s, the Bakufu increasingly sponsored the construction of clay stūpas (*deitō*), apparently in most cases to pacify the spirit of Retired Emperor Go-Toba, who had died in exile in 1239. Though records do not explain the reason for these services, the timing is close enough to Go-Toba's death to suggest pacification of his spirit as the most likely explanation for at least three of four documented occasions.⁶⁷ In some of these cases, too, the identity of the officiant monks gives us insight into the relationship between the Bakufu and contemporary temples as well as the level of knowledge that Bakufu officials seem to have had of relic traditions. The monk commissioned to perform the first of these rites was Raiken (1186–1261), who did so within the grounds of the Buddha Hall (*jibutsudō*) in the shōgun's residence. Raiken, of the Murakami Genji clan, had first trained in Tendai Buddhism at Onjōji near Heian-kyō and began to offer his services to the shōgun Yoritune during the 1230s; near the end of his life, he became abbot of Onjōji, although he ended up dying in the Kamakura region. Along similar lines, Yūson (1178–1252), who officiated at a relic rite performed at Kuonjyōin (1244), had also trained at Onjōji and became an abbot there prior to his death. Bakufu patronage of monks from Onjōji, a temple renowned for its efforts to protect the imperial family, suggests efforts on the part of Bakufu leaders to co-opt Onjōji's perceived powers to protect emperors and other figures of political authority and, in this particular case, to pacify the spirit of the deceased retired emperor.

By the mid-Kamakura era, monks had made relic rites even more accessible to the Bakufu. Two such monks especially worthy of note of are Ryūben (1206–1283) and Kenna (1261–1338). Ryūben, an Onjōji-lineage cleric and monk-administrator of Tsurugaoka Hachiman shrine, officiated at the offering of a jeweled stūpa (*tahōtō*) sponsored by the Bakufu in 1265, on the occasion of the thirteenth memorial of the death of Adachi Yoshikage (1210–1253).⁶⁸ Kenna (1261–1338) was extensively involved in relic veneration and distribution at his base-temple Shōmyōji, indicating the extent to which the ruling Hōjō clan was knowledgeable about and interested in the buddha relics of the Shingon tradition. Kenna was particularly close to the son and grandson of Hōjō Sanetoki, Akitoki (1248–1301), and the powerful Kanezawa Sadaaki (1278–1333), who rose to the status of shogunal regent. Both Akitoki and Sadaaki oversaw a whole series of activities at Shōmyōji, including the construction of a three-story stūpa reliquary in the late thirteenth century and the reconstruction of the temple complex itself in 1317. The relics liturgy accompanying the dedication of the stūpa in 1291 may possibly have been a public event; for the most part, however, the relics tradition at Shōmyōji did not incorporate public

demonstration of the powers of relics as a major feature, focusing instead on the translation of relics from western Japan. Throughout this period, the Hōjō family seems to have viewed the ritual activities at Shōmyōji as primarily on behalf of the clan. Kenna's acquisition of buddha relics, particularly envisioned in the form of the wish-fulfilling jewel (*nyoi hōju*) of Shingon tradition, was aimed primarily at promoting the health, success, and salvation of the Hōjō lineage.

At the same time the Hōjō also patronized two other nearby temples that housed relics. One, Gokurakuji, like Shōmyōji, eventually came to be a temple of the Shingon-Ritsu tradition. Originally founded by the former high-ranking Bakufu official Hōjō Shigetoki (1198–1261) as a Pure Land temple, Gokurakuji was transformed into a Shingon temple when Shigetoki invited the illustrious master Ninshō (1217–1303) to take up residence there in 1267. Although Ninshō led the rite of dedication for the Shōmyōji reliquary in 1291, the earliest evidence of relic veneration at Gokurakuji was in 1303 and concerned the remains—in this case, called *shari*—of Ninshō himself.⁶⁹ A thirteen-story stūpa was constructed in 1315 to commemorate the thirteenth anniversary of Ninshō's death, suggesting that the relic tradition of Gokurakuji found its significance in mortuary ritual.⁷⁰ This is all the more evident when we consider a prayer composed by the Gokurakuji abbot Junnin in 1319 to transfer merit to Ninshō; in this prayer, Junnin refers to the “benefits” (*riyaku*) and “efficacy” (*kunō*) of relics (*dado*), because they constitute the “virtuous blessings” (*on-toku*) of Śākyamuni Buddha.⁷¹ Gokurakuji's tradition of relic veneration continued at least through the fourteenth century and quite possibly later as well.⁷²

The other major temple was Engakuji, which as a Zen temple offered a quite different tradition of relic veneration. Engakuji eventually achieved such importance that it became one of the five temples in the so-called Gozan (“five mountain”) system patronized by the Bakufu. Its construction was initiated in 1282 by the retired shogunal regent Hōjō Tokimune, and it was specifically dedicated to the memory of warriors who had died during their defense of Japan against the Mongols. At the same time, the very architecture and clerics of the temple owed a great debt to the continent. Engakuji was built in the Chan monastic style of the Song dynasty (960–1279), and its first abbot was the Chinese monk Wuxue (1226–1286, Jpn. Mugaku) of the Linji (Rinzai) school.

Although relic veneration was already well established at Engakuji by the late Kamakura period, in the mid-fourteenth century, the Kyoto-based Ashikaga Bakufu made relics there an even greater priority. Part of the impetus was the common Chan or Zen practice of literally treat-

ing the remains of masters as relics (*shari*). (This was also increasingly the case in Shingon-Ritsu as well, where Ninshō's bones were described as relics, just as Gyōki's had been following their discovery in the thirteenth century.)⁷³ Originally, after his stint as abbot of Engakuji, Wuxue finished his life at Kenchōji, where he died, and a reliquary was erected to memorialize him.

It was, however, to be the death of shōgun Ashikaga Yoshiakira (1330–1367) that set the stage for a new development in the history of shogunal relic veneration. At first, when his remains were taken to the family temple Jōmyōji, his younger brother Motouji and a series of Zen monks went to venerate them, and they were installed there in Kōmyōin. However, the monks of other Ashikaga-related temples such as Kenchōji requested that the bones be distributed to them for installation in their respective temples. Motouji refused them all, instead choosing to distribute the remains of Yoshiakira only to the Ōbaini cloister at Engakuji, where Wuxue's remains had later been relocated, and Zuisenji, a temple affiliated with Engakuji that had been founded by the eminent Zen teacher Musō (1275–1351).⁷⁴ For the Ashikaga Bakufu as well as many Buddhist clerics of the era, it was no longer assumed that the only ashes worthy of the title of "relics" (*shari*) were those of Śākyamuni Buddha.⁷⁵

Moreover, there was also a notion of burial *ad sanctos* in Japanese traditions, which may have partially informed the installment of some of Yoshiakira's relics in Engakuji.⁷⁶ That is, placement of Yoshiakira's relics near both the famous buddha-tooth relic already enshrined there and the reliquary of Wuxue, by virtue of their very nearness to the remains of holy persons, may have been believed to afford Yoshiakira better rebirth or salvation—at the same time associating the authority of Yoshiakira with the spiritual authority of the Buddha and the deceased Chan master.

A related belief may have undergirded the increasing use by members of the Ashikaga Bakufu of relics in funerary practice. Relic veneration formed an integral part of the services conducted on behalf of the shōgun Yoshimitsu after his death in 1408. In particular, a series of prayer documents (*ganmon*) produced on the occasion of his forty-ninth-day memorial service makes clear the extent to which relic rites had been incorporated. Relics assemblies (*sharikō*) were included along with a whole series of sūtra and buddha-name recitations as part of the rites for the deceased. At the same time, a rite of offering to relics (*dato kuyōhō*), distinct from the relic liturgies, was also conducted. In addition, seven *hōkyōin* stūpas, marked by their direct thematic connection with relic veneration, were also constructed and venerated.⁷⁷

Relics beyond Death and the Afterlife

As we have seen, the appropriation of relics by early and early medieval Japanese society was informed by interconnected topoi—clusters of symbols, narratives, and objects. Given Japanese awareness from an early era of Aśokan legend and of the tales of former lives of Śākyamuni Buddha, it is clear that relics in premodern Japan possess what Arjun Appadurai has called “semiotic virtuosity” in Christian relics—the capacity of certain objects to signal complex, multivalent, even seemingly contradictory social messages.⁷⁸ Moreover, such polyvalence had specific ritual and discursive aspects.

From early on, Japanese Buddhists assimilated the discourse relating the practice of self-sacrifice with relic or stūpa veneration, and they appropriated relic veneration in asserting and maintaining a variety of hierarchical relationships. However, in the context of the more intimate of such relationships, such as those between members of the same clan or immediate family, it was in rites related to the dead and to the afterlife, as one pivot of Buddhist social relations, that relics and stūpas gained an ongoing position in ritual life. The importation of traditions of stūpa construction and relic veneration coincided with the introduction of, and also worked to promote, the discourse of indebtedness (*on*), which provided a Buddhist framework for understanding a variety of social relations. As was the case with the ghost festival in East Asia, traditions of relic veneration introduced Buddhism into the fabric of the Japanese family in part through the discourse of indebtedness to one’s own ancestors; while the basic ideology of such discourse may originally have been Confucian in character, the development of Buddhist notions of indebtedness inserted the Buddhist community into social life through its new position as an intermediary between the living and the dead.⁷⁹

Relics, which had early on been primarily the concern of the government and of Buddhist clerics, were now incorporated into relations between families and their ancestors, even as their veneration enabled individuals or groups to improve their own karmic destinies. Such relations stretched from the social milieu of the imperial court and aristocrats in the capital area to those aristocrats in outlying areas, from the shogunal officials in the Kamakura area to those in the capital region, as well as to the lineages of clerics of Buddhist schools such as Shin-gon, (Shingon-) Ritsu, Tendai, and Zen. Especially by means of the topoi we have examined, relics incorporated in their appropriation by each of these groups both discourses and practices of power as well as doctrines and rituals of salvation.

As we have seen, Bakufu leaders’ uses of buddha relics in particu-

lar demonstrated a novel series of such appropriations, given that they freely drew upon the influences of earlier relic patronage by the Japanese aristocracy and by continental Buddhist clerics of the day—and presumably also in connection as well with the increasingly decentered character of power in medieval Japanese society. Officials of both the Kamakura and Ashikaga Bakufu clearly hoped to demonstrate their piety and produce indebtedness through acts such as the construction of 84,000 miniature reliquaries and of *rishōtō* (“stūpas benefiting beings”), activities evoking earlier construction of numerous stūpas by emperors and the aristocracy, which had likewise evoked the topoi concerning buddha relics; at the same time, they specifically invoked the legends surrounding the great patron-king Aśoka, drawing upon the ancient example of a warrior-king, to promote their own rule while simultaneously pacifying the spirits of those vanquished in their rise to power.⁸⁰

Bakufu leaders also actively attempted to acquire buddha relics from the so-called “old” Buddhist schools of Japan, especially Shin-gon, to construct new lineages of relic possession and veneration. These lineages enabled them not only to approach the Buddha in times of crises for apotropaic reasons, as well as for longevity and wealth-producing purposes, but also to transfer merit to deceased family members and contribute to their own salvation. The Ashikagas’ incorporation of relic liturgies into funerary rites for their deceased leaders and even their construction of Zen-influenced family relic traditions reminds us that the remains of holy persons—those of the Buddha or of later figures—empowered warriors and aristocrats to improve their fortunes in this world and the next.

Finally, we should note that relics were also commonly associated with “wish-fulfilling jewels” (*nyoi hōju*, *hōju*) and other gems, which may have been symbolically related to discourses emphasizing relics’ permanence.⁸¹ Indeed, even in continental literature such as the commentary *Dazhidu lun* and the scripture *Beihua jing*, relics were associated with jewels; according to the former work, the relics of buddhas of old metamorphosed into wish-fulfilling jewels, and the latter text describes relics as transforming into jewels of lapis lazuli that rain varieties of flowers from the highest heaven.⁸² In early medieval works such as Kakuzen’s collection, these discourses are recounted, indicating that *kenmitsu* Buddhists of the era were cognizant of these associations.⁸³ The evident solidity of relics seems for many to have demonstrated the Buddha’s permanence in a world of devastating instability, and, as we have seen, their value was commonly seen as transcending temporality, offering believers access to a buddha who—like Amida and Maitreya, embodied in gilt-featured images enshrined in

contemporaneous worship halls, or the cosmic buddha, the object of esoteric contemplation, believed to be manifested in all forms—was tangible yet somehow at the same time beyond death and the afterlife. It was, it would seem, primarily the multiplicity of these buddhas and bodhisattvas, their powers, their lands, and their enlightenment, to which most of the relic rites undertaken by medieval Japanese Buddhists were directed—rites offering not only visible benefits but also perduring brilliance and beauty—thus transforming a silent and impermanent body into a polyglot jewel of bliss.

Notes

1. See, for example, Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

2. Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the influence of the stories of Śākyamuni's bodhisattva career on later Buddhist traditions, especially that of relic veneration. See, for example, my *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 24–29; and in particular the landmark study by John S. Strong, *Relics of the Buddha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), which analyzes the connection between relic veneration and the biographies of Śākyamuni Buddha, including his past lives as a bodhisattva (50–70, 200–202). Bernard Faure's work has also examined the connection between images of death and mortuary practices and relic veneration specific to Zen/Chan traditions; see his *Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 132–147; and *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 158–173.

3. The connection between relic veneration and power relations forms the theme of my *Jewel in the Ashes*. The present study, while indebted to that volume, has a different focus and introduces additional sources and secondary studies.

4. I use the term “discursive practices” to emphasize both the practical character of linguistic discourse and ritual and also the discursive character of such practices. Their practical character is, in other words, neither nonlinguistic nor nonrational, constituting instead “practical logic” or “practical reason,” terms used occasionally by Pierre Bourdieu, in contradistinction to “theoretical reason,” to refer to the economy or logic of practice. “Practical logic” refers not to a capacity to make a “rational choice” along the lines outlined by authors such as Jon Elster, but rather to the term as Bourdieu has analyzed it, referring to a “practical logic” or “mode of apprehension” that is practical in character; see Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1977), 96–158. At one point Bourdieu notes, “If one fails to recognize any form of action other than rational action or mechanical reaction, it is impossible to understand the logic of all the actions that are reasonable without being the product of a reasoned design, still less of rational calculation; informed by a kind of objective finality without being consciously organized in relation to an explicitly constituted end; intelligible and coherent without springing from an intention of coherence and a deliberate decision; adjusted to the future without being the product of a project or a plan” (“Critique of Theoretical Reason,” in *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990], 50–51; see also 80–97, esp. 86). I would merely add that, in the case of a practice such as relic veneration, the activity is informed directly by a related thematic complex that is specifically discursive in character.

5. *Miaofa lianhua jing*, trans. Kumārajīva (350–409), *T* no. 262, 9:53b–c; *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (The Lotus Sūtra)*, trans. Leon Hurvitz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 294–297. Another scriptural example influential in the Buddhist tradition of self-sacrifice is that of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, who, according to the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* (Ch. *Huayan jing*), in a previous life as a king made an offering of his wife, child, city, and populace, as well as his own head, eyes, brain, and limbs (forty-fascicle ed., trans. Buddhahadra 359–429, *T* no. 278, 9:785b). Faxian notes also a tale that Ānanda had immolated his own body in a state of samādhi at the conclusion of his life to prevent war between two kings, both of whom wanted his relics; his sacrifice enabled both kings each to have half of the relics, for which they constructed stūpas (*Gaoseng Faxian zhuan*, *T* no. 2085, 51:862a).

6. *T* 9:54a; Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, 297, slightly modified. Reiko Ohnuma has studied the gift of the body in Indian Buddhist narrative literature and the “gift” in Indian Buddhism more generally, drawing attention to matters such as the bodhisattva’s bodily sacrifice and its status as the purest of gifts; see Ohnuma, “Gift,” in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 103–123; and also her *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). The *Vessantara-jātaka* tells how, in a prior life as King Vessantara, Śākyamuni exemplified the bodhisattva “perfection of giving” by offering up his wife, children, and possessions; see Rupert, *Jewel in the Ashes*, 17–19.

7. See Chapter 4, 140.

8. These were evidently based on tales as told in *Jingguangming zuishengwang jing* (Jpn. *Konkōmyō saishōōkyō*), trans. Yijing (635–713), *T* no. 665, 16:450c–53a, and *Da banniepan jing* (*Daihatsu nehanyō*), trans. Dharmakṣema (n.d., Ch. Tanwuchan, 385–433), *T* no. 374, 12:449b–51b. Both stories are recounted in the Minamoto no Tamenori’s *Sanbōe*, discussed immediately below. In the *Sanbōe* version, the Brahman ascetic is identified as the “Himalaya boy”

(Sessen dōji), by which epithet he appears in a number of medieval Japanese literary texts; see Edward Kamens, *The Three Jewels: A Study and Translation of Minamoto Tamenori's Sanbōe* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1988), 139–143.

9. *Shohon taishō Sanbōe shūsei*, ed. Koizumi Hiroshi et al. (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1980), 37–40; cf. Kamens, *The Three Jewels*, 132–134.

10. *Shohon taishō Sanbōe shūsei*, 53–57. Tamenori cites as his source the *Jingguangming zuishengwang jing* (see *T* no. 665, 16:450a–53c). Cf. Kamens, *The Three Jewels*, 144–148.

11. *Shohon taishō Sanbōe shūsei*, 285–287; cf. Kamens, *The Three Jewels*, 302–306.

12. Hōki 1, 4/26, *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai* (hereafter *KT*), ed. Kuroita Katsumi (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1965), 2:376. The height of each stūpa was 4.5 *sun*, approximately 14 centimeters. For a brief overview in English concerning this offering, see Brian Hickman, “A Note on the *Hyakumanto Dhāraṇī*,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 30, no. 1 (1975): 87–93.

13. Both are also reminiscent of the Indian Mahāyāna practice of enshrining sūtras in stūpas in substitution for the Buddha's physical relics; see Gregory Schopen, “The Phrase *sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet* in the *Vachracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna” (1975), rpt. in his *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected Papers* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 25–62.

14. *Shoku Nihongi*, Monmu 4 (700), 3.10, *KT* 2:6.

15. This is the argument of Fujisawa Fumihiko, “Nihon no nōkotsu shinkō,” *Sosen sairei to sōbo*, ed. Fujii Masao (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1988), 257–258. For the text of the inscription, see *Daisōjō shari byōki*, in *Nara ibun*, ed. Takeuchi Rizō (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1944), 2:970. Jeweled stūpas are depicted in a number of Buddhist scriptures. The most famous is the jeweled stūpa that appears in the *Lotus Sūtra*, in which is seated a buddha named Many Jewels (Skt. Prabhūtaratna, Jpn. Tahō), who invites Śākyamuni to enter and share the reliquary with him; see *Miaofa lianhua jing*, *T* 9:32b–34b and Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, 188.

16. Fujisawa, “Nihon no nōkotsu shinkō.”

17. This text, incorporated within the *Daigoji shoji engishū*, is called *Daianji Sudō Tennō goin hattō ryōsho kimon* and is reproduced in Hongō Masatsugu, “Kōnin, Kanmuchō no kokka to bukyō: Sawara Shinnō to Daianji, Tōdaiji,” *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 34, no. 1 (1991): 42, n. 30. However, the same text later refers to an event of Jōhō 3 (1076), suggesting that the description was written long after the fact; thus it is difficult to assess whether or not Sawara's remains were described as *shari* in his own time. Fear of the spirit of Prince Sawara was the first major historical example in Japan of anxiety concerning “angry spirits” (*onryō*), which became the basis for many rites of pacification in the Heian and later periods. For an overview of this problem, see Herbert Plut-

schow, "The Fear of Evil Spirits in Japanese Culture," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, third series, 18 (1983): 133–151; for an extensive study of the worship of such spirits in divinized form (*goryō*), see *Goryō shinkō*, ed. Shibata Minoru (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1984). Neil McMullin analyzes the ideological implications of the Gion *goryō* cult in "On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace: The Case of the Gion *Goryō* Cult," *History of Religions* 27, no. 3 (1988): 270–293.

By the early Kamakura era, the remains of Prince Shōtoku were sometimes referred to as "*shari*," as is evidenced in the diary of Konoe Iezane (1179–1242), *Inokuma kanpakuki*, which uses the term when describing the theft of Shōtoku's relics on Kennin 3 (1203), 6/19 (*Dai Nihon kokiroku* [hereafter *DNK*], ed. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980], 4:28–29).

18. *Fuso ryakki*, Tengyō 4 (941), third to eighth months (*KT* 12:219–222). For other studies of this narrative, see Kasai Masaaki, *Tenjin engi no rekishi* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1973), 56–110; Nakano Genzō, "Kitano Tenjin engi Nichizō rokudō meguri no dan no seiritsu," *Keka no bijutsu* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1982), 187–224; and Takei Akio, "Nichizō meikai henrekitan oboegaki," *Kodai bunka* 28, no. 3 (1976): 57–69; "Nichizō tenkai no issokumen: Toku ni Shingon mikkyō to no kanren ni tsuite," *Kodai bunka* 29, no. 6 (1977): 42–49; and "Oboegaki: *Dōken Shōnin meidō ki* to shijitsu," *Kokusho itsubun kenkyū* 20 (1987): 62–64.

Tanaka Hisao has also made note of a series of other occasions for multiple stūpa (*sotoba*) construction between the late tenth and eleventh centuries. For example, according to *Nihon kiryaku*, in 967, 6,000 stūpas were constructed in twenty-six provinces by order of Emperor Murakami, in the hopes of a cure for his illness—as Tanaka interprets it, to avoid the influence of troubling spirits (*mononoke*) (*Kōhō* 4 [967], 5/20). Tanaka stresses the varied reasons for constructing stūpas, noting what seems to have been a monthly practice by Fujiwara no Sanesuke of sponsoring what was essentially a "stone stūpa assembly" (*shakutō-e*, *sekitō-e*), and points out that stone stūpas were often constructed for such purposes as preventing epidemics or otherwise avoiding calamity (*so-kusai*); see his *Sosen saishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1978), 123–143.

19. Tanaka notes examples such as Sanesuke's erection of stūpas specifically on behalf of deceased family members (*Shōyūki*, Chōtoku 3 [997], 7/9; Chōhō 1 [999], 9/28). See *Sosen saishi no kenkyū*, 137.

20. *Hokke genki* III:109, in *Ōjoden, Hokke genki, Nihon shisō taikai* (hereafter *NST*) 7, ed. Inoue Mitsusada and Ōsone Shōsuke (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 559–560. This collection has been translated by Yoshiko K. Dykstra as *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan: The Dainihonkoku Hokekyōkenki of the Monk Chingen* (Osaka: Intercultural Research Institute, Kansai University of Foreign Studies, 1983).

21. *Hokke genki* I:15, *NST* 7:520; a shorter version of the same narrative, albeit lacking the reference to the bodhisattva, can be found in the 1139

collection *Sange ōjōki* (tale 3, NST 7:672). The mid-Heian tale collection *Chūkōsen*, written apparently as instructions for a child, also tells the story (I:9) of Bodhisattva Medicine King and his connection with relics, thus further illustrating the extent to which themes connected with self-sacrifice and relic veneration were prominent among the Heian-era aristocracy. See *Sanbōe*, *Chūkōsen*, *Shin koten bungaku taikei* 31, ed. Mabuchi Kazuo, Koizumi Hiroshi, and Konno Tōru (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), 298–299.

22. NST 7:587.

23. *Honchō shinshū ōjōden* 27, NST 7:689. The dhāraṇī performed toward the esoteric figure Sonshō Butchō was commonly practiced for purposes of extinguishing transgressions, obtaining longevity, and avoiding calamity.

24. *Kakuzenshō*, “Shari,” *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō zuzōbu*, ed. Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1935), 5:606b, 608b–c. Nishiguchi Junko also notes an account in Ōe no Chikamichi’s *Shichidaiji junrei shiki* describing an elderly nun of Yakushiji who chanted Amida’s name before small beans, which consequently transformed into relics. See her *Onna no chikara: Kodai no jōsei to bukkō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1987), 95.

25. See the quote and discussion in Nakano Genzō, *Nihon bukkō kaiga kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1982): 14–15. The quote is from a buried-sūtra inscription included in the work *Kyōzuka ihō*, a catalog edited by Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 1977), and is simply dated Kankō 4 (1007).

26. *Nihon bukkō kaiga kenkyū*, 14–15. Nakano draws in part upon the earlier work of Ishida Mosaku.

27. Although there are two extant versions of Kakuban’s *Shari kōshiki*, having five and six sections (*dan*) respectively, in both cases the second *dan* constitutes such a prayer. For the original texts, see Niels Guelberg’s *Kōshiki* database, <http://www.f.waseda.jp/guelberg/koshiki/datenb-j.htm>.

28. In *Shiza kōshiki*, T no. 2731, 84:904c–906a.

29. See Niels Guelberg’s *Kōshiki* database, cited in n. 27, for the single-section versions of Jōkei’s texts. The two five-section versions appear in “Godan shari kōshiki,” ed. Kōshiki Kenkyūkai, *Sōgō bukkō kenkyūjo nenpō* 17 (1995): 199–252.

30. James L. Ford has made note of Jōkei’s reference to the use of relics for birth in Fudaraku in a text called *Busshari Kannon Daishi hotsuganmon*. See his “Jōkei and the Rhetoric of ‘Other-Power’ and ‘Easy-Practice,’” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 29, nos. 1–2 (2002): 90; and his *Jōkei and Buddhist Devotion in Early Medieval Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 122. For the reference to veneration before a Maitreya image, see *Sennichi sharikō bukkuryō [no] koto*, reproduced in *Tōdaiji Sōshō Shōnin no kenkyū narabi ni shiryō*, ed. Hiraoka Jōkai (Tokyo: Nihon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, 1960), 3:238. I would like to thank James L. Ford for the latter reference.

31. *Konjaku monogatari shū*, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter *NKBT*)

24, ed. Yamada Yoshio et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961), 141. The Yoshida temple was located on the side of the Kamo River opposite the northeast corner of the capital. Paul Groner has noted that, although the text says that Ryōgen relocated the rite in 977 so that his mother could participate, this must be inaccurate, as she had in fact died in 966 (*Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002], 209). Even so, especially when considered together with the reference in *Eiga monogatari* cited in n. 33 below, this account would suggest that, by the late tenth century, such rites were performed on behalf of the laity, especially women.

32. The expression “jeweled trees” (*takara no ueki*) refers to trees adorned with jewels or other valuables that were especially planted for the occasion.

33. *NKBT* 24:141–142. The name and dates indicated in this passage by parentheses are missing from the extant manuscript. The editors of this edition (142, n. 26) claim that the phrase *uchi ni mo kyūkyū ni mo* refers to the imperial palace and residences of imperial princes; however, I follow the gloss of the account of this rite given in the *NKBT* edition (vol. 76) of *Eiga monogatari*, which notes that the term *kyūkyū* refers to imperial consorts, and the term *uchi*, to the emperor (152, n. 1). In support of this reading, we may note that one of these imperial consorts, Shōshi (actually a former consort at this point), is depicted in *Nihon kiryaku* as having been present during Ingen's worship of the relics at Gidarinji (Manju 1 [1024], 4/21, *KT* 11:261).

34. Tamenori's account appears in *Shohon taishō Sanbōe shūsei*, 285–286; for translations, see Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes*, 194; and Kamens, *The Three Jewels*, 304.

35. Sugiyama Nobuzō analyzes the role of the Fujiwara family in the building and patronage of this temple in *Fujiwara-shi no ujidera to sono inge* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1968), 26–32. It was especially known for its Birushana, Shaka, and Yakushi Nyorai images and was the site of rituals performed for the Fujiwaras on numerous occasions.

36. The original name given by Akimitsu to the temple was Hirohatadera, but legend has it that Genshin renamed it in honor of Gion shōja, the Jetavana or “Jeta Grove” monastery given to the Buddha by Sudatta; see *Konjaku monogatari shū*, *NKBT* 24, 578, n. 150. Akimitsu was in fact a rival of Michanaga's within the Fujiwara clan, though this seems to have borne no connection to the events of the relics assembly. Gidarinji was located between Kyōgoku and the Kamo River in the Nakamikado area.

37. The five impediments refer to the Buddhist teaching that women cannot attain five incarnate forms within the cosmos. That is, they cannot become a Mahābrahman, Indra, Māra, wheel-turning king, or buddha.

38. *Honchō shinshū ōjoden* 9, *NST* 7:685. Paul Groner has drawn attention to later works in which nuns are connected with relic manifestation, such as

Hokke shari engi, which depicts a nun named Shu Amidabutsu receiving a relic in accordance with her wish; see his “Icons and Relics in Eison’s Religious Activities,” in *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, ed. Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 130.

39. Other accounts also depict women who worshipped buddha relics and were later born in the Pure Land as a result. The tale collection *Hosshinshū* (Collection on putting forth the aspiration for enlightenment), compiled by Kamo no Chōmei (1151–1213), depicts an unnamed lady of the imperial family who served in the palace during the reign of the retired emperor Toba. Grieving over the early death of her daughter, who also had served in the palace, the lady decided to leave the home life and departed for Shitenōji. Accompanying her was a mysterious female child, who carried robes and a handbox on her behalf. A man of the area gave the two women lodging in his home, for which the lady gave one of her robes in exchange. For seven days, the lady chanted the name of Amida Buddha earnestly at Shitenōji. She gave the robe and handbox in offering to the buddha relics of the temple. The lady continued her chanting for twenty-one days altogether, giving the man who lodged her another one of her robes for each day of her stay. In the end, to his surprise, she faced west and leapt into the ocean while chanting the *nenbutsu*. In her room he found her diary, which told of the successive appearance in her dreams of Kṣitigarbha, Nāgārjuna, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī, who apparently accompanied Amida Buddha in welcoming her to the Pure Land (*Hōjō-ki*, *Hosshinshū*, ed. Miki Sumito [Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1978], 139–142).

40. See the document at the end of *Shijia wubai dayuan jing* (Kazanji archives), dated Katei 3 (1237), 3/22, quoted in Ogino Minahiko, “Komonjo ni arawareta chi no kanshū,” in his *Nihon komonjogaku to chūsei bunkashi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1995), 61. Ochiai Hiroshi, examining references to this scripture in the Zentsūjizō manuscript of *Issai sharira shū*, notes that this work is an abbreviated version of the *Beihua jing* (T no. 157), based on fascicles 6–8 (“Zentsūji Issai sharira shū,” 280).

41. *Gyokuyō*, Nin’an 2 (1167), 6/22 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906–1907), 1:17.

42. *Gyokuyō*, Jishō 1 (1177), 10/19, 2:103. “Fathoming the Lifespan” is chap. 16 of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing*, T 9:42a–44a; Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, 237–244).

43. *Gyokuyō*, Bunji 4 (1188), 2/19, 3:499.

44. *Ibid.*, Bunji 3 (1187), 2/19, 3:332.

45. *Ibid.*, Juei 2 (1184), 12/5, 2:660. Kokamon’in had died on the fourth day of the twelfth month, two years earlier.

46. Nishiguchi Junko emphasizes this connection in her *Onna no chikara*, 87.

47. *Chüyūki*, Daiji 4 (1129), 7/16, *Zōho shiryō taisei* (hereafter *ST*) 13:78–

79, and *Chōshūki*, Tenshō 1 (1131), 7/9, *ST* 17:121–122. We should note that the reason given for the initial deposit in Kōryūji was a temporary directional taboo that applied to the Toba Rikyū stūpa. I would like to thank Professor Ōishi Masaaki for his discussion of this imperial practice and note his analysis in his *Nihon chūsei shakai to jūin* (Osaka: Seibundō, 2004), 272.

48. *Hyakurenshō*, Hōgen 1 (1156), 7/2, *KT* 11:71. We should also note that the Fujiwara leaders of twelfth-century Hiraizumi constructed the Konjikidō Hall and had their bodies interred within its altar; their mummified remains were studied in the twentieth century; see Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), 131–142.

49. See Ōishi Masaaki's discussion in "Sōrei ni miru bukk'yō gireika no hassei to tenkai," in his *Nihon chūsei shakai to jūin* (Tokyo: Seibundō, 2004), 256–285.

50. *Hyōhanki*, Ninpei 3 (1153), 12/8, *ST* 18:217.

51. This is recorded by Tadamasu's brother Tadachika in his diary, *San-kaiki*. See entry for Hōgen 3 (1158), 8/11, *ST* 26:76.

52. *Hyakurenshō*, Eiryaku 1 (1160), 11/23, and Chōkan 1 (1163), 11/28, *KST* 11:75, 78.

53. This practice is discussed by Nishiguchi Junko in "Ōchō bukk'yō ni okeru nyōnin kyūsai no ronri: Shussan no shuhō to goshō no kyōsetsu," in *Sei to mibun: Jakusha, haisha no seisei to hiun*, ed. Miyata Noboru (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1989), 129–167 (158–160), and in greater depth in her *Onna no chikara*, 69–102. Nishiguchi cites references to the enshrining of remains in Ichijōin and Enkōin from *Daigo zōjiki*, compiled by Kyōen.

54. This account is recorded in the *Mon'yōki* of Son'en Shinnō (1298–1356), *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō zuzōbu* (hereafter *TZ*), ed. Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, 12 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1935), 12:306a–307a.

55. *Gyokuyō*, Kenkyū 5 (1194), 8/16, 3:888.

56. Nishiguchi has made a similar point regarding the remains of women in *Onna no chikara*, 92–97.

57. *Mon'yōki*, *TZ* 12:306b.

58. *Ibid.*, *TZ* 12:307a.

59. Amida's thirty-fifth vow states that any woman who hears his name and desires enlightenment but hates her female body will never again be born as a woman; see *Wuliangshou jing* (Jpn. *Muryōjūkyō*) *T* no. 360, 12:268c.

60. Shōji 1 (1199), 9/23, and Genkyū 1 (1204), 9/23.

61. These ritual manuscripts are entitled *Bifukumon'in ongakki shidai*. Two of them are still housed at Ninnaji, though one is at Kanazawa Bunko. See *Shukaku Hosshinnō no girei sekai: Ninnajizō konbyōshi shosōshi no kenkyū*, ed. Ninnaji Konbyōshi Shosōshi Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1995), 2:912–921.

62. *Shukaku Hosshinnō no girei sekai*, 2:913–916.

63. As Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan has noted, Fujiwara no Kiyohira (1056–1128) established multiple “umbrella reliquaries” (*kasa sotoba*), which served both to mark his claim to sovereignty and to placate the spirits of those who had died in the Ōshū wars; see her *Hiraizumi*, 67.

64. *Tajima Shinmiji monjō*, Kenkyū 8, 10/4, in *Kamakura ibun* (hereafter *KI*), ed. Takeuchi Rizō (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1971–1991), no. 937, 2:257–258.

65. The *Hōkyōin* scripture (*Yiqie rulaixin bimi quanshen sheli baoqieyin tuo-luoni jing*, T no. 1022) describes proper recitation of the *hōkyōin darani* formula, as well as construction of *hōkyōin* stūpas, as a means to acquire the power of the relics of all buddhas in the cosmos on behalf of the deceased. See also Paul Groner’s discussion in “Icons and Relics in Eison’s Religious Activities,” 132.

66. *Azuma kagami*, Karoku 1 (1225), 9/8, *KT* 33:32. Oishio Chihiro argues that the stone reliquaries were constructed specifically to pacify the spirits of Taneyoshi’s children. See his “Chūsei Nihon ni okeru Aikuō densetsu no igi,” *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 24 (1979): 8.

67. These rituals are recorded in *Azuma kagami*, Ninji 1 (1240), 6/1; 2 (1241), 7/4; Kangen 2 (1244), 6/8; and Kangen 3 (1245), 2/25 (*KT* 33:260, 282, 328, and 341). The explanation given for the rite of Ninji 2 is to avert calamity following an earthquake. The text does not mention the perceived cause of the earthquake, which may conceivably have been the vengeful spirit of Go-Toba. We should note in this context that Go-Toba himself threatened to become a vengeful ghost, which would support the possibility that these rites may have been intended to pacify his spirit. For an in-depth study of Go-Toba, see Akiko Hirota, “Ex-Emperor Go-Toba: A Study in Personality, Politics and Poetry” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1989).

68. *Azuma kagami*, Bun’ei 2 (1265), 6/3, *KT* 33:859.

69. *Gokurakuji monjo*, no. 412, in *Kamakurashi shi (shajihen) shiryōhen* 3 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1959), 400–401; *Tōshōdaiji shozō*, in *Kanagawa kenshi shiryōhen* 2: *Kodai, chūsei* (Yokohama: Kanagawaken Kōsaikai, 1975), 304–305.

70. “Gokurakuji jūsanjūtō kuyō nikki,” in *Kanagawa kenshi shiryōhen* 2:533–534.

71. The text does not make clear that relics were used in the rite, although the statement noted suggests their presence. See “Gokurakuji jūji Junnin ekōmon,” *Kanagawa kenshi shiryōhen* 2:595.

72. A document from the treasury of Gokurakuji titled “Gokurakuji jihō mokuroku sha” is essentially a list of the rituals of installation of relics at Gokurakuji between 1344 and 1352. Nine relic grains were enshrined on three occasions during this period, including a single grain allegedly from Mt. Murō and five from the remains of Junnin himself, who died in 1326 (*Kanagawa kenshi shiryōhen* 3: *Kodai, chūsei* 1:383).

73. For a discussion of Gyōki’s “relics” (*shari*) and the *shari kuyō* con-

ducted twice on their behalf at Tōdaiji in the fourth month of Kōchō 1 (1261), see Hosokawa Ryōichi, *Chūsei no Risshū jin to minshū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), 43–47. The original text is in *Tōdaiji zoku yōroku*, *Zoku zoku gunsho ruijū*, ed. Kokusho Kankōkai (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1969), 11:227–228. The ancient vase in which Gyōki's remains were deposited bears an inscription referring to them as *shari* (“Daisōjō shari byōki,” dated Tenpyō 21 [749], 3/23, *Nara ibun* 2:970).

Another early reference to the relics of masters is the mention made by Fujiwara no Michinaga of the “relic vase” (*shari tsubo*) and other objects associated with the great Tiantai master Zhiyi (538–597), which Michinaga says were sent from Mt. Tiantai to Enryakuji (*Mido kanpakuki*, Chōwa 2 [1013], 9/14, *DNK* 2:243). However, Michinaga's language is a bit cryptic; another account, by Fujiwara no Sanesuke, notes that “originally, buddha relics (*busshari*) were inserted in the vase, [but] now there are no relics”—the use of the expression *busshari* suggesting, I would submit, that Zhiyi *possessed* a vase containing buddha relics, not that the vase contained relics of Zhiyi himself (*Shōyūki*, Chōwa 4 [1015], 7/21, *DNK* 4:60). With the exception of these accounts, Heian-era monks seem to have represented the remains of clerics as clearly distinct from those of the Buddha, albeit with similarities. For example, the hagiography of the monk Son'i (866–940) describes him as drawing upon the example of the treatment of the Buddha's relics following his death to tell his disciples that they should deposit his own remains (*ikotsu*) into a stone pillar (*ishibashira*) as a means to establish karmic connections toward birth in Maitreya's Heaven (*Son'i zō sōjoden*, *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, ed. Hanawa Hokinoichi and Ōta Tōshirō, 33 vols. (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1923–1933), no. 213, 8b:732a).

74. Tamamura Takeji and Inoue Zenjō, *Engakuji shi* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1964), 102–104.

75. At the same time, Bernard Faure has noted a trend, especially in Zen, toward a general devaluation of relics that accompanied their increasing numbers and equation with the remains of more recent masters; see *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 143. Harada Masatoshi has also suggested that Zen monks may have been willing to handle the remains of the deceased because of increasing belief on the part of other schools that such remains were impure; see his “Chūsei zenshū to sōsō girei,” in *Zenkindai Nihon no shiryō isan purojekuto kenkyū shūkai hōkokushū* 2001–2002, ed. Historiographical Institute (Shiryō Hensanjō), University of Tokyo, 129–143.

76. As is well known, belief that enshrinement of one's remains near Kōbō Daishi (Kūkai) in the Oku-no-in on Mt. Kōya would ensure or contribute to one's salvation was commonplace by the late Heian era. For a discussion of burial *ad sanctos* in Indian Buddhism, see Gregory Schopen, “Burial ‘Ad Sanctos’ and the Physical Presence of the Buddha in Early Indian Buddhism: A

Study in the Archeology of Religions” (1987); rpt. in his *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1997), 114–147.

77. See, in particular, two documents of Ōei 15 (1408), 6/25 in *Honcho bunshū*, KI 30:540, 547–548. *Hōkyōin* reliquaries were constructed specifically in response to the *Hōkyōin* scripture; in this service, the *hōkyōin darani* formula is also recorded as having been recited.

78. See Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 38.

79. For discussion of Buddhist use of the discourse of indebtedness to one’s ancestors in the context of the ghost festival, see Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 200–202.

80. The Ashikaga shogunate established *rishōtō* in the so-called Ankokuji (temples for pacifying the realm) in virtually every province between the 1330s and 1350 to pacify the war dead as well as to legitimate the Ashikaga system by drawing on the resources of Buddhism. See Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes*, 254–259.

81. For a more lengthy discussion of the history of Buddhist jewel veneration, see Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes*, chap. 5.

82. *T* no. 1509, 25:478a; *T* no. 157, 3:211c–12a.

83. See the translation of Kakuzen’s section on “Relics Transform into Jewels,” in Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes*, 293–294; as well as the manuscript of *Issai sharira shū*, Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryōkan, *Ya* 3–3–3:0458, and *Ya* 3–3–4:0459, collection 100, “Transformation into Wish-Fulfilling Jewels.”

Collective Suicide at the Funeral of Jitsunyo

Mimesis or Solidarity?

MARK L. BLUM

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

—William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

JITSUNYO (1458–1525) was the fifth son of Rennyo (1415–1499), and his reluctant successor as *monshu* (also called *hossu*), or head priest of the Honganji branch of Jōdo Shinshū, the True Pure Land sect. Jitsunyo was not his father's initial choice of successor; that fell to the first son, but he died young. Jitsunyo did not receive the mantle of leadership from his father until 1489, when Rennyo was already seventy-five. This was a dozen years after the end of the devastating Ōnin War (1467–1477), which left not only the capital in ruins but the Ashikaga shogunate in tatters as well. Under a severely weakened central government, powerful daimyō or military lords were relatively free to wield their authority, and local samurai banded together to create their own centers of power. Despite continual political insecurity—Honganji was burnt down in 1465 by troops from the Tendai establishment on Mt. Hiei—by the time Jitsunyo took over, Rennyo had managed to raise the power and influence of the Honganji institution to a point where it could no longer be bullied. Jitsunyo, who initially seemed shy and almost reticent in comparison with the charismatic Rennyo, said he was not eager to take over, and promised to do so only if he could keep his father's policies in place—or so the story goes.

In the second month of 1525, Jitsunyo died. The funerary proceedings were lavish and included monks from other large monasteries in Kyoto: forty from Tōfukuji, thirty from Chion'in, fifty-seven from Nanzenji, twenty from Onjōji, and so forth. It goes without saying that

none of these establishments belonged to the Jōdo Shinshū network, and we may infer that their public representation marks the high profile of Jitsunyo in the capital. We know about the funeral from a lengthy record of the event written down by Rennyo's twelfth son Jikkō (1495–1553), a document that includes such details as the number of bunches of flowers and where they were placed on the temple grounds, the number of candles held during the final procession to the gravesite, how one *nenbutsu* was chanted with every ring of a bell as they walked, and so forth. Jikkō concludes his record with the following information:

The [final] procession of monks climbed Mt. Ryōzen while chanting, on the fifteenth day [of the second month].¹ A group participated from Hyakumanben (called Chion'in [*sic*]), from the Shōjōin at Shōkokuji, along with Gesshū (1460–1533) of Keninji, a group from Tōjiin, and a group of common monks as well. Expressing their lament at the *ōjō* (death and passing to the Pure Land) [of Jitsunyo], those people who cut open their bellies and died were ten in number. Afterward we received word that in addition there were ten others who later did the same.²

Why would twenty people commit suicide, specifically *seppuku*, on the occasion of the funeral of the head of Honganji? As incredible as this may seem, there is yet another, corroborating record of suicides spurred by Jitsunyo's death. Somewhat later, in a 1574 document by Jitsugo (1492–1584), the tenth son of Rennyo, the following episode is also recorded:

In lamentation over the *ōjō* of Jitsunyo on the second day in the second month of the fifth year of Daiei (1525), among the many people near Yamashina with aspirations in the Buddha's dharma, five or six of them threw themselves down and died. There were [also] two in Echizen, and six in Kaga. All together, thirteen people threw themselves into the sea or a river and died, a remarkable occurrence (*fushigi no koto*).³

Who were these people, and what was their relationship to Jitsunyo? As the methods of suicide employed in the two accounts differ, we may surmise that they represent entirely separate cases. Although the numbers cannot be confirmed, at the very least these two records tell us that multiple suicides did indeed occur within Honganji communities upon the death of Jitsunyo, and in at least three, if not four, locales. The fact that so many died on the same occasion suggests that the funeral itself sparked a kind of mimesis of death, despite the

fact that such behavior is utterly contrary to the teachings of the Jōdo Shinshū founder Shinran (1173–1263), or more appropriately by this time, of Rennyo. This chapter seeks to provide a rationale for this behavior, and in the process, to increase our understanding of medieval Japanese attitudes toward death as both an individual and a collective phenomenon.

Unfortunately, we have no information as to who these thirty-three people were or the nature of their relationship with Jitsunyo. That is, they are not identified in any way in these accounts or elsewhere that I know of in the Shin literature. Jikkō's record does not even mention where the suicides occurred, although, given the context of the funeral event itself, we may infer that at least the first ten suicides took place on that occasion and perhaps even at the event itself. So we are left to ponder general questions such as what religious values regarding suicide are operative here, what notions of death and life can we discern in this occurrence, what is the nature of the relationship between a Buddhist sectarian leader and his followers in medieval Japan, and is there anything specific to this particular religious tradition—Jōdo Shinshū, as part of the larger stream of Pure Land Buddhism—that would help explain this phenomenon? In addition to addressing these questions, I will also consider non-Buddhist influences on Japanese notions of suicide, with particular focus on the Confucian tradition of *junshi* (Ch. *xunsi*)—self-destruction as an heroic expression of devotion to one's lord. While *junshi* may seem an attractive explanation for these suicides, it is worth noting that these people are not extolled as heroes in Shinshū literature; Jitsugo's reaction is one of amazement rather than exaltation. The situation is further complicated by the fact that this was a community within Pure Land Buddhism, which has its own tradition of voluntary death called *jigai ōjō*—self-destruction for birth in the Pure Land. The relevant question here is whether this collective suicide event represents an example of *mimesis*, that is, imitation of Jitsunyo's death in aspiration to be like him, or *solidarity*, which would mean suicide as an irrepressible expression of identity with the collective body called Honganji that had been deeply injured by the loss of its head. The mimetic conclusion suggests a *jigai ōjō* motive. The solidarity explanation points instead to *junshi*, in this case something akin to falling on one's sword.

Insofar as records of suicides are not common within Shinshū literature, this instance of repeated or collective suicide may at first appear to reflect a historical moment of particularly high tension within the sect.⁴ However, the fact that this relatively large number of suicides occurred at a time when Honganji was not under imminent threat suggests an undeniably mimetic quality among the suicide victims

themselves, for, as Émile Durkheim has argued, a shared belief system is the fundamental cause of nearly all group suicides.⁵ Today, this kind of thing is called a “cluster” or “wave” of suicide; to understand these phenomena, suicidologists often ask if the individual participants in a suicide cluster knew each other, and surprisingly, the answer is often no.⁶ People do not require face-to-face confirmation of the meaningfulness of their decision, and the three locales mentioned in the second account above confirm this for medieval Japan as well. But this fact does not preclude the possibility of one individual’s suicide inspiring others to imitate him. Of course, no certain knowledge on this score is possible; just as a religious doctrine issued universally may in different cases ultimately prompt someone toward or deter that person from suicide, so the example of an individual successfully enacting that course of action may begin a chain reaction leading to a kind of mimetic frenzy, or it may not inspire anyone else to follow that path. Whatever the causes, what I am characterizing as a suicide cluster here was, in fact, a series of decisions by as many as thirty-three individuals to end their lives, apparently spontaneously. Suicide is always a social event as it affects everyone who knows the deceased, so the impact of an individual’s voluntary death will be circumscribed to some degree by the community’s reaction to that death. But we are prevented from pursuing this line of inquiry by the lack of recorded reactions—aside from Jitsugo’s expression of bewilderment, *fushigi no koto*.

I would like to argue that this case can be “understood” as a confluence of three social and ideological traditions that legitimized suicide and that all three were operative within the specific set of political circumstances that surrounded Honganji at that time. These three traditions may be defined as (1) ambivalence in Indian Buddhist doctrinal sources about self-mutilation and suicide; (2) Chinese and later Japanese monastic traditions valorizing suicide, in particular, practices specific to Pure Land Buddhism in China and Japan of suicide *for the purpose* of attaining birth in the Pure Land (*jigai ôjô*); and (3) traditional views of martyrdom in medieval China and Japan based in Confucian values of *junshi*, and, in the Japanese case, also incorporating ancient cultural patterns of corporate identity mixed with medieval traditions of warrior suicide. In addition, a fourth factor relevant to this particular context is the political situation of 1525, for Honganji at that moment was in the midst of an institutional transformation that turned it far more active militarily. This change in the nature of the institution as a social body seems to have created a psychological fusing of individual and corporate identity in a way not seen previously. In short, Honganji at this time had created a tight social organization

under an extremely powerful and therefore somewhat feared leader, a leader who thus looks very much like a daimyō, or military lord.

No organized religion will openly condone suicide. Yet while Japanese suicidologists extol an “unambiguous” Christian prohibition against the taking of one’s own life and decry its absence in Buddhism, they ignore the fact that this piece of Church dogma existed in a problematic relationship with the important role that suicide as martyrdom has played in shaping that religious tradition’s identity. The Christian practice of elevating its martyrs to the status of saints has its parallel, not in Buddhism, but in Confucian notions of *junshi* and *junkyō* (the teaching of self-sacrifice). Specific to Japan, moreover, has been the enduring resonance of a set of myths, said to originate from the period before the wholesale importation of continental culture, that embody altruistic suicides, which have also been labelled *junshi*, presumably because of their sacrificial qualities. In both Europe and East Asia, the problem, of course, lies in interpreting when suicide is a willful act of pride and when it is a glorious act of self-sacrifice in service to ideals that transcend the individual. Nonetheless, East Asia has generally been the more accepting of this practice. To better understand this climate of acceptability, I would like to identify for purposes of this discussion four areas within the Indian and Sino-Japanese sociocultural spheres where room is made for the acceptance of suicide without taint of sin: (1) suicide as altruistic sacrifice; (2) suicide as resignation to one’s fate—often as an expression of lamentation; (3) suicide as religious offering; and (4) suicide as a means to gain honor.

Questions of methodology inevitably arise in discussing such a delicate topic. In the West, suicidology has emerged as a speciality within sociology, and the great founders of sociology, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, both showed keen interest in the subject. One of Durkheim’s four books is specifically on suicide, and indeed his typology continues to dominate considerations of the problem in that field. Durkheim saw suicide as either *egoistic*, *altruistic*, or *anomic*. The first category indicates individuals who are insufficiently integrated into society’s values; the second, those who are so deeply socially integrated that they aspire to represent those values as martyrs; and the third, otherwise balanced individuals who are unable to cope with a sudden loss of their accustomed social situation.⁷ The Buddhist ethical view on suicide appears ambivalent precisely because attention is focused on the motivation behind it, and this focus allows for suicide as a kind of achievement in piety without any tinge of martyrdom. This kind of thing does not fit into Durkheim’s scheme, and for this discussion a more helpful approach is the view that seeks to understand suicide as

deliberate “meaningful” action, a position more reflective of Weber and the works of Jack Douglas and J. Maxwell Atkinson.⁸

Indian Buddhist Sources for Religious Suicide and Self-Mutilation

Altruistic suicide is a common theme in the mythic stories of the former lives of Śākyamuni in the Jātaka and Avadāna literature. Both are frequently depicted in Indian Buddhist art as well as in the extant Buddhist art of Central Asia and formed an important substratum of Buddhist religious values in East Asia as well. As Brian Ruppert points out in Chapter 3, the theme of self-sacrifice was often related to relic worship, and the pervasiveness of this form of piety in Japan is further evidence of how Jātaka stories with the theme of altruistic self-destruction influenced Japanese thought. Early evidence in Japan of the diffusion of a Jātaka story centering on self-sacrifice by the Buddha-to-be is found most dramatically in one of the scenes painted on the famous *zushi*, or portable shrine, of the Tamamushi family, dated approximately 650 and held at Hōryūji. The so-called “Hungry Tigress Jātaka” story, painted in lacquer on wood, is one of the earliest extant Buddhist paintings in Japan. It illustrates how the young Bodhisattva takes pity on a starving tigress unable to provide food for her cubs and offers his body to her. This particular story is pervasive in East Asian Buddhist culture from at least the third century, extremely early in the transmission of Buddhism into China, when it appears in translations of Jātaka, Avadāna, and other allegorical literature.⁹

It is true that the Pāli and Mahāsāṅghika Vinayas or monastic regulations forbid suicide arising out of feelings of loathing toward the body and also forbid the encouragement of suicidal feelings in others. But, in its valorization of monasticism, there is also no small amount of rhetoric in early Buddhism that encourages precisely the loathing of the body and abandoning of any attachment to it. For example, in the *Puṇṇovāda-sutta*, the monk Puṇṇa (Skt. Purṇa) tells the Buddha that he wants to live among the people of Sunāparanta to spread the teaching. The Buddha asks Puṇṇa how he will deal with the fact that the Sunāparanta people are violent and inhospitable. What if they insult you? What if they strike you? What if they stab you with a knife? Puṇṇa passes each testing question by saying that he will remain calm and think good thoughts about his tormentors, regardless of their persecutions, knowing they do not wish to kill him. Then the Buddha asks, “What if they do kill you?” Puṇṇa responds by stating that there are already many disciples of the Buddha who are so disgusted with their bodies that they seek death. The Chinese recension adds:

“Some take a knife and kill themselves; some take poison; some take a rope and strangle themselves; some throw themselves into a deep well. The Sunāparanta people are wise and good. If this putrefying body [is destroyed] through some means that they employ, then [I] will attain liberation.” “Very good,” the Buddha said. “You have studied well the doctrine of forbearance. Go to the land of the Sunāparanta.”¹⁰

Although the Pāli text alludes only to using a knife for self-destruction, in either recension this sūtra clearly tells us that voluntary death—whether by one’s own hand or by the hand of another—was an accepted part of Buddhist culture within some quarters of the saṅgha. Given that this passage puts into the mouth of the Buddha an affirmation that self-destruction can lead to emancipation, it is quite likely that Vinaya rejections of voluntary death reflect the need to pronounce a ruling on the matter precisely because such things were taking place.¹¹

In the Mahāyāna literature, the hermeneutics of suicide become perhaps even more complex, as statements about suicide abound, both positive and negative. Many Mahāyāna sūtras include ennobling stories of suicide or self-mutilation, usually to demonstrate both altruism and nonattachment to the self. The Mahāyāna version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, for example, translated into Chinese in the early fifth century, does not equivocate in its affirmation of suicide-as-achievement. Here we find the story of a practitioner—a Brahman ascetic cultivating bodhisattva practice in the Himalayas—who offers his body to hear merely one complete verse of the Buddha’s teaching. In this tale, a man-eating, hungry *rākṣasa* demon (actually the deity Śakra in disguise), in order to test this seeker, utters the first two lines of a *gāthā* but then claims to be unable to speak the second half of the verse due to extreme hunger. The seeker pleads with him, but the *rākṣasa* refuses to speak. The seeker then promises to give his body to the *rākṣasa* if he will but finish the verse. The deal is struck, the verse spoken, and the seeker climbs a tree to jump to his death, inviting others to witness the gift of his body in exchange for words of truth—a gift that he proclaims is not for profit, fame, or any worldly benefit, but “for the sake of all sentient beings.” He then leaps from a tree to his death but is ultimately saved by Śakra, resuming his true form, and is promised final attainment in the presence of the future Buddha Maitreya, some twelve kalpas hence.¹² The implication is clearly that suicide, properly construed, is an effective form of religious praxis that propels one down the path to final liberation. Another example from Mahāyāna literature, well known throughout East Asia, that valorizes

the sacrifice of the body is the *Sūtra of the Golden Light*, in circulation since the time of Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749). One of the “nation-protecting sūtras” employed in the rituals of Shitennōji and later, of the *kokubunji* or provincial monastery system, it contains a reenactment of the story of the bodhisattva feeding himself to a hungry tigress.¹³ But without question the most influential Mahāyāna statement glorifying both self-mutilation and suicide as expressions of piety lies in the *Lotus Sūtra*.

As Ruppert notes in Chapter 3, the “Medicine King” chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* narrates the story of how the bodhisattva Sarvasattva-priyadarśana (Beheld with Joy by All Living Beings) twice donated his physical body as an offering to a buddha called Candrasūryavimala-prabhāśī (Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon), in the context of two different incarnations.¹⁴ Each time the bodhisattva’s motivation is explained as coming from reflection upon the offerings he has already made, and the inevitable feeling that his expression of dedication has been somehow insufficient. In the first instance, he thinks, “Though by resort to supernatural power I have made an offering to the Buddha, it is not as if I had made an offering of my own body,” and in the second, similarly, “Though I have made this offering, at heart I am still not satisfied.” For the first corporeal offering, the bodhisattva fills himself internally and externally with fragrant oils and sets his body alight, subsequently burning for twelve years. All the buddhas praise him for this, saying, “Excellent! Excellent! Good man, this is true perseverance in vigor. This is called a true Dharma-offering to the Thus Come One.” In the second instance, he burns off his arms rather than his whole body, but the second example is particularly relevant to the Jitsunyo incident because it is motivated by the death of his teacher, the Buddha Candrasūryavimala-prabhāśī and occurs on the occasion of the cremation of that Buddha’s body. The message is unmistakable: self-mutilation should be recognized as a laudable demonstration of a disciple’s grief at the funeral of his teacher.

When it comes, the sacrifice is no private moment of conscience but a public display that leads to liberative ends; seeing his act, countless beings arouse the aspiration for supreme enlightenment. Moreover, the bodhisattva explains that he fully expects the reward of buddhahood for his act: “I have thrown away both arms. May I now without fail gain the Buddha’s gold-colored body!” Indeed, this is precisely what happens, whereupon his body is miraculously restored. Śākyamuni Buddha, who is narrating the episode, then restates the theme that radical acts of devotion bring radical forms of spiritual attainment:

If there is one who, opening up his thought, wishes to attain *anuttara-samyaksambodhi*, if he can burn a finger or even a toe as an offering to a Buddhastūpa, he shall exceed one who uses realm or a walled city, wife or children, or even all the lands, mountains, forests, rivers, ponds, and sundry precious objects in the whole thousand-millionfold world as offerings.¹⁵

To sum up, stories of suicide in the sūtras usually exhibit the first three motivations listed above: altruism, lamenting loss, and giving one's body as the ultimate personal offering. This is not to say that there were no Buddhist scriptures that came down strongly against suicide. Suicide is listed, for example, as one of the fifteen "unfortunate ways to die" (Ch. *esi*) in the *Sūtra of the Perfect Dhāraṇī of the Thousand-Armed Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara*, translated by Bhagavadharma in the eighth century and popular in tantric circles.¹⁶ At times, however, particularly in the Mahāyāna sūtras, suicide is used positively as a means of teaching Buddhist truths about impermanence, nonattachment, the value of piety, and so forth, and is often situated in a negative view of the physical body as weak, impermanent, and difficult to control. What is important for this discussion is the fact that the sacrificer is held up as honorable, and, moreover, the sacrifice frequently takes place in a public setting with spiritual rewards for both sacrificer and spectator.

The values that lie behind such canonical stories of physical sacrifice are also fairly consistent. First, there is the recurring sentiment of disgust at one's physical existence stemming from the view that the body is unreliable and in a state of decay; losing the body or parts of it is therefore not a significant loss. Second, it is said that there is no greater offering than one's body. That is, once rightly understood as expendable, the body can be a tool, something to be used in pursuit of spiritual goals. In the Chinese translation of the *Puṇṇovāda-sutta*, the destruction of one's body is actually referred to as an "expedient means" (Ch. *fangbian*). And third, as illustrated in the *Lotus Sūtra's* exhortation to abandon this body in order to gain the golden body of a buddha, in personal physical sacrifice lies a promise similar to that made to the martyrs of early Christianity: by giving up this body one gains another one beyond the grave that is far superior.

China

One finds numerous references to physical sacrifice and suicide in the Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature of China prior to the Mongol

period (1280–1368), which are framed as heroic acts of religious commitment. The human torch and arm burning story from the *Lotus Sūtra* appears to have been particularly influential in China, and the sūtra is frequently mentioned by name in the stories of monks and nuns who emulated these acts of self-mutilation and self-immolation. In fact, corporeal offering became so renowned in China, at least in the kind of lore we find in monastic biographies, that the various *Gaoseng zhuan* (Accounts of eminent monks) include a category for those who distinguished themselves in this way, called “sacrificing the body” (*wangshen* or *yishen*), and some compendiums like the *Fayuan zhulin* include such a category as well (here called “casting away the body,” or *sheshen*).¹⁷ The fantastic nature of many of these largely hagiographic stories may suggest to some that their descriptions of mutilation by burning the top of one’s head, or of suicide by self-immolation, or leaping into a river are more likely to have been fiction than reality. But the historicity of such practices is confirmed by the fact that we also find criticisms, by both Buddhists and others, in which these same acts of self-directed violence are attacked. For example, Yijing (635–713) condemns the roasting of fingers, burning of skin, and even immolation of the entire body as reflective of a mistaken understanding of Buddhism and bemoans how common it has become for young monks to think that, if they immolate themselves without fear, that will guarantee a quick attainment of enlightenment.¹⁸ The famous anti-Buddhist memorial by the Confucian scholar Han Yu (768–824) similarly lists the same abuses of the body, and his description matches records of the same kinds of behavior found in the *Gaoseng zhuan*. The self-mutilations he witnessed in 819 among the frenzied crowd that swelled around a procession through the capital of a relic of Śākyamuni is an event attested to elsewhere.¹⁹ Even today, moreover, one continues to see burned or mutilated fingers among Chinese monks.

Mention should additionally be made of the Central Asian evidence of other, non-Indian cultures that may also have influenced the fascination with self-mutilation found in China and Japan. Of particular interest in this context is a depiction of the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* found among the cave paintings at Qizil in Sinjiang, where there is much pulling out of hair and cutting of skin among the onlookers.²⁰ As acts of self-destruction in canonical Buddhist scriptures are never acceptable as expressions of despair, this self-mutilation as mourning is not originally Buddhist and probably not Indian in origin. The scene in Qizil is more likely to reflect the impact of either the Indo-Scythians or the Tujue cultures, both of whom are known to have scarred themselves to express grief at funerals.²¹ Nor is self-mutilation normative be-

havior at Chinese funerals. Expressions even of extreme grief among surviving family members are restrained by the notion that one's body is a precious gift bequeathed from one's parents and ancestors, so an individual is not at liberty to destroy it before fulfilling his filial obligations. On the other hand, China did have a tradition of altruistically sacrificing one's own flesh for medicinal purposes. Human blood and tissue were believed to offer especially powerful healing qualities, and there are numerous stories in non-Buddhist literature of sons and daughters cutting a piece of their flesh to feed to a sick parent.²² The copying of canonical texts in one's own blood was also valued and came to be adopted by Buddhist monks. Although there was much criticism of these forms of corporeal sacrifice, their continuation from the medieval period into the Qing (1644–1911) suggests that people who did such things were regarded in the popular culture as remarkable for their endurance of pain and depth of devotion. Within a Chinese monastic culture that manipulated the body in the service of self-discipline, it seems sensible to view self-mutilation as simply a more advanced form of praxis. While not without controversy even within the saṅgha, as Yijing's complaint shows, the appearance of these practices in popular Buddhist scriptures indigenous to China, which reaffirm them in a manner similar to the *Lotus Sūtra*, suggests their broad appeal.²³ Of particular relevance here is the subculture of suicide among believers in Pure Land Buddhism, which seems to have resulted from a combination of belief in postmortem rewards for self-sacrifice in general and the specific desire to direct all karmic merit toward the goal of birth in the realm of Amitābha Buddha. This topic will be visited again below.

Japan

Early literary sources for the study of ancient Japan such as the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, *Man'yōshū*, *Fudoki*, and *Nihon ryōiki* contain numerous stories of voluntary death carried out for one reason or another, and none of these accounts are accompanied by negative didactic comments. Alongside altruistic suicides, examples appear that are motivated by shame or despair, both of which were probably operative in suicides following an individual being convicted of a crime. It is not uncommon for aristocratic men to decide that their wives and/or children should die with them when they have personally decided to cross that line, but men without such status, and all women who willfully choose death, die alone. In the *Fudoki*, we find the first three examples of suicide by *seppuku*, or cutting open the belly, including one by a woman.²⁴

Relevant to the link between suicides and funerals that would appear much later in the case of Jitsunyo, we find a very early example of grief leading to self-destruction by a hero mourning at the graveside of his lord. I refer to the story of Tajimamori (or Tadimamori) in the *Kojiki*, also repeated in the *Man'yōshū*.²⁵ The story is set in the time when the leaders of Japan were but recently descended from *kami*. Tajimamori is dispatched by Emperor Suinin to a distant land across the sea (akin to the mythical island of Penglai) to bring back the special fruit of the “seasonless fragrant tree.” He finds the tree, gathers its fruit and a number of its branches, and returns home. But before his return, the emperor dies. When he learns what has happened, Tajimamori gives half the branches to the empress and lays the other half on the emperor’s tomb. Standing before the tomb while holding up the fruit, he cries out that he has succeeded in bringing the fruit as requested. Then, “while shouting and weeping,” he suddenly dies. Tajimamori’s death has generally been interpreted as a voluntary expression of fealty to his lord and thus categorized as *junshi*.

To restrain people from acting on such sentiments, Emperor Suinin (r. 29 BCE–70 CE) decreed that *haniwa* or clay effigies should be used in burial mounds to replace the practice of burying attendants of the king.²⁶ This rule is nevertheless violated in the story of the death of the great Queen Himiko (a.k.a. Pimiko, Himeko) who, in c. 248 CE unified the country after a great civil war. According to the “History of Wei” included in the *Sanguo zhi* (History of the three kingdoms), at the funeral of Himiko, “over a hundred male and female attendants followed her” in death.²⁷

Even more similar to the circumstances of Jitsunyo’s funeral are three suicides said to have occurred among the retainers of Prince Ohokusaka (n.d.), son of Emperor Nintoku (r. early fifth century). When his lord is slain through the treachery of a messenger, Ohokusaka’s vassal Kishi Hikaka of Naniha (Naniwa) and his two sons sit beside his body, the father holding the head and the two sons each a leg, and cry out their sadness at the death of their lord, saying, “We would not be [true] retainers if, as we three have served our lord in life, we were not to follow him in death.” They then cut their own throats and die beside his corpse.²⁸

Moving up to the early seventh century, another example of collective suicide following a powerful leader can be found in the death of Yamashiro no Ōe (d. 643), the son of Prince Shōtoku. Also known as Yamashiro no Ōe no Ō, he expected to be crowned emperor following the death of Empress Suiko in 628 but was thwarted by his ruthless uncle Soga no Emishi (d. 645). Emishi instead supported a grandson of Emperor Bidatsu (r. 572–585), and the conflict escalated into civil

war, with Emishi victorious and his candidate becoming Emperor Jomei (r. 629–641). According to the *Nihon shoki*, some years later Yamashiro no Ōe was challenged by Emishi's son Soga no Iruka over the post-Jomei succession and had to escape to Mt. Ikoma. Rejecting pleas from his vassals to flee to Mibu to raise a new army, he instead chose suicide, with the rationale given that he preferred death to spare the nation any further burden from his war for succession. Following his suicide, those in his clan who had been supporting him then decided to follow him by hanging themselves. They numbered at least twenty-three people from the imperial family, including the four younger siblings of Prince Shōtoku.²⁹

These practices were common enough for Emperor Kōtoku (r. 645–654) in 646 to issue a ruling forbidding the killing of oneself and even killing others at funerals.³⁰ There are also stories from the seventh century of women committing suicide after the death of a husband or brother who had been put to death due to political crimes.³¹

Mention of suicide with explicit reference to Buddhism first appears in public pronouncements against suicide expressed in a 834 legal commentary:

Monks and nuns may in no case burn their bodies or commit suicide (*shashin*). If they do, anyone involved will be guilty of a violation based on the precepts. . . . It is the custom in Shinano province that, when a husband dies, the wife then sacrifices herself. Wherever this kind of [practice] may be found, it is to be corrected by teaching appropriate behavior (*reikyō*).³²

Nonetheless, suicides in a Buddhist context continued to be well attested throughout the Heian period (794–1185). For example, the mid-Heian *Nihon kiryaku* records the self-immolation in 995 of a monk named Kakushin that brought the retired emperor Kazan to the funerary service to pay homage to the monk's achievement.³³ Especially in the latter half of the period, references to suicide in an explicitly Buddhist context increase, and those associated with aspiration for birth in Amida's Pure Land emerge as the most numerous of all. This link between suicide and Pure Land belief and practice may be seen as one aspect of a broader gestalt whereby motivation for self-destruction is grounded in the belief that ritual suicide done properly could propel one to an afterlife in one of the paradisiacal pure lands associated, not only with Amida, but also with the bodhisattvas Miroku (Skt. Maitreya) and Kannon (Avalokiteśvara). In accounts of such suicides, we see how the Japanese added their own mythic layer to continental ideological precedent, usually in the form of sacred locales and times when

and where religious suicide had more significance or perhaps greater chances of success. Many Heian-period suicides were associated with Tennōji in Naniwa, for example, because of popular belief that the western gate of this temple directly faced the eastern gate of Amida's Pure Land.³⁴ Many also held that entrance to Kannon's Potalaka (Jpn. Fudaraku) realm could be achieved by jumping from the Nachi waterfall in Kumano.³⁵ We also know that one of the mountains in the Higashiyama chain bordering Kyoto dubbed Amidamine (Amida Peak) became a popular site for suicide. Suicides frequently occurred on the fifteenth or sixteenth day of seventh, eighth, and ninth months. The *Hyakurensō*, although written at the end of the thirteenth century, records a self-immolation there that took place on the sixteenth day of the ninth month in 985, accompanied by an attending crowd. The text also comments that "in recent years there have been eleven people who have immolated themselves in the provinces."³⁶ The spring and autumn equinoxes (*higan*) were also a popular time for suicide—perhaps because of their associations, as times for memorializing the dead, with the Buddhist ideal of reaching a world beyond suffering or from the aesthetic appeal of the sun rising due east and setting due west.

Suicides in the Heian, Kamakura (1185–1333), and Muromachi (1392–1573) periods that were motivated by the postmortem goal of reaching a wholly superior realm are usually referred to by the terms *shashin ōjō* (*ōjō* by discarding the body), *jigai ōjō* (*ōjō* by suicide), *tōshin ōjō* (*ōjō* by leaping to one's death), or *jusui ōjō* (*ōjō* by drowning). There was also the practice of *tokai ōjō* (literally, *ōjō* by crossing the sea), which refers to the act of setting out in a boat from Wakayama for Kannon's paradise of Potalaka, thought to be somewhere in the middle of the ocean. *Shashin* also grew to become a generic term in Shugendō for a variety of extreme ascetic practices intended to culminate in death, such as putting oneself in a large hole dug in the earth, drinking lacquer, and then entering meditative samādhi. But its most common associations were with aspirations for *ōjō* and a corresponding renunciation of this "corrupt" world, as expressed in the oft-quoted phrase, "pull away from the defiled world and seek the Pure Land" (*onri edo gongu jōdo*).

Buddhism did not provide the only frame of reference for suicide in premodern Japan, however. From the Kamakura period well into the Tokugawa (1603–1868), the category of suicide known as *junshi* gained prominence. *Junshi* signifies various forms of noble death based on Confucian norms of loyalty.³⁷ But the same term was also used to represent the Christian concept of martyrdom after its introduction in the sixteenth century, because both these characterizations of volun-

tary death require public perception that the individual has sacrificed his or her life for the sake of transhistoric values fundamental to the preservation of a collective truth that guarantees order.

Junshi suicides are presented as springing from motives of either altruism or resignation, both of which are illustrated in early Japanese stories.³⁸ The latter most often occurs in the case of a battle or attack in which the person reckons it inevitable that he or she will be killed by an enemy and *in response* chooses death by his or her own hand to avoid dying in a humiliating way. This may seem more like suicide out of pride than resignation, but choosing to die in this manner marks one as a hero in traditional China, particularly for ministers and other vassals surrounding a king who is overthrown violently. Considering an individual's obligation to family, politically inspired *junshi* reflects the domination of *societal* loyalty over *filial* loyalty. As in Buddhism, these internal value conflicts often result in unclear judgments of history,³⁹ but the persistence of the heroic *junshi* tradition into the modern period has served to valorize national obligations at the expense of familial or personal concerns.

The violence at the end of the Heian period accompanying the so-called Genpei War and the rise of warrior power ushered in the literary genre called *gunki monogatari* or military epic, where heroic death is glorified to an extent not seen in earlier literature. *Heike monogatari* (Tale of the Heike) contains numerous stories, not only of battlefield death, but of battlefield suicide as well. The name of Amida is frequently called out as warriors race into battle, and the *nenbutsu* is often recited just before a suicide. Military suicides in the *Heike* typically reflect the Confucian heroic norm wherein suicide is either an alternative to being killed by the enemy or a vassal's expression of loyalty to a lord who has fallen. *Heike* and other military tales from the medieval period frequently describe these suicides in a most dramatic way, and the reader/listener cannot fail to be struck by how quickly the narrative is able to turn what appears to be imminent humiliation in defeat of a great warrior into a moment of glory and honor through his willful self-destruction. A good example is the suicide of Minamoto no Kanehira, adopted brother and devoted follower of Minamoto no Yoshinaka. In the midst of battle, Kanehira hears the boast of an enemy warrior who has just killed Yoshinaka, screamed out his triumph, then cut off the head and raised it on the point of his sword:

Kanehira was fighting desperately as these words rang in his ears. At that moment he ceased fighting and cried out: "For whom do I have to fight now? You warriors of the east, see how the mightiest warrior in Japan puts an end to himself!" Thrusting the point of his sword into

his mouth, he flung himself headlong from his horse so that the sword pierced his head.⁴⁰

The great general Minamoto no Yoshitsune similarly chooses suicide when defeat in battle is imminent, as described in a collection of stories transmitted about him, the fifteenth-century military epic *Gikeiki*. In contrast to Kanehira, Yoshitsune reflects deliberately on how to end his life and chooses to cut open his belly, because it is the most difficult and therefore the best method of dying. After expanding the large incision, he removes his internal organs and then waits to die.⁴¹ It is worth noting that *seppuku* was still an unusual way to self-destruct at the time of the events described, and indeed this story of Yoshitsune may have been a catalyst for its later normative status; it is only well after the Genpei War that *seppuku* became de rigueur for any warrior wishing to take his own life.

Heroic warrior death is especially celebrated in *Taiheiki*, completed in 1371, approximately one century after the *Heike*. Here *seppuku* has become standard operating procedure. The number of suicides in *Taiheiki* is also dramatically greater than in any prior work. In the *Heike*, for example, voluntary death described by the Buddhist term *shashin* appears only twice, and there are twenty instances of suicide called *jigai*. In *Taiheiki*, suicide described as *shashin* appears three times, but named individual deaths labelled *jigai* total 114. There are also scenes of mass suicide in *Taiheiki* that far exceed in scale anything remotely similar found in the *Heike*: for example, the defeat of the army led by Hōjō Nakatoki (1306–1333) in 1333 leads to 432 men dying by *seppuku*. Another, even more dramatic scene of mimetic frenzy follows upon the suicide of Hōjō Takatoki (1303–1333). Facing a hopeless military situation, Takatoki convenes a death party of sorts. After some ceremonial drinking, he calls out to those assembled: “Kill yourselves quickly! I shall go before you as your example!” This immediately leads 283 Hōjō men to cut open their bellies and die, “each striving to be the first.” The hall where this occurs is then set alight, which somehow inspires the warriors stationed outside the hall to die similarly, leading, according to the narrator, to a total of more than 870 *seppuku* deaths on this one occasion.⁴²

When a samurai dies by his own hand, we infer a rationale of duty or honor and often both. Indeed there is great honor in successfully performing *seppuku*, the highest of all duties. It goes without saying that much of the ideological structure of the lord-vassal relationship in feudal Japan can be traced to Neo-Confucian notions of loyalty and responsibility transmitted first during the Southern Song (1127–1279) and later, during the Ming (1368–1644), dynasties. As the above exam-

ples show, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the core samurai values of duty and loyalty had come to incorporate a notion of voluntary death. Suicide had become a common—and for many, an acceptable and even laudatory—course of action when confronting an insurmountable crisis, be it political or spiritual.

Jigai ōjō: Suicide to Reach the Pure Land

Having outlined above the general discourses of voluntary death, Buddhist and otherwise, that were transmitted to and developed in Japan, let us now consider in more detail the specific tradition of *jigai ōjō*, or what I wish to call “*ōjō*-suicide,” which holds particular relevance for the case of Jitsunyo. In the five or six centuries between its emergence in the Heian period and Jitsunyo’s time, this practice appears to have expanded so dramatically as to have become the normative religious rationalization for suicide in the medieval period. In the Heian-period literary genre called *ōjōden* (accounts of those born in the Pure Land), we find numerous examples of suicides by individuals who thought it gave them ready access to Amida’s Land of Bliss. The origin of *jigai ōjō* lies in similar practices recorded in the same genre written in China (pronounced *wangsheng zhuan*), the earliest of which dates to the seventh century.⁴³ Among various Chinese examples, probably the most well-known story in Japan was the “jumping from a tree” *ōjō*-suicide of the Pure Land patriarch Shandao (613–681), which first appears in the biographies of him written during the Song period.⁴⁴ Shandao’s example seems to have inspired many in medieval Japan, and accounts of individuals committing *ōjō*-suicide become increasingly numerous from the twelfth century. One work from this period reports twenty-four people who threw themselves into the Katsura River in Kyoto in 1176.⁴⁵ It is also from the twelfth century that accounts of suicide aimed at birth in the Pure Land begin to appear in *ōjōden*.⁴⁶ It has been said that suicide is always a public event, and, like the self-immolation in the time of the retired emperor Kazan mentioned above, we find many references to public gatherings at *ōjō*-suicides described in these sources. The descriptions in *ōjōden* do not praise the self-destroying individuals as heroic, but they do praise the ensuing miracles that the suicides generated. At the very least we may infer that these recorded suicides were often witnessed by others.

Also relevant to the suicides at Jitsunyo’s funeral is the fact that many of these twelfth-century *ōjō*-suicides take place at burial grounds such as Toribeno, Funaoka, and Amidamine, locales believed to be directly linked with journeying to Amida’s Pure Land. The presence of the death of others would seem to have been a motivating factor,

rather than a deterrence, and seems to reflect what Maurice Pinguet has called the Japanese intimacy with death.⁴⁷

In the early thirteen century, we begin to see ridicule of *ōjō*-suicide in Buddhist literature, suggesting it had become so commonplace that it could become a subject of satire. The *Uji shūi monogatari*, a collection of *setsuwa* or tales with strong didactic flavor mostly written between 1214 and 1221, contains a story about a *hijiri*, or holy man, who “announced that he was going to drown himself” in the Katsura River. This creates a stir in the city, and after one hundred days of ritual preparation he is carried down to the river by a large procession of monks and lay people—“more numerous than the stones in the riverbed”—who initially shower him with rice in an expression of their adoration but then turn ugly when, after jumping into the water while reciting the *nenbutsu*, he changes his mind and allows himself to be pulled out.⁴⁸ The incident also illustrates the fact that religious suicide, here again *ōjō*-suicide, held for many an eerie, ambiguous fascination that allowed it to be easily turned into public spectacle. It is worth remembering that, in this example, the *hijiri* turns from hero to laughingstock in the public’s estimation only when he loses his nerve and does not die.

