Seeing Speech, Reading Bodies:

Manifestations of Language in Japanese Buddhist Visual Cultures of the Thirteenth Century

by

Susan M. Dine

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(History of Art)
in the University of Michigan
2021

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Kevin G. Carr, Chair
Associate Professor Erin Brightwell
Associate Professor Nachiket Chanchani
Assistant Professor Brendan McMahon
Professor Emeritus Raymond Silverman

Susan M. Dine

smdine@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-7595-7603

© Susan M. Dine 2021

Dedication

For my mother, whose endless support made it possible for me to complete this dissertation and degree.

Acknowledgements

Too many people to name here have contributed to my progress as a scholar. Despite the impossibility of this task, a few must be noted specifically. My advisor, Kevin Gray Carr, has been an unceasing source of support throughout my time as a doctoral student. I can truly say that I would not be the person I am today without his impact. He constantly pushed me to grow as an academic and provided the scaffolding I needed to do so, but beyond that, our stimulating conversations about ethics, systems, geekiness, and scholarship in its many and varied forms have contributed to my personhood even outside academia. For all of this, some visible within this dissertation and much that is not, I thank him.

I likewise extend my gratitude to my committee members, who have been generous in sharing their knowledge, expertise, and time with me. Erin Brightwell provided invaluable guidance on my translations and interpretations of written primary sources. Even during an exceptionally difficult year for everyone, when her time was surely at a premium, she graciously gave feedback, written and in real-time. She allowed me the space to talk through aspects of the texts, but also to be a human being with all the accompanying challenges and flaws. Any mistakes throughout this dissertation in relation to primary sources are assuredly mine, but whatever facility I may express has been greatly buttressed by her support. Nachiket Chanchani has, from the time I was in course work until today, seen the value in my research and prompted me to articulate and expand this value in many ways. Conversations with him consistently lead me to concrete paths forward. Throughout the years, Raymond Silverman gave of his time and energy to help me thrive in the fields of both Art History and Museum Studies and Practice. His

perceptive questions prompted self-reflection on my practices as an academic and were always welcome and productive. I am fortunate to have experienced Brendan McMahon's thought-provoking and astute advice and insight. His presence on my committee has made even the final stages of dissertation editing exciting and stimulating.

My fortune is even greater for having known many supportive scholars beyond my committee. Natsu Oyobe has been an exceedingly unselfish and brilliant mentor for many years, nurturing my scholarship and museum work. Both before and after retiring, Patricia Simons has never failed to get to the heart of the matter and provide actionable advice. Many thanks to Megan Holmes and Ana María León, who have not only had an indelible influence on my growth, but also each epitomize the type of scholar I aspire to be. George Tanabe, though "retired" and geographically distant, exhibited his extreme kindness by meeting with a then-unknown graduate student over Zoom and the phone to answer questions about his book, published decades prior. In addition to his intellectual engagement with my project, he went above and beyond to aid me when COVID-19 prevented me from going to Japan the summer before my final year. I am very grateful for his support. The Freer Fund allowed me to spend a year at the Smithsonian Institute's Freer | Sackler Galleries, under the mentorship of James Ulak. The Mellon Foundation's generous curatorial funding also supported my doctoral work.

Among my supportive community of fellow graduate students, I especially thank Holly Rubalcava (who was there from "the beginning" so many years ago), Emily Cornish, Katharine Campbell, Chun Wa Chan, Robert Morrissey, Rachel Chamberlain, and Ashley Dimmig for their constant readiness to read drafts, talk through challenges, or to provide companionship over a meal. They made the journey so much more enjoyable.

Notes on Sources, Translation, and Transliteration

Source Abbreviations

HDZ	*Hōnen Shōnin den zenshū* 法然上人伝全集. Kyoto: Hōnen Shōnen den zenshū Kankōkai, 1978.
KZ	*Kōbō Daishi zenshū* 弘法大師全集. Mount Kōya: Mikkyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1970-77.
MSS	*Myōe Shōnin shiryō* 明恵上人資料. 5 vol. ed. Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsa dan. Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku shuppankai, 1971-.
NKBZ	*Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集. Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1970-1976.
NKBT	*Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957-1966.
SSZ	*Shinshū shōgyō zenshū* 真宗商業全集. Kyoto: Kōkyō shoin, 1963-64.

Taishō Tripiṭaka marked as found in the online database (SAT *Daizōkyō* Text Database). T (for Taishō Tripiṭaka) text number_volume number.page number. Example: T0278_.09.0676a

Translation and Transliteration

Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

For transliteration of Japanese words, I use the modified Hepburn system. For transliterating Chinese names and terms, I employ pinyin, the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) for Sanskrit, and the Revised Romanization of Korean for Korean.

Translation marker abbreviations are as follows:
J. to clarify, when necessary, a Japanese term (usually assumed);
Skt. for a Sanskrit term;
and Ch. for a Chinese term

Table of Contents

Dedication ii

Acknowledgements iii

Notes on Sources, Translation, and Transliteration v

List of Figures viii

Abstract xii

Introduction 1

Chapter Summaries 20

Conclusion 29

Chapter One Foundations and Development of Language Representations in Japan Prior to the 13th Century 30

Language as a Tool of Authority and Legitimization as Seen in Early Japanese Writing 32

The Power of Words in Sutras and *Setsuwa* 40

Kūkai and the Impact of Shingon on the Representations of Language 47

The Mechanics of Magical Words Beyond and Adjacent to the Sutras 64

Authority, Legitimacy, and Ordering the World in Early Medieval Narrative Framing 72

Conclusion 76

Chapter Two The Development of the *Nenbutsu*-speaking Image Type as a Refinement of Language-Bodies 78

Pure Land Buddhism in Japan: Early Examples and the Significance of the Tendai and Shingon Schools 80

Destruction, (Re)Construction, and Song-dynasty Imports 93

The Development of Shàndǎo Paintings in Japan 101

Forming Bodies: Shàndǎo and Kūya Sculptures at the Turn of the Century 127
Conclusion 148
Chapter Three Language-Bodies in the Individual's Context: Myōe's "*Sanji Sanbōrai*" 151
Training, Authority, and Lineage in an Age of Degenerate Dharma 157
Hōnen's Work, Myōe's Response, and the *Sanji Sanbōrai* 173
Artistic Production and the *Sanji Sanbōrai* Hanging Scroll Imagery 191
Conclusion 216
Chapter Four The Multiplicity of Language within *Kōmyō Honzon* 219
Shinran and True Pure Land Buddhism 222
The Myōgenji Work: Description and Lineage Representation 226
Dating the Myōgenji work 234
Confluence of Images Within the Composition of the Myōgenji *Kōmyō Honzon* 237
Multiplicities of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Myōgenji *Kōmyō Honzon* 249
Brief Notes About the Later Development of *Kōmyō Honzon* 263
Conclusion 266
Conclusion 269
Figures 275
Bibliography 318
Abbreviations 318
Primary Sources and Translations 318
English Secondary Sources 322
Japanese Secondary Sources 331

List of Figures

Chapter One

Figure 1-1: Sculptural mandala (*katsuma mandara*): detail view from east, Statues 839-1834 CE, wood, lacquer, gold leaf. Lecture Hall of Tōji. Image from Bogel, With a Single Glance, 282. 275

Figure 1-2 Tōji Sanskrit slips (*bonji mandara*; Sanskrit character mandala), probably 9th century, Heian period, ink on paper, Lecture Hall, Tōji, Kyoto, from *Nihon chokokushi kiso shiryo shusei: Heian jidai: zozo meiki hen* vol. 1, 50. 276

Figure 1-3 Mahāpratisarā Bodhisattva with text of *Dà suí qiú tuóluóní*, Chinese, dated 980, Northern Song dynasty, ink on paper, 30.3 x 41.7 cm, woodblock print, British Museum, 1919,0101,0.249..... 277

Chapter Two

Figure 2-1 Process of rock crystal eyes installation..... 279

Figure 2-2 Pure Land patriarch Shàndǎo (J. Zendō), first quarter of 13th century, Kamakura period, colors and cut-gold foil on silk, 141 x 55 cm, Chion-ji, Kyoto. 280

Figure 2-3 Five Pure Land patriarchs (J. *Jōdo goso zō*), Chinese, early 13th century, Southern Song dynasty, color on silk, 114.2 x 61.2 cm, Nison-in, Kyoto, Important cultural property. .. 281

Figure 2-4 Comparison of details from figures 2-2 and 2-3. 282

Figure 2-5 *Hōnen shōnin eden*: Hōnen meeting Shàndǎo in dream vision, early 14th century, Kamakura period, color and ink on paper, height: 33 cm, overall length: 1214 cm, Chion-in, Kyoto, National Treasure. 282

Figure 2-6 Amida descent with twenty-five bodhisattva attendants, 13th century, Kamakura period, color on silk, 145.1 x 154.5 cm, Chion-in, Kyoto, National Treasure. 283

Figure 2-7 Statue of Kūya, by Kōshō, between 1207 and 1212, polychromy and wood, height: 116.5 cm, Rokuharamitsu-ji, Kyoto, Important Cultural Property. 284

Figure 2-8 Detail of Kūya statue, by Kōshō, between 1207 and 1212, painted wood, height: 116.5 cm, Rokuharamitsu-ji, Kyoto, Important Cultural Property. 285

Figure 2-9 Interior inscription of Kūya statue, by Kōshō, between 1207-1212, Kamakura period, Rokuharamitsu-ji, Kyoto, Important Cultural Property. 286

Figure 2-10 Statue of Shàndǎo, circa 1200-1206, Kamakura period, polychrome and wood, height: 86.4 cm, Raigō-ji, Nara Prefecture. 287

Figure 2-11 Interior inscription of Shàndǎo statue (back area), between 1207-1212, Kamakura period, Raigō-ji, Nara Prefecture. 288

Figure 2-12 Statue of Fudō Myōō, by Kaikei, 1203, Kamakura period, polychromy, gold, and wood, Daigō-ji, Kyoto, Important Cultural Property. 289

Figure 2-13 Interior inscription of Shàndǎo statue (head), circa 1200-1206, Kamakura period, Raigō-ji, Nara prefecture. 290

Figure 2-14 Statue of Shàndǎo, first half of 13th century, Kamakura period, polychromy and wood, height: 96.1 cm, Chion-in, Kyoto, Important cultural property. 291

Figure 2-15 *Nōnyūhin*: internal organs (*gozōroppu*) of Shàndǎo statue, 13th century, Kamakura period, silk (brocade and braided cord), longest length (excluding the braided cord): 14.5 cm, Chion-in, Kyoto, Important cultural property. 292

Figure 2-16 *Nōnyūhin*: internal organs (*gozōroppu*) of Śākyamuni statue, Chinese, 985, Northern Song dynasty, silk (brocade and braided cord), Seiryō-ji, Kyoto, Important cultural property. 293

Figure 2-17 Śākyamuni Nyorai statue, first half of thirteenth century, Kamakura period, wood with traces of polychromy, height: 97 cm, Jōraku-in, Kyoto. 293

Figure 2-18 Statue of Kūya, 13th century, Kamakura period, polychromy and wood, height: 119 cm, Tsukinowa-dera, Kyoto. Important Cultural Property. 294

Figure 2-19 Statue of Kūya, 13th century, Kamakura period, polychromy and wood, height: 122.4 cm, Jōdoji, Matsuyama-shi, Important Cultural Property..... 295

Figure 2-20 Statue of Kūya, 13th century, Kamakura period, polychromy and wood, height: 84 cm, Shōgon-ji, Shiga prefecture, Important Cultural Property. 296

Chapter Three

Figure 3-1 *Sanji sanbōrai* hanging scroll, circa 1215, ink, colors, and cut gold on silk, Kōzanji, Kyoto, image courtesy of Dr. George Tanabe. 297

Figure 3-2 Transcription of diagram of *sanjirai* hanging scroll. Image source: Myōe, *Sanji sanbōrai shaku*, ed. Nakano Tatsue, in *Nihon Daizōkyō* vol. 42 (Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921), 195. 298

Figure 3-3 *Kegon kai e zenchishiki*, Raien (act. late 13th century), late 13th century, Kamakura period, ink and colors on silk, 184.5 × 118 cm, Tōdaiji, Nara. 299

Figure 3-4 *Kegon kai e sho shōju mandara*, 13th century, Kamakura period, ink and colors on silk, 117.6 x 76.7 cm, Kōzanji, Kyoto. Important Cultural Property..... 300

Figure 3-5 Kasuga Shrine Mandala (*Kasuga miya mandala*), early 13th century, Kamakura period, ink and colors on silk, 65.4. x 28.5 cm, Nezu bijutsukan (Nezu Museum), Tokyo. Important Cultural Property. 301

Figure 3-6 Myōe seated in meditation in a tree, 13th century, Kamakura period, ink and pigment on paper, 145x59 cm, Kōzanji, Kyoto. National Treasure. 302

Figure 3-7 Detail of one character, one buddha *Lotus Sutra* (*ichiji ichibutsu Hokekyō*), 10th – 12th century, Heian period, ink and color on paper, Zentsū-ji, Zentsūji. 303

Figure 3-8 Detail of one-character stupa *Lotus Sutra* (*ichiji hōtō Hokkekyō*), late 12th century, Heian period, gold on indigo paper, Nara National Museum, Nara (formerly Anrakuju-in, Kyoto), Important Cultural Property..... 303

Figure 3-9 Jeweled pagoda mandala, 13th century, Kamakura period, gold, silver, and slight color on indigo paper, 111.4 x 58.5 cm. 13th century, Ryūhonji, Kyoto, and Collection of Nara National Museum. 304

Chapter Four

Figure 4-1 *Kōmyō honzon*, inscriptions by Shinbutsu, circa 1256, Kamakura period, left: 162 x 40.2 cm, center: 177 x 42 cm, right: 161.4 x 39 cm, ink, pigment, and gold, Myōgenji, Okazaki, Aichi Prefecture, Important Cultural Property..... 305

Figure 4-2 Diagram of the composition of the Myōgenji scrolls with order of reading inscriptions noted with Arabic numerals. Tsuda Tetsuei, "*Kōmyō honzon kō*," 62. 306

Figure 4-3 Detail of figure 4-1 *kōmyō honzon*, central scroll. 307

Figure 4-4 Detail of 4-1 *kōmyō honzon*, left scroll. 308

Figure 4-5 Detail of 4-1 *kōmyō honzon*, right scroll. 309

Figure 4-6 Prince Shotoku and Attendants, 13th century, Kamakura period, ink, color, and gold on silk, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, F2001.1. 310

Figure 4-7 Portrait of Shōtoku Taishi, 13th century, Kamakura period, colors on silk, 113.8 x 38.2 cm, Ganshō-ji, Okazaki, Aichi Prefecture. 311

Figure 4-8 Six-character *myōgō*, by Shinran, 1256, Nishi Honganji, Kyoto. 312

Figure 4-9 Ten-character *myōgō*, by Shinran, 1256, Senjuji, Tochigi Prefecture. 313

Figure 4-10 Amida triad wall painting, circa 710, Nara period, polychromy, Hōryūji, Ikaruga. 314

Figure 4-11 Diagram of *kōmyō honzon* as described in Zonkaku's *Benjutsu myōtai shō*. 315

Figure 4-12 *Kōmyō honzon*, beginning of 14th century, Kamakura period, ink and color on silk, 149.5 x 84.9 cm, Kōshō-ji, Uji..... 316

Figure 4-13 *Kōmyō honzon*, beginning of the 14th century, Kamakura period, ink and color on silk, 151.5 x 55.6 cm, Jōfuku-ji. 317

Abstract

This dissertation examines the refinement of and increased experimentation with representations of "language-bodies," or simultaneous representations of both the embodied presence of a Buddhist deity and spoken or written word, in Japanese painting and sculpture of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In particular, I present visual works that used language-bodies to navigate challenges at a variety of levels: individual, familial, monastic, societal, etc.. This study's methodology centers visual analysis in combination with textual analysis, consideration of networks, and a biographical approach. While previous studies generally focus on a single sect or image type, I assemble case studies from different Buddhist groups in premodern Japan to explore broad trends in representations of language of the time. I argue that while language had long been used as a salvific and apotropaic tool, the increased use of language-bodies within newly-developed Buddhist imagery in the thirteenth century stemmed from the scope and scale of political, physical, spiritual, and ecological disasters throughout the preceding twelfth century. In this context, Buddhist practitioners both in mainstream and marginalized positions understood language to be a powerful tool for navigating such shifting societal, religious, and personal challenges.

Although works with language-bodies increased in number and type during the thirteenth century, it is important to understand their antecedents. In Chapter One, I explore early considerations of the power of words in Japan and evidence of ninth-century works as the earliest use of "language-bodies" in Japan. The next three case studies are early to mid-thirteenth-century works that simultaneously innovate and draw from those earlier conceptions

and representations. Chapter Two examines early thirteenth-century paintings and sculptures illustrating the monks Shàndǎo (613-681) and Kūya (903-972). These works manifest language-bodies in a physical, anthropomorphic forms as buddha figures emerging from the open, chanting mouths of the monks. This chapter also addresses the ways concepts regarding the depiction of language could move within networks of people, places, and objects, thus providing an example of language-bodies functioning at a broader societal level. Chapter Three's central object of study is a hanging scroll painting linked to the monk Myōe's (1173-1232) *sanji sanbōrai* ("worship of the Three Treasures thrice [daily]") ritual, depicting language-bodies as enthroned Siddhaṃ characters and phrases in Sino-Japanese characters. Combining close visual analysis with a biographical approach incorporating Myōe's life and written works enables a nuanced understanding of language-bodies by considering how such images may work at the individual and small community levels. In Chapter Four, I consider the earliest extant *kōmyō honzon* ("radiating light" icon) painting, developed within Shinran's (1173-1263) Buddhist community and containing both figural and textual icons. This *kōmyō honzon* painting evinces a multiplicity in meanings and uses of language-bodies, built on the interplay between components of the image and the work's viewers.

The objects considered in this dissertation allow us to explore the ways that material and immaterial challenges were addressed using language-bodies to leverage Buddhist power and authority as well as the legitimacy of the past. The project is relevant to a variety of disciplines in considering what visual culture can reveal about the non-semantic layers of language, premodern perceptions of these layers as manifested in visual forms, and the levels of response—from personal to societal—in using language-bodies to counterbalance upheaval.

Introduction

When Shàndǎo practices the *nenbutsu*,
Buddhas then issue forth from his mouth.
All believers who see this
Know it is not an illusion...[1]
…The winds of karma rouse waves
[And] the seated Buddha [grows] especially distant

善導念仏　仏従口出
信者皆見　知非幻術 […
…] 業風起波　坐仏殊迥

- Buddhist monk Yúnshěng 雲省 of Sìmíng, 1161 CE[2]

These words accompany a painting of the Chinese monk Shàndǎo (figure 2-2), copied in Japan sometime in the decades around 1200. In the work, Shàndǎo stands with hands pressed together and mouth open. As he seemingly chants, miniature seated buddha figures emerge but move ever further from him, drifting up and away in a mirroring of the underlying anxiety within the inscribed words above the painted image. In Japan, distance from the Buddha was a pervasive concern regardless of century or location, but for early medieval Buddhists, the negative effects of this abstract distance appeared to be very concrete: violent conflict after

[1] This term carries the implication of purposeful deceit through an illusion so the inscription is clearly noting that this is not a trick on Shàndǎo's part. The issue of illusory experiences is a prominent thread within Buddhist teachings.

[2] This is an excerpt from an inscription on a painted hanging scroll in the collection of Chion-ji 知恩寺, copied from a Song-dynasty painting done circa 1161. I discuss this painting and its full inscription in more detail within Chapter Two. The inscription text is transcribed in 2 publications: *Hōnen and Shinran: Treasures Related to the Great Masters of the Kamakura Buddhism: Special Exhibition in Commemoration of the 800th Grand Memorial of Hōnen and the 750th Grand Memorial of Shinran* (Tokyo: NHK Puromōshon: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2011), 337; Takama Yukari, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," *Geijutsu kenkyū* 24 (2011): 1.

violent conflict, natural disasters, epidemic, famine, drought, death, and more. Individually, none of these were a new concern, but the scale and frequency in the twelfth century seemed, at the time, unprecedented. They also happened to dovetail with the predictions of the start of *mappō* 末法 (Latter [Days] of the Dharma) from around 1052. In light of the physical and spiritual suffering endured by multitudes, especially in the late twelfth century, the "winds of karma" must have felt, at the time, like hurricane gales.[3] For many, circumstances were beyond their control and even those with power, means, and heightened agency could only control so much. As ever, illness could visit any household, rich or poor. An earthquake could shake down political strongholds and common huts alike. Political intrigue could cause friend to become foe, or vice versa. And there was the ever-present awareness that people's bad experiences were a karmic result of their (or their family members') actions. Into this breach of trauma and anxiety, Buddhist practitioners of the thirteenth century rode the wave of long-standing apotropaic traditions and developed new rituals, individual practices, and philosophical treatises out of them.

This dissertation explores the Kamakura period (1185-1333), with a particular focus on the early to mid-thirteenth century, as a time of intense experimentation with representations of language across a variety of media that reached out to an ever-widening audience.[4] I argue that

[3] Certainly, there are period texts that lament the tragedies of the times. While some of this could be exaggeration or poetic license, it is also true that the feelings of trauma and anxiety were no less valid for our modern weighing of the level of suffering during this time in comparison to other periods.

[4] There is no easy split of time periods where commoners had no access whatsoever to Buddhist imagery and then they did. Even prior to the thirteenth century, there were specific days or events that were open to people within the lower classes. Certain areas of sacred sites were available to those in need of support for their health and/or living situations. Still, the thirteenth century did see a selection of Buddhist monks that specifically preached with more frequency to people of diverse backgrounds. Likewise, the frequency of and access to viewing Buddhist imagery seems to have increased with practices such as *etoki* 絵解き (pictorial exegesis), printed copies of images, and more developing around this time.

while language had long been used as a salvific and apotropaic tool, this increased experimentation within visual culture was an exertion of agency, wherein Buddhist practitioners both in mainstream and marginal positions understood language to be a potential, and powerful, tool for navigating the shifting challenges of the time. Specifically, I explore how the power of language as a tool was refined and employed as "language-bodies" through the study of three image types: works depicting *nenbutsu*-speaking monks Shàndǎo 善導 (613-681) and Kūya 空也 (903-972), the *sanji sanbōrai* 三時三宝礼 (worship of the Three Treasures thrice [daily]) painting, and *kōmyō honzon* 光明本尊 ("radiating light" icons). In short, I use language-body/ies to describe an image that is simultaneously a representation of both deity and word (spoken or written)—material representations of their interpenetration and layered associated meanings. This term thus engages with individual concepts of language, body, and materiality while exploring the ways they are overlaid upon one another.

In this conception, language is broadly understood as being connected to the systems of communicating ideas or feelings via conventionalized sounds or marks accepted to have certain meanings within those widely accepted systems.[5] Therefore, "language" in this dissertation can refer to components—spoken, written, or both—from various language systems, including Sanskrit, Chinese, and Japanese.[6] Each of the case studies in this dissertation illustrate language-

[5] For a full range of what "language" can mean, see *Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, s.v. "language," accessed July 18, 2021, https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/language.

[6] Sanskrit can be recorded in written form in a variety of scripts. Some writing systems that have been used to record Sanskrit are Brahmi and Nagari scripts (each of which have variants) as well as other Indic scripts such as Gujarati, Bangla, and Odia. In Japan, the Siddhaṃ script (J. *shittan moji* 悉曇文字) was used predominately for recording Sanskrit from Kūkai's 空海 (774-835) introduction of its importance to the Shingon school's 真言宗 Esoteric training and practice. Siddhaṃ is a Brahmi script that derived from the Gupta Brahmi script in the sixth century. Although many Buddhist texts written in Siddhaṃ were transmitted to China via trade routes, it is especially notable that Esoteric (tantric) texts were recorded in Siddhaṃ script. After Kūkai studied Esoteric Buddhism in China, he returned to Japan with many Siddhaṃ texts, believing that mantras had their efficacy bound up with proper pronunciation and that the Chinese script was not sufficient in maintaining it. When Kūkai studied Siddhaṃ in China, many trade routes between China and South Asia had been cut off and the scripts developed and popularized

bodies. Painted and sculpted images of Shàndǎo and Kūya show this conflation of deity and word in the physicalization of the spoken *nenbutsu* 念仏 (Ch. *niànfó* 念佛) as miniature Amida Buddha 阿弥陀仏 (Skt. Amitābha, alt. Amitāyus) figures emerging from their mouths. In the hanging scroll painting developed by Myōe 明恵 (1173-1232 CE, alt. Kōben 高弁), buddha body is visualized as written characters, both Sino-Japanese and Sanskrit, enthroned on a lotus pedestal. Likewise, the initial *kōymō honzon* created by Shinran's 親鸞 (1173-1263) early True Pure Land Buddhist community represents written characters as an embodiment of Amida.[7] Each of these provide an example of how the concept and representation of language-bodies was refined and used as a tool to suit the needs of the communities or individuals interacting with them. The images of Shàndǎo and Kūya are a case study for broader societal concerns and needs, the Myōe work allows us to overlay a consideration of the individual person on top of these wider issues, and the *kōmyō honzon* provides a look at a moment when both societal and individual concerns were undergoing a shift mid-century.

Modern periodization is generally based on significant changes in political institutions viewed in hindsight, yet for the purposes of this dissertation, there is a clear epistemic shift around 1200. The twelfth century saw a marked increase in works of art that incorporated language—for example, in written Sanskrit and *kanji* 漢字 (Sino-Japanese characters). This trend continued into the thirteenth century when even more such works were being created. The objects in this dissertation are examples of works developed within this trajectory. From circa

after Siddhaṃ did not transmit to China easily or at all. Siddhaṃ was adopted into both mainstream and some marginal Buddhist traditions in Japan and became even more widespread in the medieval period. Therefore, although Siddhaṃ script's use in South Asia waned around 1200 CE, it continued to be used within Japan and even today is part of Buddhist practice there.

[7] This is greatly simplifying the description of what is happening in these images. The chapter summaries near the end of the introduction will give more detail.

1200 until mid-thirteenth century, there was not only a strong use of language in general within Buddhist art and practice, but also many new image forms created, illustrating the importance of language-bodies within Buddhist practice and innovation at the time. The ways in which language-bodies were incorporated into objects from the late thirteenth century on exhibited more standardization. The refinement of the depictions of language-bodies over the sixty or so years starting around 1200 prompted a practice that became so ubiquitous that they were easily recognizable, even expected, by viewers of Buddhist visual cultures, regardless of sectarian or institutional affiliation and socio-economic level.

Although there are many types of works that I could have included in this study, as mentioned, the objects I have selected not only exhibit a similar shaping of the language-bodies concept and its role in affecting change, but they are also objects that hint at the networks of artistic production that can, at times, be difficult to trace in ancient and medieval periods. Many of the works I discuss do not have extensive (or any) specific written historical documentation. Yet piecing together what is extant combined with close study of the objects' visual characteristics reveals potential connections that indicate rich intellectual and material exchanges. Further, the case studies in this dissertation each present a slightly different aspect of the overall concept of language as a soteriological and protective tool within images, as I will describe in the chapter summaries shortly.

In dealing with Kamakura-period material, including a significant amount regarding the visual cultures of the Pure Land (*Jōdoshū* 浄土宗) and the True Pure Land (*Jōdo shinshū* 浄土真宗) sects, my dissertation implicitly engages with the historiography of Kamakura Buddhist studies, allowing another look at the dated yet latent disciplinary debates via the intervention of considering the use of language-bodies in relation to continuity and change. In the post-World

War II era, prevailing scholarly opinions regarding the Kamakura period within Japanese history emphasized the period as a revolutionary shift in Buddhist traditions.[8] This approach centered studies of the founders of newly developed Buddhist movements such as the Pure Land, True Pure Land, and Nichiren sects, among others—in other words, a "new Buddhism" (*shin Bukkyō* 新仏教) of medieval Japan. This term was contrasted with "old Buddhism" (*kyū Bukkyō* 旧仏教), of the Nara (710-794) and Heian (794-1185) periods. Thus, modern studies originally constructed a reading of the Kamakura period as characterized by a binary with charismatic founders creating Buddhist communities that reached out to common people in intentional opposition to corrupt orthodoxies that catered only to elite figures.[9] Also contributing to this trend in scholarship were the wide-reaching effects of Marxist theory, through which scholars of Japanese history felt they could study the perceived shift of Buddhism's focus from the upper classes to the lower classes.[10] Additionally, because Buddhist studies in particular finds early grounding in the sectarian scholarship (*shūgaku* 宗学) of the late nineteenth century, with roots in the Edo period (1603-1868), sectarian concerns inflected studies of the Kamakura period so

[8] This was, in part, modeled on the European Christian Reformation. For more, see James Ford, "In Search of a Lost Reformation: A Reconsideration of Kamakura Buddhism," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 7, issue 4 (Dec. 1980): 261-91.

[9] Religious studies scholar Jacqueline Stone adroitly presents a detailed historiography, through the lens of her book's central topic, *hongaku* 本覚 (original enlightenment). Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 55-94.

[10] Under such methodologies, "new Buddhism" was often framed in terms of a new, democratizing emphasis on the lower classes and a subsequent casting of "old Buddhism" in the role of elitist oppressor. In other words, the subtext of work under this approach on the Kamakura period was that of "hero" and "villain" in looking at the various Buddhist traditions. A prominent (Marxist) historian, the late Amino Yoshihiko (1928-2004) worked extensively on the medieval period and had a lasting influence on subsequent Japanese historians and any scholar working on medieval Japan. Meticulously examining historical records, Amino spent his early career studying marginalized communities, concluding that premodern Japan was not culturally homogenous nor an integrated state. He added complexity and nuance to the study of medieval Japanese history, especially marginalized lifestyles, when it had relatively recently (in the Meiji period, 1868-1912) been dominated by an emphasis of orthodoxies (in service to nationalistic academic trends).

that different traditions were artificially separated out from other contemporaneous religious movements.

During the Edo period, Buddhist temples were organized into a temple-branch system within sectarian lines and under the control of the *bakufu* 幕府 (military government headed by the military ruler, or *shogun* 将軍). With restrictions on intersectarian debate, scholar-monks maintained a strong inward focus on refining their sect's doctrines and histories, resulting in broad efforts to collect, edit, and publish historical sectarian texts in addition to newly-written commentaries. The seminaries of the various sects eventually became today's Japanese Buddhist universities, which serve as essential archives and centers for the study of Japanese Buddhism.[11] These vibrant places of learning as well as the intellectual community of practitioner-scholars today are crucial in the field, but still, due to the nature and historical contexts of these institutions, the inescapable sectarian biases still color Buddhist studies in Japan. These biases—such as a teleological approach to sectarian history as well as privileging one's own sect's histories and founder—must be considered in engaging with the materials, both primary and secondary. As many significant centers of learning are associated with sects whose early development was in the Kamakura period, these sectarian biases contributed to the emphasis of a revolutionary "new Buddhism" which lionized charismatic founders.

A significant change in approach was pioneered the late Kuroda Toshio (1926-1993). He set forth the *kenmitsu taisei* 顕密体制 (exoteric-esoteric system) theory.[12] A central, innovative

[11] Some examples of such Buddhist universities in Japan are Tokyo's Risshō University (Nichirenshū 日蓮宗 affiliation) and Ōtani University in Kyoto (affiliated with the Ōtani branch 大谷派 of the True Pure Land sect), among many others.

[12] Kuroda's work is extensive. Major works include *Jisha seiryōku: mō hitotsu chūsei no shakai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980); *Nihon chūsei no kokka to shūkyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990); and "*Chūsei jisha seiryoku ron*," in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi: Chūsei* vol. 6, ed. Asao Naohiro et al (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975). English translations of several works of Kuroda's scholarship, as well as analyses of it, can be found in: *The Legacy of*

tenet of this theory was that the mainstream of Buddhism in medieval Japan were practices of the older institutions (Tendai 天台, Shingon 真言, and the Nara schools) rather than the new movements such as Pure Land schools and Zen, among others.[13] As Kuroda presented it, the *kenmitsu* system was a shared foundation in Esoteric Buddhism, incorporated into these mainstream schools to varying degrees and in different ways. Each sect then distinguished itself from the others through a particular "Exoteric" doctrine. Underpinned by Esotericism, inherent to this *kenmitsu* system was the perception of Esoteric ritual for thaumaturgic purposes, almost uniformly to repel danger and misfortunate and invite prosperity. Generations of scholars have followed in his footsteps, clarifying, augmenting, refining, and correcting for a fuller picture of *kenmitsu taisei*. Yet, because his work on *kenmitsu taisei* largely addressed leading temple-shrine complexes (*jingūji* 神宮寺) and how their use of Esoteric rituals was part of political, economic, and ideological endeavors—aspects of medieval religion that until that point had not been adequately addressed—Kuroda's scholarship aligned to some degree with what he was criticizing. In other words, in demonstrating the flaws of "old" versus "new" Buddhism model, he somewhat reinforced the existences of the two by positing that the older traditions (orthodoxies, *seitō-ha* 正統派) were mainstream and the newer groups, marginal communities (heterodoxies, *itan-ha* 異端派). As historian Sueki Fumihiko points out, "It [*kenmitsu taisei*] does not readily escape the formulation that the *itan-ha* (or new Buddhism) equals the good

Kuroda Toshio, ed. James C. Dobbins, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, issues 3-4 (Fall 1996). Of particular relevance from these issues are James C. Dobbins, "Editor's Introduction: Kuroda Toshio and His Scholarship," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, issue 3 (1996): 217-32; Kuroda Toshio, "The Development of the *Kenmitsu* System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy," trans. James C. Dobbins, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, issue 3 (Dec. 1996): 233-270; and Sueki Fumihiko, "A Reexamination of *Kenmitsu Taisei* Theory," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, issue 4 (1996): 449-66.

[13] The Nara schools, or the Six Schools (*Rokushū* 六宗), are: the Sanron 三論, Kegon 華厳, Risshū 律宗, Jōjitsu 成実, Hossō 法相, Kusha 倶舎 sects. These schools were introduced to Japan in the late seventh and eighth centuries.

guys, and the *seitō-ha* (or old Buddhism), the bad guys. 異端派（新仏教）＝善玉、正端派（旧仏教）＝悪玉という図式はなかなか脱しがたいのではあるまいか。”[14]

For decades since Kuroda’s initial introduction of these ideas, scholars have worked toward addressing the inherent issues in the “old” versus “new” model.[15] Some of the correctives have been to study figures of the established traditions—such as George Tanabe’s book on the Kegon monk Myōe 明恵 (1173-1232) or James Ford’s on the Hossō monk Jōkei 貞慶 (1155-1213).[16] Other attempts have foregrounded specific movements that upended the constructed binary by illustrating advocates for change even within established Buddhist traditions such as the precepts revival movements.[17] Still other scholars have looked at figures that represent a type

[14] English translation: Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, 61. Bracketed term added by me. Sueki Fumihiko, “*Kamakura Bukkyō kenkyū o megutte*,” in *Nihon Bukkyō shisōshi ronkō* (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1993), 276.

[15] In addition to Kuroda’s impact via the *kenmitsu taisei* theory, he also made a mark in the study of Japanese history with his theory of *kenmon taisei* 権門体制 (system of ruling elites). As with his construction of the *kenmitsu taisei* theory, Kuroda added nuance to the, at the time, prevailing conceptions of Kamakura-period governance. Scholarship generally considered the Kamakura period to be a time of emerging complete military governance. In contrast, Kuroda suggested that while military power did increase and there was a shift, nonetheless many of the elite groups from the previous Heian period 平安時代 (794-1185) continued to maintain continuity of power. Kuroda argued that governance was split among three main power blocs (*kenmon*): warriors, aristocrats, and religious centers of power.

[16] George J. Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). James L. Ford, *Jōkei and Buddhist Devotion in Early Medieval Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[17] One earlier example of such work is Matsuo Kenji, *Kamakura shin Bukkyō no seiritsu: Nyūmon girei to soshi shinwa* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988). Sections of particular relevance are pages 180-81 and 292. In addition to this and the books of the previous footnote, see also Matsuo Kenji, *A History of Japanese Buddhism* (Boston, Brill USA, 2008), particularly 160-74; Lori Meeks, “Vows for the Masses: Eison and the Popular Expansion of Precept-Conferral Ceremonies in Premodern Japan,” *Numen* 56, issue 1 (2009): 1-43; Lori Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2010); and Minowa Kenryō, “The Movement for the Revival of the Precepts by the Ritsu School in Medieval Japan,” trans. Elisabetta Porcu, *The Eastern Buddhist* 39, issue 2 (2008): 125-157/Minowa Kenryō, “*Kairitsu fukkō undō*,” in *jikai no seija: Eison, Ninshō*, ed. Matsuo Kenji, *Nihon no meisō* vol. 10 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004): 45-73.

of "trans-establishment Buddhism" (*chō taisei Bukkyō* 超体制仏教).[18] These studies have helped to break down the binary of establishment and anti-establishment (or "old" and "new") Buddhism.[19] Any scholarship that addresses the Kamakura period, my dissertation included, cannot escape being in dialogue with these many approaches.

My dissertation engages with these efforts mainly by considering continuities and disruptions within medieval Buddhism. As many scholars have shown, from Kuroda on, there are strong continuities across Buddhist traditions of the thirteenth century, orthodox and newly developing alike—most notably for this dissertation, a continuity in the use of language and its representations in efforts to exert agency by activating supernatural power. The general perception of language as a potential tool for manipulating the world had already been present prior to the thirteenth century, as shown in Chapter One which provides the foundations for the subsequent inquiries. Even in developing new image types, Buddhist communities were adapting well-established practices while responding to current events and newly imported material and ideas. Yet despite these clear continuities, there are innovations within visual culture such as the sculptures depicting *nenbutsu* chanting (explored in Chapter Two). Similarly, works such as Shinran's *kōmyō honzon*, discussed in Chapter Four, could provide historically-based material evidence for arguments on either disruption or continuity. Therefore, Jacqueline Stone's words

[18] An example of this scholarship is Sasaki Kaoru, *Chūsei kokka no shūkyō kōzō: taisei Bukkyō to taiseigai Bukkyō no sōkoku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988). One figure (who will be present in this dissertation, however briefly) who has been interpreted as trans-establishment is the monk Chōgen 重源 (1121-1206).

[19] Stone, in her work on original enlightenment within Buddhist studies and practice, outlines three theories that emerged in *hongaku* historiography. Though specific to her study, they represent broader approaches to Kamakura-period history and similar theories can be found in both general and specific scholarship on the Kamakura period. The three theories are as follows: Tendai Buddhism as a common basis from which new movements emerged (Tendai as matrix theory), founders of the new movements essentially rejecting Tendai Buddhism (radical break theory), and the founders as responding to both Tendai doctrine and the soteriological needs of the time (the dialectic theory). Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, 63-94. Pared down to their essential ideas, these three approaches—common basis, radical break, and dialectic—are applicable to many aspects within the historiography of Kamakura Buddhism.

on Kamakura Buddhism are particularly apt: "...the Buddhist movements of the Kamkura period have proved hard to categorize. Viewed from one perspective, any one of them exhibits affinites with certain others, but when the perspective is shifted, it will be seen to differ from these and instead show affinities to others."[20] This fluidity of interpretation suggests that such works can be simultaneously examples of continuity and disruption, thereby destabilizing these categories as a false binary. In fact, I propose that we should see the diversions and disruptions within continuities as experimentation—synonymous with innovation—in finding ways to mitigate real and perceived challenges—which allows us to consider why the use and development of language-bodies increased in the thirteenth century.

Because representations of language are the core of this dissertation, my work also inherently engages with that of the many other scholars who have explored the topic of text and/in/as image, including through semiotics, though my approach is not heavily colored by this methodology.[21] "Text and image" studies were prominent in work done on Euro-American visual culture during the last quarter of the twentieth century. In the last two decades, such scholarship has found fertile ground in the study of Asian visual culture and semiotic analysis has become embedded to some degree in many interdisciplinary approaches. My dissertation's topic is relevant to these various approaches, but does not center semiotic analysis. I mainly draw inspiration from scholars working with various approaches within the field of Asian studies in

[20] Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, 58.

[21] Key semioticians are Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Peirce, Roland Barthes, and Umberto Eco. Although many other semioticians contributed to the study of language signification, these four in particular have heavily influenced this study within the geographic contexts of Asia. For example, religious studies scholar Fabio Rambelli's work, which has given sustained and rich semiotic analysis to premodern Japanese Buddhist history for over a decade, draws from Umberto Eco's studies. Historical figures within Japan, too, developed semiotic theories, though of course not in modern semiotic terms. This was especially strong within the Shingon tradition, starting with the Japanese founder Kūkai 空海 (774-835, alt. Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師). A general, English-language volume on Japanese Buddhist semiotics is: Fabio Rambelli, *A Buddhist Theory of Semiotics: Signs, Ontology, and Salvation in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism* (New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

general and, more specifically, transdisciplinary Japanese studies.[22] While I engage with scholars working both within Japan and those in the Anglophone academia, research that engages the material of this dissertation in a broader, more conceptual way is generally centered in English-language publications whereas Japanese-language scholarship is often primary source oriented and context-focused, so I have engaged frequently with Japanese-language research on very specific topics or works. The Japanese scholarship has been indispensable for each chapter study and the English-language work has provided me support with the overall framework.[23]

This English-language scholarship that has shaped my approach has been interdisciplinary. Volumes such as those by linguist Christopher Seeley and literary historian David Lurie address basic histories of language in Japan, providing the foundations for considering the roles of language—especially the written word—and its general development within Japan.[24] Scholars such as Bryan Lowe, working in the field of Religious Studies, have focused on the roles and processes of writing within Japanese religious traditions—seen in his book on ritualized writing in ancient Japanese Buddhist practices.[25] In addition, the work of other religious studies scholars Ryūichi Abé and Fabio Rambelli has been valuable in providing me with an examples of nuanced semiotic approaches to Buddhist Studies, using mainly Shingon

[22] Two English-language examples, in particular, come from the study of Chinese visual culture: Michelle C. Wang, *Maṇḍalas in the Making: the Visual Culture of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhang* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018) and Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014).

[23] In the chapter summaries, I will point to some of the Japanese scholarship. The following section addresses some of the English-language scholarship I use.

[24] Christopher Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1991). David Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[25] Bryan Lowe, *Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017).

sect 真言宗 material.[26] Other approaches have been to look at how text genres were used and what they reveal about period trends and perspectives. Comparative literature scholar Charlotte Eubanks provides one such example in her book exploring *setsuwa* 説話 (explanatory tales) in connection to conceptions of the body during the medieval period in Japan.[27] Erin Brightwell's book on the *Mirror* genre (*kagami* 鏡, "cosmological histories") demonstrates how such texts were "a tool for ordering the past that appealed to both court- and *bakufu*-based writers."[28] Keller Kimbrough's work on medieval poetry and related tales of the benefits of poetry (*katoku setsuwa* 歌徳説話) explicates medieval poetic composition as an extension of Buddhist *dhāraṇī* theory.[29] All of these studies and their approaches reveal aspects of the roles, uses, and processes of language in Japanese material culture that contribute to a fuller understanding of the complex layers of how language in visual forms was (and is) interpreted by different people dependent on their own identities and backgrounds.

[26] As aforementioned, much of Rambelli's work engages with Shingon semiotics, but this is particularly representative of his research: Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhist Theory of Semiotics*. Rambelli has also delved into Buddhist materiality. His research interests are fruitful for application in art historical studies. Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhist Materiality: a Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007). Abé looks closely at Kūkai as the progenitor of semiotics within Shingon through a study of mantra. Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of the Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). I engaged in a more sustained manner with Abé and Rambelli in my Master's thesis. Susan Dine, "Sanskrit Beyond Text: The Use of Bonji (Siddham) in Mandala and Other Imagery in Ancient and Medieval Japan" (MA thesis, University of Washington, 2012).

[27] Charlotte Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body: Buddhist Textual Culture and Medieval Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011). Eubanks' book is particularly relevant to the study of visual cultures because of her emphasis on materiality.

[28] Erin Brightwell, *Reflecting the Past: Place, Language, and Principle in Japan's Medieval* Mirror *Genre* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020), 19.

[29] Keller Kimbrough, "Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry: Spells, Truth Acts, and a Medieval Buddhist Poetics of the Supernatural," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2005): 1-33. I return to Eubanks, Brightwell, and Kimbrough in more detail within Chapter One.

My dissertation also builds off art historian Halle O'Neal's study of twelfth- to thirteenth-century jeweled pagoda mandalas (*hōtō mandara* 宝塔曼荼羅) in terms of looking at innovation in language representation.[30] O'Neal's study considers these hanging scroll paintings, in which pagoda architectural forms are constructed from sutra transcriptions in Chinese characters (figure 3-9), through a layered interpretation of soteriological potential, somaticity of Buddha and practitioner, and the breakdown of the gap between illustration and scriptural text:

> These singular paintings exhibit a novel use of language that refuses hermeneutical restriction and reveals texts as open and malleable, with functions far beyond that of religious reading material. In particular, they expose underlying dynamics in medieval Japanese Buddhist art such as invisibility, performative viewing, and the spectacular visualizations of embodiment.[31]

Like the jeweled pagoda mandalas, the works in this dissertation illustrate the "underlying dynamics" of language within Buddhist art. O'Neal grounds the jeweled pagoda paintings within a vibrant sutra transcription culture that was especially rich from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, bound by ritualized processes and always seeking to make more luxurious and more unique iterations of scripture in the quest for merit leading to material and immaterial benefits. Indeed, though she presents the jeweled pagoda mandalas as "singular" works, she demonstrates that they are nonetheless created within broader traditions of sutra copying, discourses of Buddha bodies, and concerns related to salvation. As her book makes clear, what has often been called the "cult of the book" within Buddhism had a significant presence in Japan early on. In the centuries leading up to the thirteenth century, sutra transcription took many forms, ranging from luxurious handscroll sets to ceramic tiles. The jeweled pagoda mandalas of O'Neal's study span

[30] Halle O'Neal, *Word Embodied: the Jeweled Pagoda Mandalas in Japanese Buddhist Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

[31] O'Neal, *Word Embodied, 3.*

the twelfth through thirteenth centuries and could well have been one of the case studies of this dissertation.[32] Yet while sutra transcription was shifting throughout the twelfth century, the innovations expanded beyond the layered meanings of the scriptural text (as in the jeweled pagoda mandalas) to innovations in other works, specifically those studied in this dissertation. The works I present herein further invite viewer-practioners to activate both image and self via the tool of language, likewise co-constituted in image and self. My study builds on O'Neal's by showing the similar ways that multiple image types developed over the thirteenth century made visible "conceptual interpenetrations."[33] I argue that these concerns and innovations of the jeweled pagoda mandalas became more frequently visible within works of art, and more easily understood as language-bodies, over the thirteenth century as communities sought to leverage the past in a variety of ways so as to navigate challenges of their times.

These interdisciplinary studies also bring up one of the most persistent issues I encountered while writing this dissertation, the choice of terminology regarding the use of language in these works. Existing scholarship has used a variety of descriptors: intertextual, intra-textual, extra-textual, alegible, nondiscursive, non-semantic, non-syntactic, empowered inscription, non-hermeneutical manipulations of text, et cetera. Each of these terms are used for legitimate reasons, yet for my purposes I have found them to be more categorically bounded than what can accurately describe historical practice.[34] In my exploration of this dissertation's objects of study, I have found that the works' representations of language seem to function on many

[32] The complexity of these works would indeed be a rich connection to my case studies, as they combine concepts of scripture, reliquary, relic, and language-bodies (though perhaps not as readily perceived as such).

[33] O'Neal, *Word Embodied,* 235.

[34] Halle O'Neal's approach has consciously kept the necessity for fluidity concerning language representations at the fore, one of the aspects of her work that I have most appreciated.

levels—two of which are how individual encounters operate, drawing on the ways a particular viewer uses and views an object, and the multiple possibilities of their meaning and interplay within larger networks. The above terms struggle to encompass both of these, let alone the many other ways that these language-bodies engage viewers (as well as other objects). I may, therefore, employ some of these terms dependent on specific aspects of the objects in question throughout this dissertation's chapters. Overall, however, I aim to present a view of language-bodies that is intricately layered.

My use of the term language-body/ies was prompted in part by my dissatisfaction with the sometimes-limited scope of the above list. In pairing these words, I am referencing each individually (language and body) in their most commonly-used associations, but also in the breadth of their possibilities. I like the level of ambiguity that can be found in each and the way that they play off one another when combined. One of the definitions of "language" from the Merriam Webster unabridged dictionary is "a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings."[35] In addition to this inclusion of sound, gesture, and mark-making, the term language has been used in combination with other words and prefixes such as in metalanguage, object language, and thing-language. The many associations that the word can pull from one's mind are appropriate in terms of this dissertation topic, which illustrates the multivalent nature of language-bodies within visual works. The objects I study reference "language" in varying forms—spoken, written, thought—but they also engage a perception of language that is outside even these systems. This is where pairing it with the term "body" is productive. The definitions

[35] *Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, s.v. "language," accessed June 6, 2021, https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/language.

of this term within Merriam Webster are many. To name just a few, the word "body" has been used to describe the physical, material nature of living beings; the principal or central part of something; and an aggregate in contrast to things outside it (so-and-so's body of work). All of these definitions are productive associations with the way that language is visualized in the works of this dissertation. One definition from Merriam Webster is particularly relevant: "something that embodies, realizes, or gives concrete reality to a thing."[36] The objects of study all do this. They embody, realize, or give concrete reality to a wealth of concepts. At the most basic, they embody the power and presence of Buddhist deities. Yet, the associations are inherently more wide-ranging. The language-bodies studied in this dissertation include various signifiers, including Sanskrit characters, *kanji* characters, and figural (anthropomorphic) forms.[37] These language-bodies were culturally and experientially inflected (thus potentially personalized to an individual), which includes the semantic and hermeneutical layers, intertextual associations, legibility/illegibility/alegibility, extra-textual associations, visible versus invisible, and any combination thereof, among other possibilities.[38] In summary, my use of this term, language-body/ies, is an attempt to consider the ways that all of these associations were being employed in the visual culture from the early to mid-thirteenth century works that I study herein.

The question of 'what is a language-body' is answered at a variety of levels, then. It is a physical representation (a signifier) of both a referent language system (either via its

[36] *Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, s.v. "body," accessed June 6, 2021, https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/body.

[37] The complexities of this will be parsed out more, especially in Chapter Two with discussions of body and language.

[38] Lurie coined the term "alegible" (also used by O'Neal), especially in discussing early examples of written word in Japan. "Overemphasis on 'transparent' or 'legible' literacy diverts attention from the full range of ways in which writing facilitates the making of meaning and the exercise of power, many of them independent of specific or systematic linguistic associations." Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*, 64.

visual/written objects or auditory/spoken objects) and a Buddhist body. It is the latter which engages some ambiguity in the framework of language-bodies. While "Buddhist body" in terms of thirteenth-century works most frequently refers to buddha bodies, especially various manifested forms of Buddhist deities such as Amida Buddha, it also encompasses the broader considerations of "body" in Buddhist contexts.[39] For example, sutra texts could be venerated as a buddha body, relic, or reliquary.[40] As seen with Myōe's ritual and painting in Chapter Three, the Buddhist Three Treasures (*sanbō* 三宝) of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha (or Buddhist community of monks, nuns, and laity; Skt. *saṃgha*, J. *sōgya* 僧伽) are yet another way to consider Buddhist "bodies" in the sense of physical bodies and in a broader categorical sense. As physical bodies, the Three Treasures refer to the supramundane (though manifestable in the mundane world) and mundane bodies of buddhas and humans, respectively, as well as text bodies, which themselves had their own conflation with buddha bodies. The term "body" in the English language can also mean "a group or numnber of persons or things."[41] This extra layered meaning is also suited to the application of the term to representations of the Three Treasures. Therefore, although there is clearly a fluidity to the consideration of what a Buddhist body may be, I attempt to present a delineated ambiguity herein, maintaining and appreciating that the ambiguity can open up possibilities and more accurately reflect the layered associations with objects depicting language-bodies during the medieval period while nonetheless trying to give

[39] As I will address in Chapter Two, historically within Buddhist philosophy, even conceptions of buddha bodies (of specific Buddhas, for example) were debated and theorized.

[40] As scholars such as Charlotte Eubanks and Halle O'Neal have shown, this is well-supported in medieval primary sources, both textual and visual.

[41] *Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, s.v. "body," accessed July 21, 2021, https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/body.

some parameters to the term.[42] In short, even with these ambiguities, the representations of language-bodies in Buddhist visual culture have three particular qualities: referencing language, presence of Buddhist deities, and a physicality that has either a direct or implied immediacy to it.[43]

Another challenge encountered in the course of researching and writing this dissertation ended up being one of its main merits. My dissertation brings together works regardless of sectarian or instutional connections. While this means that certain aspects of the historical conextualization are relatively brief, putting these diverse objects in conversation with one another is one of the most significant contributions of this dissertation.[44] Where previous studies have generally focused on a single sect or "founding figure," my intervention brings together works from different Buddhist communities of premodern Japan. This has revealed much about a

[42] Conversations with my dissertation have been useful in pushing me to think deeply about these considerations. Many thanks especially to Erin Brightwell, who advised me to work on a "delineated ambiguity."

[43] This last quality has great potential for thinking of how and why language-bodies were refined at this specific time and then utilized to a broader degree than before, especially when thinking of how the frailty of the human body must have been highlighted to an extreme degree in the twelfth century. I have only begun to consider these connections in the last stages of crafting this dissertation and, thus, look forward to expanding on them in the future.

[44] Each of the chapter case studies could themselves be the topic of an entire dissertation due to complexities of the actors and objects therein. In fact, many dissertations dealing with Japanese art history focus on one work, trace a single image type through multiple examples, or focus on artwork of a specific school or temple. The benefits of such types of dissertations are clear single historiographies and the ability to dive deeply into temple contexts and specific sectarian networks, et cetera. For example, entire volumes have been dedicated to some of the figures that play a part in my dissertation: Hōnen, Myōe, and Shinran. In addition to Tanabe's volume on Myōe, cited above, see Mark Unno, *Shingon Refractions: Myōe and the Mantra of Light* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004); Kawai Hayao, *The Buddhist Priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams* (Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1992)/Kawai Hayao, *Myōe: Yume o ikiru* (Kyoto: Shōhaku-sha, 1987); Tanaka Hisao, *Myōe* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961); Machida Sōhō, *Renegade Monk: Hōnen and Japanese Pure Land Buddhism*, trans. Ioannis Mentzas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)/ Machida Sōhō, *Hōnen: seikimatsu no kakumeisha* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1997); Hakamaya Noriaki, *Hōnen to Myōe: Nihon Bukkyō shisōshi josetsu* (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1998); Tamura Enchō, *Hōnen Shōnin den no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1972); *The Collected Works of Shinran*, ed. Dennis Hirota, vol. 1-2 (Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1997); Wamae Wachanga Muriuki, "That I Should Dance on the Earth: Shinran's Revaluation of 'Karmic Afflictions'" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2012); and the many volumes by Ueda Yoshifumi regarding Shinran, his texts, and his doctrine (far too numerous to list here). In fact, it is notable that the majority of English-language monographs related to Shinran largely are mainly translations of his writings. This is just a small selection of texts on these figures. Japanese-language scholarship on them is immense and nigh impossible to list.

general "period eye" in terms of language representations within artworks with the additional benefit of beginning to build a rich history of overlapping relationships, exchanges, and ideas regardless of sectarian affiliations.[45]

Chapter Summaries

The first chapter, "Foundations and Development of Language Representations in Japan Prior to the 13th Century," sets the stage for the subsequent chapters. In it, I present several precedents and factors that laid the groundwork for the historical context of this dissertation's main objects of study. More specifically, I outline perceptions of language having authority, sacred power, visuality, and utilitarian efficacy—all characteristics that the thirteenth-century objects from Chapters Two to Four built upon. Chapter One considers how language was a tool for authority and legitimization from its earliest incarnations within material objects. I follow this foundational idea of authoritative framing through early imperially-sponsored texts that provide examples of language's functioning in not purely semantic ways. I next outline the ways both canonical and extracanonical texts expounded and expanded on the sacred power of word, something I touch upon in the analyses of imperial texts. To situate the impact of Esoteric Buddhism on visual culture (which tracks with Kuroda's *kenmitsu taisei* theory that lays esoteric Buddhist elements as the shared quality of orthodox and heterodox communities), I then focus on

[45] One of those working with a social history of art approach, art historian Michael Baxandall articulated and applied the concept of the "period eye" within his texts, including: *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); *Patterns of Intention: on the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). In short, it encompasses the supposition that the ways people process visual images are based on innate characteristics in combination with experiences, which are culturally and historically conditioned. Therefore, the term period eye usually refers to the way that artworks functioned within their original contexts. Innovative in the 1980s, the concept is now implicit in most art historical scholarship.

the monk Kūkai 空海 (774-835, alt. Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師). He is the first known figure in Japan to present an extensive, cohesive semiotic discussion of language within Buddhism. Additionally, he emphasized the role of language in Buddhist praxis and the structure of his visual schema accommodated (in fact, likely introduced) the use of language as icon.[46] In the centuries following Kūkai, theoretical considerations of language developed in a variety of paths. To establish an example of the mechanics of sacred word in the early medieval period, I outline the work of Keller Kimbrough on forms of poetic verse that came to be employed in thaumaturgic ways similar to the use of *dhāraṇī* formula from Kūkai's time.[47] This chapter is bookended by the concepts of authority and legitimization, which are threaded through the other considerations of the power of words. As the political world seemed to shift again in Japan in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, language was used as a tool to in crafting an understanding of current and recent events and their place within a larger history, as Erin Brightwell addresses in her study.[48] Brightwell's exploration of early medieval cosmological histories illustrates a deployment of language that uses narrative framing to make sense of the surrounding world, supplying authority and legitimization in a variety of ways. Overall, this chapter weaves together disparate threads in an effort to establish a very basic foundation of the multimodal (linguistic, oral, and visual) ways that language was used as a tool prior to the thirteenth century. In illustrating some continuities in sacred and mundane contexts regarding the perceptions of language's power, this foundational chapter serves as a broad-stroke look at the

[46] See Abé, Dine, and Rambelli, all cited above, as well as Cynthea Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

[47] Kimbrough, "Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry."

[48] Brightwell, *Reflecting the Past.*

history of language's material and immaterial effects in Japan so that the following chapters' case studies can be located within in a richer historical and conceptual context.

Chapter Two, "The Development of the *Nenbutsu*-Speaking Image Type as a Refinement of Language-Bodies," takes as its subject images of the Chinese monk Shàndǎo 善導 (613-681) and the Japanese monk Kūya 空也 (903-972) that showcase their practice of the *nenbutsu*.[49] In Japan, the earliest such extant images date to around the beginning of the thirteenth century. In both sculptural and painted forms, the monks are individually portrayed with mouths open and small figures of Amida Buddha emerging. These buddhas are figural representations of the spoken incantation of the *nenbutsu*.[50] The *nenbutsu* is the practice of paying homage to or focusing on Amida Buddha, which could traditionally be done orally, in one's mind, or both.[51] Not only do these depictions of Shàndǎo and Kūya capture the vital aspects of their teachings (an emphasis on the *nenbutsu*), but they also manifest the connection (both an informal sense as well as formalized as Buddhist *kechien* 結縁, or karmic affinity with Buddhist deity) that such an

[49] As with the following two case studies in the next chapters, the Japanese-language scholarship I reference often focuses on historical records and close attention to (and recording of) details. Therefore, I look at many short articles, chapters, or catalogue entries on specific works of art. The following are a selection of the Japanese-language scholarship that informed this chapter, even if not directly cited or engaged in the dissertation body: Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Hōnen: shōgai to bijutsu: Hōnen shōnin happyaku kaiki: tokubetsu tenrankai* (Kyoto: Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2011); Narita Shunji, "*Zendō daishi zō ni tsuite no 2・3 no mondai- tokini hankin iro zō wo chūshin ni*," *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū* 38 (1993): 1-16; Uratsuji Kentō, "*Hōnen Shōnin to Chōgen Shōnin*," in *Chōgen, Eizon, Ninshō*, ed. Nakao and Imai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983): 81-8; Takama Yukari, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," *Geijutsu kenkyū* 24 (2011): 1-18; Mizuno Keizaburō, *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei: Kamakura jidai: zōzō meiki hen* vol. 2, part 2 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2005); *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei: Heian jidai zōzō meiki hen* vol. 1, Maruo Shōsaburō et al, ed. (Tokyo: Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppan, 1967); Tanaka Yūko, "*Yugyō zo no keifu: Kyōto Rokuharamitsuji Kūya zo o meguru sōzōryoku*," *Mikkyō zuzō* 18 (Dec. 1999): 110-22; Miyajima Shin'ichi, "*Zendō daishi ryūzō*," in *Koji junrei Kyōto* vol. 19 *Chion-in* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1977): 137-38; Kurata Bunsaku, ed."*Zōnai nōnyūhin*," *Nihon no bijutsu* 86 (1973): entire issue; and Itō Shirō, "*Zendō daishi no shōzō*," in *Zendō daishi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 1980): 501-24.

[50] *Nenbutsu*/*niànfó* is a translation of the Sanskrit term *Buddhānusmṛti* ("recollection of Buddha"), though it developed within China and Japan into distinct traditions.

[51] Today, the recited *nenbutsu* is most well-known, in part because of the events, texts, and figures of the thirteenth century (during which many Pure Land sects and branches were solidifying).

action creates between believer and Buddha.[52] In fact, the works studied in this chapter materialize the thirteenth-century view of both Shàndǎo and Kūya as partaking of a divine presence through *nenbutsu* practice.

By this time, the focus on Pure Land practices was becoming more and more distinct within Pure Land communities that started to appear in the late twelfth century inspired by Hōnen. In previous centuries, such practices had been a part of a syncretic whole within other Buddhist sects, most notably Tendai.[53] In their exclusive Pure Land practice, Hōnen and his followers claimed Shàndǎo as a key patriarch in their Pure Land lineage. In fact, it was a text written by Shàndǎo that led Hōnen to devote himself to *nenbutsu* practice and Amida worship. It seems that Shàndǎo was broadly influential around the turn of the thirteenth century, as evidenced through his textual impact and the increasing prevalence of Shàndǎo depictions. With the continued development of Pure Land schools over the thirteenth century, Shàndǎo's significance did not wane. Likewise, Kūya, who had historically traveled and preached the *nenbutsu* around both urban (Kyoto) and rural areas, was taken up as a subject of artistic depiction around the same time that Shàndǎo imagery was being introduced. The first work depicting Kūya reciting the *nenbutsu*, a sculpture, was perhaps strategically used by the temple he founded, today called Rokuharamitsu-ji 六波羅蜜寺, but the native precedent that he

[52] Nakano Chieko, ""*Kechien*" as Religious Praxis in Medieval Japan: Picture Scrolls as the Means and Sites of Salvation" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2009). As Nakano describes, although many scholars working on medieval Japanese material culture naturally include a consideration of *kechien,* there are few to none in English discuss this concept/phenomenon in detail. Aside from Nakano's dissertation, a brief discussion of the concept can be found in Mark MacWilliams, "*Kannon Engi*: The Reijo and the Concept of *Kechien* as Strategies of Indigenization in Buddhist Sacred Narrative," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 3, no. 5 (1990): 53-70. Discussion of the *kechien* concept in Japanese-language scholarship has mainly centered in the Literature Studies. See Minobe Shigekatsu, "*Kechien to setsuwa denshō: Ōjōtan no seiritsu*," in *Chūsei denshō bungaku no shosō* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1988), 11-30; and Yamaguchi Makoto, "*Kechien no jikū: Ōjōden to chūsei*," *kochi Daigaku gakujutsu kenkyū hōkoku, Jinbun kagaku* 41 (1992): 21-37.

[53] This syncretism (including Pure Land practices) did indeed continue within the spectrum of Buddhist sects.

provided in counterpoint to Shàndǎo as a continental figure may account for the copies of the Rokuharamitsu-ji sculpture and, later, the incorporation of his *nenbutsu*-chanting image in narrative paintings promoting localized histories of significant people and places.[54] In this second chapter, I study these representations of Shàndǎo and Kūya in relation to one another. These works, I argue, provide insight to the ways that language's power was clearly perceived as having a material quality by the beginning of the thirteenth century. These images of Shàndǎo and Kūya clearly illustrate a refinement of language-body concepts and understandings through their materialization of spoken word as buddha bodies.

The works also show a tendency toward active presence, or in other words these images do not show benign power or sedentary adherent, but instead the monks are shown in a practice that requires bodily movement and the soteriological power—the presence of Amida—is in movement through the air. Both in the monks' depictions (especially compared to earlier images of historical Buddhist figures) and the responses the works invite from the viewer, venerator and venerated are actively moving through space. Additionally, the selection of these two monks as subject matter allowed a particular historic past to be leveraged within present Buddhist practice of the time to legitimize the popularity and rise of *nenbutsu* practice—something not uncommon in Buddhist traditions. In this chapter, I put these images in conversation with each other and suggest how they may relate to each other in terms of dating. In doing so, one encounters hints of the networks of artists, temples, patrons, and monks that created and used them. Examples such as the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya and three subsequent sculptural copies indicate a broader

[54] This work, arresting in its composition and skill, has often captured the attention of scholars in Anglophone academia, though little depth has been given to its study. Instead, it is usually brought up in passing, touched upon briefly as an example of Kei School sculpture, or to buttress other arguments. For example, Charlotte Eubanks addressed it in a later chapter of her book, but mainly to embody her argument without a deeper engagement with its specific contexts. Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 134-37. This is indicative of the ways the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya sculpture has appeared in Anglophone scholarship.

circulation of this imagery that likely contributed to the fourteenth-century paintings showing Kūya in a similar manner. In short, the Shàndǎo and Kūya examples discussed in Chapter Two establish a broad understanding of language as a powerful tool encouraging viewers to address communal suffering actively while simultaneously confirming legitimacy of their lineage and practice—two distinctive concerns of many early thirteenth-century Buddhist practitioners.

The concept of networks raised in Chapter Two leads into Chapter Three, titled "Language-Bodies in the Individual's Context: Myōe's *Sanji Sanbōrai*." This chapter focuses on a hanging scroll and paired practice that were created by the monk Myōe, who was ordained within both the Kegon sect (華厳宗) and Shingon sect (真言宗).[55] Myōe's text titled *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* 三時三宝礼釈 (*Explanation of the Worship of the Three Treasures Thrice [Daily]*) is key for laying out the daily practice associated with the hanging scroll.[56] While the *sanjirai* practice seems to have continued at the temple he established, Kōzanji 高山寺, it did not gain the popularity that the *nenbutsu* had and the imagery subsequently was mainly discarded with few to no other hanging scrolls made for the practice. In this chapter, I address the various

[55] A selection of the Japanese-language scholarship that informed this chapter is: Suzuki Kanta, "'*Gedatsumongi choshuki' ni okero Myōe no 'gonmitsu' shisō,*" *Indōgaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 58 issue 2 (2010): 698-701; Tanaka Hisao, *Myōe* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1961); Murakami Sōdō, *Toganosan Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin* (Kyoto: Kōzanji, 1929); Tanaka Hisao, "*Sanbō raihai ni kansuru Myōe no shōsoku*," in *Kamakura Bukkyō zakkō* (Kyoto: Shinbunkaku Shuppan, 1982), 332-42; Fujishima Tatsurō, "*Myōe shōnin no myōji honzon ni tsuite*," *Ōtani Gakuhō* 48-1 (1968): 1-6; Yanagida Seiji, "*Myōe shōnin no kōgi to sono kikigaki,"* in *Kōzanji tenseki monjo no kenkyū*, ed. Tsukishima Hiroshi (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980): 181-97; Mori Hisashi, "*Unkei, Kaikei to Kōzanji, Jūrin'in,"* in *Nihon Bukkyō chōkokushi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1970), 243-52; Takahashi Kazumitsu, "*Myōe no Sanji sanbō raishaku saikō*," *Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyū Nenpō* 35 (Mar. 2013): 293; Miyake Moritsune, "*Myōe no Sanji sanbōrai ni tsuite*," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 24, issue 2 (1976): 650-51; Miyake Moritsune, "*Myōe no Sanji Raishaku Shinkō ni tsuite: 'Sanji sanbōrai shaku' oyobi 'Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi' o chūshin ni shite*," *Seishin Kagaku* 13 (Mar. 1974): 99-110; Miyake Moritsune, "*Myōe kyōgaku no jidai kubun ni tsuite*," *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 49, issue 3 (Mar. 1976): 217-19. Most work focuses on the two texts by Myōe and little attention is given to the painting. Fujishima's article is one exception.

[56] Tanabe uses "Worship of the Three Treasures Thrice Daily" (Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 264). I have made some adjustments, including specifying "Explanation" in part to differentiate between the practice itself and the text explicating it.

factors that informed the creation of this image type, which enthrones both *kanji* written phrases and individual Siddhāṃ characters.[57] It combines Kegon and Shingon thought and material culture, and responds to the prevalence and popularity of *nenbutsu* practice and interest in Amida's Pure Land. It also encompasses Myōe's interactions with diverse followers, his visceral personal reaction to Hōnen's *Senchaku hongan nenbutsushū* 選択本願念仏集 (*Passages on the selection of the nenbutsu in the Original Vow*), and the artistic production in Myōe's environs. Whereas Chapter Two considers the power of language in a general communal sense, this chapter gives more attention to how the depiction of language-bodies could be used by a specific individual. The *sanji sanbōrai* painting that I study in this chapter is intimately connected to Myōe, being both a product of his mind and a subsequent focus of his personal practice. This work, therefore, provides the opportunity to contemplate how personal experiences could play out as a microcosm of the broader trends of "disaster management" via linguistic power. As such, incorporating a biographical approach in this chapter proves beneficial.

Chapter Four, "The Multiplicity of Language within "*Kōmyo Honzon*,"" provides a study of the *kōmyō honzon* 光明本尊 ("radiating light" icon) image type developed by Shinran in the mid-thirteenth century.[58] In such works, *nenbutsu* (*kanji*) characters are enthroned on a lotus

[57] Siddhāṃ (*shittan* 悉曇) is a written form of Sanskrit that was used in North India from circa 600 to 1200 CE and spread throughout Asia via Buddhism. Today, it is mainly seen in Japanese Buddhist practices as it was the form of Sanskrit that Kūkai introduced and popularized in the ninth century. Sanskrit characters are often called *bonji* 梵字 in Japanese as well—a term basically meaning characters of the Sanskrit language (*bongo* 梵語).

[58] Japanese-language scholarship that informed this chapter: Andō Fumihito, "*Myōgō honzon seiritsu no haikei ni tsuite*," *Shūkyō kenkyū* 87 (2014): 355-56; Hiramatsu Reizō, ed., *Shinshū jūhō shūei*, (Kyoto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1987)—particularly Chiba Jōryū, "*Benjutsu myōtai shō ni okeru*," Hiramatsu Reizō, ed. *Shinshū jūhō shūei*, (Kyoto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1987): 201-6; Wakaki Yoshihiko, "Zaijarin *to Shinran kyōgaku to no taiō*," *Shinshūgaku* 38 (Jan. 1968): 47-64; Tsuda Tetsuei, "*Kōmyō honzon kō*," *Bijutsu Kenkyū* 378 (2003): 61-106; Andō Fumihito, "*Shin hakken no Shinbutsu shosha seikyō ni tsuite*," *Indo Gaku Bukkyō Gaku Kenkyū* 58, no. 2 (2010): 1092-97; Andō Fumihito, "*Myōgenjibon 'Kōmyō honzon' no kōsei to sono igi,*" *Inbutsuken, Indo gaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 63 no. 2 (2015), 573-78; Andō Fumihito, "*Shinran ni okeru zōkei bijutsu no imi*," *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 89 (2106): 288-89; Andō Fumihito, "*Myōgenjibon 'Kōmyō honzon' no meishō no saikentō*," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 617, no. 2 (2019): 614-19; Yamada Masanori, "*Kōmyō honzon no seiritsu haikei*," *Nihon shūkyō bunka Kenkyū* 21, issue 1 (2017): 79-

pedestal surrounded on both sides by Pure Land patriarchs. I provide a brief analysis of Shinran's life, including his connection to Hōnen and tensions with other figures, which led to his exile and defrocking. Shinran and his close followers developed a True Pure Land icon form that suited many needs. It embodied his concept of the name (*nenbutsu*) as divine presence and made a clear connection via lineage to Buddhist masters from the continent, thus legitimizing Shinran's (and his followers') inheritance of the Dharma. Being a relatively portable work, it also benefitted this group of practitioners who did not yet have home temples in the early days of True Pure Land Buddhism. More simplified versions of *myōgō* 名号 (the [buddha's] name) hanging scrolls in Shinran's own hand are still extant, done in black ink on a blank ground of paper or silk. In this chapter, I sketch the development from that form, in which the characters of the *nenbutsu* are also enthroned on a lotus pedestal, to the *kōmyō honzon*. I look at the earliest extant version of *kōmyō honzon*, likely developed under the guidance of Shinran. In this process, one can clearly see the exploratory nature of developing works representing language in the thirteenth century. The creators of the image type were, as many Japanese scholars have stated, innovative, but it was simultaneously in conversation with works preceding such as the objects discussed in the earlier chapters.[59] Unlike Myōe's image, the *kōmyō honzon* image type continued within the True Pure Land sect's practice in the following centuries and so gives an index of innovation and experimentation followed by standardization.

Chapter Four also traces how preeminent concerns of patrons and artists shifted even within a short period and how that affected the creation and use of works with language-bodies.

97; and Nahata Takashi, "*Kinen kōen Jōdo shinshū no sugata: kōmyō honzno no shūgen*," *Shinshū Kenkyū* 60 (2016): 270-82.

[59] Almost every Japanese scholar who has written about this particular work (the incipient *kōmyō honzon*) has said or implied this. See previous footnote for some examples.

This incipient *kōmyō honzon* painting was still formed in the shadow of *mappō* anxiety, but in comparison to the works discussed in the previous two chapters, much more prominent is the use of such imagery as a concrete manifestation of the legitimacy and authority of Shinran and his followers. Chapters Two and Three reveal the urgency of societal and personal concerns laced with *mappō* anxiety in experimentations of language-bodies and consider how this imagery was understood as an avenue toward alleviating them. Chapter Four similarly expresses these concerns in its composition and the multivalent ways that its components interact with the *myōgo* and its viewers, though seemingly with more focus on the issues that come with being a forming community. Even at a glance, the image, with its central language-body and surrounding True Pure Land patriarchs, leaves no doubt that the individual True Pure Land practitioner is rooted in a larger network of people and divine power/presence. Japanese Buddhists of the early thirteenth century, viewed through the works considered in this dissertation, responded in direct ways to the political and social struggles of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. By mid-thirteenth century, as seen through Shinran's *kōmyō honzon*, many appear to have generally accepted the new order of governance and could turn their focus to carving out a space for themselves within the structures of society that had undergone significant shifts.[60] Therefore, this chapter builds on the previous sections that address societal anxieties in Chapter Two and the overlaid individual anxieties in Chapter Three, combining these considerations to illustrate the further refinement of language-body as a legitimizing and powerful soteriological tool. For Shinran, there were hints of personal anxieties (as for Myōe) that manifested partially in an emphasis on historical lineage within the *kōmyō honzon*, but the wider need was for bonding his

[60] By mid-thirteenth century, the military government was firmly entrenched, having suppressed the Jōkyū Disturbance of 1221 (alt. Jōkyū War or Rebellion, J. *Jōkyū no ran* 承久の乱) and with the Hōjō clan (北条氏) eliminating their remaining rivals in the 1240s thus solidifying their power over the *bakufu*.

followers into a community that could claim a legitimate space within the Buddhist landscape of the time and persevere in future centuries.[61]

Conclusion

Despite the doctrinal differences and personal and professional conflicts among medieval Buddhists, many of them were developing new practices and works that specifically engaged with and refined language-bodies as sacred power to be activated to beneficial effect. With interpenetrating levels of meaning and association, on the most basic level, these works are all examples of the intricate connections between language, body, and materiality that helped to fuel visual innovations of the time. On broader levels, it becomes clear that these artistic works were vehicles for communicating ideological positions in a time of highly competitive Buddhist groups, while simultaneously reflecting the very real anxieties that Buddhist practitioners felt and the tools they created and used in dealing with individual and collective challenges.

[61] Perhaps this was in part because his wife and children were also active in Buddhist practice and proselytizing. As a "family affair" of sorts, it could be that Shinran was able to conceive of continuation in ways that entangled Dharma continuance and familial inheritence.

Chapter One
Foundations and Development of Language Representations in Japan Prior to the 13th Century

Studying premodern communities poses inherent challenges in attempting to understand trends and perceptions because such mutable aspects are not always consciously understood, acknowledged, or explicitly discussed by the people of the time. To further complicate matters, both written documentation and material culture provide insights that often center around elite contexts for the straightforward reason that those with the wealth and leisure to create and commission were often the ones that shaped the persisting narratives and extant artifacts. Not only were wealthy figures more capable of commissioning works, but hegemonic factions were likewise more able to preserve that which they deemed valuable. Modern scholars are at the mercy of what has survived to study. Still, it has been shown many times and in various cultures around the world that boundaries between elites and non-elites are not so distinct, but a radial spectrum. The challenges these premodern materials present, in both what is missing and what is extant, encourage an interdisciplinary approach. In this chapter, I draw on studies of language, literature, and religion for the broad brushstrokes of the background upon which this dissertation's objects can be more clearly seen and both the continuities and innovations that occurred within Buddhist art of the early to mid-thirteenth century more easily understood.

First, I will sketch a brief history of the early use of written language in Japan—from inscribed objects as symbols of power and authority to the clear perception within early written histories and compilations (themselves asserting authority in various ways) that words had the

power to affect material and immaterial change. Buddhist conceptions of language and its place in religious tradition were an especially important part of this larger trajectory. Therefore, I next present the ways in which the Buddhist canon is (self-)generative, relying in large part on understandings of its sacred word as simultaneously a Buddha body as well as a tool producing numerous benefits. I will then look specifically at Shingon Buddhism and its founder in Japan, the monk Kūkai, to outline the major effects Shingon traditions had on representations of language in terms of visual culture and semiotic theory rooted in Buddhist practice. Lastly, I move toward the early medieval period (late twelfth to thirteenth centuries) to outline some ways that language use in written texts was also shifting at the time. I do this by drawing on Keller Kimbrough's research of the mechanics of sacred (and powerful) words in the overlap of poetry and Buddhist *dhāraṇī* (J. *darani* 陀羅尼; Buddhist incantations, spells, or multi-syllabic Sanskrit chants), and outlining Erin Brightwell's study of *Mirror* texts as part of "a multi-layered intertextual web," within which divine forces could be "manipulated or recruited to further one's cause."[62] Although each of these sections are brief relative to the primary and secondary material available on them, even these short interludes coalesce into a view of Japanese culture that, for many centuries leading up and into the thirteenth century, included a perception of the importance and power of language employed for particular ends. This understanding will allow us to see, starting in the next chapter, how thirteenth-century Buddhist practitioners shaped these

[62] Brightwell, *Reflecting the Past*, 10 and 27. Other names for these (*dhāraṇī*) incantations in Japan were *shingon* 真言 (true words), *myō* 明 (light), *ju* 呪 (spells), *sōji* 惣持/総持 (all-encompassing [verses]), and *mitsugo* 密語 (secret language). Kimbrough, "Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry," 4.

longheld understandings of language, specifically language-bodies, to their own needs and leveraged the historic past within representations of language in Buddhist art.[63]

Language as a Tool of Authority and Legitimization as Seen in Early Japanese Writing

According to the material evidence, scant though it may be, language in premodern Japan was complex and multifaceted from the earliest days of its visible manifestations. In this section, I supply cases of this, starting with early instances of writing that raise considerations of written word as signifiers of authority and moving through revealing moments within, for example, state-sponsored texts. In the works presented within this section, we see the overlapping of legitimizing narratives, popular tales, and Buddhist practice that responded to and shaped conceptions of language as potentially efficacious and powerful.

The earliest physical evidence of writing found in Japan dates to around the first century BCE. Literature scholar David Lurie addresses such an early history of writing and literacy in his book *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing*.[64] He asserts that there is not just one single history of writing and language, but that there are many simultaneous trajectories of development. Thus, he looks at early traces of writing in Japan not as evidence for "true literacy," as we may consider it today, but an adjacent phenomenon that is nonetheless essential to understanding the early stages of Japanese interaction with written text. The first-century BCE remnants of writing in Japan are in the form of Chinese coins and inscribed mirrors in tombs of elite individuals, pointing to an early function of written word as associated with and thus

[63] In many ways, the developments that Kimbrough and Brightwell discuss reflect the uses of language seen in Buddhist visual art.

