

VOLUME 4, SPRING 2019



**Journal of Asian
Humanities at
Kyushu University**

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Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University

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Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University

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Akahashi Nariko (1306–1365): A Force to Be Reckoned With

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Akahashi Nariko (1306–1365) was the primary wife of the first Ashikaga shogun Takauji (1305–1358) and the mother of his heir and six other children. Her natal family, the Akahashi Hōjō, were descendants of the Taira clan who had served for over a century as regents of the military government in Kamakura and later as its de facto rulers. But even with this notable pedigree, Nariko has garnered little scholarly attention: she seldom rates more than a footnote in studies about her famous husband, no monograph or article about her has been written in English, and there exists only one publication about her life in Japanese. While scholars have written much about the military and political machinations involving the Ashikaga shoguns in the fourteenth century, few have written about their wives and mothers. Seeking to develop a fuller understanding of Akahashi Nariko, this essay offers a picture of

a strong-willed woman who had a close relationship with and powerful influence over her husband, and was a fierce protector of her children and their political and social interests.

Poets on the Periphery: Kūkai's Vision of Frontier Governance

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AND LITERATURE

In the early ninth century, Japan's northeastern frontier remained contested territory. Although the region was nominally incorporated into the Japanese state as Mutsu Province, the indigenous Emishi repeatedly frustrated Japanese attempts to dominate the region. The numerous military campaigns undertaken during the late eighth century yielded dubious results. Furthermore, a failed coup d'état in 810, otherwise known as the Kusuko Incident, compounded the imperial court's difficulties. In response to these challenges to court authority, the thoroughly sinophilic Emperor

Saga reinforced the *ritsuryō* system of governance, including a renewed emphasis on *monjō keikoku* (statecraft through writing) as a political technology and justification for literary production. This article presents and analyzes two epistle-poems written by Kūkai to Ono no Minemori and Ōtomo no Kunimichi on the eve of their respective postings to governorships in the northeastern borderlands. These texts demonstrate how Kūkai creatively appropriated continental literary and historical source materials to situate Minemori and Kunimichi's assignment to the frontier within the framework of *monjō keikoku* thought.

Artist as Disciple: Miyajima Tatsuo and Sōka Gakkai

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Miyajima Tatsuo is a globally recognized artist known for his immersive installations of LED counters. His work emphasizes the cyclical nature of time and is often described as “Buddhist,” but without reference to the specific type of Buddhism that informs Miyajima's production. This article looks closely at Miyajima's profound affiliation with the Buddhist religious organization Sōka Gakkai and references the artist Joseph Kosuth's understanding of conceptual art to analyze Miyajima's work. It argues that Miyajima's production represents a form of religious practice rooted in Nichiren Buddhism and the cultivation of an “inseparable bond” (*shiteifuni*) with Sōka Gakkai's third president, now honorary president, Ikeda Daisaku. The article aims to counter the dominance of secularization narratives in contemporary art that frame the use of religious themes and motifs as a matter of individual interest and expression, rather than organizational affiliation and collective practice.

REVIEW

The Currency of “Tradition” in Recent Exhibitions of Contemporary Japanese Art

EXHIBITION REVIEW BY CHELSEA FOXWELL

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Research Note on Brahmanical Deities in Mikkyō Astrological Art

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KYUSHU AND ASIA

Demon Roof Tiles: A Study of the Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-A

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This article takes up a distinctive regional type of Japanese roof tile known as the *onigawara*, or “demon tile,” embellished with the face or form of an ogre. Featured is the first *onigawara* to represent only the face of a demon, a type made in Dazaifu, northwest Kyushu, where a regional government office was located from the end of the seventh century through the Nara (710–784) and Heian (794–1185) periods. The highly skilled modeling of the demon’s exaggerated features, gaping mouth, and bared teeth combine with a clever design of these elements on a distinctive tile contour that melds function with form. The design and modeling of these tiles differs both from continental examples and contemporaneous works made in the Nara capital. Prominently placed on the roofs of Dazaifu’s most important buildings, eighth-century Dazaifu *onigawara* embody the character of the place and their role warding off evil. The Dazaifu type is unique in the history of tiles, a point demonstrated through discussion of several sixth- through eighth-century intersecting streams of monster representations, tile shapes and designs, and their functions *in situ*—East Asian, regional, and capital-based.

Akahashi Nariko (1306–1365): A Force to Be Reckoned With

KAREN M. GERHART

Introduction

AKAHASHI Nariko 赤橋登子 (1306–1365) was the primary wife of the first Ashikaga shogun Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–1358) and the mother of his heir and six other children.¹ Her natal family, the Akahashi Hōjō 赤橋北条, were descendants of the Taira clan who had served for over a century as regents of the military government in Kamakura and as de facto rulers during its later years.² But even with this notable pedigree, Nariko has garnered little scholarly attention: she seldom rates more than a footnote in studies about her famous husband, no monograph or article about her has been written in English, and only one publication about her life, now over twenty years old, has appeared in Japanese.³ Much of the responsibility for the

lack of serious research on Nariko rests with limitations in the primary sources, but another significant factor is the trend in historical research that, for many years, has privileged political and economic movements and the men who lead them. Although no one today would deny that women have a presence in human history and exert a force upon events, publications on women in Japan's Muromachi period (1336–1573) lag behind those of their more powerful fathers and husbands, confirming that scholars still face significant challenges.⁴

Uncovering information about Nariko presents unique problems because most physical traces of her have long since vanished. We have no portrait, nor can we document any objects that she might have owned, commissioned, or given as gifts. Indeed, we have nothing written in her hand. All that is known to date are a number of contemporaneous documents written by male courtiers and Buddhist monks that highlight her contributions to the formation of the Ashikaga lineage.

I am grateful to John Breen, Thomas Conlan, Patricia Fister, and Hitomi Tonomura for their helpful comments and suggestions on previous drafts of this article, all of which helped me refine my thinking about Nariko and her contributions. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewer for offering astute comments and corrections. Finally, thanks are due to the Japan Endowments at the University of Pittsburgh for funding my research trips.

1 Nariko 登子 may also be romanized as "Tōshi" and "Nobuko."

2 "Akahashi Hōjō" designates Hōjō Nagatoki's 北条長時 (1230–1264) descendants.

3 Taniguchi, "Ashikaga Takauji no seishitsu."

4 Although many publications explore the lives of Japanese women before 1300 and after 1600, relatively few focus on women who lived between the two dates. English-language publications that focus on early fourteenth-century women are uncommon; see Tonomura, "Re-envisioning Women"; Tyler, *From the Bamboo-View Pavilion*; Gerhart, "Reconstructing the Life of Uesugi Kiyoko."

