

Kamakura Accounts of Myōe Shōnin as Popular Religious Hero

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Myōe Shōnin (Kōben, 1173–1232) lived at the beginning of an age of religious renewal and innovation. Hōnen (1133–1212), for example, was advocating the “Single-practice calling upon the name of Amida Buddha” (*senju nenbutsu*), the founding of the Jōdo sect being traditionally placed in 1175; Eisai (1141–1215) returned from China in 1191 to propagate the meditation practices of Rinzai Zen. And on the secular front there were also renewals and innovations, with the Minamoto clan’s establishment of a center of political power in Kamakura which would share the direction of the nation’s social, religious and cultural life with the court in Kyoto.

The belief was widespread, although not universally accepted, that the world was well into the period of the Decline of the Law (*mappō*), the last of the three phases of Shakyamuni’s teaching, which meant that people would be increasingly incapable of practicing or even of comprehending the original discipline and that human institutions would deteriorate. New methods appropriate to the times were required, and Hōnen, Eisai and Myōe were merely three of the earliest to attempt to meet the challenge of determining what these methods were to be. These three were succeeded by a flood of reformers, notably Dōgen (1200–1253), Nichiren (1222–1282), and Shinran, who was born the same year as Myōe but outlived him by three decades.

Myōe’s ambition was to rejuvenate Kegon, the most prominent of the old Six Nara Sects, which had its headquarters at the Tōdai-ji. After being ordained a priest in 1188, he devoted himself both to the study of Kegon theory and the practices of esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō*), and eventually developed his own synthesis, known

as *gonmitsu*. In 1206, at the age of thirty-four, Myōe was commissioned by Retired Emperor Go-Toba to restore the temple Kōzanji on Mount Toga-no-o. In time the temple began to flourish (although the *kondō*, or main hall of worship, was not completed until 1219), and Myōe became respected for his sanctity and dedication. But his movement lacked popular support and in the end was no more successful than other movements, half a millennium earlier, had been in extending Kegon's appeal beyond a small group of Buddhist thinkers. The doctrines of Hua-yen (Kegon) had their influences on both Shingon and Zen thought, but they were too abstruse to arouse widespread enthusiasm.

In spite of the failure of his movement, Myōe was personally one of the great figures of his time. His writings on Kegon, many of which are still extant today (see Tanaka 1961, pp. 237–249), had little effect on the subsequent development of Japanese Buddhism, whether or not they eventually show him to have been an original thinker. The Myōe *legend*, however, provided the literary and religious consciousness of an age which widely deplored the worldliness of the clergy with a model priest. This legend does not reveal the serious scholar of esotericism and Kegon philosophy that we know Myōe to have been in real life. It does, however, show us an uncompromising idealist who would accept no easy answers even during the period of moral decline in the Latter Days of the Law.

This legend offered the hope that even in these degenerate times there were still a few who understood and practiced the original discipline. With Tennyson's Ulysses, Myōe might have said:

. . . . and though

We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved heaven and earth, that which we are, we are—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

This paper will examine the legendary Myōe as he is revealed in four well-known writings of the Kamakura period. So that the quasi-biographical material presented in the first three writings may serve as an introduction to Myōe's lengthy *Final Injunctions*, translated in full at the end of the paper, I have varied the order of their presentation somewhat from the order in which they were actually composed.

The earliest record (second to be presented below) is the brief entry at the end of Book 10 (*Shakkyōka*, or "Buddhist poems") of the *Shinchokusenshū* ("New Imperial Collection"), a poetry anthology compiled by Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241) about 1234, within two years of Myōe's death. Myōe was a poet of some distinction. His favorite topic was the moon (Kawabata 1969, pp. 41–43; 68–74), and his *waka* appeared in several imperial poetic anthologies as well as a private collection, *Myōe Shōnin wakashū* ("The Venerable Myōe's *waka*"), completed in 1248 by his disciple Kōshin. Unlike his elder contemporary, the quasi-recluse Kamo no Chōmei (1155–1216), Myōe did not move in the fashionable poetic circles of his day, but he seems to have come to Teika's attention late in his life. This eminent scholar-poet notes in his diary, *Meigetsuki* ("Journal of the Full Moon"), that in 1229 his wife and children visited Kōzanji to hear Myōe lecture on the precepts (Kamata and Tanaka 1971, p. 476).

The Kamakura record next in order of composition—the longest and final item to be translated here—is *Toga-no-o Myōe Shōnin ikun* ("Final Injunctions of the Venerable Myōe of Toga-no-o"), a collection of aphorisms assembled by the disciple Kōshin between 1235 and 1238. Several texts of the *Ikun* have come down to us, and the translation is based on the popular version appended to the 1665 (Kanbun 5) two-volume xylograph of *Toga-no-o Myōe Shōnin denki* ("Biography of the Venerable Myōe of Toga-no-o"), which has frequently been reprinted, both in Tokugawa and in modern editions.

The first of the accounts to be presented in translation here is the 1254 depiction of a saintly but eccentric Myōe by Tachibana

Narisue in his *Kokonchomonjū* (“Stories Old and New”), meant to be a collection of anecdotes compiled as a sourcebook of paintable themes. Narisue was a painter, and the demands of the artist for an interesting visual arrangement tend to bend sober facts into caricature. Although *Kokonchomonjū* appeared only two decades after Myōe’s death, he is already treated as an icon.

The latest among the Kamakura accounts to be considered here (third in order of presentation) is considerably more realistic, even though the legend has had an additional quarter of a century to develop. Mujū’s *Shasekishū* (“Sand and Pebbles,” compiled 1279–1283) shows us the exemplary recluse and elaborates on the aphorism opening the *Final Injunctions*, which came to represent Myōe’s teachings in the popular mind: “Do what is appropriate” (*arubeki yō wa*).

Eccentric, wonderworker and would-be traveler. Every legend must have an admixture of fact to be credible, and this is also true in the case of Myōe. After the deaths of his parents, Myōe went in 1181 to live at the temple Jingōji on Mt. Takao, northwest of Kyoto. The abbot of this temple was Myōe’s maternal uncle, the Shingon priest Jōgaku, with whom he took the tonsure in 1188. (Myōe’s original religious name was Jōben; he adopted the name Kōben much later in life, around 1210.) Jōgaku had been closely associated with Mongaku, the notorious monk who instigated Yoritomo’s revolt.

The fragment of the legend from *Kokonchomonjū* which follows (*Kokonchomonjū* II:2:64; Nagazumi and Shimada 1966, pp. 98–102) states that Mongaku met Myōe at the temple Ninnaji and took him as a disciple. Now it is indeed true that Myōe studied at this temple in his youth, and that such a meeting of these two eminent priests would provide a suitable subject for a painting, but the legend unfortunately does not appear to be based on the historical record. Neither are the subsequent anecdotes about Myōe and the carpenters, and his association with Kōon, corroborated by the authoritative biography, *Kōzanji Myōe Shōnin gyōjō* (“The

Acts of Venerable Myōe of Kōzanji”), written by Myōe’s colleague and disciple, Kikai (d. 1250; Tanaka 1961, pp. 216–217). In short, the Myōe we are about to see is already half fiction.

