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The Influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* in Late Tenth- and Early Eleventh-Century Japan

Scholars of Heian Buddhism frequently comment that because of the influence of Genjin's *Ōjōyōshū*, Pure Land thought and practice spread rapidly to all levels of society in the eleventh century. This assertion has become so common that it is rarely questioned. In this article, I investigate eleventh-century sources, such as novels and diaries of aristocrats, and prove that the *Ōjōyōshū* is mentioned infrequently. The *Eiga monogatari*, the only text to emphasize the *Ōjōyōshū*, seems to be the exception to the rule and raises more questions than it answers, since the author is unknown. While agreeing that the *Ōjōyōshū* was an important work, I conclude that Genjin was a pivotal figure in Heian Pure Land Buddhism less through his authorship of the *Ōjōyōshū* than through his participation in and leadership of a number of religious fellowships.

KEYWORDS: *Ōjōyōshū* – Genjin – Nijūgo zanmaie – Yokawa – Fujiwara Michinaga

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THE *Ōjōyōshū*, composed by Genshin from 984 to 985, is frequently viewed as a text that almost single-handedly caused Pure Land Buddhism to become the dominant belief system in Japan. Numerous scholars, both Japanese and non-Japanese, state that because of the *Ōjōyōshū*, Pure Land Buddhism rapidly spread to all levels of society and became immensely popular. Among the evidence they present to support this contention are *nenbutsu* societies which, they say, used the *Ōjōyōshū* as a handbook; numerous copies, including woodblock print editions, of the *Ōjōyōshū*; references to the *Ōjōyōshū* in several texts; and artistic evidence, including illustrations of hells and of the Pure Land based on the first two chapters.¹

These arguments usually fail to note that at least fifty and often over one hundred years passed between the composition of the *Ōjōyōshū* and most of the evidence for its popularity that they cite. Yet during those years, the influence of Pure Land Buddhism spread enormously. Part of this misunderstanding stems from the critical role that Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262) played in the development of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. The influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* is usually discussed with reference to these two men. They were both, indeed, impressed by Genshin's work, but Hōnen was not even born until almost one hundred and fifty years after its composition.

This is not to say that the *Ōjōyōshū* was unimportant. In this article, however, I will argue that its role in early eleventh-century Japan was smaller than is usually assumed. Moreover, focusing on the *Ōjōyōshū* excessively has led us to overlook other important factors in the spread of Pure Land thought and practice at this time. Several of these factors do involve the monk Genshin, but not necessarily directly through his work the *Ōjōyōshū*. Although Genshin is frequently referred to as a reclusive monk (*inton no sō* 隠遁の僧), in fact he was extremely active in the Yokawa sector of Mt. Hiei in sponsoring and guiding numerous fellowships (*kō* 講), some of which included lay people and many of which became active beyond the boundaries of Mt. Hiei.

Nenbutsu Groups and the Ōjōyōshū

It is often said that Genshin composed the *Ōjōyōshū* as a handbook for a group

1. See, for example, Allan ANDREWS (1989, p. 28); KUGE Noboru (1968, p. 154); INOUE Mitsusada (1956, p. 164); and Michiko YUSA (2002, pp. 46–47). Richard BOWRING recently stated that the *Ōjōyōshū* caused Genshin to become a household name (1998, p. 232).

of *nenbutsu* practitioners called the Nijūgo zanmaie 二十五三昧会.² The Nijūgo zanmaie was founded in the Yokawa 横川 sector of Mt. Hiei in 986, when twenty-five monks from the hall Shuryōgon'in 首楞嚴院 vowed to become good spiritual friends (*zenchishiki* 善知識) to one another, gather monthly to practice the *nenbutsu*, and most importantly, go to the deathbed of any member who became fatally ill. The ultimate goal was birth in the Pure Land for oneself and the other members.

Because of the existence of the *Ōjōyōshū*, the argument holds, it was not necessary for members of Heian *nenbutsu* groups to read numerous texts in order to learn the proper method of performing the *nenbutsu* and achieving Pure Land birth. Allan ANDREWS takes this view in his seminal work *The Teachings Essential for Rebirth*, which remains the only book-length treatment in English of either Genshin or the *Ōjōyōshū*, arguing:

The Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth, written between the eleventh month of 984 and the fourth month of 985, was probably composed as a manual of nembutsu cultivation for the Nembutsu-samadhi Society of Twenty-five [Nijūgo zanmaie]. It became the guide to Pure Land faith and practice for the next 200 years to the close of the Heian Period. (1973, p. 28)

Similar statements are also found in Japanese works. KUGE Noboru, for example, states that the *Ōjōyōshū* was written with the Nijūgo zanmaie in mind, further arguing that its influence did not stop with that group; it became the text for such gatherings all over Japan (1968, p. 154). HAYAMI Tasuku holds that *nenbutsu* groups were formed to put the teachings of the *Ōjōyōshū* into practice (1998, p. 126).

Such assertions require further examination. Most of the *Ōjōyōshū* consists of highly technical instructions for performing meditative *nenbutsu*, as well as complex doctrinal discussions. Since the Nijūgo zanmaie did not engage in meditation at all, most of the *Ōjōyōshū* could not have been useful to them. Nevertheless, the sixth chapter, eleventh section of the *Ōjōyōshū*, “Deathbed Rites” (*Rinjū gyōgi* 臨終行儀), does deal with rituals similar to those enacted by the Nijūgo zanmaie. Based on this, some argue that this section, at least, was taken directly from the *Ōjōyōshū*. I will refute this idea in the following discussion.

2. Nijūgo zanmaie, the name of the group, is somewhat mysterious. The term *nijūgo zanmai*, found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, refers to a group of *samādhis*, performed by bodhisattvas, that puts an end to rebirth in the twenty-five existences (*nijūgo u* 二十五有; T 12: 448b11–12, c1–2). These twenty-five existences correspond to the twenty-five abodes of sentient beings in standard Buddhist cosmology. The *Fa-hua hsüan-i* 法華玄義 (593), a compilation of lectures given by Chih-i, and the *Fa-hua hsüan-i shih-ch'ien* 法華玄義釋義 (764), by Chan-jan 湛然 (727–782), both quote this passage concerning the *nijūgo zanmai* (T 33: 721c4–5; T 33: 879a9–18). There is not, however, any evidence that this meditation was actually performed by members of the Nijūgo zanmaie. The name may simply have been chosen because the number twenty-five matched the number of founding members, or to convey the intention of members to lead sentient beings in the six paths of *saṃsāra* to the Pure Land.

Several of the records of the Nijūgo zanmaie are extant, making it possible to investigate this group in considerable detail.³ In the ninth month, fifteenth day of 986, two months after the Nijūgo zanmaie was founded, a covenant called the *Kishō hachi kajō* 起請八箇条 was composed.⁴ The *Kishō hachi kajō* consists of eight articles outlining the basic rules by which members agree to abide. For example, they stipulate a regular meeting time for the group and call for the construction of both a special hall to which the critically ill person should be moved and a cemetery for members of the fellowship. The *Kishō hachi kajō* is usually attributed to Yoshishige Yasutane 慶滋保胤 (931–997), even though he was never a member of the Nijūgo zanmaie.⁵ Genshin himself, far from being the founder of the group, as is sometimes asserted, was not even a member at this time.

The *Kishō hachi kajō* does not speak of any form of meditation, although that is the topic of most of the *Ōjōyōshū*. The heading for the first article states:

We shall perform the *nenbutsu zanmai* 念仏三昧 on the fifteenth day of every month. (KOYAMA 1997, p. 85)

This article goes on to explain that during the monthly gathering, the six fascicles of the *Amida Sutra* are to be read, in order to guide sentient beings in each of the six paths. After the completion of each fascicle, members recite the *nenbutsu* one hundred times while circumambulating an image of the Buddha, transfer the merit thus acquired to all sentient beings, and recite verses in praise of the Buddha. Last, in the late afternoon, after making their vows, members intone a verse from the *Hōshō ron* 宝性論, praying that by means of the merit accumulated through these practices, they will be able at the moment of death to see Amida Buddha.⁶ In addition, this article stipulates that if a member is forced to miss a meeting, he must explain his reasons and receive permission to do so.