Further evidence of the admiration of *ōjō*-suicide can be found in the recorded suicides among the followers of Hōnen (1133–1212) and Ippen (1234–1284) that took place in response to the death of their teachers and thus provide even more relevant precedents for the suicides at Jitsunyo’s funeral. Despite modern-day claims to the contrary in both their respective traditions, Jōdoshū and Jishū, there is no clear condemnation of this practice by either Hōnen or Ippen in their extant writings. In the case of Ippen, his death is said to have motivated six (or seven) people to throw themselves in the ocean and drown.⁴⁹ The Ippen biographies explain this by stating that these individuals wanted to follow him to the Pure Land—an example of suicide as solidarity. Also, similar to Jikkō’s account of Jitsunyo’s funeral, after the fact another group was on the verge of imitating their self-destroyed brethren when they were dissuaded by a lay follower who, in asking the group for talismans and guidance, convinced them of the value of continuing Ippen’s ministry.

The Death of Saburō Tamemori

Let us now turn to the *ōjō*-suicide, prompted by Hōnen’s death, of a samurai named Saburō Tamemori of Tsunoto (1163–1243), ordained under the monastic name Songan shortly before his death, for which

we have a most graphic description in the so-called “imperial biography” of Hōnen (*Hōnen Shōnin gyōjō ezu*) presented by Shunjō (1255–1335) to Emperor Go-Fushimi in 1307. As a youth, Saburō fought with Yoritomo against the Taira, but his career was more closely tied with Minamoto no Sanetomo, shōgun from 1203 to 1219. Feeling guilty for his acts of violence in battle, Saburō sought out Hōnen for guidance in 1195, and they continued to communicate in letters. In the biography, Hōnen refers to Saburō’s “wholesome hatred of this present fleeting world” and suggests that he not fret over the unbelievers around him, writing: “The thing to do is hasten yourself to the Land of Bliss and attain enlightenment. After that you may return to this world to render service to others.” After the death of both his spiritual master (Hōnen) and liege lord (Sanetomo), Saburō’s dolorous state of mind led him to suicide.

After Hōnen’s death [Saburō] longed more and more for Amida’s Pure Land. He used to take out Hōnen’s letters to read, at which point he would address himself to Hōnen’s spirit, beseeching him to come and welcome him to the Land of Bliss. But several years passed without any answer. At last he called Jōshō-bō and a few other disciples of Hōnen on the twenty-eighth day of the tenth month in the third year of Ninji (1242) and asked them to conduct a *nenbutsu* service lasting three seven-day periods. At the end of this vigil, at the hour of midnight on the eighteenth day of the eleventh month, while in the act of repeating the *nenbutsu* in a loud voice in the practice hall (*dōjō*), he cut open his belly and took out his five organs and six entrails, and wrapped them with an under-*hakama* so that they might be secretly thrown into the river behind the temple. As it was in the middle of the night, no one knew about it. After [completing his task], he faced everyone and said, “Ever since I became a priest and retreated from the world, I have prayed for the enlightenment of the Great Minister [Sanetomo], for I feel nostalgia for my [late] lord. Hōnen also said to me, ‘We will surely meet in the Land of Bliss,’ and so to have lived [after the passing of these two men] until now in this defiled world without [my own] *ōjō* seems to have been without any value. Śākyamuni entered into extinction at eighty, and Hōnen also attained *ōjō* at eighty; I am now fully eighty as well. The eighteenth vow is that of *nenbutsu* *ōjō*; today is also the eighteenth. [Today] also corresponds to the conclusion of the *nenbutsu* service [we have just performed], so if I could achieve *ōjō* today, that would truly be special.” Without really suspecting such resolve on his part, [everyone] understood him to be talking only in generalities, and they responded by praising his words as excellent indeed.

That night passed and the next day, and not feeling any pain or any signs of the end coming, he summoned his son Moritomo, First Secretary in the Popular Affairs Ministry, and showed him his cut-open belly.⁵⁰

The story continues with Saburō somehow managing to go on living for another fifty-seven days, free from pain but growing increasingly impatient for death to come. The chapter ends with a statement attributed to Shōkō, the founder of the Chinzei branch of Hōnen's Jōdoshū or Pure Land sect with which the biography's author was affiliated, to the effect that efforts to attain *ōjō* by *seppuku*, self-immolation, drowning, or fasting are improper "in this latter age."⁵¹

Consider the following points in the above account. (1) The suicide is chiefly motivated by a profound loneliness resulting from the loss of Saburō's religious leader and political protector. (2) When he explains his intention to achieve *ōjō* (= death) on that auspicious day, those in his discourse community, not knowing that he has already disembowelled himself, react to the idea as laudatory. (3) The author takes a paradoxical stance in relating the story by, on the one hand, withholding any criticism of Saburō's act of self-destruction, and, on the other, concluding his narrative with a generic doctrinal statement that *ōjō*-suicide has been declared taboo by church leadership.

This double-coding thus provides further evidence that *ōjō*-suicides in medieval Japan were viewed with deep ambivalence. Even if the official position by educated clergy were one of condemnation, such acts commanded respect among a great many in society, and there is an unmistakably heroic dimension to Shunjō's telling of Saburō's story. At the same time, Saburō at the time of his death was a monk in Hōnen's line and so should have adhered closely to Hōnen's doctrine. This detailed account of Saburō's demise thus raises the question of why the story of an *ōjō*-suicide by one of Hōnen's followers was included in a public biography of Hōnen. As in the case of the suicides that appear in Ippen's biographies, one presumes it was meant to demonstrate the extraordinary impact of the teacher upon his followers, and it is worth noting that the biographies of both Ippen and Hōnen hint that their deaths produced an impact similar to that of Śākyamuni. Yet while Shunjō does not want his readers to think he is recommending *ōjō*-suicide, he does acknowledge that "men of superior abilities in ancient times" conducted themselves in this way with impunity, though he doubts many today could succeed at it.⁵² Like the *Uji shūi* story, the problem lies not in the morality of the act but in the ability of the actor to complete it in the proper frame of mind. Shunjō then quotes the following as a definitive ruling:

Shōkō put out an admonishment on this, saying that, in this latter age, we must refrain (*shinshaku*) from self-destruction for Birth (*jigai ōjō*), self-immolation for Birth (*shōshin ōjō*), self-drowning for Birth (*jusui ōjō*), fasting for Birth (*danjiki ōjō*), and so forth.⁵³

The choice of words attributed to Shōkō here is revealing, for the four forms of suicide he condemns are never called suicide, but only *ōjō*. In this context, therefore, we must read the term *ōjō* to designate, not merely birth in the Pure Land as an event that occurs after death, *but the death event itself*. We should understand *ōjō* here as “willful death in order to reach the Pure Land,” in essence, as voluntary death. An ambivalence toward religious suicide is evident in Shōkō’s use of the term *shinshaku* to condemn the practice, a word that means “holding back to consider a measured response” and thus that speaks more to propriety than to sinful or unethical behavior.⁵⁴

Given the similarity of circumstance, the suicides of Ippen’s followers and of Hōnen’s disciple Saburō Tamemori can be seen as precursors for the collective suicides at the funeral of Jitsunyo. While there is no personal information to draw on in the Ippen case, the personal statement from Saburō recorded for posterity is suggestive for our understanding of the collective suicide of Jitsunyo’s followers, in that his decision to take his life is framed by his expressed continuing attachment to his religious leader *and* his political leader. Jump to the early sixteenth century, and the case can be made that, for the Honganji community, the two roles are now borne by the same person. Jitsunyo’s specific political situation will be discussed below, but first it may be helpful to briefly review the feudal values of medieval Japan that pertain most directly to someone choosing to die by their own hand. For, as a medieval samurai, Saburō’s mention of his recently deceased feudal lord tells us that his sense of loyalty contributed to his decision to choose *seppuku*. We do not know if the twenty individuals who ended their lives voluntarily at Jitsunyo’s funeral were samurai, but the fact that they chose *seppuku* as the means to do so strongly suggests it.

Honganji at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century: Jitsunyo as Daimyō

It is against this background of suicide as a glorious death for samurai, suicide as hastening entry into the Pure Land, and suicide out of mourning for religious and political leaders, that we must seek to comprehend the suicide cluster that followed the funeral of Jitsunyo, leader of Honganji. In fact, all these traditions are relevant to this incident. First, Jitsunyo was the leader of a major religious organization whose

doctrine was a form of Pure Land Buddhism. Second, it can be argued that Jitsunyo was not only a religious leader but performed the role of daimyō as well, for under his leadership Honganji had become an active participant in the military feuding among warlords. In Jitsunyo, a great many Honganji adherents saw someone responsible for their existence both on earth and beyond the grave. This is the context in which we must consider the motivation of the suicides following his death.

Prior to the Ōnin War, power within Shinshū was divided among four or five regional centers of authority.⁵⁵ By the end of the fifteenth century, however, Rennyo had succeeded in establishing Honganji as Shinshū's undisputed leader. He accomplished this not only by charismatic religious leadership but also by astute politics and keen administrative skills, demonstrated in his response to persecution and civil unrest with strategies of adaptation unmatched by his rivals. Rennyo brought about a marked expansion in the size of the community supporting Honganji as the result of a successful campaign among an ever-widening range of lay Shinshū believers, called *monto*, instilling in the members of many provincial *dōjō* a sense of affiliation with Honganji, often at the expense of their ties to other branches of Shinshū. Rennyo created a vast institutional network across at least a dozen provinces that was particularly solid in northern Japan and in the capital region.⁵⁶

According to historians Akamatsu Toshihide and Kasahara Kazuo, tension between Shinshū *monto* and local samurai slowly increased during the time of Jitsunyo's stewardship of the church,⁵⁷ but this was merely an escalation of an overall shift in political power that was taking place throughout the nation during Rennyo's tenure. After the Ōnin War, the authority of the Bakufu or shogunate declined precipitously, which meant that provincial governors or *shugo* appointed by the Bakufu lost their power as well. This led to struggles for power at the local level and to the emergence of a new kind of local hegemon, most of whom came from powerful, landholding families based in the area. Scholars have termed these chieftains *sengoku daimyō* to distinguish them from the previous *shugo daimyō*. In this competition for power in the second half of the fifteenth century, many groups organized themselves into confederations or leagues (the original meaning of *ikki*) for their own protection and advancement. These *ikki* or *do'ikki* might be led by peasant *kokujin*, or *sōryō*—hereditary large landowners who served as village chiefs and often joined together under a compact to protect their interests and autonomy. As the *ikki* struggled to avoid tax liabilities and other oppressive policies, their political and economic frustration often led to violence.⁵⁸ For this reason, many peas-

ants took on military roles and were thus called *jizamurai* (rural warriors). The *ikki* affiliated with Honganji, labelled *ikkō ikki* because Shinshū was often called *Ikkōshū* (the “single-minded sect”), were no different. Under Rennyo’s leadership, the spread of Honganji brought in peasants, samurai (called *bushi monto*), and *kokujin* alike, and many Shinshū congregations easily linked up with others in their area, forming *monto ikki* united across different regions that could grow into the tens of thousands if provoked. Rennyo was able to coordinate this network of *monto ikki* and in doing so established a strong sense of allegiance to himself, or at least, to the office of *monshu*, head of the united *monto*. This has led scholars like Neil McMullin to write: “As a result of Rennyo’s success the chief priest of the Honganji became an extremely powerful figure: he was the religious overlord of tens of thousands of monto.... The chief priest became in effect a daimyō, and indeed his power rivaled that of the greatest daimyō.”⁵⁹

During this time, Honganji experienced phenomenal growth, to a point where local power structures often felt threatened and took steps to suppress its expansion. At times this led to armed destruction of a Honganji center, which only deepened its sense of militancy; many temples were built with walls and moats for protection, especially Honganji itself. The Tendai Buddhist center on Mt. Hiei was frequently antagonistic, and the famous destruction of the Ōtani Honganji under Rennyo’s leadership in 1465 by armed monks from Enryakuji was a watershed moment in the development of Honganji as a feudal institution, for it confirmed the need for its own source of military protection. But though committed to protect his constituent communities and dedicated to the expansion of his church, Rennyo was not openly supportive of organized movements in opposition to authorities, for he did not wish to challenge them directly. Rennyo’s policy of “obey the law and pay your taxes” reflects a modicum of confidence in the ability of the existing political structures to maintain order.

While there are isolated reports of suicides following Rennyo’s death, such as that of his disciple Rensō (d. 1449), nothing occurred on the scale of what happened at Jitsunyo’s funeral. To understand how Jitsunyo’s death inspired such an unusually violent reaction, it is worth noting how the stewardship of Honganji differed under his rule. First of all, in Jitsunyo’s time, the spirit of compromise with political authority so skillfully maintained by Rennyo had clearly weakened. Many Honganji leaders in the sixteenth century viewed cooperation with the Bakufu and their vassal *shugo* to be of dubious value, and there was marked resistance to compromise agreements that restricted Honganji expansion. Second, while Rennyo only minimally addressed the ever-increasing numbers of peasant leaders who took on military

roles by granting only a few *ikki* affiliated with Honganji permission to defend themselves militarily, Jitsunyo greatly expanded this role of the Honganji *monshu* as active commander-in-chief. These two changes strongly suggest that, compared with Rennyo's time, Honganji under Jitsunyo suffered from greater political isolation but also grew more accustomed to a hardened military culture.

A third area of difference lies in the changed social and political standing of the church under Jitsunyo's leadership. After an initial period devoted to infrastructural reform, Jitsunyo worked hard to strengthen Honganji's relations with the court, powerful daimyō, and local constables. His course of action was not always military but at times could be diplomatic; he sent gifts of horses, for example, to defuse threats by local authorities. The Shinshū founder, Shinran (1173–1262), though of aristocratic blood, had all but ignored the court, even instructing his followers not to participate in Shintō rituals. Rennyo reversed this ruling on Shintō, not for theological reasons so much as to remove one source of criticism of Honganji's social persona. Jitsunyo, on the other hand, petitioned the court and ultimately succeeded in having Honganji declared a *chokuganji*, a temple that the emperor publicly requests to perform rituals for the protection and peace of the nation. Thus, where Rennyo sought to keep a low profile for Honganji, Jitsunyo sought public recognition for it as a civil institution of substance.⁶⁰

The political and economic autonomy of Honganji fostered by Rennyo and established by Jitsunyo in the sixteenth century created a relationship between the *monshu* and the administrative leadership below him little different from that of a powerful daimyō atop a similar hierarchy of loyal, devoted figures who derived their power from their leader. In both social structures, the vassals would have internalized medieval values of fealty to their overlord, who in turn was responsible for their well-being. Citing Kasahara Kazuo, McMullin notes that, under Rennyo, representatives of Honganji leadership called *daibōzu* were sent out as to wield the Honganji's authority.⁶¹ These representatives derived their authority from and were expected to carry out the policies of the *monshu* himself. However, not everyone affiliated with Honganji recognized its "domain" or authority within their own, local spheres of influence, and at times this led to internal conflicts.

Under Rennyo, the number of people branded as heretics and expelled from the church increased sharply. Kasahara has found that, between the time of Shinran and Rennyo, almost no excommunications occurred in Shinshū. He concludes that this change was not the result of a sudden swelling of rebellious ideas spreading through the countryside but sprang instead from the political tensions arising out of Ren-

nyo's system of sending out his sons as appointed bishops to act as watchdogs over local Shinshū communities.⁶²

The penalties for excommunication, usually referred to as *kanki*, were extremely severe: the individual (and often his family) was ostracized from his village, prevented from earning a living there, and even prevented from joining any other Honganji community. It is interesting to see how this is reported in another record of Jitsugo, who opines that people who oppose church teachings are so disruptive—breaking laws and inciting others to do the same—that they deserve to be killed. But it would too sad to do this, Jitsugo admits, and under Rennyo and Jitsunyo, such directives did not appear, executions of heretics beginning only under Jitsunyo's successor, Shōnyo (1516–1554). But even under Jitsunyo, the excommunicated endured such deprivation that they were commonly unable to sustain their lives.⁶³ As the *Honpukuji atogaki*, a sixteenth-century record of a Shinshū temple in Ōmi province, explains, “In this life they will be shunned [so severely] by others that it is unlikely that they will not starve to death.”⁶⁴ Sometimes the decree of excommunication was interpreted by local community leaders as ordering the individual's death. Yet even death was not necessarily an escape, for Honganji directives often pronounced that such individuals were ineligible to go to the Pure Land and declared that they would fall into hell. In some cases, the punishment was declared to be in effect for the individual's next lifetime as well.⁶⁵

The heightened fear of nonconformity reflected in these stories of excommunication suggests the valorization of that most sacred of all warrior values: loyalty. We thus have a fully parallel power structure between the shōgun-daimyō/daimyō-vassal paradigm in the secular world and the *monshu-daibōzu/daibōzu-monto* paradigm within Honganji. Added to this was the church's claim not only to arbitrate an individual's salvation but to imbue each individual with a sense of responsibility for the safety and welfare of Buddhism as a whole, defined historically by its institutional embodiment in Honganji.⁶⁶

Part of the impetus for Rennyo and Jitsunyo to establish greater control of all Honganji branches was the *ikki* uprisings under the Shinshū banner, which had become large enough in Rennyo's time to require the *monshu*'s oversight. In 1488, full-scale war broke out in Kaga in the form of an *ikkō ikki* rebellion, with the Honganji forces estimated between one hundred to two hundred thousand, defeating Togashi Masachika (1455–1488), who took his own life as a result. The enraged shōgun, Ashikaga Yoshihisa (1465–1489), demanded that Rennyo excommunicate all *monto* in Kaga, but the matter was resolved by the timely mediation of the *kanrei*, or shōgunal deputy, Hosokawa Masamoto (1466–1507), allowing the Kaga *monto* to escape with only a

public censure from Rennyo and a promise to remain quiet. In turn, Masamoto agreed to become a member of Honganji, and Honganji agreed to give him special consideration in all future matters. Thus, the shōgun received a promise of peace but little else; Masamoto appeared more in control than the shōgun; and Kaga was recognized as a feudal domain run by a local branch of Honganji. After resolving the Kaga conflict, Masamoto, now affiliated with Honganji, did not take long in consolidating his power. In 1493 he staged a *coup d'état*, forcing the shōgun to resign and installing his own puppet shōgun.

Although not under direct control by Honganji leadership, the *ikkō ikki* dragged the church willy-nilly even deeper into the political arena. When Rennyo was gone, his political legacy was decidedly ambivalent: he had supported the Kaga uprisings, yet he consistently admonished all Shinshū followers to be law-abiding under the principle that Honganji was a religious institution with religious goals. But the relationship that subsequently developed between Masamoto and Jitsunyo collapsed any remaining distinction between religious and feudal institutions.

In 1506 Masamoto launched a preemptive attack on the former shōgun Yoshihide's castle in Kawachi. The siege did not go well, however, and he asked Jitsunyo to come to his aid by sending Honganji troops. Masamoto had approached Rennyo with similar requests, but Rennyo had always been able to refuse him. But now he asked as national hegemon.⁶⁷ Honganji owed a debt to him for his resolution of the Kaga conflict in their favor, but Jitsunyo, who had previously staked his reputation on being faithful to Rennyo's policies, initially refused. However, when pressed by Masamoto, Jitsunyo ordered a number of Shinshū followers in the Kawachi and Settsu areas to join Masamoto's campaign, thereby enabling him to win.

No Shinshū group had previously committed to a fight that did not directly involve a threat to its own people or their holdings. This episode thus marks the beginning of Honganji's transformation into a militarily active feudal institution, a *shūkyō kenmon*, or religious institution as power bloc, in the language of historian Kuroda Toshio (1926–1993). Jitsunyo's decision caused many local church leaders to call for his resignation, to which he reacted with tougher rules suppressing dissent.

Following the victory in Kawachi, a number of *ikkō ikki* broke out in 1506 in the Hokuriku area, and, with Masamoto's support, Honganji warriors prevailed and church membership grew. With these gains, Honganji became a major player in the power politics of the sixteenth century. Having thus increased his political profile, Jitsunyo had in effect become a daimyō to be reckoned with, one closely allied with

Japan's dominant political figure. But Jitsunyo's sense of power and security did not last long, for in 1507 Masamoto was murdered by his adopted son, and Honganji found itself in opposition to his successor, Hosokawa Harumoto (1514–1563).

Thus, by the time of Jitsunyo's death in 1525, Honganji had been transformed in the half-century since the Ōnin War into a wealthy, influential church under Rennyō and then into a political and military force under Jitsunyo. If Rennyō had displayed incipient daimyō-like qualities, Jitsunyo was a fully realized warlord. Viewed in this way, the traditional loyalty-response of a samurai would not be out of place among his followers, who, it should not be forgotten, saw him as the guarantor of their postmortem salvation.

Conclusion

The death of Jitsunyo was an event different from the death of any previous leader of Honganji, because Honganji, now a feudal domain, had evolved into a different institution. Due in part to his cooperation with Hosokawa Masamoto, Jitsunyo was able to expand the landholdings, financial foundation, and military prowess of Honganji. He showed the world that Honganji was fully capable, not only of defending territories under its control, but of dispatching troops to aid allies in other conflicts as well. The unexpected death of Masamoto in 1507, however, not only meant the loss of Honganji's patron and protector but exposed the church to Masamoto's enemies. Jitsunyo's responsibility in the post-Masamoto era was as focused on securing Honganji's territorial and economic survival as it was on providing spiritual leadership and organizational discipline.⁶⁸

Without denying the religious identity of Honganji, Jitsunyo's daimyō-like persona is easily seen in the dictatorial nature of his rule, extolling a doctrinal rigidity based solely on his personal authority and dispatching representatives to enforce his control. Heretics were not merely excommunicated from the church but lost their identities as members of communities. Fall afoul of Jitsunyo and you and your family would lose your livelihood. Such totalistic shunning in a feudal setting often meant death, and Jitsugo records suicides among those who suffered excommunication.

I have outlined the role of Jitsunyo as feudal lord to provide another historical thread in the attempt to weave together an understanding of the suicides that erupted on the occasion of his funeral. His death signaled, at the very least, a power vacuum atop a very large and powerful religious community. The control that he wielded over the lives of so many, and the political clout of Honganji as a feudal

institution, were reflected in the size and complexity of his funeral. The drama must have been enormous. But we must not lose sight of the particular religious viewpoint Jitsunyo represented. There is long tradition of valorizing self-mutilation and self-destruction in Buddhist culture in general, with evidence found in texts generated in India, China, and Japan. There is also artistic evidence that as Buddhism moved through Central Asia, it picked up Mesopotamian traditions of expressing grief at funerals through self-mutilation, probably through its contact with Indo-Scythian and Tujue peoples. On top of that we must add the layer of suicidal culture characteristic of Pure Land Buddhism in East Asia. I know of no canonical or popular writing that encourages *jigai ôjô*; in fact one finds numerous statements denouncing it. And yet its persistence in the popular imagination as something extraordinary and deserving of respect is also well attested.

Is there any significance in the fact that the suicides following Ippen's death were drownings, whereas the suicide of Saburô Tamemori was a *seppuku*, and the suicides of the followers of Jitsunyo were both? Although the distinction may be somewhat facile, may we not view drowning as closer to the traditional *jigai ôjô* model, and *seppuku* as more indicative of samurai, feudal-loyalty culture? This is not to say that both suicide cultures were not operating to some degree in all these cases. But in a medieval society dominated by a warrior ethic, *seppuku* was clearly (although not exclusively) identified with warriors and with heroic, voluntary death. At the same time, all the above suicide victims were devotees of faith in Amida and the religious goal of reaching his Pure Land, and death by voluntary drowning was a traditional form of *jigai ôjô*, whereas *seppuku* was not. Nonetheless, as everyone involved in the suicides following the deaths of Ippen and Jitsunyo hoped to reach the Pure Land after death, all fall under the broad rubric of *jigai ôjô*.

Returning to the question raised at the outset of mimesis versus solidarity, the only instance of suicide discussed here for which we are given any specific psychological information is that of Saburô Tamemori, who explains that he was prompted by extreme longing for his feudal lord and for his religious mentor. His suicide was to join *them*, done in a way that embodies the samurai identity and is expressive of solidarity. I think we can thus identify a motivational pattern here linking *seppuku*, samurai, and solidarity, wherein self-destruction offers the comfort of merging with both the personae of the masters and the ahistorical, transpersonal values they embody. This is suicide as the ultimate act of fealty. If this model holds, then drowning suggests an alternative pattern of religious piety and mimesis. This manifestation

of *jigai ôjô* is based, not on Confucian norms of loyalty to someone hierarchically above, but rather represents suicide as religious achievement, as it is in those cases described in *ôjôden* literature. Because of Jitsunyo's roles as feudal and religious master, the suicides following his death may be understood as driven by concerns both of mimesis and solidarity.

In reviewing the types of suicide sanctioned in Buddhist scripture, Confucian didactic literature, and Japanese legends, I suggested four modes or ways such behavior was rationalized by these traditions: as altruistic sacrifice; as lamentation, or resignation to one's fate; as a religious offering; and as a way to gain honor. Can we infer that all of these motives were relevant to the suicides following Jitsunyo's funeral? I believe we can. The beneficiary of any intended altruistic gain would have to be the Honganji itself. For such acts of extreme devotion at the public forum of a funeral with outsiders attending would have sent a clear message to the world of the indestructible unity of Honganji members. That these suicides were an expression of lamentation goes without saying, for this emotion is explicit in their description. Moreover, linking this emotion with resignation to one's postmortem fate is somewhat natural in this situation, for suicide in a Pure Land Buddhist context always implies confidence that one is destined for Amida's paradise. The notion of suicide as religious offering goes back to our examples in the *Lotus*, *Nirvāṇa*, and *Golden Light* sūtras, all well-established scriptures in Japan by this time, with the *Nirvāṇa* repeatedly quoted by Shinran, Chōsai, Ryōchū, and others in Hōnen's lineage.

While no leader of Honganji has ever promised religious achievement to those who sacrifice part or all of their bodies, the occasion of the funeral is reminiscent of the cave painting at Qizil where the death of the Buddha results in self-scarring and self-mutilation as expressions of devotion. Such acts of self-destruction upon the demise of a strong leader for whom an individual is emotionally dependent demonstrate intense feelings of solidarity, honor, and admiration. The suicidal offering of the bodhisattva in the "Medicine King" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* is presented in precisely these emotional terms. Narrated as a spontaneous expression of intense piety, it is generated within a similar state of grieving, and manifests not only reverence but emotional and spiritual dependence on the teacher. This is suicide directed toward a human or divine object, where mystical union is only possible through death.⁶⁹ We can certainly infer a similar reverence and dependency among the warrior-believers at Jitsunyo's funeral, heightened by the insecurity of their violent age.

At the same time, one cannot rule out the mimetic quality in this incident. First of all, the suicides are recorded in clusters rather than as individual occurrences—ten in Kyoto, five or six in Yamashina, two in Echizen, six in Kaga, and thirteen others grouped by the method of drowning. Suicides in public forums such as those at the funeral itself typically suggest dramatic motives to gain personal honor among peers or society in general, a principle seen in the story of how the advance announcement of religious suicide brought huge crowds out to see a monk throw himself into the Katsura River. As the first ten *seppuku* are described within a funeral record, they were seen as part of what made the funeral event itself memorable. In contrast to the solitary *seppuku* of Saburō, these suicides are decidedly public. Yet this particular social context does not fit comfortably into any of Durkheim's categories of egoistic, altruistic, or anomic.

Of the four modes of acceptable suicide relevant to medieval Japanese society that I offered as a Japanese alternative to Durkheim, suicide as resignation expressing lamentation and suicide as a way to gain honor seem to predominate here. These motivations suggest the solidarity paradigm, which is consistent with the militarized nature of the Honganji community under Jitsunyo's leadership. On the other hand, the fact that the suicides occur sporadically in groups also suggests a mimetic of voluntary death tied to postmortem religious goals in the manner of the repeated *ōjō* suicides following Ippen's death. In fact the very public nature of these Honganji suicides is also an imitation of the paradigmatic suicide-as-devotion stories from the *Lotus* and *Nirvāṇa* sutras, for they also take place before crowds. After all, these individuals were only following Hōnen's suggestion "to hasten on to the Land of Bliss."

Notes

1. Ryōzen is the name of one peak in the Higashiyama range bordering the eastern edge of the city of Kyoto. This is where Shinran's grave is located and where Honganji then and now maintained a substantial graveyard from at least Rennyo's time, clustered around Shinran's tomb. It is there that Jitsunyo was interred.

2. Called *Jitsunyo Shōnin jayui chūin roku*, this document has more than one modern edition, most conveniently in *Shinshū zensho*, ed. Tsumaki Chokuryō (1913–1916; rpt. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1974–1977), 64:422–433, and *Shinshū shiryō shūsei*, ed. Katada Osamu, 12 vols. (Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1977), 2:764–773.

3. *Rennyo Shōnin ōse no jōjō*, *Shinshū shiryō shūsei* 2:510a.

4. The other funerary records in the Jōdo Shinshū tradition from this period (fifteenth through seventeenth centuries) do not mention suicides; see *Shinshū shiryō shūsei* 2:764–790.

5. Émile Durkheim, *Suicide, A Study in Sociology* (1912), trans., John A. Simpson and George Spaulding (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1951), 123–142, 220–223.

6. Loren Coleman, *Suicide Clusters* (Boston and London: Faber & Faber, 1987), 89–92. Unlike the instances discussed here from Japan's suicide tradition, however, the focus of this kind of research among suicidologists has been on teenagers.

7. Durkheim, *Suicide, A Study in Sociology*, Book Two, chaps. 2–5.

8. J. D. Douglas, *The Social Meanings of Suicide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); J. M. Atkinson, *Discovering Suicide: Studies in the Social Organization of Sudden Death* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978).

9. For example, see the *Liuduji jing*, T no. 152, 3:2b8a. This and other stories of personal physical sacrifice also appear in *Xianyu jing* (*Damamūkānidāna-sūtra*), T no. 202, 4:352b, 377b, and *Fobenxing jing*, T no. 193, 4:5c.

10. *Za ahan jing*, T no. 99, 2:89c11–14. In Pāli, this section stops short of actually confirming that suicides take place: “There are disciples of the Buddha who, feeling dispirited (*aṭṭiyamāna*), ashamed (*harāyamāna*) and disgusted (*jigucchamāna*) with regard to their body and their life, have sought an executioner. But [in this] I have obtained an executioner without having to search” (*Majjhima-nikāya*, ed. V. Trenckner & Chalmers [London: Pāli Text Society (hereafter PTS), 1888–1925], 3.269). The *Puṇṇovāda-sutta* is sutta no. 145 of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and no. 88 of the *Salāyantana-vagga* in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, ed. V. Trenckner and R. Chalmers (PTS, 1888–1899). The Pāli Text Society translations of this passage, which differ slightly, are in *Collection of the Middle Length Sayings: Majjhima-nikāya*, trans. I. B. Horner (PTS, 1954–1959), 3:321, and *The Book of Kindred Sayings: Samyutta-nikāya or Grouped Suttas*, trans. F. Woodward and C. Rhys-Davids (PTS, 1950–1965), 4:36. Cf. a nearly identical passage in the *Asubha-sutta* (SN 46.72).

11. In terms of *doctrine*, suicide would seem to go against the first precept forbidding the taking of sentient life and also to violate the injunction against *vibhāva-tṣṇā*, or the craving for annihilation. But Étienne Lamotte and Peter Harvey both conclude that the first precept strictly speaking refers to the taking or harming of another's life, not one's own, and does not pertain to the *vibhāva-tṣṇā* issue; see Lamotte, “Religious Suicide in Early Buddhism,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 4, no. 2 (1987): 105–118; Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 286–287. In this context, Lamotte specifically cites the *Dazhidu lun*, attributed to Nāgārjuna and translated by Kumārajīva in the early fifth century. It regards suicide as improper (*akuśala*) but states that “suicide is not the same as the injunction

against the taking of sentient life” as outlined in the Vinaya because karma results only from what one does to another sentient being, not to oneself (*T* no. 1509, 25:140a6–8).

12. *Da banniepan jing*, *T* no. 374, 12:449b8–451b5. Earlier in the same sūtra the Buddha states: “It is thus for you that in the course [of many lives] over innumerable kalpas I have thrown away my body, my hands, my feet, my head, my eyes, and even my brain. For that reason you must not be lazy” (375b22).

13. *Jinguangming jing* (*Suvarnaprabhāsa-sūtra*), *T* no. 663, 16:354b2ff. Here the story is given added psychological depth in a kind of open contemplation of suicide. The hero is one of three princes who discuss among themselves the state of the starving mother and her cubs, the implications of altruistic suicide to save her, their dissatisfaction with their bodies, and the value of suicide so construed as a means to attain the ultimate goal of complete enlightenment.

14. The story of the bodhisattva Sarvasattvapriyadarśana’s two acts of sacrifice appears in *Miaofa lianhua jing*, *T* no. 262, 9:53b–54a, translated passages taken from Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 294–298.

15. *Miaofa lianhua jing*, *T* 9:54a12–16; Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, 298.

16. *Qianshou qianyan dabeixin jing*, *T* no. 1060, 20:107b10.

17. Monks who committed suicide as Buddha-offerings total forty-seven in the first three *Gaoseng zhuan* (*T* nos. 2059, 2060, and 2061). The *Fayuan zhulin* category is given at *T* no. 2122, 53:989c. For suicide among nuns, see *Biqiuni zhuan*, *T* no. 2063, 50:937c. For discussions in secondary sources, see, for example, Lamotte, “Religious Suicide in Early Buddhism”; Jean Gernet, “Les suicides par le feu chez les Bouddhistes Chinois du Ve au Xe siècle,” *Mélanges publiés par l’Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises* (1960), 527–558; Yün-hua Jan, “Buddhist Self-Immolation in Medieval China,” *History of Religions* 4, no. 2 (1964–1965), 243–268; John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 35–50; and James A. Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007).

18. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan*, *T* no. 2125, 54:231a.

19. See Han Yu’s memorial, trans. by James R. Hightower and cited in Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin’s Travels in T’ang China* (New York: Tonal Press Co., 1955), 221–227, and in Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 48.

20. Albert Grünwedel, *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1920), figure 415.

21. On the Scythians, see A. D. Godley, *Herodotus: with an English Translation*, 4 vols. (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1922–1938), 2:269–273. On this practice by the Huns, see Edouard Chavannes, trans. and annotation, *Les mémoires historiques de Sse-ma Ts’ien*, 6 vols. (Paris: Adrien-Masonneuve, 1969), 1:

lxv; and on the Tujue, see Stanislas Julien in “Documents sur les T’ou-kiue,” *Journal asiatique* (1864): 332. There was also a Mesopotamian tradition of pulling out of the hair and face-cutting that occurred at funerals. I am grateful to Bruce Williams for assistance in this area.

22. For example, see Dong Gao, ed., *Quan Tang wen*, 11 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Suju, 1983), 6:5504–5505, and also the *Zhuangzi* (*Sōshi*), vol. 2, *Shinshaku kanbun taikei* 8, ed. Endō Tetsuo and Ichikawa Yasushi (Tokyo: Meiji Shoten, 1977), 747. See also Qiu Zhonglin, “Ren Yao yu xieqi: ‘Gegu’ liaopin xianxiang de yiliao guanannian” (The human-flesh as medicine and the idea of “vitalism”: The medical idea of the behavior of ‘cutting flesh to heal parent’ from Sui-Tang dynasty to modern China), *Xin shixue* 10, no. 4 (1999), 67–116.

23. Two widely known indigenous or apocryphal scriptures that extol the value of burning one’s own body (*shaoshen*) are the *Fanwang jing* and *Shoulengyan jing*. The *Fanwang jing* echoes the *Lotus Sūtra* in recommending burning one’s fingers or arms as offerings to the Buddha, going so far as to say that he who does not go this far in his practice cannot be considered a *bhikṣu* and is violating a minor precept (*T* no. 1484, 24:1006a18). The *Shoulengyan jing* goes even further, promising the elimination of all responsibility for previous karmic activities for monks who burn their fingers or set their bodies alight as torches before a buddha image (*T* no. 945, 19:132b13).

24. Two are from the *Harima fudoki*, one of which is the death of a female *kami* named Ōmi who ends her own life when she is unable to find her husband; the other is from the *Bizen fudoki*. See *Fudoki, Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter *NKBT*) 2, ed. Akimoto Kichirō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958), 346–347, 378–379.

25. *Kojiki, Norito, NKBT* 1, ed. Takeda Yūkichi and Kurano Kenji (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958), 202–203; Donald L. Philippi, trans., *Kojiki* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 226–227. See also *Man’yōshū*, vol. 4, *NKBT* 7, ed. Takagi Ichinosuke (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1962), 290–291.

26. *Nihon shoki*, vol. 1, *NKBT* 67, ed. Sakamoto Tarō et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965–1967), 272–275; trans. W. G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697, Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, Supplement I (London, 1896), 178–181.

27. Chen Shou, *Sanguo zhi*, 5 vols., ed. Chen Naiqian (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1959), 3:858. The term used in this account is *junsō* (Ch. *xunzang*), which in ancient China signified vassals being buried alive, along with valuable objects, at the funeral of their lord.

28. *Nihon shoki* 1, *NKBT* 67:454.

29. *Ibid.*, *NKBT* 67:252.

30. *Nihon shoki* 2, *NKBT* 68:294

31. See the stories of Sahobime (Sapobime) in *Kojiki, Norito, NKBT* 1:89–96 (trans. Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki*, 213–218), and of Yamanoe (Yamanobe) in

Nihon shoki 2, *NKBT* 68:486 (Aston, *Nihongi*, 383). These instances are also considered *junshi*.

32. *Ryō no gige, Shintei zōho kokushi taiki* (hereafter *KT*), ed. Kokushi Taiki Henshūkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1977), 89.

33. *Ibid.*, 11:183.

34. Mention is made of this belief in *Konjaku monogatari shū*, *Shūi ōjōden*, *Ryōjin hishō*, etc. See also a document entitled *Shitennōji goshuin engi*, *Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho*, ed. Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan, 100 vols. (Tokyo: by the editor, 1970–1973), 85:305–307.

35. D. Max Moerman: *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asia Center, 2005), 92–117, and “Passage to Fudaraku: Suicide and Salvation in Premodern Japanese Buddhism,” in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 266–296.

36. *KT* 11:9.

37. *Junshi* means suicide as an expression of self-sacrifice for a cause beyond the individual. The word is also used to translate the Christian notion of dying to become a martyr. Many scholars prefer *junkyō*, meaning the teaching of self-sacrifice; a martyr is therefore a *junkyōsha*.

38. Prior to the influx of Buddhism and Confucianism, altruistic suicide may be seen in the story of Ototachibana hime found in both *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Ototachibana is a passenger on a boat with Yamato Takeru, who figures in many legends as a fearless warrior. Traversing Tokyo Bay, Takeru remarks how small the body of water is, which causes the local deity to create a storm in anger. The boat is soon out of control, and everyone faces certain doom, when Ototachibana hime steps up to Takeru, offers herself in his service, and then promptly leaps into the water to her death, calming the waves; see *Kojiki*, *Norito*, *NKBT* 1:227, and *Nihon shoki* 1, *NKBT* 67:304.

39. A well-known example from Chinese history is the controversy surrounding the great Han historian Sima Qian (b. 145 BCE). Sima was punished after the king decided that a general whom Sima had defended (for surrendering to an army of barbarians after being defeated in battle) was really a traitor. Sima’s punishment was castration. He could have saved his reputation by choosing to die by his own hand, but rather, he chose to live and face the punishment of his captors in order to finish writing his masterpiece, the *Shiji*. Although he stoically endured his punishment and completed his great historical work, many later writers consider Sima to have set a bad example by not committing suicide, as the code of loyalty demanded. See Andrew C. K. Hsieh and Jonathan D. Spence, “Suicide and the Family in Pre-modern China,” in *Normal and Abnormal Behavior in Chinese Culture*, ed. Arthur Kleinman and Tsungyü Li (Boston: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1981), 29.

40. Hiroshi Kitagawa and Bruce T. Tsuchida, *The Tale of the Heike* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975), 523.

41. *Gikeiki*, NKBT 37, ed. Okami Masao (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1959), 382–386; *Yoshitsune: A Fifteenth Century Japanese Chronicle*, trans. Helen Craig McCullough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), 290. The element of removing the intestines is echoed in the later story of Saburō Tamemori, discussed below.

42. *Taiheiki*, NKBT 34, ed. Gotō Tanji and Kamata Kisaburō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1960), 307, 333; *Taiheiki*, trans. Helen Craig McCullough (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 310–311.

43. The earliest of such records is chap. 6 of the *Jingtu lun* (T no. 1963) by Jiacai (fl. c. 627–650), in which twenty such individuals are introduced. The date of this work is unknown. It should be noted that the term *ōjōden* or *wangsheng zhuan* is sometimes used to include stories of aspiration for the pure lands of Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara as well as that of Amitābha.

44. In Shandao's earliest biography, in the Tang *Gaoseng zhuan*, a follower jumps to his death from a tree after a session of chanting *nenbutsu* with Shandao (T no. 2059, 50:684a). It is not until the Song-period *wangsheng zhuan* that Shandao's own death is described a suicide. Today, many scholars doubt that Shandao really died by suicide, but the Song tale is repeated in all other biographical accounts of Shandao, many of which, such as the *Fozu tongji*, were very influential in Japan. On the historical issues surrounding this story, see Nogami Shunjō, *Chūgoku jōdo sansoden* (Kyoto: Bun'eidō Shoten, 1967), 168–176.

45. *Akihiroōki*, *Koji ruien* (1908–1911; rpt. Kyoto: Koji Ruien Kankōkai, 1927–1930), Shūkyōbu 2:723.

46. Several occur in Miyoshi no Tameyasu's *Shūi ōjōden*, completed around 1111.

47. *Voluntary Death in Japan*, trans. Rosemary Morris (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

48. *Uji shūji monogatari* 133, NKBT 27, ed. Watanabe Tsunaya and Nishio Koichi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1960), 323; trans. from D. E. Mills, *A Collection of Tales from Uji* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 349. After the *hijiri* is pulled out of the river, the crowd is so outraged that it throws rocks at him in disgust.

49. Tachibana Shundō and Umitani Shigeki, eds., *Ippen Shōnin zenshū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1989), 117–118, 142. The *Yugyō Shōnin engi-e* gives the number as six, while the *Ippen hijiri-e* records seven people who drown themselves. Interestingly, the entry for suicide (*shashin*) in the *Ippen jiten* states only that Ippen condemned the useless abandonment of the body in opposing *ōjō*-suicide. Ignoring the passages just referenced, it cites only a general comment in the *Ippen hijiri-e* that refers to the inevitability of death as something that

should encourage everyone to be more diligent in practice, with Ippen reminding his audience that, when facing death, no one wants to feel he or she has wasted the opportunity of human existence without spiritual attainment: “While the body must be tossed off at death, if you have not confirmed your *anjin* [mind settled on the Pure Land] beforehand, it would indeed be regrettable to abandon this difficult-to-obtain body, capable of pursuing the Buddhist path, in [such] a meaningless way” (*Ippen jiten*, ed. Imai Masaharu [Tokyo: Tokyodō, 1989], 139–142).

50. *Hōnen Shōnin den zenshū*, ed. Ikawa Jōkei (1952; rev. Chiba: Hōnen Shōnin Den Kankōkai, 1967), 183–185.

51. This admonition attributed to Shōkō appears to be apocryphal. The Genroku-era scholar Gizan (1648–1717), in his edition of Shunjō’s biography, adds a long commentary on the problem of *jigai ōjō* but does not mention Shōkō; see *Jōdoshū zensho*, ed. Jōdoshū Shūten Kankōkai (1907–1194, rev. 1928–1936; rpt. Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1970–1975), 16:445–446.

52. Ikawa, *Hōnen Shōnin den zenshū*, 186.

53. *Ibid.*, 187. Here “Birth” indicates birth in Amida’s Pure Land.

54. Interestingly, the Jōdo Shinshū scholar Zonkaku (1290–1373) describes the Zen and Jōdo schools as being founded on the principle of *shashin ōjō*. In the case of Jōdo, he writes: “The heart of the Jōdoshū lies in setting up two paths based on the distinction between difficult practices and easy practices. The path of difficult practice is the path to enter the sacred attainments by means of cultivating *jiriki* (self-effort) praxis, and seeks to illuminate the various sūtras of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. The path of easy practice is the path to [the land of] Utmost Bliss and of giving up your body (*shashin*) for *ōjō* in that world” (*Busenshō, Shinshu shōgyō zensho* 3:248).

55. Although there were nine branches of Jōdo Shinshū, only three were in real competition for dominance: Honganji, based just to the east of Kyoto; Senjuji, based in Takada in the Kantō; and Bukkōji, based in central Kyoto. Other influential branches include the Kinshokuji and Kibe lines, which were based in Ōmi province.

56. These were the provinces of Noto, Kaga, Echizen, Etchū, Echigo, and Sado in the north; Kawachi, Settsu, Ōmi, Yamashiro, and Ise in the Kansai area; and Musashi and Hitachi in the Kantō. For consideration of Rennyo’s historical impact, see Mark L. Blum and Shin’ya Yasutomi, eds., *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

57. Akamatsu Toshihide and Kasahara Kazuo, eds., *Shinshūshi gaisetsu* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1963), 212–213.

58. Those politically dominant *kokuji* known as *sōryō* were usually descendants of the *jūtō* or stewards appointed by the Kamakura Bakufu. Their landholdings sometimes included land outside the domain they lived in, and they often owned the land that tenured farmers worked. The *ikki* were often

temporary compacts instigated by a group of *kokujin* banding together to negotiate a politically difficult situation. In the Muromachi period, the *kokujin* often functioned in political opposition to the *shugo*, or provincial lords who had legal jurisdiction over large amounts of territory but often little relationship to the people who lived there. It was not uncommon for the *kokujin* to use the authority of the shōgun to oppose the *shugo*. See Kawai Masaharu, “Shogun and Shugo: The Provincial Aspects of Muromachi Politics”; and Nagahara Keiji, “Village Communities and Daimyo Power,” in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, ed. John W. Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 65–86, 107–126.

59. Neil McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 36. See also Nagahara Keiji, *Sen-goku no dōran, Nihon no rekishi* 14 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1975), 323.

60. Some scholars, notably Futaba Kenkō, see Jitsunyo as having betrayed Shinran’s original mission to establish an ideal religious community based on different political values. See, for example, his “Shinshū kindai dendō no mon-daiten,” in *Shinshū kyōgaku kenkyū*, ed. Futaba Kenkō and Satō Michio (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1980) 3:27–32; and Kitanishi Hiromu, “Shinshū kyōdan ni okeru ‘chishiki’ to dendō: Jūroku seiki no hengōki o chūshin to shite,” in *Soshiki to dendō*, ed. Nihon Shūkyōshi Kenkyūkai (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967). For a discussion of the differing interpretations of Rennyo’s political moves, see Minor and Ann Rogers, *Rennyo* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 27–33.

61. McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 36; Kasahara Kazuo, *Ikkō ikki no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1962), 617. See also Nagahara Keiji, *Sen-goku no dōran*, 326.

62. In addition to ideological or doctrinal conflicts, there were excommunications for failure to pay the expected tithe to Honganji. See Kasaharu Kazuo, *Chūsei ni okeru Shinshū kyōdan no keisei* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1971), 301–308.

63. *Jitsugoki*, in *Rennyo Shōnin gyōjitsu*, Inaba Masamaru (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1928), 167–169.

64. *Shinshū shiryō shūsei* 2:629.

65. Kasahara, *Chūsei ni okeru Shinshū kyōdan no keisei*, 301–308.

66. The response by *monshu* to attacks by hostile forces in the Muromachi period, whether from Enryakuji or Oda Nobunaga, was to defend both the school (*tōryū*) and the Buddhist teachings themselves (*buppō*). See also Michael Soloman, “Honganji Under Rennyo: The Development of Shinshū in Medieval Japan” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, St. Louis, October, 1976), 10, as quoted in McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 256.

67. Masamoto even postponed the enthronement ceremony of the current emperor, saying, “Even if the enthronement ceremonies are held, one

who is not in substance a king will not be regarded as a king.” From the *Daijōji jisha zōjiki*, trans. from Michael Solomon, “The Dilemma of Religious Power: Honganji and Hosokawa Masamoto,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 33 (1978): 51–65.

68. The power base of Honganji at this time, with the exception of Kaga and a few small sections of land, was different from the financial foundation of the other major Buddhist institutions or the daimyō in that it did not depend upon landholdings. Honganji was able to raise substantial sums of money from donations, and the loss or gain of land was not nearly as important to its stability as it was to that of its rivals.

69. One might argue that the two situations are different, in that the *Lotus Sūtra* story describes an extreme offering that, because it is made to a buddha, elicits a wondrous response. But the bodhisattva does not think of such a reward when he decides to offer his body; indeed, if he did, he would lose the karmic merit of his offering. And while the Honganji membership may not have seen Jitsunyo as Amida Buddha, the fact remains that, as a blood descendant of Shinran, he represented him, and by this time Shinran was regarded by many as an incarnation of Amida or one of his attending bodhisattvas.

At the Crossroads of Birth and Death

The Blood Pool Hell and Postmortem Fetal Extraction

HANK GLASSMAN

IN MEDIEVAL JAPANESE Buddhism, the salvation of women increasingly came to be understood as the salvation of mothers.¹ In the following pages, I will explore the conditions surrounding that salvation and the gendered meaning of the damnation that made the drama of redemption necessary. This essay traces the development of the cult of the so-called “Blood Pool Hell” in Japan. As we shall see, doctrines and rituals relating to the funerary and memorial care of women underwent profound change over the centuries. The changes, while deeply meaningful for women and their families, also reflected upheavals in the terrain of medieval Japanese gender beliefs. Furthermore, the wide dissemination of this cult from the end of the medieval period by nuns, monks, mountain ascetics, and lay organizations was closely tied to the establishment, funding, and expansion of institutional religious networks. One result of these changes was the increasing estrangement, at least from a religious point of view, between women and the fetuses they carried. This ideology of the separation of mother and child in turn had profound soteriological implications for women who died in late pregnancy and childbirth and also for children who died *peripartum* or *parapartum*.

Part One: Death in Childbirth and the Blood Pool

While the popularity of belief in the Blood Pool Hell and the *sūtra* that describes it became widespread from the eighteenth century on, this infernal place was already well known to some religious communities, including the Sōtō Zen sect, by the end of the medieval period. Chapter 6 in this volume, by Duncan Williams, investigates the Sōtō sect’s use of this troubling doctrine during the Tokugawa or early modern period (1603–1868). By this time, death in childbirth or late

pregnancy had become well known as a sin. Also, from around the sixteenth century on, there was an incipient insistence that the fetus is a separate entity from the woman who carries it. Eventually, the idea that mother and child are independent beings was expressed in a ritual that sought to resolve the problem of death in pregnancy, where one corpse represented two “bodies.”

Wakita Haruko has suggested that during the late medieval period the Japanese view of motherhood shifted from one that held that the child, even after birth, was a replication of the mother, a part of her body, to one that saw the fetus or child as an independent entity from the mother. This notion of the separation of mother and child is captured, Wakita notes, in the phrase popular during the early modern period, “The belly’s just borrowed goods (*hara wa karimono*).”² This maxim represents the culmination of a trend toward an emphasis on paternal ownership over the child. Ironically, as women became more and more narrowly defined as mothers, they also lost their claim to the status of genetrix and were reduced to mere vessels for male reproduction. Similarly, Sawayama Mikako has traced the changes in attitude towards childbirth and women’s bodies that took place over the course of the early modern period. She suggests that during this time there arose a different attitude toward the fetus’s relationship to the mother’s body, one that deeply problematized traditional modes of population control such as induced abortion or infanticide (*mabiki* or “thinning”). This shift was closely tied to the changing place of women in families, where wives became ever increasingly identified with the interests of their husband’s families and their birthing bodies became a corporate resource.³ It represents one of the final chapters in a process that began with the transformation of noble and warrior-class women from daughters into wives during the Kamakura period. Religious ideologies surrounding pregnancy and childbirth are always, of course, intimately related to kinship beliefs.⁴

The Blood Pool Hell

The *Xuepen jing* (Jpn. *Ketsubonkyō*), or Blood-bowl Sūtra, is a sūtra composed in China around the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.⁵ It describes how Mokuren (Skt. Maudgalyāyana, Ch. Mulian), a disciple of the Buddha famous for his supernatural or magical powers, descended to hell to save his mother. This narrative differs from the classic Mokuren story as told in the Chinese *Yulanpen jing* (*Urabonkyō*, *Ullambana Sūtra*). In that earlier version of the story, Mokuren saves his mother from the realm of hungry ghosts. Here, however, we find her sunk in hell, submerged in an enormous pond, or lake, of menstrual and birth blood. She is in the company of a multitude of women

there who suffer abuse at the hands of the hell wardens and are forced to drink the blood. They are punished like this, the *sūtra* explains, because the blood produced by their bodies spills on the ground and offends the earth gods or ends up in rivers from which the water to make tea for holy men is drawn. This hell, called in Japanese *chi no ike jigoku* (blood pool hell), threatens damnation for the sin of female biology.

There are several different extant versions of the *Ketsubonkyō*. Some of these identify the offending effluvium as birth blood alone, while others include the blood of menstruation. The prime candidates for this hell were women who had died in childbirth. Some scholars have suggested that the first versions of this *sūtra* imported to Japan inveighed only against the polluting nature of birth blood and that the category was later expanded to include menstrual blood, but this theory has been called into serious question.⁶ Ironically, the salvation offered women within the Sino-Buddhist cult of ancestors is salvation as mothers—that is, salvation by virtue of the very biological potential that would come to spell their doom.⁷

The date of the introduction of the *sūtra* and cult of the Blood Pool Hell to Japan is unclear. As noted above, the earliest Chinese examples date to the twelfth century. Some scholars believe that Japanese knew of the *Ketsubonkyō* as early as the mid-thirteenth century, but most insist that it cannot be found until the middle of the Muromachi period (1392–1568).⁸ While there are some questions surrounding the antiquity of the cult in Japan, there is no doubt that the idea of a special blood pool hell for women was somewhat familiar by the sixteenth century. It is mentioned in several late medieval *otogizōshi* (popular tales written in the Japanese syllabary), as we shall see. Hitomi Tonomura, following Tokieda Tsutomu, has suggested that belief in the *sūtra* and the hell it describes spread among commoners in the fourteenth century and that the Blood Pool Hell had been common knowledge among aristocrats from an even earlier period.⁹ There is no evidence, however, to support Tokieda's assertion. He wishes to link the spread of the *sūtra*'s cult to the ascendancy of patriarchy and women's loss of status around the Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392), which is a correct instinct, but he offers no basis in fact for this early dating.¹⁰

Tokieda's article centers on a set of *kokera kyō*, *sūtra* fragments copied onto narrow strips of wood, discovered in sulfur deposits along the shores of a lake called Yugama at Shiraneyama in Kusatsu in the 1950s. Each five-inch strip has written on one side about fifteen characters from the *sūtra*; it seems that these sticks were thrown into the volcanic lake with prayers for women's salvation. Tokieda's hypothesis is that they were deposited there by *yamabushi*, or priests of Shugendō

(a form of mountain asceticism based largely on tantric Buddhist practices), on behalf of women and their families. This theory has much to recommend it, even if all of Tokieda's corroborating material points to a later date than the one he suggests.¹¹

These *kokera kyō* are a fascinating find and are very important for understanding the ritual context of the cult of the *Ketsubonkyō* but unfortunately are not useful for dating the practice or the establishment and spread of the cult. Tokieda suggests that they probably come from the early or mid-fifteenth century, but his only firm evidence with regard to their dating is that they must have predated an 1882 eruption of Shiraneyama. If they are, in fact, as old as he believes, then they are among the earliest sources for the *Ketsubonkyō* in Japan. Tokieda connects this site in eastern Japan to Tendai Shugendō practices and the Ōmine-Haguro mountain circuit for *yamabushi*.¹² Below we will have occasion to further explore possible links between eastern Japan, Shugendō, and the blood pool cult.

Most scholars place the terminus ante quem of the *Ketsubonkyō* in Japan at 1429, when the diary of the Tendai priest Chōben from the Kantō region in the east noted that a text bearing this title was offered for a certain man's mother's thirty-third-year memorial service.¹³ However, Katsuura Noriko's research indicates that even in the fifteenth century, the *Ketsubonkyō* was not widely used in funerals or memorial services for women. She finds two examples of its use by Kyoto aristocrats in ceremonies held in 1482 and 1487. After that, the high-ranking courtier Kanroji Chikanaga copied it for his mother's thirty-third-year memorial service in 1491. In 1496, at the twenty-fifth annual memorial service of Chikanaga's elder sister (who was the mother of famous poet and diarist Sanjōnishi Sanetaka), Chikanaga's son Motonaga copied the *Ketsubonkyō* and offered five red candles for his aunt's sake.

Although Sanetaka records the sūtras he offered on various occasions, the *Ketsubonkyō* is not among them. It was thus a matter of personal choice and by no means a standard practice. Sanetaka did pay a nun to light candles at Seiganji on his mother's behalf for a two-month period. Sanetaka's sons and daughters copied various scriptures, but not the *Ketsubonkyō*. Chikanaga himself offered the *Ketsubonkyō* for his mother's thirty-third-year service but not for her memorials before or after this one. Motonaga, when his aunt's thirty-third-year service came around, did not copy the *Ketsubonkyō*, as he had for her twenty-fifth, but rather the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, famous for its story of the sex transformation of the daughter of the Dragon King. Use of the *Ketsubonkyō* must have seemed quite novel. Such ceremonies had long tended to focus on the *Lotus Sūtra*, a text closely associated in Japan with the salvation of women, although the *Urabonkyō*

and other versions of the Mokuren scripture were also copied during this period.¹⁴

An essential question to ask in this context is why women in general and mothers in particular should be in need of special dispensation in order to avoid birth in hell. Although the history of the *Ketsubonkyō* in Japan may only reach as far back as the fifteenth century, it is possible there was some precedent for the idea that women who die in childbirth would be punished in hell. An oft-cited early example is the story of the mother of the gods, Izanami, in the *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan). When she gives birth to the fire god, Kagutsuchi-no-mikoto, she is burned to death and is later found by her husband Izanagi in the dark and gloomy land of Yomi, where, like Eurydice, she must not be gazed upon by the husband who has come to rescue her. When he does steal a forbidden glance at her, he sees a putrefying mass of flesh, riddled with insects and writhing with worms. It is not at all clear in this case, however, that Izanami's fate was directly related to her death in childbirth. It is more likely an expression of the horror of death and the pollution of the corpse so well attested in indigenous Japanese religion. The emphasis here is on the husband's transgression of the taboo against the gaze. The sin was Izanagi's for looking at his dead wife, not Izanami's for the manner of her death.¹⁵

Other intimations that death in childbirth may have been viewed as sinful can be found within a Buddhist framework in such works as the *Tale of Genji* and the ninth-century *Nihon ryōiki* (Miraculous tales of Japan). In the *Nihon ryōiki* tale, Fujiwara no Hirotsu travels to the underworld, where he is incriminated by his wife upon his arrival at the court of King Enma, the chief justice of the tribunal of hell.¹⁶ Since she is undergoing unspeakable suffering after her death in childbirth, she insists that he, as her husband and the father of her child, should bear equal responsibility and suffer for the next three years as she has suffered the past three. The man escapes this fate by promising to copy the *Lotus Sūtra* on her behalf and to pray for her quick release from purgation. Just before he goes, he asks the identity of the imposing judge and is told that Enma is known as the bodhisattva Jizō (Skt. Kṣitigarbha) in the human realm. In his *Ippyaku shijū gokajō mondō* (Answers to one hundred forty-five questions), when asked, "What about the case of the sin of a woman who has died bearing a child?" the Pure Land teacher Hōnen (1133–1212) replies, "With the chanting of the *nenbutsu*, she will achieve birth in the Pure Land."¹⁷ The questioner here clearly is assuming that women who die in childbirth are a special category of dead and are particularly difficult to save.

While these examples lack the systematic character of the *Ketsubonkyō* and its cult that developed in the late medieval period, they do

form a sort of prehistory to the idea that, once pregnant, it is a mortal sin to die before being delivered of one's child.¹⁸ As we shall see, by the fifteenth century or so, this earlier, somewhat vague association between punishment in hell and death in childbirth or late pregnancy had developed into a well-articulated system of mythology and ritual practice. In the process of this development, the responsibility or blame for the "sin" of death in childbirth came to rest firmly upon women themselves. Katsuura Noriko notes the contrast between the ninth-century *Ryōiki*, where the husband Hirotari is portrayed as a partner in his wife's fate and is expected to share in her suffering, and the late medieval *Sangoku innen Jizō bosatsu reigenki* (Miraculous tales from the three countries of karmic ties to Jizō), where a wife's death in childbirth is attributed to evil deeds in past lives. At the beginning of the medieval period, death in childbirth was a family tragedy; by the end of the medieval period it had become evidence of the sinful karma of the dead woman.¹⁹ As we shall see, that woman's salvation also became a community concern.

To understand this focus on death in childbirth and its conversion into a karmic sin of the dead woman herself, we must recall the very real danger associated with childbirth in premodern societies. While today in developed countries midwife-assisted home births are statistically safer than overly medicalized hospital births, before the advent of modern diagnostic techniques and the development of emergency medicine, childbirth was the most common cause for female death before the age of menopause. There are a great number of references in ancient and medieval texts to deaths due to difficult labors.²⁰ While the men of the medieval period were dying on the field of battle and under the burden of corvée labor, women of all classes were suffering violent deaths in childbirth or failed pregnancies. With this reality of the gravely dangerous nature of pregnancy and childbirth in mind, perhaps we are in a better position to understand the violent and horrific imagery of the Blood Pool Hell.

There was a progression in the ritual use of the *Ketsubonkyō*—from a memorial function, to a preemptive or prophylactic (Jpn. *gyakushu*) function, to a talismanic function. In other words, in Japan, the *sūtra* was initially copied, recited, and offered by relatives who wished to save women in the next world. Later, these became practices that women themselves undertook as insurance against their own damnation. Eventually, by the Tokugawa period, they were aimed at gaining benefits in this life (*genze riyaku*). For example, the *sūtra* functioned as an amulet that allowed women to move about freely during their menstrual periods without fear of violating taboos against blood pollution. The first scenario, memorialization of dead women by their surviving

relatives, especially their children, is clearly the use imagined by the authors of the *sūtra* and is in line with its ideological thrust. We have seen an example of this sort of activity in the above example of the Kanroji family.

The second use is by women who aim to save themselves from post-mortem punishment. Women would copy the *sūtra* with prayers to be spared the fate it describes, asking to be protected from death in childbirth. The principal deities of the *Ketsubonkyō* cult, Jizō and Nyoirin Kannon, became the guarantors of safe childbirth (*anzan*) from the late medieval period forward. It is this prophylactic use of the *sūtra* by women that in part accounts for its sharp rise in popularity in the early modern period. Women's reliance on the *sūtra* as an amulet to stave off the dangers of pregnancy and childbirth (and against the attendant fate of torture in the blood pool) was supported by a network of traveling nuns who brought this cult into the homes of women across Japan.

The Kumano *bikuni* of the early modern period, and related groups at Tateyama, Zenkōji, and elsewhere, advocated this talismanic use of the *sūtra*. The activities of the nuns known as Kumano *bikuni*, their history, and the texts and paintings they carried, have received considerable attention from scholars over the past twenty years, but many questions still remain.²¹ We know even less about the various kinds of traveling nuns known variously as *kanjin bikuni*, *aruki miko*, *uta bikuni*, and *hongan ama*. While the first two are often assumed to be synonyms for Kumano *bikuni*, it is clear that there were many other groups of wandering nuns, not directly affiliated with Kumano, Nachi, or Myōshinji, home base of the Kumano *bikuni*. What we do know about this type of late medieval nun is that she preached to women, told them stories, and showed them pictures. These tales and images often concerned childbirth and pregnancy, which were subjects of primary concern to their female audience. As Kōdate Naomi and Makino Kazuo have argued, there were strong affiliations, both institutional and doctrinal, between the nuns at Zenkōji and the Kumano *bikuni*, and also links to groups associated with Tateyama and various Tendai Shugendō sites. It was at the close of the medieval period that women began to take over the propagation of the *Ketsubonkyō* cult and make it their own. These nuns carried paintings that revealed in lurid detail the world of the Blood Pool Hell and also offered the promise of salvation.²²

Nuns who walked the main arteries and tributaries of the Tokaidō, Japan's major east-west thoroughfare, as well as country back roads, seem to have been at the vanguard of the phenomenon of *hongansho*, permanent fund-raising missions emanating from temples and shrines. These institutions, which appear beginning in the late fifteenth century,

were originally run and staffed by women. One of the earliest *hongan-sho*, that of Zenkōji, still exists today as the Jōdo sect convent called the Daihongan, headed by a nun known as the Hongan-ni of Zenkōji. Since the fifteenth century, the nun incumbent in this position was responsible for large-scale alms campaigns. Monks joined this trend only later, establishing many *hongansho* and fund-raising networks.²³ There are many examples of *hongansho* associated with nuns. The most famous, whose female leaders were known as the “three great saints of the world” (*tenge no san shōnin*) are the Kannokura Myōshinji, home of the Kumano *bikuni*, Seiganji in Owari, and the Great Shrine of Ise’s Keikōin. The women who headed these *hongansho* and the wandering nuns who operated under their auspices were all closely associated with Tendai Shugendō institutions and lineages.

The legend of one such nun, the Yao *bikuni*, appears widely in Tokugawa-period gazetteers. The basic elements of this tale are that a little girl from Obama in Wakasa discovered and ate a certain kind of dried meat, human or mermaid, which cursed her with immortality. Now over 800 years old, she is known as the Yao or Happyaku *bikuni*, the “eight-hundred nun.” She is also known as the Shiro *bikuni* or Shira *bikuni*, the “white nun.” This is variously said to refer to her snow-white hair, or the fairness of her complexion (in spite of her advanced age), or to the white camellia she carries. As Tokuda Kazuo has observed, it more likely derives from a connection to the mediumistic cult of the Shugendō site Shirayama (Hakusan) in Hokuriku and is related to religious performance by the traveling women known as *shiradayū*, *shirabyōshi*, and *shirakamime*. Finally, this name reveals a link to the *oshirasama* puppets used by female shamans in Tōhoku until modern times. Orikuchi Shinobu and Nakayama Tarō each suggested in 1930 that this cult of northeastern Japan had been brought there by the Kumano *bikuni*, and Hagiwara Tatsuo demonstrates the close ties between the Kumano *bikuni* and the Yao *bikuni* legend.²⁴

The Yao *bikuni* legend is particularly important to our story because of its early date. While there is no firm evidence of the Kumano *bikuni* before the seventeenth century, we have several fifteenth-century references to the activities of this weird “white nun.” Among these is a comic *otogizōshi* from 1480 entitled *Hitsuketsu no monogatari* (The brushmaker’s tale). The main character is a *tanuki* (“raccoon dog”) masquerading as a human. On a mission to the capital, the hero and his companions find a large number of people gathered at the Nishidōin temple, where a nun from Wakasa has been preaching. She is currently staying in a Jizō hall at Ōmine. The *tanuki* and his two friends are then flagged down by the strange (*fushigi*) nun, who engages them in a religious dialogue (*mondō*) and regales them with sto-

ries, explanations of the origins of various professions, arts, and technologies. She also tells them her own history. Although she appears to be in her eighties or nineties, she is in fact 900 years old. She informs them that, although recently people have taken to calling her the “eight-hundred nun,” she was originally known as the “white nun of Wakasa” and that she became a disciple of Hottō Kokushi when she visited his temple, Yura no tera, on pilgrimage to Kumano.²⁵ This reference marks her as an ancestor of the traveling religious who became known as the Kumano *bikuni*, for whom an identification with Yura no tera and Hottō Kokushi, or Muhon Kakushin, was an essential foundational story.²⁶ Legend has it that Kakushin’s mother was Myōchi, founder of the Kumano *bikuni* order.

Hitsuketsu no monogatari is a precious source, especially since the name and identity of its author are known, a true rarity within the *oto-gizōshi* corpus. This fifteenth-century text’s vivid account of the Yao *bikuni* is made all the more compelling because the putative existence of the heroine in the real world is corroborated by three roughly contemporary courtly diaries. All three diaries tell a similar story. It was early in the summer of 1449 when she came to the capital. The nun known as Yao or Shira *bikuni* had set up shop at the Jizō hall at Nishidōin (one diary puts her at the second avenue Higashidōin Jizō hall on one day and at the Jizō hall of first avenue’s Nishidōin the next) to give lectures on the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Hokke dangi*). She caused quite a stir as people battled to catch a glimpse of her. Traveling with an entourage of some twenty nuns, she charged admission on a sliding scale with rates from 100 *sen* for the rich to 10 for the poor. Katsuura has demonstrated that, by the fifteenth century, preaching on the *Lotus Sūtra* and the associated rituals of *kechimyaku* (transmission of religious “blood lineage”) were closely linked to the idea of the salvation of women from hell. (Williams’s Chapter 6 in this volume discusses the use of Sōtō Zen *kechimyaku* charts to save women from the Blood Pool Hell during the Tokugawa period.) There is little doubt that the sermons of this outlandish nun focused on the special significance of the *Lotus Sūtra* to women.²⁷

The Yao *bikuni* preached her sermons in a Jizō hall, a most significant detail. The connection between women and the Jizō cult became stronger and stronger over the course of the medieval period. Miracle stories linking Jizō to women increased in number, and a link was forged between the Ketsubon cult and Jizō by the Kumano *bikuni* and others.²⁸ Matsuoka Hideaki has suggested that belief in the *chi no ike* was in fact spread in large part through the medium of the female Jizō confraternities, or rather cosororities, known as Jizōkō.²⁹ Here is the place to search for the medieval origins of the modern *mizuko* Jizō

cult dedicated to the appeasement of the unborn. Jizō also occupies a central position, quite literally, in the iconography of the *Kumano kanjin jukkaizu* (Painting of the ten worlds [*jukkai*] perceived within the mind [*kanjin*]) and the stages of the human life cycle, carried across the country by the Kumano *bikuni* and used in preaching for fundraising (*kanjin*). Jizō appears as a large figure at the visual center of the paintings, where he presides over the children's limbo or Sai no kawara, although here he is not the savior from the Blood Pool Hell. That role is filled by Nyoirin Kannon. Another important aspect of the Yao *bikuni* story is her association with the major Shugendō site, Ōmine. Shugendō practitioners at Ōmine, Kumano, Tateyama, and elsewhere were essential to the propagation of this dark Buddhist vision of female biology.

The *otogizōshi* corpus is an excellent source for examining the reception and dissemination of this ideology. The Blood Pool Hell or *chi no ike jigoku* is mentioned in a number of these Muromachi-period narrative works, for instance in *Tengu no dairi* (early sixteenth century), *Chōbōji yomigaeri no sōshi* (1514), and *Isozaki* (probably late sixteenth century).³⁰ In such texts, we are offered vivid descriptions of the hells. As Sawai Taizō has noted, the description of the Blood Pool Hell offered in *Tengu no dairi* has all the enthralling cadences and exclamations expected of a vocally performed text. The rhythms of the narration here are those of the incantational prayer, the *saimon*, as we can imagine it performed by the *kanjin bikuni* of Kumano or Tateyama, Ise, or Shirayama. Kōdate has referred to this practice as “the telling (*katari*) of the Blood Pool Hell.”³¹

It is through such performances that women learned the doctrine and the topography of the Blood Pool Hell.³² Often, as is the case in *Tengu no dairi*, the hell as illustrated has little to do with the rather thinly described place featured in the sūtra. The Blood Pool Hell only becomes a real place, capturing the imagination, when collectively recreated through public storytelling. The nuns who preach these texts act as guides to the next world and reveal the danger waiting there, outlining the precautions needed to avoid the terrible fate of *chi no ike*, the blood pool. In this sixteenth-century text, there is no doubt that it is incumbent upon women to copy and keep the *Ketsubonkyō*; they cannot rely upon the kindness or compassion of relatives to save them. As the nuns reworked and elaborated the iconography and narration of the Blood Pool Hell and other women's hells, they also enlisted other underworld figures into their story. For example, in *Tengu no dairi*, Datsueba, the cruel hag who strips away the clothes of the dead as they cross the Styx-like River of Three Crossings (Sanzu no kawa) after death, becomes a guarantor of safe childbirth. She presides

over births and lends the newborn an item called the “placenta cloth” (*enakin*). Each person must return this to her when they meet again on the other side. Perhaps this is the *enagi*, a jacket worn by babies over their birth clothes, or *ubugi*, on their first ceremonial shrine visit. Perhaps it is a cloth used to wrap the afterbirth once it is delivered. Datsueba, also known as Sanzu no baba, was not the only female figure from Buddhist lore to be redefined in this way. The deities Kishimojin (Skt. Hārītī) and the ten *rasetsu* (*rākṣasas*), or demon women of the *Lotus Sūtra*, were also enlisted in rituals of pregnancy and childbirth.³³

In this stage of the development of the cult, women were responsible for their own salvation and had to take steps in this life to avoid punishment in the next. From at least the sixteenth century, women were called upon to take an active part in the *Ketsubonkyō* faith—copying texts, viewing images, preaching—involved as both consumers and producers. Later, beginning in the eighteenth century, they would be convinced not only of the benefits of the *sūtra* for postmortem salvation but also of its effectiveness as an amulet against menstrual pollution, a topic also discussed in Chapter 6. The protection against menstrual pollution was accomplished through a symbolic and temporary transformation of the female body to male. Thus, the *Ketsubonkyō* became in later periods a way for women to sidestep the restrictions created by the rhetoric of the pollution of the female body, here in this world, now in this life. There is no evidence, however, of such talismanic use of the *sūtra* extending back into the medieval period.³⁴

Different textual lineages of the *sūtra* have been transmitted in Japan, stipulating various causes for birth in the Blood Pool Hell—the blood of childbirth, menstrual blood, or both. But it was death in childbirth that remained the most famous and indisputable cause. Those who died in childbirth, it was believed, were invariably bound for the Blood Pool Hell, and special steps were required of the survivors to insure that the dead woman could be saved (“become bud-dhas,” *jōbutsu suru*, or “float,” *ukabareru*). These deaths required a special ceremony known as the *nagare kanjō* (“flowing anointment”).³⁵

There is evidence that this ritual aimed at saving women from the Blood Pool Hell reaches back at least as far as the early eighteenth century.³⁶ It took different forms, such as floating banners out to sea or down a river, standing short wooden slat-stūpas in the flow of a river (as can still be seen at Mt. Kōya today), or hanging a rope from the side of a bridge. The most common form was the suspension of a cloth from two or four poles above a river or along a roadside. This cloth was dyed red (in some cases it was an actual piece of blood-stained clothing or bedding from the birth itself), and a portion of a *sūtra* or, most usually, the legend “*Namu Amida butsu*” was written upon it. Passersby

would splash water on this cloth, with prayers for the dead woman's welfare, until the red color faded to white or, in some locales, for a set number of days—49, 100, or 1,000. In the case of a rope hanging from a bridge, those crossing would yank on the rope and say a prayer.

Thus the community would, at some level, make the appeasement of the unhappy soul of the woman a shared project. The danger presented by death in childbirth reached beyond the woman in question and her immediate family; it was a public problem. The *nagare kanjō* rite was very common throughout Japan during the late Tokugawa and the Meiji periods and marks the fullest development of belief in postmortem punishment in the Blood Pool Hell. Let us now move back in time to examine two stories from the period when the *Ketsubon-kyō* cult was just beginning to gather momentum.

Part Two: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Violence in Two *Otogizōshi*

The violence of death in childbirth in the real world was echoed in *otogizōshi* in the form of violence against pregnant women. Significantly, this violence was invariably the result of the jealousy of co-wives, that is, of senior wives against younger women. The curse of the jealous woman placed on the object of her lover's affection is an extremely common theme in Japanese literature. Often, even in the absence of direct evidence of foul play, the death of a pregnant woman was blamed on the ill will of a rival.³⁷ One particularly interesting story in this regard is the late sixteenth-century *Isozaki*, a tale about the murder of a young woman by her lover's wife, where there is direct reference both to the title and to the content of the *Ketsubonkyō*, as well as to the Blood Pool Hell.³⁸ Also, the 1466 hagiography of Prince Shōtoku called *Taishiden* explicitly cites jealousy as a cause for birth in the Blood Pool Hell.³⁹ Jealousy is closely linked to kinship organization and social structure; its association with the religious condemnation of female biology is telling.⁴⁰

Two other works, *Kōya monogatari* and *Kumano no honji*, each describe the murder of a young pregnant woman, a primipara, a first-time mother-to-be, who is robbed of the chance to bear the son who would nurture her into ancestorhood. What can they tell us about medieval views of pregnancy and the kinds of ritual requirements that fell to the surviving family after a death in childbirth?

“Make of my body a 160-gallon breast”:

The Maternal Body in *Kumano no honji*

Kumano no honji was staggeringly popular in the late medieval and early modern periods; a great number of copies survive today in li-

braries and private collections.⁴¹ There are smaller and greater variations in language and plot among the editions, but they all tell the same basic story. A royal concubine in ancient India, known as Gosuiden after the name of her residence, conceives the long-awaited heir to the throne. Gosuiden is one of 1,000 concubines, however, and the others are seized with a jealous rage and plot to destroy her and her child. The desperate women dress in red, disguising themselves as a horde of demons, and descend upon the Gosuiden, where the king and his favorite concubine, the future mother of his child, are sleeping. In many illustrations, they wear the candelabra headdress of the “visitation of the Hour of the Ox” (*ushi no toki mairi*), the accoutrement of the jealous woman who would place a hex on her husband and, especially, his lover.⁴²

In the ensuing confusion, the king is driven away, and the 999 jealous co-wives are able to seize Gosuiden. The evil concubines order some warriors to take her to the mountains and execute her. In many versions the executioners’ swords break across the back of her neck when they attempt to decapitate her; she explains that as long as the child is still within her womb it will be impossible to kill her.

Begging of her executioners a moment’s reprieve, Gosuiden chants the “Kannon” chapter from the *Lotus Sūtra* thirty-three times, then turns to the child in her womb, telling it to be born immediately. One version of the tale notes that this is in spite of the fact that she has carried him for only seven lunar months—that is, Gosuiden’s baby is a barely viable twenty-eight-week fetus.⁴³ The baby dutifully complies with his mother’s request and is born; she washes him and swaddles him in her robe. Cutting off her long hair, she makes an offering of it and vows that, even with her head gone, her body will become a 160-gallon breast (*san koku roku to no chibusa*) and remain behind for sake of the young prince.⁴⁴ With this, the henchmen cut off her head. Although her arms and legs become pale and cold and start to decompose, her breasts remain warm and golden to feed the baby for three years.⁴⁵

Howard Eilberg-Schwartz points out that the decapitation of women in literature functions to separate a woman’s intellect, her identity and subjecthood, from her body. In Eilberg-Schwartz’s words, “Objectification of woman as a sexual body necessarily requires coming to terms with the presence of her head. Decapitation is one way of solving the dilemma. Removing the female head relieves woman of both identity and voice and reduces her to a mere sexual and reproductive body.”⁴⁶ *Kumano no honji* is a very dramatic expression of the idea that even after birth, a child continues to be a part of its mother’s body. In this case, though, the mother’s body exists for the

sole purpose of nourishing the child, and in some sense, then, the body of the mother is seen to be merely an extension of the child. This interpretation reverses Wakita's idea of the identity of mother and child, or *boshi ittai*, in which the child is a replication (*bunshin*) of the mother. Although, in the denouement of the tale, Gosuiden's head is miraculously restored and the little family reunited, the message of subordination of mother to son remains clear. Wendy Doniger writes, "From ancient myth to contemporary culture, the metaphor of beheading has been used to express the dehumanization of women."⁴⁷ And yet Gosuiden is not a mere victim.

The beheading of Gosuiden, famously characterized by Watsuji Tetsurō as the most gruesome scene in the history of Japanese literature, does not rob her of her voice. While she does become "reduced" to a "reproductive body," she also undergoes an apotheosis into the vulnerable and victimized deity so familiar throughout Japanese religious literature. In fact, Watsuji was among the first to point out this theme of the underdog god, and much of his theory is based on his analysis of *Kumano no honji*.⁴⁸ This is no surprise; Gosuiden is the consummate suffering savior. By the force of her will and the depth of her faith, she is able to survive death in order to nurture her baby.

