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## Buddhist Temple Networks in Medieval Japan

### Daigoji, Mt. Kōya, and the Miwa Lineage

The intellectual links between medieval esoteric temples and localized Shin-gon movements are still far from being well understood. Although a part of education at major monastic complexes such as Daigoji and Mt. Kōya, transmissions of esoteric theories were not uniform and varied depending on their recipients' social status. A comparative reading of the *Yugikyō* transmissions imparted by the abbot Jikken of Kongōōin to his official disciple Dōhan and a lesser-known semi-itinerant priest, Rendōbō Hōkyō, from a local training hall at Mt. Miwa in Nara Prefecture shows that during the late twelfth to fourteenth centuries non-elite practitioners in medieval Japan, such as those associated with the local Miwa lineage, did not simply study the *Yugikyō* teachings but were actively involved in their dissemination. They used theories associated with this sutra as key parts of their own religious capital and transported them from large esoteric temples further afield to Japan's countryside.

KEYWORDS: esoteric Buddhism—temple networks—Daigoji—Mt. Kōya—*Yugikyō*—Miwa lineage

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THROUGHOUT the twentieth century, Japan's medieval history was framed and explored in terms of contrasting dichotomies: imperial court versus military government, Heian capital versus Kamakura, or elite versus popular. While some of these categories may hold for a while longer, increasing access to primary sources has prompted investigations into the finer complexities of Japanese history, namely, the constantly shifting relationships between medieval centers and peripheries (ADOLPHSON et al. 2007), and the impact of these shifts on Japan's religious forms of expression. New categories of analysis emerging from social and cultural theoretical works also challenge earlier dualistic modes of thinking: the twenty-first-century studies of the history of Japanese religions and culture talk increasingly about the networks of previously overlooked mediators (LATOUR 2008; ADOLPHSON 2007; 2012; LOWE 2017) and deities (FAURE 2016a), hidden histories (BIALOCK 2007), and the uses of conceptual metaphor (SLINGERLAND 2004; FAURE 2016a; 2016b). The impact on Japanese religiosity of people, ideas, and objects, which are constantly on the move, or are in a state of disassembling, breaking up, and disappearing also invites increasing challenges and interests (REINDERS and RAMBELLI 2012). The same goes for traditional interpretations of Japanese medieval modes and models of power, particularly empowerment as a process (DOLCE and MATSUMOTO 2010; CONLAN 2011).

This article focuses on little-studied intellectual links between the renowned figures within the Daigoji 醍醐寺 monastic complex in the vicinity of the Heian capital and localized Shingon movements engendered by historically less visible, non-elite practitioners who brought esoteric Buddhist teachings (*mikkyō* 密教) to Japan's countryside during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. One such case is a personal teacher-student relationship between a high-ranking cleric associated with the Daigoji sub-temple Kongōin 金剛王院 and a practitioner linked to a group of semi-itinerant priests and ascetics active around Mt. Miwa 三輪 in Nara Prefecture (the so-called Miwa lineage). This relationship, which in certain aspects must have been typical for medieval temple milieu, has recently

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become apparent through modern studies of medieval Shinto at Miwa (ANDREEVA 2017c) and the spread of esoteric teachings loosely linked to the *Yugikyō*, a sutra that became prominent via a variety of media during the late twelfth to fourteenth centuries (ITŌ 2003; DOLCE 2006–2007; 2010; 2016; OGAWA 2014). Non-elite practitioners in medieval Japan, such as those from Miwa, did not simply study the *Yugikyō* teachings, but were actively involved in their dissemination. They used this sutra and theories associated with it as key parts of their own religious capital: through the efforts of these otherwise little-noticed historical actors, the *Yugikyō* theories were exchanged, commented upon, and transported from large esoteric temples further afield to Japan's countryside.

To clarify the significance of these actors and their movements, it is necessary to address both the official and unofficial temple networks in medieval Japan, with a special emphasis on the processes of education and learning at large esoteric temple complexes, such as Daigoji and Mt. Kōya 高野. Then, the position and actions of non-elite esoteric practitioners who actively sought to enhance their social and religious status through intensive periods of study at such temples can be more easily understood.<sup>1</sup>

Our primary example will involve the Daigoji abbot Jikken 実賢 (1176–1249), who resided at Kōgōin during his early monastic career. Jikken's writings reveal several notions linked to medieval Japanese discourses on the *Yugikyō* that he may have passed on to his disciples. One was Dōhan 道範 (1178–1252), Jikken's designated transmission heir, favored for his scholastic knowledge. Another was Rendōbō Hōkyō 蓮道房宝篋 (ca. 1235),<sup>2</sup> an otherwise little-known priest who would later become a leading figure of the local Miwa lineage. To elucidate some undercurrents in Daigoji's esoteric thought, particularly the transmissions on the *Yugikyō*, the writings of one of Jikken's earlier precursors as a Daigoji abbot, Jitsuun 実運 (1105–1160), will be briefly considered for the purpose of a better comparison over a long time span. The case of Rendōbō Hōkyō from Miwa who, together with Dōhan, succeeded in receiving certain (but possibly partial) transmissions on the *Yugikyō* from Jikken will show that within medieval Japanese temples the non-elite, less socially advantaged practitioners had considerable access to important esoteric theories, ritual texts, and doctrines, although with certain limitations. This case study will further confirm a point that is already gaining recognition in the field of medieval Japanese religions, namely, that the Daigoji clerics were involved in disseminating the *Yugikyō* and

1. Much of what is known about such practitioners often comes from critical, at times even biased, descriptions written by esoteric clerics and scholarly figures at a later date. This issue must be taken into consideration in order to overcome the imbalances in these subsequent descriptions.

2. On the basis of his study of Shinjō's 心定 (b. 1215) *Juhō yōjinshū*, Iyanaga gives Rendōbō's dates as 1189 [or 1187] to some date after 1233 (IYANAGA 2006, 220).

other esoteric teachings, including, I argue, to the so-called “countryside priests” (ITŌ 2003; IYANAGA 2006, 212–213, 216; ABE 2006–2007, 98–102; DOLCE 2010, 193–195; 2016, 293–297). Even though Rendōbō was criticized by later Shingon figures for allegedly spreading “perverse teachings” (*jakyō* 邪教) or misinterpreting the doctrines of esoteric Buddhism, the teachings that could be marked as “perverse” during the late fourteenth century had been historically transmitted by the higher echelons of the Daigoji clerical milieu since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

### *Situating Buddhist Temple Networks in Medieval Japanese History*

Thus far, the histories of Japan’s largest medieval Buddhist temples, such as Tōdaiji 東大寺, Enryakuji 延暦寺, and Kōfukuji 興福寺, have been approached through the concept of *kenmon* 権門, or the so-called “gates of power,” based on Kuroda Toshio’s theory (PIGGOTT 1982; McMULLIN 1987; KURODA 1996a; 1996b; GRAPARD 1992, 106–111, 125–137; 1998; ADOLPHSON 2000). These temples built extensive administrative and economic networks spanning both the capital and countryside. Earlier Japanese historical scholarship had focused on the official temple networks, namely, those expressed through “head-subordinate temple” (*honmatsuji* 本末寺) relations. Such networks were particularly discernible—administratively, politically, and economically—throughout central Japan. Recent investigations have begun to cast more light on the temple networks that also extended beyond the central Yamato region (BATTEN 2006; ADOLPHSON et al. 2007; ADOLPHSON 2012). On the one hand, a temple’s prestige could be constructed and strengthened through blood ties of their chief clerics to each other and Japan’s elite circles, including the imperial house, leading aristocratic families, or military rulers. Throughout the medieval period, long-established elite temple lineages, especially those specializing in esoteric teachings, acted as major providers of technologies of ritual and symbolic legitimation and empowerment to the emperor, the court, and military clans. For example, one of the key issues in Japanese medieval conceptions of rulership was the ability of Shingon and Tendai clerics to come up with new modifications of esoteric rites, focusing on powerful deities and channeling their efficacies, thus providing the desired support to the elite, in times of both conflict and calm (RUPPERT 2000; MATSUMOTO 2005; CONLAN 2011).

