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REVIEWS

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On the Verge of Damnation and Buddhahood

Motherhood, Female Corporeality, and Koan Exegesis

Buddhist scriptures depict the female body according to two contrasting models. On the one hand, female flesh is the epitome of defilement that hinders proper salvation. Yet, on the other hand, the gestational body is employed as a metaphor and a model to depict the highest spiritual perfection of the Buddhist clergy. By investigating these two seemingly incompatible approaches, this article shows how these contrasting models coexisted within the same doctrinal framework in early modern Sōtō Zen secret sources. In particular, it explores a Sōtō Zen secret document from the early modern period entitled *Ise niji kirigami*, which provides the doctrinal foundation for salvific rituals directed to women who died during parturition. The peculiarity of this document is the combination of conceptualizations typically associated with female pollution with a wide range of theorizations mainly derived from esoteric discourse on the kami, the *Lotus Sūtra*, and Zen koan interpretations. Therefore, through the investigation of the affinities with koan exegesis, Buddhist scriptures, and kami-related theories, this article aims to broaden our understanding of the tools used by early modern Zen monks to theorize the female body and contribute to the ongoing debate on the representation of the female spiritual and corporeal condition in Buddhist sources.

ᴋᴇʏᴡᴏʀᴅs: female salvation—koan—*Lotus Sūtra*—Sōtō Zen—Ise—kami

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THE IMAGE of the embryo dwelling inside the womb not yet tainted by the dualism rooted in deluded reality was an ubiquitous metaphor used to describe the experience of awakening across different religious traditions (OHNUMA 2012; ANDREEVA and STEAVU 2016; LANGENBERG 2017; BUCKELEW 2018). The embryological model was also an apt image to depict the genesis of both the cosmos and the human being, given that the micro and the macro cosmos were ultimately a reflection of each other. The case of Japanese medieval Buddhism is emblematic of the generalized adoption of the gestational notions to describe the monastic experience. As many scholars have discussed, a few scriptures elaborate on the motif of fetal development, and they enrich this symbolism with cosmological theorizations that emerged in the context of Buddhism-Shinto (DOLCE 2006; ANDREEVA and STEAVU 2016; ANDREEVA 2017).

The gestational model contributed to deepening the understanding of the human body and its biological functions, especially in relation to the problematic event of death. In late medieval Zen traditions, Sōtō Zen secret documents known as *kirigami* 切紙 (paper strips) were particularly eloquent about this theme, given that funeral rites were often explained by using the metaphor of the embryo in the uterus (LICHA 2016).[1] The moment of death was thus going back to the state of non-differentiation in the mother's womb and corresponded to the ultimate spiritual perfection. Although embryology was a widely accepted hermeneutical tool among medieval religious groups, a question remains unresolved. How do these notions influence the conceptualization of the female body?

In recent years, this query has partially found an answer in the study by Anna ANDREEVA (2018), which has cast light on the intertwining of Buddhist discourse

1. *Kirigami* were used as certificates to attest to the transmission of secret teachings between master and disciple. Likely originating within medieval esoteric Tendai (STONE 2003, 101), these peculiar documents contain different kinds of notions including ritual, doctrinal, and liturgical instructions. In the premodern Sōtō school, *kirigami* were the predominant form of communication and represented a fundamental aspect of how knowledge was shared and transmitted (ISHIKAWA 2002). I use "Sōtō school" to refer to the lineage that originated in Japan with Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253). However, during the medieval period and the first part of the early modern period, the Sōtō school was composed of several lineages independent from each other and characterized by different factional identities (BODIFORD 2008, 121–138). In this context, secrecy became a tool to express these factional identities coexisting within the same school.

and the theme of female reproduction during the Heian period. Andreeva has shown that Buddhist monks were actively involved in rituals and practices directed to aristocratic women and developed manuals to tackle several aspects of pregnancy, from infertility to changing the sex of the fetus in utero. Nevertheless, the medieval period represented a major turning point in the conceptualization of female biological functions as well as of women's subjectivity (RUCH 2002; MEEKS 2010; PANDEY 2020). Indeed, these centuries presented the massive circulation of discourses about the fall into hell caused by the pollution of the female body and depicted women as intrinsically impure (MOERMAN 2005; GLASSMAN 2008; MEEKS 2020b). The wide acceptance of the apocryphal sutra *Foshuo dazang zhengjiao xuepenjing* (hereafter *Blood Bowl Sūtra*), which championed this vision, led to the identification of childbirth and parturition blood with defilement. Therefore, bodily images, albeit effective and explicative, appear to be intrinsically irreconcilable with the idea of buddhahood, for they are reminiscent of blood and dirt. How can the parallelism of the maternal womb with the attainment of buddhahood be reconciled with the impurity of the female body? Can women's flesh be at the same time the culmination of damnation and the epitome of awakening? The resolution of these doubts might be found in the large body of works pertaining to the Sōtō Zen secret sources, which turned into a discursive arena in which such concerns were expressed and shared.

For the sake of clarity, it must be noted that Sōtō Zen secret literature does not offer substantial insights about women and female salvation before the late sixteenth century. One of the few examples of how Sōtō Zen monks viewed women's roles in the monastic communities emerges from the biography and miscellaneous works of Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾 (1268–1325), known for his deep bond with his grandmother and mother. The fundamental role played by these women in Keizan's life might have influenced the establishment of the Entsūin 円通院, a convent dedicated to the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and the salvation of all women (FAURE 1996, 34–43). The generations succeeding Keizan embraced the endemic culture of secrecy (SCHEID and TEEUWEN 2015, 1–35). Hence, Sōtō Zen *kirigami* showcase an adaptation to the medieval religious horizon resulting in an interesting combination of texts and ideas transmitted within and outside Buddhist lineages.

Although these secret insights have been erroneously understood as an obsolete legacy no longer reflecting the modern face of Sōtō Zen, the enormous textual body composed of secret manuals illustrates the social and religious changes experienced by one of the most widespread Buddhist schools in premodern Japan (BODIFORD 2008, 107–134). In addition, *kirigami* are a unique repository of knowledge portraying how the premodern culture of secrecy was engendered by means of mobility of notions and people either belonging to Buddhist or non-Buddhist communities. Accordingly, the mobility endowed in secrecy is a

fundamental aspect to investigate how *kirigami* are built. Being the annotations of oral instructions, the structure of these documents does not follow one single logic; instead, it is a patchwork of logic and ideas revealing that knowledge acquisition was neither linear nor systematic, yet it epitomizes the exchanges and networks created on the ground.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the administration of funerary practices and ceremonies revolving around death shaped the contents of Sōtō Zen secret insights. In addition to providing specific ritual instructions, these secret manuals also presented to the monastic audience how funerals and commemorating ceremonies were part of their monastic practice to the extent of being an occasion to apply Zen teachings to the lived experience of monks. Hence, Zen monks acted as mediators with the afterlife by developing a wide range of death coping strategies that made possible the achievement of enlightenment (BODIFORD 1992; WILLIAMS 2009, 50–58). In this context, Sōtō Zen monks specialized in specific rituals directed to save women who died during childbirth. The extensive transmission and use of such practices in Buddhist communities are of no surprise given that death in childbirth was a common event carrying significant implications such as women's salvation, pollution, and eventually, their rebirth in hell.

This article focuses on the analysis of these discursive strategies and presents a *kirigami* from the Sōtō Zen secret textual corpus entitled *Ise niji kirigami* transmitted during the early seventeenth century that revolves around the salvation of mothers who died before or during parturition. Unlike many secret sources of this genre that succinctly provide only the ritual passages to save women deceased during pregnancy, the *Ise niji kirigami* is one of the few examples displaying the doctrinal and hermeneutical foundation to explain why Sōtō monks were required to manage such ceremonies. This article analyzes how and why the *Ise niji kirigami* drew from the medieval tradition of secrecy ranging from esoteric kami-related theories to koan commentaries to argue that the conceptualization of women's bodies was produced by the overlapping of multi-layered theorizations on liminal bodies (that is, kami) and pristine bodies (that is, the monastic body and the buddha body). Indeed, the *Ise niji kirigami* discloses the dynamics that participated in the religious construction of female salvation directed to the clerical audience by adapting the concepts deriving from medieval secrecy. Although the *Ise niji kirigami* is not entirely representative of the Sōtō school, it showcases a relevant example that offers a more dynamic interpretation about how the predominantly male clergy conceived women's bodies beyond and within gendered concepts traditionally entrenched in the impossibility of women to achieve awakening. The text also demonstrates how this understanding was integrated within the monastic practice and seen ultimately as a moment of learning and spiritual refinement.

Embodied Hell: Emplacing Damnation Within Female Flesh

The *Ise niji kirigami* provides the doctrinal foundation that allowed, and to some extent encouraged, the administration of salvific rites directed to women. The soteriological framework of the documents combines Buddhist classics and medieval religious scriptures into four motifs corresponding to each of the four sections of this article. The four paragraphs reveal the historical and cultural factors underlying the formation of this document, thereby showing how the monastic community conceptualized its relationship with the female body and, while facing the problem of parturition defilement, sidestepped the duality intrinsic to women's spiritual disposition and biological determinism through the expedient of koan exegesis.

[1] In the two graphs of *I-Se* 伊勢, *I* 伊 is the male, and *Se* 勢 is the female. The *Se* originates the human being. It is the complete force.[2] It is the inherently immutable Mahāvairocana. Heaven is the realm of the vajra realm; earth is the world of the womb: these two are the *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽. The feminine is the *bodhimaṇḍa* of the three generations of buddhas, the authentic position (*hon'i* 本位) of the treasury of the true dharma-eye, and the exquisite mind of nirvana.

[2a] Therefore, the Devadatta chapter proclaims that the instant transformation of the [dragon] girl is the state of no-origin and the fundamental principle of non-duality. [The *Lotus Sūtra*] also maintains that upon attaining the state of awakening, the dragon princess offered to the venerable one the precious jewel. She was then said to have transformed into a man.

[2b] The invaluable jewel donated in that moment is the rounded and milky pearl, which [is akin to the stage] of the muddied ocean of the universe when the fetus is not yet dwelling inside the mother's womb. Thus, the [scriptures] say, "Through the reversed spear of heaven, Mt. Sumeru opened up and [hence] the entire world formed. This is called Awajishima 淡路島. This is also known as the heavenly *qi* 気. The seven generations of heavenly gods still abide in the cloud and do not have an appearance yet." It is the [condition] before entering the womb. The father's defilement is the bones, the mother's defilement is the skin and flesh. From the union of the red and white fluids, the human [body] is formed. The center of the mother's chest corresponds to dwelling on a wet leaf. At that moment, there is no deluded mind. There is no form. Following

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2. This expression derives from the formula *hito tairaka ni umare maru chikara* 人平生丸力, "the complete force from which all human beings are born." This line is found in the Edo-period secret manual *Sangen icchi sho* 三賢一致書 (alternatively *Sangai isshin ki* 三界一心記) known for an interesting combination of kami-related concepts, esoteric Buddhism, and Zen. The words *hito* and *maru* might be an allusion to the common name Hitomaru 人丸 used to refer to the legendary poet Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂 (c. 690) and the medieval esoteric tradition centered on the literary and poetic production about Ise (Sanford 1997, 29, n. 46).

this state, the form emerges, and the five parts of the body begin to manifest. Within the tenth day, the body appears in its form, [yet] the six faculties are not yet aware of the form. [This stage] is thus called the no-birth. During the act of birth, this is the principle of all things.

[3] Being up on a tree by hanging from a branch with one's mouth designates the mother's breast. Being under the tree is leaving the womb. Therefore, we say that replying [to the question] when one is on the top of a tree is easy, replying when one is under the tree is difficult. To indicate the state of abiding inside the mother's womb, we comment that the top of the tree is the womb, [while] the base of the tree is the [act of] leaving the womb and being exposed to the myriad of sufferings [of the dualism] of cold and hot. The bare pillar[3] stands inside the womb, and it is the exact point at which the red and white fluids merge. Since even [the merging of the red and white fluids] occurs in the absence of any thoughts and [corresponds to] the attainment of one's original mind, it is also known as being covered in the red mantle (that is, the placenta).

[4] When indicating life, it is called death. For this reason, being born is dying at the sight of the many sufferings. Dying is being alive. At the time of birth, one crosses the River of the Three Destinies (*sanzu* 三途). Inside the [woman's] chest, there is the River of the Three Destinies. Drain and let flow the bloody fluid from the left side. From the right side, run out the polluted water. The water is [then] drained out from the center. These are the River of the Three Destinies. Given that the buddhas of the three generations alike know all at once the principle of original non-duality, if [the woman] attains awakening she [will be reborn] in the land of the buddhas of the ten directions. If she remains in the delusional state, she will go to the realm of the ten hells, which is also known as the [pool] of women's menstrual blood. Inside the [woman's] chest there is a black snake. [Indeed,] the experience of the sufferance [originating from] the five signs of decay and the three distresses, flows in the center [that is, the chest]. This then turns the monthly water into the menstruation flow.[4]   (Ishikawa 1993b, 133)

The *kirigami* opens with the elaboration of the two graphs of *I-Se*, a widespread allegory depicting the formation of the universe that arises from sexual union. The second paragraph deals with the famous episode of the dragon princess narrated in the *Lotus Sūtra*. The third theme introduces the conceptual combination of the practices performed to save women and koan exegesis. The

3. The bare pillar (*rochū* 露柱) designates the pillars inside the monastery perimeter that are entirely exposed. In Zen literature, the bare pillar symbolizes the state of the terse and unobstructed mind (*Foguo Yuanwu chanshi biyan lu*, т 2003, 48.208c29–209b20).

4. The document uses the terms "monthly water" (*gessui* 月水) and "menstruation flow" (*sawari* 佐波利) interchangeably. In Chinese sources, given the association between moon and tides with yin in the yin-yang correlative system, menstruation was called monthly water (*yueshui* 月水) (Chu 1980, 42). The *Ise niji kirigami* is also analyzed in Licha (2023, 257–261).

koan mentioned here is from the *Wumenguan* and serves to revise female gestation as an allegory of awakening. Lastly, the closing motif explores the consequences of rebirth in hell inscribed within the biomarkers of women's bodies, such as blood and impurity.

It must be noted that the investigation of the document in this article follows a thematic criterion. However, the *Ise niji kirigami*, and this genre of documents in general, resembles a collection of notes quickly taken during explanatory encounters with one's master. Therefore, the *Ise niji kirigami* does not follow a logical progression and simply juxtaposes different reflections about the four themes discussed in this article. Given the lack of a coherent structure, to guide the reader through the underlying logic and complexities of this kind of source, this article does not investigate the motifs according to the order in which these were originally placed in the document. Yet, the current study reshapes the main topics of the *kirigami* into an argumentative framework to illuminate the intellectual process that led to the creation of these sources. Therefore, the motifs are investigated following the order corresponding to paragraphs 4, 2a and 2b, 1, and 3 of the *Ise niji kirigami*.

These four themes are conceptually distant and, to some extent, contradict each other. In the following sections, the analysis of these motifs will reveal the composite and fragmented identity of the female corporeality, whose representation was not limited to horror and disgust. The conceptualization of the gestational body thus transcended these boundaries and existed within a semantic realm of seeming contradiction that swung between salvation and damnation, holiness and monstrosity.

The most effective manner in which to investigate the document is by first exploring the context in which it developed. The fourth paragraph introduces the theological context that inspired the *Ise niji kirigami*. Two interrelated symbolic loci emerge from this section. The first entails the agency of monks to save mothers who died during parturition, while the second deals with female defilement and its late medieval conceptualizations. In other words, the *Ise niji kirigami* encodes different doctrinal manifestations that validate the salvific intentions of Zen monks performing rituals to save women, more specifically women who died during childbirth. The longstanding religious tradition of Buddhist monks saving mothers was not a Sōtō Zen invention, nor was it developed in Japan (Cole 1998; Ohnuma 2007). Indeed, the theme of priests rescuing their mothers from a cruel destiny was a locus of tales about the life of eminent Buddhist figures (Ōsumi 1983). Several biographies contained in the *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釈書 by the Zen monk Kokan Shiren 虎関師錬 (1278–1347) illustrate the moral debt of monks to rescue their mothers from hell and, in some cases, retain a moral message that encouraged women to become mothers of eminent monks in order to be saved (Ebisawa 2007; Meeks 2010, 265–273; Sanvido 2023).

Although the *Ise niji kirigami* does not directly quote tales of monks and their mothers, the employment of these stories in the earlier ritual setting of memorial services for mothers shows the attempt to provide a rationale underlying the performance of such ceremonies, hence adding an important piece to the semantic framework in which the *Ise niji kirigami* was composed.[5] In addition, medieval narratives of filial piety emerged in tandem with the concept of female pollution, which is the central motif of the fourth paragraph. The most emblematic example of this sort is the *Blood Bowl Sūtra*. The legend of this sutra narrates that Mulian 目連, driven by deep filial piety, exercised his extrasensory powers to descend into hell and save his mother.[6] Mulian discovers that the *contrapasso* for all women is being immersed in an enormous lake of blood since their sin had been the defilement of earth spirits through their uterine fluids. Therefore, to save women and mothers from their eternal damnation, the Buddha preached this sutra, which ought to be copied to allow mothers of the past, present, and future to escape from their cruel destiny. In China, the sutra served specifically to prevent the disgraceful fall into the abyss of hell, especially for women who died during childbirth (Maekawa 2003; Meeks 2020a), which appears as an *ante litteram* formulation of the soteriological approach similarly adopted in Japan, in particular during the Edo period (Williams 2009, 50–58).

Paragraph 4 embraces this symbolic universe and relies on the enduring association that sees parturition blood as well as women's menstruation as polluted. By postulating the intrinsic uncleanness of female corporeality, this section provides the main reason why women in such circumstances necessitate the intervention of a professional Buddhist figure. The rhetorical strategy of our document is not limited to evoking the gruesome hell inscribed in the fate of women. Yet, quite tellingly, it professes the existence of such a hell within female flesh, which appears as a map of her damnation since inside her body resides two markers of the infernal afterlife, the River of the Three Destinies in her belly and the snake abiding in her chest associated with the impurity of blood.

The River of the Three Destinies is the place connecting this with the other world and is oft included in the medieval illustrations of the afterlife, such as the

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5. As Michel Mohr (2013) discusses, the Japanese Rinzai Zen monk Tōrei Enji 東嶺円慈 (1721–1792) proposed a Zen-based interpretation of the *Fumu en nanbao jing* 父母恩難報経, a Chinese scripture developed between the fifth and the sixth century that praises filial piety. Tōrei's approach to this sutra resembles the same hermeneutical strategy of the *Ise niji kirigami* and reveals the ability of Zen monks to readapt teachings from heterogeneous cultural backgrounds to their own experiences.

6. The sutra exists in many variants, and the story of Mulian visiting the afterlife differs accordingly. Another scripture deeply linked to the *Blood Bowl Sūtra*, the *Yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆経, hinges on the salvation of Mulian's mother from the realm of the hungry ghosts (Glassman 2008, 176). A historical discussion about the transmission of the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* in Japan can be found in Meeks (2020b).

FIGURE 1. Detail from Saidaiji's *Kumano mandara* 熊野曼荼羅 (undated). Kṣitigarbha helps the couple to cross the River of the Three Destinies. Courtesy of Saidaiji. © Saidaiji.

Kumano kanshin jikkai mandara 熊野観心十界曼荼羅 (hereafter, *Kumano mandara*), employed during preaching via picture scrolls (*etoki* 絵解き) between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. This mandala is organized into two sections, of which the upper one illustrates in a bridge-like structure the different stages of human life from birth to death, while the rest of the painting is dedicated to the ten realms of rebirth. In the left-hand lower section, we see a couple formed by a man and a woman crossing a bridge on the River of the Three Destinies together with the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha.

According to Michiyo Ogawa (2020, 272), the couple's salvation depended upon the successful childbirth accomplished during their lifetime. Accordingly, becoming a mother supposedly prevented the woman from being drowned eternally in the blood pool.[7] Following this explanation, it becomes clear why the *kirigami* implicitly suggests removing the uterine water by piercing three different parts of the belly, which are representative of the three branches forming the River of the Three Destinies.[8] While this exhortation is unlikely to correspond to the actual act of performing a surgical operation on the deceased female body,[9] it

7. On the relationship between mother's bodies and awakening, see Blair (2016).

8. The imagery of the River of the Three Destinies is probably inspired by an analogous Chinese locus, the Nai 奈 River as seen in the *Shiwang jing* 十王経 (Iwamoto 1979, 312–333). Moreover, starting with the *Jizō Bosatsu hosshin in'en jūō kyō* several sources suggest that each bridge to cross the river corresponds to different stages of spiritual refinement (Teiser 1994, 33). In the case of the *Jizō Bosatsu hosshin in'en jūō kyō*, the river can be crossed at the shallows of a mountain stream, at a deep river, or by a bridge (x 1: 20.404c11–13).

9. Several *kirigami* illustrate in detail how to separate the woman from the baby (*mi futatsu* 身二つ) (Ishikawa 1987; 1994). However, Sōtō monks would not perform surgical operations; rather, they were mainly responsible for the ritual function, while the procedure, if it occurred, would have been conducted by a physician (Tsutsumi 1999, 133–152; Williams 2008, 224).

might be read as an indication to assist the woman while fording the river, hence enabling the monk to play the same role as Kṣitigarbha in the *Kumano mandara*.[10] Thus, our document alludes to the operation of metaphorically removing the uterine water by opening the belly in three different parts. This indication is the only aspect that suggests the presence of a ritual and is reminiscent of other ceremonies performed for deceased pregnant women that shall be discussed later.

The second main element of the fourth paragraph states the primary reason for women's perennial castigation in hell. In other words, the five signs of decay and the three distresses (*gosui sannetsu* 五衰三熱) assume the form of a snake that abides inside the female body and turns into menstruation blood throughout her life. The conceptual overlapping of female pollution, reptile nature, and blood became a central component of medieval narratives about women's inevitable fate in the afterlife. One of the most famous examples is again from the *Kumano mandara*, which translates in visual terms the representation of this fate, echoing the descriptions of hell in the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* (Moerman 2005, 222–224). In the lower right-hand portion of the *Kumano mandara*, we see the hell of the blood pond (*chi no ike jigoku* 血の池地獄) that contains several women with serpentine features, while pedestals in the shape of a lotus flower and a lotus leaf emerge from the pond and host two women peacefully praying in white garments.

A fundamental reference to deepen our understanding of this scene is a medieval Tendai commentary to the *Blood Bowl Sūtra*, the *Ketsubonkyō dangishi*, the first commentarial edition of this sutra. As Lori Meeks discusses in a forthcoming publication, this commentary plausibly became part of sermon-stories preached by itinerant storytellers and of *otogizōshi* 御伽草子 (popular short stories) literature. In the *Ketsubonkyō dangishi*, we learn that all women without exception are reborn as snakes:

> All the women who fall into this hell are transformed into snakes. These women are snakes 20 *jō* 丈 in length. Women with minor karmic ties become snakes of 8 *jō* in length. The reptile bodies are inflicted with afflictions. These are known as the sufferings of the snake's body. There are 84,000 scales. Underneath each of these scales lie 84,000 insects that continually corrode their flesh.
>
> (Makino and Kodate 2000, 17; paraphrased in Meeks forthcoming)

The manual equates women to animals (*chikushō* 畜生) "since the present pool of blood represents the ignorance of women, they have the same mind as the animals on the blood path" (Makino and Kodate 2000, 21; Meeks forth-

10. The *Jizō Bosatsu hosshin in'en jūō kyō* comments that a woman can cross only when assisted by the man who first was fond of her (that is, her husband) (x 1: 20.404c14; Sanvido 2023).

FIGURE 2. Detail from Saidai-ji's *Kumano mandara* (undated). Women in the blood pool. Picture courtesy of Saidaiji. © Saidaiji. All rights reserved.

coming).[11] This interpretation proposes a dehumanization of the female body, whose biological characteristics are seen as a direct reflection of their spiritual capacities. Although less explicitly, the last paragraph of the *Ise niji kirigami* embraces the same vivid set of images found in the Tendai text that links sufferings to a specific marker within the body. We must avoid, however, reaching the premature conclusion that the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* textual tradition represents the only source of inspiration for the *Ise niji kirigami*.

Nevertheless, serpents were not exclusively symbolic of pollution and women's biological characteristics. On the contrary, medieval Tendai theorizations on kami point to the snake form as the manifestation (*suijaku* 垂迹) of deities who, to save sentient beings, "dimmed their light and mingled with the dust of the world" (*wakō dōjin* 和光同塵). For instance, the Tendai compendium *Keiran shūyōshū* proclaims that humans and kami thoroughly incarnate the three poisons and, as such, encapsulate a reptile essence (T 2410, 76.517c17–19; translated in ANDREEVA 2017, 228). Accordingly, the reptile essence endowed in both kami and humans symbolizes the non-duality of ignorance and ultimate reality; the rhetoric adopted in the *Ise niji kirigami* to describe the female condition is likely reminiscent of the esoteric Buddhist discourse on kami.

Indeed, the ontological affinity between reptile creatures and women is stated clearly in the *Ise niji kirigami*, given that female sufferance is symbolized by the five signs of decay and the three distresses. This concept was largely adopted in

11. As MEEKS (forthcoming) points out, another important aspect of this text is the characterization of the menstrual blood as the origin of all sentient beings' afflictions.

medieval Japan to explain the ontological condition of female kami. *Otogizōshi* literature, for instance, offers several narrative examples in which female deities would beg for monastic intervention to achieve salvation, which was hindered by the five signs of decay and the three distresses. These tales frequently feature dragon deities such as Benzaiten 弁才天 and stage a common literary trope that is the bestowal of the robe and the creation of a unique connection with the Buddhist clergy, often represented by a Zen monk (Yamamoto 1993, 122–124; Itō 2012, 181–184). Therefore, the representation of female salvation as depicted in late medieval sources existed inseparably from theories about kami ontology, given the physical and spiritual affinity between women and kami (Itō 2012, 184).[12]

By the Edo period, the ontological affinity between women and kami came to be a stable component of funerary rhetoric. For instance, a seventeenth-century manual conceptually linked to the *Ise niji kirigami*, the *Tainai goi mandara*, adopts the embryological scheme of the five phases inside the womb to illustrate the changes occurring between death and the subsequent rebirth.[13] This text equates the maternal womb to the shrine of the kami, and thus the fetus dwelling inside the womb is the kami. Although this commentary does not embrace the serpentine symbolism, it adopts kami-related knowledge to describe the gestation in the womb, hence applying such interpretative tools to female corporeality (Nakahara, Yoneda, and Gōto 2018, 476).

Hence, the *Ise niji kirigami* appears to be embedded in the dense cluster of references that flourished during the medieval period, when the snake symbolism was assimilated in the Buddhist discourse on the kami and resulted in innumerable ritual formulations, theoretical elaborations, and vivid iconographies (Andreeva 2017, 306–307; Itō 1997, 67–68). In other words, the representation of the woman's afflictions as a snake inside her breast is the result of a theoretical cluster that derives from both the visual illustrations and the commentarial tradition of the *Blood Bowl Sūtra*, and the theory of the reptile essence inherited

12. Itō (2012) notes that this discourse was intertwined with another crucial issue represented by the gender of Amaterasu and their role in the imperial genealogy. Being the primary ancestor of imperial lore, in Buddhist-Shinto sources Amaterasu was frequently considered a male being in order to avoid the problem of pollution and the inability to achieve awakening linked to female deities.

13. The *Tainai goi mandara* was transmitted among the monks at the Shingon temple Kongōji 金剛寺 (Shiga Prefecture). This manual records verbatim quotations from the *Ise niji kirigami*, thus suggesting a connection between these two sources. Other Zen-esoteric texts, such as the *Sangen icchi sho*, adapt kami-related concepts to the process of gestations (see Sanford 1997; Hirose 2012; 2013). These concepts became so common during the Edo period to the extent of being reshaped in educational manuals such as the *Onna chōhōki*, which explains the development occurring during the ten months spent inside the womb (Nagatomo 1993, 86–108). A Sōtō *kirigami* from the early modern period, the *Taijū sagashi no kirigami* 体中サガシノ切カミ, displays a similar elaboration (Ishikawa 2001, 454; Licha 2016, 503–506).

in humans and deities. It is noteworthy that, as YAMAMOTO Hiroko (1993, 251) suggests, the medieval conceptualizations on the serpent-kami—especially in the *Keiran shūyōshū*—echoed the episode of the dragon princess in the *Lotus Sūtra* and inspired the creation of an intricate network of theories. The *Keiran shūyōshū* explains that the dragon princess appeared in front of the Buddha on Vulture Peak as a snake sixteen *jō* in length, thus the original state of all sentient beings is a serpent. By awakening this original state, the princess achieved buddhahood (T 2410, 76.517c24–28; TEEUWEN 2000, 104). Although the serpentine nature of kami and dragon-women is reminiscent of negative and malevolent characteristics, in the Buddhist-Shinto reading of the *Lotus Sūtra* it conveys the inherent enlightenment of these liminal creatures by virtue of the principle of buddhahood in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成仏) (TEEUWEN 2000, 104).