MYŌE IN *KOKONCHOMONJŪ*

The *Kokonchomonjū* story which follows is entitled “About the Venerable Kōben who was an Extraordinary Man, and How the Kasuga Deity Prevented his Going to India.” I have presented only the first part of this story in translation here, omitting the later account of Myōe’s first attempt to visit India. According to this account, Myōe made plans during the winter of 1202–1203, and then visited Nara’s Kasuga Shrine to take leave of the deity, for whom he had a special affection. On his way to the shrine, sixty head of deer bowed to the ground on bended knee to pay homage to the holy man. When Myōe returned to his native province of Kii, the Great Deity spoke through a woman he had possessed and asked Myōe not to leave Japan. When the holy man requested a sign that the oracle was indeed from the deity, the woman vaulted up onto a beam of the thatched roof and sat there for three days answering Myōe’s questions about the Kegon Sutra, while a fragrant white foam trickled from her mouth!

This is probably the most popular theme in the Myōe legend. With variations it is described, mentioned or illustrated in a number of works: the early biographical *Denki*, the *Kokonchomonjū*, the *Shasekishū* (1:5), the *Kasuga gongen genki-e* (“Illustrated Record of the Miracles of the Kasuga Avatars,” 1309), the *Shingonden* (“Lives of Esoteric Masters,” 1325), and *Kasuga ryūjin* (“The Dragon God of Kasuga”) by the great Nō dramatist, Zeami (1363–1443). I have examined these variations at length in another paper (Morrell 1982).

The *Kokonchomonjū* account then concludes with a description of Myōe’s final moments. Let us now turn to the translation of the first part of this tale:

In his youth Kōben was raised by the Kita-no-In no Omuro.¹ Priest Mongaku saw the child during a visit [to the Ninnaji] and noted that he was no ordinary person. "You must let me have this youth to be my disciple," said Mongaku; and he took the boy with him.

When Kōben had become a priest and was living on Mount Takao, he put his heart and soul into his studies to the exclusion of all else. Mongaku had decided to rebuild Takao's [Jingōji] and he brought in carpenters, whose constant milling about distracted Kōben. So he retired into the mountains taking with him as many sacred texts as he could carry, and he could be seen there alone, away from all comings and goings. At noon when the carpenters had spread out their rations, he would run down from the mountain and hurriedly gobble up seven or eight portions of food. Then he would return to his hideaway carrying additional copies of sacred texts and remain there for two or three days without making an appearance. He would do this once every couple of days without fail. When Mongaku heard of it he remarked: "This is not the way a mere mortal behaves; it is the conduct of an incarnate Being."

The holy man would read the sacred texts in the dead of night. Now a priest called Kōon,² son of Ōga Motokata, became Kōben's disciple. Kōon, who waited on his teacher for many years, related that Kōben would inspect the holy texts in the pitch-black night without even lighting a lamp. "Bring me a certain writing that is in such-and-such a place," he would say to his disciples. And then he examined what they brought to him after bumbling about in the dark. "This isn't the one," he would remark. "It's the writing with this-and-that passage." Such unusual behavior!

One evening as it began to grow dark the master called to Kōon. "At a time like this a mountain temple is just the place to attain purity of heart. Come out and see the moon!" Then they left the building and made their way up the mountain along the bank of the Kiyotaki River for more than three kilometers until they came to a large rock, which they scaled. "What an impressive rock it is," remarked Kōben. "It could have been the foundation stone for a great monastery. Somehow I have a great fondness for this rock." Then Kōben, with deep purity of heart, conversed about a variety of matters.

"It seems to be cold." Kōben brought out a straw mat from nowhere and had

1. Shukaku Hōshinnō, Cloistered Prince Shukaku (1150-1202). Son of Emperor Goshirakawa and brother of the poetess Princess Shikishi (d. 1201), Shukaku was abbot of Ninnaji from 1169.
2. This obscure priest, whose name literally means "Bright Sound," may have belonged to a family of flute players. Motokata's father was the famous music historian, Motomasa (1077-1138). See Harich-Schneider 1973, pp. 253-62.

Kōon spread it over the rock—a strange and curious business! The site was named “Meditation Rock” (Jōshinseki), modeled after the boulder at Wu-chên Temple in China. There is also a pine here called the “Rope-Seat Tree” (Jōshōju) where Kōben took refuge during meditation (*zazen*).³ On one occasion, around the first of the year when he was engaged in contemplation under this tree, hail fell [and Kōben composed this verse]:

<i>Iwa no ue</i>	On black-dyed sleeves
<i>Matsu no kokage ni</i>	In the shadow of the pine
<i>Sumizome no</i>	Upon the crag,
<i>Sode no arare ya</i>	Hail! A string
<i>Kakeshi sono tama</i>	Of prayer-beads.

THIS poem is a variation on one which Teika included (along with several others not translated here) in the *Shinchokusenshū* two decades earlier. It is introduced there with a long head-note:

In a valley west of where [Myōe] was living was a crag which he called Meditation Rock. Also at that place was a pine called Rope-Seat Tree, on whose two branches he would take refuge to sit in meditation. One day in the First Month when the snow was falling, he was practicing meditation (*zazen*) for a short time when the wind blew violently through the pine tree. Gathering up the hail which collected on his black-dyed sleeves, he stood upright on the rock and composed the following verse comparing the hail stones to the “wondrous jewels in the folds of the garment”:⁴

<i>Matsu no shita</i>	On black-dyed sleeves
<i>Iwane no koke ni</i>	Here in the boulder's moss
<i>Sumizome no</i>	Beneath the pine,
<i>Sode no arare ya</i>	Hail! A string
<i>Kakeshi shiratama</i>	Of white jewels. [SCSS X:629] ⁵

3. A notation at the top of Jōnin's famous painting of Myōe meditating in a tree states that the location was “in the Rope-Seat Tree on Meditation Rock at Kōzanji's Mount Ryōga ('Lanka').” See Bandō 1974, frontispiece; Shirahata 1966, Plate 4; *Kegon engi* 1959, text p. 9.
4. *Ejū myōju*. Possibly a reference to the Parable of the Hidden Jewel in the *Lotus Sutra* (Ch. 8) in which the inherent Buddha-nature of which worldly men are unaware is likened to a precious stone sewn in a garment.
5. *K. Taikai* 5, p. 92. See also Sato and Watson 1981, p. 191.

The Exemplary Recluse. Mujū Ichien (1226–1312) was six when Myōe died and he did not compose the *Shasekishū* until almost a half century later. By this time the new currents of Kamakura Buddhism were flowing away vigorously from the main streams of Heian's Tendai and Shingon although their channels were not so well defined as they would appear to later historians.

Mujū eventually associated himself with the Rinzai Zen school of Enni Ben'en (1202–80) but his roots were in traditional Buddhism. In an age in which many of the new movements tended to deny the viability of any form of religious practice other than their own, Mujū defended the traditional principle of accommodation (*hōben*) whereby the Buddha was seen to preach the Law through a variety of doctrines and practices accommodated to the diversity of human needs and biases (Morrell 1973, pp. 447–88). The doctrine was sometimes denied indirectly through a reinterpretation rather than by straightforward rejection: the Buddha might indeed accommodate his teaching to specific needs, but the needs of *this particular age* during the Decline of the Law (*mapppō*) can be satisfied only by *one specific method*, the one to which I happen to subscribe.