On the other hand, *kenmon* temple networks radiating from a head temple emerged through the securing of lands and wealth donated as gifts, largely in return for divine protection and ritual services or through absorbing property as a result of administrative, economic, or even clandestine takeover. In this way, a few major temples came to own vast estates; through expanding their base and increasing their supporters’ numbers, at times of necessity *kenmon*

temples could summon considerable military might. This ownership interfered constantly in the political and economic affairs of medieval Japan (McMULLIN 1987; FRIDAY 1992; ADOLPHSON 2000; 2007). Pilgrimage was another way for the temples and sacred sites associated with them to “develop into a culturally significant landscape” (BLAIR 2015, 4).

However, the full range of *kenmon* temples’ economic, administrative, and religious activities—even within their own official estate networks—is far from being sufficiently clear (BAUER 2011). Further consideration is due on the historical impact of the unofficial, personal contacts between the high-ranking clerics residing at *kenmon* temples and their disciple networks, which resulted in the transmissions of certain teachings from temples’ scholastic study seminars to a variety of local contexts, often without building the official institutional ties. Such individual, teacher-centered networks involved both the clerics’ designated pupils who were personally selected and officially approved to study and further transmit important scholastic theories and “trademark” ritual knowledge of a particular lineage. Less privileged followers also participated in the religious study and transmission of such knowledge, and yet remained on the sidelines of official temple hierarchies. Although such outsiders were less socially advantaged within a given temple milieu, some of them nevertheless succeeded in receiving at least partial ritual transmissions of secret esoteric teachings and went on to form their own ritual study and practice groups, which during the medieval period came to proliferate in the countryside and mountain temples, or private Buddhist facilities (*betsuin* 別院; *bessho* 別所) (ADOLPHSON 2007; 2012; ANDREEVA 2017c, 105–140).

As medieval Japan studies progress, Buddhist sources and historical documents preserved in Japanese temple archives reveal a more nuanced picture of historical transitions and tensions between different modes of religious knowledge production and empowerment. Scholars of Japanese Buddhism have noted that the Insei 院政 period (1086–1192) and its aftermath were marked by an increasing privatization of land and power by different factions within Japan’s social elites and by a fragmentation of Buddhist temple lineages that created an excessively complicated lineage-specific ritual performance. Jacqueline Stone, for instance, has stated that “knowledge, as well as land, wealth, and political power, was becoming privatized” (STONE 1999, 108). For example, the many varieties of the ritualized worship of relics in medieval Japan illustrate such conditions well (RUPPERT 2000). What did esoteric knowledge radiating from the established temples and prestigious clerical or scholarly figures within them actually mean? How was it understood, especially by the disciples learning it, and how did it affect the local religious contexts to which these disciples had moved on to, after completing their studies?

Fabio Rambelli has shown that the process of education and esoteric knowledge transmission at Shingon temples could last months or decades, if one were to follow several teachers at different temples in a bid to constantly update and broaden the grasp of esoteric teachings and rituals. In particular, he has noted:

The education of monks was finely tuned according to the class background and the specific hierarchical rank, position, and duties of each student.... Education consisted of listening to the lectures of scholar-monks for three months followed by an individual study period of three months, and at the end of these six months the student would receive the consecration (*kanjō* 灌頂) by an esoteric Buddhist master (*ajari* 阿闍梨).... Esoteric knowledge was transmitted... in a number of separate transmission steps.... Because of the nature of such knowledge, not everyone was entitled to receive it.... Performed at the end of a specific training... consecration rituals functioned as devices to control the meaning of and limit access to knowledge; they were also a means to control legitimacy. (RAMBELLI 2006, 116–117)

Indeed, the social standing of students mattered. Medieval sources show that practitioners could pursue a sojourn and study at esoteric Buddhist temples such as the Tendai temples of Mt. Hiei 比叡 and Onjōji 園城寺 or the Shingon temples of Daigoji and Mt. Kōya. However, not all of them could easily gain access to their teacher of choice or be accepted by the highest echelons of clergy. Elite masters were in a position to decide on a personalized curriculum of study and supervise students' progress over the months or years. In fact, finding a qualified or famous teacher and securing their agreement to join their study group was far from being guaranteed a position in the lineage. The question of legitimacy mattered as well. On the one hand, the prestige of an esoteric teacher (at least posthumously) rested on a number of noble or talented students who went on to forge successful careers at his or other temples. But, on the other hand, a cleric in a position of such privilege would have to be careful and discerning as to whom exactly he could select to become his rightful successor in terms of the temple's most valued intangible property: a particular set of esoteric teachings and rituals, a special "know-how" of a given lineage tradition.

### *Non-elite Practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism in Medieval Japan*

The splitting and multiplication of temple lineages and fragmentation of esoteric knowledge occurring within the esoteric milieu during the Insei and Kamakura (1185–1333) periods were promptly noted by medieval Buddhist observers and commentators. One of them, the scholar-monk Raiyu 頼瑜 (1226–1304), played a key role in configuring the "new meaning" of Shingon doctrine (Shingi Shingon 新義真言) at Mt. Kōya and Negoroji 根来寺. Writing during the second half

of the thirteenth century, he noted that within the Ono 小野 branch of Shingon there proliferated multiple transmissions on major esoteric scriptures and powerful esoteric deities, including the *Yugikyō* and its central divinity Aizen Myōō 愛染明王. In a collection of notes, *Usuzōshi kuketsu*, recorded after the exchanges with his own teacher Kenjin 憲深 (1192–1263), Raiyu traced the various *Yugikyō* theories that were produced during the latter part of the Heian period (794–1185) by the Ono branch founder and other renowned figures: Ningai 仁海 (ca. 951–1046) and two disciples of his follower Seison 成尊 (1012–1074), the Daigoji cleric Gihan 義範 (1023–1088), and his rival Hanjun 範俊 (1038–1112).<sup>3</sup> Consequently, an increasing number of exegetic theories about the deity's main attributes, its manifestations, and Sanskrit syllables associated with it occurring in the context of different variations of the Aizen rite led to a situation in which, in Raiyu's words, "various teachers each had a different explanation" (T 2535, 79.264b2–3).<sup>4</sup> In particular, he noted that some specific theories, such as the "deeply secret transmission" (*jinpi no den* 深秘之伝) about two Sanskrit syllables constituting a symbolic form of the so-called "human vajra" (*ningyō sho* 人形杵; DOLCE 2016), its appearance, meaning, and the mudra associated with it, had no origin in the mainstream esoteric sutras, but rather in Japan's very own local interpretations. Most importantly, some of these theories were spread not only by renowned masters from esoteric *kenmon* temples, but also by local priests, semi-itinerant ascetics, and other low-ranking religious specialists:

Question: From which sutra or ritual manual does the meaning of the "human vajra" come from?

Answer: The august oral transmission says that this theory is not in the correct [mainstream] sutras and ritual manuals. It comes from the deeply secret Raga rite,<sup>5</sup> found in the writings of previous Japanese masters. On this phenomenon, [Kenjin] said that this deity's [Aizen] mudra and mantra derive from the *Yugikyō*, but apart from the three mudras, three mantras, and mudra and mantra on the five kinds of association, many of these theories were manufactured by the countryside Shingon priests (*inaka shingonshi* 田舎真言師) and their ilk. These theories are plagiarized and fake, and must not be trusted. I said: "The theories deriving from sutras and ritual manuals are the ones [propagated] by the

3. Kenjin was appointed as the abbot of Daigoji in 1253 and the founder of the Hōon'in 報恩院 lineage, which also belonged to the Ono branch of Shingon (RUPPERT 2000, 350). Both Gihan and Hanjun strove for the Ono branch leadership after the death of Seison; Hanjun performed the Aizen rite for Emperor Shirakawa 白河 (1053–1129) (RUPPERT 2000, 332–333).

4. In this case, Raiyu seems to imply that the reasons for this fragmenting of ritual knowledge were somehow inherent in the scripture and practices associated with it.