[64] David Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2011). My next two pages draw heavily from Lurie's work.

denoting social status and apotropaic power.[65] Archaeological evidence from the third and fourth centuries CE of the same types of items, though domestically produced, contain pseudo-inscriptions (shorthand for "incomprehensible writing-like patterns") that indicate a function independent of linguistic content—i.e. apotropaic as well as illustrating status and power.[66] This discussion leads to a key intervention from Lurie: his use of the term "alegible" rather than "illegible." Lurie emphasizes that the communities creating and using these objects may have "read" a text in ways not fully understood by modern audiences and scholars. In actuality, written texts can have both legible and alegible layers. In this context, Lurie means legible as having linguistic content (associated with a particular form of language), and alegible as encompassing "the use of written materials for such purposes as symbolizing social distinctions, political authority, or magical power."[67] We see, therefore, in the study of early forms of "writing" in Japan that the function of language is complex, already with potential for symbolizing or employing power. This tension between, to use Lurie's terminology, the legibility and alegibility of written characters as fertile ground for polysemy is partially what allows the innovation of language use in the objects of the next three chapters.

The centuries following these examples of inscriptions and pseudo-inscriptions on coins and mirrors show a development in the use of language within inscriptions, though written language's multifaceted associations persisted into the period of written histories on the archipelago. Fifth-century CE swords contain linguistic content referring to relationships and

[65] Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*, 55-9.

[66] Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*, 2. Lurie further explores "pseudo inscriptions" later in his book. Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*, 59-62.

[67] Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*, 2.

patronage, a slight change from those earlier tomb goods. Despite this linguistic content of the inscriptions, completed by scribes from the Korean peninsula, excavation contexts as well as other markers indicate that the written word's function changed little from the prior centuries.[68] Indeed, such inscriptions seem to have mainly been a sign of social and political power. The seventh and eighth centuries marked a significant increase in literacy and text-based administration of religion and government. Many scholars traditionally link this shift specifically to the introduction of Buddhism (a strongly text-based religion) and Buddhist texts in Chinese writing. However, as Lurie points out, the content, style, and media of seventh-century written material shows variation, which leads to a conclusion that different modes of writing were developing and co-existing at the same time.[69] Clearly, though, early writing in Japan was linked to the exercising of institutional power, including political, military, and religious.

The alegible qualities of writing seen in those early examples are relevant to this dissertation's study, but in addition, the linguistic content of Japanese histories such as *Kojiki* 古事記 (*Records of Ancient Matters*, 711-712 CE) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (*The Chronicles of Japan*, alt. *Nihongi* 日本紀, 721 CE) can provide insights into early perceptions and uses of written word. In most cases, the individuals or groups commissioning or creating the works were related to the elite, governing clans (*uji* 氏). They were texts sponsored by the ruling power, but who was reading these texts, both in the Heian period and later in the Kamakura period? These texts were not widely circulated until the early modern period. Such early texts, *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* included, were commissioned by the ruler and generally read only by the educated

[68] Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*, 88-99.

[69] Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*, 3-7.

elite. Yet these texts were ostensibly compilations of previous narratives. Even if some were undoubtedly embellished or even a few fabricated for these official compilations, it is likely that many were previously known tales, if only for the fact that it would have lent weight to the authority of the texts. Further, many parts likely existed orally or in short, now lost versions.[70] Many of these oral narratives had likely been known in some way beyond elite circles, potentially including nonliterate, middle- and lower-class audiences. Other evidence indicates that the source material from such compilations may have been more widely known. For example, from 713 to around 733 CE, *Fudoki* 風土記—records of provincial areas—were compiled under imperial order.[71] These records included agricultural, geographical, and historical information. Additionally, they were presented as recorded local myths and folklore, specifically oral tales of elders. The specification of documenting orally-transmitted folklore and myths within these records gives modern scholars a glimpse into the nature of such tales. Indeed, a number of the episodes within *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* themselves hint at a widespread knowledge or appeal. Yet there were also works that were much more limited in readership such

[70] Two such works are the *Tennōki* 天皇記 (*Record of Sovereigns*) and the *Kokki* 国記 (*National Record*), both of 620 CE and credited to Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子 (574-622) and Soga no Umako 蘇我馬子 (c. 551-626). No known extant copies exist, but as they are referenced in *Nihon shoki*, they predate this work.

[71] These are the records from the Nara period often translated into English as "local gazetteers," but *fudoki* has also been translated as the title *Records of Wind and Earth*. An alternative title is *Kofukdoki* 古風土記 (Old Fudoki) for these Nara-period records. *Fudoki* are also important for the material they record that is *not* found in the imperial histories. None are complete, though the Izumo records are the most intact, and many of the extant records are spread across modern collections. For more on *fudoki*, see Akimoto Kichirō, *Fudoki*, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* series (NKBT) vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958); Akimoto Kichirō, *Fudoki no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 1998); Miura Sukeyuki, *Fudoki no sekai* (Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Iwanami Shoten, 2016); and Ibaraki Yoshiyuki, *Fudoki kenkyū no genjō to kadai* (Osaka: Nenshōsha, 2019). Study of specific regional *fudoki* in Japanese-language scholarship is numerous. English-language scholarship has generally focused on such regional *fudoki* sets. Examples include, but are not limited to: Michiko Y. Aoki, *Records of Wind and Earth: a Translation of Fudoki with Introduction and Commentaries* (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 1997); Mark C. Funke, "Hitachi no Kuni Fudoki," *Monumenta Nipponica* vol. 49, no. 1 (Spring, 1994): 1-29; Edwina Palmer, "Calming the Killing "Kami": the Supernatural, Nature and Culture in "Fudoki,"" *Japan Review* 13 (2001): 3-31; and Anders Carlqvist, "A Natural Treasury: Plants and Animals in "Izumo Fudoki,"" *Japan Review* 19 (2007): 77-105. Along with the ancient chronicles, select *fudoki* can be found on "Japanese Historical Text Initiative" (JHTI), University of California Berkley, accessed May 16, 2021, https://jhti.berkeley.edu/.

as the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*) collection of poetry, which became a classic in elite education and courtly dynamics. Compositions featured in *Man'yōshū* were referenced repeatedly by later compositions throughout the Heian and Kamakura periods. Due to this, even though the early texts are separated by centuries from the main visual works studied in this dissertation, their enduring nature in poetry and prose illustrate, at least, a familiarity with concepts espoused therein and, at most, that such concepts still circulated over those periods and were indicative of similar beliefs.[72]

A brief look at portions of the linguistic content of these early stories gives concrete examples of words as partaking of or generating a thaumaturgic power. *Kojiki* dates to circa 711-12 and was recorded by Ō no Yasumaro 太安万侶 (died 723) at the order of the female sovereign Genmei Tennō 元明天皇 (660-721, r. 707-715).[73] Unlike some other early texts, *Kojiki* received little attention during the Heian and Kamakura periods. As such, the oldest complete manuscript is from a much later period (Muromachi period, 1337-1573).[74] Still, despite

[72] Additionally, tales and beliefs found within some of these early texts may have continued to be transmitted orally as well, potentially throughout a range of social levels. In many ways, the shifts within Buddhist visual culture were a continuation of ruminations on the power of words found in such texts, only through visual compositions rather than in literary modes.

[73] The term *tennō* has often been translated into English as either "Emperor" or "Empress." The literal translation of *tennō* is heavenly sovereign, which is more accurate to use than "Emperor" or, in the case of Genmei, "Empress." For the text of the *Kojiki*, see NKBT 1:41-343; *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (NKBZ) vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1970-1976), 43-354. The oldest extant manuscript is the Shinpukuji-bon 真福寺本 manuscript of 1371-72. For English-language translations, see Gustav Heldt, *The Kojiki: an Account of Ancient Matters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968); and Basil Hall Chamberlain, *A Translation of the "Ko-ji-ki" or Records of Ancient Matters* (Yokohama, Japan: R. Meiklejohn and Co., Printers, 1882). According to the preface, Tenmu Tennō 天武天皇 (631-686, r. 673-686) originally ordered such a compilation, but it was not completed until Genmei's sponsoring of this work.

[74] This is the Shinpukuji-bon manuscript, which according to the colophon drew from two earlier manuscripts dating respectively to 1266 (of the Ise-bon textual lineage) and 1282 (of the Urabe textual lineage). *Kojiki* and other early texts are mentioned in passing in various scholarly sources from the Heian and Kamakura periods, but the printing innovations of the early modern period allowed texts like the *Kojiki* to reach a broader audience. During the Edo period, when this text was reproduced in print and circulated starting in 1644, literacy was at a high. *Kojiki* was also seized upon by scholars promoting nativist studies in the Edo and Meiji periods.

its relative obscurity over the interim years, for the reasons mentioned above it is still a valuable point of exploration regarding early views of language, specifically written text. *Kojiki* is now known as the earliest extant written chronicle of Japan. It is deemed valuable for its basic outline of events, its literary worth, and other information that can be teased out of the text. As with any text, however, one must account for the context of its creation. *Kojiki* cannot be taken fully at face value in part due to its political purpose in legitimizing the rule of Genmei's line over those of other clans.[75] In this way, the *Kojiki* performs much in the way that art historian Haicheng Wang discusses state-sponsored texts—as a way to create and enforce structure and status (and thus legitimacy) for a governing group.[76] Because the majority of *Kojiki* is concerned with establishing a direct lineage from the creator deities to the then-current sovereign, book one focuses on the creation of the islands of Japan as well as the pantheon of deities, and from book two on most of the text is essentially a listing of sovereigns (descending from aforementioned deities), their consorts, their offspring, and any significant occurrences related to those people.

While there are not many overt mentions or inferences to language and its function, there are a few points of interest. From an overall look at the text, one finds that the poems are written using characters in a phonographic manner while the rest of the text relies on logographic use,

[75] *Kojiki* was recorded not long after the 672 CE Jinshin rebellion (壬申の乱) and clearly situates what would become the imperial line as having a divine mandate to rule passed to them from the *kami* 神 (local deities). In the early twentieth century, historian Tsuda Sōkichi was one of the first scholars to address the *Kojiki* text as a political tool. Tsuda Sōkichi, *Tsuda Sōkichi zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963-66). Tsuda would eventually be a target for conservatives and imperial supporters in the years leading up to World War II, but his propositions regarding the *Kojiki* had significant influence on subsequent scholarship, especially post-WWII, which corrected and refined his theories. Other early twentieth-century scholars studied the *Kojiki* from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including literature (Watsuji Tetsurō and Kurano Kenji, who likened *Kojiki* to European epics) and linguistics (Hashimoto Shinkichi). Today, the *Kojiki* remains a rich object of study.

[76] Haicheng Wang, *Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

which implies the importance of pronunciation/recitation for the poems.[77] Further, the preface of the *Kojiki* is widely considered the first "discussion of textuality" in Japan.[78] Allegedly based on recitations of a mysterious figure (Hieda no Are 稗田阿礼, active late seventh—early eighth century) or previous sages, the preface was often interpreted as referencing pre-literate traditions and recording Japanese language prior to the practice of writing in Japan—as its compiler implied. In contrast, Lurie convincingly argues that the sentiments expressed within the preface cannot be accepted wholesale. In sum, rather than a "valiant attempt to record the oral Japanese language" via a "laborious process of wrestling with an alien Chinese writing system" *Kojiki* was actually a highly refined style of writing that reflected the everyday written communication found on *mokkan* 木簡 (narrow, thin pieces of wood strung together to write on).[79]

Ō no Yasumaro's discourse on textuality that Lurie explored framed language within his contemporaneous and historical contexts. In the preface, he wrote:

> However, in high antiquity words and meanings were both forthright; spreading out sentences and constructing phrases, it is very hard to put them in writing. If one compiles them completely in accordance with the readings of the characters, the words to not extend to the meaning; if one strings them together totally relying on the sounds of the characters, the impression of the passage becomes very long. Herewith, at present, I sometimes used both sounds and readings within a single phrase; I sometimes recorded only the readings inside a single passage. Thus, when the logic of the words was hard to see, I clarified it with notes; when the form of the meaning was easy to understand, I did not annotate at all.

[77] Lurie briefly explains the logograph and phonograph styles employed thus within *Kojiki* in his dissertation. David Lurie, "The Origins of Writing in Early Japan: From the 1st to the 8th Century C.E." (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2001), 251-3.

[78] Lurie, "The Origins of Writing in Early Japan," 247. He dedicates an entire chapter of his dissertation to the preface of the *Kojiki* (246-310). Lurie is using "textuality" in this context as a discussion of the characteristics of written language as opposed to spoken. In other words, the compiler's discussion of the difficulties he encountered as a scribe and his notes on his own methodology are the first consideration of "textuality."

[79] Lurie, "The Origins of Writing in Early Japan," 248. The writing system of *Kojiki* was highly systematized, its logographic system allowing one to read it (understand its linguistic content) without being able to *read* it (know the specific pronunciation, for example)—to paraphrase Kamei Takashi. Kamei Takashi, "*Kojiki wa yomeru ka*," in *Kojiki taisei 3: Gengo moji hen*, ed. Takeda Yūkichi (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1957), 154. Lurie's argument is much more nuanced than I can present here.

> 然上古之時、言意並朴、敷文構句、於字即難。已因訓述者、詞不逮心、全以音連者、事趣更長。是以今、或一句之中、交用音訓、或一事之内、全以訓錄。即辞野叵見、以注明、意況易解、更非注。[80]

Ō no Yasumaro's statement hints at conceptions of language and its trajectory, though rooted in his crafting of an authoritative narrative and struggles with using a writing system (Classical Chinese) that was ill-equipped to record a language such as the Japanese of his time. This excerpt provides a glimpse into the complications of such a process, especially the issues found in the differences between written and spoken forms of language. His words insinuate that the endeavor of recording spoken Japanese in written form was not straightforward—i.e., there was not a one-to-one correlation between writing and speaking at this time.[81] However, Yasumaro's conceptions of both written and spoken language and how he reconciled the two (through his self-professed efforts) illustrate a type of societal position and skill that seemingly endowed him with a certain authority. In fact, Lurie argues that Yasumaro's framing of the difficulty of making sense, through contemporary writing, of the language of antiquity "establishes the presupposition that, through Are's recitations, Yasumaro had access to precisely that language."[82] In other words, his reference to this access (and the power and authority this access implied) emphasized his, and therefore the text's, legitimacy. Yasumaro emphasized the authoritative nature of *Kojiki* like this in many ways, inserting statements that reinforce the knowability and sources of the information he shared. At the most basic level, even if it was not consciously recognized on the part of compiler or reader, Yasumaro prepared his readers to

[80] Lurie, "The Origins of Writing in Early Japan," 301-2. NKBZ 1:49.

[81] Additionally because Classical Chinese was ill-suited to recording (spoken) Classical Japanese, many early works have a performative aspect to them that called readers to actively engage with movement within the written sentence, marked to direct readers, to read it in an order that made sense in Japanese.

[82] Lurie, "The Origins of Writing in Early Japan," 303.

consider even the stylistic choices outlined here to be a referent to an authoritative voice within the narrative. This connection of language to authority and legitimacy not only continues the earliest use of inscriptions mentioned above, but also presages the partial function of representations of language in Buddhist art of the thirteenth century.

The Power of Words in Sutras and *Setsuwa*

The Buddhist canon itself provides many moments of reflection on language and its power. In canonical texts as well as common practice, Buddhist teachings centered written and spoken word. The continued development of Buddhist schools of thought in Japan along this vein directly set the stage for the thirteenth-century thinkers and creators of material culture and the objects of study within this dissertation. This section looks at sutra texts and their generative qualities. Not only are sutras (re-)generative via the soteriological and participatory acts they ask of readers that ensure their own continuation, but they also generated Buddhist visual imagery such as paintings, embroideries, and sculptures either through explicit direction or implication. In time, similar sentiments regarding the veneration and power of sutras filtered to other forms of writing such as *setsuwa* 説話 (explanatory tales) of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods. In *setsuwa*, we also find examples of words being employed for the efficacious ability to treat afflictions, often considered to be a result of karmic conditions. This inherent generative power of the Buddhist canon and these tales rooted in the Buddhist imagination are the central premises that allowed for innovative developments within Buddhist visual culture.

In Buddhist practice throughout Asia, the copying of scripture for merit is a well-known practice encouraged by canonical texts. Charlotte Eubanks has written of an "anxiety of text," where scripture reveals an awareness of its own fragile existence at the whims of time, decay,

editing, and more.[83] As such, the sutras compel readers to aid in their preservation by reading, reciting, and copying in script.[84] These actions were spiritually and often physically rewarded. The *Lotus Sutra* (*Myōhō renge kyō* 妙法蓮華経, Skt. *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra*), for example, esteems someone who "…writes down or copies out even a single *gāthā* [verse] of the *Lotus Sutra* or who shall look with veneration on a scroll of this scripture as if it were the Buddha himself. 書寫妙法華經乃至一偈。於此經卷敬視如佛。"[85] In a line of the *Diamond Sutra* (*Kongō hannya haramita kyō* 金剛般若波羅蜜多経, abbreviated *Kongō kyō* 金剛経, Skt. *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*), similar sentiments are echoed, this time drawing parallels to relics and similarly equating the sutras to the Buddha body.

> In any place this sutra exists…it should be understood that, in that case, [it] is a stupa. All beings should venerate it, make obeisance to it, and circumambulate it, employing the scattering of many flowers and incense at that place.
>
> 在在處處若有此經. . . 當知此處則爲是塔。皆應恭敬作禮圍繞以諸華香而散其處. . . [86]

Establishing the importance of Buddhist texts was an obvious necessity for setting Buddhist practice up with a built-in form of self-preservation, which was to award karmic merit or other efficacious benefit for the reproduction, whether oral or written, of the text. The relationship between religious teachings (sacred word) and practitioner was symbiotic. While the actions of practitioners, guided by the text itself, aided in preserving text and practice, the practitioner also

[83] Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 32.

[84] Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 32-4.

[85] English translation: Hurvitz, Leon. *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 174. T0262_.09.0030c10-11.

[86] English translation used, with my adjustments, from Eubanks, *Miracle of Book and Body*, 178. T0235_.08.0750c20-23.

benefitted. In establishing this symbiotic relationship, the Buddhist canon was simultaneously self-generative and generative of benefits for others external to its own body.

Records of the benefits of sutra copying extended beyond the Buddhist canon as well. A recurring theme throughout stories in the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記 (*Record of Miraculous Events in Japan*) is the power of sutra recitation to heal illnesses, liberate individuals (from spells, hell, samsara, etc.), prevent personal calamities, or lend otherworldly power. The text was compiled by Kyōkai 景戒 (dates unknown, ninth century).[87] Completed circa 822, it is the first substantial collection of *setsuwa* in Japan.[88] As literature scholar Haruo Shirane stated, the *Nihon ryōiki* was likely a sourcebook to by used in preaching to commoner audiences.[89] The tales are moralistic, urging listeners/readers to make the correct choices, almost always from a Buddhist standpoint, though some examples are inflected with syncretic overtones. As these stories could be used in a variety of ways, with a story available for almost any lesson that a narrator wanted to address, this supports the argument for their use in sermons. Whether as a written text or at events where stories were orally recited, the nature of this compilation allows us to extrapolate that the perspectives (particularly those repeated throughout multiple stories) recorded therein were likely widely known among multiple social strata, perhaps even held by a majority. In part

[87] An alternate reading of the characters is "Keikai." For a general introduction and complete translation of the three volumes, see Haruo Shirane and Burton Watson, *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan: The Nihon ryōiki* (New York: Columbia Press, 2013). Like Shirane and Watson, I use the reading Kyōkai. There is no full extant copy of the *Nihon ryōiki*. The text as a "complete" version that is studied has pieced together five existing manuscripts, all dating from between the tenth to thirteenth centuries. For the Japanese text, see NKBZ vol. 6 or NKBT, vol. 70.

[88] *Setsuwa* is a modern term. For more in particular about *setsuwa* in relation to language and the body, see Charlotte Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*. On the importance of *setsuwa* as folklore or oral traditions, see, for example, Komine Kazuaki, *Setsuwa no koe: chūsei sekai no katari, uta, warai* (Tokyo: Shinseidō, 2000); Komine Kazuaki, *Setsuwa no mori: chūsei no tengu kara Isoppu made* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001); and Kawada Junzō, *Kōtō denshō ron* (Tokyo: Heibonsha Raiburarii, 2001).

[89] Haruo Shirane, "Introduction," in *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan*, 2. *Kanbun* 漢文 (Classical Chinese) was writing composed entirely of Chinese characters (in Japan, *kanji*) as was the norm for Buddhist texts.

because of this, *Nihon ryōiki*'s significance spans from literary style to linguistic content, being of interest to a variety of scholars both past and present. It provides many examples within a Buddhist sphere of a widespread belief in the power of words to harm or help in material and immaterial ways. In relation to this dissertation, it shows how sermons and texts outside the Buddhist canon proper could reinforce both the veneration of sutras and the conception of the sacred power of words.

To give an example from one of the tales, a man fell ill and lost hearing in both ears. He realized his woes in this life were caused by past karma.

> Thereupon, [he] swept the ground, decorated the hall, and decided to invite a meditation master [who was an expert] of [sutra] meaning. To begin with, he purified his body, bathing [it] in fragrant water, and then devoted himself to listening to a reading of a Mahāyāna sutra.
>
> 乃ち地を啣ひ堂を餝り、義禅師を屈請せむとす。先づ其の身を潔くし、香水を澡浴ミテ、方広経に依りき。[90]

Through listening to this recitation, the hearing in first one ear then the other was restored. In this example, the recited sutra built merit (supposedly to mitigate that past karma that had caused physical affliction) and also had the very tangible effect of healing the man's ailments. In other words, the power of ritualized words, here spoken, addressed both cause (past karma) and symptom (physical manifestation of past karma through ailment). This is not an isolated example, but rather happens multiple times throughout the *Nihon ryōki*'s three volumes. Another story in the first volume illustrates the power of recitation to treat individuals' afflictions: a man

[90] The English translation, with my adjustments, is from Burton Watson from Shirane and Watson, *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan*, 28. The original text is *Nihon ryōiki*, NKBZ 6:81. This episode is the eighth story in volume one of *Nihon ryōiki*'s three volumes. The cleansing of environment and self also indicates the ritual nature (and power) of words. See Bryan Lowe for more. The term *hōkō-kyō* 方広経 (literally "correct and extensive sutra") is one of the twelve divisions of the Buddhist canon that look at broad issues of doctrine and are often used in various sects. This also refers to, as Watson points out as well, one of Zhiyi's categories of the sutras (introductory). However, this term can also refer to select specific sutra texts such as the *Lotus Sutra*. Like Watson, I use a broad gloss to cover the fluidity of the term.

who did not believe in karmic causality angrily chased a monk begging for food. Thus the monk, with no other recourse, put a spell (*jubaku* 呪縛) on the man.[91] The man's two sons engaged a reluctant meditation master to see their father. "When that master, [who was] at that time proceeding slowly, finished reciting the first passage of the chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* on Kannon, [the father] immediately gained liberation [from the spell]. 其の師、乃ち徐く行き、観音品の初めの段を誦じ竟れば、即ち解説すること得つ。"[92] While on a superficial level, the recitation simply freed the man from a spell, the story parallels the one previously mentioned. The man's aggressive actions against the monk—in fact his lack of belief in karmic causality which enabled such aggression—were the immediate karmic cause of the monk's spell (the physical manifestation of karmic consequence), which caused the man to go "completely wild 狂."[93] In addition to freeing him from the spell, the master's sutra recitation also caused a shift in the affected man's perceptions, awakening his faith (*shinjin* 信心).[94] In this tale, the power of words is highlighted in the human ability to harness it to affect both terrible and beneficial change—an example of language as a tool for mitigating consequence and disaster, as will be explored through visual deployment in the art studied in the coming chapters.

---

[91] *Jubaku* has the connotation of being a spell that restricts one's movements.

[92] English translation with some modifications from Shirane and Watson, *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan*, 36. This is tale fifteen from volume one. NKBZ 6:96. An English translation can also be found in Nakamura Kyoko, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: the* Nihon ryōiki *of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 127. As Nakamura points out, *gedatsu* 解脱 refers to liberation, usually in the context of enlightenment (liberation from samsara, etc.). Here it is referring to liberation from the spell, though the next sentence gives it overtones of such a spiritual Buddhist shift that hints of a broader awakening give the text a potential deeper meaning.

[93] Shirane and Watson, *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan*, 35. NKBZ 6:96. The Nakamura English translation uses the term "hysterical" here. Kyōko Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: the Nihon ryōiki of the monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 127.

[94] *Shinjin*, a prerequisite for the Buddha path, is a "pure heart" that includes belief in the Three Treasures (*sanbō* 三宝, to be discussed further in Chapter Three) and karmic causality.

The mitigation of consequence could also be employed for people already deceased. In the final volume of the *Nihon ryōiki*, there is a story of the man Furumaro 古丸 from the Tōtōmi province (modern-day western Shizuoka Prefecture), who had conducted government affairs in a corrupt manner, suffering in hell. Upon finding out about this, the sovereign Kōnin 光仁天皇 (708-782, r. 770-781, personal name Shirakabe 白壁) took action:

> The emperor was grieved at this, and in the fifteenth year of the Enryaku era [796], the Third Month, on the seventeenth day, he summoned four sutra copiers to copy the Lotus Sutra for the sake of Furumaro. He appointed a devotees' association to support this work, inviting the prince regent, ministers, and officials in number equal to the 69,384 characters of the sutra. The emperor also requested the Most Venerable Zenjū to be lecturer, and Assistant Executive Monk Sekyō to be reciter, holding a great service at a private temple in the capital of Nara to recite the sutra, the Lotus, and requesting that its merits be applied to release the spirit of Furumaro from suffering…
>
> 天皇信悲、以延暦十五年三月朔七日、始召経師四人、為古麿、奉写法華経一部。宛経六寓九千三百八十四文字、動卒知識、挙皇太子大臣百官、皆悉加入其知識也。天皇勸請善珠大徳、為講師、請施皎僧頭、為読師、於平城宮野寺、備大法会、為講読件経、贈救彼靈之苦也...[95]

In this story, both the copying and recitation of the sutra contribute to releasing Furumaro's spirit from hell. There are more examples, in this text and others, of saving individuals, often family members, from hell through commissioning, copying, or reciting sutras. This is one of the continuous themes throughout the work and reinforces the sentiments found in Buddhist scripture.

From these stories and many more examples within the *Nihon ryōiki,* we see the power of sacralized or ritualized words. But there are also hints of the power of words in a popular sense—perhaps because of the potential audiences of these "sermons." The compiler Kyōkai reminded the reader/listener multiple times about the power of spoken words to be used for

[95] Shirane and Watson, *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan*, 185-86. This is tale thirty-five from the third volume. NKBZ 6:353.

either good or bad: “Heed well karma-producing speech. 能護口業矣.”[96] Multiple times throughout the entire work, Kyōkai warned especially against speaking ill of monks or devout followers of the Buddhist way.[97] The longest tale of the compilation mainly focuses on popular songs as portents of good and bad.[98] Kyōkai gives many such cases in this story. These occurrences are not deeply analyzed, but rather accepted as a norm, insinuating that lyrics that “spread through the land 行於天下国” are somehow attuned to unseen predictive forces.[99] Other themes also persist through this specific tale. Near the beginning of this entry, Kyōkai wrote of retired sovereign Shōmu 聖武天皇 (701-756, r. 724-749) assigning Princess Abe (later Kōken Tennō 孝謙天皇 (713-770, r. 749-758 and 765-770) and Prince Funado 道祖王 (unknown-757) as rulers. The High Councilor Fujiwara no Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂 (706-764) ritualistically swore to support Shōmu’s decision, verbally inviting disaster should he fail to uphold his oath. Apparently, a song about a lost prince circulated the countryside shortly thereafter. Then, as the text relates, a year after Shōmu’s death, Kōken and Nakamaro replaced Funado with another in the role of prince regent. Funado joined a rebellion and was eventually executed in 757. The popular song seems to have been an omen of Funado’s downfall. In 764, via other political intrigue, Nakamaro and those associated with him were killed. The way that Nakamaro’s oath

[96] The final line of tale nineteen in the first volume. NKBZ 6:103.

[97] A main aspect of *Nihon ryōiki* and late Heian/Kamakura-period Buddhism is an emphasis on the karmic model, which has been addressed by figures such as twentieth-century philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō and religious studies scholar William LaFleur. Watsuji Tetsurō, *Watsuji Tetsurō Zenshū*, 27 vols., ed. Abe Yoshishigo et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992). William LaFleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

[98] By this point, scholars and civil servants in China were already in the practice of recording the lyrics of popular songs, in part as portents of disaster or auspicious signs.

[99] Shirane and Watson, *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan*, 189. This is in the thirty-eighth tale from the third volume. NKBZ 6:369.

and death are framed in this entry implies that breaking an oath, going back on your spoken word (especially when ritualized), can have negative returns. In this same entry, Kyōkai provided a few more examples of songs that seemed to speak truth into existence by foretelling significant events. Here, seemingly because words are considered to have the ability to partake of or generate a supramundane power, they can act as a form of divination when popular trends are heeded or potentially a safeguard even outside of specific religious contexts when ritualized.

As shown, the Buddhist canon encouraged practitioners to read, recite, and copy sutra texts for material and immaterial benefit, creating a symbiotic relationship that allowed sutras to be self-/re-generative. In setting up the conditions to make this successful, the texts establish the potential supramundane power of words, something which spread throughout Buddhist practice to include rituals and more. Extracanonical texts such as *setsuwa* reinforced these perceptions. As I will show in the following section, as early as the ninth century, Buddhist visual culture became similarly reflective of the place of language within a Buddhist worldview and crafting the conditions that led to the types of works created in the thirteenth century.

Kūkai and the Impact of Shingon on the Representations of Language

Esoteric Buddhist characteristics were widely embedded into medieval Buddhist practice in general, as I discussed in the introduction via Kuroda Toshio's *kenmitsu taisei* theory. Similarly, Shingon Buddhism (真言宗) had an indelible effect on the visual cultures of Buddhism (regardless of sect affiliation) from its introduction to Japan at the beginning of the ninth century and into the centuries beyond. Its founder Kūkai 空海 (Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師, 774-835) was an educated scholar-monk who was at times controversial—as evidenced in the cold response he received when he returned to Japan from studying in China, having exhausted a

stipend meant for a twenty-year tenure overseas within only two years by investing heavily in textual and visual works. He nonetheless eventually gained widespread favor with his erudite writing skills and the novel and attractive form of Buddhism that he propagated. He is credited with officially establishing Esoteric Buddhism (Mikkyō 密教) in Japan via his Shingon sect.[100] Following his death, he became a semi-legendary figure, a historical figure whose proportions grew beyond a mortal man with apocryphal tales of miraculous events.[101] By the modern period, he was such a mythic figure that many more stories circulated about him and were widely believed, not the least of which was the erroneous yet extremely popular attribution of the *hiragana* script to him.[102] Even by the medieval periods, Kūkai was a semi-mythical figure. He and his Shingon school shaped much of the visual culture of Japanese Buddhism leading up to and beyond the medieval period, especially in relation to representations of language.

To fully understand the significance of Shingon visual theories as they impacted thirteenth-century works, it is necessary to briefly explore the early years of Shingon in Japan and the works, both textual and visual, that Kūkai imported or had created.[103] Kūkai outlined the theoretical role of objects within Buddhism, as scholars like art historian Cynthea Bogel have

[100] As art historian Cynthea Bogel explains, esoteric Buddhist elements existed in Japan prior to Kūkai's introduction of Mikkyō; she uses 'esoteric' versus 'Esoteric' to distinguish between the elements that were already dispersed throughout Nara Buddhism and the organized theory and praxis that Kūkai brought back to Japan. Cynthea Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

[101] His body is said to be held in stasis on Mt. Kōya 高野山, cared for by the Shingon monks who steward the site. This has contributed to his legendary status because he seemed to defy the norms of human life and body.

[102] Even though Kūkai did not invent the *hiragana* script, he was part of its development, particularly in the way he emphasized being able to record the pronunciation of Sanskrit terms, thus necessitating a phonetic use of written characters that would preface the phonetic *kana* scripts.

[103] This chapter section draws in large part from my Master's thesis work.

illustrated.[104] The use of images was a central part of Shingon Buddhism not only for didactic reasons, but also for the end-goal of practitioners. In short, from Kūkai's perspective, "with a single glance 一覩" at a work, there is potential for one to achieve enlightenment in this life (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成仏) and thus exit the cycle of death and rebirth (*rinne* 輪廻, Skt. *saṃsāra*).[105] In addition to Kūkai's writings specifically on the use and function of images, his conceptions of language's roles and use also altered Buddhist practice of the ninth century and beyond. Kūkai introduced to Japan a novel way of incorporating written language into the visual culture he constructed. While written language had earlier been used to record scripture, commentaries, and *dhāraṇī* as well as to document information about people, places, and dates, it now expanded to be used as an icon.[106]

Perhaps Kūkai's interest in language's roles and functions, particularly that of Sanskrit, from early in his Buddhist career led to his work on Buddhist semiotic theory.[107] Like much within Esoteric Buddhist traditions, the link between language (written or spoken) and divine intervention (even possible enlightenment) seems to be strongly indebted to the Indian Vedic tradition, specifically in relation to *mantra*. The Vedas (*vedaḥ,* Sanskrit for "knowledge") are an ancient South Asian body of texts from the Vedic period (c. 1500-500 BCE) that compose the oldest scriptures of Hinduism. Their content consists of formulas, hymns, spells, and

[104] Bogel, *With a Single Glance*.

[105] Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 3. Kūkai, *Joshin shōrai kyōtō mokuroku hyō*, in *Kōbo Daishi zenshū* (KZ) vol. 1 (Mount Kōya: Mikkyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1970-77), 95.

[106] In this way, Kūkai seems to have introduced the first representation of what this dissertation is studying as language-bodies.

[107] Although, of course, he did not approach his theoretization of language under the same scaffolding as modern semioticians and he obviously used period terms that do not always correlate with modern English terms from semiotics, Kūkai's framework is a strikingly cohesive semiotic theory. This aspect of his work has been explored to varying degrees by Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of the Mantra*; Fabio Rambelli, *A Buddhist Theory of Semiotics*; and Cynthea Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, among others.

incantations—in other words, mantra (which include but are not synonymous with *dhāraṇī*).[108] In the words of religious studies scholars Harold Coward and David Goa, the *mantra* content of the Vedas "are the sounds or vibrations of the eternal principles of the cosmic order itself."[109] In Vedic belief, mantra is, as Patton Burchett explains, the melding of the goddess Vāk's (alt. Vāc) cosmic phonic energy (vibrations) with human's vital energy (breath, or exhalation). This Vedic goddess is the personification of speech. Vedic belief holds that the entire universe is embodied in sound (word) and the objects denoted by those sounds.[110] Vāk is also the Sanskrit word for "speech." Thus in Vedic texts, Vāk can refer to the female deity, words, or both simultaneously via feminine embodiment of cosmic sound. This duality of Vāk's identity suggests a link between word (language) and energy (vibrations). Some late Vedic texts establish the goddess Vāk as the consort of Prajāpati, the male embodiment of ultimate reality, indicating further a connection between word and ultimate reality.[111] At the point of Prajāpati's earliest mentions, the deity is seen as a creator figure of sorts. Later, the term Prajāpati came to mean any divine being who created something, meaning it could reference figures such as Brahma, Vishnu (Viṣṇu), or Shiva (Śiva), among others. In some Vedic traditions, all things are created from the union of Vāk and Prajāpati (the union of energy and ultimate reality). This perceived union suggests an ancient belief in the connection between language and reality. Such a link illustrates possible

[108] *Mantra*, as sacred utterances, include types with syntax and without. In general, all *dhāraṇī* are *mantra*, but the reverse is not the case. According to Jan Nattier, *dhāraṇī* seem to originally have developed within and were particular to Buddhist practice. Still, others use the words *mantra* and *dhāraṇī* interchangeably, as in the case of Bill Porter (penname Red Pine) in his translations of Chinese texts which include sutras.

[109] Harold G. Coward and David J. Goa, *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India and America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 35.

[110] Patton E. Burchett, "The 'Magical' Language of Mantra," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 4 (2008): 822.

[111] Jan Gonda, "The Popular Prajāpati," *History of Religions* 22, no. 2 (Nov. 1982): 129-30.

roots of the belief within Mikkyō that the Sanskrit letter and sound A acts in part as a sign of the realization of reality—the enlightened mind.[112] As in those ancient Vedic beliefs, which emphasized vibration in relation to language, Kūkai's texts also give significance to the somaticity of language, specifically Sanskrit, though visual aspects are given equal importance.

In addition to the theories about language he encountered within Buddhist texts and traditions, Kūkai was also exposed to discourses within Chinese poetic traditions. Indeed, he actively summarized and engaged with them—as seen in his *Bunkyō hifuron* 文鏡秘府論 (*A Mirror on the Literature and a Treasury of Marvels Treatise*), a compendium on classical Chinese poetry and prosody likely written in the early ninth century.[113] Kūkai had an extensive education, was an admirer of poetry and rhetoric, and was himself an accomplished poet, writer of Chinese, and calligrapher. It is unsurprising that he would have actively engaged with contemporary conversations on Chinese poetry.[114] The *Bunkyō hifuron* is a lengthy work rich for study, but the significant relevance here stems from Kūkai's analysis of the poetic mechanics and logic with a particular emphasis on prosody. His analysis on the effective use of poetry (and, in contrast, the faults that make it less effective) aligns quite well with his consideration of language's functions within a Buddhist worldview. Overlaps are seen, for example, in his deep

[112] The specific form of Sanskrit used in Esoteric Buddhism, Siddhāṃ, descends from Brahmi script via the Gupta script. The origins of the Brahmi script are disputed, but one faction of scholars believes it to have originated in Vedic script, the form in which the Vedas were written.

[113] KZ 3:1-206. Because many Tang-dynasty 唐朝 (618-907 CE) literary texts are lost, the *Bunkyō hifuron* has been studied by many scholars who focus on Chinese liturature.

[114] Although *Bunkyō hifuron* is undated, the majority of scholars generally believe it to have been created several years prior to 820, when he wrote a synopsis of it. For more on the *Bunkyō hifuron*, see Konishi Jin'ichi, *Bunkyō hifuron kō* vols. 1-3 (Kyoto: Daihasshū shuppan, 1948-1952). For an English translation, see Richard W. Bodman, *Poetics and Prosody in Early Mediaeval China: a Study and Translation of Kūkai's* Bunkyō hifuron (Basel; Melbourne: Quirin Press, 2020). This is basically an updated (using the pinyin system) reprint of his dissertation: Richard W. Bodman, "*Poetics and Prosody in Early Mediaeval China: a Study and Translation of Kūkai's* Bunkyō hifuron" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1978).

commitment to correct pronunciation and arrangement in both Sanskrit and Chinese in order for their use to be most effective—such as the importance of sound and arrangement in *dhāraṇī* to be efficacious in terms of Buddhist ritual and in poems for transmitting thoughts and arousing emotion.[115] For Kūkai, classical literature and the Buddhist canon were intricately connected: "[Someone who] intentionally explains the sutras [and] advances on the path to becoming a Bodhisattva must first understand literature. 故経説。阿毘跋致菩薩必須先解文章。"[116] An analysis of *Bunkyō hifuron* in tandem with Kūkai's Buddhist semiotics deserves more attention than I can give it here. However, the overlaps of his conception of how language is, essentially, a world-builder from the basic levels of sharing and promoting ideas and emotions to the more complex theoretical considerations of polysemy and the Dharma (body).[117] Indeed, these overlaps illustrate simultaneously the intertextuality of writings at the time and the integrated way that language (and its structure, logic, and use) was conceived. Kūkai's corpus supports an intertextual reading of language perceptions, creating the opportunity to understand seemingly disparate texts within a complex network.[118] This would mean that just as treatises on classical

[115] Note, however, that even his notation of the "correct" Sanskrit is a version of Sanskrit pronunciation through a Japanese lens so that it would not, from the perspective of a native Sanskrit speaker, have been considered "correct."

[116] English translation with modifications from Bodman, "*Poetics and Prosody in Early Mediaeval China: a Study and Translation of Kūkai's* Bunkyō hifuron," 162. KZ 3:2.

[117] Some sections of the *Bunkyō hifuron* that focus on reaching the reader/listener of poetry mirror Kūkai's rhetoric elsewhere on the Buddhist concept and deployment of skillful means (*hōben* 方便, Skt. *upāya*). My use of polysemy here mimics that of Ryūichi Abé's use throughout his book (*The Weaving of the Mantra*). Essentially, in semiotic terms, each "sign" (optical object, which included written words) could be a signifier of endless signifieds (have simultaneous multiple meanings). For Kūkai, this aligned well with core Buddhist concepts related to "reality" and Buddha nature, among other things.

[118] For example, Kūkai includes in his *Bunkyō hifuron* an excerpt by Wáng Chānglíng 王昌齡 (698-756), which explains a process of poem-making that has some similarities to a Shingon practice in which one meditates on the Sanskrit character A. A deeper analysis of the potential links between these in the future could be fruitful for a more nuanced analysis of this practice and the accompanying hanging scroll paintings.

Chinese poetry and esoteric Buddhist views of language could (and did) build upon one another, texts such as state-sponsored histories could potentially be in conversation with either.[119]

In light of this, Kukai's Buddhist linguistic theory can be viewed with more nuance. In his conceptions, language derives from voice. The primordial "voice" is the sound of the Sanskrit A, from which all other sounds originate. Likewise, in the Sanskrit writing system all characters include the A form within them and thus derive from the character A.[120] This mirrors the concept of the cosmos being an emanation of the Dainichi Buddha 大日如来 (Skt. Vairocana or Mahāvairocana), whose seed syllable (*shūji* 種字, also written *shuji* with a short "u" at times, Skt. *bija*) is the Sanskrit character A. I will address the concept of seed syllables later in this chapter, but they were Sanskrit characters that were, at their core, polysemic. They were viewed as compressions of the teachings of buddhas or bodhisattvas, syllables and written characters that were apotropaic in their sacred power, and the essence of a deity (nondual in nature). Through the Shingon school, these seed syllables were core to the introduction of language-bodies to Japan with the first use of written word as icon being found in Sanskrit seed syllable form. In terms of the Sanskrit character A in relation to Kūkai's explication of the cosmos, as the character A is within every character of the Sanskrit writing system, Dainichi Buddha is within every part of the universe. The principle of attaching meaning to these characters goes beyond the physical construction of the script and originates from various sutras, within which is written

[119] These above-addressed state-sponsored histories were themselves heavily marked by Chinese literary traditions known to erudite aristocrats and monks.

[120] Kūkai discusses the significance of the Sankrit character A in many places, but representative texts are *Shōji jissōgi* 声字実相義 (*Voice, Letter, Reality*), KZ 1:521-534, and *Bonji shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi* 梵字悉曇字母并釈義 (*Essential Characters of the Sanskrit Siddhāṃ Script and Their Interpretations*), KZ 2:719-736.

that the Tathāgatas empower some letters of languages (Sanskrit) and present them as *mantras*.[121] As Kūkai expounded, the view that written characters are external to the Dharma is an illusion cultivated by the delusory mind (the unenlightened mind). However, in apparent contrast to this type of perspective, continued meditation on such visual representations of language can illuminate the emptiness of letters—the concept of "letter sameness," to use terminology employed by religious studies scholar Ryūichi Abé, who has closely analyzed Kūkai's Esoteric concept of "world-text."

In the world-text system, "each sign reflects within itself other signs against whose difference the original sign's identity is established, thereby forming an infinitely referential network of signs that forms the totality of the world-text."[122] Essentially, the "world-text" is everything that is seen and unseen within reality. Each sign (optical objects, i.e., of color, shape, and movement) is a "letter" within this text. This world-text theory can be seen in *hō mandara* 法曼荼羅 (Dharma mandala) paintings, which represent the Buddhist deities in their seed syllable Sanskrit-character form. This painting type was first imported to Japan by Kūkai. It is also applicable to the Shingon school's *aji kan* 阿字観, a meditative practice using an image of the Sanskrit A on a lotus pedestal within a moon disk on a hanging scroll.[123] The use of a Sanskrit character as the visual focus of a rite reveals this world-text concept, where the physical

[121] Tathāgata, "thus gone one" (*nyorai* 如来) is a term that was used in the sutras by the Historical Buddha to refer to himself. There are a variety of interpretations of this term, but it is generally understood to mean a buddha, one who has become enlightened and thus has left *saṃsāra*. The term is understood to be an honorific title of a buddha.

[122] Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 285. Although this sentence specifies *mantra*, the concepts relating to constructing signs is also applicable to other aspects of Kūkai's *Mikkyō* praxis, such as the visual use of Sanskrit.

[123] The *aji kan* was used more extensively in Mikkyō ritual tradition than the *hō mandara*. We do not know exactly when the *aji kan* was first used, but it stems from a sutra passage and the image that is paired with this ritual meditation is obliquely described in verse by Kūkai in his *Hizōhōyoki* 秘蔵宝鑰 (*Jeweled Key to the Secret Treasury*). For this section in the English translation, see Kūkai, and Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 220. For the Japanese, see KZ 1:469.

"letter" is imbued with deeper meaning while simultaneously aiming to provide enlightenment upon the realization that the sign (the letter) is a construction. Abé aptly summarized the complex nature of Kūkai's semiotic theory as follows:

> In short, the goal of mantra may be described as a *de*-semiotization: by means of illustrating the material foundation and physical labor inherent in constructing signs, mantra strips signs of their seeming transparency and exposes as illusory and fictional the apparent self-presence of signs' objects.[124]

Or, in Janet Gyatso's words, this is a "feat of semiological acrobatics [that] the letter-as-empty signifier can perform."[125] The seemingly contradictory nature of Kūkai's world-text theory and his texts on the ritual use of Sanskrit demonstrate his use of skillful means (*hōben* 方便, Skt. *upāya*) to address different levels of practitioners. Kūkai used specific terms to discuss the different levels of understanding. In his texts, *jisō* 字相 (lit. "character aspect") is the idea that each sign has a single specific meaning (within this is the concept of differentiation among physical signs, *shabetsu* 差別). *Jigi* 字義 (lit. "character meaning") is the idea that each sign has countless meanings (the endless polysemy of the sign).[126] Kūkai crafted a linguistic theory that was not only compatible with skillful means but reinforced it by theorizing the different semiotic levels of a sign where one ultimately realizes the nondual (the endlessly polysemic) nature of the sign (*jigi*).[127]

---

[124] Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 298.

[125] Janet Gyatso, *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 190.

[126] Kūkai's concepts of *jisō* and *jigi* can be found in works such as: *Shōji jissōgi*, KZ 1:521-534 (T2429_.77); *Unjigi* 吽字義 (*On the Sanskrit Letter Hūṃ*), KZ 1:535-553 (T2430_.77); and *Bonji shittan jimo narabini shakugi*, KZ 2:719-736 (T2701_.84). This is also discussed in Fabio Rambelli, "Secrecy in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism," in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion*, ed. Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (New York: Routledge, 2006), 107-129.

[127] The term nondual (*funi* 不二, Skt. *advaitam*) is a core part of Buddhist thought and is used relatively frequently Buddhist writings and practice. See next footnote for a bit more detail.

The goal of skillful means is to ease the suffering of human beings and to bring to them the knowledge of the Dharma (teachings of the Buddha) by using whichever technique can be understood by each person. By encountering Sanskrit visually within Esoteric rites, the Buddhist practitioner is first educated on the multiple meanings of the "letter." Once these complex meanings are understood, the practitioner can begin to understand the true meaning of *śūnyatā* (*kū* 空) through the eventual realization of the somaticity inherent in a sign.[128] It does not exist independently, but rather is a construction. It is simultaneously empty of meaning and an emanation of Dainichi Buddha. Or as Janet Gyatso puts it: "Its ultimate content transcends such a formulation, consisting instead of the realization of a Buddhist principle such as emptiness, or thusness, or birthlessness, which is not limited by any determination, be it temporal, spatial, or linguistic."[129] Though signs (such as Sanskrit characters) are attached with meaning in order to initiate worshippers to complex concepts within doctrine, the goal is to eventually understand that such signs are part of a world-text wherein every letter/sign, despite the attached meanings, is one with the Dainichi Buddha. In Kūkai's perception, then enlightenment is bound up in the realization of the emptiness of the sign, i.e. the realization of a sign's quality of nonduality.[130] Inherent in every sign is the concept of nonduality and thus every sign is imbued with the possibility of achieving enlightenment "with a single glance" of the ready practitioner.

[128] The term *kū* is often translated into English as "emptiness;" however, a more accurate translation may be spaciousness, or voidness. To maintain a meaning equal to the Sanskrit term one could use the phrase freedom of attachment. Such a phrase would align better with the concept of nonduality, a term introduced into the English language as a translation for the Sanskrit term *advaitam*. A theological term, it can be defined as the quality of being in unity with the universe while appearing otherwise (appearing distinct, though not separate).

[129] Gyatso, *In the Mirror of Memory*, 176.

[130] For more on this, see Rambelli, "Secrecy in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism," 112. In some ways, this perception of signs aligns with the arbitrariness of the sign discussed by Saussure.

Kūkai discussed several specific examples of these more amorphous broader linguistic theories. His discourse on the four mandala types is foundational for understanding the forms a Buddhist icon could take in Shingon practice.[131] The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Dai Birushana jōbutsu jinben kaji kyō* 大毘盧遮那成仏人弁加持経, abbr. *Dainichi-kyō* 大日経) and later texts by Kūkai describe four types of mandala: the *dai mandara* 大曼荼羅 (Skt. *mahā maṇḍala*), the *hō mandara* (Skt. *Dharma maṇḍala*), the *sanmaya mandara* 三昧耶曼荼羅 (Skt. *samaya maṇḍala*), and the *katsuma mandara* 羯磨曼荼羅 (Skt. *karma maṇḍala*).[132] Each mandala represents the deities in a different form: the *dai mandara* in anthropomorphic form; the *hō mandara* in seed syllable (Sanskrit character) form; the *sanmaya mandara* in symbolic form (represented as associated ritual implements, etc.); and the *katsuma mandara* in three-dimensional (sculptural, generally figural) form. Kūkai wrote, in a verse, "The Four Mandalas are inseparably related to one another 四種曼荼各不離(相)…"[133] This is because, as Kūkai argued, each of the other three is inherently part of the fourth sculptural mandala form. He explained that the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* outlines three esoteric forms of expression for all Tathāgatas, which are *akṣara* (Sanskrit characters, J. *jiku* 字句), *mudrā* (signs, shown in hand movements and positions, J. *insō* 印相), and *bimba* (images, J. *zō* 像). These are represented two dimensionally by, respectively, the *hō mandara*, the *sanmaya mandara*, and the *dai mandara*. According to Kūkai, these mandala (or expressions of the Tathāgatas) all imply the sort of

[131] Mandala (*mandara* 曼荼羅) are representations of cosmic forces in the universe. In the case of Japan, they generally represent pantheons of deities—first Buddhist under the Shingon framework, but later coming to include indigenous local deities (*kami* 神) and eventually physical sites of power and significance. I will discuss medieval mandala further in Chapter Three.

[132] For the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* text, see T0848_.18.

[133] Kūkai and Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works*, 227. Kūkai, *Sokushin jōbutsugi*, KZ 1:507.

activities that one could call the *katsuma mandara*. As *katsuma*, or karma, means "action," in this context, it seems that rather than being simply a sculptural representation, per se, the "mandala" is the implied deportment and activities of these Tathāgata.

Kūkai was a prolific and talented writer, but his conceptions of visual representation, including of language, is also illustrated in his visual schema, which included the four mandala types. After spending a stipend meant for twenty years in only two and returning from China, Kūkai was understandably met with censure. Although it took years, his transgression was eventually forgiven, potentially because the quantities of objects that he imported testified to his use of the funds to enrich the Buddhist establishment at home in Japan. Additionally, his expertise and training was needed to gain full efficacy of said objects and ritual texts, many of which were new to Japan. As was required, Kūkai drafted an inventory of these imported goods titled *Catalogue of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items* (*Jo shin shōrai kyōtō mokuroku hyō* 上新請来經等目録表, hereinafter referred to as the *Catalogue*), sending it and the objects to the court in the capital upon his return.[134] The *Catalogue* is divided into seven headings:

- Newly Translated Sutras (*shin'yaku kyō* 新譯經)
- Sanskrit [works] (*bonji* 梵字)
- Treatises, Commentaries, Essays, etc. (*ronshoshōra* 論疏章等)
- Buddhist Icons, etc. (*butsuzō nado* 佛像等); Ritual Implements (*dōgu* 道具)
- Items Handed Down by the Masters (*ajari tsuki shokumono* 阿闍梨付囑物)
- Three Sanskrit Manuscripts (*bonkyō sanku* 梵夾三口)[135]

[134] Kūkai. *Shōraimokuroku,* KZ 1:69-104. The original inventory is no longer extant, but two early copies survive: one copy is at Tōji 東寺 and the other at Hōgonji 宝厳寺.

[135] Translation from Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 116. Originals in Kūkai. *Shōraimokuroku,* KZ 1: 72, 87, 91, 94, 95, 96, 101.

The Buddhist Icons section lists five mandalas and five patriarch paintings.[136] Of these mandalas, one was a *sanmaya mandara*, three were *dai mandara*, and the fifth is listed as a *daihi taizō hō mandara* 大悲胎蔵法曼荼羅 ("Great Compassion Womb *hō mandara*"), either commissioned by Kūkai in China or made earlier and given to him.[137] Although records indicate that the *dai mandara* were used extensively, repaired, and subsequently copied in the ninth century, there are no known records that point to the early use of the *sanmaya mandara* or the *hō mandara*.[138] Kūkai's imported *hō mandara*—almost certainly the first in Japan—was eventually incorporated fully within Shingon practice.[139] The use of Sanskrit text was adapted to other mandala configurations of Buddhist deities until its influence was relatively widespread in the medieval period. The presence of at least three of the four mandala types in both Kūkai's writings and his imported objects reveals his developing consideration of how to use written text in visual works, leveraging the preexisting perceptions of language's power and linking it to new theories of signification that he imported from China.

---

[136] *Shōraimokuroku,* KZ 1:94-95. Two more mandalas were listed in the *Catalogue* under the Items Handed Down by the Masters section. *Shōraimokuroku,* KZ 1:97. Works imported by Kūkai included five Shingon patriarch portraits (circa late eighth century), two Chinese and three South Asian individuals. Those three paintings have the patriarchs' names written in Sanskrit on the top sections. More information can be found in Bogel, *With a Single Glance.*

[137] Kūkai also imported a second *sanmaya mandara* listed in the Items Handed Down by the Masters section. The use and fate of the imported *hō mandara* is unknown. The earliest extant *ryōbu* 両部 (both realms, i.e. Dual World) *hō mandara* date to around mid-eleventh century, around two hundred years later than the first recorded *hō mandara*.

[138] Despite this, based on later records, we know that these Sanskrit Dual World mandalas were eventually used ritualistically to initiate monks to the title of Sanskrit master in Shingon Buddhism.

[139] Kūkai wrote in *The Secret Key to the Heart Sutra* (*Hannya shingyō hiken* 般若心経秘鍵) about a link between the bodhisattva *Prajñāpāramitā* (般若) and the *hō mandara*. Kūkai, *Hannya shingō hiken*, KZ 1:554-564. In the same text, he composed a verse that discussed *Prajñāpāramitā* as a *dhāraṇī* that "consists of sounds and words…and stands for Reality itself." For the English translation, see Kūkai, and Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works*, 273. KZ 1:561. It is interesting to note the Mikkyō link between the deity *Prajñāpāramitā*, language, and reality. This could perhaps be a remnant of earlier Vedic beliefs (mentioned above).

In a commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Kūkai linked the *hō mandara* format and text by discussing three versions of the sutra:

> As for the text of this sutra, in total there are three [types of] works. The first is the work that is the permanent and true nature of reality. This is the Dharma mandala [*hō mandara* 法曼荼羅] of all the buddhas. The second type is the widely circulating text. This is the sutra text of ten thousand hymns of praise that Nāgārjuna chanted and transmitted. The third is the abbreviated text. [It] has over three thousand verses even if hymns of praise and three thousand sutra texts in seven scrolls. Thus as expected, it is just like using the abbreviated to surrogate the extensive and using the small to hold the many. That is because its each and every word contains countless meanings, and every single letter, every single stroke or dot, encapsulates within itself innumerable truths.
>
> 此經總有三本。一法爾常恒本。諸佛法曼荼羅是也。二分流廣本。龍猛所誦傳十萬頌經是也。三略本。有三千餘頌雖頌文三千經卷七軸。然猶以略攝廣以小持多。一字中含無邊義。一點內呑塵數理。[140]

Basically, Kūkai writes that the original and fullest "text" of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is indeed the *hō mandara*. The original sutra presents itself in the form of the entire universe, where every object seen and unseen is a "letter" (to use Abé's term)—a concept of the universe and its elements that illuminates the principle of the emptiness of things. This idea of a world-text is mirrored in the physical, two-dimensional *hō mandara* (*Dharma maṇḍala*), "the mandala consisting of all things of the world as its letters."[141] In the excerpt from his commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Kūkai outlined a hierarchy of the three forms of the sutra, going from its most comprehensive (the universe/the *hō mandara*) to consecutively more abridged versions of it in the sutra handed down to Nāgārjuna, and then the shorter version passed to China and Japan.[142] As Abé stated, however, this process was not just a shortening but rather a

[140] I have modified Abé's translation of the text, but his work was my starting point. Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 275. Kūkai, *Dainichikyō kaidai* ("*hokkai jōshin*"), KZ 1:634 (T2211_.58.0001a24-29).

[141] Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 275.

[142] It is relevant to note that Nāgārjuna (J. Ryūju bosatsu 龍樹菩薩) is seen as the third patriarch of Shingon Buddhism and the first human to receive the Esoteric teachings. The second patriarch is the bodhisattva Vajrasattva

condensation of the sutra with each character of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* containing countless meanings. This assertion could be expected, especially in light of Kūkai emphasizing the polysemy of the sign in Mikkyō praxis.

Although we cannot know for certain how Kūkai intended the *hō mandara* to be used, a look at some of his other efforts in tandem with the above commentary on the four mandala types can further illuminate the connections he saw between language, body, and the material and immaterial world. In fact, looking at his writings and visual schema show that even up to his death, he worked to develop not only an understanding of these connections, but also ways to effectively leverage them for spiritual and worldly benefit. As I will show in the following pages, the statues (figure 1-1) housed within Tōji's Lecture Hall embody Kūkai's conceptualization of the four mandalas in relation to one another. These sculptures were started under Kūkai's direction and completed in 839, five years after his death. According to historical records, during repairs in 1197, gilt copper containers were found within the heads of fifteen of the twenty-one statues on the altar.[143] Modern X-rays and repairs have substantiated the presence of these relic

(J. Kongō-satta 金剛薩埵), who appeared before Nāgārjuna in India and transmitted the teachings (and texts) to him. The first is Dainichi Buddha. Kūkai relates a story—based on Amoghavajra's (Fukūkongō-sanzo 不空金剛三蔵, the sixth patriarch) account—of the meeting of Vajrasattva and Nāgārjuna in his *Record of the Dharma Transmission of the Secret Mandala Teaching* (*Himitsu mandarakyō fujōden* 秘密曼荼羅教付法伝.), KZ 1:1-49. Kūkai wrote an abbreviated version titled *Short History of Shingon Dharma Transmission* (*Shingon fuhōden* 真言付法伝), KZ 1:50-68.

[143] The following section on these statues draws from Maruo Shōzaburō. *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei: Heian jidai; Jūyō sakuhinhen*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1966-1997), which contains images, descriptions, and documents relating to the statues and the interred items. Another text that addresses these is Matsuura Masaaki, "*Tōji Kōdō no Shingon chōkoku*," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 150 (Sept. 1983): 77-101. For an English summary of the creation and repairs of these statues, see chapter eleven of Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 278-338. It is relevant that some of these items were found and documented in 1197 by Unkei 運慶 (1150-1223), a Kamakura-period sculptor who will be discussed in the following chapter, whilst he led a restoration team after destruction from twelfth-century violent conflicts. "*Tōbōki*," *Zokuzoku gunsho ruijū* vol. 12, ed. by Kokusho Kankōkai (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1906-9), 15b-17b.

containers in the statues.[144] These containers held "relics" of semiprecious stones, incense and slips of paper with written Sanskrit letters (figure 1-2) in mandala arrangements relevant to the deity within which they were deposited.[145] Such interred items, called by modern scholars *zōnai nōnyūhin* 像内納入品, are found in many Buddhist sculptures from various periods and typically consist of texts, relics or relic-like items, and other sacred small objects. Based on available evidence, the Tōji Lecture Hall sculptures' *nōnyūhin* were interred when the sculptures were completed in 839.[146]

These Sanskrit character arrangements, today also known as *bonmon mandara* 梵文曼荼羅 ("Sanskrit text mandalas"), are examples of the transitional phase in the development of written-character icons, or early forms of language-bodies. Executed in black ink on paper, the Sanskrit characters are the seed-syllable forms of Buddhist deities. Unlike the anthropomorphic deities of a *dai mandara* or the characters of the later versions of *ryōbu hō mandara* (and possibly the *hō mandara* that Kūkai imported), only one of the Sanskrit characters of the Tōji slips is enthroned on a lotus pedestal. Four additional characters are encircled in a disk. The inconsistency indicates that monks and artisans were working through new ways to conceive of and represent written word. Representations of the disk of the moon (*gachirin* 月輪) are found within many "courts" (deity palaces) on the Diamond and Womb World mandala encircling the deities and implying sacred presence, perhaps even signaling status as objects of reverence. To

[144] Maruo, *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei*, 49-51.

[145] Ibid.

[146] For more on *nōnyūhin,* see Helmut Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred: Empowering Buddhist Images in Clear, in Code, and in Cache* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011). I will discuss *nōnyūhin* further in the next chapter, including more sources for additional information.

date, the Tōji Sanskrit slips have not been discussed in relation to *hō mandara*.[147] Yet they were likely interred just thirty years after Kūkai's return from China either under his supervision or relatively shortly after his death and are the earliest extant works made in Japan that represents written characters as an icon. They are indicative of the early adoptive stages of this new practice.

The context of their deposit also supports an understanding of them within Kūkai's developing linguistic theory and visual system. The works found within the Tōji sculptures are particularly significant in marrying these two aspects of Kūkai's interest, relating back to his discussion of the four mandala types. The sculptures in Tōji's Lecture Hall together form a sculptural mandala, or *katsuma mandara*, one of the four mandala types. As previously noted, Kūkai saw the four mandalas as inseparably related. Furthermore, each expression (*akṣara*, *mudrā*, and *bimba*—respectively, the *hō mandara*, the *sanmaya mandara*, and the *dai mandara*) of the Tathāgatas is, according to him, implied in *katsuma mandara*. The inclusion of the Sanskrit slips shifts the interpretation of the Tōji Lecture Hall statues. With this knowledge, one can see the installation as making material Kūkai's theory on the four types and their inseparability. The anthropomorphic form of the sculptures reference *dai mandara,* the hand gestures and various attributes of the icons reference *sanmaya mandara,* and the Sanskrit slips reference *hō mandara.* Thus, the four types are inherently encompassed in this one building's visual program. Indeed, as Kūkai theorized, the three other types of mandala are embodied within this Tōji *katsuma mandara*. This configuration collapses the four into one through a layered reading of the works that is only clear to those who planned, created, installed, and consecrated of the sculptures.

[147] I did discuss this briefly in my Master's Thesis. Dine, "Sanskrit Beyond Text," 53-5.

Throughout his life, Kūkai expressed a fascination with Sanskrit and a profound belief in its specific role in the deepest meanings of the "secret storehouse," i.e. the Shingon Esoteric teachings. He returned from China with a single Womb World *hō mandara* and many written Sanskrit materials. This fascination combined with his ideas of polysemy and "letters" within a "world-text" is, unwitting or not, ideally represented in the concept of the *hō mandara*. His texts and ideas are without a doubt the basis for later ritual uses of Sanskrit in Esoteric praxis, but even in his own lifetime, he was formulating a visual system that integrated his linguistic theory, both broadly construed (seen in his analysis of classical Chinese poetry) and specifically via a Buddhist worldview. In light of this, the Tōji Sanskrit slips are a possible indication of the practices Kūkai was transmitting to his disciples from circa 809 to his death in 835, or—at the very least—a forerunner to a fuller incorporation of Sanskrit character icons into the realm of Esoteric Buddhist rites. The contributions of Kūkai and his followers paved the way for the use of text within visual cultures that would, in the thirteenth century, see a sharp increase in the use, dissemination, and development of new forms.

The Mechanics of Magical Words Beyond and Adjacent to the Sutras

With an understanding of early perspectives regarding the power of words to have both material and immaterial effects as well as the significance of Shingon visual culture, we can look at practices that link the two. Perhaps more importantly, we can also look at an example of the mechanics of magical words—*how* they were understood to work. Certainly, for some individuals, a lack of understanding may have increased the mystery, affecting a view of words as truly awesome: potentially both terrible and great. Language could be efficacious in benefitting people, but as we see in accounts of spells or curses, it could also be harnessed to

disastrous effect. Because of this, we see figures in the Heian (like Kūkai) and Kamakura periods specifically theorizing a logic to the power of words. Literature scholar Keller Kimbrough traced and applied hermeneutical approaches using contemporaneous thought in his study of medieval poetics in Japan. He examined *katoku setsuwa* 歌徳説話 (lit. "tales of the benefits of poetry"), considering the efficacy of these texts through the lens of "dharani theory."[148] Such works are rich objects of study for many reasons, but one is that they can illumine the nuanced ways that cultural practices overlapped and fed one another. In this section, I will provide a brief background on *dhāraṇī* and then outline the significance of Kimbrough's work, especially in providing a deeper context for the dissertation chapters to come.

The use of *dhāraṇī* in general is representative of the extension of scripture's power. Some of Japan's earliest imported Buddhist texts were *dhāraṇī*. Etymologically, the root of the Sanskrit word *dhāraṇī*, "*dhr*," means "to hold."[149] A *dhāraṇī* is a formula imbued with a magical power—a formula that stores (holds) meaning and power, though depending on the viewer/listener/reciter, power may be the only legible aspect. When one attains an understanding of a *dhāraṇī*, then one holds the knowledge stored within it. An instance of *dhāraṇī*'s use in storing meaning is mentioned in the *Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom Sutra* (*Hannya haramitta kyō* 般若波羅蜜多経, Skt. *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, Ch. *Bōrě bōluómìduō*), where bodhisattvas are described as attaining a specific *dhāraṇī*, or in other words the meaning held in that *dhāraṇī* was grasped.[150] In use, *dhāraṇī* could be written or spoken. Written *dhāraṇī* often

[148] Kimbrough, "Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry," 1-2. This entire chapter section draws heavily from Kimbrough's article. I omit diacritics from quoted material where the author does not include them.

[149] Briefly discussed in Gyatso, *In the Mirror of Memory*, 173.

[150] Ibid. The text of the sutra: T0220_.05.

functioned in an apotropaic way like an amulet, providing protection or fortune to the user/wearer.[151] In addition to *dhāraṇī* storing deep Buddhist meaning, being written in Sanskrit also connected these phrases to what was considered the language of the original spoken teachings and Śākyamuni (J. Shaka Nyorai 釈迦如来), the Buddha of the present age.

Considering that in early state-sponsored narratives—even drawing on native origin stories—words were understood as capable of affecting change in the physical realm, as discussed above, the use of *dhāraṇī* to do likewise seems to have been readily accepted. Along with a multitude of ritual practices, certain *dhāraṇī* chanted aloud or written on paper were used for various purposes, from addressing potential post-death karmic consequence by gaining merit to physical concerns such as curing illness or warding off calamity.[152] *Dhāraṇī* were also embedded in other aspects indicating the power of words partaking of a supermundane source. Seed syllables, mentioned above in relation to Shingon Buddhism, come from either the first or last syllable of a deity's individual *dhāraṇī*, depending on which aspect of the deity is being emphasized.[153] In this way, seed syllables originally acted as mnemonic devices used to

---

[151] An early example of apotropaic use of *dhāraṇī* can be found in *hyakumantō* 百万頭 (one million pagodas). Commissioned by female sovereign Kōken 孝謙天皇 (718-770, r. 749-758 and 764-770) in 764, one million miniature pagoda vessels with deposits of woodblock-printed *dhāraṇī* were made and distributed among temples throughout the land (like relics in reliquaries). Peter Kornicki, "The Hyakumanto Dharani and the Origins of Printing in Eighth-Century Japan," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 9, issue 1 (2012): 43-70.

[152] Much work has been done in many languages on *dhāraṇī* throughout Asia in general and more specifically within Japan. For an overarching look at *dhāraṇī* and its trajectory within Buddhism, especially with a consideration of it per English-language scholarship, see Ronald M. Davidson, "Studies in Dhāraṇī Literature I: Revisiting the Meaning of the Term 'Dhāraṇī,'" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* vol. 37, no. 2 (April 2009): 97-147. For work specifically addressing medieval Japan and *dhāraṇī* as a healing strategy, see Benedetta Lomi, "Dharanis, Talismans, and Straw-dolls: Ritual Choreographies and Healing Strategies of the "Rokujikyōhō" in Medieval Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* vol. 41, no. 2 (2014): 255-304.

[153] The earliest instance of this concept being discussed comprehensively in English comes from this text: L. A. Waddell, *The "Dharani" Cult in Buddhism; Its Origin, Deified Literature and Images* (Berlin: Oesterheld & Co., 1912). It has been further described in works since, such as that of Janet Gyatso, cited above. The amount of Japanese-language work done on this makes it impractical to attempt a comprehensive list here. Still, two foundational texts are Ujiie Kakushō, *Darani no sekai* (Tokyo: Tōhō shuppan, 1984) and Ujiie Kakushō, *Darani shisō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōhō shuppan, 1987).

remember the information stored; they came to function as not only a store of meaning, but also the essence of a deity.[154] Essentially, these seed syllables were polysemic. They were signifiers of signified deities, but had a more complex, layered nature as semiotic signs. A single written character was multi-referential, connecting to *dhāraṇī*, the presence and identity of a deity, the sutras, and the existence of the Buddhist practitioner as one who was viewing and therefore constituting the sign.

The widespread use and popularity of *dhāraṇī* by the early medieval period saw the expansion of *dhāraṇī* logic to other forms of writing. With a focus on the thirteenth to early seventeenth centuries, Kimbrough's work on *katoku setsuwa* presents perspectives of poetic power extremely relevant to the works discussed in the next three chapters of this dissertation, especially as many core developments within this genre seem to have occurred during the thirteenth century.[155] These developments focused on the idea that *waka* 和歌 (Japanese poetry, especially of 31 syllables), could function like *dhāraṇī*—in fact, the notion that became predominant was that these poems *were* Japanese *dhāraṇī*. As seen in the historical record, *dhāraṇī* had been employed since at least the eighth century to counteract ills of the world. One such record is the 718 iteration of the Ritsuryō 律令 (criminal and administrative) code. Despite proscriptions of magico-religious skills by Buddhists in its *Sōniryō* 僧尼令 (Rules for Buddhist

[154] This seems to have occurred also outside of Japan—for example, there are Chinese prints that illustrate this. One such work is of the Mahāpratisarā Dhāraṇī from the Dunhuang Caves (figure 1-3, dated 980 CE), within which there are Sanskrit characters enthroned on a lotus pedestal within a moon disc, following conventions for depicting a main icon.

[155] Kimbrough makes brief mention of the importance of music theory on changes in the perceptions of poetry at this time. I will not explore that here, but for more see Ogawa Toyo'o, "Katokuron josetsu 2," in *Uta monogatari to waka setsuwa* (*Setsuwa ronshū* vol. 9), ed. Setsuwa to Setsuwa Bungaku no Kai (Osaka, Seibundō, 1999). For a primary source example, see the *Nomori no kagami* 野守鏡 text of 1295.

Priests and Nuns) section, these rules still allowed the use of *dhāraṇī* for medical treatment per Buddhist teachings:

> [*Article 2.*] All monks and nuns who practice physiognomy, determine fortune, and the lesser paths of divination and healing illness will be deprived of their ordained status [and return to lay life]. [Those who] heal the sick [using] *dhāraṇī* in accordance with the Buddha Dharma are exempt from this prohibition.
>
> 凡僧尼。卜相吉凶。及小道巫術療病者。皆還俗。其依佛法。持咒救疾。不在禁限。[156]

This is some indication of the widespread popularity of *dhāraṇī* chanting as early as the eighth century.[157] As many scholars have posited, *dhāraṇī* were embedded even in Exoteric Buddhist practice and paved the way for Kūkai's Esoteric Buddhism introduced under Shingon.[158] Ostensibly, *dhāraṇī* use only became more widespread over the following centuries. As mentioned above, they often served as mnemonic and/or apotropaic devices. Most were transliterated from Sanskrit to Chinese (even embedded within the scriptures) to try to maintain, as closely as possible, phonic accuracy, which implies that some of their power and efficacy was linked to sound.[159] This transliteration resulted in oral recitations that were, to Chinese and Japanese users, generally incomprehensible.[160] Or rather, if we were to return to David Lurie's work, they were legible only in the recognition of their magical power. Based on the sustained

---

[156] Using Abé as a starting point, I have modified the English translation. Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 162 (italics added by Abé). *Ritsuryō*, in *Nihon shisō taikei* (NST) vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1976), 216.

[157] Abé discusses more examples of *dhāraṇī* around this time and leading up to Kūkai's introduction of a formal Shingon school in the following century. Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 161-76.

[158] See, for example, Horiike Shunpō, "*Nara jidai bukkyō no mikkyō teki seikaku*," in *Nihon kodaishi ronsō*, ed. Kodaigaku kyūkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1960); Yamaori Tetsuo, "*Mikkyō girei to Kūkai*," in *Kūkai to mikkyō uchū*, ed. Kanaoka Shūyū (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1989), 112-57 (143-46 specifically on this point); and Matsunaga Yūkei, *Mikkyō no rekishi* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1969), 155-64.

[159] Kūkai explicitly discussed the importance of "accurate" Sanskrit pronunciation.

[160] The same was true of sutra recitation or chanting at the time. Reciting the sutras "in Japanese" also resulted in an incomprehensible performance of sound (unless one was very learned in the sutras and could follow), implying a priority of sound over linguistic content with the sacred power of sutra words as well.

popularity of *dhāraṇī*, the incomprehensibility did not pose a problem—in fact, it likely added to an air of mystery and power since certain sounds were thought to be uniquely connected to the universe.

Already in the twelfth century, aristocratic figures were expounding on the qualities of poetry. Shortly before his death, Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1153 or 1155-1216) wrote about poetry in terms that echo the way monks as far back as Kūkai, who himself is representative of the overlaps of poetry and Buddhism, were thinking and writing about *dhāraṇī*:

> In what way does a poem's benefits surpass ordinary language? Because it contains many truths in a single word, because it exhausts, without revealing, deepest intent, because it summons forth events of the unseen ages before our eyes, because it employs the ignoble to express the superior, and because it carries to extremes, in seeming foolishness, most mysterious truth—because of this, when both not heartfelt and words are insufficient, if one should express oneself in verse, the mere thirty-one characters [of a poem] will possess the power to move heaven and earth, to calm demons and gods.
>
> いづ「く」かは、歌、たゞものをいふに勝る徳とせん。一詞に多くの理を籠め、現さずして深き心ざしを盡くす 見ぬ世の事を面影に浮べ、いやしきを借りて優を現し、をろかなるやうにて妙なる理を極むればこそ、心も及ばず詞も足らぬ時、是にて思ひを述べ、僅三十一字が中に天地を動かす徳を具し、鬼神をも和むる術にては侍れ。[161]

As in writings on the power of language within Buddhism, Kamo no Chōmei asserted that poetry compresses multiple meanings (signifieds) into a signifier. This mirrors Kūkai's writings about the polysemy of the sign and the power this creates and signals. Such explications on language (here, poetic theorizing) continued into the thirteenth century in both the Buddhist and poetry spheres, at times overlapping. In fact, these explications took place in words and practice—paintings, calligraphy, etc. all created a type of theory on language as well.

[161] The English translation, with minor adjustments, is from Kimbrough, "Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry," 5. Kamo no Chōmei, *Mumyōshō*, in NKBT 65:88.

Two thirteenth-century works especially showcase the overlap between Buddhism and poetry: the 1295 *Nomori no kagami* 野守鏡 (*Mirror of the Watchman of the Fields*) and the circa 1280 *Shasekishū* 沙石州 (*A Collection of Sand and Pebbles*) by the monk Mujū Ichien 無住一円 (1227-1312).[162] Both works explain how poetry can be *dhāraṇī*, outlining the reasons behind such an assertion. This logic centers around the period term *kotowari* 理 (reason, truth, principle). As a philosophical term and approach, it was prioritized in the thirteenth century in the way that the principle of precedence lent authority in earlier writings.[163] Throughout the thirteenth century, many authors (including those of the two works above) used the term *kotowari* in descriptions of poetry—identifying "reason" (which Kimbrough offers as a translation for *kotowari*) with this art form. As Kimbrough wrote, "The locating of the miraculous powers of *waka* in this *kotowari*—a truth that is expressed, dharani-like, in the semantic superabundance of the Japanese poetic form—is the essence of thirteenth-century *waka*-dharani thought."[164] Japanese poetry and *dhāraṇī* had powerful potential because of this possibility for what Kimbrough calls "semantic superabundance" (polysemy), a condensing of expansive meanings into small sets of words or syllables, and thus were tools that could be utilized to address either spiritual or mundane problems.[165]

---

[162] *Nomori no kagami*, in *Nihon kagaku taikei* vol. 4 (Tokyo: Fūkan Shobō, 1956-1963), 64-96. Mujū Ichien, *Shasekishū*, in NKBT 85.

[163] This is discussed further in Ryūfuku Yoshitomo's work. Ryūfuku Yoshitomo, *Nikki no shikō: Nihon chūsei shikōshi e no joshō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1995), 13. This is also discussed briefly in Ogawa Toyo'o, "*Katokuron josetsu 2*," in *Uta monogatari to waka setsuwa*, *Setsuwa ronshū* vol. 9, ed. Setsuwa to Setsuwa Bungaku no Kai (Osaka: Seibundō, 1999), 249.

[164] Kimbrough, "The Reading of Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry," 8.

[165] Kimbrough uses the term semantic superabundance from Abé's work on Kūkai (Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*).

The linguistic theorization of thirteenth-century poets regarding the power of verse was refined in the centuries following until many poems, contemporaneous and historical, were categorized under this hermeneutical framework as "*dhāraṇī*." These later writers looked back to works as early as the ninth century through the lens of what Kimbrough calls medieval *dhāraṇī* theory, in which conditional construction crafted a ritualized demand of sorts. Under this paradigm, "conditional construction" is a poem setting up a condition, for example, that would make it only logical for deities to fulfill the words of the verse—in effect, forcing the hand of a deity lest they be seen as unreasonable or illogical.[166] Kimbrough wrote in his analysis that these miraculous powers of poetry, like *dhāraṇī*, derive their efficacy from the intrinsic quality of truth. He connects both to ancient South Asian truth acts (*saccakiriyā*/*satyakriyā*), which are common in the Buddhist canon (for example, in the *jātaka* stories).[167] The concept of truth acts aligns well with the conditional constructions in poems that led to reason, or truth, as the source of efficacious change. The truth acts, like poetic conditional phrases, adhere to a general "if x, then y" structure wherein x is an indisputable truth so supernatural forces (buddhas, *kami*, etc.) feel compelled to fulfill y because it would be unbearable for anyone to conceive of x as an untruth.[168]

Whether in these types of poetic verse, Buddhist truth acts originating from South Asia, or *dhāraṇī*, in thirteenth-century Japan, understandings of the mechanics of language were refined to leverage—through these forms—the potential power of words. In light of the increase

[166] Kimbrough, "Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry," 13. Kimbrough provides many examples of poetic verse that seem to have effected change in this way, rainmaking being a common occurrance among them.

[167] For more, see W. Norman Brown, "The Metaphysics of the Truth Act (Satyakriyā)," in *Melanges d'Indianisme à la Memoire de Louise Renou* (Paris: Editions E. de Boccard, 1963): 171-7.

[168] For more, see Kimbrough, "Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry," 18-23.

in new forms of visual objects that represented language in different ways at this time, it seems significant that the expositions on the connection between poetry and *dhāraṇī* were seemingly inspired by the same material and occurred around the same time as the works in the next three chapters. The written record—both record-keeping driven *and* artistic such as poetry—can inform our understanding of visual materials, as will be explored in the next three chapters. Yet the reverse is also true. The material discussed in the rest of this dissertation can enhance our modern understanding of the medieval magico-religious workings of *waka* and *dhāraṇī.* All of these developments were part of a confluence of innovation and thought that provided the fertile ground for the growth of new forms of language-bodies in Buddhist art.