In exploring the common serpentine nature of deities and the human being, these conceptualizations reverberate several characteristics considered to be representative of women. Thus, it is not by chance that the *Ise niji kirigami* reports the episode of the dragon princess, thereby establishing this implicit connection. In other words, women—like kami and dragons—are potentially suitable for salvation, yet they require Buddhist monastic intervention to achieve awakening. The next section explores how the Buddhist-kami medieval *écriture* about the dragon princess exerted their influence on the ontological conceptualization of female dragons in Sōtō Zen's foundational tales (*engi* 縁起), thereby contributing to the hermeneutical principles adopted to explain the relationship between Sōtō monks and female creatures who were to be saved.

Woman, Dragon, Deity: The Female Being as Antagonist, Donor, and Protector of the Dharma

Paragraphs 2a and 2b of the *Ise niji kirigami* refer to the dragon princess parable to introduce the theme of female salvation. This famous tale appears in the chapter on Devadatta in the *Lotus Sūtra* (chapter 12 in Kumārajīva's translation), in which Mañjuśrī praises the story of the princess as the epitome of the perfect awakening quickly attained (WATSON 1993, 182–190). The story is emblematic for illustrating the spiritual perfection achieved by a nonhuman, young, and female being and served the purpose of narrating female enlightenment, which was nonetheless possible upon certain conditions. The *Ise niji kirigami* mentions one of these conditions, which is among the most debated components of the story: the bodily transformation from the female to the male form. Stephanie BALKWILL (2018) has read this element of the story as a skillful means used by the princess to prove her worth to the skeptical male arhats and disciples in front of her. Thus, her sex change does not represent a precondition for her spiritual

progression.[14] In our document, the sex-change theme is tied to another motif: the donation of the jewel. The *Ise niji kirigami* explicitly mentions the excerpt from the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the dragon girl offers the wish-fulfilling jewel to the Buddha. Sōtō Zen tales and records combine these two themes to narrate the role of the dragon princess as a giver and a protector of the dharma. In other words, while the dragon princess undergoes a transformation, it does not exclusively concern her gender but also her spiritual disposition towards the dharma. Such an interpretation better illuminates why the *Ise niji kirigami* incorporates this tale. The vicissitudes of the princess mentioned in the documents represent a locus classicus when narrating female enlightenment, yet it also indirectly suggests the soteriological path that the woman must follow to obtain salvation.

Can reptile dragon-women mediate with divinity and embody the innermost meaning of the dharma? This is the pivotal matter that guided numerous medieval Buddhist exegetes in their mythological construction of the dragon princess as the donor, transmitter, and guard of the Buddha's teachings. The *Lotus Sūtra* episode of the dragon princess inspired the depiction of women as givers, thereby establishing a new narrative pattern that weaved together women, the dragon princess, and the jewel (Ruppert 2000, 193–230; Meeks 2010, 141–155). In addition, medieval commentaries produced within the Buddhist-Shinto lineages expanded this motif and carved a new role for the princess within the transmission of secret insights (Faure 2015, 235–271). A poignant example is that of the *Reikiki*, one of the fundamental scriptures of Ryōbu Shintō 両部神道, which illustrates the legend of the origination of the kami initiation (*jingi kanjō* 神祇灌頂) (Rambelli 2002). The text mentions a succinct description about how this manual was first conceived, claiming that an unnamed emperor entered the secret consecration platform (*himitsu kanjō dan* 秘密灌頂壇) to receive the profound teachings about the way of the kami from the dragon deity (ST 88: 42).

Medieval scholar-monks strove to fill the genealogical gap of the *Reikiki* by adding essential details about the identity of both the unnamed emperor and the dragon deity. Eventually, the two mysterious figures were identified with Emperor Daigo 醍醐 (885–930) and the dragon-woman abiding in the pond of Shinsen'en 神泉苑 garden of the Imperial Palace precincts (*Reiki kikigaki* in ST 88: 213; translated in Rambelli 2002, 280). As Fabio Rambelli (2002) notes, the secret text given by the dragon woman to the sovereign recalls the episode of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the donation of the jewel, thus suggesting that the dragon deity was the princess from the scripture.

14. Balkwill (2021) investigates several Chinese examples in which the transformation of the female body is challenged by young, female, and non-monastic women who reject the spiritual supremacy of men. On the idea of bodily transformation as skillful means, see Sunim (1999).

Another secret manual, the *Jindaikan shikenbun* handed down within the same textual lineage, identifies the dragon woman with an emissary of Amaterasu who appeared in front of Emperor Daigo to guide him through the obtainment of the most recondite meaning inherent in the imperial regalia (ST 90: 563; RAMBELLI 2002, 280). This version of the story reveals the attempt by medieval exegetes to forge and cement the bond between the dragon princess, buddha-kami kinship, and the imperial genealogy. The textual corpus inspired by the *Reikiki* is of particular interest to grasp the medieval construction of the archetypal feminine and introduces two themes embroidered in the *Ise niji kirigami*. The first is the dragon girl depicted as the donor of both material (manuals or texts) and intangible gifts (secret insights) concerning Buddhist-Shinto cosmology. The second relevant aspect is the bond with Amaterasu and, indirectly, the female deities' kinship. In other words, the rewritings of the dragon princess's story add another interpretative layer to her persona. While symbolizing women's enlightenment, this nonhuman female creature embodies different aspects of the supernatural female agency exerted within the androcentric Buddhist world.

Sōtō Zen foundational narratives and hagiographies expand the motif of the gift exchange with dragon creatures by combining it with components emerging from the intercultural mingling with other traditions and local beliefs. The *Getsuan Ryōen Zenji gyōjō*, a historical record about the Sōtō master Getsuan Ryōen 月庵良円 (1348–1425), epitomizes the classic trope of the encounter between Zen monks and dragons. This text narrates that during a sermon Getsuan's attention was captured by a woman. She introduces herself as a deity from China who has been protecting the community surrounding Getsuan's temple, Sōkōji 總光寺 (Yamagata Prefecture). Despite her supernatural powers, the woman confessed her afflictions represented by the five signs of decay and the three distresses—a physical and spiritual condition common to women, dragons, and female deities—and asked Getsuan to liberate her. After a few days, Getsuan bestowed her with the bodhisattva precepts along with the Sōtō Zen blood lineage chart. The dialogue that follows this scene illuminates the conceptual framework to which such a narrative belonged:

> In the remote past, during the *Lotus Sūtra* assembly on Vulture Peak, a dragon girl donated to the Buddha the single luminous pearl. At this very moment, in the dharma-transmission room, I bestow the master [Getsuan] with these objects. Accept [my offer] without any hesitation, so that past and present may become one (*ittetsu* 一轍). (ZSSZ 10: 558–559)

Getsuan welcomed the woman's gift and proclaimed that the transmission that occurred in the room must remain a secret to posterity.[15] This short episode is packed with references that pertain to the same symbolic world that originated in the *Ise niji kirigami*. Although the record does not explicitly recognize the enigmatic woman as a dragon, several components reveal her serpentine nature. In particular, the woman establishes a clear connection with the dragon princess from the *Lotus Sūtra* by interpreting her gift of the three objects as a reenactment of the episode from the scripture. In erasing any temporal and spatial distance, she proclaims herself to be a manifestation of the dragon princess and ties an analogous symbolic knot with Getsuan as the one sealed between the princess and Śākyamuni.

A variation of this tale hinging on the donation of immaterial gifts appears in the record narrating the dharma succession of Tsūgen Jakurei 通幻寂霊 (1322–1391) at Eitakuji 永沢寺 (Hyogo Prefecture). The story recounts a mysterious creature that identified as "a dragon bearing deluded karma" whose presence caused uncontrolled meteorological disasters. Upon the bestowal of the precepts by Tsūgen, the creature instantly dissolved into the clouds and transformed herself into the protecting guardian of the mountain and its temple (*Nihon tōjō rentō roku* in ssz 16: 276). In the case of Tsūgen's legend, the attainment of buddhahood and inclusion into the Buddhist lineage are rewarded through the restoration of the social order and cessation of uncontrolled meteorological phenomena. Converted into an ally of the dharma, the dragon woman thus manifests her eternal commitment to protect the temple and its community.

How does the logic of the gift in these tales apply to our *kirigami*? We must recall that the *Ise niji kirigami* deals with the dramatic event of premature death during childbirth. By the beginning of the Edo period, such a theme had come to be a common narrative strand in literary and religious sources, which variously depicted the so-called *ubume* 産女, a woman who died during parturition (SHIMAZAKI 2011). As Hank GLASSMAN (2008, 191–195) points out, not only do the *ubume* stories disclose the physical consequences but also the deep psychological ramifications of childbirth. In some cases, the *ubume* was associated with mythological creatures such as foxes and identified as an indomitable spirit capable of subverting the social order with her liminal presence. Moreover, since the *ubume* resides near water streams or rivers, Edo-period sources have identified this place with the aforementioned River of the Three Destinies that separates this world from the afterlife. The *ubume* was also linked to aquatic creatures like reptiles, thereby sharing a kindred nature with dragons (YASUI 2020).

15. The dragon woman donated to Getsuan a coin, a small bell, and a plate to mix and dilute the black ink to paint the teeth. On the elaboration of the dragon princess episode in *engi* literature, see ABÉ (2015).

The textual body of Sōtō *kirigami* includes the *Ubume kirigami*, which prescribes the recitation of phrases that infuse in the woman a benevolent spiritual disposition and guide her to show signs of repentance induced by the power of the three dharma-treasures (Ishikawa 1987, 188; Sanvido 2023). These instructions suggest that these women were perceived as agents of social destruction, and only the power of the dharma could placate them. This ritual takes place in several passages including the purification of the body, the tonsure of the woman, the explanation and bestowal of the precepts, and the practice of writing Sanskrit syllables on the woman's face and body along with the name of the ten buddhas. The monk would also transmit the precepts of Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1263–1323)—a practice not mentioned in Zhongfeng's set of regulations for purity, the *Huanzhu jiaxun* 幻住家訓—and consisting of a prayer directed to the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha to achieve awakening (Ishikawa 1987, 175).[16] The ceremony culminated with the inscription on the woman's chest of an encircled character for mind (*shin* 心).

The practices described in the *Ubume kirigami* had the function of purifying both the body and the mind of the woman, for her gender, along with her death in childbirth, represented two major forms of defilement. The development of such ritual strategies remedies the general belief that women who died during parturition would have returned to cast their curse on the living, given their tormented souls that hindered salvation. Consequently, these supernatural manifestations, while being narrative expedients, were nonetheless an integral part of lived reality, thereby inspiring the creation of ritual responses that could cope with the social and spiritual fear experienced by both the family and the woman herself. To some extent, the gruesome transformation of the *ubume* echoes similar characteristics of nonhuman beings such as dragons that threatened communities and temples. Therefore, the *kirigami* on female salvation, as well as Sōtō tales, have in common an analogous conceptual framework directed to strengthen the transforming power of the precepts and rituals, which were able to turn even dangerous creatures into protectors of the dharma. In other words, the allusion to the gender transformation mentioned in the *Ise niji kirigami* can be interpreted in terms of spiritual change following the embrace of the dharma and culminating in the tacit vow to become a guardian of the temple community.

The performance of such rituals was embedded in the relationship of mutual obligation between the monk and the creature to pacify—being a dragon or a

16. The creation of such practices was linked to the widespread faith in Kṣitigarbha, which was also connected to the cult of the ten kings, and the belief in the thirteen buddhas (Ishikawa 1985, 486–487). In Edo-period Sōtō temples, the propagation of the *Blood Bowl Sūtra* occurred in tandem with the faith in the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, who was frequently invoked and prayed to during funerals for laywomen (Williams 2009, 50–51).

woman—since the acceptance of the precepts corresponds to the tacit promise of not haunting the living. Therefore, the reciprocity at the foundation of this act is reminiscent of the dragon princess's donation of the jewel and bears kindred symbolic implications. Whereas the depiction of the female body in paragraph 4 of the *Ise niji kirigami* accorded to an aesthetic of repulsion by evoking disgust-inspiring representations, the motif of the donation of the jewel invests the feminine self with a certain degree of agency (Wilson 1996, 77–111; Langenberg 2017, 75–94, 153–179). This depiction was by no means an attempt to remedy deeply ingrained gender imbalances. However, the capacity of changing the world with the agency endowed in their supernatural powers, as well as becoming vessels and protectors of the dharma, resembles other creatures with a similar nature, such as kami, and evokes an ideal kinship between women and nonhuman beings.

As previously mentioned, Buddhist commentaries on the kami such as the *Jindaikan shikenbun* established a direct connection between the dragon princess and the kami pantheon, emphasizing the kinship bond between Amaterasu and the princess. Of particular importance for the present argument is a widely known commentarial edition of the *Lotus Sūtra* by the Tendai monk Eishin 栄心 (d. 1546), the *Hokekyō jikidan shō*, which narrates the reincarnation of the dragon princess and her sisters in Japan. Here, we discover that Seiryō Gongen 清滝権現, the protecting deity of Daigoji 醍醐寺, is the second daughter of the Dragon King Sāgara and manifested in the archipelago as Princess Tamayori 玉依. The elder daughter of the dragon king, that is, the dragon princess from the *Lotus Sūtra*, is Princess Toyotama 豊玉 and corresponds to the illuminating deity (*myōjin* 明神) of Buzen 豊前 Province and its surrounding mountains. Lastly, the younger dragon daughter is the illuminating deity of Itsukushima 厳島 (*Hokekyō jikidan shō*, fasc. 7: 28b–29a).

The *Hokekyō jikidan shō* is only one among the many examples illustrating the divine kinship existing between female deities (Tanaka 1993, 13–47). For instance, the *Jingi keizu*, a genealogy of gods by the Tendai priest Ryōhen 良遍 (d.u.), further enriches the tale in the *Hokekyō jikidan shō*. This chart presents Princess Toyotama and her sister Princess Tamayori (also glossed in the text as Seiryū Gongen) as the daughters of Izanami and Izanagi. Accordingly, Amaterasu and the two princesses share the same ancestors, thus making Amaterasu a direct descendant of the dragons (st 90: 604). The textual strands developing the reincarnation of the dragon daughters in Japan, regardless of minor discrepancies, display related ontological characteristics shared among these female creatures, such as their connection with water and, in turn, with fertility; the linkage with pregnancy; and the inclusion in the imperial genealogy. Of particular interest for this study is the role of the dragon princess in the process of cosmological gestation that created the universe and the divine kinship crowned by Amaterasu.

The Buddhist-Shinto elaborations on the relation between Amaterasu and the dragon princess were echoed and further expanded by other traditions such as Shugendo groups. To understand this linkage, we must recall that the passage from the *Hokekyō jikidan shō* cited earlier argues that the worldly manifestation of the eight-year dragon princess in Japan is the illuminating deity of the mountains located in Buzen (Fukuoka Prefecture). Buzen is the cradle of the Shugendo tradition based at the sacred mountain of Kubote 求菩提. From the Heian to the Edo period, Mt. Kubote hosted the Tendai temple Gokokuji 護国寺, serving as a center for Shugendo ascetics. The proximity to Gokokuji, along with the influence of Tendai practices, culminated in the centrality of the *Lotus Sūtra* within many beliefs and rituals performed in this area. The *Tenjin shichidai Chijin godai*, an undated document related to this tradition, explains the process of the creation of Japan and its deities by adapting the dragon princess parable. Here, the dragon princess is conceived not so much for her ability to achieve awakening, yet she is endowed with gestational characteristics derived from her role in the generation of the cosmos. The text cements the connection between the princess and fertility by establishing the association with Kaya no hime no kami 鹿屋野比売神, the protector of fields and meadows who represents abundance and fecundity. In the *Tenjin shichidai Chijin godai*, the dragon princess's role in the cosmological gestation hinges on the transmission of the wish-granting jewel. The text states that the dragon girl received the jewel from the dragon palace, traveled to India to visit the Buddha, and donated the pearl to him. The jewel then became the drop that originated the universe. The Buddha and the dragon princess thus double the heavenly couple of Izanagi and Izanami, the Buddha being the former and the dragon princess the latter. Being the body of the dragon princess, the receptacle that encloses the "primeval white brine," which is the precious jewel, Amaterasu and the dragon princess are one and the same since they are formed by the same substance (Shigematsu 1969, 107).

In the *Tenjin shichidai Chijin godai*, the drop of brine that originates the first island dwells inside the dragon princess's body, which is composed of the substance that created the entire universe and is the same as Amaterasu. Likewise, the *Ise niji kirigami* collocates the dragon princess's "milky pearl" within the generation of the cosmos, as it is "akin to the stage of the muddied ocean of the universe when the fetus is not yet dwelling inside the mother's womb." This reading of the jewel adds another hermeneutical layer to the parable of the dragon princess, resulting in a twofold symbolism endowed in the jewel. On the one hand, as mentioned earlier, in paragraph 2a, the pearl establishes a mutual obligation between the monk and the woman. Therefore, the object is representative of the individual experience of the woman and expresses the bond with the monk who is responsible for her salvation. Yet, paragraph 2b presents another analysis that

associates the jewel with the cosmological arising. In addition, the pearl is also evocative of a non-subjective experience that manifests through the metaphor of cosmological gestation. In other words, the gift of the pearl is paired with cosmological and gestational theories to convey the state of non-differentiation that precedes the moment of birth.

Birth at "I-Se": Gestational Metaphors and Imperial Symbology

The third thematic thread of our document presented in the opening paragraph of the *Ise niji kirigami* concerns the hermeneutical elaborations rooted in the multiple semantic ramifications of the term "*I-Se*." The conceptualizations of *I-Se* introduce two fundamental aspects that illuminate the context of production in which the *Ise niji kirigami* originated. First, the *Ise niji kirigami* reveals how medieval notions revolving around Buddhist embryology—as in the case of the *I-Se* paradigm—were readapted and applied to interpret conception and birth. Far from being just a metaphor for the highest spiritual achievement of the Buddhist clergy, the gestational model expressed by the union of the two graphs of *I-Se* was indeed an apt theory to describe the female experience of parturition. Second, the context that inspired the *Ise niji kirigami* is ascribable to the relation between Zen and Ise as "divine capital" (Breen and Teeuwen 2017), intended here in the broader sense of the intellectual, literary, and religious products that derived from the Ise complex and its central deity Amaterasu.

The polysemy endowed in the characters *I-Se* unravels the dense entanglement of discourses circulating among different fields of knowledge and textual traditions in medieval Japan. The common ground of these fields was the intrinsic secret nature of their transmission. The semantic elaboration of the word "*I-Se*" initially developed within the framework of poetic commentaries clearly reflects the impact of Buddhist doctrinal speculations produced within the context of Shingon and Tendai groups, as well as the mixture of kami cults and yin-yang divination (*onmyōdō* 陰陽道) practices (Klein 2003).

In the *Jingi kanjo kegyō sahō* 神祇灌頂加行作法, ritual instructions on the *jingi kanjō* in Goryū Shintō 御流神道, we read the same line that opens the *Ise niji kirigami*: "As for the two graphs of *I-Se*, *I* is the male, and *Se* is the female. The two graphs of *I-Se* are the force that originates the human being" (Itō 2011, 485; Faure 2000). This interpretation derives from the association of *I-Se* with the masculine (*I*) and the feminine (*Se*), whose union is symbolized by the merging of the white fluid (semen) and the red fluid (blood) (literally, the merging of the two drops [*niteki wagō* 二滴和合]). The sexual union is thus the epitome of a single and unified entity and expresses the understanding of reality from the standpoint of the enlightened ones (Klein 1998).

While esoteric manuals extensively applied the pervasive imagery of *I-Se* to add a more nuanced understanding of awakening (Itō 2011, 482–483), the *Ise niji kirigami* reshapes this concept on the actual event of childbirth. In this way, gestation-derived notions are not merely narrative expedients to illustrate the male experience of spiritual progression, but they also provide an apt theorization to illuminate the interrelated biological and soteriological processes of the female body. What is striking about the hermeneutical framework of the *Ise niji kirigami* is that it employs the allegory of the female corporeality to explain the condition of the woman's body entrapped in an eternal gestation, thereby resolving the ontological impasse of childbirth death, which becomes a form of liberation rather than unavoidable damnation.

Yet the *Ise niji kirigami* is not an isolated example displaying the readaptation of the *I-Se* theories to the event of childbirth. Other early modern Sōtō *kirigami* describe how to create amulets inspired by the concept of *I-Se* to protect women during delivery.[17] Among these, the *Nansan fu kirigami* illustrates how to craft the amulets for difficult births. During such occasions, the monk divided a soybean (*shiromame* 白豆, also referred to as *daizu* 大豆) into two parts. On one half, the ritual performer was required to write the character "*I*," while on the other half "*Se*." The *kirigami* also instructs where to collocate the two halves of the bean. During labor, the first half was momentarily placed on the woman's mouth, and the second half on the birth opening (*sanmon* 産門). This ceremony was then followed by the chanting of the *dhāraṇī* of Vairocana Tathāgata (*kōmyō shingon* 光明真言), which had the function of eliminating any trace of evil karma that might have hindered a prosperous birth and concluded by offering hot purifying water to the woman. Another untitled variant of this document, while reporting identical directions, also depicts the graphic shape of the talisman. The instructions prescribe to write a ritual formula on a piece of paper four *sun* 寸 (roughly twelve centimeters) in length. At the center of the paper rectangle in larger characters there is an homage to the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (*Namu Kanzeon Bosatsu* 南無観世音菩薩). On the upper section, annotated in similar writing, we read the inscription "Ise," while on the lower part, in smaller ideograms, the amulet blesses the woman for a "safe and serene delivery and a virtuous child" (*anrakusan fukushi* 安楽産福子) (Ishikawa 1993a, 111–112).

One may wonder about the degree to which these practices were representative of the knowledge about pregnancy and the female body in the late medieval and early modern periods. Although these *kirigami*, as well as the *Ise niji kirigami*, were certainly directed to a monastic audience, the healing power of

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17. Duncan Williams (2009, 52–55) has extensively discussed the distribution of talismans directed to women and promoted by Sōtō Zen temples.

I-Se in the context of parturition also became widely known among women. The *Onna chōhōki*, a famous early modern educational guidebook for women, suggests writing the word *I-Se* on a piece of paper to use it as a talisman during difficult childbirths. This guide proclaims that the rationale underlying the *I-Se* talismans derives from the expression "the complete force from which all human beings are born" (*hito tairaka ni umare maru chikara* 人平生丸力), the same words evoked at the beginning of the *Ise niji kirigami*. The woman who contemplates the two characters of *I-Se* and reads in there the aforementioned expression would give birth by means of extraordinary powers (*jinriki* 神力) (Nagatomo 1993, 108). Accordingly, at least during the seventeenth century, women were knowledgeable about the protecting function of *I-Se*, which is presented here as a powerful spell capable of generating a supernatural force that enters the woman's body to help her during parturition. Therefore, the creation of talismans rooted in the parading of *I-Se* suggests that this theoretical framework served as the conceptual blueprint to describe the moment of birth as well as the spiritual and biological implications of parturition. Indeed, the *Ise niji kirigami* translates in doctrinal terms the logic underlying the practices described, for instance, in the *Nansan fu kirigami* and the *Onna chōhōki*. In addition, the *Ise niji kirigami* reveals that gestational notions initially developed in the context of Buddhism-Shinto to explain the principle of non-duality between the opposite pairs of male-female and human-kami were applied to the actual moment of childbirth and the female condition.

Nevertheless, the adoption of the *I-Se* paradigm was one of the consequences of a much broader cultural evolution that involved the interest of Zen monks towards Ise and its related matters. Indeed, the readaptation of the *I-Se* semantic framework in Sōtō Zen *kirigami* pertains to the Buddhist gaze on Ise and its central kami Amaterasu that likely stemmed from the crisis of the Ise Shrines during the fifteenth century.[18] One of the aspects that emerged from this exchange is the arising of a new genre of secret insights aimed at transmitting the Buddhist interpretation of the three sacred treasures (*sanshu no jingi* 三種神器): the mirror, the bead strand, and the sword (Hirose 2012). Such *kirigami* dedicated particular attention to the transmission of the sword, as seen in a series of *kirigami* known

18. The systematic production of knowledge centered on Ise in Sōtō Zen *kirigami* derived from the weakening of the shrines in the late fifteenth century. During this time, the Ise shrines experienced a decline, accelerated by the burning of the outer shrine in 1486, followed by another fire in 1489. Several actors took advantage of this situation to claim their agency over Ise and its divine capital (Breen and Teeuwen 2017, 116–120). Although Yoshida Kanetomo 吉田兼倶 (1435–1511) was the most successful, Sōtō monks' theorizations of Ise were linked to the Ise shrines, revealing an attempt to inscribe their authority on the real and symbolic space of Ise. Nevertheless, Sōtō Zen *kirigami* in Ise and the imperial symbology also drew on the historical precedents depicting the devotion of Zen monks toward Amaterasu. I am indebted to William Bodiford for pointing this out.

as *Ipponken kirigami*. The *Ipponken kirigami* opens with the inscription "secret oral instructions about the two graphs of *I-Se*," which is topped by another gloss reporting that the heaven corresponds to yang, while the earth is the yin. Following these two glosses, we find three different illustrations depicting the three regalia and explained through the gestational metaphor derived from the two graphs of *I-Se*. The first one illustrates the case containing the divine jewel (*shinji* 神爾), accompanied by the comment, "The state preceding the separation of heaven and earth is the case [containing the jewel] kept with the lid [closed]. [Again], it is the seven generations of heavenly kami" (see FIGURE 3).

The second chart depicts the sword paired with two inscriptions on each side. On the right, the explanation reads, "Jeweled Sword, Izanagi no mikoto." On the left side, the inscription reports, "the cutting instrument: thus the facing part of the grass, trees, and leaves are the same as the sword" (see FIGURE 4).

Lastly, we have a circle representing the mirror. The stylized mirror is connected through lines with four glosses that, from right to left, recite,

> Izanami no mikoto as the hidden deity; the sacred mirror; the myriad of phenomena, [such as] grass and trees reflect in the mirror. Being the manifold phenomena reflected as such, their forms are conceived; the circular form [of the mirror] is the shape of the sea. It is the internal verification of the empty circle. It is the body of the full moon (see FIGURE 5).

In other words, the three imperial objects correspond to different components of the cosmology inspired by medieval mythology. Thus, the jewel is the unity of heaven and earth, while being reminiscent of the pearl donated by the dragon princess. On the other hand, the sword and the mirror represent respectively Izanagi (the masculine and the yang) and Izanami (the feminine and the yin).

The three diagrams are paired with a type of koan commentary known as *daigo* 代語 (literally, substituting words), in which the master and his disciple discuss the symbolism of the three jewels, with particular emphasis on the sword. In this dialogue, the sword is said to be reminiscent of the blade extracted by Susanoo from the serpent's tail. The *kirigami* refers here to the legend of Susanoo and the Yamata no orochi, the eight-headed and eight-tailed legendary serpent-dragon narrated in the *Kojiki* 古事記 and the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀. In the story, Susanoo, amid the battle against the beast, discovered a sword hidden in one of its tails. Upon successfully defeating the monster, Susanoo donated the object to Amaterasu, hoping to receive her forgiveness for his disruptive behavior (BORGEN and URY 1990, 79–81).

The *Ise niji kirigami* is, in all likelihood, the product of these intellectual ramifications. In fact, in the case of Sōtō, the description of the women's corporeality and their biological functions did not necessarily derive from the textual corpus
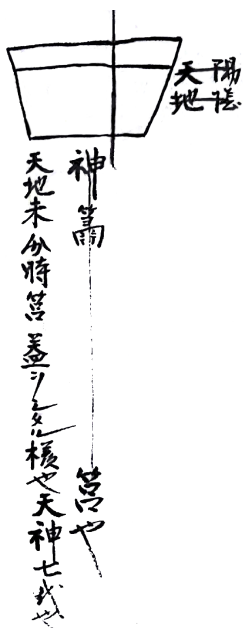
FIGURE 3. The case containing the divine jewel. Line art by the author based on the *Ipponken kirigami* from Sōrinji (1585). © Marta Sanvido. All rights reserved.
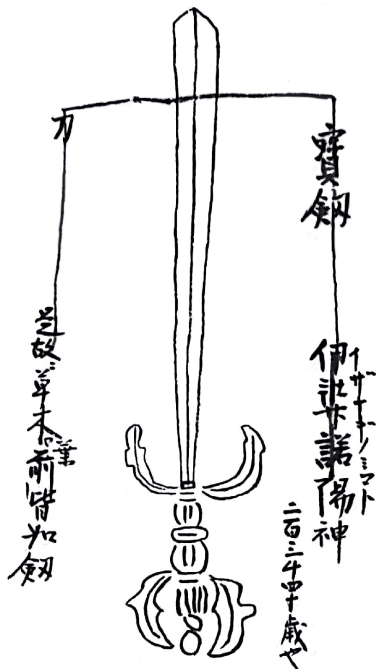

FIGURE 4. The sword. Line art by the author based on the *Ipponken kirigami* from Sōrinji (1585). © Marta Sanvido. All rights reserved.
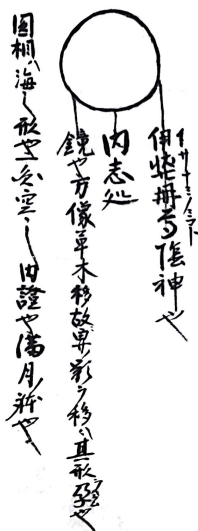

FIGURE 5. The mirror. Line art by the author based on the *Ipponken kirigami* from Sōrinji (1585). © Marta Sanvido. All rights reserved.

dealing with female salvation. On the contrary, the *Ipponken kirigami* shows that the gestational theories about *I-Se* were initially integrated within Sōtō's doctrines to forge a connection between the imperial imaginary and Zen teachings. It thus seems evident that Zen monks were keen to nurture their relationship with the imperial symbolism, yet they were also determined to provide their own interpretation of these matters.