5. In Raiyu's work, the ritual's title is written with two Sanskrit syllables (*ra* and *ga*), which were also used to signify Rāgaraja, the alias of Aizen Myōō (GOEPPER 1993). Here it denotes the Aizen ritual.



seminars at large metropolitan temples (*toe dan setsu* 都会壇説). Because they are the only ones who know this deity's secret mudras and mantras and all the secret altar [that is, lineage-specific] transmissions, multiple teachers orally instruct many disciples face-to-face and [allow them to] transmit these teachings further; that is the sign of our times!" (T 2535, 79.264b24-c4)

Raiyu's teacher Kenjin was active at Daigoji between 1214 and 1263 and during his career had more than fifty disciples. In the quote above, he draws attention to the fact that already in the first half of the thirteenth century esoteric knowledge (in this case, the *Yugikyō* and additional theories associated with it) was accessible to non-elite practitioners of esoteric Buddhism. In 1268, the priest Shinjō 心定 (b. 1215), knowledgeable about medieval Japan's esoteric culture, expressed a similar sentiment (IYANAGA 2006, 210–211). Decades later, Kōshū 光宗 (1276–1350), the compiler of the Tendai encyclopedia *Keiran shūyōshū*, lamented that “the meaning of esoteric teachings is dumbed down and thinly [spread] on the ground for the mundane folk.” He queried if it was indeed possible for them to obtain the “subtle enlightenment” within a certain temple's study group, noting that even within Tōji 東寺, a major *kenmon* temple of the Shingon school in Kyoto, the clerics descending from the Fujiwara nobles could not do so. However, Kōshū then remarked that a certain abbot Jikken of Daigoji was able to accomplish this task (T 2410, 76.833c3–7).<sup>6</sup>

It seems apparent that on the one hand, esoteric experts residing at *kenmon* temples were keen on attracting many disciples, perhaps also for economic reasons.<sup>7</sup> But on the other hand, the unrestrained spread of esoteric teachings and the more recent theories that closely resembled them were a result of further creative reformulation by the less-tightly-controlled practitioners—those residing in the countryside, unhindered by formal temple relations, and highly mobile. This must have presented a problem for the legitimacy of esoteric teachings and reputation of the *kenmon* temples themselves (IYANAGA 2006, 213–214; 2010).

In 1375, a supporter of the “proper,” thoroughly legitimate esoteric teachings, the Kōya scholar-monk Yūkai 宥快 (1345–1416), came down as particularly zealous in his criticism of the movements he deemed to be on the margins of, or even outside of, the precisely scholarly field of esoteric Buddhism. This was evident from his treatise *Hōkyōshō* (VANDEN BROUCKE 1992; IYANAGA 2006; ANDREEVA 2017c, 132–135). Yūkai also left other accounts, in which he gave further indications of what he may have considered to be historical reasons for the blurring

6. For more on Kōshū and the *Keiran shūyōshū*, see Yeonjoo PARK's (2020) contribution to this special issue.

7. One could press this understudied point further and ask how these possible economic aspects of the teacher-disciple relationship were handled at medieval Japanese temples. I leave it to future studies.



of lines between legitimate esoteric teachings and those that were replete with “perverse meanings” (*jagi* 邪義) (MORIYAMA 1965; MANABE 2002; RINZAN 2006; IYANAGA 2011; DOLCE 2016). The latter were to be considered suspicious and treated with caution, if not rejected altogether. In the *Chūinryū daiji kikigaki*, an account of esoteric oral transmissions encountered at Mt. Kōya since the late eleventh century, Yūkai states:

The invention of additional styles (*kayō no sata* 加様之沙汰) are the dharmalineages’ [own] exclusive secret essentials. The countryside Shingon practitioners and people from side lineages (*bōryū no hito* 傍流之人) will not even know such topics. This can be seen from the several oral instructions by Saiin’s 西院 precept master Ukyō 宏教. Again, even among the various lineages of the Ono branch of Shingon, such specific items are due to [the lineage’s own] ideas. [Due to excessive details,] they must be learned really well.... There are also slightly different “seals of trust” on the *Susiddhi* at Tōji, that mix up various lines of transmission like a bundle of cotton.... The Chūin lineage at Mt. Kōya [also] has a bit of “perverse teachings” mixed in. Some say that various separate places still privilege the old transmissions. However, none of those [enjoy] divine protection. These days, haven’t these [transmissions] been largely redacted, and the perverse lineages discontinued?

(T 2506, 78.911a26–b1, b7–8, c20–22)

Here, Yūkai seems to indicate that it is the *kenmon* esoteric temples, like Tōji, and sub-temple lineages, like those at Mt. Kōya, that were instrumental in producing the excessive ritual details, manuals, and interpretations that overflowed the intellectual and ritual field of medieval Japan. As shown before, his earlier counterpart Raiyu placed the responsibility for the mushrooming of such extra-curricular activities on the less literate practitioners. However, it very well may have been that by the fourteenth century the situation had changed (or Raiyu was not able to admit these facts frankly enough earlier), and the influential *kenmon* temples had reabsorbed the so-called “perverse” teachings into their own intellectual and ritual domains. The exact historical and epistemic reasons for this still remain to be explored.

And yet, what role did the so-called “countryside Shingon priests” play in this complicated historical context? Is it possible to recover the kinds of ideas that they had inherited from their renowned temple mentors? The significance and yet a somewhat under-appreciated role of non-elite Buddhist practitioners and local institutions in the construction of discourses used and fostered further by the elite Buddhist temples has already been noted (HORI 1958; GORAI 2011). Itinerant holy men (*shōnin* 上人; *hijiri* 聖)—some of them affiliated with large monastic complexes, some only temporarily so—mixed with a variety of religious agents, many of whom were also low-ranking, like the *dōshū* 堂衆 of Kōfukuji

(ADOLPHSON 2012) or the priests from Kinpusen (BLAIR 2015). They dwelled in semi-permanent seclusion at sacred sites or private religious facilities, traversed both the “centers and peripheries” of medieval Japan, and invented new icons and rituals that linked the distant divinities and complex notions of esoteric Buddhism with familiar local contexts and sacred landscapes of medieval Japan. With time, their unorthodox, “inverted” models of symbolic rulership became incorporated and used by imperial Buddhist temples in late medieval Japan (ANDREEVA 2017c, 105–140, 217–255). Like their counterparts residing at *kenmon* temples, many of these men were aware of medieval tantric ideas of embryology used to achieve the ultimate state of enlightenment and a status of the divine king that helped the very same non-elite practitioners to obtain power over Japan’s ancient cultic sites enshrining prehistoric rulers (ITŌ 2003; DOLCE 2010; 2016; OGAWA 2014; ANDREEVA 2016). These new findings suggest yet again that the agency of Buddhist temples and their role in medieval Japanese history must continue to be rigorously considered, this time acknowledging that both the Buddhist *kenmon* temples and far less institutionally-bound local private facilities were the hubs of knowledge production, and not only of the ritual kind but also of the medical and technological kind (GOBLE 2011; ANDREEVA 2017b).

### *Daigoji Abbot, Jikken*

One of Daigoji’s high-ranking clerics, Jikken, mentioned several times above, deserves special attention. Not only was he a prominent figure in medieval esoteric temple milieu, but his influence in the form of teachings that he imparted to his disciples extended seemingly far beyond the premises of Daigoji and its subtemples, Sanbōin 三宝院 and Kongōōin, where he came to occupy leading posts.

The boy that went on to become a high-ranking cleric was born into a privileged aristocratic family of the Fujiwara. Jikken’s grandfather Yorisuke 頼輔 (1112–1186) was himself a grandson of the regent Fujiwara no Morozane 藤原師実 (1042–1101); he served as a secretary to the Retired Emperor Go Shirakawa 後白河 (1127–1192). Jikken’s father Motosuke 基輔 (d. 1185) had links to the Minamoto 源 clan through his mother. He was an official of the royal court stables and a close retainer of another prominent court figure and political advisor, Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実 (1149–1207). While still in his early twenties, Jikken received his first “dharma transmission” from the Sanbōin master Shōken 勝賢 (1138–1196), thus formally entering the ranks of esoteric priesthood.<sup>8</sup> A few years later, he formally entered Kongōōin, where his own education took the most formative stage and where he eventually climbed to the position of leadership. Some sources suggest that he acquired an additional study experience on Mt. Kōya and separately,

8. That was the year of 1197 when Kujō Kanezane was dismissed from his position of power as the chief advisor to the emperor (*kanpaku* 関白).

with a former Kōfukuji scholar-monk, who specialized in the study of Hossō, even receiving some “secret instructions” (*hiketsu* 秘決) from him during a brief sojourn at a village near Mt. Katsuragi. Indeed, in medieval Shingon commentaries, Jikken is rarely mentioned by name, but instead is called “the grand abbot of Kongōōin” (Kongōōin *daisōjō* 金剛王院大僧正). In 1236–1238, Jikken was appointed the head of Daigoji and also the chief (*chōja* 長者) of Tōji, thus acquiring an elevated position within the two most prestigious esoteric temples with historic imperial connections (MDJ, 983).

