

OBSERVATIONS OF AUSPICIOUS SIGNS IN THE SELF-ORDINATION IN THE PRECEPTS



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SELF-ORDINATION (*jisei jukai*) is ordination according to the threefold pure precepts.¹ When no qualified monk is available to serve as master preceptor, one ordains oneself in front of an image of a buddha or bodhisattva, vowing to become a bodhisattva *bhikṣu*.

According to an account in the *Enryaku sōroku* (Monastic Records from the Enryaku Era), self-ordination was accepted in Japan before Ganjin established the formal method of ordination.² However, it was Saichō who first proposed such a practice in the *Sange gakushōshiki* (Regulations for Students of the Mountain School) and *Kenkairon* (Treatise Revealing the Precepts). Based on passages in the *Sūtra on Contemplation of the Practices of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra*, Saichō outlined two methods for ordination: one through the “Mahāyāna precepts” and the other through the “Hīnayāna precepts.” Citing the *Sūtra of Brahmā’s Net*, he held that, in the case of the Mahāyāna precepts, one could invoke five “invisible masters,” such as Śākyamuni, the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Maitreya, or all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions. He further stipulated that when no “visible precept masters” were available, it would be possible to perform a self-ordination once one had repented and had received auspicious signs.³

1. “The threefold pure precepts” refers to three groups of precepts: the precepts of restraint (*shōritsu gikai*, the upholding of all precepts in such groups as the five lay precepts, the eight lay precepts, the ten precepts for novices, or the complete precepts), the precepts for the accumulation of wholesome qualities (*shōzenbōkai*) in which the practice of all wholesome qualities is taken as a precept, and the precepts for action on behalf of the welfare of beings (*shōjushōkai*).

2. Takeda Chōten, “Shūso to jisei jukai,” *Tendai gaku* 22 (1980).

3. Takeda, “Shūso to jisei jukai,” note 2; Takeda Chōten, “Jisei jukai no igi,” in *Takeda Chōten sensei chosakushū*, ed. Jōfukyōkai, 1999.

During the precept revival movement of the Kamakura period, Kakujō and Eison conducted rites for the cultivation of auspicious signs based upon Saichō's interpretation of the *Zhancha jing* (Scripture of Divining the Requit of Good and Evil Actions) and the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*.⁴ They carried out self-ordinations that required the practitioner to receive "auspicious signs," that is, manifestations of the approval of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Accordingly, Eison established a tradition for the ordination of monks in his own congregation, increased the numbers of subtemples where such practices were performed, and engaged in social welfare activities. In the early Edo period, there ensued an early modern precept revival movement led by Shingon Ritsu monks, such as the precept master Shunjō Myōnin, who adopted Eison's teachings. This movement even influenced other schools, such as Tendai and Pure Land.⁵

The early modern-era precept revival movement began when Myōnin and others ordained themselves at the Makino'san Saimyōji Byōdō Shinnōin in Kyoto in 1602, becoming *bhikṣus* who had accepted the comprehensive Mahāyāna precepts. According to Fujitani Atsuo, the early modern precept revival movement in the Shingon Ritsu lineage, which valued the precepts, was centered at the three training temples of Saimyōji, Jinpōji, and Yachūji and later influenced the Anraku Ritsu in Tendai, the Pure Land precepts, and the Sōzan Ritsu (Lotus precepts).⁶ Monks representative of this movement are Myōnin of Shingon Ritsu, as well as Jinin Emyō and Jiun Onkō. And even within the Shingon lineage, such figures as Jōgon and Gakunyo engaged in a variety of activities.⁷

The practice of cultivating auspicious signs requires the practitioner to continually engage in this practice until one has sufficiently repented of past offenses and purified one's mind and body, which is confirmed by the manifestation of auspicious signs. The source of this practice is a passage from the twenty-third minor precept in the *Sūtra of Brahmā's Net*:

You should practice repentance in front of the buddha image for seven days, and once you have experienced auspicious signs, you will receive the precepts. If you are unable to obtain auspicious signs from the buddhas or bodhisattvas, then you should continue this practice for fourteen days, twenty-one days, or up to an entire year until you

4. Minowa Kenryō, *Chūsei shoki Nanto kairitsu fukkō no kenkyū* (Hōzōkan, 1999), part two, chapter three; Otani Yuka, "Nissō sō Shunjō to Nanto kairitsu fukkō undō," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 65, no. 2 (2017).

5. Fujitani Atsuo, "Kinsei shoki ni okeru kairitsu fukkō no ichi chōryū: Kenshun Ryōei o chūshin ni," *Shitennōji Kokusai Bukkyō Daigaku kiyō: Jinbun shakai gakubu* 37 (2003).

6. Fujitani, "Kinsei shoki ni okeru kairitsu fukkō no ichi chōryū"; Fujitani Atsuo, "Sangoku bini den ni miru kinsei Shingon Ritsu no tokuchō ni tsuite," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 54, no. 2 (2008).

7. Ueda Reijō, "Jōgon no jukai no shūhen," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 17, no. 1 (1968).

obtain the signs. Once you have obtained auspicious signs, you may immediately receive the precepts before the image of the buddha or the bodhisattva. If you were unable to obtain signs but received the precepts before the image, then you have not [actually] obtained them.⁸

This practice is conducted six times a day, although there is also a “three-time” version. The “six-time” practice is conducted every four hours six times per day: at the time of the regular service (sunset), the first watch of the night, the middle watch of the night, the final watch of the night, sunrise, and noon. As a rule, it is an ascetic practice in which neither sleeps nor rests. The “three-time” version prescribes the same practices but only three times per day. This strict Buddhist practice is conducted with the goal of removing sin. In a state of having mental obstructions, karmic obstructions, or obstructions due to sin, one lacks the karmic capacity to view sacred beings, such as the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Thus, one must conduct repentance rites, *shōmyō* chanting, and prayer to remove such obstructions. As a result of eradicating sin and obtaining purification, it becomes possible to receive auspicious signs.⁹

Fujitani has explained the practice of self-ordination and the cultivation of auspicious signs at Yachūji, one of the three training temples for the precepts. According to Fujitani, monks at the time all conducted self-ordinations requiring the reception of auspicious signs.¹⁰ Building on this research, this article analyzes as yet unexamined sources for the cultivation of auspicious signs, as well as the signs themselves. Moreover, this article touches upon the problem of why acknowledgment from sacred beings was valued and systematized in Shingon Ritsu ordinations in the early modern period, with reference to the influence of the Kamakura-period movement for the revival of the precepts and to Eison’s actions. This article sets out the history of, and the reasons for, the necessity of direct acknowledgements from the buddhas and bodhisattvas and offers preliminary observations concerning their essential significance.