Authority, Legitimacy, and Ordering the World in Early Medieval Narrative Framing

As I stated in the introduction, my study of the objects within chapters three to five is driven in equal parts by an interest in considering continuities as well as interventions that disrupt, shift, or innovate. From my place within the discipline of art history, these continuities and shifts come out most clearly within works of art. Yet, as I intimated above, these objects are situated within a dense, multimedia intertextual network. They are, to some degree, inseparable from the trends within other uses of language such as literary genres. In this section, I will outline the work done by literature scholar Erin Brightwell on the *Mirror* texts of the early medieval period to give an example of how written word via narrative framing was used to grapple with the many changes and challenges of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.[169] Her study illumines contemporaneous uses of narrative that reveal "textual

[169] Similar to much work done post-Kuroda to nuance our understandings of medieval Japan, Brightwell pushes back against a binary framework of looking at the past. Specifically, through her book she challenges the juxtoposition of Japanese historiographic and literary development.

production and reception as processes in which authors and readers, knowingly or not, assign values to choices of language or linguistic form."[170] The various associations with different linguistic forms and the choices connected to the assigned values links directly with the layered meanings inherent in language-bodies. The ways that *Mirror* writers were using language in its written semantic form for specific effect parallels to a degree how language-bodies were employed for their own specific effect via language as one response to calamity. While my own object study in this dissertation is not focused on literary works such as the *Mirrors*, the approaches within these works also allow one more entrée into societal perspectives of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Understanding the tools that these texts use will lay the groundwork for seeing how language is used as a tool within the Buddhist art of the next three chapters.

Brightwell's analysis of *Mirror* writings begins with the eleventh-century *Ōkagami* 大鏡 (*The Great Mirror*) and spans the following centuries, studying texts into the fourteenth century. Her selection of texts—indeed, the support for conceiving them as a separate genre, *Mirrors*—is based in their shared "narrative preoccupations," as she terms it.[171] These four parameters are place, principle, language, and the relationship between ordering the past and narrative structure. In studying the settings of the texts, Brightwell explores the selection of place as a particular deployment of narrative framing, with the types of sites or institutions revealing medieval correlations between authority and place. By considering "principle" as another criterion for studying *Mirror* texts, Brightwell identifies ways that these texts present a worldview with its own logic. Essentially, she argues that the texts studied in her book all subscribe to the "principle

[170] Brightwell, *Reflecting the Past*, 28.

[171] Brightwell, *Reflecting the Past*, 22.

of the existence of a cosmic rationale" though in different ways—be it karmic causation or an understanding of divine forces as able to be leveraged for one's cause.[172] Language selection as the next focus of Brightwell's approach is particularly relevant to this dissertation. She analyzes the choice of written language as:

> reflecting the different type of authority the respective *Mirrors* invoke, in which the appeal to the eyewitness is but one possibility: the choices range from drawing on the traditional prestige of the court orthodoxy to creating a voice that transcends worldly institutions.[173]

As Brightwell states, the use of vernacular in the early *Mirrors* has been emphasized by scholars for its relation to prioritizing the seemingly "eyewitness" accounts within them, yet Brightwell shows that the language use ranged from *wabun* 和文 to *kanbun* 漢文 with varying models in between, often called "hybrids."[174] A main thread of her scholarly intentions is to destabilize the previous perceptions of language selection within these texts as examples of the decline of linguistic ability (from Classical Chinese to hybrid/deviant modes, etc.). Although I do not dive deeper into this aspect of her work here, a key point here is that Brightwell's approach of considering language selection as a tool for crafting various forms of authority within the *Mirror* texts illustrates firmly the non-neutrality of language in terms of intention and reception. These three criteria she employs as her analytic framework contribute to her fourth: the ordering of the past.

---

[172] Brightwell, *Reflecting the Past*, 26.

[173] Brightwell, *Reflecting the Past*, 27.

[174] *Wabun* is Japanese writing with traditional vocabulary and grammar, using primarily *hiragana*. *Kanbun* are generally Japanese texts writting in Classical Chinese. Brightwell briefly outlines the use of language in the *Mirror* texts in her introduction (pages 27-8) and includes this criterion as a mode of analysis for each of text she studies throughout the chapters. Related, these *Mirror* texts drew from continental modes of presenting history, but as Brightwell points out, they synthesized those modes with domestic writings—an approach that I will address in the next chapter as it pertains to Buddhist art.

In putting the abovementioned aspects of the *Mirror* texts in close conversation with historical events, Brightwell presents the *Mirrors* as historiographical projects that respond to instability in part by *not* explicitly addressing it. By engaging the chronicle format for these narratives, "the *Mirrors* can be understood as attempts to disambiguate the relevance of the cosmological order they advance through moralizing the historical trajectories they relate—the texts offer an order in which things have worked out as they were supposed to."[175] Each of the studied works can be connected to specific historical events where political power was destabilized—for example, *Mizukagami* 水鏡 (*The Water* Mirror), studied in Brightwell's second chapter, was created in the wake of the civil war.[176] In a time where the weakness or lack of such may have been keenly felt by many, the writers of the *Mirrors* (and subsequently readers who "bought into" their narratives) seemed to respond to current events by ordering the past partially through the manipulation of written language within a text during such times of instability. As will be seen, many of these aspects from Brightwell's study will have intriguing parallels with the coming chapters. In addition to the span of time covered in Brightwell's book overlapping with my own and providing a look into contemporaneous literary practice, if one were to draw a Venn diagram, within the shared layers would be: response to instability, attempts to order (and perhaps leverage) the past, and the manipulation of language to accomplish such things. I see my work in this dissertation as engaging with scholars like Brightwell to demonstrate broader

[175] Brightwell, *Reflecting the Past*, 31.

[176] This is the Genpei War 源平合戦 (1180-1185). There had been violent conflict in the decades before this, but the Genpei War was on a larger scale in terms of affects and length. Some of the *Mirror* texts do not have dates, but scholars have narrowed the range for those. Even with the works give a general period, Brightwell's argument remains convincing.

cultural practices that may not have been neatly bounded into our contemporary considerations of academic discipline.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, there was a long history of complex associations and uses of language prior to the thirteenth century. The earliest extant examples of recorded language denoted socio-economic and political prestige and power. Importantly, they also indicate that written word only had to be legible as language (i.e. text) rather than as a meaning-bearing medium to accomplish this. Early imperially-sponsored texts expand upon these connections between recorded language and power by employing narrative framing in efforts to assert legitimacy and authority.[177] Additionally, many episodes recorded therein indicate the magico-religious uses of language. Such supramundane qualities of language are also prominent within the Buddhist canon, which promoted a dually-beneficial relationship under the understanding of words' power between sutra and practitioner that allowed for Buddhist texts to be reiterated through chanting, copies and more. *Setsuwa* tales buttressed the canon, providing numerous examples of miraculous stories related to the sutras. This constructed view of sacred words prompted theories of sacred words in the early medieval period with poetry argued to be forms of *dhāraṇī*, complete with a logic of *how* such sacred words affected beneficial change. Concurrently, works such as the *Mirror* texts were being composed to make sense of the present world at times of instability through historiography. Taken together, these factors illustrate that by the thirteenth century, particular deployment of language was an attempt to harness the past

[177] This is also covered extensively in Torquil Duthie, *Man'yōshū and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

and/or divine forces through techniques that were increasingly honed. The background described in this chapter lays the tracks for the paths of the following three chapters. The examples subsequently studied illustrate language-bodies integrated in meaningful ways to navigate personal, religious, factional, or mundane challenges. The earliest examples of language-bodies in Buddhist visual culture, traced in this chapter to the Shingon sect, historically paved the way for this dissertation's case studies, which grew from those prior perceptions of language and its power. Taken in combination with one another, the objects of study in this dissertation and the material within this first chapter illumine a view of history that is more nuanced in terms of how human motivation is enacted, rather than a binary of continuity or disruption.

Chapter Two
The Development of the *Nenbutsu*-speaking Image Type as a Refinement of Language-Bodies

Included in most survey courses, the sculpture of Kūya at Rokuharamitsu-ji in Kyoto (figure 2-7) has, throughout the decades, captured the attention of many with its dynamic use of language-bodies to represent the *nenbutsu*. Its arresting visual characteristics make it a prime candidate for inclusion in the work of scholars across various disciplines. Despite this relatively wide-spread recognition, it is generally afforded a few sentences—at most, a few pages—and it is usually only situated within a network of Kei-School sculptures. However, its use of language-bodies is key for exploring the ways that boundaries between spoken *and* written word as well as buddha bodies were collapsed into multivalent visual forms. Furthermore, its significance is embedded in a network that moves beyond artistic medium, encompassing issues related to doctrine and both personal and communal Buddhist worship.

In this chapter, I focus on images, both painted and sculpted, of the seventh-century Chinese monk Shàndǎo 善導 (613-681) and the tenth-century Japanese monk Kūya 空也 (903-972)—specifically, those that showcase the practice of the six-character *nenbutsu* 念仏 ("*Namu Amida Butsu* 南無阿弥陀仏," lit. "Homage to Amida Buddha"). In each, the monks are individually portrayed with mouths open and small figures of Amida Buddha emerging, an embodiment of word that had not been seen in Japan before that time. The earliest extant works of this type in Japan roughly date to the early thirteenth century. These images of Shàndǎo and

Kūya also illustrate the connection that word can create between believer and Buddha, nostalgically providing depictions of historical examples other times and places to inspire people of the thirteenth century, but also building intergenerational connections for Pure Land communities who often faced criticism for lacking a lineage. Pointedly, these depictions capture vital aspects of the monks' teachings (that emphasized the *nenbutsu*). They also expanded the complexity of previous language-bodies from written characters embodying buddhas or bodhisattvas to the inverse of figural depictions of Buddhist deities that simultaneously embodied word.

In this chapter, I place these works within the histories of Pure Land Buddhist practice, their historical context of destruction and (re)construction on the heels of mid to late twelfth century events, and within a network of artists and patrons. By the turn of the thirteenth century, chanting and recitation were well-established tools for dealing with affliction—spiritual, societal, and physical. The destruction from the 1180-1185 Genpei War 源平合戦, which itself followed other armed conflicts, resulted in subsequent rebuilding and shifting power figures. Building upon the antecedents discussed in the last chapter, Buddhist monks, patrons, and artists created more and more types of Buddhist art incorporating language in some form during the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Despite these continuities, people of the thirteenth century created new ways to use language that refined and diverged from earlier practices, resulting in a wider use of language-bodies, specifically.

Overall, this chapter explores the confluence of factors that allowed for the development and spread of Shàndǎo and Kūya images. I argue that these works, in their networks of artisans and Buddhist monks, are indicative of a broad use of historical figures and the power of language to navigate uncertain social, political, and religious climates. These works materialize the early

thirteenth-century view of both Shàndǎo and Kūya as partaking of and engendering a divine presence through *nenbutsu*. Additionally, they lend themselves to a reading of active presence in both the monks depicted and what the works encourage viewers to do. The dissemination of this imagery and related ideas hints at a broad interest in the power of words. Through historical precedents, active use of such power is promoted as potential means to achieve better ends, ideally birth in Amida's Pure Land. With the personal, communal, generational, and systemic effects of violent conflicts and natural disasters, the use of such a tool as words partaking of the divine could have been an option to try to partially steer one's own path in life and death. This chapter, therefore, presents *nenbutsu*-speaking images as an important point in the development of language-body representations and perspectives on the use of language within art to navigate negative circumstances during the thirteenth century. In particular, this chapter looks at the refinement of language-bodies via these works through material qualities, composition, and a sense of physicality. While these works primarily illustrated and promoted the efficacy and power of the *nenbutsu*, they were also part of a larger trajectory of premodern perceptions of language and power.

Pure Land Buddhism in Japan: Early Examples and the Significance of the Tendai and Shingon Schools

The story of Shàndǎo and Kūya images cannot be told without a brief glimpse into the history of Pure Land practice in Japan, which predated any official Pure Land sect. A look at these practices establishes a baseline for studying shifts during the early medieval period and contextualizes the use of Shàndǎo and Kūya imagery. For the first half of the twentieth century, as discussed in the introduction, scholars viewed Pure Land Buddhism mainly as part of a "Kamakura New Buddhism," a set of radical teachings and practices for the masses. Further, it

was often situated as a movement in response to widespread beliefs in *mappō*. Many scholars have rightly complicated those prior perspectives, including Kuroda Toshio and Sueki Fumihiko, leading to more nuanced studies of Pure Land practices of the medieval period. Scholarly work since the late twentieth century has situated Pure Land worship as integral to Buddhist practice in Japan from a very early point, near the introduction of Buddhism to the archipelago. Despite an official (sectarian) narrative of Pure Land Buddhism as a sect being established through the work of the monk Hōnen in the twelfth century, Pure Land traditions were a part of Japanese Mahāyāna Buddhist practice much earlier.

There is significant evidence of Japanese Pure Land traditions prior to 1100 CE. This material evidence is in the form of written records related to monks as well as Buddhist visual works. Such clues date back to the Hakuhō 白鳳時代 (645-710) and Nara 奈良時代 (710-784) periods, which were a formative time for the creation of Buddhist objects. Works related to Amida and the Pure Land were part of the early material and visual cultures of Japanese Buddhism. For example, the earliest extant Amida mural painting, from the Hakuhō period and showing him with his bodhisattva retinue, was in the Golden Hall (*kondō* 金堂) of Hōryūji 法隆寺.[178] Another early work showcasing a connection to Pure Land practice is in the inscription on the mandorla of a trio of statues, Shaka Buddha 釈迦如来 (Skt. Śākyamuni) and attendant bodhisattvas. An excerpt from the text on the back of the trio's mandorla, either inscribed in 623 as indicated or closer to the end of the seventh century, provides a concrete example of early Pure Land belief. "Should it be his karmic destiny to depart from this world, then may he ascend to Pure Land and swiftly attain the ultimate awakening 若是定業以背世者往登浄土早昇妙果

[178] It was severely damaged by fire in 1949 and is studied through photographic records made shortly prior to the fire.

...[179] Additionally, the significance of Amida worship and Pure Land belief extended beyond paintings, sutras, and sculptures to include buildings dedicated to Amida. In 741, an Amida Hall (*Amida-in* 阿弥陀院) was created in Nara to enshrine a statue of Amida and paintings of the Pure Land and in 760, an Amida Pure Land Hall (*Amida Jōdo-in* 阿弥陀浄土院) was built.[180] These are but a few examples that showcase the presence of Pure Land veneration and practice many centuries before the Kamakura-period development of Pure Land schools.

Material evidence of these early beliefs in Amida's Pure Land frequently centered on individual figures, most likely due to the personal nature of desires for birth in the Pure Land. Prince Shōtoku 聖徳太子 (c. 574-622), a semi-legendary figure often considered the founder of Buddhism in Japan, is one of the earliest figures to which Pure Land practices in Japan are attributed. Commentaries that he reportedly wrote, including one on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra* (*Yuimagyō* 維摩経), contain reference to buddhas and their lands. In his commentary on the *Lotus Sutra* (*Hokke-kyō* 法華経), he referenced women's rebirth in Amida's Pure Land.[181] Soon after Shōtoku's death in 622, his wife Tachibana no Ōiratsume 但馬橘大娘皇女 (dates

[179] Akiko Walley, *Constructing the Dharma King: the Hōryūji Shaka Traid and the Birth of the Prince Shōtoku Cult* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), 19. This entire chapter in Walley's book (pages 17-42) is dedicated to the inscription, including a discussion of the dating debates related to it.

[180] Inagaki Hisao, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: a Study and Translation from Chinese* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1995), 144-45. The 760 hall is referenced in the *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀 (*Later Chronicle of Japan*), an official history (one of the Six National Histories, *Rikkokushi* 六国史) completed in 840 and covering the years 792-833. For a brief exploration of the construction of Amida halls and imperial orders for Amida-related image and sutra distribution, see Satō Tetsuei, *Eizan jōdokyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1979), 4-5.

[181] The *Sangyō gisho* 三経義疏 (*Annotated Commentaries on the Three Sutras*) is an annotated commentary on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra*, the *Lotus Sutra*, and the *Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra* (*Shōmangyō* 勝鬘経). This trio of commentaries has been attributed to Shōtoku (such attributions date to as early as the eighth century), though modern scholars have pointed out a variety of issues with such an attribution. There is currently no scholarly consensus on the authorship of the *Sangyō gisho*. For more, see Nakamura Hajime, *Shōtoku Taishi* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1998), 123-32.

unknown) commissioned the *Tenjukoku shūchō mandara* 天寿国繍帳. This embroidery illustrated her belief in Shōtoku's birth (*ōjō* 往生) in "*tenjukoku* 天寿国" (lit. "the land of heavenly longevity"), a term that some historians suggest may have denoted Amida's Pure Land.[182] Regardless of the veracity of any of these claims related to Shōtoku, medieval texts on the history of the Pure Land sects perpetuated them, connecting their relatively newly-formed sects to a figure viewed—both then and even now—as one of the most significant and influential in the history of Japanese Buddhism.

The history of early Pure Land practice following Shōtoku is sprinkled with examples of monks from various sects whose practice incorporated veneration of Amida and striving toward birth in his Pure Land. This especially manifested in many monks' individual deathbed practices. Religious studies scholar Jaqueline Stone wrote in her volume titled *Right Thoughts at the Last Moment* about the early connections of Pure Land beliefs to deathbed practices.[183] She argues that Pure Land practices prior to the medieval period centered around funerary rituals, deathbed practices, and the afterlife. A full list of figures who performed deathbed Pure Land practices could fill this entire section. Instead, I will briefly outline a few representative examples of Pure Land practice throughout the centuries that will give an idea of the pervasiveness of Pure Land

[182] This is the oldest extant embroidered work in Japan. It was created by female servants of the Imperial court with the approval of Suiko Tennō. Though its condition has deteriorated and much of the work is lost, the inscription of this "*Tenjukoku mandara* 天寿国曼荼羅" ("mandala of the land of heavenly longevity") is recorded in section three of the eighth-century *Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō teisetsu* 上宮聖徳法王帝説, a biography of Shōtoku. Some parts were written in the eighth century, but different sections seem to date to various points in time. The complete manuscript was compiled around 1050. For the full text of *Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō teisetsu*, see *Nihon Shisō Taikei* vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975), 352-78.

[183] Jacqueline Stone, *Right Thoughts at the Last Moment: Buddhism and Deathbed Practices in Early Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016).

practice prior to the medieval period.[184] The Hossō 法相 monk Dōshō 道昭 (629-700) is an early example of a monk who seems to have performed deathbed Pure Land rites. Stories of his death convey that he faced west, sitting upright, and that a light filled his room then went away to the west, thus leaving his disciples convinced he had achieved birth in the Pure Land.[185] Another early example of individual Pure Land practice, roughly contemporaneous with Dōshō and perhaps one of the most significant, is Gyōki 行基 (alt. reading Gyōgi, 668-749), a well-known devout lay follower (J. *ubasoku* 優婆塞, Skt. *upāsaka*).[186] A popular figure of the Nara period who apparently earned the respect of the sovereign Shōmu 聖武天皇 (701-756), Gyōki traveled to villages, spreading the teachings related to the Pure Land and the practice of the *nenbutsu*. Although likely an ahistorical constructed narrative, by the thirteenth century, Gyōki was known as one of the first figures to spread the recited *nenbutsu*.[187] In addition, the monk Chikō 智光 (c. 709-780), who studied Sanron 三論 teachings, was a younger contemporary of Gyōki. Chikō discussed the *nenbutsu* in a now-lost commentary, writing of the two types of *nenbutsu*: mental and oral recitation.[188]

---

[184] In addition to the examples mentioned before and after, the Shōsō-in 正倉院 collection also has copies of the three main sutras associated with the Pure Land, indicating the early introduction of these texts to Japan.

[185] This story of Dōshō's actions on his deathbed was recounted in the *Nihon ryōiki*, the twenty-second episode of volume one. For an English translation, see Watson, *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan*, 42. For the Japanese, see NKBZ 6:106-108. Dying while focusing the entirety of one's attention on Amida Buddha was thought to ensure one's birth in the Pure Land (the Western Paradise).

[186] For more on Gyōki, especially a look at medieval hagiography related to him, see Jonathan Augustine, *Buddhist Hagiography in Early Japan: Images of Compassion in the Gyōki Tradition* (London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005).

[187] Yamaguchi Kōen, *Tendai Jōdokyō shi* (Kyoto: Tendai Gakumonjo, 1967), 253-55. Edo-period (1603-1868) compilations of these monks' biographies, partially drawing on historical documents and literature, also mention similar aspects of their lives. Perhaps the most well-known of these Edo works is the 1702 *Honchō kōsōden* 本朝高僧伝 (*Biography of High-ranking Monks*), which contained biographical information on more than 1,600 monks.

[188] This was a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Discourse on the Pure Land* (J. *Jōdoron* 浄土論). Information about Chikō's text's content can be found piecemeal in quotations from the works of Ryōen, Genshin, and others.

Many Hakuhō- and Nara-period monks such as these figures wove Pure Land practices in among other approaches, regardless of sectarian affiliation, yet in the following centuries, a significant number of Pure Land adherents were trained within the Tendai sect 天台宗, including Hōnen, who will feature within this chapter and reappear throughout this dissertation. Since Amida worship was embedded into Tendai by its Japanese founder, Saichō 最澄 (766 or 767-822, posthumously Dengyō Daishi 伝教大師), this may be expected. Saichō established Tendai as the Japanese branch of Tiāntái Buddhism founded by Zhìyǐ 智顗 (538-597) in China. Saichō's Tendai Buddhism was based chiefly on the *Lotus Sutra* and Nāgārjuna's *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* commentary. Following continental traditions, Saichō also incorporated Zhìyǐ's four kinds of *samādhi* (*sanmai* 三昧, high level of concentrated meditation), each of them variations of sitting and walking while performing *samādhi*. One, constant walking while concentrating on Amida Buddha, was based on the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra* (*Hanju zanmai kyō* 般舟三昧経, *Sutra on the Samādhi for Encountering Face-to-Face the Buddhas of the Present*), a text with the first known mentions of Amida Buddha.[189] Additionally, Saichō's plan for Mt. Hiei 比叡山 (the seat of Tendai Buddhism with the headquarter temple of Enryaku-ji 延暦寺) included a hall dedicated to Amida. Saichō supposedly used the *nenbutsu* in various ways, from ending a lecture or discussion to the ritual for removing the seven calamities.[190] More evidence for Saichō's

---

Although I do not discuss it here, Chikō developed a Pure Land mandala (called *Chikō mandara* 智光曼荼羅). For a brief exploration of this mandala in English, see Ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas*, 134-37.

[189] Paul Harrison and John McRae, *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra and the Śūraṅgama Samādhi Sūtra* (Berkley, CA: Numata Centery, 1998), 2–3, 19. This text is also thought to be the origin of Pure Land Buddhism in China. For the sutra, see T0418_.13. The specific section that discusses Amida begins at T0418_.13.0905a14.

[190] Yamaguchi, *Tendai jōdokyōshi*, 294-96. Hōnen seems to have stated this about Saichō's ritual use of the *nenbutsu* so even if this was apocryphal, such a claim is relevant for the context of thirteenth-century material culture.

connection to Amida and dedication to Pure Land birth can be found in his own written works. In *Ju bosatsukai gi* 授菩薩戒儀 (*Ordination Manual for the Bodhisattva Precepts*), he wrote: "…I [wish to be] born before the buddha [A]mida in the Land of Utmost Bliss… 生極楽界弥陀佛前…"[191]

The fact that Tendai monks thereafter nurtured Amida veneration and Pure Land practices, developing them more fully, also reveals their prominence within the sect. Ennin 圓仁 (794-864, posthumously Jikaku Daishi 慈覺大師) was a leading disciple of Saichō, studying at Mt. Hiei until travelling to China to undertake further study shortly after Saichō's death in 822. Ennin was there for about nine years, first at Mt. Wutai (Wǔtáishān 五台山) then at the capital of Cháng'ān 長安. He returned to Japan and within a decade was appointed the third head of the Tendai sect. He is known for strengthening the Esoteric aspects of Tendai, which he had studied in the Chinese capital, and for bringing back further training and resources related to Pure Land practice. He practiced the aforementioned constant-walking *samādhi*, but modified the practice to include oral *nenbutsu* chanting. This new method of the constant-walking *samādhi* was called *fudan nenbutsu* 不断念仏 (constant *nenbutsu*).[192] Zhìyǐ's system of Tiāntái practice had already incorporated a vocal *nenbutsu* to some degree and, later, Fǎzhào 法照 (9th century) encouraged a rhythmic chanting of the *nenbutsu*—a combination that became a hallmark of Kūya's legacy and

[191] The English is based on Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*,150. For the Japanese, see Saichō, *Ju bosatsukai gi*, in *Dengyō daishi zenshū* vol. 1 (Sakamoto-mura: Hieizan Tosho Kankōsho, 1926-27), 328.

[192] This is discussed in Kōyū Sonoda, "*Yama no nenbutsu*," in *Nihon jōdokyōshi no kenkyū*, ed. T. Fujishima and E. Miyazaki (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1969), 99-130. See also Yamaguchi, *Tendai jōdokyōshi*, 312-36. For a more recent publication that broadly covers Ennin's interventions to Tendai pulled from his study in China, see Kominami Myokaku, "*Jikaku Daishi Ennin nittō guhō no seika: Hieizan Bukkyō no kakuritsu wo kishite*," *Shimado* 75 (Mar. 2018): 1-23.

embedded in his imagery, as we will see later in this chapter.[193] The walking and chanting combination via the *fudan nenbutsu*, eventually popularly known as *yama no nenbutsu* 山の念仏 (mountain *nenbutsu*), began to be practiced in a yearly event at the *Jōgyō zanmai-dō* 常行三昧堂 (Hall for Constantly Moving Samādhi [practice]) of Mt. Hiei starting a year after Ennin's death in 864.[194] Beyond Ennin's direct contributions to Pure Land practices in the wider Tendai community, as with earlier monks, stories of his death foreground his personal devotion to the Pure Land. According to Ennin's biography, he died while performing the Amida *mudrā* and chanting the Amida *dhāraṇī*.[195]

Any overview of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan would be remiss without touching upon the now well-known monk Genshin 源信 (942-1017, alt. Eshin 恵心), who not only impacted Pure Land practice, but also exerted larger ripple effects on Buddhist visual culture. Genshin studied Tendai Buddhism from a young age at Mt. Hiei. He advanced in scholarship and recognition, delivering many lectures and producing a large quantity of written works. His written works often incorporated his Pure Land beliefs, but arguably his most significant was *Ōjōyōshū* 往生要集 (*Essentials of Birth in the Pure Land*), written between 984 and 985.[196] In it, Genshin detailed that the age of Dharma decline (*mappō*) required people to rely on the power of buddhas and bodhisattvas (*tariki* 他力) for salvation rather than their own power (*jiriki* 自力). At

[193] Fǎzhào's work reached Japan by Kūya's lifetime.

[194] These Tendai halls were specifically for the practice of *jōgyō zanmai*, one of the four kinds of *samādhi*. An Amida Buddha icon was generally installed as the *honzon* 本尊 (principal object of worship) because Amida Buddha was to be circumambulated for 90 days as the constant walking for this *samādhi*. The first *Jōgyō zanmai-dō* is thought to have been constructed by Ennin in 851.

[195] Satō, *Eizan jōdokyō no kenkyū*, 36.

[196] Genshin, *Ōjōyōshū*, T2682_.84.

the time, the *Ōjōyōshū* was the most accessible compendium on Pure Land practice and birth in both China and Japan, gathering citations from sutras, discourses, and both Esoteric and Exoteric commentaries. Additionally, Genshin's detailed and realistic descriptions of samsaric suffering, such as in the various hells (*jigoku* 地獄), were one way he promoted desire for post-death birth in the Pure Land. In fact, Genshin's vivid descriptions in *Ōjōyōshū* had a significant impact on Buddhist visual cultures, prompting the creation of various types of imagery.[197] In the short sermon *Yokawa hōgo* 横川法語 (*Words on the Dharma at Yokawa*) of the year 985, he preached faith in Amida and the potential of exclusive practice of the *nenbutsu*.[198] Although he was a Tendai monk with syncretic practices, *nenbutsu* recitation dominated. A 1013 record details the *nenbutsu* as the most recited for him in comparison to, for example, sutras and *dhāraṇī*.[199] Yet again with Genshin we find an account of death that describes mindfulness of Amida with him passing away while repeating the *nenbutsu*—yet one more example of the ways the *nenbutsu* practice contributed to the Japanese Buddhist conception of sacred words with efficacious power.[200]

Similar to Gyōki, Kūya was prominent among a broad audience that included commoners, proselytizing widely even in areas that were considered in mainstream Buddhism to

[197] Sarah Horton, "The Influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* in Late Tenth- and Early Eleventh-Century Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31:1 (2004): 29-54.

[198] Genshin, *Yokawa hōgo*, in *Kokuyaku: Shōwa shinsan, Shūtenbu* vol. 1, ed. Kokuyaku daizōkyō henshūbu (Tokyo: Tōhō shoin, 1932), 485. English translation in Dennis Hirota, *Plain Words on the Pure Land Way* (Ryūkoku University, 1989), 69-70.

[199] For more on this, see Satō, *Eizan jōdokyō no kenkyū*, 132-33.

[200] In the *Ōjōyōshū*, Genshin emphasized deathbed *nenbutsu* practice. Many scholars have written extensively on Genshin's life. Perhaps two of the most comprehensive are: Tensei Kitabatake, *Ōjōyōshū kōyō* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1992); Allan Andrews, *The Teachings Essential for Rebirth: A Study of Genshin's Ōjōyōshū* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970).

be unclean and thus a polluting influence on one's Buddhist practice.[201] Kūya engaged in temple training and practices, but had a prediliction for countryside travel and public works that brought many practices outside elite temples. Genshin, for his part, was an elite cleric rather than a wandering sage. Thus, Genshin's influence was felt more through lectures to the Buddhist monastic community in his lifetime as well as through his writings during and thereafter. In contrast, Kūya was a presence among both the Buddhist communities and commoners due to his travels. The histories of figures such as Genshin and Kūya are interwoven within the broader tapestry of Pure Land histories in Japan, each with significant impacts despite their different roles and approaches.

Before focusing on Shàndǎo and Kūya, a return to the Shingon sect illustrates the reaches of Pure Land practice and further outline the role Shingon played in shaping Buddhist visual cultures. In the late Heian period, Shingon was prominent. Syncretic practices were especially advocated under certain monks. The monk Kakuban 覚鑁 (1095-1143, posthumously Kōgyō Daishi 興教大師) advanced the practice of the *nenbutsu* in the Shingon sect, establishing the theoretical basis for the *himitsu nenbutsu* 秘密念仏 (secret *nenbutsu*; often called "Esoteric *nenbutsu*").[202] Within the context of increased Amida veneration from the mid-Heian period,

[201] Even Rokuharamitsu-ji, the temple he founded, was in an area where people performed labor that was considered polluting. For example, very nearby were a crematorium and along the river bank was an execution ground (the temple was built near the east bank of the Kamo River). I will go into more detail on Kūya as a historical figure later in this chapter. Two sources that address the discourse of pollution versus purification in Japanese Buddhism are Thomas Keirstead, "Outcasts Before the Law: Pollution and Purification in Medieval Japan," in *Currents in Medieval Japanese History: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey P. Mass*, ed. By Gordon Berger et al (Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2009), 267-93 and Nagahara Keiji, "The Medieval Origins of the Eta-Hinin," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 5, no. 2 (Summer, 1979): 385-403.

[202] Mt. Kōya, one of the two main centers of Shingon Buddhism, saw the settlement of a group *hijiri* 聖 (holy men; often itinerant monks) around the end of the tenth century. The *hijiri* came to be one of the three main groups of monks at this mountain center. *Gakuryo* 学侶 (scholar monks) and *gyōnin* 行人 (practitioner monks) were the other two. Throughout the centuries, at times there was competition and enmity between these groups. The *hijiri* travelled the countryside, collecting donations and aiding villagers with Mt. Kōya as their home station. *Nenbutsu* practice appeared within this growing population of *hijiri* on Mt. Kōya until there were a number of such groups by the

Kakuban—like Kūkai before him—believed that there were Esoteric levels to Exoteric practices, including the *nenbutsu.* Kakuban theorized about the Esoteric meanings of the *nenbutsu* in three texts: *Amida hishaku* 阿弥陀秘釈 (*The Esoteric Meaning of Amida*), *Gorin kuji myō himitsushaku* 五輪九字明秘密釈 (abbr. *Gorin kuji hishaku*, *The Esoteric Meanings of the Five Cakras and the Nine Syllables*), and *Ichigo taiyō himitsushū* 一期体要秘密集 (*The Esoteric Collection of Important Points in Life*).[203] In these works, Kakuban discussed three kinds of Amida *nenbutsu*. He focused on the words and syllables, equating them with sacred aspects of Esoteric Buddhism and explaining that they result in birth of the highest level in the Pure Land. Kakuban's writings also established Amida Buddha as an emanation of Dainichi Buddha's wisdom and instructed readers on specific deathbed rites for birth in the Pure Land.[204]

Following the trends of the time, Kakuban gave advice that five accompanying friends should repeat the *nenbutsu* at one's deathbed, envisioning that their spoken words enter the mouth of the dying person as they inhale and the syllables turn into the sun within the six sense-organs to clear the darkness of one's karma.[205] This perspective on the *nenbutsu* illustrates a

middle of the eleventh century. These monks practiced both esotericism and the *nenbutsu*. From these groups, a combinatory Buddhist practice focusing mainly on the two filtered into Shingon groups outside the *hijiri*. Preceding Kakuban, the Shingon monks Saisen 済暹 (1025-1115) and Jippan 実範 (1089-1144, sometimes romanized as Jitsuhan) both practiced, wrote about, and recommended *nenbutsu*/Pure Land practice. Yet Kakuban is more well-remembered for promoting the *himitsu nenbutsu*, despite receiving criticism for it at the time from some monks at Mt. Kōya.

[203] *Kōgyō daishi senjutsushū* vol. 1 (Sankibō busshorin, Tokyo, 1977), 149-52, 157-76. The *Gorin kuji hishaku* and *Amida hishaku* texts can also be found in T2514_.79 and T2522_.79, respectively. In *Gorin kuji hishaku*, Kakuban explained that the *cakras* and syllables mentioned in the title are essentially the same or, rather, nondual (as Kūkai had expounded). For more on Kakuban's life and thoughts, see Katsumata Shunkyō, *Kōgyō Daishi no shōgai to shisō* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1992). For more in English (including a translation of *Gorin kuji hishaku*), see Hendrik van der Veere, *A Study into the Thought of Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban: with a Translation of His* Gorin kuji myō himitsushaku (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2000).

[204] Esoteric teachings aim to lead to the concept of the One Mind, which contains all Buddhas, their wisdoms, their realms, and essentially all of reality. To understand these connections is to attain unity with Amida (and, incidentally, Dainichi). Kakuban mentioned this multiple times in these texts.

[205] The *Ichigo taiyō himitsushaku* presents these points.

conception of the materiality of words that intersects with and acts upon the physicality of the human body via *nenbutsu* practice.[206] In his texts, Kakuban further explained what the Sanskrit syllables of Amida's name signify, drawing from the Shingon emphasis on the power and efficacy of Sanskrit as a primordial language, as Kūkai emphasized. Aligning with popular and canonical beliefs relating to the recitation of Amida's name, Kakuban also stated the innumerable benefits of this practice, including but not limited to birth in the Pure Land.[207] Kakuban's expositions on the connections between Sanskrit and Amida can be seen in many objects of Amida veneration incorporating Sanskrit after Kakuban's lifetime. Indeed, the medieval period increasingly saw Pure Land and Esoteric/Shingon hybrid paintings and embroideries—for example, incorporating the *bonji* oft-used in Shingon works with/as Amida depictions. Although Kakuban was controversial in his own time and there seemed to be little emphasis on his teachings directly following his death, about a century later, in the mid-thirteenth century, there was revived interest in his writings.[208]

Today, the monk Hōnen is probably the figure that comes to mind when one considers Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. Originally trained within the Tendai sect, his seeming dissatisfaction with orthodox Buddhism and his reading of Shàndǎo's texts led him to leave Mt. Hiei in 1175. He started preaching to lay commoners, including those who were at times

[206] The words are also negating karmic fruits.

[207] The shortest of the three texts, *Amida hishaku* most succinctly illustrates Kakuban's belief in the efficacy of the *nenbutsu*.

[208] The monk Dōhan 道範 (1178-1252) quotes from Kakuban's *Gorin kuji myō Himitsushaku* in the first half of the thirteenth century. I do not address Dōhan or the other citations of Kakuban in this dissertation, but that is a future avenue for considering the larger network of ideas that promoted the creation and dissemination of *nenbutsu*-speaking imagery. Dōhan, "*Himitsu nenbutsu shō*," in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho* vol. 70 (Tokyo: Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho Kankōkai, 1912-1922), 79-110. This text and Dōhan's Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism is explored further in Aaron P. Proffitt, "Mysteries of Speech and Breath: Dōhan's 道範 (1179-1252) *Himitsu nenbutsu shō* 祕密念佛抄 and Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2015). Proffitt's dissertation includes an annotated translation of fascicle one.

excluded from Buddhist practice due to their social status. One of his main contributions to the history of Pure Land practice in Japan was his popularization of the exclusive *nenbutsu* practice (*senju nenbutsu* 専修念仏), meaning he preached recitation of the *nenbutsu* alone could guarantee birth in the Pure Land regardless of if one followed the other teachings and practices of Buddhism. His following grew large and he became well-known. Hōnen attracted admirers from all walks of life, including monastic and aristocratic individuals. However, unsurprisingly, his teachings also attracted criticism from monks within the orthodox traditions. Charges leveled at him included deliberate misrepresentations of the Buddhist teachings and leading people down a false path. Hōnen's life, teachings, and the responses to them will be addressed more in this chapter and the following two, but his impact was immense. He and his teachings were the seeds for the later establishment and growth of official Pure Land sects.

These historical figures and developments in the histories of Pure Land practice in Japan were all factors that contributed to the creation of works such as the images of Shàndǎo and Kūya discussed in this chapter. The biographical information about the monks above (and their contributions) showcase that Pure Land practice was prevalent in Japanese Buddhism prior to the thirteenth century and the continued discussion of these pasts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries cultivated fertile ground from which the objects of this chapter developed. From the combination of movement, rhythm, and *nenbutsu* introduced by Tendai/Tiāntāi monks that plays out in Kūya's narrative and images to the physical connections of bodily condition and *nenbutsu* treatment from Shingon figures like Kakuban as seen in sculptures of Shàndǎo and Kūya, thirteenth-century Buddhist practitioners incorporated and adapted earlier Pure Land practices and ideas into their images to suit the circumstances of the time.

Destruction, (Re)Construction, and Song-dynasty Imports

In the spring of 1180, the Taira clan (平氏; also Heike 平家) uncovered a plot by Minamoto no Yorimasa 源頼政 (1106-1180) to overthrow their power and influence over the imperial court.[209] The plan involved placing Prince Mochihito 以仁王 (d. 1180) on the throne after he had been bypassed for succession in favor of the grandson of Taira Kiyomori 平清盛 (1118-1181), the future Emperor Antoku 安徳天皇 (1178-1185, r. 1180-1185), who was crowned emperor as an infant.[210] Having failed, Yorimasa and Prince Mochihito were killed in an important battle resulting from the machinations; however, this openly enflamed the decades-long simmering tensions between the Taira and Minamoto clans and prompted Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147-1199) to rally troops in rebellion. This was the beginning of the five-year Genpei War.[211] In the twelfth month of 1180, the Taira forces set fire to Kōfuku-ji 興福寺 and Tōdai-ji 東大寺, both strongholds of anti-Taira sentiment, and destroyed buildings and Buddhist artworks that dated back as far as the eighth century. Regardless of sympathies prior to that point, this act inspired widespread outrage and fanned anti-Taira feelings. It was also one event in a sequence of political and military conflicts that contributed to the instability and resultant harms of the time. Perhaps of more pointed relevance for this chapter in particular, it

[209] The situation which resulted in this plot and subsequent violent confrontation is much more complex, stemming back to the conflict of the Taira and Minamoto in the Hōgen Rebellion (保元の乱) of 1156, instigated by a struggle over imperial succession, and the Heiji Rebellion (平治の乱) of 1160 from which the Taira emerged victorious. The events of the Kamakura shogunate are relayed in *Azuma kagami* 東鑑 (*Mirror of the East*), compiled in 1266 and covering the 1180 rebellion. *Azuma kagami*, ed. Katsumi Kuroita (Tokyo: Kokushi taikei kankōkai, 1932).

[210] Taira Kiyomori would thus act as the regnant figure while the child Emperor Antoku was a figurehead. Much has been written about these events, both historically and in contemporary scholarship. It is also the subject of a famous illustrated handscroll, *The Tale of Heike*.

[211] This was not an isolated occurrence of violence. Also, there were other events in the second half of the twelfth century (such as famine and drought) that contributed to the increased potential for personal trauma.

created a great need in Nara for reconstruction of temples and the creation of icons to fill those new buildings. The restoration of Tōdai-ji alone spanned approximately from the years 1180-1212. In this section, I will outline the rise of the Kei School (which created some of the earliest sculptural versions of *nenbutsu*-speaking imagery) in the face of these historical factors, establishing the period of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries as a time of rich cultural production, within which the early images of Shàndǎo and Kūya were created.[212]

It was the Kei School that emerged victorious in the subsequent vying for the commissions prompted by the wartime destruction.[213] As did their competitors, the Kei School traced their lineage back to Jōchō 定朝 (d. 1057), an artist well-known for his Amida Buddha sculpture at Byōdō-in. While there had been government-run Buddhist workshops (*zōbutsusho* 造仏所) in the Nara period, by Jōchō's time studios for Buddhist images were either run independently or through temples. These workshops were run by a master Buddhist sculptor (*Dai-busshi* 大仏師), a position and title that was hereditary. Jōchō inherited this title from his father Kōshō 康尚 (dates unknown). Jōchō was the first artist to receive the rank of *hokkyō* 法橋 (Dharma Bridge).[214] Three prominent studios descended from Jōchō: Enpa 円派, Inpa 院派, and

[212] Although there has been much study of Kei-School sculpture, select scholarly works include: Mōri Hisashi, *Unkei to Kamakura chōkoku* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1964); Soejima Hiromichi, *Unkei: sono hito to geijutsu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawakōbunkan, 2000); Nedachi Kensuke, *Nihon chūsei no busshi to shakai: Unkei to Kei-ha Shichijō busshi o chūshin ni* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 2006); Nedachi Kensuke, *Hotoke o tsukutta hitobito: Tori Busshi kara Unkei, Kaikei made* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2013); Mizuno Keizaburo, *Nihon chōkokushi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1996); Oku Takeo, *Nara no Kamakura jidai chōkoku, Nihon no bijutsu* 536 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 2011), entire edition; Samuel C. Morse, "Revealing the Unseen: The Master Sculptor Unkei and the Meaning of Dedicatory Objects in Kamakura-period Sculpture," *Impressions* 31 (2010): 25-41; and Samuel C. Morse, "Animating the Image: Buddhist Portrait Sculpture of the Kamakura Period," *Orientations* 35, no. 1 (2004): 22-30.

[213] For a brief, but skillfully dense history, see Samuel C. Morse, "A Short History of the Kei School," in *Kamakura: Realism and Spirituality in the Sculpture of Japan*, ed. Ive Covaci (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016): 17-26.

[214] *Hokkyō* rank was the third rank given to Buddhist image makers with *hōin* (Dharma Seal) and *hōgen* (Dharma Eye) being first and second rank, respectively. Starting around the eleventh century, these designations were given

Kei.[215] Jōchō's grandson Raijo 頼助 (dates unknown, active eleventh century), finding too much competition for patronage among the Inpa and Enpa sculptors of Jōchō's lineages in Kyoto, established a workshop in Nara at the Fujiwara family temple Kōfuku-ji. Here, he and his workshop undertook commissions to replace Nara-period sculpture when Kōfuku-ji burnt in 1096.[216] This studio became the headquarters of what would be known later as the Kei School—until Unkei moved the Kei School's center to Kyoto. Raijo's move gained him and his lineage the powerful backing and continued patronage of the Fujiwara clan and the Kōfuku-ji clergy (which included many Fujiwara since it was their clan temple). However, his son Kōjo 康助 (dates unknown) faced the challenge of a dearth of Nara projects. In general, the majority of new commissions were happening in Kyoto, not Nara. Therefore, Kōjo needed to accept assignments in Kyoto, where there was much competition for patronage.[217] His son, Kōchō 康朝 (dates unknown), faced the same situation.[218] Then, the violent conflicts throughout the twelfth century changed the situation for the Kei School and altered the trajectory of Japanese sculpture.

Although the Kei School was centered in Nara, which had seen much of the damage, the Inpa and Enpa sculptors did not shy away from reaching out from Kyoto for the new Nara work. In 1181, Kōchō's son Seichō 成朝 (dates unknown, active c. 1180-1185) presented a lineage of

---

to Buddhist sculptors, though by at least the fifteenth century, these ranks were used for other distinguished creative figures such as scholars, poets, and other artists. Hirata Yutaka, *Ebusshi no jidai* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1994), 26-40.

[215] One of Jōchō's apprentices broke off and started a studio that would be known as the Enpa. Jōchō's son Kakujo 覚助 (d. 1077) was his official successor and established a workshop in Kyoto's Shichijō area. One of Kakujo's apprentices ran a studio of artists that would be called the Inpa.

[216] There are no known extant works by Kakujo or Raijo. Raijo had the familial connection to his grandfather Jōchō, of whom the Fujiwara had been patrons. Therefore, the Fujiwara commissioning Raijo to replace lost statuary was not particularly surprising.

[217] Kei-School sculptors also did repair work on earlier sculptures.

[218] There are no known extant works by Kōjo or his son Kōchō.

six Kei-School sculptors to the imperial court in Kyoto as part of an unofficial request for first rights to Kōfuku-ji and Tōdai-ji commissions, both having been burnt to the ground in 1180.[219] The list he provided the court included, with himself, the aforementioned five names of his predecessors leading back to Jōchō. In addition to this successful request, Seichō clearly attained the support of Minamoto Yoritomo because, in 1185, the military leader invited the sculptor to create works for Shōchōju-in 勝長寿院 in Kamakura. In the following years, other Kei School artists would undertake work in Kamakura, no doubt due to Seichō's pioneering efforts. The immediate next generations of the Kei School obtained significant commissions. While Seichō was working in Kamakura, the sculptor Kōkei 康慶 (dates unknown) stewarded the family and began the restoration of Tōdai-ji.[220] Around the end of the twelfth century, Kōkei, who had become official head of the Kei School by then, transferred leadership to his son, the master sculptor Unkei 運慶 (c. 1150-1223). Unkei is perhaps the most well-known name in the history of Japanese sculpture.[221] His renown is followed closely by that of his contemporary Kaikei 快慶 (dates unknown, active late twelfth-early thirteenth centuries).[222] They both came from the workshop of Kōkei, Unkei being his biological son and Kaikei being a non-biological apprentice. These two artists shaped the style of sculpture over the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth

[219] There are no known extant works by Seichō. Furthermore, since he sired no son it is thought that he must have died relatively young.

[220] The sculptures of the Six Patriarchs of the Hossō school, housed at Nara's Kōfuku-ji, are examples of Kōkei's work. Kōkei eventually succeeded Seichō, though their actual relationship is unclear. Most scholars assert that Kōkei had no blood ties with Seichō. Despite the various arguments, no known conclusive evidence exists that can clear Kōkei's murky genealogy.

[221] Despite the extant works by Unkei, there are many that were lost. His corpus was initially quite large. He is one of the most-studied Japanese sculptors.

[222] There are a many extant works attributed to Kaikei, enough that scholars have separated his work into three stages.

century. Similar qualities can be seen in the work of Unkei's fourth son Kōshō 康勝 (dates unknown, active early thirteenth century), who created the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya sculpture that will be discussed later in this chapter. In fact, the network of active Kei-School sculptors around the turn of the century is a key consideration in studying such works representing language, as I will explore shortly.[223]

The vibrant architectural and artistic production of the time enabled the rising prominence of more than just the Kei School. The Shingon monk Shunjōbō Chōgen 俊乗坊重源 (1121-1206) oversaw the reconstruction of Tōdai-ji after its destruction in 1180. Initiated into Buddhism at the age of thirteen at Daigo-ji 醍醐寺, he later cultivated ascetic practices and spent time in Shikoku, Mount Ōmine, and Mt. Kōya. By 1181, when he was appointed to manage the fundraising for and rebuilding of Tōdai-ji, he already had a strong devotion to *nenbutsu* practice, was a patron of statues and sutras, and had a reputation for being involved in public works (similar to Gyōki and Kūya). Through his involvement with Tōdai-ji, Chōgen became a prominent figure and further embedded in the networks of art production.

Chōgen also exemplifies a general revived interest in China during the Kamakura period. This interest manifested in the resumed travel, after almost two hundred years with rare examples of connection, of Japanese Buddhist monks to China for learning, Chinese artists and artwork entering Japan, the introduction of Chinese currency and medicines, and much more.[224]

---

[223] Unlike in previous periods, Kei-School artists (and some other Kamakura-period sculptors) almost always included their signature on their works, usually on the interior or the foot tenon. This has made it easier for modern scholars to trace artistic networks and works by individuals.

[224] The Taira clan built anchorages along the Seto Inland Sea coast, expanding trade and the import of Chinese goods in the twelfth century. For more information on this, see David T. Bialock, *Eccentric Spaces, Hidden Histories: Narraitve, Ritual, and Royal Authority from* The Chronicles of Japan *to* The Tale of the Heike (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 178-79.

Chōgen claimed to have visited China three times.[225] This claim is also recorded in a bronze bell's inscription, dated to 1176, at Mt. Kōya. Yet no port records or other evidence of these trips exist. And there is no mention in his 1203 autobiography, titled *Namu Amidabutsu sazenshū* 南無阿弥陀仏作善集 (*The Benevolent Deeds of Namu Amidabutsu*), of a trip (or multiples) to China, though Chōgen's claims are seen elsewhere. This has led some scholars to doubt the veracity of the claims that Chōgen traveled to China, though as art historian John Rosenfield has stated, "circumstantial evidence" supports the conclusion that he had firsthand experience of some sites in China even if it cannot be conclusively proven.[226] In fact, given his connections with Song artisans, the evidence for at least one trip is relatively strong. With these complications in mind, Chōgen is thought to have journeyed to China around 1167-1168.

A connection to China seemingly established, Chōgen incorporated continental styles in the art and architecture of his restoration project, even hiring Chinese craftsmen. This has famously been seen in the Daibutsuden 大仏殿 building and Nandaimon 南大門 gate of Tōdai-ji, which showcases the Chinese "Tenjiku" style of architecture.[227] Significantly, it was not only in architecture that Chōgen incorporated contemporary continental styles. His efforts also included painting and sculpture. He seems to have brought Song-dynasty Buddhist paintings back to Japan, which the Kei School artists had access to as reference material. For example,

---

[225] Chōgen described his travels to Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実 (alternately called Fujiwara Kanezane 藤原兼実, 1149-1207)—as we know from Kanezane's diary text, *Gyokuyō* 玉葉 (*Jeweled Leaves*). Kujō Kanezane, *Gyokuyō* 3 vols., ed. Imaizumi Teisuke et al (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906-1907). For an example of such a mention, see the entry for the twenty-fourth day of the first month of Juei 寿永 2 (1183). *Gyokuyō* 2:593-594.

[226] John M. Rosenfield, *Portraits of Chōgen: the Transformation of Buddhist Art in Early Medieval Japan* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 39. For more from a scholar who doubts Chōgen's travels to China, see Yamamoto Eigo "Chōgen nyūsōden no shiken," *Nihon no rekishi* 199 (1964).

[227] *Tenjiku* 天竺 (lit. "Heaven") was a transliteration of the archaic Chinese name for India, "*Tiānzhú*," and was the term used for "India" in Japan at the time.

Chōgen's *Namu Amidabutsu sazenshū* states that the Kei-School sculptor Kaikei made, with reference to Chinese paintings, an Amida triad and another sculpture for two of Chōgen's *bessho* 別所 (special sanctuary).[228] As can be gleaned from this record and visual observations, Kei-School sculptors incorporated Song-dynasty image characteristics in their three-dimensional works.[229]

The visual qualities of the Kei-School sculptures drew on a variety of sources. Often remnants of the Song style in Japanese works can be seen through color palette, shading of skin in paintings, and facial features of the figures, among other characteristics. Song-dynasty Chinese sculpture in general had heightened naturalism in terms of use of color, proportions, and form. The Kei School paired Song imagery with Tenpyō-era 天平 styles, combining these with applicatios of new techniques in their approach to sculpture.[230] As a result, while Kei sculpture recalls Nara works to some degree, the works are generally less idealized and have more emphasis on naturalism, especially in representing beings from non-Buddha/bodhisattva realms, which includes human figures (as in portraits). One of the techniques that contributed to a feel of naturalism in their sculpture work was the crafting of eyes out of rock crystal. These inset lens-

[228] Discussed in Kainuma Yoshiko, "Chōgen's Jōdoji Amida Triad and its Environment: a Theatrical Effect of the *Raigō* Form," *Artibus Asiae* 74, no. 1 (2014): 99. For Chōgen's autobiograpy, see Chōgen, "*Namu Amidabutsu sazenshū,*" *Bijutsu kenkyū* 30 (Jun. 1934): 39-51. Though Kaikei did not heavily rely on Song works as references, these were made at the behest of Chōgen, who was a strong advocate for Song-style art and architecture. The Amida triad mentioned was a Kaikei triad at Jōdo-ji and an unnamed sculpture at Shin Daibutsu-ji. It is also significant for the purposes of this chapter to note that Chōgen was an Amida devotee, incorporating many Pure Land practices into his Buddhist practice—to the point where he took the name "Namu Amidabutsu" (the *nenbutsu*), as seen in the title of his autobiography. The Kei School also seems to have been a stronghold for Pure Land veneration. Kaikei, who had a close relationship to Chōgen, was bestowed the name An'Amidabutsu by Chōgen, referencing their shared veneration for Amida Buddha.

[229] Though I do not address it further here, it is worth noting that the Northern-Song capital and ruling emperor fell under the control of adversaries in 1127 with the Northern Song coming to an end in the following year. One of the results of this was an influx of Chan 禅 (J. Zen) monks immigrating to Japan and shifts in patronage among artisans (which played a part in Chōgen's use of Chinese artisans).

[230] Morse, "A Short History," 18.

shaped rock crystal eyes, or *gyokugan* 玉眼, were created by inserting from the inside the crystal that had been painted with pupils and irises, followed by white paper and the securing mechanisms (figure 2-1).[231] Once this construction was complete and the sculpture's exterior painted in a polychrome (depending on the subject of the work), the effect would be eyes that seemed particularly lifelike, especially in the low light of temple interiors. That the Kei sculptors employed such techniques in efforts toward increased naturalism may also contribute to our interpretation of *nenbutsu*-speaking imagery created by these artists, bringing up issues of how to depict spoken and sacred word (language-bodies) as materialized in this realm—in other words, as a form of naturalism that was cohesive with Buddhist considerations of the time.

It was within this general historical context of destruction, reconstruction, and innovative artistic production that images of Shàndǎo and Kūya were produced. The political tensions, violent conflicts, and the likely lasting damage from warfare, famine, and illness created an atmosphere where instability—or the possibility of it—loomed, creating a need for addressing these issues where one could. With Chōgen, the one spearheading the communal, countrywide revitalization of Tōdai-ji, being a Shingon devotee of Amida and a *nenbutsu* adherent, the increased prominence of *nenbutsu* practice could be expected. Doubly so because Amida/Pure Land veneration was similarly strong among his personal connections in the Kei School (such as Kaikei). In fact, most if not all of the Kei-School artists were Pure Land adherents and we find various examples of them using nomenclature incorporating "Amida" within their artist names. Considering the historical circumstances and the *nenbutsu* devotion of Chōgen and the Kei School, the development of Shàndǎo and Kūya images within these artistic and Buddhist

[231] Another technique that contributed to increased naturalism was the late-Heian development of *yosegi-zukuri* 寄木造 (joined-woodblock construction), which allowed for more dynamism in a sculptural figure's movement. This was pioneered in Jōchō's time, but the Kei-School artists further developed its potential.

networks around the turn of the century indicates an interest in the use of language to promote active response to spiritual and corporeal concerns—as I will explore throughout the next two sections.

The Development of Shàndǎo Paintings in Japan

Perhaps it might have surprised the Chinese monk Shàndǎo to find that, centuries after his life, he was a venerated figure in the land beyond the eastern sea. However, since he lived during a time of rich multicultural interaction especially with central Asian and South Asian communities, he may have at least expected that some of his writings could or would travel beyond the borders of his homeland. In this section, I will look at early extant examples of Shàndǎo painted images in Japan, which date to the decades surrounding 1200. When viewed in combination with Japanese Buddhist texts, these paintings, based on imported images from Southern Song-dynasty China, illustrate a rise in Shàndǎo's prominence among the Buddhist communities of Japan. This rise coincided with circumstances that made efficacious Buddhist practice particularly attractive, especially ones that were potentially adaptable for practitioners of varied social classes and backgrounds. In the following examination of early Shàndǎo painted images, I focus on a copy of a Song-dynasty painting in the collection of Chion-ji 知恩寺 (figure 2-2). I then consider the ways that his depiction in Japan became standardized through narrative emphasis on miraculous encounters and his deployment for legitimacy in patriarch paintings. In the late twelfth century, Hōnen's emphasis on Shàndǎo as a patriarch of Pure Land Buddhism cemented the Chinese monk in the Buddhist hierarchy of newly forming sects.[232] Tracing

[232] This is something which will also be addressed in Chapter Four when looking at a painting type related to Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1263), one of Hōnen's disciples.

Shàndǎo paintings reveals the ways that imported Southern-Song works were used as frames of reference by the teams of individuals who were rebuilding and revitalizing Buddhist temples and works of art in the wake of immense loss. More than that, though, the interest in Shàndǎo and the paintings of him show a preoccupation with the spoken *nenbutsu* as a way to abrogate ills in the worldview of karmic causation.[233] I argue that the development and use of *nenbutsu*-speaking Shàndǎo images in Japan illustrates the multifunctional use of language through the depiction of language-bodies: for karmic benefit, proselytization, materialization of doctrinal conceptions of language and the buddha body, and in leveraging the past for spiritual and institutional authority.

Even prior to Hōnen's time, Shàndǎo's texts were known and referenced. Genshin, for example, drew from Shàndǎo's writings in composing his *Ōjōyōshū*. Yet, despite admiration for and reference to Shàndǎo, there is no known evidence of the inclusion of Shàndǎo's image in visual works until the decades surrounding 1200 CE. The examples of Shàndǎo imagery in Japan from the thirteenth century on are rich, from Pure Land patriarch group paintings to narrative handscrolls to portraits dedicated solely to him. The broad dating of the thirteenth-century works makes it difficult to create a coherent arc among Shàndǎo images in Japan.[234] My proposed interpretation of these works in relation to one another and other materials contributes to my reading of the larger contexts that include Kūya images, specifically, and representations of language in general.

Shàndǎo's impact on Buddhist communities in Japan was first felt textually. Having entered Buddhist priesthood at a young age, Shàndǎo mainly studied the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (J.

[233] Recall that in Brightwell's study of *Mirror* texts, outlined in the last chapter, those composed in the latter twelfth century were immersed in concerns of living during *mappō* and thus had a particular emphasis on the pre-existing notion of karmic causation.

[234] I provide a tentative consideration of this development, but anticipate that future work (mine and others) will enrich our understanding of historical Shàndǎo images.

Yuima kitsu shosekkyō 維摩詰所説経) and the *Longer Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* (J. *Bussetsu muryōjukyō* 仏説無量壽経) before he happened to attend a lecture on the *Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra* (J. *Bussetsu kanmuryōjukyō* 仏説観無量寿経) given by Dàochuò 道綽 (562-645).[235] After this purportedly life-changing lecture, Shàndǎo devoted himself to the study of Pure Land practices. The texts he wrote such as his *Guān wú liàng shòu jīng shū* 観無量寿経疏 (J. *Kanmuryōjukyō sho*, *Commentary of the Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra*) became extremely influential in China, Korea, and Japan.[236] He was an early proponent of using *nenbutsu* practice to achieve salvation through Amida Buddha's name (and thus Amida's power), laying out his theory of salvation via *tariki* 他力 ("other [Amida's] power") in his writings. Shàndǎo's texts were cited by many Buddhist clerics, including Hōnen, who was particularly inspired by Shàndǎo's *Commentary*.[237]

In addition to his commentaries on sutras, the narratives of Shàndǎo's life in China made him an especially attractive candidate for the Pure Land lineages. Tales of Shàndǎo's life recount that, when he spoke the *nenbutsu*, golden light emitted from his mouth. In fact, reportedly the Tang Emperor Gāozōng 高宗 (628-683, r. 649-683) marked such a miraculous occurrence with a plaque for Shàndǎo's temple, reading Guāngmíngsì 光明寺 (J. Kōmyōji, "radiating light temple").[238] This tale emphasized Shàndǎo's ability to visually manifest in the natural world his

[235] The references for the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, *Longer Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, and *Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra* texts are, respectively, T0475_.14, T0360_.12, and T0365_.12. In English, the *Longer Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* is called the *Infinite Life Sutra*. The *Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra* is often called the *Meditation Sutra* and is widely considered an apocryphal text written originally in Chinese.

[236] T1753_.37.

[237] The main figures of the next two chapters, Myōe and Shinran, also admired Shàndǎo and were well-versed in his corpus.

[238] Wakasugi Junji, *Hōnen: shōgai to bijutsu: Hōnen shōnin happyaku kaiki: tokubetsu tenrankai* (Kyoto: Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2011), 215.

dedication to Amida and thus his potential for karmic intervention by negating past karma through Amida's power for birth in the Pure Land, but it also laid the foundation for identifying Shàndǎo himself as a manifestation of Amida Buddha through imagery (described and later depicted) associated canonically with Amida.

To date, scholarship on Shàndǎo images has been strongly sectarian, often taking the form of case studies devoted to single objects inflected with more traditional typological approaches to art history. Within Japanese scholarship, many approaches to Shàndǎo imagery have been rooted in attempting categorizations. Along with the "obvious" categories of patriarch paintings, Hōnen-Shàndǎo mandala, etc., some scholars have attempted more detailed typologies. For example, Buddhist studies scholar Narita Shunji classified Shàndǎo images into three types: the golden lower half of the body type, the reciting *nenbutsu* with hands pressed together in prayer (*gasshō* 合掌) type, and a typical seated high patriarch portrait.[239] Yet in this chapter, I aim to put more emphasis on the relations among types of Shàndǎo imagery and the larger interactions of objects (texts, images, etc.), people, and ideas. Because this chapter addresses early Shàndǎo images in particular, the boundaries between types were almost certainly less defined while these images were refined, perhaps also prompting other versions of images in the process. This potential for messy interplays provides the opportunity for acknowledging exchanges and developments in a way that more rigid categorizations may not. By exploring the overlaps of these objects, one can see the dynamics of thirteenth-century image-making, created in multi-faceted ("intertextual") conversations between Buddhist texts (sutras, explications, etc.), practices, images, and how these dynamics contributed to an

[239] Narita Shunji, "*Zendō daishi zō ni tsuite no 2・3 no mondai- tokini hankin iro zō wo chūshin ni*," *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū* 38 (1993): 3. Prior to proposing these three types, he discussed, in general terms, the split between standing and seated Shàndǎo images, whether painted or sculpted.

expansion of depictions of language-bodies.[240] Modern viewers are not privy to the full range of such conversations, but rather are looking at the traces. Many of the works that I will address in this chapter do not have specific dates of production, though most have a narrowed timeframe as a window. However, in framing these objects relationally (in this section and those in the next), I will at some points propose a possible timeline of image-making with an eye to considering how visual cultures, plentiful and varied, are part and parcel of a cacophony of conversations between entities. Such "conversations" include, as this chapter's introduction mentioned, the ways that the past is nostalgically interpreted and adapted in the attempts for positive outcomes.

I posit that the earliest images of Shàndǎo in Japan were paintings and that Chinese Southern-Song dynasty (1127-1279) works were the root of these types, which would see multiple versions in Japan over the following centuries.[241] Two early thirteenth-century paintings relate to two of the categories posed by Narita. One, a painting in the collection of Chion-ji (figure 2-2), shows Shàndǎo with a golden monk's robe (J. *kesa* 袈裟, Skt. *kāṣāya*) and hands pressed together reverentially, clearly reciting the *nenbutsu.* The second is his representation within a group portrait, a painting (figure 2-3) of the five Chinese Pure Land patriarchs (including Shàndǎo) in the collection of Nison-in 二尊院. The Nison-in painting is an imported Chinese work while the Chion-ji is suspected to be a copy of a Southern-Song painting.[242] Both are works that disclose ways Buddhist communities in Japan drew on interpretations of past

[240] The use of "intertextual" here (and in many recent scholarly approaches using such a framework) presupposes that each listed aspect (text, practice, image, etc.) is a "text" within a broader system within which they interact with and illuminate one another in contextually-specific ways.

[241] It seems that sculpted wooden images were not far behind, however I will explore Shàndǎo sculptures in the next section in tandem with Kūya works because their histories are conceptually intertwined and rely, I think, on the paintings addressed in this section prior.

[242] This supposition is widespread, but addressed well in Takama Yukari, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," *Geijutsu kenkyū* 24 (2011): 1-18.

figures and new artistic trends, adjusting and transforming visual imagery to best suit their own circumstances—and each specifically illustrate the significance and inchoate iconography of Shàndǎo.

The Nison-in patriarch painting (figure 2-3) does not explicitly deal with the representation of language, but it is an important work in understanding the standardization of Shàndǎo's iconography and significance in Japan during the early thirteenth century. The painting illustrates five Chinese Pure Land patriarchs who would become key figures to Pure Land sects in Japan due to the intervention of Hōnen. Tánluán 曇鸞 (476-542, J. Donran) is depicted seated at the top. The two figures seated on the left, respectively top and bottom, are Shàokāng 少康 (d. 805, J. Shōkō) and Shàndǎo. On the right side of the picture plane sit, from top to bottom, Huáigǎn 懷感 (d. c. 689, J. Ekan) and Dàochuò 道綽 (562-645, J. Dōshaku). Four attendant disciples flank Tánluán's seated figure. This painting is a Southern-Song work, loosely dated to the early thirteenth century. People too numerous to list, monks and scholars alike, have contended that the Nison-in painting is the patriarch painting allegedly brought back from China by Chōgen at the request of Hōnen. Other scholars such as art historian Takama Yukari more recently have suggested that the painting dates from somewhere between 1210 and 1230.[243] The relationship between Hōnen and Chōgen is difficult to chart. Certainly there are suggestions that they knew one another. Tendai monk-historian Jien 慈円 (1155-1225), who was a contemporary of both, intimated in his *Gukanshō* 愚管抄 (*Jottings of a Fool*) that they were acquainted.[244] Jien

[243] Takama Yukari, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," 4. For more, see also Takama Yukari, "*Jōdoshū ni okeru Chūgaku butsuga no juyō*," *Shigaku Kenkyū* 267 (Mar. 2010): 45-65.

[244] Jien, *Gukanshō,* ed. Maruyama Jirō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1949), 261-62. This episode in the English translation can be found in Delmer M. Brown and Ichirō Ishida, *The Future and the Past: a Translation and Study of the* Gukanshō, *an Interpretive History of Japan Written in 1219* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press,

was the brother of Kujō Kanezane, who was a devoted patron of both Chōgen and Hōnen. Just the shared prominent patron makes it likely that they at least knew of one another or were in contact to some degree (and Jien may have been in the position to know due to his familial connection to Kanezane), but in the century following Hōnen's death, the connection seems to have been greatly exaggerated to the benefit of Hōnen's legacy. For example, Hōnen's biographies relate an event that signified the start of Hōnen's evangelizing career, the "Ōhara discussion" (*Ōhara dangi* 王原談義). According to the canon of the Pure Land schools, Chōgen was one of those present that were touched by Hōnen's oratory prowess. Significantly, all the mentions of Chōgen as a disciple of Hōnen are within the textual legacies of the Pure Land sects. There are none within the Chōgen record. This was likely an attempt by disciples following in Hōnen's footsteps to further legitimize him using Chōgen's background as a prominent monk with imperial distinction, generally accepted among the orthodox Buddhist schools. Still, Chōgen and Hōnen both had a deep commitment to Amida and the Pure Land, often circulated in the same general areas, and shared mutual acquaintenaces. Thus, it is not impossible that Chōgen would have imported a patriarch painting for Hōnen. We cannot say with certainty either way, though recent work like Takama's seems to support the fact that the Nison-in painting, at least, would not be this work.[245]

It is significant that the set of figures depicted in the Nison-in painting are a configuration that seems to have been promoted, perhaps even developed, by Hōnen. This particular set of monks is mentioned in the text of the illustrated biography of the 48-scroll handscroll set titled

1979), 172. Although Jien noted Hōnen's following and the popularity of his teachings, his negative opinion of Hōnen is evident in his text.

[245] For a deeper consideration of this topic, see Uratsuji Kentō, "*Hōnen Shōnin to Chōgen Shōnin*," in *Chōgen, Eizon, Ninshō*, ed. Nakao and Imai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983), 81-88.

Hōnen shōnin gyōjō ezu 法然上人行状絵図 (*Illustrated Life and Acts of Hōnen*) of Chion-in 知恩院, its production spanning from the end of the thirteenth century to the early fourteenth century. The text in these scrolls was written largely by the Tendai monk Shunjō 舜昌 (d. c. 1335?), but draws from earlier writings.[246] Because of mentions in extant records, scholars generally accept that illustrated biographies of Hōnen existed as early as circa 1237 and there would have been various potential texts for Shunjō to mine while compiling his own biography text of Hōnen.[247] Specifically, text in Shunjō's biography relates a tale that Hōnen asked Chōgen to bring an image of his Five Chinese Patriarchs back to Japan from China:

> …Hōnen selected from the "Lives of Famous Priests," compiled during the Tang and Song dynasties, the five masters Donran, Dōshaku, Zendō, Ekan, and Shōkō and [using those five as patriarchs] he established and bestowed the sect's [Dharma] inheritance. Afterwards, when Shunjōbō Chōgen was about to depart for China, Hōnen told him "There is an image of the five patriarchs in China. [You] must, without fail, bring this [image] back." Accordingly, Chōgen, on his arrival, widely inquired and searched [for it], and obtained an image of the five patriarchs drawn on a single surface, as expected, just as Hōnen had said. Chōgen more than ever comprehended Hōnen's remarkable powers… Now, Hōnen earlier established the doctrine of the Pure Land sect and after that, when Chōgen went to China, he was appointed to ferry [back] that image, and the image [that was] brought back did not differ from Hōnen's words—is that matter not surprisingly strange? So, monks and laity of high and low social standings alike worshipped that portrait of the five patriarchs and increasingly attributed [it] to the virtue of Hōnen, greatly deepening their devotion to the *nenbutsu*. These days, that true portrait brought by Chōgen is kept in the sutra repository of the Nison-in Temple [at Saga near Kyōto].
>
> . . . 上人、唐・宋二代の高僧／伝の中より、曇鸞・道綽・善導・懐感・／少康の五師を抜き出でゝ、一宗の相承を／立て給へり。其の後、俊乗房重源入唐の／時、上人仰せられて曰く、「唐土に五祖の／影像あり。必ずこれを渡すべし」

[246] Shinran, who died mid-thirteenth century and will be discussed in Chapter Four, also wrote a biography of Hōnen.

[247] Despite the text of the Chion-in scrolls likely drawing from earlier texts, scholars (including art historian Sinéad Kehoe) assert that the scrolls overall were *not* a copy of any previous illustrated biography—an assertion that makes sense when considering the process by which the set came to be. For more about the Chion-in scrolls, see Sinéad Kehoe, "Pictures of Patriarchs: the Illustrated Life and Acts of Hōnen" (Phd diss., Princeton University, 2012). More detailed discussion of the 1237 illustrated biography antecedent begins on page 44. What is left of another antecedent for the *Hōnen shōnin gyōjō ezu*, likely dating to the thirteenth century as well, is at Zōjō-ji (Kehoe, "Pictures of Patriarchs," 51).

と。これに／よりて、渡唐の後、遍く尋ね求むる／に、上人の仰せ違はず、果たして五祖を一鋪（＝舗）／に図する影像を得たり。重源愈々上人／の内鑒（＝鑑）冷然なる事を知る［中略］今、上人先立ちて浄土の宗義を／開き給ひ、後に重源入唐の時、彼の/影像を渡すべき由を命ぜられ、渡す所／の影像、上人の仰せに違はざる事、豈奇／特にあらずや。されば、道俗貴賤、彼の五祖の／真影を拝して、愈々上人の徳に帰し、／益々念仏の信を深くしけり。当時、／二尊院の経蔵に安置するは、彼の重源将／来の真影なり。[248]

There are no known Chinese visual or textual records from this period or earlier that put these five figures into a cohesive lineage together, though these five are listed, with others, in the biographies of high priests of the Tang and Song dynasties. Therefore, by the time Shunjō was writing this biography, it seems the Nison-in painting had already been seen as imported by Chōgen for Hōnen.

Establishing lineage—and thus religious authority—in Buddhist sects and practices was common by the thirteenth century, though a significant amount of criticism leveled at the Pure Land adherents of the thirteenth century was that it did not have deep institutional support and authority. By this time, there was already an extensive tradition within Japan of tracing teachings and master-apprentice lineages through the continent (China and Korea, mainly) as far as South Asia or the Historical Buddha himself. Art historian Wakasugi Junji posits that the selection of monks within the Five Chinese Patriarchs is based on a passage in Hōnen's *Senchaku hongan nenbutsushū* 選択本願念仏集 (*Passages on the selection of the nenbutsu in the Original Vow*, hereinafter *Senchakushū*).[249] In essence, Hōnen created his own selection of monks from China

[248] The English translation, with my alterations, from Shunjō, *Hōnen the Buddhist Saint: His Life and Teaching* vol. 2, transl. Harper Coates and Ishizuka Ryugaku (Kyoto: Society for the Publication of Sacred Books of the World, 1949), 190. For the Japanese, see Shunjō, *Hōnen shōnin eden jō*, *Zoku Nihon no emaki* vol. 1, ed. Kōmatsu Shigemi (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1990), 177-78. I have copied the transcribed version as printed, including the slashes to indicate line breaks. This episode is from scroll 6, chapter 8 of the 48 scroll series.

[249] Hōnen, "*Senchakushū*," ed. Ishii Kyōdō, *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1955), 310-349. Hōnen specifically wrote a text about the Pure Land lineage through the Five Patriarchs: Hōnen, "*Ruiju jōdo gosoden*," ed. Ishii Kyōdō, *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen Shōnin zenshū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1955), 843-57. For more on illustrated handscrolls related to the Five Patriarchs, see Tanaka Kisaku, "*Jōdo goso-eden*," *Bijutsu kenkyū*,

to serve as the lineage for his Pure Land Buddhist practice, buttressing his spiritual authority by stringing together prominent historical figures in a way that seemed to uphold his perspectives as expressed in the *Senchakushū*.[250]

In the Nison-in painting—and the subsequent Five Chinese Patriarchs paintings—Shàndǎo is not accorded a place of particular importance.[251] Only the first of the Chinese patriarchs, Tánluán, is emphasized over the others. Yet, if we accept that this is an early work depicting Shàndǎo in Japan and also take a closer look at his monk robes in comparison to another relatively contemporaneous work, then it seems the Nison-in painting was one of the early works that contributed to the establishment of one of the standard iconographies for Shàndǎo. If Chōgen truly brought back a Chinese painting of the Five Chinese Patriarchs for Hōnen, it was likely prior to 1180 since the scant evidence of his travels would indicate they were prior to that point and he would have been busy managing the Tōdai-ji project as well as quite aged for such a trip after 1180. Further, if such a painting was retrieved from China, it

---

no.5 (1932): 1-7; Shinbō Tōru. "*Jōdo goso-e (Fujita bijutsukan zō) ni tsuite*," *Museum* no. 285 (1974): 19-25; and Wakasugi Junji, "*Jōdo goso-e ni tsuite*," *Gakusō* no.13 (1999): 37-52. In Chapter Four, I will further discuss the significance of the Five Patriarchs in relation to imagery developed by Hōnen's follower Shinran.

[250] The *Senchakushū* was controversial after its publication following Hōnen's death. I will not go into further detail in this chapter, but Chapter Three explores this controversy through the lens of a clash with the monk Myōe.

[251] The monks in the Nison-in painting are depicted in a traditional monk portrait format. Each patriarch is seated, presumably in the lotus position, on a raised chair with shoes resting on small platforms before them. Tánluán's importance is visually emphasized in scale, composition, pose, and the chair he is seated upon. In relation to the other figures, he is painted on a slightly larger scale than the other patriarchs. He not only presides over the other four patriarchs from the top of the composition, but he also faces the viewer straight-on whereas the other patriarchs angle inwards to help contain the viewer's gaze within the picture plane as well as reinforce the centralized placement of Tánluán. His chair and footrest are the most elaborate of the figures with metalwork details and vermilion coloring on the surfaces that interact directly with Tánluán's body. Both also have more height, visually mirroring his elevated status as the first of the Five Patriarchs. Each patriarch is distinguished from the other through a personalization of clothing, accessories, and gestures rather than facial characteristics. Their personal features are not identical as can be seen in the upper right figure of Huáigǎn, whose features look distinctly different from the other three below Tánluán. The shape of his eyes compared to Shàokāng, Shàndǎo, and Dàochuò is more elongated, his eyebrows slanted upward, and he has less facial hair. Shàokāng, Shàndǎo, and Dàochuò look much more like one another with only the slightest variation. Still, there is a blandness to all the patriarch figures that works against the impression of a portrait from life.

seems likely—perhaps probable—that it would have been a commissioned work due to the dearth of evidence that this set of monks was a configuration in China. If Chōgen indeed acquired a Five Patriarch painting for Hōnen, there is also the slight possibility that he did it via a long-distance transaction as he was using artisans and laborers from the continent for the Tōdai-ji project. With the Nison-in painting firmly accepted as a Song work and the Five Chinese Patriarchs seeming to be an invention of Hōnen's, the connections between painting and biography are showcased.[252]

However, it is likely based on Takama's tracing of imported imagery in Kyushu that the story and the painting were done shortly after Hōnen's death. It would seem that the Nison-in work was a Chinese work brought back to Japan around the first quarter of the thirteenth century within the context of Hōnen's Pure Land practice. In any event, Hōnen's veneration of Shàndǎo, including firmly establishing him in a Pure Land lineage, is representative of the rising prominence Shàndǎo gained near the end of the twelfth century. The Shàndǎo illustrated within the Nison-in work is visually connected to one of the key *nenbutsu*-speaking images of the early thirteenth century (the Chion-ji painting) and the aforementioned story that became associated with the Nison-in work by mid-thirteenth century indicates its prominence in the building of lineage in part through Shàndǎo imagery.

[252] In fact, patriarch paintings in various forms, including individual figures such as Shàndǎo and Hōnen, were prominent in the Pure Land (and True Pure Land) communities—as the monk Nichiren 日蓮 (1222-1282) noted caustically. Nichiren, "*Risshōankokuron,*" in *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* vol. 1, ed. Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo (Yamanashi-ken Minami Koma-gun: Sōhonzan Minobu Kuonji, 1965), 223. Paintings with Pure Land patriarchs developed over the thirteenth century into the fourteenth, becoming relatively standardized. Some types of patriarch images during the thirteenth century and thereafter were paintings of the Five Chinese Patriarch (as in the Nison-in work), "Two Patriarchs mandala" images 二祖曼荼羅図 (diptych images featuring Shàndǎo and Hōnen, respectively), individual patriarch portraits, patriarch images within other types of works (illustrated handscrolls, *kōmyō honzon* that will be discussed in Chapter Four, etc.), and more.

Along with the Nison-in painting, the second major hanging scroll that we shall examine in this context is one in the Chion-ji collection that illustrates Shàndǎo in a very different context. While the Nison-in painting followed static conventions of monk portraiture, the Chion-ji work depicts Shàndǎo in action. One of the most well-known Shàndǎo images, this painting dates to the beginning of the thirteenth century.[253] It shows the figure of Shàndǎo standing on a tiled floor. He faces to the right side of the picture plane, hands clasped together with prayer beads and face turned upwards. His mouth is open to indicate the action of speaking. Though badly deteriorated, floating up in the empty space in Shàndǎo's line of sight are five "transformation buddha" (*kebutsu* 化仏) figures. The image is clearly a reference to the miraculous ability mentioned in Shàndǎo's biographical narrative, the emission of golden light when he spoke the *nenbutsu*. Here, the *nenbutsu* is materialized as miniature golden Amida Buddhas rather than simply an emission of light.

As mentioned above, the Chion-ji painting is widely accepted as a copy of a Song-dynasty painting. This conclusion is drawn partially from the inscription across the top of the painting on cartouches (*shikishi-kei* 色紙形).[254] It reads:

> Portrait from life of the Tang-dynasty Master Shàndǎo
> Inscribed by the Buddhist monk Yúnshěng propagating Buddhism at Sìmíng
>
> When Shàndǎo practices the *nenbutsu*,
> Buddhas then issue forth from his mouth.
> All believers who see this

[253] This dating is made based on stylistic evidence, study of the silk construction, and Takama's tracing of imported Shàndǎo imagery. Takama Yukari, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*" and Takama Yukari, "*Jōdoshū ni okeru Chūgaku butsuga no juyō*."

[254] Common to many Japanese paintings, these sheets were usually decorated paper upon which inscriptions would be recorded.