Gosuiden's delivery of the young prince echoes the theme of "birth in the mountains" found in many legends, folk tales, and biographical narratives. Komatsu Kazuhiko notes that this kind of birth, taking place as it does outside of the borders of the civilized, stresses the wild and extraordinary nature of the offspring; Hamanaka Osamu reminds us that the theme of parturition in the mountain wilderness was often linked to the birth of the mountain god himself.⁴⁹ Monkeys, lions, and wolves protect Gosuiden's wild child. At the age of three, he is found by a holy man, a mountain ascetic, and is raised in a Buddhist cloister. As a result of his careful training in doctrine, ritual, and magic, he is later able to reunite his mother's head with her body and resurrect her.

One remarkable feature of *Kumano no honji* is its description of pregnancy. As Matsumoto Ryūshin has noted, it is this in particular that marks the text as one that was controlled by women. It reflects female concerns and female knowledge.⁵⁰ In an early scene in some versions of the story, before the horrific events described above, Gosuiden tells her nurse that she is afraid she may die. She has contracted some dread disease, she believes, since her monthly periods have stopped and her body feels heavy and uncomfortable no matter how she adjusts her position. Gosuiden's dire assessment of her own condition provokes peals of laughter from her ladies. Then one of them, in a section that breaks the flow of the narrative and probably circulated as an in-

dependent text, explains to the naive Gosuiden, as well as to the young women of the audience, the signs of pregnancy. This is accompanied by an explanation of the stages of pregnancy. Gosuiden's wet-nurse says:

"Now don't be silly. You should be happy—let me see a nice smile." The consort retorted, "What's so amusing? Haven't I just told you I've been lying in bed suffering for these past few months? What in the world could you be on about?" To this, the nursemaid replied, "You are pregnant! This must be the prince that the king has been praying would be born. And, well, they say when the five organs begin to take shape inside of you, the body is quite uncomfortable; this is what it feels like to be pregnant (*onkaishin no kokoro nari*). First your periods stop, then the spirit of birth (*ubu no kami*) enters your body. When the head and shoulders are taking shape, you feel sleepy and lethargic. While the mouth is forming, sweet things taste bitter and the bitter tastes sweet. When the legs start to grow, your five humors (*gotai*) are all out of balance. As the days mount, you will feel more and more nauseous." Hearing this, the consort was a bit more easy in her mind and felt happy.⁵¹

Another version continues, "The pain that the mother feels leading up to the birth is beyond compare. This is why our indebtedness to our mothers (*oya no on*) is great indeed."⁵²

A later version of the tale, in the *sekkyō bushi* style of rhythmic preaching popular in seventeenth century, has Gosuiden herself explaining the stages of pregnancy just before her decapitation. By now, though, it has become a tantric Buddhist reading of the formation of the fetus not found in earlier texts. Gosuiden speaks to the warrior who is about to execute her and tells him to listen as she relates in brief how a human being comes into this world. What follows is an explanation of the ten months of pregnancy in terms of esoteric Buddhist embryology, with each lunar cycle associated with a particular deity of the pantheon. For the first month, the embryo is in the "house" of Fudō Myōō and is shaped like a one-pointed *vajra*. Shaka Nyorai (Skt. Śākya-muni Tathāgata) oversees the second month, when the embryo, likened to a wishing jewel, has the form of a monk's staff. The third month is that of the bodhisattva Monju (Mañjuśrī), and the fetus is a three-pronged *vajra*. The fourth month belongs to the bodhisattva Fugen (Samantabhadra), the fifth to the bodhisattva Jizō, and so on.⁵³

This view of childbirth was also represented in pictures, both in mid-Tokugawa-period illustrated versions of *Kumano no honji* and in the late seventeenth-century manual for women's health *Onna chōhōki* (Precious treasury for women). Sawayama Mikako holds that this kind

of iconography, which filtered down from tantric Buddhist discourse into popular culture, significantly contributed to the development of the idea of the fetus as an independent entity. It is this kind of thinking that made the concept of “abortion” (Jpn. *datai*) possible. This is not to say that pregnancies were not terminated before early modern times, only that, in earlier periods, it was not until the very end of pregnancy that a child was referred to as a fetus (*tai*). In other words, by the end of the seventeenth century, a baby in its first or second trimester was no longer a part of the mother’s body but had become a separate human being.⁵⁴ Watanabe Morikuni has made the point that the medieval *otogizōshi* versions of *Kumano no honji* emphasize a woman’s experience of pregnancy—each stage of development is linked to a different sort of discomfort felt by the mother—while the early modern texts are very abstract and focus completely on the fetus. It was the male preachers of the *sekkyō bushi* texts who presented a sanitized, conceptualized vision of pregnancy, divorced from women’s experience as represented in the *otogizōshi*.⁵⁵

In a similar vein, Alice Adams has argued that the modern ultrasonic imaging of fetuses has contributed to the identification of the mother “as environment, nurturing and constant, but with no need or desires of her own.”⁵⁶ The abstract view of the fetus found in the later Gosuiden texts is based on doctrinal constructs; the earlier descriptions emphasize experience and the sensations of the maternal body. The focus in *otogizōshi* versions of *Kumano no honji* on the signs and stages of pregnancy, somewhat superfluous to the plot of the story, is gossip in the original sense of the word. It is the talk of the women who would be attendants at the birth, the god-siblings (gossips) of the woman undergoing this life-changing event.⁵⁷ Later formulations in terms of Buddhist analogies for the nine months (ten lunar months) of pregnancy used in preaching become dryly doctrinal and lack this familiar, intimate, and “gossipy” quality.

The laughter of the gossips in the *otogizōshi* texts is poignant, foreshadowing as it does the end of Gosuiden’s life in the seventh lunar month of her pregnancy. It might be more appropriate here to see Gosuiden’s decapitation, not as a dehumanization of women, but rather as an upward displacement of the extreme danger and violence of birth. For many women hearing the story, pregnancy, especially the first pregnancy of an untried womb, would prove fatal. Women were well aware of this fact. In later periods their fears were framed in terms of the Blood Pool Hell. Rural songs collected throughout Japan contain lyrics that plead, “If I should die in childbed, don’t forget the *na-gare kanjō*. Save me from the Blood Pool Hell.”⁵⁸

In the sūtra that most likely forms the basis for the Gosuiden leg-

end, the *Zhantuoyueguowang jing* (Jpn. *Sendaokkokuōgyō*, Sūtra of the king of Sendaotsu), the king's consort is killed and buried with the baby still in utero. The prince is later born inside the grave and discovered by a holy man.⁵⁹ Although this detail was changed in the versions under discussion here, the motif of birth in the grave would later capture the Japanese religious imagination. From the early modern period until modern times, the body of a woman who had died in late pregnancy could not be buried before the fetus was cut from her womb. To bury two "bodies" in one corpse would be a sacrilege. While most people used a farming implement for this procedure, the Sōtō Zen sect developed a ritual for a nonsurgical "separation" of mother and child, as Williams explains in Chapter 6 of this volume.

On the *Ubume*

The ghost of a woman who had died in childbirth was called the *ubume* or "birthing woman." Stories about this kind of ghost, who lurks on or around a bridge, have been told in Japan since at least the twelfth century.⁶⁰ Typically, she asks a passerby to hold her child for just a moment and disappears when her "victim" takes the swaddled baby. The baby then becomes increasingly heavy until it is impossible to hold. It is then revealed not to be a human child at all, but a boulder or a stone image of Jizō. Tokugawa-period artists produced many images of this ghost, and she became well known throughout Japan. Usually she is represented as naked from the waist up, wearing a red skirt and carrying a small baby. The most famous illustrations of the *ubume* are from Toriyama Sekien's late eighteenth-century encyclopedia of ghosts, goblins, and ghouls, *Hyakki yagyō* (Night procession of one hundred demons). The early seventeenth-century tale collection *Konjaku hyaku monogatari hyōban* (Selection of one hundred tales of old) says of the *ubume*: "When a woman loses her life in childbirth, her spiritual attachment (*shūjaku*) itself becomes this ghost. In form, it is soaked in blood from the waist down and wanders about crying, 'Be born! Be born!' (*obareu, obareu*)."⁶¹ The problem of death in childbirth was never, from a religious point of view, a merely physical one. In fact, the physical aspects were at best secondary to the psychological or spiritual ramifications of such a death. It is not the woman herself who is transformed into a ghost, but rather her painful emotional and psychological state at the moment of death. A similar understanding is expressed in the sixteenth-century *Kii zōtan shū* (Collected yarns of the uncanny).⁶²

The popularity of this legend is attested by many place names throughout Japan—Ubumegawa, Ubumebashi, Ubumebayashi. The *ubume* also became the object of cults of safe childbirth. There is a

Sōtō Zen temple in the district of Ubume in the city of Shizuoka, Shōshin'in, known as Ubume Kannon, where women come to pray to conceive a child or to have a successful pregnancy and delivery. The temple's legend, set in the mid-sixteenth century, concerns an *ubume*.⁶³ In Nagasaki City, a Jōdo Shinshū temple called Kōgenji houses an early modern statue of the *ubume*, displayed once a year in July. At this festival, candy that has been offered to the image is distributed, and women pray for safe delivery and for abundant milk. The statue, which is clothed in white robes, has only a head, torso, and arms; it has no lower half.

While the being known as an *ubume* was created as the result of death and childbirth, there was another type of ghost produced by the woman who died in late pregnancy. In the story examined below, we can find the prehistory of this legend and of the horrifying ritual procedures that accompanied it. It is here that we see that ghost stories were not merely weird tales shared to shock or titillate and pass the time. Ghosts were real; sometimes, extreme measures had to be taken to prevent their appearance.

"Pull out the person who is in my belly":

***Kōya monogatari* and the Personhood of the Fetus**

If *Kumano no honji* reverses the logic of *boshi ittai* described by Wakita in subsuming the maternal body to that of the newborn, the second story I will discuss overturns it completely, insisting upon the independence of mother and fetus. The late medieval confessional tale *Kōya monogatari* shows us another pregnant woman murdered in cold blood by a jealous rival.⁶⁴ As was the case in *Kumano no honji*, it is the male henchman of the bitter senior wife who does the deed, but here too there is a focus on the ruthlessness of a woman scorned.

Kōya monogatari takes the form of a series of vignettes in which monks of the Jishū cloistered at Mt. Kōya's Karukayadō take turns revealing the circumstances that shocked them into a realization of impermanence and prompted them to retreat from the world. In the story told by a monk called Sei Amidabu, the raconteur relates that, before taking the tonsure in his late twenties, he had been a warrior of some means named Toyora no Shirō. He had two wives whose mutual jealousy never gave him a moment's peace. The elder wife conspired to murder the younger and disposed of her body in an unmarked grave behind the Jizō hall of a nearby cemetery. She then planted false evidence and spread a rumor that the missing woman had eloped with a handsome young monk. This prompted the distraught Toyora to torture and kill any likely bonze who happened by, until soon there were no monks living on his entire property. A young itinerant monk, know-

ing of Toyora's reputation, hesitated to ask for lodging and decided instead to spend the night in the abandoned Jizō hall, although he found it quite spooky. He sat down before the Jizō image to devote himself to meditation on Zhaozhou's famous *kōan* "Mu" but was more and more distracted by strange noises. These sounds, as it turned out, were emanating from the ghost of the murdered junior wife, who appeared to him and entreated him to take a message to Toyora. She gave him a *kosode* robe and a poem that would prove to her husband that she had spoken to the monk.⁶⁵ Putting aside his fear, the monk came before Toyora the next day and managed to tell his story without being killed. As he presented the *kosode*, the two men noticed that there was a message written in blood on the sleeve. This message related the tragic story in full, ending with the following entreaty: "To die pregnant is most sinful. Please hurry to dig up my body; pull out the person who is in my belly and pray most fervently for my salvation."⁶⁶

Upon reading the ghost's message, coming to know the circumstances of his wife's death and also learning for the first time that she had been pregnant, Toyora saw the error of his ways and repented. Then he and the monk made their way to the gravesite together and exhumed the body. The husband, heartbroken at the sight of his dead wife's breasts swollen with milk, then turned to his terrible duty. Taking out his short sword, he sliced open the belly of the corpse, revealing a dazzlingly beautiful baby boy (*tama wo nobetaru gotoku naru nanshi*). This horrific experience became the impetus for him to become a monk. The one thing we are not told, however, is whether or not the baby was alive. Obviously, we would assume that a fetus could not survive its mother's death and continue to grow and develop inside the grave. However, there is much evidence to suggest that this assumption was not shared by premodern Japanese. In fact, as we shall see, quite the opposite belief was held; that is, if a woman died pregnant and the fetus was not removed before burial, the baby would eventually be born inside the grave, and the spirit of the mother would be unable to find rest because of a lingering attachment to her child.⁶⁷

There exists quite a large body of legends in which a child is discovered living underground in its mother's grave.⁶⁸ Generally, the child is found because it can be heard crying out from within the tomb or because the daily trips of its mother's ghost to buy it candy or other treats at local shops begin to arouse suspicion. One explanation as to why these women cannot reach the other shore of eternal rest is that every day they buy food for the child with money from their coffin, the *rokudō sen*, money buried with them to cover the necessary expenses of being ferried across the Sanzu no kawa. The money

replenishes itself, but they can't spend it and have it too. This type of ghost is known as a *kosodate yūrei*, a child-rearing ghost.

The earliest known story of this type, found in the sixteenth-century *Kii zōtan shū*, entails a famous priest, Kokua Shōnin. Kokua died at the close of the fourteenth century and was the founder of the Ryōzen branch of the Jishū. Like his confrere Sei Amidabu, formerly Toyora, of the above *Kōya monogatari*, he entered the order as an adult after finding a son in the grave of his dead wife.⁶⁹ Kokua's story, probably recorded about one hundred years after his death, is as follows.

In lay life Kokua's name was Hashizaki Kuniaki. Hashizaki was stationed in Ise when word came that his pregnant wife had died en route to the capital. Because of official duties, he was unable to return home for the funeral. Feeling that he must do something to ensure her salvation, he gave three coins to a local outcaste beggar (*hinin*) every day. When he went to visit her grave for the first time, he stopped at a nearby tea shop, where the owner told him of a ghostly woman who would come every day to buy three *sen* worth of *mochi*, or steamed rice cakes. Later, when Kokua approached the grave, he heard a baby crying inside and dug it out. His wife's body was badly decomposed, but the little boy appeared to be in good health. He gave the baby to the tea shop owner for adoption and retreated from the world.

In the cases of Kokua and Sei Amidabu, it is the husband of the dead woman who becomes a monk, but in most later stories, it is the discovered child who grows up to be a famous prelate. Legends of these ghosts became widespread during early modern times, especially in hagiographical literature. These stories were common to almost every sect but were especially popular in the Sōtō Zen school.⁷⁰

This legend of the *kosodate yūrei* is closely related to the belief that a pregnant woman who is buried with the fetus in her womb cannot attain salvation (*jōbutsu dekinai*). Thus, the practice of postmortem fetal extraction was also very common. This need to remove the fetus is usually expressed as putting the body in two (*mi futatusu ni suru*), or, perhaps better, splitting the bodies into two. This is where Wakita's idea of the unity of mother and child (*boshi ittai*) is most dramatically undermined, as she indeed suggests it increasingly was from the late medieval into the early modern period. This is also where we see that what might have seemed to be an isolated incident included in a piece of didactic literature for shock value—the story of Toyora who slit open his dead wife's belly—is actually a reflection of standard funerary practice.

Working in the late 1970s, the folklorist Katsurai Kazuo was told by elderly villagers in his home region of Kōchi prefecture on the island of Shikoku of a prohibition against using oak to make the handle of a hand scythe (*kama*).⁷¹ There were no particular rules about what type

of wood should be used, only a belief that oak must not be. Upon further investigation, he found that this taboo existed in many other communities throughout the island and also in other locales from Tōhoku to Kyushu. The reason given was universally the same. Namely, an oak-handled *kama* was to be used for one purpose and for that purpose alone—extracting the fetus from the body of a woman who had died in late pregnancy. This operation was to be performed by her husband or some other close relative or by the midwife, using an oak-handled *kama* held in the left hand. After the extraction, mother and child were often buried in separate coffins, or, if in the same coffin, back to back. Some regional variation exists in this regard. The informants explained to Katsurai that it was believed that a woman buried with a third-trimester fetus in her womb could not be saved in the next life (*jōbutsu dekinai, ukabarenai*) and stood the risk of becoming a ghost, specifically, a *kosodate yūrei*. This practice of postmortem fetal extraction gives ritual expression to the belief that, once a fetus enters its final trimester of gestation, it is no longer a part of its mother's body.⁷²

Conclusion

In the complex of beliefs and practices surrounding the *kosodate yūrei*, or child-rearing ghost, and her sister, the *ubume*, the focus is on the salvation of women as mothers, actual or potential. Women who die in childbirth or in late pregnancy are among the special and dangerous dead and need particular sorts of ritual to be saved. The Blood Pool Hell presents a real conundrum for women, since it threatens damnation for the very potential motherhood that is a woman's passport to salvation. While the *Ketsubonkyō* describes the biology of female reproduction as polluted and sinful, its hero is a saving son. The ancestral cult, a central aspect of East Asian Buddhism and Buddhist death ritual, insists that women become mothers to be saved, so the ideology of the Blood Pool Hell creates a double bind. In contrast to the Chinese case, however, Japanese women in the late medieval period took their salvation into their own hands, transforming the *Ketsubonkyō* into an amulet insuring safe childbirth or a talisman to overcome the menstrual "taboo" and allow freedom of movement and association at all times. Thus, as Carol Delaney has written, "A particular cultural understanding of the body may generate the anxieties or dangers felt to be impinging on the society. In other words, notions of the body and corporeality are neither universal nor gender-neutral but change according to specific cultures. It is not enough to look only at specific pollutants, for one must understand them in relation to the entire cultural corpus of beliefs."⁷³ The transformation of the kinship system

through the medium of Buddhist death ritual and the shift away from the view of the fetus as a part of its mother's body are essential factors for a consideration of the Japanese development of the doctrinal, ritual, and literary complex surrounding the Blood Pool Hell.

In Japan's late medieval period, a literature linking pregnancy and violence developed. In these stories of jealousy, suffering, and redemption, there is a focus on the pregnant corpse, particularly on the life-giving breasts filled with milk, and on the blood of the dead woman. In this case it is not menstrual or birth blood, but rather the blood shed by the cruelty of a steel blade. As I have suggested, however, murder or execution can be seen as substitutes for the violent and familiar occurrence of death in childbirth. This focus on the dangers of parturition can be seen most clearly in the stories of the *ubume* and the *kosodate yūrei*. For a woman to die in late pregnancy, during childbirth, or soon thereafter was not simply to die a horrible and tragic death; it was also to face the danger of becoming a ghost in this world or to face sure punishment in the Blood Pool Hell in the next. In the former case, more than blood and biology are at issue, for in the legends of the *ubume* and the *kosodate yūrei*, we encounter the theme of parental attachment to a child, "darkness of the heart," or *kokoro no yami*. As one early modern text puts it, "How poignant a mother's heart, that even after death wanders astray with longing for her child!"⁷⁴

In her study of the modern literary genre that she calls the "pregnancy novel" (*ninshin shōsetsu*), in which the narrative tension revolves around the crisis of an unplanned pregnancy, Saitō Minako identifies two subtypes, the "abortion type" and the "birth type." In the former, the female character chooses to terminate the pregnancy, either of her own volition or at the insistence of others; in the latter, she carries the child to term. Saitō points out that while the genre was established in the 1950s, its roots can be traced to the turn of the twentieth century, a time when abortion was outlawed by the Japanese government. I would suggest that the origins of this sort of narrative can be traced even further back to these late medieval stories. As Saitō notes, the murder of the heroine is a common theme in pregnancy novels, a theme she connects directly with abortion and thus to the problem of the identity or separateness of the mother's body and the fetus.⁷⁵ The particulars of the medieval tales are very different, as are their contexts, but the continuities are intriguing. The modern texts, like the medieval, are shot through with ambiguity. The question of whether the mother and child are of one body or two is an especially vexed one.

I have argued that at the end of the medieval period there was a significant shift in the way this relationship between the maternal body and the life growing within was conceptualized. While this shift

may imply a steady progression, I would like to emphasize that there was a deep ambivalence throughout. And yet within this unresolved ambivalence, a trend can be clearly discerned. As Wakita Haruko has suggested, from the late medieval into the early modern period, mother and child were no longer “of one body” (*boshi ittai*), but rather were two distinct beings.⁷⁶

Increasingly, the fetus (and newborn child) came to be seen as an independent entity, and, perhaps more significantly, as the embodiment of a creative act by the father with the mother acting as a growth medium, as a nurturing vessel rather than genetrix. The child also comes to be seen as a being formed by the efforts of divine actors. In a 1686 play by master dramatist Chikamatsu Monzaemon, we can witness a scene of the preaching of the Kumano *bikuni* on the Blood Pool Hell. Here the nuns, quite anachronistically, explain the illustrations of the Blood Pool Hell represented in the *Kumano kanjin jukkaizu* to the wife of Taira no Atsumori, Hōsshō kaku, and the wife of Tadanori, Kiku no mae:

You know, it takes a great deal of toil by the buddhas of the three worlds to make one human being. So when one is aborted before the ten months are over, all the buddhas cry out in lamentation and shed tears. These tears pour down like a torrent into the Blood Pool Hell, where they become flames that burn the bodies of the women there.⁷⁷

While in the medieval period the death of the mother is the focus of the Blood Pool Hell belief, by the middle of the early modern period the death of the child becomes foregrounded.⁷⁸ And indeed, in the 1627 printed edition of *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* (The tale of the Fuji person hole), we are told that dead children suffer in hell for the sin of causing their mothers months of fruitless pain in pregnancy and also that the tears of grief shed by those mothers “accumulate and become the Blood Pool” (*haha no nagasu namida tamarite, chi no ike to naru nari*).⁷⁹ It is here we can discern the roots of the extremely popular modern practice of *mizuko kuyō*, ceremonies performed for aborted fetuses.

Notes

1. See Hank Glassman, “The Religious Construction of Motherhood in Medieval Japan” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2001), especially chaps. 3 and 5. This essay is based on chap. 4. Material from this chapter was presented

at the 1998 annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies. I would like to express my appreciation for the useful insights provided by the respondents and audience on that occasion.

2. "Bosei sonchō shisō to zaigōkan," in *Bosei o tou*, vol. 1, ed. Wakita Haruko (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1985), 203.

3. *Shussen to shintai no kinsei* (Tokyo: Keisō Shoin, 1998), esp. 213–216.

4. Carol Delaney has demonstrated the cultural influence in monotheistic religious systems of the idea that the father supplies all of the genetic material for a new life in the form of his "seed." This agricultural metaphor of human reproduction reduces the role of the mother to that of a growth medium, the "soil." See her *Abraham on Trial: The Social Legacy of Biblical Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); and *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

5. Michel Soymié, "Ketsubonkyō no shiryōteki kenkyū," in *Dōkyō kenkyū*, ed. Michel Soymié and Iriya Yoshitaka (Tokyo: Shōshinsha, 1965), 109–165; Takemi Momoko, "'Menstruation Sūtra' Belief in Japan," trans. W. Michael Kelsey, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 10, nos. 2–3 (1983); and Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 197–199. For an excellent introduction to the *Ketsubonkyō* and the history of its cult, see Kōdate Naomi, "Aspects of *Ketsubonkyō* Belief," in *Practicing the Afterlife: Perspectives from Japan*, ed. Susanne Formanek and William R. LaFleur (Vienna: Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), 121–143.

6. Recent scholarship has made clear that both types of text were in circulation from the earliest periods. Takemi's "Menstruation Sūtra" is representative of the view that menstrual pollution was a feature of the more developed cult and texts. For the opposing opinion, see Matsuoka Hideaki, "Wagakuni ni okeru *Ketsubonkyō* shinkō ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu," in *Josei to shūkyō, Nihon joseishi ronshū* 5, ed. Sōgō Joseishi Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998), 257–280.

7. There is a large body of anthropological literature on affinal/agnatic relations, ritual, and kinship in modern Taiwan and China. I have found the work of Emily Martin (a.k.a. Emily Martin Ahern) especially useful. See, for example, her "Affines and the Rituals of Kinship," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, ed. Arthur Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 279–307; "Gender and Ideological Differences in the Representation of Life and Death," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, ed. James Watson and Evelyn Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 164–176; and "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," in *Studies in Chinese Society*, ed. Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 269–229. See also Gary Seaman, "The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution," in *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society*, ed. Emily Martin Ahern (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 109–130.

sity Press, 1981), 382–396; and Margery Wolf, *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).

8. Katsuura Noriko, *Onna no shinjin* (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1996), 222.

9. “Re-envisioning Women in the post-Kamakura Age,” in *The Origins of Japan’s Medieval World*, ed. Jeffrey Mass (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 164. Also see Tokieda Tsutomu, “Chūsei Tōgoku ni okeru Ketsubonkyō shinkō no yōsō: Kusatsu Shiraneyama o chūshin to shite,” *Shinano* 36, no. 8 (July 1984), 599.

10. Tokieda, “Chūsei Tōgoku ni okeru *Ketsubonkyō* shinkō,” 600–601.

11. *Ibid.*, 595–596. It is much more likely that these are roughly contemporaneous with, even if somewhat earlier than, similar practices at Tateyama during the early modern period, which Tokieda refers to as a “restoration” of the earlier practice found at Shiraneyama. Tokieda himself calls the *kokera kyō* “late medieval,” and it would seem quite unlikely that they predate the middle or late fifteenth century.

12. For the question of dating and evidence, see *ibid.*, 587, 591–593, and for the Shugendō connection, 595–599.

13. See, for example, Kōdate Naomi, “*Ketsubonkyō* to nyōnin kyūsai: ‘Chi no ike no katari’ o chūshin ni,” in *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to kanshō* 56, no. 5 (1991): 124. This 1429 case is the first mention of the *Ketsubonkyō* in Japan. Also see Katsuura, *Onna no shinjin*, 223. This datum can be found in *Chōben shian shō*, in *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, ed. Hanawa Hokinoichi, Ōta Tōshirō, and Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1984), 28:8, 125.

14. Katsuura, *Onna no shinjin*, 226–232.

15. See W. G. Aston, trans., *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1972), 22–25 [1:15–1:19]. Here, the outraged husband/brother Izanagi cuts the child into pieces with his sword, creating other new gods. See also 28–29 [1:23–1:25]. This can be contrasted with later periods, where it is the mother’s body that is mutilated after death in childbirth. In the story of Hiko-hoho-demi and his wife Toyotama hime (93–95 [2:34–2:35]), there is some indication of the use of parturition huts and a taboo against men witnessing childbirth, but we know that in later periods, at least among the aristocracy, men were present at births. See note 37 for sources indicating the presence of men at Heian-period aristocratic births.

16. Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The “Nihon ryōiki” of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 233–234; *Nihon ryōiki* 3:9, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter *NKBT*) 70, ed. Endō Yoshimoto and Kasuga Kazuo (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), 338–345.

17. Ishii Kyōdō, ed., *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen Shōnin zenshū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1928; rpt. 1974), 664. On Hōnen’s attitude toward mothers and birth,

see Imahori Daietsu, “Hōnen no nenbutsu to josei: Nyōnin kyōge tan no seiritu,” in *Hotoke to onna*, ed. Nishiguchi Junko (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1997), 67–107, esp. 76–83.

18. As Kunimoto Keikichi points out, death and childbirth were, in pre-modern times, two sides of the same coin; hemorrhaging was often understood to be the result of possession by malign spirits; see *San'iku shi: Osan to kosodate no rekishi* (Morika, Iwate: Morioka Times, 1996), 147. For a related discussion of blood symbolism in ancient Judaism, see Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 177–194. Eilberg-Schwartz argues that, in this system, female genital blood, whether menstrual or birth blood, was associated with death, while the male genital blood of circumcision was symbolic of life and fertility.

19. Katsuura, *Onna no shinjin*, 211, 237. A counter-example to the *Ryōiki* story can be found in Ōe no Masafusa's *Zoku honchō ōjōden*. In this tale, a woman who died in childbirth in the first month of 1101 appears later to a friend in a vision confirming her birth in the Pure Land. Her face and body were as usual, but she looked like a bodhisattva and was dressed as a *gagaku* performer. See Nishiguchi Junko, “Shinshūshi no naka no josei,” in *Nihonshi no naka no josei to bukyō*, ed. Shinshū Bunka Kenkyūjo (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1999), 191–192. Also, in the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* by Yoshishige no Yasutane, a woman who dies one month after giving birth is welcomed into the Pure Land to the strains of music; see Peter Weltzer, *Yoshishige no Yasutane: Lineage, Learning, and Amida's Pure Land* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1977), 244.

20. See Tabata Yasuko, *Nihon chūsei no josei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), 52–55; Suitō Makoto, *Chūsei no sōsō, bōsei: Sekitō o zōryū suru koto* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1991), 98–106; Hashimoto Yoshihiko, *Heian kizoku* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1986), 34; Fukutō Sanae, *Heian chō no haha to ko* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1991), 110–112; and Shinmura Taku, *Nihon iryō shakaishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1985), 155–156. For death in childbirth and during pregnancy in premodern Europe, see, for example, Jacques Gélis, *History of Childbirth*, trans. Rosemary Morris (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 238–254.

21. On the Kumano *bikuni*, see, for example, Hagiwara Tatsuo, *Miko to bukyōshi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983); Barbara Ruch, *Mō hitotsu no chūseizō* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1991), 163–169; Hayashi Masahiko, “Kumano bikuni no etoki” in *Zōho Nihon no etoki: Shiryō to kenkyū* (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 1984), 126–146; and D. Max Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 181–231.

22. Kōdate Naomi and Makino Kazuo, “*Ketsubonkyō* no juyō to hatten,” in *Onna to otoko no jikū: Nihon joseishi saikō*, ed. Tsurumi Kazuko (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 1996), 103–105.

23. Ushiyama Yoshiyuki, “Jiinshi no kaiko to hatsubō: Chūsei amadera ni yosete,” in *Nihon no bukkyō* 3: *Bukkyō o minaosu*, ed. Nihon Bukkyō Kenkyūkai (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1994), 162.

24. Tokuda Kazuo, “Igyō no kanjin bikuni: Kumano bikuni zenshi no ittan,” *Chūsei henrekimin no sekai, Nihon rekishi to geinō* 6, ed. Amino Yoshihiko et al. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1990), 111–116; Hagiwara, *Miko to bukkyōshi*, 272–278, 289–295.

25. Tokuda, “Igyō,” 107–109.

26. See Glassman, “Religious Construction of Motherhood,” chap. 3; and Tokuda, “Igyō,” 117.

27. For descriptions of and quotations from these diary entries, see Tokuda, “Igyō,” 111–115; and Katsuura, *Onna no shinjin*, 233–235. On women’s salvation, hell, and sermons on the *Lotus Sūtra*, see Katsuura, 209–240.

28. Hagiwara maintains that a strong association between Jizō and women is clearly attested from the fourteenth century, and that the association of a female form of Jizō with safe childbirth was also common during the medieval period (*Miko to bukkyōshi*, 278–295, esp. 281–282; see also 202–204). Given examples such as that of the thirteenth-century Denkōji Jizō, we can push Hagiwara’s date back considerably (Hank Glassman, “The Nude Jizō at Denkōji: Notes on Women’s Salvation in Kamakura Buddhism,” in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch [Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002], 383–413). See also Katsuura Noriko, “Onna no shigo to sono kyūsai: Haha no shōsho to kijo no datsu jigoku,” in *Hotoke to onna*, ed. Nishiguchi Junko (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1997), 44–51.

29. Matsuoka, “Wagakuni ni okeru *Ketsubonkyō* shinkō,” 270. One possible source for the idea of the Blood Pool Hell can be found in the “blood drinking hell” (*onketsu jigoku*) mentioned in the *Dizang benyuan jing* (Jpn. *Jizō hongankyō*, T no. 412) (Kunimoto, *San’iku shi*, 105).

30. *Isozaki* appears in two versions in *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei* (hereafter *MJMT*), 14 vols., ed. Yokoyama Shigeru and Matsumoto Ryūshin (Tokyo: Kadoka Shoten, 1973–1987), 2:251–264; three versions of *Tengu no dairi* can be found in *MJMT* 9:551–660; and *Chōbōji yomigaeri no sōshi*, in *MJMT* 9:351–374.

31. See Sawai Taizō, “Otogizōshi *Isozaki* kō: Otogizōshi to sekkyō no sekai,” in *Koten no hen’yō to shinsei*, ed. Kawaguchi Hisao (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1984), 326–327. Sawai suggests that, although the earliest surviving edition of *Isozaki* is from the late seventeenth century, there is strong evidence that it existed in 1642 and was probably in circulation by the end of the sixteenth century. See also Kōdate, “*Ketsubonkyō* to nyōnin kyūsai,” 125.

32. Katsuura, “Onna no shigo,” 158–164.

33. Tanaka Takako, *Sei’ai no Nihon chūsei* (Tokyo: Yosensha, 1997), 126–130. On the cult of the ten *rasetsu* women, see Nicole Fabricand-Person,

"Filling the Void: The *Fugen jurasetsunyo* Iconography in Japanese Buddhist Art" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2001).

34. For photographs of early modern *Ketsubonkyō* amulets and their printing blocks, see *Tateyama shinkō: Inori to negai*, ed. Toyamaken Tateyama Haku-butsukan (Tateyama-chō: by the editor, 1994), esp. Kōdate Naomi, "Tateyama no nyonin kyūsai kankei gofu," 47–49. On the history of the idea of menstrual pollution in premodern Japan, see Kunimoto, *San'iku shi*, 59–123.

35. See Kitashima Kuniko, "Nagare kanjō no kenkyū," in *Tōyō Daigaku Tankidaigaku ronshū: Nihon bungaku hen 19* (1983): 239–260; Kunimoto, *San'iku shi*, 339–341; Tanaka, *Sei'ai no Nihon chūsei*, 119; and Shinmura Taku, *Shussan to seishokukan no rekishi* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1996), 149–150.

36. Kitashima, "Nagare kanjō no kenkyū," 241. See also Matsushita Keidō, "Nagare kanjō shiryō: Toku ni kigen o mondai toshite," *Bukkyō to minzoku 4* (1959): 40–41. The ritual was also known as *mizu segaki*, *kawa segaki*, *nagare kanja*, *arai sarashi*, *chi no ike*, or *hyakunichi sarashi*.

37. There is not space here to explore this rich topic, but it is one I intend to return to in future research. The theme is found in many places, from *Genji*, to historical chronicles, to Noh plays, to *otogizōshi*. For Heian-period examples, see for example Edwin Seidensticker, trans., *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 165–173; Richard Bowring, trans., *Murasaki Shikibu, Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 43–99; and William H. McCullough and Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period*, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 227–308, 349–360. A useful book for thinking about the role of female jealousy in death in childbirth in Heian Japan is Doris Bargen, *A Woman's Weapon: Spirit Possession in The Tale of Genji* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997). A graphic early modern version where the pregnant woman is caused to slit her own belly with a razor is "Nyobō onna no haramitaru hara o yaki yaburu koto," from *Kūi zōtan shū*, collected in Yoshida Kōichi, ed., *Kinsei kiai shōsetsu, Kinsei bungei shiryō 3* (Tokyo: Koten Bunko, 1955), 184–195. For a European parallel, see Gélis, *History of Childbirth*, 143. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Juno (Lucina) tries to obstruct the birth of Hercules by her rival Alcmena through magical means.

38. See Sawai, "Otogizōshi *Isozaki kō*," 317–328, esp. 323ff.

39. Kōdate and Makino, "Ketsubonkyō no juyō to hatten," 85–86.

40. Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry have characterized death ritual, which often aims at the regeneration of fertility, as an attempt at a solution to the "problem" of affinal and matrilineal relations in patrilineal societies; see "Introduction," in Bloch and Parry, eds., *Death and the Regeneration of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1–44. In the same volume, also see James Watson, "Of Flesh and Bones," 155–186.

41. See Matsumoto Ryūshin, *Chūsei ni okeru honjimon no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1996), 35–62, for various versions of the tale. The story *Itsuku-*

shima no honji, which also features the decapitation of a young mother in the mountains, is probably related to *Kumano no honji* (64).

42. This image can be seen in two beautifully produced books containing seventeenth-century illustrated editions of the Gosuiden tale; see Kyūshū Daigaku Kokugo Kokubungaku Kenkyūjo, ed., *Shōtō bunko bon Kumano no honji* (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1997), 33–34; and Wakayama Kenritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Kumano gongen engi emaki* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 1999), 18–19. For a discussion of the different ways the co-wives are represented in this scene, see Komatsu Kazuhiko, *Hyōrei shinkō ron: Yōkai kenkyū e no kokoromi* (Tokyo: Arina Shobō, 1984), 236–238. On the theme of the murder of the rival, see Komatsu, 242–243; and also Sawai, “Otogizōshi *Isozaki kō*,” 323. On the visual representation of female jealousy, see Hayashi Susumu, “Shitto no katachi,” in *Hito no “katachi,” hito no “karada,”* ed. Tokyo Kokuritsu Bunkashi Kenkyūjo (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1994), 203–218. Perhaps the most famous examples of the use of the iron crown with burning candles by a jealous woman are the *Tale of Heike’s* “Tsurugi no maki” episode and the Noh play *Kanawa*.

43. *Kumano no honji no monogatari*, *MJMT* 4:161.

44. *Kumano gohonji*, *MJMT* 4:203; *Kumano no honji* (Kumata Shrine collection), *MJMT* 4:181; *Kumano no honji* (print version), *MJMT* 4:236.

45. This imagery comes from the text *Kumano no gohonji no sōshi* in *Otogizōshi*, *NKBT* 38, ed. Ichiko Teiji (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958), 426.

46. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, “Introduction” in “*Off With Her Head*”: *The Denial of Women’s Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, ed. Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 1.

47. Wendy Doniger, “‘Put a Bag Over Her Head’: Beheading Mythological Women,” in Eilberg-Schwartz and Doniger, “*Off With Her Head*,” 15.

48. Watsuji Tetsurō, “Umoreta Nihon,” in *Watsuji Tetsurō zenshū*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961), cited in Hamanaka Osamu, “*Kumano no honji kō*: Muryoku to higo,” in his *Muromachi jidai monogatari ronkō* (Tokyo: Shintensha, 1996), 208.

49. See Komatsu Kazuhiko, “Kaibutsu to irui kon’in: ‘Otogizōshi’ no kōzō bunseki,” in *Otogizōshi*, ed. Nihon Bungaku Kenkyū Shiryō Soshō (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1985), 144–149, and Hamanaka, “*Kumano no honji kō*,” 203–204.

50. See Matsumoto, *Chūsei ni okeru honjimonono no kenkyū*, 46–47.

51. *Kumano no gohonji no sōshi*, in *Otogizōshi*, *NKBT* 38:415. The identity of *ubu no kami* is unclear. This term came to refer to the god of the locale of one’s birth (*ubusuna no kami*), but also is close to the idea of the *ubu tate*, or “quickening,” experienced in the fifth month of pregnancy.

52. *Kumano no honji (emaki)*, *MJMT* 4:255.

53. *Kumano no gohonji*, in *Sekkyō seibon shū*, vol. 1, ed. Yokoyama Shigeru (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1968), 140–141, illustrations, 500 (see *Gosuiden*, 153, and ill., 502). This imagery is clearly drawn from the influential *Sangai issshinki*, attributed to the late sixteenth-century Zen monk Dairyū of Daitokuji.

For the text, see Morioka Kū, “Dairyū Sangai isshinki,” *Tachikawa ryū seikyō ruisan kaidai*, ed. Matsushita Takahiro (Tokyo: Rittaiisha, 1969), 31–35; and for discussion, see James H. Sanford, “Wind, Waters, Stupas, Mandalas: Fetal Buddhahood in Shingon,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 24, nos. 1–2 (1997): 25–31. The *Gosuiden* version of the tale features a slightly different list than *Kumano no gohonji*.

54. Sawayama, *Shussan to shintai no kinsei*, 265–270. See also Ochiai Emiko, “The Reproductive Revolution at the End of the Tokugawa Period,” in Hitomi Tonomura, Anne Walthall, and Wakita Haruko, eds., *Women and Class in Japanese History* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1999), 194–198; and Toda Ritsuko et al., *Birth in Japan: Past, Present, and Future* (Tokyo: Birth International, 1991), 72.

55. Watanabe Morikuni, “Honji monogatari kenkyū yosetsu,” in *Ōzuma Joshi Daigaku bungakubu kiyō* 1, no. 2, cited in Matsumoto, *Chūsei ni okeru honji-mono no kenkyū*, 71–72.

56. *Reproducing the Womb: Images of Childbirth in Science, Feminist Theory, and Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 117–154, 245.

57. On gossips, see Marta Weigle, *Creation and Procreation: Feminist Reflections on Mythologies of Cosmogony and Parturition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 160, 164–169.

58. Kitashima records lyrics from eighteen such songs, ranging from Niigata in the north to Wakayama in the south (“Nagare kanjō no kenkyū,” 255–256).

59. *T* no. 518. The origins of this sūtra, which was translated in 464, are unclear. No Sanskrit original is known.

60. Ishida Eiichirō, “Mother-Son Deities,” in *History of Religions* 4, no. 1 (1964): 34–35. For Taira no Suetake’s encounter with the *ubume*, see *Konjaku monogatari shū* 27:43, *NKBT* 25, ed. Yamada Yoshi et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), 539–541. Here the ghost is called *sanseru omuna*, written with the same characters used to write *ubume*. Kyōgoku Natsuhiko’s best-selling detective novel, *Ubume no natsu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1994), takes the *ubume* legend as its central motif. The novel created something of an *ubume* “boom” at the time of its publication and was made into a major motion picture in 2005. See also Orikuchi Shinobu, “Komochi no megami,” in *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1972) 7:281–283. Many scholars have associated the *ubume* with the legend of the *hitobashira*, where a sacrificial mother and child pair are buried under one of the supporting pillars of a new bridge; see Minakata Kumagusu, “Hitobashira no hanashi,” in *Minakata Kumagusu zenshū*, ed. Shibuzawa Keizō (Tokyo: Kangensha, 1952), 4:12–35.

61. “Ubume no koto,” *Konjaku hyaku monogatari hyōban*, in *Edo kaidanshū* 2, ed. Takada Mamoru (Tokyo: Iwanami Bunkō, 1989). This source discusses the origins of the *ubume* legend and its relationship to birds, an aspect of the belief beyond the scope of this chapter. For Sekien’s illustrations and text, see

Toriyama Sekien, *Zuga Hyakki yagyō*, ed. Tanaka Hisao (Tokyo: Watanabe Shoten, 1967), 227–228.

62. “Ubume no yurai no koto,” in *Kii zōtan shū*, 85–87.

63. See this temple’s website at <http://www.people.or.jp/~ubume/>. Note especially the amulets section: <http://www.people.or.jp/~ubume/ofuda.htm>; and the origin legend <http://www.people.or.jp/~ubume/yurai-engi.htm>.

64. *Kōya monogatari*, *MJMT* 4:547–567. See also *Muromachi mongatarishū*, vol. 1, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 54, ed. Ichiko Teiji et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989), 327–350; trans. Margaret Childs, *Rethinking Sorrow* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Japanese Studies, 1991), 53–72.

65. The presentation of a *kosode* by the dead to the living as proof that contact was established is a common theme in medieval and early modern ghost stories; see Tsutsumi Kunihiro, “Ano yo no shōkohin: Kinsei setsuwa no naka no katasode reitan,” in *Setsuwa denshōgaku* 7 (1999): 131–146; and also Chapter 6 in this volume.

66. *Haramite munashiku naritaru mono ha itodo tsumi fukaku sōrōheba isogi hori okoshi hara no uchi naru hito wo tori idashi yoku yoku bodai wo tohite tahi sōrōhe* (*Kōya monogatari*, 557). Childs, *Rethinking Sorrow*, 63, translates this as: “A child who dies in the womb is heavily burdened with obstacles to salvation. Hurry and dig up my body, remove the child from my womb, and give it a funeral.” I believe, however, that the subject of the verb *haramu* here must be the woman, and it follows that the person for whom services should be conducted is in fact the ghost herself, not her child.

67. There are also European stories of the delivery of a child from the corpse. It is not unlikely that, due to the bloating of the body after death, the baby would indeed be forced out of the mother’s womb inside the grave; see Paul Barber, *Vampires, Death, and Burial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 138–139; and Gélis, *History of Childbirth*, 235–236. In the case of death in late pregnancy, French midwives would sometimes place needle and thread in the coffin so that the ghost could tie off the umbilical cord after the birth. Many doctors and churchmen thought that the fetus should be removed before burial.

68. See Yanagita Kunio, “Akago tsuka no hanashi,” in *Kami o tasuketa hanashi*, *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū*, vol. 12 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969), 214–229.

69. “Kokua Shōnin hosshin yurai no koto,” *Kii zōtan shū*, 87–90. According to this story, if Kokua had not offered the three *sen* every day, his wife would have become an *ubume*.

70. See Tsutsumi Kunihiro “Kosodate yūrei no genfūkei: Sōsō girei o tegakari toshite,” in his *Kinsei setsuwa to zensō* (Tokyo: Izumi Shoin, 1999), 133–152; and also Duncan Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 43–47, 50–58, and Appendix A (125–128), as well as Chapter 6 in this volume.

71. Katsurai Kazuo, “Kama no e ni kansuru kinki: Taiji bunri no koshū nōto,” in *Sōsō bōsei kenkyū shūsei*, vol. 1, ed. Doi Takuji and Satō Yoneji (Tokyo: Meichō Shuppan, 1979), 291–295, and, in the same volume, Minakata Kumagusu, “Haramifu no shigai yori taiji o hikihanasu koto,” 296–298. See also Katsuda Itaru, “Sonraku no bōsei to kazoku,” *Kazoku to josei*, ed. Minegishi Sumio (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1992), 206–208.

72. In a fascinating case from a little more than forty years ago, a woman died at full term, and her family members and neighbors insisted that she could not be buried pregnant. A surgeon was hired to perform the extraction procedure. He removed twin girls from the woman’s womb; the three were buried together in one coffin; and two certificates of stillbirth were submitted to the local registry. News of this incident reached local authorities, who, concerned that laws against desecrating the corpse might have been violated, alerted the Ministry of Public Welfare. From there, the case went before the Ministry of Judicial Affairs. The jurists decided that, while not to be encouraged, if dictated by local custom and performed by a doctor or midwife using a scalpel, postmortem fetal extraction does not constitute desecration. See Yamaguchi Yaichirō, “Shitai bunri maisō jiken: Ninpu sōsō girei,” in *Sōsō bōsei kenkyū shūsei* 1:299–303.

73. “Mortal Flow: Menstruation in Turkish Village Society,” in *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*, ed. Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 93.

74. *Shinite mo ko o omou michi ni mayou oyagokoro koso aware ni haberu*. In *Kokon inu chomonshū*, “Harami onna shinite ko o umu koto,” quoted in Tsutsumi, “Ano yo no shōkohin,” 133.

75. *Ninshin shōsetsu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1994) 8–10, 44–48. Saitō points out that the debut novels of both Ōe Kenzaburō and Murakami Haruki took pregnancy as a central theme.

76. Wakita, “Bōsei,” 187–193, 203.

77. *Shume no hōgan Morihisa*, quoted in Kōdate and Makino, “*Ketsubonkyō* no juyō to hatten,” 103. See also Hayashi Masahiko, “Kumano bikuni no etoki,” in his *Zōho Nihon no etoki: Shiryō to kenkyū* (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 1984); and “Kumano bikuni to etoki,” in *Bukkyō minzokugaku taikei* 2: *Hijiri to minshū*, ed. Hagiwara Tatsuo and Shinnō Toshikazu (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1986).

78. See Helen Hardacre, *Marketing the Menacing Fetus in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 30–45; and William LaFleur, *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 44–65, for more on the prehistory of the recent *mizuko* boom.

79. *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, *MJMT* 11:461.

Funerary Zen

Sōtō Zen Death Management in Tokugawa Japan

DUNCAN RYŪKEN WILLIAMS

“FUNERARY ZEN” emerged in the late medieval and early modern periods as a combination of Chinese Chan/Zen, esoteric, and Pure Land Buddhist elements, along with localized death ritual practices. These funerary practices found an institutional base in the government’s temple certification policy of the Tokugawa or Edo period (1603–1868), which required that all families register at a parish temple. At the same time the practice of funerals and memorial services for deceased relatives cannot simply be understood as a response to a government directive but must also be seen as a part of a deep human need for ritualizing death. Death rituals were the central practice at Sōtō Zen parish temples, which flourished from the late sixteenth century to number more than 17,500 temples by the mid-eighteenth century. Beyond the funeral proper, Zen priests performed death rites throughout the year. Memorial services were routinely performed for a period of thirty-three years following a death. Services were also performed for various classes of deceased persons, such as “hungry ghosts,” “the ancestors,” and women and children who had died during childbirth. Large festivals for the dead, such as the summer Obon Festival for the ancestors or the *segaki* festival for hungry ghosts, marked important moments in the temple’s annual ritual calendar. This preoccupation with ritualizing death was intimately tied to the emergence of the Sōtō Zen school during the late medieval and early modern periods. This article traces this historical development as well as the major themes in funerary Zen.

We begin with a some substantial excerpts from an 1857 account of the origins of the *Ketsubonkyō* (The Blood Pool Hell sūtra), a text introduced by Hank Glassman in Chapter 5. Sōtō Zen priests in the Tokugawa period used the *Ketsubonkyō* to save women who had purportedly

fallen into a special hell, the Blood Pool Hell, to which all women were said to be destined after death. According to this account, in the year 1417, a thirteen-year-old girl, a parishioner of the temple Hosshōji, fell ill as a result of possession. She urgently requested her parents to summon the abbot. Speaking through the girl, the possessing spirit said to him:

... I am the daughter of Kamakura Hōjō Tokiyori and a nun named Hosshō, the first abbess of Hosshōji. This is why my father Tokiyori, who constructed Hosshōji, named it so. Even though I was ordained as a nun, taking pride in my family background, I did not keep the three disciplines of body, speech, and mind. Not keeping the precepts or doing good, I spent each day foolishly. Unfortunately, time waits for no one, and after six years I passed away. Since the road to hell is not distinguished by whether one is rich or poor, I am currently suffering immensely in the Blood Pool Hell, having descended there upon death because of the evil I committed during my life. This evil karmic destiny caused me to be reborn as a snake with sixteen horns, constantly suffering the “three heats” and falling back into the Blood Pool Hell...¹ Once one has been born as a woman, whether one is the daughter of an aristocratic or a daimyō [leading warrior] family, no woman can escape this hell. This is because all women have the pollution of menstrual blood or the impure blood of childbirth. This blood defiles not only the earth and water deities but also all buddhas and *kami*. For this, a woman falls into the hell of immeasurable suffering after death. The sufferings in this hell involve, first of all, the six times a day we come out of the pool to drink blood. If we refuse to drink it because of its horridness, several frightening demons come and torture us with metal rods before we get thrown back into the blood pool, screaming to no avail. In the blood pool, countless insect-like creatures with metal snouts come to pierce the skin and get into the flesh to suck out the blood before grinding into the bone to feast on the marrow. There are no words that could describe this pain. However, at times, large five-colored lotus flowers appear from within the blood pool, saving some woman or another. Seeing them, one gets envious. Those are women who fell into hell, but, because of the merit accrued through their good acts in their previous life, were able to escape the torments of hell quickly. Others were able to attain release and go to heaven because their descendents performed ceremonies for the buddhas and made offerings to the Buddhist priesthood. Oh abbot, I beg you for your great compassion and that you save me from the sufferings of this Blood Pool Hell.

In response to the abbot's query as to how she might be saved, the possessing spirit urged him to pray to the image of the bodhisattva Jizō that her father, Hōjō Tokiyori, had donated to the temple. That way, she said, he could learn how to acquire a sūtra called the *Ketsubonkyō*, which he should have recited and copied for her sake. She added:

“In this world, a woman should keep the sūtra on her body as a protective amulet, and when she dies, she should have the sūtra buried in the grave with her.... Furthermore, if one places this sūtra in the grave mound of one's deceased mother, wife, or daughter, she is guaranteed to escape the sufferings of the three evil realms and go to a buddha land. So please go back to your temple right away to recite and copy the sūtra. If you still have any doubts about what I said, go to the five-storied stone stūpa in front of the temple near the pine and willow tree where I was buried, because there will be found something miraculous.” When the abbot returned to the temple, he rang the bell to gather the monks to relate the above story. The monks went together to the five-storied stone stūpa only to find that the base of the stūpa was red. Everyone was completely amazed.

Later, in response to the abbot's prayers, Jizō appeared to him in a dream, in the guise of a dignified eighty-year-old monk with a staff in his hand, who said:

“Your prayers have reached me, so I will present you with the *Ketsubonkyō* that has been stored in the dragon palace. You should go to Taganuma Marsh early tomorrow morning.”... The next day, the abbot went to Taganuma Marsh with the other monks. To their surprise, the water in the marsh suddenly started to move of its own accord. The water swept up into the sky like the waterfall at Dragon's Gate. From the bottom of the water emerged a single white lotus flower that held within its petals a sūtra scroll. The abbot immediately thought that this was the *Ketsubonkyō* that Jizō had promised in his dream. Prostrating himself in front of the sūtra, he took it back to the temple and began with the other monks the recitation and copying of the sūtra one thousand times, every day for seven continuous days. All the copied sūtras were then interred in the nun's grave. Around midnight on the seventh day, the abbot, the monks, as well as the temple's parishioners all had the same dream. In the dream, a beautiful woman appeared ... sitting on a lotus-shaped seat surrounded by halos. She uttered the following, “Because the abbot of Hosshōji recently recited and copied the *Ketsubonkyō*, I have not only escaped the suffering of the blood pool, but my

snake body has disappeared. I am now able to go to the Buddha's pure land." The next day, when everyone at the temple talked about their dream, not a single detail differed.²

While discussion of the Sōtō Zen temple Hosshōji (later renamed Shōsenji) and its panoply of rituals devoted to saving women from the hell realms will be detailed later in this essay, this legend raises several important questions about the Sōtō Zen approach to the world beyond.³ The text reflects a number of early modern Japanese assumptions about the afterworld, including the existence of numerous hells (including one specifically reserved for women, the Blood Pool Hell) and various buddhas' pure lands, as well as everything in between. The more pleasant realms were reserved for those who had generated good karma in their lives, past or present. Or, as in this story, those who had done evil and fallen into a lower realm could escape it if someone else, such as a Sōtō Zen priest, generated good karma on their behalf. Yet another unchallenged assumption of early modern Sōtō Zen Buddhists was that, no matter how much good karma a woman had generated in her life—one can imagine that dedicating one's life as a nun, as did the woman in the story, would be considered meritorious—all women, by the supposedly impure nature of their menstrual or childbirth blood, were destined to this horrific blood pool with insect-like creatures eating into their skin and daily rounds of blood drinks. A final assumption, though, was that, with the assistance of the bodhisattva Jizō and a sacred Buddhist text (the *Ketsubon-kyō*) discovered in the marshes close to a Sōtō Zen temple, Sōtō Zen priests were capable of alleviating the suffering endured in such a hell. Indeed, their rituals could very swiftly lift a woman out of the hell into a Buddhist heaven or pure land.

Sōtō Zen priests acted as mediators between the dead in the world beyond and the living in this world. Death management involved, at the very least, protecting the deceased from the deepest hells and protecting the living from the vengeful, angry spirits of the departed who might come back to haunt them. But more was expected of the priest, especially when high fees were paid for various services for the dead. The expectation was that the Sōtō Zen priest would first be able to ensure a smooth transfer of merit from the rituals performed for the deceased, transforming them from a defiled body to a purified and enlightened spirit (*kakurei*). But there was simultaneously the concept that the priest would manage the deceased until they became venerated ancestors (*senzo*), who would watch over their remaining family.

What is curious about these assumptions is that they contradict the logic of the Zen funeral proper. As we shall see, for the laity, one of the

most attractive aspects of the Sōtō Zen funeral derived from Chinese Chan/Zen monastic death rites was that it purported to immediately propel the dead into the realm of the Buddha simply through the power of the ritual, regardless of that person's karmic accumulation or gender. This logic of immediate salvation had to somehow coexist with the logic of gradual management of the dead, requiring, as it were, damnation before salvation. This chapter explores the logic of these two death ritual systems and suggests that it was precisely the ability of Sōtō Zen priests to fashion a coexistence between Chinese Chan/Zen rituals and trans-sectarian Buddhist notions of the afterlife as well as local funerary customs that created a powerful new brand of funerary Zen.

The Funeral: Managing the Recently Deceased

When death has visited a Japanese family, the relatives of the deceased despatch [sic] a messenger to some Buddhist [sic] temple to fetch a priest, who visits the dwelling and performs certain rites over the corpse.... After the departure of the priest, the relatives cause the dead body to be washed with warm water, and make the necessary preparations for placing it in the round circular coffin or tub in which the corpse is deposited.... It is then left for a period of one to four days in the house, during which time the priest (if the family be in good circumstances and able to pay a fee of an *itzebu* or less) returns to the house and resumes his prayers and incantations, reciting some Buddhist [sic] office with the customary beating of hollow sounding-board and the tinkling of a bell in measured time of stroke.⁴

This description of Buddhist funerary rites by George Smith, a visiting Anglican bishop based in Hong Kong, captures a fairly typical process of handling an ordinary villager's death during the latter half of the Tokugawa period. Although Smith could not understand the nature of the rite, he correctly guessed that the time between the moment of death until the completion of the funeral required the intervention of a Buddhist priest. Ordinarily, before the priest arrived, the body would have already been cleansed with warm water by a family member or a close friend and placed in the coffin, having been dressed in fresh clothes: a white robe, white socks, and short trousers. At the wake itself, Sōtō Zen priests would recite sect-specific mantras in front of the deceased, including the *Taiya nenju* (Prayer on the eve of the funeral), which involved a brief address to the deceased, who had become an "enlightened spirit" gone (or "returned") to "the ocean

of eternal tranquility.” The priest(s) would then recite the names of the Ten Buddhas and also sūtras, the merit of which would be transferred to the deceased.⁵ The role of the priest at the wake was limited to this brief service, which laid the groundwork for the more elaborate and important funeral proper that lay ahead. The immediate family played a more important role, taking care of both the deceased and the visitors to the house. On the night of the wake, for example, family members would spend the entire night with the deceased. In some regions, a relative would actually share the same futon with the deceased, who would be placed in his or her bedding one last time.

Depending on regional, rather than sectarian, customs, the funeral proper would then be held at either the family’s house or at the local temple. In either case, the time from death until the funeral marked the first of three charged phases in the Buddhist management of the dead: the funeral itself, the forty-ninth day, and the thirty-third year after death. Sōtō Zen Buddhists in the Tokugawa period followed the generic process shared among all Buddhist sects in which the recently deceased were both ritually purified, a concept deriving from a commonly held pre-Buddhist notion of the pollution of the corpse—and deified, whether as “enlightened spirits” (*kakurei*), residents of a Buddhist heaven or pure land, “Buddhas” (*hotoke*), or ancestors (*senzo*). This shared ritual culture is what Tamamuro Taijō termed “funerary Buddhism” or “funeral Buddhism” (*sōshiki bukkyō*), the title of his classic work on the subject.⁶ Sōtō Zen priests both participated in and helped shape this common Buddhist culture of managing the dead, but funerary Zen also had a number of unique characteristics.

Indeed, the interaction between elements peculiar to the Sōtō Zen funerary approach with the cosmological and ritual aspects common to Japanese Buddhism as a whole was a dynamic process that allowed the sect to embed itself in local village life, embracing local funerary customs. At times, Sōtō Zen, generic Buddhist, and local beliefs and practices concerning death conflicted, occasionally producing contradictory goals and rituals.⁷ But, in the main, Sōtō Zen tradition accepted multiple practices and a division of labor in funerary practices among the household (living relatives), whose purpose was to transform the dead into ancestors; the temple (Sōtō Zen priest), whose purpose was to enlighten the dead, save them from the lower realms of existence, and send them to a buddha land; and the community (village), whose purpose was to neutralize the pollution of the dead, which affected the whole community. The ability of Sōtō Zen priests to actively participate in the broader funerary culture at the local level and yet imprint a unique Zen mark on funerary rites was the key to their accep-

tance at the village level, which in turn formed and stabilized the economic foundations of the sect.

The Zen funeral developed in medieval Japan based on Chinese Chan monastic regulations or codes, such as the 1103 *Chanyuan qinggui* (Jpn. *Zennen shingi*), which detail the procedures for monastic funerals.⁸ The Japanese Sōtō Zen founder, Dōgen (1200–1253), did not include funerary procedures in his ritual repertoire, so it was not until the third-generation monk Gikai's death in 1309 that the first Sōtō Zen funeral was conducted under Chinese Chan monastic regulations.⁹ The first Japanese Sōtō Zen monastic regulations, which included a section on how to perform funerals, were the *Keizan shingi* (Keizan's monastic regulations, ascribed to the fourth-generation monk, Keizan Jōkin in 1324 but not widely circulated until 1681).¹⁰ This text, which would become one of several manuals for the standardization of monastic procedures in the Tokugawa period, retained the basic Chinese Chan monastic funeral style (though it deleted some of the Pure Land elements) but also added new rituals for memorializing the lay dead, including merit transfer invocations (*ekō*) for both distinguished lay patrons and ordinary lay followers.¹¹

In the earliest known Japanese Sōtō Zen example of a standardized memorial verse for the lay person, two striking aspects appear: the use of the word “enlightened spirit” (*kakurei*) to refer to the deceased, who was imagined to reside on the banks of nirvāṇa, and also the very minimal difference between lay and monastic merit-transfer invocations. The term *kakurei*, while rarely used by ordinary villagers of the Tokugawa period, was a standard term employed by Sōtō Zen priests (especially in secret ritual initiation documents) to refer to those who had undergone Zen funerary rites. Indeed, from the point of view of the Zen priest, the purpose of the Zen funeral was to “deliver” or “return” (depending on one's interpretation) the deceased to an “enlightened” state. While Pure Land imagery is not completely absent from later monastic texts—and was always present in lay interpretations of where the spirit goes—official Sōtō Zen manuals tend to refer to the enlightened spirit as residing in heavenly states, such as the banks of nirvāṇa, a generic Buddha realm, or a vast, tranquil ocean of equanimity. However, these images competed with more popular Japanese Buddhist visions of the afterlife, which included both heaven-like realms, such as Amida's Pure Land, Miroku (Skt. Maitreya)'s paradise, or sacred mountains and also hell-like realms, such as the hungry ghost realm or the Blood Pool Hell. The ability of the Sōtō Zen tradition to allow both types of imagery to coexist without ever fully integrating them was one of the keys in their early success, not only in promoting

their brand of funerary Zen, but in establishing the ritual framework that other sects would copy.

Sōtō Zen funerary rites would not spread to all levels of society until the establishment of the parish temple system in the early Tokugawa period.¹² Nonetheless, starting from the mid- to late fifteenth century, Zen priests' performance of lay funerals was a crucial element in the spread of Sōtō Zen in rural Japan.¹³ While medieval Tendai and Shingon funerals tended to focus on the deliverance of aristocrats and warrior families to Amida's Pure Land or the cancellation of their bad karma through the recitation of the *komyō shingon* mantra (halo chant), the Sōtō Zen funeral appealed to every class. The elaborate Chan/Zen funeral for a high-ranking monk was streamlined for the ordinary monk, and in turn simplified for the lay person's funeral, but, as will be discussed below, the basic idea that the deceased was to be delivered to the land of the Buddha as a person with clerical status remained constant.¹⁴

One of the characteristics of a Sōtō Zen funeral was the chief priest's loud shout at the last moment to deliver the dead to the world beyond. A secret transmission document or manual (*kirigami*), explains this as follows:

When the celebrant draws the circle, he should blink at the dead. Then, holding the incense sticks in front with his eyes closed, he chants a verse of prayer with four lines in a low voice. Then with his eyes wide open he should gaze at the sky and recite the dharma words [for the dead]. All having been done, the whole of his being becomes free from any restraint; then he utters a thundering roar at the dead. Even the no-mind, no-form, and no-contrivance are discarded [to be in real void]. If there is even a little contrivance left undiscarded, the dead will [not be led to buddhahood but will] go astray.¹⁵

Preparing the dead to be "roared" into the world beyond required that the priest first of all recite the sūtra and dhāraṇī at the wake, then install the body in a coffin, and finally hold the "funeral proper," which consisted of an expanded set of sūtra and dhāraṇī recitations.¹⁶ During the Tokugawa period, additions of chants such as the *kōmyō shingon ōjō ju* (mystic formula of the halo chant for birth in a pure land) or rites such as placing white lotus flowers on top of the coffin (to represent the *sāla* trees under which the Buddha passed into nirvāṇa) were added to the ritual manuals, as Buddhist sects freely borrowed funerary rites from each other.¹⁷ Sōtō Zen priests, who most often incorporated esoteric Buddhist and Onmyōdō (*yinyang*) funerary practices, even fought a lawsuit—one that went all the way to the

Office of Temples and Shrines—with some *yamabushi* who had accused the Sōtō Zen priests of stealing their rites.¹⁸ Although Sōtō Zen funerary rites were thus woven together with materials from Chinese Chan, Japanese esoteric, and local folk traditions, the one consistent thread was the posthumous priestly ordination of the lay person.

***Motsugo sasō*: Priestly Ordination for the Lay Dead**

Though the first funeral ritual explicitly designated for lay people was not created until the mid-Meiji period, one of the most significant characteristics of the Tokugawa-period Zen funeral was the ordination of an already deceased lay person as a priest so that the *monastic* funeral style could be held for that individual.¹⁹ Indeed, this practice of ordaining the lay dead as Zen priests was one of the very few elements of Sōtō Zen lay funerals to become standardized by the early Tokugawa period, crossing Zen lineage and also regional boundaries.

While the Sōtō sect's funerary rites were similar to those of other sects of Japanese Buddhism, one striking and unique aspect of the Zen funeral was the granting of the priestly precepts (*motsugo sasō*) and a special Zen lineage chart (*kechimyaku*) to the lay dead, so that they could be enlightened and saved through a special posthumous ordination. As William Bodiford has noted, "This ritual enabled the monastic last rites of China to serve laypeople in Japan."²⁰ In other words, one of the important transformations in medieval Japanese Zen was the adaptation of the Chinese Chan monastic funeral for Japanese lay patrons, who were ordained into the monastic order, albeit posthumously, and were thus able to receive a monastic funeral.²¹

After consecrating the area surrounding the deceased, the ceremony to ordain the deceased lay person as a Zen priest would begin by washing and outfitting them with a new robe. According to the *Motsugo sasō jukai shiki* (Precept ceremony for posthumous ordination):

For the newly dead, give the person a tonsure. The precept teacher should give the deceased a robe, a bowing mat, a begging bowl, the three refuges, the three pure precepts, and the ten weighty precepts. The precept teacher should take the place of the deceased to receive these items.²²

As this passage indicates, the officiant shaved the lay person's hair to represent his or her entrance into the priesthood. (Today, this is generally done only symbolically, by removing a small lock of hair.) The deceased was also presented with all the necessary items of a Zen priest: a robe, a mat, and a begging bowl. Furthermore, the basic moral

precepts formula in sixteen articles, consisting of the three refuges, the three pure precepts, and the ten weighty precepts, was administered to the dead person. Here, a priest took the place of the deceased, who was obviously unable to respond to the ritually posed question of whether or not he or she would vow to keep the precepts. Bodiford notes one explanation of how the dead could receive these precepts, as described in *Motsugo jukai sahō* (Correct procedures for posthumous precept administration):

How can one posthumously become a monk?

Answer: “Neither saying ‘No’ nor ‘Yes.’”

A phrase?

“No self appearance; no human appearance.”

Explain [its meaning].

Answer: “When [something has] absolutely no appearance, it can become anything.”

Teacher: “But why does it become a monk?”

Answer: “Not saying ‘No’ and ‘Yes’ is truly to become a monk (*shukke*).”

A phrase?

“The sagely and the ordinary know of themselves [who they are].”²³

This *kōan*-like explanation suggests that the very inability of the dead to answer either “yes” or “no” was proof that they were indeed enlightened, reminding one of the well-known episode of Vimalakīrti’s “thunderous silence.” Though such subtle understandings of posthumous ordination were not widespread among either monks or lay people, it does point to the more general notion that the state of being dead was equal to the state of being a buddha (*hotoke*). Indeed, one *kiri-gami* explicitly affirms the precept ordination’s power to immediately transform the dead into buddhas:

When ignorant men receive the bodhisattva precepts, the dust [that covers their spirit] immediately disappears, and finally the spiritual light burgeons forth. This is why it is said that, when beings receive the Buddhist precepts, they immediately achieve the rank of Buddha, a rank identical to that of the buddhas of great awakening. This is what it really means to receive [the title of] son of the Buddha.²⁴

The posthumous priestly ordination was connected to this notion of immediate enlightenment and at the same time embodied an initiatory function. Through ordination, the dead person was initiated specifically into the Sōtō Zen lineage and, more broadly, as a “son of the

Buddha.” In other words, the dead entered into the Buddha family, the world of the Buddha.

The joining of the Buddha family lineage through posthumous ordination, combined with the power of the priest to magically send (or literally shout) the dead into the other world, tended to demonstrate the immediate efficacy of the Zen funeral in providing salvation. The idea of salvation (*jōbutsu*) literally meant to “become a buddha,” but the term was often used simply to mean a deliverance from the sufferings of this world and the hells, that is, deliverance to a higher realm, often imagined to be a Buddhist heaven or pure land. The priest’s power was further symbolized in the ritual bestowal on the deceased of the *kechimyaku* (a special Zen lineage chart linking the newly ordained precept holder through the unbroken lineage of Zen patriarchs all the way back to Śākyamuni Buddha).²⁵ Bernard Faure has written about the meaning of receiving the *kechimyaku* as follows:

The lineage diagrams thus became magical talismans in which the name of the cleric or layperson was connected to those of past Buddhas by a red line, symbol of the blood (and spirit) lineage to which he or she was attaching him- or herself. Awakening is no longer the *sine qua non* for transmission; on the contrary, it is ritual initiation that becomes the performative act par excellence, the symbolic realization of awakening recorded by the *kechimyaku*. For people participating in this ritual, the moral content of the Precepts was less important than the magical transformation of karma that it was supposed to achieve.²⁶

Upon ordination, the dead (or the living, in the case of an ordination ceremony held for living people) would receive a special dharma name (*hōmyō*) or precept name (*kaimyō*). This name was written into a space at the bottom of a lineage chart, sometimes with ink made from the abbot’s blood. This document would often be placed in the coffin of the deceased as they began their journey to the world beyond. Although the *kechimyaku* was originally handed down from master to disciple in the Zen tradition to give proof of dharma succession, the power of bestowing the document on the dead to erase evil karma and deliver them to a higher realm seems to have been promoted by Sōtō priests by the early Tokugawa period. Rather than symbolically representing enlightenment, as Faure suggests, the *kechimyaku* physically embodied the power to erase karma and secure immediate salvation after death. This understanding of the *kechimyaku* seems to have coincided with belief in its talismanic power to enable the living to ward off evil spirits, robbers, and disease.²⁷

Indeed, not just the ordinary dead, but also spirits symbolizing unfortunate fates in the afterlife—ghosts, dragon girls, snakes—were believed to benefit from the bestowal of the *kechimyaku*. In a Tokugawa-period legend about Zen Master Dōgen, which has no historical or factual basis, he was credited with using a *kechimyaku* to save a woman who had turned into a wandering ghost:

The feudal lord of Echizen province, a certain Eihei, had a concubine. Once when Eihei was traveling, his wife took the opportunity to drown his concubine in a nearby pond and thus killed her. The dead concubine's spirit came upon a traveling monk and told him of her sufferings in the world beyond. She then gave him one part of a red sleeve. Hearing about this, Eihei thought to turn his living quarters into a temple so that her spirit could be saved. He invited Dōgen to his temple and the Zen master bestowed a *kechimyaku* on the women's spirit and she was liberated. With this, Eihei decided to become a monk and later became the founder of Eiheiji Temple.²⁸

This folk legend about the origins of Eiheiji does not appear in the traditional Dōgen biographies such as the *Kenzeiki* (Record of Kenzei) and is at variance with some basic facts: Echizen's feudal lord belonged to the Hatano family, and Eiheiji was founded by Dōgen. However, the theme of salvation through the bestowal of the precepts and the *kechimyaku* was so central to Sōtō Zen efforts to demonstrate their priests' magical powers to provide salvation, even for those suffering in the world beyond, that this scene of Dōgen's salvation of the concubine's spirit eventually made its way into the nineteenth-century Dōgen pictorial narratives (*eden*) and the *Teiho Kenzeiki zue* (Illustrated Teiho-era edition of the Record of Kenzei).²⁹

Sometimes such ghosts returned in a vengeful manner, but the Sōtō Zen *kechimyaku* apparently had the power to appease angry spirits as well. For example, in the 1658–1659 popular collection of tales *Inga monogatari* (Tales of karmic causality, by the Sōtō Zen monk Suzuki Shōsan), the monk San'ei Honshū set up a small wooden stūpa and bestowed a *kechimyaku* on such a ghost to calm his spirit.

A Person Who Turned into an Angry Ghost Because He Was Killed for No Reason

A man named Abe killed his manservant for no reason. The manservant's spirit took the shape of a snake. Like a vengeful ghost, this spirit bothered everyone in the Abe family. So in 1646, the Abe family called on the [Sōtō Zen] monk San'ei to help. The monk dismantled a shrine, cleared some trees, deposited a *kechimyaku* in the ground, and set up a

small wooden stūpa. [All became well] after he conducted rites [at this site] for seven days.³⁰

Visits from ghosts from the world beyond to harass the living or request help are, of course, not limited to tales of Sōtō Zen priests. Jōdo priests and Tōzan Shugendō *yamabushi* are often featured in these legends as well, but, as Tsutsumi Kunihiro has noted, Zen priests appear in disproportionate numbers.³¹

Another motif in such salvation stories is ghosts or other spirits leaving behind evidence that could substantiate their visit to this world and their salvation through priestly intervention. The ghost of the concubine that Dōgen had saved left behind a sleeve, as did the ghost of the feudal lord Hatano Yoshishige, whom Dōgen, in a different legend, saved with a *kechimyaku*. While Eihei-ji never deigned to exhibit such otherworldly objects, there are cases throughout Japan of Sōtō Zen temples (as well as a few from other sects) exhibiting ghost sleeves in an effort to demonstrate the power of their monks to lay people.³² Enjō-ji in Hanamaki City, Iwate prefecture, for example, periodically exhibited the sleeve of a certain Shikauchi Hyōbu, who became a ghost after his death because his descendants did not respect his last wishes that a Śākyamuni statue be donated to the temple. Fuzan, the abbot of Sōseiji in the mid-Tokugawa period, pacified the ghost, and its sleeve was kept as evidence of its salvation at Enjō-ji, a branch temple of Sōseiji.³³ A similar ghost's sleeve piece can also be found at Gankō-ji in Ehime prefecture, and an illustrated scroll of such a sleeve can be found at Tokushō-ji in Niigata prefecture.³⁴

Sōtō Zen temples, along with some temples of other sects, displayed similar mementos from the world beyond as proof of the power of their ability to manage the dead. In a list of their temple treasures compiled in 1862, Tokunin-ji in Tōjō Village in Hiroshima prefecture included demon and goblin (*tengu*) horns as evidence left by these otherworldly creatures attesting to their salvation. These treasures would occasionally be exhibited for lay believers in public displays on certain days of the year.³⁵ Other temples held such mementos as animal claws and teeth (allegedly from beings liberated from their animal form), dragon scales (from dragon girls similarly saved), or crab shells (from crabs defeated by Zen masters in dharma combat).³⁶ The basic message seemed to be that, if Sōtō Zen priests could have saved even such lowly beings through the bestowal of precepts and the *kechimyaku*, that power could also be transferred to ordinary human beings to achieve their spiritual liberation. The combined power of the postmortem Sōtō Zen monastic ordination and *kechimyaku* gave the sect a valuable tool in recruiting potential parishioners, as they displayed a unique

power to bestow salvation via their funerary ritual. By broadening the appeal of Buddhist funerals to all classes of society in a way that minimized the necessity of the individual's own merit accumulation, the Sōtō Zen sect found a way to tie monastic powers to a powerful and quick method of salvation in the funeral rite. Yet, as the sect began to develop the full range of rituals to manage the dead, the Zen funeral by itself proved insufficient to garner the kind of broad-based appeal necessary to solidly establish itself in local society. To do that, the sect would need simultaneously to draw on commonly accepted notions of the afterlife, notions that contravened the idea of immediate salvation embodied in the funeral.

The *Blood Pool Sūtra*: Women's Damnation and Salvation

The miraculous appearance of the *Ketsubonkyō* (Blood Pool sūtra or literally, the Blood-bowl sūtra)³⁷ from the Dragon Palace in the marshes near the Sōtō Zen temple Shōsenji in Shimōsa province, cited at the beginning of this chapter, helped to save a nun in distress. This nun, who had turned into a ghost, left behind the blood-stained stūpa that provided evidence of her sufferings in the other world. According to the text, which was originally compiled by a Sōtō Zen monk in the 1730s,³⁸ she had been suffering tremendously in the Blood Pool Hell. She had possessed a young girl so that she could ask the abbot of Shōsenji (at that time called Hosshōji) to pray to Jizō in order to acquire the *Ketsubonkyō*, a sūtra renown for its powers to free women from this hell. After the abbot prayed to a statue of Jizō donated by the nun's father, Hōjō Tokiyori, he had a dream of the bodhisattva, who told him where to find the sūtra.³⁹ As Chapter 5 by Glassman suggests, the *Ketsubonkyō* holds important clues for understanding gender-specific funerary rituals dating from the medieval period. My discussion here extends Glassman's analysis into the Tokugawa period, when this sūtra was widely disseminated, the Sōtō Zen sect taking a leading role in its propagation.

Monks and nuns from other Buddhist traditions had also been involved in propagating the *Ketsubonkyō* and its ideas, notably Kumano bikuni (nuns) in the late medieval period and Jōdo priests in the early Tokugawa period. However, Sōtō Zen priests were among the most active proponents of the sūtra during the mid- to late Tokugawa period, with Shōsenji, along with Mt. Tateyama, being major centers of *Ketsubonkyō*-related activity.⁴⁰ Shōsenji promoted itself, not only as the birthplace of the sūtra in Japan, but also as the locus for women's salvation.⁴¹ Pilgrims visited this temple and made donations from as far away as Shinano and Mikawa provinces and Osaka and Kyōto cities dur-

ing the late Tokugawa period.⁴² To justify the prominent place that *Ketsubonkyō* teachings were assuming in the Sōtō sect, a secret transmission document from roughly 1628 recounted a legend about the appearance of a *Ketsubonkyō* text at Mt. Tiantong in China where Dōgen had trained, thus attempting to link the sūtra with the sect's founder.⁴³

To promote their abilities to save women, Sōtō Zen priests needed to argue that women were otherwise absolutely incapable of avoiding the Blood Pool Hell. The purportedly pervasive quality of women's pollution and the benefits of the *Ketsubonkyō* in eliminating bad karmic effects in both this life and the next are the subjects of a dharma lecture given in 1804 by the Sōtō priest Unrei Taizen (1752–1816) in front of two thousand men and women at the temple Jōanji in the Shima region near Ise:

The *Ketsubonkyō* [which we are transmitting today] has produced so many benefits that we can't cover them all in just one or two days. Dead people have come back to ask for it directly or have appeared in someone's dreams to request this talisman. And because they received this sūtra, they managed to escape the sufferings of hell. Living women have also been able to avoid the sufferings of menstruation by keeping this sūtra as a talisman. If one keeps this talisman on oneself, even if one is in an impure state, one can go in front of the *kami* and buddhas to offer incense, flowers, and other offerings without any problem. Having this talisman neutralizes all impurities.