8. *Taishō daizōkyō*, vol. 24, p. 1006, 7c; Charles A. Muller and Kenneth K. Tanaka, trans., *The Brahmā’s Net Sutra*, Taishō volume 24, number 1484 (BDK America, Inc., 2017), 57.

9. Arai Shinobu, “Hokekyō to kugyō to metsuzai,” *Tōyō tetsugaku kenkyūjo kiyō* 24 (2008).

Auspicious signs also have a textual basis in a passage from the forty-first minor precept in the *Sūtra of Brahmā’s Net*: “An auspicious sign would be something like a buddha coming to touch one’s head; seeing halos; seeking flowers; or other various types of wondrous signs. Once the sign is witnessed, the sin is erased” (*Taishō daizōkyō*, vol. 24, p. 1008, 17c; Muller and Tanaka, *The Brahmā’s Net Sutra*, 69). Eison also regarded the exposition in a certain *Extended Sūtra* as a basis for this practice. See Matsuo Kenji, “Yume no ki no ichi sekai: Kōsō nikki to jisei jukai,” in *Nihon chūsei no Zen to Ritsu* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003); Minowa Kenryō, “Yume to kōso to zange,” in *Nihon shoki Nanto kairitsu fukkō no kenkyū*; and “Jisei jukai ki,” in *Saidaiji Eison denki shūsei* (Hōzōkan, 1977), 338.

10. Fujitani Atsuo, “Kinsei kairitsu fukkō to Yachūji rissōbō,” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 59, no. 1 (2010); also notes 5 and 6.

The Cultivation of Auspicious Signs at Precept Temples

In this section, I examine the actual circumstances of the cultivation of auspicious signs in self-ordinations held at the Shingon Ritsu temples Yachūji, Jinpōji, and Saidaiji from the early modern period onward.

Yachūji

One of the three training temples for precepts, Yachūji in Kawachi is a Shingon Ritsu temple located in the municipality of Habikino, Osaka Prefecture. Thought to have been founded in the Nara period, it was revived by Jinin Emyō and became central to the early modern precept revival. The *Ichuha sōmyōroku* (A List of Monks of Our School) of 1846 enumerates the names of monks not only of Shingon Ritsu but also of other schools such as Tendai, Jōdo, and Nichiren.¹¹ It is clear that Yachūji opened its gates to monks of other schools in an effort to revive the precepts. Among the three training temples for precepts, it is the only one to preserve its monastic quarters as a place for practicing the precepts since the Edo period.

From Jinin's revival of Yachūji in the early modern period until the early decades of the Meiji era, *śramaṇas* at the temple all conducted self-ordinations and cultivated auspicious signs to that end in order to become *bhikṣus*. For instance, the *Chiji nichiyō* (Daily Tasks of the Steward), a manuscript copied by Tatsudō Daitoku in 1783, records the tasks of the monastic office of the steward at Yachūji and includes a passage laying out the procedures and method for self-ordination.¹² In it, the ordinand is recorded as “one [who performs] a separate practice.” This “separate practice” signifies the cultivation of auspicious signs, and the ordinand is instructed to master this practice. Furthermore, a document titled *Jukai shōshō kaimon* (A Circular Notice of a Summons to Ordination), which was circulated by messenger to summons the monks of the Yachūji school living throughout the country to witness an ordination, includes this passage:

A certain *śramaṇa* named X, having completed his separate practice, has obtained auspicious signs. Therefore, between X day and X day of X month, he will ascend the ordination platform and receive the precepts. If you eminent monks, without declining or begrudging the trouble, would certify [the ordination], then our rejoicing would be complete.¹³

11. “Yachūji shōzō seikyōrui,” part 12, in Inagi Nobuko, et al., *Nihon ni okeru kairitsu denpa no kenkyū* (Gankōji Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, 2004).

12. “Yachūji shōzō seikyōrui,” part 39.

13. See the copy of the original “Jukai shōshō kaijō” (Edo period) among the compilation of sources created when Master Noguchi accepted the precepts at Yachūji.

From this passage, we may infer that a prerequisite for ordination when a *śramaṇa* became a *bhikṣu* at Yachūji was the cultivation of auspicious signs and the confirmation of having received such signs.

The following are some partial excerpts concerning the cultivation of auspicious signs from the *Chiji nichiyō*: “Whichever buddha, bodhisattva, or *vidyārāja* is the main deity of practices preceding ordination, its image must be enshrined, but no other images of main deities may be enshrined [alongside it].... He who conducts the separate practice must not attend the *upoṣadha* (fortnightly retreat).” Again,

Only the following objects may be allowed into the monastic quarters in preparation for embarking on the practice: an image of the main deity; a pair of lamps; an incense clock; a single vase for flowers; one rope chair; a futon; an inkstone; paper and writing implements, etc. Floor cushions may not be placed before the main image. At the “six times” of day and night (sunset, the first watch of the night, the middle watch of the night, the final watch of the night, sunrise, and noon), the ordinand must perform the five types of repentance¹⁴ and chant sutras and *dhāraṇīs*. In the intervals, he must [continue to] recite without interruption. As he likes, he may also practice worship or walking meditation. He must perform the repentances of the “six times” and copy them out along with the text of his repentance at the time of his ordination. That will be extremely useful when he memorizes the ecclesiastical proceeding before his ordination.