Stable relations between Zen monks and the Ise complex were established well before the creation of the *Ipponken kirigami*, extending the influence of this connection over the following centuries. During the thirteenth century, the lineage of the Shōichi monk Chikotsu Daie 痴兀大慧 (d. 1312) founded one of its major temples, An'yōji 安養寺, at Ise. Chikotsu became an ardent advocate of the so-called union of Zen and esoteric Buddhism (*Zen mitsu kenshū* 禅密兼修), given his attempt to combine the Zen and esoteric teachings into a unified doctrinal framework. An'yōji was thus one of the most prominent religious centers of the amalgamation of Zen and esoteric teachings at the time and a pioneering example of the relation between Zen and shrines such as Ise (Takagi 2000; Itō 2018, 674).[19]

The devotion towards the Ise shrines predominantly manifested in the form of pilgrimages made by Zen monks to honor the Ise main deity, Amaterasu. The fourteenth-century short account *Tenshō daijin sōden kesa ki* narrates how a famous monk pertaining to another Zen faction, Muhon Kakushin 無本覚心 (1207–1298), the founder of the Gozan 五山 lineage Hōttō 法燈, donated the Zen robe to Amaterasu. Muhon is said to have been bestowed with the *kāṣāya* made from lily-root fiber (*kesa* 袈裟) on Mt. Tiantai 天台 in China. During his pilgrimage to Ise, soon after returning from China, Muhon would have offered the robe to Amaterasu. Later, this same robe was donated from Amaterasu to a monk from the Shōichi group, Beppō Daishu 別峰大殊 (1321–1402) (DNK, 309–312; paraphrased in Faure 1996, 107). The short story illustrating the circulation of Muhon's robe reveals crucial details that developed within the Buddhist network established at Ise. Beppō, while being a Shōichi priest, spent part of his educational years with a leading figure of the Hōttō group, Kohō Kakumyō 孤峰覚明 (1271–1361). Kohō cultivated the connection established by his master Kyōō Unryō 恭翁運良 (1267–1341) with Keizan's disciple Gasan Jōseki 峨山韶碩 (1275–1366) and the communities at two of the Sōtō main temples of the time, Yōkōji 永光寺 and Sōjiji 総持寺 (Bodiford 2008, 51–65). The Hōttō group thus represents a fundamental component in the assimilation of esoteric knowledge—

19. After Chikotsu's death, An'yōji lost the initial combinatorial approach adopted by its founder, and supposedly, also the linkage with Ise Shrine. According to the *Biyō zakki* 尾陽 雑記, the Shingon and Shinto scriptures at An'yōji were later donated to the Watarai 度会 family or transferred to nearby Shinpukuji 真福寺 (Itō 2018).

intended here in the broader sense to include esoteric Buddhist theories on the kami—among medieval Sōtō monks. HARADA Masatoshi (1998, 221) has pointed out that the crucial component of the *Tenshō daijin sōden kesa ki* is the gift and the countergift of the robe, which corresponds to proof of dharma transmission. In the powerful symbolic act of paying tribute to Amaterasu with the robe emerges the attempt of Zen priests to cement their connection with the world of the kami and, more specifically, with its most powerful one, Amaterasu. Most importantly, the theme of the gift and the transferring of objects, whether material or symbolic, constitutes a fundamental component of such narratives, as well as in the case of the *Ise niji kirigami*, in which the gift trope is expressed in the donation of the dragon princess's jewel.

As in the case of the aforementioned *Ipponken kirigami*, Sōtō monks contributed to the enrichment of the Zen-Ise narrative by expanding its boundaries to include the transfer of the three objects, a combination very likely inspired by the three imperial regalia. As a result, the juncture between Zen transmission of the precepts and the bestowal of the three divine regalia was embroidered in the foundational narratives of Sōtō temples.

Often cited in this regard is the foundational tale of Jōganji 浄眼寺 and its founder, the Sōtō monk Daikū Genko 大空玄虎 (1428–1505). Jōganji was built in the vicinity of the Ise precincts upon the bestowal of the three treasures to Daikū from none other than Amaterasu. The *Shinmei sanmotsu ki* narrates that Daikū was visited by a mysterious presence in the middle of the night, who revealed itself as Amaterasu. Daikū granted the Mahāyāna precepts and, in turn, received from Amaterasu the three treasures, represented by the lily-root fiber *kesa*, the rosary of white pearls, and the red lacquered censer. This *engi* tale retained an enormous symbolic significance to the extent of being considered among the treasures of the temple (TATSUYA 2010, 76; TSUTSUMI 1998). While this narrative pattern resembles the tale of the robe donated to Amaterasu in the *Tenshō daijin sōden kesa ki*, it also epitomizes a typical Sōtō discursive formation that developed in tandem with their local development. As noted by several scholars (HIROSE 1988, 418–420; BODIFORD 1993; FAURE 1996, 83–113), Sōtō monks created a system of ordination for local spirits, which is indicative of the intricate and multilayered relationships between Sōtō temples and site-specific cults. In addition to favoring exponential regional growth, the inclusion of local deities was thus instrumental in attracting the financial support of wealthy local families.[20]

Therefore, the *Ise niji kirigami* developed at the intersection of different mythological strands influenced by the Ise complex and the figure of Amaterasu, as

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20. Daikū seems to have received the support of the Kitabatake 北畠 clan, in virtue of his connection with Amaterasu (TADA 2008, 173–180).

well as the narratives about the divine kinship established between Amaterasu and other female deities, which contributed to the creation of the archetypal feminine. By linking together various conceptualizations of femininity, this textual subgenre was an essential cultural reference in the making of our document, which developed from the interactions among actors from different traditions.

The A-Gendered Awakening: Koan Hermeneutics and the Female Body

A man hangs from a tree only with his mouth. His arms and feet reach no bough. Beneath the tree, a person asks him the meaning of coming from the West. If the man replies, he falls into the void and dies. Yet, by not answering, he admits the incapacity to grasp the innermost meaning of Zen (T 2005, 48.293c1–11).[21] This is the tale narrated in the fifth case from the koan collection *Wumenguan* and is the story that opens the third paragraph of the *Ise niji kirigami*. What is the connection between a woman who died in childbirth and the innermost meaning of Zen? Paragraph 3 elaborates on this question and provides the hermeneutical principle to explain the condition of the woman's body from a Zen standpoint. The last section constitutes the doctrinal hallmark of the document, for it reshapes the esoteric and kami-related notions displayed in the previous paragraphs by using koan hermeneutics.

The third paragraph of the *Ise niji kirigami* adopts the fifth case from the *Wumenguan* to map the female body. While in the fourth paragraph the woman's flesh embodied the geography of hell symbolized by the markers of her infernal fate and afflictions, in paragraph 3 this dualistic perspective is abandoned. In fact, the woman's body is no longer a micro-cosmic hell, yet it becomes a tool for reading the salient components of the koan. In fact, paragraph 3 displays the association between the woman's breast with the man up in a tree hanging, while the man trying to climb down from the tree corresponds to the moment of birth. Although the woman's body is chained to childbirth pollution, the document suggests that motherhood can offer an apt image to describe the transformation brought by the attainment of buddhahood.

The *Ise niji kirigami* borrows these concepts from another secret document that was exchanged among Sōtō monks, the *Jujō no kirigami*. This *kirigami* is entirely dedicated to the fifth case, suggesting that this koan had been transmitted as an independent secret teaching given its relevance in the monastic curriculum. At this point, one may question how these two documents are interrelated and how such a reading of the fifth case became widely accepted and transmitted among Sōtō monks to explain the dynamics of human gestation. The diagram and the inscription displayed in the *Jujō no kirigami* provide valuable insights

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21. For a complete analysis of this koan, as well as other related koan, see SHARF (2021).
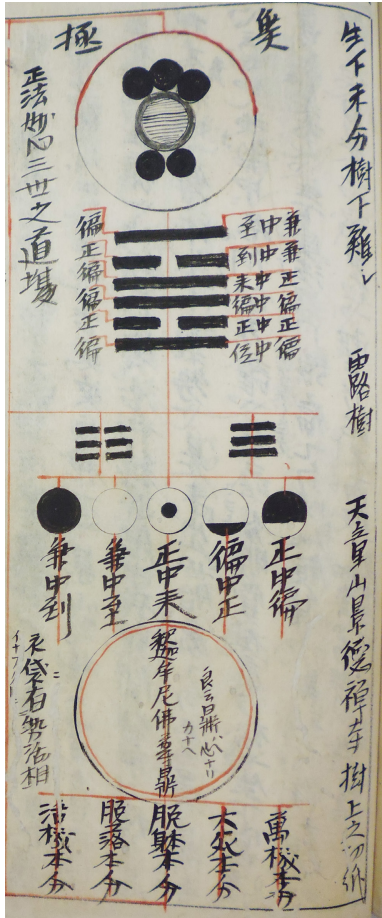
FIGURE 6. The diagram in the *Jujō no kirigami* from the collection of *kirigami* titled *Butsubutsu soso sōden himitsu shōbōgenzō* 仏仏祖祖相伝秘密正法眼蔵, vol. 1 (mid-Edo period), 36a. Picture taken by the author. Courtesy of the Komazawa University Library. © Marta Sanvido. All rights reserved.

about the conceptual proximity of the two documents and unravel the intellectual trajectory that gave rise to the construction of the feminine body inside the Sōtō monastic community.

As prescribed by the commentary, the diagram must be read from the top down. The similarity with the Neo-Confucian scheme of the supreme polarity is evident since the scheme is topped with the non-polar (*mukyoku* 無極) circle, which symbolizes the stage preceding birth, being representative of the embryo inside the womb. The description adds that,

The non-polar is what precedes the [stage] before being born (*mishō izen* 未生已前). In the upper circle, the outer part is the mother's womb. The inner circle is the child. It is the correct form of being in the womb. The person up in a tree is said to be the [condition of] not-yet-separated that anticipates being born.

Suckling from the tree bough is [suckling from] the mother's breast (*chibusa* 乳房; literally, the maternal milk)….

The *li* hexagram (*jūri* 重離) is the simultaneous union [of awakening and delusion]. It is the aspect (*sō* 相) that embraces each of the five circles [of the five positions]. (IIZUKA 2012, 152–153)

In other words, the circle at the top is the non-polar, which symbolizes the maternal uterus, while the stylized form depicted inside it is the embryo. The mother's womb is then connected to the *li* hexagram ☲☲, which, according to the theory associating the five positions of delusion and awakening (*henshō goi* 偏正五位) with tri-hexagrams, is the symbol of the ultimate union of the five positions (that is, of awakening and delusion) beyond duality.

The following section is composed of two trigrams, which are *qian* ☰ on the left side of the scheme and *kun* ☷ on the right. In the "Shuogua zhuan" 説卦伝 section of the *Yijing*, *qian* is said to be the heaven and the father, while *kun* is the earth and the mother (SKT 63: 1753). Thus, *kun* and *qian* are the two seeds that generate the remaining six trigrams composing the eight fundamental trigrams. *Qian* and *kun*, the gloss reads, bring the roots of life and death, good and evil, cold and heat, and thus union is achieved in the *li* hexagram depicted in the upper part. In other words, *qian* and *kun* symbolize the two opposites of awakening and delusion in the five-position system.

What follows are the five positions of awakening and delusion, which are represented by white-and-black circles where the white (light) symbolizes the awakening, while the black (darkness) is the delusional state. The five positions show here the interplay of awakening and delusion in the practitioner's mind and how the relation between these two forces change and evolve over time.[22] The inscription adds that the five positions represent the five faculties, the five characteristics, and the five colors.

The diagram then places another circle, which is connected through a vermilion line to the upper one. The description explains that this circle is,

22. The usage of charts in Sōtō Zen secret sources should not be surprising. These elaborate graphics, mainly inspired by Neo-Confucian cosmological diagrams, were often employed as visual aids during the master's lectures directed to a small group of acolytes and considered as secret teachings.

In the diagram featured in FIGURE 6, from right to left, the five positions are illustrated as follows: delusion within awakening (*shōchūhen* 正中偏); awakening within delusion (*henchūshō* 偏中正); approaching awakening (*shōchūrai* 正中来); reaching togetherness from within (*kenchūshi* 兼中至); and attained union of awakening and delusion (*kenchūtō* 兼中到). The prolegomenon to the relation between koan and the five-position cosmological theory is developed in a pivotal manual that constitutes the conceptual milestone of Sōtō Zen secret transmission, the *San'un kaigetsu zu* 山雲海月図 by Gasan Jōseki (IIZUKA 1998; SANVIDO 2017). For a detailed explanation of the theorization between tri-hexagrams and five positions, see ZIPORYN (2012).

[T]he life infused in the robe-placenta sack (*etai* 衣袋).[23] Śākyamuni, [when dwelling] inside the womb as a child, is the thusness inside the darkness [of the womb]. This the Śākyamuni of the remote origin.　　(Iizuka 2012, 152–153)

Lastly, the diagram terminates with five Chan idiomatic expressions that echo the gestational metaphor and are representative of the state of awakening. From right to left, the myriad of activities (*manki* 万機), which are, paraphrasing the inscription, thoroughly illuminated in the moment of birth; the great death (*daishi* 大死) is the liberation from the birth itself;[24] casting off the body (*dattai* 脱躰) is "experiencing the wind of the dharma realm and uttering the verse of sufferance"; casting off (*datsuraku* 脱落) is liberating from the outward form (*gyōgai* 形骸); and the moment of liberation (*kakki* 活機) from the mundane world towards autonomy of liberation (*kakki jizai* 活機自在).

This *kirigami* is noteworthy for including explicit references inspired by biological functions connected to gestation and birth. In other words, by relying upon the assemblage of embryogenic theories and cosmological models, the *Jujō no kirigami* depicts the state of the practitioner and their spiritual development. In addition, the diagrammatic representation conveys the experience within the monastery illustrating the internal transformation of the practitioner from the bestowal of the robe to the moment of awakening. The spiritual growth of the practitioner is suggested by two expressions that evoke the female body and gestation. First, the man holding the bough with his teeth is reminiscent of the child suckling the milk from his mother's breast. Second, the "robe sack," which is the placenta, is representative of Śākyamuni's robe, and in general, the Buddhist *kesa*. While the inclusion of gestational theories and symbolism within Zen teachings occurred already during the first part of the medieval period, being particularly evident in the textual body produced by the Shōichi monks (Takayanagi 2004; Dolce 2006; Kameyama 2020), the application of such conceptualizations to childbirth death remains unexplored. To illuminate the historical process and sociocultural dynamics that produced such hermeneutical outcomes, we must explore kindred secret documents exchanged among other Zen groups since the case of Sōtō Zen represents by no means an isolated example.

23. The word *etai* usually indicates the monastic robe, yet here is glossed as *inafukuro*. Upon comparison with other *kirigami* pertaining to the same genre, the gloss appears to have been miswritten given that the correct reading is *enafukuru*, in which *ena* 胞衣 is the placenta (*Kyōgenjujō no kirigami*).

24. The term "great death" appears to have been inspired by the sixth case of the *Foguo Yuanwu chanshi biyan lu* (T 2003, 48.146c8–10). The other four expressions from this pentadic formula appear in several Chan sources, including the *Foguo Yuanwu chanshi biyan lu*, yet considering that these are words commonly found in many texts, it is not possible to determine a univocal philological match.

Late medieval Sōtō Zen shared several doctrinal affinities with the Rinzai-branch Genjū 幻住. Established by Enkei Soyū 遠渓祖雄 (1286–1344) after his period of study in China with Zhongfeng Mingben from the Zen branch Yangqi 楊岐, the Genjū faction developed at the intersection of the Rinzai branch of the Daitokuji 大徳寺 community and Sōtō groups, reflecting the doctrinal tendencies that emerged in these two factions at the time (Andō 2011, 167–176).

Despite having been long overlooked by scholars, the close relation between Sōtō and Genjū monks is especially evident when comparing the secret documents and the koan manuals transmitted by the two factions. Particularly relevant for this study is a Genjū secret manual of koan, the *Ganzō roku* by Kohan Shūshin 古帆周信 (1570–1641), which contains the commented versions of eighty-five koan from different collections.[25] Among these, a case entitled *Ise no hon'i* 伊勢之本意 is almost identical to the *Ise niji kirigami* (*Ganzō roku*, 39b–40b; Suzuki 1987, 295). Unlike the Zen *kirigami*, the *Ise no hon'i* does not allude to any postmortem fetal extraction. Thus, in the context of the Genjū lineage, we can suppose that this teaching was not directly connected to a specific ritual setting, yet it was simply treated as a koan. This aspect is particularly intriguing since it reveals that Zen monks expanded the boundaries of the koan corpus, which differed from the conventional classic Chan collections.

As seen in the *Ise niji kirigami*, the *Ise no hon'i* reports a formula inspired by the fifth case of the *Wumenguan*, "being up on the tree is tasting the flavor of milk within the womb. Being under the tree is leaving the womb" (*Ganzō roku*, 40a; Suzuki 1987, 295). Again, this quote implicitly advises us to read this commentary alongside the exegesis of the fifth case, which is presented in another koan manual, the *Zōroku*, by the same author. Indeed, in the *Zōroku*, the fifth koan stands alone and is treated as a separate case, which is commented in the following manner,

> The master asked: what is this tree [in the koan]?
>> Elucidation: the tree is the mother's body.
>> Comment: the rock [grows] a rootless tree.
> [Asking]: "Being up in a tree," what is that?
>> Elucidation: it is the embryo dwelling inside the mother's womb.
> Hanging with your mouth… and the feet, what is that?
>> Elucidation: Hanging with the mouth from the tree is being inside the womb. It is being nurtured from the root of milk. The hands not grasping the branch [to climb the tree] corresponds to [placing] the hands on one's chest.

25. The manual does not report any date of compilation. Andō Yoshinori (2011, 198) suggests that based on other manuals transmitted by Genjū monks and preserved at the Matsu-gaoka archives, the copy is probably datable to 1714.

The feet not reaching [a bough] are the feet bending towards the mother [while being inside the womb].

Comment: Nine years spent [sitting in meditation] in front of the wall in silence. Again, nine years facing the wall without the wind passing through. The blooming of the five-petaled flower, in a spring outside *kalpa*s.

The lecture proclaims: The nine years in front of the wall correspond to the nine months in the womb. This is also known as putting on the placenta. The red robe covering Bodhidharma while facing the wall is the placenta. Bodhidharma contemplated [being] inside the womb and taught it to the multitude of people. (*Zōroku*, 34b–36a)[26]

This excerpt displays several concepts already explored in the *Jujō no kirigami*. Likewise, the Genjū exegesis of the fifth case revolves around the adaptation of concepts related to the female body and its biological functions like breastfeeding or the placenta. Indeed, the affinity in koan interpretation shared among these two factions is a crucial component to shed new light on the dynamics underlying the inclusion of a koan in the explanation of the female corporeality and contributes to unveiling the historical apparatus that participated in the development of such an interpretative framework.

The act of "suckling from the milk root" derives from a passage in a late Mahāyāna sutra, the *Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing*, a scripture that elaborates on the four fundamental objects of debt (*sien* 四恩). The section devoted to the explanation of one of the four debts, the moral obligation towards mother and father, acknowledges the pain and suffering of pregnancy. Difficult childbirth, the sutra explains, might be as painful as being plunged by hundreds of knives. Moreover, the text continues, the mother's dedication to nurture her child with "the sweet nectar of milk coming from her breast makes her merit incalculable" (т 159, 3.297b3). Eventually, the debt of a child towards his mother will never be repaid since, while in the womb,

Male and female suckle with their mouth the root of milk and are nurtured with their mother's blood. When one is born, before turning into a child [capable of eating solid foods], one consumes 180 vessels of maternal milk. When the mother attains the superb taste (*shangmei* 上味), she provides it directly to her child. This is like offering the marvelous monastic robe.

(т 159, 3.297b16–b19)

26. Although a similar version of this commentary is reported in Suzuki (1987, 291–292), here I use my transcription since Suzuki omits the details of the documents he is referring to. As Andō (2011, 176–180) notes, Suzuki's transcription seems a combination of different manuals (call no. Kuha 1240, Kuha 883–3) that include the commentary used here. Another translation of this commentary based on Suzuki's transcription can be found in Faure (1995, 362–363).

Despite the lack of any precise mention of the four forms of indebtedness, the usage of the evocative image of "suckling from the milk root" confirms that, besides possessing a general knowledge of the textual corpus exploring gestation and the female body, Zen monks adopted these notions to theorize salvation and enlightenment from a nondualistic standpoint.

The second crucial component of the Genjū commentary is the embryonic metaphor applied to the iconic image of Bodhidharma facing the wall in meditation. Thus, the cave is the womb, the red robe is the placenta, and the nine years absorbed in contemplation correspond to the time spent in the womb. We must recall that in Sōtō's *Jujō no kirigami*, the monastic robe is identified with the placenta. Likewise, in the *Ise niji kirigami*, the merging of the white and red fluids is the "attainment of one's original mind, and it is also known as being wrapped in the red cover," in which the red cover is very likely the vermilion robe of Bodhidharma.

The metaphor of the placenta to illustrate the network of meanings that are conceptually linked to the Buddhist robe is commonly used in *kirigami* about the transmission of the *kesa* (Faure 1995). The *Kesa no kirigami* adds a more nuanced explanation of the placenta, which better illuminates the intellectual process that led to the acceptance of this metaphor. This document reports that the amalgamation of the five colors (that is, blue, yellow, red, black, and white) creates the purple robe, which is the superior one. The purple robe is described as the buddha Mahāvairocana and symbolizes the union of both realms (the vajra and womb realm), as well as the syllable *A*. The document also adds that "in the Shinto [tradition], [the robe] is the placenta; it is the *chihaya* [千葉屋]" (Iizuka 2008, 262).

The term *chihaya* derives from the expression *chihayaburu* 千葉破る that opens the poem intonated during the Ise *abhiṣeka* (*Ise kanjō* 伊勢灌頂) (Teeuwen 2000, 103; Andreeva 2017, 246–255). These verses were utilized to convey the inherited enlightened and kindred nature of the practitioner and the kami, whose body already contained the seeds of awakening. *Chihaya* indicates tearing one thousand petals inside the womb and serves as a metaphor for the placenta shredding apart during childbirth. Being conceptually adjacent to Buddhist embryogenic theories, the theorization of *chihaya* developed in the same context of the two graphs of *I-Se* (Klein 1998, 29–33), as well as theories of the kindred nature of kami and humans displayed in the *Ise niji kirigami*.

In addition, the fragmentary collection *Meishuku shū* 明宿集 by the Noh playwright Konparu Zenchiku 金春禅竹 (1405–1468) reveals that the semantic overlapping of the placenta and the robe was echoed by the multiple meanings embedded in the term *chihaya*, which can indicate both the ceremonial white garment (*chihaya* 襌) and the tearing of the placenta. Indeed, the *Meishuku shū* proclaims that "the placenta [that protects] the child in the womb symbolizes the

sleeves of the white vest" (quoted in TAKAHASHI 2014, 146).[27] The medieval commentarial tradition of literary works, such as the *Kokinwaka shū* 古今和歌集 and the *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語, adds another semantic layer to the term *chihaya* that reverberates in the *Meishuku shū*. In this case, *chihaya* evokes the myth of Amaterasu inside the cave. In such a network of associations, *chihaya* metonymically indicates the sleeves twirled during the dance of the gods to celebrate the opening of the cave and the appearance of Amaterasu (TAKAHASHI 2014, 147).

The image of the cave-womb pertains to the same semantic framework of the placenta-robe, for it developed in the context of Buddhist-Shinto mythology to convey the innermost meaning of the scene depicting Amaterasu withdrawing into the heavenly cave (ITŌ 2011, 498–499). A section entitled "Ama no iwato kanjō" 天岩戸灌頂 from a Ryōbu Shintō manual, the *Tenchi kanjō ki* 天地灌頂記, states very clearly that "the cave is the maternal womb.... We [human beings] arise from the union of the red and white fluids in the mother's womb" (quoted in YAMAMOTO 1993, 331; FAURE 2016, 317–318). In other words, the placenta evokes the cosmic gestation along with the bestowal of the robe, which was interpreted as a form of rebirth inside the monastic womb. Accordingly, the locus classicus of the cave contained in both narratives created a semantic resonance that inspired the rewriting of Bodhidharma's legend through the gestational lens.

Nevertheless, the grotto scene from Amaterasu's myth confirms that these metaphors turned into a set of tools to read the female body. Indeed, the application of the cave-womb allegory was included also in ritual contexts foreign to either koan or *abhiṣeka* and related instead to pregnancy and funerals. This association served to explicate the purification rituals performed by the Shinto priests of Ise shrines to grant safe childbirth. In such a context, the moment of birth is described as "the disclosure of the birth opening at the bottom of the chest," which symbolizes the opening of the heavenly cave (*Daigūji kikigaki* in MIYACHI 1981, 180; YAMAMOTO 1993, 332). Zen monks thus were not the only actors involved in the ritual administration concerning childbirth. On the contrary, Shinto priests successfully managed childbirth-related ceremonies and embraced the symbolism of the womb-cave to explain these ritual settings.

Likewise, the Shingon-Zen funeral manual *Tainai goi mandara* adheres to this hermeneutical vogue and claims that Amaterasu retiring into the heavenly grotto is the same as the fetus dwelling inside the womb (NAKAHARA, YONEDA,

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27. In an esoteric collection of rituals, the *Sōji shō* compiled by the Tendai priest Chōgō 澄豪 (1259–1350), the candid garment of the white-robed Avalokiteśvara (Byakue Kannon 白衣観音) is an allegory for the placenta, which protects the human being from adverse conditions. Besides, in another section of the same text, the white vest of Avalokiteśvara is said to be the epitome of purity (T 2412, 77.72a4), thereby suggesting that the placenta was not stigmatized because of its connection with childbirth and pollution. On the conceptualization of the placenta in relation to the concepts of purity and pollution, see FAURE (2016).

and Gōto 2018, 476). Hence, the discourse that revolved around the motif of the cave-womb, albeit initially applied to a different ceremonial setting, turned into a prominent component in the transmission of practices dedicated to childbirth.

The cultural process that led Genjū, as well as Sōtō monks, to apply the gestational metaphor to koan interpretation, however, is also the historical product of a much more intricate development that occurred in the medieval field of koan exegesis. Indeed, as previously mentioned, Genjū's approach to koan practice emerged from the amalgamation of various traditions, encompassing the influential lineage of the Rinzai school centered at Daitokuji.

Yōsō Sōi 養叟宗頤 (1376–1458), the twenty-sixth abbot of Daitokuji, who like Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394–1481) studied under the guidance of Kasō Sōdon 華叟宗曇 (1352–1428), trained several Genjū monks such as Ikka Sekiyu 一華碩由 (1447–1507), thus having a visible impact on their interpretative style (Harada 1995). Yet, despite being the dharma heirs of the same master, Ikkyū and Yōsō could not be more different. Indeed, Yōsō and his methodology became the main target of Ikkyū, who in the miscellaneous *Jikai shū* made abundantly clear his disdain towards his dharma brother for having initiated the creation of corrupted and unorthodox Zen practices. According to Ikkyū, Yōsō would teach exemplified versions of koan to nuns and merchants and then certify their achievement of awakening. In particular, Yōsō used images and metaphors related to hell to educate laypeople (Iizuka 2001, 298). These words reflect the general tendency of adapting koan interpretation to the audience by including notions that did not strictly pertain to Zen doctrine. This passage is noteworthy since it mentions that the community at Daitokuji used the imaginary of hell to make more accessible the explanation of koan. Indeed, it corroborates the hypothesis that Zen monks were familiar with the symbolism endowed in the representations of the afterlife to the extent of including it in their own teachings.