While some might suggest that such sources, written largely by men, for men, and about men, could hardly be relevant to women's experiences, they provide important information that can be read in new ways. This essay seeks to develop a fuller picture of Akahashi Nariko and her social and political contributions by examining how she survived the chaos of constant warfare after the fall of Kamakura and exploring her interactions with important figures, her participation in various rites and ceremonies, her connections to certain religious sites, and the posthumous construction of her identity. The picture that emerges is one of a strong-willed woman who had a close relationship with and powerful influence over her husband and was a fierce protector of her children and their political and social interests.

Nariko's Early Years: 1306-1336

As was typical at this time, Nariko's birth date was not recorded, but her death date and age at death were, allowing us to extrapolate the year of her birth to 1306. Most sources claim that she was the daughter of Hōjō (Akahashi) Hisatoki 北条(赤橋)久時 (1272-1307) and an unnamed daughter of Hōjō Muneyori 宗頼 (?-1279), and the younger sister of Hōjō (Akahashi) Moritoki 守時 (1295-1333), the last adjutant (*shikken* 執権) of the Kamakura shogunate.⁵ At least one contemporary record claims she was Moritoki's daughter, which seems unlikely because Moritoki's biological age would have been eleven when Nariko was born in 1306.⁶ It has been suggested, however, that her brother, Moritoki, who held a more prestigious position than his father, adopted her in order to make her a better match for Takauji.⁷ What we do know for certain is that Nariko was born and brought up as a member of the Hōjō rulers in Kamakura.

Nariko's marriage to Takauji started out as a useful political alliance, intended to cement relations between

two important military houses. Nariko became Takauji's primary wife (*seishitsu* 正室), although we do not know exactly when this marital alliance was formed. Given that Takauji's coming-of-age ceremony (*genpuku* 元服) was held in 1318 when he was fifteen, we may assume that the marriage took place in the mid-to-late 1320s—a period when relations between the Ashikaga and Hōjō were still amiable and cementing an alliance between the two families made good sense.⁸ The marriage served to confirm Ashikaga allegiance to the Hōjō and fulfilled a long-standing tradition that the head of the Ashikaga marry a woman from the main Hōjō line.⁹ Shortly after their first son Senjuō 千寿王 (later Yoshiakira 義詮; 1330-1367) was born in 1330, fighting broke out between the Hōjō and Emperor Godaigo 後醍醐天皇 (1288-1339; r. 1318-1339), and in 1331, Takauji was ordered to join Hōjō Takatoki's 北条高時 (1303-1333) army in the Kinai region to quell an anti-bakufu uprising (Genkō Incident). Two years later, however, in 1333, Takauji suddenly switched his allegiance and attacked the Hōjō stronghold at Rokuhara in Kyoto, making the situation in Kamakura a perilous one for his wife and young son. In the same year, Nariko's brother, Moritoki, committed suicide rather than submit, and countless other Hōjō members were slaughtered or committed suicide under Takauji's orders when Kamakura fell.

It is clear that Nariko's situation changed drastically in the years following the fall of Kamakura, raising questions about how she survived, where she lived, and how she supported and protected her children. It is difficult to pinpoint her whereabouts during the widespread chaos that enveloped the country at this time. Most histories tell us that Takauji spent much of his time engaged in military activities in far-off

5 DNS 6:28 (p. 574) says Moritoki was the older brother of Takauji's wife. See also the entry for "Akahashi Moritoki" in *Nihon jinmei daijiten*. In calculating ages newborns were considered to be age one at birth.

6 *Moromoriki*, Jōji 貞治 4 (1365):5.7 (vol. 8, p. 201), 4.5.7 (p. 206), and 5.18 (p. 221) says she was Moritoki's daughter.

7 I am grateful to the anonymous reader for this suggestion. Taniguchi, "Ashikaga Takauji no seishitsu," pp. 111-12, also mentions the possibility that Moritoki adopted his sister as his daughter.

8 Yamaji, "Ashikaga Takauji," p. 107; DNS 5:905 (p. 648). In the tenth month of 1319, Takauji was presented with the court title of senior minister in the Ministry of Civil Affairs (*jibu no taifu* 治部大輔), with junior fifth rank, lower grade (*jūgoi no ge* 從五位下). This marriage between the Ashikaga and Akahashi was facilitated by several factors: Takauji's grandmother had been a Hōjō, the Ashikaga were close allies during this period, and the Akahashi were ascendant within the Hōjō at this time. See Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution*, p. 133; Taniguchi, "Ashikaga Takauji no seishitsu," pp. 112-14.

9 It should be noted that Takauji himself was not originally the intended Ashikaga heir. His father Sadauji 貞氏 (1273-1331) and his primary wife Shakadō-dono 釈迦堂殿 (n.d.) had a son, Takayoshi 高義 (1297-1317), several years before Takauji was born, and that child was designated as Sadauji's rightful heir. In 1317, however, Takayoshi died suddenly at the young age of twenty-one.

Kyoto, Tanba, and elsewhere. Yet, over the next fourteen years the couple produced six more children after Yoshiakira—four daughters and two more sons.¹⁰ After Takauji's decision to attack the Hōjō and the deaths of Nariko's elder brother and other family members, Nariko was in a precarious position, so we have to ask: What happened to her?

Several documents offer clues about what happened to Senjuō (Yoshiakira) after Kamakura fell, but offer little about his mother. When Takauji first departed Kamakura in 1331, we are told that he was forced to leave behind his wife and son as a pledge of his loyalty to the Hōjō.¹¹ At that time, mother and son were living at the Ashikaga residence at Ōkuradani 大蔵谷 near Jōmyōji 浄妙寺, but within days of Takauji's defection on 1333.4.29 they were forced to flee the city. Sources are silent on Nariko's whereabouts after that point, but a week later (5.9), we are told that the new heir, Senjuō, was with Ki no Gozaemon 紀五左衛門 (n.d.) in Musashi Province (Saitama Prefecture), heading north to join other Ashikaga supporters.¹² After Hōjō Takatoki, the fourteenth Kamakura adjutant, and many of his relatives committed suicide on 5.22 and the Kamakura bakufu fell, Senjuō (age four), aided by Hosokawa Kazuujī 細川和氏 (1296–1342), returned to Kamakura and was presented as the (nominal) commander and ensconced in the abbot's quarters of the Nikaidō 二階堂 of Eifukuji 永福寺 (also Yōfukuji).¹³

Some scholars have suggested that Nariko may have taken refuge in Tanba Province (Hyōgo Prefecture) for a time.¹⁴ While there is ample evidence that Takauji visited Tanba regularly between 1333 and 1336, his wife is not mentioned in any of these records. But then

neither is Takauji's mother, Uesugi Kiyoko 上杉清子 (1270–1342), who almost certainly took refuge in Tanba because it was her natal family's domain and Takauji's birthplace.¹⁵ In reality, there were few other safe choices for Nariko. She no longer had protection from her brother and family in Kamakura, and Tanba was safer than either Kamakura or Kyoto at this time. Thus, Nariko may have spent some time between 1333 and 1335 in Tanba near Takauji's mother.¹⁶ She may then have returned to Kamakura after Takauji set up a military headquarters at the site of the old Hōjō administrative center in the eighth month of 1335. In that year, Senjuō had his coming-of-age ceremony. When Takauji departed once again for Kyoto in 1336, he left the seven-year-old Yoshiakira nominally in charge of the city, assisted and protected by trusted retainers as his guardians.¹⁷

Scholars have not addressed the question of where Nariko lived after 1336 and, indeed, there is still much discussion about Takauji's whereabouts after that date because the available sources are limited, ambiguous, or deemed untrustworthy.¹⁸ But it is an important question to explore because it can help us understand Nariko's relationship with Takauji, her children, and, more generally, how the turmoil of the era affected family

10 Scholars do not agree on the gender of these children. Yunoue, "Ashikaga uji," p. 504, claims that the couple had five daughters and three sons, but discusses only two of the girls.