In this way, a *śramaṇa* who desired self-ordination would choose just one main deity and enshrine it in the monastic quarters; he would shut himself up alone, conducting either the five types of repentance or other repentance rituals before the main image at the prescribed six times per day. At other times, he would conduct recitation, worship, or walking meditation as he saw fit. This was an ascetic practice in which even during the intervals between repentance practices of the “six times” the ordinand constantly recited the mantra of the main deity, was only allowed to sleep upright in a rope chair, and continued practice indefinitely until he received auspicious signs.¹⁵

A version of such practices persists today at Yachūji, as is evidenced by the experiences of the current abbot, Noguchi Shinkai. According to Master Noguchi, the practice begins with a formal statement of intention. Then, the practitioner

14. The five types of repentance were originally established by Zhiyi as a Tendai practice of calming and contemplation.

15. Fujitani Atsuo, “Kinsei kairitsu fukkō to Yachūji rissōbō.”

worships the three thousand buddhas and, during the six daily intervals of practice, the one hundred buddhas, hence six hundred buddhas per day. These practices occur over a period of five days. In the case of Yachūji, the worship of the three thousand buddhas takes place over a five-day period. During the day (at sunrise, noon, and sunset), the practitioner performs the five types of repentance, seven repetitions of the [*Foding*] *zunsheng tuoluoni* (Incantation of the Glorious Crown of the Buddha), recitation of the *Yuga kaihōn* (Code of the Treatise on the Stages of Yogic Practice; one complete reading across the five days), reading of a repentance text, and five hundred to one thousand repetitions of an incantation associated with the main image. At night (the first watch, the middle watch, and the final watch), the *Sūtra of Brahmā's Net* is read instead of the *Yuga kaihōn* once over the five-day period. Between the six intervals of practice, the practitioner is instructed to “intone the *dhāraṇī* of the main image nonstop.”¹⁶

In addition to these practices, the practice of burning incense on one's arm, in which a bundle of stick incense is placed on the arm of the practitioner and burned, also took place at Yachūji as an “offering of the body.” As a sign of his determination as temple abbot, Master Noguchi also engaged in this practice. The textual bases for the practice of burning incense on one's arm are the “The Former Affairs of the Bodhisattva Medicine King” chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the sixteenth minor precept of the *Sūtra of Brahmā's Net*.¹⁷ The biography of Kaizan Eken, the third-generation abbot of Yachūji,¹⁸ gives an account of the abbot burning incense on his arm and copying sutra texts in his own blood multiple times as a component of his Pure Land faith. Because the practice of burning incense on the arm has been passed down as an oral transmission, it is unclear when this practice is supposed to take place. However, at Yachūji it is treated as part of the cultivation of auspicious signs. Until the mid-1890s, small, lozenge-shaped scars would have been visible on the arms of the *bhikṣus* who practiced self-ordination at Yachūji.

Jinpōji

Jinpōji, the second of the “three temples for training in the precepts,” was founded by Gyōki in 708 as part of the shrine-temple complex at Ōtori Shrine located in the province of Izumi. It later burned down, but around 1672 it was restored by Shinsei Ennin and Kaien Ekū as monastic quarters open to monks from various schools.

16. This information is based on sources compiled in 2000 when Master Noguchi received the precepts. With regard to the formal statement of intention, his statement was in line with the main image that he himself had chosen (an image of Aizen Myōō). He practiced the cultivation of auspicious signs for the set period of one hundred days. Interview with Master Noguchi, 16 May 2019.

17. *Taishō daizōkyō*, vol. 43, p. 843, 23b; vol. 24, p. 1006, 18a.

18. *Tōhōzan An'yōji chūkōso Kaizan Eken wajo den* was written in 1704 by Tandō Eshuku. This text is from a collection housed at Tōhōzan An'yōji.

When the temple was destroyed in 1868 as a consequence of the campaign to abolish Buddhism and destroy Śākyamuni (*haibutsu kishaku*), many of its images, books, and documents were relocated to Kōmyōin, a subtemple at the time.¹⁹ One of these sources, the *Jinpōjiha jisei jubosatsukai sahō* (Ritual Procedures for Self-Ordination in the Bodhisattva Precepts in the School of the Jinpōji; 1709) states:

The chamber for the god is to be adorned; one is to pray only for auspicious signs, and every night there must be three thousand prostrations before the image of Acalanātha. With every bow, offer one flower and one pinch of incense and unceasingly repent of your misdeeds. Also, recite the *vinaya* or the sutras, and intone the mantra for Acalanātha. As you might save yourself when your hair is on fire, repent of all your sins without holding back and seek signs with your utmost sincerity. Then you will receive a numinous omen.²⁰

That is to say, monks at Jinpōji practiced the cultivation of auspicious signs centered on Acalanātha as the main deity by repenting with full-body prostrations three thousand times each night. Upon receiving auspicious signs, they conducted self-ordinations.

Additionally, in the Tendai school from the early modern period to today, as a prerequisite for the twelve-year practice of seclusion at the mausoleum of Saichō, monks recite the names of the three thousand buddhas in the *Sūtra of the Names of the Buddhas* and perform full-body prostrations three thousand times each day until they receive auspicious signs. The worship of the three thousand buddhas has been conducted since the early Heian period at the Assembly of the Names of the Buddhas (Butsumyōe). However, the revival of this rite, which had gradually become abbreviated and conducted as a *shōmyō* dharma assembly, was an aspiration of Eison, who cultivated repentance rituals to eliminate karmic obstructions.²¹

Saidaiji

Saidaiji was founded in the Nara period, but fell into decline in the Heian period until it was revived by Eison. In 1236, Eison conducted rites for the cultivation of auspicious signs at Saidaiji along with Kakujō and others. After receiving signs, they conducted self-ordinations and became *bhikṣus*. Then, they developed a precept revival movement based at Saidaiji.²² In this section, I evaluate historical

19. Fujitani, "Jinpōji (Kōmyōin) no rekishi."

20. Thanks to Prof. Fujitani, I was able to photograph a manuscript of this text among the documents at Kōmyōin.

21. Takahashi Shūei, "Kamakura jidai no Butsumyōe," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 53, no. 1 (2004).

22. I surveyed archival sources at Saidaiji as well as consulting Inagi Nobuko, et al., *Narashi, Saidaiji shōzō tenseki monjo no chōsa kenkyū* (Gangōji Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, 1993).

sources concerning the practice of cultivating auspicious signs, housed at Saidaiji since the early modern period.