The teachings that Ikkyū refers to are contained in several secret manuals that were transmitted by the monks of Daitokuji. For instance, in the *Hyaku gojū soku*, the "insights about hell" mentioned by Ikkyū indicate the tale of Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 (778–897) in hell, contained in the *Zhaozhou Zhenji chanshi yulu* (x 68: 1315.82b8–10). This story reports a dialogue about whether people of great virtue (that is, masters who achieved buddhahood) fall into hell. Zhaozhou replies that if people like him would not have been reborn in hell, they could not save anyone (Iizuka 2002, 251). Another secret koan commentary, the *Kosoku kōan*, enriches the explanation of the tale of Zhaozhou in hell with an embryological metaphor that is reminiscent of the lines that open paragraph 4 of the *Ise niji kirigami*, "being born is dying at the sight of the many sufferings. Dying is being alive." Indeed, birth was a direct antecedent of suffering that begins with the act of leaving the womb. Everyday life is thus entrenched in pain,

and it is the true hell (Iizuka 2002, 306).[28] Given the extreme popularity of hell tales, it is very likely that such interpretations arose to provide a more understandable and ready-to-use reading of Chan cases to present to laypeople.[29] It is thus evident that the intertwining of hell images and embryology constitutes one of the doctrinal hallmarks of the Daitokuji commentaries. As a result, the impact of this interpretative style emerges in the secret manuals from the Genjū lineage and Sōtō *kirigami*.

By adapting koan exegesis to the ritual setting of female salvation, the *Ise niji kirigami* represents the *summa* of the doctrinal evolution of koan interpretation. In other words, the highly speculative embryological theories adopted to express the most recondite meaning of enlightenment were reshaped to explain the biological process of birth and thus applied to the female body. Therefore, the doctrinal dilemma of whether an impure being could ultimately achieve buddhahood is reconciled through koan hermeneutics. Indeed, the nurture ("suckling the milk root") from and protection (the robe-placenta) of the mother's body are the ultimate state of realization. When understood from a non-dualistic standpoint, the maternal corporeality, although initially depicted as monstrous and repulsive, embodies the most exquisite form of spiritual perfection.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this article has contributed to the discussion about how women were depicted in religious material, by showing that such representations were much more nuanced and did not fit a priori into the clearcut categorizations of misogyny and sexism. The *Ise niji kirigami*, on the contrary, embraces opposite portrayals of women and their bodies, which were nonetheless coexisting within the same semantic space. It is precisely within this space, which could be defined as "heterotopic,"[30] that women were perceived as impure creatures, mothers to be saved, donors, deities, dragons, agents of social instability, and ultimately corporeality of enlightenment. It must be noted, however, that the *Ise niji kirigami*

28. Birth seen as a subcategory of suffering was already a central component of the birth metaphor in Indian Buddhist sources (Langenberg 2017, 28–42).

29. The aforementioned Shingon-Zen funeral manual *Tainai goi mandara* uses the same tale of Zhaozhou in hell to equate the moment of birth with suffering. In other words, this manual explains that the woman's birth opening is the mountain of death and is the place where the impure blood of menstruation flows (Nakahara, Yoneda, and Gōto 2018, 485–487).

30. Foucault (1986) has elaborated on this concept to explain liminal spaces such as the cemetery or the asylum. Franklin-Brown (2012) has proposed to apply this notion to textual spaces such as encyclopedias, which retain several characteristics emblematic of Foucault's heterotopia. In the analysis of *kirigami* and secret sources, especially in the case of the *Ise niji kirigami*, heterotopia might illuminate the dynamics that partook in the construction of the secret space, which appears as a juxtaposition of concepts apparently in contrast with each other.

remains a portrayal of the female body as it was perceived and understood by the male-dominated institutional environment. In the assemblage of its doctrinal discourses, the *Ise niji kirigami*, like the vast majority of Zen secret sources, leaves the female voice silent. While this is surely a limit of this study, the secret sources examined here offer a valuable perspective on how Zen monks lived and conceptualized the topic of female salvation in relation to their religious practice. Although our document likely served as an echo chamber for widespread medieval narratives, it also demonstrates the agency of Zen monks in the creation of new perspectives that could deepen the conceptualization of women's spiritual capacities and biological functions.

In the introduction, I posed two relevant questions. How can the maternal womb depicted as impure be reconciled with the metaphor of buddhahood understood as a regression into the uterine status? How do embryological notions influence the conceptualization of the female body? Through the *Ise niji kirigami*, the present study has demonstrated how the theorization of awakening in gestational terms indeed had a visible impact on the negotiation of maleness and femaleness, which were by no means fixed categories. The *Ise niji kirigami* upholds classic doctrinal compounds ingrained in the representations of defiled female bodies, yet at the same time, this document also displays the methodology used to subvert gender dualism, thereby rebuilding a new conceptualization of motherhood and femininity. Ultimately, the biological processes embodied in the female body are taken as the norm to illustrate awakening itself. Accordingly, women could not be denied salvation, for their ontological selves were already the epitome of enlightenment.

As displayed in the *Ise niji kirigami*, *kirigami* documents encompass a wide variety of notions and forms of knowledge whose relation appears often inconsistent and contradictory. Although secret instructions such as the *Ise niji kirigami* are descriptive of the intellectual logic set in place inside the temple, they represent an invaluable repository of knowledge whose investigation may uncover the historical developments that favored the circulation of certain ideas and concepts. In this case, this textual corpus enabled us to shed new light on the categories of femininity and childbirth, showing that such motifs were not exclusive to a gendered domain of knowledge. Rather, characteristics emblematic of female ontology were to some degree considered representative of nonhuman beings, such as dragons and kami. In conclusion, we can affirm that this inner dynamism and mobility of ideas reflect on the hermeneutical fluidity that characterizes the exploration of the feminine self, which is generated through discursive practices that transcend the rigid ontological classifications.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DNK   *Dai Nihon komonjo: Iewake monjo* 大日本古文書一家わけ文書. Ed. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo 東京大学史料編纂所. Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1955–.

SKT   *Shinshaku kanbun taikei* 新釈漢文大系. 120 vols. Uchida Sennosuke 內田泉之助 et al., eds. Meiji Shoin, 1972–.

SSZ   *Sōtōshū zensho* 曹洞宗全書. 20 vols. Ed. Sōtōshū Zensho Kankōkai 曹洞宗全書刊行会. Sōtōshū Shūmuchō, 1970–1973.

ST   *Shintō taikei* 神道大系. 120 vols. Ed. Shintō Taikei Hensankai 神道大系編纂会. Shintō Taikei Hensankai, 1977–1994.

T   *The SAT Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō Text Database*. Version 2018. By the SAT Daizōkyō Text Database Committee with the approval of Daizō Shuppan. Web resource maintained by the University of Tokyo. https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index.html.

X   *Dai Nippon zoku zōkyō* 大日本続蔵経. CBETA edition. Maeda Eun 前田慧雲 and Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, eds. 750 vols. Zōkyō Shoin, 1905–1912. Cited from the online version, CBETA Online Reader. http://www.cbeta.org/index.htm

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Jingi keizu 神祇系図. Ryōhen. st 90.

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Jeff Schroeder

Japanese Buddhist War Support and the *Kanchō* System

When Jōdo Shin Buddhist leaders gathered for a conference in early 1941 to formulate their sect's wartime response, they did so at the bidding of their sect's *kanchō*, or administrative head. To explain organizational dynamics that contributed to patterns of war support by Japanese Buddhists, this article details the state's imposition of a *kanchō* system of governance on Buddhist organizations from 1884 to 1945. While Buddhist organizations had leeway in determining the selection process, term length, and specific powers of their *kanchō*, in all cases extraordinary authority was concentrated in a single individual. This article details how the *kanchō* system was implemented in major Zen, Jōdo Shin, Jōdo, Shingon, Nichiren, and Tendai organizations; examines the pro-war activities of *kanchō* prior to and during the Fifteen Years' War period (1931–1945); and uses the case of the 1941 Shin Doctrinal Studies Conference to illustrate how the autocratic *kanchō* organizational structure amplified a sect's most pro-war voices.

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O N 13 February 1941, twenty-six leading officials, scholars, and preachers belonging to the Ōtani denomination of the Jōdo Shin sect were gathered at Higashi Honganji 東本願寺 in Kyoto to discuss Buddhism, nationalism, and the escalating war situation. The conference was convened and moderated by sect official Ōtani Eijun 大谷瑩潤 (1890–1973). Eijun's opening address clarified the purpose of the conference:

> Considering the intensifying national circumstances before us and reflecting upon the desires of the Superior Foremost One (*kami goichinin* 上御一人 [that is, the emperor]), we people of religion cannot continue with the same thinking as in the past. Even regarding our sect's doctrines, we must deeply reflect upon whether to go on expressing them just the same as we have in the past. If we go on as we have in the past, we will be neglecting our duties as national citizens. Even in the scriptures, there is expressed the idea that [wars] related to the prospering or perishing of a people are holy wars (*seisen* 聖戦). In certain scriptures, killing is thought of as evil, but in present-day circumstances, how should we look upon that way of thinking?... Seeking the way as a human being and carrying out one's duties as a national citizen must always be in accord. Recently, the content of religious preaching has come under investigation, and restrictions have been placed upon certain doctrines.... There have been various critiques from the public. If our sect in particular has a deep relationship with the Imperial House, then it is essential for us to formulate doctrinal expressions befitting the age and expressive of loyalty.
>
> (*Shinshū kyōgaku kondankai*, 3)

Following this call for new doctrinal expressions clarifying their sect's loyalty to the emperor and support for the war effort, Eijun added a final word of warning: "Producing unified doctrinal expressions with which to instruct the sect is your duty. If you now fail to unify, we will have to trouble the honorable Dharma Master" (*Shinshū kyōgaku kondankai*, 3).

"Dharma Master" (*hossu* 法主) was a title conferred upon the chief priests of Jōdo Shin denominations' head temples that signified their leadership in doctrinal matters. In the modern era, these figures also functioned as the *kanchō* 管長, or administrative heads of denominations. As stipulated in the Ōtani denomination's 1929 constitution, the Ōtani *kanchō* possessed ultimate authority to interpret sect doctrine, appoint or dismiss resident temple priests and instructors, appoint or dismiss sect administration employees, confer awards on or administer punishments to sect members, and issue executive orders (*Shinshū Ōtaniha*

shūken). The final word on the Ōtani denomination's wartime orthodoxy indisputably lay with its *kanchō*, Ōtani Kōchō 大谷光暢 (1903–1993), an adamant supporter of the war effort. At the time of the February 1941 conference, he was touring military outposts in the South Pacific with his wife, Ōtani Satoko 大谷智子 (1906–1989), a sister of the empress. Judging by Kōchō's repeated appeals to sect members to contribute all they could to the war, as well as the remarks of Eijun (Kōchō's uncle) quoted above, it is clear that sect leaders assembled at the conference were expected to unify around revised doctrinal expressions maximally aligned with state ideology and war policies.

The same organizational dynamic of *kanchō* governance was present in all Japanese Buddhist organizations. According to Cabinet Instruction No. 19 issued in 1884, every Buddhist and Sect Shinto organization was required to appoint a *kanchō*, whose confirmation was subject to the approval of the Minister for Home Affairs (Haseyama 1956, 92; Umeda 1971, 122–125; Abe 1970, 280).[1] *Kanchō* of Buddhist organizations would be in charge of regulating sect and temple law, determining positions and titles for priests and instructors, and appointing, promoting, and dismissing priests and instructors. The same *kanchō* requirements persisted under the 1940 Religious Organizations Law that superseded the 1884 ordinance. Buddhist and Sect Shinto organizations had leeway in determining the process for selecting their *kanchō*, their *kanchō*'s term length, and the specific powers invested in the position. In line with democratizing trends, many Buddhist organizations instituted elections to determine their *kanchō*. Yet even in the most democratic of Buddhist organizations, the result was a tremendous concentration of power in a single individual.

Previous scholarship on modern Japanese Buddhism has tended to highlight democratizing reforms: independent, non-sectarian movements; increased lay involvement and authority; demands for unrestricted study of Buddhist teachings; and incorporation of democratic processes into sect administrations. Yet alongside such reforms, it is important to note a contradictory development: the establishment of centralized, autocratic rule within Buddhist organizations to a degree perhaps unprecedented in Japanese history. As documented below, administrative control over more than sixty thousand Japanese Buddhist temples and their more than ten million members came to rest in the hands of just ten *kanchō*. This centralization of power had major implications for the kind of thought and practice that could flourish within mainstream Buddhist communities.

Investigating this centralization of power, this article asks: Who were these Buddhist *kanchō*? How were they selected? What powers did they possess? How

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1. Sect Shinto organizations such as Kurozumikyō 黒住教 or Izumo Taishakyō 出雲大社教 were distinct from the Shinto practiced at the vast majority of Japan's shrines, which were managed by the state and deemed "nonreligious" (Hardacre 2017).

did they exercise those powers? And ultimately, how did the *kanchō* system shape possibilities for war support or war resistance among members of major Buddhist organizations? The article first explains the need for a new approach to the study of Buddhism and war that focuses on organizational dynamics. It then places the Japanese government's establishment of the *kanchō* system in historical context; surveys how that system was implemented in major Zen, Jōdo Shin, Jōdo, Shingon, Nichiren, and Tendai organizations; and gives an overview of the wartime activities of individual *kanchō* and *kanchō*-led organizations prior to and during the Fifteen Years' War (1931–1945). The final section of the article returns to the case of the Ōtani denomination's 1941 conference to demonstrate how organizational pressures stemming from the *kanchō* and his appointees functioned to amplify the most nationalistic, pro-war voices while marginalizing less pro-war ones. This research aims both to enrich our understanding of the causes of modern Buddhist war support and to point more broadly to the importance of organizational dynamics in shaping Buddhist doctrine and ethics.

Buddhism, War, and Organizational Dynamics

In scholarship on modern Buddhism and war, the works of Brian Victoria loom large, and for good reason. *Zen at War*, published in 1997, was the first work in English to document the deep nationalism, emperor worship, and pro-war attitudes characteristic of many Japanese Buddhist leaders during the modern period. Although Victoria's focus was on Zen, his book abounds with nationalist, pro-war quotations from prominent members of many Japanese Buddhist sects. Victoria also showed that such pro-war rhetoric was followed up with action, including prayer services for victory in battle; memorial services for fallen soldiers; chaplaincy on the battlefield; zazen instruction for military officers, soldiers, and factory workers; and donation of war planes. Victoria did an impressive job documenting the phenomenon of modern Japanese Buddhist nationalism and war support. However, in *Zen at War* and a follow-up work titled *Zen War Stories*, Victoria offered only limited analysis of the underlying causes of that phenomenon.[2]

In the decades since the publication of *Zen at War*, the literature on modern Japanese Buddhism and war has grown considerably. Many studies have examined cases of specific Buddhist individuals and groups: revolutionary activists who rebelled against the state (Shields 2017; Rambelli and Uchiyama 2013),

2. Acknowledging that lack, Victoria inserted a new chapter titled "Was It Buddhism?" to the end of the revised edition of *Zen at War* (2006). There, he narrates the long history of Buddhism-state alliances from ancient India to Japan, explaining such alliances with reference to political pragmatism, incorporation of Daoist and Confucian ideals, misuse of the doctrine of *upāya*, and connections with the samurai class.

ultra-rightwing thinkers and military officers (ŌTANI 2012; GODART 2015), a soldier (TERASAWA 2018), and a variety of scholars and intellectuals (KLAUTAU 2017; ISHII, KONDŌ, and NAWA 2020). There has also been much scholarship on D. T. Suzuki's views on war (KIRITA 1995; SATŌ 2008; SUEKI 2009; VICTORIA 2010; 2013). All of these detailed studies of individuals are fascinating and instructive in various ways. However, without a better understanding of Buddhist organizational dynamics, it can be difficult to know how representative or influential such individuals were. Suzuki, for example, was a lay scholar affiliated with the Rinzai Zen sect but employed by a Jōdo Shin university. As such, he did not possess official doctrinal authority within any sectarian organizations, and there is little evidence that his scholarship had a major impact during the war. Thus, it is unclear what, if anything, Suzuki's case tells us about broader patterns of Buddhist support for or resistance to nationalism and war. The same is true of rightwing Nichirenists like Ishiwara Kanji 石原莞爾 (1889–1949) and revolutionaries like Senoo Girō 妹尾義郎 (1889–1961), who each led relatively small, independent movements outside the bounds of mainstream sectarian Buddhist organizations.

Christopher IVES (2009) points the way toward a more robust study of the factors behind modern Japanese Buddhist nationalism and war support. He approaches his topic through an extensive review of the scholarship of Sōtō Zen scholar-priest Ichikawa Hakugen. ICHIKAWA (1970) launched the study of modern Japanese Buddhist war support. As Ives details, Ichikawa's works examined the conservative political implications of Zen's emphasis on non-discrimination, affirmation by negation (*sokuhi* 即非) logic, direct experience, and cultivation of peace of mind in the present moment. Seeking to go beyond such doctrinal analysis, IVES (2009, 107) argues for closer examination of the symbiotic relationship between Buddhist organizations and political rulers. The opening chapter of his book documents the Japanese state's persecution of Buddhist organizations in the early Meiji period, its crackdown on political dissent following the 1911 High Treason Incident (Taigyaku Jiken 大逆事件), its "thought guidance" (*shisō zendō* 思想善導) campaigns in the 1920s, and its demands for ideological unity in the 1930s and 1940s. It also highlights the convergence of interests between Buddhist organizations and the government in confronting what were perceived to be common enemies: Christians, socialists, and the "new religions." The result of these pressures, according to Ives, was a pattern of Japanese Buddhist leaders working to construct a "useful Buddhism" that would contribute to nation-building and societal development (IVES 2009, 23).[3] Ives's macro-level

3. LOBREGLIO (2017) calls attention to another important historical factor behind modern Japanese Buddhist nationalism: disillusionment over the League of Nations' rejection of the racial equality proposal and harsh treatment of Germany.

discussion of sociopolitical pressures helps contextualize Victoria and others' micro-level observations about cases of war support and resistance among Buddhist individuals. Yet the intermediary level of organizational dynamics—how individual Buddhists fit into Buddhist organizations, how those organizations were structured and governed, how broader social and political pressures on individuals were mediated by those organizations, and so on—remains unaccounted for.

As highlighted in the long quotation at the outset of this article, there existed a tension between Buddhist teachings of non-killing and public pressure on Buddhists to support the war. Within a Shin Buddhist context, further tensions existed between state demands for kami reverence and Shin teachings against kami reverence, and between state teachings on Japan as a divine land (*shinkoku* 神国) and Buddhist teachings on seeking rebirth in Amida's Pure Land. Individual Shin Buddhists had good reasons to oppose the war and the pro-war, imperialist reframing of Shin teachings. Shin layman Hirose Akira 廣瀬 明 (1919–1947) is a case in point. As a student at Ōtani University from 1939–1942, Hirose was pressured by sect leaders and military training officials to affirm that his faith in Amida supported his devotion to the emperor. Hirose's diary records his Buddhism-inspired reluctance to do so, as well as his misgivings about worshiping kami, glorifying this world rather than the Pure Land, and subordinating his individual will to the state (TERASAWA 2018, 2–3). After being forced to graduate early and enlist in the army, Hirose's disapproval of Shin sect leaders persisted. According to Terasawa's analysis, Hirose "saw that, instead of taking responsibility for issues of faith and society, the Shinshū leadership was focused on institutional survival, opportunistically allying themselves with the ultranationalists. Hirose insisted that each Shinshū believer must reject denominational pride and become independent" (TERASAWA 2018, 5). Why were Hirose and others unable to effectively "reject denominational pride and become independent"? Why did Buddhist leaders' militarist agenda win out on the whole?

To understand what drove Japanese Buddhist war support writ large, we need more studies of Buddhist organizational dynamics. In his study of religious violence, Bruce LINCOLN (2006) argues that there are four main interlocking features of any religion, all of which must be taken into account: a discourse, a set of practices, a community, and an institution. Regarding religious institutions, Lincoln writes:

> Coherence over space and continuity over time [of a religion] are secured by formal or semiformal structures staffed by officials, experts, and functionaries authorized to speak and act not only on behalf of the community, but also on behalf of the tradition or religion itself. Such structures vary tremendously in their size, power, rigidity, elite status, funding, degree of centralization, degree of hierarchy, and style of operation. But in whatever form they take, they house

the leaders who assume responsibility for preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of the group's defining discourse; supervision of its rituals; adjudication and enforcement of its ethics; nurturance, defense, and advancement of the community. Sometimes they derive considerable wealth from such service, and they are regularly caught up in serious contradictions. The most important of these is the contradiction between their own corporate self-interests and those of the community, and that between the need to accommodate change while preserving claims to eternal truth. (LINCOLN 2006, 7)

In regard to modern Japanese Buddhism, scholarship to date has provided valuable insights on the corporate self-interests of Buddhist leaders, the diverse interests and beliefs of rank-and-file Buddhists, and the contradictions between them. What remains to be clarified is how Buddhist organizations were structured and governed and thus how contradictions between Buddhist leaders and community members were resolved. Japanese-language scholarship has been somewhat better in addressing issues of Buddhist organizational dynamics.[4] Drawing upon that scholarship and my own analysis of government and sect documents, the remainder of this article will explore the structures and dynamics of Buddhist organizations prior to and during the Fifteen Years' War.

Establishment of the Kanchō System

The groundwork for centralized, autocratic rule within modern Japanese Buddhist organizations was laid in the Tokugawa period. To establish administrative oversight over Buddhist organizations and to enlist their help in monitoring the populace, the shogunate issued laws requiring all Buddhist temples to incorporate themselves into head-branch relationships with other temples. Mirroring the feudal power relations of the era, Buddhist sects were organized into an elaborate system of head temples (*honzan* 本山), intermediate head temples (*chūhonji* 中本寺), minor head temples (*kohonji* 小本寺), direct branch temples (*jiki matsuji* 直末寺), and descendant branch temples (*mago matsuji* 孫末寺). In the case of the Jōdo Shin Honganji denomination, records show instances of eight levels of head-branch relationships, such that a decision to appoint a new resident priest at the lowest-ranking temple would require successive approval from seven higher-ranking temples (AKAMATSU and KASAHARA 1963, 338).

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4. HASEYAMA (1956) and UMEDA (1971) provide thorough accounts of religious law and organizational structures in modern Japan. TAKEUCHI (1971) and KASHIWAHARA (1986) are examples of detailed studies of organizational development within particular Buddhist sects or denominations. Regarding war specifically, a number of Japanese- and English-language works have investigated the impact of the 1940 Religious Organizations Law (GARON 1986; KRÄMER 2011; NIINO 2014). For a brief review of Japanese scholarship on modern Japanese Buddhism and war, see ŌTANI (2015).

Although a sect's head temple theoretically governed over the entire sect, in practice, regional head temples directly administered their branch temples on many matters, held considerable landholdings, and were sometimes headed by the nobility; as such, they possessed considerable independence and authority. Each sect was also required to establish one or more administrative head temples (*furegashira jiin* 触頭寺院) in the vicinity of the capital of Edo. These temples served as liaisons between the government and the sects. Although technically branch temples under the authority of a head temple, these administrative head temples were frequently in a position to oversee and overrule their head temple (Tamamuro 2006).

In the modern era, this complex balancing of authority was eliminated, as the new Meiji state mandated that authority be centralized in a single individual at a sect's head temple. The origins of this mandate lie in the Great Promulgation Campaign (Taikyō Senpu Undō 大教宣布運動). In 1869, the state had mobilized Shinto priests to instruct the populace about their new government and its Shinto-based imperial ideology. This program faltered, in part due to Shinto priests' lack of facility in public preaching. To address this failing, the state launched the Great Promulgation Campaign in 1872, this time enlisting Buddhist priests to work alongside Shinto priests and others. For this purpose, each Buddhist sect was required to appoint a *kanchō*.[5] Initially, only seven Buddhist sects were recognized; but in 1874, the state relaxed its restrictions, permitting denominations within sects to appoint their own administrative heads. *Kanchō* were charged with overseeing the cultivation of "doctrinal instructors" (*kyōdōshoku* 教導職) who could convey state-authorized teachings to the populace. All Buddhist priests were required to pass state-administered examinations to obtain doctrinal instructor status in order to continue working as priests.[6]

This campaign also broke down, mainly due to Buddhist opposition to the requirement that instructors preach Shinto-based content. In 1884, Cabinet Instruction No. 19 announced the end of the campaign and its doctrinal instructor system and the start of the *kanchō* system. For some, this signified the end of unwanted government influence in religious affairs. Imakita Kōsen 今北洪川 (1816–1892), *kanchō* of the Rinzai Zen Engakuji 円覚寺 denomination, issued an announcement to sect members:

5. Regarding the initiation of the *kanchō* system, see Kashiwahara (1990, 51–52) and Ikeda (1998).

6. Doctrinal instructors were required to teach the three principles of "reverence for the kami and love of the country," "clarifying the principles of heaven and the way of humanity," and "revering and assisting the emperor and obeying the will of the court"; see Ketelaar (1990, 87–135) and Hardacre (2017, 376–380). For an example of a lecture given by a Jōdo Shin priest, see Krämer (2021).

Now, through the announcement of Cabinet Instruction No. 19, the doctrinal instructor position has been abolished. This ends all interference of the government and makes religion independent. From now on, the rise or fall of religions will be purely entrusted to the responsibility of each religious person.

(TAMAMURA and INOUE 1964, 671).

Imakita's proclamation exaggerated the independence that would be enjoyed by Buddhist organizations. The 1884 Cabinet Instruction retained the former system's requirement of appointing a *kanchō* and specified the powers that were to be invested in the position. Moreover, a *kanchō*'s appointment, rules for selection, and exercise of his authority would all be subject to the approval of the Home Ministry. Thus, although the end of the Great Promulgation Campaign marked the state's retreat from active management of Buddhist affairs, the state still retained considerable authority to influence Buddhist affairs through the oversight of *kanchō* (UMEDA 1971, 124). A subsequent cabinet instruction in the same year specified that Buddhist and Shinto *kanchō* must be treated as having the rank of "imperial appointees" (*chokuninkan* 勅任官) (HASEYAMA 1956, 95; TSUJIOKA 2017, 12). This was a rank conferred by the emperor upon military generals, prefectural governors, presidents of imperial universities, and others. This ordinance thus conferred high social status on *kanchō* while highlighting the ongoing close relationship between them and the imperial government. In political scientist MARUYAMA Masao's (1963, 1–24) terms, these cabinet instructions can be understood as efforts to bring Buddhist leaders into close proximity with the emperor and incorporate them into the nation's political hierarchy and emperor-centered structure of values.

Implementation of the Kanchō System

The Buddhist organizational landscape was in considerable flux for much of the modern period, as Buddhist sects broke apart into independent denominations, joined together into new sects or confederations, or adopted new sect laws.[7] Thus, the number of Buddhist organizations headed by *kanchō*, the powers those *kanchō* held, and the process by which they were selected shifted over the years. In the early 1920s, Japan's Ministry of Cultural Affairs published a series of reports on the nation's religious organizations. The first of those reports, published in 1921, summarized how each Buddhist and Shinto organization had implemented the *kanchō* system (SSC 1). In what follows, I rely on that government

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7. UMEDA (1971, 132–140) details the formation of thirteen sects and fifty-six denominations by 1925 and their amalgamation into twenty-eight denominations in response to the 1940 Religious Organizations Law.

document to report on the state of Buddhist organizations at that time, while drawing on relevant sect law documents to provide further details.[8]

According to the 1921 report, Japan had thirteen Shinto organizations and fifty-one Buddhist organizations headed by *kanchō*. The Buddhist organizations were affiliated with the Jōdo Shin (10), Sōtō (1), Shingon (4), Jōdo (4), Rinzai (14), Nichiren (9), Tendai (3), Ōbaku (1), Ji (1), Yūzū Nenbutsu (1), Hossō (1), Ritsu (1), and Kegon (1) sects. Some of the organizations were "sects" (*shū* 宗) while others were "denominations" (*ha* 派) of sects; in many instances, the distinction is moot since denominations had become entirely independent. The organizations varied greatly in terms of size, as judged by the number of temples: ten out of fifty-one organizations oversaw 87.4 percent of all temples in Japan (see TABLE 1). That means that administrative control over more than sixty thousand Buddhist temples and their more than ten million members was overseen by ten individuals.