11 It was apparently Tadayoshi 直義 (1306–1352), Takauji's younger brother, who recommended that Takauji leave a few retainers to protect Yoshiakira and rely on Akahashi Moritoki 赤橋守時 (1295–1333), Nariko's older brother, to protect her. *The Taiheiki*, pp. 238–39. Morotoki, however, ended up taking his own life on 1333.5.18 after Nariko and Yoshiakira fled. DNS 5:905, Shōkei 正慶 2 (1333).5.2 (p. 789). See also Taniguchi's discussion of *Taiheiki*, "Ashikaga Takauji no seishitsu," pp. 115–16.

12 *The Taiheiki*, p. 277. The Ki family was allied with the Utsunomiya 宇都宮. Takauji's eldest son by another wife, Takewaka 竹若 (1327–1333), was killed on 5.2 after he left Izu in secret and headed for Kamakura. This opened the door for Nariko's eldest son to become Takauji's heir.

13 DNS 6:1 (p. 61).

14 Matsuzaki, *Ashikaga Takauji*, p. 48.

15 For records of Takauji's visits to Tanba at this time, see DNS 5:905, Shōkei 2 (1333).4.27; 4.29 (p. 787); DNS 6:1, Kenmu 建武 1 (1334).4.10 (p. 516). In Engen 延元 1 (1336), he stayed in Tanba for a month, from 1.27 to 2.3; see DNS 6:3 (pp. 16, 56). For Uesugi Kiyoko in Tanba, see Gerhart, "Reconstructing the Life of Uesugi Kiyoko," pp. 4–10.

16 One piece of evidence for this theory is that after Nariko's death, Yoshiakira moved a portion of her remains to Tanba and interred them near those of Takauji and his grandmother Uesugi Kiyoko. This was an unusual move because Tanba was not Nariko's homeland.

17 DNS 6:2 (p. 541). Takauji first installed himself in the Nikaidō rooms of Eifukuji where Yoshiakira had been living in Kamakura, to receive the submissions of former supporters of the Hōjō. Senjuō's coming-of-age ceremony was held in 1335, when he was six years old. At this time, he received the name Yoshiakira and the rank of junior fifth, lower grade. Among those who guarded the child were Hosokawa Kiyouji 細川清氏 (d. 1362), Uesugi Noriaki 上杉憲顯 (1306–1368; Uesugi Kiyoko was Noriaki's paternal aunt), and Shiba Ienaga 斯波家長 (1321–1338). Jansen, *Warrior Rule in Japan*, pp. 119–20.

18 Matthew Stavros has proposed that, beginning in 1336, Takauji lived an itinerate lifestyle for eight years and did not have a permanent residence in Kyoto until 1344, choosing to stay with retainers and in local temples, mainly Jōzaikōin 常在光院 and Tōji 東寺, while his brother Tadayoshi 直義 (1306–1352) built a residential compound at Sanjō bōmon 三条坊門 and developed it into a political and ritual center. Stavros, "The Sanjō bōmon Temple-Palace Complex," p. 7.

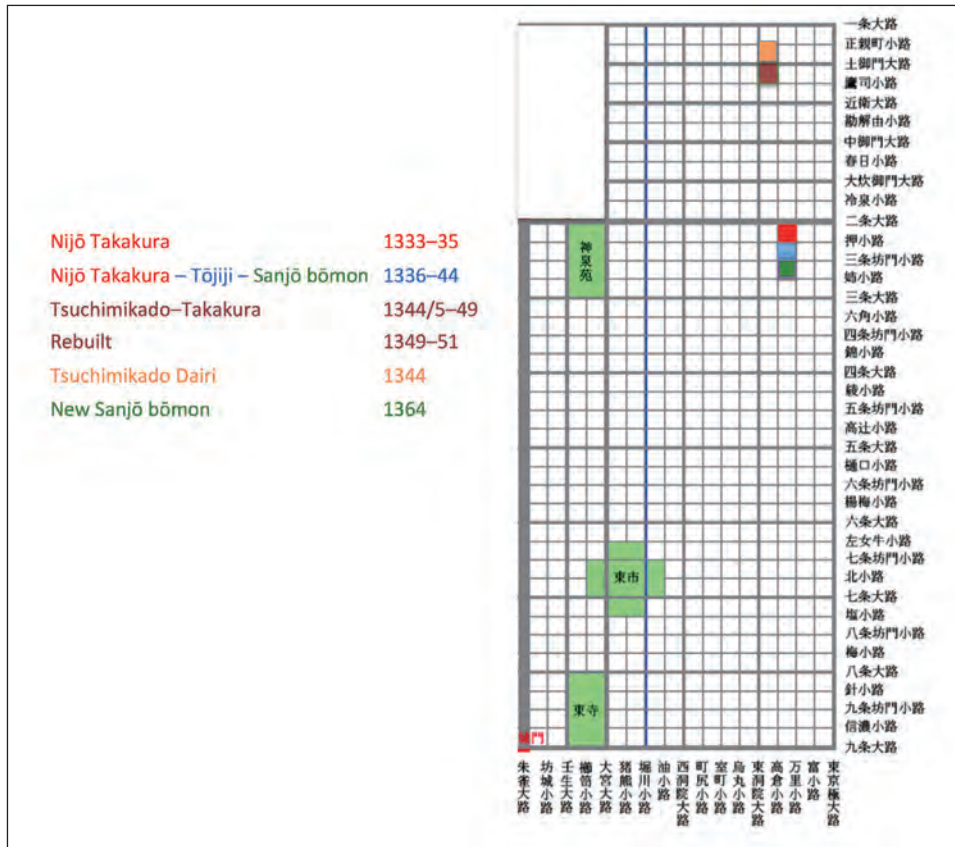


Figure 1. Ashikaga Palaces, 1336-1364. Modified after Kyōto-shi, ed., *Chūsei no meian*, p. 530, fig. 220.

dynamics. For Nariko, there seem to have been three choices: remain in Kamakura with her son, retreat to Tanba where her mother-in-law lived, or move to Kyoto with Takauji. I propose she went to Kyoto around 1337.