In the section entitled “Practices at Fixed Times” in the *Kōsō rokuji gongyō hōsoku* (Regulations for Perpetual Service for the Cultivation of Auspicious Signs) of 1845, the practices at Saidaiji are described as follows:

Texts for worship: *Dhāraṇī of the Thousand-Armed* [*Avalokiteśvara*] (five repetitions), *Dhāraṇī of the Sūtra for Humane Kings* (three repetitions), *Great Dhāraṇī of Amitābha* (seven repetitions), *Dhāraṇī of Acalanātha for Salvation through Compassion* (twenty-one repetitions), *Dhāraṇī of Rāgarāja* (seven repetitions), *Mantra of Clear Light* (seven repetitions), and *Thirty Verses on Consciousness-Only*.²³

Practices outside of the fixed time periods differ in content, but also center on *dhāraṇīs* and include chanting of “The Life-span of the Thus Come One” chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* (or the verse section of that chapter).

In the section “Morning Practice” in the *Jukai kōsō zengyō hōsoku* (Regulations for Practice of Cultivating Auspicious Signs Before Receiving the Precepts) of 1909, practices are prescribed as follows:

Texts for worship: *Abbreviated Sūtra on the Precepts of the Seven Buddhas*, [*Fōding*] *zunsheng tuoluoni* (seven repetitions), *Heart Sūtra* (three fascicles), *Middle-Length Incantation to Acalanātha* (twenty-one repetitions), *Dhāraṇī of Rāgarāja* (twenty-one repetitions), *Mantra of Clear Light* (twenty-one repetitions), *Thirty Verses on Consciousness-Only*, the twelve verses of praise for Śākyamuni, and one hundred prostrations. Then exit the hall.²⁴

The “twelve verses of praise for Śākyamuni” are, in total, sixty lines of adoration for Śākyamuni, beginning with “The true golden form of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni / His marks and dignity without parallel / His wisdom and compassion clear and bright as the ocean / His merit as vast as space,” etc. The practitioner voices these verses, bowing once every five verses. Other than practices conducted in the morning, the content of these practices differs and includes an extraordinarily large number of practices. Of the two documents quoted above, most of these are

23. Document 55-14 in the sutra repository at Saidaiji written in the hand of its author, Kankō, on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of the second year of the Kōka era (14 November 1845). The document measures 16.3 cm high, 5.6 cm wide; the entire page being 25 cm high, 47.2 cm wide, and folded into eight panels.

24. Document 55-13 written in the hand of its author, “Ryūkei, a *śramaṇa* of the Saidaiji,” in the tenth month of a *tsuchi no to tori* year during the Meiji era (1909); 24 cm high, 16.5 cm wide; 19 folded leaves.

described in the text composed in the late Meiji era, suggesting that practice of cultivating auspicious signs became more difficult over time.

I would also like to touch on the topic of drawing lots known as *saguri*. According to Ueda Reijō, “In the old days [at Saidaiji], even if someone had received auspicious signs, we would still decide whether or not to receive the precepts by drawing lots.”²⁵ A relevant passage is found in chapter thirty-five of the *Chōmonshū* (Collection [of Teachings and Admonitions] Which We Heard [from the Bodhisattva Who Made Orthodoxy Flourish]), which is a record of Eison’s teachings:

When you draw lots for an auspicious sign, by no means should you worry about your worship. Only have aspiration for buddhahood.... By all means, you must rouse up the aspiration for *bodhi* and work to attain the precepts. If you do not rouse up such aspiration, then you will not be approved, and you may not receive the precepts.²⁶

Chapter twenty-four also quotes Eison:

If you draw lots with nothing hidden, then you will be approved. But if you do not give rise to the aspiration to benefit sentient beings, then no matter how many times you draw lots, you will not be approved.

In all, topics related to “lots” are recorded in six sections of the work. Previous scholarship by Oishio Chihiro has shown that the drawing of lots was a common way for deciding matters at Saidaiji, which played an important role in sustaining the group.²⁷ The passages quoted above clarify that the drawing of lots also served the purpose of confirming that the buddhas had granted permission to receive the precepts after the attainment of auspicious signs.

Examination of historical sources demonstrates that, at Shingon Ritsu monasteries during the precept revival movement of the early modern period, the practice of cultivating auspicious signs was essential to obtaining precepts, although the content of such practice differed by institution. Furthermore, although the worship of the three thousand buddhas was sometimes distributed across several days, it was common to all temples. There were also temples in which practices included the offering of the body, the burning of incense upon the arm, and the drawing of lots to confirm the acceptance of the precepts. In addition, previous research has shown that, apart from these three temples for precept training, it was standard

25. Ueda Reijō, “Jukai satsuyō: Hoi” (2004). This text is a pamphlet by Saeki Shungen with explanations from Ueda Reijō.

26. Kōshō Bosatsu Gokyōkai Chōmonshū Kenkyūkai, ed., “Kōshō Bosatsu gokyōkai chōmonshū yakuchū kenkyū,” in *Nihon Bukkyō sōgō kenkyū* 2 (2004), 97–152.

27. Oishio Chihiro, “Eison ni yoru kuji to kyōdan kiritsu,” in *Chūsei no Nanto Bukkyō* (1996), 214–215.

for monks of the Ritsu tradition to obtain auspicious signs before receiving the precepts and officially becoming *bhikṣus*.²⁸

Auspicious Signs at Precept Temples

This section examines records of auspicious signs at Yachūji, Saidaiji, Shōmyōji, and Enmeiji.

Yachūji

In practices he undertook before his self-ordination, Jinin Emyō, the reviver of Yachūji, received auspicious signs allowing him to proceed with self-ordination. Jinin received the full precepts at Saidaiji, but the signs he experienced were kept secret. The existence of a record of such signs was first discovered by Kaizan and his disciples after Jinin's death. This record, the *Jukai kōsō* (Auspicious Signs on the Acceptance of the Precepts) of 1641, has been preserved at Yachūji as a temple treasure. The manuscript reads as follows:

Auspicious Signs on the Acceptance of the Precepts Ikkū

Sign in a dream. Item: In my dream during the night of the twenty-seventh day of the first month, to the left and right of the main image of Acalanātha there appeared golden reliquary stupas, each over two *shaku* (feet) in height.

Same. Item: In a dream one night, the flames of the main image of Acalanātha were alight [illegible]

Manifest sign. Item: At dawn on the eighth day of the second month, bells pealed in the sky before me. Immediately as I looked, the place of practice was unobstructed and it was as light as if it were noon. About one *jō* (about ten feet) above the ground was a treasure stupa in the midst of smoke, from which white smoke was furiously arising, and it remained for a little while.