Recently, the abbot Senjō (who currently resides in Ōmi province), while he was the abbot of Daitakuji in Shinshū province, was in charge of constructing a large bell for the temple. Several young men were busy with the foot bellows to make the copper bell, when a couple of young women of the village turned up at the construction site and asked for a turn in pressing the bellows. But when they tried to pour the molten copper into the bell mold, it turned into a solid block. Spectators, who had gathered in quite a number, gasped when they saw that it didn't pour out. The head bell maker's face turned white with worry. They decided to try again on another day, explaining to the abbot that the process was polluted by the presence of some women at the last attempt. Since this was why the bell couldn't be made the first time, the bell maker requested of the abbot that no women be allowed close by for the second try. The abbot agreed, but when they started the process again, this time not even the fire would start, which meant that they couldn't even pour any molten copper. Surprised, the head bell maker was at a total loss as to what to do.

It was then that a monk appeared, telling the bell maker to search for a copy of the *Ketsubonkyō* and to place it into the bellows. He found

a copy belonging to the abbot Senjō and did as he was told. The fire started immediately and the copper began to melt. The bell maker and everyone present jumped for joy, and before long, the bell was complete. When they looked at the final product, it was a grand bell without any flaws. Furthermore, it gave off a magnificent sound. All of you, listen to me carefully. The terrible nature of women's pollution knows no bounds, and only the *Ketsubonkyō* can neutralize it. That we can receive the amazing benefit of this sūtra today is a blessed thing indeed. For those who would sincerely like to receive this talisman, come and request it later today.⁴⁴

The priest delivered a straightforward message: women are by nature polluted and because of their pollution offend all things pure and sacred. Shōsenji, among other Sōtō temples, distributed *Ketsubonkyō*-related talismans to ward off women's pollution. Takemi Momoko, a leading scholar of the *Ketsubonkyō*, has noted three Niigata-area Sōtō Zen temples that until recently gave out the sūtra to women so as to "cancel" the impurity of womanhood and so that they could worship the Buddha in a "pure" state.⁴⁵ This idea of women's pollution was not specifically limited to the *Ketsubonkyō* but was an ideology widely disseminated by Sōtō Zen priests (though, of course, not limited to this sect). This ideology reflected the growing subordination of women during the Tokugawa period, a process whose medieval roots are discussed in Chapter 5. Indeed, the disruption of the process of casting a Buddhist temple bell because of the polluting presence of women is a motif found in well-known Noh plays of the time, such as *Dōjōji*.⁴⁶

Within the Sōtō sect, secret transmission documents such as the 1810 *Ryūgi no daiji* also recommended that, during precept ordination ceremonies or any temple or shrine visit, all women should carry a special talisman with a stamp of the three treasures (Buddha, dharma, and saṅgha), to avoid offending the Buddha and other deities with their impure menstrual blood.⁴⁷ In addition, the *kirigami* details two other talismans—one to stop menstruation and the other to start it up again—that were to be ingested respectively before and after a temple visit. The Sōtō sect also sold other talismans to ward off women's pollution, mainly featuring Ususama Myōō, a deity best known in monastic Zen as the guardian of the toilet but otherwise popularly known as a deity with great powers of purification. His ability to cleanse both men and women of sexual diseases was particularly well known. In other words, while highlighting the power of the *Ketsubonkyō* to save women from hell, Sōtō priests persuaded women of this by simultaneously emphasizing their polluted nature, which not only offended sacred

beings in this world but was also the cause of their being condemned to the Blood Pool Hell in the next. Salvation had damnation as its prerequisite.

Ketsubonkyō ritual activities were also conducted by women, including both parish members and pilgrims. At Shōsenji, these activities ranged from copying the sūtra to placing it in coffins at funerals. Although it was still relatively rare in the eighteenth century for women to hand-copy sūtras in Chinese characters, extant copies by Sōtō Zen members at Shōsenji attest to this practice. A 1783 sūtra copy, for example, transcribed by the mother of Matsudaira Sagami no kami, included a prayer she wrote in hopes of achieving birth in the Western Pure Land.⁴⁸ Achieving birth in a buddha land, or at least avoiding the Blood Pool Hell, seems to have also been the purpose of placing the *Ketsubonkyō* in a woman's coffin at the time of her funeral; alternatively, it might be placed in the grave of a female relative who had not received the sūtra at the time of her death. Another ritual that involved offering copies of the *Ketsubonkyō* at Shōsenji was the river *segaki* ceremony. Like other *segaki* rituals dedicated to the *muenbotoke* (the dead without relations), the ceremony was held annually up until the 1950s at a nearby river.⁴⁹ The riverside ceremony involved setting up a wooden Jizō image with a temporary altar. After recitation of the sūtra, copies of the text would be floated down the river for the welfare of all suffering beings, but especially for women who had died in childbirth and for miscarried or aborted children. To demonstrate symbolically the alleviation of suffering of those in the Blood Pool Hell, the ritual participants would pour water onto a piece of red cloth, suspended on four bamboo poles over the river, until the red dye had washed out.⁵⁰

During the Tokugawa period, Sōtō Zen priests specialized in such funerary rites for women and children who had died during childbirth. These rites numbered among the many “special circumstance” funerals for those who had died particularly violent deaths, including death at sea.⁵¹ While such practices are not mentioned in earlier medieval Sōtō Zen documents, from the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, priests wrote a large number of *kirigami* on how to perform rites for women and their children who had died in childbirth.⁵² Deaths in childbirth were frequent, and lay people looked to priests to perform special rites for such circumstances. As Glassman suggests in Chapter 5, this was owing to a popular belief that a woman who died in childbirth was thought to wander after death in the “intermediary stage” (*chūin*) as a ghost (*ubume*) if the child and the mother were not “separated.”⁵³ People thought that because such female ghosts were unable

to achieve salvation, they would haunt the living and wreak havoc on local communities out of resentment. Most *kirigami* of this genre therefore detail ritual methods to separate the mother and child (*betsu-buku*), so that both would be able to receive proper funerary attention. For example, the child's gender needed to be determined to assign a proper posthumous name. These secret transmission manuals also outlined ways to quietly chant the names of the Ten Buddhas by blowing them into the left ear of the dead woman, as well as how to draw special Sanskrit diagrams of the Five Buddhas on the woman's face to ensure her salvation.⁵⁴ Finally the coffin would be closed and struck with "a branch of an eastern-facing peach tree."⁵⁵ Apparently, this served as a magical formula signifying the "giving birth of the child" in the coffin or the "expelling of the fetus."⁵⁶ Though the noted Sōtō monk Menzan Zuihō (1683–1769) criticized this practice, this ritual symbolically separating the mother and child meant that it was no longer necessary to physically remove the fetus and thus provided a way for ordinary priests to avoid the impurity of blood and death.⁵⁷ Sōtō Zen temples such as Ubume Kannon ("Birthing Woman" Kannon) in present-day Shizuoka prefecture, also mentioned by Glassman in Chapter 5, was one such temple to become famous based on legends of the female ghosts saved and the pregnant women protected by its ritual services.

As a rule, children did not receive special funerals because they were not thought to be fully "human" and thus deserving of a funeral until a certain age.⁵⁸ During the Tokugawa period, however, Sōtō Zen priests participated in a small but growing trend to provide children who died with special funerary rites and separate graves.⁵⁹ The idea of young children having spirits was also taken up in preaching campaigns against infanticide, especially in the Tōhoku region. Sōtō Zen temples such as Shōonji in the Sendai domain, under instructions from the Office of Temples and Shrines, took a central role in preaching campaigns at villages in the Higashiyama region to educate peasants about the evils of infanticide. This was despite the general inclination of villagers to ignore such preaching because of the economic burdens of rearing multiple children.⁶⁰ Preaching manuals produced at other Sōtō Zen temples, such as Rinnōji and Kōkenji, noted the prevalence of infanticide in the Tōhoku region and emphasized the evil of killing children—said to result in rebirth as a snake—as well as the importance of having many children, in an effort to counter the popular impression that having more than one or two children would result in poverty.⁶¹ Graphic paintings of the tortures in hells reserved for women who committed infanticide can also be found from the early nineteenth century, attesting to the rise both of religious injunc-

tions against killing and of governmental pressures to increase the Japanese population.⁶²

The practice of providing a copy of the sūtra to women during precept ordination (*jukai*) ceremonies represents another uniquely Sōtō Zen ritual associated with the *Ketsubonkyō*, one that spread to virtually all Sōtō temples.⁶³ Posthumous precept ordination at funerals, where lay members were ordained as priests, were a significant part of death rites, but precept ordination for the living was equally important. The priests gave out the *Ketsubonkyō* along with the *kechimyaku* to women after giving a dharma lecture on the sūtra's merits, such as the one translated above.⁶⁴ With the words "*Ketsubonkyō* for the buddhahood of women" written on the front cover of the sūtra, the text was believed to purify women before they joined the family of the buddhas.

Belief in this talismanic function of the sūtra flourished in part because the text was so short; a single slip of paper with the sūtra printed on it could be wrapped in an amulet cover. The alleged power of the sūtra to remove "impurities" also encouraged its use as an amulet for safe childbirth. Such amulets were dispensed at Shōsenji up until about 1937. The sūtra was placed in the pregnant woman's waistband, and after birth, the seven Sanskrit characters representing Jizō were cut out of the sūtra. Each Sanskrit character was drunk on seven consecutive nights, commemorating the seven nights during which the abbot had copied the sūtra according to its origin legend. The family took back the remaining uncut section of the sūtra to the temple so that a new sūtra could be obtained for the period until the mother fully recovered.⁶⁵

Though these practices were specifically aimed at women in the Shōsenji community, they were also organized by women's associations in nearby villages and thus spread across sectarian lines. Starting in the late Tokugawa period, on the twenty-fourth of each month, women gathered at the temple as part of a Jizōkō (Jizō association) to recite, among other hymns, the *Ketsubonkyō wasan* (Hymn of the Blood Pool Hell Sūtra):

Homage to the revered *Ketsubonkyō*.
 Since women's evil karma is so deep,
 this sūtra was preached as a sea of compassion.
 We cross the sea of suffering because
 the menstrual blood flows seven days of the month,
 and the evil blood of childbirth
 pollutes the *kami* and buddhas,
 causing deep transgressions.
 Further, this evil blood soaks into the earth

swelling up into a pool
 forty thousand *yojana* deep, forty thousand *yojana* wide.
 This eighty thousand *yojana* hell
 was created by none other than ourselves.
 Once born as a woman,
 it matters not whether one is rich or poor;
 all fall into this hell without fail.
 Now, what does this hell look like?
 Demons lay out rope and nets and
 prod everyone, “Cross, cross.”
 If one can’t cross, one sinks into the pool,
 though one’s hair stays aloft like floating weeds.
 Insects with black metallic, long snouts
 cover one’s whole body to pierce the skin and eat the flesh.
 If one tries to escape to one shore of the pool,
 the hell guardians are there to chase people back.
 At the other shore, a line of demons is waiting.
 Fear from every direction—
 what a pitiful condition for women!
 Listen to the waves in the pool:
 they are as loud as mountains crashing down.
 Look at the women who manage to reach the shore:
 their black hair, once groomed so carefully,
 has turned a gruesome red.
 Their bodies are all skin and bones,
 for the three daily meals are blood balls,
 while blood is the only drink.
 The demons tell them, “Drink, drink!
 All this is caused by the evil karma in your previous life.”
 All the women just wail, emitting a sound more frightening
 than millions of thunderbolts,
 sadly thinking of their evil karma in past lives
 and wondering why they have to suffer so.
 One must therefore have gratitude for one’s mother
 and perform services in memory of her,
 which will without doubt take away her suffering and give her ease.
 Homage to this *sūtra* that saves all women,
 a *sūtra* that all women should recite and recommend to others
 so that everyone can pray for the world beyond.
 If this is done, one’s deceased mother, sister, and all women
 with the helping hand of Jizō
 can be freed from this Blood Pool Hell’s suffering
 to arrive at the Pure Land to listen to the highest teachings

and become friends with the buddhas and bodhisattvas.
Homage to this sūtra that saves all women.⁶⁶

This hymn follows the basic narrative of the *Ketsubonkyō* but made it easier for women to understand the doctrine through recitation. The use of hymns to visualize the horrors of hell was one of a number of popular practices, along with the use of hell scrolls in preaching, in which contents of Buddhist sūtras were made easier to understand. Priests propagated faith in the sūtra through hymn singing at the temple, but in the greater Abiko-Tonegawa region, a heavy concentration of women's associations participated in the *Ketsubonkyō* cult independently of the temple, in order to avoid painful childbirth or rebirth in hell.⁶⁷ The Matsudokkō (Matsudo Association) was one such group, based on the cult of a local deity famous for ensuring safe childbirth, the Matsudō Daimyōjin enshrined at the Matsudō Shrine in Abiko Village. Matsudokkō women's associations made donations to both Shōsenji and one of its branch temples, Hakusenji, as attested by stone markers dating from as early as 1775.⁶⁸ Both temples enshrined statues of the life-prolonging Jizō for help in the next world, but the women of the association also expressed their concern for the next world with stone markers commemorating the powers of Matsudō Daimyōjin for help in this world. As Iishiro Kazuko and Seki Tadao have argued, the fire at Shōsenji during the Meiwa period (1764–1771) provided a catalyst for the temple to engage in new fundraising, focused on *Ketsubonkyō* activities.⁶⁹ It was precisely during this period that Shōsenji's appeal to women's associations like the Matsudokkō met with enthusiastic response, due to the dissemination of the Blood Pool Hell legend in the form of large-scale woodblock printings of the *Ketsubonkyō engi* as well as through the preaching campaigns utilizing pictorial illustrations of the legend. Both the propagation by Sōtō Zen priests of the sūtra and of its doctrines of women's pollution and the Blood Pool Hell, and also the participation by women of the Abiko-Tonegawa village association in related ritual activity, made Shōsenji a major center of *Ketsubonkyō* faith. This sūtra, which could be copied as a prayer to attain birth in the Pure Land, was placed in a coffin to assure that the deceased did not fall into the Blood Pool Hell. But it was also used as a talisman to erase impurities or achieve easy childbirth. Sōtō Zen priests transformed the text from having the solely otherworldly function of saving women from the Blood Pool Hell to a multifunctional talismanic sūtra. From cradle to grave, Sōtō Zen priests "used" this sūtra to help create yet another set of ritual activities that purported not only to assist women in this world but also to manage their death in the world beyond.

The Long Journey to Become a Buddha-Ancestor

The management of the dead through the Zen funeral and rites associated with the *Ketsubonkyō* exposes a fundamental disjuncture in the Zen funerary system. The Zen funeral's attraction, as suggested above, lay in the notion that, through priestly intervention, the deceased could immediately attain a state equal to that of the Buddha. However, *Ketsubonkyō* rites along with other aspects of death management were based on the premise that the dead person had fallen into a realm of immense suffering, such as the hungry ghost or hell realms, and needed the help of priests and family members. To be logically consistent, if the Zen priest had been successful in sending the dead person to a buddha land at the funeral stage, there would be no need for the ancestral memorial services held on a regular timetable for up to thirty-three years after death. One cynical explanation for this seeming contradiction would be that Sōtō Zen priests simply took advantage of the coercive nature of the Tokugawa-period parishioner-temple system to multiply the number of annual and memorial rites for the dead and thus obligate their parishioners to pay more money to the temple, thereby securing a steady income base. However, it is also possible to understand this disjuncture between funeral and other posthumous rites by recognizing that two parallel understandings of the afterlife co-existed in funerary Zen without ever having to be fully integrated or explained.⁷⁰ The logic of the Sōtō Zen funeral—salvation through posthumous priestly ordination and the bestowal of the Zen lineage chart—functioned simultaneously with the logic of long-term death management that Sōtō Zen priests found more broadly in the generic Buddhist discourse of the Ten Kings and Thirteen Buddhas and also locally in the form of pre-existing regional customs of ancestor veneration. While this would become a dilemma for Sōtō Zen in contemporary times, during the Tokugawa period the government-mandated parishioner system left little room for questioning the contradictory logics of these two classes of death management. However, as Mariko Walter suggests in Chapter 7, the issue of two contradictory logics—immediate salvation via the funeral and long-term postmortem management—coexisted in other sects as well. Walter also notes that the tension between the two logics is handled in sect-specific ways. In the case of Sōtō Zen, ignoring the contradiction and refusing to integrate them was its method of living with this dilemma.

When a person dies and is given a Buddhist funeral in Japan, it is customary for most people to refer to the deceased as *hotoke* or, more honorifically, *hotoke-sama*. The Sino-Japanese character used to represent the term *hotoke* is of course 仏, a character which is also read *butsu*

or “buddha.” In other words, the Sino-Japanese character which means buddha [*butsu*] is also given the native Japanese reading *hotoke*. And yet while people will speak of a deceased person as having “become a *hotoke*,” they do not say that he has “become a buddha [*butsu*].” This difference in usage arises since the term “buddha” [*butsu* 仏] originally meant “someone who has awakened to ultimate truth,” and not merely a deceased individual.⁷¹

As discussed above, the Sōtō Zen sect grew during the late medieval and early modern periods because it skillfully propagated ideas and practices specific to the sect while also incorporating local and common aspects of Japanese religious culture. Sōtō Zen perspectives on the afterlife were no different. As anthropologist Sasaki Kōkan has suggested, one feature of Japanese Buddhism has been to use the Sino-Japanese character for “buddha” to refer to the dead. Ambiguities such as the use of this term *hotoke* allowed the Sōtō Zen sect to maintain both that the dead were transformed into buddhas and yet at the same time retained the characteristics of a spirit that needed management. If the “logic of buddhahood” functioned within the funeral rite, a parallel “logic of spirit taming” shaped the other posthumous rites.

The notion that dead spirits remained in a polluted and unstable state and needed appeasement and taming existed prior to the advent of Buddhism in Japan. This idea of the dead continued to hold considerable sway in the common religious imagination of Tokugawa-period people. While ordinary people believed that some spirits of the dead easily found tranquility and a new residence, perhaps on mountain tops, many spirits were understood to be unstable and even dangerous if appropriate ritual action was not undertaken.⁷² Hence the need for priestly intervention. Pre-Buddhist ideas of the unstable spirit that had not yet departed for the land of Yomi (the underworld) also combined with Buddhist ideas of “intermediate existence” between this life and the next. By the late medieval period, this created a pervasive *mentalité* that funerary rites functioned both to purify the dead and to prevent an unfortunate fate for both the dead and the living, especially in the case of those spirits prone to attack or possess the living or to cause calamities or epidemics.⁷³ Thus a major concern of Buddhist priests came to include managing unstable, unruly, or wrathful spirits of the dead by appeasing them through music and dance, by driving them away with bonfires, or by containing them.⁷⁴ By these rituals, people hoped to placate the spirits over time so that they would be transformed into either benign “ancestors” (*senzo*) or “guardian *kami*” who could protect the family or the village. This religious belief pervaded the Japanese religious landscape by the late medieval period

and encouraged the logic of death rituals performed over time. This discrepant logic, an alternative to the immediate salvation of the Zen funeral, had to coexist with it in the framework of funerary Zen.

The multivalent status of the deceased was succinctly captured in the term *hotoke*, which could “signify variously buddha, ancestral spirit, and spirit of the dead.”⁷⁵ Although scholars disagree as to why or when the term *hotoke* came into use as a general term for the deceased, by the Tokugawa period, the theological use of the term “buddha” to refer to an enlightened person overlapped the popular meaning of the term “hotoke” to refer to the dead.⁷⁶ While the rhetoric of Zen priests focused on the power of their funerals to send the dead to “the land of the Buddha,” have them “achieve the same state as the Buddha,” or cause them to “join the Buddha’s family,” they simultaneously performed a wide range of posthumous rites premised on the assumption that the “spirit” also needed to be cared for over time. Although some scholars have argued that Sōtō Zen priests simply “accommodated superstitious folk beliefs,” in fact they helped to promote the very idea of that death rituals over time were a necessity.

The logic behind memorial rites, generally called *tsuizen kuyō*, evolved from both folk religious beliefs about the commemoration of ancestors and Buddhist ideas about the spirits of the dead. The folk religious belief was that the spirit required a certain amount of time to settle down from the upheaval of death and rid itself from death’s pollution. The Buddhist belief was that the spirit needed time and merit, whether produced by that individual’s own disciplines or dedicated by someone else, to cancel the heavy weight of bad karma that the deceased had accumulated. On the one hand, then, the goal of such funerary rites was to help the dead spirit settle down and become purified through the ritual intercession of the living, thus transforming the polluted body of the newly deceased into a venerated ancestor. On the other hand, the goal was not only to help the dead join the collective ancestral body of the household; through the cancellation of karma, the deceased—often thought to be dwelling among the hungry ghosts or in the hell realms—could also be transformed into the body of the Buddha or, at least, into a resident of the higher of the six realms in Buddhist cosmology.⁷⁷

The Ten Kings and the Thirteen Buddhas

Buddhist memorial and ancestral rites almost always included both these ideas. These rites took their most developed form in the elaborate series of Thirteen Buddha Rites (*jūsan butsuji*), which constituted the most common ritual observed at Sōtō Zen temples during the To-

kugawa period. The rites of the Thirteen Buddhas had their roots in Chinese Buddhist belief in the Ten Kings (*jūō*). Chinese Buddhist apocryphal texts, such as the *Sūtra on the Prophecy of King Yama*, detailed the seven rituals that descendants of the deceased needed to perform during the first forty-nine days after death (the number of days traditionally said to elapse before rebirth), so that the dead might escape punishment in hell and be reborn in the heavenly realms.⁷⁸ In addition to these rituals, three further rites of propitiation were offered to the Ten Kings, who were said to guard the hell realms, on the hundredth day, first year, and third year after the death. The basic correspondence theory involved performing rites of offering for the intercession of the “protective buddhas,” who by being the “original source” of the Ten Kings, could influence the outcome of their judgment favorably and save the deceased from hell’s sufferings. These ten memorial rites for the dead, based on the belief in the Ten Kings, were developed in Japanese apocryphal sūtras and later became a standard part of funerary rites in the Shingon, Tendai, Zen (Rinzai and Sōtō), Jōdo, and Nichiren traditions.⁷⁹

In the case of Sōtō Zen, the Ten Kings and Ten Buddhas belief seems to have developed from the time of the well-known priest Tsūgen Jakurei (1322–1391), who, according to his “recorded sayings,” conducted such rituals. Paintings depicting the Ten Kings judging the dead were used for ritual or didactic purposes at the old New Year celebration, on the sixteenth of the first month, or during the Obon Festival in the summer, which were times of the year when the ancestral spirits were thought to return to this world. Enomoto Chika’s study of Ten Kings paintings used in ritual practice at temples in the Murayama region of Yamagata Prefecture reveals that Tokugawa-period prayer practices were aimed at achieving salvation for ancestors by praying in front of such paintings.⁸⁰ It is likely that rites centering on appeasing the Ten Kings took place both when ancestral spirits were thought to be present as well as on fixed dates after a person’s death. During the Kamakura period (1185–1333), three additional rites—for the seventh, thirteenth, and thirty-third year after death—were added, along with three additional buddhas, bringing the total to Thirteen Buddha Rites.⁸¹

Though the notion of the Ten Kings did not completely disappear, by the Tokugawa period, the Thirteen Buddhas series of rites became standard at most Buddhist temples, including Sōtō Zen temples. Indeed, to complete the full cycle of the thirty-three-year memorial service for one’s ancestors became a major theme at Sōtō Zen parish temples.⁸² An account of one such case from the late Tokugawa period tells how the abbot of Chōjuin in Shimōsa province explained to a

family the purpose and necessity of the full set of Thirteen Buddha Rites, one by one, to prevent their recently deceased head of the household from falling into the hells. For example, he said that the fourteenth-day rite was necessary because Shokō-ō, the hell king of that day, had related to him that:

The [deceased] is suffering and crying because of the evil acts he committed toward his wife during his life. However, his death did him no good because the inheritance he left had become a source of contention among the children. Having left behind such unfilial children, it was inevitable that he would fall into hell. However, if a memorial service were held [on that day], it would serve as a mysterious method to save him.⁸³

The family paid for the necessary ceremony, only to be told by the abbot on the twenty-first day that the next hell king was now ready to throw the man into hell, but if the children donated the fees for the memorial service that day, there was still a chance that their father could be saved. Next, the family was told that they needed to pay for the thirty-fifth-day memorial service because, on this day, the deceased would be tied up in front of King Enma with a mirror placed in front of him to reflect his past evil karma. The munificence of the memorial service, explained the abbot, would determine whether the deceased would go to a buddha land or a heaven, return as a human, or be sent on to the next hell king. The abbot continued to offer rationales of this sort for three years, as the deceased was allegedly sent from one hell king's judgment to another, not only because of his own heavy karma but also because his living descendants' merit was not sufficient to bring him ultimate relief until all the Thirteen Buddhas Rites were completed.

Despite the logic of the funeral—that is, of immediate salvation through the priest's power to send the deceased into the company of the buddhas—a different kind of logic was at work in the ancestral memorial services held at the same temple. Just as in the case of women and the Blood Pool Hell, Sōtō Zen priests first had to condemn the dead to a lower realm of existence before the karma that weighed them down could gradually, over a thirty-three-year period, be erased via the Thirteen Buddha Rites.

Of the Thirteen Buddha Rites, those of the forty-ninth day and the thirty-third year were particularly charged with meaning. Until the forty-ninth day after death, the dead spirit was said to exist in a liminal state. This was also the minimum socially accepted time of mourning,

though in certain regions mourning lasted for up to a full year. Because the spirit was thought to leave its house on the forty-ninth day to proceed either to the family grave or to another world, this was a crucial juncture when the pollution of death was lifted. The forty-ninth day (or in some cases, the thirty-fifth day, as in the case from Chōjuin mentioned above) represented the juncture at which the fate of the dead person was determined, thus making it a particularly heightened moment in Buddhist death management. Furthermore, the day marked a sense of closure for the living, who had observed special customs during that period. Based on the idea that the family was also affected by the pollution of the corpse, customs such as using salt to purify themselves after the funeral, or refraining from getting married during the first year, became commonplace.

The third and final significant moment in the Buddhist management of the dead came in the thirty-third year after the death. In the Sōtō Zen tradition, the practice of performing the full set of rites up to the thirty-third year appears to have become standard by the mid-Tokugawa period, as seen in the *Nenki saitenkō* of Manzan Dōhaku (1636–1714) and in the scroll paintings of the Thirteen Buddhas hung in temples for ritual use. In esoteric Buddhist traditions, the thirty-three years also symbolized the length of time the deceased in the Earth's Womb took to mature and be reborn as a full-fledged buddha.⁸⁴

After thirty-three years of rituals, the dead person was supposed to have become, in Buddhist parlance, fully liberated, and to have gone to a buddha land or become a buddha. Within the context of ancestral worship, the thirty-third year also signified the moment when a dead person was transformed into a full-fledged ancestor of the household. Stephen Teiser, in discussing the gradual transformation of the dead into ancestors in China, describes the purpose of ancestral rites as "... effect[ing] the passage of the dead from the status of a recently deceased, threatening ghost to that of a stable, pure, and venerated ancestor."⁸⁵ In Japan, in contrast to China, the notion of an ancestor was also conflated with that of a *kami*, prompting Robert Smith to note that the thirty-third year marked a transition from "a buddha to god."⁸⁶ Furthermore, as suggested by the practice of removing an ancestor's individual memorial tablet from the family Buddhist altar—by throwing it away, placing it on the *kami* altar (*kamidana*), or taking it back to the Buddhist temple—the thirty-third year brought to an end the significance of the individual's deceased spirit, as the personality was by then assumed to have merged with the collective of household "ancestors" (*senzo*). Smith has described this process as one whereby

“...his [the deceased’s] spirit is ritually and symbolically purified and elevated; it passes gradually from the stage of immediate association with the corpse, which is thought to be both dangerous and polluting, to the moment when it loses its individual identity and enters the realm of the generalized ancestral spirits, essentially purified and benign.”⁸⁷ Just as in the world of the living, where the household, rather than the individual, was the basic religious unit in the Tokugawa period, the dead could not long retain their individuality either.

While the deceased after thirty-three years was still thought of in multiple ways—as a *kami*, an ancestor, a buddha, or a resident of a buddha land—Sōtō Zen priests could not help but participate in this long series of ancestral memorial services. The Sōtō Zen priest’s explanation above, that the weight of the deceased’s karma was so heavy that it required ritual action for thirty-three years, was a response to living relatives’ hope that their ancestors, who might have fallen into a state of suffering, could benefit from this-worldly intercession. Jacques LeGoff has suggested in regard to the Christian tradition:

From the earliest centuries of the Church, Christians, as funeral inscriptions reveal, hoped that a dead man’s fate was not definitively sealed at his demise, and that the prayers and the offerings—that is, the intercession—of the living could help dead sinners escape Hell, or, at least, benefit from less harsh treatment.⁸⁸

Similarly, the Sōtō Zen priest acted as a mediator between the living and the dead and between this world and the next, resulting in a fluid world of multiple, and sometimes contradictory, funerary practices.

Although a part of the appeal of Sōtō Zen funerary rites was the bestowal of a *kechimyaku* and a special posthumous ordination at the funeral that was thought to immediately give the deceased membership in the Buddha’s lineage or even buddhahood itself, the more generic notion in both Buddhist and local religious culture—that the dead required a more lengthy period of ritualization—played an equally important role in funerary Zen. Whether it was women’s condemnation to the Blood Pool Hell or the Thirteen Buddha memorial rites, the presumed heavy weight of their karma was used to explain the need for managing the dead through a more gradual ascendance to buddhahood or ancestorhood. It was precisely the flexibility of Sōtō Zen priests, who permitted wide-ranging local variation in the coexistence of both the logic of the funeral proper and the management of the dead over time, that made funerary Zen a key factor in the growth of Sōtō Zen, embedding the sect in the fabric of ordinary people’s religious life during the Tokugawa period.

Notes

An earlier version of this essay appeared as chap. 3 of my book, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

1. The link between women and rebirth as snakes in Japanese culture is explored in Mamoru Takada, *Onna to hebi* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1999), 95–134. In English, see Carmen Blacker, “The Snake Woman in Japanese Myth and Legend,” in *Animals in Folklore*, ed. J. R. Porter and W. M. S. Russell (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer for the Folklore Society, 1978), 113–125; Susan B. Klein, “Women as Serpent: The Demonic Feminine in the Noh Play *Dōjōji*,” in *Religious Reflections on the Human Body*, ed. Jane Marie Law (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 100–136; and Mary Picone, “Lineaments of Ungratified Desire: Rebirth in Snake Form in Japanese Popular Religion,” *Res* 5 (1983): 105–114.

2. The earliest known version of this story, the *Ketsubonkyō engi* held by Shōsenji, Temple (Chiba prefecture) dates to 1736. However, I did not have access to it. The version cited above is from the *Nyonin jōbutsu Ketsubonkyō engi* of Ansei 4 (1857) by Seien Tairyō, manuscript held at Shōsenji. A printed version can be found in Hagiwara Tatsuo, “Ansei yonenban Ketsubonkyō engi (Abikoshi Shōsenji shozō),” *Shiryō to denshō* 1 (1980): 20–22. The entire text is translated in Duncan Williams, “Representations of Zen: A Social and Institutional History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Edo Japan” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2001). See also ns. 38 and 41 below.

3. Although the abbot in this story is made to seem like a Sōtō Zen priest, in 1417, when the story takes place, Shōsenji was not yet affiliated with the Sōtō sect. Since the earliest text recording this legend dates from the mid-Tokugawa period, it is likely that Sōtō Zen priests at Shōsenji created it to help raise funds and create new rituals for the temple.

4. George Smith, *Ten Weeks in Japan* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861), 145.

5. This represents a slightly abridged and revised version of the *Taiya nenju*, which can be found in *Keizan shingi, Sōtōshū zenshū* (hereafter *SZ*), ed. Sōtōshū Zensho Kankōkai, 1929–1935; rev. 18 vols. (Tokyo: Sōtōshū Shūmuchiō, 1970–1973), 2:449. It has been translated by Nara Yasuaki (a.k.a. Nara Kōmei), “May the Deceased Get Enlightenment! An Aspect of the Enculturation of Buddhism in Japan,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 15 (1995): 38–39. Satō Shōshi has noted the influence of Jōdo and Ritsu practices of *Taiya nenju* on this Sōtō Zen version in his “Shūmon sōsai girei no henshen” 1–2, *Kyōka ken-shū* 33 (1990): 55.

6. See Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 1963), 83.

7. The interrelation between sectarian Buddhist and non- and pre-Buddhist funerary practices is complex and has received substantial attention

from Japanese Buddhist scholars, anthropologists, and historians. Halldór Stefánsson has classified three major approaches to the study of funerals: (1) studies that emphasize the Buddhist aspect of funerals, focusing on how Buddhism took over an aspect of Japanese religious life that had previously been considered taboo (for example, Haga Noboru); (2) studies that emphasize the non-Buddhist aspects of funerals, highlighting the indigenous roots of funerary and ancestral rites (for example, Yanagita Kunio and Takeda Chōshū); and (3) studies that emphasize the structural or systemic aspects of funerals (for example, Herman Ooms). To these he adds his approach, which focuses on the collective forms of concern for the dead, such as village-level practices; see his "On Structural Duality in Japanese Conceptions of Death: Collective Forms of Death Rituals in Morimachi," in *Ceremony and Ritual in Japan: Religious Practices in an Industrialized Society*, ed. Jan van Bremen and D. P. Martinez (London: Routledge, 1995), 83–107). To these four approaches, I would add another: studies that emphasize the role Confucian ideas played in forming funerary practices (for example, Kaji Nobuyuki).

The relevant works here are Haga Noboru, *Sōgi no rekishi* (Tokyo: Yūzan-kaku, 1970); Takeda Chōshū, *Sosen sūhai* (Kyōto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1957) and *Minzoku bukkyō to sosen shinkō* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1971); Yanagita Kunio, "Senzo no hanashi," *Teibon Yanagita Kunio* 10 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969), 1–152; *Sōsō shūzoku goi* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975); "Sōei no enkaku shiryō," *Teibon Yanagita Kunio* 15 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969), 521–552; Herman Ooms, "A Structural Analysis of Japanese Ancestral Rites and Beliefs," in *Ancestors*, ed. William Newell (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 61–90; and Kaji Nobuyuki, *Chinmoku no shūkyō: Jukyō* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1994).

8. This section on Zen funerals as found in monastic regulations (*shingi*) is largely based on Matsuura Shūkō, *Zenke no sōhō to tsuizen kuyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1969) and *Sonshuku sōhō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1985); Narikawa Mineo, "Zenshū no sōsai girei," *Aichi Gakuin Daigaku Zen kenkyūjo kiyō* 24 (1995): 121–166; and Satō Shōshi, "Shūmon sōsai girei no hensen" 1–2, *Kyōka kenshū* 33 (1990): 46–62, and 34 (1991): 39–53. On Chinese Chan funerals, see also Alan Cole, "Upside Down/Right Side Up: A Revisionist History of Buddhist Funerals in China," *History of Religions* 35, no. 4 (1996): 307–338, and on their transformation in Japan, see William M. Bodiford, "Zen in the Art of Funerals: Ritual Salvation in Japanese Buddhism," *History of Religions* 32, no. 2 (1992): 146–164, and *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 187–190.

9. After Dōgen's own death, his disciple Ejō simply recited the *Shari raimon* without performing a Chan/Zen funeral; see Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 192.

10. For an overview of the history of the various extant copies and printed

editions of the *Keizan shingi*, see Ichimura Shōhei, trans. and ed., *Zen Master Keizan's Monastic Regulations* (Tsurumi: Daihonzan Sōjiji, 1994), 365–392.

11. The Chinese Chan monastic codes reflected the coexistence of Chan and Pure Land practices, but Keizan decided to replace, for instance, the recitation to Amida Buddha (*Amida butsu jūnen*) with the recitation of the Names of the Ten Buddhas (*jūbutsumyō*). However, as Satō Shōshi has noted, the Pure Land elements returned in later Sōtō Zen monastic regulations, as the idea of the soul going to a Pure Land after death became a part of the common culture of later medieval and Tokugawa-period Japanese funerary culture; see “Shūmon sōsai girei no henshen” (1): 59. By the time of the funerals of the well-known Sōtō monks Meihō in 1350 and Tsūgen in 1391, the recitations also included esoteric Buddhist dhāraṇī and as well as the *kōmyō shingon*.

12. Although I have linked the popularization of the Zen funeral to the Tokugawa-period parish temple system, others have pointed to the emergence in the seventeenth century of rites for dead children and the accompanying notion that all individuals must have funerals performed as an indicator of its growth. See Kyōka Kenshūjo, ed., *Shūmon sōsai no tokushitsu o saguru* (Kyōto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1985), 265–266.

13. Tamamuro Taijō's study of the growth of funerary practices in the later medieval period through the study of funeral sermons has been widely cited (see his *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 128–130). However, William Bodiford has correctly critiqued Tamamuro's misleading method of counting the number of relevant pages in the “Zen master's sayings” (*goroku*) to suggest the growing significance of funerary Buddhism and the relative insignificance of Zen meditation. For example, Bodiford notes that pages counted as “funerary” because they are funeral sermons also make reference to Zen monastic practices (*Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 197–199). While Bodiford's critique of Tamamuro's methodology is accurate, Tamamuro's conclusions are nevertheless irrefutable; funerary practices for Sōtō Zen priests became increasingly dominant in the late medieval and early modern period, while Zen meditation was virtually nonexistent.

14. For details of the simplification process, see Tamamuro, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 123–127.

15. This 1633 *kirigami*, *Geko no daiji* (A manual for the [symbolic] firing of the wood in cremation), was written by Donryō, abbot of Yōkōji. A printed version appears in Ishikawa Rikizan, “Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron” (10), *Komazawa Daigaku bukkyōgakubu ronshū* (hereafter *KDBR*) 18 (1987): 170. The English translation is from Nara, “May the Deceased Get Enlightenment!” 39–40, modified.

16. This basic pattern appears in funerals of other sects as well. See, for example, the discussion of late medieval and Tokugawa-period descriptions of Jōdo funerals in Kamii Fumiaki, “Jōdoshū sōgishiki no henshen,” *Sōsai bukkyō*:

Sono rekishi to gendaiteki kadai, ed. Fujii Masao and Itō Yuishin (Tokyo: Jōdoshū Sōgō Kenkyūjo, 1997), 51–95; and Asano Hisae, “‘Muen’ no na o motsu shomotsu tachi: Kinsei sōshiki teibikisho shōkai,” *Bukkyō minzoku kenkyū* 7 (1991): 1–21.

17. Mention of these new practices can be found in the *Tōjō sōdō shingi gyōhōshō* (1753) and the *Tōjō sōdō shingi kōtei betsureku* (1752), in *SZ: Shingi*, 29–208 and 209–330, respectively.

18. On the incorporation of Onmyōdō ideas about directional taboos or coffin placement into Zen funerary practices, see Ozaki Masayoshi, “Sōtōshū sōsai girei to Onmyōdō” (1), *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū kiyō* (hereafter *IBK*) 45, no. 1 (1996): 202–205, and (2) *Sōtōshū kenkyūin kenkyū kiyō* (hereafter *SKK*) 28 (1997): 219–238.

19. Zen funerals specifically designated for the laity were not created until the mid-Meiji period; see Satō, “Shūmon sōsai girei no henshen” (2), 39–53. Indeed, the three types of Sōtō funerals that are currently performed (that is, for high priests, ordinary priests, and lay persons) were first clearly distinguished in the postwar manual *Shōwa kaitei Sōtōshū gyōji kihan* (1950) by the Sōtōshū Shūmuchō.

20. Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 195.

21. Bodiford, “Zen in the Art of Funerals.”

22. For the *Motsugo sasō jukai shiki*, see Ishikawa, “Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron” (8), *KDBR* 17 (1986): 186, and (9), *Komazawa Daigaku bukkyōgakubu kenkyū kiyō* (hereafter *KDBK*) 45 (1987): 173.

23. Translation from Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 195–196. For the *Motsugo jukai sahō* and the similar *Mōja jukai kirigami*, as well as discussion of these two texts, see Ishikawa, “Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron” (2), *KDBR* 14 (1983): 128–129, (4) *KDBR* 15 (1984): 158–159, (7) *KDBK* 44 (1986): 266; and “Chūsei Sōtōshū ni okeru jukai girei ni tsuite: Shuju no jukai girei shinansho no hassei to sono shakaiteki kinō,” *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 32, no. 3 (1989): 65–66.

24. This *kirigami*, the *Busso shōden bosatsukai no kechimiyaku saigoku mujō no daiji*, can be found in Ishikawa, “Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron” (14), *KDBR* 20 (1989): 129. The translation is from Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 64, which mistakenly cites it as being in Ishikawa, “Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron” (6), *KDBR* 16 (1985).

25. On the roots of the *kechimiyaku* in Japanese Buddhism, see Nakao Ryōshin, “Zenmon no sōsai to kaimyō juyō,” *Nihon bukkyō gakkai nenpō* 63 (1998): 145–147.

26. See Faure, *Visions of Power*, 64.

27. Hirose Ryōkō, “Nihon Sōtōshū no chū, kinsei ni okeru jukai to kaimyō,” in *Kaimyō no imi to kinō*, ed. Sōtōshū Gendai Kyōgaku Sentā (Tokyo: by the editor, 1995), 63.

28. This can be found under the section titled *Dōgen Zenji Eiheiiji konpon dō kechimyaku ike no koto* in the *Getsuan suiseiki*, held at Kyōto University Library. A very similar text also appeared under the title *Kechimyakudo rei* in the several other Tokugawa-period Sōtōshū collections. For more on Dōgen saving a ghost in these texts, see Tsutsumi Kunihiro, “Ano yo no shōkohin: Kinsei setsuwa no naka no katasode yūreitan,” *Setsuwa denshōgaku* 7 (1999): 138–141.

29. The early nineteenth century witnessed a boom in legends of ghosts and ghost stories narrated in popular literature and performance; see Deguchi Midori, “One Hundred Demons and One Hundred Supernatural Tales,” in *Japanese Ghosts and Demons: Art of the Supernatural*, ed. Stephen Addiss (New York: George Braziller, 1985), 15–24.

30. “Tsumi naku shite korosaru mono onrei to naru koto,” *Inga monogatari*, vol. 1, no. 10.1, *Koten bunko* 185, ed. Yoshida Kōichi (Tokyo: Koten Bunko, 1962).

31. Tsutsumi, *Kinsei setsuwa to zensō* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1999), 172–173.

32. Tsutsumi Kunihiro surveys such ghost sleeves (*katasode yūrei*) among temples of different sects in his “Ano yo no shōkohin,” 138–141.

33. Legend no. 3471 in *Hanamaki no densetsu*, ed. Oikawa Jun (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1983).

34. For the story of the ghost of a jealous wife being saved by the Tokushōji abbot, see “Yūrei saido eden ryaku engi,” in *Tokushōji engi to jihō*, ed. Tokushōji Gojikai (Niigata: Tokushōji, 1994), 18–20.

35. This list can be found in the *Banshōzan Kikyūhō Tokunūji yuraisho*, in *Zoku Sōtōshū zensho: Jishi*, ed. Sōtōshū Kankōkai (Tokyo: Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, 1974), 119–123. For discussion, see Tsutsumi, *Kinsei setsuwa to zensō*, 181–183.

36. Tsutsumi, “Ano yo no shōkohin,” 133–134.

37. The *Ketsubonkyō*—or, more formally, the *Bussetsu daizō shōkyō ketsubonkyō*—is a very short, 420-character apocryphal sūtra (*Manji zokuzōkyō* 1–87.4, 299) produced in medieval China. A full translation appears in Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 199–206. A number of extant Chinese, Korean, and Japanese variants are analyzed by Takemi Momoko in “‘Menstruation Sūtra’ Belief in Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 10, nos. 2–3 (1983): 229–246 (231). The *Ketsubonkyō*’s origins in China (including Daoist versions) are explored by Michel Soymié, “Ketsubonkyō no shiryōteki kenkyū,” in *Dōkyō kenkyū* 1, ed. Michel Soymié and Iriya Yoshitaka (Tokyo: Shōshinsha, 1965), 109–166.

Classifications of extant Japanese *Ketsubonkyō* texts are discussed in Matsuo Hideaki, “Wagakuni ni okeru *Ketsubonkyō* shinkō ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu,” *Josei to shūkyō, Nihon joseishi ronshū* 5, ed. Sōgō Joseishi Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998), esp. 259–264. The best overview of *Ketsubonkyō* studies is Kōdate Naomi and Makino Kazuo, “Ketsubonkyō no juyō to tenkai,” in *Onna to otoko no jikū*, vol. 3, ed. Okano Haruko (Tokyo: Fujiwara

Shoten, 1996), 81–115. In English, see Kōdate Naomi, “Aspects of *Ketsubonkyō* Belief,” in *Practicing the Afterlife: Perspectives from Japan*, ed. Susanne Formanek and William R. LaFleur (Vienna: Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), 121–143. Scholars disagree as to whether *Ketsubonkyō* was first introduced to Japan between 1250 and 1350 or not until later in the Muromachi period (1392–1573), but the general consensus holds that its cult did not become widely popular until the early Tokugawa period.

38. The earliest, 1736 version of the founding legend has been attributed to Senjō Jitsugan (1722–1802) by the research team assembled by Sōtō Zen Headquarters (see Sōtōshū Shūhō Chōsa Iinkai, “Shūhō chōsa iinkai chōsa mokuroku oyobi kaidai: Shōsenji,” *Sōtō shūhō* 682 [1992]: 410). However, as Nakano Yūshin has argued, Jitsugan would have been only fifteen years old at that time, so his authorship is highly unlikely; as indicated in Jitsugan’s own *Yūkoku yoin*, it was probably authored by a fairly unknown Shōsenji monk prior to Jitsugan’s time (“Sōtōshū ni okeru Ketsubonkyō shinkō” 2, *Sōtōshū shūgaku kenkyūjo kiyō* 7 [1994]: 129–130).

39. Though the *Ketsubonkyō* activities at Shōsenji centered around the bodhisattva Jizō, most pictorial depictions of the Blood Pool Hell center on the salvific powers of Nyoirin Kannon; see Kōdate and Makino, “Ketsubonkyō no juyō to tenkai,” 86–94. Another rare example that ties Jizō to the Blood Pool is the Jizō at Chatōden in Minoge Village, Kanagawa prefecture; see Tokieda Tsutomu, “Sekibutsu to Ketsubonkyō shinkō: Ōyama sanroku Minoge no Jizōson o megutte,” *Nihon no sekibutsu* 32 (1984): 27–33.

40. On the role of Kumano *bikuni* in spreading the idea of the Blood Pool Hell, see Hagiwara Tatsuo, “Kumano bikuni no seitai,” in *Nihon minzoku fūdoron*, ed. Chiba Tokuji (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1980), 269–282; and *Miko to bukyōshi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983), 24–63; as well as Hayashi Masahiko, *Nihon no etoki* (Tokyo: Miai Shoten, 1982), 126–146. For the involvement of early Tokugawa-period Jōdo priests in *Ketsubonkyō* activities, see Kōdate Naomi, “Shiryō shōkai ‘Ketsubonkyō wage’: Kinseiki Jōdoshū ni okeru Ketsubonkyō shinkō,” *Bukkyō minzoku kenkyū* 6 (1989): 59–91; and Matsuoka, “Wagakuni ni okeru Ketsubonkyō shinkō ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu,” 269. On Tateyama and the *Ketsubonkyō*, see Kōdate Naomi, “Ketsubonkyō shinkō reijō toshite no Tateyama,” *Sangaku shugen* 20 (1997): 75–84. The “red-colored” waters of the hot springs at Tateyama reminded people of the Blood Pool Hell. Though Osorezan is not as well known for its *Ketsubonkyō* activities, the same practice conducted at Tateyama—of placing the sūtra into the “hell” of the hot springs to rescue women—continued there until very recently; see Duncan Williams and Miyazaki Fumiko, “The Intersection of the Local and the Trans-local at a Sacred Site: The Case of Osorezan in Tokugawa Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28, nos. 3–4 (2001): 399–440.

41. Founded in 1263 as a nunnery for Hosshō-ni, the daughter of Hōjō Tokiyori, Shōsenji was originally named Hosshōji and nominally affiliated with

the Rinzai sect. It was converted to a Sōtō Zen temple in the fifteenth century by Shunpō Shūō (d. 1506).

Among the extant *Ketsubonkyō engi*, founding legends that explain the appearance of the sūtra in Japan, all but one were produced at Shōsenji and contain the same basic story of how the suffering spirit of Hosshō-ni told the priest how to find the sūtra at Taganuma Marsh. The 1857 version translated in part above, the *Nyonin jōbutsu Ketsubonkyō engi*, differs from the other Shōsenji versions only in that it dates the Hosshō-ni incident to 1417, while earlier versions date it to 1397. For a partial cataloguing of these *engi*, see Nakano, “Sōtōshū ni okeru *Ketsubonkyō shinkō*” 2, 127–128; and for variants, see Takemi, “‘Menstruation Sūtra’ Belief in Japan,” 237–238.

42. See Kōdate and Makino, “*Ketsubonkyō no juyō to tenkai*,” 111.

43. This legend is found as a part of a *kirigami* from Yōkōji, the *Kawara konpon no kirigami*, which Ishikawa has dated to roughly 1628 (“Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron” [4], *KDBR* 15 [1984]: 152–169). The relevant section is translated in Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 207.

44. This lecture, entitled *Ketsubonkyō yūshutsu in'yu suishu*, is part of a collection of dharma lectures given by Unrei Taizen at *jukai-e* (precept ceremonies). The collection, the *Kaie rakusōdan*, is contained in *SZ: Zenkai*, 704–720.

45. Takemi, “‘Menstruation Sūtra’ Belief in Japan,” 243.

46. For psychoanalytical interpretations of the relationship between women, temple bells, sexuality, and salvation, see Klein, “Women as Serpent,” 100–136.

47. The text of this *kirigami* can be found in Sugimoto Shunryū, *Tōjō shitsunai kirigami sanzwa kenkyū narabi hiroku* (Tokyo: Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, rev. 1982), 16–17; rpt. in “*Ashiki gōron*” *kokufuku no tame ni*, ed. Sōtōshū Jinken Yōgo Suishin Honbu (Tokyo: Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, 1987), 134. While it is unclear from whom he received this teaching, the earliest version of this *kirigami* is attributed to Yūten in 1810, which makes it a rather late *kirigami* (see Sugimoto, 20).

48. Takemi, “‘Menstruation Sūtra’ Belief in Japan,” 243.

49. *Segaki* rituals were rites dedicated to feeding *gaki* (hungry ghosts) and consoling *muenbotoke*, those spirits unable to receive proper ancestral services because they had no descendants or only unfilial descendants. Originally, *segaki* ceremonies were held after large-scale natural disasters such as fires, flood, or earthquakes, because so many of the dead were thought to become hungry ghosts or *muenbotoke* on such occasions. Though independent of Obon rites, during the Tokugawa period, *segaki* rituals were often held at the same time, with households preparing a special altar for their ancestors and a different one for the other spirits. See Ozaki Masayoshi, “Segaki-e ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu,” *IBK* 43, no. 1 (1994): 131–134; and *SKK* 26 (1995): 91–104; as well as Richard Payne, “Shingon Services for the Dead,” in *Religions of Japan in Practice*, ed. George J. Tanabe, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999),

159–165. On *muenbotoke*, see Asano Hisae, “‘Muen’ no na o motsu shomotsu tachi: Kinsei sōshiki tebikisho shōkai,” *Bukkyō minzoku kenkyū* 7 (1991): 1–21; and Mogami Takayoshi, “Muenbotoke ni tsuite,” in *Sōsō bosei kenkyū shūsei* 3, ed. Takeda Chōshū (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1979), 386–393.

50. See Takemi, “‘Menstruation Sūtra’ Belief in Japan,” 241.

51. Namihira Emiko, “‘Jō shisha no sōhō to shūzoku,’” in *Bukkyō minzoku-gaku taikei* 4: *Sosen saishi to sōbo*, ed. Fujii Masao (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1988), 141–160.

52. A list of these *kirigami* was first compiled by Tsutsumi Kunihiko in *Kinsei setsuwa to zensō* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1999), 141. For an overview, see Ishikawa Rikizan, “Kirigami denshō to kinsei Sōtōshū: ‘Betsubuku,’ ‘motsugo sasō’ kankei kirigami no kinseiteki hen’yō o megutte,” in *Minzoku shūkyō no kōzō to keifu*, ed. Tamamuro Fumio (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1995), 298–322. See also Ishikawa, “Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron” (8), *KDBR* 17 (1986): 186–187; and (9), *KDBK* 45 (1987): 178–189; or *Zenshū sōden shiryō no kenkyū* (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 1:482–500, 2:995–1006.

53. See Katsurai Kazuo, “Kama no gara ni kansuru kinpi: Taiji bunri no koshū nōto,” *Tosa minzoku* 30 (1976); Minakata Kumakusu, “Haramifu no shigai yori taiji o hikihanasu koto,” *Kyōdo kenkyū* 5, no. 4 (1931): 245–246; Namihira, “‘Jō shisha no sōhō to shūzoku,’” 149–153; Sōtōshū Dendōbu Eidōka, ed., *Jinken kara mita baikaryū eisanka* (Tokyo: Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, 1992), 46–47; and Yamaguchi Yaichirō, “Shitai bunri maisō jiken: Ninpu sōsō girei,” *Minkan denshō* 17, no. 5 (1953).

54. *Betsubuku menjō bongyō*, in Ishikawa, “Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron” (9), *KDBK* 45 (1987): 178–189.

55. An example of such a *kirigami* is the *Tabi taiji mōja*. The motif of the peach tree being used to ward off demons or evil spirits was a common one in Chinese magical practices. It also occurs in the *Kojiki*, where the creator deity, Izanagi, threw peaches at the denizens of the land of Yomi (the underworld) who were following him; see Donald Philippi, trans., *Kojiki* (Tokyo: The Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 1959), 65. It was also thought that ghosts came in and out of the other world through an entrance found underneath the northeast branches of a large peach tree; see Xiuwen Wang, “Momo no densetsushi,” *Nihon kenkyū* 20 (2000): 125–172.

56. The motif of a child being born in a coffin or a grave (several well-known Sōtō Zen monks, such as Tsūgen Jakurei, were said to have born in a grave after their mothers died in childbirth) has been explored by Tsutsumi; see Tsutsumi Kunihiko, “Kosodate yūreitan no genzō: Sōtōshū sōsō girei o tegakari toshite” (1993); rpt. in *Setsuwa: Sukui toshite no shi*, ed. Setsuwa Denshō Gakkai (Tokyo: Kanrin Shobō, 1994), 117–142; and *Kinsei setsuwa to zensō*, 133–152. On Tsūgen Jakurei’s case, see *Kinsei setsuwa to zensō*, 135–140.

57. See Tsutsumi, *Kinsei setsuwa to zensō*, 146. This practice can also be found in esoteric and Shugendō traditions.

58. Helen Hardacre, *Marketing the Menacing Fetus in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 25.

59. On the question of separate children's graves (*kobaka*), see Tanaka Hisao, "Kobaka: Sono sōsei ni shamaru ichi ni shite" (1965), rpt. in *Sōsō bōsei kenkyū shūsei* 1, ed. Doi Takuji and Satō Yoneshi (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1979), 314–330. The age at which children might receive funerals is a complex issue, differing by region. On dead children in the world beyond, see Watari Kōichi, "Osanaki mōjatachi no sekai: 'Sai no kawara' no zuzō o megutte," in "*Sei to shi*" no zuzōgaku, ed. Meiji Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1999), 197–243.

60. See Sawayama Mikako, "Sendaihan ryōnai akago yōiku shihō to kanren shiryō: Higashiyama chihō o chūshin ni," in *Kinsei Nihon mabiki kankō shiryō shūsei* (Tokyo: Tōsui Shobō, 1997), 33–127.

61. For examples of such sermons, see *ibid.*, 119–122.

62. A good example is the painting dated 1813 from Jōsenji (Shirakawa, Fukushima prefecture) donated by the shogunal advisor, Matsudaira Sadanobu, to the temple's chief abbot for the purpose of warning the local populace against the consequences of infanticide. It is reproduced in *Ano yo no jōkei*, ed. Itabashi Kuritsu Bijutsukan (Tokyo: by the editor, 2001), 24–25.

63. Indeed, until fairly recently, the standard ritual manual used throughout the Sōtō school, the *Gyōji kihan*, explicitly mentioned the need to pass out the *Ketsubonkyō* to women during the *jukai* (precept ordination) ceremony. The 1967 *Shōwa teihon Sōtōshū gyōji kihan* details how large the *Ketsubonkyō* talisman should be, the style for its cover, the Shōsenji legend, and the fact that it should be distributed on the fifth day of a formal *jukai* ceremony. Nakano Jūsai notes that at Sōjiji, one of the Sōtō sect's headquarter temples, this custom was maintained until 1981; see "Shūmon fukyōjō ni okeru sabetsu jishō 1: Sei sabetsu 'Ketsubonkyō' ni tsuite," *Kyōka kenshū* 30 (1987): 123. Because of the discriminatory nature of this practice, mention of it has been omitted from recent editions of the ritual manual.

64. On rare occasions, a man who may have wanted to present the sūtra to a relative or to a women who had already passed on, for example, by interring the sūtra in her grave, may have also received the text at the *jukai* ceremony. The only other occasion on which a man might receive the *Ketsubonkyō* at Shōsenji was if he was afflicted with a sexually transmitted disease such as gonorrhea or syphilis. The Shōsenji version of the sūtra included a Jizō mantra written in Sanskrit, which the man would cut out from the sūtra. The portion of the cut-out text would then be swallowed with water, and the remaining portion of the sūtra would be placed in his ancestral grave for the sake of his ancestors. On this practice, see Tagami, *Bukkyō to sei sabetsu* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1992), 203–204.

65. Takemi, "'Menstruation Sūtra' Belief in Japan," 243.

66. See Nakano, “Shūmon fukyōjō ni okeru sabetsu jishō” 1: 288; or Tagami, *Bukkyō to sei sabetsu*, 205–206. For two other hymns commonly recited by the women’s associations—the *Chi no ike jigoku wasan* (Blood Pool Hell hymn) and the *Nyonin ōjō wasan* (Women’s salvation hymn)—see Nakano, 289.

67. For a study of women’s childbirth associations in this region, see Ōshima Tatehiko, “Koyasu jinja to koyasukō: Chibashi Hanamigawaku Hatachō,” *Seikō minzoku* 169 (1999): 24–29.

68. See Iishi Kazuko, “Matsudō daigongen to Matsudokkō: Shinai ni okeru nyoninkō no hensen katei o tōshite,” *Abikoshishi kenkyū* 9 (1985): 173–199.

69. Iishi, *ibid.*, 193; also Seki Tadao, “Shōsenji no bunkazai, shikō,” *Abikoshishi kenkyū* 10 (1986): 96.

70. In the 1990s a number of Komazawa University scholars, many of them Zen priests serving parish temples, started to highlight this discrepancy both doctrinally and in terms of their ritual practice. This theme is one aspect of a project on Sōtō Zen funerals inaugurated as the first joint research project under the auspices of the newly inaugurated Sōtōshū Center for Buddhist Studies (Sōtōshū Sōgō Kenkyū Sentā), which began in April 1999. It should be stressed, however, that the perceived need to explain the discrepancy either for doctrinal consistency or in explanations to parishioners is a modern, not Tokugawa-period, problem.

71. Sasaki Kōkan, “‘Hotoke Belief’ and the Anthropology of Religion,” trans. Norman Havens, *Nihon bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 81 (1998): 41.

72. One of the most well-known associations of Tokugawa-period Sōtō Zen temples with belief in the passage of the dead to and through mountain ranges is the so-called “*mori no yama kuyō*” in the Shōnai region of Yamagata prefecture; see Suzuki Iwayumi, “‘Shisha kuyō’ no ichi kōsatsu: ‘Mori kuyō’ o megutte,” *Shūkyō kenkyū* 64, no. 3 (1981): 289–291; and “‘Mori kuyō’ no jiin gyōjika,” *Shūkyō kenkyū* 69, no. 4 (1996): 258–259; Watanabe Shōei, “Mori kuyō to Zenshū jiin ni tsuite no ichishiten,” *Shūkyō kenkyū* 68, no. 4 (1985): 210–211; and “‘Mori kuyō’ ni okeru Zenshū jiin no ichi,” *SKK* 17 (1986): 134–148.

73. See, for instance, Murayama Shūichi, *Tenjin goryō shinkō* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1996). Powerful people, such as Sugawara no Michizane, who had been wrongfully denied their rightful positions in society and others holding grudges toward the living were believed to be particularly prone to attack or possess the living. These spirits also included those who had suffered untimely deaths through murder, natural disasters, or childbirth. In English, see Robert S. Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1986).

74. One method of “containing” unruly spirits can be seen in the practice of guiding and placing them in special boards at the altar of the hungry

ghosts; see Kawakami Mitsuyo, "Two Views of Spirits as Seen in the Bon Observances of the Shima Region," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 15. nos. 2–3 (1988): 127.

75. Sasaki, "Hotoke Belief and the Anthropology of Religion," 46. See also Daimon Kōzen, "Anshin no tame no shūkyō gyōji no ichi kōsatsu: Sōsai o chūshin toshite," *Kyōka kenshū* 39 (1996): 129.

76. The folklorist Yanagita Kunio has put forth the intriguing though highly implausible thesis that the term *hotoke* was a degeneration of the term *hotoki* (a household tablet into which the ancestors descended). Aruga Kizae-mon has argued, instead, that the term was popularly used among the early medieval aristocracy to refer to the Buddha but does not explain how this is related to the use of the term *hotoke* to refer to a dead person; see his "Hotoke to iu kotoba ni tsuite: Nihon bukkuyōshi ichi sokumen," in *Sōsō bōsei kenkyū shūsei* 3, ed. Takeda Chōshū (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1979), 93–113.

77. On the development of the six realms (*rokudō*) concept in Japan, see William R. LaFleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 26–59; Erika Peschard-Erlih, *Les mondes infernaux et les peintures des six voies dans le Japon bouddhique* (Paris: Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, 1991); and Barbara Ruch, "Coping with Death: Paradigms of Heaven and Hell and the Six Realms in Early Literature and Painting," *Flowing Traces: Buddhism and the Literary and Visual Arts of Japan*, ed. James Sanford, Masatoshi Nagatomi, and William LaFleur (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 93–130.

78. *Yanluowang shouji sizhong yuxiu shengqi wangsheng jingtu jing*, Pelliott, no. 2003. For discussion of this text, see Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 182–184. See also his *Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

79. For a summary of the differences in Chinese and Japanese Ten Kings beliefs, see Watanabe Shōgo, *Tsuizen kuyō no hotokesama: Jūsanbutsu shinkō* (Tokyo: Keisuishsha, 1989), 162–163.

80. These practices continue even today at twenty-seven temples in Yamagata representing several sects; see Enomoto (formerly Shōshi) Chika, "Yamagataken Murayama chihō no jigoku-e to etoki," *Etoki kenkyū* 4 (1986): 16–32; and Watanabe Shōgo, *Chūseiishi no minshū shōdō bungei* (Tokyo: Iwata Shoin, 1995), 253–256.

81. The thirty-three-year period was interpreted in the Tōzan Shugendō tradition, from which Sōtō Zen received much of its Thirteen Buddha Rites, as if it were a pregnancy cycle in which, through the entire process, a new person was to be reborn only to repeat the cycle of life and death again until final nirvāṇa; see Ishikawa Rikizan, "Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron" (8), *KDBR* 17 (1986): 201–203. For pregnancy metaphors for rebirth in the

Shingon school, see James H. Sanford, "Wind, Waters, Stupas, Mandalas: Fetal Buddhahood in Shingon," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 24, nos. 1–2 (1997): 1–38.

82. For the Thirteen Buddhas *kirigami*, which explained the meaning of each buddha at each rite, see Ishikawa Rikizan, "Chūsei Sōtōshū kirigami no bunrui shiron" (7), *KDBK* 44 (1986): 263–265; and (10), *KDBR* 18 (1987): 181–191.

83. Rev. Shinohara Eiichi, the current abbot of Chōjuin, kindly gave me permission to use this untitled document.

84. The significance of the number forty-nine has several interpretations. For example, in medieval popular literature, the forty-ninth day corresponded to the forty-ninth-day "nails" that the guardian king of hell, Enma-ō, was supposed to drive into the person to keep them in hell. This led to local customs such as making soft rice cakes on that day so that the nails would not go in; see Tamamuro, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 157. Tamamuro has also noted that the number forty-nine was based on the Buddhist seven-day unit system, and that, prior to the introduction of Buddhism, the mourning period lasted fifty days (147). Robert J. Smith writes that, in certain regions of Japan, the dead person's pollution, while lasting forty-nine days for men, lasted only thirty-five days for women; see his *Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 92.

There are several theories about the significance of the number thirty-three, the most popular one referring to Kannon having thirty-three transformation bodies. Another theory points to the fact that Śākyamuni was thirty-three years of age when he gave a sermon to his mother Māya at Tōriten, one of the thirty-three heavens; see Wada Kenju, "Bukkyō shūzoku ni arawareta kazu no kōsatsu: Kuyō shūzoku o chūshin toshite," *KDBK* 28 (1970): 31–45; and Watanabe Shōgo, *Tsuizen kuyō no hotokesama*, 186–190. For esoteric and Shugendō interpretations of the Earth Womb conception of rebirth, see Miyake Hitoshi, "Tsuizen kuyō no etoki: Tōzanha Shugen no chiiki teichaku," *Keiō Gijuku Daigakuin shakai Kagaku kenkyūka kiyō* 36 (1997): 65–68; and *Shugendō: Essays on the Structure of Japanese Folk Religion* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2001), 245.

85. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China*, 13.

86. Smith, *Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan*, 3. Smith also points out that this transformation occurs at the fifty-year mark in a few regions of Japan, which he attributes to Shintō influences (76). Of course, in contemporary Japan, memorial rites to mark the fiftieth or hundredth year after death are not uncommon.

87. Smith, *Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan*, 69.

88. Jacques LeGoff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages* (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 75.

The Structure of Japanese Buddhist Funerals

MARIKO NAMBA WALTER

IT IS OFTEN SAID, especially from a Western perspective, that modern Japanese hold ambivalent, even contradictory attitudes toward religion. Many Japanese go to a Shinto shrine to celebrate a birth and other rites of passage for their children, while young adults tend increasingly to have weddings in a Christian chapel, even if they themselves are not Christian. More than 65 percent of Japanese say they have no faith in a particular religion, and yet 94 percent of their funerals are conducted with Buddhist rites.¹ Other statistics show that while most people have a Buddhist altar at home, they visit temples only at the time of a funeral or for periodic memorial ceremonies for deceased relatives. The pervasive presence of Buddhism in the funeral context, even in a society that increasingly describes itself as secular, is nothing new or surprising for most Japanese. More than four decades ago, scholar Tamamuro Taijō traced the historical transformation of Japanese Buddhism into a religion based upon funerals in his *Sōshiki bukk'yō* (Funeral Buddhism).² The tone of Tamamuro's study is rather critical toward what he called "funeral Buddhism," a rubric that has since acquired a life of its own. Like others who have subsequently decried funeral Buddhism, he seemed to assume that Buddhism—or any religion, for that matter—should deal with questions of how to live, and not just with death and the afterlife. But whatever one may argue the normative purpose of Buddhism should be, the firm reality remains that Japanese Buddhism today is centered around death rituals. Moreover, the economy of most Buddhist temples depends almost totally on income derived from death-related services.³

This chapter will consider the structure and meaning of funerals in the major Japanese Buddhist traditions, focusing on contemporary funerary procedures as prescribed in the Tendai, Shingon, Jōdo, Zen, Shin, and Nichiren sects. Since the early modern period, Buddhist

priests have standardized ritual procedures for funerals according to their respective traditions and written them down, often in Sino-Japanese and using Buddhist technical terminology. Nonspecialists can hardly understand the meaning of such abstruse instructions, nor do most modern Japanese comprehend the sūtras and other texts that priests recite during a funeral. A majority, however, understand that the funeral has to be done in the prescribed way in order to send the dead person to the right destination, for example, to Gokuraku Jōdo, Amida Buddha's Pure Land of Utmost Bliss. Without "proper" rituals, the spirit of the deceased may wander as a terrifying ghost, bringing misfortune to his or her family. The concept of the spirit (*tamashii*) in Japanese indigenous beliefs presents another complicated dimension to Buddhist rituals, as will be discussed below.

In order to understand how the present form of Japanese Buddhist funerary ritual took shape, it is useful to consider the historical development of funeral procedures. This chapter will therefore first present a brief overview of the history of Japanese Buddhist funerals. Then, moving on to ritual analysis, it will identify an underlying structure of Buddhist funeral rituals (*sōgi*) shared, as I will argue, by most if not all of the major Buddhist traditions. This inquiry into the structure and meaning of funeral rituals inevitably leads to doctrinal questions concerning death, the afterlife, and the idea of "enlightenment" or buddhahood itself. My working assumption is that different sectarian doctrines concerning enlightenment have not necessarily translated into different ritual structures; despite doctrinal differences among traditions, Japanese Buddhist death rituals share the same fundamental structure across schools and sects. The chief differences seem to lie in the interpretation of the ritual process.

A Brief History of Japanese Buddhist Death Rituals

As discussed in the Introduction to this volume, Buddhism came to Japan bringing new modes of disposing of the dead, new concepts of the afterlife, and new rituals for memorializing the deceased. According to the eighth-century dynastic history *Shoku Nihongi*, about a century and a half after Buddhism's official arrival from Paekche in the sixth century, the monk Dōshō (d. 700), who had visited China and studied Hossō (Ch. Faxiang) teachings with the famous Xuanzang (602–664) in Chang'an, was the first person in Japan to be cremated, at his express wish.⁴ While some evidence in fact exists for the practice of cremation before Buddhism's introduction, the traditional method of disposing of the dead had most commonly been interment in the case of aristocrats and exposure or abandonment of the corpse for ordinary

people.⁵ In ancient Japan, corpses were often treated with fear, and contact with the dead required scrupulous ritual purification. The association of Buddhism with cremation helped to promote this method of disposal among elites. Although cremation did not become a universal practice until the late nineteenth century, after Dōshō's cremation, several emperors in succession were cremated in the eighth century, and this became the preferred method of disposal among the aristocracy. Cremation also facilitated the enshrinement of bones and ashes in Buddhist memorial chapels dedicated to deceased emperors and other aristocrats, transforming mortuary practice among the nobility. Most of the emperors who reigned between the tenth and fourteenth centuries were cremated and their remains enshrined in memorial structures known as Hokkedō (Lotus chapels) or in other variants of memorial stūpas such as *gorintō* (five-wheel stūpas) or *tahōtō* (many-jeweled stūpas).⁶ Even in cases of cremation where the remains were installed in Hokkedō, stone stūpas would in many cases also be erected at the cremation grounds.⁷ Earlier attitudes in elite circles of avoidance of corpses and graves due to death pollution were gradually overshadowed by practices of preserving bones or cremated remains, which were assimilated to relic worship, being enshrined in family memorial chapels or tombs within Buddhist temple compounds.

Practices connected with aspirations for birth after death in a pure land (*ōjō*)—usually Gokuraku or Utmost Bliss, Amida Buddha's Pure Land in the west—seem to have spread among the aristocracy early on. When Empress Kōmyō died in 760, the imperial court ordered the provincial governments to have pictures made of Amida's Pure Land, and Pure Land sūtras copied in provincial temples and nunneries.⁸ Pure Land practices gained momentum over the course of the Heian period (794–1185), and the chanting of the *nenbutsu* or Amida's name, aimed at achieving birth in his realm, spread among people of all classes. The first two chapters in this volume have already discussed the role of Genshin's (942–1017) treatise *Ōjō yōshū* (Essentials of Pure Land birth) and the practices of the Yokawa Nijūgo zanmai-e, or Sāmadhi Society of Twenty-five, in popularizing deathbed practices (*rinjū gyōgi*) carried out to encourage the dying to visualize Amida and chant his name in their last moments, so as to be born in his Pure Land. Associations similar to the Yokawa society formed throughout the country, and, as mentioned in Chapter 2, by Jacqueline Stone, deathbed rituals soon spread beyond the monastic context and were performed by monks for their lay patrons at the time of death. In time, the focus of these *nenbutsu* rites shifted from deathbed practices for the sick and dying to funerals for the deceased. Small chapels were sometimes established in graveyard compounds or near

temples where such funerary rites were conducted.⁹ In the funerary context, Pure Land practices were frequently combined with those of esoteric Buddhism, as we see, for example, in the elaborate imperial funeral performed for Emperor Go-Ichijō in 1036.¹⁰ The obsequies included an esoteric Amida *goma* rite, *nenbutsu* recitation by twenty monks, and the scattering of sand empowered by the Bright Light mantra (*kōmyō shingon*) over the cremated remains.¹¹

From around the late Heian period, some Buddhist monks began to handle disposal of the body in addition to conducting funeral and memorial services, mainly for their aristocratic patrons. According to Tamamuro, it was not until the fifteenth century that Buddhist monks began actively to conduct funerals at the village level. The decline of the *shōen* system of feudal land tenure and the rise of a small landholding peasantry contributed to the spread of Buddhist temples in villages.¹² Before the end of the sixteenth century, peasants largely relied for the performance of funerals and memorial ceremonies on traveling monks and holy men, who visited the villages irregularly to perform religious services.¹³ As members of the peasant class began to own their own land and to establish their own households in the villages, some of these wandering monks started to settle among them permanently. The household system, or *ie*, which solidified in the early modern period, became the basis of Japanese family structure, typically centered around a male family head who was tied to his land and to social obligations within a stratified village community. Under the *ie* system, the household unit was defined in terms of common ancestors. The oldest son would succeed his father as the family head and as such was responsible for arranging funeral and memorial rites.

Many Buddhist temples were founded during the 200 years between the mid-fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries. Village households had strong ties with the priests of their local temple, who performed religious services for them, including funerals and memorial rites. The bonds between temples and households were formalized and reinforced in the so-called *danka* ("parishioner household") or *jidan* ("temple-parishioner") system of temple certification, established in the seventeenth century, which the Tokugawa government relied upon to eradicate the perceived Christian threat. Each household was required to affiliate with a local Buddhist temple, which would issue an annual certificate attesting that the household members were not Christians or members of other proscribed religious groups. These certificates were then used by local officials in compiling a religious census that accounted for everyone under their jurisdiction, which was then submitted to the government. From the time this system was implemented, death rituals were conducted by one's family temple

(*bodaiji*), and people had no other option.¹⁴ Not only were people required to receive certification from specific Buddhist temples under an administrative system, but the creation of new Buddhist sects was also prohibited. In this way the Tokugawa government gained a measure of control over Buddhist clerics as well as the populace as a whole and also formalized the sectarian divisions among Buddhist institutions. As a consequence, not many new temples were built, nor were new sects established after 1665.¹⁵ As the *danka* system increasingly solidified, and the relationship between the temple and the family strengthened, various Buddhist rituals were instituted and formalized in order to fulfill the religious needs of temple parishioners. In this process, pre-existing Buddhist rituals and also elements from other religious traditions were incorporated into death rites and assigned Buddhist meanings according to the teachings of particular Buddhist traditions. During the Meiji period (1868–1912), the *jidān* system was formally abolished, but the household or *ie* system was retained and supported by the Meiji government as the unit of administrative control. The thirteen official Buddhist traditions formalized under Tokugawa rule continue to exist today, despite some reorganization in the Meiji period and after the Pacific War.¹⁶ Especially in rural areas, the relationship between a temple, associated with a particular sect, and the individual household still persists.

This nutshell account of Buddhist funerary history sheds some light on why 94 percent of the Japanese continue to have Buddhist funerals. Many people who otherwise might not necessarily see themselves as practicing Buddhists nonetheless consider it right and proper to have Buddhist funerals conducted by their family temples in order to honor their family ancestral line and to assure the postmortem welfare of their deceased relatives.

Denominational Characteristics of Funeral Rites: Their Origins and Differences

Japanese Buddhist funerals have evolved and changed over the centuries, incorporating local beliefs and practices and responding to popular demand. Buddhist funeral traditions also developed through a process of ritual borrowings among the different schools or sects. Imitation and appropriation across sectarian traditions in funeral and memorial rites often proved vital to pleasing and retaining the support of temple parishioners, who expected adequate and powerful rituals in order to assure the postmortem welfare of their dead. Today, in keeping with the sectarian structure of Japanese Buddhist institutions, each sect maintains its own funeral liturgy and associated rituals as a unique

proprietary tradition handed down through its own institutional lineage and embodying its own distinct doctrine. Accounts of Buddhist funerals in contemporary Japan and their historical background often tend to be organized by sect. Here, accordingly, I will provide a brief account of the historical background of the death rituals of the major Buddhist sects, noting, however, where complex interactions among traditions have occurred.¹⁷

Tendai

The Tendai sect, founded by Saichō (766/767–822), numbers among the oldest surviving traditions of Japanese Buddhism and was the most influential religious institution of Japan's Heian period. During that period, ritual practices of the great Tendai monastery on Mt. Hiei came to be adapted for funerary use across Buddhist sectarian and institutional lines. Three kinds of practice that spread widely in Heian times form the basis of current Tendai funeral observances, and indeed, of all major Tendai ceremonies: (1) the *Hokke zanmai* or Lotus samādhi, (2) the *jōgyō zanmai* or constantly walking samādhi, and (3) esoteric rites. The Lotus samādhi was originally a form of the “half-sitting, half-walking samādhi,” one of “four kinds of samādhi” established by the Chinese Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi (538–597).¹⁸ Also known as the *Hokke senbō* or Lotus repentance rite, it incorporated recitation of the *Lotus Sūtra* and repentance of sins. This meditation was introduced to Japan by Saichō in 812, who established a *Hokke zanmaidō* or Lotus meditation hall on Mt. Hiei for its practice. Though this meditation was originally aimed at realizing the true aspect of the dharmas, in Japan, its purpose shifted toward repentance and eradication of sin, and the *Hokke zanmai* was adapted as a funerary rite and performed for the repose of the deceased.¹⁹ The constantly walking samādhi is thought to have originated with Huiyuan (523–592) in China and was incorporated into Zhiyi's meditation system as another of the “four kinds of samādhi.”²⁰ Originally, it was a ninety-day meditative practice in which one circumambulated an image of Amida Buddha, reciting his name and contemplating his characteristics, with the aim of realizing the nonduality of the practitioner and the Buddha. Practice of the “constantly walking samādhi” was established on Mt. Hiei by Ennin (794–864), but his version seems to have been based on a form of *nenbutsu* service devised by the monk Fazhao (fl. latter eighth century) that Ennin witnessed while traveling in China. On Mt. Hiei, the “constantly walking samādhi” was reoriented as a rite for achieving birth in Amida's Pure Land and was performed as an annual ceremony for seven days in the eighth month.²¹ It was instrumental in the spread of the chanted *nenbutsu* and of aspirations for birth in

Amida's Pure Land. Lastly, in addition to the Lotus samādhi and the constantly walking samādhi, which are considered exoteric practices, Tendai funerals also draw on esoteric rites. In the Heian period, a range of esoteric rites was employed across schools for funerary purposes. Those used at Tendai funerals today are typically the *kōmyō kushakujō* and *kōmyō shingon*. In the first rite, which literally means "radiant light tin staff offering," the officiating priest ritually shakes a tin staff for some time in order to illuminate the bodhisattva path, pacify desires, and exorcise evil. The *kōmyō shingon* or Bright Light mantra is used to empower sand and is recited before and during the rite of sprinkling the sand on the head, chest, and legs of the deceased person in the coffin in order to ensure that person's birth in the Pure Land.²² Use of the *kōmyō shingon* in death rites transcended sectarian orientation and can be dated back to at least the ninth century, when this mantra was employed in a memorial service for Emperor Seiwa in 880.²³ The Nijūgo zanmai-e, discussed in Chapter 1 by Sarah Horton and Chapter 2 by Jacqueline Stone, stipulated in its regulations that members should empower sand with the *kōmyō shingon* to scatter over the graves of any members who died.²⁴ However, the earliest standardized Tendai funeral liturgy incorporating these particular esoteric rites is difficult to pinpoint. They do appear in Tendai compilations of the early seventeenth century, such as the *Fukuden shokushu san'yō* by Jikai Sōjun (1624–1693).²⁵

Like the funerals of most Japanese Buddhist traditions, those of Tendai include the element of posthumous ordination, discussed in more detail below. Posthumous ordination confers on the deceased person the Buddhist precepts and a precept name or dharma name, in effect transforming that person into a monk or nun. As discussed in Chapter 6, by Duncan Williams, this practice began in the later medieval period and was popularized by Sōtō Zen; with some significant exceptions, it was adopted by other sects as well. In the Tendai case, the precepts employed are the bodhisattva precepts of the sudden and perfect teaching (*endon bosatsukai*), advocated by Saichō and his disciples.²⁶

Shingon

Shingon funerals are said to have their remote origins in a recitation text composed by Kūkai (774–835), the Shingon founder, on the death in 825 of his sister's son, who was also his close disciple. This text is included in the *Shōreishū*, a collection of Kūkai's vows, inscriptions, prayers, and other texts compiled by his disciple Shinsai (800–860). Specific Shingon funerary protocols derive from later oral transmission texts such as the *Indō daiji* and *Indō shidai* attributed to Kakuban

(1095–1143), revered as founder of the “new doctrine” branch of Shingon (*shingi* Shingon), who systematized Kūkai’s teachings.²⁷ Today, the three major divisions within the Shingon sect—the Kōyasan, Chizan, and Buzan lineages—each have their own versions of the funeral procedure, which were compiled in the 1920s and 1930s.²⁸

Shingon emphasizes its key doctrine of “realizing buddhahood with this very body” or *sokushin jōbutsu* as the most significant theme of its death rituals. In Shingon teachings, *sokushin jōbutsu* is understood as the “subtle practice of the three secrets” (*sanmitsu myōgō*) or the union, through ritual performance, of the body, speech, and mind of the practitioner with the body, speech, and mind of the cosmic Buddha. In the funeral context, this attainment is ritually conferred on the deceased by the officiating priest, based on the understanding that the three secrets—body, speech, and mind—of the Buddha, the officiant, and the dead person are in essence equal.²⁹ In the funeral performance, a repentance text is read to purify the deceased of sins committed with the three faculties of body, speech, and mind, or intent, followed by the taking of the triple refuge. Taking refuge in the three treasures—the Buddha, dharma, and saṅgha—is a practice common across Buddhist traditions but carries a distinctive meaning in Shingon, where it denotes a state of samādhi in which one’s body and mind are totally identified with the three treasures of the Shingon tradition. In this unified state, the deceased is led (*indō*) to Maitreya Bodhisattva’s Tuṣita Heaven, understood as encompassed within the omnipresent realm of the cosmic buddha, Dainichi Nyorai. According to Arai Yūsei, the words “leading” or “sending” may actually be somewhat misleading in a Shingon context, since the idea is rather that the deceased “returns” to the source of the life of Dainichi, thus realizing buddhahood.³⁰ The issue of the buddhahood or enlightenment of the deceased will be addressed in greater detail below.