Nariko's Childbearing Years in Kyoto: 1337-1344

My theory that Nariko spent the remainder of her life in Kyoto is, in part, based on evidence that suggests that Takauji had a residence in the central part of the capital as early as 1333. According to Kawakami Mitsugu, from 1333 until he left to establish a military headquarters in Kamakura in 1335, Takauji lived in Kyoto at the cross-roads of Nijō 二条 and Takakura 高倉 streets (figure 1). When he returned to the capital early in 1336, however, he was forced to stay at the home of Minister of the Right Tōin Kinkata 洞院公賢 (1291-1360) because a fire had completely destroyed his residence while he

was away.¹⁹ We have no information about its size or conformation and no proof that Nariko was in Kyoto at this early date. Indeed, because of the precariousness of the new regime in Kyoto, it is more likely that she went to Tanba in 1333, possibly returning to Kamakura for her son's coming-of-age ceremony in 1335, and then moved to Kyoto around 1337.

In the fourth month of 1336, Takauji had been forced to flee toward Kyushu, and when he returned to Kyoto two months later he stayed for a time at Tōji 東寺.²⁰ But after he received the title of provisional senior counselor, junior second rank (*gondainagon junii* 權大納言從二位) in the eleventh month of 1336, Kawakami

19 DNS 6:2, Engen 1 (1334).1.11 (p. 970). See also Kawakami, *Nihon jūtakushi*, pp. 204-205; and Nagaoki *sukune ki* 長興宿禰記, Bunmei 文明 8 (1476).11.13, cited in Kawakami, p. 204.

20 DNS 6:3, Engen 1.4.3 (p. 273); Engen 1.6.14 (p. 520). Takauji also stayed at Jōzaikōin, a temple located in the area of Higashiyama near Chion'in 知恩院 for a time between 1334-1336.

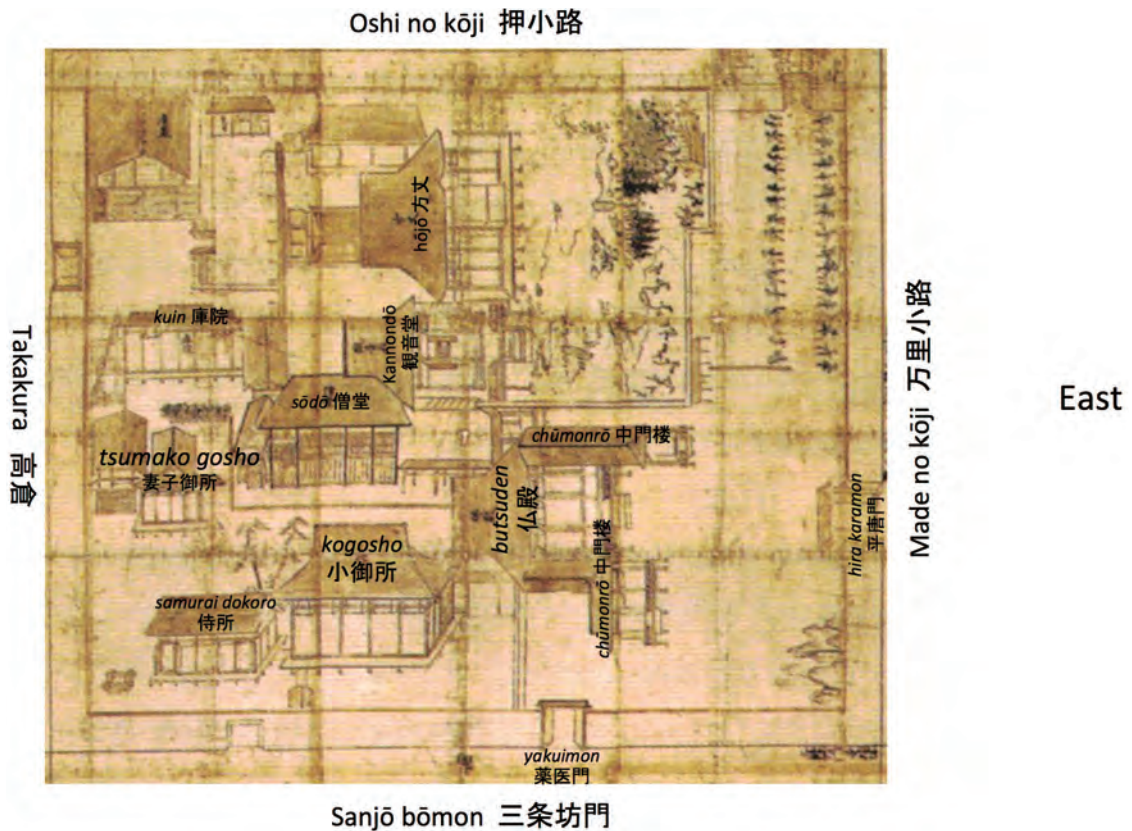


Figure 2. Tōjiji-ezu, ca. 1352. Nanbokuchō period. Ink on paper. H 148 cm, W 177.5 cm. Property of Tōjiin, Kyoto. Modified after Stavros, *Kyoto: An Urban History*, p. 117, fig. 5-4.

Mitsugu has suggested, based on several records, that Takauji lived at a location described as “north of Sanjō bōmon, south of Oshi no kōji 押の小路, west of Made no kōji 万里小路, and east of Takakura 高倉”—approximately the site of Tōjiji 等持寺 and in the same general area of his brother Tadayoshi’s 直義 (1306–1352) residential compound at Sanjō bōmon.²¹ Hosokawa Taketoshi also believes that Takauji lived at Tōjiji at this time.²² Hosokawa and Kawakami, both relying on information in *Taiheiki* 太平記, are of the opinion that by this date Tōjiji was a multifunctional site, serving as a Zen temple, an Ashikaga memorial temple, and living

quarters for Takauji and his family. Matthew Stavros, on the other hand, argues that the records they rely on, *Taiheiki* and *Nagaoki sukune ki* 長岡宿禰記, are not to be trusted and disputes any suggestion that Takauji lived in the central part of Kyoto before 1344.²³

Nonetheless, there is little reason to dismiss the information in these sources when we have nothing to contradict it and many other factors to support it. As Hosokawa has suggested, it would have been most desirable for Takauji to have a presence in this area because it was a useful location for keeping an eye on the troublesome Godaigo, whose palace was located just a block north at Nijō-Tomi no kōji 二条富小路 (figure 1). This part of the city also became the center for several of Godaigo’s supporters, including Kusunoki Masashige 楠木正成 (1294–1336) and Yamana Nagatoshi

21 DNS 6:3, Kenmu 3/Engen 1.11.25 (p. 890); Kawakami, *Nihon jūtakushi*, pp. 198–205. More precise coordinates are not available, as locating buildings by nearby crossroads was (and still is) the norm (see figure 1).