Know it is not an illusion.[255]
It is the mind, it is the Buddha,[256]
Every person is endowed [with both, i.e. Buddha nature].
[We] desire to know Shàndǎo,
[Whose] wondrousness is fully matured.
The waters of [Shàndǎo's] mind are calm
[And the] Buddha-moon [mirrored in his mind] drops down as a reflection.
The winds of karma rouse waves
[And] the seated Buddha [grows] especially distant

The first day of the second month of the *xinsi* [31st] year of Shàoxīng [1161]

唐善導和尚真像
四明伝法比丘雲省　讃

善導念仏　仏従口出
信者皆見　知非幻術
是心是仏　人人具足
欲知善導　妙在純熟
心池水静　仏月垂影
業風起波　坐仏殊迥

紹興辛巳二月一日[257]

The inscription and the painted image reinforce one another. The text narrates the miraculous effects of Shàndǎo's *nenbutsu* practice: that it manifested Buddha figures that could be seen by "believers 信者." In addition to providing a textual testimony of Shàndǎo's connection to the

[255] This term carries the implication of purposeful deceit through an illusion so the inscription is clearly noting that this is not a trick on Shàndǎo's part. The issue of illusory experiences is a prominent thread within Buddhist teachings.

[256] This is a reference to the nonduality of the human mind (with its buddha-nature, or *bodaishin* 菩提心, Skt. *bodhicitta*, also translated as enlightenment mind in English) and buddha. In other words, this line with its parallel construction is drawing equations between the mind and the Buddha to illustrate each person's potential—as is made clear in the next line.

[257] The English translation is my own, though greatly enriched by the guidance of Erin Brightwell through discussion. The Japanese text is transcribed in 2 publications: *Hōnen and Shinran: Treasures Related to the Great Masters of the Kamakura Buddhism: Special Exhibition in Commemoration of the 800th Grand Memorial of Hōnen and the 750th Grand Memorial of Shinran* (Tokyo: NHK Puromōshon: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2011), 337; Takama Yukari, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," 1.

sacred power of Amida Buddha, the inscription expounds on the ability and challenges of individuals to aspire to similar devotion and efficacious actions. Tánshěng's lines of the calm waters of the mind and the reflection of the buddha-moon are somewhat ambiguous in terms of subject. They could, as I have interpreted above, refer to the source of Shàndǎo's fully-matured wondrousness—his innate buddha-nature that is enhanced and manifested through *nenbutsu* practice. This interpretation would draw more connections between the inscription and image with a play on the reflection/image (影) dropped down (垂). It aligns with the inner buddha-nature as reflected on the still surface of the waters of the mind, but also resonates with the painted figures of Amida suspended (another way to gloss 垂) in the air in front of Shàndǎo. This layered meaning of the these paired lines also plays on the various uses of 影 as image, reflection, etc.. However, it is possible for these quatrains to be interpreted, though with less connection to the painted image, as the reader/aspirant needing to make the waters of their mind calm so the buddha-moon will reflect in it.[258] The following lines about the winds of karma and the seated Buddha becoming increasingly distant also simultaneously address the painted seated Amida figures that drift up and away from the figure of Shàndǎo and the challenges of *mappō*. Overall, the inscription still emphasizes an individual's actions and karmic consequences ("winds of karma," *gōfū* 業風), yet implies that the *nenbutsu* is a technique for abrogating the effects of karmic consequences and lessening the distance between practitioner and Buddha, both in this life (Shàndǎo's manifesting Buddha figures/presence via *nenbutsu*) and beyond (birth in Amida's Pure Land). The inscription also helps with the dating of the object. This copy's

[258] These lines are further reminiscent of other Buddhist practices such as the Esoteric *aji kan* 阿字觀 (meditation on the Sanskrit character A). For more on the *a-ji kan*, see Susan Dine, "Sanskrit Beyond Text," 27-35. More could be said about the connection between this inscription, *nenbutsu* practice, and other Buddhist practices relating to the power of language such as the *a-ji kan*, but I will save that for a future project.

inscription dates the original to around 1161, which established not only the dating of the original imagery that the Chion-ji painting copied but also the earliest possible date for the Chion-ji work. Study of the structure of the Chion-ji painting's silk supports a date of around forty years following 1161.[259]

Additionally, there are various visual characteristics that illustrate the strong Song-dynasty quality of the Chion-ji work. As Takama Yukari describes, the surface representation of Shàndǎo's flesh is delicately painted. Using the technique of back-painting, the skin tones are given depth and the features are executed with thin, black lines, clearly reflecting techniques of Southern-Song painting.[260] The setting of the painting is minimal, but marks a further connection to Chinese characteristics and plays a part in establishing a link to the biographical narrative of the efficacious power of his *nenbutsu,* one of his most defining characteristics in medieval Japan. The small slice of architecture that the viewer can see is Chinese in style, simultaneously partaking in current artistic trends from Song China and referencing Shàndǎo's origin and miraculous narrative. Shàndǎo stands upon a marbled tiled floor that delineates the foreground of the painting.[261] This elaborate marble tiled floor and golden Chinese-style balustrade could potentially be a hint at the Pure Land itself as a setting since many paintings of Amida in his Pure Land illustrate a Chinese-style palace behind him. The balustrade at the edge of the pavilion brilliantly outlines the area of interest for the viewer while the background is decidedly relegated

[259] Takama, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," 2. In the following pages, Takama's text presents the results of a close scientific analysis of the work in combination with previous scholarship.

[260] Takama, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," 4. Takama contends, though, that this painting should be studied as important in its own right rather than seen as a watered-down example of Song painting.

[261] Takama Yukari discussed the tiled floor as a marbled Seven Treasures (*shippō* 七宝) pattern. The Seven Treasures are gold, silver, pearls, agate, crystal, coral, and lapis lazuli. Though obviously faded and damaged with time, a floor depicted in this way would have originally been resplendent. Takama Yukari, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," 1.

to just that: background, unnoticeable in comparison to the rest of the compositional elements.[262] The viewer's gaze is contained by the balustrade, the golden color of which is mirrored in and thus draws the eye to the draping, luxurious fabric of Shàndǎo's clothing, which has a heavy use of applied *kirikane* 截金 (cut gold).[263]

The use of gold in the image points to the lavish nature of the painting, which was clearly made within a context of economic means. There is also a deeper meaning to the use of gold, however, particularly in relation to Shàndǎo's clothing and the miniature buddha figures. The use of gold for the seated Amida Buddhas not only conforms to iconographic standards for buddhas, but also serves to connect the buddha emanations to the physical body of Shàndǎo. The figuration of buddhas has been, to varying degrees, an issue addressed since the advent of Buddhism, included even in the words of the Historical Buddha. Discussions of Buddha's bodies, physical and conceptual, have incorporated many perspectives, but are grounded in philosophical and doctrinal concerns.[264] Since about the fourth century, the mainstream Mahayana position has been that the Buddha has a threefold body: the *dharmakāya* (J. *hosshin* 法身, "Dharma body"), the *saṃbhogakāya* (J. *hōjin* 報身, lit. "reward body," sometimes "enjoyment body"), and the *nirmāṇakāya* (*ōjin* 応身, lit. "response body," alt. *keshin* 化身, Manifestation body). The *dharmakāya* is formless, essentially inconceivable in space and time

[262] These elements of a Chinese-style setting were incorporated into a number of later works with Shàndǎo, such as some Two Patriarch mandala painting pairings that each depict Shàndǎo and Hōnen, respectively.

[263] This practice of applying cut gold foil in patterns to painted or sculpted images seems to have been imported from Tang-period (618-907) China and was especially well-used in Japan from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. For a brief summary of *kirikane*'s origins, see Hiroaki Katayama, "*Ranshōki no kirikane monyō nitsuite*," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 299 (Jul. 2008): 6-8.

[264] For a good overview (in English) of buddha bodies, see Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, "Buddha's Bodies and the Iconographical Turn in Buddhism," in *Buddhist Spirituality: Later China, Korea, Japan, and the Modern World*, ed. Takeuchi Yoshinori (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 391-413.

and the original "support" for the other bodies.[265] The *saṃbhogakāya*, of which there can be many, is, in the words of art historian Mimi Yiengpruksawan, "how Buddha becomes apparent—visually—to those who have reached an advanced stage of understanding."[266] The *nirmāṇakāya* likewise has multiple forms—as in the example of the Historical Buddha, Śākyamuni. The *nirmāṇakāya* is a transformation that "appears as whatever is most salvifically beneficial."[267] These intricacies of the threefold body are especially present in the various meditational practices within Buddhist sects, including the *nenbutsu* practice shown in this Chion-ji work.[268]

As for physical characteristics that are associated with the figuration of buddhas, specifics for each Buddha derive from sutra texts; however, the general characteristics that identify a buddha (Skt. *Tathāgata*, J. *nyorai* 如来, "Thus Come One") body are rooted in Śākyamuni's presentation of his own major and minor characteristics (*shinsō* 身相, Skt. *lakṣaṇa*). One of the thirty-two major characteristics mentioned in the Buddhist canon is the Buddha's golden body (J. *shinpi konshiki* 身皮金色).[269] Therefore, canonically and iconographically, the Buddha is depicted as golden. In the Chion-ji painting, the seated Amida

[265] The concept of a "support" (*āśraya*, J. *eji* 依止; in this type of use, an alternative is *kāya*, J. *shin* 身) comes from Buddhist master and philosopher Asaṅga (fl. 4th century CE, J. Mujaku 無著).

[266] Yiengpruksawan, "Buddha's Bodies," 396.

[267] Paul J. Griffiths, *On being Buddha: the Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994), 82.

[268] For more on Mahāyāna meditation practices and how it relates to three-body theory, see Alan Sponberg, "Meditation in Fa-hsiang Buddhism," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), 15-44. There are many more complexities that can come out when discussing (representations of) Buddha bodies, as we will see in Chapter Four of this dissertation. Shàndǎo also differed from previous Buddhist monks in China on his opinion of Amida's Buddha body classification. Whereas most monks understood Amida as *nirmāṇakāya* because even "ordinary" people could see him, Shàndǎo argued that based on scriptural references, Amida was actually a Buddha's *saṃbhogakāya* and was visible to those who practiced the *nenbutsu* due to *tariki* (other power). Still, the representations of Amida Buddha figures emitting from Shàndǎo's mouth in the Chion-ji painting could be understood as representations of either/both the *saṃbhogakāya* or *nirmāṇakāya* (bodies), depending on one's interpretation of the image and inscription.

[269] T1579_.30.0566c20.

Buddha figures are golden following convention. The significant amount of gold in representing Shàndǎo's clothing is a visual reference to the connection (*kechien* 結縁) created between Amida and Shàndǎo through *nenbutsu* practice, which itself manifested Amida's presence. Additionally, the gold in Shàndǎo's clothing is a visual hint of Shàndǎo's identity as a manifestation of Amida Buddha. Further, the golden-bodied miniature Amida Buddhas illustrate Shàndǎo's spoken words as miraculous and themselves a form of the Buddha body that may only be revealed to the sight of those "who have reached an advanced stage of understanding." To others not yet so advanced, the *nenbutsu* may be perceived through the faculty of hearing the spoken words. To reiterate the words of Yúnshěng from the painting's inscription, "All believers who see this [buddhas issuing forth from Shàndǎo's mouth] know it is not sorcery"—in other words, those who can perceive the manifested presence of Amida in *nenbutsu* practice have reached an advanced stage of understanding. The use of gold also acts in a way to support this concept of selective viewing or understanding, with its reflective quality alternately emphasized or not as light plays over it.[270] In summary, the use of gold in the Chion-ji painting contributes to the multifaceted functions of the language representation (here, the figural, spoken *nenbutsu*), through which the meanings and depictions of buddha bodies, relationships between venerated and venerator, and the intricacies of perception faculties are layered. In short, the use of gold is a key part of the visualized conceptualization of language-bodies in this painting.

Consideration of Shàndǎo's clothing also hints at the artistic connections among early thirteenth-century works, both images and texts. The designs of plum blossoms and mountains on the *kesa* are executed in cut gold, which stands out against a now-dark background of what

[270] This point is inspired by the input of art historian Brendan McMahon, who himself works on the material qualities of objects and how they contribute to the use and interpretation of works.

would have originally been a blue-green hue. Shàndǎo's own right side is resplendent in fully golden cloth with *kirikane* designs upon a golden-colored ground. If we compare Shàndǎo's clothing in this painting with the Nison-in depiction of his dress, we see some interesting alignments (figure 2-4). While the Chion-ji work uses literal gold material for the portrayal of part of Shàndǎo's monk robes, the Nison-in work instead uses color contrast. The same section of the robe in this work is painted in a hue that mimics, though without the metallic quality, a golden color through a deep cream. We cannot know for certain if it was meant to imitate gold, if there was an intentional similarity drawn between the two works in terms of Shàndǎo's clothing design and contrast, or if the similarities are, in fact, coincidental. Yet, such depictions of Shàndǎo's clothing filtered into Shàndǎo images throughout the rest of the thirteenth century and those following, implying that the developing Shàndǎo iconography of the early thirteenth century, shown in both of these works, had an impact on subsequent Shàndǎo images. The "gold" sections of Shàndǎo's clothing in both the Chion-ji and Nison-in paintings also have similar circular flower patterns.[271] If the similarities of the Shàndǎo clothing in these two paintings was intentional, at least to some degree, there could be a few reasons for this. First, there could have been a set Shàndǎo iconography in China and Korea, especially since the Nison-in painting is an import and the Chion-ji painting is considered a copy of a Song work. Another possibility lies in artistic exchanges and networks within Japan.[272]

Potentially supporting the hypothesis that the similarities between the two paintings are a result of domestic artistic networks is the fact that Shàndǎo's clothing in both images can be seen

[271] This type of pattern was common to Song-dynasty Buddhist imagery.

[272] Shàndǎo's teachings traveled to/through Korea, which itself had a strong connection to Pure Land practice with influential thinkers and practitioners who affected Pure Land Buddhism in Japan, such as Won Hyo 원효/元曉 (617-86, J. Gangyo) who had a syncretic view of Buddhism that included Pure Land practices and used song and dance to spread the Dharma to commoner laypeople.

as creating a "half-gold" figure—a version of Shàndǎo that can be attributed to the text *Mukan shōsōki* 夢感聖相記 (*Record of Holy Aspects of Dream Sensations*), supposedly written by Hōnen in 1198 (Kenkyū 建久 9), and an important episode included in Hōnen's various subsequent biographies.[273] In the *Mukan shōsōki,* a dream meeting with a monk who proclaims himself to be Shàndǎo is narrated. The monk is described thus: "The half of the body from the waist up was the usual monk's appearance, while the half of the body from the waist down was the aspect of a golden-colored buddha. 腰上半身尋常僧相。腰下半身金色佛相。"[274] Similar accounts of the half-gold Shàndǎo may be traced to Hōnen biographies, which also included this tale of Hōnen's encounter with Shàndǎo in a dream. The text portion (*kotobagaki* 詞書) of scroll seven of the early fourteenth-century *Hōnen Shōnin gyōjō ezu* 法然上人行状絵図 (*Illustrated Tales of Hōnen Shōnin*) handscroll set mentioned in relation to the Five Patriarch paintings above contains this episode:

> There then came forth out of the cloud a monk who made towards the place where Hōnen was. [His robes] were golden from his waist downward and dyed black from his waist upwards. Bowing low with his hands folded pressed together, Hōnen said "And who may you be?"
>
> The monk replied, "I am Zendō [Shàndǎo]."
>
> "And what have you come for?"
>
> "To show my appreciation for your devotion to the practice and dissemination of the one and only discipline of the [exclusive] *nenbutsu*." With this, Hōnen awoke. Afterwards, he told a painter called Jōdai to paint his dream for him. The painting circulated in society and was called "Dream Zendō" [Shàndǎo]. It is this [image in the handscroll]. That portrait is just like the one which was brought over later from China by Chōgen. It is

[273] Two versions exist. "*Saihō shinanshō Hōnen shōnin gomusōki*," *Hōnen shōnin den zenshū* (Kyoto: Hōnen Shōnen den zenshū Kankōkai, 1978), 860-61 and "*Shūi gtōroku Mukan shōsōki*," HDZ, 862. Also: T2612_.83.0239b21. Hōnen's authorship has been disputed by Tamura Enchō, *Hōnen shōninden no kenkyū,* HDZ, 240-56.

[274] *Mukan shōsōki,* T2612_.83.0239c05-06.

quite clear that Hōnen's religious work was in harmony with the master Zendō [Shàndǎo].

雲の中より一人の僧出て、上人の／所にきたり住す。そのさま、腰よりしもは／金色にして、こしよりかみは墨染なり。上人、／合掌低頭して申し給はく、「これ、誰人に／ましますぞや」と。僧答へ給はく、「我は是善導／なり」と。「何の為に来給ふぞや」と申し給ふに、／「汝専修念仏をひろむること貴かゆへに／来れるなり」との給とみて夢さめぬ。画／工乗台におほせて、ゆめにみるところを／図せしむ。世間に流布して＜夢の善導＞／といへる、これなり。その面像、後に唐朝より渡れる影像に違はざりけり。上人の仏導、和尚の尊意に適へること、明らけし。[275]

The illustration paired with this text shows the moment of Hōnen and Shàndǎo meeting face-to-face (figure 2-5). Handscrolls are read right to left as the viewer would unroll a section a little more than a shoulder's width with the scene slowly unfolding before them. Following the text quoted above, the viewer first encounters the right side of the scene with swirling clouds at the top edge of the scroll. The bank angles downward across the scroll, revealing brightly-colored, paradisical birds whose colors are mirrored in the clouds above, both giving the first clue of something miraculous occurring. Five-colored clouds are a symbol of a sacred vision or encounter. As the scroll is unrolled and more of the scene is revealed, the viewer finds Hōnen standing on the banks of a waterway, looking toward the left. His positioning guides the viewer to continue the physical and narrative unfolding of the scene. The viewer's gaze crosses the foaming eddies that surge to the left below clouds that swirl in similar motions at the top of the picture plane with an added upward lift to promote continued attention to the manifestation of the clouds. Further hints of a potential otherworldly encounter come from the beams of light that lay atop the water, angling from the top left down toward Hōnen in the bottom right. Both the

[275] The English translation follows, with some changes, Shunjō, *Hōnen the Buddhist Saint: his life and teaching* vol. 2, 206. Because Takama remains more true to the handwritten *emaki* text (using *kana* when *kana* is used instead of *kanji*), in providing the transcription here, I have used a combination of Takama, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," 9 and Shunjō, *Hōnen shōnin eden jō, Zoku Nihon no emaki* vol. 1, ed. Kōmatsu Shigemi (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1990), 178.

mysterious source of these rays of light and two birds in flight encourage the viewer to continue unrolling the scroll, revealing the narrative climax for which the text prior to the scene has primed the reader.

Finally, the viewer encounters the figure of Shàndǎo, who stands on a five-colored cloud. His clothing is depicted in an ombré effect, with the lower parts shining gold and transitioning to the more common, dark robes of a monk.[276] Up until this point, the scene's composition has flowed strongly leftwards, but Shàndǎo's figure abruptly disrupts that. The frothing sacred cloud upon which he stands seems to be moving quickly toward the right, shown in the zooming trail connecting his mounted cloud to the bank of clouds across the top of the image. So, too, does the orientation of the birds on the riverbank slightly leftward and below him direct viewers back to the right side of the image. Three birds in flight to the left of Shàndǎo's figure are flying back toward the water as if to mark that, now that the viewer has encountered Shàndǎo, this is a moment to pause the forward movement of scroll and story alike. A pause here creates an opportunity for the viewer to look back over the elements of the scene, contemplate it in relation to the preceding text, and consider the significance of Shàndǎo coming down to meet Hōnen.

In this scroll, language and image work in tandem with one another, but we do not see the use of language-bodies. Many later pictorial versions of Hōnen's biographical narrative (handscroll and panel paintings) would incorporate language-bodies in their representation of Shàndǎo in this scene. In this handscroll, before the viewer could even see the illustration, the text of the scroll historicized the painted image of Shàndǎo, establishing connections between

[276] As Takama notes, the robes were first painted with gold pigment and then a thin layer of dark ink was applied on top of the gold paint from midsection to shoulders. Takama Yukari, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," 9.

Hōnen's dream vision and a Shàndǎo image that was supposedly imported by Chōgen from China—perhaps the image of him within the Five Patriarchs painting that Chōgen allegedly brought for Hōnen. Though this illustrated handscroll was made in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, as mentioned above, Shunjō drew in part on pre-existing biographies of Hōnen and circulating stories to compile the text of the illustrated handscroll. The narrative descriptively paints a picture of a Shàndǎo iconography that is simultaneously rooted in Hōnen's dream vision *and* sourced from China by Chōgen, both signs of the miraculous connection between Shàndǎo and Hōnen.

In Japan, half-gold (***han konjiki*** 半金色) Shàndǎo representations became common by the beginning of the fourteenth century in both visual and literary representations of the Chinese monk.[277] A return to Shàndǎo's representations in the Chion-ji and Nison-in paintings—two of the earliest extant painted images of him in Japan—indicate an early development of a "half-gold" guise. However, instead of a split on a horizontal axis as seen in the Chion-in handscroll, where Shàndǎo's upper clothing is black and his lower clothing gold, and referenced in the *Mukan shōsōki,* Shàndǎo's clothing in the Chion-ji and Nison-in hanging scrolls instead emphasizes a split across a vertical axis with Shàndǎo's right side being golden and his left in the more mundane robes of a monk. Still, despite this difference in orientation, the "half gold" body of Shàndǎo in this narrative episode of Hōnen's life and the early thirteenth-century paintings is similar enough that scholars continue to remark that the two hanging scrolls are related in some

[277] From the extant half-gold Shàndǎo images, it seems they are most frequently split horizontally with the top and bottom being separate parts as in figure 2-5 whereas in the Chion-ji work (and the Nison-in painting if we read the light color as "golden"), the split ostensibly separates left and right.

way to the dream tale of Shàndǎo.[278] Whether Shàndǎo's depiction is somehow a result of Hōnen's dream or rooted in continental prototypes, the half-gold clothing became a standard iconographical feature for Shàndǎo that set him apart from the other Pure Land patriarchs (even in the Five Patriarch imagery). Takama Yukari even insinuates that the dream Shàndǎo became prevalent in the fourteenth century (such as in the various illustrated Hōnen biography hanging and hand scrolls) in large part because of the early thirteenth-century Chion-ji painting and its potential association with Hōnen's dream vision and Chōgen's travels to China.[279]

A record that contributes to our understanding of how Hōnen perceived Shàndǎo that has a concrete attribution and more precise dating is Hōnen's *Senchakushū* 選択集 (*Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shū* 選択本願念仏集, *Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Original Vow*).[280] In this text, Hōnen clearly presented Shàndǎo as a manifestation of Amida, stating the *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹 (original ground, trace manifestation) connection between the two:[281]

---

[278] Takama, who has studied the Chion-ji painting closely and whose work my own analysis is indebted to, is one such scholar.

[279] Takama, "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite*," 11.

[280] Hōnen. *Senchakushū*, in *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen Shōnin zenshū*, ed. Ichii Kyōdō (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1955). Also: T2608_.83. While the Jōdo sect officially claims the *Senchakushū* was written in 1198, there is disagreement amongst scholars regarding its dating. However, the consensus is that it was written no later than 1216 with very strong arguments for dating it to the first five years of the thirteenth century.

[281] During the Heian period, Buddhist deities and indigenous *kami* were brought together in newly formulated theories, mainly stemming from Esoteric Buddhist doctrine. Esoteric Buddhism was particularly adept at incorporating local beliefs and traditions due to its theories of emanation and absorption. In short, the various buddhas or bodhisattvas were considered emanations of a primordial, cosmic Buddha (Dainichi Buddha 大日如来). In Japan, a relationship between Buddhist deities and localized *kami* developed through a constellation of theories now called *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合 (unification of *kami* and buddhas). *Kami* figures were seen as emanations of buddhas, or in other words, trace manifestations (*suijaku*) of original ground (*honji*). For more on this concept in English, see *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, ed. Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003). Meiji-period scholar Tsuji Zennosuke first studied the *shinbutsu shūgō*, *kami* buddha syncretism, process. Other scholars such as Tamura Enchō, Hori Ichirō, Takatori Masao, and Murayama Shūichi continued such studies.

> Further, in China was it not transmitted from master to disciple that Shàndǎo is [A]mida in his transformation body [*nirmāṇakāya*]? If [that] is the case, we can say that this book is the direct teaching of [A]mida.
>
> 何況大唐相傳云善導是彌陀化身也。爾者可謂又此文是彌陀直説。[282]

Hōnen further emphasized this connection, even explicitly using the terminology of *honji-suijaku*, in the text by equating the forty-eight vows of Amida to exclusive *nenbutsu* practice:

> If one should ask, "What is Shàndǎo's original mode of being [*honji*, lit. "original ground"]?" it is none other than that of [Amida] the Dharma king of the forty-eight vows himself. The solemn pronouncement of [Amida] the supremely enlightened one over ten *kalpas* ago ensures that we can rely on the *nenbutsu*. Should one follow him down to his earthly manifestation [*suijaku*], one would find that it was the master of the exclusive practice of the *nenbutsu* [Shàndǎo].
>
> 仰討本地者四十八願之法王也。十劫正覺之唱有憑于念佛。俯訪垂迹者專修念佛之導師也。[283]

As we can see from these excerpts, Hōnen clearly believed in and (re)affirmed Shàndǎo as a manifestation of Amida. This injects his face-to-face dream meeting with Shàndǎo with more significance, being, in actuality, a meeting with Amida. As both the object of veneration in Pure Land Buddhist practice and the source (the initial "patriarch," as it were) of existence and legitimacy for Pure Land followers, Amida's presence in a dream meeting with Hōnen was akin to a bestowal of spiritual authority on Hōnen. Simultaneously, it was an affirmation of Hōnen's particular devotion to Shàndǎo as a patriarch figure. Further, Shàndǎo's identity as Amida is visually reinforced in the Chion-in scroll scene. Appearing to ride a mount of sacred clouds in a speedy descent to the mundane realm to greet a practitioner mirrors contemporaneous *raigō* 来迎

[282] For the English, I have made alterations (under Erin Brightwell's guidance and expertise) to *Hōnen's Senchakushū: Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Original Vow (Senchaku hongan nembutsu shū*, trans. and ed. Senchakushū English Translation Project (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 152. For the Japanese, see T2608_.83.0019c28-T2608_.83.0020a01. I have also noted in the English translation where the Buddhist term *nirmāṇakāya* appears.

[283] English translation with some minor changes: ibid. For the Japanese, see T2608_.83.0020a02-04.

images of Amida Buddha descending to greet dying believers to spirit them away for birth in the Pure Land (figure 2-6). Presumably, Hōnen's personal beliefs captured in the *Senchakushū* and were espoused verbally in his teachings and interactions with patrons and followers. This likely contributed to the rise in Shàndǎo veneration around 1200 CE and the creation of a tradition of Shàndǎo imagery such as the examples discussed above. Although the timing of when a connection between a Shàndǎo figure half-clad in gold and this episode in Hōnen's biography is murky, nonetheless the "half-gold Shàndǎo" is often also identified as and thus usually synonymous with "Dream Shàndǎo" (*yume no Zendō* 夢の善導).

In summary, from the available evidence, it seems that these early Japanese Shàndǎo images were a result of Song-dynasty prototypes in combination with Hōnen prioritizing Shàndǎo's teachings and emphasizing him as a manifestation of Amida Buddha. In this process, the representation of language was engaged in a layered way that included conceptions of physical body—Shàndǎo's and Amida's. The Chion-ji painting shows a shift in the Tang-dynasty narrative of Shàndǎo's *nenbutsu* recitation. Instead of emissions of golden light, Shàndǎo's *nenbutsu* resulted in emissions of Amida Buddha bodies, further establishing the connections between language, object, and body that had, by this point, been theorized extensively within mainstream Buddhist traditions. Through this painting, especially the strategic use of gold, Shàndǎo himself was visually equated to those Buddha bodies in multifaceted ways. Subsequently, this gold in Shàndǎo's clothing became an iconographic characteristic of his depiction in Japan. This, along with images of Hōnen's dream vision (regardless of their relationship to one another), further legitimized both Shàndǎo's eminence and Hōnen's spiritual authority. The Chion-ji painting highlighted the power of language through *nenbutsu* recitation. Although we cannot know if it was the first to do so in Japan, it was among the early examples

that clearly led to a widespread phenomenon that continued and even increased throughout the thirteenth century.

Forming Bodies: Shàndǎo and Kūya Sculptures at the Turn of the Century

It is somewhat artificial to separate the paintings of Shàndǎo from sculptures, yet it is useful for understanding the tradition. The Nison-in and Chion-ji paintings are clearly connected to the Song dynasty through a direct transmission, one being an imported painting and the other a copy of a Song work. They establish an artistic connection between paintings from the continent and Japanese paintings of Shàndǎo. In this section, I will build off the discussion of the Chion-ji painting of Shàndǎo, exploring the move of the artistic motifs and intellectual concepts embodied in this Shàndǎo image to the medium of sculpture. Specifically, I will explore wooden sculptures of *nenbutsu*-speaking Shàndǎo and Kūya created as early as the first decade of the thirteenth century. The majority of this section is spent looking at the earliest sculpture of Kūya and two early sculptures of Shàndǎo, however I will briefly address copies done throughout the following century or so, their existence indicating that the earlier works must have been well received. Although the sculptural legacy of Shàndǎo was a bit more lasting and consistent than Kūya's (sculptures of Shàndǎo were created all the way into the Edo period), it is a sculpture of Kūya that may be the most famous *nenbutsu*-speaking image of them all. The Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya sculpture in Kyoto has captured the interest of many, yet for how often it is briefly mentioned by scholars across disciplines, comparatively there are not many close studies of the sculpture.[284] I argue that the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya (figure 2-7) and two early Shàndǎo sculptures are evidence

[284] This is likely also linked to the fact that Kūya was not integral to any sectarian or institutional lineage.

of the prevalent concepts of the power of words that moved within a rich network of artistic production that drew from imported works, antecedents, and interactions with overlapping sets of patrons, artists, and monks. Underlying the confluence of these factors was a pervasive desire for such efficacious power in the face of historical circumstances.

The Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya is a wooden sculpture of the standing itinerant monk. One foot, clad in straw sandals (*waraji* 草鞋), is placed forward into the viewer's space and one hand is frozen in the midst of keeping a beat for himself and those surrounding. His neck is stretched out and mouth open to form words, giving the figure an active appearance in comparison to most sculptures of historical figures completed up to this point. The open mouth is not the sole indication of speech. Six standing figures of Amida Buddha emerge from Kūya's mouth via an attached wire (figure 2-8). These six figures represent the written characters of the *nenbutsu*—one Amida figure for each character. Despite the positioning and details that suggest Kūya is in the middle of chanting, both feet are still planted flat on the ground. Although the stature of the sculpture is a bit less than life size, the viewer may, at first glance, have seen it as him arrested in time and imagined that they had stumbled across Kūya rhythmically keeping time on the *shōko* 鉦鼓 (small gong) and energetically chanting the *nenbutsu*, leaning forward to encourage others into joining this practice of *nenbutsu* chanting.[285]

[285] *Shōko* were generally used during the Heian period in *gagaku* 雅楽 (Japanese court music), which could be a hint of his potentially aristocratic parentage. Another reference could be to the monk Chōgen (strong patron of the Kei School). Chōgen used a similar gong with harness in the 1198 Welcoming Ceremonies at the Watanabe *bessho* 別所 (special sanctuaries). Rosenfield, *Portraits of Chōgen*, 258. The gong used by Chōgen was saved as a treasure. For more on that, see Nara National Museum, *Dai kanjin Chōgen* (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2006), no. 28 and Tsutsui Eishun, *Tōdaiji ronsō* vol. 1, ed. Tsutsui Kanshū (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1973), 269.

According to most transmitted biographies of Kūya, he was of aristocratic descent.[286] His training was in the Tendai school and he became fully ordained in 948. By his time, it was not uncommon for monks with Tendai backgrounds to leave central Tendai temples to preach among lower class laypeople.[287] It was also relatively common for such itinerant monks to have an element of Pure Land veneration and *nenbutsu* performance as part of their proselytizing. Kūya was one such monk. After Tendai training, he left Mt. Hiei to proselytize. He, like other so-called *nenbutsu* sages (*nenbutsu hijiri* 念仏聖), was an alms-begging mendicant who propagated the *nenbutsu* among villagers and provided services to them by performing rites for the dead, healing illnesses, or organizing infrastructural improvements such as digging wells. Kūya became known by various monikers: *ichi no hijiri* 市の聖 ("marketplace sage"), *ichi no shōnin* 市の上人 ("marketplace holy man"), and *Amida hijiri* 阿弥陀聖 ("Amida sage"). In the traditional narrative of his life, he followed in the footsteps of Saichō and Ennin at the time of his death, undergoing cleansing rituals and facing west before dying—steps toward birth in the Pure Land.

Kūya's legacy endured in part because he was captured in writing by later authors. Biographies were written about him by Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保胤 (after 933-1002, alt. Jakushin 寂心) and Minamoto no Tamenori 源為憲 (d. 1011). Yoshishige no Yasutane's late tenth-century text, *Nihon ōjō gokuraki ki* 日本往生極楽記 (*Record of Pure Land births in*

[286] There are few primary sources about Kūya from his lifetime and later texts generally say that Kūya did not speak of his birth and early childhood. Still, one theory is that he was the illegitimate son of the sovereign Daigo 醍醐天皇 (885-930; r. 897-930), however there is no scholarly evidence to verify this claim.

[287] This was not limited to Tendai monks, nor were they the first to do so. Perhaps one of the most significant early examples of preaching to lower class laypeople (especially Pure Land practice) is that of the monk Gyōki, mentioned earlier.

Japan), promoted Kūya as responsible for the popularity of the *nenbutsu* in Japan.[288] This work provided forty-two short biographies of individuals believed to have been born in Amida's Paradise. The biographies in the *Nihon ōjō gokurakiu ki* must have been relatively well-known in the twelfth century because many copies were made around the end of the century, perhaps contributing to an increased profile of Kūya that encouraged the development of Kūya imagery throughout the thirteenth century. Kūya was also the subject of an entry in *Ryōjin hishō* 梁塵秘抄 (*Treasured Selections of Superb Songs*), an 1179 compilation of *imayō* 今様 ("contemporary style") poetic verse.[289] This text compilation was circulated only among select elite audiences, though it drew from songs that would likely have been popular among even common audiences. The *Hosshinshū* 発心集 (*A Collection of Spiritual Awakenings*), written by Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1153 or 1155-1216) as a collection of anecdotes about Buddhist "recluses" who pursued religious awakening or salvation, also contained references to Kūya, calling him "*ichi no hijiri"* or "*Amida hijiri*" in a tale that presents Kūya's propagation of the *nenbutsu* in Japan.[290] As we

[288] Yoshishige Yasutane, *Nihon ōjō gokuraki ki* (Tokyo: Yagi Shōten, 2007), 38-41. This publication has photographs of an early Kamakura-period manuscript of the text in the collection of Tokyo's Sonkeikaku Bunko 尊経閣文庫.

[289] *Imayō* poetic verse was lyrically sung, often with musical accompaniment, and was extremely popular in the twelfth century. This anthology was compiled personally by Go-Shirakawa Tennō 後白河天皇 (1127-92, r. 1155-58), which was unusual as *imayō*, though popular, were considered a plebian form and *waka* verse would have been more standard among aristocratic circles. Another version of the title's English translation is: *Songs to Make the Dust Dance on the Beams*. The use of *ryōjin* 梁塵 (the characters respectively for "beam" and "dust") references a Chinese tale of two legendary singers whose voices were so remarkable that they could make the dust dance on the rafters for three days before settling. This hint at the power of words to move (literally) even non-sentient objects such as dust as well as the Buddhist content (even 塵 or "dust" in the title references deeper Buddhist meanings as the term was used in Buddhist canon and commentary as a reference for the material world) are quite relevant to this dissertation. In the future, I plan to explore this connection further. For more on the study of the *Ryōjin hishō*, see Yung-Hee Kim, *Songs to Make the Dust Dance: the Ryōjin hishō of Twelfth-century Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994). For a transcription of the remaining extant parts of the text, see *Ryōjin hishō*, *Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei* series (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1979).

[290] This text eventually became widely circulated. The compilation is heavily inflected with Pure Land belief and practice, many stories being related to Amida devotion or *nenbutsu* practice. For a transcription of the text, see Kamo no Chōmei, *Hōjōki, Hosshinshū*, ed. Miki Sumito, *Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei* series (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1976). Though Kūya is mentioned elsewhere (even by the name Kūya), *Amida hijiri* and *ichi no hijiri* are used on

see in Chōmei's text, Kūya's legacy was well-known enough that even brief mentions found in narrative entries about other figures were understandable. Chōmei's writings—as well as other the other texts mentioned above—further promoted Kūya's legacy.

Throughout Kūya's life as an itinerant Buddhist monk, he seems to have consistently employed Buddhist practice to deal with calamity. In the 930s, he reportedly gave the food he begged from the elite to displaced refugees from a revolt. Even the founding of Saikō-ji 西光寺 (later called Rokuharamitsu-ji), which itself nurtured Kūya's renown, appears to be the result of trying to navigate disaster. Evidence suggests that, in response to epidemics of the time, he organized the copying of a luxurious version of the Buddhist scriptural text *Dai hannya haramitta kyō* 大般若波羅蜜多経 (*Large Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*).[291] Its completion was commemorated with a ceremony in 963. The temple claims this moment as its origin story.[292] In the centuries after, it cultivated veneration of Kūya. Like many other sites, Rokuharamitsu-ji experienced damage in the twelfth century. By this point, the Rokuhara district of Kyoto was also home to many in the Taira clan, including a residence called the Rokuhara mansion that had been a site of intrigue and action during the Heiji Rebellion of 1160. Because of the Taira's role in the ongoing conflicts of the twelfth century, the Rokuhara district sustained damage during the Genpei Wars. In 1183, some Rokuharamitsu-ji buildings were burnt. As with the other sites of

page 298. Ten of the stories are translated in Marian Ury, "Recluses and Eccentric Monks: Tales from the Hosshinshū by Kamo no Chōmei," *Monumenta Nipponica* 27, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 149-73. Some other entries (though all related to "love") are translated in Rajyashree Pandey, "Suki and Religious Awakening: Kamo no Chōmei's Hosshinshū," *Monumenta Nipponica* 47, no. 3 (Autumn 1992): 299-321.

[291] For this sutra text, see T220.5–7. For more on this research relating to Kūya, see Robert F. Rhodes and Richard K. Payne, *Genshin's Ōjōyōshū and the Construction of Pure Land Discourse in Heian Japan (Pure Land Buddhist Studies*. (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), 64–72.

[292] Although a Shingon-affiliated temple today, for part of its history Rokuharamitsu-ji was a Tendai *betsuin* 別院 (branch temple), connected in some way to the sectarian background of its founder.

destruction, there was need for restoration, which frames the historical context for the creation of the Kūya sculpture. This sculptural depiction of Kūya and its context provide a chance to understand ways that human motivations could be enacted via artistic production and a particular interpretation and leveraging of the past. Considering the relevance of Kūya's own reactions to dealing with violent conflict, spreading illnesses, famine, and homelessness, honoring him at the beginning of the thirteenth century may have seemed particularly relevant as similar challenges directly preceded the sculpture's creation.

A closer look at both the Rokuharamitsu-ji sculpture and its sculptor gives us a more nuanced perspective of how language comes into play. The sculpture captures Kūya's personal iconography, which stemmed from his defining practice. Unlike many sculptural portraits of Japanese founders or patriarchs, this figure of Kūya is not only standing, but ostensibly *walking*. With an active stance, his left foot moves forward into the space of the viewer. Likewise, the staff is planted firmly to the ground as if to aid the next step. This pilgrimage staff topped with a deer's antler points to a legend in his hagiography, in which he sorrowfully added the antler to his staff after a hunter killed a deer that had attended Kūya's meditation. His sandals reference Kūya's reputation as an itinerant traveling monk. This design of sandal with strands that wrap around the back of the foot by the heel was used for travel and mountain climbing as it was more secure than, for example, just a thong sandal. The figure's upper body leans forward, the muscles and tendons of his neck slightly flexed as he vocalizes his chants, made visible by six buddha figures. As in the Chion-ji painting, in this sculpture the *nenbutsu is* the buddha body materially manifest. Therefore, in intoning the *nenbutsu,* Amida is made present. It, too, has expanded the earlier conception of language-body to more clearly refine and illustrate the layered associations between word and body. The number of figures is significant and differs from the painting of

Shàndǎo. The *nenbutsu*, when written, is composed of six Sino-Japanese characters despite its seven spoken syllables. Aligning the number of buddha figures to the number of written characters, this sculpture of Kūya physically illustrates the connection not only between spoken word and the buddha, but also *written* word. In simplified semiotic terms, body and script are explicitly signifiers for the same signified. As a result, these figural buddha bodies also came to signify the written characters. Kūya's *nenbutsu* was renowned for using rhythm and dance in tandem with speaking the words "*Namu Amida Butsu*."[293] This intoned *nenbutsu* is referenced by Kūya keeping a beat on a gong hanging from his neck. These markers—the pilgrimage staff, gong, and being captured mid-speech with the *nenbutsu* bodily manifesting Amida Buddha—became the set iconography for Kūya in paintings and sculpture thereafter.

From an inscription on the interior of the sculpture (figure 2-9), we know the work was carved by Kōshō of the Kei School, sometime between 1207 and 1212.[294] Written with black ink on the interior of the sculpture, the inscription reads "[the] monk Kōshō" (*sō Kōshō* 僧康勝) along with a *kaō* 花押 (stylized signature or mark).[295] By 1212, Kōshō had achieved the rank of *hokkyō*.[296] Due to this, the sculpture—sometimes dated generically to the first decade of the thirteenth century—can be more specifically dated to between 1207 and 1212. Kōshō was the

[293] This is called *odori nenbutsu* 踊念仏 (dancing *nenbutsu*).

[294] This may well have been coincidental, but Kūya's Buddhist name was Kōshō 光勝. Therefore, Kūya's Buddhist name and the sculptor of the Rokuharamitsu-ji work's name were homophones, even sharing the second character of their names. With the various active Kei-School sculptors at the time, perhaps Kōshō was chosen in part for this connection, which would be yet one more way that auditory sound factored—if indirectly—into the creation of this statue.

[295] *Zōzō meiki* (Tokyo: Kōkogakkai, 1936), 175. Mizuno Keizaburō, *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei: Kamakura jidai: zōzō meiki hen* vol. 2, part 2 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2005), 248.

[296] Ibid. This is discerned from a recorded inscription on the lotus pedestal of a Miroku 弥勒 (Skt. Maitreya) image at Kōfuku-ji (sculpture location, if extant, now unknown). For further discussion on Kōshō's rank and the use of *sō* to designate *shōbusshi* 少仏師 (lower rank Buddhist image maker), see Mizuno, *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei*, 249-50.

fourth son of the now famous Kei-School sculptor Unkei. Kōshō was active until at least around 1232.[297] With Kōshō's Kūya sculpture being created in the years around 1210, it seems likely that Kōshō or other related figures would have seen an image of a *nenbutsu*-speaking Shàndǎo, whether the Chion-ji painting, the Song-dynasty work that it copied (dated 1161), or another similar depiction of him. Thus, Mōri Hisashi suggests in his study of Kamakura-period sculpture that the emerging Amida figures in the Kūya sculpture could have derived from the same source as the Shàndǎo images.[298]

Another possibility is that Kōshō saw a sculpture of a *nenbutsu*-speaking Shàndǎo, such as the one held by Raigō-ji 来迎寺 in Nara (figure 2-10). The Raigō-ji work is unusual among Shàndǎo sculptures because he is depicted in a seated position, sculpted with one leg bent underneath him and the knee of his other leg raised but drawn in relatively close to his body. Despite the flexibility of his lower limbs, the trunk of his body is static and rigidly upright. His eyes are open, gazing forward with an expression of active attention. His mouth is open as if caught mid-speech. Close examination of the sculpture reveals a hole in the interior of the mouth with evidence that this work originally had a wire armature protruding. This is the same approach seen in the Kōshō Kūya. This hole, along with the Raigō-ji sculpture's hands being pressed together in prayer, make it very likely that the sculpture would have originally had a wire with miniature buddha figures projecting out of the mouth. In other words, like the Kūya sculpture, the Raigō-ji sculpture physically manifested *nenbutsu* practice. This is further

[297] He is also documented as having worked on an 1198 restoration at Tō-ji 東寺 with his father and two of his brothers. Kōshō led the 1232 casting of a bronze Amida triad at Hōryū-ji, a work viewed as a relatively unsuccessful attempt toward a hybrid of the newer trend toward naturalism and an archaic style. He also carved a wooden sculpture of Kūkai for Tōji's Miedō in 1233.

[298] Mōri Hisashi, *Unkei to Kamakura chōkoku* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1979) [originally *Nihon no bijutsu* 11 (1964)], 121. Mōri seems to be the only scholar to explicitly state this, but in a relatively offhand manner.

supported by the fact that the same technique was employed in other thirteenth-century sculptures of Shàndǎo and Kūya.

From the current evidence, the Raigō-ji work appears to be the earliest extant Shàndǎo sculpture in Japan—and likely the earliest *nenbutsu*-speaking sculptural image. The interior of the Raigō-ji sculpture contains inscriptions in two locations that, while not recording the year, give us information to narrow down the date. The inscription on the interior side of the figure's back includes names of people who contributed to the creation and dedication of the sculpture (figure 2-11).[299] Among those, six of the listed names are also found on an interior inscription of a Fudō Myōō 不道明王 sculpture at Daigō-ji 醍醐寺 (figure 2-12).[300] Because the Daigo-ji sculpture has a recorded year of Kennin 建仁 3 (1203), we know that these six people had joined together to sponsor a sculpture that year. Due to the shared names between the works, one strong possibility is that creation of the Raigō-ji Shàndǎo sculpture, sponsored by the same people, occurred around the same time, meaning the Shàndǎo work was also created around 1203. Further, art historian Nagaoka Ryūsaku posits that there is the possibility that this Raigō-ji Shàndǎo could have been the central image in a Shàndǎo Enshrinement Hall (*Zendō midō* 善導御堂) being constructed around this time.[301] This hypothesis is based on a set of letters between

[299] Funding, preparing, and completing deposits for statuary was one way that a person could not only accrue merit, but also establish a connection (*kechien* 結縁) with the image and thus the deity. Inscriptions on the interior of scultpures also had the potential for *kechien* in a conceptual, but also physical sense. Inscribing one's name on the interior of a sculpture's body created a material, seemingly permanent connection—especially in cases where the statue was considered a living body (*shōjin* 生身). There are also documented examples of a reversal of sorts, where the deity was inscribed on the body of the adherent—either in name or seed syllable. I will briefly touch on this in the next chapter. Clearly, the material written word had the power to forge immaterial bonds between human and sacred beings.

[300] Nagaoka Ryūsaku, *Tokubetsuten Kaikei: Nihonjin o miryōshita hotoke no katachi* (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2018), 240. This entire paragraph draws from Nagaoka's work.

[301] Ibid. This also contributes to an understanding of how Shàndǎo images may have been used (in veneration).

Hōnen and his disciple Shōkū 証空 (1177-1247) found inside an Amida sculpture of Kōzen-ji 光善寺. Within these letters is a reference to progress on the erection of such a hall around the year Shōji 正治 2 (1200), though it is not clear exactly where this hall was being built. Other clues point to the context of the Raigō-ji sculpture's creation. One of the named individuals in the Raigō-ji inscription, a monk called Kin'amidabutsu 金阿弥陀仏 (dates unknown) who apparently lived on land neighboring modern-day Raigō-ji, is found in other contemporaneous records that connect him with the monk Chōgen.

The Raigō-ji Shàndǎo does not have a definitive artist attribution, but some scholars—such as Nagaoka—have suggested a Kei School connection. After undergoing repair in recent years, a second inscription was found on the interior of the Raigō-ji work. The characters "*Sonkei* 尊慶" are written in black ink on the interior surface of the head (figure 2-13), bolstering the Kei School hypothesis.[302] As mentioned above, prominent Kei-School sculptors were very active in Nara during the time the Raigō-ji Shàndǎo was made. Furthermore, with a connection between one of the inscribed patrons and Chōgen, who himself was a consistent patron of the Kei School, the possibility that the Raigō-ji work could be linked to a Kei sculptor is convincing. We may not be able to concretely identify this Raigō-ji sculpture as a Kei-School work or as the image enshrined in the abovementioned hall, but from the evidence at hand it seems reasonable to place the work's creation between 1200 and 1205.

Such a dating would place the Raigō-ji work slightly prior to the Rokuharamitsu-ji sculpture. With the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya being definitively attributed to Kōshō of the Kei School and the high probability of the Raigō-ji Shàndǎo having a similar artistic connection, the

[302] Nagaoka even presents (in question form, thus understandably hedging to some degree) Kaikei as a possibility. Ibid. We do not yet have details of anyone known as Sonkei outside this work.

similar depiction of spoken word in both sculptures could very well have been a result of artistic innovation that was either developed or nurtured through community exchange. It seems, perhaps, to push the boundaries of belief to consider that the two sculptures were created in isolation from one another, especially as they both represented the spoken *nenbutsu* and were created within the same general time frame and artistic environs. Without precise dating, it is not possible to say which may have been the initial innovation of forming immaterial words into sculptural material objects via miniature Amida Buddha figures, and they may have also had a common source outside themselves (another object, patron, text, oral tradition, etc.). However, I maintain that the value is not in considering the "first" as the innovation, per se, but rather that the presence and power of words was evidently important enough to more than a single artist or patron for such *nenbutsu* representations to be prominent around the turn of the century, indicating a now-obscure network of artists, patrons, and viewers. Also, the *nenbutsu*-speaking image type being successfully incorporated into more works in the following hundred years indicates that such a conception of the *nenbutsu* as a language-body (and its use as a tool of sorts) became increasingly employed and recognizable in Buddhist visual culture.

A sculpture of Shàndǎo at Chion-in (figure 2-14), dated broadly to the first half of the thirteenth century, is part of this group of *nenbutsu*-speaking images. It not only shows the continued veneration of Shàndǎo as well as similarities with both the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya and Raigō-ji Shàndǎo, but it is a prime example of the activation of sculpted images through both visible and non-visible means. The sculpture represents Shàndǎo standing upright, hands once more pressed together, chin slightly lifted, and mouth open in speech. As in the Raigō-ji work, there is a hole in the interior of the sculpture's mouth—an indication of original wire armature that would have held miniature buddha figures. Unlike the Raigō-ji work, though, this sculpture

bears some striking similarities to the Chion-ji painting of Shàndǎo. In fact, scholars, including Asanuma Takeshi, suggest that the sculpture is at least partially modeled after the painting.[303] In the sculpture and painting, Shàndǎo's pose is the same. Although the pigment has deteriorated so very little remains, the way the clothing falls in the sculpture resembles that of the Chion-ji painting, though more naturalistically in terms of how textiles lie—possibly a sign of more sophisticated Kei-School sculptural naturalism. The expression of the Chion-in sculpture likewise mirrors the painting. There is a round fullness to the Chion-in sculpture's face that echoes the soft youthfulness in the painting. In both, Shàndǎo's eyes are raised. This is especially obvious in the sculpture today with its shining eyes, though it would have originally looked even more naturalistic before the majority of pigment had deteriorated and flaked off. Still, the features and expression of the Chion-in sculpture seem to clearly mimic that of the painting unlike, for example, the Raigō-ji Shàndǎo sculpture. The amount of miniature buddha figures that were on the original, now-lost armature of either the Raigō-ji or Chion-in sculptures is unknowable (did they, like the Rokuharamitsu-ji work, have six to correspond to the six written characters of the *nenbutsu*?). Still, it is certain that the works used language-bodies to portray a visible activation of words as well as Shàndǎo's connection to—manifestation of—Amida Buddha. In addition, the objects found within the Chion-in sculpture point to a non-visible activation of form.

By the thirteenth century, the practice of caching objects within a sculpture (*zōnai nōnyūhin*) was relatively prevalent.[304] The Tōji Lecture Hall sculptures with their interred

[303] Asanuma Takeshi, *Hōnen: shōgai to bijutsu*, 215-16.

[304] This practice emerged in Japan around the eighth century. Art historian Akiko Walley discussed some examples of what she calls "proto-*nōnyūhin*" from the eighth century. Akiko Walley, "Sheltered by the Buddha: Objects Buried under the Great Buddha of Todaiji as Proto-Tainai Nonyuhin," *Paragone* 5 (2018): 65-73. The earliest known written documentation of a deposit within an image refers to a 762 Kannon 観音 sculpture for Ishiyamadera 石山寺. "*Zō Ishiyamain shorō geki bun'an*," in *Dai Nihon kobunsho* vol. 15, ed. Tokyo daigaku shiryō hensanjo

objects, mentioned in the previous chapter, are among some of the earliest examples. During the Heian period, the practice increased in popularity. Objects placed within statues could include sutras, paintings, prints, grains, jewels, coins, personal belongings, records of devotees and their devotional activities, and relics—especially Buddha relics, or *śarīra* (*busshari* 仏舎利). While Heian *nōnyūhin* in single statues were relatively limited in type and number, in the Kamakura period, statues would often contain many and varied objects, though the practice of interring personal belongings seems to have been discarded. As Pei-Jung Wu notes, scholars in the early twentieth century initially discussed *nōnyūhin* in a documentary manner, simply noting details about objects.[305] In recent decades, more interpretive work has been conducted, generally focusing on *nōnyūhin* as serving two potential functions: to enliven the image or to form a bond with the deity it represents (or both).[306]

Wu points out that scholars often pose the functions of these interred objects as ambiguous and that there has been little to no attention paid to written records that reveal contemporaneous perspectives on *nōnyūhin* and allow modern historians to give more definition to the process. In her article, Wu focuses on two case studies of statues with *nōnyūhin* connected to the monk Eison 叡尊 (1201-1290), using textual records to more concretely address the dual functions of *nōnyūhin* and the degree to which broader audiences were aware of these

(1922; reprint, Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai: 1977), 236-37. For some of the earlier general histories of statue object caches, see Kurata Bunsaku, "*Zōnai nōnyūhin*," *Nihon no bijutsu* 86 (July 1973); *Jūyō bunkazai bekkan: Zōnai nōnyūhin*, Mainichi shinbun sha, ed. (Tokyo: Mainichi shinbun sha, 1978). Modern scholars' term "*nōnyūhin*" for these deposits draws from historic use of *nōnyū* in documents to refer to "inserting deposits."

[305] The following pages are indebted to Wu's work. Pei-jung Wu, "Wooden statues as living bodies: deciphering the meanings of the deposits within two Mañjuśrī images of the Saidaiji order," *Artibus Asiae* vol. 74 no. 1 (2014): 75-96.

[306] More recent examples of scholarship on *nōnyūhin* include Nedachi Kensuke, "*Reigenbutsu to nōnyūhin wo tōshita seisei no ishoku wo megutte*," *Bijutsu Fōramu 21* vol. 22 (2010): 46-50 and Helmut Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred: Empowering Buddhist Images in Clear, in Code, and in Cache* (Lawrence, KA: Spencer Museum of Art and Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2011).

functions.[307] The two statues, dating to 1267 and 1302, and related texts in Wu's study show that a large number of people from different religious levels and socio-economic classes contributed to the materials interred. Wu also outlines that, through text, discussion, and ceremonies, information about the use and function of these materials was relatively widely accessible. For example, public ceremonial caching would have allowed groups of people to witness the process and its significance (through accompanying oral aspects). Specific combinations of *nōnyūhin* were also delineated through textual records. A *ganmon* 願文 (dedicatory inscriptions/texts) in a Kamakura-period Jizō statue documents the intentional combinations of deposits within to mirror the Three Treasures (*sanbō* 三宝), the three aspects of Buddhism that are the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.[308] From these examples and more, it is clear that by the thirteenth century, statue deposits were systematized to the degree that they constituted sophisticated conceptual programs for Buddhist practitioners with an eye to practical (beneficial) ends. *Nōnyūhin*, deposited under ritual, were deeply intentional and intimately connected with the perspectives of contemporary communities in relation to the sculpture.

The Chion-in Shàndǎo is yet another example of this Kamakura practice of interring objects, however the *nōnyūhin* in this sculpture are a very specific type, exhibiting once more a connection to Chinese prototypes. Facsimiles of internal organs (*gozō roppu* 五臓六腑) were crafted out of silk brocade and braided cord (figure 2-15), then interred in this Shàndǎo figure,

[307] Wu's case studies are a statue of Mañjuśrī at Saidai-ji and a now-lost Hannya-ji Mañjuśrī statue. For more on Eison's use of imagery as living icon, see Paul Groner, "Icons and Relics in Eison's Religious Activities," in *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, ed. Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf (Standford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 114-50.

[308] Hank Glassman, "The Nude Jizō: Notes on Women's Salvation in Kamakura Buddhism," in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 383-413. I will address the Three Treasures of Buddhism further in the next chapter that focuses on Myōe's practice.

imbuing it with life through a complex execution of simultaneous mimesis, accuracy, and sacrality. In essence, the model organs worked to constitute the statue as a "living body" (*shōjin* 生身). Eison, writing in 1269 about *nōnyūhin* in a different sculpture, says about the merit-accruing interred objects in relation to the living body:

> With these accumulated merits to constitute its body [of the statue], who could say this wooden icon with its assemblage of good roots as adornment does not hold the majesty of a living body?
>
> 凡厥集功徳為體，誰謂之木像之尊，積善根成粧，寧不具生身 之威乎。[309]

Although the Japanese *nōnyūhin* practice overall likely originated in China, it developed differently in Japan. In China, interring models of human organs within statues was popular, as we know from extant statues and texts, but this type of *nōnyūhin* was not similarly widespread in Japan.[310] A number of the few such types in Japan actually fall within a lineage stemming from a famous imported Chinese work, the Seiryō-ji Śākyamuni sculpture. This Seiryō-ji statue was brought to Japan in 986 a year after its creation in 985.[311] Around the twelfth century, the statue acquired its own legend of being a portrait of the Historical Buddha from India that came to Japan through China. The aforementioned biography of Hōnen written by Shunjō mentions the

---

[309] For the English: Wu, "Wooden Statues as Living Bodies," 90. For the Japanese text: Eison, *Saidaiji Eison denki shūsei,* ed. Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo (1956; reprint, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1977), 156-57.

[310] Tanabe Saburōsuke, "*Zōnai nōnyuhin zakki: Chūgoku Kankoku no irei nado*," *Miroku kobunka* 31 (1982): 1-7; Shimizu Masumi, "*Gozō rokufu no aru Sōdai mokuzō bosatsu hanka zō*," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 135 (1981): 49-60. Pei-jung Wu also has written further on the different deposit styles: Pei-jung Wu, "A Comparison of the Chinese and Japanese Deposit with Buddhist Statues: With the Seiryōji Shaka and Saidaiji Shaka Statues as Examples," *TNNUA Artistica* 2 (June 2011): 71-99. Helmut Brinker questions the conclusion that textile viscera were not popular and wonders, based on the Seiryō-ji statue lineage discussed further down this page, if this practice was more frequent than we know. Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 42. Extent evidence does not currently support this, but we could consider it a possibility.

[311] The documentary evidence surrounding this sculpture is very strong, including an inscription on the interior dating it and providing the names of the two sculptors. For more on the Seiryō-ji sculpture, particularly its *nōnyūhin*, see Oku Takeo, "*Seiryōji shaka nyōrai zō*," *Nihon no bijutsu* 513 (Feb. 2009). It is now a hidden image (*hibutsu* 秘仏), therefore images are not taken or circulated of it. Images of sculptures from the Seiryōji lineage are usually presented as a stand-in for visualizing the discussion of its characteristics. See figure 2-17 of one such sculpture.

renown of the statue, indicating the pervasive acceptance of its status as an icon even among *nenbutsu* practitioners.

> In the first year of Hōgen [1156), in Hōnen's twenty-fourth year, he took leave of Eikū, and spent seven earnest days at Seiryō-ji at Saga. He undertook prayer in an effort to seek the Dharma. This temple's main icon [*honzon* 本尊] of Shaka [Buddha], having emerged from the clouds of the Western [Indian] Heavens and divided the mists of the Eastern Xia, was a spiritual image that had moved through the Three Kingdoms; because of this [Hōnen] brought special offerings [thither]—most suitable!
>
> 保元々季（＝年）、上人二十四の歳、叡空上人／に暇を請ひて、嵯峨の清凉寺に／七日参寵の事ありき。求法の一事を／祈請の為なりけり。この寺の本尊／尺（→釈）迦善逝は、西天の雲を出で、東夏の／霞を分けて、三国に伝はり給へる／霊像なれば、取り分き懇志を運び／給ひけるも、理にぞ覚え侍る。[312]

The objects deposited inside the Seiryō-ji Śākyamuni include, among many other things, a textile set of human organ models.[313] This is, therefore, an example simultaneously of a Chinese work illustrating the practice of interior-deposited model organs as well as the transmission of such a practice to Japan.

The Chion-in sculpture is one of the very few examples of interred human organs outside the direct Seiryō-ji Śākyamuni statute lineage.[314] Art historian Helmut Brinker makes a brief argument that the deposits of the Seiryō-ji sculpture may have affected the practice in the thirteenth century, questioning the conclusion that it was mainly limited to the Seiryō-ji

---

[312] The final sentence of the English text (starting from "This temple's main icon...") is an unpublished translation by Erin Brightwell, preserving the poetic phraseology of the original Japanese. The first two sentences I have adapted from Shunjō, *Hōnen the Buddhist Saint: His Life and Teaching* vol. 1, 143. Shunjō, *Hōnen shōnin eden jō, Zoku Nihon no emaki* vol. 1, 172. This episode of the narrative is from scroll 4.

[313] *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei: Heian jidai zōzō meiki hen* vol. 1, Maruo Shōsaburō et al, ed. (Tokyo: Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppan, 1967), 42-65. *Jūyō bunkazai bekkan: Zōnai nōnyūhin*, 124-27 (and color plate 10 and monochrome plates of number 56). The earliest English text specifically on this statue is Gregory Henderson and Leon Hurvitz, "The Buddha of Seiryōji: New Finds and New Theory," *Artibus Asiae* 19 no. 1 (1956): 5-55.

[314] For more on this, see Donald F. McCallum, "The Saidaiji Lineage of the Seiryōji Shaka Tradition," *Archives of Asian Art* 49 (1996): 51-67.

tradition.[315] The Seiryō-ji textile organs (figure 2-16) are crafted with care, differentiated with color, textile, and shape. Additionally, they are inscribed with Sanskrit seed syllables that reference principle deities of the Dual World mandala.[316] A statue of Śākyamuni possessed by Jōraku-in (in Kyoto), likely made during the first half of the thirteenth century, follows the visible Seiryō-ji iconography (figure 2-17). However, its similarities also extend to the non-visible elements. Similar to the imported Chinese Seiryō-ji work, the Jōraku-in sculpture also has an interred set of textile organs bearing Sanskrit seed syllables.[317] As Brinker stated, the "anonymous sculptor of the Jōraku-in Śākyamuni statue and those who commissioned it must have been familiar with the organic features of the Seiryō-ji Śākyamuni's iconic body and its specific vitality."[318]

There are two potential explanations for the contents of the Seiryō-ji being known. Either the work was opened at some point during the early thirteenth century and enough people had access to the contents to be able to replicate the organs for the Jōraku'in work or there were accurate records of the Seiryō-ji deposits that are now lost.[319] Either scenario suggests that knowledge of the Seiryō-ji's simulacra organs and their part in constituting the work as a living image could have been known in the thirteenth century at least among those producing Buddhist

[315] Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 41-42.

[316] This engages with the discussion in chapter one regarding Kūkai's conceptions of world text and mandala, bringing up intriguing aspects of the constitution of a Buddha body. Unfortunately, I do not have the time here to explore this in relation to the Seiryō-ji sculpture.

[317] Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 41. For more on the Jōraku'in work, see *Nihon bukkyō bijutsu no genryū,* Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., numbers 95 and 96; Washizuka Hiromitsu et al, *Enlightenment Embodied: the Art of the Japanese Buddhist Sculptor (7th-14th centuries)*, Reiko Tomii and Kathleen M. Fraiello, trans. and ed. (New York: Japan Society, 1997), 122-23 (number 21).

[318] Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 41-42.

[319] As far as modern scholars currently know, the documents related to the Seiryō-ji sculpture were all deposited within it by Chōnen, the one who commissioned it and took detailed notes of the process and *nōnyūhin*.

imagery. This opens up the intriguing possibility that the makers or patrons of the Chion-in sculpture, created in the same general period of the Jōraku'in work, may have included textile viscera (though without written characters) as a result of knowledge about the Seiryō-ji's statue's *nōnyūhin* and a desire to increase the efficacy and presence of the work. In light of Wu's study as well as the renown of the Seiryō-ji Buddha, we can see the textile organs in the Chion-in work as enlivening the sculpture. In other words, these interior, non-visible objects activate this "body" of Shàndǎo, potentially heightening its power and the ability of the sculpted figure itself to "breathe life" into the Buddha figures that emerge from the sculpture's mouth.[320]

There is no extant evidence that the practice of constituting a living body for *nenbutsu*-speaking images in sculptural form via interred textile organs continued after the Chion-in Shàndǎo. However, *nenbutsu*-speaking Shàndǎo images did continue to be made throughout the thirteenth century. Another example, broadly dated to the second half of the thirteenth century and in the collection of Zendō-in 善導院 (Kyoto), is very like the Chion-in sculpture in basic composition. It, too, is a standing Shàndǎo with hands together in prayer, chin lifted, and mouth open to emit what originally would have been small buddha figures—as we can tell from a hole inside the mouth. Both even have the sculpture's left foot ever so slightly forward, to some degree mirroring the angles in the Chion-ji painting. However, the Zendō-in sculpture also differs in many ways. This Shàndǎo seems less youthful, in part because the face is more lined with age and is, overall, less rounded. The Zendō-in Shàndǎo's eyes are closed, creating a feeling

[320] A text about a different wooden sculpture, written by Eison's disciple Shinkū in 1287, describes well the perception of how *nōnyūhin* contributed to the power and presence of a statue: "With such an assemblage of diligence and merits, it is not a wooden statue but can be called a living body. Its miraculous and marvelous [power] is beyond understanding. Such things have happened more than once. 如此慇懃志功徳所集，非為木像，可謂生身。 然則靈異不思議，其事非一。"Wu, "Wooden Statues as Living Bodies," 91. For the Japanese: Shinkū, *Saidaiji Eison denki shūsei*, 407. Shinkū's statement echoes that of Eison, quoted above.

of internal thought in this *nenbutsu*, which admittedly serves to support the mindful aspect of the *nenbutsu* from scripture, but diverges from the Chion-ji painting as well as the Raigō-ji and Chion-in sculptures. In the Chion-ji and Chion-in works, Shàndǎo's eyes are not only open and lifted, but are intently locked on the Amida Buddha figures, creating yet one more visual connection between Shàndǎo and Amida.[321]

In part because of the eyes, the Zendō-in sculpture of Shàndǎo lacks the hint of vitality in the Chion-in work. This is also partially due to the way the clothing has been sculpted. The Chion-in Shàndǎo's clothing falls in fluid lines that create a sense of movement and naturalism. When fully colored (as it would have been originally), it likely would have seemed as if it would respond with more soft folds and sway with the press of one's fingers. In contrast, the Zendō-in Shàndǎo's clothing is more rigid. The folds appear programmatic and stiff, the overall verticality weighing the clothing down with no sense that it would respond to the touch of a breeze or human hand. In actuality, while the Chion-in sculpture resembles the Chion-ji painting in facial features and expression, the Zendō-in sculpture reflects the stiffness of the Chion-ji painted Shàndǎo's clothing, though the painted version is even more flat. The Chion-in sculpture is executed in a way that aligns more with the skillful naturalism of the Kei School sculptors.

Kūya, as the other *nenbutsu* sage who seems to have gained increased renown over the end of the Heian period and beginning of the Kamakura period, was also the subject of continued depictions throughout the thirteenth century, including through what appear to be copies of the Rokuharamitsu-ji work. Although the Kōshō work is the most well-known and skillfully carved of the extant Kūya sculptures, there are three other extant Kamakura-period sculptures of Kūya.

[321] Even without the original Amida figures, from the angles of the Chion-in Shàndǎo and the hole in the mouth, the sculpture clearly mimicked the painting in directing Shàndǎo's gaze. This is not true of the Raigō-ji work with eyes open, but cast downwards with heavy lids—much like the meditative gaze of Buddha icons.

Two of them, now held by Tsukinowadera 月輪寺 in Kyoto (figure 2-18) and Jōdo-ji 浄土寺 in Matsuyama-shi 松山市 of modern-day Ehime Prefecture (figure 2-19) still have the wires with six Amida figures protruding from the mouth. The third (figure 2-20), held by Shōgon-ji 荘厳寺, is missing the figures representing the *nenbutsu*, though a hole within the mouth provides evidence that it would have originally had similar armature. These three works are clearly copies of the Rokuharamitsu-ji sculpture. They all portray him in the same general pose, holding an antler staff in his left hand and ringing the gong with his right while his left foot steps forward and he leans into the forward movement to speak the *nenbutsu*. Even the small detail of the robe slipping a bit off the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya figure's right shoulder as a charmingly relatable aspect of energetic action is reproduced in the Tsukinowadera, Jōdo-ji, and Shōgon-ji sculptures.

The copies, however, have their own variant characteristics, mainly in relation to the facial features. While the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya's eyes are almost lazily open, heavy lids causing the gaze to seem more internalized and the figure to be entranced in his own episode of devotion, the three copies have eyes that are wide open. The individual features are different amongst all three later versions. In fact, it is the iconography (pilgrimage staff, gong, and *waraji*) that has clearly been established by this point that identifies Kūya rather than any particular facial feature.[322] For example, the Jōdo-ji sculpture is heavily wrinkled, giving this Kūya the look of a very old man with weathered skin. Scholar Iwata Shigeki has remarked on the Shōgon-ji sculpture's prominently different jowls, suggesting that this feature is reminiscent of the Jishū

[322] Though even the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya's facial expression was an imaginative construction rather than any attempt at a true portrait.

時宗 sect founder Ippen 一遍 (1234-1289), who was another *nenbutsu hijiri*.[323] Because the Shōgon-ji sculpture was made in the late thirteenth or possibly at the very beginning of the fourteenth century, Ippen would have been relatively known at the time of creation because of his following. Ippen promoted a dancing *nenbutsu* and rejected institutional affiliations and so shared some other similarities with Kūya that would have made the play on identity in the Shōgon-ji sculpture appealing.[324] This raises the intriguing possility that the differences in the facial features among the three extant copies may be due to their use as a type of dual portrait.[325] Along with the differences of individual expression in these copies, they are also done with varying degrees of skill in overall execution. The Shōgon-ji work has a relatively polished look compared to the other two copies (though this could be partially due to the present conditions of the objects), especially in the folds of the clothing. Yet this figure's legs are particularly stiff and block-like, belying the nature of the scupture's material in a way that is not quite so obvious in the other copies. The differences and similarities between the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya and the three extant Kamakura-period copies provide interesting material for further exploration of transmission and transformation of artistic works and conceptual ideas. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, suffice to say that the three copies indicate the extent to which this anthropomorphic version of language-bodies was adopted over the thirteenth century following the earliest examples of the first quarter of the century.

---

[323] Incidentally, Ippen venerated paintings of Shàndǎo's allegory of the *niga byakudō* 二河白道 (White Path between two rivers), which developed over the thirteenth century, giving yet one more example of the prominence of Shàndǎo's thought among the Japanese Buddhist communities of the time.

[324] Iwata Shigeki, *Genshin: jigoku gokuraku e no tobira: 1000 nenki tokubetsuten* (Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2017), 270.

[325] In relation to this project, I do not have the time to explore this further here, but leave it as an avenue for future exploration.

To summarize, the earliest two extant sculptural works depicting embodied *nenbutsu*—the Raigō-ji Shàndǎo and the Rokuharamitsu-ji Kūya—seem to have been created in close temporal proximity and likely within a social network of artists and patrons that intersected with one another, connected to the Kei School and other key figures working to revitalize Buddhist sites. The conceptual and, in relation to the visually manifested *nenbutsu*, technical similarities of the works also support this hypothesis. Further, both works were created within the same general context of the rising popularity of Pure Land practice and Hōnen's proselytization, which included veneration of Shàndǎo as a patriarch. In the decades following, sculptures of Shàndǎo and Kūya performing the *nenbutsu* continued to be created, often seemingly based on the early thirteenth-century images of these two monks. Overall, these various sculpted works exhibited for their viewers the workings of the *nenbutsu*, activating and conflating word and sacred presence within Buddhist art. In making immaterial and fleeting auditory objects material and visible, these sculptures illustrate not only an attempt to freeze the transient in material form as seen in many Kei-School works, but also the dynamic potential of words to not only be imbued with the power of sacred beings such as buddhas, but to manifest and *be* buddhas themselves.

Conclusion

The works discussed in this chapter provide a glimpse into how inherited perceptions of language were leveraged along with the authority of historical figures during a time of compounded material and spiritual uncertainties, perhaps in an attempt to grapple with potential subsequent harm and anxiety. Layered on top of the deep roots being deployed in these *nenbutsu*-speaking images is the complexity of social networks and the challenges of tracing the movement of ideas, techniques, and more in the early medieval period. Charlotte Eubanks wrote

that the Rokuharamitsu-ji statue is a "multidimensional statement of theology and that, like setsuwa, it can be read for clues concerning medieval Buddhist conceptions of corporeality and textuality."[326] As mentioned in the previous chapter, her book is concerned with connections between book and body in Japanese Buddhist contexts. Despite her mention of the Rokuharamitsu-ji work specifically, in fact all the works discussed in this dissertation chapter—Shàndǎo or Kūya, sculpture or painting—can be read for clues individually, but are especially revealing in conversation with one another. Even with certain differences, the images discussed in this chapter show a link to one another in various ways. Whether there are hints of connections through networks of practitioners, patrons, and/or artists, clearly the dissemination of this *nenbutsu*-speaking image type illustrates a period interest in the practice itself and how one may make visible the unseen, efficacious forces at play during the *nenbutsu*. Thus, the images worked in a cyclical manner. They seemingly documented the power of the practice by illustrating it as performed by two legendary historical figures and, in doing so, encouraged others to aspire to such whole-hearted *nenbutsu* that would, hopefully, yield similar results as those in the miraculous tales of Shàndǎo and Kūya.

Furthermore, the interest in imagery of Shàndǎo and Kūya performing the *nenbutsu* emphasizes human agency. Although the *nenbutsu* inherently involves faith in *tariki* —the power of Amida Buddha—for either salvation or the benefits that could be realized through meritorious practice, the *nenbutsu* still requires the action of humankind (though Hōnen's followers would dispute this, the ways that practice was preached among them makes clear that the spoken *nenbutsu* invokes *tariki*). In the same way that a push of a wagon down a hill causes gravity ("other power") to take over in the movement of the wagon, in the lineage of exclusive spoken

[326] Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 135.

nenbutsu, it seems as if a human being must give an initial push through performing the *nenbutsu* to get the gears of positive karmic consequence to begin grinding. In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, when so much was out of the control of individuals (food, housing, and health insecurities, for example), the committment to *nenbutsu* practice could have felt like a concrete action that could be taken in the overwhelming face of such circumstances. Certainly, this could account for the increased popularity of Shàndǎo and Kūya, monks who themselves remained committed to personal practice and devotion in the face of complicated conditions.[327] The legacies, both intellectual and practical, of these figures were heightened as people such as Hōnen or Kamo no Chōmei, among many others, reiterated them. This chapter began to unpack the complex ways that thirteenth-century images (physically and conceptually) could be simultaneous nodes and travelers within a network of historical forces. The objects discussed herein are fertile ground for understanding, through these networks, a widespread perception of language as a tool to lend a type of order to an unordered world through a symbiotic relationship of divine power and personal effort (however minimal or not).[328] The following chapter will continue these musings on the power of language to navigate broadly felt societal instabilities, but with a closer look at representations of such within a very specific context that highlights personal precarity within these larger challenges via a case study of the monk Myōe.

[327] In fact, perhaps Kūya's own increased prominence in the thirteenth century was partially due to Shàndǎo's as Kūya could be seen as an accompanying native example of ideal *nenbutsu* practice.

[328] It is notable that Pure Land groups were perceived by some figures in orthodox circles to be themselves a source of disorder.

Chapter Three
Language-Bodies in the Individual's Context: Myōe's "*Sanji Sanbōrai*"

In the thirteenth century, the uneven light emanating from a lamp would illuminate and activate the cut gold demarcating enthroned written phrases on the *sanji sanbōrai* 三時三宝礼 (worship of the Three Treasures thrice [daily]) hanging scroll (figure 3-1). The central enthroned phrase, written in black-ink characters that seem to cascade downward like a waterfall, would have stood out starkly against the cream background picked out by the flickering light. With this contrast, the low light of late evening or the darkness of a hall, and the gold outline, the words may seem to lift from the hanging scroll into the viewer's space.

Following established practice, the figure before the scroll would press their hands together and begin chanting in a quiet, yet steady voice: "*Namu dōsō betsusō jūji bupōsō sanbō* 南無同相別相住持佛法僧三寶" ("Homage to the Same Aspect, Different Aspect, and Abiding Three Treasures of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha").[329] With this, the adherent would devote mind and mouth to revering the Three Treasures (*sanbō* 三宝, Skt. *triratna*). The painted words of the hanging scroll are a visual manifestation of that which the adherent holds in their mind, that which trips off their tongue and lingers as an auditory "object" in the air. These aspects—mental, oral, auditory, visual, invisible—are all interconnected. Interpenetrating one another, the

[329] This references three types of the Three Treasures.

experience of these aspects illumines more than words. It brings to light the ultimate potential of language to activate a deeper realization than the superficial semantic.

The preceding describes what the monk Myōe 明恵 (1173-1232 CE, alt. Kōben 高弁) aimed to accomplish with his *sanji sanbōrai* practice and imagery, developed in the early thirteenth century.[330] Myōe was very much a part of the orthodox Buddhist sects, though not without his own controversial connections. Drawing from the various schools, he is representative of common syncretic practices of Buddhism in his time. Though he predominantly associated himself with the Kegon 華厳宗 and Shingon schools, the fluid boundaries between Buddhist schools of thought can be seen in the background of the monk.[331] Myōe took precepts in both the Kegon and Shingon sects, the combination of which strongly influenced his practice. The synergies and tensions present from the sampling of various Buddhist modes of thought (Shingon, Tendai, Hossō, etc.) were generative most especially when it came to material culture, the amount of which only continued to increase as a wider range of people had some form of access to Buddhist images.

[330] The *sanji sanbōrai* has often been abbreviated as *sanjirai* and I will also use this shorthand numerous times throughout this chapter. The hanging scroll painting associated with this practice has been called by many names. There is some slight confusion about terminology due to the late tenth-century *Sanbō ekotoba* 三宝絵詞 (*Illustrations and Explanations of the Three Jewels*), which has been abbreviated to *Sanbō e*. The majority of Kamakura-period uses of *Sanbō e* refer to this collection of tales, yet the context of these historical references is equally important. The term "*sanbō e* 三寶繪" ("Three Treasures image") in thirteenth-century Kōzanji texts may refer instead to the paintings developed by Myōe—in fact, it is likely. In modern texts, scholars have used the following to refer to Myōe's *sanji sanbōrai* hanging scrolls: *myōji no honzon* 名字の本尊 (name icon), *sanji sanbōrai mandara* 三時三宝礼曼荼羅, and *sanji sanbōrai honzon* 三時三宝礼本尊.

[331] The central text of the Kegon school, founded in China as Huáyán around the late sixth century, is the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (J. *Kegonkyō* 華厳経), which centers Vairocana Buddha (J. *Birushana* 毘盧遮那). Kegon was established in Japan in the eighth century. A core part of Kegon doctrine is that every element is interdependent with Vairocana penetrating everything. Therefore, each element reflects the others, none being separate or independent from another.

In the centuries after his life, Myōe became a popular subject of hagiographies. His life has been of great interest to modern scholars during the last fifty years or so. Part of his attraction has been his Buddhist devotion, which was dramatically showcased in the episode where he mutilated his own ear. In 1196, wanting to show his commitment to the Buddhist path and eliminate pride in his appearance, Myōe used a knife to cut off his ear as he sat before a buddha image.[332] Despite the drama of this scene that has attracted both premodern and modern audiences, in studying his life, his committment was most consistently shown in his constant attention to conduct and practice. He was a prolific writer, composing a variety of texts: explications of (new) rituals and practice, sutra commentaries, responses to his contemporaries, poetry, and notably a record of his dreams (the famous *Dream Diary*, J. *Yume no ki* 夢の記). His contribution to material culture goes beyond these texts, also including Buddhist imagery, both traditional and newly formed. This chapter focuses on Myōe's creation of the *sanji sanbōrai* practice and the accompanying hanging scroll as an example of the ways that language representations were employed to navigate instabilities. This scroll's general layout, outlined in a text written by Myōe and also illustrated through an extant hanging scroll likely dating to the early thirteenth century, enthrones both written phrases in Sino-Japanese characters and individual Sanskrit characters, equating them with a supernatural power.