The most well known among the Shingon funeral rituals is the *kōmyō* mantra, which we have already touched upon in connection with Tendai funerals. In Shingon death rites, the body of the deceased is placed on a cloth with a mandala printed in the center that has been spread on the bottom of a coffin. Another cloth mandala is used to cover the body for esoteric protection. Then a handful of mantrically empowered sand is sprinkled into the coffin. The Sanskrit A syllable representing the womb repository realm (Skt. *garbhadhātu*, Jpn. *taizōkai*) is written on the bottom of the coffin and the *vaṃ* syllable representing the diamond realm (*vajradhātu*, *kongōkai*) is written on the coffin lid. These esoteric syllables, along with the sand empowered by the Bright Light mantra, are believed to lead the deceased to the Pure Land.³¹ The scattering of sand empowered with the *kōmyō shingon* over

the corpse or the tomb is said to protect and save sinful beings, even those otherwise destined for the *Avīci* hell. The power of this mantra is likened to a bright light that shines and purifies the sins of the deceased, enabling them to be born in the Pure Land. The *kōmyō shingon* was not exclusively a funerary practice; for example, it was promoted by Myōe Kōben (1172–1232) as a form of esoteric empowerment ritual, as a routine practice in the monastery, and even as a simple recitation available to all people.³² Its use in funerals grew increasingly popular, however, and it was appropriated across traditions. The broad dissemination of the mantra is attested by the many votive stone stūpas and memorial steles known as *kōmyō shingontō* dating from the later thirteenth through sixteenth centuries.³³ Today, esoteric elements such as the scattering of empowered sand and “shaking of the tin staff,” mentioned above in connection with Tendai, lend a dramatic quality to Shingon funerals.

Jōdo

Aspirations for birth in the Pure Land had penetrated into the beliefs of Japanese at all social levels by the latter Heian period, long before the founding by Hōnen (1133–1212) of an independent Jōdo or Pure Land sect, and no specifically sectarian Pure Land funeral procedures seem to have been established in Hōnen’s time. On his deathbed, Hōnen is said to have faced toward the west and chanted the *nenbutsu* before he passed away, but the deathbed *nenbutsu* was a very common practice, not confined to any particular school. After his death, however, Hōnen’s disciples appear to have developed funeral rites reflective of their teacher’s exclusivistic stance. For example, the late thirteenth-century *Nomori no kagami*, a treatise on poetics, observes, “These days in the funeral obsequies (*nijūgo zanmai*) of the single-practice [followers], they recite the *Contemplation Sūtra* (*Guan Wuliangshou jing*) but not the *Lotus Sūtra*.”³⁴ Pure Land priests also seem to have played a major role in conducting funerals among the common people in the later medieval period.³⁵

Formal procedures for Jōdo funeral and memorial services have their remote origins in the rites held at the thirteenth annual memorial service for the mother of Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa shogun, in 1614. Prior to this state memorial ceremony, both the fourteenth and fifteenth abbots of Zōjōji, the memorial temple for the shogunal family, had gone to Nara to study the traditions of the various schools. The following year they compiled a number of articles governing the administration and ritual procedures of the Jōdo sect, which were shared with two other leading Jōdo temples: Chion’in and Denzūin.³⁶ This first attempt at standardizing funerary and other procedures for the

Jōdo sect was not actually disseminated to local branch temples, as the numerous Jōdo temples scattered in the central and peripheral regions of Japan had their own ritual traditions, reflecting local beliefs and customs. Nonetheless, the official version of the ritual procedure gradually came to be accepted by many Jōdo temples and at the same time underwent modification over the next few centuries according to local needs and conditions.³⁷

Modern attempts to standardize funeral procedure began in conjunction with the seven hundredth anniversary celebration of Hōnen's death. Since then, standard procedures for all Jōdo Buddhist rituals have undergone several revisions; the most recent, *Jōdoshū hōyōshū*, compiled in 1953, was part of postwar reforms.³⁸ As with other sects, however, there are still local differences in ritual performance by Jōdo priests, despite the official standardization efforts by the head temple over the last three hundred years.

A typical Jōdo funeral ritual starts with the offering of incense to the Buddha and the chanting of short scriptures. The Buddha and bodhisattvas are invited into the *dōjō*, the place of the funeral ritual, and asked to protect the deceased, and verses of repentance (*sange*) are recited. Conferring of the precepts and a posthumous name represent the second stage of the funeral. In the last part, the officiating priest recites scriptures and chants the *nenbutsu* in order to send the deceased to the Pure Land. He emulates the Buddha's preaching in the Pure Land, sitting on a high platform known as the *kongō hōza*, the *vajra* seat of the Buddha, and transfers the merit of the recitations to the dead person.³⁹ Birth in the Pure Land is the main theme of Jōdo practice, and the funeral rituals of the sect clearly reflect their teachings on the afterlife.

Zen

There are two major traditions of Japanese Zen: Rinzai and Sōtō. Rinzai consists of fifteen branches, which do not follow funerary procedures standardized by their head temple but rather each set their own standards in funerary ritual according to their respective traditions. Nonetheless, most Rinzai temples basically follow the ritual procedures outlined in the *Shōsōrin shingi*, compiled by Mujaku Dōchū (1653–1744).⁴⁰ Sōtō temples use their own text, the *Danshinto sōgihō*, which lays out funeral instructions similar to those of Rinzai. Both Rinzai and Sōtō texts elaborate the details of funeral procedure step by step, from the shaving of the hair, bathing of the deceased, and so forth, to the various stages of memorial rites.

The oldest extant text of Zen monastic precepts, the *Chanyuan qinggui* (Jpn. *Zennen shingi*), compiled in Song-dynasty China in 1103

by the monk Changlu Zongze, provides outlines for the funerals of both ordinary monks and temple abbots.⁴¹ The funeral instructions for ordinary monks are relatively simple and emphasize Pure Land elements, such as the chanting of *nenbutsu* and prayers for the deceased monk to achieve birth in the Pure Land. The much more elaborate funeral ritual for abbots, however, follows the pattern of traditional Confucian rites for deceased parents. In Japan, the abbot's style of funeral was adapted for lay patrons of Zen temples. This necessitated the institution of posthumous ordination, so that lay people could be given monastic funerals—a practice that, as already noted, was eventually adopted by other Buddhist traditions as well.⁴²

A number of Zen monastic regulations or codes including funerary ritual instructions circulated in the late medieval and early modern periods.⁴³ Zen funerals were accepted and became popular initially among warrior elites. By around 1500, Zen funerals had become widespread among lay people, although the first Rinzaï text to make official mention of lay funeral procedures, the above-mentioned *Shōsōrin shingi*, did not appear until the seventeenth century. Sōtō funerals for lay people generally followed this text.⁴⁴ Despite the richness of the lay funeral culture described in Chapter 6 in this volume, lay funeral procedures were not officially included in Sōtō ritual instructions until the 1950 manual *Shōwa kaitei Sōtōshū gyōji kihan*.⁴⁵ Until recently, when some simplifications were instituted, Zen funeral instructions grew increasingly complex with the passage of time.⁴⁶ A full ritual procedure comprised nine *butsuji* (literally, “nine Buddhist events”), while simplified versions were available for seven, five, or three *butsuji*, depending on the size of the particular Zen temple and/or the financial resources of the deceased person's family.⁴⁷

In an often-cited survey of Sōtō Zen works from the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries, Tamamuro Taijō noted a shift in emphasis over the course of this period from meditation practice (*zazen*) to death rituals. He concluded that this shift represents one of the reasons why Sōtō Zen was able to penetrate the mass population at the village level, while Rinzaï tended to remain more closely connected with Kyoto elites.⁴⁸ While the method of Tamamuro's survey has been criticized, emphasis in early modern Sōtō Zen did indeed shift from meditative practice to providing lay funerals, as Williams has also noted.⁴⁹

Jōdo Shinshū

From a doctrinal perspective, Shin Buddhism does not view the funeral ceremony as a ritual for ensuring the enlightenment of the deceased. This stance reflects the distinctive teaching of the founder

Shinran (1173–1262), that salvation or birth in the Pure Land does not come about through one's own efforts but solely by entrusting oneself to the power of Amida's original vow to save all beings who rely upon him. Shinran left no instructions for his own funeral but rather instructed his disciples to discard his body in the Kamo River, as an offering to the fish.⁵⁰ Shinran also held that one's birth in the Pure Land is determined, not at the time of death, but at the moment when one fully entrusts oneself to Amida Buddha's compassionate vow and unwavering faith first arises in one's heart.⁵¹ Moreover, according to at least one of his writings, birth in the Pure Land (*ōjō*) and attaining buddhahood (*jōbutsu*) happen simultaneously.⁵² In fact, there seems to be some ambiguity in Shinran's teaching about when exactly *ōjō*—or buddhahood—is attained. Some scholars interpret Shinran's idea of immediate birth in the Pure Land (*sokutoku ōjō*) as occurring in this life, depending on the firmness of one's faith.⁵³ While it may be more "natural" to think of *ōjō* as occurring after death—and at least some Shin followers have no doubt embraced this more common view—soteriologically speaking, in Shinran's teaching there would seem to be no gap between the present moment, when absolute conviction in salvation through Amida's power arises, and birth in the Pure Land after death. In this sense, salvation is immediate and direct, without the conventional notion that salvation must await birth in the Pure Land after death.

Because birth in the Pure Land in Shin doctrine is already assured to those who place total trust in Amida, funeral rituals are not deemed necessary to lead them to the Pure Land. Thus Shin funerals are held only to commemorate the dead and lack the element of the *indō*, the ritual guiding of the deceased to a buddha land; they also deemphasize the details of traditional offerings rooted in popular religious culture, such as a bowl of rice with chopsticks placed in it upright, rice balls, tea or water, fresh monk's white clothes for the deceased, coins for the ferry crossing to the other world, and so forth.⁵⁴

Yet despite the fact that Shin doctrine holds funerals to be soteriologically insignificant, as funeral services became increasingly integral to Buddhist institutions generally in the late medieval period, Shin temples could not ignore such trends and began to refine and standardize their own funeral procedures. This task was accomplished by Rennyo (1415–1499), the eighth abbot of Honganji, under whose leadership the Honganji branch of Shin Buddhism grew into one of Japan's major Buddhist institutions and became solidified as a powerful religious body. Rennyo standardized and formalized the already existing daily Shin ritual procedures and prayers, including funerary services. Before his death, Rennyo gave detailed instructions for his own funeral, from the procession, cremation, and installation of his

remains, to subsequent memorial services. Recitations at his funeral consisted of three chief elements: (1) the *Shōshinge*, Shinran's verses in praise of true faith and the *nenbutsu*; (2) *nenbutsu* chanting; and (3) *wasan*, or hymns of praise.

Today, given that Jōdo Shinshū consists of ten branches, including the three major branches of Honganji, Ōtani, and Takada, one finds some minor variations across lineages in funeral procedures. For example, in the Honganji branch, the three Pure Land sūtras are recited;⁵⁵ recitations may also be performed at different points in the funeral sequence, for example, at the time of death, after placing the corpse in the coffin, during the wake (*tsuya* or *tsūya*), at the crematorium, and so forth. The Ōtani branch of Shinshū, however, based on its regulatory reformation in 1942, offers a simplified version of the funeral for modern city dwellers, with less frequent prayers in the deceased's home.⁵⁶

Nichiren

The teachings of the Nichiren sect or Nichirenshū are based on faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*. According to the founder Nichiren (1222–1282), the essence of the *Lotus Sūtra* is contained in its *daimoku* or title. By the power of chanting the *daimoku*, in the formula *Namu Myōhōrengekyō*, believers in the *Lotus Sūtra* are said to go to the Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak (*ryōzen jōdo*), where they will be welcomed by Śākyamuni Buddha. In contrast to the western Pure Land, where Amida Buddha is said to dwell, Nichiren's pure land is an apotheosis of Mt. Gr̥dhra-kūṭa in India, where Śākyamuni Buddha is said to have preached the *Lotus Sūtra*. It is believed that by family members, relatives, and friends chanting the *daimoku*, the deceased can attain immediate buddhahood and reach the Buddha's realm of enlightenment. To a follower, Lord Hakii, Nichiren wrote as follows:

The *Lotus Sūtra* is the boat to ford the river of three crossings [Sanzu no kawa, which divides this world from the other world]; the great white ox cart to carry one over the mountains of death; a light on the dark path of the next world; and a bridge to reach [the pure land of] Sacred Eagle Peak. . . . I will surely be waiting for you there.⁵⁷

Thus for the Nichiren sect, faith is the key to the immediate enlightenment of the deceased.

Like all its rituals, early funerals in the Nichiren sect included recitation of key sections of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the chanting of *daimoku*, but they do not appear to have been standardized before the nineteenth century. At that juncture, the prominent scholar-monk Uda-na'in Nichiki (1800–1859) compiled the ritual manual *Jūgōen raiju giki*

(Ritual instructions for the Jūgōen).⁵⁸ This became the basis of the modern compilation of ritual procedures, *Shūtei Nichirenshū hōyōshiki*.⁵⁹ Nichirenshū funerals lack the element of posthumous ordination (*jukai*), because chanting *daimoku* is equated with receiving and upholding the precepts. Since faith itself brings about enlightenment and enables devotees to achieve the Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak, the ordination process is not deemed necessary for Nichirenshū believers at death. In the funerary ritual, not only the priests but also the participants recite portions of the *Lotus Sūtra* and chant *daimoku*. In general, Nichirenshū death rituals consist of recitation of the *Lotus Sūtra*, memorial prayers, chanting of *daimoku*, and dharma talks without the ordination ritual. Details of the funeral offerings are specified; for example, rice balls and a bowl of rice with a single chopstick placed in it are to be set on a low table above the head of the deceased. As in most Japanese Buddhist traditions, a dharma name is often conferred on the deceased and inscribed on an *ihai* or memorial tablet, along with the date of death, and enshrined in the family altar.

During the wake, if the deceased is a woman, the “Devadatta” chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* is often recited, since the chapter contains the story of the realization of buddhahood by the eight-year-old *nāga* princess.⁶⁰ Nichiren drew on this passage to teach women’s achievement of buddhahood through faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*, and it has been incorporated into the funeral service with this significance.

Some mention should be made of the variant practices of Nichiren Shōshū, a branch of the Nichiren tradition that broke away not long after Nichiren’s death. In recent times, Nichiren Shōshū was known for its connection with new religious movement Sōka Gakkai, until the two groups split in 1991. Nichiren Shōshū believers do not enshrine *ihai* in the family altar. In Nichiren Shōshu, the *gohonzon* or calligraphic mandala devised by Nichiren is the sole object of worship and thus also the sole focus of funeral prayers. Nichiren Shōshū does not observe many of the minor customs common across traditions. For example, believers do not offer tea before the deceased but rather a cup of water; they do not place a triangular white cloth on the deceased’s forehead, nor do they place coins in the coffin.⁶¹ For their memorial services, the “Skillful Means” (“Hōben”) and “Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathāgata” (“Nyorai jūryō”) chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra* are recited by the officiating priest and participants alike.

The Structure and Meaning of Death Rituals

As summarized above, funerals in each of the Japanese Buddhist traditions have a complex history; each sect, too, has its own view of the relation of enlightenment or salvation to death and the afterlife. Official

funerary procedures published by the headquarters of each sect, often written in highly condensed Sino-Japanese, are often difficult to understand.⁶² The same Buddhist term may be interpreted quite differently according to the tradition, or different terms may be employed with virtually the same meaning. Doctrinal expertise in multiple traditions is thus necessary for comparative study of these primary documents. In recent decades, however, secondary research, most notably that of Fujii Masao, has compiled data about instructions for funeral performance in all major Buddhist traditions.⁶³ While these compilations still represent prescriptive literature—how traditional funerals are supposed to be conducted—and thus may not be accurately reflected in all particulars of on-the-ground funeral performance, they nonetheless make possible a trans-sectarian analysis of Japanese Buddhist death rites. In this section I will attempt to illuminate a pattern in funerary ritual common to most Buddhist funerals across sectarian traditions: the “deep structure” of death rituals, to use James Watson’s term in his anthropological study of contemporary Chinese funerals.⁶⁴

In examining this underlying pattern, I first differentiate between: (1) the chronological sequence of the funeral process, and (2) the deeper level of the ritual structure in terms of meaning and function. While investigating the deeper structure is the main aim of this chapter, we must still have a sense of the overall chronological sequence in order to see how the deeper structure interrelates with the temporal dimension of the ritual sequence as a whole. In brief, the chronological sequence refers to (a) the reading of the “pillow sūtra” (*makura-gyō*) at the beginning of the funeral observances; (b) the wake (*tsuya*), held the night following the death; (c) the funeral proper; (d) the departure of the casket; (e) the cremation; (f) the installation of the remains in the grave; and (g) memorial rites. The deeper ritual structure refers to (A) an initiatory stage, which corresponds temporally to the recitation of the pillow sūtra and the wake; (B) the ordination (*jukai*); (C) the leading of the deceased to the other world (*indō*); and (D) merit transfer via memorial prayers (*ekō* or *tsuizen*). The deeper structure partially parallels the chronological sequence, but the purpose in differentiating it is to reveal the underlying religious meaning of the ritual. The following diagram illustrates the interrelationship of the funeral’s chronological sequence and its underlying structure:

The Structure of Japanese Buddhist Death Rituals

A. Initiatory stage

- a) The pillow sūtra (*makura-gyō*)
- b) The wake (*tsuya*)
- c) Funeral proper

- B. Ordination of the dead (*jukai*)
- C. Leading the deceased to the other world (*indō*)
 - d) Departure of the casket
 - e) Cremation and gathering the remains
 - f) Installation of the remains in the grave
 - g) Memorial rites
- D. Transfer of merit (*ekō* and *tsuizen*)

Now let us consider the four elements of the underlying structure individually.

A. Initiatory stage

Although differently interpreted, the funerals of all schools incorporate a preparatory phase, prior to the funeral itself. The instructions for funeral rituals in most Japanese Buddhist schools usually start with recitation of the pillow sūtra, the first event in the ritual process, which is conducted shortly after the announcement of death. Priests are summoned to recite a particular sūtra at the bedside of the deceased; which sūtra is recited is determined by the particular sect. The function of the sūtra recitation is to ritually purify the deceased and to welcome the Buddha to the ritual space as a preparation for the deceased's posthumous ordination, the next stage of the funeral structure. The pillow sūtra recitation marks the start of the Buddhist funerary sequence, initiating the transit of the deceased to a postmortem realm. In the Jōdo sect, recitation of the pillow sūtra is followed immediately by a symbolic tonsure of the deceased, the officiating priest simply touching a razor to the dead person's head. (In other sects, the shaving ritual is performed during the actual ordination, or *jukai*.) All Buddhist traditions in Japan incorporate this opening phase of the death ritual, together with the wake, but the significance assigned to the pillow sūtra recitation may differ according to the tradition. For example, in the case of Shingon, scrolls depicting the esoteric deity Fudō Myōō (Skt. *Acalanātha*) or the Thirteen Buddhas are hung on the wall, and the pillow sūtra is recited to purify the body and mind of the deceased and to welcome the buddhas to the funeral ritual space. The esoteric scripture *Hannya rishukyō* is recited to enable the deceased to attain buddhahood; the mantra of Fudō is offered to banish demonic influences; and other recitations are performed, including the *kōmyō shingon*, the Amida *dhāraṇī*, and the invocation of the founder Kūkai (*Namu Daishi henjō kongō*).⁶⁵ In Jōdo Shinshū, an image of Amida or a scroll of the *nenbutsu* is used, and recitations may include excerpts from Shinran's *Shōshinge*, the *Amida Sūtra*, and the *nenbutsu*.⁶⁶ Since the deceased's birth in the Pure Land is deemed to have already been

achieved through the power of faith granted by Amida, these recitations are understood, not as effecting the dead person's salvation, but simply as an expression of gratitude.

The wake or *tsuya*, usually informal, is conducted by immediate family members and relatives of the deceased. If the death has occurred at night, then the wake will be held the following night. Traditionally the body was bathed by family members prior to being placed in the coffin, but in contemporary urban settings, this task is more likely to be performed by professional washers, who arrive in a van in which the body will be washed prior to the wake and which is usually parked for this purpose outside the deceased person's house. This bathing process, termed *yukan*, is said to have Buddhist origins. For example, in his essay "Linzhong fangjue" or "Instruction for the Moment of Death," appended to his translation of the short sūtra *Foshuo wuchang jing* or *Scripture on Impermanence*, the Chinese monk Yijing (635–713) recommends washing dying persons with perfumed water.⁶⁷ The custom of dying persons bathing before beginning their deathbed rites also finds frequent mention in medieval Japanese sources, as Stone notes in Chapter 2 in this volume, but today, bathing is performed after death. Tendai and Shingon both have sect-specific ways for preparing the bath water, but in general, cold water is run in the bathtub and then hot water added before the corpse is placed in the tub. This is called *sakasa-mizu* or "reverse water," since usually hot water goes into the tub first for ordinary bathing for the living.⁶⁸ Like the pillow sūtra recitation, *yukan* serves as purification process, preparing the deceased for his or her departure to a buddha land or other enlightened realm. After being bathed, the body is dressed in white clothing, signifying the garments of an ordained monk or a pilgrim, depending on local interpretation.

After being bathed and dressed, the body is placed in a coffin. One or two priests are usually invited to attend the wake between 7:00 and 9:00 in the evening for sūtra recitation, the particular sūtra again being determined by the deceased's family's sectarian affiliation. During the wake, no special sūtra recitations or prayers are offered beyond what is specified in that sect's ordinary daily practice. After the sūtra recitation, there may be a short sermon from the priest, followed by chanting. A small funeral table for offerings is set up and incense offered; candles are kept lit throughout the night. Traditionally, participants in a wake are treated to elaborate vegetarian food, and *sake* will be served. The function of the wake is to remember and reflect upon on the deceased.

The initiatory stage, corresponding in chronological sequence to the pillow sūtra recitation and the wake, thus detaches the deceased

from the realm of the living and begins their transit to the afterlife. It represents a purification that the dead must undergo in preparation for the next significant structure in the funerary sequence, *jukai* or ordination, without which they cannot proceed to the Land of Bliss or other enlightened realm. In other words, through the recitation of the pillow sūtra and the washing of the body, the way to buddhahood is ritually opened for them.

The funeral proper is held immediately the next day, the eyes of the family members red from their sleepless night. The officiating priest or priests begin the funeral, which consists of the posthumous ordination process and the *indō*, or ritual of guiding the deceased to the buddha land or state of enlightenment. Let us turn now to these elements in the underlying funeral structure and their varying interpretation by denomination.

B. Ordination of the dead (*jukai*)

First, in order to dispatch the dead to a superior postmortem realm—whether conceived as a pure land, such as Amida's Land of Utmost Bliss, or simply as an enlightened state, the deceased lay person is ordained as a Buddhist monk or nun. Posthumous ordination usually starts with the sprinkling of water over the body and ritual shaving of the head, if these purificatory rites have not already been performed during the initiatory stage prior to the wake. As described above, the shaving is done only symbolically, a priest touching a razor to the deceased's head in a ritual gesture. Even if the deceased person has already received a formal ordination while alive, it can be repeated in the funeral context, since it is thought to ensure a safe transit to the afterlife. To confer ordination through this posthumous process is considered to purify the volatile spirit of the recently deceased and assure that person's entry into an enlightened state.

Generally, a brief text expressing repentance of sins (*sange*) is recited on the deceased's behalf immediately before the posthumous ordination as a part of the ritual purification of the dead person's spirit. This act expresses repentance before the "three treasures" for evil actions, stemming from greed, anger, and ignorance, committed since the beginningless past by the deceased and the funeral participants. The repentance recitation typically begins: "Before the three treasures [Buddha, dharma, and saṅgha], I now confess all my past evil deeds of the body, speech, and mind, born of beginningless greed, anger, and ignorance . . .," wording drawn from the verse section of the "Practice and Vows of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra" chapter of the *Huayan jing*. In Tendai funerals, the Lotus repentance rite, centering on *Lotus Sūtra* recitation, is conducted at the funeral for this pur-

pose prior to posthumous ordination.⁶⁹ In Sōtō Zen, the repentance text is a verse from the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, likening the monastic precepts to thunder and a compassionate mind to clouds, which together pour forth the sweet dew of the dharma rain.⁷⁰ Repentance in funerals of the Jōdo sect takes a somewhat different form, as repentance recitations (drawn from Pure Land texts, such as Shan-dao's *Wangsheng lizan ji* or Verses in praise of birth in the Pure Land) are performed at various points in the ritual sequence: before recitation of the pillow sūtra, before and after encoffining, at the beginning of the main funeral ceremony, and so on.⁷¹ In other sects, however, repentance recitation is not dispersed throughout the ritual sequence but performed at a single point, right before the posthumous ordination.

While repentance in Buddhism also carries the meaning of repentance for specific transgressions (*ji sange*), it has generally focused on “repentance in principle” (*ri sange*), or repentance for the deluded attachments that conduce to evil thoughts, words, and deeds, and is usually enacted through sūtra recitation or other ritual acts. Repentance in the funeral context does not, of course, mean repentance performed by the deceased. But through ritual acts of repentance, such as sūtra recitation conducted by priests and surviving family members, the sins and karmic hindrances of the deceased are said to be lessened or eradicated. Thus repentance, like merit, can be transferred to the dead through ritual performances by the living.

Repentance recitation is followed by posthumous ordination, in effect an induction into the realm of the Buddha that transforms the deceased person into a monk or nun. The basic formula of this induction is to bestow the precepts of the triple refuge—in the three treasures of the Buddha, dharma, and saṅgha. Which additional precepts may be bestowed, and how the ordination itself is interpreted, differs according to the sect. Tendai employs the Mahāyāna bodhisattva precepts, comprising the “three groups of pure precepts” (*sanju jōkai*): to stop evil, cultivate good, and benefit sentient beings. As interpreted by Tendai tradition, the bodhisattva precepts are the “perfect and sudden precepts” (*endonkai*), an expression of inherent Buddha nature and also the direct cause for its realization. Conferring them upon the deceased is said to ensure that person's direct access to the realm of the Buddha's enlightenment.⁷² In Shingon, the posthumous ordination process confers on the deceased the three refuges, the ten good precepts, and two mantras said to encapsulate respectively the aspiration for enlightenment (Skt. *bodhicitta*, Jpn. *bodaishin*) and the esoteric *sanmaya* (Skt. *samaya*) precepts, which are said to lead to the realization of the oneness of the practitioner and the *dharmakāya* Buddha.⁷³

In Jōdo funerals, the precepts are bestowed during the initiatory stage, before the pillow *sūtra* is recited. After the ritual shaving, the officiating priest invites the Buddha to the ritual place with prostrations, which signifies taking refuge in the Buddha, dharma, and saṅgha. In the presence of the Buddha, the priest leads the prayer for repentance of all the sins of the deceased. If the deceased has not received the “five-fold transmission” (*gojū no sōden*) while alive, the transmission will be performed at this point. The fivefold transmission refers to a set of secret essentials of the Pure Land sect, formally compiled by the seventh patriarch Shōgei and transmitted to his disciple Shōsō in 1393. These transmissions were originally given to monks (*denbō*) but later came to be bestowed also on householders (*keta gojū*) and on the deceased (*okuri gojū*).⁷⁴ For the posthumous ordination, members of the deceased’s family usually receive this transmission on the deceased person’s behalf. After the ordination is completed, the posthumous name, *kaimyō*, is formally bestowed by the officiating priest. In Jōdo funerals, unlike those of other sects, posthumous ordination is performed, not during the funeral proper, but at the initiatory stage. Instead, the *indō* rite of leading the deceased to the other world becomes the main ritual focus of Jōdo funerals.

In Sōtō Zen funerals, the three refuges, three groups of pure precepts, and ten weighty precepts are all conferred, along with a lineage chart (*kechimyaku*), thought to enable the deceased to achieve the status of buddhahood.⁷⁵ In contrast, in Jōdo Shinshū, as already noted, no precepts are given, since salvation is said to come solely through reliance on the power of Amida Buddha, and all who have faith in him are assured of birth in his Pure Land. Instead of an ordination name (*kaimyō*), the deceased receives a dharma name (*hōmyō*). Since the deceased is believed to go immediately to the Pure Land, this dharma name is inscribed, not on an *ihai*, or ancestral tablet, which is understood as a temporary repository for the deceased spirit, but rather on a hanging scroll or in a necrology used to keep track of the death dates of relatives and ancestors.⁷⁶ Like Shinshū, Nichirenshū funerals also dispense with the ordination ritual at the funeral, although for different reasons: embracing the *daimoku* in and of itself is understood as the subtle precept (*myōkai*) that leads to buddhahood. However, the “great precept of the origin teaching [of the *Lotus Sūtra*]” (*honmon no daikai*) is again conferred, and, along with the *daimoku*, a passage of the *Lotus Sūtra* is recited, thus equating embracing the *sūtra* with upholding the precepts.⁷⁷

Thus, despite differences in specific precepts conferred, funerals in most Buddhist sects include the element of posthumous ordination, or something that ritually corresponds to it. This stage of the funeral

serves to initiate the deceased into monastic status, deemed an initial and necessary step toward the achievement of posthumous salvation. Traditionally, the rituals of posthumous ordination and *indō* took place in a temple or in the deceased person's home, depending on the family's choice or other circumstances. Today, they are increasingly likely to be performed at a *sōgiya* or professional funeral home.

C. Leading the deceased to the other world (*indō*)

After the posthumous ordination, the priest ritually guides or leads the dead person to the Buddha's realm. The *indō*—leading or guiding—phase of the funeral signifies the beginning of the deceased's journey to the other world as an initiated monastic and generally consists of a short sermon or verses intoned before the body in its coffin, as well as incense offerings. In Japan, *indō* began as a Zen funeral practice and, like other Zen monastic ritual procedures, its use in the funeral context is said to have originated with the Chan monk Huaihai (749–814). It has been adopted by most Japanese Buddhist traditions, each of which gradually developed its own form of *indō*. In Sōtō Zen, the *indō* funeral sermon often follows the question-and-answer format of the *kōan*. Typically it deals with the fundamental problem of life and death. The officiant priest poses a question in cryptic Zen-style language, followed by a pause in which he waves a torch (*ako*), drawing a circle of fire and then flinging the torch down, and recites a concluding resolution to the question. He also delivers a ferocious shout, designed to “roar” the deceased back to the original realm of the Buddha. While the paradoxical language of the Zen *indō* sermon is incomprehensible to most lay followers, the officiant with his ritual torch is symbolically understood to illuminate the darkness of the other world to show the way for the deceased.⁷⁸ The *ako* is also sometimes employed in Tendai funerals, where the *indō* section can take one of two forms: either an initiation into the esoteric *sanmaya* precepts and a petition for Amida to descend and welcome the deceased, or a conferral of the sudden and perfect precepts aimed at bringing the deceased into the state of buddhahood.⁷⁹ In Shingon, the *indō* consists of an esoteric consecration rite (Skt. *abhiṣeka*, Jpn. *kanjō*). Originally an ancient Indian ritual for consecrating kings, *kanjō* was incorporated into esoteric Buddhism as a rite of initiation, for transmitting the dharma or for establishing a connection between the recipient and the Buddha. In the funeral context the *kanjō* ritual is the most important aspect of the Shingon rites and signifies that the deceased has been enabled to enter the dharma realm of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.⁸⁰ A series of mudrās and mantras are also conferred on the deceased, again with the aim of enabling that person to realize

buddhahood.⁸¹ In Nichirenshū, the *indō* sermon may draw on portions of the *Lotus Sūtra* and Nichiren's writings to explain that the deceased will be born in the Pure Land of Eagle Peak by virtue of faith in the *Lotus*.⁸² In short, *indō* represents the central element of the Japanese Buddhist funeral rites. It guides the deceased to the right path within the geography of the afterlife, enabling that person to realize buddhahood. As a prior condition for such guidance, the deceased generally has to be transformed into a monk or nun, outfitted with monastic clothing, and given a proper precept or dharma name.

After *indō*, the coffin lid is nailed down or sealed by the deceased's family members and friends, one by one. A particular sect-specific recitation or chanting by the priests before the departure of the coffin for cremation was traditionally conducted in the deceased's house or the temple where the funeral took place. The process of carrying the coffin in a procession from the funeral site to the crematorium was called *nobe okuri* (sending off to the field). One of the most significant elements of traditional Japanese funerals, this traditional procession survived until recently in the countryside. In some regions, music with drums and flutes also accompanied the *nobe okuri*. Now a funeral car is waiting just outside the funeral home, and usually the *nenbutsu* or *daimoku*—again depending of the sectarian affiliation of the deceased's family—is chanted by priests and participants while the coffin is loaded into the hearse.⁸³ At the crematorium the officiating priest again offers a short prayer. After the cremation, when the bones have been picked up and placed in an urn by family members, he may also perform sūtra recitation as the remains are placed in the grave.

D. Transfer of merit (*ekō* and *tsuizen*)

According to Buddhist tradition, after death, those deceased who have yet to achieve liberation may wander in an interim state (Skt. *antarābhava*, Jpn. *chūu*), usually said to last up to forty-nine days, before being reborn. In China, around the tenth century, the interim state acquired the connotation of a purgatorial realm, where the dead may undergo judgment and even torturous punishment.⁸⁴ In the interim state, the deceased can do little or nothing to improve their condition; only memorial prayers offered by the living can transfer merit to them, relieving their suffering and enabling them to be born in a better realm. Thus traditionally, in Japan, prayers were to be offered every seven days up until the forty-ninth day following death. The service on the forty-ninth day was deemed particularly significant, since this was often considered to be the point at which the realm of rebirth was determined. After the forty-ninth-day ritual, a series of memorial

rites continued to be performed on the first, third, and seventh anniversary and so on in a sequence of thirteen memorial rites, up through the thirty-third year following the death. As Williams notes in Chapter 6 in this volume, these Thirteen Buddha Rites (*jūsan butsuji*) derived from the Chinese rites of offerings to the Ten Kings, who are at once judges who sentence the dead in the afterlife and also protective buddhas who may intercede on their behalf. To the rites of the Ten Kings were added three additional rites to complete the sequence of Thirteen Buddha Rites. As Williams also notes, these memorial rites draw on a logic different from that of the funeral proper. While the funeral itself assumes that rites performed by the officiating priest will at once lead the deceased to an enlightened state, the series of subsequent memorial offering rites seems to assume instead that the deceased are in need of ongoing assistance to eradicate their sins and ensure their postmortem well-being until they can be guided, via a prolonged ritual process, to a stable condition of enlightenment. This last phase of the death rites in particular drew on traditions external to Buddhism, such as Confucian rites aimed at transforming the volatile spirit of a newly deceased person into a protective ancestor, and also notions of death defilement, requiring that the polluted spirit of the newly deceased be placated, purified, and transformed into a benevolent guardian *kami*. These concepts were assimilated to Buddhist notions of merit transfer to those wandering in the interim state or suffering in postmortem realms of unhappy rebirth. Since late medieval times, Buddhist priests have served as ritual mediators between the afterworld of the dead and the realm of those still living. Today, a continuing sequence of memorial rites is performed in all Buddhist sects, although in Jōdo Shinshū, they are explained, not in terms of merit transference (since salvation comes solely through Amida), but rather as opportunities to appreciate Amida's compassionate vow and also honor the memory of the deceased.

Although one finds both procedural and sequential differences from one sect to another in the funeral ritual sequence, the "deep structure" identified above would seem to underly most Japanese Buddhist funerals as prescribed in official sectarian ritual texts. This "deep structure" centers on posthumous ordination or its ritual equivalent, aimed at leading the deceased individual to an enlightened state. The initiatory stage begins the transition from this world to the next, preparing and purifying the deceased for the ordination process and subsequent *indō* rite. Within this underlying structure, memorial rites follow a separate logic from that of the funeral rituals and have tended to incorporate a wider range of non-Buddhist afterlife concepts.

Some Doctrinal Questions

The above analysis of the structure of Japanese Buddhist death rituals inevitably raises questions connected to major issues in Buddhist Studies, such as the nature of enlightenment and the problem of the existence (or nonexistence) of a spirit or soul. While such complex subjects cannot be fully addressed in a short essay, one can hardly avoid touching on them altogether, as they are directly related to Buddhist understandings of death itself. Thus I will address briefly the issue of enlightenment after death, according to different traditions, and also touch on the question of the continued existence of a soul or spirit.

For those who practice Buddhism during the course of life, it is their ongoing faith, or efforts in religious discipline, that will determine their enlightenment. However, as noted at the outset, a majority of Japanese turn to Buddhism solely on the occasion of death rites, and, in that context, it is not the individual's own practice while alive but rather the funerary ritual performance that is deemed to bring about the enlightenment of the deceased. Each sect of Japanese Buddhism provides some version of a theory of an enlightenment or salvation achieved immediately after death. Differences in the understanding of enlightenment are, after all, a major doctrinal feature differentiating these traditions from one other. Yet at the same time, as just noted, they also perform ongoing memorial rites, which would seem to suggest that the deceased is not in fact enlightened but still in need of continuing ritual assistance from the living in order to reach an enlightened state. As Williams points out in Chapter 6, although they do not necessarily cohere logically, these two understandings of enlightenment after death have coexisted for a very long time, at least since the Tokugawa period. Generally speaking, however, it is only recently that sectarian scholars have felt a need to address the tension between them and resolve it in doctrinal terms. Let us consider some of these doctrinal explanations being offered today.

In the Jōdo or Pure Land sect, Amida Buddha is said to descend, together with his attendant bodhisattvas, to welcome devotees at the point of death and escort them to his Pure Land; thus Pure Land believers are held to go directly at death to the Land of Bliss, and, strictly speaking, there is no wandering in the darkness of interim existence for such people. Nonetheless, under the influence of widespread custom, the forty-nine-day rites have been incorporated into Jōdo funerary rites. Moreover, from a doctrinal standpoint, birth in the Pure Land (*ōjō*) guarantees the eventual attainment of buddhahood but is not yet buddhahood itself; thus ongoing rites of merit transference

have doctrinal meaning in assisting the deceased person's ongoing practice toward enlightenment in the Pure Land. Also, although devotees are said to be born immediately on a lotus dais in the jeweled lake of Amida's Pure Land, how quickly the lotus blossom will open, allowing that person to behold Amida and hear his preaching, will depend on that individual's past deeds. The forty-nine-day rites are sometimes said to transfer merit to the deceased so that their lotus blossom will open more quickly.⁸⁵

A sharper disjuncture between the two understandings of postmortem enlightenment could be said to occur in the case of Shingon, where the funeral performance is said to confer the state of "direct realization of buddhahood with this very body" (*sokushin jōbutsu*). The *indō* ritual is said to lead the deceased to manifest innate buddhahood or to "open the lotus blossom of the original enlightenment of the Buddha Dainichi."⁸⁶ Similarly, the above-mentioned *kōmyō shingon* rite of casting mantrically empowered sand over the body is said to unite the "three secrets" (*sanmitsu*), that is, the body, speech, and mind of the deceased, with those of Dainichi Nyorai. The union of the body, speech, and mind of the practitioner with those of the cosmic Buddha was central to Kūkai's understanding of Shingon practice and is said to bring about the immediate realization of buddhahood.⁸⁷ In the Shingon funeral context, this accomplishment is said to be conferred on the deceased through the ritual performance.

However, Shingon also performs the extended sequence of memorial offerings comprising Thirteen Buddha Rites. The question then arises why the dead person still needs memorial rites to attain enlightenment, if he or she has already been made to achieve buddhahood through the performance of the funeral proper. One contemporary interpreter attempts to answer this question from the perspective of contemplative union with esoteric deities (*yuga sanmai*). The identity of each of the buddhas and bodhisattvas to whom the Thirteen Buddha Rites are directed in Shingon is established according to esoteric doctrine. At the time of any particular rite, the deceased may be said to be enjoying the bliss of union with the corresponding deity, such as Fudō, Kannon, and so on, and those who offer the memorial prayers may also be said to participate, along with the deceased, in the realm of that deity.⁸⁸

Tendai funerals, as we have seen, may incorporate rhetoric of both "going to the Pure Land" and "realizing buddhahood with this very body." If "going to the Pure Land" is understood as distinct from attaining buddhahood, then memorial prayers may be interpreted in the same sense that they are in the Jōdo sect, as transferring merit to assist the deceased in his or her efforts to continue practice and

achieve buddhahood in the Pure Land. However, if the deceased are understood as having been led to achieve the state of buddhahood by the funeral performance, then the same interpretive problem arises as in Shingon. One contemporary Tendai spokesperson says that he explains the memorial rites “as a chance, afforded by the virtue of the deceased to those who had the closest ties to that person, to offer memorial prayers and thus accumulate merit for themselves.”⁸⁹ In this reading, it is not so much the dead who are assisted by the prayers of the living, as the living who are benefited by the chance to offer prayers for the dead.

The *indō* rite in Zen funerals—the waving of the torch, the cryptic sermon, and the loud roar of the officiant priest—is also said to guide the deceased into the realm of buddhahood. Zen, as we have seen, first instituted *indō* as a funerary rite in the medieval period, and it was later adopted by other sects. For Zen, the place where the dead go has been a controversial issue. In China, Zen and Pure Land disciplines were often practiced concurrently; for example, the early twelfth-century *Chanyuan qinggui*, mentioned above as the first extant set of Chan monastic regulations, mentions birth in the Pure Land in the context of funerals for ordinary monks.⁹⁰ Keizan (1266–1325), who, after Dōgen, was most influential in the formation of the medieval Sōtō sect, tried to eliminate Pure Land elements from Zen funeral rituals.⁹¹ Japanese Zen in general displays some ambivalence regarding the afterlife and has not always excluded the concept of birth in the Pure Land. However, official Sōtō doctrine does not incorporate it; posthumous ordination is said to lead the dead, not to the Pure Land, but to buddhahood. Nara Yasuaki, professor and president emeritus of Sōtō Zen-affiliated Komazawa University, has stressed that, in the context of a lifetime, enlightenment is not achieved once and for all but must be deepened through ongoing practice; similarly, the dead may be thought of as continuing their practice, and the memorial prayers of the living, as praising the practice of the deceased, who has already become a buddha.⁹²

In the Nichiren sect, the dead are said to go to the Pure Land of Eagle Peak, where they will meet Śākyamuni Buddha; according to the letter to Lord Hakii cited above, Nichiren himself will also meet the believer there. Through the *indō* rite, the officiating priest acts as a good friend or *zenchishiki* to guide the deceased to this pure land. However, the distinction found in the Jōdo sect, between “going to the Pure Land” and “attaining buddhahood” does not apply here. The Pure Land of Eagle Peak is not a distinct cosmological realm but a representation of the Buddha’s enlightened state, which one can enter directly through faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*. As the “Lifespan of the Tathāgata”

chapter (“Nyorai juryōbon”) states, when people ardently aspire to see the Buddha, he will at once appear with many monks on Eagle Peak.⁹³ The “assembly on Eagle Peak” is the enlightened realm depicted on the calligraphic mandala that Nichiren devised; Nichiren doctrine also teaches that this pure land can be realized in the present world. As a postmortem destination, the Pure Land of Eagle Peak may be understood as a projection of the enlightened state of buddhahood into the next world. Since one’s faith and practice while alive are deemed determinative of one’s buddhahood in the afterlife, those who did not have faith in the *Lotus Sūtra* while alive are thought to require the transfer of merit from the living. But what about deceased devotees? Here, too, the question of the purpose of ongoing memorial rites arises. In a manner somewhat similar to Nara’s explanation in the case of Sōtō Zen, Ishikawa Kyōchō, former head of the Nichirenshū Research Center for Contemporary Religion (Nichirenshū Gendai Shūkyō Kenkyūjo) stresses that enlightenment is not achieved once and for all but unfolds in the continuation of faith and practice. From this standpoint, the transfer of merit through ongoing memorial rites may be understood as assisting the eternally continuing practice of the departed.⁹⁴

The most distinctive case in terms of funeral ideology is that of Shin Buddhism. As we have already seen, Shin funerals do not include the *indō* ritual or posthumous ordination. Shin doctrine holds that such rites are unnecessary, because birth in the Pure Land is achieved through reliance on the power of Amida’s vow and not on the practice and efforts of individuals. Thus all who place their trust in Amida are assured of birth in the Pure Land, even without the ritual performance of a priest at the funeral ceremony. The funeral sequence as a whole is aimed, not at ensuring the salvation or enlightenment of the deceased, but at expressing gratitude to Amida and to Shinran and other important Jōdo Shinshū patriarchs, as well honoring the memory of the deceased. By the same logic, merit transference is not deemed necessary for the deceased to reach the Pure Land or to achieve enlightenment there. Nonetheless, the forty-nine-day rites and other memorial observances are in fact performed in Shin Buddhism. These are not explained in terms of *ekō* or *tsuizen* but rather as remembering the dead and affording the living an opportunity to hear the dharma.⁹⁵

As just outlined, the deep structure of the funerals in all major traditions combines some notion of enlightenment or birth in a pure land achieved immediately at death with a perceived need for subsequent memorial rites continuing over a period of years. The doctrinal explanations provided differ according to the sect, but the underlying

structure of the funerary sequence remains remarkably similar. Even in the case of Jōdo Shinshū, whose formal doctrine denies the soteriological efficacy of funerary ritual, the basic form of death rites does not depart fundamentally from this structure.

Another feature common to all schools of Japanese Buddhism is the assumption of postmortem continuity of personal identity. Talk about posthumous ordination, leading the dead to enlightenment, transferring merit to the deceased, and so forth all seems to presuppose that the dead continue to exist with their individual personality and mental tendencies intact. The form in which the dead persist is referred to by such expressions as *hotoke*, *tama*, or *rei*. “Spirit” or “soul” might be the closest English equivalent, although “soul” may import Christian metaphysical associations not present in the Japanese terms. As Williams discusses in Chapter 6, *hotoke* literally means “buddha” but is used to refer to the recently dead. Over time, a *hotoke* is ritually transformed into an ancestor (*senzo*); *tama* and *rei* can denote both the deceased who protect the family lineage as ancestors but also unhappy wandering ghosts who trouble the living or who may be serving terms in the hells or other miserable realms of rebirth.⁹⁶ From the standpoint of orthodox Buddhist doctrine, the idea of a “spirit” that persists after death may be regarded as a “heresy” (to use George Tanabe’s term in Chapter 9 in this volume), since the early Buddhist teachings of “not self” (Skt. *anātman*, Jpn. *muga*) denied the existence of persistent metaphysical entities, over and against the Brahmanic idea of a soul or *ātman*. Tensions between doctrines of nonsubstantiality and impermanence, and representations of the dead as stable, perduring entities, can be found across Buddhist cultures and are by no means limited to Japan. However problematic notions about spirits may be for Buddhist scholars, they have become inextricably intertwined with Buddhist funerary rites. A salient example in Japanese Buddhist funerals are the *ihai* or memorial wooden tablets inscribed with the deceased’s posthumous precept or dharma name, which Stephen Covell discusses in more detail in Chapter 8. In one interpretation, *ihai* are considered to be dwellings for the deceased spirit; without the *tama ire* ritual that enables the spirit of the deceased to enter the tablet, the *ihai* does not represent the deceased nor is the posthumous precept name deemed efficacious. The structure and meaning of Japanese Buddhist funerals cannot be comprehended if one ignores the nature of the “spirit” in Japanese beliefs, although there is insufficient space here to fully explore this issue. We should note, however, that while both continued memorial rites and notions of spirits may present difficulties in terms of doctrine, there is no denying that people find them affectively meaningful in transcending the bar-

rier between life and death and maintaining a connection to deceased loved ones.

Conclusion

As we have seen, despite the complexity of their formal ritual instructions, couched in sect-specific Buddhist terminology, the funeral rites performed by the major Japanese Buddhist traditions exhibit remarkable commonality in their basic ritual pattern. Different sectarian doctrinal understandings have not translated into different ritual structures; rather, the same ritual structure has proved capable of supporting a range of doctrinal interpretations. This finding may be explained from both historical and anthropological approaches. Historically, the formation of the underlying ritual structure of Buddhist funerals developed without sectarian exclusivity. The Japanese Buddhist funeral has drawn on a number of Buddhist ideas and practices, including aspirations for birth in a pure land, the perceived incantatory powers of the *nenbutsu* and esoteric mantras, and the posthumous ordination and torch-waving rite of *indō* introduced by Zen. Rival Buddhist institutions were not at all hesitant to borrow each other's ritual methods to make their rites more attractive to parishioners in order to ensure the survival and prosperity of their temples. And although we speak of "Buddhist" funerals, the Japanese funeral is in fact the product of historical negotiation among multiple cultural components, a mixed bag, so to speak, of popular folk traditions, imported Confucian rituals, and other continental practices, as well as Buddhist teachings about death and the afterlife. For example, the idea of the continuity of the spirit or soul and the need to pacify the souls of the dead, attested to in ancient Japanese beliefs, are still apparent in modern Buddhist memorial services, as we have seen. Concerns about death pollution and purification, closely tied to conventions of *kami* worship, are also important components of the death practices connected with the corpse, such as the ritual cleansing of the body. Confucian ideas and rites provided impetus for Buddhist ancestral rites in terms of both ritual procedures and ritual artifacts, including the ancestral tablet or *ihai*. Buddhism, on the other hand, has provided the ideas of rebirth, merit transference, pure lands, and enlightenment, as well as specific funerary practices such as the Lotus repentance rite and the *kōmyō shingon*. In short, Buddhist funerary rituals are and have been the product of a dynamic cultural system, not just the intellectual product of learned priests. Popular demand, local and non-Buddhist traditions, "heretical" beliefs, economic considerations, and material culture all have played an active part in the formation of Japanese Buddhist funerals.

From an anthropological perspective, we may note that the “deep structure” of the traditional Buddhist funeral has come to be deeply embedded in Japanese society as the “correct” way of honoring the dead, and it is deemed essential by many for the deceased’s postmortem well-being, even where the specific Buddhist meanings of the rites are not well understood. It is true that today modern Japanese are beginning to question traditional rites and promote changes in death ritual that better answer their needs. This questioning of funerary tradition has made possible a number of creative options for funerals in contemporary Japan.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, most people still choose “Buddhist” funerals. To be sure, these are no longer necessarily performed by one’s family temple. In many cases, professional funeral homes (*sōgiya* or *sōgi gaisha*) organize the entire funeral, and the Buddhist priest no longer plays the central role; in a typical hour-long funeral, only thirty-five to forty-five minutes may be allocated to the recitation of Buddhist sūtras and prayers. Thus the fact that roughly 94 percent of the Japanese perform funerals in a Buddhist way does not necessarily mean that they are conducting the full traditional rites described in the Buddhist manuals. It would probably be more accurate to say that such funerals are done according to the Japanese secular funeral-dealer style, with Buddhist coloring. While some priests may complain that it is impossible to comprehend and appreciate the full meaning of the funeral and memorial services in such a condensed form, most modern Japanese simply cannot afford to go back to lengthy “old-fashioned” Buddhist funerals. The pace of life is simply too fast to take time for such elaborate rituals, whose proper completion requires at least several days, and the local community networks that once supported them have increasingly given way to a society based on nuclear families.⁹⁸

Yet despite recent changes in the Japanese funerals, the underlying structure remains much the same. The wake may now be held in a rented room of a funeral parlor instead of the family home; food and tea will be served by the facility, reflecting the traditional custom of offering a vegetarian feast and drinking *sake* during the wake. In streamlined urban funerals, the wake and the funeral are often performed on the same day, and a priest is called in only once for a short sūtra recitation. An acting part-time priest or even a tape recorder, as Stephen Covell also notes in Chapter 8, may fulfill the role of performing the posthumous ordination and abbreviated *indō* rite. *Tsuizen kuyō* or memorial rites are still held without fail, with the memorial rite on the forty-ninth day being deemed particularly important, although the frequency of such rites has decreased in recent decades, and many families may not even have a Buddhist altar at home. Thus the actual

ritual forms are becoming abridged and “modernized” as the *sōgiya* industry has increasingly taken over the Buddhist temple’s role as a purveyor and organizer of funerals. Still, the basic structure of Buddhist funerals continues to be honored. That is to say, the procedures of the modern *sōgiya* do not seem to have substantially undermined the elementary structure of Buddhist funerals. Although a majority of modern Japanese may remain ignorant or confused about meanings and functions of specific elements in the Buddhist funeral, many nonetheless believe that the funeral ritual is in some sense necessary to establish the deceased in a peaceful or enlightened state in the Pure Land or other postmortem realm. The funeral, it is still thought, can, with the proper ritual gestures and incantations, transform the deceased into buddhas (*hotoke*) “effortlessly, marvelously, with an irresistible power that is itself intangible, invisible, unmanifest,” to borrow Herbert Fingarette’s expression.⁹⁹

Thus, both historical interaction across Buddhist traditions and widespread social acceptance has resulted in funerary rites that, despite differences in Buddhist terminology, liturgical texts, and so forth, exhibit a more or less similar structure, which can be summarized as initiatory stage, ordination (*jukai*), leading the way (*indō*), and the transfer of merit through memorial rites (*ekō* or *tsuizen*). While the focus of this study is on Japan, a comparison with funerals in other Buddhist cultures might show similarities in underlying structure.¹⁰⁰ Despite this structural similarity, however, we have also seen that the doctrinal meaning or interpretation of these funerary procedures differs considerably from one school of Japanese Buddhism to another. These differences arise primarily from their distinctive approaches to the idea of enlightenment or buddhahood. This raises the question of the relationship between funeral ritual and its philosophical or doctrinal interpretation. Which comes first, the ritual or the particular idea of enlightenment that the ritual is said to express? Are they necessarily connected? Who produces and perpetuates such connections or interpretations? Given that funeral rituals have emerged through a total cultural process as described above, there would seem to be no simple answers.

In his study of late imperial Chinese funerary ritual, James Watson has pointed out that modern rural Chinese generally do not concern themselves with the meaning of their funeral rites as long as they are performed according to prescribed norms; the original intention, cultural meaning, and symbolism of the ritual objects and processes have been lost during the passage from antiquity to the modern age.¹⁰¹ In Japanese Buddhist funerals, the underlying Buddhist meanings of the ritual procedures may be still significant for priests and doctrinal

specialists but for most lay people, the Buddhist significance of the funeral is no longer well understood. This widespread lack of understanding, coupled with the fact that there exists a single basic funeral structure to which different doctrinal meanings have been assigned, may also be taken as signifying the priority of ritual practice or ritual forms over meanings—or of the performative domain over the ideological domain, to use Watson's terminology. However, the two cases are not altogether comparable. While both unite elements from disparate sources, the traditional Chinese funerals that form the subject of Watson's study are not standardized within the framework of any particular doctrinal religion, such as Buddhism. In traditional Japanese funerals, Buddhist meanings and messages are everywhere evident in the ritual forms and language employed, even though many people today are not familiar with them. Buddhist rites, symbols, and concepts (for example, ordination, Pure Land, and so forth) form the common denominator of the Japanese funeral and govern its ideological domain; moreover, the underlying structure of the funeral, shared across sects, forms a template upon which, even now, knowledgeable Buddhist scholars and practitioners continue to generate new meanings. Thus Watson's emphasis on the preeminence of the performative domain of Chinese funerals may not be totally applicable to the Japanese case. I am more inclined to adopt Evelyn Rawski's opinion that ritual forms and meanings interact; as she puts it: "Beliefs and practice as organically linked to one another, each influencing the other."¹⁰² Each Buddhist tradition has put forth differing ideas of salvation or enlightenment, and these differing concepts of salvation or enlightenment have in turn been reinforced through association with the underlying form of the funeral. The fact of a unified deep structure in Buddhist funerals across sectarian lines does not necessarily translate into the primacy of ritual performance over the ideological domain.¹⁰³

The encompassing Buddhist explanatory framework and its accompanying funerary rites have not only offered a bridge between the living and the dead, but, we can imagine, have also eased the psychological tension between attachment to the deceased and the fear of death and of the corpse. At the time of its introduction, Buddhism brought more compelling perspectives on death to the Japanese than had previously been available, and its death rituals have subsequently undergone continual reformation according to specific needs and circumstances while maintaining the fundamental claim that Buddhist ritual performance transcends the barriers between life and death. The ultimate aims of Buddhist funeral rituals are to aid the deceased in attaining postmortem buddhahood or stability in the afterlife and to aid the living in the acceptance of death via the ritual process. Con-

temporary transformations or reformations of traditional funeral rites will probably not soon abandon these functional and structural elements of Buddhist death rituals, which have permeated the Japanese way of life and death for many centuries.

APPENDIX 1

The Sōtō Zen Funeral Procedure

葬儀の式次第—曹洞宗

1) 臨終諷經 (枕經)	1) Deathbed sūtra recitation (<i>rinjū fugin</i>), or the pillow sūtra (<i>makura-gyō</i>)
遺教經または 舍利礼文	Recitation of the <i>Sūtra of the Buddha's Final Instructions</i> (<i>Yuikyōgyō</i>) or relic veneration text (<i>shari raimon</i>)
回向文	Transfer of merit (<i>ekōmon</i>)
帰依文	Taking of refuge (<i>kiemon</i>)
2) 通夜	2) The wake (<i>tsuya</i>)
仏説父母恩重經	Recitation of the <i>Sūtra on Filial Piety</i> (<i>Bussetsu fumo onjūkyō</i>)
大悲心ダラニ	Recitation of the “great compassionate mind dhāraṇī” (<i>daihiishin darani</i>)
嘆文	Invocation and veneration of the eighty-eight buddhas (<i>tanmon, tanbutsu</i>)
洞上唱礼法	Recitation for venerating all buddhas (following the procedures of the <i>Tōjō shōraihiō</i>)
通夜説法	Preaching (<i>tsuya seppō</i>)
3) 剃髪	3) Shaving of the head (<i>teihatsu</i>)
偈文	Recitation of verses (<i>gemon</i>)
剃髪偈	Verses for shaving the head (<i>teihatsu ge</i>)
光明真言	Recitation of the mantra of light (<i>kōmyō shingon</i>)
4) 授戒	4) Posthumous ordination (<i>jukai</i>)
懺悔文	Recitation of the repentance text (<i>sangemon</i>)
妙法蓮華經 觀世音菩薩普門品	Recitation of the “Universal Gate of Bodhisattva Kanzeon” chapter of the <i>Lotus Sūtra</i> (<i>Myōhōrengekyō</i> , “Kanzeon bosatsu fumonbon”)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 三歸戒文 | Conferring the triple refuge (<i>sankikaimon</i>) |
| 三聚淨戒文 | Recitation of the three groups of pure precepts
(<i>sanju jōkaimon</i>) |
| 十重禁戒文 | Recitation of the ten weighty precepts (<i>jūjū kinkaimon</i>) |
| 血脈授与文 | Recitation for the conferring of lineage (<i>kechimyaku juyomon</i>) |
| 5) 入龕諷經
妙法蓮華經
如來壽量品偈 | 5) Sūtra recitation for encoffining (<i>nyūgan fugin</i>):
verse section of the “Fathoming the Lifespan of the
Tathāgata” chapter of the <i>Lotus Sūtra</i> (<i>Myōhōrengekyō</i> ,
“Nyorai juryōbon,” <i>ge</i>) |
| 回向文 | Transfer of merit (<i>ekōmon</i>) |
| 6) 大夜念誦
(龕前念誦) | 6) “Recitation on the eve of the funeral” (<i>taiya nenju</i>), or recitation before the casket (<i>ganzen nenju</i>) |
| 大夜念誦文 | “Recitation on the eve of the funeral” text (<i>taiya nenjumon</i>) |
| 十仏名 | Names of the ten buddhas (<i>jūbutsumyō</i>) |
| 舍利礼文 | Relic veneration text (<i>shari raimon</i>) |
| 回向文 | Transfer of merit (<i>ekōmon</i>) |
| 7) 挙龕念誦 | 7) Recitation for lifting the casket (<i>kogan nenju</i>) |
| 挙龕念誦文 | Recitation text for lifting casket (<i>kogan nenjumon</i>) |
| 大悲呪 | Recitation of the great compassion spell (<i>daihi ju</i>) |
| 8) 引導法語 | 8) Preaching for the deceased (<i>indō hōgo</i>) |
| 引導文 | <i>Indō</i> text (<i>indōmon</i>) |
| 弔辭, 弔電 | Messages of condolence (<i>chōji, chōden</i>) |
| 9) 山頭念誦 | 9) Recitation at the funeral site (<i>santō nenju</i>) |
| 山頭念誦文,
十仏名 | Funeral site recitation text (<i>santō nenjumon</i>),
recitation of the names of the ten buddhas
(<i>jūbutsumyō</i>) |
| 回向文 | Transfer of merit (<i>ekōmon</i>) |

修証義、 普門品偈	Recitation of “The Meaning of Practice-Realization” (“Shushōgi”), verses from the “Universal Gate of Bodhisattva Kanzeon” chapter of the <i>Lotus Sūtra</i> (<i>Myōhōrengekyō</i> , “Fumonbon,” <i>ge</i>)
送棺回向文	Recitation for the transfer of merit while sending off the casket (<i>sōkan ekōmon</i>)

From Fujii Masao, ed., *Sōgi daijiten* (Tokyo: Kamakura Shinsho, 1980; rpt. 1995), 188–189, translated by Mariko N. Walter.

APPENDIX 2

The Pure Land (Jōdōshū) Funeral Procedure 葬儀の式次第—浄土宗

1) 枕経	1) Pillow sūtra (<i>makura-gyō</i>)
1. 奉請 三奉請 四奉請	1. Inviting the buddhas (<i>bujō</i>): Welcoming of Amida, Śākyamuni, and the buddhas of the ten directions (<i>sanbujō</i>) Welcoming of the buddhas of the ten directions, Śākyamuni, Amida, and the bodhisattvas Kannon and Seishi (<i>shihōzei</i>)
2. 広懺悔 (付懺悔偈) 懺悔偈 (略懺悔)	2. Expanded repentance text (<i>kōsange</i>), with supplemental repentance verses (<i>fu sange ge</i>) Repentance verses (<i>sange ge</i>) (the abbreviated repentance, <i>ryaku sange</i>)
3. 剃度作法	3. Rite of shaving (<i>teido sahō</i>)
4. 帰与三帰三竟	4. Taking refuge in the Three Treasures (<i>kiyo sanki sankyō</i>)
5. 授与戒名	5. Conferring the posthumous name (<i>juyō kaimyō</i>)
6. 開経偈	6. Opening sūtra verses (<i>kaikyō ge</i>)
7. 誦経 四誓偈か 仏身観文	7. Sūtra recitation (<i>jukyō</i>): The four bodhisattva vow verses (<i>shisei ge</i>) or the “contemplation of Amida’s body” passage (<i>busshinkanmon</i>) from the <i>Contemplation Sūtra</i> (<i>Kanmuryōjukyō</i>)

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 8. 聞名得益偈 | 8. “Benefit of hearing the Buddha’s name”
verses (<i>monmyō tokuyaku ge</i>) from the <i>Sūtra of Immeasurable Life</i> (<i>Muryōjukyō</i>) |
| 9. 発願文 | 9. “Making a vow” text (<i>hotsuganmon</i>) |
| 10. 摂益文 | 10. Text on the “benefit of being encompassed”
by Amida’s light (<i>shōyakumon</i>) from the
<i>Contemplation Sūtra</i> (<i>Kanmuryōjukyō</i>) |
| 11. 念仏一会 | 11. <i>Nenbutsu</i> chanting in unison (<i>nenbutsu ichie</i>) |
| 12. 総回向偈 | 12. Verses for the general transfer of merit (<i>sōekō ge</i>) |
| 2) 納棺式 | 2) Encoffining rite (<i>nōkanshiki</i>) |
| 1. 納棺 | 1. Encoffining (<i>nōkan</i>) |
| 2. 納棺偈 | 2. Encoffining verses (<i>nōkan ge</i>) |
| 3. 奉請 | 3. Inviting the buddhas (<i>bujiō</i>) |
| 4. 広懺悔
(付懺悔偈) | 4. Expanded repentance (<i>kōsange</i>), with
supplemental repentance verses (<i>fu sange ge</i>) |
| 5. 発願文 | 5. “Making a vow” text (<i>hotsuganmon</i>) |
| 6. 摂益文 | 6. Text on the “benefit of being encompassed” by
Amida’s light (<i>shōyakumon</i>) |
| 7. 念仏一会 | 7. <i>Nenbutsu</i> chanting in unison (<i>nenbutsu ichie</i>) |
| 8. 総回向偈 | 8. Verses for the general transfer of merit (<i>sōekō ge</i>) |
| 9. 総願偈 | 9. General concluding verses of the bodhisattva
vows (<i>sōgan ge</i>) |
| 3) 通夜 | 3) The wake (<i>tsuya</i>) |
| 4) 迎接式 | 4) Preliminary service (<i>gōshōshiki</i> , abbreviation of the
full <i>dōnaishiki</i> ceremony) |

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1. 奉請 | 1. Inviting the buddhas (<i>bujō</i>) |
| 2. 懺悔偈 | 2. Repentance verses (<i>sange ge</i>) |
| 3. 授与三歸三竟 | 3. Conferring refuge in the Three Treasures (<i>juyo sanki sankyō</i>) |
| 4. 開經偈 | 4. Opening sūtra verses (<i>kaikyō ge</i>) |
| 5. 誦經 | 5. Sūtra recitation (<i>jukyō</i>) |
| 6. 摂益文 | 6. Text on the “benefit of being encompassed” by Amida’s light (<i>shōyakumon</i>) |
| 7. 念仏一会 | 7. <i>Nenbutsu</i> chanting in unison (<i>nenbutsu ichie</i>) |
| 8. 回向 | 8. Transfer of merit (<i>ekō</i>) |
| 9. 総回向偈 | 9. Verses for the general transfer of merit (<i>sōekō ge</i>) |
| 10. 合鉦 | 10. Ritual striking of the cymbals (<i>gappachi</i>) |
| 11. 出棺 | 11. Departure of the casket (<i>shukkan</i>) |
| 12. 出棺偈 | 12. Verses for departure of the casket (<i>shukkan ge</i>) |
| 5) 堂内式 | 5) Full ritual at the funeral site (<i>dōnaishiki</i>) |
| 1. 洪鐘 | 1. Ringing the opening bell (<i>kōshō</i>) |
| 2. 法鼓 | 2. Beating the dharma drum (<i>hokku</i>) |
| 3. 喚鐘 | 3. Ringing the bell to start the funeral (<i>kanshō</i>) |
| 4. 作相 | 4. Assuming correct ritual posture (<i>sasō</i>) |
| 5. 入堂 | 5. Entering the hall (<i>nyūdō</i>) |
| 6. 香偈 | 6. Incense offering verse (<i>kōge</i>) |
| 7. 三宝礼 | 7. Veneration of the Three Treasures (<i>sanbōrai</i>) |

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 8. 奉請 | 8. Inviting the buddhas (<i>bujō</i>) |
| 9. 懺悔偈 | 9. Repentance verses (<i>sange ge</i>) |
| 10. 転座 | 10. Changing seats (<i>tenza</i>) |
| 11. 作梵 | 11. Intoning hymns (<i>sabon</i>): The “Praise of the Four Wisdoms” (<i>Shichisan</i>) or “Hymn to the Tathāgata” (<i>Nyoraibon</i>) |
| 12. 合鉢 | 12. Striking the cymbals (<i>gapachi</i>) |
| 13. 鎖龕
(鎖龕の文) | 13. Closing the casket (<i>sagan</i>)
(“Closing the casket” recitation text [<i>sagan no mon</i>]) |
| 14. 起龕
(起龕の文) | 14. Raising the casket (<i>kigan</i>)
(“Raising the casket” recitation text [<i>kigan no mon</i>]) |
| 15. 奠湯 | 15. Offering of pure water (<i>tentō</i>) |
| 16. 奠茶 | 16. Offering of tea (<i>tencha</i>) |
| 17. 靈供 | 17. Offering of rice (<i>reiku</i>) |
| 18. 念誦 | 18. Recitations (<i>nenju</i>) |
| 19. 下炬 | 19. Waving of the torch (<i>ako</i>) |
| 20. 弔辭 | 20. Messages of condolence (<i>chōji</i>) |
| 21. 開經偈 | 21. Opening sūtra verses (<i>kaikyō ge</i>) |
| 22. 誦經 | 22. Sūtra recitation (<i>jukyō</i>) |
| 23. 摂益文 | 23. Text on the “benefit of being encompassed” by Amida’s light (<i>shōyakumon</i>) |
| 24. 念仏一会 | 24. <i>Nenbutsu</i> chanting in unison (<i>nenbutsu ichie</i>) |
| 25. 回向 | 25. Transfer of merit (<i>ekō</i>) |

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 26. 総回向 | 26. General transfer of merit (<i>sōekō</i>) |
| 27. 総願偈 | 27. General concluding vow verses (<i>sōgan ge</i>) |
| 28. 三身礼 | 28. Veneration of Amida's three bodies (<i>sanjinrai</i>) |
| 29. 送仏偈 | 29. Verses for sending off the buddhas (<i>sōbutsu ge</i>) |
| 30. 退堂 | 30. Exit from the funeral hall (<i>taidō</i>) |
| 6) 納骨式 | 6) Rite of interring the remains (<i>nōkotsushiki</i>) |
| 1. 開經偈 | 1. Opening sūtra verses (<i>kaikyō ge</i>) |
| 2. 誦經 | 2. Sūtra recitation (<i>jukyō</i>) |
| 3. 摂益文 | 3. Text on the "benefit of being encompassed" by Amida's light (<i>shōyakumon</i>) |
| 4. 念仏一会 | 4. <i>Nenbutsu</i> chanting in unison (<i>nenbutsu ichie</i>) |
| 5. 回向 | 5. Transfer of merit (<i>ekō</i>) |
| 6. 総回向偈 | 6. Verses for the general transfer of merit (<i>sōekō ge</i>) |
| 7) 洒浄式 | 7) Purification of the hall after the funeral (<i>shajōshiki</i>) |
| 1. 四方洒水 | 1. Water purification in the four directions (<i>shihō shasui</i>) |
| 2. 奉請 | 2. Inviting the buddhas (<i>bujiō</i>) |
| 3. 誦經 | 3. Sūtra recitation (<i>jukyō</i>) |
| 4. 念仏一会 | 4. <i>Nenbutsu</i> chanting in unison (<i>nenbutsu ichie</i>) |
| 5. 普濟偈 | 5. Verses of universal salvation (<i>fusai ge</i>) |
| 6. 送仏偈 | 6. Verses for sending off the buddhas (<i>sōbutsu ge</i>) |

From Fujii Masao, ed., *Sōgi daijiten* (Tokyo: Kamakura Shinsho, 1980; rpt. 1995), 96–99, translated by Mariko N. Walter.

Notes

1. Fujii Masao, *Bukkyō no girei* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1983), 102. The figures are based on a 1980 survey by the Shufu Rengōkai (Housewives' Association) commissioned by the Keizai Kikakuchō (Economic Planning Agency) of the Japanese government.

2. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 1963).

3. For example, the average payment a temple received for a funeral service in 1990 amounted to around 745,000 yen (about \$5,600 at the average exchange rate of \$1 = 133 yen in 1990), including *ofuse* (donation) for sūtra recitations at the wake, funeral, and cremation site as well as the donation for the posthumous name (*kaimyō*). This does not include the cost of continued memorial services up to the fiftieth anniversary or the price of a grave plot, gravestone, or the annual grave maintenance fee. Altogether, death-related expenses in Japan can cost on average over \$30,000. See Nakano Tsuyoshi, *Yujinsō wo kangaeru* (Tokyo: Daisanbunmeisha, 1993), 20–21; and also www.alpha-net.ne.jp/users2/sato1976/sougi02kinngaku.htm and www.e-sogi.com/okonau/hiyo.html for recent figures, which if anything have dropped slightly from those of a decade ago. This drop is due both to the economic recession and the fact that an increasing number of Japanese are becoming critical of the enormous cost of death-related expenses. I would like to thank Prof. Nakano for providing helpful information and directing me to these websites.

4. *Shoku Nihongi* 1, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter *SNKBT*) 12, ed. Aoki Kazuo et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 23–27.

5. See, for example, Nelly Nauman, “Death and the Afterlife in Early Japan,” in *Practicing the Afterlife: Perspectives from Japan*, ed. Susanne Formanek and William R. LaFleur (Vienna: Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), 51–62; and Andrew Bernstein, *Modern Passings: Death Rites, Politics, and Social Change in Imperial Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006), 28–29. For an account of burial practices (double burial) among aristocrats prior to the introduction of Buddhism, see Gary L. Ebersole, *Ritual Poetry and the Politics of Death in Early Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 129–136.

6. *Tahōtō* are stūpas or pagodas constructed in the image of the Treasure Tower (*tahōtō*) that appears in the *Lotus Sūtra*.

7. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 105–108.

8. *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō Hōji 4, 7/26. See *Shoku Nihongi* 3, *SNKBT* 14:358–359.

9. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 116.

10. *Ruiju zatsurei*, summarized in Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 104.

11. On funerary use of the *kōmyō shingon*, see Mark Unno, “Recommending Faith in the Sand of the Mantra of Light: Myōe Kōben’s *Kōmyō shin-*

gon dosha kanjiinki,” in *Re-visioning “Kamakura” Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1998).

12. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 262–268.

13. Fujii, *Bukkyō no girei*, 129.

14. On the *danka* system and its relation to funerals, see Tamamuro Fumio, *Sōshiki to danka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999). Tamamuro Fumio has stressed the increasing power of Buddhist clerics over parishioners under the *jidān* system. Individuals depended for their very social identity on the temple’s certification of their status as Buddhist parishioners. If the temple priest withheld certification, that individual could be labeled as a Christian, subjecting his or her entire family to imprisonment or even execution (200). In English, see Tamamuro Fumio’s “Local Society and the Temple-Parishioner Relationship,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28, nos. 3–4 (2001): 262–292; and also Nam-lin Hur, *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

15. Fujii Masao, *Butsuji no kisō chishiki* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1985), 234–235.

16. These thirteen sects are Tendai, Shingon, Ritsu, Jōdo, Rinzai, Sōtō, Ōbaku, Shin, Nichiren, Ji, Yūzū Nenbutsu, Hossō, and Kegon.

17. In my analysis of Buddhist funerals, I have relied heavily on the work of Fujii Masao, including the “Sōgi shiki” section of his *Bukkyō girei jiten* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1977), 281–336; his edited volume *Sōgi daijiten* (Tokyo: Kamakura Shinsho, 1980; this collection henceforth cited as *Sōgi daijiten*); and his *Sōgi o kangaeru* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1990).

18. See Daniel B. Stevenson, “The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T’ien-t’ai Buddhism,” in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1986), 45–97.

19. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 100. See also Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 173–175.

20. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 102; Stevenson, “The Four Kinds of Samādhi,” 58–61.

21. See Sonoda Kōyū, “Yama no nenbutsu: Sono kigen to seikaku,” in *Heian bukkyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981), 163–169; Edward Kamens, *The Three Jewels: A Study and Translation of Minamoto Tamenori’s Sanbōe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Japanese Studies, 1988), 342–344; and Groner, *Ryōgen and Mt. Hiei*, 175–179.

22. Tada Kōbun, “Tendaishū,” in *Sōgi daijiten*, 63.

23. *Sandai jitsuroku*, Genkei 4, 12/11, *Shintei zōho kokushi taikēi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929–1966), 4:488. For the mantra’s textual history and an overview of its practice in Japan, see Mark Unno, *Shingon Refractions: Myōe and the Mantra of Light* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), 21–44.

24. This is specified in both sets of regulations extant for the Nijūgo zanmai-e, the 986 *Kishō hachikajō* attributed to Yoshishige no Yasutane (article 2), and the 988 *Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kishō* attributed to Genshin (article 4). The critical edition of both texts has been published in Koyama Shōjun, "Tōdaiji Chūshōin shozō 'Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi' no saikentō: Sōshobon no goshoku ni yoru mondaiten," *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 53 (1997): 56–95 (86–87).

25. Tada, "Tendaishū," 64.

26. *Ibid.*, 62–63.

27. Arai Yūsei, "Shingonshū," in *Sōgi daijiten*, 69–70.

28. For example, *Benmō Shingonshū dan'yō kyōten*, compiled by Iwahara Teishin in 1937 (Kōyasan); *Chizan hōyō benran*, compiled by the Hōshiki Chōsakai in 1930 (Chizan) and revised in 1959; and *Yōzon hōshō* and *Zōho Buzan-ha hōsokushū* based on the 1919 sectarian manual *Hōsokushū* (Buzan). See Fujii, *Bukkyō girei jiten*, 289, 292, 295.

29. Arai, "Shingonshū," 70.

30. *Ibid.*, 72.

31. Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 64.

32. On Myōe's use of the *kōmyō shingon*, see, for example, Sueki Fumihiko, *Kamakura bukkyō keiseiron* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, Tokyo, 1998), 255–275; and Unno, *Shingon Refractions*.

33. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 110.

34. *Gunsho ruijū*, ed. Hanawa Hokiichi; rev. ed. Ōta Toshirō, 29 vols. (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1939–1943), no. 484, 27:513a.

35. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 118–119.

36. This text is known as the *Jōdoshū shohatto*, also called *Genna jōmoku* or *Sanjūgokajō hatto*, and became the main foundation of Jōdoshū temple regulations; see *Nihon bukkyō tensei daijiten*, ed. Kanaoka Shūyū (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1986), 269.