3. Confusion surrounding these documents has significantly impeded research in the past. The first problem is that the same text is referred to in various typeset editions by different names. For example, the title *Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kishō* in the *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* (BZ) and the title *Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai shiki* in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (T) actually refer to the same work. This is only one of numerous examples of such confusion. Another problem is the difficulty in establishing the authenticity of these texts. Because the original for none of them survives, scholars must rely on copies that date to later periods and frequently contain notes added by the compilers. Moreover, the identity of the author is often unknown.

Koyama Masazumi, a graduate student at Ryūkoku University, investigated both the oldest surviving manuscript and the various typeset editions. A photographic reproduction of the first two texts in the manuscript, as well as a typeset version, are found in his article (KOYAMA 1997) on pages 72–74.

4. All references to the *Kishō hachi kajō* are from the text in KOYAMA's article (1997).

5. For more on this issue, see HAYAMI 1998, p. 134.

6. The *Hōshō ron* (the full title is the *Kukyō ichijō hōshō ron*; S. *Ratnagotra-vibhāga-mahāyānōt-taratantra-sāstra*) is a four-fascicle work, found in T 31. The text itself does not name an author, but Chinese tradition holds that it is by Sūramati. Thought to date to the late fourth or early fifth century, it contains a detailed discussion of the concept that the Buddha-nature is inherent in all sentient beings (*tathāgata-garbha*). The verse from the *Hōshō ron* is also quoted in the *Ōjōyōshū*. The *Ōjōyōshū*, however, takes the verse from Chia-ts'ai's 迦才 *Ching-t'u-lun* 淨土論 (early seventh century), which in turn refers to

The term *nenbutsu zanmai*, used in the article's heading, does not refer to one specific practice. The text seems to be subsuming all of the activities outlined here, including reading of the *Amida Sutra* and recitation of the *nenbutsu*, under the title *nenbutsu zanmai*. Daniel STEVENSON explains that in fourth- to sixth-century China, *nian-fo san-mei* (*buddhānusmṛti-samādhi*) involved visual recollection of the physical marks of the Buddha (1995, pp. 360–61). There is no indication, however, that this was the case in the Nijūgo zanmaie. Loose usage here of the word *zanmai* is in keeping with the name of the fellowship itself, which, as footnoted earlier, was not specifically related in any way to the *nijūgo zanmai* described in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra*. The absence of meditational activity stands in direct contrast to the focus of the *Ōjōyōshū*.

Article Four of the *Kishō hachi kajō* states:

We shall construct a separate building and call it the Ōjōin 往生院. When a member becomes ill, he shall be moved there. (KOYAMA 1997, p. 88)

The hall was to be modeled on the Jetavana monastery in India. In the northwest corner of this monastery stood a hall called Mujōin 無常院 that enshrined a standing, east-facing statue of the Buddha. The sick person, in front of the statue, would face west and visualize the marks of the Buddha. He then grasped the end of a five-colored pennant that was hung from the hands of the image.⁷

SATŌ Tetsuei argues that the author of the *Kishō hachi kajō* must have had a copy of the “Deathbed Rites” section of the *Ōjōyōshū* at his side when he wrote the fourth and fifth articles (1979, pp. 137–38). Hayami Tasuku and Hori Daiji, among others, echo this idea (HAYAMI 1978, p. 114; HORI 1964, p. 148). For years this was the standard theory. Recent research, however, has shown that sources besides the *Ōjōyōshū* were also used extensively in the composition of the *Kishō hachi kajō*. KOYAMA demonstrates that large portions are taken verbatim from Tao-shih's *Fa-yüan chu-lin* 法苑珠林 (1997, p. 63). The *Fa-yüan chu-lin* itself was used as a source for the “Deathbed Rites” section, but the text of this article in the *Kishō hachi kajō* matches exactly that in the *Fa-yüan chu-lin*, not the *Ōjōyōshū*.⁸

the *Hōshō ron*. Whether the source here for the author of the *Kishō hachi kajō* was *Ōjōyōshū*, the *Hōshō ron*, or the *Ching-t'u lun* remains unknown.

7. The *locus classicus* for this passage is found in Tao-hsüan's (596–667) *Ssu-fen-lu shan-fan pu-ch'ueh hsing-shih-ch'ao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, written around 660. Tao-hsüan outlines a procedure in which the dying person is transferred to a separate hall, where he dies in front of an image of the Buddha, his hands attached to it by threads. This passage is quoted in the *Ōjōyōshū*. The Nijūgo zanmaie charters, however, quote a similar section from Tao-shih's (?–668?) 道世 *Fa-yüan chu-lin* (668), rather than the *Ōjōyōshū* (and thus the *Ssu-fen-lu shan-fan pu-ch'ueh hsing-shih-ch'ao*) (T 40: 144a13–20). The *Fa-yüan chu-lin* is a one-hundred fascicle work that classifies and explains various Buddhist teachings and technical terms. Minamoto Tamenori, a contemporary of Genshin, used it extensively in the *Sanbōe*, indicating that this text was known among educated people in Heian society.

8. In his article, KOYAMA Masazumi (1997) lines up passages from the *Fa-yüan chu-lin* and the *Kishō hachi kajō*, highlighting matching portions. This passage from the *Fa-yüan chu-lin* may be

Article Five states:

During the period of [the member's] illness, members should take turns nursing him. (KOYAMA 1997, p. 89)

The purpose of the group, this article states explicitly, is to help participants attain birth in the Pure Land. This is accomplished by constantly encouraging one another, and at the moment of death assisting the dying person in maintaining the proper state of mind (*rinjū shōnen* 臨終正念). A person's next birth relies entirely on whether or not he achieves this state in his final moment, this article continues. The fellowship is meaningless, therefore, if the dying man is left alone.

Members are to form pairs and take twenty-four hour shifts watching over the sick man. One person's role is to assist with recitation of the *nenbutsu*, while the other takes care of the menial tasks that accompany an illness. They may leave only when the next pair comes to relieve them, and they are forbidden to shy away from unclean sights or smells. When the sick man seems about to die, everyone is to gather for recitation of the *nenbutsu*, singing of hymns, and other activities. If the dying person has dreams or visions, they are to be recorded. In this article, unlike the previous one, only one phrase quotes from the *Fa-yüan chu-lin*. None of this article matches the text of the *Ōjōyōshū*.

In the sixth month, fifteenth day of 988, two years after the *Kishō hachi kajō* was written, Genshin, having joined the group, composed the *Nijūgo zanmai kishō* 二十五三昧起請. While some of the twelve articles are similar to those in the *Kishō hachi kajō*, others introduce entirely new ideas, such as lectures on the *Lotus Sutra*. Still, meditation is not mentioned. Because Genshin is the author of this text, it can be used to reveal many aspects of his thought not found in the *Ōjōyōshū* that were enacted in a popular context. Article One states:

We shall practice the continuous *nenbutsu* (*fudan nenbutsu* 不斷念仏) throughout the night of the fifteenth day of every month. (KOYAMA 1997, p. 73)

This is the first time the term *fudan nenbutsu* is used to describe one of the *Nijūgo zanmai*'s activities. Traditionally, the *fudan nenbutsu* was identified as the highly demanding *jōgyō zanmai* 常行三昧, one of the four types of *samādhi* outlined in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. As defined in that text, the *jōgyō zanmai* requires constant circumambulation of an image of Amida for ninety days. In Japan, however, the term was used to refer to a number of different *nenbutsu* practices. In the *Nijūgo zanmai kishō*, *fudan nenbutsu* simply identifies a *nenbutsu* practice that continued throughout the night. A demanding exercise, it does stand in contrast to the procedure outlined in the *Kishō hachi kajō*, in which

found in T 53: 986c29–987a16. All portions of the *Ōjōyōshū* which quote the *Fa-yüan chu-lin* are listed in HANAYAMA Shinshō 1937, p. 42.

recitation of the *nenbutsu* occurs for a relatively short length of time. Still, it is not a form of meditation in the usual sense, nor is it mentioned in the *Ōjōyōshū*.