We can easily see why Myōe's aphorism about suitability would appeal to Mujū. On the one hand, compatible with the traditional principle of accommodation, "the sects and the teachings of monks who have left their homes for various temples on many mountains may differ, but they are all children of Shakyamuni." On the other hand, if a monk behaves himself according to what is appropriate to his lot in life, then he will observe the priestly regulations. While the laxity of the clergy could be *explained* as an inevitable condition of society during the Decline of the Law, there was also widespread determination that it be *corrected*. And Myōe provided a welcome model. The following is Mujū's account in the *Shasekishū* (3:8; Watanabe 1966, pp. 161–63), entitled "The Discourse of the Sage of Toga-no-o."

A number of recluses from Mount Kōya made a pilgrimage to Toga-no-o to establish karmic affinities with the venerable Myōe, and sent in word of their ar-

rival. At first they were told that he had a cold and would not hold an audience. But presently Myōe appeared on the heels of his messenger. The group was hustled in and the sage addressed them.

“The way this monk Myōe pampers himself is so gross that he goes about with an attendant. All of you have come a long distance from Kōya to visit this old priest. When you wanted to come in to see me, I acted like an ordinary layman by saying that I had a cold. Even if I had been laid up with a grave illness, I should have agreed to meet with you to discuss the Law of the Buddha. If my condition were any less serious, there could be no conceivable justification for my behavior. I have simply lost sight of *that which is appropriate* (*arubeki yō*) for a person in my circumstances.

“If I were to write in simple characters what to teach people, after having examined the sacred writings over the many years of my life, it would be the six syllables, ‘Do what is suitable.’ I teach that which is appropriate according to the ways and methods of what is suitable for the layman, and for the priest, and for the recluse. But in these Latter Days people are confused about what is appropriate. The king and ministers, those acquainted with the uses of external support, should protect the Law and respect it, not losing sight of the fact that Lord Shakyamuni has entrusted it to their care. That is what is appropriate for the emperor. And other laymen should not act contrary to his purposes.

“The sects and the teachings of monks who have left their homes for various temples on many mountains may differ, but they are all children of Shakyamuni. So once they take their vows, shave their heads and dye their garments, they should abandon desire and cut off attachment, being mindful of the Five Aggregates of elements of which we are constituted and pursuing the practice of the Three Teachings [morality, wisdom, meditation]. But although they shave their heads, they do not shave their desires; and they dye their clothes but not their hearts. Some assume the responsibilities for wife and child, while others buckle on armor. The country is gradually being overrun with monks who act just as the Three Poisons [of covetousness, anger and delusion] and the Five Desires [for property, sex, food, fame and sleep] lead them: so that in the end they do not maintain the Five Commandments or engage in the Ten Good Deeds. They are not mindful of what is appropriate to those who have abandoned the life of the householder.

“The recluse in particular should cast away pride and attachment and obliterate worldly thoughts, training mind and body according to what is appropriate to the teaching of the Law instead of acting like a man of the world. To behave as everyone else does truly violates the teaching of the Buddha.”

Thus Myōe spoke tearfully on the profound meaning of the Law as what was appropriate for those who had entered upon the Way of release and liberation, and on what was essential in the teaching for this generation, so that the venerable

recluses wrung out their black, tear-drenched sleeves. Myōe spoke from the evening of that day throughout the night until morning, then during the following day until they heard the sound of a bell. "What a long time I've been talking," he remarked, and then retired.

It had seemed that the discourse had lasted only a moment. The monks recalled that the Buddha's sermon of sixty short kalpas⁶ had seemed to his audience as only half a day long; and they all felt that had they lived at that time and heard him preach, it would have been just like this. Deeply impressed, they returned to Mount Kōya.

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A venerable recluse who was observing the post-noon fast was invited to perform a religious service in Kawachi province. It was a wintry day over a seven-league stretch of road, and he was asked to come before noon. The recluse was mounted on a horse which could not move very fast; and, although the day was cloudy and he could not see the sun, it seemed to have been high in the sky for a considerable time.

The monk remarked that the sun seemed to have passed the meridian; but his host replied that it was still before noon, and, with various delicacies, encouraged him to eat. By nature a gourmand, he ate with gusto until he was sated, finishing up with dessert. As he was picking his teeth, he heard the sound of a bell; and when he made inquiry was informed that it was the vesper bell. This can be compared to Myōe's being startled by the vesper bell, but the recluse's diversion by food was downright reprehensible compared with Myōe's forgetting the time while discussing the Law.

When we view the present world using the past as our mirror, we find genuine differences among what prospers and what is rejected. The recluse of old imbued his heart with the Buddha's Law and set aside the myriad matters of the world, while in the present age men abandon the Buddha's Law but do not neglect worldly fame and profit. Under such circumstances they only bear the name of "recluse" (*tonsei*), but do not know its reality. Year after year we can see an increasing number of people who "escape the world" (*tonsei*) simply to get ahead in life and in spite of the fact that they have no religious aspiration at all. In the world they are nobodies, with neither fame nor profit, but on entering the gate of the recluse they now have both! So nowadays perhaps we ought to change the character *ton* in *tonsei*^a ("to escape the world") and write it with a homonym so as to read *tonsei*^b ("to covet the world").

6. According to one view expressed in the *Daichidoron* ("Great Treatise on Wisdom," Takakusu 1509) a short kalpa is the time required to empty a hundred square mile (40 *li*²) city enclosure filled with poppy seeds if one seed were removed every three years. Subsequent references to Takakusu will be abbreviated "T."

<i>Tonsei no</i>	Let us change
<i>Ton wa tokiyo ni</i>	The character <i>ton</i> in <i>tonsei</i>
<i>Kakikaen</i>	To accord with the times:
<i>Mukashi wa nogare</i>	Of old it meant "to escape,"
<i>Ima wa musaboru</i>	And now it means "to covet."

THE POPULAR MORALIST

Myōe died in 1232 in his sixtieth year, revered by his disciples for his austerity and scholarly achievements. It is reasonable to suppose that Kōshin,⁷ a relatively young member of the Kōzanji community, would not have been especially close to the temple's venerable abbot and would have had little contact with him during his lifetime, only coming to know him through the stories which circulated after Myōe's death. Three years after the event Kōshin began to write down what he had heard attributed to Myōe, fully aware, as he tells us at the outset, that there were probably some errors in people's recollections.

It is the legend that concerns us here, however, and not the accuracy of the account. Kōshin's collection of aphorisms is readily understood, which doubtless accounts for its subsequent popularity. It is not great literature, or even particularly well-expressed as conventional wisdom. It does, however, define the concerns of the Kamakura religious mood: the sense that the world was clearly in the period of the Decline of the Law, the widespread desire for clerical reform, and the search for commitment to action rather than to sterile speculation. These are also the concerns which we have seen reflected in the stories about Myōe as a popular religious hero.

One might summarize *Final Injunctions* for the reader, calling attention to its major themes and eliminating its redundancies.

7. There is no general agreement on Kōshin's dates. If he were 71 *sai* in 1263 (Tanaka 1961, p. 235), then he would have been born in 1193, and hence thirty-nine in 1232 when Myōe died. Other records, however, indicate that he was twenty-nine that year (Tanaka 1961, p. 251). And at least one modern source (Mizuno 1966, p. 268) lists his dates as 1219–1250, which would mean that Kōshin was still in his teens when he compiled the *Final Injunctions*.