These high office appointments and his own privileged background undoubtedly provided Jikken with opportunities to lead important ritual ceremonies requested by the imperial court and elite aristocratic families. In the winter of 1240, Jikken performed an esoteric rite dedicated to the wrathful deity Aizen Myōō “as it was performed by the Buddha” (*nyohō aizenhō* 如法愛染法). This was a highly exclusive rite performed only for the benefit of royal clients; however, it seems that Jikken performed it at one of the Kujō family mansions situated on the Ichijō avenue, possibly that of Kujō Michiie 九条道家 (1193–1252), Kanezane’s grandson.<sup>9</sup>

In the summer of the same year, Jikken was requested to perform the ritual of “praying for the rain” (*shōukyōhō* 請雨經法) at the Shinsen’en 神泉苑, the royal palace garden. This rite, too, was of a high significance, as its performance history was deeply entrenched in the demonstrations of state power over the climate as well as the political and economic welfare of the people. On that particular occasion, there was a display of a “miraculous sign” (*gen* 驗), and the ritual efficacy of Jikken’s esoteric performance was considered to be of the highest caliber. A rare map of the Shinsen’en said to record Jikken’s procedures of 1240 (and again in 1244) is preserved in the Nara National Museum. Copied at Saidaiji in 1279, most plausibly at the request of the Saidaiji leader, the Shingon Ritsu monk Eizon 叡尊 (1201–1290), this map depicts the garden pond with a small island rising in the middle of it. The map also shows a temporary structure where this rite was performed, thirteen poles with streamers, and the rite’s principle image; there are explanatory notes in red and black, positioned throughout the map. In medieval Japan the knowledge of such procedures had to be documented as precisely as possible, reflecting important precedents. It is telling that Jikken’s 1240 rain-making rite became such an example.<sup>10</sup> Following these impressive displays of ritual power, in 1247 the seventy-two-year-old Jikken was appointed as personal

9. Michiie was a son of Fujiwara no Yoshitsune 良経 (1169–1206; Emperor Go Toba’s prime minister) and a niece of Minamoto no Yoritomo 頼朝 (1147–1199; the first Kamakura shogun). Like his grandfather Kanezane, Michiie, with his ample familial and political links to the Kamakura Bakufu, was a regent to the ruling emperor.

10. Jikken also performed esoteric rites during the solar eclipse of 1246 (MDJ, 983).

protector-monk (*gojisō* 御持僧) to the ruling emperor and scored yet another high office at Tōji (MDJ, 938).

Not only the emperors and stately lands benefited from Jikken's mastery of esoteric rites. Aristocratic families in the capital requested that he perform prayers for safe pregnancy and childbirth for several imperial consorts. These rituals fused Indian, Central Asian, Chinese, and Japanese Buddhist divinities and local deities. On the one hand, these rituals experimented with acculturation and assemblage of preexisting religious concepts and practices to suit the immediate needs of the court as well as methodologies of risk alleviation, and, on the other, they were designed to protect noble women's bodies, conform their pregnancies to the Buddhist notions of time, and provide a platform for ensuring the continuation of Japan's imperial lineage. The ritual program for safe pregnancy and childbirth (as opposed to individual rites for the same purpose) seems to have fully emerged in the early twelfth century.<sup>11</sup> The court protocols known as *Osan oinori mokuroku*, documenting births given by the imperial consorts and daughters of the aristocracy between 1119 and 1337, provide ample details as to which rituals were performed, in what sequence, and by whom. The programs themselves varied slightly on different occasions, but here is a concise example:

The second year of Daiji 大治 (1127), ninth month. Prayers for the labor of the royal consort Taikenmon'in 待賢門院 (Fujiwara no Shōshi 璋子, 1101–1145). The birth of Retired Emperor Go Shirakawa.

The *Peacock Sūtra*: Prince Omuro of Ninnaji. Prolonging life. Seven Medicine Master Buddhas. Holy Kannon: provisional abbot Shōkaku.

The Five Altars, two sets.

The Pole Star, seven altars.

Six Syllable [Kannon], six altars.

King Aizen, two altars. Worthy Star King (Sonshōō 尊星王). Worthy of Victory (Sonshō 尊勝). Aizen fire ritual: provisional abbot.

Offerings.

King Aizen: [the rite performed by] Prince Omuro of Ninnaji. Kariteimo 訶利底母. Nyoirin 如意輪 [Kannon]. The star deity Keito 計都. Enmaten 閻魔天, the king of hell. The star deity Rago 羅睺. (ZGR 33: 474)

It is notable that during the Insei period the royal childbirth rituals included the Aizen rites (KOJIMA 1998). The record from 1119 detailing the labor of Taikenmon'in and birth of Emperor Sutoku 崇徳 (1119–1164) might be the earliest one. The example above briefly describes what was done when she gave birth to Go Shirakawa, another ruler-to-be. The court protocols show that such rituals were entrusted only to noble esoteric clerics related to the imperial house

11. For a comparable court protocol of ritual actions sponsored during an imperial consort's labor by aristocratic families and the court dating from 1178–1181, see ANDREEVA (2017a).

by blood (in this particular case, Prince Omuro of Ninnaji). Jikken's aforementioned performance of the Aizen rite in 1240 may have also been linked to such an occasion.

In 1247, during the reign of child Emperor Go Fukakusa 後深草 (1243–1304), when it became clear that the consort (*chūgū* 中宮) of the Retired Emperor Go Saga 後嵯峨 (1220–1272), Ōmiyain 大宮院 (Saionji Kitsushi 西園寺姑子, 1225–1292), was pregnant, Jikken was again invited to conduct this particular rite. This was mostly due to his own noble background and high-ranking clerical position within two major *kenmon* esoteric temples, but also because he was already known for its performance. The rite was sponsored by Ōmiyain's father and the then prime minister, Saionji Saneuji 西園寺実氏 (1194–1269). Such invitations were politically desired by both parties; patrons employed the clerics' ritual skills for minimizing mortal risks for their pregnant daughters, while the rites gave an increased visibility to Buddhist clerics, exposing them to the direct attention of the patrons.<sup>12</sup> The 1247 prayers were only partially successful; the royal birth was peaceful, but instead of a boy there appeared a baby girl. However, two years later, Jikken's mastery was finally rewarded, and Ōmiyain gave birth to the crown prince and Go Saga's son Tsunehito, who would become Emperor Kameyama 亀山 (1249–1305).

The centerpiece of the said ritual, Aizen Myōō, was an extremely important deity. Japanese aristocracy coveted Aizen Myōō's esoteric powers as it promised overwhelming love and respect from others, defeat of one's enemies, and increasing various fortunes in the present life. Several manifestations of this deity were described in the *Yugikyō* (GOEPFER 1993; DOLCE 2010; OGAWA 2014; IYANAGA 2016). Due to its powers of cutting delusions rooted in desire and activating the seeds of enlightenment hidden within physical bodies, Aizen was invoked in esoteric rites covering all contexts of elite life. Recognized as an authoritative performer of a particular modification of the Aizen rite, Jikken was no doubt well acquainted with the contents of the *Yugikyō* and medieval interpretations of it produced by esoteric scholar-monks within Daigoji and Mt. Kōya.

Despite such prominence, it is rather unfortunate that only a few written documents authored personally by Jikken have survived. Although mentioned posthumously in compendiums penned by esoteric clerics, his figure still remains a remote silhouette in the intellectual landscape of Japan's medieval Buddhist milieu. One of the rarities attributed directly to him (via oral instructions [*kuden* 口伝] recorded by his disciples) is a short text detailing preparations for the initial stages of esoteric training, *Jūhachidō kegyō sahō*, as practiced at the major sub-temple

12. The clerics involved were granted gifts from the ruling emperor and the consort's family (ANDREEVA 2017a).

Sanbōin. In this short record, Jikken laid out basic requirements for aspiring students who planned to undertake their first steps in esoteric practice.

In general, the monks wishing to study Shingon at first amicably follow the school. They devote themselves to their karma [follow a vegetarian diet], do not favor military valor, and do not attach swords to their belts. They constantly adhere to the practice of chanting sutras and wearing monastic robes. Chanting and reading sutras incessantly accumulates merit and produces deep aversion to the seven transgressions of body and speech. They diligently study various exoteric and esoteric teachings (*kenmitsu shogyō* 顯密諸教), strengthen their faith, and deepen their wisdom. Precisely such people are up to the task: [those who] uphold the precepts, practice meditation, and adhere to the teacher-disciple transmissions (*shishi sō* 師資相)...