37. Fujii Masao, "Jōdoshū," in his *Sōgi daijiten*, 93.

38. Fujii, "Jōdoshū," 93–94; and *Bukkyō no girei*, 311.

39. For a more detailed discussion, see Fujii, "Jōdoshū," 94–95.

40. Fujii, *Bukkyō girei jiten*, 299–300.

41. See Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan qinggui* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 206–211, 217–219.

42. On the adoption of Zen funerals in Japan, see William M. Bodiford, "Zen Funerals," chap. 14 in his *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 185–208.

43. For a list, see Matsuura Shūkō, *Zengi no sōhō to tsuizen kuyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1969), 11–12.

44. Shibuta Kōho, "Rinzaishū," in *Sōgi daijiten*, 177–178; Sakauchi Ryūyū, "Sōtōshū," *ibid.*, 186–187.

45. Fujii, *Bukkyō girei jiten*, 303.
46. Matsuura, *Zengi no sōhō to tsuizen kuyō no kenkyū*, 14.
47. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukkyō*, 126–127.
48. Ibid., 128–130.
49. Tamamuro's method is critiqued in Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, 197–199. See also Chapter 6, n. 13, in this volume, by Duncan Williams.
50. This is mentioned in the 1337 *Gaijashō* by Kakunyo. See *Teihon Shinran Shōnin zenshū*, vol. 4 (Kyoto: Hōzokan, 1969), 159.
51. *Mattōshō*, in *Shinran chosaku zenshū*, ed. Kaneko Daiei (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1966); in English, see *The Collected Works of Shinran*, 2 vols., trans. Dennis Hirota et al. (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997), 1:580. See also Shinran's criticism of deathbed practice in Chapter 2 in this volume, by Jacqueline Stone.
52. Nadamoto Aiji et al., *Shinran no shisō*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kyōiku Shinchōsha, 1977), 62.
53. For Shinran's idea of immediate birth in the Pure Land, see "Ichinen tanen mon'i" and "Yuishinshō mon'i," *Shinran chosaku zenshū*, 513–516 and 533–549, respectively. Cf. Hirota, *Collected Works of Shinran*, 1:455 and 1:541–542.
54. Sasaki Kōsei, "Shinshū Ōtani-ha," in *Sōgi daijiten*, 130.
55. *Amidakyō* (smaller *Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra*), *Muryōjūkyō* (larger *Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra*), and *Kanmuryōjūkyō* (*Guan Wuliangshou jing*).
56. Sasaki, "Shinshū Ōtani-ha," 129.
57. "Hakii-dono gosho," in *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun*, ed. Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo, 4 vols. (Minobu-chō, Yamanashi Prefecture: Minobusan Kuonji, 1988), 2:1932–1933. For similar statements in Nichiren's writings promising the protection of the *Lotus Sūtra* in the afterlife, see "Myōhō mandara kuyōji," 1:698–699; "Hitoeginushō," 2:1107; and "Ueno-dono gohenji," 2:1637.
58. The Jūgōen was a Nichirenshū seminary established by Nichiki at Kaga in Kanazawa.
59. Hayami Benjō, "Nichirenshū," in *Sōgi daijiten*, 223–224; Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 224.
60. Hayami, "Nichirenshū," 210.
61. See Nichiren Shōshū Henshūbu, "Nichiren Shōshū," in *Sōgi daijiten*, 223–224.
62. For examples, see the detailed liturgical proceedings for Zen and Jōdo funerals given in the appendixes to this chapter.
63. See n. 17 above.
64. James L. Watson, "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, ed. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988): 3–19.
65. Arai, "Shingonshū," 73.

66. Sasaki, "Shinshū Ōtani-ha," 131–132.
67. *T* no. 801, 17:746b.
68. Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 36.
69. Tada, "Tendaishū," 54–56.
70. Sakauchi, "Sōtōshū," 190. For the *Lotus Sūtra* verse, see *Miaofa lianhua jing*, *T* no. 262, 9:58a; trans. Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (The Lotus Sūtra)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 318.
71. For the complete ritual sequence, see Fujii, "Jōdoshū," in his *Sōgi daijiten*, 96–102, as well as the second appendix to this chapter.
72. Tada, "Tendaishū," 62–63.
73. Arai, "Shingonshū," 71.
74. The fivefold transmission refers to the five core teachings of capacity (*ki*), dharma (*hō*), understanding (*ge*), proof (*shō*), and faith (*shin*) said to lie at the heart of the key Pure Land texts. Shōgei systematized these items based on the Tendai, Shingon, and Zen transmissions of his time. The original full-scale ritual of transmission required more than a hundred days to complete; the versions of the fivefold transmission conferred upon lay devotees and the deceased have been simplified; see *Jōdoshū daijiten*, ed. Jōdoshū Daijiten Hensan Iinkai, 4 vols. (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1974), 1:448–450.
75. Sakauchi, "Sōtōshū," 190–191.
76. Okuzaki Ryōkan, "Jōdo Shinshū Honganji-ha," in *Sōgi daijiten*, 127.
77. Hayami, "Nichirenshū," 207–208. The equation of embracing the *Lotus Sūtra* with upholding the precepts appears in the sūtra itself; see *Miaofa lianhua jing*, *T* 9:34b; Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom*, 193.
78. See the description in Bodiford, "Zen and the Art of Funerals," 201–204.
79. Tada, "Tendaishū," 64.
80. Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 58–59.
81. Arai, "Shingonshū," 72, 75.
82. For a sample Nichirenshū *indō* text, see Hayami, "Nichirenshū," 216–217.
83. On the decline of the funeral procession, see Bernstein, *Modern Passings*, 147–150.
84. See Stephen F. Teiser, "The Growth of Purgatory," in *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 115–145.
85. See Fujii, "Jōdoshū," 106–107; and *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 112–113; as well as Iwahashi Shunshō, "Seizan Jōdoshū," in *Sōgi daijiten*, 118–119.
86. Arai, quoting Kūkai's *Dainichikyō kaidai*, "Shingonshū," 70.
87. On Shingon "three secrets" practice, see, for example, Kūkai's *So-kushin jōbutsu gi*, in *Kōbō Daishi Kūkai zenshū*, ed. Miyazaka Yūshō (Tokyo: Tsukuma Shobō, 1988), 2:221–227; Hisao Inagaki, trans., "Kūkai's 'Principle of Attaining Buddhahood with the Present Body'" (1975), rpt. in *Tantric Buddhism*

in *East Asia*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 99–118.

88. Kuriyama Shōjun, quoted in Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 59–61.

89. Kiuchi Gyōō, as quoted in Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 37.

90. Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*, 206–209.

91. Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 143.

92. Quoted in Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 149–150.

93. *Miaofa lianhua jing*, T 9:43b; Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, 242.

94. Quoted in Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 193–194.

95. Fujii, *Sōgi o kangaeru*, 97–98, 112–113, 119.

96. According to Yanagita Kunio, the spirit of the dead (*shirei*) becomes a *hotoke* after the forty-ninth day and goes to the Pure Land. At the same time, the spirit of the dead gains higher status as a *shōryō* (spirit) and visits its family household annually at the equinoxes and the Obon ancestral festival. *Shōryō*, Yanagita says, derives from the Chinese word for “mind” or “nature spirit” as expressed in Chinese poems. In Japan it has acquired the connotation of a personal spirit able to persist independently of the body. Being gradually purified by the annual festivals, by the time of its last memorial rite, the spirit becomes a benevolent ancestor. This ancestor will eventually be regarded as a *kami* of the yearly cycle of seasons (*toshigami*) and visit the family house every new year (*Senzo no hanashi* [Tokyo: Tsukuma Shobō, 1946], 47–48, 58–61, 68–69, 88, 106–109, 137, 154–156). Yanagita’s account represents a general schematization, of which many local variations may be found.

97. For new funerary options and recent changes in the traditional funeral, see Mark Rowe, “Stickers for Nails: The Ongoing Transformation of Roles, Rites, and Symbols in Japanese Funerals,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, nos. 3–4 (2000): 353–378; and “Where the Action Is: Sites of Contemporary Sōtō Buddhism,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004): 357–388.

98. For a summary of these and other shifts in funerary modern practice, see Murakami Kōkyō, “Changes in Japanese Urban Funeral Customs during the Twentieth Century,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, nos. 3–4 (2000): 335–352.

99. *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 4.

100. See, for example, Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970; rev. 1982), 248–254; and Richard Gombrich, *Precept and Practice, Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 241–242.

101. “The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites,” 4, 18.

102. Evelyn Rawski, “A Historian’s Approach to Chinese Death Ritual,” in Watson and Rawski, *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Early Modern China*, 28.

103. I am aware that, as Watson states: “Many anthropologists try to create meaning by reassembling symbols, metaphors, and actions into a coherent set of messages—thereby engaging in the structural analysis of various types” (“The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites,” 5), and that my analysis and construction of the structure of Japanese Buddhist funerals represents my own reading of their meanings based on the texts of the ritual procedures and is thus not the only possible paradigm. Were one to examine Buddhist funeral procedures from a different perspective—for example, that of “indigenous” traditions and beliefs, as Yanagita Kunio and his students did—a very different deep structure might emerge, revealing an underlying pattern reflecting those traditions and beliefs. See, for example, Yanagita’s correlation of funeral rites with birth rites in “Yanagita Kunio no shakai to kodomo,” *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū* (Tokyo: Tsukuba Shobō, 1963), 15:215–216.

The Price of Naming the Dead

Posthumous Precept Names and Critiques of Contemporary Japanese Buddhism

STEPHEN G. COVELL

TODAY, THE SECTS of traditional Buddhism are facing perhaps the most serious threat to their existence since the government's efforts during the Meiji period (1868–1912) to forcibly separate a “Buddhism” and a “Shinto” from the fabric of premodern Japanese religion. The contemporary threat is tied directly to the central role of funerals. Until the Meiji period, many temples relied on income-producing landholdings for their livelihood. One effect of Meiji-period reforms, however, was that many temples were stripped of their major landholdings and thereby deprived of a critical source of income. Half a century later, land reform efforts (*nōchikaihō*) in the early postwar period, designed to end tenant farming and lead to an equitable distribution of land, further drastically reduced the landholdings of most temples. Temples in the modern period were thus increasingly forced to rely for income on the performance of rituals. In the preceding essays by Duncan Williams and Mariko Walter, we have seen how providing funerals and memorial services developed as a major role of temples since at least the Edo or Tokugawa period (1603–1868) and became the primary source of income for most temples during the modern period. This chapter builds on the arguments raised by Williams and Walter to demonstrate how this reliance on postmortem rituals for income has in turn become a wellspring for critiques of the institutions of traditional Buddhism. Today, at best, Buddhist priests are criticized as being commercialized—merely salaried performers of empty rituals who are out of touch with contemporary spiritual needs; at worst, they are attacked as taking advantage of people in their most desperate moment in order to turn a profit.

The pervasive and growing image of traditional Buddhism as corrupt seriously hampers efforts on the part of the priests and sects of

traditional Buddhism to engage positively with contemporary society. Social welfare and environmental movements, such as the Light Up Your Corner Movement (Ichigū o Terasu Undō) of the Tendai sect or the Sōtō sect's Sōtō Volunteer Association (SVA, or Sōtōshū Kokusai Borantia Kai)—now registered as the independent organization Shanti Volunteer Association (Shanti Kokusai Borantia Kai)—are hidden under the dark shadow cast by critiques of corrupt priests and practices devoid of meaning. Moreover, the negative image generated by the reliance on funerary and mortuary rituals for financial stability creates an atmosphere in which a growing number of Japanese are willing to seek out alternative venues for postmortem care. While still a small minority, the long-term threat they pose to temples is real, and officials of the sects of traditional Buddhism are slowly beginning to formulate policy aimed at addressing the root causes of discontent.

In Chapter 7 Walter examined the history and structure of funeral rituals in Japan. This chapter approaches postmortem care in contemporary Japan, first introducing the various ways in which Japanese scholars have framed traditional Buddhism in modern times as corrupt, and then investigating contemporary critiques that Buddhist postmortem rituals lack relevance, as well as the responses of various representatives of traditional Buddhist sects. My discussion focuses on the granting of posthumous precept names (*kaimyō*, *hōmyō*, or *hōgō*), a portion of Japanese Buddhist funeral ritual that lies at the heart of contemporary critiques of traditional Buddhism.

Portraits of “Corrupt” Traditional Buddhism

Critiques of traditional Japanese Buddhism are in no way limited to the contemporary setting, nor are they confined to scholars. However, the work of scholars contributes to and reflects a more widely held negative image of traditional Buddhism in contemporary Japan. The most influential modern author of “corruption theory” (*daraku setsu*), as it appears in Japanese and Western scholarship on Japanese Buddhism, has been the prewar scholar Tsuji Zennosuke (1877–1955).¹ Tsuji laid out his “corruption theory” in *Nihon bukkyōshi no kenkyū* (Studies on the history of Buddhism in Japan). In describing what he called the “origins of early modern Buddhist decline” (*kinsei bukkyō suibi no yurai*), Tsuji pointed to two factors, the corruption of the Buddhist priesthood (*sōryo no daraku*), and the formalization (*keishikika*) of Buddhism. Tsuji traced the beginnings of the corruption of the Buddhist priesthood to at least the medieval period and listed five sources of that corruption. First, he cited evidence to show that priests had be-

come no different from ordinary secular individuals by engaging in worldly activities. Major temples came to wield political, economic, and military power, in the exercise of which priestly interests became thoroughly secular. Second, priests failed to maintain their strict codes of conduct. They engaged in illicit affairs with women, drank alcohol, and ate meat. Third, Tsuji claimed that homosexuality was not uncommon among priests and that was a clear sign of their corruption. Fourth, priestly status could be bought and sold and therefore held little legitimacy. And fifth, priests engaged in profit-making ventures, such as money lending.² With the exception of the charge of homosexuality, each of Tsuji's critiques continues to be pursued in both scholarly and popular assessments of traditional Buddhism today. Tsuji similarly attributed the formalization of Buddhism to three factors. First, he said, new doctrine ceased to develop; doctrinal debate was frozen in the early modern period and later degenerated into mere sectarian sniping.³ The second factor was the advent in the early modern period of the parishioner system (*danka seido*). In the early 1600s the shogunate government or Bakufu began a campaign to eradicate Christianity. To keep track of the population, the temple certification system (*terauke seido*) was instituted, and by 1688 all Japanese were required to register at a local temple. Under this system, Tsuji asserted, temple priests became lax because their temples were under government protection. This, he argued, "was the basis for temples divorcing themselves from the hearts and minds of the people" and also promoted a third factor, the emergence of priests as a de facto social elite (*kizokuka*). This development, in his view, was brought about by the government-enforced main-branch temple system (*honmatsu seido*), in which temples were required to organize along clearly hierarchical lines, together with the status system (*kaikyū seido*), in which the people of Japan were classified as either samurai, farmers, artisans, or merchants; these structures shackled the freedom of the temples and worked to solidify the Buddhist priesthood as an elite class.⁴ This in turn, Tsuji argued, led priests to forget the needs of the masses.⁵ Just as the charge of corruption in the priesthood remains strong today, so, too, does that of formalization.

Tsuji's assumptions about Buddhist corruption in the early modern period have been echoed by others, such as Ōno Tatsunosuke, who writes:

The various sects of Buddhism in the Edo period were organized under the government's anti-Christian campaign, the parish system. And, because temples attained financial stability, the priests went along with

the flow, and did nothing more than perform memorial services and funerals. The people saw and heard about the corruption of priests on a daily basis and in time lost interest in Buddhism.⁶

Still other scholars have extended Tsuji's criticisms to include the modern and contemporary periods. For example, Watanabe Shōkō wrote in 1958 regarding contemporary temple Buddhism:

One might say that Japanese Buddhism has fallen into formalism, and that its true nature has been forgotten. The Indian Buddhist order revered a simple way of life.... Since they did not perform rituals in order to be observed by others, they were not concerned with putting on an appearance.... In Japan ... the temples and monasteries just became places of entertainment for sightseers rather than places of discipline for monks.... With such an attitude it is natural that religious activity was completely degraded simply to recreation having no spiritual meaning.⁷

In 1963 Tamamuro Taijō, a renowned scholar of Japanese Buddhism, published his now-classic *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Funeral Buddhism), which Walter draws on in her discussion in Chapter 7. While Tamamuro's work examined the history of Japanese Buddhism from its earliest stages to the Meiji period, it is clear that, for the author, the label "funeral Buddhism" applied to contemporary Buddhism as well. In his preface, he states, "In contemporary Buddhism, the aspects of healing and bringing good fortune have grown comparatively weak. It would not be an overstatement to say that [Buddhism today] is solely about mortuary rituals."⁸ Moreover, it is clear that the term "funeral Buddhism" is not complimentary; it is a critique of the direction traditional Buddhism took from the early modern period on. Tamamuro continues:

Buddhists use the popular explanation that temple-parish relations were fixed by the Edo Bakufu and led to the corruption of Buddhism. However, the Bakufu did nothing more than systematize temple-parish relations, which were already nearly complete. Moreover, the manner in which priests sought to ingratiate themselves with government officials is problematic. To say that [corruption] was the system's fault is not always appropriate.⁹

Here Tamamuro discredits the common attempt of many Buddhists in the modern period to deflect criticism of their current system of

temple-parish relations by shifting the blame to the early modern government-enforced temple certification system. In his view, it was the priests themselves, and not the government, who were to blame for the corrupt state of Buddhism.

In a similarly critical vein, Tamura Yoshirō, writing around the same time as Tamamuro, comments:

Buddhist temples were meant to be halls of truth, places where the Buddha's teachings are imparted and practiced and centers where those whose lives are sustained by that truth can gather. But ... Buddhist temples in Japan are now primarily cemeteries. The resident priests are custodians of the dead.¹⁰

Claims about Buddhist corruption, many tied to the role of temples as postmortem caretakers, and perceptions of priests as "custodians of the dead" rather than as renunciates in search of enlightenment, are so widespread that degeneration is taken as fact. For example, Nakamura Hajime, one of Japan's most renowned scholars of religion, and the other editors of the journal *Gendai bukkyō* (Modern Buddhism), writes: "So why did the New Religions proliferate in the postwar period? ... First, established Buddhism was corrupted and no longer able to meet the needs of the people."¹¹

More recently, Tamamuro Fumio, Japan's preeminent scholar of early modern Japanese Buddhism, has painted a very negative image of the coercive nature of the parishioner system in early modern Buddhism. "Our ancestors," he writes, "had to carry money to the temples even if that meant less food for them to eat. If they refused to donate, they suffered status and religious discrimination."¹² In his view, this religious extortion brought about the present, moribund state of traditional Buddhism, symbolized by its role in caring for the dead. In his prologue, he writes: "In short, parishioners [today] only understand the temple as a funeral parlor where funerals and memorial services are performed; they have no connection to the sect or to the ideals of the sect. I will examine just why it was that [traditional Buddhism] fell into this state of affairs [*naze sō natte shimatta ka*]."¹³

Tamamuro's work fits well into a small boom in books by scholars and others that debate the parishioner system in contemporary Japan and, in particular, the dominant role of funeral and memorial services in traditional Buddhism. Critics ask: "How can 'real' Buddhists be involved in such matters as funeral rituals and ancestor worship," since they are not supposedly the true concern of Buddhist doctrine? For example, in her work on Buddhist nuns in Japan, Paula Arai appears to

take the position of her Japanese informants, whom she quotes as saying: "If there are actually any who follow Buddhist truth, they are only nuns. Monks are only concerned with ceremonies and services."¹⁴

Arguments such as these shed light by contrast on what many believe is "true" Buddhism. First, Buddhism should be a philosophy (and not corrupted by "magical" rituals). Second, temples should be places of discipline for monks and nuns, not tourist sites. And, third, temples should offer more than postmortem care.

Postmortem care is indeed the mainstay of ritual life at most temples. Many priests understand the performance of funeral and mortuary rituals as following the Buddhist truth; the assurance of postmortem salvation provides a sense of calm (*anshin*) or empowerment for those who seek their services. Moreover, these are the services most often sought by the laity. The focus by temples on postmortem rituals is not merely the result of priestly action but also reflects lay demands. The difficulty many priests encounter when they attempt to expand temple activities beyond traditional lay expectations (for example, if they try to implement volunteer programs that require extensive lay participation) provides evidence of the roles the laity expect to play and those they expect the priest to play. The critique of funeral Buddhism, in which concern over doctrinal or ritual "degeneration" is raised, and in which priests are portrayed as impersonal "chanting machines," masks the role that continued demand by the laity plays in the continuance of postmortem care as temples' chief social role.

The Price for Naming the Dead: Posthumous Precept Names

At the center of many critiques of contemporary traditional Buddhism lies the practice of granting posthumous precept names to parishioners. The conferring of such names, the money donated for their granting, and their doctrinal underpinnings have come under severe criticism since at least the 1970s. So pervasive has this criticism become that the Japan Buddhist Federation (Zennihon Bukkyōkai), which represents all sects of traditional Buddhism, commissioned a study of the criticisms and released its findings and recommendations in early 2000.¹⁵

Posthumous precept names have been granted to the laity for centuries, with examples dating from the Kamakura period (1185–1333) and even earlier, but it was not until the 1600s that their use began to spread among the general populace.¹⁶ In addition to the two-character precept name (*kaimyō*), which was standard until the Kamakura period, a number of additional characters came to be added. During the Kamakura period, the character "*in*," which means temple, and a vari-

ety of similar characters referring to temples such as “*ji*,” “*an*,” and “*bō*,” began to be added to the precept name in order to distinguish those deceased who had made great contributions or were otherwise deemed thoroughly dedicated to Buddhism. As the warrior class came to power, the character “*den*” (which can mean temple, hall, or lord) was added to “*in*,” apparently in an effort at one-upmanship in order to distinguish the names of the rising warrior class from those of the court nobles. “*In*” and “*inden*” are today applied to the posthumous names of members of families that have traditionally received such names, as well as those who have made exceptional financial contributions to the temple. In addition to the so-called “*ingō*,” or “*in*” class names, “*dōgō*,” which were originally honorific names for high-ranking priests, were also used in lay precept names. *Dōgō* names are two characters in length. Today they are generally used to evoke an image of the deceased’s life. For example, a business man may have characters used that reflect success in business, or a tea ceremony practitioner may have characters used that relate to the tea ceremony. Together with *ingō* and *dōgō*, a third set of characters is commonly used today as well. These are the rank-name characters, or “*igō*,” and generally consist of two or three characters. The characters used vary from sect to sect. In addition to reflecting the recipient’s level of faith, donations to the temple, or service to society, these characters also serve to distinguish men from women and adults from children, and, until recently, discriminated outcaste and minority groups from the majority population. The general format for the whole posthumous name is *ingō* + *dōgō* + *kaimyō* + *igō*. Although technically only the two central characters comprise the precept name, or *kaimyō*, today the full set of characters is commonly referred to as the precept name (*kaimyō*). A standard posthumous name, therefore, consists of at least six characters (*dōgō* + *kaimyō* + *igō*), and potentially many more.

Once given, the posthumous name takes on a lasting role in the “life” of the deceased. It is carved onto tombstones, forever announcing to all passers by the status of the dead while in life, and it is written on the memorial tablets (*ihai*) that are placed in home altars and that play a central role in family religious practices. Memorial tablets are generally housed in the family altar until the thirty-third-year memorial service, at which point it is thought that the deceased has lost his or her individuality and merged into the larger corporate family ancestor. At this point the tablet is either burned or entrusted to the family temple. *Ihai* are variously understood. The tablet may be seen as a place to which the spirit of the deceased comes when family members make daily offerings or on special holidays, or as the place where the spirit permanently resides, or simply as a reminder to the living of the family

members who have gone before them. Yet as Robert J. Smith notes, regardless of other meanings, the memorial tablet plays a critical role in making sure that the deceased is not “cut off from normal intercourse with the living members of his household.”¹⁷ The posthumous name marks the social status of the deceased in his or her new relationship with the living family.

From early on, posthumous precept names were awarded for merit accrued vis-à-vis the temple during the deceased’s lifetime, that is, for donations or services rendered, but also for monetary donations made by surviving family members. During the Tokugawa period, the conferring of such names became a source of steady income for temples.¹⁸ Little has apparently changed in how precept names are administered, or in their role as a funding source for temples, except for the fact that, as lands were stripped away from temples, income from the granting of such names and related services became critical to the survival of most temples.

A combination of two related factors has brought about severe criticism of posthumous precept names in contemporary Japan. First is the question of their necessity. Buddhist priests taught, and it was once widely believed, that conferring a posthumous precept name exerted a direct positive impact on the deceased’s postmortem state. But do they have contemporary meaning and function? The doctrinal explanations for such names, and explanations for contemporary use, including questions regarding discriminatory practices, are one source of such critiques. Second is an increasingly critically aware consumer society and a concomitant advance of the commodification of posthumous precept names.

Debating the Necessity of Posthumous Precept Names

In August 2000 the Jōdo sect of Pure Land Buddhism released the results of a survey of the abbots of its temples throughout the country. In May 2000 the same sect’s Chiba Prefecture Teaching District (Chiba Kyōku) released the results of a survey of parishioners, college students, and Internet respondents.¹⁹ When the results of these two surveys are set side by side, they reveal interesting aspects of the posthumous precept name debate. Given the vociferous critiques of such names in public debate, the fact that the majority of parishioners (58.8 percent) responded that “posthumous precept names are necessary” is striking. However, the proportion of parishioners who thought posthumous precept names were necessary is still far less than the proportion that believed funerals were necessary (70 percent), suggesting

some discontent with posthumous precept names. Moreover, 32.9 percent of parishioners responding negatively regarding the necessity of such names—of whom students accounted for 64 percent and Internet respondents, 77.3 percent—reveals clear dissatisfaction, especially among the young. Furthermore, a February 1999 survey conducted by the Japan Consumers Association (Nihon Shōhisha Kyōkai) found that 57 percent of respondents selected “I don’t need a posthumous precept name, my given name is fine,”²⁰ and a survey by the Sōtō sect found that only 10 percent of respondents believed that posthumous precept names were “absolutely necessary” (*zettai hitsuyō*). Taken together with the Jōdo sect survey, these results point to considerable opposition to posthumous precept names.

The survey of temple abbots shows that they are aware of the popular dissatisfaction with posthumous precept names and points to what they believe to be its sources.²¹ The vast majority of abbots (70.7 percent) responded: “The problem lies in the commercialization of faith, in which posthumous precept names are given in exchange for remuneration.” Following this were those (14.6 percent) who chose: “The problem lies in the inequalities inherent in the ranking of posthumous precept names,” hinting at the perceived discriminatory nature of posthumous precept names. “It is a problem of meaning; people do not understand the need for posthumous precept names,” ranked third, accounting for 11.9 percent of the responses. These three responses can be broadly placed into two mutually related categories: problems of meaning and function, and the changing nature of religion in contemporary Japan, namely, its growing commodification, to be discussed below. There are at least three possible reasons as to why the meaning and function of posthumous precept names are questioned today: (1) priests fail to teach the laity about their meaning and function; (2) views of the afterlife and salvation are rapidly changing; and (3) the discriminatory functions of posthumous precept names. Let us consider each of these.

The Silence of the Priests

Mizutani Kōshō, former president of the Jōdo sect-affiliated Bukkyō University and member of the Japan Buddhist Federation Committee to Consider Posthumous Precept Names, has remarked:

Today, particularly in the cities, posthumous precept names (*kaimyō*, *hōmyō*) are seen as something one gets when one dies, regardless of taking on the precepts or taking refuge in the Buddhist teachings. They

are understood as something that is necessary and, therefore, given [at funerals]. The religious meaning of posthumous precept names is weakening.²²

One critique leveled at the priests of traditional Buddhism is that they fail to explain the meaning and function of the ritual services they perform—that is, they fail to preach. Their failure to preach, it is argued, leads to a weakening of the religious meaning of such critical practices as the granting of posthumous precept names. Moreover, their lack of effort to expound the Buddhist dharma is seen as evidence of their secularization or degeneration into ritual professionals. Their image, therefore, becomes, not that of world-renouncer serving the lay community, but that of world-embracer engaged in the business of providing ritual services. Funerals and memorial services are one of the few times when priests enjoy a captive audience and could take the opportunity to preach. During the 1998 Regular Meeting of the Tendai Sect Diet, one priest argued that funerals were the best time to preach. He argued that Buddhists should practice spreading Buddhism through funerals and not perpetuate funeral Buddhism.²³ However, my fieldwork shows that many priests do take advantage of the opportunity provided by postmortem rituals to discourse on Buddhist teachings in some form or another. Yet in most cases observed, the presiding priest dedicated the most of his talk to explaining the meaning of the various items used in the funeral and burial process, such as the wooden stūpas (*tōba*, *rokkakudō tōba*) that family members place at the gravesite. The perceived lack of preaching may come from differing expectations regarding what should be preached at funerals. In other words, while the priest may seek to guide the bereaved through the ritual process by explaining the ritual implements or the outline of the funeral ceremony, a growing number of the laity appear to seek a more personally meaningful approach to preaching, such as memorializing the deceased or explicating broader Buddhist teachings as to how one should live one's life.

There are many possible explanations for the perceived lack of preaching. I would suggest three: (1) the increasingly dominant role of funeral companies in the funeral process; (2) the belief that contact with the temple is itself a form of preaching; and (3) the decline in temple-parishioner relations. In response to the criticism that priests fail to preach, many priests complain that funeral companies, which today often schedule funerals down to the time allotted to the priest for conducting the ritual, do not allow them time to explain the ritual (*sekkyō*). However, just as many choose not to preach at these or other opportunities. At urban temples I observed, preaching rarely was con-

ducted following regularly scheduled ritual activities, though preaching did take place at major annual events.²⁴ Rural temple priests appear more likely to engage in preaching than their urban counterparts, which is in all probability due to the stronger bonds between priest and parishioner in the rural areas. At rural temples I observed, preaching occurred following all ritual services, including scheduled ceremonies, funerals, and annual events.²⁵

One possible explanation for the apparent sporadic engagement in preaching may be that some priests believe that increasing contact with the temple itself is a form of preaching. In other words, the act of teaching may be differently perceived. Where some may expect preaching to consist in verbally expounding the Buddhist teachings, others see it as the act of maintaining a particular physical space or atmosphere in which people can immerse themselves. The following, for example, is from a Tendai telephone dharma talk.²⁶

The first thing that probably comes to mind when you think “Buddhism” is funerals. Yet the original aim of Buddhism is to spread widely the teachings of the Buddha. It is definitely not the performance of funerals. But today, isn’t it the case that through funerals, memorial services, and visits to graves, people often come into contact with temples, priests, and therefore, with Buddhism?²⁷

Similarly, in an essay concerning graves, a Shingon sect priest argues that graves serve a critical role today because people have the opportunity to visit the temple, to pay their respects before the main image (*honzon*), and perhaps to become interested in Buddhist teachings and deepen their faith during regular visits to the family grave.²⁸

Another factor cited in explanation of the perceived lack of preaching is the slow decay of temple-parishioner relations. The future of temple-parishioner relations is of great concern to officials of the sects of traditional Buddhism, and most are seriously engaged in programs to reach out to parishioners.²⁹ As temple-parishioner relationships weaken, and as functional relationships at funerals between priest and attendees become impersonal service-based relations, the opportunity to encourage understanding of the religious meaning of posthumous precept names becomes ever more limited. Relatives of the deceased are faced with a bill for two hundred thousand to a million yen or more for a specialized portion of the funeral ceremony—the posthumous precept name—that they little understand, which leads to mistrust. Priests recognize this lack of trust; it was cited by 41.1 percent of priests surveyed as one reason for the controversies surrounding posthumous precept names.³⁰

In order to restore meaning to posthumous precept names and, thereby, trust, members of the Japan Buddhist Federation committee and others suggest that Buddhist priests spend more time explaining the religious meaning of posthumous precept names. Most sects produce literature that seeks to explain posthumous precept names, although it is uncertain how wide the readership is (the usual pattern for distribution is to ship this literature to local temples, which are then responsible for passing it on to parishioners). The following is a typical explanation and is given in a Tendai sect publication for parishioners called *Tendai Booklet*.

It [the posthumous precept name] is a lot like the Christian name that Christians receive when they are baptized. In Buddhism, when you become a Buddhist, you receive the precepts. As evidence of that, you are given a precept name. Therefore, even though you may think that precept names are something that your temple abbot gives in a ceremony to someone who has passed away, originally they were to be taken while alive. It is a name for living a life of faith and pride as a Buddhist.³¹

The home pages of individual temples, essays by Japan Buddhist Federation committee members, and other sources also provide explanations. The following is from the home page of a Shingon sect temple:

When a Buddhist believer, or someone whose family religion is Buddhism, dies, they receive a precept name from their temple and have a funeral performed for them. The abbot of their temple takes into consideration their character, the family's wishes, the precept names given their ancestors, and the contributions they have made to the temple, and grants them a precept name. In Shingon sect funerals, the abbot faces the main image, and, there before it, takes on the deceased as his disciple, performing a ceremony to make that person a disciple of the Buddha (i.e., a priest). Specifically, he confers the precepts upon the deceased, dresses him or her in white robes, and grants a priestly name. This is a precept name (*kaimyō*).³²

In the early modern period, posthumous precept names could play a meaningful role in the lives of parishioners because they were thought to be efficacious devices for ensuring postmortem salvation, whether understood as birth in a pure land, rescue from rebirth in a hell, or otherwise.³³ Today, however, many people question the meaning of these names. For example, some liken posthumous precept names to the indulgences once used by the Catholic church.³⁴ In a 1998 newspaper essay, Inoue Shin'ichi, chair of the board of directors

of the Foundation for the Restoration of Buddhism (Bukkyō Fukkō Zaidan), wrote: “Posthumous precept names today are just like the indulgences issued by the Pope. In other words, if you buy this one slip of paper for a great sum of money, you can go to heaven.” And, like the Christian indulgences, he notes, posthumous precept names sold for cash are likely to invite a protest and revolution within Japanese Buddhism.³⁵

Changing Views of the Afterlife and the Relevance of Traditional Buddhism

Attempts to teach about the meaning and function of posthumous precept names face an uphill battle. Japanese views of the afterlife, and of the role of the funeral, are rapidly changing. One problem suggested by these changes is that posthumous precept names no longer hold the effective meaning they once did. As expensive remnants of a little-understood ceremony, they are thus ripe targets for criticism, especially criticism concerning the economic activities of contemporary priests. One Tendai priest comments:

I doubt there are too many people in today's world who fear spirits. And I don't think that talking about classical worldviews like hells and pure lands has any power of persuasion. In which case, the meaning of holding a magical service to appease the spirits [of the dead] is denied.... What people seek in Buddhism is a ritual to memorialize the dead and express condolences. However, the problem is that today's ritual has become a ritual for the purpose of having a ceremony. The peace of mind, which originally should be sought, is given nothing but lip service.³⁶

According to the survey of parishioners, students, and Internet respondents cited above, only 41.4 percent of parishioners believed in the existence of a world after death, with students and Internet respondents numbering about the same (40.5 percent and 39.5 percent, respectively). A different survey, conducted in 1996, found that only 15.9 percent of respondents believed in a world after death, but another 38.8 percent thought it might be possible.³⁷ Regarding the existence of spirits or of a soul (*reikon*), 47.8 percent of parishioners admitted to believing that they exist, compared with 54 percent of students.³⁸ These numbers suggest that, for many contemporary Japanese, the granting of a posthumous precept name in order to assure birth in the Pure Land, or some other form of postmortem salvation, may hold little meaning. A survey conducted by Tokyo City further

confirms this. According to this survey, 60 percent of respondents chose: "A funeral is a custom for seeing off the deceased," and only 32.4 percent chose: "A funeral is a religious act for praying for the happiness of the deceased." When combined with the survey results just cited, this suggests that the funeral, in which posthumous precept names play a central role, is seen by many, not as a "religious" act designed for the well-being of the deceased in the world hereafter, but as a "customary" act designed to allow the living a moment to say farewell. The term "customary" may be misleading here, in that it creates a potentially false division between religion and custom, setting them apart as static opposites. Nonetheless, the surveys demonstrate that a shift is occurring from needs framed as next-life-focused to ones framed as this-life-focused. Ownership of home Buddhist altars (*butsudān*), the centerpiece of household Buddhist practice (prayers for the ancestors), has dropped 10 percent in urban areas (though it has gained approximately 5 percent in rural areas) since 1985.³⁹ Many priests recognize the public's changing view of the afterlife. Yet the sects and priests of traditional Buddhism generally remain committed to posthumous precept names because they have played a definitive role in the religious identity of traditional Buddhism for hundreds of years and because the income they generate comprises a substantial portion of overall temple income.

Meaning and Discrimination

The meaning and function of posthumous precept names also has been called into question in recent years because of their role as means of social discrimination. The use of discriminatory posthumous precept names (*sabetsu kaimyō*), names that mark individuals and families as members of minority or outcaste groups in death as they had been marked in life, is the most well-known example.⁴⁰ Such names call into question the meaning of giving or receiving posthumous precept names. If a precept name is truly to signify that one has become a disciple of the Buddha, why would there be the need to distinguish certain disciples as impure? And if the purpose behind receiving such a name is to effect birth in the Pure Land, does discrimination continue in the afterlife?

The use of such posthumous precept names came to light dramatically in 1979, when Machida Muneo, the head representative of the Sōtō Zen sect to an international conference on peace and religion, claimed that discrimination no longer occurred in Japan, and thirty representatives of other Japanese religious organizations also in attendance clapped in response. Machida was soon called to task by mem-

bers of the Buraku Liberation League (Buraku Kaihō Dōmei), which represents members of a segment of Japanese society that has been the subject of discrimination throughout the early modern and modern periods. League members pointed to the willful and continuing use in posthumous names of characters such as “beast” or “leather,” signifying those whose ancestors worked in the “impure” trade of tanning, to mark members in death.⁴¹

The posthumous precept names were only the visible tip of discriminatory scarring. The names were chiseled onto gravestones and recorded in registers of the dead kept at temples, either of which could, were, and still are used to track an individual’s history.⁴² Furthermore, priests gave such discriminatory names in special funeral rites designed to mediate the impurity believed to be associated with the discriminated class.

The Sōtō sect, after some delay, vigorously sought to redress the problem. Discriminatory names have been removed from newer gravestones; unclaimed stones have been moved together to receive special attention; and priests are no longer permitted to share the contents of their registers with private detectives and other third parties who might use them for discriminatory purposes. Gravestones, however, are only the surface reflection of a deeper question of doctrinal support for discrimination. Sōtō officials argued that Sōtō teachings and practices were not flawed; rather it was the temple-registration system of the Tokugawa period that was to blame. This attempt to separate practices corrupted by social influences from a pure and unsullied Zen doctrine was severely criticized by the Buraku Liberation League. Critics pointed out that discriminatory practices were evident in Sōtō long before the Tokugawa period. Others questioned the end-goals of the current reformation process. If the stones are erased, and the records purged, will the history of discrimination be expunged from the record of traditional Buddhism? Such critics support the need to redress problems but hope that the memory of past discrimination will not be forgotten, lest it be repeated. Meanwhile, the process of weeding out offensive gravestones by the sect and by antidiscrimination groups is ongoing, just as phone calls to temples requesting information regarding the backgrounds of individuals continues.⁴³

Use of discriminatory posthumous precept names was by no means limited to the Sōtō sect. Shingon, Tendai, and other sects also participated in such practices.⁴⁴ As with Sōtō, other sects, as well as many individual priests, are earnestly attempting to address the problem of discriminatory posthumous precept names and thereby restore meaning to the contemporary practice of granting posthumous precept names. Such efforts also aim at righting the wrongs of their

predecessors and restoring legitimacy to traditional Buddhism, as the following example demonstrates.

On March 21, 1982, a rite to appease the dead was held at a small Tendai temple in Nagano prefecture. The abbot of the temple, Takahashi Shinkai, worked as a teacher at the local junior high school, where he was in charge of a special education curriculum concerning discrimination. Upon examining his temple records, Takahashi found that of the eighty-five households in his parish, twelve had family members who had been given discriminatory names, virtually all connoting leather workers. In consultation with the parish representatives (*sōdai*), he arranged for a special service to be held at which all members of the parish would gather, and he would publicly preside over a ceremony to apologize for past discrimination and to award new posthumous precept names and ritually seek happiness for the spirits of those who had been discriminated against. The following is the preamble read at the ceremony.

In order to cut away the roots of discrimination from four hundred years ago, I, Takahashi Shinkai, [now] single-mindedly give rise to this vow. We hereby do away with the discriminatory posthumous precept names and change them. And, we seek to invite to this place of practice, to join us in a memorial service, the souls of each family. We humbly implore you, souls who suffered miserable discrimination in life, and in death had discriminatory names carved into stone! Without a doubt, Amida's light shines throughout every corner of the other world, Kannon's merit-power cleanses your lifetime of suffering, and the merit of this sūtra chanting transmits our intentions to the other world. We hope that each of you spirits will joyfully sit atop the lotus of merit and perfection.⁴⁵

In addition to such individual efforts, the Tendai sect established a Committee for the Promotion of Harmony (Tendaishū Dōwa Suishin Iinkai) in 1983. In 1996 this committee published a short piece on the history of discrimination against *burakumin* in the sect's magazine for priests. (Although it failed to mention discriminatory posthumous precept names, it did note in its discussion of status maintenance that Buddhism had been "used for political purposes.") The article implores Tendai sect members to bring the teachings of the sect to bear on the problem:

How can we come to terms with this problem as citizens, moreover, as clerics of the Tendai sect? In the Tendai sect we take as our guide [the statement]: "With the one-vehicle teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* as our base

and with confidence in the universality and majesty of buddha-nature, we undertake practices for ourselves and to enlighten others (*jigyō keta*), and make the True Law flourish. And, we strive in the sacred task of saving humanity. Further, we exhaust all efforts in developing the national culture, and endeavor so that all may realize the Buddhist path and to build a pure land'' (Tendai Constitution, Article IV). Even as we let these aims of our sect shine forth, we must acknowledge that it is our command and our duty as members of the Tendai sect to abolish all forms of discrimination, beginning with Buraku discrimination, and to confirm human rights.⁴⁶

Discrimination by social group or race was often a one-sided process. Priests forced status-system-enforcing discriminatory names on people who had little choice in the matter. However, another form of discrimination continues to take place today that is often actively encouraged by parishioners, namely, economic class discrimination. Traditionally, those who perform outstanding services for the temple, or who donated frequently and in large amounts while alive, or whose survivors donate large sums to the temple, can be awarded special prefix and suffix characters for their posthumous precept names in recognition of their role in supporting the temple. One's posthumous precept name used to play—and in close-knit communities, especially in rural areas, still does play—an important social role in demarcating one's family status within the community. For this reason, certain families whose ancestors have traditionally received special posthumous precept names often still seek to receive such names, even if they are no longer of an economic status to afford it.

There are few guidelines for granting special posthumous precept names. The permission of sect headquarters is usually required, but in practice the final decision is left up to individual abbots. This lack of standards for granting such names is one source of criticism. What greater significance can the names have, it is argued, if naming practices appear to vary from one temple to another? The Jōdo sect survey of abbots cited above found that priests listed the following reasons for granting special posthumous precept names (multiple answers were permitted): (1) service as a parish representative or member of the temple board of directors (73.3 percent); (2) extraordinary contributions—monetary or otherwise—to the temple (72.7 percent); (3) the family had traditionally been granted such a name (54.0 percent); (4) contributions to society by the individual or his/her family (42.4 percent); (5) request of the individual or his/her family (42.2 percent); (6) the individual's participation in scheduled religious services, events, and/or service to the temple (41.9 percent); (7)

participation in the *gojū sōdenkai* (32.1 percent);⁴⁷ (8) the amount donated over time, or given through the temple support fund (22.7 percent); and (9) the amount of donations given at the time of the funeral (7.9 percent).⁴⁸ This list demonstrates that at least among Jōdo sect priests, special names are given primarily for services rendered to the temple. Cash purchases of such names at the time of the funeral is reported as far less frequent.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, wealth remains a factor in determining special names, even if it is a smaller reason than would at first appear to be the case. As the middle class expanded during Japan's booming economic recovery after World War II, more families gained the financial wherewithal to request special posthumous precept names. In certain areas, this was—and remains—nearly impossible, since local status groups rarely accept the legitimacy of newly bought special posthumous precept names, and priests are not inclined to upset local status relations by granting a newcomer or newly rich parishioner a special posthumous name. However, temples can and do grant special posthumous precept names to new families, especially in urban areas. The donations required for such names rose with overall wage increases, leading to an inflation of prices. New urbanites, many of whom were beginning new household lineages in the city, not only had the wealth to acquire such names but perhaps also had the functional need to acquire what was still seen by many as a social status symbol. There is ample evidence that many still actively seek out higher priced names as status symbols. For example, in 1984 family members of the deceased mayor of a city in Ibaraki prefecture sought the removal of the abbot of their temple because he refused to grant a special posthumous precept name.⁵⁰ The priest argued that only those who had done outstanding acts for the temple or on behalf of Buddhism could be granted such a name. The family argued that the mayor had done much for the city and that, for a person of his status, not to have a special posthumous precept name was embarrassing. Eventually, the priest was forced to acquiesce when other priests cautioned him not to disturb local relationships. The implication was that causing a politically and socially powerful family to question the temple actively and thereby disrupt local harmony could do far more harm to Buddhism than would a weakening of standards for granting such names.

Despite such examples, however, it appears that the desire for special posthumous precept names may be waning today. Sharp criticisms of their appropriateness certainly abound, such as the following: "There are even ranks in posthumous precept names. The more money that you pay, the higher ranked the name that you get. What the heck is that about? It's totally nuts. Really."⁵¹ A 1999 survey found

that 46 percent of respondents could not accept that “differences in posthumous precept names could be bought for a price.”⁵² Much of the evidence for people seeking higher priced names is drawn from data from the 1980s, the height of Japan’s bubble economy, and a period in which family and social structures, still in flux today, had perhaps yet to change to the extent that they have now. The social meaning of posthumous precept names, therefore, may be changing along with shifts in family structure. The shift to nuclear families has involved a concomitant decrease in interest in ancestor veneration or lineage-supporting rituals such as posthumous precept name-granting. And community structure has changed from community-based to individual-based relational networks that are not confined to a local community. All of these changes weaken the major incentives—social status, filial piety, and lineage maintenance—for acquiring a special posthumous precept name.

Countermeasures: Precepts for the Living

“Precept names are supposed to be taken by those who seek to become disciples of the Buddha and engage in practice. Such names are granted during a ceremony in which vows are taken. If they are not taken while one is alive, then they are meaningless.”⁵³

Lackluster teaching efforts, especially concerning the significance of postmortem care, combined with changing attitudes toward the afterlife and salvation, contribute to the growing impression that, if not corrupt, traditional Buddhism is at least out of touch, a collection of empty forms. The granting of lay precepts to the living is one means under consideration by some members of traditional Buddhist sects to redress this image.⁵⁴ To emphasize the precepts as a moral guide for the living would counter criticisms while creating a modern religious meaning for the sects of traditional Buddhism. Given the changing views of the Japanese public toward the role of the funeral as reflected in the surveys cited above, this move to shift meaning to the living might seem an effective route for reform. However, though shifting the emphasis to the living within the context of funerals may be possible, shifting from posthumous precept names to living precept names may prove exceedingly difficult. One reason for this is that posthumous granting of precept names has become associated less with taking on a set of moral imperatives to guide one in a life of faith as a Buddhist than as devices for ensuring the postmortem salvation of the deceased. Changing this association of precept names with death to an association with leading a moral life while alive requires changing basic assumptions about lay association with the temple: the temple must shift

from a place one joins only in death to a place one actively associates with in life, from a place that centers on ensuring the welfare of the dead to one that centers on activities to encourage the living to explore and practice the Buddhist teachings.

The difficulty involved in such a shift is demonstrated by the often inconsistent and unsure steps toward implementing lay precepts that the various sects have attempted. Although most sects now allow for the taking of precepts by laity, none have well-advertised and well-supported programs. And none have adopted such a program as a primary part of their proselytizing efforts. This lack of effort, noted by Japan Buddhist Federation committee members, weakens the viability of precepts for the living as a method for giving new relevance to posthumous precept names, let alone the more radical step of shifting to precepts for the living only.⁵⁵

The lack of effort to implement precepts for the living may stem from the critical role that posthumous precept names play in temple finance. Posthumous precept names account for most income derived from funeral services. Even if a current abbot could financially afford to institute a program for granting precepts to parishioners while they are alive, the priest who followed him might find his financial base undermined. This is because the donations that temples request for the granting of a precept name while one is alive are generally about one-tenth to one-twentieth of the amount requested for posthumous precept names. Not only would income from funerals be considerably lower than otherwise possible, but income from memorial services, which are conducted on the forty-ninth day, one-hundredth day, and first, third, seventh, thirteenth, seventeenth, twenty-fifth, thirty-third, and fiftieth anniversary of death, would drop significantly as well, since donation levels for these services are generally linked to the amount originally donated for, and the rank of, the posthumous precept name. The effect on temple finances is a major concern. However, because the living precept name consists of only the two-character *kaimyō*, temples would still be assured of income from granting the remaining characters at death (that is, *ingō*, *dōgo*, and so forth).

The granting of precepts to laity while living is also a difficult path for the sects of traditional Buddhism to embark on because it would probably exacerbate the debate over the role of priests and precepts in contemporary Japan. Questions concerning precept maintenance or lack thereof by priests play a major role in the debate over the very legitimacy of the traditional Buddhist priesthood. Encouraging the formal taking and maintaining of lay precepts among one's parishioners would not only require a priest to explain the meaning of lay precepts but might also require an explanation of priestly precepts by way of

comparison. This, in turn, could lead to a demand for stricter maintenance of the precepts on the part of the priests themselves, or potentially call into question their current lifestyles. Since the Meiji period, few Japanese Buddhist priests have observed the traditional clerical precepts against drinking alcohol or meat-eating, and almost all marry; thus the divide between clerical and lay lifestyles is not that great.⁵⁶ Encouraging observance of lay precepts could still further narrow the lay-priestly divide, casting further doubts on the legitimacy of the religious professionals.

Despite lack of effort on the sect level, many individual priests encourage the holding of lay precepts as part of their teaching efforts. The following is an example taken from a Tendai sect collection of dharma talks that is available at some temples in the Tokyo area. In a piece entitled “Lifestyle guidelines for the Tendai faithful,” the writer comments: “All members of the Buddhist faith must hold to the five precepts. The five precepts are (1) not to take life, (2) not to steal, (3) not to have improper sexual relations, (4) not to tell lies, and (5) not to drink alcohol.” In this case, however, the precepts are used as an efficient method of teaching proper moral behavior, but they are not tied to the formal taking of precepts.⁵⁷

Implementing a living precept program is difficult, not simply because of priestly concerns, but also because of lay concerns. To date, parishioners have rarely been called upon to take so specific and active a step as taking on precepts and a Buddhist name. One of the greatest challenges to traditional Buddhist sects is the “conversion” of parishioners from relying on the temple as a place for postmortem practices only to actively embracing the tenets of the Buddhism as expressed by each sect. In order for such a move to be successful, as discussed above, parishioners would have to no longer view the precepts as something associated only with death. The “living precept” concept offers a possible route toward a new parishioner-temple relationship, but it is more likely a midway point rather than a beginning.

To Hold at Bay the Waves of Commodification

As the sects and individual priests of traditional Buddhism work to impart forgotten meaning to, and recreate contemporary functions for, posthumous precept names and to make amends for past discriminatory practices, they must face a second hurdle, the changing nature of religious affiliation in Japan. Many aspects of contemporary Japanese religious practice can be understood as commodified religion. This means that religious affiliations are shifting from long-term to short-term, from family-based to those based on individual choice, and from

donation-based to fixed-price-based. Within such an environment, posthumous precept names, which no longer hold the religious or social meaning they once did, become an increasingly difficult “service” to “sell,” as these comments indicate:

Dharma name, precept name, whatever you call it, don't try to get rich off it. There's no need for such things! We don't need graves and family altars either. Why are sūtra readings at funerals so expensive? When my dad died, the sūtra-reading fee was 360,000 yen. On top of all that, the fees for weekly sūtra readings for the first forty-nine days and the one-hundredth-day sūtra reading were incredibly expensive. Can it really cost 10,000 yen for one hour of sūtra reading!? I just can't believe that the funeral sūtra reading was 360,000 yen. That's way too expensive! How can they take that much from a grieving family!? Aren't there any priests who'll do it for free?⁵⁸

What would happen if you had a funeral performed and didn't make an offering? Nothing really. Even if the priest gets angry, the deceased isn't going to fall into hell. I suppose the only thing that would happen is that priest won't be able to eat.⁵⁹

While the meaning of posthumous precept names is questioned frequently, often the initial cause for questioning derives from what are perceived as exorbitant prices. Articles about some aspect of posthumous precept names and “high prices” appear in newspapers and weeklies regularly, and many individuals “know of someone” who has been asked to pay, or has paid, large fees for a posthumous precept name.⁶⁰ Part of the dissatisfaction with “high prices” may be linked to a consumer mentality. Consumers expect that the product they purchase will “work as advertised,” especially if they have paid a premium for it. In the case of posthumous precept names, for which results cannot be seen or experienced in this life, without full faith inspired by the salesperson in the product, dissatisfaction can easily result. As such names lose their meaning within contemporary society, full faith wanes, especially if the salesman (priest) fails to pitch his product (preach).

One approach taken by some priests has been to turn questions regarding price-setting into opportunities to expound upon the spirit of donation. For example, one priest writes:

In Japan today, most people think donations are that which “you give a priest when he chants a sūtra for you.” Why must one give money? It's

only natural as an offering of gratitude in exchange for the labor of chanting a sūtra. But if that's the case, it's much higher than the average market rate wage. It's a big mistake to think of donations in this manner. Śākyamuni Buddha left us these words: "The joy of giving alms is to forget the self, to forget the other, and to forget the gift. This is the greatest form of giving alms." There may not be anyone capable of giving like that, but the true meaning of giving alms was originally to give without seeking reward.⁶¹

The attempt to shift the debate away from the use of such terms as "labor," "exchange," and "market wage" and toward the use of such terms as "almsgiving" is one way some priests choose to fight the growing commodification of their labor and to teach Buddhism as they understand it.

Another method is to combat dissatisfaction over "pricing." Members of the sects of traditional Buddhism often rightfully point out that priests who charge exorbitant fees and those who take advantage of a family's suffering to extort extra money for the granting of special prefixes and suffixes represent only a small minority. For example, 56.4 percent of the Jōdo sect priests surveyed responded that they relied strictly on donations and never used "fees." Another 29.6 percent said they rely on donations for standard posthumous precept names but do set a fee for granting special posthumous precept names. The fact that some priests continue to create an image problem while also further commodifying posthumous precept names mostly demonstrates the lack of control that sects have over individual priests. Especially after the Religious Juridical Persons Law (*shūkyō hōjin hō*) was passed in 1951, abbots of individual temples registered as separate juridical persons have enjoyed substantial strength vis-à-vis sect headquarters. Moreover, the fact that apparently little has been done, until recently, to openly present a counterimage to that generated by "rogue" priests demonstrates a complicity of silence in the system of pricing posthumous precept names.

The consumer mentality can be seen in other aspects of posthumous precept name acquisition as well. First, it is now possible to "shop" for prices. As family structure shifts increasingly to nuclear families, and as the job market switches from one in which individuals live in the area where they grew up to one in which they may live far from their hometown or may even move several times in their lifetime, many families find themselves in the market for a new temple affiliation when a close family member dies and is in need of a funeral. Such individuals may have the freedom to search for a temple that offers a product at an affordable price, or the individual may seek out a

famous temple, preferring association with a quality “brand name.” More than likely, they will be introduced to a temple by their funeral company representative, who will also instruct them regarding market prices for the posthumous precept name. Such market rates can also be found on the Internet (the current rate is 300,000 to 3,000,000 yen or more, with 3–5 percent of the primary mourner’s annual salary said to be a rough gauge for the basic precept name).⁶² In this sense, donations to temples for posthumous precept names are not understood as donations but as fees for services rendered and product delivered.

Second, an increasingly commercial relationship can be seen in recurrent calls that temple finances, and posthumous precept name pricing structures in particular, be made open and clear. Consumers (parishioners and others in need of religious services) demand to know why the product they are purchasing is priced as it is, and shareholders (parishioners) demand to know how the company (temple) keeps its books. Related to this are calls for making posthumous precept names free. If they are truly religious in nature, the argument runs, then there should be no need for money to change hands. Countering this, some argue that they are not to be “priced” in the first place. Money given is a donation, which itself is a form of practice. Yet those arguing in such a fashion are fighting against the tide of change. The fact that money given for a precept name is no longer perceived as a donation by most can be seen in the common terms “fee” (*ryō*) and “market price” (*sōba*), which further points to the commodification of the act. Recognizing this, 60.3 percent of priests surveyed responded that the source of current problems surrounding posthumous precept names is “the social trend towards believing everything can be solved with money.”⁶³ No fewer than 70.7 percent of abbots in a separate survey responded: “The problem lies in the commercialization of faith, in which posthumous precept names are given in exchange for remuneration.”⁶⁴ Once a product has been commodified, removing it from the market, as it were, may not be so easily accomplished.

Third, priests are increasingly viewed as professionals offering a service. Those seeking their services expect “service for what they paid for and no further relationship.”⁶⁵ This view of the priest is influenced by the fact that a growing number of people are now introduced to priests through funeral companies and interact with the priest as a one-time service provider. The priest is hired, not for his ability to effect postmortem salvation for the deceased, but to play a role in the funeral ceremony.⁶⁶ In some cases the priest hired for the role is not even an independent priest but an employee of the funeral company itself. One extreme example of this trend can be seen in the develop-

ment of robot priests for use at memorial parks. These life-like wonders, true “chanting machines,” will chant the appropriate sūtra at the push of a button.

Finally, new funeral options are appearing. Of particular interest is the “natural funeral” (*shizensō*) movement.⁶⁷ This movement calls for such funeral options as burial at sea, scattering of ashes in the mountains, and the like. Such innovations allow little room for the services of a priest, unless those services can be meaningful in some way to the surviving family members. One way of understanding this movement is as a reaction to a service provider (temples) that fails to deliver a product (funeral) that satisfies (plays an effective emotional/social/religious role). The natural funeral movement, while receiving support from a limited number of priests, is more often the target of criticism by priests. One cynical reaction to priestly complaints is to point out that natural funerals obviate the need for graves and thus pose a potentially devastating threat to the economic survival of traditional Buddhism. However, the following passionate critique by a Tendai priest shows that, for some priests at least, natural funerals are a threat to more than just temple finances—they are a threat to the very moral foundations of Japanese culture.

If we recognize the majesty of human life, it should be clear that the body cannot just be thrown out. Whatever excuse one uses for scattering remains, it comes down to throwing them out. Usually, one visits the grave thinking of the parents. What do people who throw out the remains do? Visit the mountains or forest? . . . The extended family has already collapsed. But I don't think it is all right to destroy parent-child relations as well. Even in a nuclear family, parent-child relations are authoritative. They are tied to good neighborly relations. We should reaffirm the fact that the family line is extended through the grave. . . . The lack of an ethical view is a major problem. Ethical views begin in the family. . . . Set the mind straight, train the body, support your family, govern the country, make all equal under heaven. Are these just too old-fashioned? I think reaffirming the importance of the family and the importance of community relations will shed light on the antisocial nature of scattering remains.⁶⁸

The author also describes what he feels must be done by priests to combat this practice—give precepts to as many as possible through funerals and live exemplary lives as priests.

The teachings of Tendai are the One Buddha Vehicle and the possession of buddha nature by all. All people will equally become buddhas

in the future. That being the case, the precept ceremony allows the faithful their first step as Buddhists. Precept ceremonies should be conducted one after the other. I hear that in the cities the time allotted for funerals is limited. [If that's the case,] then explanations and preaching can take place at the memorial service. Being a priest to whom the parishioners and faithful feel they can safely entrust their parents' funeral—that's something nurtured through daily contact with the parishioners. Good preaching and a good lifestyle are what is needed. If we start from there, there will no longer be people who think of having natural funerals or of scattering remains.⁶⁹

Priests such as this one, fighting to reconstruct a meaningful role within "traditional" boundaries, as well as those pushing for new roles such as providers of social welfare services, must construct their strategies within a changing world. Priests as service providers, market competition, calls for clear pricing schemes, and price comparison all point to a commodification of Buddhist services. The conclusion of the Japan Buddhist Federation—that the term "fee" must never again be used by priests, lest it encourage a commodified view of posthumous names and thus contribute to a negative view of priests as business-oriented—is itself clear evidence of the trend toward the commodification of traditional Buddhism. These observations, however, apply more to urban areas, and within urban areas, to individuals establishing new relationships with a temple. In temples where a family has had a long relationship, or where, as in rural areas, individuals are more likely to have a relationship with the temple that goes beyond funerals, for example, to include festivals, local meetings, and so forth, priests are far less often viewed as merely funeral company employees or one-time hired professionals. Given this, we cannot say that religion has been fully commodified, only that the trend is toward commodification.

Conclusion

Contemporary dismissals of traditional Buddhism as empty of meaning, compounded by critiques of a corrupt priesthood, profiting from death, shape the scholarly, popular, and sectarian images of traditional Buddhism today. At the heart of such critiques lies the reliance of the priests and sects of traditional Buddhism on postmortem care for their financial stability and as their primary social role. In regard to the former, at least three factors ensure that priests are increasingly unable to justify the cost of the postmortem care they deliver. First, they fail to instill meaning in their actions through preaching. Second, views of

the afterlife and postmortem salvation held by the larger society are no longer in harmony with the views put forth by the sects of traditional Buddhism. Third, social disputes regarding the inequity of Buddhist postmortem care call the purpose of that care into question. As for postmortem care as the social role of temples, the commodification of religious practice in contemporary Japan represents a formidable challenge to Buddhist insistence on traditional forms of religious affiliation. Commodified (one-time, short-term, individual, price-based) relations with parishioners and others threatens not only the “traditional” (repeated, long-term, family/community-based, oblation-based) forms of religious activity still sought by traditional Buddhist sects but also the parish household system that such relations support and the financial stability that system represents.

Finally, changing views of the afterlife, as well as the commodification of religious activities, may reflect the expectations of the younger generations. These are the very generations that the sects of traditional Buddhism must turn to in the future for the next generation of laity and priests. As the sects continue to insist on traditional functions, such as funeral and memorial services, they risk further alienating those who have yet to commit to a temple, primarily younger urban dwellers. Japanese youth, although interested in subjects such as spirits and ghosts, do not seek traditional relationships with religious institutions, but rather, as witnessed by the rise of the so-called New New Religions, seek personal, introspective religious experiences.⁷⁰ If the leaders of the sects of traditional Buddhism are to reach out to the coming generation of Japanese, they will first need to address the religious needs of Japanese youth. The sects of traditional Buddhism, facing the changing nature of society at the start of a new century, have attempted to construct and implement plans to cope with the new realities, such as social welfare programs and committees on discrimination, the environment, proselytizing, and so forth. Furthermore, as shown by the Japan Buddhist Federation’s commissioning of a study of the problems surrounding posthumous precept names, the sects of traditional Buddhism are actively investigating the roots of their current unpopularity. It remains to be seen if such measures will assure their survival in their current form well into the twenty-first century.

Notes

An earlier version of this essay appeared as chapter 8 of my book, *Japanese Temple Buddhism: Worldliness in a Religion of Renunciation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005).

1. Paul Watt offers a brief introduction to “corruption theory” in his “Jiun Sonja (1719–1804): A Response to Confucianism within the Context of Buddhist Reform,” in *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, ed. Peter Nosco (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 188–214 (188–191).

2. Tsuji Zennosuke, *Nihon bukk'yōshi no kenkyū*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kinkōdō Shoseki, 1931), 2:546.

3. Ibid., 2:516.

4. The term “*kaikyū seido*” is more accurately translated as “class system”; Tsuji uses it here, however, to refer to the status system, more generally called “*mibun seido*.”

5. Tsuji, *Nihon bukk'yōshi no kenkyū*, 2:517. On status and the priesthood, see Alexander Vesey, “The Buddhist Clergy and Village Society in Early Modern Japan” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2001).

6. Ōno Tatsunosuke, *Nihon no bukk'yō* (Tokyo: Shinbundō, 1961), 248–249.

7. Watanabe Shōkō, *Japanese Buddhism: A Critical Appraisal* (Tokyo: Koku-sai Bunka Shinkōkai, 1964), 59.

8. Tamamuro Taijō, *Sōshiki bukk'yō* (Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 1963), 1.

9. Ibid., 2.

10. Tamura Yoshirō, *Japanese Buddhism: A Cultural History* (1967; English ed. Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing Co., 2000), 214.

11. Matsuno Junkō et al., *Gendai bukk'yō: Shinkyō no jiyū to bukk'yō* (Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppan, 1972), 22–23.

12. Tamamuro Fumio, *Sōshiki to danka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999), 227.

13. Ibid., 4.

14. Paula Arai, *Women Living Zen: Japanese Sōtō Buddhist Nuns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 139.

15. The Japan Buddhist Federation is the 1957 incarnation of the Dainippon Bukkyōkai, which in turn had been the Nippon Bukkyō Rengōkai. These federations, in turn, had their roots in the Bukkyō Konwakai, founded in 1900. The Japan Buddhist Federation’s homepage is www.jtvan.co.jp/~jbf/. The debate over posthumous precept names has even been reported in the U.S. mass media; see, for example, Jōji Sakurai, “Afterlife names are worth a bundle to Buddhist priests,” *The San Diego Union-Tribune* (April 4, 1999): A–31.

16. See Tamamuro Fumio, *Sōshiki to danka*, for more on the topic of posthumous precept name ranks. Katō Eiji claims that posthumous precept names were in wide use by the general populace by the mid-eighteenth century; see “Shigo no kaimyō wa bukk'yō ni arazuya!?” *Jimon kōryū* (July 2000): 84–87.

17. Robert J. Smith, *Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 66.

18. See Duncan Ryūken Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

2005), 28–29. For an in-depth discussion of the history of posthumous precept names in English, see William Bodiford, “Zen and the Art of Religious Prejudice: Efforts to Reform a Tradition of Social Discrimination,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, nos. 1–2 (1996): 1–27.

19. Results of the parishioner/student/Internet-based survey can be found in *Chūgai nippō* 9 (May 2000). Those for the abbot-based survey can be found in *Jimon kōryū* (August 2000): 86–89.

20. Cited in *Jimon kōryū* (September 2000): 81.

21. In this survey, 84.8 percent responded that they had heard or read of it in the mass media; 45.8 percent had heard directly from people other than parishioners; and 20 percent had heard about it directly from parishioners; see *Jimon kōryū* (August 2000): 86.

22. *Jimon kōryū* (April 2000): 44.

23. *Daikyūjūgokai tsūjō shūgikai giji hōkoku* (Ōtsu, Shiga Prefecture: Tendaishu Gikai Kanji, 2000), 34, 36.

24. One informant, however, told me that sermons are almost always conducted at rites for aborted fetuses, at least at her temple.

25. Samplings from observations are too small and in the future must be backed with broader survey results.

26. Various Buddhist groups, sectarian and trans-sectarian, offer telephone dharma talks. There are several varieties; for example, individuals seeking advice from priests may call in to speak with a priest. Other services include prerecorded talks on specific subjects.

27. <http://tendai.room.ne.jp/~kanagawa/index.html> (new address: <http://www.freeml.com/kanagawatendai>).

28. *Jiin no genzai*, ed. Hokushindō (Tokyo: by the editor, 1998), 218.

29. See Stephen G. Covell, “Lighting Up Tendai: Strengthening Sect-Parishioner Bonds through the Light Up Your Corner Movement,” *Asian Cultural Studies* 27 (2001): 35–47.

30. *Jimon kōryū* (August 2000): 87.

31. *Tendai Booklet*, no. 19, 18–19. See *Jimon kōryū* (May 2000): 77–78, for similar explanations offered by the Shingon sect, Chizan branch; the Jōdo sect; and the Jōdo Shin sect, Ōtani branch.

32. Kichijōji home page, www.dokidoki.ne.jp/home2/kisyoji/index.htm, July 22, 1999.

33. The effect understood to result from the granting of a posthumous precept name varied from sect to sect, though today it appears most laity understand it to mean birth in a pure land.

34. Tendai Busseinen home page, www2t.biglobe.ne.jp/tendai, Q & A section, February 7, 2000 (new address: <http://www.tendai-yba.com>). See also Katō Eiji, “Shigo no kaimyō wa bukyō ni arazu ya!?” 88.

35. *Mainichi shinbun* (evening edition), November 19, 1998.

36. Hokushindō, ed., *Jiin no genzai*, 184.

37. Survey conducted by Shūkyō to Shakai Gakkai, 1996; cited in Ishii Kenji, *Deta būku gendai Nihonjin no shūkyō: Sengo gojūnen no shūkyō ishiki to shūkyō kōdō* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1997), 85.

38. The stronger numbers shown by students reflect a growing interest in the occult, afterlife experiences, and the like among Japanese youth. Where sects of traditional Buddhism tend to promote traditional values and culture, Japanese youth are showing more interest in experiential religion; see *Bukkyō nenkan* '88, ed. Bukkyō Nenkan Hensan Iinkai (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1988), 22–23.

39. *Asahi shinbun* survey, September 23, 1995, cited in Ishii, *Deta būku*, 68. Between 1981 and 1995, ownership of Buddhist altars nationwide dropped from 63 to 59 percent.

40. There are many studies on this subject in Japanese. In English, see Bodiford, “Zen and the Art of Religious Prejudice”; and Williams, *The Other Side of Zen*, 26–32.

41. Bodiford, “Zen and the Art of Religious Prejudice,” 9.

42. On occasion, private detectives are hired to determine the social background of individuals by families negotiating a wedding and by companies seeking to know the background of a prospective employee. Individuals from status or race groups that are subject to discrimination (such as Koreans or Burakumin) are selectively denied permission to marry or employment based on such background checks.

43. The December 16, 1999 *Asahi shinbun* (Tokyo morning edition) claims that at least two such phone calls were recently reported by a priest in Nagano. And a 1996 *Saga shinbun* article examines the ongoing process in Saga prefecture of searching for and processing gravestones and temple registers of the dead that record discriminatory posthumous precept names (*Saga shinbun*, May 21, 1996, society section, www.saga-s.co.jp).

44. *Gekkan jūshoku*, a monthly journal for priests, ran a series of articles dealing with discriminatory practices by the Shingon sect (April–June 1983), with a follow-up series in December–February 1994. *Jimon kōryū*, a monthly trade journal for temple management, carried a series on discriminatory remarks by a Jōdo Shin sect priest and the subsequent sect-level meetings (the series appeared in the January, March, May, and July 2000 issues).

45. *Gekkan jūshoku* (May 1983): 36–37.

46. *Kōhō Tendai*, no. 2 (January 1996): 18–19.

47. A Jōdo sect ceremony that lasts from five to seven days, in which participants take part in a fivefold transmission of Jōdo sect teachings. A lay ordination takes place during the ceremony.

48. *Jimon kōryū* (August 2000): 88.

49. This conclusion fits well with information related to me by several priests following an academic conference in Tokyo (Bukkyō Bunka Gakkai Gakuju Taikai, 2000). Although they admitted that they are delighted when a

parishioner donates a large sum of money in return for a special name, they claimed they neither ask for nor require a set amount. For special names, they remarked, service to the temple is the foremost deciding factor.

50. *Gekkan jūshoku* (July 1984): 21–26.

51. *Bukkyō nandemo Q & A*, http://www2t.biglobe.ne.jp/~tendai/cgi_qa/renlst.cgi (new address: <http://www.tendai-yba.com>).

52. Japan Consumers Association survey, cited in *Jimon kōryū* (September 2000): 81.

53. *Jimon kōryū* (February 2000): 65. This statement was made by a sixty-five-year-old male from Chiba prefecture in response to a nationwide survey conducted in newspapers by the Committee on Buddhism in the Twenty-First Century (Nijūisseki no Bukkyō o Kangaeru Kai).

54. The turn to precept reform is nothing new. Calls to reform priestly adherence to precepts have been made throughout history in Japan, and calls to have laity adhere to lay precepts have also been made on occasion. See, for example, the precept reform movement of Jiun (1718–1804) (Watt, “Jiun Sonja”).

55. *Jimon kōryū* (August 2000): 90–91.

56. Clerical marriage, more so than consumption of alcohol or other violations of the traditional monastic code, serves to define much of the debate over precepts today. On this topic, see also Richard Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Covell, *Japanese Temple Buddhism*, chap. 6.

57. *Tendai koyomi hōwashū*, ed. Tendai Koyomi Kankōkai (Tokyo: by the editor, 1983), 86. Interestingly, the author comments: “I won’t say that ‘not to drink alcohol’ means not to touch a drop, as in the Hīnayāna, but too much alcohol can upset one’s mind, so it should be had only to warm the heart and purify one a bit.”

58. *Jimon kōryū* (February 2000): 64.

59. Tendai Busseinen home page, www2t.biglobe.ne.jp/tendai, Q & A section (new address: <http://www.tendai-yba.com>). This is a response by a priest to an inquiry regarding donations.

60. Indeed, a family friend whose husband had unexpectedly passed away once phoned me about trouble she was experiencing with a priest. The priest, she told me, was requesting 200,000 yen for a regular posthumous precept name but told her she could have a more effective special posthumous precept name for 1,000,000 yen. Such priests, however, are exceptions to the rule. Of the many priests I have met during fieldwork, I know of none who has engaged in such practices.

61. Tendai Busseinen home page, www2t.biglobe.ne.jp/tendai, Q & A section, February 7, 2000 (new address: <http://www.tendai-yba.com>).

62. See, for example, <http://ekitan.com/biz/handbook/data/10110400.htm> or www.minso.com/sougi/m-kaimyo.htm. The “market price” in some

areas is based on the deceased's earning power while alive, generally one month's salary. See also the Kichijōji home page, www.dokidoki.ne.jp/home2/kisyoji/index.htm.

63. *Jimon kōryū* (July 2000): 92.

64. *Ibid.* (August 2000): 86–89.

65. *Ibid.*, 87.

66. A more radical example is that of the “Christian” priests who perform weddings at some wedding chapels in Japan. Many are not ordained; they are merely foreigners (Caucasians) who look the part and can read from the Bible in English.

67. See, for example, Mark Rowe, “Grave Changes: Scattering Ashes in Contemporary Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 30, nos. 1–2 (2003): 85–118; rpt. with revisions in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 405–437.

68. Sakamoto Kōhaku, Director of Studies at Eizan Gakuin, *Kōhō Tendai* (September 1998): 12–13.

69. *Ibid.*

70. “New New Religions” is a term coined by the Japanese press, and, unfortunately, also used by scholars of Japanese religions to refer to those religious groups that have formed from the 1970s on and that reflect a different, more introspective, eclectic, and individualistic worldview than the so-called New Religions—a term used to identify religious movements that emerged from around 1850 until the 1970s, which are more oriented towards traditional Japanese family values. The usefulness of these rubrics as categories of analysis is, of course, rather limited.

The Orthodox Heresy of Buddhist Funerals

GEORGE J. TANABE, JR.

THE TWO LEGS on which Japanese Buddhism stands ritually and economically are funeral services and the practices of worldly benefits (*genze riyaku*), the one serving the dead, the other the living. Take away funerals, memorial rites, good luck charms, talismans, and prayers for good things, and Buddhism will topple over. In their low assessment of the role of religion in Japan, Edwin Reischauer and Marius Jansen fail to take into account the importance of Buddhist funerals and rituals for practical benefits, but apart from these two areas, their harsh evaluation applies. "Contemporary Japanese life," they write, "is thus full of traces of Buddhism as a sort of background melody, but it is not for many a leitmotif in either their intellectual or emotional lives."¹ Death and superstition are the camps in which Buddhism lives, hardly able to venture forth to inform more vital concerns of public policy, social morality, and personal values. Hirose Takuji, a sociologist at Bukkyō University, reflects a common opinion in saying that priests "almost never respond to news about society and are concerned only about funerals."² Dead to most of the world, Buddhism thrives in the narrow corridors of the world for the dead.

But it thrives nonetheless. In providing services for gaining practical benefits, Buddhism shares a large market with only one other religion, Shinto. In the sector of funerals and memorial rites, it commands a more than 90 percent monopoly. With death rates projected to continue to rise for another twenty years or so, the immediate outlook is good. The corridor may be narrow, but it is comfortable and promises to get even better. Except for a handful of hostile critics and reform-minded priests, few people are clamoring for Buddhism to venture beyond its niche, and most people are not troubled by the fact that "Buddhist concepts about such things as paradise and the transmigration of the soul linger on in folklore but serve as guiding principles

for few people.”³ In a national survey of its temples and members, the Sōtō Zen sect learned that most people do not want their priests to do anything other than perform funerals.⁴

Critics of contemporary Buddhism—and some of them come from within the fold—are troubled by its failure to break out of its ritual enclave. Buddhism should be applicable to life, they say, as much as it is to death. In its prize-winning series of reports on contemporary religion, the newspaper *Mainichi shinbun* investigated new religious movements engaged in “manufacturing meaning in life” (*ikigai sangyō*) and contrasted them with the traditional Buddhist “death industry” (*shisha sangyō*).⁵ This does not mean that the traditional Buddhist sectarian organizations are wholly fixated on death, for they do have a wide range of programs in education, social welfare, and self-improvement. Still, these efforts comprise the exception to the rule that Buddhism is a death industry functioning mechanically according to fixed scripts. One of the *Mainichi* reports covered an unqualified “priest” who worked as a contract ritualist performing low-cost funeral services according to whatever sectarian tradition the families requested. The *Mainichi* reporter was struck not just by his lack of integrity but by how he so easily met the expectations of the families, who were satisfied with the chanting of sūtra passages. “Can there be a more bitter mockery of modern Buddhism than the fact that its terminal point is hanging on to death rituals?”⁶ The journalists were hard on the Buddhist establishment and showed their attitude, if only rhetorically, in the title of their report, “Has Buddhism Died?”

In his contribution to this volume, Stephen Covell examines the declining role of Japanese temples and cites several Japanese scholars and their criticisms of the empty formalism of modern Buddhism. Covell quotes Watanabe Shōkō, who says that Japanese Buddhism has fallen into formalism and that temples are places of entertainment for sightseers rather than places of religious discipline. The granting of posthumous names is also under fire for being so costly, almost as if it were a money-making scheme rather than an act of religious integrity. Covell’s study shows that the crisis of empty but expensive rituals strikes at the very core of temple life and threatens its meaningful existence.

There is another problem, however, that may be even more serious, and it arises from the view that the formal ritual, even when practiced with full meaning and understanding, is heretical. Japanese Buddhist funerals are later developments in the long history of Buddhism, and the question of their orthodoxy has been troublesome. Empty formalism is a problem, but a full understanding also raises a disturbing question: what if the funeral ritual itself were not Buddhist, represent-

ing an aberration so far errant that it falls outside of what by any standard might be called Buddhism? That is another charge being leveled against Buddhist funerals, as well as against the rituals for practical benefits. The two legs on which Buddhism stands, the critics aver, are not in accord with true Buddhism, and while they keep Buddhism alive, they do so as heresies. Echoing criticisms voiced from the Meiji period (1868–1912) on, the charge is not new, but it does come from Buddhist priests and scholars as an internal indictment that cannot be brushed off as easily as the opinions of outsiders like journalists. Covell takes note of internal critics such as Buddhist nuns who criticize priests for corrupting pristine philosophy with magical rituals of death. Even ardent defenders of funerals as proper Buddhist rites have to build strategies of justification to deal with the view that, in the strictest and most ideal sense, funerals are not Buddhist. Ōkura Ryūjō, a ranking priest in the Shingon sect, wrote a book-length defense of the Buddhist funeral but still had to admit that “it has been said many times over that there are no funerals in Buddhism and that funerals were not part of the original function of priests.”⁷ The orthodoxy of funerals is highly suspect, and funeral Buddhism may be living as heresy. If this were not the case, apologies would not have to be written in its defense.