But the kind of understanding which is only to be realized through direct exposure to a work in its entirety is worth the reader's additional effort. Kōshin's account was widely read in later centuries, and is translated here just as it is, extenuating nothing. I have, however, added to the standard 1665 text (Miyasaka 1964, pp. 59-75) brackets indicating the entry numbering used in a modern colloquial rendering (Satō 1971, pp. 457-470), in order to facilitate identification.

Final Injunctions of the Venerable Myōe of Toga-no-o
(*Toga-no-o Myōe Shōnin Ikun*)

Compiled by Kōshin beginning in the summer of Bunryaku 2 (1235). I collected and wrote down what people told me. There are surely some errors.

[1] We ought to hold fast to this seven-syllable phrase: "That which is appropriate" (*arubeki yō wa*). There is that which is appropriate for the monk and that which is appropriate for the layman, that which is appropriate for the emperor and that which is appropriate for his subjects. Every evil arises because we disregard what is appropriate for us.

[2] I am not one who looks forward to being saved in the afterlife. I simply want to do what is appropriate for me in this life.

[3] One who practices the Way of the Buddha must have an unsullied mind. With their defiled behavior, what can the warrior and his kind expect of life? I cannot imagine that my religious practice would be adequately maintained if I treated the Buddha's Law lightly and followed the crowd to act like everyone else in the world. Even if something is beyond my realization, I should make every effort to reach to the bottom of it (*soko wo kiwamete*),⁸ as does the Buddha's wisdom, and to understand. Although I am called a dabbler, since there are many things that I do not understand, this should not distress me. But I should not trifle with the Buddha's Law by having a defiled mind. If I do, then it will be

8. Shallow, medium, and deep understanding are represented by the metaphor of a rabbit, a horse, and an elephant crossing a ford. The rabbit skims the surface, the horse is half-submerged, and the elephant makes the crossing with his legs firmly planted on the river-bed. Miyasaka finds this metaphor in the *Ubasokukaikyō* (T. 1488) and in the *Bibasharon* (T. 1547). As depicted in the *Kokonchomonjū*, Myōe was an avid reader. A tabulation of such relatively obscure references would help define the extent of his erudition.

impossible for me, just by taking the tonsure, to maintain life in this human form.⁹ How would I differ from those *dengaku* entertainers known as “Eulalia Priests”?¹⁰

[4] There is a passage in the *Āgamas*¹¹ which states exactly what I have maintained for many years: that the fervor of those in antiquity who rejoiced in the Law of the Buddha was like the attitude of people today who covet fame and prosperity. Look it up later.

[5] It does not bother me to hear it said that I follow the lead of others. I have no desire for fame and prosperity; nor have I urged people to solicit subscriptions for statues and sutras. In this spirit I simply feel as much compassion as I am capable of toward the world of sentient beings. It would be pathetic if people thought that even beggars and lepers held me in contempt [for failing to observe the Buddha’s teaching].

[6] When one has inner worth corresponding to the donations he accepts from the faithful, then it is a blessing to receive. But if the monk (*bhikkhu*) who violates the regulations has accrued no merit for the afterlife, then it is certain that his robe will become a net of fire, and the food he has accepted will become molten rings to sear his stomach.¹²

[7] A person may never recite a single scroll of a sutra or mystic spell, nor even once offer incense and pray for his own spiritual benefit. And yet, if he is

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9. The literature of Buddhism frequently stresses the good fortune of our having been born in human form, where we have the opportunity of following the Buddha’s teaching. See, for example, the opening statement of Mujū’s *Tsuma kagami* (Morrell 1980, p. 51). A defiled mind will lead to rebirth in one of the Three Evil Destinies beneath the human realm: the world of the animals, the world of the hungry ghosts, and the hells.
 10. *Susuki hōshi*. *Dengaku* (“Field Music”) began as a rustic entertainment but toward the end of the Heian period was performed by a class of entertainers who shaved their heads and attached themselves to temples in order to avoid taxation and labor service (O’Neill 1958, pp. 4–8). I have not been able to identify the specific sub-class called “Eulalia Priests.”
 11. *Agongyō*. “Sutras of the Tradition.” The four *Āgamas* in Chinese translation roughly correspond to the five *Nikāyas* (“Discourses”) of the Pali *Sutta-piṭaka*. Miyasaka identifies four among a number of possible early sources for this statement. As for the somewhat brusque ending of this section, Kōshin records the aphorisms as Myōe’s verbatim statements to his immediate disciples rather than as general moral admonitions. The order is not directed at *us*, but at someone who was present when Myōe made the remark.
 12. References to the Hell Chapter (*Jigokubon*) of the *Shōbōnenkyō*, T. 721.

upright in mind and body and behaves according to what is appropriate [to his lot in life], then all the gods and beneficent spirits will protect him. His aspirations will be naturally realized and his wishes easily attained. Rather than making life difficult, simply be upright without much ado. If a person's mind is subject to anxiety, deception and cupidity, and his behavior is always unsettled and given to willful impropriety, then even though he were to commission a celebrant of great spiritual achievement to recite a million scrolls of sutras, and though he might construct and venerate a thousand times a hundred million images of the Buddha, his retribution will be the same as for those who recite the scripture with a foul mouth. One who prays with a defiled mind moves ever rapidly toward a bad end, and he will never have his petitions granted.

Doing nothing to correct his state of mind, the fool is entangled in his own willful desires. He has the unreasonable expectation that if he prays, he can obtain anything at all. Engaging the services of a foolish venal monk, he torments himself in mind and body without there being any response to his prayers. And so he merely creates the karma for his fall into hell. What a sad state of affairs!

[8] "When you know something well, you will not be arrogant about it. When you know something well, the very idea of being arrogant will not occur to you. If it does, then you don't really know!" It is a common saying.

[9] For one who would realize his Buddha-Nature, it is like seeing Tōji's pagoda¹³ at the start of First Avenue and finally reaching it at Ninth Avenue—a truly gratifying experience!

[10] A person who follows the Buddha's Law must first of all be free of passions and free of attachments. Beyond this, those with a knowledge of religious matters are called "scholars," and those able to elicit response to prayer are known as "adepts" (*genza*), or "esoteric masters" (*shingonji*); while those with neither scholarly nor devotional abilities are just good-for-nothing monks. But if one has the least fixation on the phenomenal world, he simply cannot be called a follower of the Buddha's Law.

[11] King Prasenajit¹⁴ addressed the Buddha with these words: "My mother has just died. If someone would restore her to life, I would reward him even if it

13. The pagoda is located just west of the intersection of Ōmiya and Ninth Avenue on Kyoto's southern edge of town, east of the Rajōmon Gate. Myōe presumably walked down Ōmiya, which runs north-and-south just east of the original site of the Imperial Palace.

14. Hashinoku-ō (Pali, Pasenadi), King of Kosalā. The source of this story is the *Zōagongyō* (T. 99, Samyuktāgama), the Chinese translation of the *āgama* (cf. note 11) parallel to the Pali *Samyutta-nikāya*. The Pali version is about King Pasenadi and his grandmother (Rhys Davids 1917, p. 122).

meant giving up country, castle, wife and children, or losing life itself.” People today have little to be complacent about, but grief to such an extent is unknown. Everyone is aware of the wide disparity between antiquity and these Latter Days, between that great country and this savage hinterland. How distressing it is!