As discussed in the introduction, modern studies of the Kamakura period have centered on concepts of continuity and disruption—first disruption with the framing of "Old" and "New" Buddhism, then continuity with, for example, Kuroda's *kenmitsu taisei* theory and the subsequent scholarship stemming from his conceptual approaches. Although these studies seem

[332] Kikai, *Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin gyōjō* in *Myōe Shōnin shiryō* (MSS) vol. 1, ed. Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsa dan (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku shuppankai, 1971), 75-80.

dated, the dynamic of these binaries inflect even twenty-first century scholarship. With this chapter's study of Myōe and the *sanjirai*, I contribute to work destabilizing these binaries because both continuity and disruption must simultaneously frame our approach to the past. Myōe is an example of the continuities of Buddhist practice, drawing from established schools of thought and linking himself to far-reaching lineages that stemmed from Śākyamuni himself. Yet he also exemplifies innovation that responded to period concerns. The very direct impetus for such visual and ritual experimentation was the need to navigate uncertain circumstances, which are exposed by even a rudimentary look at Myōe's life and the social and political environment of the time—as this chapter will demonstrate.

It makes sense that Myōe would incorporate aspects of his training and broad societal perceptions to try to navigate those fraught paths. In Chapter One, language having a power that transcends the mundane realm was shown to have roots that stretched back centuries before the Kamakura period. Thus, using language as a tool was not an unusual approach for Myōe. That lectures and texts were irreplaceable for conveying meaning was already fundamental to the idea of skillful means (*upāya*). And, as ever, words were meaningful expressions of feelings, relationships, and power in social settings—even prompting many expressive forms of wordcraft in Japan by the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Wordcraft was an esteemed art in the Heian and Kamakura periods. Correspondence often included poetic verse. Myōe himself was renowned for his *waka* poetry. The connections between phenomenological experience and, in semiotic terms, their signifieds lent logic to the use of written word as icons, as seen in Shingon visual culture. As shown in the previous chapter within the biographical narrative of Kūya, there had also been many prior instances of language being used as a preventitive or reparative act when faced with calamity. This use of language for purposes beyond simple communication was

not a new occurrence in the thirteenth century, but as the significant increase in visual works incorporating language and the view of such material covered in this dissertation indicates, such use became more prevalent and widespread within material culture during this period.

My exploration of Myōe's *sanjirai* texts and imagery situates practice and painting, originally conceived together but later abbreviated to practice only, as constructed within a constellation of inspirations. These include, but are not limited to: the doctrines, texts, and paintings of the Kegon and Shingon schools; the prevalence and popularity of *nenbutsu* practice and interest in Amida's Pure Land; Myōe's personal reaction to the monk Hōnen's *Senchakushū*; his concern for monastic and lay, male and female, and elite and commoner alike; and his position among a community rich with artistic production. One of Myōe's greatest and most enduring legacies is his version of the *kōmyō shingon* 光明真言 ("Mantra of Light," lit. "true words of light"; a practice that continues even in contemporary times). The *kōmyō shingon* had been a part of Buddhist practice in China and Japan prior to Myōe's time, primarily in funerary rites, but Myōe developed his own version of the *kōmyō shingon* in which grains of sand were empowered. The *kōmyō shingon* has often been presented in modern scholarship as an example of Myōe combining Shingon practice with Kegon doctrine, exemplifying his *gonmitsu* 厳密 (Avataṃsaka-Tantrism) form of Buddhism.[333] Although this practice has been emphasized in recent scholarship, it is a later development of Myōe's understanding and incorporation of language on his own spiritual path. Many of the aspects that we discern in studying his *kōmyō*

[333] I will touch on the *kōmyō shingon* briefly later in the chapter, but one representative (English-language) study is Mark T. Unno, *Shingon refractions: Myōe and the mantra of light* (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2004). As for the term *gonmitsu*, the term itself is a modern one, used in the early twentieth century, seemingly first by Ishii Kyōdō, though others have followed. Ishii Kyōdō, "*Gonmitsu no shiso Kōben,"* in *Taisho daigaku gakuhō* vol. 3 (1928): 48-72. For a more recent exploration of how this Kegon and Shingon interrelationship can be teased out of a text by Myōe, see Suzuki Kanta, "'*Gedatsumongi choshuki' ni okero Myōe no 'gonmitsu' shisō,*" *Indōgaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 58 issue 2 (2010): 698-701.

shingon trace back to perspectives found in the development of the *sanjirai*. Certainly, both illustrate the thought that Myōe gave to the interactions of language, the natural world, and Buddhist practice. I place the *sanjirai* as important in this dissertation because the work makes visible a conception of language that sheds greater light on period explorations of language-bodies. The *kōmyō shingon* addresses language in an overall worldview with visualization in grains of sand rather than painted imagery.

While a study of the *sanjirai* can be seen as a case study for Myōe's pluralism, it is also another opportunity for deepening our understanding of the place of language in Buddhism and Japanese medieval visual culture. Where the previous chapter indicated the wider societal concerns and the responses to them manifested through representations of language, this chapter considers the deployment of language within Buddhist art simultaneously as an example of an active response to societal disasters and a response at a more personal level to individual uncertainties. In other words, in comparison to the last chapter's relatively broad view of language-bodies, this chapter outlines the ways visual culture could play out as a microcosm of those broader trends of disaster management via the power of language-bodies. With this in mind, I explore Myōe's basic background as a foundation for understanding the *sanjirai* and its meaning specifically in Myōe's life and those of his followers. I also attend to Myōe's response to Hōnen's controversial exclusive *nenbutsu,* which seemed to have prompted for Myōe a closer and more consistent engagement with language as a tool within Buddhist practice. Following this, I outline how Myōe's encounters with Buddhist art via production and use were factors in his formulation of the *sanjirai* imagery. Overall, though, I argue within this chapter that the development of images incorporating language-bodies can be understood by following parallel paths: as part of a larger group of images partaking in a societal trend to serve community

interests during the thirteenth century and as individualized objects that were developed, used, and interpreted in personal ways.

These objects and their meanings were co-constituted by those who used and viewed them. In relation to the *sanjirai*, we fortunately have a relatively rich corpus of material, remnants of Myōe's life and practice preserved by the temple he founded, to consider both its place in that broader arc and through an individual lens. Myōe's motivations for creating the *sanjirai* (practice and painting) were multifaceted, driven by his own pursuit of spiritual liberation in what he saw as troubled times. Certainly, Myōe perceived his lifetime as irrevocably and somewhat tragically embedded in the period of *mappō*. On top of that, he personally dealt with the uncertainties that many of his time did: loss of family, housing instability, and more. His concern with following the tenets of the orthodox traditions of Buddhism and his desire for a more sustained adherence to Buddhist precepts further prompted the *sanjirai*. Myōe, consciously or not, developed the *sanjirai* as a concentrated effort through which he could activate his own motivations in pursuit of the power and mercy of buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Training, Authority, and Lineage in an Age of Degenerate Dharma

In studying Myōe's life, it is clear that training, authority, and lineage provided scaffolding for Myōe's use of language-bodies when many other aspects of his life at various points were in upheaval. As such, this trio underpinned his responses and efforts when he was confronted with change or uncertainty, whether it was Hōnen's perspectives which flew in the face of Myōe's own Buddhist background or more mundane considerations of housing. An exploration of Myōe's training and his encounters with and shaping of authority and lineage will allow a deeper understanding of the contexts from which he created the *sanjirai.*

Born in 1173, Myōe went to live at Jingō-ji 神護寺 on Mt. Takao just outside Kyoto after his parents died when he was eight.[334] His maternal family, the Yuasa 湯浅 clan, claimed to be a branch of the famous Fujiwara clan 藤原氏.[335] Myōe was accorded full monastic precepts in the Kegon school at Tōdaiji 東大寺 in 1189.[336] His Shingon study was under the Shingon priest Jōgaku 上覚 (1147-1226, alt. Gyōji 行慈), who was his maternal uncle and abbot of Jingō-ji. Jōgaku administered the Esoteric initiation (J. *kanjō* 灌頂, Skt. *abhiṣeka*) to Myōe in 1201, signaling a mastery in the basics of Shingon ritual.[337] Although he was close to his uncle and mentor Jōgaku as well as Jōgaku's own master, Mongaku 文覚 (1139-1203), Myōe studied with a variety of teachers. For example, he studied Kegon texts with a monk at Kegon-in and the basic Siddhāṃ primer with yet another. Like many monks of his time, he found himself within multiple Buddhist traditions. In fact, combining Kegon theory with Shingon ritual, Myōe

[334] Myōe's father, Taira Shigekuni 平重国 (d. 1180), was killed in a conflict shortly after the beginning of the Genpei War. His mother, alternately called the lady of Yoshiwara (dates unknown, 12th century) or fourth daughter of Yuasa Muneshige 湯浅宗重 (dates unknown, 12th century), died four months later.

[335] The Fujiwara was arguably the most powerful clan outside the Imperial family throughout the Heian period—in fact, as part of their savvy political maneuvering, the Fujiwara married daughters to Emperors and Imperial princes. This resulted in many Emperors having Fujiwara maternal grandfathers. By the twelfth century, the Fujiwara's power was waning, but nonetheless they had significant influence, especially in Kyoto and Nara. Additionally, by this time, the family had grown to have many branches. As clans grew yet fortunes waned, non-first sons joined the Buddhist tonsured community and those in significant families were often administrators of temples and monasteries. Therefore, members of the extended Fujiwara clan were positioned throughout the various Buddhist schools and sites. The Yuasa were noted as a samurai clan in the Yuasa area from around mid-Heian period. Kamakura-period Yuasa members (Myōe's maternal clan) proclaimed themselves as a branch of the Fujiwara. The twelfth-century *Kowakadera engi emaki* 小若寺縁起絵巻 situates Yuasa Muneshige, Myōe's maternal grandfather, as the son of a Fujiwara Munenaga 藤原宗永. No concrete connection to the Fujiwara family has been confirmed by modern scholars.

[336] Tanaka Hisao, *Myōe* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1961), 15.

[337] There are a variety of *kanjō* initiations that can be received in the Shingon sect, from basic transmission within a Shingon lineage to more specialized practices such as the *shittan kanjō* 悉曇灌頂 (Sanskrit/Siddhāṃ *abhiṣeka*) and more.

developed his *gonmitsu*—a background which would contribute to the specific features of the *sanjirai* hanging scroll.

Despite his own training in the Kegon and Shingon sects, Myōe had some concerns with their lineages in Japan and the behaviors of his fellow monastic community. He showed this concern in a variety of ways throughout his life, but it stemmed in many ways from the anguish he felt over living not only during the period of *mappō*, but also in Japan, a land far away from the original homeland of the Historical Buddha. By Myōe's lifetime, many (including Myōe) believed it to be the age of *mappō*, an age that was expected to span around 10,000 years during which the teachings of the Buddha would be warped or shrouded in large part due to human actions making attaining enlightenment all but impossible. In the centuries following the introduction of Buddhist practices to Japan (usually officially dated to 552 CE), Buddhist monks had debated and carefully worked to calculate a starting date for *mappō.* By the end of the Heian period, a majority of the monastics and laypeople in Japan widely accepted *mappō*'s beginning as the year 1052 (Eishō 永承 7). This belief was supported by the events of the following 150 years, a span littered with social and political unrest as well as natural disasters. Because of these, by the thirteenth century, Buddhist monks were significantly concerned with being entrenched within *mappō* and devising ways of dealing with life during such a period.[338] Many scholars have viewed these concerns as prompting most Buddhist movements in the Kamakura

[338] Jacqueline Stone gave a good overview of *mappō* in the Kamakura period, steeped in its roots from India and China. Jacqueline Stone, "Seeking Enlightenment in the Last Age: "Mappō" Thought in Kamakura Buddhism: Part 1," *The Eastern Buddhist* vol. 18, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 28-56; Jacqueline Stone, "Seeking Enlightenment in the Last Age: "Mappō" Thought in Kamakura Buddhism: Part 2," *The Eastern Buddhist* vol. 18, no. 2 (Autumn 1985): 35-64. She addressed a variety of aspects such as the calculations done by monks to discern the dates for *mappō.* She also, for example, noted that in sixth-century China and thereafter, certain schools of Buddhism developed in response to current events such as Buddhist persecutions, specifically situating their communities and practices as suitable for the Age of Dharma Decline—monks like Shàndǎo of the previous chapter believed themselves to be living in this degenerate age and in need of coping practices (Stone, part 1, 31).

period, including those of Myōe, Hōnen, and Shinran. Certainly, the texts produced by such figures support this assertion of *mappō*'s impact on these individuals and their communities.

Myōe's various spiritual concerns were highlighted in his texts and actions. Religious studies scholar Mark Unno considered the issue of "religious authority" and its importance to Myōe.[339] Unno writes, "So isolated did he [Myōe] perceive himself to be, he declared that no one in Japan was qualified to transmit the knowledge of enlightenment to him."[340] In many ways, Myōe straddled boundaries between the orthodox Nara and Kyoto Buddhist institutions and those who sought change outside of these mainstream groups. However, Myōe's perception of necessary "change" was a return to the conduct of monks centuries ago. This prompted Myōe's promotion of precepts revitalization.[341] Myōe was not alone in feeling disenchanted with the established institutions and lineages of his time. Many of the figures now credited with starting new schools of Buddhism in the Kamakura period studied at Enryakuji (the Tendai school headquarters), but left to find alternative ways to alleviate their dissatisfaction with contemporaneous Buddhist practices. Still, however much the figures working outside orthodox institutions introduced new concepts, practices, or emphases, they were, as Unno describes, very much tied to at least one major Buddhist tradition: articulating a source of religious legitimacy. Even Myōe's lack of faith in the potential of his contemporaries to guide him on the Buddhist path did not mean that he dispensed with the concept of a lineage as a form of legitimacy.

---

[339] Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 45-72. It is worth noting that Unno is also ordained as a Shin Buddhist priest and thus is both scholar and practitioner. In his work, he himself points out how sectarian biases can sometimes be threaded throughout work done by both sectarian and non-sectarian scholars.

[340] Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 46.

[341] This concern of precepts revitalization went beyond Myōe. Contemporaneous figures such as Eison 叡尊 (1201-1290) were also proponents of precepts revitalization. In fact, Eison founded the Shingon Risshu sect (真言律宗) as an offshoot of the Shingon sect. This sect emphasized precept adherence in addition to Esoteric practices.

In his own self-presentation Myōe generally looked further afield for legitimacy and guidance, rather than drawing specifically on a close connection with the Japanese monks with whom he studied or their lineages.[342] He wrote very little on even the first five patriarchs of the Chinese Avataṃsaka school (Huáyán). He instead drew extensively on a lay Huáyán master, Lǐ Tōngxuán 李通玄 (635-730, alt. 646-740), which has been a point of great significance for scholars interpreting Myōe's work placing him within a Kegon lineage. For quite a while, the general consensus in academia was that Myōe was somewhat unorthodox in focusing on a lay master rather than an official Kegon patriarch. However, as religious historian Sueki Fumihiko has argued, Lǐ Tōngxuán was representative of mainstream Huáyán (Kegon) thought and thus Myōe was referencing an intellectual Kegon lineage if not the sect's patriarchs.[343] George Tanabe, a religious studies scholar, nuances the connection Myōe found with Lǐ Tōngxuán, discussing how both figures prioritized practice in Kegon/Huáyán over minute doctrinal quibbling. In fact, Lǐ's work was a natural fit for Myōe because it often relied on imagery (visually descriptive written text, illustrated works, or visions/meditations) as a form of teaching.[344] In Japan, Shingon Buddhism was especially active in using imagery in this way. For Myōe, with training in both Kegon and Shingon Buddhism, Lǐ's texts presented a rationale for a Kegon approach that aligned with Myōe's training in Shingon, effectively helping him construct his personal framework for Buddhist practice that combined his background.

[342] This is not to say that the Japanese monks who mentored him and were his friends and acquaintences did not have any impact on him. Indeed, many historical figures contributed to Myōe's experiences and opinions. Rather, I am presenting the way that Myōe portrayed himself and his relationship to Buddhism in Japan within his own writings.

[343] Sueki Fumihiko, *Kamakura Bukkyō keiseiron* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998), 218-19.

[344] As discussed in Chapter One, the use of imagery was embedded in Buddhist practice practically from its inception due to the concept of skillful means (*hōben*, Skt. *upāya*) and the potential and efficiency of imagery to convey concepts.

In addition to creating intellectual connections, Myōe's concern with spiritual authority instilled a strong desire to travel to South Asia, the locus of Buddhism's origin and thus of its schools' religious and scriptural lineages. Myōe twice made plans to travel to India, keenly feeling his lack of temporal and geographic proximity to the Historical Buddha due to being born in Japan during *mappō*. Perceiving all of the deficits of studying Buddhism during *mappō*, he thought that at least doing so in India would be his best chance to encounter Buddhism in a form closer to that which the Historical Buddha preached. When he started to plan for a trip to India early in 1203, his own personal circumstances were challenging. Due to political upheaval, mentors and family members such as Mongaku and Jōgaku were exiled, leaving Myōe with no fixed abode at the time.[345] This likely also contributed to Myōe's determination to travel to Śākyamuni's homeland. He started planning, but the intervention of the Kasuga deity waylaid his plans. It seems the wife of his uncle Yuasa Munemitsu 湯浅宗光 (before 1175–after 1238) was prone to possession by spirits.[346] In the third month of Kennin 建仁 3 (1203), the Kasuga deity (*Kasuga myōjin* 春日明神) possessed her body, climbed onto the lintel of a building, and spoke to Myōe through the woman's body: "I am the Kasuga Deity. I have descended to prevent your intended practice [on the travel] to the India. 我是春日明神(ナリ)、御房西天、修行(ヲ)思立(シ)メ給(フ)、コノ事ト、メ奉(ラムカ)タメニ降(レル)ナリ..."[347] Three days after Myōe prayed in front of a mandala of Zenzai dōshi 善財童子 (Sudhanakumāra or more

[345] More about the political involvement of Mongaku and Jōgaku, which was fully underway by the time Myōe was orphaned, can be found in George J. Tanabe, Jr., *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 48-50.

[346] During this period, women were not referenced in texts by their given names, but rather by either their relationship to a man such as their husband or family member, or sometimes based on their own rank or location.

[347] The English translation is my modification from Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 68. For the Japanese, see *Myōe Shōnin jingon denki* (alt. *Kasuga myōjin takusen ki*) in MSS 1:237. In regards to the Japanese text, I have left the parentheticals that modern editors inserted in the transcription.

commonly and hereafter just "Sudhana") with the spiritual advisers (discussed later in this chapter) and received a sign of the authenticity of this proclamation, the Kasuga deity spoke once more through his aunt. With a bit more expansiveness, the deity reiterated that Myōe should not leave Japan.[348] Myōe acquiesced, though hesitantly.

As various historical accounts reveal, by the thirteenth century, areas of Japan were already being likened to areas of India and local *kami* 神 (indigenous deities) were similarly identified with Buddhist figures. Myōe's followers recorded that he even declared that the Kasuga deity was a manifestation of Śākyamuni.[349] A contemporary of Myōe's, the monk Jōkei 貞慶 (1155-1213, posthumously Gedatsu Shōnin 解脱上人), wrote of Śākyamuni and Maitreya (J. Miroku 弥勒) as a single entity—Śākyamuni as a past physical manifestation, Maitreya as a future physical manifestation. Jōkei further posited that the Kasuga deity was the present manifestation, drawing on oracular records and accounts of miraculous events where buddhas and bodhisattvas physically manifested in Japan to Buddhist followers.[350] Jōkei was instrumental

[348] MSS 1:237.

[349] Ryūchō and Kōshin, *Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin gyōjō,* MSS 1:113. There are a series of *gyōjō* 行状 (records of conduct) texts at Kōzanji that are the earliest biographies done by Myōe's direct disciples, using their firsthand knowledge. Kikai's 喜海 (alt. Girinbō 義林房 1178-1251) text, written in *kana* 仮名, is the first and generally understood as the most accurate. Only two of its three fascicles are extant, owned by Semuiji in Wakayama. They are unsigned, but partially with information from the colophon of Kōshin's 高信 (born 1201) 1255 elaboration on Kikai's text, this time in *kanbun* 漢文, scholars have identified the Semuji scrolls as Kikai's, completed sometime between 1232 and 1250. The *denki* 伝記 texts, in contrast, generally date later, starting in the fourteenth century. The word *denki* is traditionally translated to English as "biography," but the use of "hagiography" may be more accurate, especially in the case of the Myōe *denki* texts.

[350] This is relayed in the *Kasuga gongen genki* (16.3), an illustrated set of scrolls which was completed in 1309. The text was written by a Fujiwara figure, Takatsukasa Mototada 鷹司基忠 (1247-1313) and his three sons in consultation with two Buddhist monks, though this text was based partially on a compilation of stories from Kakuen 覚円 (1031-1098). Clearly, more recent figures and ideas such as those concerning Jōkei were also included. Hiraoka Jōkai, ed., *Tōdaiji Sōshō Shōnin no kenkyū narabini shiryō* vol. 3 (Tokyo: Nihon Gakujitsu Shinkōkai, 1958-1960), 654. For more on the association of these three deities in English, see Royall Tyler, *The Miracles of the Kasuga Diety* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 60-104 and for an English translation of *Kasuga gongen genki* 16.3: ibid, 263-64.

in justifiying and disseminating this connection between Śākyamuni, Maitreya, and the Kasuga deity, but clearly this was a belief of many, Myōe included, that would become more widespread in centuries following.

In 1205, being once more without a fixed abode and thinking to take that as an opportunity to travel to India, Myōe again started preparations for such a trip. He became ill a few days after beginning his planning, which seemed to be another sign again from the Kasuga deity. The illness was peculiar, affecting him only when he spoke of the journey to India. According to an account of Myōe's life written within decades of his death, he made three pairs of lots to discern if the illness was indeed a sign.[351] Each pair had an option that said "Go to India" and one that said "Do not go." Myōe underwent ritual preparation and then had a pair each placed in front of three objects of worship: Śākyamuni, the Kasuga deity, and Sudhana.[352] If even one of the three pairs' results was "Go to India," he decided that he would persevere and take the journey. Myōe himself placed a set on the altar in front of the Śākyamuni image, yet when he did one of the lots fell beneath the altar and though he searched, he could not find it. The one that disappeared was the "Go to India" option, leaving the "Do not go" option in front of Śākyamuni. Likewise, the results of the other two sets were "Do not go." This directive was further confirmed in a dream that same evening. As a result, Myōe again cancelled his plans for a pilgrimage to India. Still, his concerns over his distance from Śākyamuni persisted and his

[351] This episode is in: Ryūchō and Kōshin, *Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin gyōjō*, MSS 1:123-24.

[352] Sudhana is a figure from the last chapter of the *Kegonkyō* 華厳経 (Skt. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, Eng. *Flower Garland Sutra*) which generally circulated separately, called *Nyū hokkai bon* 入法界品 (Skt. *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*). This chapter relates the pilgrimage of Sudhana, who visits with 52 wise advisers (*zenchishiki* 善知識, Skt. *kalyāṇa-mittatā*, often translated to English also as "Good Friend") in a quest for englightenment. Not only is Sudhana an important figure in the Kegon sect, but the significance of his identity as a pilgrim was particularly relevant to Myōe's own desires for pilgrimage.

continued resolve for a closeness to the Historical Buddha is visible in other aspects of Myōe's life, informing the later creation of the *sanjirai* painting approximately ten years later.

Such anxieties, especially living in the age of *mappō*, were factors in the emphasis Myōe placed on the precepts. By around the early tenth century, monastic precepts had incrementally become neglected. Monks in the eleventh and twelfth centuries began to revive the use of the full precepts for both monks and nuns. The Kegon monk Gyōnen 凝然 (1240-1321), a generation after Myōe, studied and wrote about the schools of Buddhism, establishing the earliest foundations of the modern approach to Japanese Buddhist studies. In his *Risshū gyōkan shō* 律宗瓊鑑章 (*Excellent Mirror of the Precepts School*), Gyōnen wrote about the Shingon monk Jippan 実範 (1086-1144) seeking to revive the precepts.[353] The gap of over 170 years since the last full precepts ceremony was conducted and the absence of someone to administer the precepts to him meant that Jippan's challenge was a lack of direct transmission and thus a lack of legitimacy. Seclusion at Kasuga Shrine 春日神社 in Nara and subsequent dreams led Jippan to Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺, where Ganjin 鑑真 (688-763, Ch. Jiànzhēn) had given the first official precepts in Japan centuries earlier. At Tōshōdaiji, according to this tale, Jippan discovered an old monk who, though somehow not recorded, was an heir to the precepts. This monk administered the precepts to Jippan, who then propagated them. Jippan may be credited with re-starting the historical full precepts ordination, but many others from Jippan's lifetime and after perpetuated the importance of the precepts and worked on its continued revitalization.

Myōe himself received the full precepts as a result of these efforts, in turn becoming a strong supporter of not only such ordinations, but also to upholding the precepts in practice.

[353] Gyōnen, *Risshū gyōkan shū*, in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* vol. 105 (Tokyo: Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho kankōkai, 1912-1922), 25-44.

Kūkai—the central figure in Myōe's Shingon lineage—also emphasized keeping the precepts.[354] The precepts and the conduct required from them purportedly followed that of the Historical Buddha's time, providing the potential for a type of proximity to Śākyamuni which Myōe had sought in his plans to travel to the Buddha's homeland. For those like Myōe, dissatisfied with and attempting to reform Nara Buddhism, the precepts were a means for an authentic connection to Śākyamuni in a corrupt age. In the words of George Tanabe, "To be a buddha, one had to act like the Buddha, and the details for re-created conduct were well specified... Using all means available to him, Myōe lived in the presence of Śākyamuni, his most intimate teacher, colleague, and friend."[355]

Clearly, Myōe's Kegon and Shingon training overlapped in many ways and it would be misleading to suggest that they were separate aspects of his life and practice. Still, we can tease out some of the dynamics of this overlap in order to establish a nuanced perspective when we turn to studying Myōe's *sanjirai* as (initially) practice paired with painting. Most Myōe scholars have traditionally seen his Buddhist practice as a form steeped in Kegon thought, but Shingon ritual. Many trace Myōe's trajectory as becoming more and more focused on Shingon in his later years compared to his dedication to Kegon revival in earlier years. There is some truth to both, but as discussed above, the actuality was much messier. Recall, for example, that Lǐ Tōngxuán was significant to Myōe in part because of the ways that he connected Kegon thought to prominent strands of thought in Shingon. The practices that Myōe developed during the last

[354] This is often discussed in relation to Eison's 叡尊 (1201-1290; a contemporary of Myōe's and founder of the Shingon Risshū 真言律宗) activities spurred by Kūkai's last instructions regarding the precepts. For more see Wajima Yoshio, "Eison to Ninshō," *Shiseki to bijutsu* vol. 44 issue 3 (April 1974): 192.

[355] Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 46.

decades of his life—such as the *sanji sanbōrai* and later the *kōmyō shingon*—are often seen as resulting from the Shingon aspects of his Buddhist practice.

As explored in Chapter One, words and language were theorized extensively in Shingon Buddhism. Similarly, Kūkai's introduction of Esoteric Buddhism to Japan had long-lasting and significant effects on Buddhist visual culture. This Shingon history must have had an influence on Myōe's own interest in language and its uses as well as his patronage of artworks, but we cannot dismiss his background in other Buddhist traditions. As Tanabe wrote, Myōe drew widely from many streams of thought, being "an upholder of the tradition of being open to all traditions."[356] Although one could spend many years parsing out these myriad components of Myōe's life, for the purposes of this discussion I want to simply assert that Myōe's consideration of the efficacy of language within ritual contexts does not draw, as many may suppose, from his Shingon training alone. In fact, a brief look at even one small part of the lengthy *Kegonkyō* 華厳経 (Skt. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, Ch. *Huāyán jīng*, lit. "*Flower Garland Sutra*"), the central text of the Kegon School, reveals an example of how language's power was threaded throughout all the Buddhist traditions.[357]

According to widespread belief, the *Kegonkyō* was the First Sermon of the Historical Buddha, Śākyamuni. This sutra's contents are rich for study and, of course, sectarian and non-sectarian scholars alike have dedicated much time and attention to it throughout the centuries. The actions of Vairocana Buddha (also Mahāvairocana, J. Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来) in the *Kegonkyō* are of particular significance to this dissertation's interest in the complex dynamics

[356] Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 158.

[357] Recalling the explorations of early perspectives on language in Japan from Chapter One, one could extrapolate to suppose that this thread also connected domestic precedents and beliefs to Buddhist philosophies.

between the power and visualization of words. When Samantabhadra desires explanations for all the aspects of the world, Vairocana's response is to emit golden light from his forehead. This light illuminated all that could not be explained.[358] Therefore, it is clear that in the key Kegon scripture, there is at least some limitation to words. Words alone cannot, for example, enlighten—at least at their surface level. In this scene it is Vairocana's non-verbal radiance that spurs enlightenment.[359] Still, the *Kegonkyō* and sutras in general reveal another side to this coin: words are often necessary to transmit, point, and encourage. For the promulgation of Buddhism and thus its salvific potential via rebirth and/or enlightenment, it was necessary for sutras to be written, preserved, copied, and disseminated—as described by Charlotte Eubanks.[360] Still, as Chapter One illustrated, another quality of words and their use is seen throughout the Buddhist canon, including within the *Kegonkyō*. Words are portrayed at times as having a significance beyond the necessity of words to transmit ideas beyond a form of skillful means.[361]

The power and physicality of words is raised in a different scene in the *Kegonkyō*. In this episode, having already entered into *samādhi* (J. *sanmai* 三昧, mental training through intense meditation) via the power of Śākyamuni Buddha, Samantabhadra further received virtue from all the buddhas. Part of this process involved a combination of spoken sound (utterances) and touch (the Buddhas' right hands rubbing Samantabhadra's head).[362] Here, words are combined with a

[358] This also brings to mind the way that the legendary lay practitioner Vimalakīrti used silence to expound on a teaching (nonduality) in the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa* (J. *Yuimagyō* 維摩経, various translations into Chinese: T0474, T0475, T0476). In the future, a deeper consideration of language via absence/silence (and perhaps especially in the Zen 禅 traditions) would enrich this project.

[359] T0278_.09.0676a-685c.

[360] Charlotte Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 32-4.

[361] This is also seen in the article by Keller Kimbrough regarding *dhāraṇī*, addressed in Chapter One.

[362] This episode is book three of the sutra, T0278. This point starts at T0278_.09.0668b15. For the English-language version, though with some inaccuracies, see *The Flower Ornament Scripture: a translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra* vol. 1, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1984), 177-78. Myōe's description of this is linked

physical gesture, their connection to breath and transformative power made material as they are linked with application to Samantabhadra's head as if a liniment. In other words, sound and touch produce a possible interpretation of, to use Tanabe's phrase, "hand-held words."[363] This particular scene from the *Kegonkyō* impacted Myōe's thought and practice. He wrote an explication of it in his discussion of the *kōmyō shingon*, establishing this scene as foundational to the theory of language and ritual efficacy within the *kōmyō honzon*.[364] Essentially, he explained that the sounds and words have the power of enlightenment which can be transferred.[365] In such writings, Myōe demonstrates the overlapping of Shingon and Kegon theories in his development of the *kōmyō shingon*—particularly relevant to this dissertation because his development of the *sanjirai* intersects with the formative period that led up to his intervention in the *kōmyō shingon*. These considerations of language were core to the final decades of his life, during which he developed both ritual practices.

From the many instances illustrating the power of words in the Buddhist canon and the use and popularity of ritual practices such as Myōe's, it is clear that language, from period perspectives, was able to empower spaces, objects, and people. As shown in the canon and commentaries, this is true particularly when language is supported by a deeper, perhaps initially

---

to his explication of his version of the *kōmyō shingon*. Myōe, "*Kōmyō shingon kaji dosha gi*," in *Shingonshū anjin zensho* vol. 2, ed. Hase Hōshū (Kyoto: Rokudai Shinpōsha, 1914), 10. He describes the words as rubbed into Samantabhadra's head.

[363] Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 138.

[364] Myōe, "*Kōmyō shingon kaji dosha gi*," 8. The *kōmyō shingon*, briefly mentiond near the beginning of this chapter, is a mantra generally used for funerary purposes that Myōe popularized in the medieval period by using this mantra to empower sand that could then be sprinkled over the bodies of the deceased with the goal of facilitating rebirth in Buddhist paradise. This process was called *dosha kaji* 土砂加持. I do not deeply explore Myōe's *kōmyō shingon* or *dosha kaji* in this dissertation, though it is certainly relevant. Extensive work on the practice has been done by Mark Unno and more recently can be found in work by Sasaki Daiju, among others.

[365] Myōe, "*Kōmyō shingon kaji dosha gi*," 9-10. He is specifically relating the transferrance of words' power to grains of sand as the text is an explication of the *kōmyō shingon* ritual mentioned near the beginning of this chapter.

unperceived quality. For Myōe, this would have been the power and mercy of the buddhas and bodhisattvas as well as one's own aspiration toward enlightenment (*bodaishin* 菩提心, Skt. *bodhicitta*). This duality of words in scripture as both powerful and limited aligns with the levels of understanding that Kūkai addressed, all leading toward the eventual realization of the nondual (*funi* 不二, Skt. *advaitam*) nature of things. Because of the nonduality of things, one could look at an object and, if at a certain level of understanding, discern the infinite Dharma world. This is related to the essential concept of emptiness (also, "void(ness)," J. *kū* 空, Skt. *śūnyatā*), wherein "all things are empty of intrinsic existence and nature" or, in other words, everything is nondual, sharing the primordial buddha-nature.[366] Exploration of these many related concepts can be found throughout various Buddhist traditions, including both the Kegon and Shingon schools.

Myōe's worldview was similar, constructed the way that a spiderweb is woven of multiple strands of spidersilk. If you tug a strand in a web, the rest of the network reverberates. New strands can be layered, complex, sometimes difficult to parse out, and ever further reaching. Myōe's perspective on language was woven from many sources and experiences. His creation of practices like the *sanjirai* pulls from all of these strands and cannot be narrowed to Kegon thought and Shingon practice, but is a complex web of its own with a construction we can only continuously analyze to better understand its structure.

Before discussing the *sanjirai* itself, we should briefly touch on Myōe's experience with the temple Kōzanji 高山寺 (alt. Toganōsan Kōsanji 栂尾山高山寺, Toganōdera 栂尾寺), which he revived and the development of which contributed to his creation of new practices and imagery. At the end of 1206, after both attempts to travel to India, Myōe received land near

[366] Paul Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism: the doctrinal foundations* (London: Routledge, 2008), 68-9.

Jingō-ji, which had become both his home and place of study after the death of his parents. Located deep in the mountains behind Mt. Takao (and at the time a subtemple of Jingō-ji), it was an ideal place for ascetic practice and suited Myōe's affinity for outdoor meditation.[367] Despite complicated interpersonal dynamics, the land was granted by the retired sovereign Go-Toba 後鳥羽天皇 (1180-1239, reigned 1183-1198) for the revitalization of the Kegon sect.[368] Although Myōe himself avoided explicitly political entanglement, many of his close connections were part of communities allied with the Shogunate, Go-Toba's rival for political strength.[369] Indeed, one of Myōe's mentors, Mongaku, who died about three years before Myōe was granted this land, was punished by Go-Toba for his anti-imperial actions. There is little to no evidence of a connection between Myōe and Go-Toba, although later chronicles (*denki* 伝記) present anecdotes of such.[370] In addition, other figures were essential for the continued development of Kōzanji such as benefactor Kō Sanmi no Tsubone 督三位局 (late 12th- early 13th centuries), a noblewoman who was a patron and follower of Myōe for at least the period spanning 1216-

[367] This is captured in texts, but also in imagery (figure 3-6). Some of the earliest portraits of Myōe illustrate him in practice outdoors. In fact, the descriptive title figure 3-6 is known by today exemplifies this (*Myōe Shōnin seated in meditation in a tree*, c. 1232-34, Kōzanji). Another early portrait, extremely damaged, shows Myōe in a "rope-mat tree" (*jōshōju* 縄床樹) that existed on the grounds of Kōzanji (*Myōe Shōnin seated on a rope-mat*, E'nichibō Jōnin, c. 1224-26, Kōzanji).

[368] Go-Toba's official reign ended in 1198 when he abdicated in favor of his son, but he reigned as a cloistered emperor, though with less power than previous cloistered emperors, until 1221, when he was exiled after a failed attempt to restore imperial power at the cost of the Shogunate.

[369] In 1192, the first shogunate was established by Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147-1199). In this political system, the emperor was a figurehead while the military shogun 将軍 held the power. The political workings of this time are complex and the subject of many books and articles, but for about 100 years prior to this point, there had been the *insei* 院政 (cloistered rule) system with retired, cloistered emperors holding the political power while the sitting emperor was figurehead.

[370] These anecdotes are likely apocryphal as there are no mentions in the early biographies written within the decades directly following Myōe's death.

1221.[371] The development of Kōzanji was integral to Myōe's trajectory, especially in terms of finding an institutional home (thus more stability) and his patronage network.

Since Kōzanji's establishment, fire and conflict destroyed the temple numerous times over the centuries, so only one Kamakura-period structure remains (the scripture hall, Sekisui-in 石水院). Yet a diagram dated to 1230 and housed at Jingō-ji depicts the temple layout about twenty years after Myōe received the land. Despite receiving the temple and innovating doctrine and practice, Myōe was not successful in revitalizing the Kegon sect. After his death, it continued in a rather quiet, scholastic way in comparison to groups such as the Zen or Pure Land schools, which gained widespread popularity. Yet, Kōzanji itself impacted the life and legacy of Myōe. Today, it is a repository of many renowned treasures. Construction at Kōzanji took place over the two decades or so following Go-Toba's grant of land, a period that overlaps with the years during which Myōe conceived of and created the *sanji sanbōrai*.[372]

This background is an essential part of viewing the *sanjirai*—and thus the use of language respresentations—through the lens of individual impact. Myōe's life and writings are marked by loss (of family, mentors, homebase, etc.) and a journey towards closeness with Śākyamuni (in a spiritual sense and, at times, through attempts within the physical world). The way Myōe frames authority and lineage through his texts and his visual program, explored in

---

[371] On Fujiwara Nagafusa as intercessor, see Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 73-76. For more on Lady Sanmi, see Karen Brock, "Chinese maiden, Silla monk: Zenmyō and her thirteenth-century Japanese audience," in *Flowering in the Shadows*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 1990), 185-211 and Karen Brock, "Tales of Gishō and Gangyō: editor, artist, and audience in Japanese picture scrolls" (PhD diss., Princeton, 1984), 365-73. Lady Sanmi is alternately recorded as Kami 守 instead of Kō. As usual for the time, records refer to her by rank rather than a personal name. Sanmi (third rank) could refer to her position or that of her father or husband. In English, she is generally referred to as Lady Sanmi by scholars. The foundational text on Kōzanji, Myōe, and patronage was Murakami Sōdō, *Toganosan Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin* (Kyoto: Kōzanji, 1929). New information and correctives to this work have since been published (including Brock's correctives, known and accepted by Murakami), but it remains a central source in scholarship on Kōzanji.

[372] The significance of which becomes clearer later in this chapter during a discussion of artistic production in Myōe's environs.

greater detail later in this chapter, reveals some of the ways he responded to period uncertainties, which constantly inflected his Buddhist practice, an aspect of his life that was a constant even in the face of many other losses. Myōe constructed his Buddhist present within a longer trajectory of legitimacy stemming back to Śākyamuni—similar to the ways that *Mirror* texts were employed to order an unruly present through cosmological histories, as Erin Brightwell explored. Any perceived attacks on his carefully curated pluralistic Buddhist practice would have presented a potential for undermining his strong convictions and devotion to the Buddhist path. This could account for his vehement reactions to the perspectives of his contemporary Hōnen, who took a more concentrated turn toward the power of language.

Hōnen's Work, Myōe's Response, and the *Sanji Sanbōrai*

In the years directly leading up to the completion of Myōe's explanatory text *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* 三時三宝礼釈 (*Explanation of the Worship of the Three Treasures Thrice [Daily]*), he was extremely concerned with the actions and thoughts of Hōnen. This is exemplified in his reactions seen via the *Zaijarin* 摧邪輪 (*Tract for destroying heretical views*), completed in 1212 (Kenryaku 建暦 2) and released to a wider audience a few months later in 1213, and the *Zaijarin shōgonki* 摧邪輪荘厳記 (*Elaboration on the Zaijarin*) released three months following the *Zaijarin*'s release.[373] The *Zaijarin* was a response—perhaps more accurately, a rebuttal—to Hōnen's *Senchakushū*. Though reportedly written in 1198 at the request of patron and follower Kujō Kanezane, the *Senchakushū* was shown to only a select few

[373] Myōe, *Zaijarin*, ed. Kamata Shigeo and Tanaka Hisao, in *Kamakura Kyū Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), 43-106; Myōe, *Zaijarin*, ed. Nakano Tatsue, in *Nihon Daizōkyō* vol. 42 (Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921), 275-374; Myōe, *Zaijarin shōgonki*, ed. Nakano Tatsue, in *Nihon daizōkyō* vol. 42 (Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921), 375-404.

dedicated disciples. It was not widely released until Hōnen's death in 1212.[374] This is likely because Hōnen knew it would receive strong criticism among the wider Buddhist community—and it did. The *Senchakushū* almost immediately laid out its goal: to turn people solely to the practice of exclusive *nenbutsu* chanting. Hōnen outlined the rejection of the Holy Path (*shōdō* 聖道, Skt. *ārya-mārga*, alt. the Noble Path) in favor of aspiration to the Pure Land.[375] Dedication to the Holy Path focused on following practices explained in the sutras aimed at improving one's conduct and spiritual understanding, aligning with the precepts regulating behaviors. Even with just the understanding of the precepts' importance to Myōe explored above, one can already envision how Hōnen's perspectives would be inflammatory for Myōe. Instead of the constraints on behavior encouraged by following the precepts and conventional Buddhist morality, Hōnen encouraged Buddhist followers to abandon self power (*jiriki* 自力) for other power (*tariki* 他力) and aim for Birth in the Western Pure Land of Amida Buddha rather than aiming for the conventional path to enlightenment:

> Now is that time of the dharma's decline, (and we are presently) in the evil age of the five defilements. There is only the single gate of the Pure Land as the road on which we can proceed.
>
> 當今末法是五濁悪世。唯有浄土一門可通入路。[376]

[374] Another text written by Hōnen is his last testament, the *Ichimai kishōmon* 一枚起請文 (*One Sheet Document*), in which he briefly summarizes his teachings. His teachings were otherwise recorded in the thirteenth century by his direct followers or by later Pure Land figures in the fourteenth century.

[375] The Noble Path is the Noble Eightfold Path (*hasshōdō* 八正道, Skt. *āryâṣṭâṅga-mārga*), which is right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

[376] English translation (parentheticals added by me): Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 89. Original: Hōnen. *Senchakushū*, in *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen Shōnin zenshū*, ed. Ichii Kyōdō (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1955), 311.

In other words, in the face of *mappō*, Hōnen promoted the belief that one could only rely on the power of buddhas and bodhisattvas, aiming for the Pure Land rather than escape from *saṃsāra* (*rinne* 輪廻, the cycle of death and rebirth) by one's own efforts.

Hōnen's exclusive *nenbutsu* was also different in some ways from the *nenbutsu* that had been practiced in Japan for centuries at this point. The *nenbutsu* could be spoken orally as a chant in combination with internal focus. To many in orthodox sects such as Myōe, the internal meditative focus on Amida and his Pure Land was acceptable on its own however the inverse was not. Chanting versus internal may seem like a false duality, but the explanations and explorations of each aspect in doctrinal texts illustrate that this was a distinction that concerned practitioners. Until Hōnen, even when there was an oral component, doctrine related to *nenbutsu* practice had traditionally prioritized the meditative focus. In Hōnen's teaching, one could simply chant the *nenbutsu* without the mental component or, in other words, the body's part in it was more important than the mind's.

Myōe, with his focus on scripture, precepts, and internal meditation, was livid at this assertion. He saw the *Senchakushū* as a deliberate misreading and misrepresentation of scripture, commentaries, and patriarchs. In the very first section of the *Senchakushū*, Hōnen quoted the Chinese monk Dàochuò 道綽 (562-645, J. Dōshaku) as the source of abandoning the Holy Path to instead venerate Amida and aspire to the Pure Land. The text Hōnen cited is the *Ānlè jí* 安楽集 (*The Paradise anthology*, J. *Anrakushū*), a dialogic commentary on the *Kanmuryōjukyō* 観無量寿経 (*The Amitāyus Meditation Sutra*, Skt. *Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra*), one of the three main Pure Land sutras.[377] In the *Ānlè jí*, Dàochuò identified two types of teaching, the Holy Path and the

[377] *Ānlè jí*, T1958_.47.

Pure Land path. While Dàochuò did strongly encourage following the Pure Land path (*nenbutsu* meditation) in the time of *mappō*, Hōnen selected and framed the *Ānlè jí* excerpts as if one should follow the Pure Land to the absolute exclusion of the Holy Path. However, Dàochuò's text did *not* reject other practices. In fact, the text explicitly stated that one should cultivate all practices, even when questioned about the *nenbutsu* meditation directly.[378] These examples of Hōnen's selective citations and misleading framings of texts prompted scorn from Myōe, as seen in his written responses to Hōnen's *Senchakushū*.

Myōe's *Zaijarin* was his first public written response to the *Senchakushū.* According to Kikai's 喜海 (alt. Girinbō 義林房 1178-1251) biography of Myōe, Myōe first responded to the *Senchakushū* shortly after its publication through a lecture in autumn 1212.[379] Upon hearing that Hōnen's followers called for comments made there to be corrected in a debate, Myōe began to write *Zaijarin* in preparation. He wrote it quickly, finishing it by the end of the year. In general, Myōe had no issues with Pure Land aspirations and the *nenbutsu* practice. In fact, these practices were already embedded into the broad range of Buddhist sects. Therefore, as Tanabe argues in his discussion of the *Zaijarin*, Myōe did not see his criticism toward Hōnen's teachings as a sectarian conflict—i.e. Pure Land followers were not the object of his scorn, but rather what Myōe saw as Hōnen's incorrect understanding of the Pure Land tradition.[380] The content and tone of the *Zaijarin* are in defense of a tradition in which Myōe felt himself a stakeholder. He

[378] *Ānlè jí,* T1958_.47.0015c.

[379] Kikai, *Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin gyōjō*, MSS 1:45.

[380] Though he did see the conundrum in his own criticism of Hōnen, however necessary he felt it. In condemning Hōnen's exclusionary stance, Myōe himself was excluding a practice while arguing for inclusivity of practices. He saw the paradox in his own stance and text, but felt it a necessary step to dispel heresy.

supported *nenbutsu* practice, but not to the exclusion of other practices and was especially offended by the dismissal of the aspiration to enlightenment (*bodaishin*).

In Myōe's perspective, *bodaishin,* the aspiration toward enlightenment and the desire to aid others toward it as well, was the essential element to every Buddhist practice, including the *nenbutsu*. To shed light on the problems with the *Senchakushū,* Myōe cited the same scholar-monks that Hōnen did, describing the misinterpretations and misleading excerpts. He referenced the Chinese monk Shàndǎo (discussed in the previous chapter), whom Hōnen admired and clearly situated as a Pure Land patriarch. In particular, Myōe emphasized Shàndǎo's own reverence for *bodaishin* as yet one more example of the ways in which Hōnen distorted the tenets of Pure Land practice. Such references also furthered his own promotion of *bodaishin*. Additionally, Myōe was especially angered by the stripping of the meditative aspects of the *nenbutsu* as Hōnen pared it down to being sufficiently efficacious and meaningful in recitation only. Myōe cited a range of Buddhist texts to illustrate that the foundation of the *nenbutsu* is in proper mental states and processes (which is intertwined with *bodaishin*). In fact, almost the whole of *Zaijarin* is about refuting Hōnen's trivialization and abandonment of *bodaishin* and, in contrast, outlining its centrality to Buddhist practice and beliefs.[381] Myōe's *sanji sanbōrai* practice, developed by 1215 three years later, would likewise show his view of *bodaishin* as integral to all Buddhist practice and ritual.

Myōe's experiences related to the completion of *Zaijarin* exemplify the ways language was invested with supernatural power in premodern Japan. Having completed the text, he submitted it to the review of the buddhas and bodhisattvas by waiting for a clear signal of its

[381] For a good English-language summary of the *Zaijarin* that goes into detail about *bodaishin*, see Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 96-110.

acceptability. In a subsequent dream, a man wrote the name of the bodhisattva "*Kannon* 観音" (Skt. Avalokiteśvara) on Myōe's forehead ("...上人ノ面二観音ト書ク..").[382] Another dream found Myōe illuminated in golden light coming from the west ("...西方ヨリ金色の光明来リ照ス...").[383] In yet another dream concerning *Zaijarin*, a man came again to write on Myōe's forehead, this time the name "Shàndǎo" ("...一人アテ善導ト書ク...").[384] The text written on the forehead can be interpreted in various ways and likely had a layered meaning even in the thirteenth century. In the first dream, the text on the forehead could signify that Myōe was a manifestation or in some way partaking of the identity and power of the bodhisattva Kannon, one of the key attendant figures of the Amida's descent to welcome the deceased and bring them to the Western Paradise (*raigō* 来迎). As one of the key Buddhist deities associated with the Pure Land, invoking the figure of Kannon to approve the words of the *Zaijarin* provides the text a spiritual legitimacy within Pure Land practice, thus elevating its significance and accuracy over Hōnen's work. That is to say, this dream episode insinuates that *Zaijarin*'s words were approved by Kannon, perhaps even that Myōe was channeling Kannon in writing *Zaijarin*. Kannon (and Shàndǎo as a manifestation of Amida) might be seen in this dream episode as an authority, lending weight to the *Zaijarin*.

The physical marking of Myōe's dream body with the written characters of Kannon at the very least created a link between the two. In fact, the use of writing on the forehead to establish a *kechien* had, according to a contemporaneous account, been publicly used in recent times. The

[382] These dreams are recounted in one of the biographies on Myōe. Kikai, *Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin gyōjō* in MSS 1:46.

[383] Ibid. This is an intimation of Amida's radiance being bestowed on Myōe since Amida's Pure Land is also known as the Western Paradise or Western Pure Land.

[384] Ibid.

famous *Hōjōki* 方丈記 (*The Ten Foot Square Hut*), written in 1212 by Kamo no Chōmei, recounts his memory of the events in the capital Heian-kyō 平安京 (modern-day Kyōto 京都) during the late twelfth century. The earthquakes, fire, famine, and death during this period contributed to the general sense of living during *mappō* and resulted at times in bodies piled up on the streets of the city. A section of the *Hōjoki* writing about events in the year 1181 discusses one of the responses to such tragedy.[385] The monk Ryūgyō 隆暁 (1135-1206) of Ninna-ji 仁和寺 went about the city with a group of priests and wrote the Sanskrit letter A on the corpses' foreheads in order to establish a kechien between the departed and buddha.[386] Here we see that monks of the time—Shingon monks, in this case—used the visual marker of a written character to bind supernatural power and/or mercy to the deceased bodies. While *kechien* could be developed through a variety of practices in one's life, in Kamo no Chōmei's accounting, Ryūgyō used this written character to create this connection on behalf of the deceased. This recollected event was likely only one example of multiple such excursions over the years of warfare and famine. Such suffering and death were still prevalent, meaning that it is possible Myōe would have encountered another similar scene at some point. Furthermore, Ryūgyō (and Ninna-ji) were mainly affiliated with the Shingon sect, within which Myōe received part of his Buddhist training. Another interpretation of the word "Kannon" written on Myōe's forehead in his dream is, similar to the incident in the streets with Ryūgyō, as a visual marker of a *kechien* between monk and bodhisattva. While these the layers of interpretation could have been perceived

[385] Kamo no Chōmei, *Hōjōki*, *Tsurezuregusa*, NKBT 30:31. The Hōjōki specifically uses the term *kechien*.

[386] Likely, the *kechien* was established with Dainichi Buddha since Ryūgyō was a Shingon monk and the Sanskrit letter A was Dainichi's seed syllable. However, by this time the Sanskrit letter A also had some associations with Amida so there could be a layered interpretation, which would also align with Shingon doctrine (all buddhas and bodhisattvas as emanations of Dainichi Buddha).

separately by Myōe and his contemporaneous Buddhist circle, it is probably more likely that they were all true and relevant concurrently. That is, the words written on Myōe were simultaneously a mark of *kechien,* a sign of the presence of Kannon, and even a label of sorts identifying a manifestation of Kannon.

The other two dreams were also seen to legitimize *Zaijarin*. The golden light shining on him from the west is a reference to the golden light of Amida Buddha pouring out from his Pure Land, bathing Myōe in its brilliance and approval of the *Zaijarin.* This specifically engages with the very source of Pure Land Buddhism and lineage: Amida, his vows, and his Pure Land. The third dream is similar to the prior two in a variety of ways. It uses both the power of words and Pure Land lineage to validate Myōe's text. This time, Shàndǎo's name is written on Myōe's forehead. The last chapter discussed Shàndǎo's prominence in the early thirteenth century broadly and specifically within Hōnen's Pure Land Buddhism. In *Zaijarin*, Myōe was not only responding to Hōnen's own emphasis on (and misinterpretation of) Shàndǎo's teachings, he was also engaging with an increasing interest in this Chinese monk. Receiving Shàndǎo's name on his forehead was like receiving Shàndǎo's stamp of approval on the work, conceivably giving Myōe's *Zaijarin* as much significance and weight as Shàndǎo's Pure Land texts. Indeed, according to this dream, Hōnen was not the inheritor of Shàndǎo's Pure Land teachings, but rather Myōe was. The use of language to materialize—even within a dream vision—cosmic connections is an appropriate forerunner to Myōe's conception of a *sanjirai* hanging scroll that would use similar techniques only a few years later.

In *Zaijarin shōgonki,* written seven months after *Zaijarin,* Myōe mostly revisited the arguments of the previous text. A review of both texts shows that this second work is more analytical while the first reflects a heightened emotional response. Although Myōe's written

works that followed did not directly reference Hōnen and *Senchakushū,* Hōnen's impact is still discernible. About two years after *Zaijarin shōgonki*, on the twenty-fifth day of the eleventh month of Kenpō 建保 3 (1215), Myōe completed his *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* text.[387] In it, he explained the *sanji sanbōrai* practice and described the accompanying hanging scroll. Myōe's *sanji sanbōrai* was a simplified practice, potentially perfect for trying to make Kegon practice, which was viewed as quite scholastic at the time, accessible to a wider audience. In the way that Hōnen pared salvific practice down to simply reciting the *nenbutsu* for Amida, Myōe likewise created this way for followers to easily incorporate meritorious worship into their daily lives. Yet where Hōnen situated the recitation of the *nenbutsu* as yielding salvific results (birth in the Pure Land) without any meditative component or even further personal efforts, Myōe emphasized the *sanji sanbōrai* as underpinned by reverence, *bodaishin*, and mental discipline. Although the text was completed in 1215, it seems that Myōe had been practicing the *sanjirai* since 1214 (Kenpō 2).[388] *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* explores the *sanjirai* largely in a dialogic fashion, presenting questions and answers for the majority of the text. While this could have been merely a convention modeled after the many times this format is used in sutras and commentaries, it is likely that the text actually *was* written in response to requests from his lay followers.[389]

The beginning of the *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* text opens with a brief description of the *sanji sanbōrai*, in which one presses their hands together in prayer (*gasshō* 合掌) and first chants the

[387] Myōe, *Sanji sanbōrai*, ed. Nakano Tatsue, in *Nihon Daizōkyō* vol. 42 (Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921), 195-210; Myōe, *Sanji raishaku*, in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zenshō* vol. 13 (Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912-1922), 131-44. This text's title is sometimes referred to by the abbreviated forms of *Sanji raishaku* or *Sanbō raishaku*.

[388] This is mentioned in the account by his close follower Kikai. *Myōe Shōnin gyōjō* is a compilation of Kikai's own recollections of Myōe as well as others'. It was completed sometime between Myōe's death in 1232 and Kikai's in 1250. Kikai, *Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin gyōjō* in MSS 1: 46-7.

[389] This is based on other evidence such as two extant letters to followers, which I will briefly discuss shortly.

central phrase of *Namu dōsō betsusō jūji bupōsō sanbō* 南無同相別相住持佛法僧三寶 (Homage to the Same Aspect, Different Aspect, and Abiding Three Treasures of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha).[390] Next, one chants *shōshō seze chigū chōdai* 生生世世値遇頂載 (I meet and show respect [to the Three Treasures] through countless lives and ages), followed by the right column then left column phrases, both top to bottom. The enthroned phrases in the right and left columns—two each—are four "names" (or types) of *bodaishin*, drawn from the twenty presented in the *Kegonkyō*.[391] The practitioner should do three repetitions of all of the recitations in this order. Doing this as prescribed, three times a day, means that there are nine recitations total each day. After this brief description of the process of the *sanji sanbōrai*, Myōe wrote a description of the hanging scroll:

> ...the central line is the name of the Three Treasures. The left and right two lines are the names of *bodhicitta* [*bodaishin*]. The Sanskrit characters at the top are the Sanskrit names for the Three Treasures.
>
> 中ノ一行ハ三宝の名字也。左右ノ二行ハ。菩提心ノ名字也。上ノ梵字ハ。三宝ノ梵號也。[392]

These Sanskrit characters—commonly called *bonji* 梵字 in Japanese, which I will use hereinafter— are in a horizontal line across the top.

As Myōe indicated, these characters reference the Three Treasures of Buddhism: the Buddha (*butsu/hotoke* 仏/佛), Dharma (*hō* 法) or Law/Teaching, and Sangha (*sōgya* 僧伽) or Community. These Three Treasures (alt. Three Jewels, Three Refuges) are a core part of Buddhism, wherein Buddhists take refuge in each of the three—Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

---

[390] The diagram of this scroll is seen in figure 3-2.

[391] The source for the right column's top phrase is T0279_.10.0147a28-29. The source for the bottom phrase and the two phrases in the left-most column is T0279_.10.0147b01-02.

[392] Myōe, *Sanji raishaku*, in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zenshō* vol. 13 (Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912-1922), 131.

The Three Treasures are so central to Buddhist traditions that statement of faith or refuge in them was/is part of initiating lay followers. For Myōe, as both the *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* text and the accompanying image indicate, the Three Treasures were an object of worship. Throughout the *Sanji sanbōrai shaku*, Myōe explained that the practice was, in large part, an expression of gratitude to the Buddhist multitudes whose enlightenment and/or teachings benefit sentient beings.[393] *Bodaishin* is one way to carry this reverence toward the Three Treasures out.[394] Therefore, this gratitude, the Three Treasures, and *bodaishin* are intricately intertwined, a dynamic represented even in the process of physically displaying reverence toward the hanging scroll.[395]

Hōnen's impact on the *sanjirai* is seen further in Myōe's text. Myōe specifically mentioned the *nenbutsu* and how the *sanjirai* can be equally effective. He made a strong effort to present the *sanjirai* as exceedingly accessible. Anyone could perform this practice. Acknowledging that an average person may not have the same committment as a devoted monk (such as himself), Myōe even wrote about an alternative for those who find it difficult to recite the full set of phrases nine times a day. Instead, it can be pared down to an abbreviated recitation, which he explained in the closing of the *Sanji sanbōrai shaku*. Further, if even that recitation is too much for an individual, one can forgo the oral aspect.

> As for lay men and women, saying "Homage to the Three Treasures; may they save us in our next lives" is sufficient, or [the phrase] "Homage to the Three Treasures and *bodaishin*, may our vows be fulfilled in the world to come"—it's a matter of preference;

[393] Ibid.

[394] Myōe, *Sanji raishaku*, 131-33.

[395] This interconnectedness of gratitude, the Three Treasures, and *bodaishin* is embedded in the very practice. The individual feels their gratitude and speaks it out by reciting the prescribed phrases, which themselves in visual form have become embodied text. The object of worship, the Three Treasures, is centralized not only visually but it is also prioritized orally, being the first recited. The *bodaishin* phrases are quadrangulated visually around the Three Treasures, supporting this central object. The recitation order means that these four supporting phrases both expand on and support the central aspect.

> there is no prescribed formula. When the observance within one's heart is respectful, even if not orally expressed, that must be sufficient.
>
> 在家ノ男子女人ハ。南無三寶後生タスケサセ給ヘトイハンニ足リ。若ハ南無三寶菩提心。現當二世所願圓滿トモ心ニ任セテ。定式アルベカラズ。心ノ内ニ敬重ノ儀アレバ。口ニアラハサズトモ足ヌベシ。[396]

For Myōe, unlike Hōnen, mindfulness is clearly the core of the *sanjirai*—to the point that oral recitation is not particularly necessary as long as mindfulness is achieved. As seen in the *Zaijarin* and *Zaijarin shōgonki*, this had been a major point of contention for Myōe regarding Hōnen's *Senchakushū*—that Hōnen not only accepted but explicitly propagated oral recitation of the *nenbutsu* without the meditative aspect.

Almost a year later, on the fifth day of the tenth month of Kenpō 4 (1216), Myōe completed the *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi* 自行三時礼功徳義 (*On the Merits of the Thrice [Daily] Individual Obeisance* [*to the Three Treasures*]).[397] Here, Myōe reiterated the merit of the *sanji sanbōrai*, focusing especially on it as a practice of self-exertion—indicated in the title's use of *jigyō* 自行 (one's practices/obeisance [in the effort for enlightenment]). This emphasis is seemingly a continuation of Myōe's perspectives that prompted the criticism, direct and indirect, for Hōnen that was threaded throughout the *Zaijarin*, *Zaijarin shōgonki*, and *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* texts. An anecdote in this *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi* is telling, relaying information about who was practicing or *could* practice the *sanjirai*.[398] In the text, Myōe described a dream that a

[396] Myōe, *sanji raishaku*, 144. I have incorporated some of George Tanabe's translation of the recitation lines. Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 114.

[397] Myōe, *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi,* ed. Nakano Tatsue, in *Nihon daizōkyō* vol. 42 (Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921), 211-16.

[398] Myōe, *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi*, 211.

male lay follower shared with him. In the dream, the follower and his wife were protected from danger in the mountains by practicing the *sanjirai*.

This episode also worked as a testimonial to further support the efficacy of the *sanjirai*. That it was an incident in a dream did not make it less significant. As one can easily see with a study of Myōe's life and written works, visions both waking and sleeping (dreams) had an important role in his Buddhist practice—even his *Zaijarin* was approved via dream visions. "Reality is a complex idea, applicable to both abstractions and facts. For the common believer, however, abstract (ultimate) reality and ordinary reality are both credible and reliable enough to live by..."[399] These words, written by Tanabe in his exploration of the role of dreams in Buddhist practice and specifically Myōe's, illustrate ways in which the mundane world overlapped with the supernatural. As Myōe understood, dreams were a liminal space where the two could naturally co-exist and thus dream experiences could impart divine messages about the conduct of human beings. The message imparted by his follower's dream was that the *sanjirai* was an effective tool to deal with dangers in the human realm—fortuitously, in supporting Myōe's *sanjirai* practice, this message from the *Jigyō sajirai kudoku gi* also further supports this dissertation's assertion that, in the thirteenth century, language was understood as a common tool to navigate various disasters. Additionally, Myōe sharing this very personal anecdote aligns with this chapter's focus on how representations of language (in Myōe's conception, painting and practice/oral recitation are intertwined and the presence of one suggest the other) as a form of human agency, though a larger trend, were impactful in individualized ways that we as modern viewers may not always understand. This episode is a peek into a mundane, but significant concern (dangers traveling in the mountains) that a thirteenth-century practitioner may have had.

[399] Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 6.

The *sanjirai* was aimed at a relatively diverse group of Buddhist followers. While the *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* outlined how to make the practice ever more accessible, the *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi* additionally demonstrated how suitable it was for lay Buddhists, partially through use of this dream episode. Here, we also see that both men and women could use this practice for salvific effect. Even if this dream incident was an embellishment for Myōe's text rather than something actually shared with him—and from what we can tell, Myōe does not seem to have been prone to such things—we could interpret some intent from whom the story includes. The inclusion and consideration of women's spiritual lives and concerns is not confined to this single scene. As we see from textual records, Myōe had many female patrons and followers. He dedicated a nunnery, Zenmyōji 善妙寺 (in Hiraoka), as a subtemple of Kōzanji for women who lost their husbands in the Jōkyū Disturbance of 1221 (alt. Jōkyū War or Rebellion, *Jōkyū no ran* 承久の乱). While thirteenth-century Japan and early scholarship on the period were both male-dominated, research of the last half century has increasingly provided more complex perspectives on the roles of women in various spheres of influence such as religious centers.[400] With this more accurate understanding of the times, it is unsurprising that Myōe had female followers, but even in comparison to period norms, he seems to have been especially cognizant of their positions and their salvific needs. In his later years of life, a specific example of this relates to the *kōmyō shingon*. In writing about the *kōmyō shingon*, he specifically mentioned its

[400] Work done by historians such as Hitomi Tonomura, Barbara Ruch, and Joan Piggott has been immensely influential in advancing knowledge of this subject. For example: Hitomi Tonomura, "Coercive Sex in the Medieval Japanese Court: Lady Nijō's Memoir," *Monumenta Nipponica* vol. 61, issue 3 (2006): 283-338; Hitomi Tonomura, "Birth-giving and Avoidance Taboo: Tomen's Body versus the Historiography of "Ubuya"," *Japan Review* vol. 19, issue 19 (2007): 3-45; *Women and Class in Japanese History*, ed. Hitomi Tonomura, Anne Walthall, and Wakita Haruko (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, the University of Michigan, 1999); Barbara Ruch, *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, the University of Michigan, 2002); and *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Dorothy Ko, Jahyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley: California, 2003).

usefulness for women: “Furthermore, there is the matter of transmuting the five hindrances of women as described in the *Lotus Sutra* by means of the power of this mantra. 又此真言の力に依（り）て。法華経に説く所の。女人の五障を轉する事あり。”[401] Scholars such as Mark Unno and Karen Brock have addressed Myōe’s approach to female followers with more complexity, but, to simplify, the *sanjirai* was a practice aimed at Buddhist followers regardless of gender.[402]

The range of pracitioners for the *sanjirai* is also implied by Myōe’s recommendation for the practice found in two letters, now held by the Kanazawa Bunko 金沢文庫 (Kanazawa Prefectural Museum).[403] These letters were included in the box that holds an early copy of the *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi*.[404] The two letters, today titled as such with the characters *shōsoku* 消息 (letter, correspondence), are now folded and bound into a small pamphlet. This folding has damaged parts of the letters, making some of the text illegible. They are both written to lay followers, a woman and a man. In addition to illustrating the use of the *sanjirai* to men and

[401] For the Japanese, see *Kōmyō shingon dosha kanjin bekki*, in *Shingonshū anjin zensho* vol. 2, ed. Hase Hōshū (Kyoto: Daigakudō Shoten, reprint 1973), 72. The English translation with some alterations draws from Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 131.

[402] Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 129-45. Karen Brock, “Chinese maiden, Silla monk: Zenmyō and her thirteenth-century Japanese audience,” 185-211.

[403] For more on these, including the edited and published version of the letters, see Tanaka Hisao, “*Sanbō raihai ni kansuru Myōe no shōsoku*,” *Kamakura Bukkyō zakkō* (Kyoto: Shinbunkaku Shuppan, 1982), 332-42 and Tanaka Hisao, “*Sanbō raihai ni kansuru Myōe no shōsoku,*” *Kanazawa Bunko kenkyū* 6.5 (May 1960): 4-6. This article in *Kanazawa Bunko kenkyū* has a low quality image of one of the letters.

[404] Kanazawa Bunko has copies of the *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* and the *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi*, both of the texts discussed above. No known version in Myōe’s hand has been preserved, but due to references by Myōe and followers as well as mentions in inventories (*mokuroku* 目録), there is no question that these two texts were originally written by Myōe. The postscript of the Kanazawa Bunko *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* states that it is a copy done on the eighteenth day of the first month of Kagen 嘉元 4 (1306) at Tahōji 多宝寺 in Kamakura. The *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi* copy does not have a postscript or date, but study of the characters has shown the two texts to be done by the same hand so scholars assume they were copied at the same time. Tanaka, “*Sanbō raihai*,” 333.

women alike, this correspondence also reveals Myōe's perception of the general appeal and efficacy of the *sanjirai*.

Despite the *sanjirai* being available as a practice to men and women, study of these two letters tells us that the approach to lay followers was still gendered in various ways. One letter is written with *kana* 仮名 (Japanese phonetic written syllabary). As scholar Tanaka Hisao points out, from the opening and closing of the letter, we can tell that Myōe was writing this *kana* letter to a female lay follower: "Truly, as for the sake of those such as court ladies [like yourself]... マコトニ女房ナンドノ御タメニハ−" and "...for the sake of court ladies and the like, [I] included and explained a little interpretation of texts 女房等ノ御タメニハスコシ御訓尺ヲクハエテ尺シテキ."[405] Additionally, the polite phrasing of the letter reveals that the female recipient was of high social standing, which aligns with Myōe's other known female constituencies.[406] In contrast, the second letter to a male follower is written in *kanji*. *Kana* development began in Japan during the Heian period around the ninth century.[407] In the following centuries as the use of *kana* became more refined, certain cultural associations and terms likewise developed regarding *kana* and *kanji*. Of particular relevance are the terms *onna-de* 女手 (women's hand/script) and *otoko-de* 男手 (men's hand/script). As we know from period texts, *onna-de* was not used to describe *kana* (more specifically, hiragana) because *only* women used it.[408] This term

[405] Discussion of the gender of the letter recipients: Tanaka, "*Sanbō raihai*," 334. The quoted opening and closing of the letter to the female follower are respectively pages 336 and 340 of the transcription.

[406] Also, in terms of literacy, aristocratic women would have had reading and writing skills. Women of lower ranks would have been less likely (or not at all, depending on socio-economic level) to engage in correspondence.

[407] For an English exploration of the development of *kana* in Japan, see Christopher Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 1991). There are significantly more studies in Japanese such that it would be overwhelming to list them here. Seeley's bibliography of Japanese sources is a good start to such work.

[408] A few examples of the use of *onna-de* in Heian-period texts are *Utsubo monogatari* うつほ物語 (*Tale of the Hollow Tree*, late tenth century) and *Tosa nikki* 土佐日記 (*Tosa Diary*, travel diary for Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之,

was adopted for *kana* because, while men also used *kana*, women predominantly used it rather than *kanji*. Also, what may be considered "serious" writing by men was generally done in *kanji* characters, though from the tenth century on men increasingly used *kana*—and even sometimes an assumed female persona—to achieve certain affect. *Kana* was often associated with emotive writing so the choice of it could lend an immediacy of feeling to a work. Men's writings related to institutional settings such as government office or Buddhist contexts were generally executed in *kanji*. Because we can discern the genders of the addressees for these two letters, we also know that Myōe adjusted his writing and style for greatest accessibility, contrasting a full *kanji* letter with a *kana*-heavy letter. Therefore, he must have at least partially chosen his script based on the gendered background of the adherents.

These letters, as mentioned, give a sense of who may have performed the *sanjirai*, but they also tell us that Myōe himself was still incorporating the practice, likely daily, enough to receive questions about it from his followers. Scholars such as Tanaka posit that the letters date to 1217 or 1218 because citation of *Ju bodaishin kaigi* 受菩提心戒儀 (*Taking the precepts of Enlightenment Aspiration*) indicates that the letters were written after the 1216 *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi*.[409] This would make sense also because Myōe's articulation of the practice in the letter indicates that the *sanjirai* was well-developed by this point, supporting the hypothesis that these letters were written after the composition of *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* and *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi*. Further, Myōe references two works in the beginning of the letter to the male follower, which reads "The writing and progress of this practice [*sanjirai*] is by means of reverence reliant upon

who flourished in the early tenth century). *Utsubo monogatari*, NKBT vols. 10-12; Ki no Tsurayuki, *Tosa Nikki*, NKBZ 9:29-64.

[409] Tanaka, "*Sanbō raihai*," 335. *Ju bodaishin kaigi*, T0915_.18.0940.

the two works of the Three Treasures... 三宝二枚依仰敬以書進之、礼拝之業. . . ”[410] Another thirteenth-century record uses language that points more specifically to *sanjirai* paintings. In *Kōzanji shōgyō mokuroku* 高山寺聖教目録 (*Catalogue of Sacred Scriptures at Kōzanji*), the 1250 catalogue of the Kōzanji storehouse, there are two Three Treasure picture scrolls listed: “*sanbō e nikan* 三寶繪二巻. ”[411] Because the catalog is for Kōzanji where Myōe developed the *sanji sanbōrai*, these are likely hanging scrolls done for *sanjirai* practice to the specifications that Myōe notes in the *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* rather than the collection of tales (*Sanbō ekotoba*). In fact, it is likely that the extant scroll still held by Kōzanji is one of these two scrolls as I will address later.

By the 1220s, it seems the *sanjirai* was fully incorporated into temple life at Kōzanji. A wooden plaque known today as *Arubeki yōwa* 阿留邊畿夜宇我 (“As Necessary”) by Myōe records the daily schedule for the temple community.[412] As Unno states, the text of the *Arubeki yōwa* illustrates Myōe’s “pluralistic vision” of Buddhist practice.[413] Done in Myōe’s own hand, the plaque provides the temple’s regimen, behavioral guidelines for the temple study hall, and

[410] For the Japanese transcription of the letters, see Tanaka, “*Sanbō raihai*,” 340.

[411] *Kōzanji shōgyō mokuroku*, in *Kōzanji kyōzō mokuroku* (Kyoto: Kōzanji Tenseki Monjo Sōgō Chōsadan, 1985), 43. Research on this document in Japanese has been carried out by Okuda Isao and summarized and expanded upon in English by Karen Brock. Okuda Isao, *Kōzanji shōgyō mokuroku*, in *Kōzanji kyōzō mokuroku* (Kyoto: Kōzanji Tenseki Monjo Sōgō Chōsadan, 1985), 278-99; Okuda Isao, *Myōe henreki to yume* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1978), 216-39. Karen Brock, “The Case of the Missing Scroll: a History and Reconstruction of “Tales of Gishō and Gangyō,” *Archives of Asian Art* vol. 41 (1988), 7-8. Brock’s dissertation gives more detail about this specific catalogue. Karen Brock, “‘Tales of Gisho and Gangyo’: editor, artist, and audience in Japanese picture scrolls,” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1984), 24-31. The *Kōzanji engi* references a catalogue of the contents of Kōzanji’s Eastern Sutra Repository, which could very well have been the *Kōzanji kyōzō mokuroku*. The details of Okuda and Brock’s research are more extensive, but suffice to say that the 1250 date seems reliable and is generally accepted by scholars.

[412] Unno and other scholars use “As Appropriate” to translate this phrase.

[413] Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 16.

similar guidelines for the Buddha altar hall.[414] The *Arubeki yōwa* marks two specific times to chant the *sanbōrai,* in the hour range of 8:00-10:00 pm and around twelve hours later, 8:00-10:00 am. While the *sanjirai* had perhaps been prompted by Myōe's own reaction to Hōnen's perspectives, it clearly became an entrenched part of daily life among the Kōzanji community. However, it seems to have underwent some changes when incorporated into the daily regimen. Only two times for recitation are noted, rather than three, which aligns with Myōe's explanation of the adaptable nature of the practice. It also seems that, after a time, the visual supplement was not required (perhaps similar to the way Myōe stipulated that spoken recitation was not necessary if mindfulness and gratitude was held in the mind), though a *sanjirai* painting remained in Kōzanji's storehouse. Despite these shifts almost a decade after the *sanjirai*'s creation, Myōe's original conception of it as a practice with a paired painting allows us to consider how images of language-bodies work in tandem with viewer participation. Myōe, with his background in Shingon and Kegon, was no stranger to works of art and a look at his interactions with artistic production suggests ways that this broader artistic network could have affected the appearance of the *sanjirai* painting.

Artistic Production and the *Sanji Sanbōrai* Hanging Scroll Imagery

Buddhist imagery was an integral aspect of Myōe's practice. He not only used existing forms, but also created new ones. Perhaps that is part of the reason Kōzanji developed a certain reputation regarding Buddhist works. Even in modern times, scholars believed for some time that

[414] The heading of the plaque, *Arubekiyōwa*, actually only refers to the first section. Still, it has been adapted as a title for the whole work. Murakami Sodō instead called the plaque *Nichiyō shingi* (*Daily Regulations*), referencing similarities to the monastic regulations of the Zen schools. Murakami Sodō, *Toganoo-zan Kōzanji Myōe shōnin* (Kyoto: Kōzanji, 1937), 318-20.

Kōzanji had been a thriving premodern center for official artistic production. However, in recent decades this has been carefully researched and shown to be a common misconception.[415] Although persons both within the Kōzanji community and some only tangentially connected commissioned, created, used, and valued works of art, especially paintings and sculptures, Kōzanji was not a site with a dedicated workshop. Nonetheless, Myōe and his surrounding community were located within a network of art production and consumption that included Nara, Kyoto, and surrounding areas. Today, Kōzanji is still a repository with significant works of art from the Kamakura period and later. The *sanji sanbōrai* practice and imagery developed within this sphere and is more fully understood with a better understanding of Myōe's encounters with artistic production.

The Kōzanji *sanjirai* hanging scroll's appearance is consistent with the characteristics of thirteenth-century painting. As addressed in the previous chapter, Buddhist artists at the time were incorporating Song-dynasty artistic trends in a variety of ways, especially in light of revitalization after late twelfth-century damages and losses. These trends are often more discernible in figural depictions of buddhas and bodhisattvas, yet there are still some traces of continental presence in the Kōzanji *sanjirai* painting. In fact, even the characters of the text show attention to Song introductions to Japan. In the *kanji* representation of the Three Treasures, *Namu dōsō betsusō jūji bupōsō sanbō* 南無同相別相住持佛法僧三寶, rather than the character of 无 in *namu* that was, to that point, used for such phrases in Japan, the character of 無 is used, a use based frequency in recently introduced Song works.[416] The depictions of the lotus pedestals

[415] Karen Brock is one such scholar who has done archival research to address this misconception.

[416] Myōe's expository *Sanji sanbōrai shaku* incorporates both the archaic and new forms of *mu* within the text. I have not yet determined the reasoning or significance of using both in a single text. I will touch upon the significance of character versions in the next chapter.

also align with Song conventions of color and shape for such pedestals. Despite the painting's pigments being faded with parts flaked off, the central phrase's lotus pedestal is the best preserved on the hanging scroll and thus the easiest to see the connection.

The condition of the painting has further potential to relay important information. Its state is comparable with that of other works from the thirteenth century. However, the condition indicates that it was used less than, for example, the Kōzanji thirteenth-century paintings of Myōe. Even at the time of its development, Myōe presented the *sanjirai* practice as highly adaptable for personal Buddhist practice. Similar to the way that it could be abbreviated based on the individual's schedule, it seems that the next leap could have been to adapt it as a practice that would require no supplementary image. In short, if need be, one could recite the required phrases without the painted image. This could partially explain the lack of other *sanjirai* hanging scrolls. Although the thirteenth-century records and even modern scholars mention two *sanbō e*, or Three Treasures images, currently I have only found evidence of one extant painting—the Kōzanji scroll that is the focus of this chapter.[417] It seems that at the most two *sanjirai* scrolls have survived, perhaps even just one.[418] Unless further evidence comes to light, it is also reasonable based on the evidence to date the extant *sanjirai* painting to at least the thirteenth century, if not to circa 1215, meaning it is likely that it is the painting designed and commissioned—and then used—by Myōe.

[417] The global pandemic of COVID-19 has caused some limitations regarding research sources and travel. I will expand research on this potential second work in the future. Yet, in 1968, historian of Buddhism Fujishima Tatsurō cited without reference or further discussion "Moreover, as for this icon [type], it has been passed down as an object from those times [circa the years Myōe wrote about *sanjirai*] to Toganoo's Kōzanji in the west of the capital in two scrolls なおこの本尊は、当時のものが、現に洛西栂尾高山寺に二幅伝えられている." Fujishima Tatsurō, "*Myōe shōnin no myōji honzon ni tsuite*," *Ōtani Gakuhō* 48-1 (1968): 1. This could draw solely from a reading of the 1250 catalog listing of two Three Treasures picture scrolls or it could be a reference to his own (undisclosed) research.

[418] Further, at this point I have found no evidence that there were ever more than two.