A *kanchō*'s official job was to administer his sect (or denomination) in accordance with his sect's teachings and constitution. The sect constitutions (*shūken* 宗憲) of most Buddhist organizations specified that the *kanchō* had the authority to appoint or dismiss priests; confer ranks on priests and instructors; appoint or dismiss all sect administration employees; confer awards and punishments on sect members; convene and adjourn the sect's legislative assembly; veto laws passed by that legislative assembly; and, in urgent situations, bypass the sect's legislative process and issue executive orders. A few sect constitutions (for example, Tendai and Shingon) granted a role to *kanchō* in levying sect fees and overseeing sect finances, but for the most part, *kanchō* did not have direct oversight over their organization's budgets. Naturally, a *kanchō* did not perform all these duties single-handedly. In most organizations, much of this work was delegated to an administrative director appointed by the *kanchō* and known by various titles depending on the sect and time period (for example, *shūmu sōchō* 宗務総長, *jimu sōchō* 寺務総長, *shūmuin sōmu* 宗務院総務, *kantoku* 監督, *shikkō* 執行).

Although no such requirement was demanded by the 1884 Cabinet Instruction, most sect constitutions—including Sōtō, Honganji, Ōtani, Shingon, Tendai, and Jōdo—granted *kanchō* ultimate authority over doctrinal judgments. For example, the Sōtō sect constitution states, "The *kanchō* judges arguments concerning sect teachings" (*Sōtōshū shūken*, 19); the Ōtani constitution states, "The *kanchō* judges what is correct or false regarding sect principles" (*Shinshū Ōtaniha shūken*, 7); and the Kogi Shingon sect constitution states, "Concerning

8. I consulted the following sect constitutions: *Jōdo shūsei* (1928; most recently revised in 1923), *Kogi Shingonshū shūken* (1931; issued in 1926 and revised thereafter), *Nichirenshū hōki* (1935), *Shinshū Ōtaniha shūken* (1937; issued in 1929 and revised thereafter), *Sōtōshū shūken* (1927; issued in 1922), and *Tendaishū kenshō* (1924; issued in 1915 and revised thereafter).

TABLE 1. Buddhist organizations by number of temples
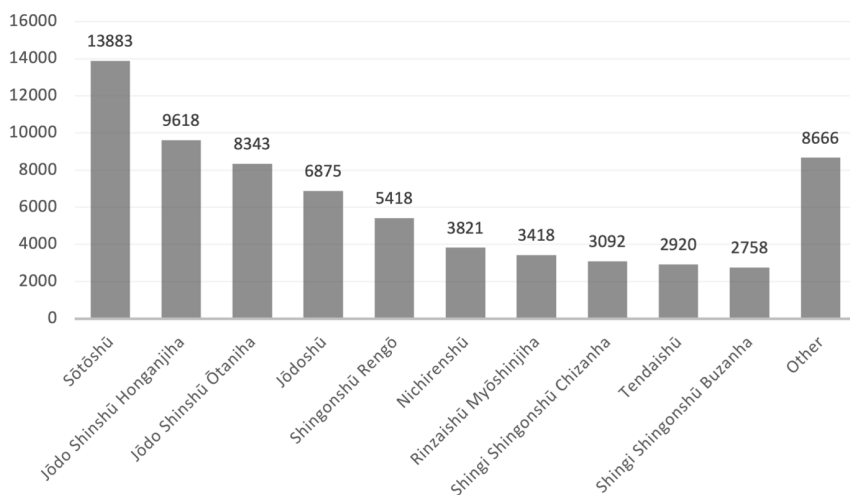
The number of temples is based on 1922 data compiled in ssc (18: 13–27). That report indicates a total of 68,812 Buddhist temples, 7,176,208 Buddhist households, and 12,408,870 Buddhist followers (ssc 18: 3). The population of Japan in the same year was approximately fifty-six million. Estimates of Buddhist followers vary greatly depending upon method of calculation. A decade and a half later, the Buddhist Federation reported 41.8 million Buddhist followers—at a time when Japan's population was approximately seventy-two million.

Shingonshū Rengō 真言宗連合 (Shingon Sect Confederation) refers to a confederation of eight Shingon denominations belonging to the "old doctrine" (*kogi* 古義) faction headquartered at Mt. Kōya 高野. Technically, they constituted eight separate organizations. However, the director of the confederation functioned as *kanchō* for all eight organizations, so I treat them as a single organization in TABLE 1. The Kogi Shingon sect would be formed in 1925 by three denominations from the Shingonshū Rengō.

The "other" category includes 2,378 temples belonging to the other thirteen Rinzai denominations; 1,420 temples belonging to the other eight Jōdo Shin denominations; 1,280 temples belonging to three Jōdo denominations; 1,156 temples belonging to two Tendai denominations; 1,015 temples belonging to the other eight Nichiren sects; and 1,417 temples belonging to other miscellaneous sects.

TABLE 2. Buddhist *kanchō* systems

	ELECTORS	CANDIDATES	TERM
Jōdo Shinshū Honganjiha	none	son of *kanchō*	no limit
Jōdo Shinshū Ōtaniha	none	son of *kanchō*	no limit
Tendaishū	none	*tandai* appointed by *kanchō*	no limit
Sōtōshū	resident priests of at least "dharma ground" rank	resident priests of "service ground" rank; 35 years of monkhood; 50 years of age	no limit (rotates annually between Eiheiji and Sōjiji abbots)
Rinzaishū Myōshinjiha	resident priests of at least sixth dharma rank	5 individuals nominated by former *kanchō*	5 years
Jōdoshū	all resident priests and teaching center directors in foreign districts	abbots of 3 head temples (who were also elected)	no limit
Shingonshū Rengō	all resident priests	abbots of 6 head temples	no limit (from 1925: 7 years)
Nichirenshū	all resident priests (as of 1924)	abbots of 44 head temples	3 years

understandings of sect tenets held by priests, parishioners, and adherents, the *kanchō* judges what is correct and what is false" (*Kogi Shingonshū shūken*, 7). In different language, the Tendai and Jōdo sect constitutions also affirm their *kanchō*'s ultimate doctrinal authority: "The Tendai *zasu* 座主 [prelate, that is, the *kanchō*] carries on the great model of the lineage of patriarchs and holds total doctrinal authority within the sect" (*Tendaishū kenshō*, 5), and "The [Jōdo sect] *kanchō* carries on the great model of the lineage of patriarchs and purifies and corrects doctrinal propagation" (*Jōdo shūsei*, 2).

The *kanchō* selection process varied widely by sect (see TABLE 2). The Jōdo Shin and Tendai sects were the least democratic. In Jōdo Shin organizations, the *kanchō* was a hereditary position passed down from father to son along with the title of Dharma Master and the position of head temple abbot (*honzan jūshoku* 本山住職). This tradition of hereditary succession was possible because sect founder Shinran had married and fathered children, declaring himself "neither monk nor layman." Within the Honganji and Ōtani organizations, leadership passed down through Shinran's bloodline to the *kanchō* of the modern era. In the Tendai sect, the *kanchō* position was assigned to the traditional head of the sect, known as the *zasu*. The *zasu* appointed one or more priests to the position of *tandai*, or judge. At the time of a *zasu*'s death or resignation, the most senior *tandai* rose to the position of *zasu*.

All other major Buddhist sects and denominations selected their *kanchō* through a voting process. The election of sect leaders was not an entirely new phenomenon of the modern period. During the preceding Tokugawa period, the most common practice was for head temple abbots to select their own successors, who then had to be approved by the shogunate. However, Jōdo and Shingon sects had held elections by ballot (*irefuda* 入札) to select certain head temple abbots and sect leaders. In other cases, the selection of head temple abbots had been achieved through mutual consensus (for example, in the Nichiren Minobu denomination) or through systems in which headship rotated regularly among priests of different lineages (as in the Zen sects).[9]

Participation in the modern election of a *kanchō*—either as a candidate or as a voter—was generally restricted to male resident temple priests (*jūshoku* 住職).[10] Participation was further restricted on the basis of temple or priestly ranking systems. In the Sōtō sect, where the *kanchō* position rotated annually between the abbots of the sect's two head temples, Eiheiji 永平寺 and Sōjiji 總持寺, the election of the abbots was based on a temple ranking system. Temples

9. Information on early modern temple priest selection processes is compiled and discussed in SSC (5: 14, 48–49, 60).

10. Most Rinzai Zen constitutions (including that of the Myōshinji 妙心寺 denomination) and all Jōdo constitutions specified that voting was restricted to "male priests" (SSC 1: 25, 30–42); other sect constitutions did not specify a gender.

belonged to three categories: high-ranking "service ground" (*echi* 会地) temples where important dharma services and retreats could be held, medium-ranking "dharma ground" (*hōchi* 法地) temples, and low-ranking "ordinary monk ground" (*heisōchi* 平僧地) temples. In the election of a new abbot of Eiheiji or Sōjiji, all resident priests of temples of "dharma ground" rank or above in good standing with the sect could vote. Candidates had to be resident priests of "service ground" temples and have a monastic age of at least thirty-five and a birth age of at least fifty.

In the most restrictive elections, candidates for *kanchō* or head temple abbot positions were directly nominated by the former *kanchō* or head temple abbots. Thus, in the Rinzai Myōshinji denomination, a departing *kanchō* nominated five candidates in consultation with an advisory committee. In the Sōtō sect, prior to their deaths or resignations, abbots of Eiheiji and Sōjiji made lists nominating ten candidates, but qualified individuals not appearing on that list could still run for election. In the Shingon sect, where eight denominations were joined together in a confederation, the *kanchō* and abbot of the "general head temple" (*sōhonzan* 総本山, that is, Kongōbuji 金剛峯寺 on Mt. Kōya) was elected from among the abbots of the sect's six "great head temples" (*daihonzan* 大本山). For the election of a great head temple's abbot, that temple (presumably its former abbot) nominated five qualified candidates of the third priestly rank or higher, who then had to be approved by the abbots of the other great head temples.

The Nichiren sect provides an example of a *kanchō* election process being democratized over time. The sect had three types of head temples: one general head temple (Kuonji 久遠寺 on Mt. Minobu 身延), four great head temples (Hokekyōji 法華経寺, Honmonji 本門寺, Myōkenji 妙顕寺, and Honkokuji 本圀寺), and thirty-nine head temples. Beginning in the 1890s, an election was held every three years, with the abbots of all forty-four head temples voting to select one of their members to serve as *kanchō*. In 1914, candidates for the *kanchō* position were restricted to the abbots of the general head temple and four great head temples. However, in 1923, candidacy was opened again to abbots of any of the forty-four head temples, and voting rights were granted to all resident priests of branch temples of the fifth rank and above. Finally, in 1924, voting rights were extended to all resident temple priests regardless of rank.[11] The Jōdo and Shingon sects also granted voting rights to all resident temple priests regardless of rank, both in elections of *kanchō* and of head temple abbots.

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11. See the entry for "kanchō" in Nichirenshū Jiten Kankō Iinkai (1981). The sect's forty-four head temple priests were also elected. When resigning or transferring to a new position, a head temple priest nominated three candidates, who were required to be of a certain priestly rank. Resident priests of branch temples under the oversight of that head temple, along with the abbots of the sect's other head temples, could vote in the election (*Nichirenshū hōki*, 66–67).

Term length for the *kanchō* position varied by sect (see TABLE 2). In the Jōdo Shin, Tendai, Sōtō, and Jōdo sects, it was a lifetime position. In these sects, elections could be quite infrequent. For example, Yamashita Gen'yū 山下現有 (1832–1934) served as the Jōdo sect's *kanchō* from 1902–1934. The Nichiren sect adopted a three-year term. The Rinzai Myōshinji denomination adopted a five-year term. Within the Shingon sect confederation, the *kanchō* position was a lifetime appointment, but when that confederation broke apart in 1925 and denominations associated with Mt. Kōya, Ninnaji 仁和寺, and Daikakuji 大覚寺 temples founded the Kogi Shingon sect, they adopted a seven-year term for their *kanchō*.

The power possessed by *kanchō* was held in check somewhat by the legislative and budgetary powers of sects' legislative assemblies (*gikai* 議会, *shūkai* 宗会). These assemblies were also a new feature of Buddhist organizations in the modern period. In some cases, all members of an assembly were elected; in other cases, a portion were appointed by the *kanchō*.[12] As with elections of *kanchō*, participation in elections was frequently restricted based on temple or priestly rankings (for details, see SSC 4). Only in the postwar period would participation be extended to laypeople. It is beyond the scope of this article to review the nature of these assemblies and the extent of their powers vis-à-vis the *kanchō* and sect administrations. Here it is sufficient to note that *kanchō* generally had the authority to convene or adjourn the meetings of those legislative assemblies, veto decisions reached by those assemblies, and issue executive orders separate from those assemblies' legislative processes.

Political Activities of Kanchō

Kanchō not only had extensive authority within their sectarian organizations; they also served as representatives of their sects in dealings with the state and other outside groups.[13] When state leaders sought Buddhist assistance in moral reform campaigns, anti-Communism initiatives, or spiritual mobilization for war, they approached the *kanchō* with their requests or demands. By and large, Buddhist *kanchō* cooperated with those requests. In exchange, they lobbied the state in regard to proposals for a national religious organizations law, compensation for temple lands that had been confiscated by the state, and legislation allowing religious professionals to hold public office.

12. The proportion of appointed to elected members shifted over time. For example, in the Ōtani organization, a legislative assembly composed entirely of appointed members was formed in 1895. In response to a protest movement demanding reform, that assembly was expanded in 1897 to include some elected members. Democratizing reforms continued, such that by 1925, all assembly members were elected, and all resident temple priests could run for or vote in an election (KASHIWAHARA 1986, 116–121).

13. A *kanchō*'s authority to represent his sect in making agreements with other Buddhist organizations was formalized in the Shingon and Tendai sect constitutions.

When proposals for a national religion law were being debated in the National Diet in the late 1890s, some Buddhist *kanchō* collaborated in lobbying government officials to reform the bill; others joined forces to oppose the bill on the grounds that it failed to grant Buddhism a higher status than Christianity (Abe 1970; Kashiwahara 1990, 145).[14] The bill was voted down in the House of Peers in 1900. A similar dynamic played out in 1912 when the Home Ministry requested Buddhist *kanchō* attend a "Conference of the Three Religions" aimed at enlisting Buddhist, Sect Shinto, and Christian organizations in a moral instruction campaign. A meeting of Buddhist *kanchō* and other Buddhist leaders was convened to coordinate a response. Again, many expressed resistance on the grounds that the state's plans would place Buddhism and Christianity on the same level. Yet the *kanchō* of most Buddhist organizations agreed to participate in exchange for political favors (Dohi 1967).

At a meeting of Buddhist *kanchō* in 1912, it was decided to establish an organization for *kanchō* and other top Buddhist officials to cooperate on issues of common concern. In 1915, that organization was renamed the Buddhist Federation (Bukkyō Rengōkai 仏教連合会). It was governed by twelve directors appointed by their respective sects or denominations.[15] This federation financed pan-sectarian initiatives ranging from political lobbying and international Buddhist exchange to disaster relief and war preparedness training. Through distribution of pamphlets and a monthly journal (*Seikyō shinron* 政教新論), it also served as a conduit of information from the state to Buddhist temples and organizations across the country. For example, after a 1924 meeting with the prime minister, Buddhist *kanchō* and administrators used the Buddhist Federation to distribute instructions to temples regarding how to support the state's "thought guidance" campaign (Kashiwahara 1990, 203–205). Similarly, following the 1937 China Incident that led to Japan's declaration of war against China, Buddhist *kanchō* traveled en masse to Tokyo to pay their respects to the imperial kami at Meiji

14. Only from 1889 was Christianity officially permitted in Japan through constitutional guarantees of religious freedom, and even then, it was not incorporated into the *kanchō* system. From 1899, Christianity came to be regulated by Home Ministry Order No. 41, which specified requirements regarding preaching activities and construction of religious facilities. The more detailed and stringent regulations that applied only to Buddhist and Sect Shinto organizations (especially the 1884 Cabinet Instruction pertaining to *kanchō* governance) marked those religions as having higher social status than Christianity; see Dohi (1967, 95) and Umeda (1971, 130–131).

15. Originally named the Bukkyō Kakushū Konwakai 仏教各宗懇話会, the Buddhist Federation's twelve directors represented Tendai, Shingon, Shingi Shingon Chisanha, Shingi Shingon Buzanha, Rinzai (including Ōbaku), Jōdo Shin Honganjiha, Jōdo Shin Ōtaniha, eight other Jōdo Shin denominations, Sōtō, Jōdo, Nichiren, and miscellaneous denominations (Jōdo Seizan denominations, Ji, Yūzū Nenbutsu, Shingon Risshū, Hossō, Kegon, and Ritsu). Each year, an election was held to select one or more of those directors to serve as executive director (*Nihon Bukkyō yōran*, 215–218; Kashiwahara 1990, 188; Ōsawa 2015a).

and Yasukuni shrines and to visit the emperor at the Imperial Palace (Anderson 1956, 48).[16] The Buddhist Federation then distributed pamphlets explaining the nature of the war; held conferences promoting spiritual mobilization; promoted religious services of gratitude for the imperial army and "alms begging to repay the country" (*hōkoku takuhatsu* 報国托鉢); led efforts to provide support and care for soldiers; and coordinated receptions and gifts for visiting leaders of state (*Nihon bunka dantai nenkan*, 224–229).

In 1940, the Buddhist Federation was reestablished with the more patriotic name of Great Japan Buddhist Society (Dai Nihon Bukkyōkai 大日本仏教会) and with a new mission of "assisting the heavenly work [of the emperor]" (*tengyō o yokusan suru* 天業を翼賛する). It was headed by Jōdo Shin Kibe denomination *kanchō* Kibe Kōji 木辺孝慈 (1881–1969) from 1940–1941, Nichiren *kanchō* Sakai Nisshin 酒井日慎 (1855–1944) from 1942–1943, and Jōdo *kanchō* Ikuhō Zuien 郁芳随円 (1967–1945) from 1944–1945.[17] It coordinated Buddhist missionary activities throughout Japan's empire, collected temple bells and other metals for donation, fostered friendly relations with Thai Buddhist leaders, and dispatched priests to the warfront in Burma to carry out pacification efforts (Ōsawa 2015a, 31–35, 40–43).

Separate from these collective efforts, individual *kanchō* shaped their sects' responses to war through speeches, rituals, and administrative actions. For example, during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, Honganji denomination *kanchō* Ōtani Kōson 大谷光尊 (1850–1903) traveled the country encouraging sect members to purchase government bonds. Ōtani denomination *kanchō* Ōtani Kōei 大谷光瑩 (1852–1923) awarded honorific posthumous names to sect members who died in battle. And Jōdo sect *kanchō* Hino Reizui 日野霊瑞 (1818–1896) urged sect members to contribute money to relief funds for soldiers and their families. All three also visited military sites to offer comfort and inspiration to Japanese soldiers (Ogawara 2010, 109–113).

During the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, this pattern of *kanchō*-led Buddhist war support only grew. Honganji denomination *kanchō* Ōtani Kōzui gave a lecture promoting military service that was published as a pamphlet and used as the basis for military chaplains' sermons. Kōzui's extraordinary fundrais-

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16. Another meeting of Buddhist *kanchō* with the emperor and the minister for cultural affairs took place in November 1942 (Ōsawa 2015b, 32).

17. Kibe Kōji, who was a younger brother of former Honganji denomination *kanchō* Ōtani Kōzui 大谷光瑞 (1876–1948), had also served as president of the Myōwakai 明和会, an intersectarian Buddhist organization that functioned as a liaison between the Japanese army and Japanese Buddhists. In 1937, the Myōwakai exchanged statements with Chinese Buddhists regarding the ethics of the Sino-Japanese War, characterizing Japanese aggression in terms of "the benevolent forcefulness of 'killing one in order that many may live'" (Victoria 2006, 87; Niino 2014, 214).

ing, chaplaincy, and morale-boosting efforts later won him an imperial rescript of appreciation (Ogawara 2010, 164–169). Nichiren sect *kanchō* Kubota Nichiki 久保田日亀 (1841–1911) declared his loyalty to the war effort, founded a patriotic organization, and collected donations for soldiers (Ogawara 2010, 170–171). And Shaku Sōen 釈 宗演 (1860–1919), *kanchō* of both the Rinzai Engakuji and Kenchōji 建長寺 denominations, served as a military chaplain in Manchuria, preaching to soldiers about the righteousness of their cause and the importance of cultivating mental fortitude; he then published a book and multiple articles about his experiences (Auerback 2012).

At the start of the Fifteen Years' War, Jōdo sect *kanchō* Yamashita Gen'yū spoke out in approval of Japan's military takeover of Manchuria and establishment of a new nominally independent nation there (Jōdoshū 2018). Likewise, Ōtani denomination *kanchō* Ōtani Kōchō sent a telegram to the League of Nations declaring the legitimacy of Japan's actions in Manchuria (Fukushima 1995, 166). Then in a speech to Ōtani members, Kōchō urged remembrance of Buddhists' debt to their emperor and service to their country in accordance with the doctrine of the "mutual dependence of the two truths" (*nitai sōe* 二諦相依) (*Shinshū* 363: 1).[18]

The pro-war efforts of Umetani Kōei 梅谷孝永 (1863–1945), *kanchō* of the Tendai sect from 1927–1940, are detailed in *Tendai zasu ki* records published by Enryakuji. His addresses to the Tendai community during the Fifteen Years' War regularly highlighted the debt the sect owed to Emperor Kanmu, who had granted permission to sect founder Saichō to establish an independent sect on Mt. Hiei. In August 1937, Umetani joined other Buddhist *kanchō* in traveling to Tokyo to visit the emperor and empress, palace officials, and government officials to express his wishes for "enhancement of the emperor's majesty and perpetuation of the army's good fortune" and to present gifts of sacred talismans (*Tendai zasu ki*, 61). Back on Mt. Hiei, Umetani instructed his sect about the need to contribute support to the "holy war" that would bring peace to East Asia (*Tendai zasu ki*, 64). Umetani also participated in or oversaw memorial services for deceased emperors, memorial services for the war dead, condolence visits and donations to military hospitals, and the dispatching of priests to serve as military chaplains. Some of those donations and funds came directly from the Umetani Shōtoku Foundation (*Tendai zasu ki*, 63).

The nationalist, pro-war statements of Sōtō Zen sect *kanchō* Hata Eshō 秦 慧昭 (1862–1944; *kanchō* from 1934–1935 and 1941–1944) have been well-documented by scholars. For example, in a January 1942 journal article, Hata defined the

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18. Within modern Jōdo Shin communities, the Buddhist doctrine of "absolute truth" (*shintai* 真諦) and "conventional truth" (*zokutai* 俗諦) was interpreted to refer to Buddhist teachings and secular law respectively (Rogers and Rogers 1991).

Buddhist doctrine of "right intention" as a matter of "vanquishing the self and serving the public," explaining that such an attitude would be fundamental to the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (TAKEUCHI 1971, 246). And in a December 1942 article, Hata echoed others' observations about the coincidence of the dates of Śākyamuni Buddha's enlightenment and of the emperor's declaration of war against the United States and Great Britain, remarking that the latter event signified "the enlightenment of East Asia" (VICTORIA 2006, 131).

In terms of active war support during the Fifteen Years' War, no Buddhist *kanchō* outdid the efforts of Ōtani Kōshō 大谷光照 (1911–2002) of the Jōdo Shin Honganji denomination. Like his counterpart in the Ōtani denomination, Kōshō enjoyed the noble rank of "count" (*hakushaku* 伯爵), granted to the head of his household by the Imperial Household Agency in 1896 (TSUJIOKA 2021). Noble rank was a unique feature of Jōdo Shin *kanchō*, who belonged to eminent families descending from the sect founder Shinran; other Buddhist sects, traditionally committed to monastic rules of celibacy, were not led by households that could inherit and pass down noble rank. In practice, noble rank conferred the right to visit the inner precincts of the Imperial Palace, attend Gakushūin 学習院 (Peers School), serve in Japan's House of Peers, and marry other members of the nobility.[19] Kōshō's predecessor Ōtani Kōzui had married the sister of the former empress. In a match arranged by prince and soon-to-be Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro 近衛文麿 (1891–1945), Kōshō also married a princess (ANDERSON 1956, 132).

Kōshō was unique among Buddhist *kanchō* in enlisting in the military. He served in 1936 and again from 1939 to 1941, rising from the rank of private to lieutenant (ANDERSON 1956, 132–134). His military service was loudly promoted in Honganji publications as a model for sect members to follow. When not engaged in armed service, Kōshō made multiple tours of the warfront to console and motivate troops in Manchuria and China. On one such tour in late 1937, Kōshō visited Nanjing the day after it fell to Japanese troops. During his four-day visit, he participated in a ceremonial march into Nanjing and officiated at a memorial service for the war dead. Kōshō's visit coincided with the start of the well-documented Nanjing Massacre. An adamant supporter of Japan's army, Kōshō reported that during his four days in and around the city, he observed only a peaceful environment with no indications of any massacre (ARA 2002, 311). Back in Japan, Kōshō visited the Imperial Palace, Meiji Shrine, and Ise Grand Shrines to pay his respects to the emperor and the imperial kami. He also

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19. Honganji *kanchō* Ōtani Kōzui had attended Gakushūin; Kōzui's brother Ōtani Sonyu 大谷尊由 (1886–1939) served in the House of Peers from 1928 and was appointed Minister of Colonial Affairs from 1937–1938.

traveled the country giving patriotic sermons and served as an official in the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA), the fascist political party created in 1940 by Prime Minister Konoe (ANDERSON 1956, 134–138). During the Allied occupation, Kōshō would be purged from all public offices due to his involvement in the IRAA (WOODARD 1972, 187, 203).

Ōtani Kōchō, *kanchō* of the Ōtani denomination, promoted the war through sermons, a national radio address, visits to the warfront, *kikyōshiki* 帰敬式 initiation rites for soldiers shipping off to war, and funeral services for the war dead.[20] Following the Pearl Harbor attack, Kōchō declared to the Ōtani community that the emperor's goal of uniting "the eight corners of the world under one roof" (*hakkō ichiu* 八紘一宇) was rooted in a desire for shared peace and prosperity among East Asian nations, and that faithful Buddhists ought to exert themselves to repay the "unfathomable imperial blessings" they had received (*Shinshū* 484: 3). Kōchō's wife, Satoko, also contributed to the war effort by preparing care packages for soldiers, making condolence hospital visits to wounded soldiers, composing jingoistic poems and hymns, and accompanying her husband on trips to the warfront.[21]

Such are examples of how some prominent Buddhist *kanchō* used their influence to promote war support among Buddhist communities. Future scholarship might investigate the wartime actions of other prominent *kanchō* or the underlying reasons for the *kanchō*'s uniform support for the state and its wars.[22] In the next section, I will examine more closely the impact of the *kanchō* organizational structure on the dynamics of war support among Buddhist scholars.

Organizational Dynamics of Buddhist War Support

The February 1941 Shin Doctrinal Studies Conference (Shinshū Kyōgaku Kondankai 真宗教学懇談会) was organized and moderated by Ōtani Eijun, uncle of *kanchō* Ōtani Kōchō. Within the Ōtani denomination, members of the Ōtani family were treated like royalty. Like the *kanchō*, they enjoyed noble status and were distinguished from commoners by honorific titles. Two months after the February 1941 Shin Doctrinal Studies Conference, Eijun would be appointed

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20. Carried out specifically for soldiers shipping off for war, *kikyōshiki* initiation rites took on connotations of preparing soldiers for death. Having been initiated into the Jōdo Shin community, it was thought that death in battle would lead to rebirth in Amida's Pure Land (NIINO 2014, 63).

21. For details on Kōchō and Satoko's wartime activities, see SCHROEDER (2022, 154–157).

22. During the Fifteen Years' War, such *kanchō* included Mochizuki Nikken 望月日謙 (Nichiren *kanchō*, 1936–1941), Sakai Nisshin (Nichiren *kanchō*, 1941–1944), Suzuki Tenzan 鈴木天山 (Sōtō *kanchō*, 1935–1940), Tōkai Tōtatsu 東海東達 (Rinzai Myōshinjiha *kanchō*, 1932–1937), Mineo Daikyū 峰尾大休 (Rinzai Myōshinjiha *kanchō*, 1937–1941), Iwai Chikai 岩井智海 (Jōdo *kanchō*, 1934–1937), Ikuhō Zuien (Jōdo *kanchō*, 1937–1945), and Takaoka Ryūshin 高岡隆心 (Shingon *kanchō*, 1934–1939).

head of sect affairs. Eijun's convening of the Shin Doctrinal Studies Conference, appointment as head of sect affairs, and subsequent restructuring of the Ōtani organization all seem to have been responses to the 1940 Religious Organizations Law. As Eijun's opening remarks at the conference allude (quoted above), the state was increasingly scrutinizing and censoring religious teachings. Prime Minister Hiranuma Kiichirō's 平沼騏一郎 (1867–1952) remarks in a 1939 speech to the Imperial Diet regarding the Religious Organizations Law exemplify the state's hard line on religious teachings: "In our country, the instructions of the ancestral kami, which is to say the way of the kami, is the absolute way, and the people of our country all must respectfully follow it. Teachings which differ from or conflict with it are not permitted to exist" (*Dai nanajū yon kai Teikoku Gikai*, 320).