[12] It is customary in these Latter Days for people to parade their casual knowledge of Buddhism for fame and profit without grasping its essentials. Thus, they neglect the truth of the Two-fold Emptiness [of persons and things]¹⁵ and do not reveal its intent. If that which is taught by contemporary scholars were the real Dharma, then Buddhism would be the worst of all ideologies. Just consider this: if you take as your mentor a person who does not grasp the essentials of the Teaching, what kind of results can you expect? A deplorable situation indeed.

[13] In my study of Buddhism I have concentrated solely on the problem of how the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas would practice the Way, so my results are useless for today’s scholars. But the Buddha seems to have been gracious toward me. When I put these difficult methods more or less into practice, my mind becomes clear and free of impediments.

[14] Ever since I was a child many years ago I have been studying the sacred scriptures solely that I might comprehend the Law which the Buddha devised for our salvation. I certainly never wanted to become a scholar that I might be praised by others.

[15] What I should like to have is a teacher, not disciples. People usually prefer to become teachers, rather than to follow others as life-long disciples; but instead of having disciples to train, I wish to train my own mind to attain enlightenment. Moreover, it was because the Buddha venerated all others who were virtuous that he excels all sentient beings and is teacher to the gods and men.¹⁶

[16] “Nowadays, even those with pretensions as scholars, having learned by rote chapter and verse from the scriptures, no longer comprehend the Ultimate

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15. The central Mahayana doctrine that not only is the phenomenal world Empty (*kū*) of any abiding self or substance (*muga*), but that the ultimate elements (*hō*, dharmas) postulated by the Sarvāstivāda and other Hinayana schools are equally Empty. Myōe’s Kegon sect views the phenomenal world as the “interdependent arising of the realm of elements” (*hokkai engi*), Emptiness being defined as Dependent Origination.
 16. *Tennin (no) shi*. One of the Ten Epithets (*jūgō*) of the Buddha, a concept developed in early Buddhist writings. There is also a *Jūgōkyō* (T. 782), Sutra of the Ten Epithets, which may have been known to Myōe.

Truth¹⁷ in their hearts.” When I made this remark to someone who came to my hut to ask about the teachings of Buddhism, he said nothing but presently became paralyzed with rage.

The *Nirvana Sutra*¹⁸ says: “This is what I would now explain to you—because they do not comprehend the Ultimate Truth in their hearts, they transmigrate for aeons in the painful seas of birth-and-death . . .”

Perhaps the reason he got angry when I said that I have not seen anyone who really comprehends “the Ultimate Truth in his heart” is that for me to make any statement—either that a person knows or does not know, sees or does not see—implies that I myself have plumbed its depths and clarified the issue. But because he became angry, it is evident that the man himself did not understand.

A man everyone knew was a thief stole a pot, and then completely forgot that he placed it on his head. When the owner came to inquire, saying that his pot was missing, the thief denied that he was to blame. “I didn’t take it,” he said, spreading out his hands. And, indeed, he held the pot neither in his hands nor in his words. He spoke with great sincerity, not realizing that it was perfectly evident to everyone that he was wearing the pot on his head. His saying “I didn’t take it” was just like my visitor’s attempt to vindicate himself. How tedious.

[17] In antiquity a monk would experience the Truth about Reality (*jissō no kotowari*) and hand this on to his disciples; but in this Latter Age we do not have the wisdom to realize that Truth. Monks have a worldly air and are involved in mundane affairs before all else. Moreover, as a way for the temple to stir up interest in Buddhism, they spend their entire lives worrying about costumes for dancers and folk-music entertainers.¹⁹ Such a scholar-monk who hustled about telling people that he had been made manager of the folk-music performances at a certain temple became quite a topic of conversation. To enter the path of the Buddha is an entirely different matter. The man, who was thought to have made considerable progress in Buddhism, gradually became estranged from the Dharma.

[18] We ought to bear in mind that our behavior day and night is reflected in the crystal mirror of judgment.²⁰ Nor should we imagine that because something

17. *Shintai*. The multiplicity of the world viewed as arising interdependently (cf. note 15) is Empty of any self or substance; this is the Ultimate or Absolute Truth. The same world viewed empirically, however, has a provisional existence (*ke*); this is the complementary Conventional Truth (*zokutai*).

18. *Daihatsunehangyō*. Both “Northern Text” (T. 374), Ch. 15, and “Southern Text” (T. 375), Ch. 14, differ slightly from Myōe’s citation.

19. *Dengaku, sarugaku*. Both are precursors of the Nō drama. See note 10.

20. *Jōhari no kagami*. Mirror at Emma’s court in hell in which is reflected the good and evil karma produced by the deceased during his lifetime.

is hidden, that because we keep it secretly in our heart, others will not know of it. All is reflected in this mirror, which is obscured by no clouds. This should teach us compunction.

[19] The layman may conscientiously perform meritorious acts for the sake of the dead; but if he is motivated by fame, profit, or any worldly fixation, he acquires no benefit and exerts himself to no avail. And when priests recite sutras and meticulously chant mystic spells without genuine conviction, when they lack in the observance of the regulations and make no effort to improve the three modes of behavior [body, word, and thought] but place great store on good eating and receiving donations, then they provide no help for the dead. Not only that, but by virtue of accepting alms from the faithful under false pretences, each in his own way will fall into the [three] Evil Paths. This is the amazing way we behave in this Latter Age, benefitting no one. Both clergy and laity should face up to this problem, so as not to suffer grave calamity. It is both a curse and a blessing that as a result of our past actions we have been reborn into this world. We should grieve that our physical bodies have the misfortune to live in an age after the passing of the Buddha; but we should be gratified that our hearts have established affinities with the Buddha's Law.

[20] When the Dharma is dispensed indiscriminately, then it will not have an effect on the action and speech (*shingo*) of the recipient. And when it does not affect action and speech, then, contrary to its purpose, it becomes a poison. Because the Dharma has no single fixed formulation (*musō*), there are those who say: "Well, then. Let's just lie down and do nothing at all!"

[21] The miraculous feats of the eminent priests of old are beyond comprehension, and we set them aside as a special case. But there are those without superhuman abilities but with tremendous dedication who, throwing caution to the wind and willing to chance death, travel to India to engage in various religious austerities. I think this is most splendid and enviable.

[22] In antiquity the foolish benefited from association with the wise. Nowadays, on the contrary, the foolish who associate with those who give the appearance of being profound are only confounded by pedantry and gradually turn away from the truth of the Dharma.

[23] Today there are no exceptionally good people or exceptionally bad ones: everyone is the same and we cannot distinguish the virtuous from the wicked. This is because of the Latter Age in which we live. The years and days pass, and in the end even such distinctions as we have now will fade.

[24] The pity of the Latter Age is that religious practice as prescribed by the Buddha is now secondary to learning. When the scholar has finished perusing all the characters of one work, he wants to go on to the next, simply to add to his store of what he has read. He has no intention of putting the ideas to use, of performing the prescribed religious practice. His heart is drawn to empty words

and delusive concepts, and he appears lukewarm toward that which he takes to be the truth. With this example before me, it behooves me to examine my own heart, which has yet to attain Buddhahood.