Sign in a dream. Item: In a dream during the night of the nineteenth of the same, a peacock came flying from the west and landed on the roof of the place of practice.

Same. Item: In a dream during the night of the twentieth, I looked at the sky and saw through all eighteen heavens in the realm of form.

Manifest sign. Item: On the morning of same, there manifested in the sky a bell which rang with a deep sound. At once, I perceived all sounds in the dharma realm. Also, there appeared in the place

28. Fujitani Atsuo, "Jōgon Risshi no kairitsukan ni tsuite," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 65, no. 1 (2016).

of practice a single persimmon. Its leaves were yellow. Also, a cool breeze blew from the east. Fronds of dwarf bamboo swayed to the west. When the cool breeze touched my body, [the sensation] was utterly beyond description with language.

Sign in a dream. Item: In a dream during the night of the twenty-fifth of same, moon disks were ranged brightly in the sky. Further, a single great ship passed away to the west in the sky above the River Kura, trailing five-colored adornments. In the preceding, I have written [only] a little, and I have left out the rest.²⁹

“Ikkū” is a name for Jinin Emyō. According to the record, in his dreams he saw a peacock, radiance, the eighteen heavens of the realm of desire, moon discs, and a great ship of five colors. As for manifest signs, there were the sound of a bell expressing all sounds in the dharma realm, the appearance of a hedge of dwarf bamboo, and a cool breeze blowing over him (sensations of vision, hearing, and touch). Also, he saw a golden stupa for relics as a sign in a dream and a treasure stupa as a manifest sign.

Similarly, the auspicious signs that Master Noguchi Shinkai, the current abbot of Yachūji, received in April 2000 included the appearance of a comet. Also, his deceased master appeared in a dream, speaking with him and performing a service and a dharma assembly.³⁰ These auspicious signs are similar to those described in the *Sūtra of Brahmā's Net*.

Saidaiji

The historical sources related to auspicious signs at Saidaiji are not open to the public. Therefore, as a reference to such signs, we must rely on Eison's *Jisei jukaiki* (Record of Self-Ordination) for an account of auspicious signs that he received on the twenty-seventh day of the eighth month of the second year of the Katei reign period (1236). The text notes:

When [Eison] was staring into the eyes of [an image of] the Buddha Mahāvairocana and praying earnestly, the eyes of the Buddha Mahāvairocana opened, and then two paper flowers came fluttering down. When he looked up, surprised, there was a third [manifest sign].

In a dream [Eison] had while napping past midnight at the Kaizen'in, Eison's father offered him a young noblewoman and told him to take her as his wife for the rest of his life. When he awoke,

29. Ikkū (Jinin Emyō), *Jukai kōsō*, in document 2-6-1 among the sacred teachings held at Yachūji; 29.5 cm high; 42.7 cm wide, 1 leaf.

30. Interview with Master Noguchi Shinkai and transcribed by the author.

he grieved that he had been unable to receive an auspicious sign, but instead had a nightmare in which he was married to a woman. However, as he prayed before buddha images, he came to believe that the dream expressed that liberation through acquiring the precepts and practicing them was the truth, that he would acquire the precepts, and that fortune would result [as sign in a dream].

While [Eison] was praying without sleep, there appeared before the Great Ajari (Seikei), his former master at Ryōzan'in of Chōkokuji, the dual-realm mandalas inscribed with root Siddham syllabus (on paper, two *shaku* in width), and this was his receipt of auspicious signs. Before long, he had a dream in which he unrolled and viewed a mandala of the vajra realm (manifest sign, and sign in a dream).³¹

It is evident from such records that the cultivation of auspicious signs was conducted at Saidaiji from the early modern period onward and even after the Meiji Restoration. According to extant diagrams and the explanations, the paper on which the signs were written would be folded in two. Then, this paper would be wrapped in a larger piece of paper. On top of that, a paper string would be tied in a cross-shape, and it would be sealed with a paper band labeled “auspicious signs.” On the cover of the envelope would be written the name of the person who had received the signs.

A Saidaiji document titled *Kōsō aru no koto* (Concerning the Existence of Auspicious Signs) from the late Edo period explains what one should expect when receiving auspicious signs. The text includes an admonitory note, stating, “having arrogance about auspicious signs that you have received will be a hindrance to your practice.” To summarize the content:

Even if you were to see an auspicious sign in which the main object of worship appears, you must not give rise to the arrogant notion “I have accomplished the buddhadharma.” In olden times, Māra manifested as an Amitābha triad, but because he was seen by someone who always had great faith, he vanished, and in the end, a true triad came to welcome the dying individual. On the other hand, for someone who is arrogant, even the true object of worship will appear as Māra. The buddhas merely respond to karmic dispositions. Auspicious signs do not really exist, but merely depend on their own transient conditions. Just because you have seen a buddha, you must not believe that you have accomplished all merits. Through some minor causes and conditions, you have been able to sense a buddha, so if you continue

31. Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed., *Saidaiji Eison denki shūsei* (1977).

to strive you will eventually reach the seventh *bhumi*. Receiving auspicious signs ought to produce profound faith.³²

This passage expresses the basic Buddhist philosophical concept that all things are empty, and objects and consciousness arise through causes and conditions. Also, the existence of this source informs us that there was a tendency among monks who had received auspicious signs to boast of them and to be lax in their practice. The receipt of auspicious signs, that is, the manifestation of a buddha or bodhisattva or having a dream of being granted sacred objects, could change depending on that individual's daily practice and mental state; the signs could either help to advance one's practice or corrupt the practitioner due to arrogance.

In the early Kamakura period, Myōe, who was a role model for Eison, recorded auspicious signs that he received both in his dreams and manifestly throughout his life. Myōe was a rare monk who understood the true purport being communicated by auspicious signs and who responded to real situations with earnestness.³³ The monks of the early modern Shingon Ritsu conducted the cultivation of auspicious signs as part of a rigorous initiation, received those signs as evidence that they had been permitted to become bodhisattva monks by sacred beings (buddhas and bodhisattvas), and they took it as a primary goal that they were to continue their striving on that basis. However, these sources also show that it was difficult for monks to continue to discipline themselves after having received auspicious signs.