As shown in multiple records, Myōe himself was interested and involved in the creation of Buddhist imagery. A brief look at some types of images within these records illustrates his patronage, use, and circulation of Buddhist imagery. In the first year of the Kennin 建仁 era (1201), after Myōe successfully recited sutras for the improved health of his aunt, Yuasa Munemitsu's aforementioned wife, he received funds and materials from the couple to commission a *Zenzai zenchishiki mandara* 善財善知識曼荼羅 (Mandala of Sudhana and the wise advisers).[419] Art historian Jan Fontein addressed artistic works from Kōzanji, including this mandala, in his dissertation and subsequent monograph on Sudhana. Though now dated, its chapter exploring early Kōzanji works was the first such done in English.[420] Myōe's planned mandala would depict the wise advisers (*zenchishiki*) that Sudhana encountered on his pilgrimage as relayed in the *Kegonkyō*. In the years of the Kenkyū 建久 era (1190-1199) before this spiritual and economic transaction with Munemitsu, Myōe had made iconographical sketches of these advisors. He sent these sketches and the materials with two followers to Shunga 俊賀 (active early 13th century) in the capital. Shunga, a monk-painter, was *hokkyō* 法橋 (Dharma Bridge) rank and part of the Takuma school (*Takuma-ha* 宅間派) of Buddhist painting (*butsuga* 仏画) that flourished in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.[421] The Takuma painting

[419] MSS 1:179.

[420] Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana: a Study of Gaṇḍavyūha llustrations in China, Japan, and Java* (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1967).

[421] As was stated earlier, the *hokkyō* rank was the third rank given to Buddhist image. Shunga was clearly associated with a painting atelier so, while the rank was applied to many types of creative figures, from this and other such examples it is clear that these rankings included painters by the beginning of the thirteenth century. Hirata Yutaka, *Ebusshi no jidai* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1994), 26-40. For more on Shunga, including his work for Myōe, see Tanaka Ichimatsu, "*Shunga hokkyō ni tsuite," Nihon Bijutsu kyōkai hōkoku* no. 40 (April 1936): 4-12. This is dated, but still a good overview from which to start when looking closer at Shunga. The school was split into two branches, one led by Takuma Shōga 琢磨生姜 (fl. 12th century) centered in Kyoto to service the monasteries in and around that area while another branch fulfilled commissions from military leaders in Kamakura. For more on the Takuma school and its artists, see Hirata Yutaka, "*Takuma ha ni okeru dentō sei*," *Kokka* 1085 (Jul. 1985): 11-26 and Gratia

atelier became known for its incorporation of Song-dynasty stylistic qualities—in fact, one Shunga's works for Myōe was recorded as an iconographic drawing (*zuzō* 図像) from a "*karahon* 唐本" (Chinese/Continental work).[422] Myōe's own connection to the Takuma atelier may have, in part, come from his Shingon affiliation as the head of the Kyoto branch of the studio, Takuma Shōga 琢磨生姜 (fl. 12th century), was a Shingon priest.

In 1202, the mandala had been completed and was dedicated at Jōdōji in a ceremony based off a text, *Zenzai zen'yū nenju shidai* 善財善友念誦次第 (*Ritual Meditation on the Spiritual Friend Sudhana*), that Myōe himself wrote that same year about the mandala's use.[423] The text describes a forty-two character mantra that Sudhana learned and outlines the proper procedure for its use with the mandala, providing an early example of the ways that Myōe's Buddhist practice intertwined language and the visual. Shortly after its dedication, the mandala was donated to Sonshō-in 尊勝院 at Tōdaiji, but has been lost in the centuries since. Because of this connection to Tōdaiji, occasionally some have speculated that a hanging scroll (figure 3-3) in the collection of Tōdaiji with the words *kegon kai e zenchishiki* 華厳海絵善智識 written across the top is Myōe's *Zenzai zenchishiki mandara*, but, among other reasons, the written records do not align with the work's characteristics.[424] The mandala commissioned by Myōe and

C. Williams, "Takuma Eiga: a Revisionist Analysis of a Fourteenth-Century Buddhist Painter" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2006).

[422] MSS 1:179. While the character 唐 was the character denoting the Tang dynasty, it came to be a modifier of nouns to reference their quality as "Chinese," but since the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula were at times lumped in with this modifier, "Continental" could be a better translation. Fontein translated this phrase as "Chinese book."

[423] This text is currently unpublished, but the colophon can be found in: *Kōzanji kyōzo tenseki monjo mokuroku* vol. 1, ed. Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsa dan (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1973-1982), 391.

[424] The extant scroll also has a relatively strongly documented provenance. It was donated to Tōdaiji in the fifteenth century, approximately two hundred years after the Myōe work was gifted to the temple. The inscriptions notating the remounting and copying the original inscriptions (which state that the painter was Rai-en of *hokkyo* rank) date

painted by Shunga and/or his assistants was comprised of four scrolls or panels containing the wise advisers whereas the *kegon kai e zenchishiki* is a single hanging scroll. Sometime after Myōe's 1201-commissioned set of paintings/panels, other *Zenzai zenchishiki* mandalas were created, including an example that was at Kōzanji by the time the *Kōzanji engi* 高山寺縁起 (*The Origin of Kōzanji*) was compiled in 1253 by Kōshin 高信 (1193-1264), twenty years after Myōe's death. In the *Kōzanji engi*, Kōshin writes "…on the back face of the same, a picture of Avataṃsaka Sudhana and the wise advisors… 同後面圖繪華厳善財善知識."[425] Likely, the extant hanging scroll now at Tōdaiji made use of the related imagery at Kōzanji as a source for copying the iconography of the figures.

Another extant work of the same subject matter is a Kamakura-period painting (figure 3-4) in Kōzanji's collection, bearing the words "*kegon kai e sho shōju* 華厳海会諸聖衆 ("the multitude of virtuous figures from the Flower Garland Ocean Assembly")". This work may or may not be one mentioned in the above-quoted *Kōzanji engi*, but regardless of connecting the extant works directly to those noted in the thirteenth-century documents, these written and painted works show Myōe's impact on artistic production at Kōzanji.[426] He not only commissioned a work on the subject matter of the wise advisers, but in writing about its use in practice, he contributed to its continued importance at Kōzanji, which can be seen in other wise advisers works made there over the thirteenth century. Furthermore, Myōe's association with the monk-painter Shunga did not end with this 1201 commission. Evidently satisfied with Shunga's

---

the work to 1294. Ishida Hisatoyo has written on the *kegon kai e zenchishiki* mandala: Ishida Hisatoyo, "*Kegon kai-e zenchishiki mandarazu*," *Museum* no. 155 (Feb. 1964): 2-14.

[425] Kōshin, *Kōzanji engi,* in MSS 1:639.

[426] Fontein writes that even if this Kōzanji painting is not a work by Shunga, it is likely a copy done within a century of Shunga's life. Fontein, *Sudhana,* 111.

Zenzai zenchishiki mandara, Myōe continued to commission paintings from Shunga in the following two decades. Due to these connections with the Takuma atelier and their subsequent shaping of the tastes of Myōe's disciples, much of the artwork at Kōzanji was inflected with a Song-dynasty style—as seen in some touches within the *sanji sanbōrai* hanging scroll.

However it was not just work from the Takuma atelier that filled Kōzanji, though that connection influenced a lot of the early twentieth-century scholarship regarding the temple, affecting scholarly perspectives even to the 1990s. Art historian Karen Brock has explored the artistic production related to Kōzanji, building on the work of Fontein and many other Japanese scholars such as Murakami Sōdō and Hirata Yutaka.[427] Specifically, her in-depth combing of the records and careful examination of many paintings put to rest the then common belief that Kōzanji had its own workshop.[428] Instead, drawing heavily on careful consideration of documentary evidence, she positions the image makers of Kōzanji as amateur (if some surprisingly skilled) such as the monk E'nichibō Jōnin 恵日房成忍 (active c. 1211-c. 1243). Myōe interacted with various artists, professional and amateur, and works of art. He even had some Shingon training with Kōzen 興然 (1120/1-1203/4), an eminent iconographer of the time.[429] Myōe did not write much about image makers himself, though his direct followers anecdotally included some of their own experiences related to Myōe and image makers in their

[427] Murakami Sōdō, *Myōe Shōnin: Toganosan Kōzanji* (Umegahatamura: Toganōsan Kōzanji, 1929); Hirata Yutaka, *Ebusshi no jidai* vol. 1-2 (Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1994); Hirata Yutaka, *Ebusshi no sakuhin* (Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1997).

[428] Karen Brock, "E'nichibō Jōnin, the Saint's Companion," in *The Artist as Professional in Japan*, ed. Melinda Takeuchi (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 38-77. As Brock points out, scholars such as Helmet Brinker, Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, Kanazawa Hiroshi, John Rosenfield, and Shimada Shūjirō have referred to a Kōzanji workshop.

[429] Hisatoyo Ishida, *Esoteric Buddhist Painting*, trans. E. Dale Saunders (New York: Kodansha International, 1987), 82-8; Hamada Takashi, *"Zuzō*," *Nihon no Bijutsu* 55 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1970).

biographies of him.[430] Still, Myōe often utilized buddha or *kami honzon* in practice, as recorded in his texts or lectures.

We may conclude based on the evidence that Myōe was deeply engaged with Buddhist imagery. In fact, his engagement with the visual through works of art but also through interpreting his dreams and visions indicate that visuality was core to his approach. Beyond developing relationships of varying degrees of strength or intimacy with image makers—professional such as Shunga and amateur such as Jōnin—his interest in and writings about images centered on their use.[431] In fact, as Brock writes, "Myōe directed Jōnin and Shunga's efforts, but as a *practitioner* of Shingon and Kegon who insisted on the correct representation of iconographical details."[432] In other words, Myōe was concerned with the efficacy of visual works, which was achieved through correct representation and use. Myōe's inattention to recording details of production is a challenge to modern scholars because we, too, must consider, generally without concrete records, what types of connections he may have made directly and indirectly to Buddhist imagery of the time. It is not always possible to concretely discern connections during the medieval period as we are partially at the mercy of which documents and works survive to modern times. Still, it is beneficial to look at works created relatively concurrently and within Myōe's sphere of experience. Along this vein, shrine mandala (*miya mandara* 宮曼荼羅) images may be considered as another potential factor in Myōe's creation of the *sanji sanbōrai* image.

---

[430] Yanagida Seiji, "*Myōe shōnin no kōgi to sono kikigaki,"* in *Kōzanji tenseki monjo no kenkyū*, ed. Tsukishima Hiroshi (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980), 181-97. For example, the aforementioned texts on the *sanji sanbōrai* explicate the imagery yet do not concretely note a specific painting and its context or maker.

[431] Brock discusses the possibility that Jōnin was Shunga's son and/or student. Brock, "Jōnin," 74-5.

[432] Emphasis through italicization added by me. Brock, "Jōnin," 77.

Although mandala had been part of Buddhist visual cultures for centuries by Myōe's lifetime, as noted in Chapter One, *kami* mandala were a much more recent development. Despite the earliest extant examples dating to the thirteenth century, textual evidence dates *kami* mandala to the previous century.[433] *Kami* mandala have a variety of forms: *kami* figures only, *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 (original ground, trace manifestation) with *kami* and Buddhist representations, *miya mandara* with or without figural or written-character deities, and in later centuries *sankei mandara* 参詣曼荼羅 (pilgrimage mandala). We do not currently know for certain if Myōe drew from *kami* mandala. Yet such a hypothesis seems plausible when considering his devotion to the Kasuga deity, his connections to particular monks and Buddhist art makers, and the visual connections we can make between extant *kami* mandala and the *sanji sanbōrai* hanging scroll painting.

Myōe's devotion and connection to the Kasuga deity partially facilitated links with a wider network, including artistic productions related to Kōfukuji and Kasuga Shrine in Nara (as the two were a Buddhist-*kami* "multiplex").[434] Although Kōfukuji was largely home to the Hossō 法相 school (Yogacārā), like most other instutions at the time, it was affiliated with other schools as well. Royall Tyler writes that in the Heian peirod, Kōfukuji "was at least equally a

[433] Kujō Kanezane's *Gyokuyō* 玉葉 (*Jeweled Leaves*) has such a citation dated to the year Juei 寿永 3 (1184), mentioning specifically a picture (*zue* 図絵) of Kasuga Shrine. *Gyokuyō* 2:212. This is discussed in Kageyama Haruki, "*Kaiga*," in *Kasuga taisha*, (Osaka-shi: Osaka shoseki, 1984), 39. The terminology in these early works do not use words like *mandara*, but descriptions make clear that the mentioned works are *kami*-related *mandara*.

[434] Religious studies scholar Allan Grapard uses this term. His reasoning is discussed in Allan G. Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Multiplexes of Heian Japan." *History of Religions*, Vol. 27, No. 3 ("Shintō as Religion and as Ideology: Perspectives from the History of Religions," Feb., 1988): 248. Historian Kuroda Toshio used the term *jisha seiryoku* 寺社勢力 (shrine-temple power complexes) to initially explore the same concept. Kuroda Toshio, "*Chūsei jisha seiryoku ron*," *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten), 187-241; reprinted in Kuroda Toshio, *Kuroda Toshio chosakushū* (Kyōto-shi: Hōzōkan. 1994), 187-241.

Shingon temple."[435] In point of fact, many of the smaller subsidiary temples that came under Kōfukuji's control in the late Heian and early Kamakura periods were Shingon temples. The Shingon conection at Kōfukuji/Kasuga likely only strengthened Myōe's own relationship to the Kasuga deity. Myōe's dedication to the Kasuga deity is well documented, even in his own *Dream Diary*, which included recorded dreams that Myōe interpreted to be related to or messages from the Kasuga.[436] Not only did he venerate the Kasuga deity and trust in messages he believed to be transmitted from the deity—for example, the oracle experiences or placing lots in front of an object of Kasuga worship, described earlier—but he also spent time in Nara at the sacred site of the Kasuga Shrine. The *Dream Diary* also provides information about Myōe's waking travels and experiences. In the eleventh month of Ken'ei 建永 1 (1206), Myōe noted in his *Dream Diary*: "I conducted a lecture and doctrinal exposition at the hall of the Great August [Kasuga] Deity. I also began a service on the seven fascicles of the *Heart Sutra*. 大明神之御殿御前論義講一坐修之、幷心経七巻佛事始之..."[437] As far as we modern readers can discern, the presence of Kasuga deity and Shrine in Myōe's life continued until the end of his days. In his diary entries of 1230, he mentions both sleeping interactions with the deity, some compelling him to visit Kasuga Shrine, and waking visits to the Shrine.[438] From this and more, we know that Myōe was familiar with Kasuga Shrine, its community, and thus likely the artwork created and

[435] Royall Tyler, *The Miracles of the Kasuga Deity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 68.

[436] There are many other instances beyond what I write about in this paragraph, recorded in Myōe's various writings and correspondences as well as in the texts of his fellow monks and close followers (such as Kikai).

[437] The English translation: Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 169. The Japanese: Myōe, *Myōe shōnin yumeki*, in MSS 2:132. Since the *Heart Sutra* (*Hannya shingyō* 般若心経) is usually one fascicle, it is unclear what version Myōe is writing about.

[438] A few examples can be found in English: Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper*, 191. Japanese text: Myōe, *Myōe shōnin yumeki*, 165.

used at Kōfukuji/Kasuga, which had its own workshop as early as the first decade of the thirteenth century, before the development of the *sanjirai*.

A pivotal figure of this Kōfukuji/Kasuga community at the time was the monk Jōkei, whom Myōe knew personally. From their professed perspectives, their link was likely an affinity due to similar priorities. Like Myōe, Jōkei also worked for a revival of discipline in the monastic community, focusing on monastic code (*ritsu* 律, Skt. *vinaya*). Prior to Myōe's own harsh reproach, Jōkei also criticized Hōnen and his followers. In fact, Jōkei was one of the principal authors who drafted the *Kōfukuji sōjō* 興福寺奏状 (Kōfukuji Petition) of 1205 to criticize Hōnen's exclusive *nenbutsu*.[439] Myōe's own *Zaijarin* would follow about ten years later, though he acknowledged that he had heard criticism previously—likely that of Jōkei and other orthodox monks—and not quite believed it until he read *Senchakushū* himself. The interests and backgrounds of Jōkei and Myōe also intersect in ways that exceed a desire for monastic discipline and a shared criticism of Hōnen's exclusive *nenbutsu*. Jōkei was part of the Fujiwara family—a more reliable connection than Myōe's line's claim—though at a time when the Fujiwara's power was waning. Jōkei's own father and grandfather were exiled and killed, respectively, due to their involvement in the political machinations of the time, which were rooted in conflicts among the imperial, aristocratic, and military clans.[440] Jōkei and his siblings took Buddhist tonsure, Jōkei himself joining the Fujiwara tutelary temple of Kōfukuji at eleven years old. He ascended quickly at Kōfukuji, cultivating ties with and the admiration of figures

[439] *Kōfukuji sōjō*, in *Kamakura ibun komonjo hen* vol. 3, ed. Takeuchi Rizō (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1971), 257b-262a. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

[440] This is a gross simplification, but as much in both English and Japanese has been written on these events, for the purposes of this dissertation I will leave it at this. It is also of note that Jōkei's grandfather, Fujiwara no Michinori 藤原通憲 (1106-1160, alt. Shinzei 信西), is relatively well-known historical figure as head of the Fujiwara clan during his time and ally to the Taira in the Heiji Rebellion of 1159, leading to his eventual downfall.

such as Kujō Kanezane. As a Kōfukuji monk, Jōkei was influential in the promotion of Kasuga-kō 春日講 (Kasuga lay associations), both an indication of his personal worship and of the *kami*-buddha syncretism of the period.[441] Jōkei's connection to Kasuga can be seen in many accounts, including one narrative that connects Jōkei, Myōe, and the Kasuga deity. During a 1203 oracular interaction with the Kasuga deity, the deity stated their caring for both Myōe and Jōkei, expressing regret at Jōkei's move (in 1192) from Kōfukuji to Kasagidera 笠置寺, a remote temple northeast of Nara.[442] Still, despite his remote residence, Jōkei was active, often traveling to Kyoto and Nara (Kōfukuji/Kasuga) for various reasons and continuing to promote Kasuga. Myōe's interactions with Jōkei are indicative of his own connections to the Kōfukuji/Kasuga community, showing that his presence in the area was not due solely to a personal reverence for the Kasuga deity, but also included relational exchanges with people.

Combined with his interest in the creation and use of Buddhist imagery, the evidence of Myōe's interactions with communities at Kōfukuji/Kasuga provide a base for exploring how works associated with the famed multiplex could be linked with those created under Myōe's direction at Kōzanji. One such possibility are *kami* mandala images. Although there are a variety of *kami* mandala, the two main categories within these are those related to either Kasuga or Kumano.[443] Therefore, we find many examples of mandala images of Kasuga's site and *kami*. One hanging scroll painting is of particular interest in our study of the *sanji sanbōrai* hanging

[441] Again, for more on this, see Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology," 246-69.

[442] MSS 1:237-43.

[443] Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis points out that these two sacred sites can be seen as representing "the supralocal, officially sponsored kami-worshipping tradition" (Kasuga) and "the local, unofficial tradition" (Kumano). Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, *Japanaese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 144.

scroll: a Kasuga mandala dating to the early thirteenth century (figure 3-5).[444] Now in the collection of Tokyo's Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, the hanging scroll depicts the grounds of Kasuga Shrine. In this painting, the topography of the Kasuga Shrine site is shown, though with particular visual focus on the four central shrine buildings.

Shrine mandala are traditionally read from the bottom to top.[445] The viewer visually follows a path through the Kasuga site, leading ever closer to the innermost sanctum (the *honden* 本殿): the four shrines dedicated to the main deities of the Kasuga Shrine complex. From right to left, the structures of the *honden* are dedicated to the *kami* Takemikazuchi no Mikoto 武甕槌大神, Futsunushi 経津主神, Amenokoyane 天児屋命 (or 天児屋根命), and Himegami 姫神.[446] Directly above these structures are four *bonji* enthroned on lotus pedestals and within moon disks (*gachirin* 月輪). These represent the Buddhist bodies of these local *kami*. Two sacred mountains

[444] The dating of this hanging scroll has been a topic of scholarly discussion for decades, but scholarly consensus dates the work to the early thirteenth century. For a brief English overview of this, see Ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese mandalas*, 151-52. The in-depth discussions in Japanese are so numerous, it makes a list here impractical.

[445] A brief walk-through of how a viewer would encounter the image is as follows. Near the bottom right is the Sanjūhassho Jinja 三十八所神社. To the left of the structure, the herd of meandering deer lead the gaze to a river, the diagonal of which directs the viewer's gaze to the boundary of the middle court of principal shrines (*honsha chūin* 本社中院). To the left of the gate is a small, enclosed shrine, the Enomoto Jinja 榎本神社. This fence demarcating the middle court ends shortly to the right of the entrance, the *nanmon* 南門. This is a compositional decision. The concept of "realistic" in terms of shrine mandala is rather fluid. Rather than a precise map-like rendering of a shrine's topography, mandala such as this *miya mandara* may shift the locations or directions of aspects such as building structures. Such descisions speak to the priorities of including the key characterstics of a sacred site like Kasuga while making the image something that can draw in a viewer—perhaps a member of a lay community—to mentally "experience" the site in a way that replicates the spiritual journey of a physical pilgrimage. The Nezu *miya mandara* was no less "realistic" for having the middle court's boundary fence abruptly end (as it would not in the physical space) to the right of the gate in order to bring the viewer's gaze to the Wakamiya Jinja 若宮神社. Instead, such a compositional choice emphasizes the movement of the eye through the picture plane. From the Wakamiya Jinja, the viewer moves via the painting through an expanse dotted with flowering trees, whose heights encourage the gaze to move upwards with only a brief interruption of a red fence (*tō en* 稲垣) and the *niino hashi* 二位橋. Aligned on a horizontal axis to the right of these is the small, unassuming Iwamoto Jinja 岩本神社. At the left edge of the picture plane, in relation to the four main structures, is the Mizuya Jinja 水神社.

[446] Although there are many resources to explore these *kami* and their connection to the Fujiwara family and Kasuga Shrine, for a starting point see the aforementioned books *The Miracles of the Kasuga Deity* (English language) and *Kasuga taisha* (Japanese language).

reign over the entire image from the very top of the image, Mount Mikasa 三笠山 and behind it Mount Kasuga 春日山.

In some other shrine mandalas, the upper section of the image has a representation of Buddhist Pure Lands. As Allan Grapard states, "by the middle of the Heian period, a sacred geography had evolved in Japan according to which a clear distinction was made between the plains (the world of the secular) and the mountains (the world of the holy)."[447] Accordingly, some mountains were identified as Buddhist sites—from Pure Lands mapped onto the local topography to significant Buddhist locations from South Asia that were thought to have been relocated to Japan.[448] From as early as the twelfth century, many considered Mount Mikasa the future Buddha Maitreya's Pure Land (*Tosotsuten* 兜率天, Skt. *Tuṣita*), localizing Buddhist Paradise at Kasuga and further contributing to Jōkei's (and Myōe's) assertion that the Kasuga deity was the current manifestation of Śākyamuni/Maitreya. Additionally, Kasuga was associated with several sacred geographical sites such as Vulture Peak and the bodhisattva Kannon's Pure Land called Fudaraku 補陀落 (Skt. Potalaka). Not only do these associations present another way that medieval Buddhist praxis was syncretic, but such perspectives encouraged *kami*-buddha worship and strengthened ties to *kami* as in the case with Myōe's connection to the Kasuga deity. Indeed, Buddhism and *kami* worship were not seen as separate to many, including monks like

[447] Allan G. Grapard, "Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religions," *History of Religions* 21:3 (1982): 205.

[448] There was even a theory that the Dual World mandalas could be overlaid onto Japan's topography as just one example of the mandalization of space (see Grapard's ouevre for discussions on mountains, sacred space, and the mandalization of topography). Land and image were connected conceptually and physically in complex ways. After Buddhism's introduction, mountain sites were often used for monasteries (such as the Tendai center Enryakuji on Mount Hiei and the Shingon center Kongōbuji 金剛峯寺 on Mount Kōya), spiritual retreats, the purview of mountain ascetics (*yamabushi* 山伏), and more. In *kami* worshipping practices, mountains were realms where the *kami* themselves may come to earth or manifestations of *kami* themselves.

Myōe and Jōkei, who promoted Kasuga as a Pure Land. The central part of the Nezu *miya mandala* representing the *honden* paired with enthroned *bonji* is a physical manifestation of the belief that localized *kami* were manifestations of Buddhist deities, specifically at Kasuga in this case.

The overall experience of the Nezu *Kasuga miya mandara* exemplifies how individuals or communities such as Kasuga-kō could use shrine mandala for remote pilgrimages and points to a strong veneration of the site (which included Myōe as an adherent) that stretched far beyond its topographical borders. Yet one of my main considerations of the Nezu mandala and its potential relevance to the *sanjirai* painting centers on the enthroned *bonji* element.[449] It is certainly possible, perhaps even likely given Myōe's personal connection to the Kasuga deity, that Myōe was influenced by a work like the Nezu *miya mandara*. The Nezu scroll dates to the early thirteenth century (as with the Kōzanji *sanjirai* scroll) so it is nigh impossible to know which may have come first, if one impacted the creation of the other, and if so, how. Yet a few affinities lend some credence to the possibility of any or all of those, however unprovable. And even with the vague dating of the Nezu scroll, becuase we have textual references to Kasuga mandala prior to 1200, it seems slightly more likely that these affinities would have drawn from a Kasuga precedent.

Like the *sanjirai* painting, the Nezu work would have originally been more colorful, but time and use have caused the pigment to deteriorate and change. Yet both now and in its original presentation, the *bonji* moon disks on the Kasuga mandala draw the eye due to their lightness in

[449] I want to note that the Nezu mandala is itself a candidate for study that aligns with the topic of this dissertation in that its depictions of divine bodies and power through language, in this case *bonji*, provide yet another example of the ways that language-bodies were a tool for understanding and ordering the uncertain world for the betterment of those inhabiting it.

contrast to the rest of the image. The disks were carefully painted with the *urazaishiki* 裏材式 technique (back painting), where white pigment was applied to the back of the painting and then a thin layer on the front, resulting in an intensity of the color that gives the feeling of a glowing moon. From the front, delicate lotus thrones are painted in a Song-dynasty palette and style, using red, white, blue, and green pigments. Both the lotus thrones and the moon disks are outlined in cut gold leaf (*kirikane* 截金), which in the flickering light of a lantern would have caught light, presenting this aspect of the painting in an almost ethereal way. The *bonji* characters are inked on these moon disks, brushed in dynamic lines to hover on these lotus pedestals. These *bonji* characters are the Buddhist bodies of the deities associated with Kasuga while the shrine structures below them are representative of the *kami* bodies through implied presence. It is not only proximity, but also palette that connects the *bonji* bodies and the shrine structures. While white pigment is used elsewhere in the image—for example, in the trees' flowering blossoms—it is sparingly applied except in the moon disks and the nearby architecture of these shrines, even more striking here for being set against immediate reds, blacks, and browns. As the moon disks embrace the Buddhist bodies in *bonji* form, the use of white in the *honden* area similarly visually illustrates these shrines as a potential embrace for the *kami* bodies when they manifest inside. For both, the contrast of the white against the browns and greens of the Kasuga landscape strategically draws the viewer's eye to these points of divine representation.

As in the Nezu *miya mandara*, the *sanjirai* scroll has lotus-enthroned *bonji* characters within moon disks in a horizontal line across the image plane. Both the Nezu *miya mandara* and the *sanjirai* scroll use contrasting light areas to create affinities between two elements within the picture plane. The Nezu painting visually connects the *bonji* and the shrine architecture through

the use of white pigment. Likewise, the Kōzanji painting's light pigment creates a visible connection between the central enthroned *kanji* phrase and the *bonji* in moon disks across the top. As in the Kasuga scroll, this strategic use of color and contrast creates a visual affinity between the two which mirrors the semiotic connection. The two signifiers of the same signified (the Three Treasures) are drawn together through palette choice. Why, one might ask, would there be two different respresentations of what is ostensibly the same thing? Unfortuately, this is not one of the questions that Myōe directly addressed in his dialogic texts about the *sanjirai*. Yet, if we consider some of his related perspectives on language, Sanskrit, and the world(-text), we may gain some insight.

Like the Nezu painting, the *sanjirai* scroll brings to the fore the polysemic nature of objects and representations. *Honji-suijaku* manifestations as well as Kūkai's exploration of the nonduality of things and the relation to a world-text, as I discussed in Chapter One, similarly address this. Myōe was well-versed in Shingon texts, including Kūkai's.[450] Significantly, Myōe also emphasized the concept of emptiness, especially in comparison to his contemporaries. These contemporaries such as Hōnen, Jōkei, and others discuss the "two truths," Nāgārjuna's two truths doctrine of form and emptiness or rather conventional (or provisional) truth and ultimate truth, but rarely mention or discuss emptiness itself.[451] Mark Unno argues that the increased polemics of sectarianism in the late Heian period and into the thirteenth century did not encourage monks

[450] Though Myōe warns that the rhetoric of nonduality can lead to useless exercises and the trap of discursive logic. Myōe, *"Honji honbun*," in MSS 2:856.

[451] In this conception, phenomena are understood to be simultaneously empty (*śūnyatā*) and existing dependent on other phenomena. The phenomenal world is neither/both real and unreal. The ways of understanding and thus writing about the two truths doctrine have been both epistemological and ontological. Yet the concept of emptiness is an essential aspect either way, even if not directly addressed.

to explore emptiness with notable depth.[452] However, Myōe is an example of another perspective for the time: one of inclusive, pluralistic practice in his approach and writings that mirror the syncretic nature of actual practiced Buddhism. That is, although most monks and temples were engaged naturally in syncretic practice to at least some degree, in writings and presentation many were increasingly entrenched in promoting their specific sect. While Myōe undertook to revive/reimagine Kegon, he also continuously argued for a pluralistic approach to Buddhism—as in his *Zaijarin.* He seemed, in fact, more sensitive to these nuances than most of his contemporaries. Among those who excoriated Hōnen and his *Senchakushū* for promoting the *nenbutsu* to the exclusion of other practices, Myōe seems to be the only one who saw the irony in his own criticism. He worried that by writing to discredit Hōnen's *nenbutsu* practice for being exclusive that he himself was reifying Hōnen's missteps. Myōe did still have his moments of exclusion as well as hierarchical perceptions of practices and teachings. Overall, though, he advocated for pluralism. Therefore, his heightened attention to the concept of emptiness compared to other thirteenth-century figures is less surprising than we may initially think.

His consideration of emptiness, formulated largely from his own interpretations rather than referencing scriptural sources, is especially visible in his later works such as *Kōmyō shingon dosha kanjin ki* 光明真言土砂勧信記 (*Recommending Faith in the Sand of the Mantra of Light*) and *Kōmyō shingon kaji dosha gi* 光明真言加持土砂義 (*The Meaning of the Sand of the Incantation of the Mantra of Light*).[453] In these texts, Myōe explained the four aspects of

[452] Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 75.

[453] Myōe, "*Kōmyō shingon dosha kanjin ki*," in *Shingonshū anjin zensho* vol. 2, ed. Hase Hōshū (Kyoto: Rokudai Shinpōsha, 1914), 15-54. Myōe, "*Kōmyō shingon kaji dosha gi*," 6-14.

emptiness theory, of which the inconceivability of emptiness was particularly important.[454] In explaining this aspect, Myōe used fourfold differentiation (*shiku* 四句, Skt. *catuṣkoṭi*) to break out of the trap of discursive logic.[455] Instead Myōe used fourfold differentiation to apply nondiscursive logic: 1) X exists (being) yet, 2) X does not exist (nonbeing), 3) X both exists and does not exist, and 4) X neither exists nor does not exist. Essentially, this all leads to X, in Myōe's case generally Dharma and/or emptiness, being inconceivable. Skillful means—meeting a person where they are currently cognitively at—is one way to walk Buddhist followers through these understandings.

Although these texts postdate Myōe's development of the *sanjirai*, hints of these thoughts are found throughout Myōe's written oeuvre both before and after. The presentation of them in his texts related to the *kōmyō shingon* are extremely developed, the culmination of much previous consideration. I propose that, in actuality, Myōe explored many of these concepts to some degree in at least the visual component of the *sanjirai* and his exploration continued in the years following as he continued to practice the *sanjirai* and develop new forms of ritual such as the *kōmyō shingon*. For Myōe, words and their relationships with elements of nature (human beings included) were also key in considering how different aspects of "reality," both provisional and ultimate, interact with one another. In his texts on the *kōmyō honzon*, Myōe further discussed the relationship between words (in particular, Sanskrit) and nature. As Kūkai had written, Sanskrit was the language of the Buddhas, the primordial voice, and thus Myōe in general situated it as the language of nature, entangled with the six senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch,

[454] For an English summary of this and of emptiness in Myōe's work in general, see Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 76-98.

[455] Fourfold differentiation is also called *tetralemma*, a South Asian concept that states that any logical proposition has four possibilities: affirmation, negation, both, and neither.

taste, and thought. For Myōe, for many medieval Buddhists, words could be physical objects as shown with the co-application of words and touch in a balm to Samantabhadra's head so that even the sounds of words had a physicality in the transformations that they enacted.

This physicality of words, as seen in the previous chapter, was explicitly shown in works of the thirteenth century. Kōshō's Kūya sculpture (figure 2-7) is precisely one example of this. Though we cannot say for certain, it is possible that Myōe either saw or heard about this sculpture because he had encounters himself with the Kei School.[456] In 1198, prior to the establishment of Kōzanji, Myōe traveled to Jingō-ji. Mongaku, who was undertaking work restoring the temple, had a statue of Śākyamuni commissioned from the well-known sculptor Unkei by this point. When Kōzanji was under construction years later, Myōe engaged Unkei for a sculpture for the main hall. In 1219, the Unkei statue of Vairocana was enshrined.[457] In 1223, a Śākyamuni sculpture by the Kei School's Kaikei 快慶 (d. c. 1223) was moved from Kōzanji to the Zenmyōji 善妙寺 nunnery.[458] A year later, Myōe dedicated a Zenmyō statue by Tankei 湛慶 (1173-1256), Unkei's his eldest son and brother to Kōshō who sculpted the Kūya statue. Myōe viewed many Kei-School works and had interactions with their sculptors due to commissions for his temple and the nearby convent. Additionally, his earlier travels from the 1180s and after to sites where Kei-School artists were working also increased his exposure to their work. With Myōe's documented incorporation of Kei school works and a history of travel, it would not be surprising if Myōe had some kind of contact, either direct or indirect, with Kōshō's Kūya

[456] For more, see Mori Hisashi, "*Unkei, Kaikei to Kōzanji, Jūrin'in,"* in *Nihon Bukkyō chōkokushi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1970), 243-52.

[457] Kōshin, *Kōzanji engi,* MSS 1:634.

[458] Myōe's follower Kikai recorded the transfer of the Kaikei sculpture. Takeuchi Rizō, comp., *Kamakura ibun* vol. 5 (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1973), 212.

sculpture completed, at the latest, by 1212—less than a decade prior to Myōe's *sanjirai*-related texts. Whether he saw or heard about Kōshō's sculpture specifically, for the purposes of this dissertation I rather want to emphasize that the use of language within Buddhist artworks was clearly a topic of interest throughout Myōe's environs.

The human faculties—and thus the phenomenal world—are interwined with language. As intimated above in the *Kegonkyō* episode and through examples discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, sound, hearing, touch, sight, and thought were inextricably linked when considering the efficacy of certain words. We may even connect the faculty of taste to words because of the entangled nature of taste and tongue. Along with the mouth in general, the tongue's movements and shape craft the pronunciation of words. Indeed, in medieval Japanese texts, the tongue was at times presented as the necessary, and then sacralized, tool for the recitation of words. Charlotte Eubanks, writing about book and body in medieval Japan, discusses the chanting skull motifs in *setsuwa* tales.[459] In several tales, the tongue remains as intact flesh that continues to chant sutras despite the rest of the body having decayed to skeletal remains. Eubanks describes this as the permeation of the body by the text—"to the extent that the sutra can still hold part of that body (mandible, cranium, tongue) stitched together even after death."[460] For example, this is seen in a narrative about the priest Ichiei 壱容 (dates unknown) from the eleventh-century compilation *Dainihonkoku Hokkekyō genki* 大日本国法華経験記 (*Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Japan,* alt. *Hokke Genki* 法華験記).[461] In the story, while spending the night in the woods on

[459] Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 156-61.

[460] Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 158.

[461] *Hokke genki*, compiled by Chingen, in *Nihon Shisō Taikei* vol. 7, ed. Inoue Mitsusada and Ōsone Shōsuke (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 409-24.

pilgrimage, Ichiei hears a voice reciting a sutra and paying homage to the Three Treasures. The following morning, Ichiei finds human skeletal remains nearby. Despite the lengthy time that had obviously passed since the death, the tongue inside is intact, "red and fresh, not damaged 赤鮮不損."[462] As this tale shows, the efficacy and power of language was intertwined to some degree with all of the perception faculties (the "senses").

Sanskrit, according to both Kūkai and Myōe, had a particularly close connection to these faculties and to nature because Buddhist monks in Japan perceived the language to be almost ageless, existing since Brahmā and the Buddha spoke. Therefore, the mantras (*shingon*) were expressive world-texts, perceiv(ed/able) objects. Words can form the very foundation for thought. Language also engages with both the phenomenal world and the ultimate reality. This was part of the power of words from Myōe's perspective. They could be used to describe the world that followers experienced, but they could also expand the conception of "reality" within the mind. Additionally, their ritual use especially could transcend the phenomenal into the ultimate. In Shingon practice, mantras were an avenue for such. From the Heian period on, the use of *bonji* as a representative form of a buddha or bodhisattva similarly had the potential to nurture an elevated understanding of "reality" in viewers, to the point where it could perhaps collapse the boundaries between the mundane (phenomenal) and supernatural (ultimate). Having the Three Treasures embodied twice in the *sanjirai* image, as both *kanji* and *bonji*, engages with all of these concepts. The dual representations reference Buddhism's originary geographical location via the Sanskrit and its expanse by the thirteenth century to encompass cultures that use Sino-characters. Further, illustrating these two forms of the same aspect was a representation of

[462] For an excerpt tranlsated into English, see Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 159. For the Japanese: *Nihon Shisō Taikei* 7:519.

the constructed semiology about which Myōe wrote that was strongly based on earlier Shingon texts such as Kūkai's. At the initial level, these characters are the Three Treasures in two different languages. Although Myōe did not expand upon the *bonji* use much in the *Sanji sanbōrai shaku*, extrapolating from his overall body of written work and earlier Shingon interpretations of word and meaning can indicate a potential interpretation of the two signifiers for the Three Treasures. Developing a deeper understanding, one realizes that the form is both important and not important as all things are interpenetrating. In the mundane world, these choices have associations—for example, Sanskrit with Śākyamuni's homeland—but the goal is to eventually realize the falsehood of such associations in an understanding of the interpenetration of all things with Buddha. The painting, therefore, has layered meanings and interpretations dependent on the positionality of the viewer and their stage of understanding.

Even if indirectly, the *sanjirai* draws on a legacy of different representations of language. Certainly, the use of *bonji* in paintings was already a part of Shingon visual culture and practice, as shown in this dissertation's Chapter One. With his background as a Shingon monk, Myōe's training included at least rudimentary exposure to this type of imagery and its perceived efficacy—this is especially clear since we know he studied Sanskrit.[463] More generally, there were broader Buddhist practices of visually emphasizing the importance and position of written language. Some examples include *ichiji ichibutsukyō* 一字一仏経 (one-character one-buddha sutra) and *ichiji hōtōkyō* 一字宝塔経 (one-character jeweled stupa sutra). These luxurious sutra types equate text with the sacred buddha body, as mentioned in the introduction. In *ichiji ichibutsukyō* (figure 3-7), the columns of characters are interspersed with columns of miniature

[463] Many texts, including biographies (such as the aforementioned one by Kikai) and tales of Myōe, mention this.

buddhas so that each written character (*ji*) is essentially paired with a Buddha figure (*butsu*). The composition is such that the characters are written bodies equated to figural bodies. The presence of the buddha body is therefore inherent in every word of the sutras. *Ichiji hōtōkyō* (figure 3-8) likewise craft such a similitude. Each character is brushed within a small pagoda form as if they are each a buddha body relic safeguarded and revered in the East Asian version of a stupa. Taking it a step further, text and pagoda are collapsed in twelfth- and thirteenth-century *hōtō mandara* 宝塔曼荼羅 (jeweled pagoda mandala) images. In these paintings, or "textual images" as art historian Halle O'Neal calls them, the jeweled pagoda is crafted from the written characters of sutra texts (figure 3-9).[464] In all of these examples, written word has layered meaning that expands beyond the semantic content. They are all materialized texts in an intertextual network within which the *sanjirai* was conceived.

Myōe may also have been responding to circulating imagery relating to Pure Land belief, especially within the context of engaging with and responding to Hōnen's *Senchakushū* in the years leading up to the *sanji sanbōrai* creation. In the aforementioned *Kōzanji engi*, Kōshin itemized Kōzanji's works and their on-site locations as of 1253, which can give us an idea of the works of art that the Kōzanji community interacted with relatively frequently.[465] Brock has done much to narrow creation dates down for some of these works in her dissertation and subsequent publications, using Kōzanji's extensive repository of documents. A painting of an "Amida triad in gold *kanji* [characters] 金泥漢字阿弥陀三尊" was completed before 1232 and by 1253, it

[464] O'Neal's study was discussed in the introduction, but as a reminder, for more on *hōtō mandara*, see O'Neal, *Word Embodied*.

[465] Kōshin, *Kōzanji engi,* MSS 1:629-66.

hung in the Buddha Chapel of the Meditation Hall precinct.[466] Because they are specified to be *kanji* forms, the representations of the deities in the Amida triad were likely *nenbutsu*, or *myōgo* 名号 (Buddha's Name), forms, discussed further in the next chapter. We do not know whether this work was acquired or commissioned before or after the creation of the *sanjirai* practice, but it seems that at least during the final years of Myōe's lifetime both types of works were available at Kōzanji. The Buddha Chapel visual program in Kōzanji's Meditation Hall Precinct as of 1253 illustrates well the multi-faceted nature of Myōe's personal Buddhist practice, which was rooted in a *gonmitsu* (Kegon and Shingon) background but inclusive of many sects and practice. In this space, there were paintings of Sudhana and the wise advisers as well as the Kegon Ocean Assembly (representative of Myōe's Kegon practice), Dual World mandalas and a portrait of Kūkai (exemplifying important Shingon works), and the Amida triad, among others.[467] It was truly a curated space manifesting the pluralism that Myōe promoted at Kōzanji.

The study of Kōzanji's *sanjirai* hanging scroll is greatly enriched by understanding it within the broader context of artistic production and consumption within which Myōe lived. As a thirteenth-century monk, he was no stranger to mandala images, especially due to his Shingon background. His encounters with Kasuga/Kōfukuji as well as both professional and amateur image-makers (sculptors and painters) presented more opportunities for looking at and using images for worship, potentially including other works that incorporated language representations. Additionally, Myōe was not content to simply reiterate current visual models, but he also conceptualized his own types of images with related practices, chief among them the *sanjirai*. In short, his engagement with Buddhist images simultaneously exhibited continuity and

[466] Brock, "*Jōnin,*" 56-8. Kōshin, *Kōzanji engi*, MSS 1:645.

[467] Ibid.

experimentation. As explored here, the *sanjirai* is situated within a longer arc of Myōe's Buddhist practice, much of it dealing with the relationship between representations of language in Buddhist artwork as an efficacious way to effect change in one's personal trajectory.

Conclusion

Although Myōe was aiming for a practice as accessible and appealing as the *nenbutsu*, the *sanjirai* never achieved the same widespread popularity. In fact, despite Myōe's intense response to Hōnen's *Senchakushū*, in the following centuries, the *Senchakushū* was disseminated much more widely than Myōe's commentaries. Myōe himself was well-known and well-loved by his immediate community, but Kegon and the monastic precepts within it did not subsequently revitalize or flourish in the way that he and some of his contemporaries desired. Certain aspects of Myōe's life and practice did endure more widely. His life became semi-legendary through dissemination of his hagiography. In terms of Buddhist practice, Myōe's main legacy was the popularity and ongoing use of the *kōmyō shingon* practice. The *sanjirai* can, and should, be understood within the broader context of thirteenth-century perspectives on language, but also within the smaller net of Myōe's life.

As his writings and the accounts of his life from his followers reveal, Myōe encountered many moments of uncertainty during his life. He not only lost both parents at a relatively young age, but his other family members and mentors were embroiled within political intrigues. Before he had the home temple of Kōzanji, at various points he was forced to move from place to place at the mercy of hosts, possibly causing him to reflect as well on the effects that were surely visible among city streets as a result of the warfare, epidemics, and natural disasters of the early decades of his life. Hand-in-hand with these issues, his spiritual concerns were not insignificant.

His Buddhist practice aimed at alleviating the many uncertainties in his life and he consistently turned to language as a tool in attempting to enact some control over his trajectory. While this was apparent through his use of mantra, his work to craft new rituals and Buddhist images also manifested this interest via language-bodies within visual works. As Fujishima Tatsurō has stated, the *sanjirai* was created partially in response to Hōnen and the controversy he stirred among Buddhist communities of the time.[468] Myōe's excoriation of Hōnen through his writings clearly did not fully address the issue to his satisfaction. In responding to what he saw as a spiritual and doctrinal disaster, Myōe sought to draw from the positive aspects of Hōnen's own work—accessibility and widespread appeal—while correcting what he saw as Hōnen's fundamental misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Buddhist thought and practice. Thus came the *sanjirai*, born of Myōe's mind and background.

Where Myōe's *Zaijarin* and *Zaijarin shōgonki* may have convinced the learned who read them of Hōnen's missteps, the *sanjirai* was a daily experiential foil to Hōnen and his exclusive *nenbutsu*. It also had the potential to grow beyond a select audience who had, for example, the education and skills to engage with the two aforementioned texts. Indeed, as the two extant examples of *sanjirai*-related correspondence indicate, Myōe continued to espouse its use and seems to have catered his approach to the specific individual. For him, this practice and its accompanying image could work in ways against the perceived disaster of Hōnen's (popularly received) teachings in ways that written commentary could not. While Myōe's experimentation with image and language, seen in the *sanjirai*, is representative of larger societal trends—like the examples of the last chapter—he and the *sanjirai* also provide a window into the ways that language use was also meaningful for individuals. Along with the macro-view, the *sanjirai*

[468] Fujishima Tatsurō, "*Myōe shōnin no myōji honzon ni tsuite*," 6.

practice and painting defines a microcosm where the enacted strategy was to use the power and mercy of buddhas and bodhisattvas to address Myōe's very personal challenges and concerns within his own practice and that of his followers.

Chapter Four
The Multiplicity of Language within *Kōmyō Honzon*

The previous chapters have established various reasons people felt particular unease and precarity from the twelfth century on. The last two chapters specifically explored the first couple of decades of the thirteenth century, situating the innovations in the representations of language-bodies as a wider trend across communities, and also exploring this approach as a personal effort with individual meaning. Chapter Two illuminated the increase in the popularity and diffusion of Pure Land practice while Chapter Three illustrated the complex response of monks—exemplified by Myōe—within the orthodox traditions to figures such as Hōnen and his followers who worked outside those traditions. It was not simply a matter of the "new" Pure Land communities pitted against "old" orthodox communities. Instead, Pure Land practice was well-known and employed across a wide range of Buddhist groups. Still, doctrinal conflict often fostered animosity between the newly-developing groups and the established Buddhist sects, which we saw acutely in the case of Myōe in the last chapter. Well beyond Myōe's personal and public reactions, Hōnen's impact was vast and controversial. The acts of his followers over the thirteenth century cemented his place in Japanese Buddhist history and many of them continued to experiment with language as a tool giving its users some sense of control over this world and the next.

One such follower was the monk Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1263). As a devoted follower of Hōnen, Shinran was the founder of the True Pure Land Sect (*Jōdo Shinshū* 浄土真宗). He and his closest followers are also credited with creating a new type of image in the mid-thirteenth

century: the *kōmyō honzon* 光明本尊 (lit. "radiating light icons").[469] *Kōmyō honzon* works have been described as one of the distinctive features of Kamakura Buddhist art.[470] The earliest extant *kōmyō honzon* (figure 4-1), thought to be the first such example is the only one from the middle of the thirteenth century. This and subsequent *kōmyō honzon* from the early fourteenth century show more variation than later medieval examples, exemplifying an initial experimental stage of the iconography. According to a nationwide survey of True Pure Land works published in 1987, there are sixty-six extant *kōmyō honzon* that span in date from mid-thirteenth century to the Edo period.[471] While there are variances, *kōmyō honzon* generally have a name of the Buddha Amida, called *myōgō* 名号, enthroned on a lotus pedestal in the center, the lineage of Pure Land masters from the continent to the left, and the lineage of Japanese Pure Land masters to the right. Almost all extant versions have two more enthroned *myōgō* listing different sacred names in the lower left and lower right, as well as figural depictions of Amida Buddha and Śākyamuni Buddha flanking the central *myōgō*. All but one extant work depicts rays of light emitting (i.e. *kōmyō*) from the *myōgo*, giving the icons their name. Because these works record various Japanese True Pure Land lineages throughout the centuries, there has been much discussion of the *kōmyō honzon* in Japanese scholarship, from both art historians and religious historians. To date, scholarship has focused mainly on the works within the overarching narrative of True Pure Land

[469] The term "*kōmyō honzon*" first appeared in the sixteenth century, but until modern times, it was not used consistently to describe the works described above. In premodern times, these works were called *kōmyō hon* 光明本 (radiating light works) or *kōmyō hin* 光明品 (radiating light items). Using a modern term such as *kōmyō honzon* clearly locates and legitimizes these works within art history as icons (*honzon*), something that has been suggested multiple times to be a sectarian coloring of the study of *kōmyō honzon*. However, as I show in this chapter, even in the formative years of the image type, they indeed functioned as icons, whatever term used to describe them. Therefore, I will continue to use the modern term of *kōmyō honzon* throughout the text.

[470] Andō Fumihito, "*Myōgō honzon seiritsu no haikei ni tsuite*," *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 87 (2014): 355.

[471] Hiramatsu Reizō, ed., *Shinshū jūhō shūei*, (Kyoto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1987).

development, yet I argue that the initial *kōmyō honzon* should be studied as an example of a broader Kamakura-period trend of increased use of language (and/as body) within Buddhist art. In fact, this image type draws together both aspects addressed in the previous two chapters: communal and personal.

Shinran had lived through this era of the violent conflicts (the Genpei War, for example), political intrigue, and the destruction and restoration of Buddhist centers. A pivotal moment in Shinran's biography was his exile from Kyoto and the stripping of his monastic position around the time of the *nenbutsu* ban of 1207. By the time the *kōmyō honzon* image was first being developed, things had calmed politically. Yet, the 1250s were a time of turmoil for Shinran, dealing with his followers being geographically split mainly between the capital and the eastern regions. Compounding the challenge of managing diverse and widespread groups was the fact that his relationship with one of his sons grew increasingly agitated, coming to a head right around the time it seems the first *kōmyō honzon* was created. This *kōmyō honzon* was crafted mere decades after the Jōkyū disturbance and after Shinran was exiled. Therefore, the *kōmyō honzon*'s creation is contextualized within sectarian rivalries between Buddhist figures and communities as well as Shinran's own familial tensions.[472]

In this chapter, I argue that in the thirteenth century, the flexible and multifaceted nature of the early *kōmyō honzon* was continuously reinforced by and reinforcing the idea and power of language-bodies. I focus on this first example of a *kōmyō honzon*, a trio of paintings that form a single work held by Myōgenji 妙源寺 in Aichi Prefecture (figure 4-1), hereafter called the Myōgenji work. This work can be understood as navigating complex interactions within the early

[472] These clashes were with orthodox groups as well as among figures within the True Pure Land community. This includes the contentious relationship Shinran had with one of his sons, Zenran 善鸞 (dates unknown, active thirteenth century, alternate Jishin-bō 慈信房).

True Pure Land community under Shinran. It becomes clear that this object, like Myōe's *sanjirai* scroll, was, like the works in Chapter Two, is an example of language representation as a tool for managing potential conflict, spiritual and mundane.[473] Through looking at Shinran's background, the contemporaneous imagery that shaped the *kōmyō honzon*, and the hermeneutical possibilities, I show that the *kōmyō honzon* reveals the deployment of language-bodies in response to both personal anxieties and wider community concerns—a deployment that worked to bridge the gap of a lack of institutional support and affiliation. Because of this, the use of language-bodies in *kōmyō honzon* would continue in future centuries, eventually absorbed and standardized. Still, the Myōgenji work illustrates a new thirteenth-century image type using language-bodies, exemplifying the experimental nature of their use.

Shinran and True Pure Land Buddhism

In some ways, Shinran's background was similar to Myōe's. He was born in the Kyoto area into the Hino 日野 branch of the Fujiwara clan and his parents died while he was young.[474] This is often noted as the impetus for his entry to monastic life, with mentions of his burning desire to learn more about death and impermanence at the young age of nine in the wake of his parents' deaths. After entering monastic life as a child, he lived and trained for twenty years as a Tendai monk at the sect's center, Mt. Hiei. In 1201, at the age of twenty-nine, he undertook a retreat to Rokkakudō 六角堂 (alt. Chōhō-ji 頂法寺) in the capital, where, according to the

[473] Because very little has been written on *kōmyō honzon* in English, I will go into more detail providing a summary of the composition than is strictly necessary for my argument, but this is to ensure that even those who have not read the Japanese scholarship may gain a fuller understanding of these types of works.

[474] This background section is brief compared to the great amount of scholarship that has been done on Shinran's life, which is far too numerous to list here.

legends passed down through True Pure Land followers and temples, Shōtoku appeared to him in a vision in the guise of a beautiful woman. Instructions from this vision led him to Hōnen, whose tutelage fostered in him the *nenbutsu* way, finding promised salvation through Amida Buddha's vow in his first year as Hōnen's disciple. Although Shinran and True Pure Land followers stressed his connection to Hōnen, the precise closeness of their relationship is unclear. For example, in 1204, Hōnen had his followers sign the *Shichikajō kishōmon* 七箇条起請文 ("Seven Article Pledge") in response to the criticism leveled at Hōnen's group from the Buddhist establishment. Shinran's signature appears near the middle instead of with the group of followers with close relationships to Hōnen. Nonetheless, the connection was important and portrayed as close in the mythology that developed around Shinran among his followers.

As a culmination of tensions that had been ongoing between the orthodox Buddhist schools and Hōnen's Pure Land community, a *nenbutsu* ban (alternately called the "Jōgen 承元 persecution") was issued in 1207. Two of Hōnen's followers were executed, having been accused of illicit relations with court women under the guise of *nenbutsu* guidance, and both Hōnen and Shinran were exiled, each to different locations. Shinran was sent to Echigo province 越後国 (modern-day Niigata prefecture). Though Shinran was pardoned in 1211, he chose to go to the Kantō region (the region surrounding modern-day Tokyo) instead of returning to Kyoto. At this time, the *nenbutsu* ban was also lifted. Hōnen died in 1212 after returning to Kyoto so Shinran never saw Hōnen again after they were exiled.

In addition to following Hōnen's exclusive *nenbutsu*, Shinran's lifestyle was controversial for openly flying in the face of the established Buddhist schools. Sometime during

the first decade of the thirteenth century, Shinran married and began a family.[475] This, along with his eating of meat, was shocking to the religious establishment as both went against the Buddhist precepts for monks.[476] Shinran, and later his followers, maintained that these actions were to illustrate that Amida's salvation could be gained by people of all classes via the *nenbutsu* —laity and monastic alike—in the age of *mappō*. When he was defrocked and exiled in 1207, he took the name Gutoku 愚禿. This name, meaning "foolish and bald," may have also been a play on the contemporaneous use of the word *tokukoji* 禿居士 (shaven-headed layperson), a person neither monk nor layperson, in reference to monks who were remorseless in breaking the precepts.[477] In other words, Shinran was not only well-aware of the censure of establishment Buddhists, but at times seemed to purposefully needle them while also somewhat prosaically acknowledging his new status as, in truth, neither monk nor layman.

The nature of exile during this period, enacted to humble those being punished, meant that Shinran would have labored in the fields for his subsistence, thus coming into direct and

[475] The exact date is as yet unknown, but scholars generally think it to be sometime around the 1207 exile, give or take a few years. The details of his marriage are unclear. Indeed, it is not even clear whether he had only one wife or two to three wives. We only know for certain that he had at least a single wife, Eshinni 恵信尼 (1182-c. 1268), who bore him children (likely six). There is also a strong likelihood that Eshinni was a Buddhist nun from a family of consequence. For more information on the nun Eshinni, see: James Dobbin, *Letters of the Nun Eshinni: Images of Pure Land Buddhism in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

[476] One can imagine the reactions of Myōe and Jōkei discussed in the last chapter, both devoted to precepts revitalization.

[477] For a more in-depth look at the significance of the "Gutoku" name used by Shinran, see Takahatake Takamichi, *Young Man Shinran: a Reapprisal of Shinran's Life* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1987), 89. It is worth noting that Takahatake is a scholar-monk himself, and so his work may be understood also as within a sectarian academic path. In relation to Shinran's appellations, in addition to the argument laid forth by Takahatake, based on period terms and the use of *toku* in this way within a sutra Shinran oft-quoted, this is also very plausible because Shinran was interested in words and their meaning—which we can see in his notations of quoted sutras and commentaries. His interpretation of words and passages were, at times, relatively radical based on the characters and meanings he assigned to them.

prolonged contact with the lower echelons of society such as peasants, hunters, and fishermen.[478] Although the capital had seen much hardship during Shinran's years, the lifestyles he must have encountered in Echigo after his exile surely put hardship into a new perspective. No longer was he entrenched in the Buddhist monastic realm or even within his aristocratic connections to the Fujiwara. He then had to navigate new circumstances and likely witness firsthand, day in and day out, the ways that the class of daily laborers, pejoratively called *ge'nin* 下人 (menials, lit. "low(ly) people"), toiled. He almost certainly would have had to barter with people in these groups, trading his produce for meat, perhaps even bartering with services based on his aristocratic-monastic, educated upbringing. However, much of this is speculation based on what is known about exiles for people of his rank. There are no records of his daily life in exile, though there are some moments of retrospective reflections from his later writings.[479] Whatever Shinran experienced directly during his exile, he seems to have continued to advocate for Hōnen's exclusive *nenbutsu*. In fact, a study of his life and writings implies that his exile was formative in developing his deeper understanding of the exclusive *nenbutsu* (of other power, *tariki*) as the only way for salvation. After exile, Shinran lived in the Kantō region until 1234, continuing to build communities of exclusive *nenbutsu* followers under his own refinement of Pure Land doctrine. A while after returning to Kyoto, he discovered that his son Zenran 善鸞 (dates unknown, active thirteenth century, alternate Jishin-bō 慈信房), who had remained in the

[478] Takahatake also argues, based on extant records and knowledge of court ties, that Shinran's exile was carried out in Echigo where he had an uncle nearby and one of Hōnen's patrons had land. Takahatake, *Young Man Shinran*, 91-92.

[479] It would take a deeper study—and is better suited to a scholar of literature or psychology—but in the way that the *Mirror* texts studied by Brightwell generally gave little to no attention to the actual atrocities or traumas of contemporary conflicts, perhaps the concept of absence within Shinran's oeuvre could potentially be a *presence* (of struggle or trauma).

Kantō region, was spreading what Shinran judged to be falsehoods. In his personal correspondence to his son Zenran and others, Shinran expressed his disappointment in this and sought to address such falsehoods. Additionally, he requested that Zenran cease such actions. The situation was not resolved amicably and Shinran disowned his son in 1256, right around the time the first *kōmyō honzon* was being developed.

This understanding of Shinran's background, however brief, is key to considering the ways that he used the *nenbutsu* and related imagery, within which language embodied Buddha presence. For Shinran, the visual representations of *myōgō* were likely valuable because of their polysemic possibilities. They could, among other things, embody the Buddha Amida, promote the miraculous nature of *nenbutsu* practice, and be leveraged for spiritual authority and legitimization. With the challenges that Shinran faced individually and communally with his followers, such aspects were valuable for providing a potential outlet to navigate such challenges in a way that felt controllable and immediate—a way to nudge other power, which Shinran encouraged followers to accept fully, into action.

The Myōgenji Work: Description and Lineage Representation

The earliest extant *kōmyō honzon* work is a set of three scrolls owned by Myōgenji. Because of its early date and the later significance of *kōmyō honzon*, especially in relation to lineage histories, the Myōgenji work and its context of creation has received much scholarly attention in Japan, embodying the focus on lineage for religious authority that Mark Unno discusses as a trend in modern scholarship.[480] Scholars have dated the Myōgenji work to mid-

[480] Unno, *Shingon Refractions*, 48-52.

thirteenth century.[481] Although the work is a unique *kōmyō honzon* since it is made up of three separate hanging scrolls, based on the stylistic uniformity as well as the calligraphy in the upper and lower inscriptions, they are clearly a single production composed of three parts. The inscriptions on the upper and lower edges of the hanging scrolls are made to be read cohesively, moving in a set pattern through them (figure 4-2).[482] The central hanging scroll is slightly larger than the two flanking it. These left and right scrolls are not only nearly identical in size, but they also are mounted with the same pattern around the upper and lower inscriptions. All three scrolls have a light green silk mounting bordering the main picture plane, further contributing to their cohesiveness as a single work.

The central scroll (figure 4-3), being the largest, has an emphasized importance despite having the most simplified composition. Shining gold paint (*kindei* 金泥) set against a dark pigment brings the attention directly to the nine-character *myōgō*: *namu fukashigi kōnyorai* 南无不可思議光如来 (Homage to the Tathāgatha of Inconceivable Light).[483] This *myōgō* sits atop a lotus blossom, luxuriously painted and carefully colored to the current Song-dynasty trends. The golden characters interact in a physical way with the lotus. The characters seem to have a weight and physicality. The *myōgō* does not simply float above the blossoming pedestal, but sits firmly upon it. The text is represented as a physical body that interacts with other objects according to the laws of nature, creating a shadow. In this way, these words that could be a focus of mental

[481] I will discuss this dating with more detail shortly.

[482] Multiple scholars have pointed this out. A detailed description of this can be found in: Tsuda Tetsuei, "*Kōmyō honzon kō*," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 378 (2003): 61-106.

[483] It may be of interest to note that of the extant *myōgō* papers written by Shinran, to be discussed later in this chapter, none were the nine-character *myōgō*. Also, the painting technique employed here is similar to a depiction of Shàndǎo discussed in Chapter Two. Study of the *myōgō* character, particularly the lines used to outline the characters, shows that the black ink was applied on top of gold.

thought or orally spoken are situated within the physical realm—made clear by the shading underneath the final character 来. The characters' golden color further perpetuates the phrase's representation as a physical body—indeed as a buddha body.[484] Ninety-one undulating gold lines, now relatively faint, radiate out from the Myōgenji work's *myōgō*.[485] In its original appearance, whether shown in daylight or seen by flickering firelight, the golden characters would have given this language-body a shining look with the rays of gold creating a sense that the sacred light was radiating outward to permeate the surrounding space—perhaps even to envelop the viewer.[486] This central scroll has only a single subject, but it nonetheless would have commanded the viewer's attention.

The left scroll (figure 4-4) contains many more subjects, depicting the continental figures of the True Pure Land lineage. At the bottom is a triad of bodhisattvas: the bodhisattva Seishi 勢至 (Skt. Mahāsthāmaprāpta) in the center with Seshin 天親 (alternately 世親, Skt. Vasubandhu, fl. 4th-5th centuries CE) and Ryūju 竜樹 (Skt. Nāgārjuna, c. 150-250 CE) bodhisattvas on the right and left, respectively.[487] The group of monks situated above this triad are recognized in Japan as the patriarchs of True Pure Land Buddhism. The two figures directly above the bodhisattva triad are seated in chairs that differ from the five figures at the top. These two figures

[484] Recall the discussion of golden buddha body/ies in Chapter Two.

[485] No other extant *kōmyō honzon* has this number of light rays coming from its central enthroned *myōgo*.

[486] This is a difficult effect to capture in photographs.

[487] Figures in the work are identified with inscribed cartouches. The character combination 天親 for Seshin is used in the Myōgenji work, older works, or works thought to be within the same lineage of copying the older works. Later versions of *kōmyō honzon* generally use 世親, a combination of characters used for Seshin in Song-dynasty China. Shinran wrote about the significance of Seshin and Ryūju in his *Hymns of the Pure Land Masters* (*Kōso wasan* 高僧和讃). For the English version, see Shinran, *The Collected Works of Shinran*, trans. and ed. Dennis Hirota (Kyoto: Jodo shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1997), 1:361-66. For the original Japanese, see T2651_.83.0660a16-T2651_.83.0664b23.

are, as indicated by the cartouche inscriptions beside them, on the left Bodhiruchi (died 527, J. Bodairushi 菩提流支) and on the right Tánluán 曇鸞 (476-542, J. Donran).[488] Whereas the five figures above sit upon black chairs with armrests and backs that are straight, these two monks closest to the bodhisattvas sit upon more ornate chairs. The painted details representing the chairs' delicately carved motifs and the shape of the chairs' components are themselves different, curving in ways reminiscent of arabesque-like clouds. Above Tánluán is Shàndǎo, who is recognizable from the half-gold of his robes—which had become his standard iconography by the mid-thirteenth century. To the left of Shàndǎo is Dàochuò 道綽 (562-645, J. Dōshaku).[489] The two figures just above are Huáigǎn 懷感 (died c. 689, J. Ekan) on the left and Shàokāng 少康 (died 805, J. Shōkō) on the right. At the peak of the group depicted on this scroll is Fǎzhào 法照 (9th century, J. Hosshō).

Viewing the monk selection in the left scroll in conversation with textual works by both Hōnen and Shinran can contribute to our understanding of the scroll's composition and the ways that visual works could perform important labor in legitimization. The above-listed monks, with the exception of Bodhiruchi and Fǎzhào, were put forth by Hōnen as the Five Pure Land patriarchs (as discussed earlier) in his *Ruiju jōdo gosoden* 類聚淨土五祖傳 (*Collected Biographies of the Five Pure Land Patriarchs*).[490] In his text *Senchakushū*, Hōnen discussed the

[488] Tánluán developed the six-syllable *nenbutsu*.

[489] The importance of Shàndǎo to Japanese Pure Land practice has already been expounded upon in this dissertation. Dàochuò supposedly turned to the practice of Pure Land Buddhism over all other practices upon reading an inscription by Tánluán. His contribution to Pure Land Buddhism lies in distinguishing two Buddhist paths: the holy path for monastics and the Pure Land path which relied solely on Amida Buddha's power. Significantly, he also discussed Pure Land practice as especially beneficial for *mappō*.

[490] Hōnen, "*Ruiju jōdo gosoden,*" ed. Ishii Kyōdō, *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen Shōnin zenshū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1955), 84357.

various prior compositions of Pure Land lineages.[491] In one of these prior formations, Bodhiruchi was included with the five that Hōnen featured in *Ruiju jōdo gosoden.*[492] Shinran discussed various Pure Land masters in his writings, but in *Kōsō wasan* 高僧和讃 (*Hymns of the Pure Land Masters*) he focused on seven masters as the main figures of the True Pure Land tradition: Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Tánluán, Dàochuò, Shàndǎo, Genshin, and Hōnen.[493] He also featured these seven in the *Shōshin nenbutsu ge* 正信念仏偈 (*Gāthā on True Faith in the nenbutsu*, often referred to via the shortened title *Shōshinge*) within *Jōdo monrui jushō* 浄土文類聚鈔 (*Passages on the Pure Land Way*).[494] Due to these two Shinran texts, these are the seven figures that scholars and practitioners alike have accepted as the patriarchs of the True Pure Land lineage. However, it seems that the Myōgenji work diverges from the set of continental patriarchs suggested by the writings of both Hōnen and Shinran. This could, of course, be due to factors such as local traditions. It could also indicate some conceptual changes for Shinran, if not in the main figures of a set lineage, then in how to most convincingly portray a lineage to viewers. The *Kōsō wasan* was completed in 1248, though with slight revisions later.[495] The Myōgenji work

---

[491] Hōnen, *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū*, 310-49.

[492] T.2608_83.2b28-c13; Hōnen, *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū,* 313; see the similar discussion in *Gyakushu seppū* 逆修說法, *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū,* 263-66. Scholars such as Robert Sharf have discussed the significance of both Hōnen and Shinran in establishing the lasting Pure Land lineages, as seen, for example, in *Ruiju jōdo gosoden*. He even states that, were it not for Hōnen and Shinran, there would be no concept of a lineage of Chinese Pure Land masters. Robert Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism and Chan/Pure Land Syncretism in Medieval China," *T'oung Pao* 88, no. 4-5 (June, 2003): 282-331.

[493] For the English, see Dennis Hirota, et al. *The Collected Works of Shinran* (Kyoto: Jodo shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1997), 359-93. For the Japanese, see Shinran, *Kōsō wasan*, T2651_.83.0660a16-0664b23.

[494] The *Shōshinge* starts at T2646_.83.0600a06. For the English translation, see Hirota, *Collected Works*, 304-09. There are various old manuscript copies of this text. A copy of a 1309 manuscript text likely preserves the oldest version of the text, but a copy done by Rennyo 蓮如 (1415-1499) in 1434 is the oldest extant version with a firm date.

[495] One early manuscript was transmitted to the Takada branch 高田派 of True Pure Land Buddhism. Known as the Senjuji-bon 専修寺本, it was long thought to be an autograph manuscript, however early twentieth-century research

was conceived sometime in the next ten years—likely around the year 1255, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

There is a consensus among scholars that Shinran was involved in the conception and creation of the Myōgenji *kōmyō honzon*. What, then, prompted the selection of main lineage figures from the continent that differed from those upon whom the *Kōsō wasan* focused? We may never know the answer to this question, but it prompts some stimulating discussion on how written and visual narratives overlap and diverge, both in representation and use. Likely, the answer lies among a combination of different factors, but perhaps the most practical answer has to do with the use of this Myōgenji work. As various scholars have pointed out, the True Pure Land works of Shinran's time were made while he was proselytizing around eastern provinces and, later, the Kyoto area. As such, portability was an important aspect of True Pure Land imagery. While the Myōgenji work is a bit large, the scrolls could still be rolled up and transported with relative ease compared to, for example, the sculptures discussed in Chapter Two.[496] The Myōgenji work was likely used to supplement sermons on True Pure Land Buddhism, providing faces for prominent figures who theorized about Pure Land Buddhism. Not only that, it provided a visual lineage through which *nenbutsu* believers could trace their practice all the way back to India, the land of the Historical Buddha. Bodhiruchi, as a monk from Northern India who was active in China and known for translating Buddhist texts including the *Amida-kyō*, filled the gap between the figures of South Asia (Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu) and

revealed that it was a copy with only the cover done in Shinran's hand. There is also a woodblock edition of Shinran's major hymns that was published in 1473 by Rennyo. See: *Teihon Shinran shōnin zenshū*, vol. 2 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1969); *Shinshū shōgyō zensho* (SSZ), vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1964); *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, vol. 83, *Shinran shū, Nichiren shū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1964); and *Shinran shōnin shinseki shūsei*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1973).

[496] Various scholars such as Tsuda Tetsuei and Andō Fumihito, for example, discuss portability in relation to Buddhist objects in general and Japanese scholars, these two included, have outlined the portability of objects such as the Myōgenji work specifically.

the monks in China. In this way, his inclusion in the lineage of the Myōgenji work legitimized the transmission of Pure Land teachings from the Buddhist heartland to China. Tánluán, Dàochuò, Shàndǎo, and Huáigǎn together provide continuous figures from Bodhiruchi's time until Huáigǎn's death. There are some relatively slight gaps between the lives of Huáigǎn and Shàokāng and then between Shàokāng and Fǎzhào, but presumably Shàokāng is representative of eighth-century Pure Land Buddhism in China while Fǎzhào is the ninth-century link. Therefore, the selected figures visually create a logical argument for a continuous Dharma inheritance for True Pure Land Buddhism.

Like the left scroll, the right scroll (figure 4-5) portrays a lineage of Pure Land Buddhist figures, though from Japan. At the bottom is the standing figure of Prince Shōtoku with four smaller attendant figures around him: Imoko 妹子 (Shōtoku's envoy to China), Umako 馬子 (head of the Soga clan, with which Shōtoku was allied), Hakka 学帢, and Hyeja 恵慈 (Shōtoku's tutor of Buddhism from Goguryeo).[497] Directly above Shōtoku is the monk Genshin, seated on a raised platform with a curved backrest. Again, there is a gap between the death of Fǎzhào and the birth of Genshin, though similarly to the approach to gaps above, Genshin is still a tenth-century figure in relation to Fǎzhào's ninth-century representation. Despite such gaps or the much earlier life of Shōtoku depicted below Genshin, Shōtoku is further a key bridge between the Chinese patriarchs and Genshin, or rather Japan in general. Shōtoku was believed to have been in China and India in previous births and, as mentioned earlier in this dissertation, he is an early example of Pure Land practice in Japan. In the case of True Pure Land lineage as shown on the Myōgenji scrolls, Genshin represents a turning point where significant Pure Land practice was more

[497] Shōtoku was a high-ranking member of the royal family. He is credited with savvy political action and, though he was a historical figure, as mentioned in Chapter Two, he is also semi-legendary as many tales associated with him are apocryphal and/or exaggerated.

extensively promoted in Japanese monastic settings, especially for his composition of *Ōjōyōshū*. In the Myōgenji work, Genshin is the only figure among the Japanese monks depicted with a colorful *kesa*, creating a visible link to the Chinese patriarchs on the left scroll and further emphasizing Genshin's significant role as a transitional figure in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. Indeed, he was the first in Japan to compose a lengthy, comprehensive treatise on the Pure Land and related practices. Moving in a straight line up from the figure of Genshin is the figure of Hōnen. The two other monks Shinkū 信空 (1146-1228) and Shōgaku 聖覚 (1167-1235) sit respectively to the left and right below Hōnen, creating a diamond shape of the four Japanese monks. Shinran, smaller in size than the rest of the monks, sits respectfully behind Hōnen looking to him within the picture plane much as we may imagine he did in life. Visually, this embodies Shinran's self-presentation in relation to the lineage of founding fathers within True Pure Land.[498] In his writings, he portrays himself as their humble follower, propagating their teachings, rather than in the same league as them, next in the lineage of patriarchs:

> Thus, I, Shinran, have not one disciple. What is it I teach that that I should speak of "disciples"? Since all are disciples of [Amida] Nyorai, all are fellow travelers [along the path] [*dōgyō*].
>
> そのゆへ親鸞は弟子一人ももたず、なにごとををしへて弟子といふべきぞや。みな如来の御弟子なればみなともに同行なり。[499]

The left and right scrolls combined, therefore, illustrate a lineage of Buddhist Pure Land masters, stemming from the bodhisattvas through to Japan first via general Buddhist practice and then through practices that became increasingly Pure Land-based (Genshin and then Hōnen). This visual lineage and the care given to crafting a logic of continuance through it reveal a core

[498] Hiramatsu Reizō, SSZ 2:185.

[499] English translation is based on, with adjustments, Michael Solomon, "Kinship and the Transmission of Religious Charisma: The Case of Honganji," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 33-3 (May, 1974): 406. For the Japanese, see SSZ 3:9.

concern for Shinran at the time the Myōgenji work was made: spiritual authority through Dharma inheritance.

Dating the Myōgenji work

Situating the work's date of creation would then give us an entrée into considering these concerns in a more specific context. Just as the cartouche inscriptions identify the figures depicted throughout the Myōgenji *kōmyō honzon*, the text inscriptions provide essential clues for dating the work. The inscriptions on the tops and bottoms as well as those identifying inscribed cartouches throughout the three scrolls were written by the monk Shinbutsu 真仏 (1209-1258), one of Shinran's close disciples. These Myōgenji inscriptions have been studied closely in relation to confirmed sacred teachings transcribed by Shinbutsu, with the characters of both carefully compared. These graphological comparisons have led Japanese scholars to decisively attribute the written inscriptions of the Myōgenji work to Shinbutsu.[500] Since Shinbutsu died in 1258, it is clear that this set of scrolls was completed before then. The written cartouches for the triad at the bottom of the left scroll also support this hypothesis of the work dating to pre-1258—in fact, according to scholars such as Tsuda Tetsuei and Andō Fumihito, they point to a date that is no later than 1256.[501] In 1256, Shinran wrote in the opening of *Nyūshutsu nimongeju* 入出二門偈頌 (*Hymn of the Two Gateways of Entrance and Emergence*) about the newer characters 世

[500] This is discussed in various publications, some relatively briefly and some in more detail. Tsuda states that the handwriting is undeniably Shinbutsu's. Tsuda, "*Kōmyō honzon kō*," 63. For more on Shinbutsu and texts attributed to him via the Takada Shinshū branch, see *Eiin Takada koten*, vol. 1 *Shinbutsu Shōnin shū* (Tsu-shi: Shinshu Takadaha Shumuin, 1996). See also Kevin Carr, "The Lives of Shōtoku: Narrative Art and Ritual in Medieval Japan" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2005). Also, on Shinbutsu graphological studies, see Andō Fumihito, "*Shin hakken no Shinbutsu shosha seikyō ni tsuite*," *Indo Gaku Bukkyō Gaku Kenkyū* 58, no. 2 (2010): 1092-97.

[501] See bibliography for work by these two scholars.

親 used to translate Vasubandhu and write the name Seshin: “In old translations, his name was translated Tenjin [天親, Ch. Tiānqīn], which is inaccurate; in new translations, Seshin [世親, Ch. Shìqīn] is regarded as correct. 旧訳天親此是訛。新訳世親是為正。”[502] Because the Myōgenji work uses the older characters of 天親, Tsuda, Andō, and others convincingly date this *kōmyō honzon* to prior to 1256.

From these points as well as analyses of the texts in the upper and lower sections of the scrolls, numerous arguments have further narrowed window of creation for the Myōgenji work. The aforementioned Andō, giving one such argument, presents a much more specific conclusion that the Myōgenji work was conceived between the second day of the sixth month of 1255 and the twenty-eighth day of the third month of 1256.[503] Other scholars have presented other dates that overlap Andō’s suggestion, including Tsuda Tetsuei. One example of evidence supporting more specific dating can be found in the central scroll’s inscriptions. In the lower inscription, which is where one would start overall in reading the texts, the verses are taken from the aforementioned *Shōshinge*, recorded in the second scroll of Shinran’s *Ken jōdo shinjitsu kyōgyōshō monrui* 顕浄土真実教行証文類 (*The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, hereafter abbreviated *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証).[504]

The dating of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* has been a topic of much study. Traditionally, this work has been dated to 1224 because of a line in its final chapter which mentions Gennin 元仁 1

[502] For the English, see Hirota, *Collected Works*, 623. I have changed the romanization. For the Japanese, see T2649_.83.0654a25-6.

[503] Andō Fumihito, “*Myōgenji hon ‘Kōmyō honzon’ no kōsei to sono igi*,” *Inbutsuken, Indo gaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 63 no. 2 (2015), 574-75.

[504] Tsuda, “*Kōmyō honzon kō*,” 64. For the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, see T832646. For English translations, see Hirota, *Collected Works*, vol. 1 or Shinran, *Kyōgyōshinshō: on Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment*, trans. Inagaki Hisao (Berkeley, California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2003).

(1224). However, twentieth-century scholars have presented compelling arguments that the *Kyōgyōshinshō* was completed after Shinran's return to Kyoto in 1234. First, there is no evidence of literary production from Shinran for fifteen years after his return until 1248. This argument posits that those fifteen years were devoted to the completion of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, especially in light of Shinran's usually enthusiastic production of both original works and manuscript copies of works he admired. Secondly, it seems that the first copy of this work did not occur until the year 1247.[505] The earliest extant copy done by one of Shinran's Kantō disciples dates to 1255. It seems unlikely that an earlier Kantō copy would not have been made had the original been completed during Shinran's time in the Kantō region. Until around the mid-twentieth century, this "Kyoto theory," in opposition to the "Kantō theory," became standardly accepted with various attempts at reconciling this theory with the 1224 date. The surviving manuscript done in Shinran's hand underwent scientific studies of the paper and calligraphy in 1952. The results of these studies pointed to it being a copy of an earlier draft rather than a first draft. They indicated that Shinran likely made this version around the age of sixty-three and continued to make revisions on it until the age of eighty.[506] Because available evidence seems to validate different points of both the Kantō and Kyoto theories, it is likely some mix of the two: a draft of *Kyōgyōshinshō* was probably made while Shinran was active in the Kantō region; he then seems to have worked to develop this draft during the years after his return to Kyoto. More recently, the scholarly community leans toward understanding the text's dating in this nuanced way.

[505] This copy is no longer extant, but copies of the copy mention that Shinran's cousin and disciple copied from Shinran's own manuscript.

[506] These studies can be accessed in more detail through a variety of publications (see bibliography). A good outline of the dating arguments regarding the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in English may be found in Hirota, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, 11-13. For a Japanese summary, see *Teihon Shinran Shōnin zenshū* vol. 1 (Kyoto: Hōzōnkan, 1969), 400-14. In short, Shinran's calligraphic style is broken up into specific stages of his life and the transformation of his handwriting can be relatively easily traced, thus making graphology one way that Shinran's writings have been dated—as here.