To understand the dynamics of the Shin Doctrinal Studies Conference, it is necessary first to note who was in attendance. Alongside members of the Ōtani family, top-ranking sect officials, and top-ranking sect scholars, two individuals stand out: Soga Ryōjin 曽我量深 (1875–1971) and Kaneko Daiei 金子大栄 (1881–1976). Their presence was surprising because they essentially had been excommunicated from the sect for a decade. In 1928, owing to unorthodox doctrinal studies methods and viewpoints (for example, describing Amida's Pure Land as an "idea" rather than a "substance"), Kaneko was accused of heresy and pressured to resign from his professorship at Otani University and to relinquish his status as a priest (SCHROEDER 2014; MURAYAMA 2021). Two years later, Kaneko's mentor and colleague Soga was also accused of heresy and pressured to resign from his professorship. Throughout the 1930s, neither scholar played any significant role in Ōtani sect affairs. However, both independently gave lectures and published writings on Shin Buddhism's connections to the Imperial House and State Shinto ideology. Kaneko additionally joined a Ministry of Education research association devoted to promoting "national spirit," gave lectures at government-sponsored conferences, and published books through affiliates of the Ministry of Education (ISHII 2012; SCHROEDER 2022, 161–170). In a time of escalating political pressures, sect administrators like Ōtani Eijun turned for help to Soga and Kaneko.

At the conference, Kaneko and Soga outlined their unorthodox interpretations of Amida Buddha, Amida's Pure Land, and their relationship to Japan, the emperor, and the imperial kami. For example, Kaneko remarked, "It's not incorrect to say that the Buddha Land is the land of the kami. The land of our ancestors [that is, the ancestral kami] is the Pure Land. The Pure Land scriptures are the nation's scriptures. The Pure Land *nenbutsu* [chanting the name of the Buddha], just as it is, is reverence toward the land of the kami" (*Shinshū kyōgaku kondankai*, 20). Similarly, Soga drew connections between Amida Buddha and the imperial sun kami Amaterasu, arguing that both are "ancestors" who are different from "religious gods," and that Amaterasu can be viewed as a manifestation

of Amida (*Shinshū kyōgaku kondankai*, 8). In discussing the relationship between loyalty to the emperor and faith in Amida Buddha, Soga argued that "Amida's Primal Vow and the emperor's primal vow are in accord" (*Shinshū kyōgaku kondankai*, 15). "Primal Vow" (*hongan* 本願) refers to Amida Buddha's vow to save all sentient beings; by speaking of "the emperor's primal vow" and claiming it to be in accord with Amida's Primal Vow, Soga seems to attribute salvific power to Japan's emperor.

Traditionalist scholars at the conference resisted Soga and Kaneko's identification of the Pure Land with Japan and of Amida Buddha with Amaterasu and the emperor. They continued to frame Shin Buddhists' loyalty to the emperor in more modest terms, for example, as a matter of repaying historical debts owed to the Imperial House for supporting Buddhist institutions. Essentially, they sought to support the state and its wars without sacralizing them. At times, this resistance to a fuller embrace of State Shinto ideology led them to criticize state policies. For example, Kōno Hōun noted contradictions between the content of State Shinto rituals and the state's explanation of those rituals as "nonreligious" duties of all loyal citizens. Accepting the premise that Shinto rituals were to be nonreligious, Kōno criticized the state as "mistaken" in promoting *norito* 祝詞 prayers, *harae* 祓 ritual purification ceremonies, and prayers at home altars (*kamidana* 神棚), all of which he judged to be "religious" (*Shinshū kyōgaku kondankai*, 5–6).[23]

Following the conference, Ōtani Eijun's new administration conferred high scholarly ranks on Soga and Kaneko, restored them to professorships at Otani University, appointed them to a committee in charge of settling doctrinal disputes, invited them to give prestigious lectures, and appointed them to head two of four departments in a new research institute. These actions were obviously a fulfillment of Eijun's stated intention to cultivate personnel more skilled at combating negative public perceptions of Shin Buddhism as unpatriotic (*Shinshū* 479: 2). Soga and Kaneko thus became central voices in Ōtani doctrinal affairs during the remaining war years, proclaiming to sect members and the public at large the convergence between Shin Buddhist teachings and State Shinto ideology and the reasons why Shin Buddhists ought to sacrifice themselves for the war effort (Schroeder 2022, 184–186).

There is every reason to suspect that similar dynamics played out within other Buddhist organizations. *Kanchō* and the administrators they appointed had the power to make crucial personnel decisions to determine who would lead their

23. In 1936, Kōno had faced backlash for publishing an article describing kami such as Amaterasu and Hachiman as "sentient beings within the deluded realm of karmic transmigration" (*rinne no kahō meikai no ujō* 輪廻の果報迷界の有情) (*Shūso shōnin no jingikan*, 15). At that time, sect administrators pressured him to resign his position as president of Otani University. Otherwise, he does not seem to have been disciplined for any of his other politically controversial remarks.

organizations during the war years. Organizational pressures stemming from above helped shape an environment where the most nationalist, pro-war voices became prominent and resistant voices were marginalized. In a rare case like that of Takenaka Shōgen 竹中彰元 (1867–1945), a temple priest in a small town in Gifu Prefecture who had dared in 1937 to speak out loudly against the war with China, Ōtani sect administrators responded with denouncements and punishments that effectively silenced him (ŌTANI 2012, 145–147). The Shin Doctrinal Studies Conference shows that even among Buddhist leaders, there existed a variety of political viewpoints toward the state ranging from sacred devotion to pragmatic loyalty to outright criticism. Organizational pressures from the *kanchō* system help explain why, within major Buddhist organizations, any resistance to state ideology or initiatives failed to congeal into collective action. In MARUYAMA's (1963, 60) terms, the *kanchō* system effectively created "petty emperors" who enforced acceptance of state ideology within their communities. The only potential for coordinated resistance existed outside those organizations among small, independent Buddhist movements, the clearest example being socialist Nichiren Buddhist Senoo Girō's Youth Buddhist Alliance (SHIELDS 2017, 203–225).

Conclusion

It is sometimes remarked that Buddhism is a religion "without any pope." It is true that no single figure possesses doctrinal or administrative authority over all Buddhists. The Dalai Lama is not the "Buddhist pope." However, if the term "pope" is used in a looser sense to indicate an individual with ultimate authority over doctrinal and administrative affairs within a religious organization, one might say that modern Japanese Buddhist organizations were governed by popes.

The reality of modern Japanese Buddhism governed by pope-like figures grates against prevailing modernist depictions of Buddhism as an individualist path where each practitioner is permitted—or even expected—to question authority and investigate the teachings directly through personal study and experience. Approaching the study of Buddhism from such a perspective, one may be surprised to discover millions of Buddhists joining together in declaring their total loyalty to an emperor and dedication to imperialist wars. But in practice, Buddhism has rarely functioned as an individualist endeavor. Most Japanese Buddhists in the modern period belonged to hierarchical sectarian organizations governed by *kanchō*, and those *kanchō* and their appointees exerted powerful pressure on sect members to adapt Buddhist teachings and practices to wartime demands. Investigating such organizational dynamics is critical for gaining a better understanding of what accounted for modern Buddhist war support and of what practical steps might be taken by Buddhists intent on ensuring their tradition's independence from the state in the future.

In documenting the background, implementation, and effects of the *kanchō* organizational system, this article has only scratched the surface of modern Japanese Buddhist organizational dynamics. Viewing Buddhist organizations as "corporations" that share much in common with for-profit businesses and other collective enterprises (McLaughlin, Rots, Thomas, and Watanabe 2020), one might ask: What management strategies were adopted by Buddhist *kanchō* and their appointees in mitigating conflicts and achieving organizational objectives? How were the demands of various shareholders and stakeholders within and outside Buddhist communities balanced? How did Buddhist organizations foster self-sacrificing attitudes among their members? How were the decisions of Buddhist leaders shaped by economic interests? And how were Buddhist organizations modeled after or otherwise influenced by non-Buddhist organizations, such as Shinto or Christian organizations, *zaibatsu* business conglomerates, or the Imperial House? To get to the root of why individual Buddhists engaged with war and other issues as they did, it is essential to learn more about the organizations that they gave shape to and by which they were in turn shaped.

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ssc   *Shūkyō seido chōsa shiryō* 宗教制度調査資料. 19 vols. Monbushō Shūkyō-kyoku, 1921–1926.

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Opening the Curtains on Popular Practice

Kaichō in the Meiji and Taisho Periods

In this article I discuss the continuity and changes of displays of temple and shrine treasures (*kaichō*) in the Meiji and Taisho periods. I estimate the number and features of *kaichō* in these periods primarily using articles in the *Yomiuri shinbun* and *Shinano mainichi shinbun* newspapers. I discuss the ways that these displays intersected with aspects of the Meiji period, including changing laws and the expansion of a convenient transportation network. The newspaper articles are also an excellent source of information regarding the practice of these displays, including the functions of confraternities, continued attraction of sideshows (*misemono*), and use of these displays to pray for victory in Japan's modern wars and the repose of its war dead.

KEYWORDS: *kaichō*—newspapers—trains—confraternities—law

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Ｏ N THE evening of 19 June 1885, several members of the Tokyo police on patrol in Fukagawa 深川 Park approached a woman they thought was trying to kill herself. They asked her name, but she would only mumble, "Even Fudōsama can't hear [me]" or "I can't even hear Fudōsama." After repeated questioning, the police managed to discover that she had come from her home in Mie Prefecture with a request for the Fudō Myōō 不動明王 from Shinshōji 新勝寺 in Narita, which had been on display in the park. When she arrived, however, she found that the display had ended on 13 June and became distraught. Thinking it best not to leave her alone, the police temporarily placed the woman in a local hospital (ys 21 June 1885, 2).[1]

This woman's story highlights several issues that this article examines. The first is that displays of regularly hidden images (*kaichō* 開帳) still had the power to draw people from all over Japan even into the modern period, despite the dearth of scholarship on the display of temple and shrine treasures in this period. Perhaps this lacuna is understandable: for some scholars, the early modern period was the heyday of *kaichō*, and accordingly their work remains firmly focused on this period (Hiruma 1980). Even scholars who discuss hidden buddhas and their displays in the medieval and modern periods skip much of what happened in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Horton 2007). One might incorrectly assume from research that ignores this period that *kaichō* and practices associated with them remained relatively unchanged from the early modern period to the present day. As I will demonstrate below, although the early modern period was the golden age of *kaichō* in terms of numbers and display size, the displays that are held at temples today have undergone small but significant changes since then late nineteenth century.

The woman's story highlights another important issue: how *kaichō* practices intersected with and were changed by the various aspects of Japan's transformations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The most obvious in this case is the newspaper: the story of how she missed the display of Fudō was covered in the *Yomiuri shinbun* (ys). In the first section of this article, I discuss newspaper coverage of *kaichō* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Articles about *kaichō* varied and included announcements of upcoming

1. Unless noted, all quotations from the *Yomiuri shinbun* are from the morning edition.

displays, opinion pieces, the promulgation of laws, highlights about travel to displays, and discussions of events at and around *kaichō*. The two newspapers I discuss below had major differences as well. The *Shinano mainichi shinbun* (sms) focused on displays held in Nagano or by Zenkōji 善光寺, and during those displays the paper ran multiple, lengthy articles on many days discussing activities and participation. The content in the ys was more varied yet shorter. It also shifted throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with more diverse articles and legal promulgations appearing in the 1880s and 1890s and less complex announcements about and advertisements for *kaichō* in the 1900s. I also estimate the number and frequency of displays from the articles that appeared in the papers. These numbers show that there were some continuities over the course of the Meiji period; the trends of which temples displayed their images and which ones hosted displays remained similar to those seen in the early modern period. There were some changes as well: religious sites seem to have slowly decreased the number of displays of treasures outside of their home temple or shrine (*degaichō* 出開帳), while continuing to display their treasures in their own temples or shrines (*igaichō* 居開帳), a trend that began in the late Edo period (AMBROS 2004).[2]

The woman's encounter with the police brings up yet another aspect of modern Japan that I discuss here: the police and changing legal codes. In the second section of this article, I examine how temples and shrines navigated the changes enacted by the nascent Meiji state by looking at how laws and changes in the penal system affected *kaichō*, especially *degaichō*, in the 1870s and 1880s. Finally, one aspect of Japan's nineteenth- and twentieth-century transformations evident from the woman's story is perhaps less obvious: that a woman from Mie Prefecture traveled to Tokyo for a display of Narita's Fudō image. While travel over such a distance was not unusual for the early modern period, transportation changed rapidly in the Meiji period. Thus, I also discuss how infrastructural changes, especially quick and convenient train travel, affected the practice of *kaichō* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Other scholars writing about *kaichō* have focused on the absent or hidden image, questioning its ontological or semiotic status (RAMBELLI 2002; HUR 2009). Rather than ask, "What happens at *kaichō*?" they ask, "What does it mean to hide an image?" or "What does this signify?" Here I focus on what happens when that image is shown. To this end, in the final section of the article I consider three examples of practice associated with *kaichō*. The first is the role of confraternities (*kō* 講) in *kaichō* and how those roles changed in the late nineteenth and

2. There are several types of *degaichō*, from the single stop, just called *degaichō*, to the tour of the provinces, called *kaikoku kaichō* 回国開帳. Because it is unclear from the news coverage under discussion, I use the broader classification of *degaichō*.

early twentieth centuries. Second, I examine the sideshows (*misemono* 見世物) popular during the early modern period to show how they continued with novel attractions into the modern period. Finally, I discuss two cases of *kaichō* used during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) to pray for victory, the wellbeing of soldiers, and the repose of the war dead. Though these examples may be too few or selective to make a larger argument about modern *kaichō*, I include them to demonstrate the range of activities, both old and new, that occurred at and around *kaichō*. Perhaps they will inspire others to examine these practices in more depth.

An examination of modern *kaichō* is particularly useful for several reasons. First, it provides an excellent opportunity to study popular practices in these periods. These practices are often overlooked in order to study the reformation of Buddhism, how government policy affected religious traditions, or the growth of new religions. Second, by examining modern *kaichō*, we may see continuity and change across time. As I mentioned above, *kaichō* and practices associated with them did not suddenly cease, change drastically, or simply continue unchanged after the Meiji Restoration. Rather, there was a gradual process of transformation from early modern *kaichō* to those of postwar and contemporary Japan, such as displays in department stores (Reader 2014, 1–27). Finally, an examination of *kaichō* in these periods demonstrates how the intersections of popular practice with governmental regulations and modern innovations led to changes in the practice of *kaichō*.

Before moving on, it might be useful to briefly discuss *kaichō*. As mentioned above, *kaichō* refers to the display of a temple or shrine's treasures either in the home institution or at an outside institution. The characters for *kaichō* literally mean "opening the curtain." Although the objects displayed were most often hidden statues or images (*hibutsu* 秘仏), they could also be scrolls or even relics of the Buddha or a saint. Other nonreligious treasures could also be displayed, such as the display at Sengakuji 泉岳寺 that includes the weapons and armor associated with the forty-seven samurai of *Chūshingura* 忠臣蔵 fame. Public displays of temple treasures have their roots in ninth-century China, there is mention of hidden images in the *Konjaku monogatari* 今昔物語, and there are records of temples in Japan displaying their treasures from the Kamakura period (Horton 2007, 157; Ambros 2004, 2–3).[3] Temples and shrines perform *kaichō* for various reasons. One reason is to allow petitioners to create a karmic connection with the deity. Deities are also thought to respond to face-to-face requests for benefits

3. Horton examines a number of reasons given to hide images: influences from esoteric Buddhism and Shinto, practical concerns (hiding the damage to images or controlling the viewing of images for fundraising purposes), that concealment is an element of Japanese society, and that hiding an image is similar to the way that our illusions obscure our buddha-nature (Horton 2007, 166–173).

(AMBROS 2004, 3; MACWILLIAMS 1997, 398–403). In some instances, temple legends mention how their images had to be hidden and only occasionally unveiled to protect casual viewers from their power. Some images were considered so powerful or precious that copies were made at the temple for ritual or display purposes while the originals were hidden from view. The Maedachi Honzon 前立本尊 (literally, "the image that stands before") at Shinano 信濃 Zenkōji is perhaps the most famous example of such a copy of an image. In Zenkōji's case, its main image has remained hidden for many years (referred to as a completely hidden buddha [*zettai hibutsu* 絶対秘仏]) and its Maedachi Honzon, which is a national treasure in its own right, is what is shown to the public during *kaichō*.

Kaichō are also important economically for the temple or shrine and its local area because of the large number of pilgrims who come to see the image. Thus, *kaichō* are often used as fundraisers for the institutions, for instance when they need to repair a hall. Additionally, in the Edo period, the Tokugawa government benefited because it did not need to give money to temples and shrines if they could raise it on their own (AMBROS 2004, 3; HIRUMA 1980, 202–203). Finally, *kaichō* and *degaichō* were effective means of advertising a temple in the hopes of encouraging potential pilgrims to visit it (READER 2014, 4).

Displays in the News

In the early modern period, *kaichō* were advertised through signposts in the crossroads and outside of the hosting temples and by showy processions as the objects to be displayed were paraded into or through the town (AMBROS 2004). In the Meiji period, another form of advertisement was added: the newspaper. Displays were, and still are, considered newsworthy events. Additionally, *kaichō* organizers purchased ad space to make their upcoming displays known.

In this article, I examine articles published in the YS during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the YS is now a nationwide newspaper with offices in major cities, in the Meiji and Taisho periods the paper focused on Tokyo. It began publishing on 11 November 1874, and by 1875 it had the highest readership of any paper in Tokyo. By 1885, it had the second largest readership of any paper in Japan. Subscription numbers fluctuated around fifteen thousand for its first twenty-five years, increased from twenty to thirty thousand from 1900–1910, and jumped to seventy thousand in 1915 (HUFFMAN 1997, 87–89, 142, 386–387). It was popular for a number of reasons: it was published with *furigana* reading aids, written in a popular style, and it printed topics of interest for a mass audience (HUFFMAN 1997, 89–93). Although it only briefly touched on politics for the first decades of its publication, it published the laws and announcements of the local and national governments, which is useful for this study (HUFFMAN 1997, 89, 129).

The history of the newspaper shapes the information that we are able to glean from it. For instance, since the paper was founded six years after the Meiji Restoration it cannot be used to track the immediate effects of the "separation of buddhas and kami" (*shinbutsu bunri rei* 神仏分離令, announced 17 and 28 March 1868) or "Destroy the buddhas, eliminate Śākyamuni" (*haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈, 1868–1871) movements on *kaichō*. Nor can we determine what effects, if any, the Great Promulgation Campaign (1870–1884) and the laicization of Buddhist priests had on *kaichō*.

Because the YS focused on Tokyo during this period, much of its coverage concerns temples and shrines in the Kanto region that were displaying their images, hosting images, or sending their images to other temples. Though the reports remained centered on Kanto, the paper occasionally did report on displays of famous icons that were further afield, such as displays in Nara, Kyoto, and on the Saigoku 西国 pilgrimage route (YS 23 March 1877, 1; 12 May 1877, 2; 12 March 1893, 2; 13 September 1910, 3). The displays at Shinano Zenkōji, whether *degaichō* in Tokyo or *igaichō* in Nagano, were almost always noted, perhaps because of the temple's popularity nationwide and its relative proximity to Tokyo.

The extensive reporting of *kaichō* in the YS is perhaps a result of the paper's focus on a general readership in its first decades. Its editors may have seen that *kaichō* were popular, and therefore they reported on them. Despite this coverage, many of the articles—like other articles in the YS during this period—were remarkably short. Though a few took a third or a fifth of a page, most were just a few lines long. This severely limits the amount of information that can be gleaned from these articles individually. However, the articles can be used collectively to determine a great deal about *kaichō* as they were practiced and as they changed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For more in-depth information about individual *kaichō*, however, one would have to turn to other sources, such as temple and shrine archives, local histories, or local newspapers. For this reason, I have supplemented the YS reporting with that from the SMS, a regional newspaper in what is now Nagano Prefecture. The SMS began publishing as the *Nagano shinpō* 長野新報 in 1873 and became the *Shinano mainichi shinbun* in 1881. The SMS's focus on news in Nagano Prefecture provides detailed information on the displays of Shinano Zenkōji, a temple with a long history of both at-home and traveling displays of the copy of its main image, as we will see below.

In addition to the concerns of balancing news from Tokyo with regional news, I also chose the YS and SMS because I was able to easily access them. The YS digital newspaper database, Yomidas Rekishikan, has been readily available in Japan and abroad for many years. The SMS has also been digitized and made available via the *Shinano mainichi shinbun* database. Though it is currently available online through tiered paid plans, at the time of my research in 2013, I could

only access the sms database at the Nagano Prefectural Library in Nagano City, where it is still accessible for free. Additionally, the historical coverage for both newspapers is comparable and covers the period in question in this study: the Yomidas Rekishikan includes all issues of the ys since 1874, and the sms database includes issues from 1873 on.

Including other regional newspapers, or perhaps even the *Chūgai nippō* 中外 日報 religious newspaper (available in microfiche in a few libraries in the United States), would provide breadth and depth to the material presented here. However, doing so presents its own set of problems. Many of these newspapers have not been digitized, and for some the articles have not been indexed. In cases where the articles have been digitized, the databases are often only available in local or prefectural libraries or behind paywalls. Additionally, the sheer number of articles would soon become overwhelming. Tracking down and accessing other newspaper archives or databases, combing through their pages, reading thousands of articles, and recording the information would surely provide more depth and breadth to what I provide here, but searching in multiple newspaper archives would likely result in diminishing returns past a certain point.[4] So, due to time and financial constraints, I have limited myself to these two newspaper databases. These two provide a balance of national and regional news, and I was able to access them freely while doing research.

Searching for the term "*kaichō*" in these databases also returned a few articles that used synonyms for *kaichō*, such as *kaihi* 開扉 and *keigan* 啓龕. The search in the ys database resulted in 543 articles for the Meiji period, fifty-seven for Taisho, seventy-six for prewar Showa, twenty-nine for the war period (1937–1945), forty-three for post-World War II, and ninety-two for the 1960s, but I focus on the first two periods here.[5] The results included a number of false positives that had to be removed. These included many articles on organized gambling, called *tobaku kaichō* 賭博開帳 or *bakuchi kaichō* 博打開帳, among other names. Other false positives included the use of the word *kaichō* as a metaphor for the unveiling of things normally hidden, such as the story of two women from Yoshiwara who were crying because their rickshaw overturned and "like the [statue of the] founder of Ikegami, [Nichiren 日蓮], their hidden areas were displayed outside [*degaichō*]" (ys 27 April 1880, 2).

4. Newspark, the Japanese Newspaper Museum in Yokohama, has access to the databases of sixty-three newspapers in Japan, but it only has one terminal from which to access these databases and it does not allow printouts, which would severely limit the ability to reliably read, record, and review the articles on temple and shrine displays.

5. Although there is some overlap in the coverage of the Meiji and Taisho and the Taisho and Showa prewar databases, this only resulted in an overlap in one article, which I have deducted from the above total.

TABLE 1: Articles on temple/shrine *kaichō* in the *Yomiuri*

	MEIJI	TAISHO
igaichō	221	29
degaichō	126	3
general	20	0
unknown	14	0
TOTAL	381	32

After the false positives were removed, I found 381 articles on *kaichō* published in the YS in the Meiji period and thirty-two in the Taisho period.[6] I placed these into four categories: *igaichō*, *degaichō*, general articles on *kaichō* (including laws and opinion), and unknown—*kaichō* articles that I was unable to place in a previous category (TABLE 1).[7]

In the Meiji and Taisho periods, the YS frequently published a number of articles on individual temple displays. Typically, the first notice of a *kaichō* came one to six months in advance. This happened most often with large *kaichō*, such as those by Asakusa Kannon 浅草観音 (Sensōji 浅草寺) or Narita's Fudō (Shinshōji). The number of articles on *kaichō* per year are shown in FIGURE 1.

The number of *kaichō* per year is shown in FIGURE 2.[8] In total, the YS reported on 117 *igaichō* and fifty-one *degaichō* in the thirty-eight years of reporting for the Meiji period; it reported on eighteen *igaichō* and three *degaichō* for the roughly fourteen years of the Taisho period. During the fifty-three years in question, the images most frequently displayed at their home institutions were the Asakusa Kannon (eight times), Narita's Fudō (six times plus one *degaichō* at Fukagawa), the statue of Yūten Shōnin 祐天上人 (1637–1718), the founder of Yūtenji 祐天寺 (six times), and the image of Kōbō Daishi at Kawasaki Daishi 川崎大師 (also known as Heikenji 平間寺) (six times). The images most frequently displayed in Tokyo for *degaichō* were the image of Nichiren from Mt. Minobu 身延 (Kuonji 久遠寺) (five times), Maedachi Honzon of Shinano Zenkōji's Amida triad (four times), and the Shakamuni statue at Seiryōji 清涼寺 (three times). The most

6. In later periods there appear to be more articles on gambling and fewer on the display of temple and shrine images in these periods.

7. Although in some cases the articles amounted to one-third or one-fifth of a page, they usually presented little more information than the article "title" did. In fact, most articles did not have what we would call a headline or a title, rather, they were set off by bullet points and the first line of the article functioned as its title.

8. I determined this by recording the first mention of the display of an image or at a temple or shrine. This may have resulted in a slight skewing of the year in which *kaichō* were held in some instances.
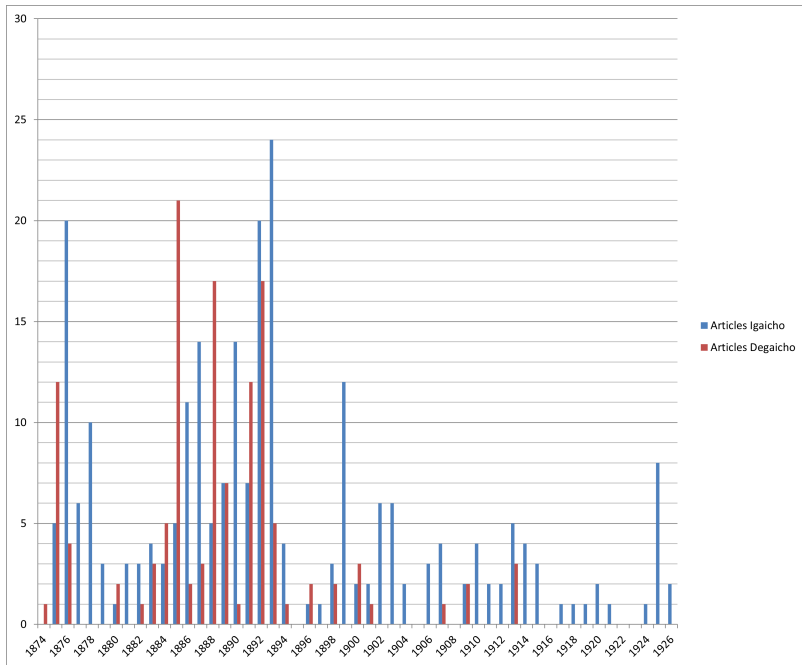
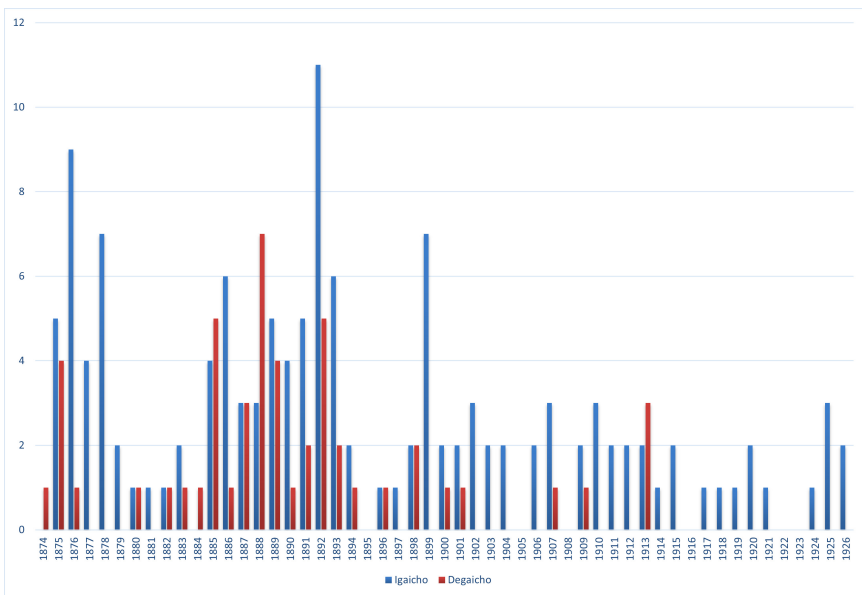FIGURE 1. *Yomiuri* articles per year.