In fact, in this work by Genshin, the deathbed ritual part of the Nijūgo zanmaie's activities is actually deemphasized, as can be seen by comparing the length and detail of Article Eight of the *Nijūgo zanmai shiki* with Article Five of the *Kishō hachi kajō*. This indicates that there may have been a movement, led by Genshin himself, to avoid placing too much weight on the deathbed moment, a conspicuous element of the *Kishō hachi kajo* (ISHIDA 1986, p. 218). In addition, Genshin does not quote himself; the *Kishō hachi kajō* never quotes directly from the *Ōjōyōshū*, nor does it refer to that text.

Three death registers (*kakochō* 過去帳) for the Nijūgo zanmaie are also extant. The most complete, discovered in 1970 at the Kunaichō Shoryōbu 宮内庁書陵部, was published under the title *Ryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kechien kakochō* 楞嚴院二十五三昧結縁過去帳. No commentary was provided at that time, but in 1985, HIRABAYASHI Moritoku presented both the text and a brief analysis of it. This has come to be the standard version of the Nijūgo zanmaie's *kakochō*.

The manuscript, copied by the monk Keisei 慶政 (?–1267) in the year 1230, not only includes many names not found in earlier *kakochō* but also provides the date of death and the age of the deceased. It contains seventeen biographies. In total, fifty-one names are listed, all monks at Yokawa. The names and biographies are in the order in which the members died. The biographies focus on the deathbed moment of the member and on proof after his death of his birth in the Pure Land. The *Ōjōyōshū*, however, is referred to only in Genshin's own biography and in the biography of the monk Shōkin 聖金, who is said to have recited the "Deathbed Rites" section as he died (HIRABAYASHI 1985, pp. 48–49).⁹

Copies of the Ōjōyōshū

If the *Ōjōyōshū* was indeed extremely popular in the early- to mid-ten hundreds, one could reasonably expect that many copies were made at that time. Two basic versions of the *Ōjōyōshū* exist today. The distinction between them is first made in the postscript to a 1253 printed copy (KITABATAKE 1992, p. 45). The first version was sent to China (referred to as the *kensō bon* 遣宋本); the other remained in Japan (referred to as the *ryūwa bon* 留和本).¹⁰ Some Kamakura printed copies state that the *ryūwa bon* was the original, while the *kensō bon* was the revised version (HAYAMI 1988, p. 146). This is based on the fact that the *ryūwa bon* contains four sections in the first fascicle that are missing from the *kensō bon*. But Hanayama Shinshō, who conducted a thorough study of various copies of the

9. For further detail on this biography of Genshin, see RHODES 1996.

10. Although the character *sō* refers to the Song dynasty, at this time China was actually in the Tang dynasty. The Kamakura notetakers, however, seem to have been confused on this point, and the name *kensō bon* stuck.

Ōjōyōshū, argues that the *kensō bon* is closer to Genshin's original, explaining that the extra parts found in the *ryūwa bon* seem to have been added later. The two earliest known copies are both *ryūwa bon* (cited in HAYAMI 1988, p. 146). In any case, the differences between the two versions are minor and not significant for the purposes of this article.

Genshin had long cherished the idea of going to China himself, but for various reasons, including obligations to his family, was unable to do so. There was close contact, however, between Japan and China in the mid- to late-tenth century. The Sanron monk Chōnen (?–1016) went to China in 983, returning in 986 with texts and a famous statue of Śākyamuni. His homecoming was marked in Kyoto by a large celebration of which Genshin would have been aware. HAYAMI even speculates that Genshin included numerous quotes from Chinese commentaries in the *Ōjōyōshū* because from the start he intended to send it to China (1988, p. 148). When Genshin went to Kyushu in 987, his main goal may have been to dispatch his work to China. In Kyushu, he became acquainted with a merchant to whom he entrusted the *Ōjōyōshū*, as well as several other Tendai texts. The *Ōjōyōshū* was well-received in China, as Genshin learned, to his delight, through letters that are sometimes appended to copies of the *kensō bon* version. In fact, the *Ōjōyōshū* perhaps had more contemporary influence in parts of China than it did in Japan.

The oldest extant copy of the *Ōjōyōshū* dates to the twenty-sixth day, seventh month of 996, during Genshin's own lifetime; he would have been fifty-five years old at the time. The date is listed in a postscript, which also gives the name of the copyist as Chōin 長胤. Unfortunately, only fifty-five pages of the second fascicle are extant (KITABATAKE 1992, p. 41).

The next copies are one dating to 1152, of which only the last half of the first fascicle is extant, and one from 1181 that contains some Japanese syllabary (hiragana) mixed with the Chinese characters (NISHIMURA 1990, pp. 40–41). The fact that the latter includes hiragana indicates that there was an effort at the time to direct the text toward a broader readership. Nevertheless, by the time this copy was made, Pure Land thought and practice had already spread widely throughout Japan.

The oldest complete copy for which the date is certain, kept at Shōren'in in Kyoto, is from 1171 (KITABATAKE 1992, p. 45). Recently, however, a complete Heian copy was discovered at Saimyōji 最明寺 in Kanagawa Prefecture. It is thought to have been made slightly before the Shōren'in text, but unfortunately the date is not recorded (KITABATAKE 1992, p. 42).

The copy upon which the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* text was based is a printed edition at Mt. Kōya's Shōchi'in. The exact date is not known, nor are further details concerning its origins. The postscript states that there was a woodblock printing in 1168, which was then lost in a fire and reprinted in 1210, but neither survives in its entirety (KITABATAKE 1992, p. 42). The compilers of the *Nihon*

shisō taikai edition of the *Ōjōyōshū* used a complete copy dating to 1253, owned by Ryūkoku University in Kyoto (NST 6: 5).

Portions of the 1210 *ryūwa bon* are held at Osaka's Shitennōji and at Senkōji in Aichi Prefecture. These two parts, when combined, form an almost complete version. Because this text became popular, numerous later printed copies were based on it (KITABATAKE 1992, p. 42). The earliest known printing of the *Ōjōyōshū*, in 1168, was made almost two hundred years after its composition. Not surprisingly, this was the time when Hōnen was active. Therefore, although it is true that the *Ōjōyōshū* was one of the earliest and most frequently printed texts, this could not account for the popularization of Pure Land Buddhism in the hundred years immediately after it was written.

In 1631, for the first time markings (*kaeriten* 返り点 and *okurigana* 送り仮名) were added to the Chinese characters in a printed version to assist Japanese in reading the text without translation (KITABATAKE 1992, p. 43). The oldest copy of parts of the *Ōjōyōshū* that includes illustrations, called the *Eiri Ōjōyōshū jigoku monogatari* 絵入往生要集地獄物語, dates to 1671 (NISHIMURA 1990, p. 45). Obviously, this is quite late.

The *Ōjōyōshū* did become famous through paintings and illustrated versions, but not until the 1600s and after. Moreover, such illustrations were limited to the first two chapters. There exist only fragments of a few eleventh-century copies. Of course it is possible there were many more that do not survive, but ultimately the evidence is inconclusive.

References to the Ōjōyōshū in Contemporary Texts

Numerous biographies of Genshin exist, but as with most biographies of eminent monks, they tend to be considerably embellished. This makes it difficult to reconstruct the facts of Genshin's life and the importance the *Ōjōyōshū* played at that time. Nevertheless, three biographies of Genshin were written within sixty years of his death, which, for a monk of his time period, is unusual. Two of the biographies were probably written by monks who knew Genshin personally, while the third author seems to have had contact with some of Genshin's disciples.