Ian Reader and I have already discussed the issue of the “heresy” of worldly benefits and have noted that the censure is based on a modern construction of true religion and orthodox Buddhism that ignores important sūtras affirming these practices.⁸ In turning my attention here to the heresy of funerals, I shall argue that the deviance is similarly detectable only when the standards of orthodoxy are selected to be antithetical to mortuary practices. The doctrinal assault against funerals, however, does little to change the practice, which remains entrenched in custom, tradition, and a view of what Buddhism is, not what it should be. Since mortuary practices resist attempts to bring them in line with orthodox theory, the theory has to be manipulated. This is not as difficult a problem as it would seem, since the standards of orthodoxy are already fluid and represent a range of differences among individuals and sectarian organizations. The variations arise from multiple perceptions of what constitutes true Buddhism, and while the practice remains the same, the shifting standards, like slowly bending mirrors, produce images ranging from heresy to orthodoxy. The problem of heresy lies not in funerals *per se* but in the choice of the lenses by which to view them. Thought, in this case, must be molded to fit action, which, apparently heretical, actually functions as the unchanging standard to which orthodoxy must conform. The heresy of funerals is thus orthodox.

The principles of orthodoxy are established by sectarian traditions as interpreted by scholar-priests. Japanese scholars of Buddhism are often priests teaching in sectarian universities, and their scholarship easily shades over into theological advocacy. The distinction between academic description and theological prescription is not always clear, and the debates about the heresy of funerals in the Buddhist community are waged primarily by scholars driven as much by ecclesiastical and sectarian concerns as by academic method. The problem of heresy arises not because scholars also have their priestly interests, but because as priests they know too much as scholars. What they know is that early Buddhism, which they take to be the standard of authenticity, aimed at getting people off the samsaric wheel of birth and death, and that, in the nirvāṇa of enlightenment, death casts no shadow. Like most attachments in life, funerals were rituals that only perpetuated the illusion of a substantive and sovereign self that survives the ravages of the body. If Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, taught the truth of no-self, then the mortuary celebration of the surviving self cannot be true, at least not to his teaching. Born of a certain kind of knowledge of early Buddhism, this crisis has never been resolved, and the search for an orthodox exit from the dilemma continues. Scholar-priests are compelled to make Japanese funeral Buddhism (*sōshiki bukkō* or *sōsai bukkō*)—the term itself, as Covell notes, is synonymous with degenerate religion—be good and true. After all, if funerals are so objectionable, then why was one performed for Śākyamuni?

The Funeral of Śākyamuni

The common standard used to condemn funerals as heresy is the view that Śākyamuni and the early Indian saṅgha did not engage in mortuary practices. Doctrinally, Śākyamuni taught the nonexistence of souls (*anātman*), and the absence of souls leaves nothing to commemorate after death. “The philosophy of original Buddhism,” writes Murakami Shigeyoshi, “contains atheistic elements that deny the existence of gods and souls.”⁹ Murakami goes on to trace the developments and diversity of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the subsequent, even greater, changes it underwent in Japan. Sectarian groups use different sūtras and have their own distinctive doctrines and rituals. They are “so separated from each other that it would be better to say that they are all different religions.”¹⁰ Being orthodoxies unto themselves, they are potentially heresies to each other and certainly to the original teaching of Śākyamuni. Yet despite their differences, Japanese Buddhist groups all perform funeral rites, which assume a postmortem personal exis-

tence, and in this they share a common divergence from the perceived teaching of Śākyamuni.

Unlike the scholar-priests, ordinary people are not bothered by this question of apostasy, especially since most are not even aware of it. In the same vein as Reischauer and Jansen, Arai Ken, a Buddhist professor at Komazawa University, says in reference to Buddhist mortuary rites that “it is a rare person . . . who does these things on the basis of religious faith. For most it is merely a matter of convention. Those who guide their daily lives by the standards of a particular religion constitute only a small minority.”¹¹ Heresy matters only to those for whom awareness of and adherence to right standards of belief are important.

Nara Yasuaki, professor and president emeritus of Komazawa University, a Sōtō Zen institution, adopts a liberal attitude that tolerates the practice of funerals as a necessary accommodation to social reality. Funerals, in his view, conform to a lower level of secular truth, but not to the higher level of transcendent truth in which the path leading to enlightenment does not pass through mortuary way stations. “It is true,” he writes, “that the Buddha admonished his disciples not to be bothered by funerals and other rites for lay believers because they have no place on the path to enlightenment.”¹² Nara recognizes that the problem is not in the practice but in the choice of standards for measuring the practice, and he allows for a double standard, one transcendent and the other secular. The transcendent truth (Skt. *lokottara*) is ultimate, absolute, and pure, but because it cannot be apprehended and practiced at the everyday level, it must be interpreted and accommodated as secular truth (*laukika*). The two levels are in tension with each other and sometimes are mutually exclusive, but “the interaction between the two is necessary, which, if established satisfactorily, helps the faith to take root and flourish.”¹³ A satisfactory interaction does not dissolve the tension, and popular “‘Buddhist’ views are not always genuinely Buddhist.”¹⁴ But without the lower truth to address real needs, Nara asserts, Buddhism cannot survive on its higher truth alone.

The Buddha’s disciples, according to the legendary account of his death in the *Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta*, were the first to invoke the lower truth when they performed a funeral for the master himself. Just before he died, the Buddha converted one last mendicant and received assurances from his followers that they were certain about his teaching and had no doubts. Anticipating the death of their master, those who were still tied to worldly matters fell to the ground in grief, while the accomplished ascetics calmly reminded themselves that all things, including the World Honored One himself, come to an end as surely as

they have beginnings. The Buddha's last words affirmed the inevitability of decay and the virtue of diligence. He entered into four successive stages of meditative trance, then attained five further states of mind, the last of which was the passing away of the consciousness of sensations and ideas. At that point Ānanda thought he was dead, but Anuruddha said that the last state of mind was not death. The Buddha then reversed his meditative course, passing back through the five states of mind and the four meditations. Returning back to the first meditation, he reversed direction again, repeating his course up to the fourth meditative stage. He exited that stage and then expired.¹⁵

Ānanda informed the Mallas of Kusinārā (Skt. Kuśinagarī) of the Buddha's death, and they gathered perfumes, garlands, and musical instruments. They honored the Buddha's remains with music, hymns, and dances, and prepared to cremate him the next day. After carrying the body to the cremation site, they wrapped it in cloth and "placed the body in an oil vessel of iron, and covered that close up with another oil vessel of iron."¹⁶ They built a funeral pyre, placed the body on it, and burned (baked?) it until "only the bones remained behind."¹⁷ The Mallas gathered the bones in their council hall and for seven days paid homage with song and dance. Eight groups vied for the bones of the Buddha until they decided to distribute the relics equally among themselves. Making their request too late, the Moriyas had to settle for the embers, and Dona the Brahman, who had arranged the distribution to the eight groups, claimed the vessel in which the body had been burnt. They all made ritual mounds for burying the relics, the embers, and the iron vessel.¹⁸

The *Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta* account of the Buddha's funeral clearly shows that ritual homage, cremation, retention of the bones, and burial were all part of the Indian Buddhist imagination, if not actual practices. These are still the essential elements in Japanese Buddhist funerals, and it is surprising that Japanese scholar-priests do not do more with this scriptural account in their attempt to justify funerals. Like T. W. Rhys Davids, the translator of this *sutta*, they are convinced that little was done about the ritual disposal of the dead in early Indian Buddhism, since other canonical sources are mostly silent about the topic. Gregory Schopen points out, however, that archaeological studies available to Rhys Davids showed that monasteries maintained cemeteries and that "the early Buddhist monastic communities were, in fact, preoccupied not only with disposing of their dead but with ritually and elaborately housing them as well. . . ."¹⁹ Schopen argues that Rhys Davids turned a blind eye to archaeological and epigraphic evidence because canonical literature was to him the only standard for determining real Buddhism. By presenting a view of early Buddhism

as “rationalist and free of ritual,” Rhys Davids described a religion that has been called “Protestant Buddhism”²⁰ and thereby contributed to the “invention of an authentic Buddhism in Europe.”²¹ Invented in Europe, this is the same “original Buddhism” (*genshi bukkyō*) that serves as the standard for many Japanese scholars.

Schopen’s findings challenge this view of classical Buddhism but do not solve the problem of heresy. His Buddhism includes ritual and allows for mortuary orthopraxis but not orthodoxy. Japanese scholars are aware that the practice of funerals can be traced back to the scriptural story of Śākyamuni’s death. Buddhist funerals, notes Takahashi Kōji, imitate Śākyamuni’s funeral.²² The great obstacle to finding orthodoxy in funerals does not lie in any failure to recognize early ritual practices, but in the doctrinal definition of the soul. The problem is one of thought, not action. If there is no soul, then funerals are doctrinally out of place, but if a soul can be construed, then rites for it are legitimate.

How, then, can a belief in the soul displace or at least stand alongside the conviction that there is no soul? In addition to theories of double truth, such as that of the ultimate transcendent and conventional secular truths used by Nara, the methodological strategy for accomplishing this lies in the idea of syncretism, a process by which religious systems are seen to acquire, often unwittingly, foreign elements that may even represent contradictions and heresies. From the point of view of original Indian Buddhism, the foreign elements in Japan are found in indigenous Shinto beliefs that were retained by those who become Buddhists. Despite the no-soul doctrine, Japanese Buddhists were not willing to give up native affirmations of the soul and incorporated them into Buddhism. Anthropologist Sasaki Kōkan, also cited by Duncan Williams in Chapter 6 in this volume, argues that the Japanese soul (*tama*) retained all of its indigenous characteristics even as it became the object of ritual attention in Buddhist funerals. The soul goes to the world of the ancestors and returns annually for visits with the living, who offer it food and gifts. While Buddhists give it their overlay by saying that it becomes enlightened, the *tama* is not transformed into a Buddhist entity, and actually stands over and against the Buddhist ideas of no-self and emptiness.²³ The task of reconciling these contradictory claims may not be intellectually possible, but the absorption of the soul into Japanese Buddhism was made easier by the fact that Indian and Chinese texts had already defined the soul not as a permanent reality (*ātman*) but as a transitory intermediate existence called the *antarābhava* in Sanskrit. The *antarābhava* connected one life at its end with its next rebirth. Insofar as the *tama* also represented a personal postmortem existence, it could take its place comfortably

alongside the *antarābhava*. The belief in a soul was not the result of syncretistic adoption of a heretical *tama* into a pure Buddhism free of postmortem existences, but was already in the Buddhism that went to Japan. The clash between orthodoxy and heresy was not created by the Japanese; they simply inherited it and added their own twist.

The Heresy of the Soul

Schopen's study points out how scholars of Buddhism (and Christianity as well) selectively view evidence to fit their preferred visions of what religions should be and therefore were. Mining sources for only the evidence that supports predetermined conclusions is a common practice among scholars, and in the case of Buddhist Studies, the canonical mine contains a wealth of veins and lodes from which to choose gems that support any number of conflicting positions. Even if one chooses to look at just literary texts to the exclusion of archaeological and epigraphic evidence, it is possible to select certain supportive works and ignore writings that refute preferential understandings. If the doctrine of no-self is upheld as orthodox and exclusionary, then ideas of the self or soul found in canonical texts can be ignored or refuted, and the adoption of those ideas can be blamed on syncretism with non-Buddhist elements. The Japanese belief in *tama* is, as we have already seen with Sasaki Kōkan's explanation, such a case in point: *tama* is an indigenous concept over which Buddhists laid their interpretation that the soul is an intermediary existence on its way to enlightenment. Both conceptions coalesce, but they still coexist side by side, easily separable into their respective meanings, the one remaining orthodox, the other heretical. Tracing resident heresies to non-Buddhist sources is convenient and simple, but the more complex view, one expressed by Nara Yasuaki and others, is that the existence of the soul is already affirmed in early Buddhist texts and the question of its orthodoxy (or heresy) has to be settled by relegating it to a secondary level of meaning or by accepting the idea that standards of orthodoxy and therefore of heresy change with time and circumstance. In this case, syncretism does not work as an explanatory mechanism, and the double truth theory must be invoked instead.

By Vasubandhu's time in the fifth century CE, the concept of the soul was well developed. The metaphysical analyses of what exactly happens after death were remarkably detailed but still open to controversy. The basic challenge of transmigration theories centered on the need to explain just how the "soul" or whatever it is passes from one life to the next, bequeathing moral consequences from the one to the other. Is there a genetic, that is, a physical basis for this transition? If

one soul dies in the birthing of the next soul, how is the karmic record transmitted? Robert Kritzer summarizes the various theories attempting to explain this intriguing process and gives a description of Vasubandhu's account, which has become known as the Buddhist version of the Oedipal conflict:

First the *antarābhava* [the intermediate existence] observes the location of its future birth, where its future parents are having sex. If it is destined to be male, it will be consumed with lust for the mother and hatred for the father; if female, the opposite. Confused by these thoughts of lust and hatred, it wishes that it were the one having intercourse and establishes itself in the impurity in the womb, namely the semen and blood of the parents. At this point, its *skandhas* [the constituents of personal existence] congeal and cease to exist. In this way conception takes place.²⁴

While other theories used images such as seeds and sprouts to explain the continuity between one life and the next, Vasubandhu located the mechanism of transmission in male semen and female blood (the ovum). This material or physical explanation contrasts with psychological theories that locate the passing of the karmic record in the transfer of consciousness. The issue has long been debated, and, as Kritzer shows, arguments and counterarguments were thrown against each other. Vasubandhu ascribes a critical role to the physical elements, and the body therefore is not to be taken lightly.

The arguments about rebirth are really about death and its effect on the *antarābhava*, the intermediate existence, which in Sino-Japanese Buddhist terminology is most commonly called *chūu* or *chūin*. The precise term for such metaphysical matters is always a problem, but in the light of ancient and modern affirmations of the corporeal aspect of the intermediate existence, we should call it the body-soul. *Chū* refers to intermediate or in-between, while *in* (also *on*) is one of the words used for the Sanskrit *skandhas*, the five psychophysical constituents of a person (form, feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness). Though the biological body ceases to exist in death, it can be preserved in cremation, thus retaining the first, physical *skandha*, which is form—the body, or here, relics. Like all living beings, the material soul must maintain its life by eating. What it eats is made clear through other terms used to define it: *jikikō genzen*, that which appears by eating incense; *jikikōshin*, the body that eats incense; and *kōon*, incense *skandha*. After death the soul wanders in limbo and must be fed every seven days for a period of forty-nine days if it is to make safe passage to its next destination. The function of the memorial services performed

every seven days after the funeral is to provide sustenance to the soul through offerings of incense and prayers. "We burn incense," says Fukunishi Kenchō, a Jōdoshū ritual specialist, "because they [that is, interim existences] feed on incense."²⁵ Incense, quite literally, is body-soul food.

The forty-nine-day memorial observances for the care and feeding of body-souls are deeply entrenched in nearly all schools of Japanese Buddhism, but the belief in body-souls is controversial because of its collision with the repeated doctrinal denials of permanent souls (*anātman*). In the early discourses of the Buddha, the question of what transmigrates after a person's death was side-stepped as a question that tends not to edification. Chinese Mahāyāna texts recognized the lack of final conclusions. In *Dasheng yizhang*, Huiyuan (523–592) wrote that "the conclusions about whether or not there is an intermediate existence are not the same in the sūtras and treatises. Abhidharma teachings affirm its existence, while Satyasiddhi doctrines definitely deny it. . . . Mahāyāna theories are inconclusive about whether it exists or not."²⁶ Huiyuan goes on to say that "since the retribution for those who are exceedingly good or heavy with evil is swift, they have no intermediate existence." In *Shi jingtu qunyi lun*, Huaigan (seventh century) noted the same split, one side contending that death in one life leads directly to birth on a lotus blossom in the Pure Land without anything transmigrating between the two, while the opposing view held that birth in the Pure Land takes place after an intermediate existence in an inferior body. Ashamed of its body, it hides itself by wearing clothes and survives by eating incense. After eating the incense of millions of buddha lands, it receives the body *skandha* and proceeds to the place of its next rebirth.²⁷ The intermediate existence is often said to last for seven seven-day periods, every seventh day of which food and sūtra readings must be offered until the forty-ninth day.

The debates over the body-soul are as persistent as they are ancient, and even a modern hardliner like Akitsuki Ryūmin, a Rinzai Zen priest and self-styled reformer of Buddhism, realistically contends that what he accepts as the refusal of early Buddhists in India to perform funerals or memorial services because of the no-soul teaching applies as a model only to himself and not to others who participate in such rituals. Caught in the familiar dilemma of practice diverging from precept, Akitsuki forces the square peg of funerals into the round hole of no-soul by contending that the psychological and emotional reality of memory remains despite the absence of self and therefore can be commemorated in a funeral.²⁸ Akitsuki's understanding of an early Buddhism without mortuary rites is considerably idealized along the lines of the European invention of classical Buddhism, at least as seen in the light of Schopen's findings.

Affirming the doctrine of no-soul and the funerary practice of commemorating memory, Akitsuki took his cue from Hagami Shōchō (1903–1989), the famous priest who set out on the grueling thousand-day walking pilgrimage (*kaihōgyō*) at Mt. Hiei as a means of dealing with his wife's untimely death. Strictly denying the existence of a soul for his wife, Hagami concluded that something real still remained in memory. In one of the great stories of a Buddhist priest's love for a woman, Hagami's case reveals the depth of his memory for his wife and inadvertently shares common ground with the modern proponents of nonreligious funerals, many of whom reject the Buddhist conception of the soul's rebirth as another person. They, too, use the funeral to personalize a lost one, who is memorialized as that particular person and no other. Speaking as a clinical psychologist, medical school professor, and avowed atheist, Ōhara Kenshirō poetically described his late wife's heart as still living in him as if she were away on a trip, leaving him home alone.²⁹ Believing priest and atheist scientist agree: souls do not exist, but memories do.

Akitsuki's dilemma is that of a purist trying to hold true to the no-soul doctrine. One way out of the dilemma is to disregard that doctrine in favor of the commonly accepted idea of a soul. That is the practical position of most Buddhists, and Pure Land (Jōdoshū) Buddhists, whose beliefs center on rebirth, readily affirm the existence of souls. But if this approach puts a practical end to one dilemma, it gives rise to another. Orthodox Jōdoshū doctrine states that the power of Amida Buddha is exceedingly efficient, and the soul, upon the death of the body, goes directly to the Pure Land without any wandering about in an intermediate stage. The attainment of rebirth is immediate (*sokutoku ōjō*) and therefore there is no *chūin*, no in-between state, no need to provide for a soul in transit, no need for forty-nine days of critical care and feeding. This is the same view already expressed by Huai-gan, who noted the theory of direct rebirth without an intermediary. The practical application of this idea would eliminate funeral and memorial services, since there is no postmortem existence requiring care. There is no need to support the journey between lives if there is no traveler making the trip. The intellectual conundrum that results is interesting: immediate rebirth of the soul means that the soul defined as the *intermediate* existence does not exist.

In 1959, Shiiō Benkyō (1876–1971) published an article in an official Zōjōji journal in which he argued that there are no intermediate existences (*chūin*) in Pure Land Buddhism. Shiiō's position is not that there is no soul, but that it is reborn instantaneously at the moment of death and has no need therefore to go through an intermediate stage. Educated at Tokyo Imperial University, Shiiō was a well-respected scholar who taught at schools such as Waseda, Nihon University, and

Taishō University, where he also served as president for three terms. Shiio held the high clerical rank of *daisōjō* (grand archbishop), served as the chief priest of Zōjōji, the most important Jōdoshū temple in eastern Japan, and spearheaded the Tomoiki (Life Together) movement dedicated to integrating Buddhism into everyday life. As if he were not busy enough, he was also elected to the lower house of the National Diet three times.³⁰ Written by one of such stature, the booklet had a great impact and is still being discussed today.

The metaphysics of the soul is open to endless speculation, but since the discussions are usually carried out in reference to scriptural statements, there is a suggestion of certainty based in canonical authority. Scriptural words are used as if they have factual referents, and arguments are tested against usual criteria of reason. The contradiction between the existence of a *chūin* and the claims of immediate rebirth (*sokutoku ōjō*) is totally logical and can therefore be manipulated by rationalizations. Since the intermediate existence and all the events it can undergo have no empirical anchors, the arguments are in a narrow sense inconsequential, but their implications are very real: do we or do we not carry out funerals and memorial services?

The answer is driven only in part by doctrinal imperatives, which, if they were the final word on Shiio's case, would mean quite simply that memorial rites are not necessary. But nondoctrinal forces are also at work, and emotional demands are equally determinative of the issue. Yagi Kishō, a Jōdoshū priest, described a funeral he performed for an elderly parishioner, who died suddenly in the afternoon after spending the morning shopping. Using the word *ōjō*—which technically refers to birth in a pure land but in common parlance simply means death—to comment on the person's swift and painless passing, Yagi said to the surviving family members that it was a "great death/birth in the Pure Land" (*dai ōjō deshita ne*). Rather than agreeing with him on the merciful quality of a swift death, the family members were slightly upset at him for making the comment. Yagi then realized that death was too quick in this case, that there had been no transition time allowing the family a chance to find closure with the sudden departure.³¹ Psychologically, a transition period allowing time to come to terms with death serves a positive function for the family, and even after death, transition rituals centered on the soul help in grief resolution. Immediate rebirth, like the sudden death it follows, is too quick.

One way out of the *chūin* dilemma is indirectly suggested by Fukunishi Kenchō, who notes that immediate birth in the Pure Land, without a transitional stage, takes place only for those who have been extremely good (*gokuzen*.) There is also no transition required for the extremely bad (*gokuaku*), who go straight to hell. Fukunishi does not

draw out explicitly the implication that, since most people are neither extremely good nor bad, they are not destined for immediate appearance in the Pure Land or the hells, but he clearly implies that most cases involve transit time as a *chūin*. By relegating the doctrine of immediate birth in the Pure Land to the far extremes of the moral spectrum, the notion of transitional existence can be preserved in a broad center for the vast majority of people, who, being neither totally good nor bad, will set out on the usual forty-nine-day journey, which then culminates in birth in the Pure Land. When the transitional time has passed with the proper observances of rituals every seven days, the temporary memorial tablet (*ihai*) made of plain wood is replaced with the black lacquered tablet with the individual's posthumous name written in gold, the color of the Pure Land.³² The black and gold tablet certifies the safe passage of the soul through its intermediate stage.

The arguments about the soul continue unabated without final resolution. Whether absorbed through syncretism from the outside or developed as an internal aberration, the soul cannot rest securely in orthodoxy. The no-soul orthodoxy does not deny the existence of a personal agent; what it rejects is its substantive or permanent nature. As we have seen, the problem is nevertheless construed as a question of existence. Sectarian formulations, however, take another approach in attempting to save the soul from heresy and that is by postulating its path to enlightenment. If heretical souls can be enlightened or saved, then the orthodox objective of Buddhism would be achieved. For the living, attaining enlightenment through karmic perfection, serious meditation, complex rituals, or pure faith is daunting and reserved primarily for a few. But once dead, everyone can be enlightened or saved—everyone, that is, for whom a funeral is performed. Far from deviating from the highest ideals of Buddhism, the funeral rite is the easiest route to the highest goals. Japanese sectarian doctrine and rituals lay out different paths, but they all lead to their respective orthodox summits. Mariko Walter in her contribution to this volume surveys the various sectarian structures and meanings of the funeral rituals, which attempt to follow their respective ideals of enlightenment or salvation. Walter shows that the patterns of relating funeral rituals to sectarian teachings vary and that while most people may not know these meanings—hence the charge of empty formalism—meanings do exist.

Adjusting Orthodoxy to Heresy

While classical Buddhist traditions rejected aid for the dead on the idealized grounds that a postmortem agent either did not exist or did

not need help, mortuary rites still survived on the conviction that, ideals apart, there was a journey to be made after life. Japanese Buddhist sects developed their own mappings and meanings of the trip, specifying the final destinations and the preparations necessary to meet road conditions. The ritual send-off, the funeral, was critical, and improper orientation at the start meant that the traveler would endlessly wander, ever hungry, never finding a finish. For most sects the funeral was an ordination rite that conferred virtual clerical status on the deceased, who could best undertake the journey armed with the precepts, a new spiritual name, and ritual directions to the final goal of enlightenment or birth in the Pure Land.³³

Reminiscent of the classical "Protestant" Buddhism conceived to be without rituals, the Jōdo Shinshū sect (hereafter Shinshū), which traces its origins to Shinran (1173–1263), insists that the other power (*tariki*) of Amida Buddha is solely sufficient for birth in the Pure Land and that any human contrivance such as rituals represents self-power (*jiriki*), which is utterly ineffectual and superfluous. Any deliberate effort to secure one's salvation is an expression of lack of faith in Amida's power to guarantee birth in the Pure Land, whether immediately (*sokutoku*) in this life or, at the latest, at the point of death. The dead do not need ritual help, or, more accurately, Amida does not require human assistance. This is the rationale for Shinran saying that he never recited the *nenbutsu* for the repose of his deceased parents and that his dead body, as Walter notes, should be put in the Kamo River for the fish to eat. Kakunyo (1270–1351), Shinran's great-grandson, responding to what he saw as heresies in the Shinshū community, wrote in his *Gaijashō* (Notes on Correcting Heresies) that funerals were not important and should not be performed.³⁴ This has been the standard of Shinshū orthodoxy on funerals.

Despite Kakunyo's ruling, however, funerals continued to be performed, and Zonkaku (1290–1373), Kakunyo's son, attempted a justification of rites for the dead. The specific doctrinal problem with funerals is that they provided transference of merit from the living to the dead on the bad assumption that Amida's power is insufficient and requires human assistance. In his own work "Notes Assailing Heresy and Revealing the Truth" ("Haja kenshō shō"), Zonkaku addressed the charge that Shinshū was heretical for *not* providing funeral services. In his reply, Zonkaku questioned the efficacy of funerals in helping the dead reach the Pure Land, but he suggested nevertheless that the Pure Land *nenbutsu* "functions as a signpost for people who have lost their way; it is indeed a lamp in the dark."³⁵ In the hands of Shinran and Kakunyo, the standard of Pure Land ideology was used to condemn the heresy of funerals, just as early Protestant Buddhism is in-

voked by modern scholars to reject rituals. In the eyes of Zonkaku's critics, however, funerals were orthodox, and Shinshū was heretical for rejecting them. Zonkaku turned the Shinshū standard around, and, as Mark Blum notes, explained that Shinshū monks refuse to perform only "funerals *not based on Buddhist scripture*."³⁶ Funerals can be justified, not only because they are supported by Pure Land scriptures, but also because Śākyamuni himself, the highest standard of orthodoxy, performed a funeral for his father, thus setting "an example to be followed by the sentient beings of the future."³⁷ Despite Zonkaku's appeal to Śākyamuni, Kakunyo was not persuaded, and he severed his ties with his son.³⁸ Branded a heretic, Zonkaku is still seen as someone "un-Shinshū, un-Shinran, and even un-Buddhist."³⁹

In the Tokugawa period, the struggle to justify funerals resulted in intricate reasonings. Blum points out that various rites memorializing the dead and transferring merit to them became (and still are) the mainstay of Shinshū practice, and that the prominent priests Ekū (1644–1722) and Genchi (1734–1794) wrestled with the problem, trying to find space somewhere between Kakunyo's orthodoxy and Zonkaku's heresy. Ekū is particularly clever in arguing that there is nothing wrong with rituals for transferring merit to the dead as long as one performs them with the understanding that "if what one actively practices [in these rituals] is *tarikī* in nature, then what the [deceased] gains is merit that is also *tarikī* in nature."⁴⁰ Blum points out that the issue rests on the intentionality of the person who recites the *nenbutsu*. Right thought about *tarikī*, the "other power" of Amida, produces action acceptable as orthodox, but that same action is heretical if it results from wrong thought about *jiriki* (self power). In a similar vein, Genchi does not condemn mortuary rites but qualifies them with admonitions about being mindful of faith in the power and mercy of the Buddha.⁴¹ While the examination of intention has a long history in Buddhist thought and goes back to the Vinaya cases in which infractions of the precepts can be justified if no intention was involved in the act, the arguments of Ekū and Genchi are still compromises and lack the fundamentalist clarity of Kakunyo. As long as they were unwilling to end the practice of funerals, then they had to accept that heresy as the standard and try to fit orthodoxy to it. Whereas Kakunyo fit practice to theory, Ekū and Genchi defined theory to fit practice.

Given its antiritualist ideology, the Shinshū case represents the most convoluted attempt to square theory with practice. In our own time, the discussions and debates continue in all sectarian quarters, and strategies for dealing with this major issue abound. The ongoing discussions, which show little signs of abatement, testify to the lack of any acceptable solutions and also to a sense of crisis arising from the

criticism that temples and priests practice ritual formalism that yields profits but not right understanding. While the debates are producing some alterations in mortuary practices and even some defections from the traditional rituals, Buddhist funerals remain largely unchanged. Cremation, bone preservation, sūtra chanting, incense offerings, grave visitations, and ancestral respect remain supreme, and the real changes have to be found, as the cases of Ekū, Genchi, and others demonstrate, in manipulating doctrinal standards.

The difficulty of matching doctrine to practice is often ascribed to the syncretic nature of the funeral, an external ritual that somehow found its way into a religion that originally had none. People think, writes Itō Yuishin, that Buddhism defined funerals, but in actuality the “mortuary system itself definitely did not arise from specific doctrines of Buddhism.” The source—and this is the most often identified source—is folk beliefs, which Buddhism had no choice but to accommodate for the sake of its survival.⁴² The persistence of funerals was so strong that even though sectarian founders such as Shinran and Ippen rejected funerals, their followers did not follow them on this point, and by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, funerals were a permanent Buddhist fact of life.⁴³ Taking cues from the cases of Ekū and Genchi, Blum notes that their struggles arose because of the “enduring power of pre-Buddhist Japanese notions of death ... and Confucian norms of ancestor reverence.”⁴⁴ The problem was and continues to be a consequence of syncretism with other belief systems, and the solution has been sought by changing Buddhism to accommodate those beliefs.

In contrast, Ikemi Chōryū, a Jōdoshū scholar, sees the problem as internal, and he identifies its source in two places: early Indian Buddhism and later Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. Clearly understanding that the blemishes are in the eye of the beholder, Ikemi argues that the problem of heresy all depends on how “original Buddhism” is defined. If original Buddhism is the religion “as it originated” (*kigenteki*), then that Buddhism is fixed and not amenable to funerals. But if original Buddhism is the religion that is “supposed to be” (*tōiteki*), then that Buddhism is not fixed but has rather changed over time. What it is supposed to be is a religion of salvation, and the key question therefore is “whether or not funeral Buddhism offers salvation.”⁴⁵ Ikemi examines ritual practices of the Nijūgo zanmai-e or Samādhi Society of Twenty-five, already mentioned in Chapter 1 by Sarah Horton and Chapter 2 by Jacqueline Stone, which included both meditative and devotional practices as well as deathbed rites to prepare the terminally ill for their postmortem journey. Salvation here is understood as birth in the Pure Land, so clearly there is salvation for the soul. But what of

the body? Is there a mortuary rite for the physical remains? Citing the regulations of the group, the *Nijūgo zammai kishō* attributed to Gen-shin, Ikemi points out that they provide for burial of deceased members in a designated spot chosen for this purpose. Expressing sadness at the sight of bodies abandoned by the wayside according to the customs of the time, the text urges that *sotoba* markers should be placed for deceased members of the Society to commemorate the body, an act equivalent to the performance of a funeral. Ikemi recognizes that the connection between the salvation of the soul and the funeral for the body combines “pure high-level religion” (Pure Land) with “impure low-level magic” (esoteric Buddhism), but the *Nijūgo zanmai-e* documents do not make a distinction between the two, instead holding them together in a “holistic” way.⁴⁶ Herein lies the desired connection between salvation and funerals, the link that would make the funeral ritual conform to what original Buddhism is supposed to be and therefore make it orthodox. The match between Indian Buddhism and Japanese Pure Land Buddhism removes any tension between the two, and the only threat to this partnership can come from modern objections to the merger of high religion and low magic. “As long as we cling to the standpoint of modernism (*kindaishugi*),” Ikemi writes, “we cannot sufficiently grasp the meaning of deathbed rituals.”⁴⁷ For him, modernism is the threat.

The struggle to fit orthodox thought to heretical action arises in good part from the clash between religion and modernity. Posing as a problem of how to deal with early Buddhist antiquity, the dilemma is also an attempt to come to grips with modern rationalism. For Ikemi, the belief that the worlds of the living and the dead are connected is shamanic, and that primitive worldview is clearly at odds with modern science. In the light of scientific rationalism, religious beliefs about the afterlife are untenable, but so is the secular sentimentality that makes nonreligious people yearn for the dead and think that maybe they are still alive. Ikemi tells the story of a father whose brain-dead son was kept alive by machines, one of which had a white light. The father imagined the light was a living message from his son, but soon realized that this was a “sad hallucination” on his part and therefore gave up his illusory hope that his son would wake up again. Ikemi calls the father’s self-condemnation of his hope a “limitation of modern civilization” and suggests that the ancient shamanic imagination must be reawakened to overcome modern refusals to see deathbed and other mortuary rituals as white lights linking the living with the dead.⁴⁸

Like Protestant Buddhism and Shinran’s rejection of magical rituals, modern rationalism, quite apart from any religious sentiment, is not disposed to superstition. Ōmura Eishō, an active representative of

the Shinshū clergy, finds ready agreement with the Association for the Promotion of Freedom in Funerals (Sōsō no Jiyū o Susumeru Kai), which advocates nonreligious funerals and the scattering of ashes. Perceived by many as a group promoting the destruction of traditional funerals and ancestor veneration, the Association has attracted media attention in far greater proportion than its limited membership would seem to warrant. Ōmura, a Shinshū priest, argues that traditional funerals give too much significance to the body, as if, after it dies, it is worthy of preservation and veneration. Citing Shinran's famous utterance about becoming food for fish in the Kamo River, Ōmura strips the body of its postmortem value and cites other Buddhist cases in which bodies were deemed negligible. At best, the body should be burned and offered to the Buddha as a candle. Burial practices present a serious contradiction to Shinshū teaching, which also holds that the household Buddhist altar (*butsudan*) most certainly is not an object for the veneration of the souls of the departed. Of the common practice of placing the cremated remains in urns, Ōmura refused to have this done even for his parents. "I have," he says, "no fear of . . . no attachment to bones." Ever the Shinshū iconoclast, he rejects the system of family graves, insisting that Buddhism requires one to leave one's family in favor of a strict individualism.⁴⁹ The antiritualism of Shinshū orthodoxy is commensurate with the modern mentality that finds little room for magical rituals based on mythic worlds where the dead go on living. For Ikemi, modernism prevents the acceptance of irrational mythic worlds, but for Ōmura, Shinshū antiritualism welcomes modern rationalism.

But even Ōmura cannot champion modernism over and against the shamanic or sentimental mentality seeking to keep the dead alive if only in memory. Affirming Kakunyo's orthodox objections to funerals on the basis of modern Shinshū doctrine that is against popular superstitions and customs, Ōmura still has to come to terms with the fact that Shinshū temples make their living with funerals and that members seek little else from their religion. Like Ekū and Genchi, he too has to adjust orthodoxy and, in addition, question the wisdom of modernity. Ōmura is willing to reevaluate his sect's condemnation of folk practices and admits that funerals in fact involve the transfer of merit to the deceased to give them the guidance that Shinshū orthodoxy says they do not need. One way Shinshū doctrine tolerates offerings to the dead is by regarding them as praises to the Buddha. This is the same renaming strategy that Ekū used in taking a ritual act, which on the surface is unacceptable as *jiriki*, and giving it a new intentionality—that of *tariki*—to make it admissible. Carried out as offering praises to the Buddha in gratitude for received blessings (*butsuon hōsha*), mortuary rites are acceptable. Carried out as offerings to

the dead (*shisha kuyō*), they are unallowable. As Walter has shown in her examination of the structure and meanings of funerals in Chapter 7, different intentionalities and understandings can be given to the same ritual act.

In reevaluating the rejection of popular customs, Ōmura suggests a conjunctive strategy similar to the way in which Ikemi combined high and low religion. Using the account of the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa's (r. 1155–1158) funeral, Ōmura proposes that *nenbutsu* offerings for the dead and *nenbutsu* recitations to praise the Buddha can be combined together in a "harmonious unity" (*konzen ittai*) that is "without contradiction."⁵⁰ The unity of the two constitutes "one body" (*ittai*), but the distinction can still be made such that the praises are seen to be in accord with Shinshū, while the offerings to the dead are "pre-Shinshū."⁵¹ The rhetoric is familiar, reminiscent of the esoteric idea of "two but not two" (*nini funi*). The two sides, however harmonious in thought and intention, can still be distinguished from each other, and people can forget to praise the Buddha and only make offerings to the dead, thus allowing mortuary rites "to slide down into the respectability of ancestor veneration."⁵² Shinshū orthodoxy still holds the upper hand: praises to the Buddha can stand alone, but offerings to the dead cannot.

Ōmura nevertheless keeps trying to embrace funerals. In reconsidering modern Pure Land doctrine, he is critical of the modern tendency to turn Buddhism into a system of thought hostile to common sentiments about meeting each other in the next life or waiting for loved ones in the next world. These sentiments cannot be justified rationally, but what must be sacrificed, in his opinion, is the rationality, not the sentiment. "People are not saved by their heads," he writes, "and we need to include their bodies."⁵³ Itō Yuishin describes a similar physiological disconnect in recalling that, when he was young, his head was steeped in doctrine but his feet were planted in funerals, and that he suffered from a "separation between my head and my feet."⁵⁴ Sympathetic as he is to the common sentiments that sustain and fortify funerals, Ōmura cannot free himself from the grip of orthodoxy enough to be able to accept routine rituals that have a powerful appeal precisely as empty formalism. He expresses disappointment that the wedding ceremony has lost its meaning of death and rebirth—the death of the girl leaving her old home and being "reborn" as a bride in her new home.⁵⁵ Worse than heresy, which at least requires wrong meaning, is meaninglessness.

Ōmura belongs to a group of Shinshū priests who have mounted a campaign to rid their sectarian teachings of the contradiction between theory and practice. Since funeral practices are resistant to change, their attempt has been to change their doctrine by calling

into question the modern rationalism that condemns ritualism. Deeply concerned about opinion surveys showing the great degree to which their members are involved with ancestor veneration, animism, good luck charms, and other forms of primal religiosity proscribed by their official teachings, the group calls for a reevaluation of the modernism that supports the orthodoxy of antiritualism. They name this rigid orthodoxy Shinshū Puritanism, “Shinshū P” for short. Shinshū P, they argue, should be replaced by Shinshū Catholicism (Shinshū C), which is more sympathetic to ritual. Shinshū C would force the sect to refrain from condemning ritual magic and thereby close the gap between theory and the “field” of actual practice. By going beyond the puritanical restrictions allied with modernism, this theology is called “postmodern” Shinshū, which some have criticized as being a misnomer since it attempts to embrace premodern superstition and magic. Sasaki Shōten defends postmodern Shinshū on the grounds of a “give-and-take logic” (*yodatsu no ronri*) that allows for an initial acceptance of folk practices as a way to “jump into the inner castle of the enemy and to make what one grasps there into one’s own medicine.” Using the language of warfare, Sasaki writes:

Contrary to theology P, which cuts down superstition by logic and rejects it forthwith, one does not directly negate it here, but looks for salvation by way of empathy. One spares and embraces the popular practices to turn them into something Shinshū-like; one gives in to them in order to take them back to one’s own side. Rather than drawing one’s sword against the sword of the enemy, one grasps the other sword to remold it into the shape of the *nenbutsu* and give it back as a *nenbutsu* sword that cuts through all superstition. This is ultra-C swordsmanship!⁵⁶

Shinshū C clearly is not really going to replace Shinshū P, for it is a tactic for infiltration and subversion in the service of defending Shinshū P. Sasaki’s language appears to be accommodating in an attempt to bend orthodoxy into another shape, but it springs back to its original position, knocking popular practices off the negotiating table. Modernism prevails, and the adjustments to make orthodoxy fit heretical practices are not significant enough to cure Shinshū of its double-mind. Orthodoxy prevails, and heresy therefore persists.

Conclusion

Like all concepts, orthodoxy and heresy are intellectual constructs by which judgments are made according to changing standards and definitions. According to the no-soul doctrine and Shinran’s rejection of

ritual, funerals are heresies. According to the account of Śākyamuni's funeral, the doctrine of the intermediate existence, Buddhism as it should be, or right intentionality—be it the mind of *tariki* or praising the Buddha—funerals are orthodox. The standards used to determine orthodoxy and heresy—and there are many more—fall into a wide range from which one is free to pick or compelled to hold. The basic elements of the ritual itself are surprisingly unchanged: cremation, preservation of the bones, burial, and liturgies that delineate how the body-soul makes it to its next destination. The various sects each construct their own unique details, many of which to be sure are defined by their respective teachings, but the basic elements are resilient to changes called for by the charges of heresy. Even in the case of Shinshū, severe criticisms and doctrinal rejection of funerals fail to put an end to its practice or even to modify the core elements significantly. The tortured arguments attempting to make doctrine fit the practice demonstrate the resilience of mortuary rites, which people of all sectarian persuasions carry out without much concern for whether they are right or wrong or even for what they doctrinally mean in the eyes of scholars and priests. The performance of funerals is clearly orthopraxis, and if the scholars and priests manage to adjust their teachings to fit the practice—and Ikemi Chōryū comes close—then funerals, which thereby will no longer be heretical, will serve as the standard by which orthodoxy is adjusted.

In emphasizing the primacy of mortuary orthopraxis as the standard of orthodoxy, I do not mean to oversimplify and overlook the real process by which practice is also determined by theory. Walter points out in Chapter 7 the complexities of the relationships between theory and practice in the structures and meanings of funerals. There is a tremendous range of meanings and strategies for negotiating death, and all of the studies in this volume attest to this diversity. Yet underlying these changing attempts is the profoundly simple, eminently human attachment to remembrance. Even in the recent emergence of the so-called nonreligious funerals in which ashes are scattered or religious ministrants are absent, grieving survivors still wish the dead well, desire to see them again, and think of them as being in some unexplained way alive. Human sentiments make the core elements of Japanese funerals resilient to the persuasions of orthodoxies. In the end, love and affection hold sway over both theory and practice.

Notes

1. Edwin O. Reischauer and Marius B. Jansen, *The Japanese Today* (enlarged edition; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 207.

2. Hirose Takuji, “Sōsai bukkyō e no hyōka o megutte,” in *Sōsai bukkyō: Sono rekishi to gendaiteki kadai*, ed. Itō Yuishin and Fujii Masao (Tokyo: Jōdoshū Sōgō Kenkyūjo, 1997), 297.

3. Reischauer and Jansen, *The Japanese Today*, 207.

4. Reported by Fujii Masao, “Sōgi no genten ni tachimodotte,” in Itō and Fujii, *Sōsai bukkyō*, 322.

5. Mainichi Shinbunsha Tokubetsu Hōdōbu Shōkyō Shuzaihan, ed., *Shūkyō o gendai ni tou*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1976), 13. This series won the Kikuchi Kan Prize, a prestigious prize in the honor of the writer, Kikuchi Kan (1888–1948).

6. Ibid., 179.

7. Ōkura Ryōjō, *Sōshiki wa dō arubekika* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1994), 200.

8. See Ian Reader and George J. Tanabe, Jr., *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1998). In this essay I use the word “heresy” very broadly and apply it to action as well as thought. I also define it loosely and use it synonymously with terms such as wrong, heterodox, not genuine, spurious, apostasy, and so forth.

9. Murakami Shigeyoshi, *Gendai Nihon no shūkyō mondai* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1979), 9.

10. Ibid., 10.

11. Arai Ken, “New Religions,” in *Religion in Japanese Culture: Where Living Traditions Meet a Changing World*, ed. Noriyoshi Tamaru and David Reid (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1996), 109.

12. Yasuaki, Nara, “May the Deceased Get Enlightenment! An Aspect of the Enculturation of Buddhism in Japan,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 15 (1995): 35.

13. Ibid., 36.

14. Ibid., 37.

15. *Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta*, in T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Buddhist Suttas* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 112–122. For discussion of the Buddha’s funeral, see John S. Strong, “The Parinirvāṇa of the Buddha,” chap. 4 in his *Relics of the Buddha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 98–123; rev. as “The Buddha’s Funeral,” in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 32–59.

16. *Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta*, 126.

17. Ibid., 130.

18. Ibid., 122–135.

19. Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1997), 8.

20. Charles Hallisey, “Roads Not Taken,” in *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 47.

21. Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha*, 6–7.
22. Takahashi Kōji, “Jōdoshū to sōsai Bukkyō,” in Itō and Fujii, *Sōsai bukkyō*, 254.
23. Sasaki Kōkan, “Sōsai mondai e no ichi shiten,” in *Shūmon sōsai no to-kushitsu o saguru*, ed. Sōtōshu Kyōka Kenshūsho Shinsuikai (Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1985), 19–20.
24. Robert Kritzer, “Semen, Blood, and the Intermediate Existence,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 46, no. 2 (1998): 1030.
25. Fukunishi Kenchō, “Hōshiki no tachiba kara: Chūin no hōyō,” in *Shi no girei*, ed. Saiki Sōryō et al. (Tokyo: Jōdoshū Tokyo Kyōku Seinenkai, 1997), 146.
26. *T* no. 1851, 44:618c.
27. *T* no. 1960, 47:40c–41b.
28. Akitsuki Ryūmin, *Gokai darake no bukkyō* (Tokyo: Hakujuisha, 1993), 28–39.
29. Cited in Matsunami Kōdō, *Nihon bukkyō kaikakuron* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku Shuppan, 1996), 93.
30. Gendai Bukkyō o Shiru Daijiten Henshū Iinkai, ed., *Gendai bukkyō o shiru daijiten* (Tokyo: Kinkasha, 1980), 1102.
31. Yagi Kishū, “Chūin o kangaeru,” in Saiki Sōryō et al., *Shi no girei*, 165.
32. Fukunishi Kenchō, “Hōshiki no tachiba kara,” 146.
33. For an account of the Tendai funeral service as an ordination rite that leads to enlightenment, see George J. Tanabe, Jr., “Dying to be a Buddha: The Tendai Funeral Ritual in Japan,” in *Pulgyohak nonsō*, ed. Korean Cho’en-tae Buddhist Research Institute (Seoul: Cho’en-tae Buddhist Research Institute, 1999), 457–488.
34. See Mark L. Blum, “Stand by Your Founder: Honganji’s Struggle with Funeral Orthodoxy,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, nos. 3–4 (2000): 179–212.
35. Cited in *ibid.*, 191.
36. *Ibid.*, 192. Italics Blum’s.
37. Cited in Sasaki Shōten, “Toward a Postmodern Shinshū Theology,” trans. Jan van Bragt, in *Religions of Japan in Practice*, ed. George J. Tanabe, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 478.
38. See James C. Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989; rpt. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), esp. chap. 6.
39. Sasaki Shōten, “Toward a Postmodern Shinshū Theology,” 478.
40. Cited in Blum, “Stand by Your Founder,” 202.
41. *Ibid.*, 202–203.
42. Itō, “Bukkyō to sōsai,” in Itō and Fujii, *Sōsai bukkyō*, 3.
43. *Ibid.*, 18.
44. Blum, “Stand by Your Founder,” 205.
45. Ikemi Chōryō, “Sōsai bukkyō to Nihonjin no shinsei,” in Itō and Fujii,

Sōsai bukkhyō, 25. Irisawa Takashi finds another route for linking meditation, another Buddhist soteriological ideal, with cremation. Noting the importance of the meditative stages Śākyamuni went through in the *Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta* death account, Irisawa argues that the Sanskrit term for cremation, *jhāyati*, also refers to meditation; see “Budda wa naze kasō sareta no ka,” *Ryūkoku Daigaku ronshū* 457 (2001): 35.

46. Ikemi, “Sōsai bukkhyō to Nihonjin no shinsei,” 31–32. The passage in question is in article nine of the *Yokawa Shuryōgon’in nijūgozanmai kishō*. For the critical edition, see Koyama Masazumi, “Tōdaiji Chūshōin shozō ‘Yokawa Shuryōgon’in nijūgo zanmai Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi’ no saikentō,” *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 53 (Feb. 1997): 80–81.

47. Ikemi, “Sōsai bukkhyō to Nihonjin no shinsei,” 31–32.

48. *Ibid.*, 48–49.

49. Ōmura Eishō, “Ohaka daitōron,” *Bukkyō* 38 (1997): 23–30.

50. Ōmura Eishō, “Jōdo shinshū to sōsai girei,” in Itō and Fujii, *Sōsai bukkhyō*, 191–193.

51. *Ibid.*, 192.

52. *Ibid.*, 195.

53. Ōmura Eishō, “Kindai Jōdo kyōgaku e no hansei,” in Itō and Fujii, *Sōsai bukkhyō*, 287.

54. Itō, “Nihon Bukkyō toshite no sōsai bukkhyō,” 305.

55. Ōmura, “Kindai Jōdo kyōgaku e no hansei,” 288.

56. Sasaki Shōten, “Toward a Postmodern Shinshū Theology,” 479–480.

Glossary of Chinese and Japanese Characters

- Achu foguo jing* 阿閼佛國經
Adachi Yoshikage 安達義景
ajari 阿闍梨
Akihiroōki 顯広王記
ako 下炬
akunin ōjō 惡人往生
Amida 阿弥陀
Amidadō 阿弥陀堂
Amidamine 阿弥陀峰
Amida nijūgo bosatsu raigōzu 阿弥陀
 二十五菩薩來迎図
Amida zanmai 阿弥陀三昧
Amituo jing 阿彌陀經
anjin, anshin 安心
Ankokuin Nichikō 安國院日講
Anle ji 安樂集
anzan 安産
aruki miko 歩き巫女
Ashikaga Motouji 足利基氏
Ashikaga Yoshiakira 足利義詮
Ashikaga Yoshihide 足利義榮
Ashikaga Yoshihisa 足利義尚
Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義滿
Ashō-bō Inzei (or Insai) 阿証房印西
Azuma kagami 吾妻鏡
Baoxing lun 寶性論
Beihua jing 悲華經
Benchō (Ben'a, Shōkō) 弁長(弁阿,
 聖光)
Benmō Shingonshū dan'yō kyōten 便蒙
 真言宗檀用經典
bessho 別所
betsubuku 別腹
Bifukumon'in 美福門院
Bifukumon'in ongakki shidai 美福門
 院御月忌次第
Biqiuni zhuan 比丘尼傳
Bizen fudoki 備前風土記
bodaiji 菩提寺
bodaikō 菩提講
bodaishin 菩提心
bodaisho 菩提所
bonbu 凡夫
bosatsu 菩薩
boshi ittai 母子一体
Bukkōji 仏光寺
bunshin 分身
buppō 仏法
Busenshō 歩船鈔
bushi monto 武士門徒
busshari 仏舍利
busshari ichiryū 仏舍利一粒
butsudan 仏壇
Butsugon 仏嚴
 “Butsuji” 仏事
butsuon hōsha 仏恩報謝
Buzan lineage 豊山派
byakugō 白毫
Byōchū shugyōki 病中修行記
Byōdōin 平等院
Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗頤
Chanyuan qinggui 禪苑清規
Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左
 衛門
Chingen 鎮源
chi no ike jigoku 血の池地獄
Chinzei lineage 鎮西派
Chion'in 知恩院
Chiyo migusa 千代見草
Chizan hōyō benran 智山法要便覽
Chizan lineage 智山派
Chizen 智詮

- Chōben 長弁
Chōbōji yomigaeri no sōshi 長宝寺よみがえりの草紙
 Chōkaku 朝覚
chokuganji 勅願時
 Chōrakuji 長樂寺
 Chōshin 朝臣
Chōshūki 長秋記
chūin 中陰
Chūkōsen 注好選
chūu 中有
Chūyūki 中有記
Da banniepan jing 大般涅槃經
dado (dato) 駄都
daibōzu 大房主
 Daigo (emperor) 醍醐天皇
 Daigoji 醍醐寺
Daigo zōjiki 醍醐雜事記
 Daihongan 大本願
daimoku 題目
daimyō 大名
Dainichikyō kaidai 大日經開題
 Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来
 Dairyū 大竜
daisōjō 大僧正
 Daitokuji 大徳寺
danjiki ōjō 斷食往生
danka 檀家
danka seido 檀家制度
Danshinto sōgihō 檀信徒葬儀法
 Daochuo 道綽
 Daoshi 道世
 Daoxuan 道宣
darani 陀羅尼
Dasheng yizhang 大乘義章
datai 堕胎
dato kuyōhō 駄都供養法
Datsueba 奪衣婆
Dazhidu lun 大智度論
deitō 泥塔
denbō 伝法
 Denkōji Jizō 伝香寺地藏
 Denzūin 伝通院
Dizang benyuan jing 地藏本願經
 Dōgen 道元
dōgō 道号
 Dōhan 道範
do'ikki 土一揆
dōjō 道場
Dōjōji 道成寺
 Dōshō 道昭
Eiga monogatari 栄華物語
 Eiheiji 永平寺
 Eikan (or Yōkan) 永観
eitai kuyō baka 永代供養墓
ekō 回向
 Ekū 惠空
enagi 胞衣着
enakin 胞衣巾
 Enchō 円澄
endon bosatsukai 円頓菩薩戒
 Engakuji 円覚寺
engi 縁起
 Enkōin 円光院
 Enma, King 閻魔王
 Ennin (Jikaku Daishi) 円仁(慈覚大師)
 Enryakuji 延暦寺
 Enshō 延昌
 Eshin Sōzu 恵心僧都
esi 惡死
fangbian 方便
Fanwang jing 梵網經
Fayuan zhulin 法苑珠林
 Fazhao 法照
Fobenxing jing 佛本行經
Foshuo wuchang jing 佛說無常經
Fozu tongji 佛祖統紀
 Fudaraku 補陀落
 Fudō Myōō 不動明王
 Fugen 普賢
Fuji no hitoana sōshi 富士の人穴草子
 Fujiwara no Akimitsu 藤原顯光
 Fujiwara no Kaneie 藤原兼家
 Fujiwara no Kenshi 藤原賢子
 Fujiwara no Kiyohira 藤原清衡

Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長
 Fujiwara no Morosuke 藤原師輔
 Fujiwara no Munetada 藤原宗忠
 Fujiwara no Munetomo 藤原宗友
 Fujiwara no Nagakiyo 藤原永清
 Fujiwara no Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂
 Fujiwara no Sanesuke 藤原実資
 Fujiwara no Tadachika 藤原忠親
 Fujiwara no Tadahira 藤原忠平
 Fujiwara no Tadamasu 藤原忠雅
 Fujiwara no Tadamichi 藤原忠通
 Fujiwara no Teika (Sadaie) 藤原定家
 Fujiwara no Yasunori 藤原保則
 Fujiwara no Yorimichi 藤原頼通
 Fujiwara no Yoshimi 藤原良相
 Fujiwara no Yukinari 藤原行成
Fukuden shokushu san'yō 福田殖種纂要
 Funaoka 船岡
Fusō ryakki 扶桑略記
Gaijashō 改邪鈔
gaki 餓鬼
gakuryō 学侶
gakutō 学頭
ganmon 願文
Gaoseng zhuan 高僧傳
gebon 下品
 Genchi 玄智
genshi bukyō 原始仏教
 Genshin 源信
Genshin Sōzu den 源信僧都伝
genzen 現前
genze riyaku 現世利益
 Gesshū 月舟
 Gidarinji 祇陀林寺
 Gikai 義介
Gikeiki 義經記
 Gion shōja 祇園精舍
 Gizan 義山
 Go-Fushimi (emperor) 後伏見天皇
gohonzon 御本尊
 Go-Ichijō (emperor) 後一条天皇

gojū no sōden 五重の相伝
gojū sōdenkai 五重相伝会
gōkō (see *mukaekō*)
gokuaku 極悪
 Gokurakuji 極楽寺
 Gokuraku Jōdo 極楽浄土
Gokurakuki (see *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*)
gokuraku kuhon ōjō 極楽九品往生
gokuzen 極善
goma 護摩
 “Gongu jōdo” 欣求浄土
gon shōsōzu 権少僧都
gorintō 五輪塔
goroku 語録
goryō 御靈
 Go-Shirakawa (emperor) 後白河天皇
 皇
goshō (five impediments) 五障
gōshō (welcoming descent) 迎接
Goshūi ōjōden 後拾遺往生伝
 Gosuiden 五衰殿
gotai 五体
 Go-Toba (emperor) 後鳥羽天皇
 Gozan 五山
guan 觀
Guanfo sanmeihai jing 觀佛三昧海經
Guan Mile puta shangsheng
Doushuaitian jing 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經
Guannian Amitufo xianghai sanmei gongde famen (*Guannian famen*)
 觀念阿彌陀佛相海三昧功德法門
 (觀念法門)
Guan Wuliangshou jing 觀無量壽經
Guan Yaowang Yaoshang erputa jing
 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經
gunki monogatari 軍記物語
gyakushu 逆修
 Gyōki 行基
 Gyokuyō 玉葉
 Hachijōin 八条院
 Hagami Shōchō 葉上照澄
 “Haja kenshō shō” 破邪顯正鈔

Hakii, Lord 波木井殿
 Hakusan 白山
 haniwa 埴輪
 Hannya rishukyō 般若理趣經
 Han Yū 韓愈
 Happyaku bikuni 八百比丘尼
 hara wa karimono 腹は借り物
 Harima fudoki 播磨風土記
 Hashizaki Kuniaki 橋崎国明
 Heian-kyō 平安京
 Heike monogatari 平家物語
 Henjōin 遍昭院
 higan 彼岸
 Higashiyama 東山
 hijiri 聖
 Hiko-hoho-demi 彦火々出見
 Himiko 卑弥呼
 himitsu nenbutsu 秘密念仏
 hinin 非人
 Hippōkan 秘宝館
 hitobashira 人柱
 Hitsuketsu no monogatari 筆結物語
 “Hōben” chapter 方便品
 hōgō 法号
 Hōjō Akitoki 北条顕時
 Hōjōji 法成寺
 Hōjō Nakatoki 北条仲時
 Hōjō Sanetoki 北条実時
 Hōjō Shigetoki 北条重時
 Hōjō Takatoki 北条高時
 Hōjō Tokimune 北条時宗
 Hōjō Tokiyori 北条時頼
 Hōjō Yasutoki 北条泰時
 Hōjō Yoshitoki 北条義時
 Hokekyō 法華經
 Hokke dangi 法華談義
 Hokkedō 法華堂
 Hokke genki 法華驗記
 Hokke senbō 法華懺法
 Hokke shari engi 法華舍利緣起
 Hokke zanmai 法華三昧
 Hōkōin 法興院

hōkyōin 宝篋印
 hōkyōin darani 宝篋印陀羅尼
 hōmyō 法名
 Honchō bunshū 本朝文集
 Honchō shinshū ōjōden 本朝新修往生
 伝
 Honchō zoku monzui 本朝続文粹
 Hōnen 法然
 Hōnen Shōnin gyōjō ezu 法然上人行
 状絵図
 hongan ama 本願尼
 Honganji 本願寺
 Hongan-ni 本願尼
 hongansho 本願所
 honji 本事
 Honjō-bō (Honshō-bō) Tankyō
 (Tangō) 本成房(本浄房, 本性
 房)湛教(湛敦, 湛豪)
 honmatsu seido 本末制度
 honmon no daikai 本門の大戒
 honmon no daimoku 本門の題目
 Honpukuji atogaki 本福寺跡書
 honzon 本尊
 Hōōdō 鳳凰堂
 Hōryūji 法隆寺
 Hosokawa Harumoto 細川晴元
 Hosokawa Masamoto 細川政元
 Hosshinshū 発心集
 Hosshōji 法性寺
 Hosshō-ni 法性尼
 Hossō 法相
 hossu 法主
 hotoke 仏
 Hottō Kokushi 法燈国師
 Huaigan 懷感
 Huaihai 懷海
 Huayan jing 華嚴經
 Huiyuan 慧遠
 Hyakki yagyo 百鬼夜行
 hyakumantō 百万塔
 Hyakurensō 百鍊抄
 hyōhaku (hyōbyaku) 表白

- Hyōhanki* 兵範記
Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū 一期大要秘密集
Ichigū o Terasu Undō 一隅を照らす運動
 “*Ichinen tanen mon’i*” 一念多念文意
ie 家
ie system 家体制度
Ieyasu (see *Tokugawa Ieyasu*)
igō 位号
ihai 位牌
ikigai sangyō 生きがい産業
ikki 一揆
ikkō ikki 一向一揆
Ikkyōshū 一向宗
Ikoma, Mt. 生駒山
ikotsu 遺骨
Ikuhōmon’in 郁芳門院
imayō 今様
imi 忌
in (*skandhas*) 陰
indō 引導
Indō daiji 引導大事
Indō shidai 引導次第
Inga monogatari 因果物語
Ingen 院源
ingō 院号
injō 引接
Inokuma kanpakuki 猪隈関白記
Ippen 一遍
Ippen hijiri-e 一遍聖絵
Ippyakū shijū gokajō mondō 一百四十五箇条問答
Isozaki 磯崎
Issai sharira shū 一切舍利羅集
Itsukushima no honji 厳島の本地
Izanagi 伊邪那岐
Izanami 伊邪那美
Jiacai 迦才
jibutsudō 持仏堂
Jichihan (*Jitsuhan, Jippan*) 実範
jidan 寺壇
jigai ōjō 自害往生
jigyō keta 自行化他
Jikai Sōjun 慈海宋順
jikikō genzen 食香現前
jikikōshin 食香身
Jikkō 実孝
Jikū (*Shōken*) 慈空(性憲)
jikyōsha 持経者
jingi saishi 神祇祭祀
Jingtu lun 浄土論
Jinguangming jing 金光明經
Jinguangming zuishengwang jing 金光明最勝王經
jinsō 陣僧
jiriki 自力
jī sange 事懺悔
Jishū 時宗
jūtō 地頭
Jitsugo 実悟
Jitsugoki 実悟記
Jitsunyo 実如
Jitsunyo Shōnin jayui chūin roku 実如上人闍維中陰録
Jiun 慈雲
jizamurai 地侍, 地士
Jizō 地藏
Jizōkō 地藏講
jōbon 上品
jōbutsu 成仏
Jōbutsu jishin 成仏示心
jōdo hensō 浄土変相
Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗
Jōdoshū 浄土宗
Jōdoshū shohatto 浄土宗諸法度
Jōdo taii shō 浄土大意抄
jōdozu 浄土図
Jōgō 定豪(定毫)
jōgyō zanmai 常行三昧
Jōgyō zanaidō 常行三昧堂
jōin 定印
Jōkei 貞慶

- Jōkū 淨空
 Jōmyōji 淨妙寺
 jōroku 丈六
 Jōsenji 常仙寺
 Jōshō-bō 淨勝房
 jūbutsumyō 十仏名
 Jūgan hosshinki 十願発心記
 Jūgōen raiju giki 充洽園礼誦儀記
 jukai (receiving the precepts) 受戒
 jukai (conferring the precepts) 授戒
 Jukkai shō 述懷抄
 Jūnikajō 十二箇条
 junkyō 殉教
 junkyōsha 殉教者
 Junnin 順忍
 junshi 殉死
 junsō (see *xunzang*)
 jūō 十王
 Jūroku wasan 十樂和讃
 jūsan butsuji 十三仏事
 jusui ōjō 入水往生
 kada 伽陀
 Kaen 可円
 Kaga 加賀
 Kagutsuchi-no-mikoto 迦具土命
 kaihōgyō 回峰行
 Kaihoin jūō ge 開補院住僧解
 kaikyū seido 階級制度
 kaimyō 戒名
 kakochō 過去帳
 Kakuban 覚鑊
 Kakuchō 覚超
 Kakuho (prince-monk) 覚法法親王
 Kakukai 覚海
 Kakukai Hōkyō hōgo 覚海法橋法語
 Kakunyo 覚如
 kakurei 覚靈
 Kakushin 覚信
 Kakuzen 覚禅
 Kakuzenshō 覚禅抄
 kama 鎌
 kami 神
 kamidana 神棚
 Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明
 Kamo River 加茂川
 kanbyō 看病
 Kanbyō yōjinsō 看病用心抄
 Kanezawa Sadaaki 金沢貞顯
 Kan'in 寛印
 kanjin (fundraising) 勧進
 kanjin (mind discernment) 観心
 kanjin bikuni 勧進比丘尼
 kanjō 灌頂
 kanki 勘気
 Kannokura 神倉
 Kannon 観音
 kanrei 管領
 Kanroji Chikanaga 甘露寺親長
 Kanroji Motonaga 甘露寺元長
 Karukayadō 刈萱堂
 kasa sotoba 笠卒塔婆
 katari 語り
 katasode yūrei 片袖幽霊
 Katsura River 桂川
 kawara 河原
 kawa segaki 川施餓鬼
 Kazan (emperor) 花山天皇
 Kazanji 花山寺
 kechien 結縁
 kechimyaku 血脈
 Kedaiin 華台院, 花台院
 Kegon 華嚴
 Keikōin 慶光院
 Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾
 Keizan shingi 瑩山清規
 Kenchōji 建長寺
 kenmitsu 顕密
 Kenna 劔阿
 Kenninji 建仁寺
 Kenreimon'in 建礼門院
 Kenzeiki 健甞記
 keshin 化身
 keta gojū 化他五重
 Ketsubonkyō 血盆經
 Ketsubonkyō engi 血盆経縁起

Kibe 木辺
kigenteki 起源的
Kii zōtan shū 奇異雜談集
 Kinbu, Mt. 金峰山
kindaishugi 近代主義
 Kinshokuji 錦織寺
kirigami 切紙
 Kishi Hikaka 吉師日香蚊
 Kishimojin 鬼子母神
Kishō hachikajō 起請八箇条
kitō 祈祷
 Kiyomizudera 清水寺
kōan 公案
 Kōbō Daishi (Kūkai) 弘法大師(空海)
 Kōdaiji 高台寺
 Kōfukuji 興福寺
 Kōgenji 光源寺
Kojidan 古事談
Kojiki 古事記
 Kōjō 康尚
 Kōkamon'in 皇嘉門院
kokera kyō 柿經
Kokon inu chomonshū 古今犬著聞集
kokoro no yami 心の闇
 Kokua 国阿
kokubunji 国分寺
kokujin 国人
 Kokūzō 虚空藏
 Kōmyō, Empress 光明皇后
 Kōmyōin 光明院
kōmyō kushakujo 光明供錫杖
kōmyō shingon 光明真言
Kōmyō shingon dosha kanjinki 光明真言土砂勸信記
kōmyō shingon ōjō ju 光明真言往生呪
kōmyō shingontō 光明真言塔
kongō hōza 金剛法座
kongōkai 金剛界
kongōrin 金剛輪
Konjaku hyaku monogatari hyōban 今昔百物語評判
Konjaku monogatari shū 今昔物語集

Konoe Iezane 近衛家実
konzen ittai 渾然一体
kōon 香陰
 Kōryūji 香隆寺
kosodate yūrei 子育て幽霊
kosode 小袖
 Kōtoku (emperor) 孝徳天皇
Kōya monogatari 高野物語
 Kōya, Mt. 高野山
Kōyōshū 孝養集
 Kōzanji 高山時
kuhon 九品
kuhon jōdozu 九品浄土図
Kuhon ōjōgi 九品往生義
kuhon ōjōzu 九品往生図
 Kujōdō 九条堂
 Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実
 Kūkai 空海
 Kumano *bikuni* 熊野比丘尼
Kumano kanjin jukkaizu 熊野観心十界図
Kumano no honji 熊野の本地
kunō 功能
 Kuonjyūōin 久遠寿量院
 Kuroda Toshio 黒田俊雄
 Kūya (or Kōya) 空也
 Kyōen 慶延
kyō katabira 経帷子
 Kyōmyō 境妙
 Linji school 臨濟宗
 “Linzhong fangjue” 臨終方訣
Liqu jing 理趣經
Liuduji jing 六度集經
mabiki 間引き
 Maka Birushana Nyorai 摩訶毘盧遮那如来
makura-gyō 枕經
Man'yōshū 万葉集
 Manzan Dōhaku 叡山道白
mappō 末法
 Matsudō Daimyōjin 待道大明神
 Matsudokkō 待道講
Mattōshō 末燈鈔

meido 冥途
Meigetsuki 明月記
Meihō 明峰
Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方
Miaofa lianhua jing 妙法蓮華經
mibun seido 身分制度
Mida raigōzu 弥陀来迎図
meidō 御影堂
Miidera 三井寺
Mikawa ōjō kenki 三河往生験記
mikkyō shuhō 密教修法
Minamoto no Kanehira 源兼平
Minamoto no Masazane 源雅実
Minamoto no Sanetomo 源実朝
Minamoto no Tamenori 源為憲
Minamoto no Toshifusa 源俊房
Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝
Minamoto no Yoshinaka 源義仲
Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経
Miroku 弥勒
Miura Taneyoshi 三浦胤義
Miyoshi no Tameyasu 三善為康
mizuko kuyō 水子供養
mogari no miya 殯の宮
Mohe zhiguan 摩訶止觀
Mokuren 目蓮
Monju 文殊
mononoke 物の怪
monshu 門主(門首 in Higashi Honganji)
monto 門徒
monto ikki 門徒一揆
Mon'yōki 門葉記
Morosuke (see Fujiwara no Morosuke)
Motsugo jukai sahō 没後授戒作法
motsugo sasō 没後作僧
Motsugo sasō jukai shiki 没後作僧授戒式
muenbotoke 無縁仏
muga 無我
Muhon Kakushin 無本覚心
Mujaku Dōchū 無著道忠

mujō 無常
mujōin 無常院
mujō no kei 無常磬
mukaekō 迎講
Muryōjuin 無量寿院
Musō 夢窓
Myōchi 妙智
Myōe Kōben 明恵高弁
Myōhōrengekyō 妙法蓮華經
myōkai 妙戒
Myōkō 明行
Myōkū 妙空
Myōshinji 妙心寺
Myōun 明雲
Nachi 那智
nagare kanjō 流れ灌頂
Nakabara Morosuke 中原師右
Nakamura Hajime 中村元
Namu Amida butsu 南無阿弥陀仏
Namu Daishi henjō kongō 南無大師遍照金剛
Namu Myōhōrengekyō 南無妙法蓮華經
Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan 南海寄歸内法傳
Nanzenji 南禅寺
nenbutsu 念仏
nenbutsu zanmai 念仏三昧
Ne no kuni 根の国
Nenshō 念昭
Nichiren 日蓮
Nichiren Shōshū 日蓮正宗
Nichirenshū 日蓮宗
Nichizō 日藏
Nihon kiriyaku 日本紀略
Nihon ōjō gokurakuki 日本往生極樂記
Nihon ryōiki 日本靈異記
Nihon shoki 日本書紀
Nijūgo zanmai-e 二十五三昧会
Nijūgo zanmai kishō (see Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kishō)
nini funi 二而不二

Ninmyō (emperor) 仁明天皇
 Ninnaji 仁和寺
ninshin shōsetsu 妊娠小説
 Ninshō 忍性
 Nishidōin 西洞院
 Nishi no Okata 西の御方
nobe okuri 野辺送り
nōchikaihō 農地解放
 Nōgu 能救
Nomori no kagami 野守鏡
Nōsenshō 能選抄
nyoi hōju 如意宝珠
 Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪観音
Nyonin jōbutsu Ketsubonkyō engi 女人
 成仏血盆経縁起
 “Nyorai juryōbon” 如来寿量品
 Ōbaiin 黄梅院
 Ōbaku 黄檗
obareu 産れう
 ōbō 王法
 Obon お盆
 Ōe no Kiyosada 大江清定
 Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房
 Ōe no Sukekuni 大江佐国
ofuse お布施
 Ohokusaka, Prince 大草香皇子
 ōjō 往生
ōjōden 往生伝
 Ōjōin 往生院
Ōjō kōshiki 往生講式
Ōjō yōshū 往生要集
ōjōzu 往生図
okina wajō 翁和尚
 Oku-no-in 奥の院
okuri gojū 贈五重
 Ōmi 淡海
 Ōmine 大峰
on (indebtedness) 恩
on (skandhas) 陰
 Onjōji 園城寺
onkaishin no kokoro 御懷娠のころ
onketsu jigoku 飲血地獄
 Onmyōdō 陰陽道

Onna chōhōki 女重宝記
onri edo gongu jōdo 厭離穢土欣求淨
 土
onryō 怨霊
ontoku 御徳
 Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫
oshirasama お白さま
 Osorezan 恐山
 Ōtani Honganji 大谷本願寺
otogizōshi 御伽草子
 Ototachibana hime 弟橘媛
oya no on 親の恩
 Penglai, Mt. 蓬莱山
Pingdengjue jing (see *Wuliang qingjing*
pingdengjue jing)
Qianshou qianyan dabeixin jing 千手
 千眼大悲心經
Quan Tang wen 全唐文
raigō 来迎
raigō-e 来迎会
raigō gyōja no kō 来迎行者の講
raigō injō 来迎引接
raigō shō 来迎接
Raigō wasan 来迎和讃
raigōzu 来迎図
 Raiken 頼賢
rakan 羅漢
rasetsu 羅刹
rei 霊
reikon 靈魂
reikyō 礼教
 Renmyō 蓮妙
 Rennyō 連如
Rennyō Shōnin ōse no jōjō 蓮如上人仰
 条々
 Rensō 蓮崇
 Renzen 蓮禅
rikkokushi 六国史
rinjū gyōgi 臨終行儀
Rinjū gyōgi chūki 臨終行儀注記
rinjū jukai 臨終受戒
rinjū nenbutsu 臨終念仏
Rinjū no yōi 臨終之用意

Rinjū setsuyō 臨終節要
rinjū shukke 臨終出家
Rinjū yōjin no koto 臨終用心事
Rinshi 倫子
Rinzai Zen 臨濟禪
ri sange 理懺悔
rishōtō 利生塔
rishubun 理趣分
Ritsu 律
riyaku 利益
rokkakudō tōba 六角堂塔婆
rokudō 六道
rokudō sen 六道錢
Rokuharamitsuji 六波羅蜜寺
Ruijū zatsurei 類聚雜例
Ryōchin 良陳
Ryōchū 良忠
Ryōgen 良源
Ryōjin hishō 梁塵秘抄
Ryōjusen 靈鷲山
Ryō no gige 令義解
Ryōzen 靈山
ryōzen jōdo 靈山淨土
Ryūben 隆弁
Ryūgyō 隆堯
sabetsu kaimyō 差別戒名
Saburō Tamemori of Tsunoto
 (Songan) 津の戸三郎為守(尊願)
Sahobime (Sapobime) 沙本毘賣
Saichō 最澄
Saidaiji 西大寺
sai-e 齋会
saimon 祭文
Sai no kawara 賽の河原
sakasa-mizu 逆さ水
san'ai 三愛
Sanbō ekotoba 三宝絵詞
Sandai jitsuroku 三代実録
sangai 三界
Sangai isshinki 三界一心記
sange 懺悔
Sange ōjōki 三外往生記

sangoku 三国
Sangoku denki 三国伝記
Sangoku innen Jizō bosatsu reigenki 三国因縁地藏菩薩靈驗記
Sanguo zhi 三國志
sanju jōkai 三聚淨戒
Sankaiki 山槐記
sanmaidō 三昧堂
sanmaya precepts 三昧耶戒
sanmitsu kaji 三密加持
sanmitsu myōgō 三密妙行
Sanmon dōshaki 山門堂舎記
sanryō 山陵
sanseru omuna 産女
santan 贊嘆
Sanzu no baba 三途の婆
Sanzu no kawa 三途の川
Sawara, Prince 早良親王
segaki 施餓鬼
Sei Amidabu せい阿弥陀仏
Seiganji 誓願寺
Seishi 勢至
Seiwa (emperor) 清和天皇
sekkanke 摂関家
sekkyō bushi 説教節
senbōsō 懺法僧
sengoku daimyō 戦国大名
Senjō Jitsugan 千丈実巖
senju darani 千手陀羅尼
Senjuji 専修寺
Senjushō 選集抄
Senkan 千観
Sensai 贍西
senzo 先祖
seppuku 切腹
Sessen dōji 雪山童子
Setsumoku nikka 説黙日課
setsuwa 説話
Shabadō 娑婆堂
shabetsu chiin 差別智印
Shakakō 釈迦講
Shaka nenbutsu 釈迦念仏
Shaka Nyorai 釈迦如来

Shakumyō 釈妙
shakutō (sekitō) 石塔
 Shandao 善導
shaoshen 燒身
shari 舍利
shari-e 舍利会
sharikō 舍利講
shari kōshiki 舍利講式
shari kuyō 舍利供養
Shari kuyō kōshiki 舍利供養講式
Shari raimon 舍利礼文
shari tsubo 舍利壺
Shasekishū 沙石集
shashin 捨身
shashin ōjō 捨身往生
sheshen 捨身
shichibutsu Yakushi 七仏薬師
Shichidaiji junrei shiki 七大寺巡礼私記
shie 死穢
 Shiio Benkyō 椎尾弁匡
Shiji 史記
Shijia wubai dayuan jing 釋迦五百大願經
Shi jingtu qunyi lun 釋淨土群疑論
shingi 清規
shingi Shingon 新義真言
 Shingon 真言
 Shinran 親鸞
 Shinsai 真際
shinshaku 斟酌
 Shinshū (see Jōdo Shinshū)
shirabyōshi 白拍子
shiradayū 白太夫
shirakamime 白神女
 Shirakawa (emperor) 白河天皇
 Shirayama (Hakusan) 白山
shirei 死靈
 Shiro *bikuni*, *Shira bikuni* 白比丘尼
shisha kuyō 死者供養
shisha sangyō 死者產業
Shishuki 師守記
 Shitennōji 四天王寺

Shitennōji goshuin engi 四天王寺御手印縁起
shizensō 自然葬
Shizhu piposha lun 十住毘婆沙論
shōen 莊園
 Shōgei 聖閑
shōin 接引
 Shōjōin 勝定院
shōju raigō 聖衆来迎
 “Shōju raigō no raku” 聖衆来迎の楽
shōju raigō sō 聖衆来迎相
 Shōkin (or Shōnen) 聖金(聖念)
 Shōkō 聖光
shōkō 接講
 Shōkokuji 相国寺
 Shōkū 証空
Shoku Nihongi 続日本紀
 Shōmu (emperor) 聖武天皇
 Shōmyōji 称名寺
 Shōnyo 証如
Shōreishū 性靈集
shōryō 精靈
 Shōsenji 正泉寺
 Shosha, Mt. 書写山
Shōshinge 正信偈
shōshin ōjō 燒身往生
 Shōsō 聖聰
Shōsōrin shingi 小叢林清規
 Shōtoku (empress) 称徳天皇
 Shōtoku, Prince 聖徳太子
Shouhu guojiezh tuoluoni jing 守護國界主陀羅尼經
Shoulengyan jing 首楞嚴經
Shōwa kaitei Sōtōshū gyōji kihan 昭和改定曹洞宗行持軌範
Shōyūki 小右記
 Shugendō 修験道
shugo 守護
shugo daimyō 守護大名
Shūi ōjoden 拾遺往生伝
shūjaku 執着
 Shukaku 守覺

- shukke* 出家
shūkyō hōjin hō 宗教法人法
shūkyō kenmon 宗教権門
Shume no hōgan Morihisa 主馬判官盛久
Shunjō 舜昌
Shuryōgon'in 首楞嚴院
Shūtei Nichirenshū hōyōshiki 宗定日蓮宗法要式
Sifenlǚ shanfan buque xingshi chao 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔
Sima Qian 司馬遷
sōdai 總代
Soga no Emishi 蘇我蝦夷
Soga no Iruka 蘇我入鹿
sōgi 葬儀
sōgiya 葬儀屋
Sōgō 僧綱
Sōka Gakkai 創価学会
sokushin jōbutsu 即身成仏
Sokushin jōbutsu gi 即身成仏義
sokutoku ōjō 即得往生
Son'en Shinnō 尊円親王
Son'i zō sōjōden 尊意贈僧正伝
Songi 尊儀
Sonshi 尊子
Sonshō Butchō 尊勝仏頂
Sonshō darani 尊勝陀羅尼
sorei 祖霊
Sōrinji 双輪寺
sōryō 惣領
sōsai bukk'yō 葬祭仏教
sōsai mondai 葬祭問題
Sōshiki bukk'yō 葬式仏教
Sōsō no Jiyū o Susumeru Kai 葬送の自由をすすめる会
sotoba 卒塔婆
Sōtō Zen 曹洞禅
Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真
Suiko (empress) 推古天皇
Suinin (emperor) 垂仁天皇
Suisaki 水左記
Sukehito, Prince 輔仁親王
- Suzuki Shōsan* 鈴木正三
Ta'amidabutsu Shinkyō 他阿弥陀仏真教
Tahō 多宝
tahōtō 多宝塔
Taiheiki 太平記
Taimadera 当麻寺
Taimadera engi 当麻寺縁起
Taima mandala 当麻曼荼羅
Taira no Kiyomune 平清宗
Taira no Koremori 平維盛
Taira no Kōreshige 平維茂
Taira no Munemori 平宗盛
Taira no Shigehira 平重衡
Taishiden 太子伝
Taiya nenju 逮夜念誦
taizōkai 胎蔵界
Tajimamori (Tadimamori) 多遲摩毛理
takara no ueki 宝の植木
tama 霊
tama ire 魂入れ
Tamamuro Tajō 圭室諦成
Tamamushi no zushi 玉虫厨子
tamashii 魂
Tamura Yoshirō 田村芳朗
Tanba, Mt. 丹波山
Tango Risshi 丹後律師
Tanluan 曇鸞
Tanshū 湛秀
Tanwuchan 曇無讖
tariki 他力
Tateyama 立山
Teiho Kenzeiki zue 訂補健甞記図絵
Teishin kōki 貞信公記
Tendai 天台
tenge no san shōnin 天下の三上人
tengu 天狗
Tengu no dairi 天狗の内裏
Tennōji 天王寺
terauke seido 寺請制度
tō 塔
tōba 塔婆

Toba (emperor) 鳥羽天皇
 Toba Rikyū 鳥羽離宮
 Toba Shōkōmyōin 鳥羽勝光明院
 Tōdaiji 東大寺
 Tōfukuji 東福寺
 Togashi Masachika 富樫政親
 tōiteki 当為的
 Tōjiin 等持院
 tokai ōjō 渡海往生
 Tokoyo 常世
 Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康
 Tomoiki 共生
 Toribe, Mt. 鳥部山
 Toribeno 鳥部野
 Tōriten 忉利天
 Toriyama Sekien 鳥山石燕
 toshigami 年神, 歳神
 tōshin ōjō 投身往生
 Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺
 Tosotsuten 兜率天
 Toyora no Shirō 豊浦の四郎
 Toyotama hime 豊玉姫
 Tōzan Shugendō 当山修験道
 Tsūgen Jakurei 通幻寂霊
 tsuifuku 追福
 tsuizen 追善
 tsuizen kuyō 追善供養
 Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之介
 Tsurugaoka Hachiman shrine 鶴岡
 八幡宮
 tsuya (or tsūya) 通夜
 Tujue 突厥
 ubugi 産着
 ubume 産女
 ubu no kami 産の神
 Udana-in Nichiki 優陀那院日輝
 Uji shūi monogatari 宇治拾遺物語
 ukabarenai 浮かばれない
 Ungaku 運覚
 Ugoji 雲居寺
 Unrei Taizen 雲隱泰禅
 Unrin'in 雲林院
 Urabon 盂蘭盆

Urabonkyō 盂蘭盆經
 ushi no toki mairi 丑の時参り
 Ususama Myōō 鳥枢沙摩明王
 uta bikuni 歌比丘尼
 Wakan rōishū 和漢朗詠集
 wangshen 亡身
 Wangsheng lizan ji 往生禮讚偈
 Wangsheng xifang jingtu ruiying zhuan
 往生西方淨土瑞應傳
 wangsheng zhuan 往生傳
 wasan 和讃
 Watanabe Shōkō 渡辺昭宏
 Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎
 Wuliang qingjing pingdengjue jing 無
 量清淨平等覺經
 Wuliangshou jing 無量壽經
 Wuxue 無學
 Xianyu jing 賢愚經
 Xiyu Zhihuansi tu 西域祇桓寺図
 Xuanzang 玄奘
 xunzang 殉葬
 Yakujo 薬上
 Yakuō 薬王
 Yakushiji 薬師寺
 Yakushi Nyorai 薬師如来
 yamabushi 山伏, 山臥
 Yamanoe (Yamanobe) 山辺
 Yamashinadera 山科寺
 Yamashiro no Ōe no Ō 山背大兄王
 Yamato Takeru 日本武
 Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男
 Yanluowang shouji sizhong yuxiu
 shengqi wangsheng jingtu jing 閻
 羅王授記四衆預修生七往生淨土
 經
 Yao bikuni 八百比丘尼
 Yijing 義淨
 Yiqie rulaixin bimi quanshen sheli
 baoqieyin tuoloni jing 一切如來心
 祕密全身舍利寶篋印陀羅尼經
 yishen 遺身
 yodatsu no ronri 与奪の論理
 Yokawa 横川

Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai

kishō 横川首楞嚴院二十五三昧

起請

Yōkōji 永光寺

Yomi 黄泉

Yorimichi (see *Fujiwara no*

Yorimichi)

Yoritomo (see *Minamoto no*

Yoritomo)

Yoshidadera 吉田寺

Yoshishige no Yasutane (*Jakushin*)

慶滋保胤(寂心)

Yōzon hōshō 要尊法抄

yuga sanmai 瑜伽三昧

Yugyō Shōnin engi-e 遊行上人縁起絵

“*Yuishinshō mon'i*” 唯信鈔文意

yukan 湯灌

Yulanpen jing 孟蘭盆經

Yura no tera 由良の寺

Yūson 猷尊

Za ahan jing 雜阿含經

zazen 座禪

zenchishiki 善知識

Zenkōji 善光寺

zenkon 善根

Zennen shingi 禪苑清規

Zenni Kenshin 禪尼顯心

zensō 禪僧

Zhantuoyueguowang jing 旃陀越國王

經

Zhiyi 智顗

Zhongguo benzhuān 中國本傳

Zhuangzi 莊子

Zōho Buzan-ha hōsokushū 增補豐山派

法則集

Zōjōji 増上寺

Zoku honchō ōjōden 続本朝往生伝

Zonkaku 存覺

Zuisenji 瑞泉寺

zushi 厨子

Contributors

MARK L. BLUM is Associate Professor at the State University of New York, Albany. He is the author of *Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism* (2002) and coeditor of *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism* (2005), both from Oxford University Press. He is currently writing a history of *nianfo/nenbutsu*, and is also researching the *Antarābhava-sūtra* and modern Shin Buddhist thought.