FIGURE 2. Displays per year.

frequented host institutions for traveling displays were Ekōin 回向院 (eleven times, 20 percent of the *degaichō*) and Jōshinji 浄心寺 (six times, 11 percent).

This information is not surprising because it is a continuation of early modern trends. Asakusa Kannon was the image most frequently displayed during *igaichō* in Edo. It was shown thirty-six times from 1654 to 1850.[9] During the early modern period, the four most frequently displayed images for *degaichō*—nicknamed the "Four Heavenly Kings" (*Shitennō* 四天王)—came to Edo from Narita (twelve *degaichō* in Edo), Mt. Minobu (ten), Zenkōji (six), and Seiryōji (ten) (AMBROS 2004, 1; HIRUMA 1980, 55, 152; KITAMURA 1989, 37).[10] Ekōin was also the most frequented host temple in Edo, hosting 166 out of 741 *degaichō* between 1654 and 1867 (AMBROS 2004, 6). Continuing a trend from the early modern period, Nichiren temples always held *degaichō* in other Nichiren temples. Jōshinji, a Nichiren temple that hosted six *degaichō* in the Meiji and Taisho periods, hosted twenty-two in the early modern period, the most for any Nichiren temple (KITAMURA 1989, 48, 52).

Returning to the information presented in FIGURES 1 and 2, we can see one major change over the course of the fifty-three years covered. There is a gradual decrease in individual *kaichō* mentioned in the YS, beginning from around the turn of the twentieth century. Specifically, between 1874 and 1900 the average number of *igaichō* reported in the YS per year was 3.48 and *degaichō* was 1.74 per year (2.11 per year from 1882–1900).[11] From 1901 to 1926, however, the averages were much smaller: 1.58 per year for *igaichō* and 0.26 for *degaichō*.

Although a decrease in reports on *igaichō* could be the result of an overall decrease in *kaichō*, this is not necessarily the case. The decrease could be due to a change in the focus of the YS. Though it started as a paper for the masses, it began to print more fiction in the 1890s and thus focused more on literary readers (HUFFMAN 1997, 268). This could have combined with the introduction of other more specialized newspapers, such as the *Chūgai nippō* mentioned earlier, which would cover religious events. These could have resulted in the reporting of only large *kaichō* within the Kanto region. Cross-referencing these data with other sources could indicate whether the number of *kaichō* decreased or the YS's coverage of them did. Additionally, while there is a gradual decrease in

9. The other most frequently displayed *igachō* images in the early modern period were the Enoshima Benzaiten 江島弁財天 (16), Gokokuji 護国寺 Kannon (15), Kameido Tenjin 亀戸天神 (13), Susaki Benzaiten 洲崎弁才天 (12), Mita Jōkanji Amida 三田浄閑寺 (10), Kinegawa Jōkōji 木下川浄光寺 Yakushi 薬師 (10), and Eitaiji 永代寺 Kangiten 歓喜天 (10) (HIRUMA 1980, 97–98).

10. For more on Zenkōji's Edo *degaichō* and *kaikoku kaichō* (*kaichō* around the provinces), see McCALLUM (1994, 169–173).

11. I have included this number because there was a law, to be discussed in the next section, which banned the transportation of Buddhist images to different jurisdictions. This was in effect from 16 June 1876 to 21 March 1884.

the frequency of articles on displays overall, there are several fluctuations of articles on *degaichō* specifically. The first is from 1876 to 1884 when, aside from a few isolated displays, they drop to zero for reasons I discuss in the next section. Between 1884 and 1900 they jump to an average of 2.11 per year, with a high of seven. Following 1900, however, reporting on *degaichō* decreased significantly. I should note again that these numbers are most likely not the absolute number of displays held during these periods. For reasons mentioned above, this discussion should be taken as a rough indication of the trends in temple and shrine displays as indicated in the YS.

Laws and Kaichō

Like many things connected with religion in the early years of the Meiji period, *kaichō* were subject to a number of frequently changing laws and regulations. The most drastic of these, the Ministry of Doctrine (Kyōbushō 教部省) Proclamation Number Four, came on 14 June 1876. The proclamation stated: "The transportation and display of Buddhist images by every temple to other jurisdictions must cease immediately. This is to be promulgated to the temples" (YS 16 June 1876, 1). The order was signed by the Vice Minister of Doctrine (Kyōbutaifu 教部大輔), Shishido Tamaki 宍戸璣 (1829–1901).[12] Though only banning the transport and display of Buddhist images outside their home jurisdictions, this proclamation effectively ended *degaichō* for the eight-year period from 1876 to 1884 (FIGURE 2).

Although I have not been able to determine the context surrounding the ministry's ban on *degaichō*, or its focus on only Buddhist *degaichō*, the ban is not surprising for a number of reasons. In the two years leading up to it, there had been a number of articles in the YS concerning troubles associated with *kaichō*; Proclamation Four could be interpreted as a response to these issues. In one case, there had been rumors about confraternities misappropriating the donations collected during a *kaichō* and using them to visit sex workers in Yoshiwara (YS 22 May 1875, 1; 3 June 1875a, 2). Other people complained of the noise generated by *kaichō*, particularly by confraternities drumming in the early morning to welcome the visiting image (YS 29 March 1875, 1), but this practice was curtailed by a general order on 7 April 1876, which stated that "drumming when others are sleeping and other unusual customs are strictly prohibited" (YS 7 April 1876, 1). Local schools worried that the gathering crowds surrounding *degaichō* would distract students (YS 19 April 1876, 3). One writer complained that since Tokyo was to set an example of civilization and enlightenment for the rest of the nation, people should spend time at school or working rather than waste time and energy at *kaichō* (YS 3 June 1875b, 2).

12. Shishido is perhaps more famous for his involvement in the annexation of the Ryūkyūs by Japan (KERR and SAKIHARA 2000, 390–391).

Furthermore, Proclamation Four came in a line of other laws that affected religion in the early Meiji period. After the Ministry of Rites was replaced with the Ministry of Doctrine in the fourth month of 1872, the new ministry set up a series of laws restricting or redefining Buddhism and Shinto. These included the creation of doctrinal instructors (1872–1884); the abolishment of anti-meat-consumption and marriage laws (fourth month of 1872); the required adoption of surnames by priests; and the ban on cremation in 1873 (Bernstein 2006, 68; Jaffe 2001, 72; Ketelaar 1990, 99). Taking these laws as context, it might not be surprising that the Ministry of Doctrine would ban *degaichō* in 1876 when faced with a series of complaints about it.

Changing ideas about cultural artifacts and their preservation may also have been a factor in the development of Proclamation Four. The nascent Meiji government began developing a policy for cultural and historical preservation in the 1870s (McDermott 2006). Inspired by international museums and participation in cultural exhibitions around the world, government officials "realized that preservation of the nation's cultural property was fundamental to defining and maintaining its historical identity and demonstrating its long cultural heritage to the rest of the world" (McDermott 2006, 343). As part of this, temples were required to submit lists of their treasures to the government in 1871 and allow inspections of those treasures. There was a great deal of overlap between the treasures on these lists and items that had been displayed during early modern *kaichō*. For example, in the case of Hōryūji 法隆寺, the items on the list submitted to the government and surveyed by officials were items from the temple's *degaichō* in 1692 and 1842 (McDermott 2006, 348). Furthermore, plans for national museums began around this time, and officials' inspection visits to temples were one step towards that. However, the basic principle of preservation put forward by the Grand Council in 1872 was to house treasures at their temples whenever possible and only seek to house multiples or copies of objects in museums. Additionally, in 1873, the Grand Council issued a directive stipulating that priests were required to seek permission from the Ministry of Religion before selling items—foreign collectors were purchasing temple treasures, and selling items helped temples balance losses of land and stipends—in case the government wanted to purchase them for museums.[13] Seen through this lens, the Ministry of Doctrine may have promulgated Proclamation Four, which put a stop to *degaichō*, as part of a larger move to protect important cultural and historical artifacts in the 1870s. At the same time, local and national governments in Japan pushed for exhibitions (*hakurankai* 博覧会) of items of historical and artistic significance. A number of these occurred in the 1870s and 1880s, and many of them, especially in the Kansai region, included tem-

13. For example, Ernest Fenollosa amassed a large collection of Buddhist art during this period (Horton 2007, 159–160).

ple treasures (MᴄDᴇʀᴍᴏᴛᴛ 2006). Perhaps the move by the Ministry of Doctrine was meant to curtail *degaichō* and promote participation in these exhibitions.

Whatever the reason, Proclamation Four effectively brought an end to *degaichō* between 1876 and 1884. However, some temples and shrines still managed to take their images on the road—there were three *degaichō* during this period. The majority were able to do so due to technicalities. The first case was the display of a scroll depicting Genkai's 源海 body from Yuinenji 唯念寺 in Nagano to Taisōji 泰宗寺 in Tokyo on 17 June 1876.[14] Genkai was a *nenbutsu* ascetic who had become a "mummy" (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成仏); however, his body had been washed out of its tomb/mound in the Kawanakajima 川中島 area of what is now Nagano City during the flooding of the Sai 犀 River following the Zenkōji earthquake of 1847 (ʏs 17 June 1876, 2). The priest at Yuinenji saw what he thought to be a person in the river, swam out to save it, and then realized that it was Genkai's mummified remains. He had a painting of Genkai's remains made before reburying the body on Yuinenji's grounds. The temple was able to carry out this traveling display most likely because they had begun moving the scroll before the order was put into effect. The second *degaichō* held was between two temples in Tokyo and therefore was allowed because it was between temples in the same jurisdiction (ʏs 2 October 1880, 2). The third was from the Suitengū 水天宮 in Kurume 久留米 City, Fukuoka Prefecture, to one of its branch shrines in Tokyo: this was the *degaichō* of a Shinto image, and so perhaps it was allowed because it was not a Buddhist image (ʏs 5 September 1882, 2).

After several years with no traveling displays by Buddhist temples, the ʏs published a rumor in May 1881 that the proclamation would soon be repealed and that the government would set aside a plot of land in Ueno specifically for *degaichō* (ʏs 6 May 1881, 2). It is unclear if this plot of land for displays was an actual proposal or simply a rumor, but either way it did not come to fruition, and it would be another three years before the measure would be repealed. Proclamation Four was repealed on 21 March 1884 by the Ministry of Interior Secondary [Proclamation] Number Sixteen (Naimushō Otsu Dai Jūrokugō 内務省乙第十六号), which simply stated that the Ministry of Doctrine's 1876 Proclamation concerning *degaichō* was repealed (ʏs 21 March 1884, 1). Less than a month after the repeal, the ʏs began reporting on pending *degaichō*. The first was a request that Seiryōji be allowed to bring its famed Shakamuni image to Tokyo (ʏs 13 April 1884, 2). In the year following the repeal, *degaichō* came back bigger than before: there were six in Tokyo, more than any year in the Meiji period prior to the ban.

14. Though the newspaper article is unclear whether it was his body or an image of his body (they use the phrase "Genkai's desiccated…"), it was most likely an image because the priest at Yuinenji had buried Genkai's body in 1848. A special thanks to Wada Yoshitaka 和田良尊, head priest at Yuinenji, for his quick response to my query regarding the display of the Genkai scroll.

The YS articles do not contain any information regarding the reasons for the repeal of Proclamation Four. This and any possible complaints by priests when the ban first started are topics that warrant further investigation. The repeal did come from the Ministry of the Interior at a time when the central government was backing away from involvement in sectarian and religious matters (Jaffe 2001, 70–71). For example, the ban on cremation was lifted in 1875, the Ministry of Doctrine dissolved into the Bureau of Shrines and Temples under the Ministry of the Interior in 1877, and the Doctrinal Instructor system was abolished in 1884 (Bernstein 2006, 85; Jaffe 2001, 70–71).

Though now officially sanctioned, *degaichō* were not arranged haphazardly. The sixty-fourth article of Proclamation Sixteen stated that when taking an image to another prefecture for display, one "must receive approval by submitting to the primary and secondary area offices documents signed by the resident priest and parishioners, with a postscript signature by the sect's *kanchō*" (*Genkō jiin reiki*, 30). Four months later, the Tokyo prefectural government issued a more specific proclamation that temples were to request permission before loaning their halls to another temple for *degaichō* (YS 5 August 1884, 1).[15] Furthermore, Tokyo's proclamation states, treasures (*hōmotsu* 宝物) were not to be taken out of Tokyo (YS 5 August 1884, 1).[16] These laws were much simpler than those of the early modern period, which required approval from local businesses, domain offices, administrative head temples (*furegashira* 触頭), and the Magistrate of Temples and Shrines, in addition to consensus among the temple's priests, parishioners, and hosting institutions (Ambros 2004, 8–10; Kitamura 1994).

Another concern for temples and shrines was security. In the early modern period, temples would often hire local people for security, and the town magistrate (in Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto) would send their subordinates to patrol the grounds during displays. In the Meiji period, however, temples began to work with and rely on the local police force. During displays, police would keep an eye out for lost children and suspicious people (SMS 7 April 1894). It is unclear

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15. This proclamation was called Tertiary [Proclamation] Number 121 (Hei Dai Hyaku Nijūichigō 丙第百二十一号). It states: "Concerning the repeal of the Kyōbushō's Proclamation Number Four from Meiji 9, from now, when transporting and displaying images from temples in Tokyo's jurisdiction to other jurisdictions, as well as loaning halls for the display of images of temples from inside and outside the jurisdiction, [one] should take to the appropriate office a document with the joint signatures of the said temple's resident priest, parishioner representative (for temples without parishioners, a representative believer), the head temple (*honji* 本寺), and a postscript by the temple's headquarters. Circulate this proclamation. [One] should understand that treasures are not to be taken out."

16. It is not clear whether this meant officially designated cultural treasures or temple treasures. Additionally, it is not clear what it meant by "taking out," that is, whether travel out of Tokyo or simply out of the temple was banned.

whether they would have patrolled inside of the temple building to secure the images displayed there.

One *kaichō* in particular demonstrates the transition from early modern policing and punishment to that of the Meiji period. From the 1610s to 1876, Kodenmachō 小伝馬町 Prison in Edo held suspects and prisoners, some of whom were tortured and executed there. In the transitional years following the Meiji Restoration, however, the former shogunal penal system was transformed. This included the construction of a modern, Western-influenced prison near the metropolitan police headquarters in Kajibashi. This prison was completed in 1874, and Kodenmachō was decommissioned in 1876 (BOTSMAN 2004, 171).

It was apparently difficult to convince people to purchase and develop this land where the former prison had stood, so some of it was turned into a city park. Another portion was purchased by Mt. Minobu to build a Tokyo Betsuin, which was completed in 1883. As they neared completion in September and October of 1883, a fourteenth-century Nichiren statue (Ganman Nichiren 願満日蓮) was sent from Mt. Minobu to Tokyo. Although traveling displays were still technically illegal under Proclamation Four at this time, this Nichiren statue was transported from Mt. Minobu, marched through Tokyo, and displayed in Jōshinji before being enshrined at the Tokyo Betsuin Founder's Hall (Soshidō 祖師堂) (YS 16 September 1883, 3; 7 October 1883, 3; 19 October 1883, 3). A four-day *kaichō* was then held at the Betsuin. This occurred seven months before Proclamation Number Four was repealed, and although it had the elements of a traveling display, it would have perhaps been allowed since the image was displayed in the process of being transferred to a new, permanent home.

Meiji Japan also saw the development of modern ideas of public health and sanitation, along with the introduction of a variety of infectious diseases from abroad. A major concern from the 1850s on was cholera. In 1854 in Scotland, John Snow discovered that cholera spread through ingesting contaminated water, and that information had reached Japan by the Meiji period. Japanese methods of prevention in the 1870s included isolation of infected individuals as well as disinfecting toilets and sewage pipes. Despite these preventative measures, the disease remained a threat throughout the Meiji period, and there were major outbreaks. The YS blamed an outbreak of cholera for the low attendance at *kaichō* in the Chiba region in 1877 (YS 31 October 1877, 2). However, when one of the largest outbreaks occurred in 1879, which killed more than one hundred thousand people, Kyoto City government attempted to check the spread of the disease by curtailing public gatherings. These included *kaichō*, temple and shrine festivals (*sairei* 祭礼), and preaching (*sekkyō* 説教), as well as mutual financing meetings (*tanomoshikō* 頼母子講). The YS reported that "all gatherings of various people have been stopped, so the level of economic depression in the city was almost miserable" (1 July 1879, 3). This mirrors contemporary restrictions

and rescheduling of events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where, for instance, Shinano Zenkōji's *gokaichō* 御開帳 ceremony scheduled for 2021 was postponed until 2022.

Viewing Hidden Images as Art

One aspect that is difficult to ascertain from newspaper articles on *kaichō* is how changing conceptions of Buddhist and Shinto images may have affected the practice of and participation in displays of temple and shrine treasures. Interpretations and ways of viewing objects change with time. Recognizing this, Fabio RAMBELLI (2002) has identified phases of modern thought about hidden images in Japan, which can also be applied to Japanese religious images in general. During the separation of buddhas and kami, objects were destroyed in an attempt to desacralize them. One result was that collectors acquired large numbers of Buddhist images. In the 1880s, scholars and government agencies began analyzing images in terms of Western aesthetic values. From the turn of the century, priests began seeking recognition for objects in their temples as important cultural properties (*jūyō bunkazai* 重要文化財) or national treasures (*kokuhō* 国宝); RAMBELLI (2002, 278–279) traces this to a desire on the part of Buddhists to forge connections with the government.

Other scholars have also discussed the effects of Western aesthetics and burgeoning Japanese nationalism on Buddhist images. Sarah HORTON (2007, 161) discusses the oft critiqued roles of Ernest Fenollosa and Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉 覚三 in "turning buddhas into art rather than objects of devotion." Fenollosa played a number of roles in Japan, including as Imperial Commissioner of Fine Arts and a position at the Tokyo Fine Arts Academy, and in the U.S., such as head of the Oriental department at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In these positions he pushed for recognition of Japanese art. As part of his quest, in 1884, against the protests of the Japanese priests at Hōryūji, Fenollosa and Okakura uncovered the Kannon image in the Yumedono 夢殿 that had been hidden for more than eight hundred years (HORTON 2007, 159–160).

Japanese governments also had a role in this transformation. The 1897 law for the protection of temple and shrine artifacts, which created the categories of important cultural properties and national treasures, "hastened their transformation into aestheticized relics of a bygone age" (*Shaji shūkyō hōki zenshū*, 235–253; GRAHAM 2007, 209). One way this may have affected *kaichō* was that it allowed temples and shrines with important cultural artifacts to petition the Minister of the Interior for money for their repair. This would mean that the temples and shrines would have more money to spend on other things and would not need to raise funds for the repair of certain items.

While the recognition of the aesthetics of Buddhist images may have influenced how people viewed images, it did not necessarily mean that all people viewed religious images as simply objects of art or pieces of history. Objects can be accorded many meanings by those who view or use them, and even a single viewer can have multiple interpretations of a single image. Additionally, it takes time for ideas such as the artistic value of objects to diffuse. Thus, years after Fenollosa and Okakura promoted the aesthetic quality of Japanese religious images, people were going to Narita and Nagano in droves to petition their efficacious cultic deities, and others like the young woman from Mie who was found by the police were drawn to displays so they could "hear" the image or be heard by them. Even today, visitors to *kaichō* may go to access the perceived cultic power of the image, see its beauty, or enjoy it for its history. In fact, if anything, the interpretation of images as art or historical objects may have drawn people to a *kaichō*, rather than chased them away.

Boats, Trains, and Rickshaws: Changes in Infrastructure and Transit

While it is difficult to determine what effect, if any, changing views of religious objects had on *igaichō* and *degaichō*, the effects of more convenient transportation are much easier to trace. In the Meiji period, many travel restrictions from the early modern period were lifted. These included the requirement to have approval before long-distance travel within the country, checkpoints on major roads, and limitations on who could utilize certain modes of transportation. Additionally, although river transportation, roads, and maritime travel were all relatively well developed in the early modern period, they became more stable and convenient in the Meiji period. In 1906, for example, the sms reported that the city had put in "new roads" so visitors to Nagano did not have to "traverse country roads" (*inakamichi* 田舎道) to reach Zenkōji as they had during previous displays (sms 31 March 1906, 3). From the 1870s on, railroads were a major component of these infrastructure improvements that vastly accelerated travel. Together, these changes to travel put *kaichō* within the reach of more people. From the newspaper accounts, train travel had a greater impact on *kaichō* for both the organizers and participants, so I will focus on that below.

Although slow to start due to the high cost and a desire to pay off foreign loans, the amount of rails in Japan increased almost exponentially from 1872 to 1907 (TABLE 2) (ERICSON 1996, 9–10). At the beginning, there were only eighteen miles of track running from Shinbashi to Yokohama and from Osaka to Kobe, which were the ends of a longer line planned between Shinbashi and Osaka. While the rail significantly reduced the amount of time it took to travel between Shinbashi and Yokohama, the ticket prices were quite high: a third-class ticket cost 37.5 *sen* 銭 (approximately 3,500 *yen* 円 in current Japanese currency), which was more than

TABLE 2: Railroad in Meiji Japan

YEAR	MILES OF TRACK
1872	18
1876	65
1880	98
1884	263
1888	912
1892	1871
1896	2507
1900	3855
1904	4693
1907	4899

the steamboat between the two cities; second-class was 75 *sen* (approximately 7,000 *yen*), or 13 *sen* more than taking a rickshaw; and first-class was 1 *yen* 12.5 *sen* (approximately 10,000 *yen*). This was at a time when 1.8 liters of rice cost 4 *sen* (ERICSON 1996, 66).

The first record in the YS of a *kaichō* benefiting from the railroad (and vice-versa) is in an article from 4 April 1884. The article announced that from that day until the *kaichō* at Kawasaki Daishi ended on May 4 there would be special service between Shinbashi Station and Kawasaki. For the length of the *kaichō*, there were two express trains between the stations each day: one at ten in the morning, and one at four forty-five in the afternoon. Because Kawasaki was a stop on the initial Shinbashi-Yokohama line, and there was at least one *kaichō* between the opening of this line and the 1884 *kaichō* there (in 1876), it is highly likely that some visitors to the temple took advantage of the train before this, but there is no record of it in the YS.

On 15 May 1884, more than a month after the first article, the YS published that in the forty days of the *kaichō* (it seems to have been extended, as many *kaichō* often were) 29,543 people rode third class, 771 rode second class, and 29 rode first class on the special *kaichō* express service. The article provides even more detail: of the third-class passengers, 975 were children; of the second-class, 60 were children; and there were no children in first-class. In all, this special service had earned the Japanese national railroad 4,358 *yen* 32 *sen* and 5 *rin* 厘 from third-class passengers, 222 *yen* 30 *sen* from second class, and 4 *yen* 95 *sen* from first class (YS 15 May 1884, 3).

Although there are only eight articles on *kaichō* in the YS that mention transit after the Kawasaki Daishi display in 1884, we can gather some information

about *kaichō* and transit from those that are mentioned. For example, the second mention of transit, with reference to Ikegami Honmonji 池上本門寺 for its 1887 *kaichō*, only mentions express travel and a special stop, like Kawasaki Daishi's *kaichō* three years earlier (YS 21 June 1887, 2). From the 1890s, however, a number of rail companies, led by Nippon Railway (Nippon Tetsudō 日本鉄道, a private company not to be confused with the National Railroad Office, Tetsudōkyoku 鉄道局), began offering discounted group and commuter tickets, particularly to special events (ERICSON 1996, 82). So, in 1894, when Zenkōji hosted its *igaichō*, the Nippon Railway company offered a 40 percent discount on tickets to Nagano (YS 7 February 1894, 3).[17] Other companies followed suit, offering discounts on three-, four-, and five-day roundtrip tickets to Nagano (YS 4 April 1894, 3). The YS announced that because of these discounts more than five thousand people crowded Zenkōji in one day and confraternities showed up with more than two hundred members; the hotels were booked, and the local shops did brisk business (YS 15 April 1894, supplemental ed., 1; also mentioned in SMS 24 April 1894, 2). And "although Nagano residents take care in their preparations for *kaichō*," the SMS reported, "even they were taken by surprise" by the number of people arriving for this display (SMS 25 April 1894, 2). This happened one year after Zenkōji had held a *degaichō* in Tokyo. Zenkōji, once known as one of Edo's Four Heavenly Kings of *degaichō*, held one more *degaichō* in 1898 at Ekōin, but after that a Zenkōji *degaichō* does not appear in newspaper records until the twenty-first century.[18]

Narita's Shinshōji, the second of the Heavenly Kings, shows a similar pattern. It held two *degaichō*: one at Shitennōji 四天王寺 in Osaka in 1875 and another at Fukagawa Park in 1885 mentioned at the start of this article. From 1885 onwards, there are only newspaper records of it holding *igaichō* in Narita. The Narita Railway completed a line in 1897 with the express purpose of transporting people from Tokyo to Narita's temple.[19] Furthermore, it began offering discounted tickets to Shinshōji's *igaichō* in 1902 (YS 16 March 1902, 6). Before the train line was completed—and even for a time after—petitioners walked or rode in carts to the temple (YS 30 May 1898, 3).

Travelers to *kaichō* also visited places near their destinations and farther afield. During an 1882 display at Shinano Zenkōji, nearby temples Saikōji 西光寺 (Karukayasan かるかや山) and Seisuiji 清水寺 (in Nagano City) held displays of their treasures concurrently, hoping to draw in visitors in town for Zenkōji's

17. Nippon Tetsudō was a private rail company that the government supported in order to develop its rail network (ERICSON 1996, 20).

18. Zenkōji held a *degaichō* at Ekōin in April and May of 2013 to collect donations for the rebuilding of the Tohoku region in the wake of the triple disaster on 11 March 2011.

19. Likewise, Sanuki 讃岐 railway, which opened in 1889, was built to take people from Marugame 丸亀 to Kotohira 金刀比羅 Shrine (AOKI, IMASHIRO, KATO, and WAKUDA 2000, 92–93).

display (sms 13 April 1882). Twelve years later, the sms reported that many people traveling to Nagano City for Zenkōji's display were also visiting Moto Zenkōji 元善光寺 in present-day Iida City, Nagano Prefecture, located roughly one hundred fifty kilometers to the south of Zenkōji (sms 15 April 1894, 2). Almost seventy kilometers to the north, in Naoetsu, travelers had to transfer between train and steam ship, and so businesses and inns there were crowded during Zenkōji's 1894 display (sms 5 May 1894, 1). Visiting other sites and stopping along the way was, of course, a part of travel in the early modern period, so these results are not surprising. However, as direct routes increased in later years, businesses at these former transfer points lost customers.

The opening of railroads had a great effect on the performance and practice of *kaichō*. In the early modern period, *degaichō* were expensive affairs that included the transport of many items, not simply the main image, from the temple (Ambros 2004, 1–2, 9–13, 18–21). Occasionally the temple lost money (McCallum 1994, 169–172). Additionally, the town around the temple languished while the main image was being displayed elsewhere (Ambros 2004, 8). As the case of the 1884 Kawasaki Daishi display demonstrated, even the local railroad stood to profit from *kaichō*. And, in some cases, like that of Narita Railroad (figure 3), the rail companies took an active role in promoting *igaichō,* even listing times of express trains in their advertisements. For these reasons, if a nearby train station existed, it would be more profitable for the temple or shrine, its town, and the railroad company if the petitioners came to the temple or shrine rather than transport the main image to Tokyo.

However, some temples continued to perform *degaichō*. One possible reason is that there was no convenient transportation. Two temples that performed *degaichō* after 1901 were Mt. Minobu (in 1913) and Okuyama Hōkōji 奥山方広寺 (Shizuoka, in 1907).[20] There was no convenient rail access to these temples until the Taisho period or later. Three others were from western Japan—Kyoto (Honkokuji 本圀寺, 1901), Nara (Tsubosakadera 壺坂寺, otherwise known as Minamihokkeji 南法華寺, 1913), and Nachi (Seigantoji 那智青岸渡寺, 1913). These temples, while famous, were perhaps too far afield for petitioners from Tokyo to reach quickly. However, access to train lines and distance from Tokyo may not have been the only factors behind organizing a *degaichō*. Ikegami Honmonji held a *degaichō* in 1909, traveling from its location on the outskirts of Tokyo to another Nichiren temple in central Tokyo (ys 17 April 1909).

While travel had been made easier and faster, it was not necessarily safer. For example, in March of 1877, the ys reported on how travel to the display of the typically hidden icon of Kegonji 華厳寺 in Gifu Prefecture would be easier because "the peaks had been reduced" by roughly 27 meters (89 *shaku* 尺) at a

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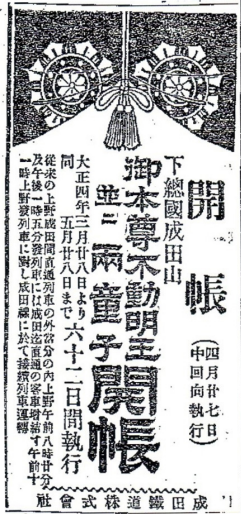20. Okuyama displayed its Hansōbō 半僧坊 statue.