The first extant biography, contained in the *Nijūgo zanmai kakochō* and probably written by his close disciple Kakuchō 覚超 (960–1034), does place some emphasis on the *Ōjōyōshū*, including letters sent from China praising Genshin and his work. After presenting the letters, Kakuchō states:

I have never heard in previous ages of spreading the Buddhist teachings in two countries. Indeed, [Genshin] is a master who transmits the light. How could he not be a messenger of the Tathāgata? (HIRABAYASHI 1985, p. 49)

Nevertheless, the *Ōjōyōshū* is far from the only work of Genshin's that is mentioned. The *Kakochō* also refers to the *Ichijō yōketsu* 一乗要訣, the *Daijō tai kusha*

shō 大乘対俱舎抄, the *Inmyō shisō isho chūshaku* 因明四相違疏注釈, and the *Dansan chūshaku* 断纂注釈 (HIRABAYASHI 1985, p. 49). The *Ichijō yōketsu* in particular, a text that took up the cause of universal enlightenment, was an influential work, perhaps more so in eleventh-century Japan than the *Ōjōyōshū*.¹¹

The second biography is in the last fascicle of the *Hokke genki* 法華驗記, composed by the monk Chingen around the year 1043. Chingen is known to have had contact with Genshin through the Shakakō 釈迦講, a devotional group Genshin organized. The section of the biography concerning Genshin's life before going to Mt. Hiei's Yokawa sector clearly borrows from the *Nijūgo zanmai kakochō*, but the following portion presents some new information. These additions probably came from other documents, from stories that were circulating, or from Chingen's own knowledge of Genshin and his activities.

The *Hokke genki* states:

[Genshin] wrote the *Ōjōyōshū*, setting forth guidance to the Land of Supreme Bliss (*gokuraku*), bestowing the means [by which to achieve enlightenment]. At this time, [he had] a dream in which a smiling Kannon extended a golden lotus; Bishamon raised a canopy, standing before the holy man [Genshin] to serve him. It is quite impossible to conceive of the Buddha's great wisdom and expedient means (*hōben*). (NST 7: 549)

The *Hokke genki* adds, after several more lines, that the T'ang emperor commanded that a temple be built to enshrine an image of Genshin and a copy of the *Ōjōyōshū*, and that he granted Genshin the title Great Master (Daishi 大師) (NST 7: 550).

But again, the *Ōjōyōshū* is not the only work of Genshin's discussed. Immediately before the passage quoted above, the *Hokke genki* addresses the importance of the *Ichijō yōketsu* in some detail, telling of a dream Genshin had in which Aśvaghōṣa and Nāgārjuna, two prominent Indian Buddhists, pat him on the head to show their approval of the text (NST 7: 549). The *Hokke genki* also states that Genshin wrote the *Shō Amidakyō sho*, the *Tai kusha shō*, and the *Inmyō shisō isho chūshaku* (NST 7: 550).

The third biography is known by a number of different names, including the *Enryakuji Shuryōgon'in Genshin Sōzuden*, *Genshin Sōzuden*, and *Eshin Sōzuden*. This was written in the middle of the eleventh century by Ōe no Sukekuni 大江佐国, of great literary fame at that time. Sukekuni used the biography in the *Kakochō*, embellishing it with his famous literary style. In addition, he included information from numerous other documents, and he was able to converse with a disciple of Genshin's later years, Kyōhan 慶範. Because Kyōhan died in 1061, the biography must have been written before then (HAYAMI 1988, p. 5). This places it in the years between Genshin's death in 1017 and Kakuchō's own

11. See RHODES 1993 for further detail on the *Ichijō yōketsu*.

death in 1034. Of the three early biographies, the *Eshin Sōzu den* stresses the *Ōjōyōshū* the most, referring to it several times, discussing the circumstances through which it was sent to China (ESZ 5: 662–63). The *Ōjōyōshū*, however, is not the focus of this work.

On the one hand, more time is spent on the *Ōjōyōshū* than on any other text of Genshin's in all three biographies. This indicates that the *Ōjōyōshū* may have been the most influential of his writings. On the other hand, it still is not the focus of any of these biographies. As Robert RHODES points out, biographies served specific purposes; that found in the *Hokke genki*, for example, intended to show Genshin's devotion to the *Lotus Sutra*, not to Amida Buddha (1996, pp. 42–43).

Later biographies include those found in the *Zoku honchō ōjōden* and the *Konjaku monogatari* 今昔物語. The *Zoku honchō ōjōden* was written by Ōe no Masafusa (1041–1111), probably within five years of 1103. Masafusa relies heavily on information from the *Genshin Sōzuden*, and therefore, indirectly, also on that from the *Kakochō*. Numerous famous stories about Genshin come from the *Konjaku monogatari*, which is thought to have been compiled around 1106. By this time, elaborate legends about Genshin had taken shape.

Several other biographies date to even later years. In recent times, those writing about Genshin have sometimes freely relied on these biographies, such as that contained in the *Sangoku denki* 三国伝記 (1431) and the *Eshin'in Genshin Sōzu gyōjitsu* (1718). These texts, however, pose numerous problems, since the source of much of this later information is not known. As time passes, more and more emphasis was apparently placed on the *Ōjōyōshū*. This has contributed to the myth of its all-pervasive influence in the eleven hundreds.

The *Ōjōyōshū* did have considerable influence, almost immediately, in Enryakuji itself. HAYAMI states that this is because Genshin was the first to clarify the ways in which the *nenbutsu* differed from a *dhāraṇī*, explaining that the goal of the *nenbutsu* is birth in the Pure Land (1988, p. 116). The first work to refer to the *Ōjōyōshū* was Jōshō's 静照 (d. 1003) *Gokuraku yūi* 極樂遊意, written before 990, which discusses the sixteen contemplations outlined in the *Visualization Sutra* (ISHIDA 1970, p. 466). In addressing the ninth, contemplation of Muryōju Butsu 無量寿仏, Jōshō says, "There are, in the world, the works *Ōjōyōshū* and *Byakugō kan* 百豪觀.¹² Practitioners should act in accordance with these texts" (ISHIDA 1970, pp. 457–58). Both of these writings are by Genshin. Within five years of the completion of the *Ōjōyōshū*, therefore, a monk on Mt. Hiei had mentioned it in another work. Nevertheless, this is only a passing reference that also speaks of one of his other writings. An additional contemporary monastic text that mentions the *Ōjōyōshū*, the *Ōjō gokuraku mondō* 往生極樂問答, is by Kakuchō, who states that the ten items outlined in the *Ōjōyōshū* regarding one's

12. The *Byakugō kan* is found in ESZ 3: 579–83.

dying moments should be followed (BZ 24: 360).¹³ Kakuchō, as a close disciple of Genshin, naturally would refer to Genshin's works.

The *Ōjō jūnen* 往生十念, of unknown authorship, mentions the *Ōjōyōshū* in several places. Initially, the *Ōjō jūnen* was attributed to Genshin, but the current consensus is that it dates to a slightly later period and is probably also by Kakuchō (ISHIDA 1970, p. 468). Another text which refers to the *Ōjōyōshū* is Shingen's (1064–1136) *Junji ōjōkō shiki* 順次往生講式, which is supposed to have contained chapters called “Ōjōyōshū uragaki” and “Ōjōyōshū ihyō ki” 往生要集依憑記 (ISHIDA 1970, p. 466). Unfortunately, this work does not survive.

The ten-fascicle *An'yōshū* 安養集 provokes some interesting questions regarding the *Ōjōyōshū* precisely because it does not refer to it. The introduction states that the purpose of the work is to collect passages that explain and interpret the virtues of Amida from the esoteric and exoteric teachings of India, China, and Japan. This passage continues by explaining that several tens of masters (*ajari* 阿闍梨) from Enryakuji participated in the compilation, but the main compiler was Minamoto no Takakuni (1004–1077). The *An'yōshū* is strictly an anthology; none of the writings of the compilers themselves are included.¹⁴ The *An'yōshū* quotes Genshin's *Amidakyō ryakki*, but contrary to expectation, never the *Ōjōyōshū* (ISHIDA 1970, p. 468).