[25] Choose your mentor cautiously after careful deliberation. The matter is not to be taken lightly, to be decided by parental dictate, the attraction of friends, or happenstance. The *Sutra on Perfect Enlightenment*²¹ says to "take as your teacher one who can cure the four ills of religious practice: seeking enlightenment through the performance of works (*sa*), through cessation of mental operations (*shi*), through acceptance of things as they are (*nin*), and through the elimination of the passions (*metzu*)." This is explained in detail in the fourth scroll of the commentary²² on the *Sutra on Perfect Enlightenment*.

[26] There are those whose personal behavior does not conform to the Law prescribed by the Buddha. But although they shamelessly offend against the regulations, people have great respect and confidence in them. We should not regard this as a commendable state of affairs. In the *Heap of Jewels Sutra* the Buddha says: "In the Latter Days of the Law such things will happen because I will permit demonic powers of deception to appear. But the person who maintains Right Views²³ will see me by his side."²⁴

[27] Even though all is transient for this body which does not remain long in this world, it is pathetic how we dote on the good opinion of others. Were we to live a thousand or ten thousand years, we should delight only in the good. It is shameful and stupid for one as ephemeral as lightning or morning dew to act badly even once.

[28] When one conducts a religious service, standing in for the Buddha to expound the Dharma, it is shameful to ramble on aimlessly while accepting donations from the faithful. For such priests "expounding the Dharma" means "accepting donations"; they have forgotten the Buddha's intention. The *Heap of Jewels Sutra* has injunctions against such behavior. In the section on expounding Dharma, the monk says: "Because He is by the side of the priest who expounds

21. *Engakukyō* (T. 842).

22. *The Engakukyō ryakusho* (T. 1795) by Kuei-fêng Tsung-mi (Keihō Shūmitsu, 779–841). The influential Tsung-mi was fifth patriarch of the Chinese Hua-yen (Kegon) sect in addition to being the last representative of the Ch'an transmission from Hui-neng's noted disciple Shên-hui (Kataku Jinne, 668–770). Traditionally there has been a close rapport between Kegon philosophy and Zen practice.

23. *Shōken*. Originally, Right Views, a step in the Eightfold Path; but here probably "the man with discrimination."

24. *Hōshakkyō* (T. 310). The reference is not in the extant version of the sutra.

the True Law, it is no different than if the Buddha were actually living in the world.” [Cf. item 26]

[29] “How are we to behave?” people ask nowadays, understanding Buddhism as conventionally teaching that we are to leave this world of birth-and-death. But this is no more than the selfish attachment to Nirvana of the Two Vehicles.²⁵ When I say that people speak without comprehending the way things are, it may seem that I am conceited; but I am just bemoaning the fact that the Law of the Buddha has declined. When I speak of the Decline of the Law (*hōmetsu*) I do not mean that the Law itself is lacking or deficient, but rather that a certain state of affairs has arisen. This is all explained in detail in *Questions on Manifestation*.²⁶ Look it up!

[30] The ordinary person does not even realize that he “has a nature” (*ushō*) [with the potential for enlightenment]. But Buddhism uses the idea of “no Buddha nature” (*mushō*) as an entrance to the Way. When we inquire if one can enter the Way with such attachment to self as we indulge in, we find that there is no such teaching in Buddhism.²⁷

[31] The man who dwells on the faults of others is himself without virtue. Virtue belongs to those who cherish it, who regard virtue (*toku*^a) as something to be attained (*toku*^b). Those obsessed with the faults of others have no room for virtue to reside in themselves.

[32] Who am I to put on the airs of a Master? If the Buddha were still alive, I would not be considered to be even at the level of a novice.

[33] This is my usual advice to those who wish to pursue the religious life. “What should you do to become a Buddha? How should you act to perfect yourself in the Way? Give up all hankering and transform yourself into a worthless fellow. Acting without any thought of self, simply eat when you are hungry and bundle up when you are cold. If you spend your life like this, then the earth may be hammered into pieces, but the Way of the Buddha will not collapse.”

A bystander hearing this remark decides that it must be a good idea to become a worthless fellow. “That’s what I’ll do,” he thinks to himself, proceeding to eat

25. The commendable but inferior vehicles of śrāvaka (*shōmonjō*) and pratyeka-buddha (*engakujō*) which the Mahayana contrasts with the way of the bodhisattva, who has selfless compassion for all sentient beings.

26. *Shutsugen monki*. The work is no longer extant.

27. Unlike Kegon, the Hossō sect of Myōe’s friend Jōkei (1155–1213) teaches that a certain class of sentient being does not have the nature (*mushō*) to attain Buddhahood. Myōe seems to be saying that such a notion might be provisionally useful in motivating people to religious practice, whereas the theoretically correct view might lead to complacency and egoistic attachment.

his fill and sleep to excess. Now he spends his time immersed in some passing fancy, or he passes the day in casual chatter without performing an act of the slightest benefit to others. Spending his time from morning till night without for a moment helping his temple, he imagines that he has truly become that worthless fellow who does nothing at all. But in fact he has been transformed into a worthless creature of the animal world. If a person acts like this, he will certainly be numbered among the denizens of hell. How could he possibly attain the fruit of Buddhahood which is Enlightenment?

What I mean by a "worthless fellow" is one who begins by throwing himself body and soul into the practice of the Way. He has no sluggishness of mind and is not moved by fancy to cultivate random thoughts. So his meditation is spontaneous and undisturbed. Acting with such determination day and night, he has no taste for the *nō*²⁸ theater nor does he seek diversions. He does not consciously think of becoming a Buddha nor does he vow to perfect himself in the Way. Casting aside social advancement, his great desire is to eliminate all hankering and to live having been transformed into a worthless fellow.

[34] It is a terrible thing to have become a monk and to have studied the Way for the purpose of becoming a Buddha; and then to tell yourself: "Don't think you can do it!" With such an attitude you will not attain perfection in the Way. I do believe that I can make people into Buddhas, and I would not lead them astray. If you trust and have confidence in me, then you will believe that these methods [which I prescribe will lead to Enlightenment]. And if you become a worthless fellow (cf. 33), passing your life like this, is this really such a worthless thing to do?

[35] The relationship between teacher and disciple is extremely important in Buddhism. If you do not comprehend the Dharma, then follow a ten-year-old novice who does and hear the Dharma from him, even if you are a hundred years of age.

Forget about praying to Buddha, reading the scriptures, and all the devices of Mahayana and Hinayana. Just ask your teacher what to do step by step.

[36] People nowadays think that there is certainly nothing wrong in performing religious exercises other than those established by the Buddha. They are like wolves whose tails are snipped short [so that they can pass as dogs].²⁹

[37] When your spiritual adviser is not about, you should follow the counsel of the senior monk present. Everyone should subordinate himself to others in this way. If people do not associate in harmony, how do they differ from tigers,

28. *Dengaku no nō* and *sarugaku no nō*. Myōe has already expressed a lack of enthusiasm for these entertainments in items 3 and 17.

29. That is, they are wolves in sheep's clothing (?). The force of the comparison is unclear.

wolves, or poisonous snakes?