22 Hosokawa, “Kūkan kara mita Muromachi bakufu,” pp. 40–41 (2084–5).

23 Stavros, “The Sanjō bōmon Temple-Palace Complex,” pp. 7–10.

山名長年 (n.d.), who were awarded land and built residences in the area.²⁴ It would have been mutually beneficial for Takauji and Tadayoshi to share adjacent sites, with Takauji's residence located north of Oshi no kōji, Tadayoshi's south of Sanjō bōmon, and the small chapel, Tōjiji, between the two, as they worked together to form a new administration. Furthermore, after the brothers issued the Kenmu Shikimoku 建武式目 (the code of laws governing the new military government in Kyoto) in 1336 and Takauji received his promotion to *seii taishōgun* 征夷大將軍, senior second rank, in 1338, it would have been imperative for him to have a presence near the seat of power rather than be bivouacked in the southeastern part of the city at the Rokuhara outpost or in temples as Stavros has suggested. Takauji's new rank admitted him to membership in the upper echelon of court nobles, which mandated he have a residence that reflected his new status.

Another reason to suppose that Takauji lived at Sanjō bōmon around 1337, and one more relevant to our discussion of Nariko, may be found in a much-discussed drawing, the *Tōjiji ezu* 等持寺絵図 (figure 2), said to have been produced around 1352. The drawing is believed to represent Takauji's living quarters at Tōjiji between 1336 and 1344. Many scholars have used the illustration to draw widely varying conclusions about the site, but Fujita Meiji's contribution to the discussion is an important one. Fujita believes that a small separate building, unmarked and located northwest of the Small Living Palace (*kogoshō* 小御所) where Takauji would have resided, housed Nariko and, later, some of her children.²⁵ The building, which Fujita terms a "wife-and-children's palace" (*saishi/tsumako no gosho* 妻子の御所), is drawn with Chinese-style eaves, a characteristic of upper-class residential architecture at the time and one appropriate for use by the wife of someone of Takauji's rank and position.²⁶

Other evidence for Nariko living in the capital before 1344 can be found in records of the deaths of her and Takauji's six later children.²⁷ Although birth dates

Table 1. Children born to Nariko and Takauji, 1330-1344.

Yoshiakira 義詮 (male)	b. 1330	d. 1367
Unnamed (female)	b. 1337	d. 1342.10.2
Seiō 聖王 (male)	b. 1339	d. 1345.8.1
Motouji 基氏 (male)	b. 1340	d. 1367
Tayoko 頼子 (female)	b. 1341?	d. 1353.11.9
Ryōsei 了清 (female)	b. 1343	d. 1347.10.14
Unnamed (female)	b. 1344	d. 1346.7.9

are not recorded for any of them, information about their deaths and the events that accompanied them suggest they were all born in Kyoto, the earliest in 1337, indicating that Nariko had a stable living arrangement at the location described as "north of Sanjō bōmon, south of Oshi no kōji, west of Made no kōji, and east of Takakura" for many years prior to 1344 (table 1). Nariko must have become pregnant soon after moving to Kyoto, as a girl (unnamed) was born in 1337. The child survived only five years, and when she died in 1342 we are told that all business conducted by the Miscellaneous Claims Court (*Zassō Ketsudansho* 雑訴決断所) was halted for seven days out of respect for Takauji's daughter and to allow government officials to properly mourn her death.²⁸ In 1339, Nariko gave birth to a second son, Seiō 聖王 (1339-1345), who died before the age of seven; again the Miscellaneous Claims Court was closed for seven days for mourning.²⁹ Memorial services were held for Seiō at Tenryūji 天龍寺, a Kyoto

are preserved in the diary *Osanzo nikki* 御産所日記, but do not exist for the fourteenth century.

28 DNS 6:7, Kōei 康永 1 (1342).10.3 (p. 366). The Miscellaneous Claims Court was a new bureau, staffed by aristocrats, imperial service bureaucrats, and warriors, that was set up by Godaigo within the Records Office (*Fudono* 文殿) in 1333 to process lawsuits; see Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution*, pp. 150-54. Taniguchi Kengo questions whether the two girls born in 1337 and 1343 were Nariko's children; "Ashikaga Takauji no seishitsu," pp. 120-23.

29 He died on Jōwa 貞和 1 (1345).8.1, DNS 6:9 (p. 171). Oguni Hirohisa claims that Seiō was born in Kyoto, but does not cite any source to support this claim; "Musuko-tachi' ga mita," p. 197. Seiō's birth date has been calculated based on records written when he died, some of which state his age at death. *Moromiriki*, for example, says he was four or five years old when he died, but *Jōrakuki* 常樂記, a record of death dates (*kakochō* 過去帳) believed to have been kept by monks at Daigoji 醍醐寺 from 1295 to 1424, claims he was seven; DNS 6:9 (pp. 174-75). This means Seiō could have been born in 1339, 1340, or 1341. But two

24 Hosokawa, "Kūkan kara mita Muromachi bakufu," pp. 39-40 (2083-4).

25 Fujita, "Shuden no seiritsu katei," pp. 133-34.

26 According to Fujita, based on facts about later residences, it was typical for shogunal residential compounds to have separate buildings for wives and children; see "Shuden no seiritsu katei," p. 133.

27 Data about births and birthing locations for various children of the Ashikaga shoguns from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

temple founded by the two Ashikaga brothers to venerate Emperor Godaigo.³⁰ On Jōwa 貞和 3 (1347).11.11, Takauji went to Kyoto's Yasaka Hōkanji 八坂法觀寺 to donate rice allotments to pay for offerings to accompany memorial rites (*tsuizen kuyō* 追善供養) for another daughter (Ryōsei 了清, 1343–1347) who had died in the previous month.³¹

A fourth child, another son, Motouji 基氏 (1340–1367), was born in 1340. He, too, was born and lived in the capital, but would be sent to Kamakura in 1349 to become the shogunal deputy of the eight eastern provinces (*Kantō kanrei* 關東管領).³² Three more girls followed in rapid succession, Tayoko 頼子 (also Tsuruō 鶴王; 1341–1353), Ryōsei, and an unnamed girl (1344–1346) who survived only two years.³³ On the twenty-fourth day of the fifth month of 1344 (Kōei 康永 3), two months prior to the birth of this last child, Takauji requested Sanbō-in Kenshun 三宝院賢俊 (1299–1357), a powerful Kyoto Shingon Buddhist monk, to perform a special ritual, Fugen Enmei Hō 普賢延命法, to protect his wife and enhance her health and longevity.³⁴ As Nariko was thirty-eight years old when she delivered her last child, Takauji's request suggests there may have been problems with the pregnancy or concerns that she might not survive the birth. Upon the death of this last child, in 1346 (Jōwa 2.7.7), the Miscellaneous Claims Court was again ordered to be closed for seven days.³⁵ All of the closures for Takauji's children were issued by order of the Records Office to mark their deaths and provide mourning time for officials. This suggests that early on Takauji was accorded prestige and power in the capital and shows that these deaths in his family were

given attention at the highest level.