Shōmyōji

This section examines fourteenth-century documents on auspicious signs that have been transmitted at Shōmyōji, a center for the precept revival movement in the Kanto region. Shōmyōji was the mortuary temple for the Kanazawa Hōjō clan and was patronized by the Kamakura shogunate as a seminary for the study of multiple Buddhist lineages, beginning with the Saidaiji lineage.³⁴

In one of these documents, the *Jōchi jukai kōsōki* (Record of Auspicious Signs on the Acceptance of the Precepts by Jōchi) dated to 1341, we find the following passage:

At just the hour of the hare (6–8 AM) on the third day of the twelfth month of the fourth year of the Ryakuō era (1341), he completed receiving the precepts at Gokurakuji.... The man of virtue lamented that his acceptance of the precepts had occurred without any won-

32. Saidaiji sutra repository, document 58-83-8.

33. Kōshō Bosatsu Gokyōkai Chōmonshū Kenkyūkai, ed., "Kōshō Bosatsu gokyōkai chōmonshū yakuchū kenkyū" 78. Eison deeply sympathized with Myōe's faith in Śākyamuni.

34. Such documents are housed at the Shinagawa Prefectural Kanazawa Bunko. Matsuo Kenji, "Yume no ki no ichi sekai: Kōsō nikki to jisei jukai."

ders, so he asked [Jōchi] if he would accept any mementoes or *śarīra*. Jōchi was overjoyed, and when he said that he would accept them, he granted him a white *śarīra*, its shape like a chestnut, a single grain in appearance. Overjoyed, he went from Gokurakuji to Kanazawa, and when he showed what he had received to the congregation of monks there, as this *śarīra* had increased from its original number of (original text illegible), they looked upon it, rejoicing.³⁵

This account is a record of a dream in which, having been permitted to receive the precepts, Jōchi obtained a grain of *śarīra*. When he returned from Gokurakuji to Shōmyōji, a miracle occurred in which that *śarīra* divided many times over. Furthermore, in another record, the *Tansen kōsōki* (Record of Auspicious Signs of Tansen), there is a similar account of auspicious signs:

In a dream during the night of the twelfth day of the third month, I saw *śarīra* of the Buddha on the table before the main image, appearing like human skin. I took five grains in my hand, sorted them, and when I thought that I would protect them, I awoke from the dream.

Dreams of receiving relics, regarded as expressing the all-powerful functions of Śākyamuni and of the buddhadharma, were thought to express approval from the gods and buddhas for the receipt of the precepts. Four other records from the fourteenth through fifteenth centuries are of dreams in which a sacred being grants something precious or some food: the *Sokunyobō shamikai kōsōki* (Record of the Auspicious Signs of the Śramaṇa Precepts of Sokunyobō; dated to 1315), the *Ryōhonbō shamikai kōsōki* (Record of the Auspicious Signs of the Śramaṇa Precepts of Ryōhonbō; 1319), the *Sen'i shaminikai kōsōki* (Record of the Auspicious Signs of the Śramaṇerī Precepts of Sen'i; 1329), and the *Sennyobō jusha kōsōki* (Record of the Auspicious Signs of Sennyobō; 1432).³⁶

The preceding records of auspicious signs were significant for rituals regarding precepts for monks and nuns at Gokurakuji in Kamakura, which was a branch temple of the Saidaiji. Matsuo Kenji has analyzed these records of auspicious signs as objects written on folded paper in place of memory or the spoken word, which were supposed to be destroyed after reporting to one's master. Thus, these extant records are but stray remainders of oral reports of auspicious signs that happened to be written down and forgotten.³⁷ Compared with the few examples of written accounts of auspicious signs at Saidaiji and other temples, these differ in that they

35. Kanazawa Bunko, document no. 6196. Folded leaf.

36. These documents are housed at Kanazawa Bunko and are numbered 6192, 6193, 6194, and 6195, respectively.

37. Matsuo Kenji, "Yume no ki no ichi sekai: Kōsō nikki to jisei jukai."

were written on the back of folded paper. This fact suggests that they were personal memos that just happened to survive by chance.

This process of receiving the precepts was undertaken by all monastics at Shōmyōji who became *śrāmaṇeras*. In the religious community surrounding Eison, the practice of cultivating auspicious signs may well have been a frequent occurrence in order to receive proof that one had the karmic capacity to uphold the precepts. There is also the possibility that this system of obtaining auspicious signs, which was common to the early modern precept revival, was already common practice at the temple.

Enmeiji

Enmeiji in Kawachi is a Ritsu temple of the Shingon esoteric tradition founded by Jōgon. Jōgon was a critic of the disorder in monastic decorum in his day and promoted strict adherence to the precepts. An account recorded in the Meiji-era *Kōsō no ki* (Record of Auspicious Signs), which survives at Enmeiji, includes the following statements:

In a dream, I saw that I was seated atop a lotus blossom, having acquired all the virtues inwardly and adored by all sentient beings outwardly.

In a dream, when I had hung a sacred image of the founding patriarch, our Great Master [Kūkai], and was practicing the rites that precede a precept ordination, all at once thunder rumbled, I saw Vaiśravaṇa appear above the sacred image, and I awoke.³⁸

The cultivation of auspicious signs in the Shingon Ritsu movement were considered direct acknowledgements by the buddhas of the acceptance of the precepts, and their content differed by institution and individual, but it aligned with the exposition concerning the forty-first minor precept in the *Sūtra of Brahmā's Net*. While signs in dreams are predominant, there are also manifest signs. These sources communicate the actual character of auspicious signs, which could be obtained as confirmation from the buddhas only as the result of purification of mind and body through the conduct of repentance practice. Furthermore, the masters who supervised self-ordinations would determine whether something was a genuine auspicious sign or not. This role was fulfilled by *bhikṣus* who had previously obtained auspicious signs themselves.

38. Quoted in Matsuo Kenji, "Yume no ki no ichi sekai: Kōsō nikki to jisei jukai."

The Necessity of Auspicious Signs in Precept Revival Movements

The fact that multiple Shōmyōji records from the fourteenth through fifteenth centuries provide detailed accounts of attaining auspicious signs as a prerequisite for taking the precepts suggests that a similar system of ordination existed at Gokurakuji. Might this have also been the case for Eison's religious community at Saidaiji and elsewhere during that time? To answer this question, it is first necessary to consider the means by which the precepts were received.