No matter where "the original" was composed or when it was started, the firmest example of an early copy is the 1247 manuscript. In the interest of dating the Myōgenji work, though, the 1255 manuscript copy appears to be the most relevant because it was for his Kantō community, where the *kōmyō honzon* triptych was made. Although I will not go into detail here, this narrowed date range that both Andō and Tsuda provide for the Myōgenji work's production are supported through comparisons between the Myōgenji work, the 1255 manuscript, and Shinran's own inscriptions on the Anjō scroll.[507] Essentially, their arguments center on the fact that the Myōgenji work could not have been completed prior to 1255 because it seems to cite the Kantō version of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* manuscript. And it must have been created prior to the point when Shinran wrote the *Nyūshutsu nimon geju* in 1256. Thus, the inscriptions give us a very specific window for the Myōgenji scrolls' creation.

Confluence of Images Within the Composition of the Myōgenji *Kōmyō Honzon*

Thus dated firmly to the mid-thirteenth century, the Myōgenji work was innovative in pulling together aspects from visual culture that surrounded Shinran and other Buddhists during this period: mandala—in particular, the *sesshu fusha mandara* 摂取不捨曼荼羅 (all-embracing, forsaking none *mandara*), Shōtoku imagery, images of significant monks or patriarchs, and standalone *myōgō*. Historian Chiba Jōryū, for example, mentions that *kōmyō honzon* combine the pre-existing images of important monks and Prince Shōtoku as well as imagery of *myōgō*.[508] This combinatory approach to creating the *kōmyō honzon* indicates a strong familiarity with

[507] The *Anjō no goei* 安城御影 (Anjō image) scroll is a portrait of Shinran painted during his lifetime in 1255 (right around the conception and creation of the *kōmyō honzon*).

[508] This and the following discussion of Chiba's essay draw from: Chiba Jōryū, "*Benjutsu myōtai shō ni okeru*," Hiramatsu Reizō, ed. *Shinshū jūhō shūei*, (Kyoto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1987), 203.

Buddhist imagery of the first half of the thirteenth century—which is, perhaps, unsurprising when considering Shinran's aristocratic familial connections and the seemingly relatively sophisticated social status of his wife. Further, for the purposes of this dissertation, this sampling suggests also that visual aspects were considered and incorporated for their usefulness in relation to the community needs. In light of this, the fact that the central component of *kōmyō honzon* compositions, around which everything else revolved, ended up being an enthroned *nenbutsu* phrase is significant. While each component contributed a different type of potential function, as I will outline in this section, the language-body was nonetheless the linchpin.

In a short section of his overall essay, Chiba foregrounds the importance of mandalas in general as a main aspect of the Kamakura Buddhist world and he specifically connects *kōmyō honzon* to the s*esshu fusha mandara*.[509] Mandalas had expanded in meaning and became popularized across various Buddhist sects since the version introduced in the early ninth century, and *kōmyō honzon* are a part of this longer history of Japanese mandala. An exploration of the *sesshu fusha mandara*, works made by Hōnen's followers and likely facilitated or prompted by Hōnen himself, can illumine potential motivations for some of the compositional choices in Shinran's *kōmyō honzon*. The *sesshu fusha mandara* seems to have been an illustration of Hōnen's belief in the benefits of practicing the *nenbutsu* to the exclusion of other practices such as those promoted by established Buddhist sects. Because of the *sesshu fusha mandara*'s

[509] Contextualizing Chiba's assertion somewhat are the brief discussions of mandala in the history of Japanese visual culture from this dissertation's Chapters One and Three. Because the term *mandara* eventually encompassed much more than the traditional *maṇḍala* that had been imported from the mainland, scholars such as Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis have argued that the use of *mandara* to refer to Japanese works is thus more accurate than *maṇḍala* or mandala, especially in the medieval periods. However, for ease of reading and because mandala/*mandara* are not the focus of this dissertation, I will continue to use mandala in this section, except when using the official descriptive name for the Hōnen mandala (*sesshu fusha mandara*).

controversial nature at the time, none of these works survive today and we now rely on written records to discern its visual appearance.

One of the records that gives an idea of how these mandalas looked is, ironically, the petition that in part led to the *nenbutsu* ban and the exile of Shinran and Hōnen. The record is also a physical embodiment of the acrimony that likely resulted in the destruction of this mandala type. This *Kōfukuji sōjō* 興福寺奏状 (Kōfukuji Petition) was written by the monk Jōkei (discussed in the previous chapter) and submitted by the Kōfukuji monks in the tenth month of Genkyū 元久 2 (1205). It provided the so-called "Nine Articles of Error" 過失九か条 as part of the reasoning for the prohibition of Hōnen's exclusive *nenbutsu* practice. The second article in this outline of offences pertains to the *sesshu fusha mandara*:

> Article 2. *The Error of Designing New Images for Worship*
> In a number of places recently people have been trifling with a kind of pictorial representation known popularly as "The Mandala Embracing All and Forsaking None" (*sesshu fusha mandara*). In front of the Tathāgatha Amida is a large group of people. The Buddha emits rays of light (*kōmyō*), some of which zig-zag to shine to the side while others go out to return to the point of origin. Around a group of scholars of the exoteric sects and Shingon practitioners are others cultivating their own "roots of merit" (*zengon*), holding various sutras and reciting sacred incantations. But the light shines only on the company of those performing the Sole-practice Calling on the Name of the Buddha [exclusive *nenbutsu*]. Those who see representations of the hells fear committing sins, but those who see this mandala regret practicing good works. That is generally the tenor of this teaching. And the Shōnin [上人, holy priest, referring to Hōnen] says: "The statement that Amida will embrace all and forsake none who call upon the Buddha's name is in the scriptures. I am entirely without blame." But it is unreasonable to claim that if a person, in his single-minded practice of other good actions, were never to call upon Amida, his sincere body would thereby be excluded from the rays which truly embrace all. [By his serious commitment he, in effect,] already delights in the Western Paradise and also calls upon Amida. So why should he be alienated from the light rays of great compassion merely becaues he follows other routes to the same goal?
>
> 第二図新像失。近来諸所翫一画図。世号摂取不捨曼荼羅。弥陀如来之前有衆多人。仏放光明、其種々光、或狂而横照、或来而返本。是顕宗学生・真言行者為本、其外持諸経誦神呪、造自余善根之人也。其光所照、唯専修念仏一類也。見地獄絵像之者、恐作罪障、見此曼陀羅之者、悔修諸善。教仏之趣多以此類也。上人

> 云、念仏衆生摂取不捨者経文也、我全無過云々。此理不然、偏修余善全不念弥陀者、実可漏摂取光。既欣西方亦念弥、陀寧以余行故隔大悲光明哉。[510]

From this passage, we can understand a few points about the appearance of the *sesshu fusha mandara.* The mandala depicted a central Amida Buddha, from whom rays of light emanated. The image also contained various Buddhist practitioners, including the followers of exclusive *nenbutsu* as well as those that were presumably associated with the orthodox Buddhist schools of Kyoto and Nara. In the 1212 *Zaijarin* 摧邪輪 (*Tract for Destroying Heretical Views*), Myōe, like Jōkei and the Kōfukuji monks five years prior, also scathingly mentioned the *sesshu fusha mandara*:

> Provisional imagery revealed this intention; [the image] was called the "embracing all, forsaking none" mandala [*sesshu fusha mandara*]. The center of the image was Amida Nyorai. Emanating rays of light shone in all directions and around the perimeter of the image. There were all sorts of people, laity and monastic [alike]. The laity chanting the name [*nenbutsu*] received this shining light. The monastic community of people who had [performed] various good deeds did not have [their] darkness illuminated. This image was here and there and everywhere. Unfeeling fools and so forth all fell for it…
>
> 仮図像顕此意趣、名摂取不捨曼荼羅。中央図阿弥陀如来。光明照十方、周通図在家出家諸人、在家称名諸人受光照、出家雑善行人、不蒙照触。此像処処遍満。無情愚人等、悉皆信伏之。[511]

The iconography of these *sesshu fusha mandara* seems to have been based on a line in the *Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra* (J. abbrev. *Kanmuryōjukyō*): "Each secondary mark emits eighty-four thousand rays of light; each light shines universally upon the lands of the ten directions, embracing, and not forsaking, those who are mindful of the Buddha. 一一好中有八万四千光明

[510] With very slight changes, Robert E. Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism: a Minority Report* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1987), 76-7. For the Japanese, see *Kōfukuji sōjō*, in *Kamakura ibun komonjo hen* vol. 3, ed. Takeuchi Rizō, 257b-262a. This specific quote is on page 258.

[511] For the Japanese, see Myōe, "*Zaijarin*," *Kamakura kyū Bukkyō*. Edited by Kamata Shigeo and Tanaka Hisao. *Nihon shisō taikei* 15 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), 43-106. Recall the discussion of Myōe's *Zaijarin* and *Zaijarin shōgonki* from the last chapter.

。一々光明遍照十方世界、念仏衆生摂取不捨。[512] The descriptions in these various textual sources are consistent with one another, giving modern scholars a relatively reliable idea of the lost mandala type's composition.[513]

According to these textual sources, we can conclude that some aspects of the *sesshu fusha mandara* were incorporated into *kōmyō honzon*—for example, the rays of Amida's light spreading out in all directions to encompass followers.[514] However, in the *kōmyō honzon*, orthodox Nara and Kyoto practitioners and monks have been removed and only True Pure Land patriarchs remain, eliminating the polemics against other practices. By shifting to the *kōmyō honzon* iconography, Shinran was able to promote Hōnen and Pure Land Buddhism while discarding overtly contentious elements, an action which surely contributed to the continuing existence and use of *kōmyō honzon* unlike the lost *sesshu fusha mandara*. This negotiation of contention strongly implies that Shinran was navigating, through images, the particular challenges he and his followers faced as self-identified inheritors of Hōnen's Pure Land practice.

Another mandala antecedent from the early thirteenth century could also be the *sanji sanbōrai* hanging scroll discussed in the last chapter. Andō briefly posits that the *sanjirai* scroll was an antecedent for Shinran's *kōmyō honzon*, making connections to Myōe's two texts on the the paired practice and painting.[515] There is currently no conclusive evidence that Shinran would have read these texts or seen the *sanjirai* painting, but the possibility exists, especially when one

[512] For the English, see Inagaki Hisao and Harold Stewart, *The Three Pure Land Sutras: a Study and Translation from Chinese* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1995), 333. For the Japanese, see T0365_.12.0343b25-26.

[513] There is also a mention of the *sesshu fusha mandara* in the 1283 Buddhist text, *Shasekishū* 沙石集 (*Sand and Pebbles*).

[514] Although the oldest extant work does not show the rays of light extending to the important True Pure Land figures (but rather implies it), all of the later examples save one depict the figures explicitly in the radiance of Amida's light.

[515] Andō Fumihito, "*Myōgō honzon seiritsu no haikei ni tsuite*," *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 87 (2014): 355.

considers that Shinran was very aware of Hōnen's critics and addressed them through his own writings. As someone who had written two treatises that refuted the teachings Hōnen laid out in his *Senchakushū*, Myōe was clearly one of those critics. In addition to displaying familiarity with the written critiques of Hōnen, Shinran was likely also aware of the visual cultures associated with such groups. From his own experienced consequences of exclusive *nenbutsu* practice, his networks, and the fact that Shinran grew up and lived in Kyoto for thirty-five years, Shinran almost certainly saw *sesshu fusha mandara* and likely at least heard about Myōe's *sanjirai* image, created in response to Hōnen. In fact, a major point of difference from the *sesshu fusha mandara* was a shift in how Amida was portrayed in *kōmyō honzon*. Since period documents seem to consistently note when a painting is a text-icon, from the descriptions of the *sesshu fusha mandara* we can conclude that Amida was represented in a figural form. The textual form of Amida with the *kōmyō honzon* could well have been drawing in part on the *sanjirai* scroll as well as other works.[516] It seems that the development of the *kōmyō honzon*, while incorporating aspects of the *sesshu fusha mandara*, occurred in conversation with other contemporaneous works and concepts.

Another type of image incorporated within *kōmyō honzon* is Shōtoku Taishi imagery. Images of Shōtoku were circulating during the thirteenth century in various contexts, including Pure Land communities. As explained in Chapter Two, Shōtoku was considered, especially from sectarian perspectives, as one of the first adherents of Pure Land practice in Japan. Medieval texts on the lineage of Pure Land practices trace back to Shōtoku, connecting the newly-forming sects to this semi-legendary historical figure positioned as the father of Buddhism in Japan.

[516] Remember that among the works recorded as being Myōe's chapel in the first half of the thirteenth century, there was a hanging scroll of a text-icon of Amida.

While general veneration of Shōtoku was initiated soon after his death, his cult status grew starting in the eleventh century—partially resulting from use of textual and visual works in the proselytization of Shōtoku veneration.[517] This use of images in Shōtoku veneration created a strong following of Shōtoku among a widespread base during the medieval period.[518] By the thirteenth century, Shōtoku had been canonized as the founder of Buddhism in Japan. Following this widespread view of Shōtoku, Shinran's writings situate Shōtoku's contributions as enabling Buddhism to be propagated to Japan. For example, Shinran composed a collection of hymns in 1255 (around the time the Myōgenji work was made) dedicated to Shōtoku, *Kōtaishi Shōtoku hōsan* 皇太子聖徳奉讃 (*Hymns in Praise of Imperial Prince Shōtoku*), which enumerated Shōtoku's many contributions to Buddhism, but also connected him to India by mentioning Shōtoku's previous incarnations.[519] As seen in *kōmyō honzon*, this belief was presented visually. Furthermore, it was Shōtoku's appearance in a dream that led Shinran to Hōnen and exclusive *nenbutsu* practice.

Popular and oft-used depictions of Shōtoku are taken from episodes in his biography: Shōtoku as a two-year-old infant, the "filial pious" (*kyōyō* 孝養) Shōtoku shown as a youthful sixteen-year-old, the preaching prince as a thirty-five-year-old, and in the guise of "Prince

[517] For an in-depth study of Shōtoku veneration and imagery, see Kevin Carr, *Plotting the Prince: Shōtoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012). Ikumi Kaminishi also notes that records indicate the use of Shōtoku painting and sculpture during the eleventh century for proselytization. Ikumi Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist propaganda and etoki storytelling in Japan* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

[518] Abe Yasurō, "*Shōtoku Taishi shinkō*," in *Shōtoku Taishi jiten*, ed. Ishida Naotoyo (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1997), 434.

[519] Nabata Ōjun, *Shinran wasan-shū*, Iwanami bunko no. 318-3 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1976), 231. For the *Hymns* in English, see Hirota, *Collected Works*, 433-47.

Regent" (*sesshō Taishi* 摂政太子).[520] In the Myōgenji work, the "filial" Shōtoku is depicted from his biography as a youth attending to his dying father, mainly signified by his hair bound in two bundles around his ears. He holds a ritual censer (*egōro* 柄香炉). This image of Shōtoku at age sixteen emphasizes the filial episode in his legendary biography. Although we do not know specifically why this particular Shōtoku type was selected for the Myōgenji work, it is tempting to consider it in light of the events occurring within Shinran's life at the time, particularly in relation to Shinran's children's devotion to True Pure Land and his contentious relationship with one of his sons. Shinran, being married with children, had followers who were biological inheritors of his teachings as well as devoted disciples who were not related by blood. Therefore, Dharma lineage, filiality, and this particular Buddhist community were entangled in a way that was unusual (with the "priest" having recognized, biological children) up until this point, perhaps prompting the pointed selection of a version of Shōtoku dedicated to his father.

The fact that the Myōgenji work was created circa 1255-56 also lends significance to the choice of representing Shōtoku in his filial form. This was exactly the period where issues with his son Zenran were coming to a head. A bit more than ten years after Shinran returned to Kyoto, there was strife among his Kantō True Pure Land communities. Eventually, Shinran sent Zenran to deal with this. However, after a while, in order to control such discord and to suppress rivalries, Zenran stressed his blood relation to Shinran with the implication that he had received a special transmission from his father. Shinran, finding out about such lies, repeatedly

[520] Although I do not address this further here, of note are thirteenth-century works that illustrate conceptions of Shōtoku that engage the identification of Shōtoku as a manifestation of a Buddhist deity and depictions that draw on notions of the three bodies of a buddha (see Chapter Two) through figural and text-icon representations within a single work such as a thirteenth-century painting of a Filial Shōtoku in the Fujii Saisei-kai Yūrin-kan Museum. For more on this painting, see Carr, *Plotting the Prince*, 39-41. The Shōtoku depiction types are also addressed throughout Carr's book.

remonstrated his son and, in the fifth month of 1256, Shinran finally disowned Zenran. It would not be a stretch to hypothesize that father-son relationships and filial piety would be laying heavy on Shinran's mind over the course of the *kōmyō honzon*'s creation sometime between the sixth month of 1255 and near the end of the third month of 1256, if we allow that Andō's dating is correct (and it is convincing). Due to the nature of the True Pure Land communities, the lines between Shinran's personal concerns and community concerns are somewhat blurry so, in actuality, the selection of the filial Shōtoku depiction could have referenced, for the wider community (and not just Shinran), the tensions that the Zenran incident likely wrought throughout Shinran's followers.

Even beyond possible associations with the Zenran incident, the inclusion of Shōtoku in the *kōmyō honzon* also indicates a knowledge of and interaction with trends in Buddhist painting. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Shōtoku veneration had spread widely even among laypeople. As with his popularity and cult followings, the thirteenth century saw a rise in paintings of Shōtoku.[521] A thirteenth-century painting of Shōtoku Taishi held by Ganshōji 願照寺 depicts a standing Shōtoku with six small attendants seated in front of him (figure 4-7). The Shōtoku figures in both the Myōgenji and Ganshōji paintings are standing, hair flowing while holding a ritual censor. Although the number of attendants differs between the two works, the same four figures depicted in the Myōgenji scrolls are shown in the Ganshōji scroll. Additionally, later *kōmyō honzon* also illustrate six rather than four attendants. Variations in the Shōtoku section are one facet of the formative nature of early *kōmyō honzon*. This Ganshōji scroll shows us one example of a genre of imagery that was contemporaneous and adapted as an

[521] There are a many extant thirteenth-century Shōtoku images. One such example is a painting now owned by the Freer Sackler Galleries (figure 4-6).

element of the *kōmyō honzon* in a similar manner to compositional aspects from, for example, *sesshu fusha mandara.* With the strong legacy Shōtoku had within True Pure Land (courtesy of Shinran), the use of his image within the Myōgenji work in a multifaceted way, as I will expand upon later in this chapter, is just one more example of the intentional combination of contemporaneous imagery visually situated under the sacrality of a text-icon.

Portraits of significant monks functioned in a similar way as Shōtoku imagery for newer Buddhist communities like the True Pure Land group: to provide a lineage and legitimize their Dharma inheritance.[522] The *kōmyō honzon*'s use of continental patriarch portraits, for example, recalls the paintings of the Five Pure Land patriarchs that developed earlier in the century, as discussed in Chapter Two. By this point, there were also diptych portrait paintings pairing Shàndǎo with Hōnen as central patriarchs of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. *Kōmyō honzon* imagery absorbed this patriarch imagery as part of the composition. The parallel construction of patriarchs on either side seems to expand upon the dual Shàndǎo-Hōnen mandala, but in this instance each side (continental and domestic) is expanded from a single figure to many, thus firmly establishing the True Pure Land community within a longer history of Pure Land practice. The use of portraiture was crucial to the True Pure Land community, especially with the tensions with Hōnen's other followers as well as orthodox Buddhist groups.

The central part of *kōmyō honzon,* the *myōgō*, was no less in dialogue with contemporaneous imagery, though within the Myōgenji work its polysemic nature was further enhanced. As previously mentioned, there was already a strong practice of enthroning written characters as buddha bodies, in many cases collapsing sacred word (teachings) and buddha in

[522] In the century following the Myōgenji work, *ekeizu* 絵系図 (portrait lineages) would be used in proselytization, particularly by Ryōgen 了源 (1295-1336), originally a Kantō disciple of True Pure Land Buddhism and founder of the Bukkō-ji lineage 仏光寺派.

ways that were understood at various levels—the ultimate being the revelation of nonduality. In addition to the Shingon works, the Kōzanji *sanjirai* painting, and the referenced Amida triad in golden characters at Kōzanji—all discussed earlier—*myōgō* themselves were depicted individually on hanging scrolls in the thirteenth century, although less lavishly.[523] As with the other objects within this study, *myōgō* works employed language in a multifaceted fashion: the simultaneous embodiment of Amida and his teachings, the representation of a key tenet of True Pure Land Buddhism (*nenbutsu* recitation), potential evidence of Dharma transmission, and more. Historian Chiba Jōryū states that *myōgō* images almost certainly pre-dated *kōmyō honzon* and were then incorporated into the latter's compositions.[524] However, not every early *myōgō* is firmly dated and those verifiably done in Shinran's hand are contemporaneous with the Myōgenji triad. Even if such *myōgō* do predate the Myōgenji work's creation within True Pure Land Buddhist practice, it is likely not by much.

Shinran's *myōgō* works are executed calligraphically in ink, generally with the phrase depicted on a delicately painted monochromatic lotus (figure 4-8). There are at least five extant *myōgō* scrolls done by Shinran. All are dated to around mid-thirteenth century and the *myōgō* form varies with six-character, eight-character, and ten-character *nenbutsu* phrases. Three of the five are the ten-character *myōgō*: *kimyō jin jippō muge kō nyorai* 帰命盡十方无导光如来 ("I take refuge in the Tathāgata of Unobstructed Light Suffusing the Ten Directions").[525] One such

[523] The greater extant amount of thirteenth-century simplified, ink *myōgō* are likely because these less lavish works would have been less expensive to produce and would have suited adorning the early simple spaces of worship for the True Pure Land school.

[524] Chiba, "*Benjutsu myōtai shō ni okeru*," 204.

[525] An eight-character *myōgō* and a six-character *myōgō*, both dated 1256, are the other two extant *myōgō* done in Shinran's hand. Too many scholars to list here have suggested that these *myōgō* were a symbol of Dharma transmission, similar to one of the potential functions of *chinsō* 頂相 in the Zen tradition.

work (figure 4-9), held by Senjuji 専修寺, is dated on the back to the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of Kōgen 康元 1 (1256). The composition consists only of the *myōgō* written in black ink on an open lotus blossom that has been painted in fine black lines. The final effect is that the *myōgō*, its characters darker black and with the line weight variation of calligraphic writing, is spatially emphasized atop its lotus "throne." The lotus blossom was and continues to be a common motif used for pedestals of painted and sculpted Buddhist icons. Enthroning a written character or characters on a lotus pedestal was a convention that had already been used in this manner in earlier centuries (figure 1-2).

The *myōgō* taken from its isolated state in the examples discussed in the previous paragraph and incorporated into the *kōmyō honzon* makes clearer the multiplicity of meaning it could have. It is central icon—Buddha body, aligning with some iconographical characteristics and doctrinal positioning.[526] In the Myōgenji work, it is inserted among lineage imagery. Indeed, it dominates the lineage imagery, emanating light towards those shown as within the Pure Land inheritance. In this setting, the *myōgō*/*nenbutsu* is both the source of the transmission and the transmission itself. Similarly, the rays of golden light that extend the painted physical presence of the text-icon Buddha outwards to his followers (vis-à-vis the patriarchs) can represent Amida's salvific power (other power), the invoked presence of Amida (through *nenbutsu* recitation), and the transmission of his teachings.

Kōmyō honzon developed as an image type within a long history of Buddhist visual culture, but also on the heels of turmoil and subsequent rich cultural innovation. In drawing on multiple contemporaneous image types—*sesshu fusha mandara*, Shōtoku imagery, patriarch

[526] The use of gold and lotus pedestal has been discussed already within this dissertation as has the position of the *nenbutsu* within Buddhist practice and conceptions of Buddha body. Therefore, I will not elaborate more here.

imagery, and text icons (including *myōgō*)—*kōmyō honzon* combined familiar and accessible elements that capitalized on popular trends of the time. The combinatory nature of the developed image was particularly suited to the True Pure Land sect in its early days under Shinran. With the evangelizing nature of Shinran and his followers, including travel between regions (the capital of Kyoto, Echigo in the north, Kantō to the east, and even more expanded with the immediate generations to follow) and preaching to different levels of society, portability enhanced the potential uses of *kōmyō honzon*.[527] These aforementioned compositional components all available in a single work—especially in the examples after the Myōgenji scrolls—allowed a multi-functional image with as much ease as possible, enabling a use of language representation that was employed for personal and communal purposes, but also had the effect of building a wider audience for seeing such imagery.[528]

Multiplicities of Meaning in the Interpretation of the Myōgenji *Kōmyō Honzon*

There is little known about the use of *kōmyō honzon* like the Myōgenji work, but it is possible to hypothesize about its role in True Pure Land Buddhism through analyzing the composition in combination with its historical context. Both Hōnen and subsequently Shinran devoted themselves to proselytizing among a range of social classes. In fact, even after it became legally and socially acceptable for him to return to Kyoto, Shinran traveled instead to the Kantō region in large part due to the importance of spreading exclusive *nenbutsu* teachings. The composition of *kōmyō honzon* give them a flexibility of function that would have been

[527] The Myōgenji scrolls, when rolled, were exceedingly portable: only 16-16.5 inches long. Paintings that could be rolled up and carried as opposed to sculptures, for example, were appropriate for the movements of early True Pure Land monks without established temples.

[528] Unfortunately, I will not spend much time on this point due to concerns of time.

particularly useful to figures such as Shinran, who preached to both lay commoners and aristocratic patrons. The image could have been used in a variety of ways from icons for ritual worship to visual complements for sermons to training young clerics in True Pure Land history and more. In this section, I show that, regardless of its actual use in the thirteenth century, the flexibility of the imagery with its dominant text-icon depiction of Amida illustrates a use of language representation, *myōgō,* as a tool for navigating a variety of social situations and challenges that synthesizes many of the uses of language from the early thirteenth century.

As one of the scholars who support the theory of *kōmyō honzon* use as a visual complement to sermons, Andō Fumihito calls the combination audiovisual proselytization (*shichōkakuteki dentō* 視聴覚的伝道).[529] Art historian Ikumi Kaminishi's volume on *etoki* 絵解 (pictorial exegesis) explores the use of images during proselytization in depth.[530] In it, she identifies two types of *etoki*: one was a didactic temple performance by figures at established Buddhist institutions while the other was performed by itinerants in public spaces.[531] Though not using the specific term *etoki*, the earliest reference to this type of event appears in the *Rihōō ki* 吏部王記, the diary of imperial prince Shigeakira 重明 (906-954).[532] Shigeakira relates being at Jōganji 常願寺 and having the abbot describe the meaning of the paintings on the pillars of one of the halls.[533] This seems to have been a relatively spontaneous interpretation of the images, but

[529] Andō, "*Myōgenjibon 'kōmyō honzon' no kōsei to sono igi,*" 577.

[530] Ikumi Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoki Storytelling in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006). The following section is indebted to Kaminishi's research.

[531] Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 19. She contrasts them as didactic (Buddhist clergy) versus entertaining (itinerant performance). In my opinion, this may be a bit of an oversimplification as there was likely significant overlap of the two characteristics. As much as possible, I will hypothesize on this further in relation to *kōmyō honzon*.

[532] Though the original is no longer extant, a fragmented twelfth-century copy of the text exists.

[533] Shigeakira, *Rihō ō ki*. *Shiryō sanshū*, ed. Yoneda Yūsuke and Yoshioka Masayuki (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū

later texts continue to provide clarification and more examples of pictorial exegesis—perhaps the most well-known and rich being the twelfth-century *Taiki* 台記, the diary of Fujiwara no Yorinaga 藤原頼長 (1120-1156).[534] The connection between images and accompanying explanations of related Buddhist teachings was not new (see, for example, scrolls such as the eighth-century *E inga kyō* 絵因果経, or *Pictures of Cause and Effect*), but, Kaminishi explains within her book, sermon-giving combined with physically and verbally interacting with an image seems to have been an innovation introduced in Japan around the tenth century.[535] By the thirteenth century, *etoki* (now also used as a noun in contrast to texts of the prior century) had become even more theatrical. After the thirteenth century, Kaminishi writes, the term *etoki* was consistently used to describe the deciphering of images rather than the phrases previously employed.[536] It seems that, during the thirteenth century, the practice was standardizing to the degree that terminology soon thereafter became fixed. Clearly then, the practice of pictorial exegesis was well-known—and almost certainly well-used—among Buddhist communities at the time.

Kanseikai, 1974), 56.

[534] A brief discussion of the *Taiki* and a representative example can be found in Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 25. Kevin Carr addresses the text as well, but focusing mainly on examples related to Shōtoku veneration. Carr, *Plotting the Prince*, 128-29. As Kaminishi points out, because this is the first time that *etoki* definitively appear in extant written history, this entry has gained much scholarly attention. She is quick to point out that at this time, *e* and *toki* have not combined to a noun, but rather are object and predicate describing the action of expounding on a painting. Still, it is clear that the described event is, without a doubt, an *etoki* event. Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 25. According to diary entries, Yorinaga attended at least six *etoki*.

[535] The *E inga kyō* scrolls are in the Nara National Museum (757-0).

[536] Kaminishi discusses the two ways of rendering the character for *toki* in *etoki*: 説 implied a stronger association with preaching/ecclesiastical exegesis while the use of 解 seems to have suggested an event more like street performances. Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 30.

Although *etoki* were used in a variety of circumstances, the history of itinerant *etoki* specifically is entwined with that of Pure Land Buddhism. As mentioned in earlier chapters, itinerant Buddhist monks who traveled throughout the country engaging in social work, preaching, and/or fundraising date to at least the eighth century. There are also examples of itinerants advocating *nenbutsu* practice, two being the monks Gyōki and Kūya. Due to the appeal of the *nenbutsu* among laypeople, for its ease of practice and salvation, it is perhaps unsurprising that some of the earliest *etoki*-using itinerant monks were Pure Land proponents. Kaminishi argues that the earliest known non-clerical monk to perform *etoki* was Izumo Shōnin 出雲上人 (dates unknown, active twelfth century).[537] She posits that he was one of the earliest monks to link *etoki* and *nenbutsu* practices, citing excerpts from Yorinaga's diary as evidence.[538] According to Yorinaga's diary entries, Izumo Shōnin seems to have been not only an *etoki* performer, but also associated with two halls outside the gate of Shitennōji 四天王寺: the Hachiman Nenbutsu-jo 八幡念仏所, where *nenbutsu* chanting occurred, and the Paradise Hall (Gokurakudō 極楽堂), where *etoki* of *raigō* and Western Paradise images likely took place.[539]

[537] Kaminishi makes the distinction throughout her book that *etoki* preaching was done by Buddhist clerics for elite or other monastic members since they "were not allowed to preach to non-aristocracy" (Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 75). In contrast, generally non-clerics (monks who had resigned or been de-robed from the clergy such as Hōnen or Shinran) preached to commoners.

[538] For more details on the main aspects of this argument, see Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 77-80.

[539] Shitennōji was a thriving hub for *nenbutsu* Amida belief by the end of the twelfth century. These halls are no longer standing, but we see depictions of two halls that are likely these buildings in the second scroll of *Ippen Shōnin eden* 一遍上人絵伝 (*The Illustrated Scrolls of Ippen Shōnin*), dated 1299. A popular chanting verse recorded in the *Ryōjinhishō* 梁塵秘抄 (c. 1179) captures the use of chanting in Pure Land promotion as well as site-specific Shitennōji Pure Land worship (directional references layering temple layout and cosmic geography). See Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 82 and Kadokawa Gen'yoshi, *Katarimono bungei no hassei* (Tokyo: Tokyodō Shuppan, 1975), 43.

Where *nenbutsu* practice itself allowed common laypeople low-stakes agency (due to a reliance on other power) in their own salvation, *etoki* provided them with the chance learn Buddhist teachings, get a reprieve from the ordinary acts of their everyday lives, and partake in community, among other things. Monks interested in the salvation and edification of all social classes were likely originally drawn to Pure Land precisely because of its potential for the accessibility of both. In turn, these qualities also contributed to the success of their Pure Land proselytization. Beyond that, the astute use of techniques such as storytelling, singing/chanting, and the visual (in essence, what Andō called "audiovisual") for such proselytization could further promote successful conversions of communities. Despite most of the textual sources on *etoki* being from elite perspectives, one could read between the lines with relative ease to understand the ways this practice could have been carried out among groups with lower social status. Therefore, in Kaminishi's words, "Anyone can easily participate in *etoki* and *nenbutsu*. Indeed, their simplicity and directness attracted the interest of ordinary audiences."[540] With these various contributing factors it makes sense that some of the earliest depictions of *etoki* can be found in thirteenth-century handscrolls relating to Pure Land practice. For example, the 1253 *Taima mandara engi emaki* 當麻曼陀羅縁起絵巻 (*Illustrated Scroll of the Taima Mandala Legend*) at Kōmyō-ji 光明寺 (Kanagawa Prefecture) illustrates a nun explaining the meaning of the mandala to Chūjōhime 中将姫.[541] The 1299 *Ippen hijiri-e* 一遍聖絵 (*Illustrated Scrolls of the*

[540] Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures*, 80.

[541] This is an *etoki* example that aligns more with Kaminishi's category of didactic temple *etoki*. The Taima mandala is well-known among scholars of Japanese art history studying Pure Land Buddhism. It is a tapestry woven in the eighth century that was "discovered" in the early thirteenth century, becoming popularized and prompting many copied versions (painted and printed). See Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, *The Revival of the Taima Mandala in Medieval Japan* (New York: Garland, 1985).

Sage Monk Ippen) shows itinerant *etoki* among groups of lay commoners.[542] This entwined history of itinerant *etoki* and Pure Land Buddhist proselytizing contributes to the strong possibility of interpreting the Myōgenji work as, in part, a potential complement to a performative sermon. As art historian Kevin Carr wrote, discussing pictorial exegesis in relation to Shōtoku illustrated narrative panels, "In imposing a spoken narrative on the painted compositions, they could easily connect any one motif to any other and explicate themes that were inherent in the complex structure of the paintings."[543] Similarly, the Myōgenji work could be understood as rich in connective imagery, wherein preachers "could cultivate a variety of interpretations."[544]

One of these potential interpretations for the Myōgenji scrolls is as an Amida triad.[545] Amida triads had been commonly represented in painted and sculptural forms for centuries by this time. For example, there is an Amida triad wall painting of circa 710 at Hōryūji (figure 4-10). In such a grouping, Amida Buddha is flanked by the two bodhisattvas Seishi and Kannon. While the central scroll of the Myōgenji work obviously represents Amida Buddha, the many figures in the other two scrolls may at first seem to detract from an identification of the three scrolls as an Amida triad. Yet, if the work was used in audiovisual proselytizing, certain aspects of the paintings could be drawn out more clearly depending on the occasion or sermon accompanying the work. In the left scroll, as mentioned, the bottom contains a bodhisattva trinity

[542] This relates the second of Kaminishi's *etoki* types. The scrolls are housed in the collections of Kankikō-ji 歓喜光寺 (Kyoto) and Tokyo National Museum.

[543] Carr, *Plotting the Prince*, 130.

[544] Ibid.

[545] This has been discussed by Japanese scholars, including Chiba Jōryū *op cit* and in Andō Fumihito's work on the Myōgenji scrolls, the most recent of which is Andō Fumihito, "*Myōgenjibon 'Kōmyō honzon' no meishō no saikentō*," *Indo Gaku Bukkyō Gaku Kenkyū* 617, no. 2 (2019): 614-19.

with Seishi as the central figure. Mirroring Seishi's location on the right scroll is the standing figure of Shōtoku Taishi. By the Kamakura period, it was well-established that Shōtoku Taishi was a manifestation of the bodhisattva Kannon. In the aforementioned *Kōtaishi Shōtoku hōsan*, by Shinran, the belief that Shōtoku was a manifestation of Kannon is clear:

> Ilra [Illa] of Silla stated, "Homage to Avalokiteśvara [Kannon], the world savior, the king of millet-scattered islands who transmits the dharma-lamp eastward," and bowed to the Prince of Eight Ears.
>
> 新羅の日羅まうしけり
> 敬禮救世観世音
> 傳燈東方粟散王と
> 八耳皇子を禮せしむ [546]

Other aspects of Shinran's writing as well as examples throughout medieval texts illustrate this common belief in Shōtoku as a Kannon manifestation.[547] This belief was so common that, as Carr stated, depictions equating Shōtoku to Kannon were "less a visual rhetorical attempt to actively link Shōtoku to Kannon than a simple recognition of a fact that was obvious and well established in medieval times."[548] In summarizing the various representations of Shōtoku, both illustrated and written, Carr proves that there was a very real interest in the relative immediacy of a divine Buddhist body to be found within Japan. His analysis of the character *shin* 身 for the term "body" gives further credence to the conclusion that physicality was a significant aspect of Shōtoku's popularity in medieval times.[549]

---

[546] This is the forty-fourth verse. Hirota, *Collected Works*, 440. Nabata, *Shinran wasan-shū*, 229. Although Hirota uses Ilra, it is more generally written as Illa in recent scholarship (such as in Carr's monograph on Shōtoku images).

[547] This common identification of a historical Japanese figure with a Buddhist divinity was not confined to Shōtoku, but in fact included other prominent figures with Pure Land Buddhism. This is discussed in Zonkaku's *Benjutsu myōtai shō* 弁述名体鈔, especially outlining the fact that Shàndǎo was a manifestation of Amida Buddha (discussed in the previous two chapters).

[548] Carr, *Plotting the Prince*, 40.

[549] Carr, *Plotting the Prince*, 41.

The dual identification of Shōtoku's figure as simultaneously historical Shōtoku and the bodhisattva Kannon in the Myōgenji scrolls, emphasized through his placement in the composition, would have only made the work more relevant and versatile during the Kamakura period. The deliberate placement of Seishi and Shōtoku (as Kannon), symmetrically mirroring one another in position, situates the Myōgenji work as a de facto Amida triad. Additionally, wear patterns on the faces of the Seishi and Shōtoku figures indicate that the painting surface experienced more touch there—similar to the condition characteristics seen on works known to be used for pictorial exegesis. Carr explains this in relation to a set of Picture Hall images (of Shōtoku) at Hōryūji, within which areas of narrative weight exhibit increased surface damage likely from pointers used by those explaining the work.[550] The Myōgenji work's surface does not appear to have the extent of damage seen on images used extensively for *etoki*, however the areas that do have unusual patterns of wear compared to immediately surrounding areas make persuasive material arguments for the use of the image.[551] Shōtoku's face is one of the most damaged areas on the surface, perhaps suggestive of the diverse ways that his figure could be used to narrate aspects of True Pure Land Buddhism which meant that his represented figure was most easily put in dialogue with other parts of the composition.[552]

Looking further at the depiction of Shōtoku in the Myōgenji work illustrates this potential for multiple readings and thus its suitability for use in *etoki.* As mentioned above, Shōtoku was

---

[550] Carr, *Plotting the Prince*, 129.

[551] Part of this could be that *kōmyō honzon* developed clearly into an image genre in fourteenth century so the Myōgenji work was likely able to be put away as a treasure and newer versions employed for use.

[552] It is notable that Shàndǎo's face also exhibits significant surface damage, though less than Shōtoku. In the future, I plan to expand this study of the surface condition. The discussion above of Shōtoku's depiction in a form emphasizing filial piety also contributes to his multivalent associations and the hypothesis that he was one of—if not *the*—most used figure in the Myōgenji work.

one of the earliest recorded subjects of *etoki* as well as a significant figure in the eyes of Shinran and his followers.[553] Even today, the True Pure Land sect presents Shōtoku as a prominent figure in *etoki* traditions.[554] The compositional structure of the Myōgenji work materializes this connection. The flexibility of interpretation has already been mentioned in relation to seeing the Myōgenji work as an Amida triad. Why, then, was Kannon not directly depicted, but rather the "trace" (*suijaku*) form of Shōtoku? This is one aspect that contributes to a reading of the scrolls' use in *etoki.* In an area especially known for Shōtoku worship, preachers could cater their sermons to the crowd and focus on Shōtoku and his attendants, discussing their connection to True Pure Land Buddhism. An additional reading of the figure of Shōtoku within this work lies in the connection of the three main figures forming a vertical line through the center of the right scroll. The figure of Shōtoku Taishi is the foundation of this vertical lineage with Genshin above him and, finally, Hōnen at the top.

As such, Shōtoku was visually represented as the base of Japanese Buddhism (literally shown below the other Japanese Pure Land masters as a foundation). Genshin's significance, as discussed briefly in Chapter Two, centers on his three-volume *Ōjōyōshū*, which was the text that first introduced Hōnen to Pure Land teachings. Hōnen's significance to Shinran as his teacher is

[553] For more detail on the history of narrative images of Shōtoku Taishi, see Kaminishi's chapter on *etoki* and Shōtoku Taishi as well as Carr, *Plotting the Prince.*

[554] For more on Shōtoku belief in the True Pure Land sect, see: Kenneth Lee, *The Prince and the Monk: Shōtoku Worship in Shinran's Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). For example, the Toyama Prefecture True Pure Land headquarters, Zuisenji 瑞泉寺, has an annual *etoki* event during which they preach the teachings of Shinran and expound on the life of Shōtoku using a combination of eight hanging scrolls and a statue of the two-year-old Shōtoku. Zuisenji is the only modern temple to combine paintings and statue in this manner, but as Abe Yasurō (429) and subsequently Kaminishi (52-3) have stated, this practice was much more widespread in the medieval period. In the century or so following Shinran's death, this connection became increasingly standardized, especially in the Ōtani branch (likely due to the efforts of Rennyo). Kaminishi presents documentary evidence that new True Pure Land temples in the late medieval period required a statue of Shōtoku as well as the worship of him via this image as the founder of Buddhism in Japan. Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures,* 53 (FN 46). Additionally, there are huge sets of paintings depicting the lives of Hōnen, Shinran, and Shōtoku (see Carr's *Plotting the Prince*).

clear. If one had to give a very abbreviated form of the history of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan, focusing on the three figures of Shōtoku Taishi, Genshin, and Hōnen would be an efficient way to do so. Being able to also discuss *honji suijaku* and Shōtoku as a manifestation of Kannon, bodhisattva attendant to Amida Buddha, only further legitimized True Pure Land Buddhism. This was especially significant because Shōtoku was "an important alternative source of authority" (outside establishment Buddhism, per se) for many religious groups of the thirteenth century, especially those newly formed and trying to establish a lasting legacy such as Shinran's True Pure Land.[555] Altogether, Shōtoku's legends and associations were multivalent, making him an ideal figure to work both within and without the orthodox Buddhist schools.[556]

In this way, the Myōgenji *kōmyō honzon* was, a little ironically considering its central text-icon, an extratextual statement of lineage composition. Thus, narrative/viewing emphasis depended on the situation and content of a sermon. Considering especially the increasing popularity and accessibility that *etoki* was gaining during the time of the Myōgenji work's creation as well as the prevalence of Shinran's travel and preaching, the use of *kōmyō honzon* in proselytization seems very likely. The ability to leverage the strategically combined visual elements for a multiplicity in meanings was surely valuable for a community of proselytizing monks who found themselves speaking to groups in a variety of settings—especially in the early days of True Pure Land Buddhism. If we consider the Myōgenji work in these terms, then the prominence of the text-form depiction of Amida must be understood as a significant, known mechanism for navigating tensions.

[555] Carr, *Plotting the Prince*, 30.

[556] True Pure Land Buddhism was not the only group to claim a lineage from Shōtoku. In fact, many Buddhist sects (including Tendai and Shingon) legitimized a lineage through this figure.

As with the multiplicity of the components of scrolls discussed above, the enthroned *nenbutsu* (a language-body) can be interpreted with multivalent meanings and associations that draw together the many examples of language representation that have been considered in this study thus far. The central *myōgō* was an accepted form of Amida—to the point where it was embedded within a de facto triad. Here, we see its form and function most definitively as an icon, a buddha body. However, the buddha body depiction in text form allows a deeper exploration and explication of doctrinal concepts that could be difficult for non-advanced practitioners/students to grasp. One can imagine a lay person with little exposure to canonical texts, doctrinal ponderings, or the like asking upon hearing that the central image is Amida: "Why? How?" Therefore, the *myōgō* is simultaneously a didactic supplement. It allows a preaching figure to illuminate (perhaps literally, considering the golden body of the *myōgō*) the sacrality of word in Buddhist traditions, which reached back to both the spoken teachings of the Historical Buddha and the synonymous nature of the sutras with the buddha body. The *myōgō* also resulted from an increased diffusion of esoteric elements throughout thirteenth-century practice, where language was deployed for efficacious results. Elements of Shingon teachings had disseminated relatively widely among the orthodox Buddhist schools, being incorporated to various degress—as we saw with Myōe's *gonmitsu* practice that relied, in part, on the Kūkai's explications of world-text. The Myōgenji work could, depending on the circumstances, be used via the *myōgō* to delineate some of these more complex ideas as they selectively manifested in True Pure Land Buddhism to support the "all embracing, never forsaking" power of the *nenbutsu*.

Thus, the Myōgenji work's *myōgō* is also similar to the Shàndǎo and Kūya images of Chapter Two. The connections between Amida's presence and spoken word are made manifest

in its illustration. Amida's identity as a Buddha is marked by certain iconographical details such as the lotus pedestal and golden body, and the radiating light is a visual depiction of Amida's presence reaching out to adherents. In other words, this center scroll both reflected and formed the medieval Buddhist imagination of the *nenbutsu*/Amida. In speaking the *nenbutsu*, the most propagated practice of (True) Pure Land Buddhism, one relies on other power for salvation. The spoken *nenbutsu* is an invocation of that reliance and, ultimately, of Amida Buddha's presence. The power and sacrality inherent in these words are tied to other power, which itself is reliant on divine presence—as seen also in *raigō* paintings where deathbed Pure Land practices, including the *nenbutsu*, call some combination of Amida's retinue to spirit the adherent off to the Pure Land. Even beyond these existential layers of the *myōgō*/*nenbutsu*, the use of written word could stimulate other interpretations through the very fact that it *was* written word. Whether one was literate—i.e. could actually *read* the characters—or not, the *myōgō* was "legible" as text. For those who were not literate, it may have perhaps held even more mystery and power simply by virtue of not being able to immediately decipher semantic meaning (a sort of "magic"). Surely the reactions to the text-form of Amida ranged the radial spectrum because people's responses are shaped in large part by their positionality and prior experiences. Literate versus illiterate is admittedly two such poles, but this is a false dichotomy because "literacy" does not have a fixed determination. Early fourteenth-century documents point to an understanding of this in relation to *kōmyō honzon*.

Although we currently do not have a written record of the Myōgenji work's use and interpretation at the time its creation, a text written by Zonkaku 存覚 (1290-1373, posthumous name Kōgen 光玄), Shinran's great-great-grandson, gives us an idea of how there were varying

levels of "literacy."[557] This text, the *Benjutsu myōtai shō* 弁述名体鈔 (*Summary of the Verbal Statements on the Body of the Name*), is an instruction manual for *kōmyō honzon*, written sometime between 1310 and 1335.[558] In it, Zonkaku expounded on the *myōgō*, writing that the six-character "*namu Amida Butsu*" would be a good selection for the central image, however, the meaning would not be as satisfactorily understood as the nine-character *myōgō* because "Amida" 阿弥陀 is a transliteration of the Sanskrit word "Amitābha." The nine-character *myōgō* directly translates (rather than transliterates) Amitābha with *fukashigi kōnyorai* ("Tathāgatha of Inconceivable Light") and so its actual meaning could be understood more readily when read or spoken.[559] That is why, according to the *Benjutsu myōtai shō,* the nine-character *myōgō* was established as the central icon. From Zonkaku's description, in the early fourteenth century, transliteration versus translation were one of the challenges for "reading" the central icon in a semantic manner (i.e., for those who could be considered "literate"). We may surmise that similar issues were present circa 1255. Examination of the surface of the *myōgō* shows that black ink has worn off only the bottom character, specifically the part directly above the pedestal. As with Shōtoku's face, this may be from repeated touch to the surface as True Pure Land adherents expounded on the *myōgō*—perhaps discussing *nenbutsu* practice, Amida's other power, and/or

[557] Because the scope of this dissertation is the thirteenth century and the complexities of *kōmyō honzon* development in the early fourteenth century would significantly divert the main focus of this chapter, I will not go into much detail about Zonkaku and *Benjutsu myōtai shō*. However, I am developing an article on the development of this icon in the early fourteenth century that will give more attention to these materials. I will give a brief and broad overview over the next section.

[558] During the Edo period, there was doubt among scholars regarding the authorship of the work. Many Nishi Honganji sectarian scholars either cast doubt on it being a work of Zonkaku or, acknowledging it as his work, declared it to be an exception that departed from (in their opinions) "correct" doctrinal teachings. Scholars today have debunked the Edo-period arguments and revealed the sectarian bias of Edo scholars that stemmed from the fraught relationship of Honganji's Kakunyo and his son Zonkaku. Both the Edo-period and modern arguments are much more complex than represented in this footnote. For a a transcription of the text, see Zonkaku, "*Benjutsu myōtai shō*," Hiramatsu Reizō, ed. *Shinshū jūhō shūei*, (Kyoto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1987), 207-12.

[559] Hiramatsu, *Shinshū jūhō shūei*, 208.

even the significance of the semantics of this version of *nenbutsu* (as Zonkaku did over half a century later).

Still, by the mid-thirteenth century, the written word had already been demonstrated as partaking of supernatural power and presence with positive effects time and time again. If we consider the written word through the accounts recorded by figures such as Kamō no Chōmei, we see that it had also been used as a tool in very public ways—such as to establish *kechien*.[560] Even if not explicitly stated at the time—and we do not have records of the types of sermons or other events that may have accompanied the Myōgenji work in 1255 or shortly thereafter—the *myōgō* depiction could be a material trace of the *kechien* process, simply one more layer among the tiered functions. The *nenbutsu* practice is, at its core, reciprocal, though the teachings situate it as essentially fully dependent on Amida. Yet without the participation of an adherent, there can be no activation of other power on one's own or another's behalf. This is a relationship of reciprocity. In Hōnen's and then Shinran's teachings, Amida's other power can ensure one's birth in the Pure Land, no matter what potentially ethically questionable actions people may have done, if only they put their faith in this other power via the *nenbutsu*. Amida's presence, seemingly invoked by the recitation (as seen in the art of Chapter Two), is expanded geographically and temporally by the continuous recitation of the *nenbutsu*. As the sutras in the Buddhist canon are self-generative, discussed in Chapter One, the *nenbutsu* practice encourages the spread of Amida worship. Hōnen and Shinran expanded it from an efficacious practice if one paired it with rigor, as Myōe encouraged, to one that could affect positive change on anyone regardless of lifestyle, capabilities, or social status. In the period of *mappō*, a time when the

[560] There are myriad examples of text-based *kechien* such as the aforementioned examples of writing Sanskrit characters on the foreheads of corpses or the writing of donor names on the (interior) bodies of buddha images.

Buddhist teachings could be considered as continuously degrading, such an appealing practice perpetuated the power of Amida Buddha. This is the core of the reciprocity inherent in the practice and thus the Myōgenji scrolls, which visually manifest mutual flourishing through this reciprocity with the radiant Amida as text-icon (language-body) and those who have received his transmission and flourished through other power.[561]

The hermeneutical aspect of the *myōgō* is core to the entirety of the work, despite the overall composition's ability to be flexibly used to emphasize other components. For example, even if expounding on Shōtoku's connection to Pure Land Buddhism, the presence of the *myōgō* is unavoidable. With the center scroll largest, using gold, and compositionally extending toward its flanking scrolls through the rays of light, it underpins even the legitimacy and efficacy of figures such as Shōtoku. Should that go unspoken in the oral lectures or sermons, the image itself could ensure this sentiment was present and the viewer likely internalized this imagery either consciously or unconsciously. Indeed, the multiplicity of interpretation rather contributes to the potential of the language representation to be utilized in myriad ways from legitimization to didactically and more.

Brief Notes About the Later Development of *Kōmyō Honzon*

From the modern scholar's perspective, the story of the *kōmyō honzon* image type jumps from the Myōgenji work to the early fourteenth century. The focus of this chapter is not on the

[561] This framework of thinking of mutual flourishing through reciprocity was adapted from Robin Wall Kemmerer's consideration of cultural and ecological intersections of First Nations peoples in North America and the ecologies of their lands. She explains how Traditional Knowledge and scientific study can combine to illuminate this concept of reciprocity between communities of humans and plants (gifts from Creator deities in many of these cultures). I have here used reciprocity to consider the sometimes unnamed or subconscious transactions that occur between entities. Kemmerer's overall scholarly approach and framing would benefit many fields of study, art history included. Robin Wall Kemmerer, "*Mishkos Kenomagwen*: the Teachings of Grass," *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 156-66.

early development of *kōmyō honzon*, but rather on the Myōgenji scroll as an example of thirteenth-century interest in language representations as tools. While the use and development of *kōmyō honzon* is certainly connected to this focus, the next point of firm dating for objects and texts is the first quarter of the fourteenth century. The trajectory of this image type's development is colored with the efforts and effects of institutionalization and standardization. It is a rich history and there is much more to be done on it, especially in English-language scholarship. However, for this dissertation, a brief summary will suffice.

The major shift from the Myōgenji work to other extant *kōmyō honzon* was the consolidation of elements into a single scroll in contrast to the Myōgenji triptych set.[562] During the early fourteenth century, there was still variation in works (for example, figures 4-12 and 4-13 of Kōshō-ji 光照寺 and Jōfuku-ji 浄福寺, respectively), not only in Japanese monks depicted since more monks joined the True Pure Land lineage as time progressed, but also in aspects such as the choice of Shōtoku figure type. This suggests that the *kōmyō honzon* as an image type based off the Myōgenji work was still in the process of becoming just that: a type. From the mid- to late fourteenth century, aside from the logical addition of more Japanese disciples, the elements of *kōmyō honzon* were standardized with few variations and such deviations were likely due to localized circumstances. Another key change by the mid-fourteenth century was the addition of standing anthropomorphic figures of Śākyamuni and Amida Buddhas directly flanking the central *myōgō*, which remained dominant in its size and positioning. The overall standardization of *kōmyō honzon* imagery seems to have been the result of Zonkaku's involvement with True Pure Land imagery in general and *kōmyō honzon* in particular.[563] His

[562] The Myōgenji work is the only version that is not a single scroll.

[563] Zonkaku had a fraught relationship with his father Kakunyo 覚如 (1270-1351), who was head of the Honganji branch of True Pure Land Buddhism and caretaker of the family mausoleum which helped him divert some power

diary, *Sode nikki* 袖日記 (*Pocket Diary*), contains records of him viewing *honzon* at various locations and specifically mentions seeing three *kōmyō honzon* (though he does not use that term), including one that seems to have been the Myōgenji work.[564]

Zonkaku's *Benjutsu myōtai shō*, mentioned above, is likely the decisive factor in the standardization and continuation of *kōmyō honzon*. In the manual, Zonkaku describes in general the composition of *kōmyō honzon* during his lifetime (figure 4-12). This description contains the compositional elements found in the Jōfukuji work and matches the visual appearance of *kōmyō honzon* from the mid-fourteenth century and after. That the extant *kōmyō honzon* dating to mid-fourteenth century following the creation of the *Benjutsu myōtai shō* generally align with Zonkaku's text indicates his description may have been used as the standard model for the genre. That is, rather than providing a description of something that was already systematized, Zonkaku selectively combined his viewing experiences after viewing various *kōmyō honzon*. His text then was likely pivotal in creating the *kōmyō honzon* as a single standardized image type. Thus, the text itself prompted more works in this standardized composition, acting cyclically to both document and promote this form of *kōmyō honzon* until it became the norm. Study of fourteenth-century *kōmyō honzon* paintings and artists in relation to Zonkaku reveals their embedded networks and identifies another avenue through which he may have influenced the standardization of *kōmyō honzon* compositions.

---

and significance from the Kantō followers to the site of Shinran's interment. Kakunyo's work formalized the True Pure Land Buddhist sect. He and Zonkaku diverged in thought, including the use of artwork to proselytize (Zonkaku promoted inexpensive prints for followers, for example).

[564] Zonkaku, *Zonkaku Shōnin ichigoki; Zonkaku Shōnin sode nikki*, ed. Chiba Jōryū, *Ryūkoku Daigaku zenpon sōsho* vol. 3. (Kyoto: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1982), 303-41. His description of it aligns with the characteristics of the Myōgenji work.

In short, the fourteenth-century works and Zonkaku's manual are relevant, but provide us a view of figures historicizing the *kōmyō honzon* more than fifty years after its creation. The study of these materials allows an ideal opportunity to trace the standardization of an image type in parallel with the institutionalization of a Buddhist sect and its many (and sometimes discordant) branches. However, focusing this chapter on the Myōgenji work as contextualized within its period of production allows a deeper consideration of how it functioned and the significance of the language representation therein.

Conclusion

The thirteenth century was clearly a period of innovative adaptation among Shinran and his followers, born partly out of necessity. Shinran's exile seemingly prompted his devotion to proselytizing among diverse groups, especially lay commoners. The Myōgenji work, almost certainly the first *kōmyō honzon*, was developed based on previous visual elements and concepts, creating a form that was both familiar and innovative at the same time. In its ability to parley between True Pure Land teachings and orthodox criticisms of it, it suited early True Pure Land Buddhist practitioners well. The development and continuance of the image type from the early fourteenth century and afterwards is one testament to this. The iconography and composition display a unity with what we know of Shinran's thoughts and beliefs from his writings as well as what seems to be an attempt to address previous perceived shortcomings in Pure Land followers.[565]

The hermeneutical possibilities embodied in the work also made it particularly suitable for a community that was not yet firmly established or housed in permanent and wealthy

[565] Consider here the criticisms leveled at Hōnen, especially in relation to images such as the *sesshu fusha mandara*.

temples. The relative portability and the diverse potential interpretations likely would have been ideal. Underpinning every aspect of the work is the *myōgō*, which was simultaneously a Buddha body and Amida Buddha's transmission. As such, language representation was key in addressing communal challenges. The *myōgō*, in combination with its companion compositional elements, allowed the Myōgenji work to respond to criticisms, establish spiritual legitimacy by tracing lineage over the Three Kingdoms (*sankoku* 三国) and ultimately to Amida himself, and promote an air of institutional authority on par with orthodox communities (even if they were not yet).[566] In these ways, language was deployed to navigate, dispel, or even prevent disputes that would harm the community's continuance.

Even without concrete evidence of use, the time frame of the Myōgenji's production allows us to consider the ways it may have responded to personal challenges as well. In part, the multiplicity of meanings within the work prompt generous readings of connections into the painted scrolls. For example, the mounting tensions within the Kantō community at the time the Myōgenji work was created could have influenced its clear presentation of a consolidated lineage and principle (Amida veneration and *nenbutsu* practice). Additionally, I have herein speculated that the parallel increasing difficulties between Shinran and his son could have affected the choice of illustrating Shōtoku in his filial type rather than extracting a different moment of his popular narrative. Shinran's biography and his role in True Pure Land Buddhism is documented due to his elevated status as a patriarch. However, we could consider the possibility that other individuals less esteemed by historical tides likewise found in the Myōgenji work an effective tool for alleviating their own personal concerns, whether over their fates after death or in

[566] The "Three Kingdoms" (India, China, and Japan) were considered, in medieval Japanese Buddhist writings, the three lands of Buddhist transmission.

everyday experiences. In these various ways, the Myōgenji work encompasses an approach to language-bodies that draws on many of the trends we saw in the previous chapters and captures a snapshot of how the intertwined nature of words and divine presence was relevant at two interecting levels: community and individual.

Conclusion

Here, at the close of this study, let us can return to both the painting of Shàndǎo from Chion-ji that opened this dissertation and the Kūya sculpture discussed in the second chapter. The language-body concept, material representations of the interpenetration of language and buddha body and the layered associated meanings, is perhaps most easily recognized in these works. In each, Amida Buddha manifests in anthropomorphic form. These miniature buddha figures are also clearly signifiers of the spoken word, indicated by the open mouths of Shàndǎo and Kūya, the pose of their bodies, their widely-known biographical connection to spoken *nenbutsu* practice, and the positioning of the buddha figures. In a time of instabilities, these works made visible and concrete *nenbutsu* practice and its results (invoking the presence and thus salvific power of Amida) by leveraging historic figures and perceptions of language to respond to the equally concrete challenges of the time that ranged from individual to societal.

Whether small buddha figures, enlivened ink strokes, or radiant golden characters, the representations of language-bodies in this dissertation's case studies reveal a notion of words that incorporated a consideration of physicality. Figures that are simultaneously Buddha and spoken words drift in the same space as, for example, Kūya and the viewers. The movement and vigor of the ink Siddhaṃ and Sino-Japanese characters in the *sanjirai* hanging scroll recall the ways that bodies move through space—similarly, they rest on a lotus pedestal in the way that buddha sculptures in a viewer's space would. Shining rays from the *kōmyō honzon*'s *myōgō* reach out to the painted figures surrounding it, bathing them in golden light with the intimation that the

viewer of the paintings would likewise receive such beneficence. Each are not simply words, spoken or written. Nor are they simply physical bodies. They are both.[567] The works layer meaning and efficacy in collapsing the distance between language and body. Therefore, in a time experienced in numerous challenging ways (and understood as within *mappō*), language-bodies were thus an appealing way to address such issues. In making language-bodies visible, the works studied in this dissertation present language's potency as an entity, physical and immediate—of particular relevance when many people were suffering physically in a variety of ways from violent conflict, epidemics, famine, drought, and more. Understanding that language had long been used as a salvific and apotropaic tool, Buddhist practitioners of the thirteenth century, both in mainstream and marginalized positions, crafted new forms of art to leverage its power. These new forms of art showed a refined use and understanding of language-bodies. It is perhaps unsurprising that the use of language-bodies in Buddhist visual culture was increasingly refined in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, during which the ontological connection between language and Buddhist deities was more clearly revealed in visual works.

Chapter Two's analysis of material on Shàndǎo and Kūya revealed the broader network through which images of and concepts about language representation moved, uncovering how general societal perspectives on language were both reflected and shaped. Examining Myōe's *sanjirai* painting in Chapter Three added nuance to these wider networks and cultural trends by illustrating the ways personal anxieties found sanctuary in the tool of "word" and/as body. Finally, Shinran's *kōmyō honzon* of Chapter Four allowed us to consider the ways both the

[567] With deeper understanding of Buddhist philosophy, they become neither—consider the fourfold differentiation, or *tetralemma*, discussed in Chapter Three.

macro and micro views could converge when we look at the power of language-bodies from each perspective.

Monks such as Hōnen spurred the increasing popularity of Pure Land thought and practice, especially in the face of *mappō*. In indirect and direct ways, they contributed to the rise of language-bodies within art, inversely paralleling the supposed decline in the Buddhist teaching and practice. An example of the indirect ways such monks stimulated the new representations of language-bodies is how both the criticism of Hōnen's work and the justification for it caused the creation of texts revisiting ideas of language in Buddhism, drawing on sutras and previous commentaries. Clearly, the previous centuries had not exhausted the topic. In fact, thirteenth-century monks found they had much to say (in texts and through imagery) about the place and power of language within Buddhism and its art. In contrast to earlier centuries, however, these tensions and explorations also played out more frequently among a broader audience on a wider scale than before, rather than being mainly limited to elite and monastic communities. This is partially due to the general waning fortunes of aristocrats and the need for religious groups to garner support (financial, labor, material, etc.) from other groups, but it also linked to rivalries and dissension within and between religious groups. As the historical record shows, Hōnen, Myōe, and Shinran were known to preach to lower status individuals—lay commoners—as well as their more affluent patrons. The increased attention to and dissemination of innovative language-body images for their efficacious potential prompted the new forms of visual works explored in Chapters Two through Four. These forms were incorporated to varying degrees of success. The *nenbutsu*-speaking imagery that embodied word as figural buddhas continued in depictions of Shàndǎo and Kūya, illustrating intersections of body and word, material and immaterial, and sound and touch. Myōe's *sanji sanbōrai* hanging

scroll eventually disappeared as a supplement to its related ritual, though it may have contributed to the central aspect of Shinran's *myōgō* and had a lasting impact on other imagery of the time.[568] The Myōgenji work was the root of the *kōmyō honzon* image type, which continued within True Pure Land traditions for centuries.

I curated the works in this dissertation knowing that there were many more thirteenth-century examples through which I could explore this topic. Intentionally setting aside these areas has made me sharply aware of their absence and has delineated them as areas for future inquiry. For example, one of the avenues for future study in relation to the concept of language-bodies is the use of *gohonzon* 御本尊 ("honored object of worship," alt. called *moji mandara* 文字曼荼羅 or "script mandala") developed and promoted by the monk Nichiren 日蓮 (1222-1282), a contemporary of Shinran. So, too, would material from Zen 禅 Buddhism or more Sanskrit script mandalas (*bonji mandara* 梵字曼荼羅), among many others, be rich areas to expand the work done in this dissertation. A study of trends in inscribing the interior of sculptures would also be a stimulating avenue for considering how boundaries between language and body were collapsed in the early medieval period. Deeper considerations of materials and their strategic and relational uses would also be productive courses of future inquiry. At this stage, the nature of my project allows me to contribute to scholarship that nuances our understanding of broader "Kamakura Buddhism" by showing the ways Buddhist practice in the thirteenth century never took place within sectarian vacuums. Rather art, practice, and doctrine were formed through constant negotiations between sectarian concerns and intergroup interactions, whether tense or congenial. Further expansions of this study would continue this approach while widening the survey of

[568] The supposition of the *sanjirai*'s impact on the *kōmyō honzon* has still not been sufficiently proven. This is an area where further study would be productive.

objects, people, and institutions that were part of the early medieval Japanese experiments in language representation.

Although future avenues would develop this project in productive ways, in its current form, this dissertation considers what visual culture studies can reveal about the non-semantic layers of language, premodern perceptions of these layers manifested in visual forms, and the levels of response—from personal to societal—in using language-bodies to counterbalance spiritual and corporeal upheaval. The extent of language's manipulation as a mechanism to order and influence the world reached new heights in the period addressed by this dissertation, both within visual art and other arenas such as literature. In visual art, the predominant form of language manipulation was in language-bodies. They were continuously and increasingly integrated and refined during the thirteenth century for broad audiences: lay and monastic, orthodox and (originally) heterodox, indigent and affluent, male and female, and the many identities over and in between those shifting binaries. As examples of the increased experimentation with language and the visual, this dissertation's objects of study contributed to a religious landscape in the following centuries that inherited, prized, and strategically used language-bodies. The use of language-bodies diffused throughout visual culture to the degree that they could later be found in seemingly endless variations of objects, media, and contexts.

The aftereffects of twelfth-century turmoil in Japan are usually couched in terms of rebuilt temples, the rise of the Kei School of sculptors, and the shift in governing powers from aristocratic to military. Yet as this dissertation has shown, a result of the immediate responses via visual art to this period of instability had the lasting effect of making language-bodies pervasive throughout the various levels of society and in a variety of sectarian and institutional contexts. The winds of karma and roused waves that Yúnshěng mentioned in his 1161 poem, copied with

the image of Shàndǎo onto the Chion-ji scroll, surely reflected many fears of the time related to distance and uncertainty. As the examples of this dissertation have shown, this consideration took the form of a refinement of language-bodies for material and immaterial protections and benefits, emphasizing in new ways their multifaceted nature by touching upon, among others, materiality, soteriology, the body, visibility, and invisibility.

Figures



Figure 1-1: Sculptural mandala (*katsuma mandara*): detail view from east, Statues 839-1834 CE, wood, lacquer, gold leaf. Lecture Hall of Tōji. Image from Bogel, With a Single Glance, 282.



Figure 1-2 Tōji Sanskrit slips (*bonji mandara*; Sanskrit character mandala), probably 9th century, Heian period, ink on paper, Lecture Hall, Tōji, Kyoto, from *Nihon chokokushi kiso shiryo shusei: Heian jidai: zozo meiki hen* vol. 1, 50.

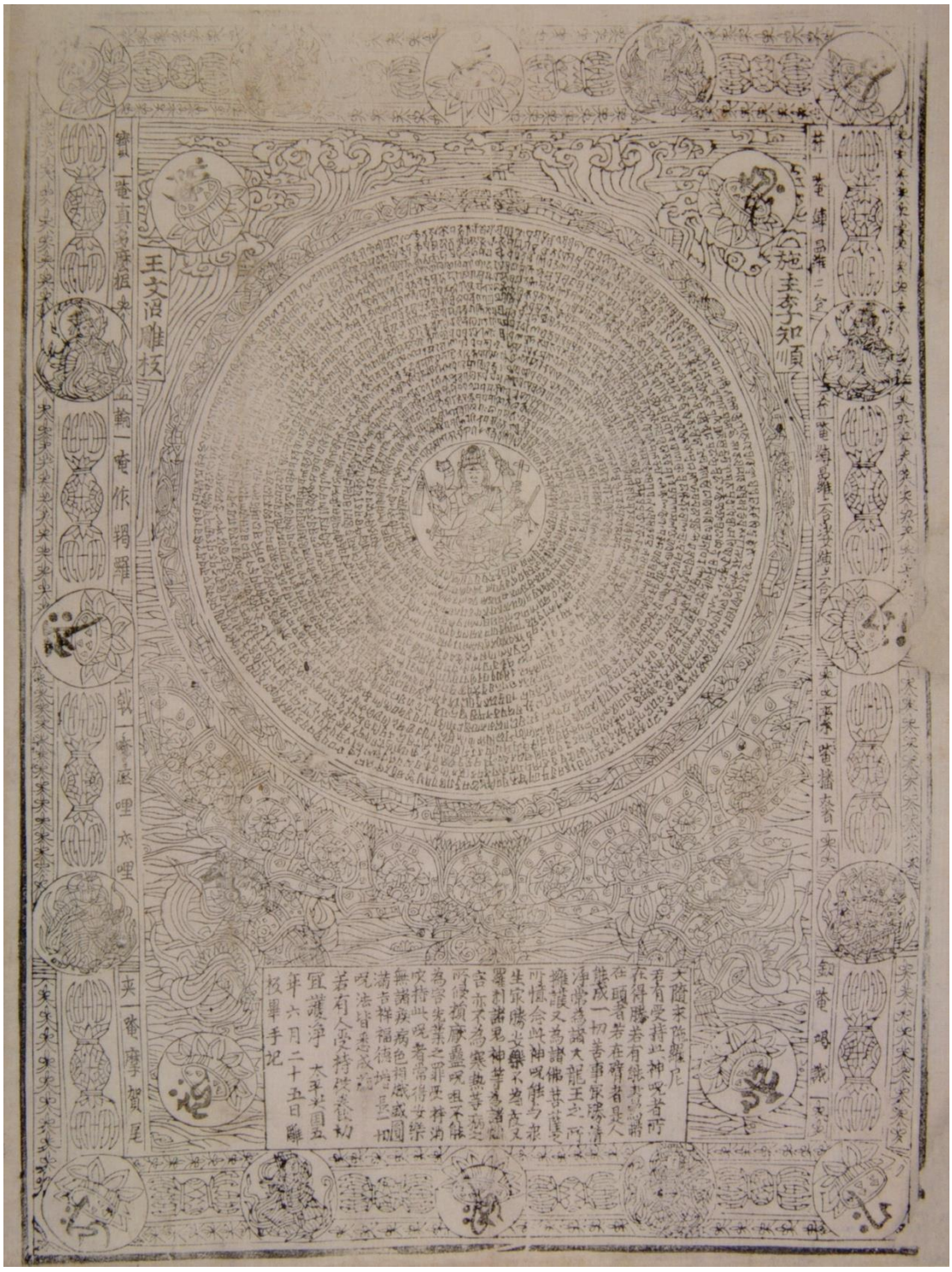


Figure 1-3 Mahāpratisarā Bodhisattva with text of *Dà suí qiú tuóluóní*, Chinese, dated 980, Northern Song dynasty, ink on paper, 30.3 x 41.7 cm, woodblock print, British Museum, 1919,0101,0.249.











Figure 2-1 Process of rock crystal eyes installation.



Figure 2-2 Pure Land patriarch Shàndǎo (J. Zendō), first quarter of 13th century, Kamakura period, colors and cut-gold foil on silk, 141 x 55 cm, Chion-ji, Kyoto.



Figure 2-3 Five Pure Land patriarchs (J. *Jōdo goso zō*), Chinese, early 13th century, Southern Song dynasty, color on silk, 114.2 x 61.2 cm, Nison-in, Kyoto, Important cultural property.



Figure 2-4 Comparison of details from figures 2-2 and 2-3.

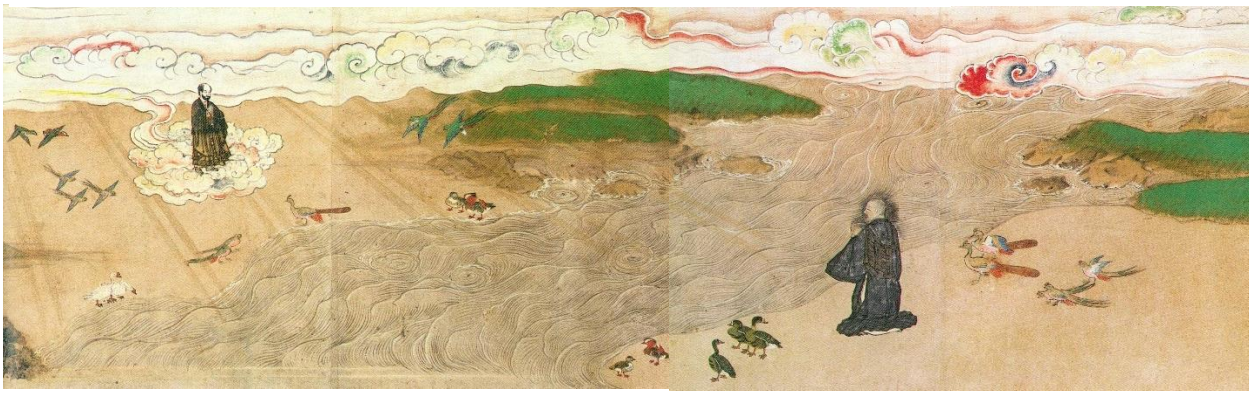


Figure 2-5 *Hōnen shōnin eden*: Hōnen meeting Shàndǎo in dream vision, early 14th century, Kamakura period, color and ink on paper, height: 33 cm, overall length: 1214 cm, Chion-in, Kyoto, National Treasure.



Figure 2-6 Amida descent with twenty-five bodhisattva attendants, 13th century, Kamakura period, color on silk, 145.1 x 154.5 cm, Chion-in, Kyoto, National Treasure.



Figure 2-7 Statue of Kūya, by Kōshō, between 1207 and 1212, polychromy and wood, height: 116.5 cm, Rokuharamitsu-ji, Kyoto, Important Cultural Property.

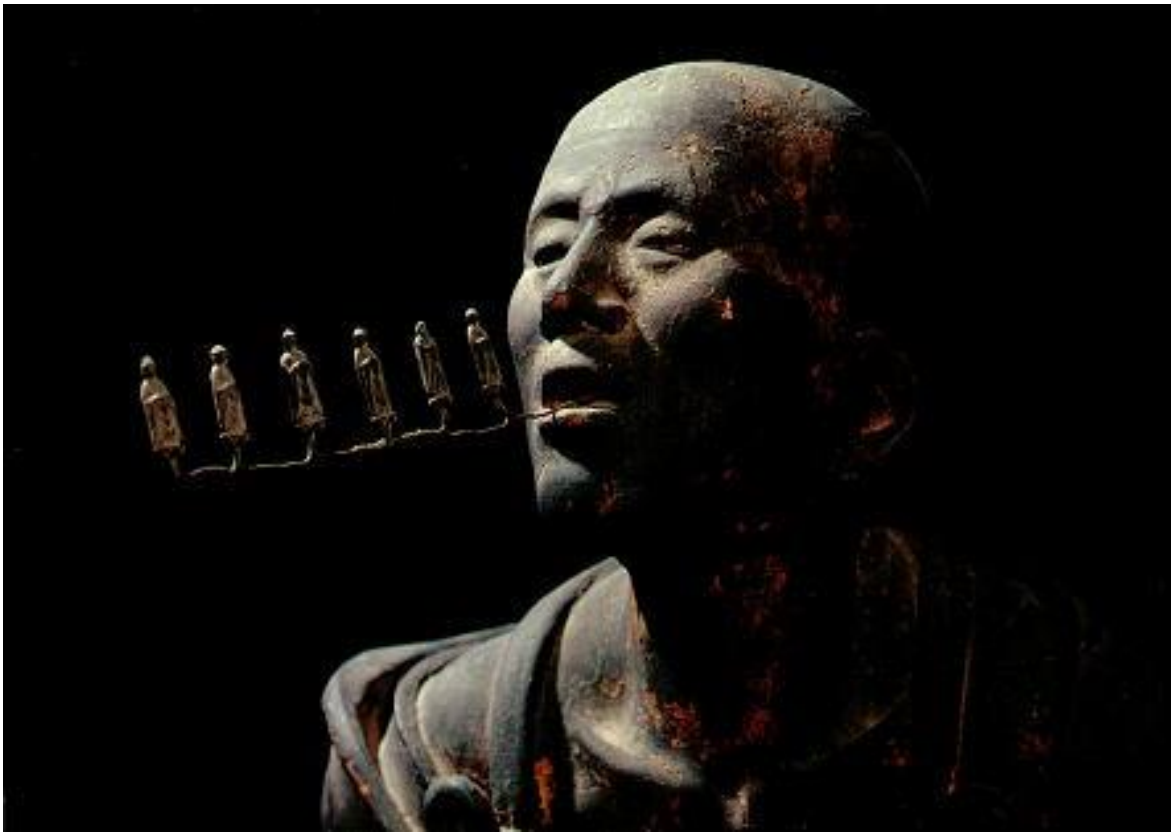
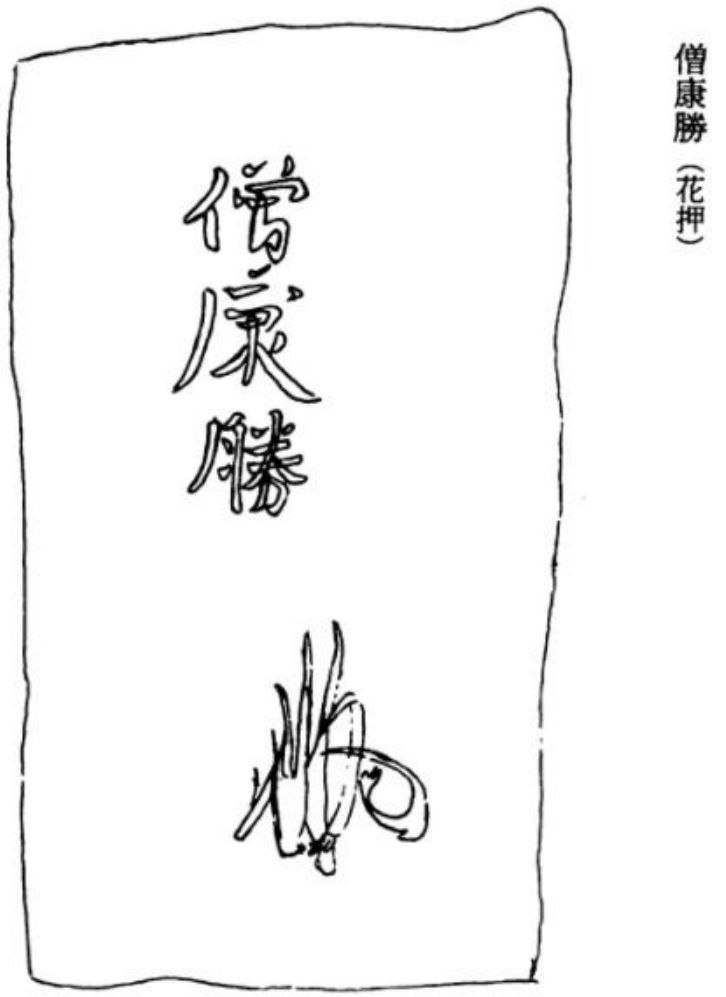


Figure 2-8 Detail of Kūya statue, by Kōshō, between 1207 and 1212, painted wood, height: 116.5 cm, Rokuharamitsu-ji, Kyoto, Important Cultural Property.



挿図1　像内腹部墨書　籠字

Figure 2-9 Interior inscription of Kūya statue, by Kōshō, between 1207-1212, Kamakura period, Rokuharamitsu-ji, Kyoto, Important Cultural Property.



Figure 2-10 Statue of Shàndǎo, circa 1200-1206, Kamakura period, polychrome and wood, height: 86.4 cm, Raigō-ji, Nara Prefecture.