Ishida Mizumaro argues that the *An'yōshū* resembles the *Ōjōyōshū* in structure: the first two chapters are “Despising the Defiled [Land]” (On'e 厭穢) and “Longing for the Pure [Land]” (Gonjō 欣淨); it continues with “Cultivating Causes [for Pure Land Birth]” (Shuin 修因), “Experiencing Results” (Kanka 感果), “Subsidiary Rewards” (Ihō 依報), “Proper Rewards” (Shōhō 正報), and “Ideas” (Ryōken 料簡). Because these match very closely the chapter headings of the *Ōjōyōshū*, ISHIDA posits that the *An'yōshū* was in fact a study of the *Ōjōyōshū* (1970, p. 468). This view seems to be the consensus; the *Nihon bukkyōshi jiten* states that it was probably modeled on the *Ōjōyōshū* (ŌNO 1979, p. 10). Such an explanation, however, poses further questions. If the compilers of the *An'yōshū* intended to model their work on the *Ōjōyōshū*, this would indicate that they found the *Ōjōyōshū* inadequate, since they wanted to do basically the same thing. In addition, throughout the *Ōjōyōshū* Genshin occasionally uses his own words, but they never saw fit to quote him.

Certainly the *Ōjōyōshū* was known on Mt. Hiei soon after it was written, but this does not necessarily mean that it had a large impact outside the monastic community. The examples cited above show some familiarity on the part of the authors with the *Ōjōyōshū*, but with the possible exception of Kakuchō in his *Ōjō jūnen*, they did not focus on it in any detail.

13. A translation of these ten items is found in DOBBINS, 1999.

14. The text is held by Saikyōji, a Tendai temple located in Sakamoto 坂本, near Mt. Hiei; again, there is no typeset edition.

Biographies of several monks in *ōjōden* 往生伝 (collections of biographies of those who had achieved birth in the Pure Land) provide some further evidence of the influence of the *Ōjōyōshū*, but not as much as might be expected. The first Japanese *ōjōden*, Yoshishige Yasutane's *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*, was completed in 986, at almost exactly the same time as the *Ōjōyōshū*. Not unexpectedly, it does not mention this text. The next *ōjōden*, Ōe no Masafusa's *Zoku honchō ōjōden*, was written around 1101, almost one hundred years later. The only time this work speaks of the *Ōjōyōshū* is in its biography of Genshin. There, Masafusa lists six works written by Genshin. He briefly discusses the *Ōjōyōshū*, explaining that it was sent to China and well-received. After listing the six, he says that these writings all should be followed, without singling out the *Ōjōyōshū* (NST 7: 573).

The third fascicle of the *Shūi ōjōden* (1132), by Miyoshi no Tameyasu, tells the story of Ajari Shōkin (d. 1025), who is listed in the *Nijūgo zanmaie kakochō* as one of the early members of that group. This narrative states that when Shōkin became ill, he faced a painting (*henzō*) of the Pure Land and recited the *nenbutsu*. As he neared death, the people surrounding him told him not to speak of anything besides birth in the Pure Land, explaining that the *Ōjōyōshū* commands that a person's good friends (*zen chishiki*) do this at the time of his death (NST 7: 624). This is clearly based on the earlier-mentioned story in the *Kakochō*. Another mention of the *Ōjōyōshū* is found in the middle fascicle of the *Go shūi ōjōden*, also by Miyoshi no Tameyasu, which relates that the monk Gikō 義光 (d. 1127) read the *Ōjōyōshū* every day (BZ 107: 112). Still, most biographies in *ōjōden* make no reference to the *Ōjōyōshū*. In addition, these works date to more than one hundred years after the composition of the *Ōjōyōshū*. Even when they give biographies of earlier figures, much of the information may be inaccurate.

ISHIDA argues that the *Ōjōyōshū*'s authority extended to monks belonging to other schools. He cites, for example, the Sanron school's Eikan 永観 (1033–1111), suggesting that the influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* on Eikan's *Ōjō shūin* 往生拾因 and *Ōjōkō shiki* is strong, but he adds that this is hard to prove (1970, p. 470). He bases his argument on connections Eikan is known to have had with Genshin's thought. For example, the *Shūi ōjōden* states that Eikan sponsored *mukae-kō* 迎講, dramatizations of the *raigō* scene (Amida and his retinue coming to greet the dying person and escort him to the Pure Land), which were associated with Genshin (NST 7: 381). The fact that Eikan was influenced by Genshin, however, does not necessarily mean that influence occurred by means of the *Ōjōyōshū*, as I discuss later in this article. In fact, the *Ōjōyōshū* never mentions *mukae-kō*. The influence on Eikan of Genshin likely came largely through activities themselves.

The Eiga monogatari, Ōkagami, and the Ōjōyōshū

Novels are the form of literature most frequently cited as evidence of the widespread influence of the *Ōjōyōshū*. In almost all cases, however, the novels that

are mentioned were either composed much later than the *Ōjōyōshū*, such as the mid-Kamakura *Heike monogatari*, or the connections between the two are only speculative. This is not, however, the case with the *Eiga monogatari* 栄華物語; the author of this work was indisputably familiar with the *Ōjōyōshū*. The *Eiga*, the first portion of which was composed around 1028, is the first novel which gives incontestable proof of the *Ōjōyōshū*'s influence.

Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1028) is the central figure of the *Eiga*. Michinaga was the most successful of the Fujiwaras, the family which dominated Japanese politics for much of the tenth and eleventh centuries. For thirty years, Michinaga was de facto ruler of Japan, a feat he accomplished by means of his political savvy, which included the tactic of marrying his numerous daughters to crown princes. As he grew older and his health began to suffer, he turned his interests to Buddhism, commissioning the building of a personal temple, Hōjōji, part of which was an Amida Hall called Muryōjuin. The purpose of the author of the *Eiga* in writing the entire book seems to have been to praise Michinaga and his accomplishments.

Chapters Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen, Eighteen, Twenty-two, and Thirty contain twenty quotations from the *Ōjōyōshū* (MATSUMURA 1969, pp. 3–4). Sometimes the author acknowledges this source, sometimes not. The only difference between the two works is that the *Eiga* writes the passages out in Japanese syllabary rather than Chinese characters. Quotes are not only from the first two chapters of the *Ōjōyōshū* but also from the chapters “Proper Practice of the *Nenbutsu*” (*Shōshū nenbutsu* 正修念仏), “Methods of Assisting [Practice]” (*Jonen hōhō* 助念方法), “*Nenbutsu* for Special Occasions” (*Betsuji nenbutsu* 別時念仏), and “Benefits of the *Nenbutsu*” (*Nenbutsu riyaku* 念仏利益). For the most part, though, the *Eiga* quotes from the second, “Longing for the Pure Land” (*Gongu jōdo* 欣求淨土).

The *Eiga* even mentions the title of the *Ōjōyōshū* at one point: when a group of nuns visits Michinaga's Amida Hall and worships the Buddha statue there, “recalling the words of the *Ōjōyōshū*,” they recite a verse from it (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 2: 573–74). In addition, the *Ōjōyōshū* is quoted in the narration of Michinaga's death.

His only desire was to concentrate his thoughts on Amitābha Buddha as death approached. He wished to see no forms other than the signs and attributes of the Buddha, to hear no sound other than the words of the Buddhist teachings, and to think of no object other than his future life.

(McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 2: 763)

HAYAMI argues that this shows that Michinaga's death took place exactly according to the instructions of the *Ōjōyōshū* (1998, p. 196). In fact, however, as G. CAMERON HURST notes, Michinaga's death in all likelihood was a messy, unpleasant affair (1979, p. 106).

Some say that the *Eiga*'s heavy reliance on the *Ōjōyōshū* shows that this work

of Genshin's profoundly influenced the literati shortly after its completion. Complicating this argument, however, is the fact that other contemporary works do not mention the *Ōjōyōshū*. Why, then, would the *Ōjōyōshū* be so heavily used only in the *Eiga*?