Fujitani explains that in Nara it was mandatory that after one received the threefold pure precepts through a comprehensive ordination (*tsūju*), one would additionally receive all two hundred fifty *bhikṣu* precepts through a separate ordination (*betsuju*). However, in the Kamakura period, after Kakujō and Eison instigated a revival of precepts, the method of accepting the precepts and becoming a *bhikṣu* through comprehensive self-ordination took on an increased significance.³⁹ Specifically, during the precept revival movement of the Kamakura period, Kakujō, Eison, and others held that it would only be possible to become a bodhisattva *bhikṣu* through the comprehensive ordination into the bodhisattva precepts, which are in accordance with the complete monastic precepts outlined in the four-part *vinaya* as the “restraining precepts.”

They conducted complete self-ordinations (*jisei tsūju*) and called themselves bodhisattva *bhikṣus*. However, the method by which they attempted to become *bhikṣus*—through self-ordination—was conducted as an expedient to acquire the status of *bhikṣu*. For this reason, Eison's tradition did not necessarily mandate that all monks conduct self-ordination or obtain auspicious signs. Indeed, Eison told his disciples, “When you have no regard for your position, simply discard your life and limb, and have accepted the precepts for the sake of sentient beings, then you will have not the slightest doubt that you have received them. . . . That being so, all those who have not yet accepted them will truly wish to accomplish this method.” Saying this, he seems also to have recommended self-ordination to a relatively strong degree.⁴⁰

Concerning the superiority of comprehensive versus separate ordinations, Minowa Kenryō has argued that in Eison's community priority was placed upon the comprehensive ordination. As the comprehensive precepts came to be regarded as a distinct way of accepting the precepts, with efficacy across multiple lifetimes, the significance of the traditional separate ordination, which had efficacy only for one lifetime, substantially diminished. Minowa notes that, nine years after their self-ordinations, Eison and Kakujō accepted the precepts through separate

39. Fujitani, “Sangoku bini den ni miru kinsei Shingon Ritsu no tokuchō ni tsuite.”

40. Kōshō Bosatsu Gokyōkai Chōmonshū Kenkyūkai, ed., “Kōshō Bosatsu gokyōkai chōmonshū yakuchū kenkyū,” 42.

ordinations, with the implication of “reconciliation with the traditional mechanism for ordination in the southern capital.” Minowa also analyzes the record of Eison’s transmission of precepts in the first fascicle of the *Gyōjitsu nenpu furoku* (Appendix to the Veritable Chronology of the Deeds [of Eison]) and points out that separate ordinations, in the style of three masters and seven witnesses, were conducted for ordinations of monks and nuns, but that comprehensive ordinations were more common.⁴¹

At its start, the precept revival movement was a community of renunciants (*tonseisō*). It produced its own unique system for accepting the precepts, and it retained the system of accepting ordination from others. However, the earliest historical record of auspicious signs at Shōmyōji is from 1315, twenty-five years after Eison’s death. Thus, we can infer that soon after the death of Eison self-ordination by means of separate ordination, which required the attainment of auspicious signs, was practiced at Gokurakuji. Minowa refers to sources showing that each of the seven divisions of Eison’s congregation received its own precepts and that a single monk might accept the precepts any number of times through multiple types of ordination, such as the receipt of the ten precepts for novices, the bodhisattva precepts via comprehensive ordination, the complete monastic precepts via comprehensive ordination, or the complete monastic precepts via separate ordination.⁴² Taking this into consideration together with the preceding records attributed to Eison, it is possible to conclude that comprehensive ordinations—administered by a quorum of qualified *bhikṣus* as well as through self-ordination—were taking place during Eison’s lifetime. Within Eison’s congregation, there may have been a shift in the method of receiving the precepts.

Due to the circumstances of the Warring States period, there were no longer any precept-abiding monks. However, the formality of ordination ceremonies continued and was maintained at Saidaiji. Once the political situation in Japan became stable in the Edo period, there emerged a movement to revive the precepts. At the start of the precept revival movement in Shingon Ritsu during the early modern period, Myōnin and others conducted complete self-ordinations as comprehensive ordinations in the threefold pure precepts, relying upon the methods of Eison and others of the Kamakura period.⁴³ After that, many *bhikṣus* were ordained through self-ordination at the three training temples for the precepts, which had been

41. Minowa Kenryō, *Chūsei shoki Nanto kairitsu fukkō no kenkyū*, chapter 9, section 4: “Tsūju to betsujū no kankei.”

42. Minowa Kenryō, *Chūsei shoki Nanto kairitsu fukkō no kenkyū*, chapter 9, section 4: “Tsūju to betsujū no kankei.”

43. Myōnin went to Tsushima in 1606 to plan a voyage in search of a formal separate ordination requiring three masters and seven witnesses. Hearing that even in Ming China Buddhism was in decline, he decided not to make the voyage. He later died of illness 1610 while still in Tsushima (*Gensei, Makinōō Byōdō Shinnō’in kōritsu shisō Myōnin Risshi gyōgōki* [1664]).

demarcated and established as monastic quarters open to schools of Buddhism.⁴⁴ As self-ordination required the obtaining of auspicious signs, not only the founders but all the precept monks in these monastic communities would have been able to become *bhikṣus* only when they had repented, removed their attachment to their own viewpoints, and received approval from the buddhas of the purification of their minds and bodies. Implementing this system for ordination, they aimed to revive the precepts. The three training monasteries observed the regulations of the *Vinaya in Four Parts*, particularly according to their interpretation in the Nanshan precept lineage, though the complete acceptance of all the precepts (the two hundred fifty *bhikṣu* precepts) through separate ordination was no longer practiced.

The Influence of Eison in the Early Modern Precept Revival Movement

The early modern precept revival movement initiated by Myōnin and others adopted Eison's method of self-ordination. They were also involved in the copying and editing of accounts of the achievements of Eison, as well as those of other monks who upheld the precepts. Among its collections of sacred texts, Saimyōji Byōdō Shinnōin possesses several Eison-related manuscripts copied by Myōnin, such as Eison's *Gakushōki* (Record of the Study of Orthodoxy),⁴⁵ the *Kōshō Bosatsu gyōjō* (Deeds of Kōshō Bosatsu),⁴⁶ and the *Mahāpratisarā Mahāpratyaṅgirā Dhāraṇī*,⁴⁷ said to have been copied in Eison's own hand. Yachūji also houses such manuscripts, such as the Saimyōji edition of the *Gyōjitsu nenpu* (Veritable Chronology of Deeds)⁴⁸ and of the *Gakushōki*.⁴⁹ In a colophon to the latter, Myōnin records his feeling of joy at "having been able to copy this work by Eison thanks to Yūson at Saidaiji." Thus, it is clear that Eison was revered and taken as a sage for having accomplished the revival of the precepts.