FIGURE 3. An advertisement by Narita Railway for Shin-shōji's 1915 *kaichō* (ys 26 March 1915, 1), used with permission of *Yomiuri shinbun*.

cost of four thousand yen (ys 23 March 1877, 1). However, less than two months later, about ten people drowned when a ferry carrying pilgrims to that same *kaichō* overturned in the river (ys 12 May 1877, 2). Even as travel became easier, death was always a possibility.

Less life-threatening issues also arose. Names of stations did not always match what people expected, especially when the names of municipalities had changed in the Meiji period. This apparently caused some to miss the stop closest to the temple they planned to visit. This reportedly happened in Nagano City where "the station employees called out 'Nagano! Nagano!' but people did not exit the train because they did not know that 'Nagano' was 'Zenkōji'" (sms 1 April 1894, 2). The author of the article suggested adding a placard with the name "Zenkōji" on it or having the station employees call out "Zenkōji! Zenkōji!" in addition to "Nagano." It is unclear, however, how many people missed their stop because of names, or if it happened in other locations.

As roads improved and cars and busses became more prevalent in the 1930s, and especially in the postwar period, travel to temples around Japan changed. This affected pilgrimage sites in rural areas. As READER (2005, 152–158) points out, and as we see here, pilgrimage sites and transportation companies worked together to promote travel to temples and shrines. More research could be done to discuss how this affected travel to distant displays in the postwar period.

Meiji and Taisho Kaichō Practices

Many practices associated with *kaichō* during the early modern period continued after the Meiji Restoration, while others changed or were forced to stop

and new ones added. In this section I will discuss several of these practices that appear in the ys and sms, including the involvement of confraternities, exhibitions or *misemono* sideshows, and the performance of *kaichō* practices for victory in or remembrance of the Russo-Japanese War.

In the early modern period, confraternities of the visiting temple prepared the area around the host temple, and this practice continued into the Meiji and Taisho periods with some modifications. For example, when Zenkōji's icon was to be displayed at Seiganji 誓願寺 in Tokyo in late April and May of 1893, "Confraternity members and believers alike" were said to be "preparing to meet the icon" almost a month in advance (ys 5 April 1893, 3).[21] Some preparations included placing lanterns and flags announcing the *kaichō* on the surrounding streets (Kitamura 1989, 136–140). However, the Road Management Law of 1882 regulated this activity. It stated that approval was required from the police before placing lanterns or placards on the streets to advertise *kaichō*.[22] Confraternity members also drummed and chanted to welcome the image (Kitamura 1989, 136–140), but as noted above, drumming early in the morning was banned in April of 1876 (ys 7 April 1876, 1).

Another change in confraternity practices came with the railroad and group discounts. In the early modern period, it may have only been possible to send a few members of a confraternity to a distant *igaichō* (Thal 2005, 113). Those lucky members traveled to the temple or shrine with the group's offerings and petitions and returned to the confraternity with amulets to distribute. With travel discounts, especially group ones, whole confraternities could travel to *igaichō*. One place where this happened was at the 1894 *igaichō* at Zenkōji, where the ys and sms reported that a number of confraternities arrived by train with two hundred to three hundred members each (ys 15 April 1894, supplementary ed., 1; sms 15 April 1894, 2). Confraternities continued to present offerings, including music and food, to the displayed deities (ys 3 March 1887, 2; 28 April 1888, 2). An additional practice was naked pilgrimage. This practice, which seems to have ended in the Meiji period, may or may not have been connected with confraternities. The ys reported that in one night in May of 1885, fifty-six naked people who were petitioning Narita's Fudō or Mt. Minobu's Nichiren images in Fukagawa Park were discovered by the police (ys 15 April 1885, 2).

Misemono were unaffiliated displays or exhibits that were held outside of the main *kaichō*. The performers at the *misemono* of the early modern period displayed unusual or vulgar things, performed dances, sold goods, or challenged

21. Though Seiganji was in Asakusa's Tajimachō 田島町, following the Kanto earthquake in 1923 it moved to Momijigaoka 紅葉丘 in Fuchu City.

22. This was the Central Police Office's Law Primary Number Eight. The sections concerned are three and five. See ys 24 October 1882, 1.

passersby to games of skill, all for a fee (MARKUS 1985). According to the reports in the YS, *misemono* continued near *kaichō* into the Meiji period.[23] While the YS does not list most items displayed at Meiji *misemono*, it does mention a few. Like their early modern predecessors, many of these items were novel to many Japanese; indeed, that is why they were mentioned in the paper. The first mention is of an elephant that was to be moved from the *misemono* area in Asakusa Park for a *kaichō* (YS 2 April 1890, 2). A few years later, an entertainer attempted to gather customers by advertising months in advance that he was giving away roller skates as the grand prize at his booth (YS 12 December 1892, 2). Other people became (unintentionally?) *misemono* through their actions: several people racing bicycles drew a crowd from the nearby *kaichō* of Shinobazu Benzaiten 不忍弁才天 (YS 17 April 1899, 1). In Nagano during the 1882 and 1888 *igaichō* displays of Shinano Zenkōji's Amida Triad Icon, building stalls on the temple's grounds was banned. This pushed the *misemono* to an empty lot nearby. On display were moving mechanized dolls, the life of Shinran (*ichidaiki* 一代記) divided into fifteen parts, and a variety of performances (SMS 13 April 1882; 14 April 1888). In 1882, the town was covered in lanterns so "night is like bright day, it is very beautiful" (SMS 13 April 1882). That *misemono* were discussed in such detail in newspaper articles on *kaichō* demonstrates that they were considered to be a part of the general atmosphere of displays into the Meiji period, even though they were not a formal part of the temple and shrine displays.

Finally, two *kaichō* were connected with the Russo-Japanese War. The first was Kawasaki Daishi's 1904 *kaichō*. A YS article announced that the *kaichō* was "to pray for the complete victory of the imperial army and the well-being of the soldiers at land and on the sea, from tomorrow the eleventh [of April] until the twentieth of May we are displaying our main image of Kōbō Daishi" (YS 10 April 1904, 3). That Kawasaki Daishi would use a *kaichō* to pray for the victory and health of the armed forces is not surprising. Other temples and shrines offered prayers and gave amulets to the armed forces during the Russo-Japanese War (THAL 2005, 266).

Following the end of the conflict, which claimed 10 percent of the Japanese soldiers mobilized, the YS published an article about an *igaichō* held by Shinano Zenkōji in April 1906. This *kaichō* was one of Zenkōji's regularly scheduled displays, which have been held every six years.[24] In addition to this *kaichō*, the article continued, there was also to be a memorial service for those who had died in the war (YS 5 April 1906, 3). The use of displays to pray for victory and the repose

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23. I have been unable to find information about *misemono* into the Taisho period.

24. Modern-day *gokaichō* at Zenkōji have been performed in the Year of the Ox and Year of the Sheep. One major exception was the *gokaichō* scheduled for 2021, which was postponed by one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

of the war dead may have come at a time when Japanese Buddhists sought ways to be relevant to the government and therefore tied old practices with the concerns of the nation-state and its citizens.

Conclusion

Much like the woman from Mie who had traveled to Tokyo looking for Fudō Myōō, we have searched for traces of *kaichō* in the Meiji and Taisho periods. Unlike the poor woman who was so far from Fudō that even he could not hear her pleas, we can still see a faint silhouette of the *kaichō* of these periods. This outline, gathered from articles from the pages of the ʏs and sᴍs newspapers, demonstrated that *kaichō* and practices surrounding them continued through the Restoration into the Meiji period, but they were buffeted in the first twenty years of that period by changing government policies. For a time, regulations severely restricted the movement of temple images. Temples and shrines continued to display their images, though either these displays decreased or the reports on them decreased at around the start of the twentieth century. People's practices and temples' performances of *kaichō* were also altered by the convenience of train travel, which benefited petitioners, temples, and train companies. The articles of the ʏs and sᴍs also allowed us to briefly glimpse some of the practices that occurred with *kaichō*, and how those changed in the Meiji period. Practices that were deemed disruptive—drumming at night, posting signs in the streets, and petitioning deities while naked—were banned or policed. Other activities adjusted to fit new developments: train travel allowed confraternities to travel en masse; temples gained new commercial partners such as newspapers and train companies; sideshows showcased new items; and displays were tied to war efforts. However, as mentioned above, these articles have only provided us with a sketch of *kaichō* in this period; more work must be done, using other sources such as temple and shrine archives and municipal histories, to fill in the details of this sketch.

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ABBREVIATIONS

sᴍs   *Shinano mainichi shinbun* 信濃毎日新聞. *Shinano mainichi shinbun* database. https://db.shinmai.co.jp/tdb/service/.

ʏs   *Yomiuri shinbun* 読売新聞. Yomidas Rekishikan. https://database.yomiuri.co.jp/about/en/.

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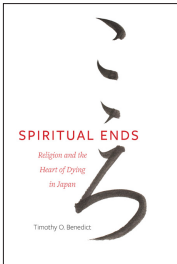
Timothy O. Benedict, *Spiritual Ends: Religion and the Heart of Dying in Japan*

University of California Press, 2022. 208 pages. Paperback, $34.95. ISBN 978-0-520-38866-6. doi.org/10.1525/luminos.136

THERE IS ONE sentence in chapter 1 of Timothy O. Benedict's book that struck a chord and that was decisive in further convincing me to keep reading to the end: "[W]hen scholars of religion reproduce the characterizations of spirituality through the language of spiritual seekers themselves, their research is in constant danger of confusing scholarly classification with judgment" (12). Although this may sound like an obvious methodological observation to many of this journal's readers, as Benedict notes, the uncritical usage of the term "spirituality" in religious studies, medical anthropology, and other fields with which this book engages is not uncommon. Defining spirituality according to how those we study explain it to us, especially in terms of its alleged contrasts to religion, does not shield us from the risk of sounding like we take for granted and essentialize spirituality. This issue is particularly conspicuous in the field of hospice care, which has been instrumental in the Japanese context in framing scholarly usage of spirituality in general.

The foremost scholar of *supirichuariti* (spirituality), Shimazono Susumu, has frequently relied on the definitions of spirituality and its distinction from "religion" as provided by "spiritual care" pioneer Kubotera Toshiyuki. Indeed, as Benedict explains in chapter 5 (95–97), Kubotera, a Christian minister and former chaplain at Yodogawa Christian Hospital (the cradle of the hospice care movement in Japan), provided the first meaningful distinction between religious and spiritual care by associating spirituality with healing (*iyashi* 癒し) and religion with salvation (*sukui* 救い). As I have recently discussed in my

monograph about spirituality in Japan (Gaitanidis 2022), such conceptual distinctions have been instrumental in constructing an idea of spirituality as what comes *after* religion. I have done this, however, without touching on the rich and complex history and current conditions of spiritual care. My work was, in this sense, incomplete, but thanks to Benedict's book we now have in our hands the definitive account of spiritual care in Japan to recommend to students, colleagues, and all those interested in the topic.

Benedict, a former chaplain himself and currently an Associate Professor in Sociology at Kwansei Gakuin University, spent approximately one year and a half conducting participant observation and informal conversations with patients and staff at twelve hospices in Japan, as well as recording interviews with twenty chaplains, eleven doctors, twenty-five nurses, and nine hospice patients (13–14). The extent of his expertise in the field is palpable throughout the book and especially in chapters 2, 3, and 4, where the ethnographic accounts from his fieldwork consistently point to the reality that spiritual care, however defined, fails to capture the complex entanglement of care that is offered to patients at the end of their lives and which often does not distinguish between the patients' beliefs, their emotional sensibilities, and their physical needs. This is why Benedict has chosen to focus his attention on the concept of *kokoro* 心 (the Chinese character which adorns the cover of the book) because, he argues, it refers to the faculty of both thinking and feeling and hence encapsulates the interaction between the cognitive and affective dimensions that the notion of spiritual care does not necessarily convey. The spiritual care that Benedict witnessed was not just about helping patients work through existential questions or offering religious truths that might provide solace in the face of death, but it also included "a wide range of mundane activities and interactions between hospice workers and patients that help the patient constantly feel their worth by letting them 'be themselves'" (30). *Kokoro* care is, therefore, a better description of spiritual care in Japan, argues Benedict.

I am not convinced that finding a more "suitable" expression for the practice of spiritual care—based on the romanization of a Japanese word—is beneficial to this book's otherwise extensive and fascinating deconstruction of this field's theories and practice in Japan. I think that Benedict does a perfect job of problematizing spiritual care without providing an alternative. In fact, the ethnographic material of the first three chapters illustrates perfectly the context that the author sets off to unravel and the problems associated with the adjective "spiritual."

The description in chapter 2 of the daily rhythms of hospice care already introduces the contradictions arising from dividing spiritual care and other types of care. For example, one of the cases analyzed in this chapter is that of Fukuda-san (22–23), a woman in her mid-seventies, who, during her final days, had asked for her sedation levels to be raised, even though the amount given

to her was appropriate for her pain. We are told that chaplains would usually advise against anything that would prevent the patient or the patient's entourage from communicating at the end of life, but an exception was made in this case at the request of Fukuda-san's daughter. Her mother, she explained, was the type of person who liked to be in command of a situation, and the adjustment of her medication was one of the ways she could exert control like she always had. Refusing that would prevent her from dying in a manner that "was herself." Benedict explains that hospice workers committed to spiritual care believe that anything that prevents the patient from addressing a potential spiritual pain that might be the actual cause of her misery should be avoided, but "being oneself" was, in this case, prioritized and integrated into the way Fukuda-san's end-of-life care was later remembered. The adjective "spiritual" clearly does not cover the complexity of Fukuda-san's care.

To unravel this issue of what exactly spiritual care is about, Benedict, in chapter 3, explains that spiritual care is less about what is being done and more about how it is conducted. In fact, we learn that "religious care"—that is, activities and interactions with patients that are openly framed in the language of particular religious traditions (34)—is rarely practiced or asked for by patients. There are several reasons for this, not necessarily related to the Japanese patients having a poor image of religious professionals, as many other scholarly studies of contemporary religion in Japan have already shown. Benedict notes that we also need to take into account that, for example, due to improvements in drugs given to patients at the end of life, many patients choose to stay at a hospice for shorter periods, and only after they have exhausted all their medical options to alleviate pain at home (35).

Religious workers in medical settings have also intentionally transformed the religious elements of their tradition and made it more accessible to a secular audience to continue attracting new members and maintaining their position in society (36). These observations by the author are very important because they undermine and complicate a common trope heard in the media that the main reason Japanese are said to prefer spiritual care is because of their alleged "non-religiousness." In the second half of the chapter, Benedict creates three categories that help the reader to better grasp the notion of spiritual care. These are "vocal care," in which caregivers converse and listen to patients, "resonating care," in which emphasis is put on simply being with the patient, and "supportive care," which refers to "creating an environment that helps the patient affirm their value amid the dying process" (41) and that often aims at disguising imagery or things that may remind the patient or their families that they are in a medical care facility. Taken together, none of these categories of care can be said to be exclusive to the domain of practitioners with a religious background, and Benedict notes that chaplains are aware of this. Yet, they are usually quick to explain

that their religious training is important because what they do is different from the work of clinical psychologists; psychologists treat patients with counseling therapies that are part of mainstream medicine, while chaplains are simply listening, empathizing, and even crying with the patient (47).

On reading chapter 3, one may wonder if the profession of spiritual care is the result of boundary-work between (at least) two professional communities. However, chapter 4 introduces another argument: chaplains are uniquely trained to deal with "spiritual pain." Yet, Benedict already warns us at the start of the chapter that a core tension lies at the heart of the concept of spiritual pain.

> On the one side, I suggest that for most Japanese patients, spiritual pain is only rarely articulated in terms of a search for meaning, belief, or transcendence. In fact, many of the patients who come to "accept" their death claim to do so by letting go of the need to transcend their condition altogether…. On the other side of this tension is the fact that hospice workers who are committed to providing spiritual care ultimately do suggest that a "search for meaning" can be latent, repressed, or sometimes just poorly articulated by Japanese patients. In their view, spiritual pain is like a submarine at sea. Even when you cannot see it, it might be lurking below. (51)

Through many detailed examples, Benedict helps us navigate what seems to be a struggle to generalize very specific cases and the constant work of interpretation that is required from hospice workers to identify what constitutes spiritual pain in the case of this or that patient. Does, for example, the fear of being a burden to one's family count as spiritual pain? Physicians and nurses in Japan seem to think so, but in other countries, despite the presence of the same anxieties, categorizations are different.

The same can be said about the absence of a strong anxiety regarding death among Japanese patients, which is not conditioned by some "samurai-like spirit" that makes the Japanese oblivious to the fear of death (62). It is also observed in other countries. So, what are the reasons for the apparent contradiction between the low number of Japanese hospice patients who openly raise "spiritual" questions and the conviction of many hospice workers and nearly all chaplains that most patients are in need of spiritual care? Benedict offers two ways to answer this question (67). One confirms suspicions of boundary-work, that is, that despite the arbitrariness of labels like "spiritual pain" the legitimization of such pain as a clinical symptom legitimizes the existence of religious chaplains. A second "more charitable" (67) way to answer the question also consists of one of Benedict's key arguments in this monograph: the term "spiritual" functions in Japanese hospice care as a floating signifier that is available to professionals committed to spiritual care and who draw on it to

make sense and respond to mundane or deep existential concerns expressed by patients. It is a label used by caregivers who, in the first place, believe that patients experience but will not easily express a particular kind of pain that becomes expressible once the adjective "spiritual" is attached to it.

This argument leads us to chapter 5, aptly titled "The Invention of Japanese Spirituality." Starting with an examination of D. T. Suzuki's definition of spirituality, where Benedict finds the first attempt at describing "something that is different from religion, resides deep in every person, and becomes 'awakened'" (80), the chapter traces the global conversations about spirituality from Cicely Saunders, the mother of modern hospice care, and the World Health Organization's nuanced use of the term as an alternative to "holism," to later developments in which spiritual care became a technology of care necessitating professional certificates and quantifiable assessments. We learn, therefore, that even before examining the case of spiritual care in Japan, delineating a spiritual dimension in patients, which could serve as the locus of spiritual pain, at times undermines the original meaning of this type of care, which was more about treating patients as a whole person (89). Nevertheless, as the rest of the chapter illustrates, many commentators tried to define precisely what spiritual pain is about. Some attempted to locate the locus of spiritual pain in the spirit (*tamashii* 魂) of the person, while others tried to explain how spiritual pain felt, by introducing an understanding of spirituality as focused on feelings, reasons, and the self-identity of the patient. By doing this, philosophers, hospice care practitioners, and priests emphasized spirituality as the integrating or core element of personhood, thus entirely distinct from "religion." The more "medicalized" spirituality became, the less it was allowed to reminisce about anything religious, even if all chaplains continue to believe that religious beliefs invariably inform their work (104). By the end of the chapter, one cannot help feeling that in the majority of cases, the French suggestion of replacing the adjective "spiritual" with "existential" would solve many of the definitional issues, but this is exactly where the value of Benedict's effort is located. He shows that conceptual conversations about spirituality and medical care happened within global conversations that the pioneers of spiritual care in Japan conducted with British, German, and American colleagues, all the while they were developing their own frameworks, which they considered to be better suited to their contexts.

And it is to this local context that Benedict turns in chapter 6 where he avoids a simple diffusionist idea of spiritual care, having come from abroad to flourish in Japan during the last thirty years. Indeed, as the author illustrates, the institutionalized forms of social welfare provided by Buddhist and Christian hospitals during the early twentieth century later became key sites for purveying the philosophy of hospice and spiritual care in Japan (109). In other

words, this was not a sudden phenomenon: "care for the *kokoro* of patients was on the minds of religious groups well before the notion of spiritual care" (115). Benedict notes that modern Buddhist intellectuals, such as Inoue Enryō, had already argued that social engagement was necessary to reform Buddhism, inspiring the foundation of medical charities and pushing the number of Buddhist medical institutions beyond that of their Christian counterparts during the first few decades of the twentieth century (116). Later, however, financial struggles contributed to a reduction in the number of Buddhist-associated hospitals (today, only a handful remain), whereas, on the contrary, Christian missions benefited from increased donations. "In 2017, approximately thirty-three Christian hospitals in Japan provided some form of hospice care, and all but nine of these hospices were founded before 1960" (119). By the time Elizabeth Kübler-Ross's bestselling book *On Death and Dying* (1969) was translated into Japanese in 1971, religion-affiliated medical institutions had several decades of practice under the belt to start framing their work as spiritual care. Kashiwagi Tetsuo, a psychiatrist at the Yodogawa Christian Hospital, traveled to the UK and US from 1979 to 1981 to receive training directly from figures like Cicely Saunders. In 1985, Tamiya Masashi used the Sanskrit term "Vihāra" (Bihāra) to refer to Buddhist hospice care, spearheading a movement whose activities have sometimes gone well beyond spiritual care to include all kinds of welfare support. After the Kobe earthquake and the Aum sarin gas attack in 1995, Benedict notes that *kokoro* care went mainstream, and "religious workers in hospice care started to rely on the label of 'spiritual care' to distinguish their work from a broader type of psychological care" (127). The triple disaster of 11 March 2011 further changed the situation, highlighting even more clearly how the history of medical welfare and hospice care in Japan shows "how religious groups in Japan looked to such engagement, both to show their own healthy role in society and to live out their religious commitments" (130).

In the short concluding chapter, chapter 7, Benedict reiterates his key argument: "spirituality" is a strategic label that serves to negotiate the flexible boundaries between the religious and the secular to legitimize and valorize the role Japanese religious workers play in the hospice (137). And, he restates that the notion of *kokoro* as the seat of feelings and its importance in the practice of spiritual care in Japan "demonstrates the need for more analysis of the role that feelings play in the forming of Japanese religious and nonreligious identities" (136). There is no argument against this observation. With some exceptions (see footnote 9 of chapter 7 and Baffelli (2023) for a more recent example), emotions are still an underdeveloped analytical dimension of religion in Japan. But, and this is my main criticism of Benedict's argument, do we need to keep Japanese terms, such as *kokoro*, to talk about such aspects of religion in English?

I have no doubt that Benedict's aim is not to emphasize an alleged uniqueness of Japanese culture. Throughout the book and until the end, where he refers to Jungian psychologist Kawai Hayao, but warns against Kawai's tendency to overstate the Japanese psyche's specificities, Benedict makes sure that we understand that he is not writing another *Kokoro, The Japanese Art of…* book. Still, keeping the romanized word and referring to *kokoro* care reminded me of debates surrounding, for example, the use of Kami or *kami* in studies of religion in Japan published in English (or other alphabet-based languages). Are these words untranslatable? Or is keeping them in romanized script a matter of convenience so that the author does not need to keep reminding readers that, in this case for example, *kokoro* does not *just* mean "mind/heart"? I understand that readers are not naïve and that most would think that I provided the answer to my concern already in my second question. As long as we are careful in avoiding essentialized accounts of our concepts like Benedict does brilliantly with spirituality, our audiences will understand our intentions in keeping some words untranslated. But part of the problem remains. How many readers will remember that, as in the case of "spirituality" or "kami" (Sato 2016), *kokoro* also has a particular history, nonetheless transnational, during which its meaning became entangled at the end of the nineteenth century between psychologists, hypnotists, and Buddhist intellectuals (Ichiyanagi 2014)? Except for this minor comment, I thoroughly enjoyed Benedict's book and highly recommend it to anyone interested in hospice care, spiritual care, or end-of-life care in, but not limited to, Japan.

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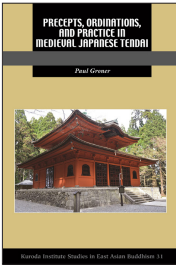
Paul Groner, *Precepts, Ordinations, and Practice in Medieval Japanese Tendai*

University of Hawai'i Press, 2022. 400 pages. Hardback, $68.00. ISBN 9780824892746. Paperback, $20.00. ISBN 9780824893286.

PAUL GRONER's newest book from the Kuroda Studies in East Asian Buddhism series published with the University of Hawai'i Press collects, organizes, and revises twelve articles previously published by the author from 1978 onward. As a whole, these chapters provide a detailed and comprehensive illustration of the discourse on the Buddhist precepts in the Japanese Tendai school in a way no work in English has done before and few studies in Japanese even begin to broach. Building on Groner's previous monographs on Saichō (1984) and Ryōgen (2002), this book seeks to understand the discourse on the precepts in the Tendai school and its development throughout the medieval period.

The book consists of a "series of portraits of Tendai views, often based on a particular person, text, or ritual" (302). Although Groner does not offer an overarching narrative for this complex discourse, he nevertheless highlights several major themes in medieval Tendai doctrine and practice. The chapters of the book progress from a general discussion of the place of precepts in the history of Tendai scholasticism to studies of particular individuals, texts, lineages, and doctrinal matters. Within this overall progression, each chapter combines social, intellectual, textual, and institutional history in a way that illuminates the effectiveness and necessity of this sort of multifaceted approach to the study of religion in premodern East Asia.

A foreword by Jacqueline Stone emphasizes what is at stake in this book. By contextualizing the apparent contradiction between the loose observation of monastic precepts and a deep concern with moral and behavioral norms in Japanese Buddhism, the volume challenges assumptions that Japanese Buddhists were dismissive of the fundamental tenets of monastic life. The introduction and conclusion, in particular, address this issue by summarizing the themes discussed in more detail throughout the book: laxity vs. strictness, ordination, the tension between ideals and lived practice, and the complex discourse linking the precepts to other aspects of Buddhist doctrine and practice.

Individual chapters go into detail on a number of important individuals, themes, and concepts related to the Buddhist precepts. The bodhisattva precepts and the *Brahma's Net Sūtra* is a central topic, as is the *Lotus Sūtra* and the works of well-known Tendai scholiasts such as Annen. The book also includes

chapters about lesser-known figures such as Kōen and Ninkū of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and several influential, though obscure, types of ordination within the Tendai tradition. The difference between "universal ordination" (*futsūju* 普通授, or simply *tsūju* 通授)—a ceremony in which precepts are bestowed upon both lay believers and monastics—and "distinct ordination" (*betsuju* 別授)—when ceremonies for laity and monastics are conducted separately—forms one locus of this discussion. The "consecrated ordination" (*kaikanjō* 戒灌頂), a type of precepts ceremony that married esoteric rituals with precept conferral ceremonies, forms another. In addition to these topics, studies on the role of confession in Japanese Tendai, debates as a component of training on Mt. Hiei, and the "perfect-sudden precepts" (*endonkai* 円頓戒)—an idea that links the precepts to the *Lotus Sūtra*—form a network of concepts linking the precepts and monastic law to the philosophy of the Tendai school.

What becomes apparent through these chapters is that the precepts were a perennial concern in the history of Tendai in Japan. At the same time, the sources and individuals mentioned represent a high degree of diversity within what we might otherwise assume to be a unified vision. Tendai, as Groner writes, "was not a monolithic entity" (301), and the debate surrounding the precepts was "ongoing" and "multifaceted"(7).

What was the debate about the precepts, and why were they so important in the Tendai tradition? On the one hand, the scholars in the Tendai school consistently argued for a more rigorous application and stricter adherence to the precepts by connecting ordination and precept practice to various doctrines of the *Lotus Sūtra* or to esoteric Buddhist thought. On the other hand, their constant refrain lamenting the laxity of their fellow monastics and urging stricter regulation of monastic life may indicate that maintaining order was not easy and that "laxity" was more common than we often imagine. By Groner's account, this "laxity" was partly a product of rules that were "vague" or "ambiguous," particularly the precepts of the *Brahma's Net Sūtra*. Despite its centrality, this text was "ill-suited as a basis of monastic Buddhism" (303), and, coupled with the fact that many of the monks on Mt. Hiei were sons of wealthy aristocrats who joined the order more out of obligation than religious conviction, the slide into negligence was inevitable. By working to understand Buddhist conceptions of morality, Groner argues that the Tendai scholiasts aimed to reinforce "strictness" and adherence to the *Vinaya*, particularly in regard to the ordination ceremony.

By collecting decades of research in a single volume, Groner's book represents the most comprehensive study of the role of the precepts in Japanese Buddhism to date, one not likely to be superseded any time soon. As such, the book is not only the culmination of a single research project but of a career studying and researching Japanese Buddhism. The book concludes with a short essay by a former student, Charles Jones, describing Groner's role as a mentor and remind-

ing us that, although we may study obscure topics such as medieval Japanese monastic law, what we do as academics matters to our students and the future generations of Buddhist studies scholars (330). While opportunities to directly study with Paul Groner may be fewer now that he has retired, with this new volume the chance to learn from Groner through his writings will be with us for years to come.

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