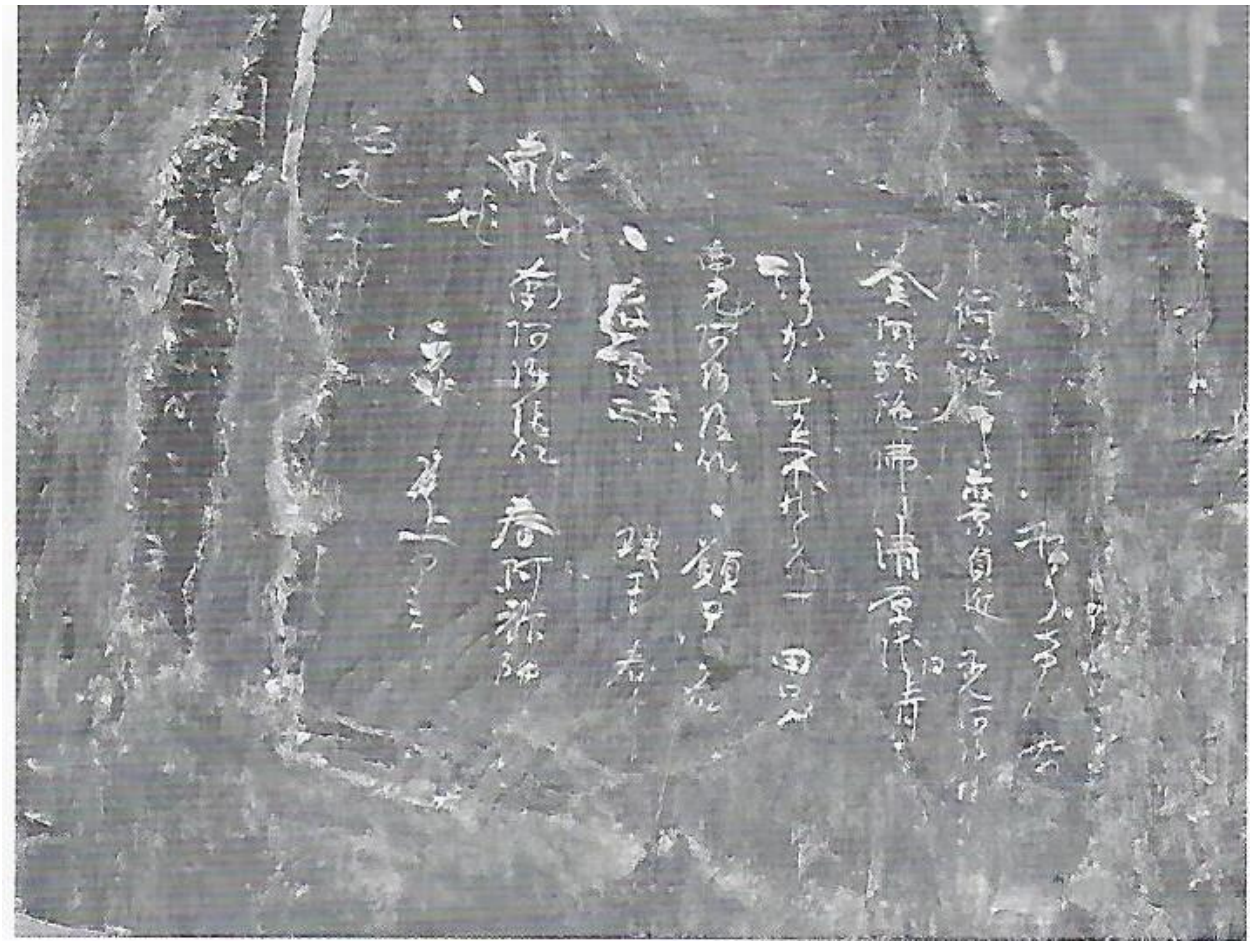


Figure 2-11 Interior inscription of Shàndǎo statue (back area), between 1207-1212, Kamakura period, Raigō-ji, Nara Prefecture.



Figure 2-12 Statue of Fudō Myōō, by Kaikei, 1203, Kamakura period, polychromy, gold, and wood, Daigō-ji, Kyoto, Important Cultural Property.

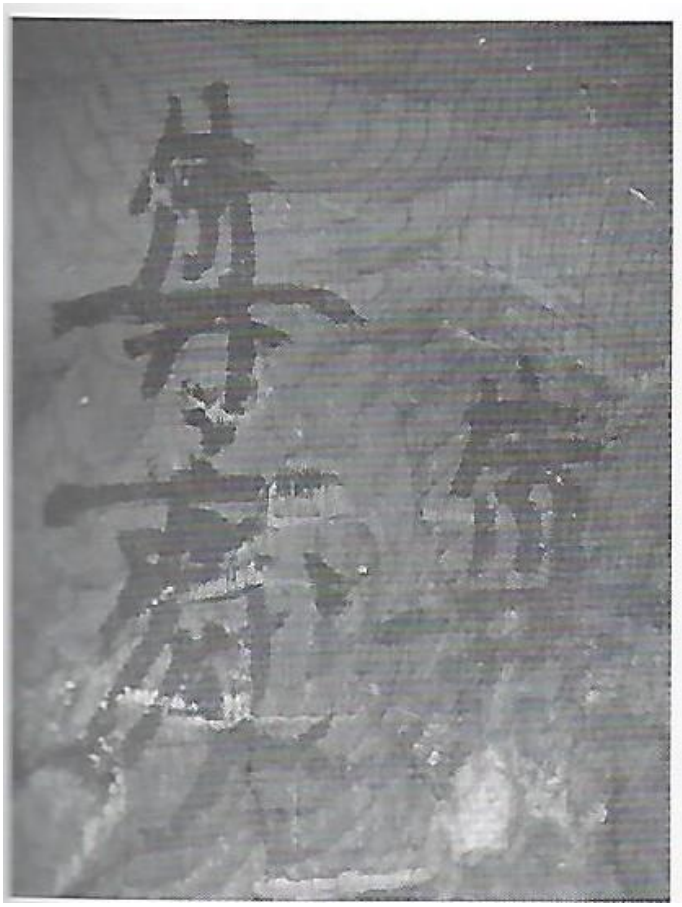


Figure 2-13 Interior inscription of Shàndǎo statue (head), circa 1200-1206, Kamakura period, Raigō-ji, Nara prefecture.



Figure 2-14 Statue of Shàndǎo, first half of 13th century, Kamakura period, polychromy and wood, height: 96.1 cm, Chion-in, Kyoto, Important cultural property.



Figure 2-15 *Nōnyūhin*: internal organs (*gozōroppu*) of Shàndǎo statue, 13th century, Kamakura period, silk (brocade and braided cord), longest length (excluding the braided cord): 14.5 cm, Chion-in, Kyoto, Important cultural property.

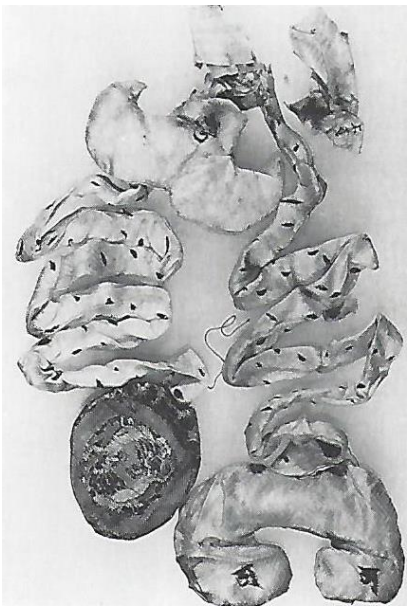


Figure 2-16 *Nōnyūhin*: internal organs (*gozōroppu*) of Śākyamuni statue, Chinese, 985, Northern Song dynasty, silk (brocade and braided cord), Seiryō-ji, Kyoto, Important cultural property.



Figure 2-17 Śākyamuni Nyorai statue, first half of thirteenth century, Kamakura period, wood with traces of polychromy, height: 97 cm, Jōraku-in, Kyoto.



Figure 2-18 Statue of Kūya, 13th century, Kamakura period, polychromy and wood, height: 119 cm, Tsukinowa-dera, Kyoto. Important Cultural Property.



Figure 2-19 Statue of Kūya, 13th century, Kamakura period, polychromy and wood, height: 122.4 cm, Jōdoji, Matsuyama-shi, Important Cultural Property.



Figure 2-20 Statue of Kūya, 13th century, Kamakura period, polychromy and wood, height: 84 cm, Shōgon-ji, Shiga prefecture, Important Cultural Property.



Figure 3-1 *Sanji sanbōrai* hanging scroll, circa 1215, ink, colors, and cut gold on silk, Kōzanji, Kyoto, image courtesy of Dr. George Tanabe.

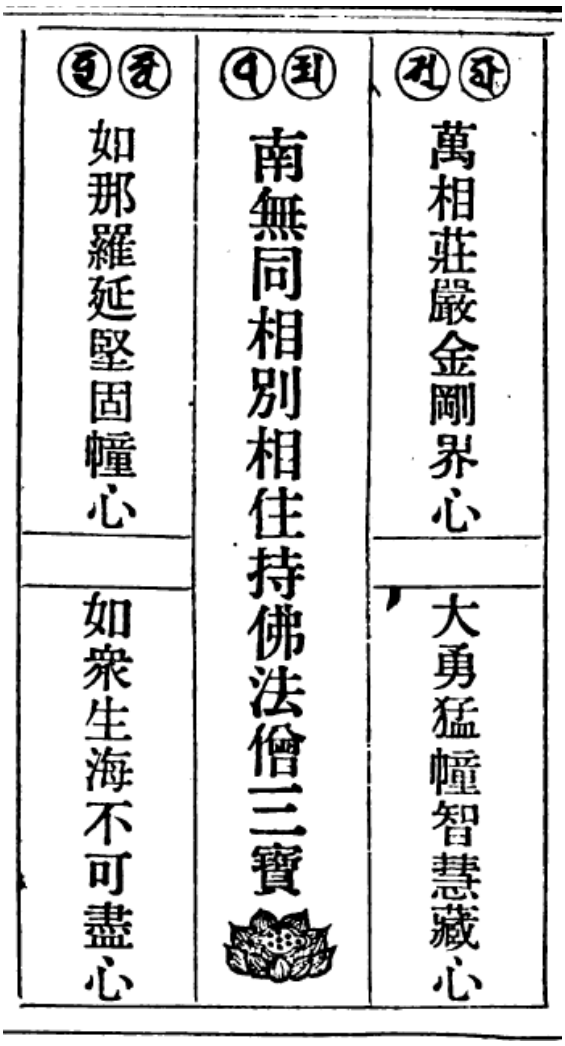


Figure 3-2 Transcription of diagram of *sanjirai* hanging scroll. Image source: Myōe, *Sanji sanbōrai shaku,* ed. Nakano Tatsue, in *Nihon Daizōkyō* vol. 42 (Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921), 195.



Figure 3-3 *Kegon kai e zenchishiki*, Raien (act. late 13th century), late 13th century, Kamakura period, ink and colors on silk, 184.5 × 118 cm, Tōdaiji, Nara.

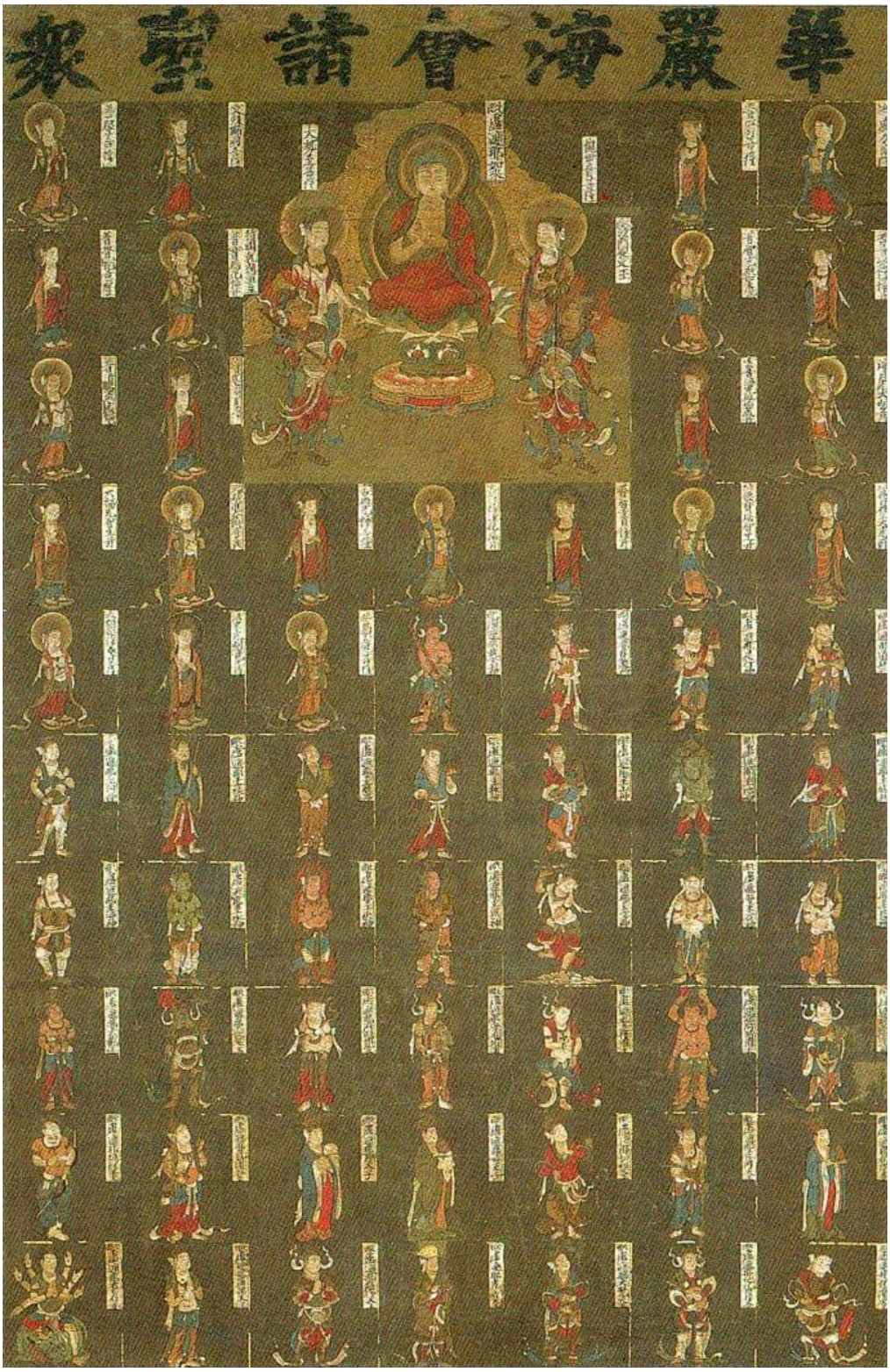


Figure 3-4 *Kegon kai e sho shōju mandara*, 13th century, Kamakura period, ink and colors on silk, 117.6 x 76.7 cm, Kōzanji, Kyoto. Important Cultural Property.



Figure 3-5 Kasuga Shrine Mandala (*Kasuga miya mandala*), early 13th century, Kamakura period, ink and colors on silk, 65.4. x 28.5 cm, Nezu bijutsukan (Nezu Museum), Tokyo. Important Cultural Property.

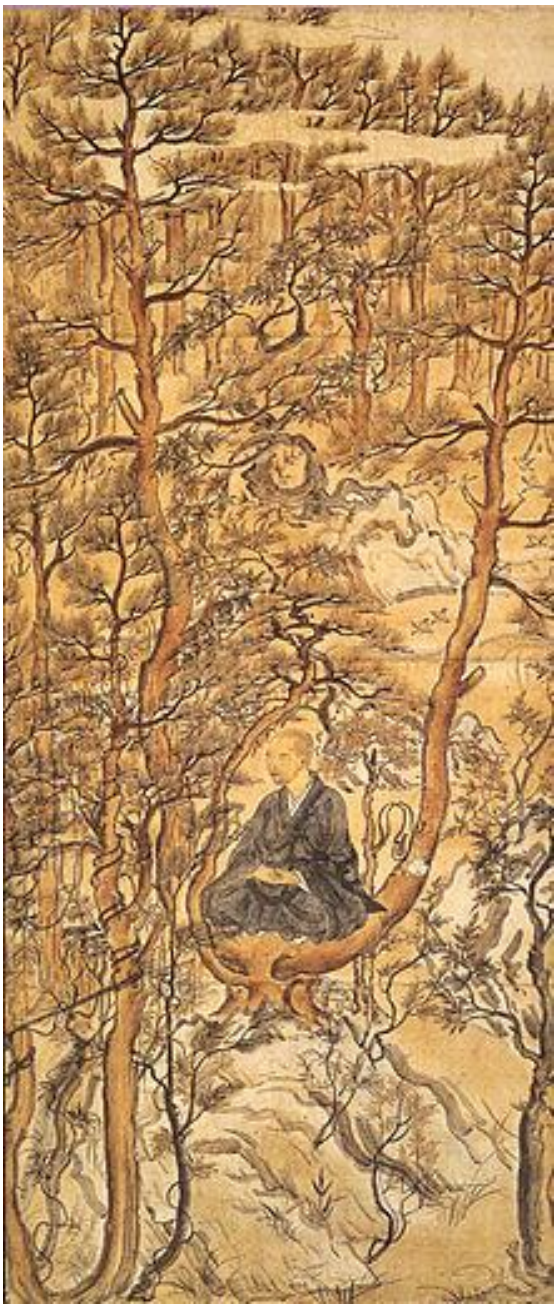


Figure 3-6 Myōe seated in meditation in a tree, 13th century, Kamakura period, ink and pigment on paper, 145x59 cm, Kōzanji, Kyoto. National Treasure.



Figure 3-7 Detail of one character, one buddha *Lotus Sutra* (*ichiji ichibutsu Hokekyō*), 10th – 12th century, Heian period, ink and color on paper, Zentsū-ji, Zentsūji.

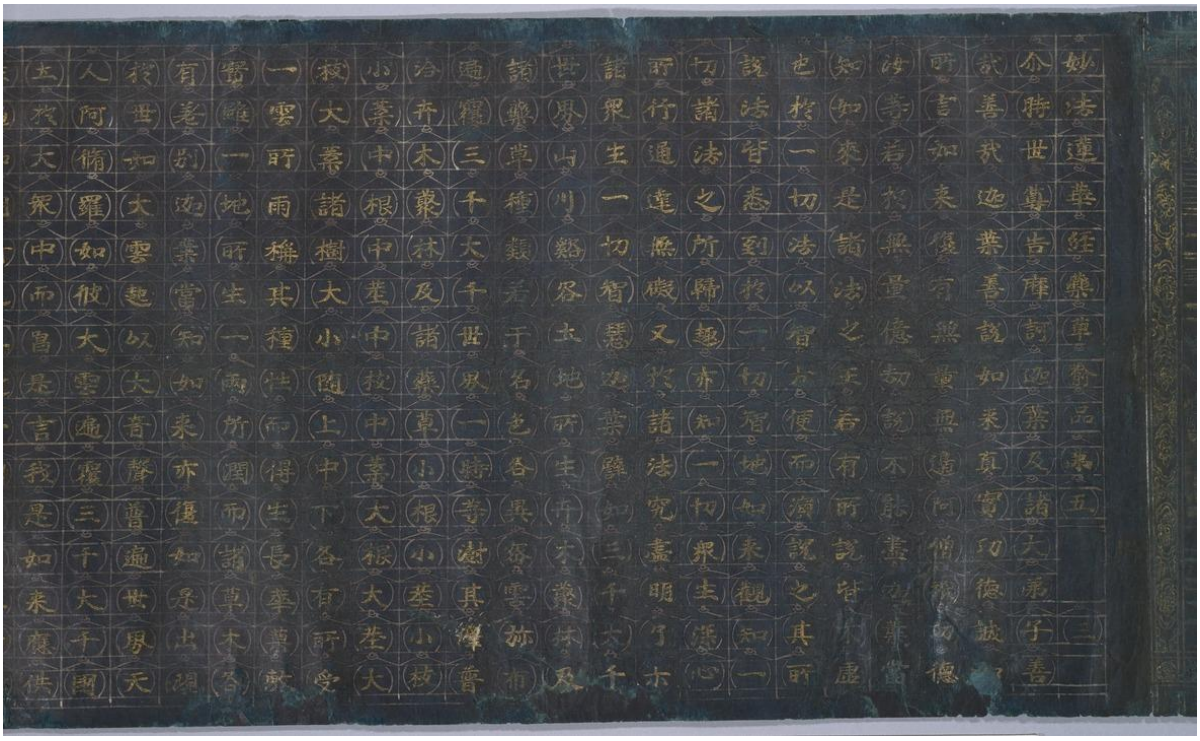


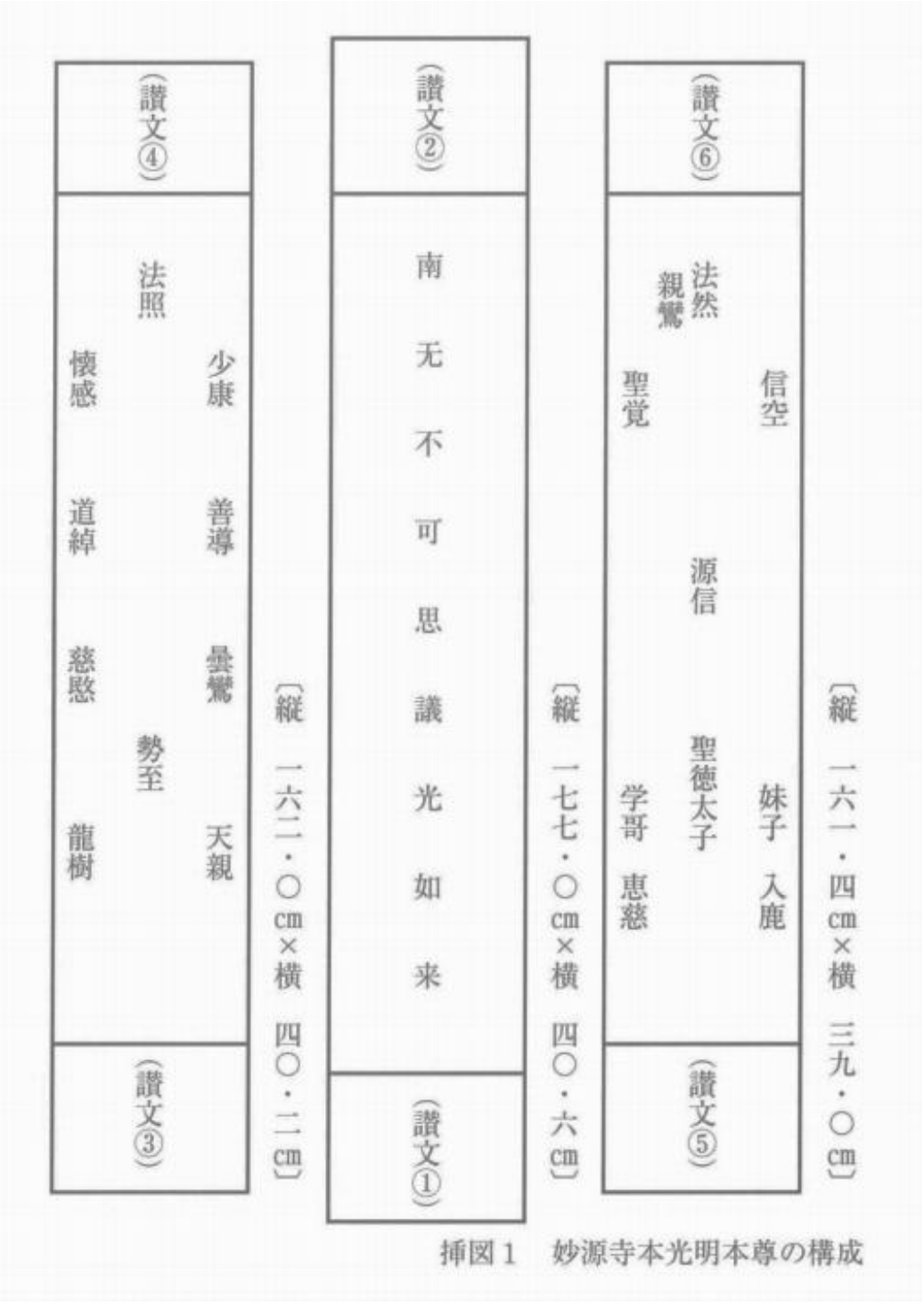
Figure 3-8 Detail of one-character stupa *Lotus Sutra* (*ichiji hōtō Hokkekyō*), late 12th century, Heian period, gold on indigo paper, Nara National Museum, Nara (formerly Anrakuju-in, Kyoto), Important Cultural Property.



Figure 3-9 Jeweled pagoda mandala, 13th century, Kamakura period, gold, silver, and slight color on indigo paper, 111.4 x 58.5 cm. 13th century, Ryūhonji, Kyoto, and Collection of Nara National Museum.



Figure 4-1 *Kōmyō honzon*, inscriptions by Shinbutsu, circa 1256, Kamakura period, left: 162 x 40.2 cm, center: 177 x 42 cm, right: 161.4 x 39 cm, ink, pigment, and gold, Myōgenji, Okazaki, Aichi Prefecture, Important Cultural Property.



挿図1　妙源寺本光明本尊の構成

Figure 4-2 Diagram of the composition of the Myōgenji scrolls with order of reading inscriptions noted with Arabic numerals. Tsuda Tetsuei, "*Kōmyō honzon kō*," 62.

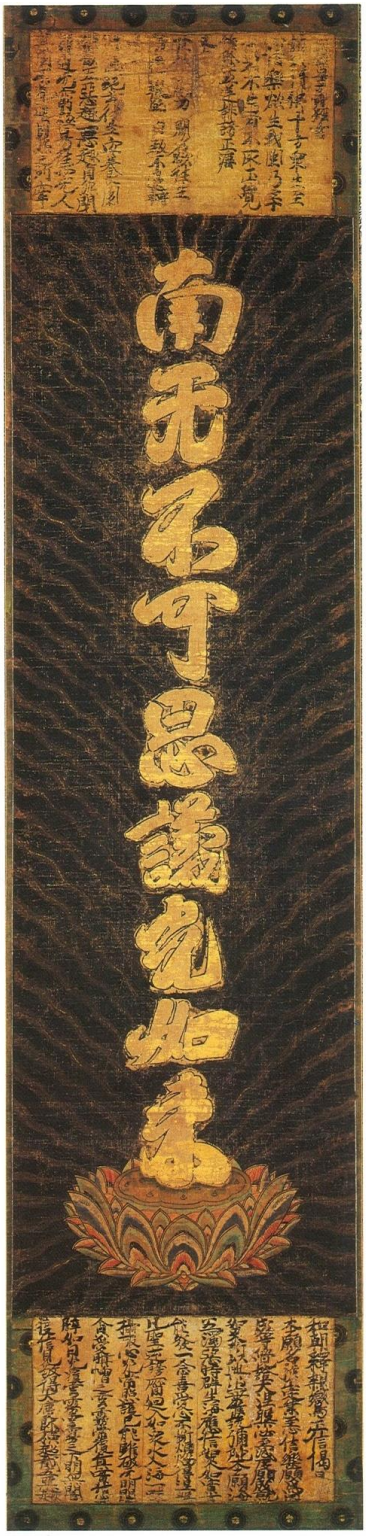


Figure 4-3 Detail of figure 4-1 *kōmyō honzon*, central scroll.



Figure 4-4 Detail of 4-1 *kōmyō honzon*, left scroll.



Figure 4-5 Detail of 4-1 *kōmyō honzon*, right scroll.



Figure 4-6 Prince Shotoku and Attendants, 13th century, Kamakura period, ink, color, and gold on silk, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, F2001.1.



Figure 4-7 Portrait of Shōtoku Taishi, 13th century, Kamakura period, colors on silk, 113.8 x 38.2 cm, Ganshō-ji, Okazaki, Aichi Prefecture.

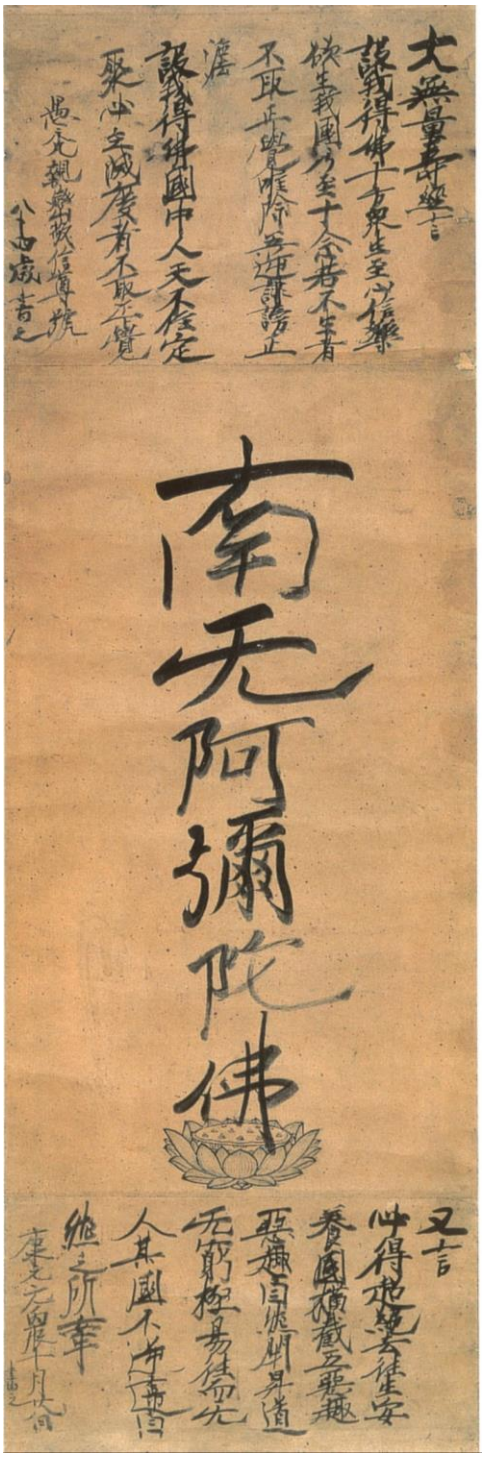


Figure 4-8 Six-character *myōgō*, by Shinran, 1256, Nishi Honganji, Kyoto.

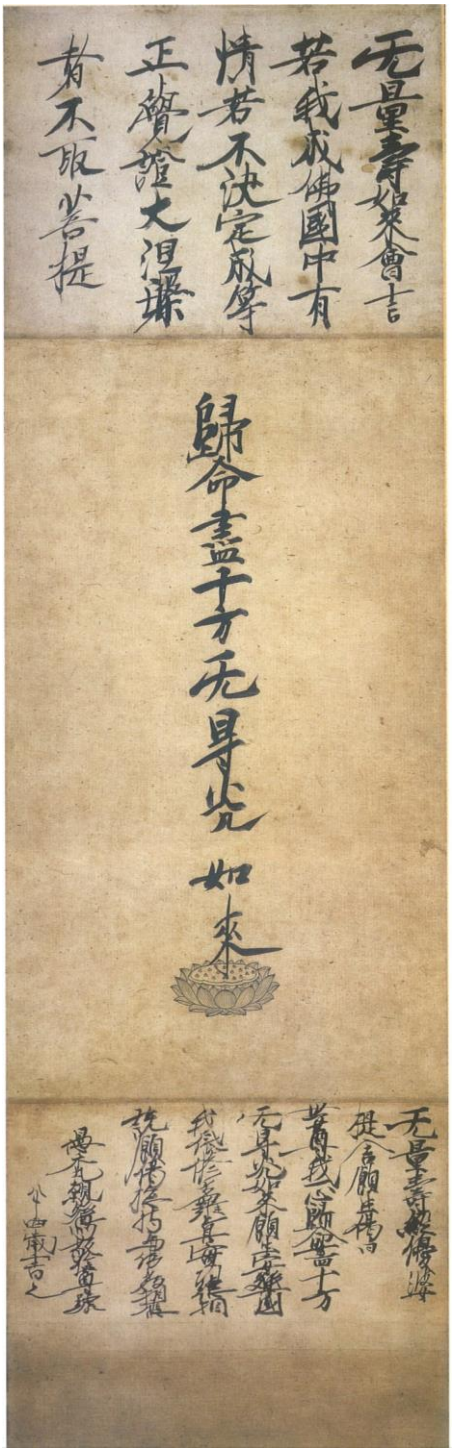


Figure 4-9 Ten-character *myōgō*, by Shinran, 1256, Senjuji, Tochigi Prefecture.



Figure 4-10 Amida triad wall painting, circa 710, Nara period, polychromy, Hōryūji, Ikaruga.



Figure 4-11 Diagram of *kōmyō honzon* as described in Zonkaku's *Benjutsu myōtai shō*.



Figure 4-12 *Kōmyō honzon*, beginning of 14th century, Kamakura period, ink and color on silk, 149.5 x 84.9 cm, Kōshō-ji, Uji.



Figure 4-13 *Kōmyō honzon*, beginning of the 14th century, Kamakura period, ink and color on silk, 151.5 x 55.6 cm, Jōfuku-ji.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

HDZ	*Hōnen Shōnin den zenshū* 法然上人伝全集. Kyoto: Hōnen Shōnen den zenshū Kankōkai, 1978.
KZ	*Kōbō Daishi zenshū* 弘法大師全集. Mount Kōya: Mikkyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1970-77.
MSS	*Myōe Shōnin shiryō* 明恵上人資料. 5 vol. ed. Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsa dan. Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku shuppankai, 1971-.
NKBZ	*Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集. Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1970-1976.
NKBT	*Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957-1966.
SSZ	*Shinshū shōgyō zenshū* 真宗商業全集. Kyoto: Kōkyō shoin, 1963-64.

Taishō Tripiṭaka marked as found in the online database (SAT *Daizōkyō* Text Database). T (for Taishō Tripiṭaka) text number_volume number.page number. Example: T0278_.09.0676a

Primary Sources and Translations

Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra. T0365_.12.

Chingen 鎮源, comp. *Hokke genki* 法華験記. In *Nihon Shisō Taikei* 日本思想体系 vol. 7, 409-24. Edited by Inoue Mitsusada and Ōsone Shōsuke. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974).

Chōgen 重源. "*Namu Amidabutsu sazenshū* 南無阿弥陀仏作善集." *Bijutsu kenkyū* 美術研究 30 (Jun. 1934): 39-51.

Dōhan 道範. "*Himitsu nenbutsu shō* 祕密念佛抄." In *Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho* 大日本仏教全書 vol. 70, 79-110. Tokyo: Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho Kankōkai, 1912-1922.

Eiin Takada koten vol. 1, *Shinbutsu Shōnin shū.* Tsu-shi: Shinshu Takadaha Shumuin, 1996.

Eison 叡尊. *Saidaiji Eison denki shūsei* 西大寺叡尊傳記集成. Edited by Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo. Reprint, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1977 (original 1956).

The Flower Ornament Scripture: a Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra. Translated by Thomas Cleary. Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1984.

Genshin 源信. *Yokawa hōgo* 横川法語. In *Kokuyaku: Shōwa shinsan, Shūtenbu* vol. 1, 485. Edited by Kokuyaku daizōkyō henshūbu. Tokyo: Tōhō shoin, 1932.

Gyōnen 凝然. *Risshū gyōkan shū* 律宗瓊鑑章. In *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* vol. 105, 25-44. Tokyo: Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho kankōkai, 1912-1922.

Hōnen 法然. "*Ruiju jōdo gosoden* 類聚淨土五祖傳." *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen Shōnin zenshū*, 843-57. Edited by Ishii Kyōdō. Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1955.

———. *Senchakushū* 選択集. Edited by Ishii Kyōdō. *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū.* Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1955.

———. *Hōnen's Senchakushū: Passages on the Selection of the nembutsu in the original vow (Senchaku hongan nembutsu shū*. Translated and edited by Senchakushū English Translation Project. Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998.

"Japanese Historical Text Initiative" (JHTI), University of California Berkley, accessed May 16, 2021, https://jhti.berkeley.edu/.

Jien 慈円. *Gukanshō* 愚管抄. Edited by Maruyama Jirō. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1949.

Jōgū Shōtoku Hōō teisetsu 上宮聖徳法王帝說. In *Nihon Shisō Taikei* vol. 2, 352-78. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975.

Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明. *Hōjōki, Hosshinshū* 方丈記；発心集. *Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei.* Edited by Miki Sumito. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1976.

———. *Hōjōki, Tsurezuregusa* 丈記, 徒然草. NKBT 30.

Kikai 喜海. *Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin gyōjō* 高山寺明恵上人行状. MSS 1.

Kōfukuji sōjō 興福寺奏状. In *Kamakura ibun komonjo hen* vol. 3, 257b-262a. Edited by Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三. Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1971.

Kōgyō daishi senjutsushū 興教大師撰述集 vol. 1. Sankibō busshorin, Tokyo, 1977.

Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsa dan, ed.. *Kōzanji kyōzo tenseki monjo mokuroku* 高山寺經藏典籍文書目錄 vol. 1. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1973-1982.

Kōzanji shōgyō mokuroku 高山寺商業目録. In *Kōzanji kyōzō mokuroku*, 278-99. Edited by Okuda Isao. Kyoto: Kōzanji Tenseki Monjo Sōgō Chōsadan, 1985.

Kyōkai 景戒. *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: the Nihon ryōiki of the monk Kyōkai.* Translated by Kyōko Nakamura. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973.

———. *Record of Miraculous Events in Japan: The Nihon ryōiki*. Translated by Burton Watson with introduction by Haruo Shirane. New York: Columbia Press, 2013.

Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実. *Gyokuyō* 玉葉 3 vols.. Edited by Imaizumi Teisuke et al. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906-1907.

Kūkai 空海. *Bonji shittan jimo narabi ni shakugi* 梵字悉曇字母并釈義. KZ 2:719-736.

———. *Bunkyō hifuron kō* 文鏡秘府論考 vols. 1-3. Edited by Konishi Jin'ichi. Kyoto: Daihasshū shuppan, 1948-1952.

———. *Hannya shingō hiken* 般若心経秘鍵, KZ 1**:**554-564.

———. *Himitsu mandarakyō fujōden* 秘密曼荼羅教付法伝. KZ 1:1-49.

———. *Joshin shōrai kyōtō mokuroku hyō* 上新請来経等目録表. KZ 1:95.

———. *Kūkai: Major Works.* Translated and edited by Yoshito S. Hakeda. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.

———. *Shingon fuhōden* 真言付法伝. KZ 1:50-68.

———. *Shōji jissōgi* 声字実相義. KZ 1:521-534.

———. *Unjigi* 吽字義. KZ 1:535-553.

Longer Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra. T0360_.12.

Lotus Sutra T0262_.9.

Mujū Ichien, *Shasekishū*. NKBT 85.

Myōe 明恵. *Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi* 自行三時礼功徳義. In *Nihon daizōkyō* vol. 42, 211-16. Edited by Nakano Tatsue Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921.

———. *Kōmyō shingon dosha kanjin ki* 光明真言土砂勧信記. In *Shingonshū anjin zensho* vol. 2, 15-54. Edited by Hase Hōshū. Kyoto: Rokudai Shinpōsha, 1914.

———. *Kōmyō shingon kaji dosha gi* 光明真言加持土砂義. In *Shingonshū anjin zensho* vol. 2. Edited by Hase Hōshū. Kyoto: Rokudai Shinpōsha, 1914.

———. *Sanji raishaku* 三時礼釈. in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zenshō* vol. 13, 131-44. Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912-1922.

———. *Sanji sanbōrai* 三時三宝礼. In *Nihon Daizōkyō* vol. 42, 195-210. Edited by Nakano Tatsue. Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921.

———. *Zaijarin* 摧邪輪. In *Kamakura Kyū Bukkyō*, 43-106. Edited by Kamata Shigeo and Tanaka Hisao Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971.

———. *Zaijarin* 摧邪輪. In *Nihon Daizōkyō* vol. 42, 275-374. Edited by Nakano Tatsue. Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921.

———. *Zaijarin shōgonki* 摧邪輪荘厳記. In *Nihon daizōkyō* vol. 42, 375-404. Edited by Nakano Tatsue. Tokyo: Nihon daizōkyō hensankai, 1914-1921.

Nichiren 日蓮. *Risshōankokuron* 立正安国論. In *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* vol. 1. Edited by Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo. Yamanashi-ken Minami Koma-gun: Sōhonzan Minobu Kuonji, 1965.

———. *Risshōankokuron* 立正安国論. T2688_.84.

Nomori no kagami 野守の鏡. In *Nihon kagaku taikei* vol. 4, 64-96. Tokyo: Fūkan Shobō, 1956-1963.

Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom Sutra (*Hannya haramitta kyō* 般若波羅蜜多経). T0220_.05.

Ryōjin hishō, Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei 梁塵秘抄, 新潮日本古典集成. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1979.

Saichō 最澄. *Ju bosatsukai gi* 授菩薩戒儀. In *Dengyō daishi zenshū* vol. 1: 328. Sakamoto-mura: Hieizan Tosho Kankōsho, 1926-27.

Shàndǎo 善導. *Guān wú liàng shòu jīng shū* 観無量寿経疏. T1753_.37.

Shigeakira 重明. *Rihō ō ki*. *Shiryō sanshū* 吏部王記. 史料纂集. Edited by Yoneda Yūsuke and Yoshioka Masayuki. Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1974.

Shinran 親鸞. *The Collected Works of Shinran*. Translated by Dennis Hirota, vol. 1-2. Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1997.

———. *Kyōgyōshinshō: on teaching, practice, faith, and enlightenment*. Translated by Inagaki Hisao. Berkeley, California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2003.

———. *Teihon Shinran Shōnin zenshū* 定本親鸞聖人全集 vol. 1. Kyoto: Hōzōnkan, 1969.

Shunjō 舜昌. *Hōnen shōnin eden jō, Zoku Nihon no emaki* 法然上人絵伝上, 続日本の絵巻 vol. 1. Edited by Kōmatsu Shigemi. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1990.

———. *Hōnen the Buddhist Saint: His Life and Teaching* vols. 1-2. Translated by Harper Coates and Ishizuka Ryugaku. Kyoto: Society for the Publication of Sacred Books of the World, 1949.

Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經 vol. 83, *Shinran shū* 親鸞集, *Nichiren shū* 日蓮集. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1964.

Teihon Shinran shōnin zenshū 定本親鸞聖人全集, vol. 2. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1969.

"*Tōbōki*." *Zokuzoku gunsho ruijū* 続々群書類従 vol. 12. Edited by Kokusho Kankōkai. Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1906-9).

Ō no Yasumaro 太安万侶. *Kojiki* 古事記. Translated by Donald L. Philippi. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968.

———. *A Translation of the "Ko-ji-ki" or Records of Ancient Matters.* Translated by Basil Hall Chamberlain Yokohama, Japan: R. Meiklejohn and Co., Printers, 1882.

———. *Kojiki* 古事記. NKBT 1:41-343.

———. *Kojiki* 古事記. NKBZ l:43-354.

Vimalakīrti Sūtra. T0475_.14.

Yoshishige Yasutane 慶滋保胤. *Nihon ōjō gokuraki ki* 日本往生極楽記. Tokyo: Yagi Shōten, 2007.

Zonkaku 存覚. "*Benjutsu myōtai shō* 弁述名体鈔." In *Shinshū jūhō shūei*, 207-212. Edited by Hiramatsu Reizō. (Kyoto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1987.

———. "*Zonkaku Shōnin sode nikki* 存覚上人袖日記." In *Zonkaku Shōnin ichigoki; Zonkaku Shōnin sode nikki*. *Ryūkoku Daigaku zenpon sōsho* vol. 3, 303-341. Edited by Chiba Jōryū. Kyoto: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1982.

English Secondary Sources

Abé, Ryūichi. *The Weaving of the Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Andrews, Allan. *The Teachings Essential for Rebirth: A Study of Genshin's Ōjōyōshū.* Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970.

Aoki, Michiko Y.. *Records of Wind and Earth: a Translation of Fudoki with Introduction and Commentaries.* Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 1997.

Augustine, Jonathan. *Buddhist Hagiography in Early Japan: Images of Compassion in the Gyōki Tradition.* London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005.

Baxandall, Michael. *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

———. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style.* Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

———. *Patterns of Intention: on the Historical Explanation of Pictures.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Bialock, David T.. *Eccentric Spaces, Hidden Histories: Narraitve, Ritual, and Royal Authority from* The Chronicles of Japan *to* The Tale of the Heike. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Brock, Karen. "The Case of the Missing Scroll: a History and Reconstruction of "Tales of Gishō and Gangyō." *Archives of Asian Art* vol. 41 (1988), 6-31.

———. "Chinese Maiden, Silla Monk: Zenmyō and her Thirteenth-Century Japanese Audience." In *Flowering in the Shadows*, 185-211. Edited by Marsha Weidner. Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 1990.

———. "E'nichibō Jōnin, the Saint's Companion." In *The artist as professional in Japan*, 38-77. Edited by Melinda Takeuchi. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.

———. "Tales of Gishō and Gangyō: editor, artist, and audience in Japanese picture scrolls." PhD diss., Princeton, 1984.

Brown, Delmer M. and Ichirō Ishida. *The Future and the Past: a Translation and Study of the* Gukanshō, *an Interpretive History of Japan Written in 1219.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979.

Bodman, Richard. *Poetics and Prosody in Early Mediaeval China: a Study and Translation of Kūkai's* Bunkyō hifuron. Basel; Melbourne: Quirin Press, 2020.

———. "*Poetics and Prosody in Early Mediaeval China: a Study and Translation of Kūkai's* Bunkyō hifuron." PhD diss., Cornell University, 1978.

Bogel, Cynthea. *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Brightwell, Erin. *Reflecting the Past: Place, Language, and Principle in Japan's Medieval* Mirror *Genre.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020.

Brinker, Helmut. *Secrets of the Sacred: Empowering Buddhist Images in Clear, in Code, and in Cache.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011.

Brown, W. Norman. "The Metaphysics of the Truth Act (Satyakriyā)." In *Melanges d'Indianisme à la Memoire de Louise Renou*, 171-77. Paris: Editions E. de Boccard, 1963.

Burchett, Patton E.. "The 'magical' language of mantra." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 4 (2008): 807-843.

Carlqvist, Anders. "A Natural Treasury: Plants and Animals in "Izumo Fudoki."" *Japan Review* 19 (2007): 77-105.

Carr, Kevin. *Plotting the Prince: Shōtoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism.* Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012.

Copp, Paul. *The Body Incantatory: Spells and Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Coward, Harold G. and David J. Goa. *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India and America.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Davidson, Ronald M.. "Studies in Dhāraṇī Literature I: Revisiting the Meaning of the Term 'Dhāraṇī.'" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* vol. 37, no. 2 (April 2009): 97-147.

Dine, Susan. "Sanskrit Beyond Text: The Use of Bonji (Siddham) in Mandala and Other Imagery in Ancient and Medieval Japan." MA thesis, University of Washington, 2012.

Dobbins, James C. "Editor's Introduction: Kuroda Toshio and His Scholarship." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, issue 3 (1996): 217-32.

———. *Letters of the Nun Eshinni: Images of Pure Land Buddhism in Medieval Japan.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

Duthie, Torquil. *Man'yōshū and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan.* Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Eubanks, Charlotte. *Miracles of Book and Body: Buddhist Textual Culture and Medieval Japan.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011.

Foard, James. "In Search of a Lost Reformation: a Reconsideration of Kamakura Buddhism." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 7, issue 4 (Dec. 1980): 261-91.

———. *Jōkei and Buddhist Devotion in Early Medieval Japan.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Fontein, Jan. *The pilgrimage of Sudhana: a study of Gaṇḍavyūha illustrations in China, Japan, and Java.* The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1967.

Funke, Mark C.. "Hitachi no Kuni Fudoki." *Monumenta Nipponica* vol. 49, no. 1 (Spring, 1994): 1-29.

Glassman, Hank. "The Nude Jizō: notes on women's salvation in Kamakura Buddhism." In *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, 383-413. Edited by Barbara Ruch. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Gonda, Jan. "The Popular Prajāpati." *History of Religions* 22, no. 2 (Nov. 1982): 129-149.

Grapard, Allan G.. "Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religions." *History of Religions* 21 (3): 1982, 195-221.

———. "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Multiplexes of Heian Japan." *History of Religions*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Feb., 1988), 246-69.

Groner, Paul. "Icons and Relics in Eison's Religious Activities." In *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, 114-50. Edited by Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf. Standford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.

Gyatso, Janet. *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Griffiths, Paul J.. *On being Buddha: the Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood.* Albany: State University of New York, 1994.

Harrison, Paul and John McRae. *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra and the Śūraṅgama Samādhi Sūtra.* Berkley, CA: Numata Centery, 1998.

Heldt, Gustav. *The Kojiki: an Account of Ancient Matters.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Henderson, Gregory and Leon Hurvitz. "The Buddha of Seiryōji: New Finds and New Theory." *Artibus Asiae* 19 no. 1 (1956): 5-55.

Hirota, Dennis. *Plain Words on the Pure Land Way.* Ryūkoku University, 1989.

Hisatoyo Ishida. *Esoteric Buddhist Painting.* Translated by E. Dale Saunders. New York: Kodansha International, 1987.

Horton, Sarah. "The Influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* in Late Tenth- and Early Eleventh-Century Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31:1 (2004), 29-54.

Hurvitz, Leon. *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.

Inagaki Hisao. *The Three Pure Land Sutras: a Study and Translation from Chinese.* Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1995.

Kainuma, Yoshiko. "Chōgen's Jōdoji Amida Triad and its Environment: a Theatrical Effect of the *Raigō* Form." *Artibus Asiae* 74, no. 1 (2014): 97-129.

Kaminishi, Ikumi. *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoki Storytelling in Japan.* Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Kawai Hayao. *The Buddhist Priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams.* Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1992.

Kehoe, Sinéad. "Pictures of Patriarchs: the Illustrated Life and Acts of Hōnen." Phd diss., Princeton University, 2012.

Kemmerer, Robin Wall. "*Mishkos Kenomagwen*: the Teachings of Grass." In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, 156-166. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013.

Kim, Yung-Hee. *Songs to Make the Dust Dance: the Ryōjin hishō of Twelfth-century Japan.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.

Keirstead, Thomas. "Outcasts Before the Law: Pollution and Purification in Medieval Japan." In *Currents in Medieval Japanese History: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey P. Mass*, 267-93. Edited by Gordon Berger et al. Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2009.

Kimbrough, R. Keller. "Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry: spells, truth acts, and a medieval Buddhist poetics of the supernatural." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 1 (2005): 1-33.

Kornicki, Peter. "The Hyakumanto Dharani and the Origins of Printing in Eighth-Century Japan." *International Journal of Asian Studies* 9, issue 1 (2012): 43-70.

Kuroda Toshio. "The Development of the *Kenmitsu* System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." Translated by James C. Dobbins. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, issue 3 (Dec. 1996): 233-70.

LaFleur, William. *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983.

Lee, Kenneth. *The Prince and the Monk: Shōtoku Worship in Shinran's Buddhism.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.

Lomi, Benedetta. "Dharanis, Talismans, and Straw-dolls: Ritual Choreographies and Healing Strategies of the "Rokujikyōhō" in Medieval Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* vol. 41, no. 2 (2014): 255-304.

Lowe, Bryan. *Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan.* Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017.

Lurie, David. "The Origins of Writing in Early Japan: From the 1st to the 8th Century C.E.." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2001.

———. *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Machida Sōhō. *Renegade Monk: Hōnen and Japanese Pure Land Buddhism*. Translated by Ioannis Mentzas. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Mark MacWilliams. "*Kannon Engi*: The Reijo and the Concept of *Kechien* as Strategies of Indigenization in Buddhist Sacred Narrative." *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 3, no. 5 (1990): 53-70.

Matsuo Kenji. *A History of Japanese Buddhism.* Boston, Brill USA, 2008.

McCallum, Donald F.. "The Saidaiji Lineage of the Seiryōji Shaka Tradition." *Archives of Asian Art* 49 (1996): 51-67.

Meeks, Lori. *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010.

———. "Vows for the Masses: Eison and the Popular Expansion of Precept-Conferral Ceremonies in Premodern Japan." *Numen* 56, issue 1 (2009): 1-43.

Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, s.v. "language," accessed June 6, 2021, https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/language.

Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, s.v. "body," accessed June 6, 2021, https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/body.

Minowa Kenryō, "The Movement for the Revival of the Precepts by the Ritsu School in Medieval Japan." Translated by Elisabetta Porcu. *The Eastern Buddhist* 39, issue 2 (2008): 125-157.

Morrell, Robert E.. *Early Kamakura Buddhism: a Minority Report.* Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1987.

Muriuki, Wamae Wachanga. "That I Should Dance on the Earth: Shinran's Revaluation of 'Karmic Afflictions.'" PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2012.

Nagahara Keiji. "The Medieval Origins of the Eta-Hinin." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 5, no. 2 (Summer, 1979): 385-403.

Nakano Chieko. ""*Kechien*" as Religious Praxis in Medieval Japan: Picture Scrolls as the Means and Sites of Salvation." PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2009.

Morse, Samuel C.. "Animating the Image: Buddhist Portrait Sculpture of the Kamakura Period." *Orientations* 35, no. 1 (2004): 22-30.

———. "A Short History of the Kei School." In *Kamakura: Realism and Spirituality in the Sculpture of Japan,* 17-26. Edited by Ive Covaci. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016.

———. "Revealing the Unseen: The Master Sculptor Unkei and the Meaning of Dedicatory Objects in Kamakura-period Sculpture." *Impressions* 31 (2010): 25-41.

O'Neal, Halle. *Word Embodied: the Jeweled Pagoda Mandalas in Japanese Buddhist Art.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018.

Palmer, Edwina. "Calming the Killing "Kami": the Supernatural, Nature and Culture in "Fudoki."" *Japan Review* 13 (2001): 3-31.

Pandey, Rajyashree. "Suki and Religious Awakening: Kamo no Chōmei's Hosshinshū." *Monumenta Nipponica* 47, no. 3 (Autumn 1992): 299-321.

Proffitt, Aaron P.. "Mysteries of Speech and Breath: Dōhan's 道範 (1179-1252) *Himitsu nenbutsu shō* 祕密念佛抄 and Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism." PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2015.

Rambelli, Fabio. *Buddhist Materiality: a Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.

———. *A Buddhist Theory of Semiotics: Signs, Ontology, and Salvation in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism.* New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

———. Secrecy in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism." In *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion*. Edited by Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen, 107-129. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Rhodes, Robert F. and Richard K. Payne. *Genshin's Ōjōyōshū and the Construction of Pure Land Discourse in Heian Japan (Pure Land Buddhist Studies*. Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawaii Press, 2017.

Rosenfield, John M.. *Portraits of Chōgen: the Transformation of Buddhist Art in Early Medieval Japan.* Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011.

Rubin, Elyse. " The Dissertation Handbook: A Guide to Submitting Your Doctoral Dissertation and Completing Your Doctoral Degree Requirements." Diss. U of Michigan, 2017.

Ruch, Barbara. *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan.* Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, the University of Michigan, 2002.

Seeley, Christopher. *A History of Writing in Japan.* Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1991.

Sharf, Robert. “On Pure Land Buddhism and Chan/Pure Land Syncretism in Medieval China.” *T’oung Pao* 88, no. 4-5 (June, 2003), 282-331.

Shirane, Haruo. *Classical Japanese Reader and Essential Dictionary*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2007.

Solomon, Michael. “Kinship and the Transmission of Religious Charisma: The Case of Honganji.” *The Journal of Asian Studies,* Vol. 33, No. 3 (May, 1974): 403-413.

Sponberg, Alan. “Meditation in Fa-hsiang Buddhism.” In *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism,* 15-44. Edited by Peter N. Gregory. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1986.

Stone, Jacqueline I. *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism.* (Honolulu, Hawai’i: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 55-94.

———. *Right Thoughts at the Last Moment: Buddhism and Deathbed Practices in Early Medieval Japan.* Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016.

———. “Seeking Enlightenment in the Last Age: “Mappō” though in Kamakura Buddhism: part 1.” *The Eastern Buddhist* vol. 18, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 28-56.

———. “Seeking Enlightenment in the Last Age: “Mappō” though in Kamakura Buddhism: part 2.” *The Eastern Buddhist* vol. 18, no. 2 (Autumn 1985): 35-64.

Sueki Fumihiko. “A Reexamination of *Kenmitsu Taisei* Theory.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, issue 4 (1996): 449-66.

Takahatake Takamichi. *Young Man Shinran: a Reapprisal of Shinran’s Life.* Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1987.

Tanabe, George J.. *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Teeuween, Mark and Fabio Rambelli, ed. *Buddhas and kami in Japan: honji suijaku as a combinatory paradig.* New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003.

Ten Grotenhuis, Elizabeth. *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999.

———. *The Revival of the Taima Mandala in Medieval Japan.* New York: Garland, 1985.

The Legacy of Kuroda Toshio. Edited by James C. Dobbins. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, issues 3-4 (Fall 1996).

Tonomura Hitomi. “Birth-giving and Avoidance Taboo: Tomen’s Body versus the Historiography of “Ubuya”.” *Japan Review* vol. 19, issue 19 (2007): 3-45.

———. “Coercive Sex in the Medieval Japanese Court: Lady Nijō’s Memoir.” *Monumenta Nipponica* vol. 61, issue 3 (2006): 283-338.

Tyler, Royall. *The Miracles of the Kasuga Deity.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Unno, Mark. *Shingon Refractions: Myōe and the Mantra of Light.* Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004.

Ury, Marian. “Recluses and Eccentric Monks: Tales from the Hosshinshū by Kamo no Chōmei.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 27, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 149-73.

Van der Veere, Hendrik. *A Study into the Thought of Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban: with a Translation of His* Gorin kuji myō himitsushaku. Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2000.

Waddell, L. A.. *The "Dharani" Cult in Buddhism; Its Origin, Deified Literature and Images*. Berlin: Oesterheld & Co., 1912.

Walley, Akiko. *Constructing the Dharma King: the Hōryūji Shaka Traid and the Birth of the Prince Shōtoku Cult.* Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015.

Walley, Akiko. “Sheltered by the Buddha: Objects Buried under the Great Buddha of Todaiji as Proto-Tainai Nonyuhin.” *Paragone* 5 (2018): 65-73.

Wang Haicheng. *Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Wang, Michelle C.. *Maṇḍalas in the Making: the Visual Culture of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhang.* Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018.

Washizuka Hiromitsu et al. *Enlightenment Embodied: the Art of the Japanese Buddhist Sculptor (7th-14th centuries)*. Translated and edited by Reiko Tomii and Kathleen M. Fraiello. New York: Japan Society, 1997.

Williams, Gratia C.. “Takuma Eiga: a Revisionist Analysis of a Fourteenth-Century Buddhist Painter.” PhD diss., Columbia University, 2006.

Williams, Paul. *Mahayana Buddhism: the Doctrinal Foundations.* London: Routledge, 2008.

Women and Class in Japanese History. Ed. Hitomi Tonomura, Anne Walthall, and Wakita Haruko. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, the University of Michigan, 1999.

Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan. Ed. Dorothy Ko, Jahyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott. Berkeley: California, 2003.

Wu, Pei-jung. “A Comparison of the Chinese and Japanese Deposit with Buddhist Statues: With the Seiryōji Shaka and Saidaiji Shaka Statues as Examples.” *TNNUA Artistica* 2 (June 2011): 71-99.

Wu, Pei-jung. “Wooden statues as living bodies: deciphering the meanings of the deposits within two Mañjuśrī images of the Saidaiji order.” *Artibus Asiae* vol. 74 no. 1 (2014): 75-96.

Yiengpruksawan, Mimi Hall. “Buddha’s Bodies and the Iconographical Turn in Buddhism.” In *Buddhist Spirituality: Later China, Korea, Japan, and the Modern World*, 391-413. Edited by Takeuchi Yoshinori. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999.

Japanese Secondary Sources

Abe Yasurō 阿部泰郎. “*Shōtoku Taishi shinkō* 聖徳太子信仰.” In *Shōtoku Taishi jiten* 聖徳太子辞典. Edited by Ishida Naotoyo. Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1997.

Akimoto Kichirō 秋本吉郎. *Fudoki* 風土記. NKBT vol. 2 Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958.

———. *Fudoki no kenkyū* 風土記の研究. Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 1998.

Andō Fumihito 安藤章仁. “*Mikawa Myōgenji ni okeru Shinshū bunkazai ni tsuite* 三河名源氏における真宗文化財について.” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* インド学仏教学研究 44, issue 2 (1996), 702-704.

———. “*Myōgenjibon ‘Kōmyō honzon’ no kōsei to sono igi* 妙源寺本「光明本尊」の構成とその意義.” *Inbutsuken, Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印仏研、印度学仏教学研究 63 no. 2 (2015), 573-78.

———. “*Myōgenjibon ‘Kōmyō honzon’ no meishō no saikentō* 名源寺本『光明本尊』の名称の再検討.” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* インド学仏教学研究 617, no. 2 (2019): 614-19.

———. “*Myōgō honzon seiritsu no haikei ni tsuite* 名号本尊成立の背景について.” *Shūkyō kenkyū* 宗教研究 87 (2014): 355-56.

———. “*Shin hakken no Shinbutsu shosha seikyō ni tsuite* 新発見の真佛書写聖教について.” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* インド学仏教学研究 58, no. 2 (2010): 1092-97.

———. “*Shinran ni okeru zōkei bijutsu no imi*.” *Shūkyō kenkyū* 宗教研究 89 (2016): 288-89.

Chiba Jōryū 千葉乗隆. “*Benjutsu myōtai shō ni okeru* 弁述名体鈔.” In *Shinshū jūhō shūei* 真宗重宝聚英, 201-6. Edited by Hiramatsu Reizō 平松令三. Kyoto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1987.

Fujishima Tatsurō 藤島達朗. “*Myōe shōnin no myōji honzon ni tsuite* 明恵上人の名字本尊について.” *Ōtani Gakuhō* 大谷学報 48-1 (1968): 1-6.

Hakamaya Noriaki 袴谷憲昭. *Hōnen to Myōe: Nihon Bukkyō shisōshi josetsu* 法然と明恵―日本仏教思想史序説. Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1998.

Hamada Takashi 浜田隆. *"Zuzō* 図像." *Nihon no Bijutsu* 日本の美術 55. Tokyo: Shibundō, 1970.

Hiramatsu Reizō 平松令三, ed.. *Shinshū jūhō shūei* 真宗重宝聚英. Kyoto: Dōbōsha Shuppan, 1987.

Hiraoka Jōkai 平岡定海, ed.. *Tōdaiji Sōshō Shōnin no kenkyū narabini shiryō* 東大寺宗性上人の研究並史料 vol. 3. Tokyo: Nihon Gakujitsu Shinkōkai, 1958-1960.

Hirata Yutaka 平田寛. *Ebusshi no jidai* 絵仏師の時代 vol. 1-2. Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1994.

———. *Ebusshi no sakuhin* 絵仏師の作品. Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1997.

———. "*Takuma ha ni okeru dentō sei* 宅間派における伝統性." *Kokka* 國華 1085 (Jul. 1985): 11-26.

Hōnen and Shinran: Treasures Related to the Great Masters of the Kamakura Buddhism: Special Exhibition in Commemoration of the 800th Grand Memorial of Hōnen and the 750th Grand Memorial of Shinran. Tokyo: NHK Puromōshon: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2011.

Horiike Shunpō 堀池春峰. "*Nara jidai bukkyō no mikkyō teki seikaku* 奈良時代仏教の密教的性格." In *Nihon kodaishi ronsō* 日本古代史論叢. Edited by Kodaigaku kyūkai. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1960.

Ibaraki Yoshiyuki 荊木美行. *Fudoki kenkyū no genjō to kadai* 風土記研究の現状と課題. Osaka: Nenshōsha, 2019.

Ishida Hisatoyo 石田尚豊. "*Kegon kai-e zenchishiki mandarazu* 華厳海会善智識曼荼羅図." *Museum* ミュージアム no. 155 (Feb. 1964): 2-14.

Ishii Kyōdō 石井教道. "*Gonmitsu no shiso Kōben* 厳密の始祖高弁*." Taisho daigaku gakuhō* 大正大學々報 vol. 3 (1928): 48-72.

Itō Shirō 伊東四朗. "*Zendō daishi no shōzō* 善導大師の肖像." In *Zendō daishi kenkyū* 善導大師研究, 501-24. Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 1980.

Iwata Shigeki 岩田茂樹. *Genshin: jigoku gokuraku e no tobira: 1000 nenki tokubetsuten* 源信 ： 地獄 極楽への扉 ： 一〇〇〇年忌特別展. Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2017.

Kageyama Haruki 景山春樹. “*Kaiga* 絵画.” In *Kasuga taisha* 春日大社. Osaka-shi: Osaka shoseki, 1984.

Kamei Takashi 亀井孝. “*Kojiki wa yomeru ka* 古事記は読めるか.” In *Kojiki taisei* 古事記体制 *3: Gengo moji hen* 言語文字遍. Edited by Takeda Yūkichi Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1957.

Kawada Junzō 川田順造. *Kōtō denshō ron* 口頭伝承論. Tokyo: Heibonsha Raiburarii, 2001.

Kawai Hayao 河合隼雄. *Myōe: Yume o ikiru* 明恵：夢を生きる. Kyoto: Shōhaku-sha, 1987.

Kitabatake Tensei 北畠典生. *Ōjōyōshū kōyō* 往生要集綱要. Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1992.

Kuroda Toshio 黒田俊雄. *Jisha seiryōku: mō hitotsu chūsei no shakai* 寺社勢力 ： もう一つの中世社会. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980.

———. *Nihon chūsei no kokka to shūkyō* 日本中世の国家と宗教. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990.

———. “*Chūsei jisha seiryoku ron* 中世寺社勢力論.” In *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi: Chūsei* 岩波講座日本歴史:中世 vol. 6, edited by Asao Naohiro 朝尾直弘 et al. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975.

Kominami Myokaku 小南妙覚. “*Jikaku Daishi Ennin nittō guhō no seika: Hieizan Bukkyō no kakuritsu wo kishite* 慈覚大師円仁入唐求法の成果 ： 比叡山仏教の確立を期して.” *Shimado* 史窓 75 (Mar. 2018): 1-23.

Komine Kazuaki 小峯和明. *Setsuwa no koe: chūsei sekai no katari, uta, warai* 説話の声—中世世界の語り・うた・笑い. Tokyo: Shinseidō, 2000.

———. *Setsuwa no mori: chūsei no tengu kara Isoppu made* 説話の森 ： 天狗・盗賊・異形の道化. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001.

Kōyū Sonoda 薗田香融. “*Yama no nenbutsu* 山の念仏.” In *Nihon jōdokyōshi no kenkyū* 日本浄土教史の研究, 99-130. Edited by T. Fujishima and E. Miyazaki. Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1969.

Kurata Bunsaku 倉田文作. *Jūyō bunkazai bekkan: Zōnai nōnyūhin* 重要文化財別巻：像内納入品. Edited by Mainichi shinbun sha. Tokyo: Mainichi shinbun sha, 1978.

———. “*Zōnai nōnyūhin* 像内納入品.” *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 86 (July 1973).

Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan. *Hōnen: shōgai to bijutsu: Hōnen shōnin happyaku kaiki: tokubetsu tenrankai* 法然生涯と美術 ： 法然上人八百回忌 法然 ： 生涯と美術 ： 法然上人八百回忌 ： 特別展覧会. Kyoto: Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2011).

Machida Sōhō 町田宗鳳. *Hōnen: seikimatsu no kakumeisha* 法然 ： 世紀末の革命者. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1997.

Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶. *Mikkyō no rekishi* 密教の歴史. Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1969.

Matsuo Kenji 松尾剛次. *Kamakura shin Bukkyō no seiritsu: Nyūmon girei to soshi shinwa* 鎌倉新仏教の成立 ： 入門儀礼と祖師神話. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988.

Matsuura Masaaki 松浦正昭. "*Tōji Kōdō no Shingon chōkoku* 東寺講堂の真言彫刻." *Bukkyō geijutsu* 仏教芸術 150 (Sept. 1983): 77-101.

Minobe Shigekatsu. "*Kechien to setsuwa denshō: Ōjōtan no seiritsu*." In *Chūsei denshō bungaku no shosō*, 11-30. Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1988.

Minowa Kenryō. "*Kairitsu fukkō undō*." In *Jikai no seija: Eison, Ninshō*. *Nihon no meisō* vol. 10 Edited by Matsuo Kenji. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004: 45-73.

Miura Sukeyuki. *Fudoki no sekai.* Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Iwanami Shoten, 2016.

Miyajima Shin'ichi 宮島新一. "*Zendō daishi ryūzō* 善導大師立像," in *Koji junrei Kyōto* 古寺巡礼 vol. 19 *Chion-in* 知恩院, 137-38. Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1977.

Miyake Moritsune 三宅守常. "*Myōe kyōgaku no jidai kubun ni tsuite* 明恵教学の時代区分について." *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 宗教研究 49, issue 3 (Mar. 1976): 217-19.

———. "*Myōe no Sanji Raishaku Shinkō ni tsuite: 'Sanji sanbōrai shaku' oyobi 'Jigyō sanjirai kudoku gi' o chūshin ni shite* 明恵の三宝礼拝信仰について:「三時三宝礼釈」および「自行三時礼功徳義」を中心にして." *Seishin Kagaku* 精神科学 13 (Mar. 1974): 99-110.

———. "*Myōe no Sanji sanbōrai ni tsuite* 明恵の三時三宝礼について." *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 24, issue 2 (1976): 650-51.

Mizuno Keizaburō 水野敬三郎. *Nihon chōkokushi kenkyū* 日本彫刻史研究. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1996.

———. *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei: Heian jidai zōzō meiki hen* 日本彫刻史基礎資料集成：平安時代造像明記遍 vol. 1. Tokyo: Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppan, 1967.

———. *Nihon chōkokushi kiso shiryō shūsei: Kamakura jidai: zōzō meiki hen* 日本彫刻史基礎資料集成：鎌倉時代造像明記遍 vol. 2, part 2. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2005.

Mori Hisashi 毛利久. "*Unkei, Kaikei to Kōzanji, Jūrin'in* 運慶、快慶と高山寺、十輪院," in *Nihon Bukkyō chōkokushi no kenkyū* 日本仏教彫刻史の研究, 243-52 Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1970.

———. *Unkei to Kamakura chōkoku* 運慶と鎌倉彫刻. *Nihon no bijustu* 日本の美術 11. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1964.

Murakami Sōdō 村上素道. *Myōe Shōnin: Toganoosan Kōzanji* 明恵上人：栂尾山高山寺. Umegahatamura: Toganōsan Kōzanji, 1929.

———. *Toganosan Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin* 栂尾山高山寺明恵上人. Kyoto: Kōzanji, 1929.

———. "*Myōe shōnin no kōgi to sono kikigaki* 明恵上人の講義とその聞き書き." In *Kōzanji tenseki monjo no kenkyū* 高山寺典籍文書の研究, 181-97. Edited by Tsukishima Hiroshi 築島裕. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980.

Nabata Ōjun 名畑應順, ed.. *Shinran wasan-shū, Iwanami bunko* 親鸞和算集、岩波文庫 no. 318-3. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1976.

Nabata Takashi 名畑崇. "*Kinen kōen Jōdo shinshū no sugata: kōmyō honzon no shūgen* 記念講演浄土真宗のすがた：光明本尊の祝言." *Shinshū Kenkyū* 真宗研究 60 (2016): 270-82.

Nagaoka Ryūsaku 長岡龍作. *Kaikei: Nihonjin o miryōshita hotoke no katachi: tokubetsuten* 快慶 ： 日本人を魅了した仏のかたち ： 特別展. Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2018.

Nakamura Hajime 中村元. *Shōtoku Taishi* 聖徳太子. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1998.

Narita Shunji 成田俊治. "*Zendō daishi zō ni tsuite no 2・3 no mondai- tokini hankin iro zō o chūshin ni* 善導大師像についての 2・3 の問題−特に半金色像を中心に." *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū* 仏教文化研究 38 (1993): 1-16.

Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed.. *Dai kanjin Chōgen* 大勧進重源. Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2006.

Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed.. *Nihon bukkyō bijutsu no genryū* 日本仏教美術の源流 numbers 95 and 96.

Nedachi Kensuke 根立研介. *Hotoke o tsukutta hitobito: Tori Busshi kara Unkei, Kaikei made* ほとけを造った人びと ： 止利仏師から運慶・快慶まで. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2013.

———. *Nihon chūsei no busshi to shakai: Unkei to Kei-ha Shichijō busshi o chūshin ni* 日本中世の仏師と社会 ： 運慶と慶派七条仏師を中心に. Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 2006.

———. “*Reigenbutsu to nōnyūhin wo tōshita seisei no ishoku wo megutte* 霊験仏と納入仏を通した聖性の移植をめぐって.” *Bijutsu Fōramu 21* 美術フォーラム vol. 22 (2010): 46-50

Ogawa Toyo’o 小川豊生. “*Katokuron josetsu* 家督論叙説 2.” In *Uta monogatari to waka setsuwa* (*Setsuwa ronshū* 説話論集 vol. 9). Edited by Setsuwa to Setsuwa Bungaku no Kai. Osaka, Seibundō, 1999.

Okuda Isao 奥田勲. *Myōe henreki to yume* 明恵 ： 遍歴と夢. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1978.

Oku Takeo 奥健夫. *Nara no Kamakura jidai chōkoku, Nihon no bijutsu* 奈良の鎌倉時代彫刻、日本の美術 536. Tokyo: Shibundō, 2011.

———. *“Seiryōji shaka nyorai zō* 清凉寺釈迦如来像.*” Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 513 (Feb. 2009).

Ryūfuku Yoshitomo 龍福義友. *Nikki no shikō: Nihon chūsei shikōshi e no joshō* 日記の思考 ： 日本中世思考史への序章. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1995.

Sasaki Kaoru 佐々木馨. *Chūsei kokka no shūkyō kōzō: taisei Bukkyō to taiseigai Bukkyō no sōkoku* 中世国家の宗教構造 ： 体制仏教と体制外仏教の相剋. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988.

Shimizu Masumi 清水眞澄. *“Gozō rokufu no aru Sōdai mokuzō bosatsu hanka zō.” Bukkyō geijutsu* 仏教芸術 135 (1981): 49-60.

Shinbō Tooru 眞保亨. “*Jōdo goso-e (Fujita bijutsukan zō) ni tsuite* 浄土五祖絵（藤田美術館像）について.” *Museum* ミュージアム no. 285 (1974): 19-25.

Shinran shōnin shinseki shūsei 親鸞上人真跡集成 vol. 3. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1973.

Soejima Hiromichi 副島弘道. *Unkei: sono hito to geijutsu* 運慶：その人と芸術. Tokyo: Yoshikawakōbunkan, 2000.

Sueki Fumihiko 末木文美士. *Kamakura Bukkyō keiseiron* 鎌倉仏教形成論. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998.

———. “*Kamakura Bukkyō kenkyū o megutte* 鎌倉仏教研究をめぐって.” In *Nihon Bukkyō shisōshi ronkō* 日本仏教思想史論考, edited by Sueki Fumihiko, 273-83. Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1993.

Suzuki Kanta 鈴木貫太. "'*Gedatsumongi choshuki' ni okero Myōe no 'gonmitsu' shisō* 『解脱門義聴集記』における明恵の「厳密」思想." *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究 58 issue 2 (2010): 698-701.

Takahashi Kazumitsu 高橋寿光. "*Myōe no Sanji sanbō raishaku saikō* 明恵の三時三宝礼釈再考," *Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo Nenpō* 綜合佛教研究所年報 35 (Mar. 2013): 293.

Takama Yukari 高間由香里. "*Chionji shozō jūyō bunkazai Zendō daishi ni tsuite* 知恩寺所蔵重要文化財善導大師像について." *Geijutsu kenkyū* 芸術研究 24 (2011): 1-18.

———. "*Jōdoshū ni okeru Chūgoku butsuga no juyō* 浄土宗における中国仏画の受容." *Shigaku Kenkyū* 史学研究 267 (Mar. 2010): 45-65.

Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, comp.. *Kamakura ibun* 鎌倉遺文 vol. 5. Tokyo: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1973.

Tamura Enchō 田村圓澄. *Hōnen Shōnin den no kenkyū* 法然上人伝の研究. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1972.

Tanabe Saburōsuke 田辺三郎助. *"Zōnai nōnyuhin zakki: Chūgoku Kankoku no irei nado* 像内納入品雑器：中国韓国の慰霊など*." Miroku kobunka* 弥勒古文化 31 (1982): 1-7.

Tanaka Hisao 田中久. *Myōe* 明恵. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1961.

———. "*Sanbō raihai ni kansuru Myōe no shōsoku* 三宝礼拝に関する明恵の消息." In *Kamakura Bukkyō zakkō* 鎌倉仏教雑考, 332-42. Kyoto: Shinbunkaku Shuppan, 1982.

———. "*Sanbō raihai ni kansuru Myōe no shōsoku* 三宝礼拝に関する明恵の消息." *Kanazawa Bunko kenkyū* 金沢文庫研究 6.5 (May 1960): 4-6.

Tanaka Ichimatsu 田中一松. "*Shunga hokkyō ni tsuite* 俊賀法橋について*." Nihon Bijutsu kyōkai hōkoku* 日本美術協会報告 no. 40 (April 1936): 4-12.

Tanaka Kisaku 田中喜作. "*Jōdo goso-eden* 浄土五祖絵伝." *Bijutsu kenkyū* 美術研究, no.5 (1932): 1-7.

Tanaka Yūko 田中優子. "*Yugyō zo no keifu: Kyōto Rokuharamitsuji Kūya zo o meguru sōzōryoku* 遊行像の系譜：京都六波羅蜜寺空也像をめぐる想像力." *Mikkyō zuzō* 密教図像 18 (Dec. 1999): 110-22.

Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉. *Tsuda Sōkichi zenshū* 津田左右吉全集. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963-66.

Tsuda Tetsuei 津田徹英. "*Kōmyō honzon kō.*" *Bijutsu kenkyū* 美術研究 378 (2003): 61-106.

Tsutsui Eishun 筒井英俊. *Tōdaiji ronsō* 東大寺論叢 vol. 1. Edited by Tsutsui Kanshū 筒井寛秀. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1973.

Ujiie Kakushō 氏家覚勝. *Darani no sekai* 陀羅尼の世界. Tokyo: Tōhō shuppan, 1984.

———. *Darani shisō no kenkyū* 陀羅尼思想の研究. Tokyo: Tōhō shuppan, 1987.

Uratsuji Kendō 裏辻憲道. "*Hōnen Shōnin to Chōgen Shōnin* 法然上人と重源上人." In *Chōgen, Eizon, Ninshō* 重源、叡尊、忍性. Edited by Nakao and Imai, 81-8. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983.

Wajima Yoshio 和島芳男. "*Eison to Ninshō* 叡尊と忍性." *Shiseki to bijutsu* 史跡と美術 vol. 44 issue 3 (April 1974), 192.

Wakaki Yoshihiko 嬰木義彦. "Zaijarin *to Shinran kyōgaku to no taiō* 『摧邪輪』と親鸞教学との対応." *Shinshūgaku* 真宗学 38 (Jan. 1968): 47-64.

Wakasugi Junji 若杉準治. *Hōnen: shōgai to bijutsu: Hōnen shōnin happyaku kaiki: tokubetsu tenrankai* 法然：生涯と美術：法然上人八百回忌：特別展覧会. Kyoto: Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2011.

———. "*Jōdo goso-e ni tsuite* 浄土五祖絵について." *Gakusō* 学叢 no.13 (1999): 37-52.

Watanabe Shōgo 渡辺昭五. "*Katoku setsuwa no hassei* 歌徳説話の発生." *Setsuwa bungaku kenkyū* 説話文学研究 23 (1988): 3-16.

Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎. *Watsuji Tetsurō Zenshū* 和辻哲郎全集 27 vols.. Edited by Abe Yoshishigo et al. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992.

Yamada Masanori 山田雅教. "*Kōmyō honzon no seiritsu haikei* 光明本尊の成立背景." *Nihon shūkyō bunka kenkyū* 日本宗教文化研究 21, issue 1 (2017): 79-97.

Yamaguchi Kōen 山口光円. *Tendai Jōdokyō shi* 天台浄土教史. Kyoto: Tendai Gakumonjo, 1967.

Yamaguchi Makoto 山口眞琴. "*Kechien no jikū: Ōjōden to chūsei* 結縁の時空:往生伝と中世仏教説話集." *Kochi Daigaku gakujutsu kenkyū hōkoku, Jinbun kagaku* 高知大学学術研究報告，人文科学 41 (1992): 21-37.

Yamamoto Eigo 山本栄吾. "*Chōgen nyūsōden shaken* 重源入宋伝私見." *Nihon no rekishi* 日本の歴史 199 (1964).

Yamaori Tetsuo 山折哲雄. "*Mikkyō girei to Kūkai* 密教儀礼と空海." In *Kūkai to mikkyō uchū* 空海と密教宇宙, 112-57. Edited by Kanaoka Shūyū. Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1989.

Yanagida Seiji 柳田征司. "*Myōe shōnin no kōgi to sono kikigaki* 明恵上人の講義とその聞き書き*."* In *Kōzanji tenseki monjo no kenkyū*, 181-97. Edited by Tsukishima Hiroshi. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980.

"*Zō Ishiyama-in shorō geki bun'an.*" In *Dai Nihon kobunsho* 大日本古文書 vol. 15, 236-37. Edited by Tokyo daigaku shiryō hensanjo. Reprint, Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1977 (original 1922).

Zōnai nōnyūhin 像内納入品. Edited by Kurata Bunsaku 倉田文作. *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 86 (1973).

Zōzō meiki 造像銘記. Tokyo: Kōkogakkai, 1936.