In order to answer this question definitively we need to know the identity of the *Eiga*'s author. Unfortunately, the author has never been conclusively identified. Most people agree that it was written by a woman, because the issues it focuses on are those which would have been the concern, in that time period in Japan, mainly of women. The author discusses in great detail birth, marriage, courting rituals, clothes, and so on, for the most part ignoring economic and political questions. Moreover, in the Heian period, prose writing such as this was almost exclusively confined to women.

The current theory is that the first thirty chapters were written by one woman and the following ten by another, because a clear break exists between the two sections (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 44). Chapter Thirty describes the death of Fujiwara no Michinaga; this is a moment of great transition in the novel. The author herself, at the end of this chapter, states:

There will be other events following the ones I have described. Someone who witnesses or hears about them must be sure to write them down.

(McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 2: 774)

This implies that she is ending her own narration while at the same time inviting some future person to pick up where she left off. In addition, linguistic evidence shows that there were likely at least two different authors for the first and second parts (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 41). Because most of the references to the *Ōjōyōshū* occur in the first thirty chapters, I will confine my discussion here to them and their supposed author.

The earliest known attribution of the *Eiga* to an author occurs in the *Nihongi shisō* 日本記私抄, compiled by the monk Ken'a (1261–1338). Ken'a states that it was written by Akazome Emon 赤染衛門, a poet who was active in the late tenth and early eleventh century. As McCullough points out, she could not have composed the last ten chapters, because by then she would have been over one hundred and twenty years old. Because Chapter Forty, the last, ends with an event that took place in 1092, it is assumed that the last ten chapters took shape then or soon after (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 42–43).

Akazome is known to have been close to Michinaga's family and to have had access to much information about them. One work from the early Kamakura period states that she was a lady-in-waiting for Michinaga's consort, Rinshi. Moreover, Akazome married into the Ōe family, of great literary repute for their historical writings. This may have prompted her to become interested in writing herself, and she would have had available, as the *Eiga* author must have, numerous historical documents (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 45).

Of most importance to this discussion are Akazome's Buddhist connections. Many of her poems have Buddhist themes. One of them indicates that she became a nun after her husband's death, which would have given her access to Buddhist works and information. It is thought, for example, that portions of the *Ōjōyōshū* must have been written by a nun or at least the information was obtained from nuns (MATSUMURA 1983, p. 391). To be interested in Buddhism as a Heian aristocrat was hardly unusual; even becoming a nun was fairly common. The author's familiarity with Buddhist texts such as the *Ōjōyōshū*, however, was not the norm. Clearly, the author, whether Akazome or another woman, had an unusual life.

The genre to which the *Eiga* belongs is also important; it is usually classified as the first historical novel (*rekishi monogatari*) in Japan. It was later followed by works such as the *Ōkagami* 大鏡, which is thought to have been composed soon after the first thirty chapters of the *Eiga* (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 30). Its identity as a *rekishi monogatari* sets the *Eiga* apart from, for example, *The Tale of Genji*, which does not claim to be recounting historical events. The *Eiga* talks about real people and real occurrences, and does not pretend to fictionalize them. Therefore, it would at first appear that narrations that include words from the *Ōjōyōshū* accurately represent its use.

The *Eiga* does, however, contain numerous factual errors, many of which concern minor details such as dates (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 33). If it were indeed written by Akazome, she must have composed it when she was quite old; she would have had to rely on her memory to fill in gaps in the narrative. The mistakes are more numerous toward the beginning of the work, indicating that recent events she could recall with greater accuracy (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 48). Moreover, the author fleshes out incidents, the specifics of which either she cannot remember or are not available to her. She does not invent events, but she fills in the details, "perhaps especially when she wished to depict their scenic aspects and emotional states of the people involved" (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 34).

The author makes use of numerous historical documents that she seems to have had at hand, although she rarely acknowledges her sources. The *Eiga* borrows from a number of Buddhist texts (MATSUMURA 1983, p. 384). It relies on the *Ōjōyōshū* the most when discussing Michinaga and his religious activities, which he engaged in more and more as he neared the end of his life. The relationship between Genshin and Michinaga was complex. Scholars frequently point out that the *Gonki* 権記 (991–1011), the diary of the famed calligrapher Fujiwara no Yukinari (972–1027), shows that Fujiwara no Michinaga owned a copy of the *Ōjōyōshū*.¹⁵ In the entry for the ninth month, seventeenth day of 1005, Yukinari states that he visited Michinaga to return a copy of the *Ōjōyōshū*, which he had borrowed in order to make a copy which Michinaga requested (zst, 5: 39). That

15. See, for example, HAYAMI, 1998, p. 9, 98, 147.

Michinaga asked for a new copy does suggest the possibility that he used his first so much that it became dog-eared. HAYAMI speculates that the previous year, Michinaga became enamored of the *Ōjōyōshū*, always keeping it at his side (1988, p. 207). It is also possible, however, that Michinaga had other reasons for wanting a new copy; for example, perhaps the calligraphy in his first was not of the quality of Yukinari's. On the basis of this one reference in Yukinari's diary, it is ubiquitously stated that Michinaga loved the *Ōjōyōshū*.

In any case, there was contact between Michinaga and Genshin for several years. Michinaga first took note of Genshin in his diary, the *Midō kanpakuki* 御堂関白記, when Genshin was given the title Gon Shōsōzu 権小僧都 (a prestigious imperially appointed monastic position, sometimes translated as Provisional Lesser Vicar) in 1004 (MKZ, 4: 100, 104). A month later, Michinaga notes that when he and his consort were fasting at Kyoto's Gedatsuji, they sent a messenger to Genshin to invite him to visit. Apparently, he did not come. Four days later, they once again asked Genshin to visit, because there were "things that troubled them" (MZK, 4: 124, 127). Neither of these entries mentions the *Ōjōyōshū*, although Michinaga's diary frequently contains references to Buddhist works.

From the sixth to the seventh month of that same year, 1004, Michinaga suffered from serious illness. It is likely that he wanted Genshin to pray for his recovery from sickness in this life, rather than birth in the Pure Land in the next. In any case, around this time, Michinaga sought to become close to Genshin, as he had to several other monks, but Genshin does not appear to have been interested. He did not respond to either invitation (HAYAMI 1988, p. 207). Nevertheless, Michinaga became increasingly intrigued by Genshin; it was in the ninth month of the next year that he asked Yukinari to make a new copy of the *Ōjōyōshū*. But it would be a mistake to assume that Michinaga was interested in Genshin solely because of the *Ōjōyōshū*. Genshin was engaged in numerous other activities that made him a prominent figure and brought him to Michinaga's attention. One such example is the Shakakō 釈迦講, a group founded by Genshin in 1006, which centered on *Lotus Sutra* practices. Members signed up to serve twenty-four hour shifts in a hall in Yokawa, waiting on an image of Śakyamuni as if it were alive, giving it food, fanning it in summer, and so on. Laypeople from the city of Kyoto, including women, participated. A sign-up sheet which is extant has the name of Rinshi 倫子, the consort of Michinaga, here referred to as Sadaijin Denhoku Seijo 左大臣殿北政所.¹⁶ Perhaps the author of the *Eiga* intended to reflect this interest of Michinaga's in Genshin by frequently quoting the *Ōjōyōshū*, although she never mentions Genshin's name. HAYAMI reasonably argues that the author of the *Eiga* probably used

16. It is possible that some of the people listed on the sheet did not actually go to Yokawa but rather had proxies go in their stead. In any case, they still would have been aware of the existence of the group. The text of the sign-up sheet is found in TAKEUCHI (1964, 11: 262–73) under the title *Ryōzen'in kakochō*.

excerpts from the *Ōjōyōshū* because she knew of the connections between Genshin and Michinaga (1998, pp. 98, 147).