There are also other references that indicate Nariko and the children lived in Kyoto, many of which show them participating in activities that supported Ashikaga political goals. Nariko and one of her daughters (unnamed, but probably Tayoko, who would have been five or six years old), made a pilgrimage to the Iwashimizu Hachimangū 石清水八幡宮 and Rokujō Hachimangū 六条八幡宮 shrines early in the spring of 1346 (Jōwa 2).³⁶ The pair first went to Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine on 2.7 to pay homage to the Minamoto clan tutelary divinity, Hachiman 八幡.³⁷ It would have taken Nariko and her young daughter considerable effort to reach the area because the shrine complex is located about twenty kilometers south of Kyoto on Otokoyama 男山, and we are told that it snowed the day before their journey. Eight years earlier, in 1338, Takauji's mother, Uesugi Kiyoko, had also paid a visit to the shrine.³⁸ Both visits—the one by Nariko and the earlier one by Kiyoko—were made to show support for Ashikaga political goals.³⁹ On 2.9, mother and daughter visited Rokujō Hachiman Shrine, located at the crossroads of Nishi no tōin 西洞院 and Rokujō in the south central part of the capital. This shrine was a cultic site worshipped by Takauji and his generals as a way to link themselves to the Minamoto and particularly to Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–1199), who had been the shrine's patron.⁴⁰ Throughout his life, Takauji greatly admired Yoritomo, founder of the Kamakura shogunate, and wished to emphasize parallels between himself and the notable general. The shrine thus became one of the important sites for legitimating Ashikaga rule, and one publicly

other children were born in 1340 (Motouji 基氏) and 1341 (Tayoko 頼子), leaving 1339 as the most likely date for Seiō's birth.

30 *Entairyaku*, Jōwa 1.8.2 (vol. 1, p. 313). For more on Ashikaga patronage of this temple, see Colcutt, "Musō Soseki," pp. 284–87.

31 The allotments came from land in the village of Takao 高尾 in Suō Province (Yamaguchi Prefecture). DNS 6:10, Jōwa 3.11.11 (p. 944). Ryōsei died on Jōwa 3.10.14 at Sanjō bōmon, DNS 6:10 (p. 925). Taniguchi, "Ashikaga Takauji no seishitsu," pp. 126–27, says this was because she was adopted and brought up there by Takauji's brother.

32 DNS 6.12, Jōwa 5.9.9 (p. 920).

33 For Tayoko, see DNS 6:18, Bunna 文和 2 (1353).11.9 (p. 480); the unnamed girl died in Jōwa 2.7.9, DNS 6:9 (p. 971).

34 DNS 6:8 (pp. 258–59). Kenshun wore a *shichijō kesa* 七条袈裟, a Buddhist surplice made of seven strips of cloth pieced together, while his assistants wore *kesa* made of five pieces. Such *kesa* symbolized high rank. The rite was performed before an image of Fugen Bosatsu 普賢菩薩.

35 DNS 6:9 (p. 971).

36 DNS 6:9 (p. 793).

37 Takauji and Tadayoshi also made pilgrimages to the same two shrines just weeks earlier on 1.26; DNS 6:9 (p. 777).

38 See the letter dated Kenmu 5 [Engen 3] (1338).5.27 at <http://komonjo.princeton.edu/shoguns-mother/>. I would like to thank Thomas Conlan and his students for providing a translation and interpretation of this letter. See also Gerhart, "Reconstructing the Life of Uesugi Kiyoko," pp. 11–12.

39 Takauji instituted annual New Year's visits to Iwashimizu Hachimangū after he offered prayers there for divine power in ruling the realm after partings ways with Godaigo in 1335, and Yoshiakira further reinforced Ashikaga involvement with the shrine by granting land rights to Iwashimizu for "stability in the realm and [Ashikaga] prosperity." Conlan, *State of War*, p. 171, fn. 24.

40 In 1344, Takauji made Rokujō Hachimangū part of the *monzeki* 門跡 lands of Sanbōin under Kenshun, who then enhanced its status by incorporating a mandala and a relic from Tōji. Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, pp. 100–102.

supported by Takauji's wife and children as well.

Later in 1346 (10.8) we learn that Takauji requested the powerful monk Kenshun, who was assisted by six other monks, to perform a Shingon ritual, Aizen'ō Hō 愛染王法, for one of his daughters. The rite continued for eight days before an image of Aizen Myōō 愛染明王.⁴¹ The text, however, does not tell us why it was requested or what effect it was intended to produce. While Aizen'ō Hō could be performed for many purposes—to elicit affection and respect, to subdue adversaries, stop calamities, secure peace, and to bring about things desired—it seems likely that Takauji requested the rite to help him realize his desire to marry his eldest living daughter, Tayoko, into the royal family, a feat he accomplished, albeit fleetingly, a few years later when Tayoko became Retired Emperor Sukō's 崇光院 (1334–1398; r. 1348–1351) primary consort (*kōhi* 后妃).⁴² It is not clear when Tayoko entered the palace, but it must have been near the end of her short life, perhaps around 1351 or 1352, when she was eleven or twelve. She fell ill shortly thereafter in 1353 (Bunna 文和 2.11.6), and for three nights the former Tendai abbot of Shōren'in 青蓮院, Dharma Prince Son'en 尊圓法親王 (1298–1356), conducted a special ceremony (*myōdōku* 冥道供) in the Shijōkōdō 熾盛光堂 of Jūakuin 十樂院 for Tayoko's recovery.⁴³ This ceremony, recorded in detail over many pages in *Mon'yōki* 門葉記, included preparing the temple hall and several altars with the proper vessels and offerings, inviting powerful priests, including Kenshun, to assist, and performing Shingon incantations (*kaji* 加持) and special ritual actions unique to the healing ritual.⁴⁴ Any Ashikaga hopes of a royal heir were short-

lived, however, when Tayoko died three days later on 11.9 at the age of thirteen.⁴⁵ Tayoko was posthumously awarded junior first rank (*juichii* 從一位) on her third death anniversary on Bunna 4 (1355).11.6, presumably because of her position as royal consort; this rank was reserved for the highest members of the court.⁴⁶