Although it is the midst of the latter days [of the Buddhist Dharma] and the Buddhist rituals are no longer as efficient as befit to the monks and taught by the Buddha, actions such as indulging in alcohol, consuming five bitter [herbs], eating meat, playing string instruments,<sup>13</sup> or gambling and games should be prohibited and rejected by those who seek divine protection. There are detailed records in the commentaries by previous teachers to that effect, composed of quotations from many scriptures. (SZ 23: 73)

This record provides fairly straightforward details on certain stipulations and monastic discipline that the Shingon novices were generally expected to uphold, while undertaking specialized education at esoteric temples (RAMBELLI 2006). One could further assume that this record was based on Jikken's own experience of initial training at Daigoji, but also that it outlined the standard expectations and admonitions posed to his own students, some of whom, if successful in their initial steps, would also be taught and initiated by him into the deeper layers of esoteric Buddhist teachings.

And indeed, the deeper, more complex issues of esoteric doctrines, not in the least those contained in the *Yugikyō*, must have been transmitted by Jikken to his disciples during the 1220s–1240s, when he had already finished his own advanced training and enjoyed a high position both within Kongōōin and Daigoji. Such transmissions were recorded by Dōhan, who studied with Jikken at Kongōōin as early as 1218 and also served as his personal scribe at court at least on one occasion before Jikken's death in 1249.<sup>14</sup> Given Dōhan's subsequent career

13. The record further notes that a Buddhist monk could play string instruments for his own enjoyment, but only when alone and definitely not during banquets or when entertaining guests.

14. After a period of study in the capital, Dōhan returned to Mt. Kōya in 1234, but later in 1243 he was exiled to Sanuki 讃岐 in Shikoku. This was the aftermath of a drastic division between the Kōya temples Kongōbuji 金剛峰寺 and Daidenbōin 大伝法院 founded by Kakuban 覚鑿 (1095–1143), which resulted in a group of Kakuban's followers moving to Mt. Negoro 根来. Dōhan spent seven years in exile and was not able to return to Mt. Kōya until Jikken died in 1249.

at both Mt. Kōya and elsewhere (despite years of exile following the conflict at Mt. Kōya) and his closeness to the aging “Grand Abbot of Kongōōin,” it appears that Dōhan was one of Jikken’s favored disciples: perhaps, one of the few officially designated. Recently discovered historical evidence allows us to propose that such *Yugikyō* theories, at least in their basic or condensed form, were also passed down by Jikken to his other pupils, who were perhaps less illustrious in terms of their temple rank and opportunities for exquisite scholarly training, but who, nevertheless, were able to approach him and study the important tenets of esoteric Buddhism with him.

*The Yugikyō Theories of Jikken’s Predecessors and Disciples*

The last section of this article will analyze a limited selection of quotes from the transmissions featuring *Yugikyō* and circulating at Daigoji and Mt. Kōya between the mid-twelfth century and second half of the fourteenth century. In her groundbreaking analysis of medieval *Yugikyō* commentaries, Lucia Dolce investigates the writings by the Daigoji abbot Jitsuun and Dōhan during the aforementioned period (DOLCE 2016, 293–297). While I partially adopt her method here in relation to *Yugikyō* rhetorical motifs, my aim, however, is different. I wish to delineate—however tentatively—the effect such transmissions stemming from certain Daigoji abbots, specifically Jikken, may have had on the so-called non-elite practitioners of esoteric Buddhism. My study case will feature Rendōbō Hōkyō, the priest from a private study hall near Mt. Miwa (modern-day Nara Prefecture), and his associates.

Let us turn again to Yūkai, the fourteenth-century scholar-monk from Mt. Kōya. In his already mentioned *Hōkyōshō*, the thirty-year-old Yūkai leaves an assessment of the so-called “perverse teachings” and Rendōbō Hōkyō, specifically. Pol Vanden Broucke’s English translation of Yūkai’s compendium contains these descriptions:

Furthermore, there are many heretical views in the teachings of the writings by Hōkyō Shōnin [Rendōbō] of Miwa in the province of Yamato. The “Compendium of the Single Drop” [*Ittekishō*] and the like are Tachikawa teachings.

(Modified from VANDEN BROUCKE 1992, 28)

Although this quote has already attracted much attention (MORIYAMA 1965, 579; IYANAGA 2010; ANDREEVA 2016; 2017C, 133), let us put aside the otherwise important discussions of the Tachikawa lineage and what exactly constituted the notion of “perverse teachings” in medieval Japan and instead focus on the specific details mentioned in it.<sup>15</sup> While it is not entirely clear whether Yūkai ascribed the *Ittekishō*

15. For a study of the historiography on the Tachikawa lineage and their alleged “perverse teachings,” see Gaétan RAPPO’s (2020) contribution to this special issue.



authorship to Rendōbō Hōkyō, the title of this unidentified text provokes further thought. This precise title does not appear in the Taishō canon, and at present, it is not clear if it can even be found among the Tachikawa lineage writings.<sup>16</sup>

However, the way *Ittekishō*'s title had been recorded in the modern print version of Yūkai's compendium may have been the result of a mistake by a copyist. It is notable that a similar, although not exactly identical, notion of "two drops" (*niteki* 二滴)—especially as a part of a compound of "the two drops merging" (*niteki wagō* 二滴和合)—appears more often in the Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist treatises, which form a part of the Taishō canon. Namely, the earliest textual evidence of this notion appears in the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* and *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. These and other sources, already noted by OGAWA (2014) and DOLCE (2016) in their respective studies of ritual embryology and its imagery, were known to Buddhist scholars in medieval Japan as classical bases of knowledge explaining the mechanisms of conception and fetal gestation and, ultimately, the transmigration of souls;<sup>17</sup> they formed a systematic part of educational background at major *kenmon* temples such as Kōfukuji and Ninnaji. As part of a broader array of rhetorical phrases linked to the *Yugikyō*, these two expressions were frequently mentioned in medieval transmissions that used conception as a key metaphor for "ritual generation of the perfected bodies" and divine entities (DAS 2003; DOLCE 2006–2007; 2010; 2016; OGAWA 2014, 305–307). Thus, it should not be surprising that the notion of "two drops," signifying the merging of "two vital liquids of men and women" (*nannyo niteki wagō* 男女二滴和合 or "of fathers and mothers," *bumo* 父母), also appeared in medieval transmissions on the *Yugikyō*, including those from Daigoji. In fact, these notions formed a key part of these transmissions (DOLCE 2010, 170–171).

Below, I briefly trace the use of these expressions in a limited portion of medieval *Yugikyō* transmissions recorded by Jikken's two disciples Dōhan and Rendōbō Hōkyō. The purpose is to place the esoteric thought of the Miwa priest and his associates into the historical context in which the esoteric milieu they encountered at Daigoji and Mt. Kōya had operated. Let us first start with Jikken's transmissions to Dōhan. Since Jikken's own writings or commentaries have not

16. Nobumi Iyanaga has traced another notion, "the sweet drops" (*tenteki* 甜滴), linked to the medieval discourse on the *Yugikyō* (IYANAGA 2006, 210–211; 2016). On the texts linked to the Tachikawa lineage, see IYANAGA (2010, 132–135; 2016, 366–369).