[38] It seems that Ananda's younger sister, who was a nun, became angry with the Venerable Kasyapa and thereby fell into hell.³⁰ When we apply the moral of this incident to our own circumstances, we know that also in today's world anger toward a monk produces the karma for rebirth in hell. Unfortunately, we all transgress in this respect without thinking that such behavior is sinful.

[39] Enlightenment (*bodai*) initially is simply a slight stirring within the heart toward the Truth of the Dharma.³¹ Although this stirring is still utterly undeveloped, it is inwardly in accord with the Two-fold Emptiness of persons and things (cf. 12), and so the individual will not consider himself to be superior to others. One who strives for integrity receives the protection of the Buddha even in this life. This protection brings him to accord with the truth, to have the power of faith, and to make his heart responsibly pliable toward the good.

[40] Every time you enter the practice hall, imagine that the living Buddha is there; and, in the presence of the living Tathagata, set straight your aspirations. When you think of an object carved of wood or drawn in a picture as a living being, then it *is* a living being.³²

[41] For the lone mendicant who energetically pursues the religious life at all costs it is important to seek out an untroubled area and a quiet place for his exercises. But for ordinary practitioners, it is better to form a group whose members mutually censure each others faults and encourage practice. The Buddha himself forbade groups of fewer than four. Practicing quietly in the corner of a room appeals to the slothful, and they try to deceive people by acting as if their hearts were committed to the Way. Their bodies in a peaceful state, they pass their days sleeping. Some build small independent quarters and others partition off an enclosure in which to live. And there they sleep day and night. It is like building your coffin while you are still alive, and ensconcing yourself therein. If they act this way, when in the world will they ever become Buddhas? It's a pity!

We are born by chance in human form, we have the good fortune to don the surplice and to assume the name of one who enters into the Law of the Buddha and practices the Law. And then to do nothing at all—this is to return to the

30. *Zōangogyō* (T. 99, *Samyuktāgama*); cf., *Samyutta-nikāya* 16:10. The Pali account does not say that the nun was Ananda's sister, nor that she fell into hell (Rhys Davids 1922, p. 146).

31. Presumably to be distinguished, at least in the matter of degree, from the decisive commitment of "awakening the desire for enlightenment" (*hotsubo-daishin*) which was central to Kegon, and Myōe's, thought.

32. At least as far as the devotee is concerned; cf. Mujū's *Shasekishū* 2: 6.

Three Evil Paths of transmigration! Deploring these conditions, the Venerable Bishop of Kenninji [Eisai, 1141–1215] said that he constructed a string of monastic quarters so that in each of them he could assemble those who had abandoned worldly ties that they might singlemindedly seek Enlightenment, that they might as friends in the faith cast off the myriad attachments and practice the Way. This is just what I think should be done. In addition to the profound merit accruing to these monks who make confession of their sins, they assemble together in one place to mutually improve each other's behavior. When did the Buddha ever instruct us to doze off in the corner of a room? The variety of 80,000 sacred teachings is enormous and there may be such a method; but I have yet to see it.

[42] From the time I was in a group of novices long ago, I have successively used the esoteric methods of Aizen Myōō and the Five Esoteric Bodhisattvas. I never thought of allying myself with some fine scholar, but sought rather to hold firmly to the Buddha Shakamuni, if only to his representation on a scrap of paper. Had I been alive in the days of the Blessed Shakamuni, I would have been among the least worthy of his disciples. What a sorry state of affairs that I should now administer a great number of monks and put on the airs of a preceptor, without having attained the virtue of the sages of long ago. This is not right.

Seated in the presence of the Buddha I thought to myself: "Being utterly without promise, what can I hope to accomplish in this life?" Had I decided to become a warrior, by virtue of being born into a military family, I should already have been dead after my moment of shame in this short-lived world. But having opted for the religious life, my heart will be undefiled. Perhaps I will become a person of great influence in Buddhism. This is what I thought.

[43] Having by chance entered the religious life, I devote myself to what I have learned not as a useful path to release from delusion, but somehow to promote the miserable business of clerical advancement. And in the end, without any effort on my part, I will become ill; and no matter what I do, I will die. Ah, how are we to behave in this remote land in these Latter Days? I have become petty, a person without anything intelligent to say.

[44] Pride is like a mouse. When we are occupied at the esoteric practice platform, it slips in through the windows of the various houses of learning. I always speak of the two ways it operates. If I do not know something, but, out of pride, do not ask and learn from another whose ability may be known, then my loss is great. And if I contemptuously talk down to one of lesser ability, what is the advantage? In both instances nothing is gained. Even with meager abilities, if one is judged superior to another, pride quickly arises.

[45] In Shakamuni's day monks did not drink. The details of the Grave Prohibitions, such as those against killing, stealing and adultery, had not yet been clarified; so there was no way to measure how well one was observing the regulations. And there was not even a code of behavior which reflected the Sacred

Teachings.

A person makes progress by refining what he has already learned, and making a start on what he has not yet learned. I should correct my failings by taking the Sacred Teachings as my norm and applying them to myself. This is discussed in detail in *Mandalas Explained*.³³ It is worth looking up.

[46] Observing humans from antiquity to the present, we see that the greedy, the double-dealers with no apparent sense of shame, never become true followers of Buddhism. The Buddha mentioned this in the sutras, and it is also to be found in the commentaries; there is not the least discrepancy between them.

Although I have not consulted the books on physiognomy carried by those who practice the art, I judge a person from his appearance, basing my conjecture on the implications of statements by the Buddhas and patriarchs. Eight or nine times out of ten my judgment does not differ from that of the physiognomist. In the past and at present high-minded Buddhists have come from among those with a cultivated disposition. Composing eulogies or having a taste for *waka* and linked verse are not indispensable for the practice of religion; nevertheless, those whose feelings are cultivated by such pursuits are quickly refined by the Buddha's Law, developing wisdom and a most exalted disposition. The man with a vulgar disposition may attain results if he applies himself to the religious exercises. But because of his tendency to view everything in terms of profit, he looks foolish. You would do well to teach the Law of Buddha to those with sincere disposition and gentle refinement from childhood on.

[47] As the years and months advance in these Latter Days, crookedness begins to look straight, and there are few with a sincere disposition. As a result, nothing we do can be brought to perfection.

[48] When I was living at this temple³⁴ in my youth, I had to wipe away the tears that welled up in spite of myself as I intently watched all the monks come together for prayer. The twelve watches of the day were spent entirely in diversions. They had no real faith, so that if by chance one of them came before the image of the Buddha, he would not exert himself to pray even for a moment. They were utterly uncouth in the way they carried themselves—their eyes, countenance, hands, their way of sitting, and the manner in which they circumambulated the altar. By behaving this way, they acquired no merit whatever for reciting the sutras and chanting mystic formulas but only brought disquiet to themselves by performing the rites perfunctorily so that others would notice. They did not safeguard the people nor did they require the obligation for the alms received from the faithful. Is there any doubt that they will be reborn as animals? The Buddhist with a sense of responsibility will waste few moments during the

33. *Mandara shaku*. The work is no longer extant.

34. Kōzanji on Mount Toga-no-o.

twelve watches of the day. At least, don't act as those monks did.