By the fourteenth century, there was already a long tradition in Japan of elite families marrying their daughters to royalty in hopes they might produce heirs who would become sovereigns to whom they would then have strong ties. Takauji's plan to produce a royal prince through marriage adds support to Nitta Ichirō's theory that Takauji was modeling himself after the princely shoguns of the late Kamakura period (after 1225), many of whom were descendants of Fujiwara regents or imperial princes.⁴⁷ There are other indications that Takauji saw himself as a courtly figure. For example, in 1338, he appropriated a prerogative originally reserved for emperors by appointing warrior *gojisō* 護持僧 ("protector monks") and, in 1345, he consulted Tōin Kinkata about whether one of his daughters could be addressed as "*hime gimi*" 姫君, an appellation reserved for daughters of aristocrats.⁴⁸ The attempt by Takauji to marry one of his daughters into the Jimyōin 持明院 line of emperors has gone largely unnoticed by historians, perhaps because the marriage was so short-lived and produced no politically significant results. The only source that refers to Tayoko as Sukō's *kōhi* is *Shoka keizu san* 諸家系圖纂, a mid-Edo-period compilation of various military house lineages.⁴⁹ It seems unlikely, however, that an award of junior first would have been bestowed upon this young girl for any other reason. But the timing of the marriage remains perplexing. Although Sukō believed he occupied the throne in 1349 and 1350, he did not receive enthronement rites until the first month of 1351. Before the end of that same year, he was relieved of his title and, in 1352, he was sent into exile. Tayoko

41 DNS 6:10 (p. 166).

42 DNS 6:18, Bunna 2 (1353).11.9 (p. 480). There is much confusion about Takauji's daughters. Yunoue Takashi says it was Ryōsei who became Sukō's consort, but this seems unlikely because Ryōsei died at age five. "Ashikaga uji no josei-tachi," p. 504. Takauji often requested that Kenshun perform this rite, as did Yoshiakira, for both personal and political gain. Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, pp. 113, 135, 144.

43 DNS 6:18 (p. 449). Son'en, the sixth son of Emperor Fushimi 伏見 (1265–1317), was *monzeki* of the Tendai temple Shōren'in 青蓮院. *Myōdōku* is an esoteric Buddhist offering ceremony in which Enma 閻魔, King of the Dead, is implored to destroy evil and grant long life. The Shijōkōdō housed the *hibutsu* 秘仏 Shijōkō Nyorai Mandala 熾盛光如来曼荼羅. Jūakuin was a *monzeki* temple moved in the early thirteenth century by Jien 慈円 (1155–1225) to Shōren'in in Higashiyama. Later it became synonymous with Shōren'in.

44 DNS 6:18 (pp. 449–75). *Mon'yōki* is a compilation of the ritual records of Enryakuji's 延曆寺 Shōren'in over approximately a three-hundred-year period from the early twelfth through the

early fifteenth century. Son'en began the compilation and editing process. Son'en also had performed a *myōdōku* on the sixteenth day of the tenth month, less than a month earlier, to aid Takauji's recovery from an illness; DNS 6:18 (pp. 400 ff).

45 DNS 6:18 (p. 480).

46 DNS 6:20 (p. 56). These awards to Tayoko were obviously a source of family pride, as they were reiterated on the day of the funeral held for Tayoko's mother and will be discussed later; *Moromoriki*, entry for Jōji 4.5.8 (vol. 8, p. 214).

47 Nitta, *Taiheiki no jidai*, pp. 137–38.

48 Hayashiya, *Nairan no naka no kizoku* (p. 62) quotes *Entairyaku*, Kōei 4.1; Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, p. 99.

49 DNS 6:18 (p. 480).

died in 1353, presumably while Sukō was in exile, and Takauji's great plans for his daughter went unfulfilled.

In sum, all of Takauji's and Nariko's children, with the exception of Yoshiakira, were born in Kyoto and lived with their mother throughout most of their lives: four children died before they were six years old; Tayoko left home to enter the palace when she was about twelve; and Motouji was sent to Kamakura at age ten. Nariko and Yoshiakira, however, developed a particularly deep bond throughout their lives, perhaps because they had endured great political upheaval together and because Nariko took a strong interest in Yoshiakira's political success. The overall result in the first half of the fourteenth century was a tighter family unit wherein the mother played an immediate role in raising the children and took a strong personal interest in their success.

Several children were also born to Takauji and women who may have been secondary wives or temporary liaisons. That said, Takauji fathered fewer children with fewer women than other comparable figures of his age.⁵⁰ Several of these children, however, presented potential challenges to Yoshiakira and elicited strong protective responses from Nariko. Of particular concern initially were two male children born in 1327, three years prior to Yoshiakira's birth.⁵¹ Takewaka 竹若 (1327–1333) was born to a woman known only as the “daughter of Kako Motouji 加子基氏” (n.d.), but, as mentioned earlier, the child was killed at the age of seven while trying to return to Kamakura after Takauji turned against the Hōjō.⁵² Takewaka, as Takauji's eldest male child, would likely have succeeded Takauji had he survived.⁵³ His untimely death—and Yoshiakira's mi-

raculous escape—invites speculation as to whether Nariko's powerful family was able to call in certain favors to have him eliminated, or at least to enable Yoshiakira to escape Kamakura unharmed. The situation emphasizes how crucial it was for lineages dependent on hereditary succession like the Ashikaga to produce heirs quickly. It also gives us a sense of how fierce the competition to give birth to a male child must have been among wives.

Another of Takauji's liaisons with a “woman from Echizen” (Echizen no Tsubone 越前局, n.d.), about whom little is known, resulted in the birth of another son, Tadafuyu 直冬 (1327–1400).⁵⁴ This child would become a lifelong problem for Nariko, in part because Tadafuyu lived to be seventy-four and also because he actively sought Takauji's recognition while continuing to hold several government posts throughout his life. That his mother's family name is not known suggests she was not an official “wife” like Takewaka's and Yoshiakira's mothers. As a young boy, Tadafuyu trained as a monk at the Zen temple Tōshōji 東勝寺 in Kamakura, but it is not known how, why, or even when Tadafuyu became affiliated with this temple.⁵⁵ He was not content with his religious studies, however, and repeatedly travelled to Kyoto in hopes of meeting with Takauji and convincing him to recognize him as his heir. But Takauji refused to meet with him and never officially recognized him. After Yoshiakira was born in 1330, some scholars believe that Nariko pressured her husband to deny Tadafuyu's requests for a meeting in order to protect Yoshiakira's interests.⁵⁶ And although Takauji stalwartly refused to recognize his parentage of Tadafuyu, Takauji's younger brother, Tadayoshi, invited the boy to live with him and then officially adopted him in 1344, thereby exacerbating the animosity that was already developing between the two brothers.⁵⁷ While it is not clear what level of threat the adoption represented, Tadafuyu's formally sanctioned presence at

50 His near contemporary Emperor Godaigo, for example, had over twenty formal relationships that produced more than thirty royal children, as well as many others born through informal liaisons.

51 Andrew Goble writes that two sons were born to Takauji and Nobuko (Nariko) in 1329, but his seems to be a minority opinion, and it is likely that they were born to other women earlier in 1327. Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution*, p. 133.