17. OGAWA (2014, 305–307) has noted the medieval revival of this notion by Dōhan, specifically in relation to Jikken's 1241–1242 transmissions at Sanbōin of Daigoji. DOLCE (2010, 193; 2016, 262–270, 274, n. 48) has pointed out that the description of the "two drops, red and white, merging" appears in the seventh fascicle of Tiantai scholar Zhiyi's 智顓 (538–597) treatise on meditation, *Mohezhiquan* (T 1911, 46.93b10–11). For its annotated English translation, see SWANSON (2017, 1201–1202). For a discussion of esoteric Buddhist theories of embryology in the Shingon school, see KAMEYAMA Takahiko's (2020) contribution to this special issue.

survived, two sets of transmissions linked to this sutra as taught by Jikken of Daigoji were recorded by Dōhan around 1224 and 1242. One, the *Kuden*, was recorded in 1224. However, in one of the colophons Dōhan suggests that this record was based on the *Yugikyō* teachings he had received from Jikken a few years earlier in 1218, when forty-two-year-old Jikken still resided at Kongōōin (zsz 7: 134). This particular compendium also refers to the teachings on this sutra by two other Mt. Kōya clerics, Kakukai 覚海 (1142–1223) and Yūgen 融源 (1120–1218), who will be mentioned again shortly. Given *Kuden*'s relatively short length and clarity of its explanations, one may assume that this may have been indeed an early or perhaps standard group of teachings on the *Yugikyō* that a designated student was expected to receive from his mentor at Daigoji or Mt. Kōya, as described in the earlier sections of this article. *Kuden* focuses straightforwardly on each sutra chapter, explains its key notions, and does not exhibit too many divergences into other topics. Importantly, although *Kuden* refers to some embryological metaphors, including the “five stages in the womb” (*tainai goi* 胎内五位), it does not include references to the “two drops merging.” Instead, when explaining the terms *yuga* 瑜伽 (yoga, that is, union with a deity) and *yugi* 瑜祇 (a yoga practitioner), which appear in the title of the *Yugikyō*, Dōhan's 1224 *Kuden* employs rather neutral notions signifying sexual congress such as the “man and woman's voices” (*otoko no koe* 男声, *onna no koe* 女声) (zsz 7: 93).

Another, more extensive compilation of Jikken's transmissions, the *Kuketsu*, also by Dōhan, emerged in a completely different set of social circumstances. During the eleventh month of 1241, the second son of Emperor Go Toba 後鳥羽 (1180–1239) and princely abbot of Omuro at Ninnaji, Dōjo Hōshinnō 道助法親王 (1196–1249), invited the Daigoji abbot Jikken to the imperial temple of Hosshōji 法勝寺 to deliver private lectures on the *Yugikyō*. These were recorded by Dōhan, who served at the scene as a scholarly witness and scribe, either as Jikken's rightful and official disciple, or following the personal orders from the Omuro abbot (sz *kaidai* 解題: 11–12). Jikken's lectures were noted down and later revised into a document (probably in early 1242), following the princely order. It seems that Dōhan sometimes received such orders from Dōjo, either to lecture on certain treatises or to revise them into written documents, at least before his exile to Sanuki Province in 1243.

Although both *Kuden* and *Kuketsu* are based on the same scripture, the circumstances in which they respectively emerged roughly twenty years apart were remarkably different. In contrast to the *Kuden* (1224), the *Kuketsu* (1241–1242) is a more extensive, scholarly compendium aimed at a highly educated noble practitioner of esoteric Buddhism, familiar with extensive references to the *Yogācāra* treatises and esoteric rituals by Indian and Chinese patriarchs, such as Vajrabodhi (ca. 671–741), Amoghavajra (705–774), and Yijing 義淨 (653–713). Such an exquisite royal listener would also be made aware of an earlier

Japanese commentary on the *Yugikyō* by the Tendai scholar-monk Annen 安然 (841–889/915) and transmissions by Japanese esoteric masters Genkaku 嚴覺 (d.u.), Jitsuhan 実範 (d. 1144), and Kakuban 覚鑿 (1095–1143). It is therefore thought-provoking that the later *Kuketsu* contains numerous references to a number of terms conceptually parallel or clearly cognizant of the more sexually explicit notion of “the two drops merging.” In the lecture on the introduction to the *Yugikyō*, Jikken, the lecturer, still used terms such as the “man’s voice” and “woman’s voice” to describe the meanings of the terms *yuga* and *yugi* as he had done previously teaching young Dōhan in 1218–1224 (SZ 5: 27; ZSZ 7: 93). Commentaries to *Yugikyō*’s second chapter, already noted for its reproductive imagery (OGAWA 2014; DOLCE 2016), include an explanation of the meaning of a ritual merging of a practitioner and esoteric deity (*nyūga ga’nyū* 入我我入) and deities Aizen and Sen’ai 染愛. This segment invokes a simile of “lustful desire initially arising between men and women” to explain the esoteric meaning of “lust” (*ai* 愛) (sz 5: 52). Transmissions reflecting on the *Yugikyō*’s fifth chapter describing Aizen’s iconography explain the concept of *keiai* 敬愛 (respect and love) by alluding to the sexual actions of “men and women of the mundane world” (*seken nannyo* 世間男女), Aizen’s divine appearance as consisting of “two [forms of] *rūpa*, red and white” (*shakubyaku nishiki* 赤白二色), and “two worthies merging” (*nison wagō* 二尊和合) to “produce the Adamantine King” (*Kongōō to nasu* 為金剛王) (sz 5: 56, 58–59).

Elsewhere in the *Kuketsu*, in a segment on the ritual contemplation of the seed syllable *hūṃ* included in the explanations to *Yugikyō*’s tenth chapter, Jikken (and by extension his scribe and disciple Dōhan) invoked the idea of “two drops of principle and wisdom merging” (*niteki richi wagō* 二滴理知和合), as preceding the first stage of embryonic development (*tainai shōi* 胎内初位). Furthermore, describing the “yogic consecration” (*yugi kanjō* 瑜祇灌頂) in the Ono tradition and the Daigoji lineage, he tried to explain metaphysical notions of the “doubly perfect ocean of thusness” (*sōen shōkai* 双円性海) and non-duality of the two mandalas (*ryōbu funi* 兩部不二) by conjuring a description of the “ocean of thusness [deriving from] the two drops of real men and women merging [in sexual congress];” an act envisioned to be a prerequisite for symbolic acquisition of the “secret womb” (*hizō* 秘藏) by an esoteric practitioner. This discussion involved the ideas of “two liquids and two drops” (*nisui niteki* 二水二滴) and “two drops merging [to achieve] the initial status [of embryo in the womb]” as well as a mention of a certain “transmission on the merging of two roots (*nikon* 二根) of men and women.” In another part of the same segment, citing the Ono lineage transmissions, “the mixing of two drops” seems to have been invoked more symbolically, to mean the “perfect union of principle and wisdom of the two mandalas” (*ryōbu richi myōgō* 兩部理智冥合). There, the “originally existing two drops” also

represented two Sanskrit syllables and together, a wish-fulfilling gem (*nyoi hōju* 如意宝珠) (sz 5: 109–110).

As seen from these quotations above, during 1241–1242 Jikken did not hesitate to use more explicit sexual metaphors in his explanations of the *Yugikyō*; the discourse on the “two drops merging” appeared most vital and dynamic in his interpretation of the sutra. Most of these expressions, however, were employed by Jikken in order to explain a variety of metaphysical, iconographic, and ritual notions, important for understanding the esoteric teachings. Dōhan’s *Kuketsu* deserves a detailed study from a number of angles, but here one detail must remain underscored: this compendium was produced in the context of Jikken’s extensive oral lectures on the *Yugikyō* aimed at an elite aristocrat from the imperial lineage and a highly-ranked esoteric cleric of utmost prestige and power.

And what of the countryside priest Rendōbō Hōkyō from Miwa? How and through which terms and notions did he encounter and understand the *Yugikyō*? Although it seems that there may have been a chance of him overlapping with Dōhan in terms of location and periods of personal study both at Mt. Kōya and with Jikken at Kongōin before 1224, it is unclear exactly when such personal meetings could have happened.