HAYAMI also states that because the *Eiga* quotes the *Ōjōyōshū*, we can assume that in aristocratic society at that time, the *nenbutsu* of the *Ōjōyōshū* was the ideal *nenbutsu* (1988, p. 262). In addition, he posits that the *Ōjōyōshū* was deeply loved by the aristocracy at this time (HAYAMI 1998, p. 197). We must return, however, to the issue of the author and the ideas she is presenting. As stated earlier, the author makes many mistakes, not usually in relating that certain events took place, but in the details of when it was, who was there, and what was said. To make up for these lapses in her memory, she freely borrows from numerous texts that she appears to have had at hand. Therefore, while one can probably accept as accurate, for example, that the Amida Hall enshrined nine images of Amida, it is not necessarily true that as Michinaga died, he recited words from the *Ōjōyōshū*.

Michinaga is the narrative center of the *Ōkagami*, the second *rekishi monogatari*, as well. The author, like the *Eiga* author, must have had access to numerous historical documents; in fact, he was familiar with the *Eiga* itself, to which he refers in several places. In addition, he sometimes borrows information, without acknowledgment, from it. Frequently, the author of the *Ōkagami* “asks a modern historian’s questions,” analyzing and interpreting events in a way that the *Eiga* did not (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, 1: 16–17). Nevertheless, the *Ōkagami* refers to Genshin only once, in a very brief incident in which Genshin turns down an elaborate rice bowl offered by the empress (NKBT 21: 15). The *Ōjōyōshū* is never mentioned at all, even though references to Pure Land thought are scattered throughout the text.

Other Late Heian and Early Kamakura Literary Evidence for the Ōjōyōshū’s Influence

The *Genji monogatari*, written around 1008, frequently uses phrases and ideas that some scholars say came directly from the *Ōjōyōshū*. These include words and expressions, such as *onri edo* 厭離穢土 and *raigō* 来迎, that seem to refer to important concepts contained in the *Ōjōyōshū*. For example, the *Genji* contains the phrase “despise the world and separate from it” (*yo o itoi hanareru* 世を厭ひ離れる) (SHIRATO 1986, p. 681). Although the meaning of this phrase is similar, *onri edo* itself is not found in the *Genji*. Similarly, the word *raigō* does not occur either, although there seem to be indirect references to the idea, such as a prayer to find oneself atop a lotus blossom (SHIRATO 1986, p. 679). ISHIDA Mizumaro argues that the Pure Land thought that permeates the *Genji* proves the influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* (1970, p. 480). He points, for example, to the chapter “First Flower” (Yūgao 夕顔), in which a nun refers to the holy light the *nenbutsu* cleansing her heart (NKBT 14: 125).

SHIRATO Waka is a strong proponent of the idea that the *Genji* relies heavily

on the *Ōjōyōshū*. Nevertheless, she points out herself that the words *onri edo* already occur in the fifth fascicle of the *Ten Thousand Leaves* (*Man'yōshū* 萬葉集, eighth century), in the following poem (1986, p. 678):

I have always despised this tainted earth,
my constant wish to entrust my life to the Pure Land beyond.

Mukashi yori kono edo o onri su
従来この穢土を厭離す

Hongan o mochte shō o sono jōsetsu ni yosemu.¹⁷
本願をもちて生を彼の浄刹に託せむ

ISHIDA Mizumaro also strongly believes that the *Ōjōyōshū* was immediately influential in Japanese literature. He bases this argument almost entirely on what he posits are amazing examples of Pure Land thought in the *Genji* (1986, pp. 329–30). He also argues that the *Ōjōyōshū* caused a revolution in Japanese literature (1986, p. 325).

Another argument for the influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* on the *Genji* holds that Murasaki Shikibu knew of and was impressed by Genshin. Proponents of this idea point to the chapter “Writing Practice” (*Te narai* 手習い), which centers around a prominent but nameless monk from Yokawa, his mother, and his sister. The story in the *Genji* is that while the sister and mother of the Yokawa no Sōzu 横川の僧都 were traveling, the mother suddenly became quite ill. The Yokawa no Sōzu was summoned to be at her side, where she was staying in Uji. While there, the Sōzu and other monks noticed a young woman in a state of turmoil under a tree. The other monks wanted nothing to do with her, assuming that she was a fox who had merely taken on human form. But because the Sōzu, out of his compassion, convinced them that the woman needed help, they took her in (NKBT 18: 339–414).

This connection to Genshin is first made quite late, in the *Kakai shō* 河海抄, a commentary on the *Genji* that was written by Yotsutsuji Yoshinari 四辻善成 (1326–1402) around 1367 (SHIRATO 1986, p. 670). Nevertheless, Edward Kamens points out how widespread and accepted this view became; *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature*, for example, simply states, “Genshin is the model for Yokawa no Sōzu in the closing parts of the *Genji monogatari*” (*Princeton Companion*, p. 157; referred to in KAMENS 1993, p. 133).

Proponents of this theory point out that the ages of the mother and sister in this story, eighty and fifty respectively, would roughly match the ages of Genshin’s own mother and sister at that time, as determined by various biographies of the two women (SHIRATO 1986, pp. 671–73). In addition, some scholars state that the fact that the Yokawa no Sōzu displayed such compassion towards the woman also links the figure to Genshin. Ishida Mizumaro and Ikemi Chōryū are

17. Translation from LEVY 1981, p. 345. NKBT 5: 56, 57.

among the many who argue that the Yokawa no Sōzu is Genshin (ISHIDA 1986, p. 329; IKEMI 1988, pp. 68–69).¹⁸

Kamens, however, presents a convincing argument against this theory in his essay “Genshin’s Shadow.” He contends that *Genji* is a work of fiction, not of history, and that assuming the author was modeling characters on real people is a mistake. Unlike the *Eiga*, the *Genji* is not a *rekishi monogatari*. Moreover, even if it could be established that Genshin was the monk mentioned in the *Genji*, it would not prove that the author was familiar with the *Ōjōyōshū*, although familiarity is often claimed in articles intended to show connections between the *Ōjōyōshū* and Heian literature (KAMENS 1993, p. 133, 140). Examples of Pure Land thought in the *Genji*, therefore, prove only that such ideas were indeed becoming popular. They do not tie the *Genji* directly to the *Ōjōyōshū*. More likely, in fact, all these works together were drawing on a common vocabulary that was used at the time.

Diaries of contemporary aristocrats, another valuable source of information for this time period, almost never refer to the *Ōjōyōshū*, even though other Buddhist works are frequently named. The example cited earlier from the *Gonki* is one of the few contemporary instances in which the *Ōjōyōshū* was mentioned.¹⁹ Moreover, women’s diaries and writings of the period such as the *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, the *Murasaki Shikibu nikki*, the *Sarashina nikki*, and the *Makura no sōshi*, show no evidence of influence by the *Ōjōyōshū* (ISHIDA 1970, p. 481).

Artistic Evidence for the Ōjōyōshū’s Influence

Determining the influence of the *Ōjōyōshū* is difficult in part because the *Ōjōyōshū* itself is primarily a compendium of quotations from other sources, including sutras, treatises, and commentaries. If a particular phrase or theme appears in a Japanese text or artwork that postdates the *Ōjōyōshū*, scholars frequently assume that the text or art relied on the *Ōjōyōshū*. It is possible, however, that these later writings and art forms are drawing upon the original sources, or other secondary sources, and not the *Ōjōyōshū*. This is even more likely if the original is a well-known text, such as the *Visualization Sutra*.

Much late Heian and early Kamakura art is said to be based on the *Ōjōyōshū*. Numerous scholars state that the first chapter of the *Ōjōyōshū*, particularly its descriptions of the eight levels of hells, gave rise to paintings of the hells (*jigoku zu*) and of the suffering experienced in all of the six undesirable rebirths (*rokudō e* 六道絵), while the second chapter, especially the section describing the pleasures of *raigō*, caused numerous *raigō* paintings to be produced.²⁰

But illustrations of hells that predate the *Ōjōyōshū* exist. The *Son’i zōsōjō den*

18. SHIRATO, for example, makes this argument in her article (1986, pp. 670–73).

19. I am indebted to Professor Mimi Yiengpruksawan for pointing out that diaries of Heian aristocrats rarely refer to the *Ōjōyōshū*.