STEPHEN G. COVELL is Associate Professor in the Department of Comparative Religion at Western Michigan University, where he holds the Mary Meader Professorship of Comparative Religions. He is also director of Western Michigan's Soga Japan Center. He is currently working on a book on Buddhist education in contemporary Japan. His recent publications include *Japanese Temple Buddhism: Worldliness in a Religion of Renunciation* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2005). He is also coeditor, with Mark Rowe, of *Traditional Buddhism in Contemporary Japan*, a special issue of *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 2004.

HANK GLASSMAN teaches in the department of East Asian Studies at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. His scholarly work is focused on the religious cultures of medieval Japan. Currently he is working on a book on the cult of the bodhisattva Jizō.

SARAH JOHANNA HORTON received her Ph.D. from Yale in 2001. She is a scholar of East Asian religions and Japanese culture and the author of *Living Buddhist Statues in Early Medieval and Modern Japan* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

BRIAN O. RUPPERT is Associate Professor of Japanese Religions at the University of Illinois. His publications include *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2000); "Sin or Crime? Debts, Social Relations, and Buddhism in Early Medieval Japan" (*Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 2001); "Buddhist Rainmaking in Early Japan: The Dragon King and the Ritual Careers of Esoteric Monks" (*History of Religions*, 2002); and "Buddhism in Japan" (*The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., 2005). His current projects focus on Buddhist discourses and practices of

indebtedness in early medieval Japanese society and on the relationship between Buddhism and communication in premodern Japan.

JACQUELINE I. STONE is Professor of Japanese Religions in the Religion Department of Princeton University. She is the author of *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1999). Her recent publications include the essay "Death" in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism* (University of Chicago Press, 2005) and, with coeditor Bryan J. Cuevas, *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007). She is currently writing a book on deathbed practices in early medieval Japan and pursuing ongoing research on Nichiren Buddhism and on Buddhist concepts of "Japan" and "nation" in the premodern period.

GEORGE J. TANABE, JR., is Professor of Religion Emeritus at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He is the author of *Myōe the Dreamkeeper* (Harvard University Press, 1992); coauthor with Ian Reader of *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1998); editor of *Religions of Japan in Practice* (Princeton University Press, 1999); and coeditor of *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (Columbia University Press, 2001). He is also the general editor of *Topics in Contemporary Buddhism*, a monograph series published by the University of Hawai'i Press.

MARIKO NAMBA WALTER is a research associate of the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard University. She is the primary editor of *Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture* (ABC Clio, 2005). Her other publications include "Tokharian Buddhism: Buddhism of Indo-European Centum Speakers in Chinese Turkestan" (*Sino-Platonic Papers*, 1998) and "Sogdians and Buddhism" (*Sino-Platonic Papers*, 2006). Currently she is working on a book project tentatively titled "Buddhist Mummies in Japan: Sainthood and Death."

DUNCAN RYŪKEN WILLIAMS is Associate Professor of Japanese Buddhism at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton University Press, 2005); coeditor of *Buddhism and Ecology* (Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religion, 1997) and *American Buddhism* (Curzon, 1999); and translator of four books. He is currently completing a book on Japanese-American Buddhism and the World War II incarceration experience (University of California Press, forthcoming) and a book on the history of Buddhism and bathing in Japan.

Index

Bold page numbers refer to illustrations.

- abortions, 176, 190, 196, 197, 223
 Acalanātha. *See* Fudō Myōō
 Adams, Alice, 190
 afterlife: Buddhist ethicizing of, 4–5;
 Buddhist incorporation of other
 traditions, 5, 269; contemporary
 views, 305–306, 318–319, 336–337;
 continuance of personal identity, 274,
 334; Daoist concepts, 5; entrusting to
 Buddhism, 4–6; popular concepts,
 229–230; pre-Buddhist Japanese
 concepts, 3–4, 340; Sōtō Zen
 concepts, 210, 213–214, 272. *See also*
 intermediate existence; *ōjō*; rebirth;
 soul; spirits
 Akamatsu Toshihide, 158
 Akitsuki Ryūmin, 334–335
 Akṣobhya, 28
Akṣobhya-tathāgatasya-vyūha (Ch. *Achu foguo*
jing), 28
 altars, family, 233, 299, 306, 342
 Amida (Amitābha; Amitāyus): escorting
 dead to Pure Land, 7, 27, 74; in
 esoteric deathbed ritual, 69, 70;
 images, 40, 49, 51, 52, 65; “other
 power,” 82; power of vow, 258, 338; in
 raigō scenes, 27; ten reflections on,
 63–64. *See also nenbutsu*; Pure Land
 of Utmost Bliss; *raigō*
 Amitābha (Amitāyus). *See* Amida
Amituo jing. *See Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*,
 smaller
anātman (*anatta*, Jpn. *muga*, not-self,
 so-soul) doctrine, 18, 274, 328–329,
 334, 337, 344–345
 ancestors (*senzo*): decline in contemporary
 veneration, 311; *ie* system, 250;
 indebtedness to, 124; popular
 concepts, 229–230, 250; reverence
 for, 15, 340; transforming dead into,
 14, 210, 212, 229, 233, 274
 Ankokuin Nichikō, 88
Anle ji (Collection of passages on the Land
 of Peace and Bliss, Daochuo), 31
antarābhava. *See* intermediate existence
 Appadurai, Arjun, 124
 Arai Ken, 329
 Arai, Paula, 297–298
 Arai Yūsei, 254
 Ariès, Philippe, 1, 2
 aristocracy: burial practices, 115, 249;
 cremations, 249; deathbed rituals, 67,
 83, 84–85; pre-Buddhist mortuary
 rituals, 3–4; relics and mortuary ritual,
 113, 118, 249; relic veneration, 105,
 107–108
 Ashikaga Bakufu, 122–123, 125, 137
 Ashikaga Yoshiakira, 123
 Ashikaga Yoshihisa, 161
 Ashō-bō Inzei, 84
 Aśoka, King, 10, 103, 104, 108, 119, 120,
 124, 125
 Association for the Promotion of Freedom
 in Funerals (Sōsō no Jiyū o Susumeru
 Kai), 342
 Atkinson, J. M., 142
ātman (soul), 274. *See also anātman*
 attachment: to children, 193, 196;
 thoughts at time of death, 73
 Avalokiteśvara. *See* Kannon
Azuma kagami (Mirror of the East), 83–
 84
 Bakufu (shogunate): Ashikaga, 122–123,
 125, 137; conflict with Honganji,
 161–162; declining authority, 158;
 Kamakura, 119–122, 125; relic
 veneration, 119–123, 124–125
 Beheld with Joy by All Living Beings,
 Bodhisattva, 104, 144
 Benchō (Ben’a). *See* Shōkō
 Bhagavadharma, 145

- Bifukumon'in, 114, 115; memorial rites for, 117–119
- bikuni*, 181, 182–183, 184, 197, 220. *See also* nuns
- Bloch, Maurice, 9
- blood. *See* menstrual pollution
- Blood-bowl Sūtra (*Ketsubonkyō*): copying, 181, 184, 185, 209, 223, 225; men's use of, 243n64; narrative content, 176–177; placed in coffins or graves, 209, 223, 227, 243n64; ritual functions, 180–181, 223, 225–227, 243n63; salvation from Blood Pool Hell with, 15, 181, 185, 220–221, 223; Sōtō Zen sect and, 207–210, 220–223, 225–227, 243n63; use as talisman, 180, 181, 185, 195, 209, 221, 222, 225, 227; use in funerals and memorial services for women, 178–179, 180–181, 207–210
- Blood Pool Hell: causes for birth in, 185; cult of, 15, 175, 176–178, 181, 183–186, 195, 220–223, 227; descriptions, 176–177, 208; as destination for all women, 15, 210, 221–222; as destination for women who die in childbirth, 177, 179–180, 185–186, 196; illustrated preaching, 181, 183–184, 197; salvation from, 184, 185–186, 207–210, 220; tales of, 177, 182–183
- Blum, Mark L., 339, 340
- bodhisattvas, 7, 102, 104; *kami* as, 5; prior lives of Śākyamuni, 105–106, 142
- bodies: disgust, 145; nonattachment to, 145; self-sacrifice, 104, 105, 124, 142, 146, 147; of women, 176, 187–188, 196–197. *See also* corpses
- Bodiford, William M., 14, 215, 216, 237n13
- Brown, Jonathan Todd, 86
- buddhahood. *See* enlightenment; liberation; *ōjō*
- buddha images: enshrined at deathbed, 62, 73–74; holding cords or threads connected to hands of, 41–43, 44, 62–63, 65, 66–67, 71, 74
- buddha relics. *See* relic worship
- Buddhism: corruption theory (*daraku setsu*), 294; criticism of contemporary, 293–298, 326; dominance over death rites, 1, 3–6, 90, 247, 278–279, 325–326; formalization, 294, 295; funeral, 1–2, 247, 296, 327, 328; incorporation of other traditions, 5–6, 275, 331–332, 340; worldly benefits practices, 325, 327. *See also* monks; nuns; priests; temples
- Buraku Liberation League (Buraku Kaihō Dōmei), 307
- burakumin*, 306–309. *See also* outcaste groups
- burial practices: of imperial court, 107, 115; Indian Buddhist, 330–331; of Nijūgo zanmai-e, 341; pre-Buddhist Japanese, 3, 248–249; preparations, 89–90, 211. *See also* coffins; cremation; graves
- Butsugon, 84, 85
- Byōchū shugyōki* (Notes on practice during illness; Jichihan), 69–70, 72
- Byōdōin, 40–41
- camp priests (*jinsō*), 86
- Candrasūryavimalaprabhāśrī. *See* Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon
- Catholic Church, 304–305. *See also* Christianity
- Central Asia: cave paintings, 146; depictions of altruistic suicide, 142; *raigō* thought, 31; self-mutilation at funerals, 164
- Changlu Zongze, 256–257
- Chan school: monastic funerals, 211, 213, 214, 256–257, 267; Pure Land beliefs, 272; relics of masters, 122–123. *See also* Zen
- Chanyuan qinggui* (Jpn. *Zennen shingi*), 256–257, 272
- Chikamatsu Monzaemon, 197
- childbirth: in grave, 191, 192–194; in mountains, 188; rituals for safe, 185, 191–192, 195, 225; violence of, 190, 196
- childbirth, death in: frequency of, 180; funerary rituals, 223–224; ghosts of women, 191–192, 196, 223; punishment in Blood Pool Hell, 177, 179–180, 185–186, 196; risk of, 181, 190; sinfulness of, 175–176, 179–180; spiritual ramifications, 191; tales, 177, 182–183, 184–185, 186–191, 200n19. *See also* pregnancy

- children: attachment of mothers, 196;
deaths, 197, 224; funerary rituals,
224; as part of mother's body, 187–
188; paternal ownership, 176; spirits,
224
- Chinese funerals, 146–147, 277, 278. *See also* Chan school
- Chingen. *See Hokke genki*
- chi no ike jigoku*. *See* Blood Pool Hell
- Chiyo migusa*, 89
- Chizen, 84
- Chōben, 178
- Chōbōji yomigaeri no sōshi*, 184
- Christianity: campaigns against, 250, 295;
indulgences, 304–305; martyrdom,
150–151; prayers for dead, 234; relics,
124; saints, 102, 141; view of suicide,
141
- chūin*, *chūu*. *See* intermediate existence
- coffins: birth in, 224; coins placed in, 193,
260; encoffining, 89, 211, 214, 263,
268; *kechimiyaku* placed in, 217;
Ketsubonkyō placed in, 223, 227;
mandalas placed in, 88, 254;
separating mother and child before
encoffining, 195–196, 206n72, 224; in
Zen funerals, 13. *See also* burial
practices; graves
- commodified religion, 313–314, 316, 318,
319
- Confucianism: ancestor veneration, 340;
funerals, 257; indebtedness to
ancestors, 124; influence on Buddhist
funerals, 275; self-destruction in
service to lord (*junshi*), 139, 140, 141,
150–153
- constantly walking samādhi (*jōgyō zanmai*),
35–36, 252–253
- Contemplation Sūtra*. *See* *Guan Wuliangshou
jing*
- corpses: abandonment, 248–249, 341;
clothing, 211, 263; of pregnant
women, 176; preparation for burial,
89–90, 211; purification rituals, 212;
washing, 89, 263, 264. *See also* bodies;
burial practices; cremation
- corruption theory (*daraku setsu*), 294
- cremation: of aristocrats and imperial
family members, 107, 249; in
contemporary Japan, 268; first in
Japan, 107, 248; processions to
crematorium, 268; relics produced,
107, 122–123, 330; of Śākyamuni, 330;
scattering ashes, 317, 342, 345. *See also*
natural funerals
- Daihongan, 182
- daimoku* (*Lotus Sūtra* title), 71, 259, 260,
266, 268
- daimyō, 137, 141, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162–
163, 181
- Dainichi Nyorai, 70, 115, 118, 254, 271
- Dainihon Hokeyō kenki*. *See* *Hokke genki*
- danka* system. *See* parishioner household
system
- Danshinto sōgihō*, 256
- Daochuo (Dōshaku), 31, 63–64, 72, 75
- Daoism, afterlife beliefs, 5
- Daoshi, 63; *Fayuan zhulin*, 32, 146
- Daoxuan (Dōsen), 62, 68–69, 76; *Sifenlū
shanfan buque xingshi chao* (Jpn.
Shibunritsu sanpan buketsu gyōji shō),
31–32, 41
- Datsueba (Sanzu no baba), 185
- dead: ongoing relationship with living,
9–12; referred to as *hotoke*, 14,
228–229, 230; transformation into
ancestors, 14, 210, 212, 229, 233, 274;
transformation into *kami*, 229, 233;
without relations (*muenbotoke*), 223,
241n49. *See also* afterlife; corpses; soul;
spirits
- death: compared to monastic ordination,
4, 72; exemplary, 66–67; preparations,
71–72; violent, 223. *See also* childbirth,
death in; suicides
- deathbed manuals (*rinjū gyōgisho*), 67–74;
early modern period, 88; *zenchishiki*
role, 74–81, 87
- deathbed practice (*rinjū gyōgi*): bathing
before, 263; on battlefield, 86;
chanting, 77–78, 97n67; continuity
with funerals, 90; criticism of, 81–83;
in early modern period, 88–90;
elaboration over time, 71–74;
focusing mind, 4, 7, 61; holding
threads connected to hands of
buddha image, 41–43, 44, 62–63, 65,
66–67; ordination, 4, 72; postmortem
fate and, 61–62, 73; *raigō* scenes, 41–
43; repentance, 69–70, 78; sectarian
differences, 69–71; separate room or

- deathbed practice (*rinjū gyōgi*) (cont.)
 hall (*mujōin*), 31, 62, 67, 71, 72, 73;
 specialized knowledge, 74, 80–81;
 spread of Buddhist, 4, 85–86; ten
 reflections on Amida, 63–64. See also
Ōjō yōshū; zenchishiki
- death management: by clerics, 90, 210, 212;
 contemporary changes, 19; immediate
 salvation concept and, 211. See also
 funerals, Buddhist; funerals, in con-
 temporary Japan; memorial services
- death pollution, 4, 246n84; impurity of
 corpse, 89, 179, 212, 233; isolating
 dying persons, 67; issues for monks,
 85; purification rituals, 13, 212, 233; in
 traditional Japanese religion, 6, 179,
 249. See also *kami*
- Delaney, Carol, 195
- dharma names (*hōmyō*), 217, 253, 260, 266.
 See also precept names
- Dōgen, 14, 213, 218, 219, 221
- Dōhan, *Rinjū yōjin no koto* (Admonitions
 for the time of death), 70
- Doniger, Wendy, 188
- Dōshō, 107, 248
- Douglas, Jack, 142
- Durkheim, Émile, 140, 141, 166
- early modern period (Edo period). See
 Tokugawa period
- Eiga monogatari* (A tale of flowering
 fortunes), 4, 40, 42–43, 49, 66
- Eiheiji, 218, 219
- Eikan (Yōkan), 51
- Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard, 187
- Ekū, 339–340, 342
- elites. See aristocracy; imperial family;
 samurai, suicides of
- Engakuji, 122, 123
- Enjōji, 219
- enlightened spirits (*kakurei*), 210, 212, 213
- enlightenment: after death, 270;
 immediate, by posthumous
 ordination, 216–217; immediate,
 through funeral performance, 14, 88–
 89, 90, 219–220, 270, 271; Jōdo
 Shinshū teachings on salvation, 257–
 258, 266, 273, 338; Jōdo teachings,
 270–271; Nichiren sect teachings, 259,
 260, 272–273. See also liberation; *ōjō*
- Enma, King (Skt. Yama), 179, 232, 246n84
- Ennin (Jikaku Daishi), 65, 106, 110, 252
- Enomoto Chika, 231
- Enryakuji, 35–36, 41, 47–48, 106, 114, 159
- Enshō, 41, 65
- esoteric Buddhism: cords used in rituals,
 74, 95n55; deathbed manuals, 69–70;
 deathbed rituals, 68, 79–80;
 embryology, 189; funerary rituals, 250,
 252, 253, 267
- exorcisms, 79
- families: clan temples, 36, 115, 255;
 clerical ties to, 11; death-related
 rituals and grief resolution, 336;
 nuclear, 311, 315–316, 317; relic
 worship, 113–119, 125, 249; sectarian
 affiliations, 13, 250–251; women's
 roles, 176. See also ancestors
- Faure, Bernard, 217
- Fayuan zhulin*, 32, 146
- Fazhao, 252
- fetuses: aborted, 176, 190, 196, 197, 223;
 cutting from womb of dead mother,
 191, 194–195, 206n72; embryology,
 189; separation from mothers, 176,
 190, 192, 195, 196–197, 223–224;
 ultrasonic imaging, 190; unity with
 mother, 194, 196–197. See also
 pregnancy
- feudal relationships, 152, 157, 160, 164
- filial piety, 11, 147
- Fingarette, Herbert, 277
- Fudaraku. See Potalaka realm
- Fudoki*, 147
- Fudō Myōō, 68, 69, 79, 84, 98n85, 189, 262,
 271
- Fugen (Samantabhadhra), 68, 127n5, 189
- Fujii Masao, 261, 287n17
- Fuji no hitoana sōshi* (The tale of the Fuji
 person hole), 197
- Fujiwara family, 36, 119
- Fujiwara no Akimitsu, 112, 131n36
- Fujiwara no Hirotsu, 179
- Fujiwara no Kaneie, 112
- Fujiwara no Michinaga, 4, 40, 42–43, 48,
 49, 66, 110, 112
- Fujiwara no Munetada, 66; *Chūyūki*, 51
- Fujiwara no Munetomo, *Honchō shinshū ōjō-
 den* (New collection of hagiographies
 of those born in the Pure Land), 43,
 109, 113

- Fujiwara no Nagakiyo, 84–85
 Fujiwara no Sanesuke, *Shōyuki*, 38, 67, 108
 Fujiwara no Tadahira, 107; *Teishin kōki*, 36
 Fujiwara no Tadamasa, 115
 Fujiwara no Tadamichi, 114
 Fujiwara no Teika, *Meigetsuki* (Bright Moon), 117
 Fujiwara no Yasunori, 64–65
 Fujiwara no Yorimichi, 40–41
 Fujiwara no Yoshimi, 64
 Fujiwara no Yukinari, 87
 Fukunishi Kenchō, 334, 336–337
 Funaoka Makoto, 85
 funeral Buddhism, 1–2, 212, 247, 296, 298, 302, 327, 328, 340
 funeral homes (*sōgiya*, *sōgi gaisha*), 16, 267, 268, 276, 277, 302, 316
 “funeral problem” (*sōsai mondai*), 17–19
 funerals, Buddhist: contemporary criticism of, 17, 327, 340; in early modern period, 88–89; early modern standardization, 12–15, 255–256; fees, 247, 286n3, 293, 314–316; historical development, 15–16, 248–251, 275, 340; influences from other traditions, 275; preemptive (*gyakushu*), 4; relationship between doctrine and ritual, 16–17, 270–274; sectarian differences, 251–260, 277; sermons, 267, 302–303; spread in Japan, 4; timing, 264; for women, 178–179, 180–181, 207–210. *See also* orthodoxy of Buddhist funerals
 funerals, in contemporary Japan, 276–278; alternatives to traditional funerals, 19, 294, 317–318, 335, 342, 345; changing views, 305–306, 318–319; popularity of Buddhist, 247, 251, 276–277; priest’s role, 302, 316–317; as primary role of Buddhist temples, 1–2, 247, 298, 319, 325–326
 funeral structure, 15–17, 260–262; chronological sequence, 261–262; contemporary funerals, 15–17; elements shared across traditions, 275, 277; initiatory stage, 262–264; merit transference, 268–269; underlying, 261–269, 276–277, 278. *See also* *indo*
 funerary Zen, 207, 212, 213–214, 234
 Fuzan, 219
 Gankōji, 219
Gaoseng zhuan (Accounts of eminent monks), 146
 Genchi, 339, 340, 342
 Genshin: death, 42, 46; hymns attributed to, 49; instructions for deathbed practice, 61, 62–64, 66, 67–68, 71, 72–73, 78; *kakochō* biography of, 39, 42, 46, 48; Kedaiin built by, 48–49; and *mukaeō*, 44, 46–47, 48–49, 50–51, 53; on *nenbutsu*, 64; Nijūgo zanmai-e leadership, 27; *Nijūgo zanmai kishō*, 341; Pure Land practice, 64; *raigō* concept, 31, 33, 36–38, 39–40; *raigō* images by, 39, 43–44; relics assembly liturgy attributed to, 110. *See also* *Ōjō yōshū*
Genshin Sōzu den, 47, 48
 ghosts: angry, appeased by *kechimiyaku*, 218–219; child-rearing (*kosodate yūrei*), 193–194, 196; hungry, 207, 241n49; sleeves, 219; wandering, 274; of women dead in childbirth (*ubume*), 191–192, 196, 223. *See also* spirits
 Gidarinjī, 112, 131n36
 Gikai, 213
Gikeiki, 152
 Go-Ichijō, Emperor, 250
 Gokurakuji, 122, 134n72
 Gokuraku Jōdo. *See* Pure Land of Utmost Bliss
 good friends. *See* *zenchishiki*
 Go-Shirakawa, retired emperor, 84, 117, 119, 343
Goshūi ōjoden (Miyoshi no Tameyasu), 43–44, 51, 52
 Go-Toba, retired emperor, 121, 134n67
 graves: childbirth in, 191, 192–194; eternal memorial, 19; family, 342; on temple grounds, 115, 303; visiting, 303. *See also* burial practices
Guanfo sanmeihai jing (Sūtra of contemplating the Buddha’s samādhi sea), 30–31
Guan Mile pusa shangsheng Doushuaitian jing (Sūtra on contemplating Maitreya Bodhisattva and achieving birth in the Tuṣita Heaven), 30

- Guan Wuliangshou jing* (Sūtra of contemplating the Buddha of Immeasurable Life, or Contemplation Sūtra), 29–30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 41, 63–64, 77, 255
- Guan Yaowang Yaoshang erpusa jing* (Sūtra of contemplating the two bodhisattvas Yakuō and Yakujō), 31
- gyakushu* (preemptive funerals), 4
- Gyōken, 84
- Gyōki, 123
- Hachijōin, memorial rites for
 Bifukumon'in, 117–119
- Hagami Shōchō, 335
- Hagiwara Tatsuo, 182
- Hamada Takashi, 32
- Hamanaka Osamu, 188
- Han Yu, 146
- Hatano Yoshishige, 219
- Heian period: aristocratic funerals, 4, 66–67; Buddhist funerals, 4, 252, 253; deathbed practice, 66–67, 249; Pure Land practices, 249, 255; relic worship, 108–111, 113–119; rise of Buddhist death ritual, 4; suicides to reach the Pure Land (*jigai ōjō*), 149–150, 153. *See also* Genshin; *mukaekō*; *raigō*
- Heike monogatari* (*Tale of the Heike*), 67, 83, 151–152
- hells: infanticide punished in, 224; King Enma (Skt. Yama), 179, 232, 246n84; signs of descent into, 80, 97n75; Ten Kings, 231. *See also* Blood Pool Hell
- heresies: soul concept, 332–334; worldly benefits practices as, 327. *See also* orthodoxy of Buddhist funerals
- heretics, in Jōdo Shinshū sect, 160–161
- Hertz, Robert, 8–9
- heterodoxy. *See* orthodoxy of Buddhist funerals
- Hiei, Mt.: Kedaiin, 47–49, 59n78; lay people barred from, 47; military force, 137; Mudōji Daijōin, 115, 116; relics, 106, 111–112, 114; Tendai monastery, 7, 252; women barred from, 47, 116; women buried on, 115, 116; Yokawa retreat, 7, 27, 39, 43, 46, 65. *See also* Enryakuji
- hijiri* (holy men): performance of death rites, 6; suicides, 154; as *zenchishiki*, 78–79, 83–84, 85
- Himiko, Queen, 148
- Hirose Takuji, 325
- Hitsuketsu no monogatari* (The brush-maker's tale), 182–183
- Hōjōji, 40
- Hōjō Shigetoki, 122
- Hōjō Tokimune, 13, 122
- Hōjō Tokiyori, 208, 209, 220
- Hōjō Yasutoki, 120
- Hōjō Yoshitoki, 86
- Hokkedō (Lotus chapels), 249
- Hokke genki* (Record of marvels [attributable to faith in] the *Lotus Sūtra*), 38, 43, 46–47, 49, 108–109
- Hokke zanmai* (Lotus samādhi), 252
- Hōkōin, 112
- hōmyō*. *See* dharma names
- Honchō shinshū ōjōden* (New collection of hagiographies of those born in the Pure Land; Fujiwara no Munetomo), 43, 109, 113
- Honchō zoku monzui* (Further collections of writings from our country), 45–46
- Hōnen, 166; death of, 155, 156, 255; exclusive *nenbutsu* movement, 7; *Ippeyaku shijū gokajō mondō* (Answers to one hundred forty-five questions), 179; suicides of followers, 154–157; on *zenchishiki*, 81–82
- Hōnen Shōnin gyōjō ezu*, 155–157
- Honganji branch, Jōdo Shinshū:
 excommunications, 160–161, 163, 173n62; feudal values, 161, 166; funerals, 258–259; growth, 159, 162, 258; Jitsunyo's leadership, 137, 157–164, 166; military activities, 140–141, 158, 159–160, 161–162; relations with court and daimyō, 160; unity, 165
- honji*. *See* Jātakas
- Honjō-bō Tankyō, 83–84, 98n85
- Honpukuji atogaki*, 161
- Hōryūji, 52, 105, 142
- Hōshō ron* (Treatise on the essential import of buddha nature as discerned by the Mahāyāna), 31
- Hosokawa Harumoto, 163
- Hosokawa Masamoto, 161–162, 163
- Hosshinshū* (Tales of religious awakening; Kamo no Chōmei), 78–79
- Hosshōji (Shōsenji), 208–210, 220–221, 222, 223, 225, 227, 240n41
- hotoke* (“buddhas,” referring to deceased), 212, 228–229, 230, 245n76, 274

- households. *See* families; *ie* system;
parishioner household system
- Huaigan, *Shi jingtu qunyi lun*, 334, 335
- Huaihai, 267
- Huayan jing*, repentance text drawn from, 264
- Huiyuan, 252; *Dasheng yizhang*, 334
- hungry ghosts, 207, 241n49
- “Hungry Tigress Jātaka,” 105, 142, 144
- Hur, Nam-lin, 14
- Hyakurenshō*, 150
- hymns: attributed to Genshin, 49;
Ketsubonkyō wasan, 225–227; at relics
assemblies, 110
- Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* (Collection of secret
essentials for life’s end; Kakuban), 70,
72, 73–74, 75, 76, 77–78, 79–80
- ie* system, 11, 250, 251
- ihai*. *See* memorial tablets
- Iishiro Kazuko, 227
- Ikemi Chōryū, 340–341, 342, 343, 345
- ikki* (confederations), 158–160, 161, 162,
172n58
- Imai Masaharu, 86
- imperial family: burial practices, 107, 115;
cremations, 107, 249; deathbed
rituals, 84; relic worship, 105, 112–
113. *See also* aristocracy
- impermanence: contradiction with belief
in spirits, 274; and emphasis on
continuity, 9; and valorization of
suicide, 145
- Indian Buddhism: assumed monastic non-
involvement in funerals and memorial
services, 330–331, 334; burials, 330–
331; views of suicide, 140, 141, 142–
145
- indō* (guiding the deceased), 16, 261, 264,
267–268, 269, 276, 277; in Jōdo
funerals, 266; lacking in Shinshū
funerals, 258, 273; in Shingon
funerals, 254; torch waving rite (*ako*),
16, 275; in Zen funerals, 272. *See also*
funeral structure
- Indo-Scythians, 146, 164
- infanticide, 176, 224–225
- Inga monogatari* (Tales of karmic causality),
218–219
- Ingen, 112
- injō*. *See* *raigō*
- Inoue Shin’ichi, 304–305
- intermediate existence (Skt. *antarābhava*;
Jpn. *chūin*, *chūu*), 229, 232–233,
268, 331–332, 333–334, 336–337,
345
- Ippen, 86, 154, 156, 157, 164, 166, 171n49
- Ishikawa Kyōchō, 273
- Isozaki*, 184, 186
- Itō Yuishin, 340, 343
- Izanagi and Izanami, 179
- Jansen, Marius B., 325
- Japan Buddhist Federation (Zennihon
Bukkyōkai), 298, 318; Committee to
Consider Posthumous Precept Names,
301–302, 304, 312, 319
- Japan Consumers Association (Nihon Shō-
hisha Kyōkai), 301
- Jātakas (*honji*), 103, 104, 105, 142
- jealousy, 186, 187, 192
- Jiacai, *Jingtu lun*, 31, 32–33
- Jichihan, *Byōchū shugyōki* (Notes on
practice during illness), 69–70, 72
- jigai ōjō*. *See* suicides
- Jikkō, 138, 139
- Jikū, 87, 89
- Jingtu lun* (Treatise on the pure land,
Jiacai), 31
- jinsō*. *See* camp priests
- Jishū, 86, 87, 154, 194
- Jitsugo, 138, 139, 161
- Jitsunyo: death, 137, 163; funeral, 137–
138, 164; leadership of Honganji, 137,
157–164, 166; suicides at funeral of,
138–139, 140–141, 154, 157, 158–
166
- Jizō (Kṣitigarbha): aid for right-
mindfulness, 68; associations with
pregnancy and childbirth, 179, 180,
181, 189, 191, 201n28, 223, 225;
images, 184, 193, 227; rites, 80;
salvation from Blood Pool Hell, 209,
210, 220, 226; women’s worship of,
183–184, 227
- Jizōkō (Jizō associations), 225
- Jōdo sect: funerals, 255–256, 262, 265, 266,
281–285; memorial services, 270–271;
posthumous ordinations, 266;
Ryōchū’s deathbed ritual instructions,
70–71; surveys on precept names,
300–301, 309–310, 315; teachings on
enlightenment in the Pure Land,
270–271

- Jōdo Shinshū: branches, 158, 172n55, 259; excommunications, 160–161; funerals, 257–259, 262–263, 266, 273, 338–339, 342–344; memorial services, 269, 273; postmodern, 344; reconciling doctrine and funeral practices, 342–345; Shinshū Catholicism (Shinshū C), 344; Shinshū Puritanism (Shinshū P), 344; teachings on birth in the Pure Land, 257–258, 266, 273, 338; teachings on suicide, 139. *See also* Honganji branch, Jōdo Shinshū
- Jōdoshū hōyōshū*, 256
- jōdozu* (Pure Land illustrations), 34, 35
- jōgyō zanmai*. *See* constantly walking samādhi
- Jōkei: on relic worship, 130n30; *Rinjū no yōi* attributed to, 97n67; *Shari kōshiki*, 111
- Jūgan hosshinki* (Ten vows arousing the aspiration for enlightenment; Senkan), 36
- Jūgōen raiju giki* (Ritual instructions for the Jūgōen), 259–260
- jukai*. *See* ordination
- Jukkai shō*, 48
- Junnin, 122
- junshi* (self-destruction in service to lord), 11, 139, 140, 141, 150–153. *See also* suicides
- Kaen, 89–90
- Kaihojin jūso ge* (Explanation [for] resident monks at Kaihojin), 52
- kaimyō*. *See* precept names
- Kakuban, 253–254; *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* (Collection of secret essentials for life's end), 70, 72, 73–74, 75, 76, 77–78, 79–80; *Shari kuyō kōshiki*, 110
- Kakuchō, 7, 39, 56n46, 66
- Kakuhō, 115
- Kakukai, 81
- Kakunyo, 339; *Gaijashō* (Notes on Correcting Heresies), 338
- kakurei* (enlightened spirits), 210, 212, 213
- Kakuzen, *Kakuzenshō*, 109–110, 125
- kalyāṇamitra*. *See* *zenchishiki*
- Kamakura Bakufu, 119–122, 125
- kami* (deities): death pollution taboos and worship of, 6, 16, 85, 275; female pollution and, 12, 208, 221, 225; identified with buddhas and bodhisattvas, 5; transforming dead into, 229, 233, 269
- Kamo no Chōmei, *Hosshinshū* (Tales of religious awakening), 78–79
- kanbyō*. *See* *zenchishiki*
- Kanbyō yōjinshō* (Admonitions in caring for the sick; Ryōchū), 70–71, 73, 75–77, 78, 80, 82–83, 87
- Kannon (Avalokiteśvara), 246n84; aid for right-mindfulness, 68; holding ropes tied to images of, 95n55; images in *mukaeō* ceremonies, 34, 52; Nyoirin Kannon, 181, 184; in *raigō* scenes, 27, 30, 35, 37, 38, 40; Shō Kannon, 80; thousand-armed, 84; Ubume Kannon, 192, 224. *See also* Potalaka realm
- Kanroji Chikanaga, 178
- karmic causality, 4–5, 14–15, 16, 22n13. *See also* rebirth
- Kasahara Kazuo, 158, 160
- Katsurai Kazuo, 194–195
- Katsuura Noriko, 178, 180, 183
- kechimyaku* (transmission of religious “blood lineage”) rituals, 183. *See also* Zen lineage charts
- Kedaiin, 47–49, 59n78
- Keizan Jōkin, 213, 237n11, 272
- kenmitsu* (exoteric-esoteric) Buddhist establishment, 110, 125
- Kenna, 121, 122
- Kenzeiki* (Record of Kenzei), 218
- Ketsubonkyō*. *See* Blood-bowl Sūtra
- Ketsubonkyō wasan* (Hymn of the Blood Pool Hell sūtra), 225–227
- Kūi zōtan shū* (Collected yarns of the uncanny), 191, 194
- Kishimōjin, 185
- Kōdaiji, 51
- Kōdate Naomi, 181, 184
- Kōfukuji, 36
- Kōgenji, 192
- Kojiki*, 148
- Kōkamon'in, 83, 98n85, 113–114, 115–117, 132n45
- kokera kyō*, 177–178
- Kokua Shōnin, 194
- Komatsu Kazuhiko, 188
- Kōmyō, Empress, 35, 249

- kōmyō kushakujō* (radiant light tin staff offering), 253, 255
- kōmyō shingon* (Bright Light mantra): deathbed practice, 70; Nijūgo zanmai-e practice of, 66, 80; recitation at funerals, 214, 237n11, 250, 253, 254–255, 262; “three secrets” and, 271
- Konjaku hyaku monogatari hyōban* (Selection of one hundred tales of old), 191
- Konjaku monogatari shū* (Collection of tales of times now past), 50, 51, 52, 111–112
- Kōya monogatari*, 186, 192–193
- Kōyōshū* (Collection of filial piety), 72, 73, 74, 79, 80–81, 85, 86, 87
- Kritzer, Robert, 333
- Kṣitigarbha. *See* Jizō
- Kuhon ōjōgi* (Meaning of the nine levels of birth in the Pure Land; Ryōgen), 36
- Kujō Kanezane, 84; *Gyokuyō* (Jeweled leaves), 83, 98n85, 113–114; offering rite for Kōkamon’in, 115–117; relics assemblies sponsored by, 113–114
- Kūkai, 70, 253, 262
- Kumano *bikuni*, 181, 182–183, 184, 197, 220
- Kumano kanjin jukkaizu* (Painting of the ten worlds [jukkai] perceived within the mind [*kanjin*]), 184, 197
- Kumano no honji*, 186–191
- Kuroda Toshio, 162
- Kūya (Kōya), 36, 38
- lay persons: Buddhist funerals, 6; contemporary relations with temples, 298, 303, 311–312, 313, 315–316, 318, 326; *mukaeō* attendance, 47–48; precepts, 311–313; relic worship, 112; Sōtō Zen funerals, 210–211, 213, 215–220; as *zenchishiki*, 86–87; Zen funerals, 6, 243, 257
- LeGoff, Jacques, 234
- liberation: determined at moment of death, 61–62; effected through funeral performance, 211, 217, 228–230, 232, 234, 269, 270–274; evidence of, 219. *See also* enlightenment; *ōjō*
- lineage charts. *See* Zen lineage charts
- Lotus samādhi (*Hokke zanmai*), 252
- Lotus Sūtra*: buried with relics, 110; deathbed practice and, 68, 71; “Devadatta” chapter, 178, 260; devotees (*jikyōsha*), 68, 84, 108; dragon girl story, 116, 178; “Kannon” chapter, 187; “Medicine King” chapter, 104, 144, 165; Nichiren teachings of enlightenment through faith in, 272–273; reciting title (*daimoku*), 71, 259, 260, 266, 268; relics assemblies and, 114; self-sacrificial acts inspired by, 108, 146; significance to women, 183, 260
- loyalty, 150–153, 157, 161. *See also* *junshi*
- Machida Muneo, 306–307
- Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta*, account of the Buddha’s funeral, 329–330
- Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, account of ascetic self-sacrifice, 142
- Mahāsattva, Prince, 105. *See also* “Hungry Tigress Jātaka”
- Mahāstāmaprāpta. *See* Seishi
- Mahāyāna: bodhisattvas depicted in sūtras, 104; saints, 102; totalizing character of Japanese, 5; views of suicide, 143–145
- Maitreya (Miroku), 30, 68, 105, 111, 143. *See also* Tuṣita Heaven
- Makino Kazuo, 181
- mandalas: *gohonzon*, 260; *gōshō*, 42, 43–44; Taima, 32, 35
- Man’yōshū*, 148
- Manzan Dōhaku, *Nenki saitenkō*, 233
- martyrdom, 140, 141, 150–151. *See also* *junshi*; self-sacrifice; suicides
- Matsudokkō (Matsudo Association), 227
- Matsumoto Ryūshin, 188
- Matsuoka Hideaki, 183
- Maudgalyāyana. *See* Mokuren
- McMullin, Neil, 159, 160
- Medicine King, Bodhisattva, 104, 144
- Meiji period: abolition of temple certification system, 251; religious reforms, 293
- memorial services: benefits to the living, 272, 273; for Bifukumon’in, 117–119; contemporary, 276; first forty-nine days, 4, 231, 268–269, 270–271, 273, 314, 333, 334, 335, 337; on forty-ninth day, 123, 212, 232–233, 246n84, 276; incense burning, 333–334; logical

- memorial services (cont.)
 contradiction with idea of immediate salvation through funerals, 228, 232, 234, 269, 270–274; merit transference, 5, 268–269, 273; and no-soul doctrine, 335–337; purpose, 230, 333–334; relic worship, 117–119, 123; Sōtō Zen, 228; Thirteen Buddha Rites, 230–234; thirty-third year, 212, 228, 231–232, 233–234, 246n84, 269; for women, 178–179, 180–181, 207–210
- memorial tablets (*ihai*), 13, 233, 260, 266, 274, 299–300, 337
- menstrual pollution, 12, 87, 177, 180, 185, 208, 221–222
- Menstruation Sūtra. *See* Blood-bowl Sūtra
- Menzan Zuihō, 224
- merit transference: by living, 5, 270–271, 273; memorial services, 268–269, 273; relic worship, 114; rituals, 210, 213, 268–269; tension with karmic causality, 5, 14–15, 22n13
- military epics (*gunki monogatari*), 151–152
- Minamoto clan, conflict with Taira (Genpei War), 83–84, 119–120
- Minamoto no Kanehira, 151–152
- Minamoto no Masazane, 115
- Minamoto no Tamenori, *Sanbō ekotoba* (Illustrations of the three jewels), 36, 105, 106, 107
- Minamoto no Toshifusa, 52; *Suisaki*, 50
- Minamoto no Yoritomo, 119–120
- Minamoto no Yoshinaka, 151
- Minamoto no Yoshitsune, 152
- minority groups. *See* *burakumin*; outcaste groups
- Miroku. *See* Maitreya
- Miyoshi no Tameyasu: *Goshūi ōjoden*, 43–44, 51, 52; *Shūi ōjoden* (Gleanings of accounts of those born in the Pure Land), 43, 44, 51, 109
- Mizutani Kōshō, 301
- Mokuren (Skt. Maudgalyāyana, Ch. Mulian), 176, 178–179
- monks: burials, 330; Chan/Zen funerals, 211, 213, 214, 256–257, 267; cremations, 107; death ritual specialists, 6, 85, 90, 250; familial ties, 11; fundraising missions, 182; scholar, 85; self-sacrifice, 146; suicides, 149. *See also* nuns; priests; *zenchishiki*
- mortuary rituals: explanations of Buddhist dominance, 4–6; pre-Buddhist Japanese, 3–4; as primary role of Buddhist temples, 1–2, 88. *See also* funerals, Buddhist; funerals, in contemporary Japan; memorial services
- motherhood: attachment to children, 196; child as part of mother's body, 187–188; late medieval shift in views of, 176; as primary female role, 11, 176; salvation and, 177, 195. *See also* childbirth; pregnancy
- Motsugo jukai sahō* (Correct procedures for posthumous precept administration), 216
- Motsugo sasō jukai shiki* (Precept ceremony for posthumous ordination), 215
- mourning, 232–233
- muenbotoke* (dead without relations). *See* *segaki* rituals
- muga*. *See* *anātman* doctrine
- Mujaku Dōchū, *Shōsōrin shingi*, 256, 257
- mujōin*. *See* deathbed practice
- mukaekō* (welcoming ceremony):
 contemporary variations, 52; early texts mentioning, 44–50; Genshin's role in origins, 44, 46–47, 48–49, 53; history, 27; hymns, 49; lay persons attending, 47–48; locations, 49–50; masks, 51–52; processions, **34**, **45**, 48, 52–53; *raigō* scenes and, 45–46, 53; spread in Japan, 49–51; at Taimadera, **34**, 44, **45**, 59n90; women's attendance, 47–48
- Mulian. *See* Mokuren
- Murakami Shigeyoshi, 328
- Muryōjukyō*. *See* *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*
- music: funeral, 268; in *mukaekō* ceremonies, 49. *See also* hymns
- Myōe Kōben, 255; *Shari kōshiki*, 111
- Myōkū, 49
- nagare kanjō* (flowing anointment) ritual, 11, 185–186, 190
- Nakamura Hajime, 297
- Nakano Genzō, 110

- Nakayama Tarō, 182
 Nara Yasuaki, 272, 329, 332
 natural funerals (*shizensō*), 19, 317–318
nenbutsu: deathbed rituals, 38, 63–64, 69, 70, 77, 78, 82, 255, 268; defined, 53n1; esoteric practices, 69, 70; Tendai rituals, 252–253
 Nenshō, 39, 42, 44–45
 New New Religions, 319, 324n70
 New Religions, 249, 324n70
 Nichiren, 259, 260
 Nichiren sect: deathbed rituals, 71, 88; funerals, 259–260, 266, 268, 272–273; memorial services, 273; teachings on enlightenment, 259, 260, 272–273
 Nichiren Shōshū, funerals, 260
 Nichizō, 107
Nihon kiriyaku, 149
Nihon ōjō gokurakuki, 32–33, 38
Nihon ryōiki (Miraculous tales of Japan), 179, 180
 Nihon Shōhisha Kyōkai. *See* Japan Consumers Association
Nihon shoki (Chronicles of Japan), 3–4, 149, 179
 Nijūgo zanmai-e (Samādhi Society of Twenty-five): activities, 65–66; burials of members, 341; communication with lay people, 47; deathbed rituals, 7, 65, 80, 83, 249, 340–341; formation, 7, 27, 38; founding documents, 31–32, 39, 41, 48, 54n16, 65; Genshin's leadership, 27; *kakochō* (death register), 39, 41–42, 44–45, 46, 48, 49, 56n46, 92n16; *kōmyō shingon* ritual, 66, 80; memorial rituals, 253; *mukaekō* (welcoming ceremony), 27; *raigō* thought, 31–32, 33, 39–40
Nijūgo zanmai kishō, 341
 Ninnaji, 117
 Ninshō, 122, 123
 Nishiguchi Junko, 87
 Nishi no Okata, 66–67
 nobility. *See* aristocracy
Nomori no kagami, 255
 not-self doctrine. *See* *anātman*
 novels, pregnancy, 196
 nuns: contemporary, 297–298; familial ties, 11; fundraising missions, 181–182, 184; involvement in deathbed rituals, 87; Kumano *bikuni*, 181, 182–183, 184, 197, 220; preaching by, 182, 183, 184, 197; relic worship, 113; Yao *bikuni* (white nun), 182–183, 184
 Nyoirin Kannon, 181, 184
 Obon Festival, 207, 231
 Ōe no Masafusa, *Zoku honchō ōjōden*, 43, 50–51, 200n19
 Ōe no Sukekuni, *Genshin Sōzu den*, 47, 48
 Ōhara Kenshirō, 335
 Ohokusaka, 148
ōjō (birth in pure land): in Amida's Pure Land, 6–8, 270–271; aspirations for, 6–8, 68, 108–111, 113, 270–271; assistance of *zenchishiki*, 63–64, 77–78; contemporary understandings, 336; determined at moment of death, 63–64; difficulty, 7, 62; immediate (*sokutoku ōjō*), 258; Jōdo Shinshū teachings, 257–258; Jōdo teachings, 270–271; relic worship and, 108–111; suicide to achieve (*jigai ōjō*), 139, 140, 147, 149, 150, 153–157, 164–165; ten reflections on Amida, 63–64. *See also* enlightenment; liberation
ōjōden (Ch. *wangsheng zhuan*, tales of achieving birth in Pure Land), 32–33, 43, 66, 153
Ōjō kōshiki, 51
Ōjō yōshū (Essentials of birth in the Pure Land; Genshin): Chinese sources, 31, 32, 62–64, 68–69, 78; deathbed practice instructions, 7, 37–38, 41, 61, 62–64, 66–67, 71, 73, 90; influence, 53, 67–68, 83, 249; purpose of deathbed practice, 90; *raigō* descriptions, 36–38
ōjōzu (Pure land illustrations), 34, 35, 36
 Ōkura Ryūjō, 327
 Ōmura Eishō, 341–342, 343
 Onjōji (Miidera), 64, 114, 121, 137
 Onmyōdō (*yinyang*), 214–215
Onna chōhōki (Precious treasury for women), 189
 Ōno Tatsunosuke, 295–296
 ordination (*jukai*): on deathbed, 4, 72; of living lay people, 311–313; of women, 225, 243n63. *See also* precepts

- ordination, posthumous, 261, 264–267;
 - contemporary explanations, 304;
 - function, 264, 266–267, 268; initiatory function, 216–217; in Jōdo sect, 266;
 - Nichiren Buddhist view of, 260, 266;
 - preparations, 262, 264; in Shingon, 265; Sōtō Zen practices, 215–220, 265, 266, 272; Tendai practices, 253, 265; Zen practices, 257. *See also* precept names
- original Buddhism (*genshi bukkyō*), 328, 331, 340, 341
- Orikuchi Shinobu, 182
- orthodoxy of Buddhist funerals: debates
 - on, 326–327, 328, 338–341; Jōdo Shinshū, 338–339, 342–344;
 - justifications, 327, 329, 334–335, 338–339, 345; reconciling doctrine and practice, 342–344; soul concept and not-self doctrine, 331–334, 344–345; standards, 327–328, 332
- otogizōshi*, 177, 182–183, 184–185, 186–191
- outcaste groups: discrimination against, 308–309, 322n42; discriminatory precept names, 299, 301, 306–309
- parishioner household system (*danka seido*), 13, 228, 250–251, 295–297
- patriarchal household system. *See ie* system
- peasants, 158–160, 224, 250
- Pinguet, Maurice, 154
- pollution. *See* death pollution; menstrual pollution
- posthumous ordination. *See* ordination, posthumous
- Potalaka realm (Fudaraku), 6, 111, 149, 150, 171n43
- Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, 68
- precept names (*kaimyō*): compared to indulgences, 304–305; criticism of practice, 298, 300–301, 304–305, 306–311, 314; discriminatory, 299, 301, 306–309; economic class discrimination, 309–311; explanations, 304; fees, 300, 301, 303, 310, 312, 314, 315, 318, 323n60; granted to lay people, 217, 298–299; history of practice, 298–299; importance, 299, 300–301, 305–306, 314; lack of teaching about, 301–304; links to temple donations, 310, 312; on memorial tablets, 299–300, 337; public opinion on necessity, 300–301; purpose, 311, 321n33; status-related, 298–299, 300, 309–311; in Tendai sect, 253. *See also* ordination, posthumous
- precepts: adherence to, 313; bodhisattva, 253, 265; contemporary roles, 312–313; lay, 311–313. *See also* ordination; ordination, posthumous
- pregnancy: death in, 175–176, 180, 191, 192–193, 194–195, 196; descriptions in tales, 189–190; miscarriages, 223; murders of pregnant women, 186–191, 192–193; *nagare kanjō* rites, 11, 185, 186, 190; violence against pregnant women, 186–191, 192–193, 196. *See also* abortions; childbirth; fetuses; motherhood
- pregnancy novels (*ninshin shōsetsu*), 196
- priests: camp (*jinsō*), 86; contemporary roles, 302, 312–313, 316–317, 318; criticism of, 293, 302, 305; development of funeral role, 6; lack of teaching about precept names, 301–304; mediation between living and dead, 6, 269; precept maintenance, 313; social status, 295; village, 88, 250. *See also* monks; Sōtō Zen priests
- Protestant Buddhism, 18, 331, 338–339
- Puṇṇovāda-sutta*, 142–143, 145
- Pure and Bright Excellence of Sun and Moon, Buddha, 104, 144
- Pure Land, birth in. *See* liberation; *ōjō*
- Pure Land Buddhism: deathbed rituals, 64–65, 249; esoteric Buddhism, 69; funerals, 250; patriarchs, 31; soul concept, 335–337; spread in Japan, 39–40, 53, 249; voluntary deaths (*jigai ōjō*), 139, 140, 147. *See also* Genshin; Jōdo sect; Jōdo Shinshū; *ōjō*
- Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak (Ryōjusen), 6, 259, 260, 268, 272–273
- Pure Land of Utmost Bliss (Gokuraku Jōdo): achieved through reliance on Amida's vow, 258, 266, 273, 338; aspirations for birth in, 6–8, 270–271; immediate birth in (*sokutoku ōjō*), 258;

- inhabitants, 10; women in, 10, 23n27.
See also *ōjō*; *raigō*
- Qizil, Sinjiang, 146, 165
- raigō* (welcoming descent): background of term, 28–31; Chinese thought, 31–33; meaning, 28; popularity of concept in Japan, 33
- raigō* scenes, 27; Genshin's description, 36–38; at Hōjōji, 40; Japanese, 33–43; relationship to *mukaeō* ceremonies, 45–46, 53; Taima mandala, 32; use in deathbed rituals, 41–42
- Raiken, 121
- rākṣasa* demons: Śākra disguised as, 143; ten *rasetsu* women, 185
- rationalism, modern, 341–342, 344
- Ratna-gotra-vibhāga-mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra* (Ch. *Baoxing lun*, Treatise on the essential import of buddha nature as discerned by the Mahāyāna), 31
- Rawski, Evelyn, 278
- Reader, Ian, 1, 327
- rebirth: karmic causality doctrine, 4–5, 14–15, 16, 22n13; process, 332–333, 334; samsaric, 7
- Reischauer, Edwin O., 325
- relics (*shari*): interconnected topoi, 102, 107, 110, 124; of masters, 122–123, 134n73; permanence, 125–126; placed in statues, 107, 116; powers, 106–107; produced in cremation, 107, 122–123, 330
- relics, in Christianity, 124
- relics assemblies (*shari-e*, *sharikō*), 106, 110–112, 113–114, 117, 123
- relic worship: in China, 104; by family lineages, 113–119, 125, 249; in Japan, 102–103, 104–107; in Kamakura period, 119–123, 124–125; link to aspiration for *ōjō*, 108–111, 113; link to mortuary practices, 107–108, 110, 113–119, 122, 123, 124; merit accumulation through, 104; merit transference, 114; rituals, 106–107; self-sacrifice and, 105–106, 113, 124, 142; by women, 111–113, 117–119, 132n39
- Religious Juridical Persons Law (*shūkyō hōjin hō*), 315
- reliquaries, 10, 102, 103, 104, 107–108, 119–121, 125. See also stūpas
- Rennyō, 137, 139, 158, 159–162, 163, 258–259
- Rensō, 159
- Renzen, *Sange ōjōki*, 43
- repentance, 4, 15, 63, 68, 69–70, 78, 106, 252, 254, 264–266
- Rhys Davids, T. W., 330–331
- right-mindfulness, 7, 8, 61–62, 68, 74–75, 76–77
- rinjū gyōgi*. See deathbed practice
- Rinjū gyōgi chūki* (Notes on deathbed practice; Tanshū), 68–69, 71–72, 73, 75, 76
- rinjū gyōgisho*. See deathbed manuals
- Rinjū yōjin no koto* (Admonitions for the time of death; Dōhan), 70
- Rinzai Zen sect: funerals, 256, 257; Kyoto elites and, 257
- rishō* (“stūpas benefiting beings”), 125
- Ritsu funerals for laity, 6
- robot priests, 317
- Rokuharamitsuji, 49–50
- Ryōchin, 49
- Ryōchū, *Kanbyō yōjinshō* (Admonitions in caring for the sick), 70–71, 73, 75–77, 78, 80, 82–83, 87
- Ryōgen, 36, 95n55, 111, 130n31
- Ryōjin hishō*, 44
- Ryōjusen. See Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak
- Ryūben, 121
- Ryūgi no daiji*, 222
- Saburō Tamemori, 154–157, 164, 166
- Sacred Eagle Peak. See Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak
- Saichō, 47, 252, 253
- saints, 102, 141
- Saitō Minako, 196
- Śākyamuni Buddha: cremation of, 330; funeral of, 328, 329–330, 331; funeral of father, 339; prior lives of, 102, 103, 105, 124, 142; in Pure Land of Sacred Eagle Peak, 259; relics of, 106, 123. See also Jātakas; relic worship
- Samādhi Society of Twenty-five. See Nijūgo zanmai-e
- Samantabhadhra. See Fugen
- samsaric rebirth, 7. See also rebirth

- samurai, suicides of, 152, 154–157, 164. *See also* warriors
- Sanbō ekotoba* (Illustrations of the three jewels), 36, 105, 106, 107
- Sangoku innen jizō bosatsu reigenki* (Miraculous tales from the three countries of karmic ties to Jizō), 180
- Sanguo zhi* (History of the three kingdoms), 148
- Sanmon dōshaki* (Record of the halls and shrines of the mountain), 35, 48–49
- Sanzu no baba (Datsueba), 185
- Sanzu no kawa, 193
- Sāramati, 31
- Sarvasattvapriyadarśana. *See* Beheld with Joy by All Living Beings, Bodhisattva
- Sasaki Kōkan, 229, 331
- Sasaki Shōten, 344
- Sawai Taizō, 184
- Sawara, Prince, 107, 128n17
- Sawayama Mikako, 176, 189–190
- Schopenh, Gregory, 330–331, 332, 334
- segaki* rituals, 223, 241n49
- Seishi (Mahāstāmaprāpta), 27, 30, 37
- Seiwa, Emperor, 64, 253
- Seki Nobuko, 52
- Seki Tadao, 227
- self-immolation, 108, 146, 149, 150, 156–157, 169n23
- self-mutilation, 146–147
- self-sacrifice: altruistic motives, 147; of bodhisattvas, 104, 105–106, 142, 144; cultural acceptance, 141; of monks, 146; relic worship and, 105–106, 113, 124, 142. *See also junshi*; suicides
- Senjūshō*, 85–86
- Senkan, 40, 64; *Jūgan hosshinki* (Ten vows arousing the aspiration for enlightenment), 36
- Sensai Shōnin, 51
- senzo*. *See* ancestors
- seppuku* (suicide by cutting open belly), 138, 147, 152, 155–156, 157, 164, 166. *See also* suicides
- Shakakō, 48
- Shandao, 78; commentary on *Guan Wuliangshou jing*, 32; *Guannian Amitufo xianghai sanmei gongde famen*, 32, 38; instructions for deathbed practice, 63; *ōjō*-suicide, 153, 171n44
- shari*. *See* relics
- shari-e* (*sharikō*). *See* relics assemblies
- Shasekishū*, 50
- Shiio Benkyō, 335–336
- Shikauchi Hyōbu, 219
- Shin Buddhism. *See* Jōdo Shinshū
- Shingon: buddha relics, 121, 122; deathbed rituals, 69–70; discriminatory precept names, 307; esoteric deathbed practices, 69–70; funerals, 214, 253–255, 262, 263, 267–268, 271; lineages, 254; memorial services, 271; posthumous ordinations, 265, 304; realization of buddhahood doctrine, 254, 271; relics of masters, 123; teachings, 254
- Shinran, 160; death, 258; exclusive *nenbutsu* movement, 7; *Shōshinge*, 259, 262; suicide contrary to teachings of, 139; teachings on achieving the Pure Land, 258, 338; view of deathbed rituals, 82
- Shinsai, 253
- Shinshū. *See* Jōdo Shinshū
- Shinto, 2, 247, 293; Jōdo Shinshū stance on, 160; practical benefits, 325; soul concept, 331
- shizensō*. *See* natural funerals
- shogunate. *See* Bakufu; Tokugawa period
- Shōkin, 42, 66
- Shōkō (Ben'a, Benchō), 82, 156, 157
- Shoku Nihongi*, 35, 106, 248
- Shōmyōji, 121–122
- Shōreishū*, 253
- Shōsenji (Hōsshōji), 208–210, 220–221, 222, 223, 225–227, 240n41
- Shōshinge* (Shinran), 259, 262
- Shōsōrin shingi* (Mujaku Dōchū), 256, 257
- Shōtoku, Prince, 106, 148, 149, 186
- Shōwa kaitei Sōtōshū gyōji kihan*, 257
- Shugendō, 177–178, 184
- Shūi ōjoden* (Gleanings of accounts of those born in the Pure Land; Miyoshi no Tameyasu), 43, 44, 51, 109
- Shukaku, 117
- Shunjō, 155, 156
- Shūtei Nichirenshū hōyōshiki*, 260
- Sifenlū shanfan buque xingshi chao* (Jpn. *Shibunritsu sanpan buketsu gyōji shō*, Daoxuan), 31–32
- Smith, Robert J., 233–234, 300

- social relations: discrimination against
 outcaste groups, 299, 306–309,
 322n42; feudal, 152, 157, 160, 164;
 indebtedness, 124; jealousy, 186, 187,
 192; kinship system, 186, 195–196;
 recent changes in family structure,
 311; women's status, 11, 177, 222
- social structure: class discrimination in
 precept names, 309–311; middle class,
 310; status system (*kaikyū seido*), 295.
See also aristocracy; families; *ie* system
- sōgiya*, *sōgi gaisha*. *See* funeral homes
- Sōka Gakkai, 260
- Sōshiki bukkyō* (Funeral Buddhism;
 Tamamuro), 1–2, 247, 296–297
- Sōsō no Jiyū o Susumeru Kai (Association
 for the Promotion of Freedom in
 Funerals), 342
- Sōtō Zen funerals: Chan influences, 213,
 237n11; contradictory logics, 211,
 228–230; for lay persons, 214, 257;
 manuals, 256, 257; monastic, 213,
 237n11; posthumous ordinations,
 215–220, 265, 266, 272; precept
 names, 301, 307; procedures, 279–
 281; regional and local customs, 14,
 212–213; sermons, 267; special
 circumstance, 223–224; in Tokugawa
 period, 207, 210–215
- Sōtō Zen priests: death management, 14,
 210, 212, 234; mediation between
 living and dead, 216, 234; powers of,
 218, 219–220; as ritual specialists,
 223–224; at wakes, 211–212
- Sōtō Zen sect: afterlife concepts, 210, 213–
 214, 272; discriminatory precept
 names, 307; memorial services, 228;
 monastic regulations, 213, 237n11;
 ordination ceremonies, 225; ritual
 separation of fetuses from mothers,
 191; spread of, 14, 214, 219–220, 229,
 234, 257; Thirteen Buddha Rites, 14,
 230–234
- soul: Brahmanic concept, 274; Buddhist
antarābhava concept, 331–334, 336;
 contemporary views, 305, 335;
 contradiction with not-self doctrine,
 18, 334, 337; pre-Buddhist Japanese
tama concepts, 3, 331–332; Pure Land
 beliefs, 335–337. *See also* *anātman*;
 intermediate existence
- spirits: angry or vengeful, 120, 128n17,
 210, 218–219, 229, 244n73; beliefs in
 Buddhist cultures, 18, 274, 331–332;
 contemporary views, 305; enlightened
 (*kakurei*), 210, 212, 213; imperma-
 nence doctrine and belief in, 274;
 Japanese *tama* beliefs, 3, 331–332;
 possession by, 79, 208–210. *See also*
 ghosts
- spiritual friends. *See* *zenchishiki*
- stūpas: constructing, 104–106, 107–108,
 122, 125, 129n18; memorial, 107–108,
 123, 249, 255; miniature, 106, 119;
 remains interred in, 115
- Sudō Hirotooshi, 39
- Sugawara no Michizane, 107, 244n73
- suicides: to achieve birth in the Pure Land
 (*jigai ojo*), 139, 140, 147, 149, 150,
 153–157, 164–165; after death of
 master, 154–157, 159, 163, 165, 166;
 altruistic, 141, 142, 143, 145, 147, 165,
 166, 170n38; anomic, 141, 166; on
 battlefield, 151–152; in China, 145–
 147; collective, 140, 148–149, 152;
 drownings, 164–165; egoistic, 141,
 166; at funerals, 148–149; Japanese
 literary sources, 147–153; at Jitsunyo's
 funeral, 138–139, 140–141, 154, 157,
 158–166; mimetic, 138–140, 164–165,
 166; of monks, 149, 153; motives,
 139–140, 141, 144–145, 147, 153–154,
 165; prohibitions, 149, 156–157, 164;
 as public spectacles, 153–154, 166;
 resignation motive, 141, 151, 165, 166;
 of rulers and royal attendants, 148,
 149; Saburō Tamemori, 154–157, 164,
 166; *seppuku*, 138, 147, 152, 155–156,
 157, 164, 166; Shandao, 153;
 Shinran's teachings, 139; sites, 150,
 153; as social event, 140; solidarity
 motives, 139, 154, 164; sūtra accounts,
 142–145; of women, 147, 149. *See also*
 self-sacrifice
- suicidology, 141–142
- Sukehito, Prince, 66
- Sukhāvātī. *See* Pure Land of Utmost Bliss
- Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra* (Ch. *Wuliangshou jing*,
 Jpn. *Muryōjukyō*), 28–29
- Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra*, smaller (Ch. *Amituo*
jing, Jpn. *Amidaikyō*), 29
- Sūtra of the Golden Light*, 144

- Sūtra of the Perfect Dhāraṇī of the Thousand-Armed Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara*, 145
- Suzuki Shōsan, *Inga monogatari* (Tales of karmic causality), 218–219
- Ta'amidabutsu Shinkyō, 86
- Taiheki*, 152
- Taimadera: Amida image, 52; *mukaeko* ceremonies, 34, 44, 45, 59n90
- Taimadera engi*, 44
- Taima mandala, 32, 35
- Taira clan, conflict with Minamoto (Genpei War), 83–84, 119–120
- Taira no Kiyomune, 83–84
- Taira no Koremori, 99n102
- Taira no Kōreshige, 43–44
- Taira no Munemori, 83–84
- Taira no Shigehira, 67
- Taishiden*, 186
- Tajimamori, 148
- Takahashi Kōji, 331
- Takahashi Shinkai, 308
- Takemi Momoko, 222
- Tale of Genji*, 179
- Tale of the Heike (Heike monogatari)*, 67, 83, 151–152
- tales: of ghosts, 191–192; *ōjōden*, 32–33, 43, 66, 153; *otogizōshi*, 177, 182–183, 184–185, 186–191; *setsuwa* collections, 50, 154
- Tamamuro Fumio, 297
- Tamamuro Taijō, 212, 237n13, 247, 250, 257; *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Funeral Buddhism), 1–2, 247, 296–297
- Tamamushi no zushi*, 105, 107, 142
- Tamura Yoshirō, 297
- Tanabe, Willa Jane, 44
- Tango Risshi, 86
- Tanluan, 31
- Tanshū, *Rinjū gyōgi chūki* (Notes on deathbed practice), 68–69, 71–72, 73, 75, 76
- Tateyama, 181, 220, 240n40
- Teiho Kenzeiki zue* (Illustrated Teiho-era edition of the Record of Kenzei), 218
- Teiser, Stephen F., 233
- temple certification system (*teraue seido*), 13, 207, 250–251, 287n14, 295, 297, 307
- temples: clan, 36, 115, 255; contemporary relations with parishioners, 303, 311–312, 313, 315–316, 318; donations to, 310, 312, 314–315; entertainment function, 326; fundraising missions, 181–182; funerals as primary function, 1–2, 88, 247, 298, 319, 325–326; income from funerals, 247, 293; land-holdings lost, 293, 300; main-branch system, 295; memorial service fees, 312; precept name fees, 300, 301, 303, 310, 312, 314, 315, 318, 323n60; in rural areas, 303, 318; village, 88, 250. *See also* parishioner household system
- Ten Buddhas: paintings, 231; recitation of names, 212, 224, 237n11
- Tendai: Committee for the Promotion of Harmony, 308–309; contemporary explanations of funeral practices, 303, 304; discriminatory precept names, 307; funerals, 214, 252–253, 264–265, 267, 271; lay precepts, 313; memorial services, 271–272; military troops, 137, 159; posthumous ordinations, 253, 265. *See also* Enryakuji; Hiei, Mt.
- Tengu no dairi*, 184–185
- Ten Kings, 228, 231, 269
- Tennōji (Shitennōji), 132n39, 150
- teraue seido*. *See* temple certification system
- Thirteen Buddha Rites (*jūsan butsuji*), 230–234, 269, 271
- Tōdaiji, 106, 107
- Togashi Masachika, 161
- Tokieda Tsutomu, 177–178
- Tokoyo, 5
- Tokuda Kazuo, 182
- Tokugawa Ieyasu, 255
- Tokugawa period: deathbed practice, 88–90; funerals, 88–89; memorial rites, 231; parishioner household system, 13, 228, 250–251, 295–297; regulation of Buddhism, 251; women's status, 222
- Tokushōji, 219
- Tokuunji, 219
- Tonomura, Hitomi, 177
- tonsure: after death, 215, 264; deathbed, 4, 72; symbolic, 262. *See also* ordination
- Toriyama Sekien, *Hyakki yagyō* (Night procession of one hundred demons), 191

- Tosotsuten. *See* Tūṣita Heaven
- True Pure Land Buddhism. *See* Jōdo Shinshū
- Tsūgen Jakurei, 231
- Tsuji Zennosuke, *Nihon bukkuyōshi no kenkyū* (Studies on the history of Buddhism in Japan), 294–295
- Tsutsumi Kunihiiko, 219
- tsuya*. *See* wakes
- Tūjue culture, 146, 164
- Tūṣita Heaven (Tosotsuten, Heaven of Satisfaction), 6, 30, 68, 81, 109, 111, 149, 171n43, 213, 254
- Twenty-Five Samādhi Society. *See* Nijūgo zanmai-e
- ubume* (birthing woman), 191–192, 196, 223
- Ubume Kannon, 192, 224
- Udana-in Nichiki, *Jūgōen raiju giki* (Ritual instructions for the Jūgōen), 259–260
- Uji shūi monogatari*, 154, 156
- Ungaku, 109
- Ungoji, 51
- Unrei Taizen, 221
- Urabon ceremonies, 3–4
- Urabonkyō* (*Ullambana Sūtra*, *Yulanpen jing*), 176, 178–179
- Ususama Myōō, 222
- Vasubandhu, 333
- Vessantara-jātaka*, 104
- Vinaya, prohibition of suicide, 142, 143
- Wakan rōishū*, 40
- wakes (*tsuya*), 261, 263; contemporary, 276; Sōtō Zen, 211–212, 214
- Wakita Haruko, 176, 188, 192, 194, 197
- Wangsheng xifang jingtu ruying zhuan* (Accounts of auspicious responses accompanying birth in the western Pure Land), 33
- warriors: deathbed rituals, 86; early Zen funerals, 257; precept names, 299; suicides, 140, 151–152; temples honoring deaths, 122
- wasan*. *See* hymns
- Watanabe Morikuni, 190
- Watanabe Shōkō, 296, 326
- Watson, James L., 261, 277, 278
- Watsuji Tetsurō, 188
- Weber, Max, 141–142
- Western Pure Land. *See* Pure Land of Utmost Bliss
- wish-fulfilling jewels (*nyoi hōju*), 122, 125
- women: birth and menstrual pollution, 87, 180, 185, 208, 221–222, 227; birth in Pure Land, 10, 23n27, 113; bodies, 176, 187–188, 196–197; burials, 115, 116; deathbed ritual participation, 87; decapitations, 187–188, 190; five impediments, 113, 131n37; funerals and memorial services, 178–179, 180–181, 207–210, 260; ghosts, 193, 195, 218; health manuals, 189; jealousy of co-wives, 186, 187, 192; *mukaekō* attendance, 47–48; ordinations, 225, 243n63; relics assemblies on behalf of, 114, 117; relic worship by, 111–113, 117–119, 132n39; salvation, 178, 183, 185, 207–210, 260; social roles, 11, 176, 177, 222; suicides, 147, 149; as *zenchishiki*, 87, 100n112. *See also* childbirth; motherhood; nuns; pregnancy
- Wuliangshou jing*. *See* *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*
- Wuxue (Mugaku), 122, 123
- Xuanzang (Genjō), 107, 248
- Xuepen jing*. *See* Blood-bowl Sūtra
- Yagi Kishō, 336
- yamabushi*, 177–178, 214–215
- Yamashinadera, 36
- Yamashiro no Ōe, 148–149
- Yao *bikuni* (white nun), 182–183, 184
- Yijing, 146, 263
- Yomi, 179, 229
- Yoshishige no Yasutane, 32–33, 36, 38, 40, 41
- Yulanpen jing*. *See* *Urabonkyō*
- Yūson, 121
- Zen: afterlife concepts, 272; funerals, 256–257, 267, 272; lay funerals, 6, 257; monastic funerals, 213, 214, 256–257; relics of masters, 122–123
- zenchishiki* (spiritual friends): activities, 75–80, 97n67; criticism of use, 81–82; evil influences warded off by, 78–79; Genshin as, 43; lay persons, 86–87; for non-elite clients, 85–86; number of, 70, 72, 75, 85; nursing role, 75–76;

- zenchishiki* (spiritual friends) (cont.)
 position in monastic world, 83–85;
 postmortem role, 80; remuneration,
 85; responsibility for *ōjō*, 63–64,
 77–78, 80–81; role, 74–81, 90;
 specialized knowledge, 74, 80–81;
 village priests, 88; women, 87,
 100n112
- Zenkōji, 181, 182
- Zen lineage charts (*kechimyaku*): granting
 to lay dead, 14, 215, 217–220, 266;
 powers, 217, 218–219; for women, 225
- Zennihon Bukkyōkai. *See* Japan Buddhist
 Federation
- zensō* (“meditation monks”), 85–86
- Zhantuoyueguowang jing* (Sūtra of the king
 of Sendaotsu), 190–191
- Zhiyi, 134n73, 252; *Mohe zhiguan* (Great
 calming and contemplation), 35–36
- Zōjōji, 255, 335, 336
- Zoku honchō ōjōden*, 43, 50–51, 200n19
- Zonkaku, “Haja kenshō shō” (“Notes
 Assailing Heresy and Revealing the
 Truth”), 338

Of related interest

The Buddhist Dead **Practices, Discourses, Representations**

Edited by Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone

2007, 504 pages, illus.

Cloth ISBN: 978-0-8248-3031-1

Studies in East Asian Buddhism, No. 20

Published in association with the Kuroda Institute

In its teachings, practices, and institutions, Buddhism in its varied Asian forms has been—and continues to be—centrally concerned with death and the dead. Yet surprisingly “death in Buddhism” has received little sustained scholarly attention. *The Buddhist Dead* offers the first comparative investigation of this topic across the major Buddhist cultures of India, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Tibet, and Burma. Its individual essays, representing a range of methods, shed light on a rich array of traditional Buddhist practices for the dead and dying; the sophisticated but often paradoxical discourses about death and the dead in Buddhist texts; and the varied representations of the dead and the afterlife found in Buddhist funerary art and popular literature.

Modern Passings **Death Rites, Politics, and Social Change in Imperial Japan**

Andrew Bernstein

2006, 256 pages, illus.

Cloth ISBN: 978-0-8248-2874-5

Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute

Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University

“Filled with important information and useful insights.” —*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*

“Bernstein has marshaled an impressive array of facts and ordered them to present a history of Japanese attitudes toward dissolution and its celebration.” —*Japan Times*

Cover art: Amida Buddha and his holy retinue descend to welcome a practitioner at the time of death and escort him to the Pure Land. Amida nijūgo bosatsu raigōzu (thirteenth-fourteenth century). Courtesy of Chion'in and Kyoto National Museum.

Cover design by Santos Barbasa Jr.

University of Hawai'i Press
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822-1888

ISBN 978-0-8248-3204-9



9 780824 832049