Rendōbō Hōkyō’s own records of the *Yugikyō* transmissions are included in his only surviving treatise *Kakugenshō* and two recently rediscovered late medieval copies of *Yugikyō* transmissions recorded by his fellow priest Kōban 弘鏤 (d.u.) preserved at Kanazawa Bunko. Our task of comparison is made particularly complicated by an absence of trustworthy dating for all these materials. If *Kakugenshō* is available in modern print, the other two manuscripts are hard to access and, due to their severely damaged condition, they remain only scarcely, if at all, readable. The current theory has to remain highly speculative, but based on the contents and structure of the *Kakugenshō* as well as the dates of the lives of Rendōbō’s teachers Kakukai and Yūgen, we must suppose that Rendōbō had heard and recorded their lectures in some form at least before or around 1218, that is, before Yūgen’s death. It could have been a time when Dōhan also studied there with the same masters.<sup>18</sup> Kakukai in his youth trained with the leading Sanbōin monks at Daigoji and became the chief administrator of Mt. Kōya in 1217, while Yūgen, also a Kōya cleric, had links to the Shingon reformer Kakuban, both by blood and as a fellow esoteric practitioner and scholar-monk at the Daidenbōin 大伝法院 (ANDREEVA 2017c, 136–138). If so, the two Kanazawa Bunko manuscript copies recording the transmissions attributed to Rendōbō and more clearly structured along the lines of the *Yugikyō* chapter contents, which are similar to Dōhan’s 1224 *Kuden* and 1241 *Kuketsu*, could be

18. Dōhan’s 1224 *Kuden* quotes transmissions by Yūgen and Kakukai from Mt. Kōya (sz 7: 104). Yūgen is mentioned in Dōhan’s *Kuden* multiple times (sz 7: 93–94, 101, 105, 107–108).

dated later than 1217–1218. One of these surviving pieces bears the title *Yuga yugi kuden Kōban ryakuchū*, which appears to mirror the titles of Dōhan’s 1224 collection, but consists of transmissions on only seven of the full twelve sutra chapters. In this piece, the Daigoji abbot Jikken and the Daigoji lineage are clearly cited as vital sources. The second piece is titled *Yuga dainana yuga jōjubon kuketsu [Rendō]*.<sup>19</sup>

Let us briefly survey the terms closest to the notion of the “two drops” in Rendōbō’s writings and transmissions. *Kakugenshō* features transmissions on Aizen Myōō, one of the key *Yugikyō* deities, as well as Kakukai and Yūgen’s teachings on the *Yugikyō*, including its seventh chapter. Among those, Rendōbō records discussions of esoteric deities Shōten 聖天 and two-headed Aizen. The mudra ascribed to Shōten hints at the “utmost secret (*saihi* 最秘) of congress between male and female devas” (sz 36: 335), while the identity of the two-headed Aizen allegedly appearing in the fifth chapter of the *Yugikyō* is briefly explained by alluding to the agencies of a male Kongōsatta 金剛薩埵 and a female deity, King Tainted Lust (Nyokei Sen’aiō 女形染愛王), and therefore, to the congress between men and women, or “two heads of a man and a woman” (sz 36: 340). Item fourteen in the second fascicle of Rendōbō’s compendium explains the so-called “hidden horse organ” (*meonzō* 馬陰藏) samadhi, an important segment of medieval *Yugikyō* transmissions which featured in the original sutra text (GOEPPEL 1993, 102–105; DOLCE 2010, 163, 169–171; DOLCE 2016, 293–297) and Amoghavajra’s *Liqushi*, in addition to other Buddhist scriptures.<sup>20</sup> It is here that Rendōbō’s teachers again resort to the allegories of sexual acts between male Kongōsatta and female deities, using expressions such as the “mutual congress between men and women of the mundane world,” or the “five elements (*godai* 五大) that produced men and women” (sz 36: 342–343; GOEPPEL 1993, 52–53; ANDREEVA 2016, 437–439). Elsewhere in his lectures, Yūgen also alerted Rendōbō to the “yogic consecrations at Daigoji” (sz 36: 349).

Significantly, the term “two drops” does not appear in the modern print of the *Kakugenshō*. Moreover, elsewhere in the discussions of the Rishue 理趣会 and Aizen mandalas, Rendōbō is informed by his teachers about the existing practice of “perverse contemplations” (*jagyō jakan* 邪行邪観), which involved contemplations on one’s own body as a principle buddha (*jishin o honzon to nasu* 自身為本尊). According to Rendōbō’s teachers, although befit for a deity, this particular practice of using one’s own body as a principle ritual object during the Rishue

19. I am grateful to the staff of the reading room of the Kanazawa Bunko Library for providing access to the photocopies of MS 293-13 and 82-2.

20. The hidden horse organ samadhi, describing an esoteric meditation of the Buddha, is also mentioned in Xuanzang’s Chinese translation of the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* and the *Flower Garland Sūtra*, thus making it a relatively familiar type of meditation across a number of well-known and widely studied Buddhist scriptures (DOLCE 2016, 265, n., 27).

mandala assembly would offer “little achievement of power in the current lifetime.” This brief segment suggests that, despite various claims of secrecy, even non-elite esoteric practitioners like Rendōbō, who came to study at Mt. Kōya, were made aware of the possibility and existence of such practices within Japan’s esoteric temple milieu, but were not taught the exact details, mildly cautioned against it, or discouraged to undertake them altogether (sz 36: 358).

It is in one of the surviving Kanazawa Bunko manuscript copies of Rendōbō’s own transmissions on the *Yugikyō*, namely, in its seventh chapter focusing on the deity Daishō Kongō 大勝金剛 and known under the short title “On the acquisition of the yogic union” (*Yuga jōjubon* 瑜伽成就品) that the terms related to the notion of “two drops” actually appear. In some portions of his transmissions, Rendōbō used the terms already familiar to him, such as “merging of worldly men and women,” “man and woman’s five elements [merging into] one body,” or “the non-duality of man and woman’s five elements.” As in his earlier *Kakugenshō*, these examples occur in relation to the ritual contemplation known as “hidden horse organ” samadhi, which Rendōbō also called the “lotus samadhi” (*rengē sanmaji* 蓮華三摩地). However, in his later explanation, he employed more explicit terms such as the “liquids of men and women” (*nannyo teki* 男女滴) and cited the “merging of two drops, red and white” as a prerequisite to the initial stage of embryo in the womb (*kararan* 羯羅蘭 from the Sanskrit *kalala*).<sup>21</sup> These later transmissions by Rendōbō recorded by Kōban referred to a number of the ideas of sexual intercourse, conception, and their formative biological components, including the notion of the gendered “five elements” of men and women, which Rendōbō already used in his earlier *Kakugenshō*. However, the “merging of two drops, red and white” is more directly reminiscent of the rhetoric employed by Jikken in his lectures on the *Yugikyō* presented to Prince Omuro and recorded by Dōhan in 1241–1242.

All of these writings and documents, particularly Rendōbō’s transmissions, require a much more elaborate analysis and comparison in a broader context of medieval Japanese thought on the *Yugikyō* and other scriptures. This can only be achieved through a long-term detailed study with a broad overlook, which must be left to others. Here, as regards my theory concerning the so-called countryside Shingon priests and their access to important medieval esoteric doctrines and ritual notions, I can only propose a tentative hypothesis. If our dating of his surviving writings (that is, *Kakugenshō* and the two *Yugikyō* transmissions) is approximately correct, Rendōbō Hōkyō of Miwa was able to receive some of the teachings on the key portions of the *Yugikyō* from Kakukai and Yūgen at Mt.

21. Despite its title focusing on the seventh chapter of the *Yugikyō*, the Kanazawa Bunko manuscript 82-2 comments on the often-transmitted rhetorical expressions deriving from several other chapters of this sutra.



Kōya before Yūgen's death in 1218. Specifically, Yūgen directed Rendōbō's attention toward the yogic consecrations practiced at Daigoji (sz 36: 349); Yūgen's transmissions on the "hidden horse organ" samadhi were also heard by Dōhan (zsz 7: 101–102, 107–108). Rendōbō had heard other basic theories related to the medieval Japanese discourse on the *Yugikyō* that circulated at Daigoji, Ninnaji, Mt. Kōya, and Miidera 三井寺 from both of his teachers on Mt. Kōya during the early thirteenth century. It is therefore possible that the two transmissions on the *Yugikyō*, with their more explicit sexual imagery, may have been transmitted by Rendōbō and recorded by his associate Kōban at some point later between 1218 and Jikken's passing in 1249, or before 1235 when Rendōbō, Kōban, and another esoteric practitioner called Nyojitsu 如実 gathered at Miwa *bessho* to exchange esoteric theories and rituals. Jikken had been appointed as the Daigoji abbot in 1236 and, after that, his engagements performing important rituals at the behest of the imperial court, such as the 1240 rain prayers or the Aizen rituals for the safe childbirth of imperial consorts in 1242 and 1247, may have prevented him from direct and frequent communication with his non-elite sideline disciples. Perhaps it was during the period between 1217–1218 and 1235 that Rendōbō may have gotten a chance to study with Jikken at Kongōōin; some indirect evidence suggests that their encounter could have happened earlier.<sup>22</sup>

The similarity of the transmission titles (*Yuga yugi*, or *Yugi yuga*, *Kuketsu*) and appearance of the rhetoric involving the "two drops" both in Dōhan's 1241–1242 records of Jikken's lectures on the *Yugikyō* to Prince Omuro at Ninnaji and Rendōbō's own transmission on the seventh chapter of the *Yugikyō* also suggest a connection. It may be that the discourse on the "two drops" cited in both these records was a particular theory proliferating at medieval Daigoji sub-temples and transmitted by the Daigoji abbot Jikken. Given Jikken's own engagements, it is possible that he fomented or developed this theory during the mid-1230s to mid-1240s.