20. See, for example, NARITA 1987, p. 636; TAKEMI 1998, p. 147.

尊意贈僧正伝 (late-ninth to early-tenth century) mentions depictions of the hells on the wall behind a Buddha statue at Yoshidadera (ZGR 8: 213). Such pictures also existed shortly after the composition of the *Ōjōyōshū*. The *Makura no sōshi* (late tenth to early eleventh century), for example, mentions folding screens upon which were depicted the hells at a Butsumyō e 仏名会 (NKBT 19: 114).²¹

Paintings of the hells did not become common until the middle of the Kamakura period and after. In fact, concentration on avoidance of rebirth in the six undesirable paths, and *rokudō e* based on this, did not spread rapidly until the end of the twelfth century, when the famous *Jigoku zōshi*, *Gaki zōshi*, and *Yamai zōshi*, all of which survive, were made (HAMADA 1988, p. 91). In addition, a famous set of *rokudō e* were commissioned at the end of the twelfth century by Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192) (NAKANO 1985, p. 101). There are no known *rokudō e* that date to the time of Genshin. Moreover, illustrated copies of the *Ōjōyōshū* in which the drawings incontestably are related to the text did not appear until the late 1600s, and did not become popular until the Edo period.

Although the idea of hells did not become popular in the eleventh century, the concept of *raigō* did. Genshin was instrumental in the popularization of the notion of *raigō*. This was not only through the *Ōjōyōshū* but also through activities he led. In the *Ōjōyōshū*, Genshin simply quotes the *Visualization Sutra*'s narration of how Amida, exuding a great light, accompanied by many bodhisattvas and thousands of monks, appears before the dying person (NST 6: 336). Numerous scholars have attempted to show that existing *raigō* paintings were based on this description. This is not a convincing argument for three reasons.

First, there is a variety of *raigō* paintings; not all are based on a single text. In addition, since the *Ōjōyōshū* is merely quoting the *Visualization Sutra*, determining whether certain illustrations are based on the *Ōjōyōshū* or the *Visualization Sutra* is impossible. Last, most *raigō* images are not, in fact, based on any text at all. The wall paintings at Byōdōin in Uji, the oldest surviving independent *raigō* illustrations, are meant to represent the nine levels of birth in the Pure Land. Genshin does not deal with the nine levels in any detail in the *Ōjōyōshū*. In fact, the nine levels on the walls do not accurately represent the depiction in any writings; they do not match, for example, the nine levels outlined in the *Visualization Sutra* (TAGUCHI 1982, p. 107). The artists took the idea of nine levels of Pure Land birth and the corresponding *raigō* scenes, and apparently freely interpreted them according to their own artistic sensibilities.

Mukae-kō (today commonly known as *neri kuyō* 練り供養), which were dramatizations of the *raigō* scene, probably stemmed from the activities of the Nijūgo zanmaie. The *Hokke genki*, written within forty years of Genshin's death

21. Butsumyō e were held in the twelfth month, initially from the fifteenth day, later from the nineteenth day, for three days, either at the Imperial Court or at various temples. Participants read the *Butsumyō kyō*, recited the names of the Buddhas in the three realms, and confessed their transgressions.

by a monk who had been acquainted with him, states that Genshin began the *mukae-kō*, and that participants included monastic and lay, men and women, noble and lowly. The *Eshin Sōzuden*, composed at approximately the same time, describes the ceremony in some detail.

The *Kakochō* also states that Genshin created statues and paintings (HIRABAYASHI 1985, p. 49). Although scholars assert that none of the countless objects now attributed to him are truly his works, the fact that this early account makes such a statement strongly suggests that Genshin did at least commission a distinctive type of artwork. Some of these images may have been linked to *mukae-kō*. In contrast to the later hell and Pure Land scrolls, this genre of art most likely was based on the theme of *raigō*.

Other Religious Associations

One last indication of Genshin's role in the spread of Heian Pure Land Buddhism is the existence of several other religious associations begun by him at Yokawa. The one for which there is the most information is the *Shakakō*, in which members took turns serving a statue of Śākyamuni around the clock, as though it were alive, and attended a monthly lecture on the *Lotus Sutra*. Participants included lay people, mostly aristocrats. Although the purpose of this society was not performance of the *nenbutsu*, for Genshin Pure Land Buddhism was never separate from other types of Buddhist belief and practice. For example, at the end of all of his works, most of which do not treat Pure Land ideas, he nevertheless includes a passage dedicating the merit accumulated in writing the text to the birth of himself and of all sentient beings in the Pure Land in the west. Through the *Shakakō*, lay people had regular contact with Genshin and were exposed to his religious influence, which always included a concern for Amida's Pure Land.

Genshin is also attributed with the founding of two other groups, called the *Fugen kō* 普賢講 and the *Jizō kō* 地藏講. Texts outlining the activities of these groups are found in the *Eshin Sōzu zenshū*.²² Most works in this collection, however, are apocryphal, and whether Genshin did in fact establish such groups is not known.

Monks of several sects were instrumental in spreading Pure Land Buddhism beyond the monastic community in tenth- and eleventh-century Japan. Although a strong case can be made that Genshin was the monk in the mid-Heian period who contributed the most to this spread, this is not only because he wrote the *Ōjōyōshū* but also because of his myriad other activities.

22. The *Fugenkō sahō* 普賢講作法 is found in esz 5: 519–42; the *Jizō kōshiki* 地藏講式 is in esz 5: 583–90.

Conclusion

In this article, I have shown that the *Ōjōyōshū* was not as well known in the hundred years or so after its composition as it is frequently portrayed to be. Yet in this same hundred years, Pure Land thought and practice spread rapidly. If the *Ōjōyōshū* was not the primary cause of this, what were the other factors? Religious fellowships were certainly pivotal. The Nijūgo zanmaie was limited to monks during Genshin's lifetime, but they were a diverse group: ages ranged from twenty to sixty-nine, and included a monk of one of the highest ranks (*dentō daihōshi*) as well as numerous otherwise unknown monks. Moreover, activities they sponsored soon spread to the city of Kyoto and beyond. This type of group, previously unknown on Mt. Hiei, is an often overlooked factor in the rapid spread of Pure Land Buddhism in eleventh-century Japan. The *Ōjōyōshū* was only one part, albeit an important one, of a conversation that would change the face of Japanese Buddhism.

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- ESZ *Eshin Sōzu zenshū* 恵心僧都全集. Ed. Hieizan Denshūin 比叡山伝修院, 5 vols. Tokyo: Shibunkaku, 1928. Reprint, 1971.
- MKZ *Midō kanpakuki zenchūshaku* 御堂闌白記全注釈. Ed. Yamanaka Yutaka 山中裕, 4 vols. Tokyo: Kōka Shoten, 1994.
- NKBT *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. *Manyōshū* 萬葉集, ed. Takaki Ichinosuke 高木市之助 et al., vols. 4–7, (1957–1962); *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語, ed. Yamakishi Tokubei 山岸徳平, vols. 14–18, (1958–1963); *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子, ed. Ikeda Kikan 池田亀鑑, vol. 19 (1958); *Ōkagami* 大鏡, ed. Matsumura Hiroshi 松村博司, vol. 21, (1960).
- NST *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想大系. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. *Genshin* 源信, ed. Ishida Mizumaro 石田瑞麿, vol. 6, (1970); *Ōjōden: Hokkegenki* 往生傳—法華驗記, ed. Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞 and Ōsone Shōsuke 大曾根章介, vol. 7, (1974).
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭, 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō, 1922–1923.
- ZGR *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 続群書類従. Ed. Hanawa Hokiichi 塙保己一, 70 vols. Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kankōkai, 1923–30.

ZST *Zōho shiryō taisei* 増補史料大成. Ed. Zōho Shiryō Taisei Kankōkai 増補史料大成刊行会, 43 vols. Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1965.

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