Eison's achievements earned particularly high appraisal in the Ōbaku school, which likewise valued the precepts. The admiration for and influence of Eison in the Ōbaku school, as well as others, is evident from several extant documents. For instance, the *Saidai chokushi Kōshō Bosatsu gyōjitsu nenpu* (Veritable Chronology of Kōshō Bosatsu of the Saidai[ji], Granted His Title by the Court),⁵⁰ which lists the achievements of Eison, was edited over a thirty-year period between 1688 and 1704

44. Fujitani, "Sangoku bini den ni miru kinsei Shingon Ritsu no tokuchō ni tsuite."

45. Saimyōji sacred text 2-4.

46. Saimyōji sacred text 14a.

47. Saimyōji sacred text 15a.

48. Saimyōji sacred text 125-1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

49. Saimyōji sacred text 133. *Kanjin gakushōki* vols. 1-3, dated to 1658.

50. *Saidaiji Eison denki shūsei*.

by the *śramaṇa* Enichibō Jikō of the Jōjūji in Kyoto.⁵¹ Jikō also edited the *Rakusai Hamurosans Jōjūji Kaizans Kōshō Bosatsu gyōjitsu ryakunenpu* (Abbreviated Chronology of Kōshō Bosatsu, Founder of Hamurosans Jōjūji, West of the Capital).⁵² The *Kōshō Bosatsu den* (Biography of Kōshō Bosatsu)⁵³ was compiled by Teiyo of the Pure Land temple Zōjōji based on a work composed in 1300 by the Saidaiji monk Kōtai. In addition to these manuscripts, there are other works written by Ōbaku monks that record the accomplishments of Eison: *Nanto Saidaiji Kōshō Bosatsu den* (The Biography of Kōshō Bosatsu of the Saidaiji in Nara),⁵⁴ *Nanto Saidaiji Eison den* (The Biography of Eison of the Saidaiji in Nara),⁵⁵ and *Washū Saidaiji Shamon Eison den* (The Biography of the Śramaṇa Eison of the Saidaiji in Yamato).⁵⁶

Eison and other Saidaiji monks who undertook the precept revival movement in the Kamakura period were revered for overcoming the limitations imposed upon official monks, having kept the precepts, and having initiated social welfare activities. At the time, Japan was under threat from a Mongol invasion, and these activities also served the function of protecting the nation. Bodhisattva-monks who were renunciants that kept the precepts were relied upon for their esoteric powers, which were undergirded by their observance of the precepts.

The three precept temples, including Yachūji, did not conduct funeral practices. Considering that funeral rites were one of the official functions of temples in the Edo period, one might presume that the viability of the temples was at risk.⁵⁷ However, the maintenance of the precepts tradition was deemed valuable to the shogunate. For instance, Yachūji had no parishioners, but was kept in operation through its landholdings and through contributions, which afforded it the necessary economic stability to focus on practices related to precepts. As a result, the shogunate recognized Yachūji as the head temple of the Ritsu school in 1746. Also, particularly in the early Edo period, Shingon Ritsu monks admitted monks from other lineages and were witnesses to their self-ordinations, which promoted the development of precept revival in other lineages.

51. In the latter Kamakura period, Jōjūji was a branch temple of Saidaiji. In the early Edo period, it became an Ōbaku temple. As sources concerning Jikō do not survive, the details of his life are unclear. See Matsuo Kenji, “Hamuro Jōjūji kō,” *Yamagata Daigaku rekishi, chiri, jinruigaku ronshū* (2007).

52. Held by the Imperial Palace Agency.

53. *Gunsho ruijū*, vol. 69.

54. See vol. 12 of the *Ritsuon sōbō den*, a collection of biographies of Ritsu monks edited in 1689 by Kaizans Eken, the reviver of the An'yōin in Ōmi.

55. This is included in the tenth volume of the *Tōgoku kōsō den*, a collection of biographies of monks edited in 1688 by Kōsen Seiton, an Ōbaku monk.

56. This is included in the fifty-ninth volume of *Honchō kōsō den*, edited in 1702 by the Rinzai monk Mangenshō Shibanshō.

57. “Honzan Yachū Ritsuji rinban kiyaku narabi ni shien no roku”; document 1-10-1 among the sacred documents held by the Yachūji.

Conclusion

The attainment of auspicious signs—that is, the approval by the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the acceptance of the precepts—was required in the self-ordination tradition of the early modern Shingon Ritsu school. This system, in which a practitioner obtained auspicious signs as proof of approval from a sacred being prior to receiving the precepts, rippled out into other schools and lineages. An examination of sources on the cultivation of auspicious signs as practiced at Shingon Ritsu temples demonstrates that monks who aspired to maintain the precepts were willing to revive even the most austere practices that had fallen into abeyance.

Based on extant sources, it is clear that, while the content of the auspicious signs varied by monastery and by individual, in essence they were in line with accounts in the *Sūtra of Brahmā's Net*. These acknowledgements by sacred beings signified that beings of superior realms, such as the buddhas and bodhisattvas, recognized that the practitioner had been able to extirpate attachment to his own viewpoints. For this reason, obtaining auspicious signs would deeply motivate the practitioner to obtain and observe the precepts.

Self-ordination and its antecedent practice of cultivating auspicious signs fell into decline at nearly all monasteries after the late nineteenth century. The establishment of a rationalist, modern educational system may have played a part in this decline, as well as a general loss of belief in the power of such miraculous signs. However, the cultivation of auspicious signs has continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, even if only very rarely at temples such as Yachūji or Enmeiji where monks with the lofty aspiration to keep alive the precept tradition have maintained such practices. For instance, self-ordinations at Yachūji declined after the late nineteenth century, but in 2000 the current abbot revived this tradition based on historical sources. Furthermore, the cultivation of auspicious signs is practiced in the Tendai school. The ideal of wholeheartedly repenting before the buddhas and bodhisattvas and of receiving their approval to accept the precepts lives on today.

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