What may support such a hypothesis? A much earlier collection of the *Yugikyō* transmissions attributed to another Daigoji abbot, Jitsuun, may provide clues. Hailing from an elite family linked by blood to Fujiwara no Michinaga and Emperor Horikawa 堀河 (1079–1107), Jitsuun was a younger brother of the Sanbōin founder and Daigoji abbot Shōkaku 勝覚 (1057–1129). He trained at the imperial temple Kajūji 勧修寺 in Kyoto before himself becoming the Daigoji abbot in 1156. As noted before (ITŌ 2003; DOLCE 2016, 296), the earlier attributions of this particular group of transmissions recorded under the title of *Hiketsu* to Jitsuun may not be particularly trustworthy. However, if these transmissions circulated after his death, one could argue that certain theories and vocabulary

22. The *Datō hiketsushō* suggested that Rendōbō was involved in a study with Jikken as early as 1202 (sz 23: 287), but this record only indicates that he received transmissions from the Daigoji cleric in a dream (ANDREEVA 2017C, 137, n. 97).



linked to the commentarial tradition on this sutra had already existed in Daigoji before Jikken's own time (ANDREEVA 2016, 429–431); Jikken was active at Daigoji between 1200 and 1249, therefore, he may not have been the sole inventor of such transmissions and rhetoric. What is striking about *Hiketsu* is that this presumably earlier text contained a wealth of distinct expressions deriving from the notion of the “two drops merging,” which theoretically fitted the descriptions of the so-called “perverse” teachings and the title of the otherwise unknown “Compendium of One Drop” (*Ittekishō*) cited by Yūkai in his critique of Miwa priest Rendōbō Hōkyō and the Tachikawa lineage.

The expression “two drops” (or “two drops, red and white, merging”) first appears in the *Hiketsu* in a fascicle explaining the second and fifth chapters of the *Yugikyō* (sz 5: 14–15). According to DOLCE (2016, 296–297), the second sutra chapter, containing a detailed description of what she termed the “meditation on the hidden organ of the horse” and focusing on a process of “ritual generation of a perfected body,” drew especially prominent attention among medieval esoteric practitioners (see also OGAWA 2014). The *Hiketsu* commentary on this chapter also discussed the so-called internal mandala (*nai mandara* 内曼荼羅) and gave detailed explanations of the five stages of embryo in the womb complete with hand-drawn images (DOLCE 2006–2007, 138–144; 2016, 257–262, 268–270).

The “two drops” appear again in the *Hiketsu*'s explanations on the sixth chapter of the *Yugikyō*, which discussed the four means (*shishō* 四撰) of embracing practices and reaching the status of a bodhisattva. This time, a short note on the four secret passions of Kongōsatta described a case when “the seed of consciousness faces the two drops [arises and hastens quickly to prompt the status of embryo in the womb]” (sz 5: 18). The *Hiketsu*'s segment corresponding to the *Yugikyō*'s seventh chapter presents a range of similar concepts, such as “two drops merging on the treasure lotus of non-duality,” “vital drops, red and white,” “two drops, red and white, in the place of a completely perfect twin [representing] non-duality” (sz 5: 18–19).<sup>23</sup> The eleventh chapter of the *Hiketsu*, discussing the process of initial “merging” in the ritual visualization of the internal mandala, also resorted to an explanation of such a process through the “merging of two drops, red and white” deriving from “the bodies of father and mother” (*bumo shin* 父母身). Moreover, it gave an additional dimension to this ritual visualization: “The liquids inside the two drops, these two liquids are mixed” (sz 5: 23–24). Judging by the number of times these expressions occur in the *Hiketsu* attributed to Jitsuun, the discourse on the “two drops merging” attached to the *Yugikyō* lore may have existed at Daigoji perhaps already during the late twelfth century, or from that time onward. Although the exact timing is difficult to

23. On the binary icons of non-duality, see DOLCE (2006–2007, 136–138; 2010); on the notion of the double, see DOLCE (2016, 280–287, 291–293).

independently verify, one can suppose that by the time of Jikken, active during the first part of the thirteenth century, this discourse (or at least, the use of these key rhetorical phrases) had spread via the Daigoji clerics teaching their versions of esoteric Buddhist sutras and rituals, including those linked to the *Yugikyō*, to an increasing number of esoteric practitioners, both within the *kenmon* esoteric temples and countryside, through direct and sideline transmissions. An additional channel of the spread of these teachings must have been available to students of esoteric Buddhism at various practice halls and monastic quarters at Mt. Kōya.

### *Conclusion*

If the respective dating and author attributions of these medieval writings can be considered trustworthy, one may assume that the discourse on the “two drops” and the use of closely resembling metaphoric expressions may have already been known at Daigoji around the middle of the twelfth century, particularly among the top level of high-ranking Daigoji clerics hailing from elite aristocratic families, often with direct links and access to court. This discourse and metaphoric vocabulary were certainly known to the Daigoji abbot Jikken, who delivered lectures on the *Yugikyō* to his disciple Dōhan in 1218–1224 and 1241–1242, and to his sideline pupil Rendōbō Hōkyō of Miwa, likely during 1218–1235. It is noteworthy that Jikken employed the discourse of “two drops merging” to explain the basic tenets of esoteric Buddhist doctrine to his royal client Prince Omuro of Ninnaji in 1241. The use of this discourse supports the proposal that sexually explicit explanations of ritual contemplations and actions from or inspired by the *Yugikyō* and similar scriptures were initially transmitted among the elite circles of aristocratic practitioners close to the imperial court.<sup>24</sup>

The impact of Jikken’s activities and teachings in this respect is still underestimated. Although his scholarly networks can only be reconstructed with effort, it is evident that his disciples included not only ordained monks who went on to forge notable monastic careers, like Dōhan, but also the less historically visible but nevertheless significant figures who came to be known under the titles of *shōnin* or *hijiri*. Two such disciples were Miwa Shōnin Rendōbō Hōkyō, and Kamo Shōnin Nyojitsu 加茂上人如実 (d.u.) (MDJ, 983). The former was involved in spreading the esoteric teachings in the countryside, away from elite temple complexes, and inventing new icons and rituals that formed the basis of what now is known as medieval Shinto (ANDREEVA 2017c). Around 1235, Rendōbō formed his own lineage that later became known as the Miwa lineage. Nyojitsu, who was not discussed here in detail, was acquainted with Rendōbō and formed

24. This phenomenon may also be partially confirmed by the recent scholarship in medieval Japanese literature, focusing on the esoteric literary commentaries, such as *Ise monogatari zuinō* 伊勢物語髓腦 (KLEIN 2002; OGAWA 2014, 313–316, 494–529).

his own esoteric lineage, the Kamo lineage. They both received esoteric initiations of the Sanbōin, Kongōōin, and possibly Kōmyōsan lineages from Jikken, most likely in the first half of the thirteenth century when Jikken was still based at Kongōōin (IYANAGA 2006, 219–220).

The case of Rendōbō Hōkyō, a semi-itinerant priest from thirteenth-century Miwa *bessho*, suggests that such figures were far from being completely uneducated in the doctrines and rituals of esoteric Buddhism, as their later critics had tried to claim. On the contrary, even though their status and lack of inclusion in formal esoteric temple hierarchies implied certain limitations in their access to secret teachings transmitted by high-ranking clerics, the non-elite practitioners were nevertheless able to travel freely to large *kenmon* temple compounds and join the study seminars of those renowned clerics as sideline auditors and disciples. The spread of certain rhetorical markers such as the discourse on the “two drops” seen in selected oral teachings on the *Yugikyō* confirms that both elite circles and less socially privileged medieval practitioners were involved in intellectual labor and transmission activities in equal measure, even if the contents of these were at times subtly different. Although the impact of Jikken’s teachings on the religious landscape of medieval Japan can only be traced in broad strokes, an investigation of his disciples’ social status and writings helps to understand the itineraries of religious knowledge and cultural change in medieval Japan.

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