When such monks happen to appear in public, they have no sense of shame about how they look, performing religious ceremonies without sincerity. The ancients called this perfunctory devotion, "the prayer of a mortar going up and down." When you worship, compose your mind and feel that you are in the presence of the living Buddha. Then when you pray: "Praise to the Lord of Great Grace, the Tathagata Shakamuni," the various Buddhas and Tathagatas will guide and respond to you. Through the union of devotee and deity, you will obtain merit and eliminate sinful action. I think that such great robbers and frauds as those priests who go through life without sincere faith are not to be found even among the laity. It is despicable for them to appropriate this Teaching as a livelihood, a Teaching provided to bring sentient beings to Buddhahood by a series of Buddhas coming into the world.

[49] From the single individual at the top of society to his ten thousand subjects beneath, laymen each according to their station in life, share benefits which result from maintaining a livelihood in the family profession. After a monk abandons the world, he is not to share in such benefits. Even if he receives food and clothing from family and relations, these are just the same as alms donated by the faithful. It seriously violates the principles of Buddhism for a monk to be helped by, or to support, his relatives, simply looking out for his material needs in a faithless and idle manner instead of opening the mind-ground³⁵ and keeping his behavior unsullied by observing the precepts. When a person seriously violates these principles, he cannot escape the karma for his bad actions, and there can be no doubt that he will fall into hell. Appropriating the Law of the Buddha to his own ends, he administers the temple property saying that he prays for the country, and he accepts donations saying that he prays for the benefit of the devotee. If he prays and performs esoteric rites with the Three Activities [of body, speech and thought] undisciplined, he simply violates the precepts without compunction from morning till night. As a result, he makes the ceremonial offerings and donations as occasions for violating the Five Commandments and the Ten Grave Injunctions—a deplorable state of affairs even for these Latter Days.

It seems that those who are most deeply deluded are not even aware of their delusion; and that those who are excessively immoral are not self-critical enough to see their own excesses as a great sin. By virtue of having gravely violated the principles of Buddhism, they will surely fall into hell. So when you all consider

35. *Shinji*. The substratum of undifferentiated Consciousness to which the various forms of meditation would penetrate. "This mind-ground is the locus of religious practice promoted by the Four Houses of the Mahayana, together with the Zen sect" (Morrell 1980, p. 70).

that you have become priests, even if you are not able to comprehend the Dharma, you should at least behave with concern that you do not lose your human form [for rebirth in a lower level of existence].

[50] We should earnestly awaken our faith in the Three Treasures of Buddhism. Even if we were to hear that it is sinful to rely on the Three Treasures, what could befall us if we were immovable in our faith? When there is something we really want to do, we do it, even though we have heard that a bad act engenders bad results. But everyone believes that [far from being a sinful act], we obtain merit by trusting in the Three Treasures by virtue of the good karma from our having heard the True Law in a previous life.

[51] By laying a small tree across a narrow stream, we act to relieve another's hardship. Although the help is minimal, our sympathy for others gradually deepens and in due course brings us to unsurpassed enlightenment. Everyone somehow feels that this is so. It is simply an example of the Four Universal Methods (*shishōbōgyō*) of almsgiving, affectionate speech, altruistic conduct, and accommodation to others, which covers all the stages of Bodhisattva activity from beginning to end.

[52] The priest has no other business but to become single-minded, to perfect his religious aspiration, to eliminate occasions for wasting time, and to practice the Way of the Buddha. If he is lazy, he would do better to remove his clerical attire and become a layman, for the sins of such a priest will be grave.

For the most part, no implements are necessary for the practice of the Buddha's Way, which consists simply in waking to the sound of the wind in the pines, taking the bright moon as one's friend, and being earnest in one's comings and goings. If, alone in the practice hall, you clear your heart, what other friends do you need? And even if you were to fall into hell through some misdeed, it seems that Bodhisattvas abide even there for our salvation. Because it is said that from the very beginning there have been Bodhisattvas in hell, the place is not to be feared. One who has the proper determination to follow the Law of the Buddha is fully and immediately aware of what behavior is beyond reproach, and he strives to eliminate even his minor faults.

I write this on the second day of the sixth month in Katei 4 [1238] at Kōzanji's Akai Shobō. After making inquiries, I was able to augment the work.

His disciple, the mendicant novice, Kōshin

MYŌE thus represents the ideal monk, not the partisan leader. Hōnen's reputation rests firmly on his advocacy of the *nenbutsu*, Eisai and Dōgen are primarily associated with Zen meditation practices, and Nichiren is known for his devotion to the Lotus Sutra.

But Myōe is remembered only incidentally as the would-be reformer of Kegon. In the popular mind he is the perfect recluse, the moralist who tells us that we are to act according to our lot in life, whatever that might be among a variety of possibilities.

GLOSSARY

- Agongyō* 阿含經
Aizen Myōō 愛染明王
Akai Shobō 關伽井小坊
arubeki yō wa 阿留邊幾夜宇和
Bibasharon 鞞婆沙論
Daichidoron 大智度論
Daihatsunehangyō 大般涅槃經
dengaku 田樂
Denki 伝記
ejū myōju 衣重明珠
Engakukyō 圓覺經
Engakukyō ryakusho 圓覺經略疏
engakujō 緣覺乘
genza 驗者
gonmitsu 嚴密
Gyōjō 行狀
Hashinoku-ō 波斯匿王
hō 法
hōmetsu 法滅
Hōshakkyō 寶積經
hokkai engi 法界緣起
hotsubodaishin 發菩提心
Ikun 遺訓
Jingōji 神護寺
jissō no kotowari 實相の理
Jōben 成弁
Jōgaku 上覺
jōhari no kagami 淨頗離の鏡
Jōkei 貞慶
Jōnin 成忍
Jōshinseki 定心石
Jōshōju 繩牀樹
jūgō 十号
Jūgōkyō 十号經
ke 仮
Kegon 華嚴
Kikai 喜海
Kōben 高弁
Kokonchomonjū 古今著聞集
Kasuga gongen genki-e 春日權現繪卷
Kasuga ryūjin 春日龍神
Kōon 光音
Kōshin 高信
Kōzanji 高山寺
kū 空
Kuei-fêng Tsung-mi 圭峰宗密
Mandara shaku 萬荼羅釋
mappō 末法
Meigetsuki 明月記
Mongaku 文覺
muga 無我
mushō 無性
musō 無相
Myōe 明惠
sarugaku 猿樂
senju nenbutsu 專修念仏
Shakkyōka 釈教歌
Shasekishū 沙石集
Shinchokusenshū 新勅選集
shingo 身語
Shingonden 真言伝
shingonji 真言師
shinji 心地
shintai 真諦

shishōbōgyō 四攝法行
Shōbōnenkyō 正法念經
shōken 正見
shōmonjō 聲聞乘
 Shukaku Hōshinnō 守覺法親王
Shutsugen monki 出現間記
susuki hōshi すすき法師
 Takao 高雄
tennin (no) shi 天人の師
 Toga-no-o 梶尾

toku^a 徳
toku^b 得
tonsei^a 遁世
tonsei^b 貪世
Tsuma kagami 妻鏡
Ubasokukaikyō 優婆塞戒經
ushō 有性
Zōagongyō 雜阿含經
zokutai 俗諦

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