52 The Kako were a branch family of the Ashikaga who lived in the Ashikaga homeland (Ashikaga City, Tochigi Prefecture). Shimizu, *Hito o aruku*, pp. 25–26. The lay monk Nagasaki Saemon 長崎左衛門 (n.d.) killed Takewaka when he learned that Takauji had turned against Kamakura and the Hōjō. Senjuō (Yoshiakira) was taken to a different location and escaped death. DNS 5:905, Shōkei 2 (1333).5.2 (p. 787).

53 Takauji sponsored memorial services for Takewaka after he was killed, leading historian Seno Seiichirō to believe that Takauji recognized Takewaka as his heir. Seno, *Ashikaga Tadafuyu*, pp. 2–3.

54 *Sonpi bunmyaku* says she was a lowly woman of the house (*ie no nyōbō* 家の女房). *Sonpi bunmyaku*, vol. 3, p. 253. The dates I have given are those most commonly accepted, but Tadafuyu's birth and death dates are widely disputed in contemporary records. Seno, *Ashikaga Tadafuyu*, pp. 1–3.

55 The boy served as a *kasshiki* 喝食, a novice in charge of the menu and food for the other monks. As Echizen is located northeast of Kyoto close to Tanba, the woman may have been someone Takauji met while in that area. Seno, *Ashikaga Tadafuyu*, p. 4.

56 Seno, *Ashikaga Tadafuyu*, pp. 2–3, 176; also, Taniguchi, “Ashikaga Takauji no seishitsu,” pp. 123–25.

57 DNS 6:8 (pp. 287–88).

Sanjō bōmon may have prompted Nariko and Takauji to begin construction on a new residence, which I will discuss later, located some distance away.⁵⁸

One wonders what Tadayoshi might have intended by the adoption and whether he was already planning to use the boy as leverage against his brother. Takauji certainly must have seen the adoption as another sign of his brother's growing disloyalty in the mid-1340s. After Tadayoshi's own son was born in 1347, however, Tada-fuyu became expendable as Tadayoshi turned his attention to making this child the next shogun. Tada-fuyu promised to take religious vows, but changed his mind and went to Kyushu where he was given various military posts (*Nagato tandai* 長門探題 and *Chinzei tandai* 鎮西探題), probably negotiated by Tadayoshi. Thereafter, he mobilized Kyushu warriors to fight under his command and was involved in battles with Takauji's army in the fourth month of 1350. Throughout the remainder of his life, Tada-fuyu lived in western Japan, a prickly thorn in Takauji's side and a continued threat to Nariko's son, Yoshiakira.

Takauji produced one other son, Eichū Hōshun 英仲法俊 (1340–1416), who was born much later to an unnamed concubine (*mekake* 妾) from Kyoto. As a boy, the child studied with the Rinzai 臨濟 Zen priest, Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275–1351), and became a Buddhist monk. After Soseki died, Eichū became affiliated first with Yōtakuji 永澤寺 Temple (Sōtō 曹洞 sect) in Tanba and years later, in 1382 (Kōwa 弘和 2), with help from Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358–1408), he founded Entsūji 圓通寺.⁵⁹

In sum, Takauji produced six sons — three with other women and three with Nariko. It is probably not just coincidence that the two male children by other women who were older than Yoshiakira — Takewaka and Tada-fuyu — and who could advance claims as Takauji's heir, were either killed or disenfranchised. None of Nariko's sons (or daughters) lived long lives, but Yoshiakira survived long enough to succeed his father as shogun. Although there is little concrete evidence that Nariko had a direct hand in the outcome, she certainly had a vested interest in protecting Yoshiakira's claim as heir and undoubtedly worked internally towards this end.

58 Takauji built a new residence in 1344 about eight blocks north at the crossroads of Tsuchimikado 土御門, Takakura, and Higashi no tōin streets.

59 DNS 7:24, Ōei 応永 23 (1416).2.26 (pp. 275–76).

Tsuchimikado-Takakura Palace: 1345–1358

In 1344, Takauji began construction of his Tsuchimikado-Takakura Palace at the crossroads of Tsuchimikado, Takakura, and Higashi no tōin streets, near the palace of the retired northern emperor Kōgon 光嚴 (1313–1364) and also, later, of Kōgon's mother Kōgimon-in 広義門院 (1292–1357), and about eight blocks north of the Sanjō bōmon compound still occupied by Tadayoshi.⁶⁰ Nothing is said about why Takauji felt the need to leave Sanjō bōmon, but a contributing factor may have been Tadayoshi's adoption of Takauji's illegitimate son, Tada-fuyu. On Kōei 3 (1344).5.16 and again on 12.22, fires raged through the area where the new residence was under construction, utterly destroying it and delaying the move until the fourth month of the following year.⁶¹ We know, however, that Takauji had moved into the new residence by the summer of 1345 because we are told that both he and Tadayoshi departed together from Tsuchimikado-Takakura on 8.29 to join a large procession traveling to Tenryūji for Godaigo's seventh-year memorial ceremony.⁶² The new residence is described as a large compound with a formal living quarters (*shinden* 寢殿) and a special main gate (*munamon* 棟門), both architectural features associated with elite residences.⁶³ We may assume because of the rapid rate of the construction (only four months) that not all of the buildings were new and that some were probably "donated" from the residences of other warriors in the city, a common practice in medieval Japan.

On the night of the fourteenth day of the third month of 1349 (Jōwa 5), the new Tsuchimikado-Takakura Palace was destroyed by yet another fire, causing Takauji to move temporarily to the residence of his chief of staff, Kō no Moronao 高師直 (d. 1351).⁶⁴ The records are silent, however, on Nariko's whereabouts. Concerted efforts were made to rebuild quickly, with

60 Kōgimon-in moved to the Jimyōinden 持明院殿 on Jōwa 1 (1345).2.8. DNS 6:8 (p. 832).

61 *Moromoriki*, vol. 2, p. 133; DNS 6:8 (p. 550). Much of Sanjō bōmon was also destroyed in the fire on 12.22. Kōei 4/Jōwa 1(1345).4.26 in *Moromoriki*, vol. 3, p. 82; DNS 6:8 (p. 964).

62 Kyōto-shi, ed., *Chūsei no meian*, pp. 528–29; *Entairyaku*, vol. 1, pp. 338–46.

63 For a discussion of the *shinden* and a diagram, see Fujita, "Shuden no seiritsu katei," pp. 134–35.

64 According to the account in *Moromoriki*, only the buildings of a Tenjin 天神 shrine and buildings associated with the bakufu's administrative offices (Samurai Dokoro 侍所) survived this fire. DNS 6:12 (p. 546).

planning already underway on 3.24, just ten days after the fire. The house pillars were raised on 6.20, and Takauji (and presumably Nariko) returned on 8.10, five months after the conflagration.⁶⁵ The rapidity of the rebuilding suggests that either the residence was not completely destroyed or, again, that buildings were moved there from other sites.

Within the week, Takauji had a confrontation with his brother and demanded that Tadayoshi turn over the Sanjō bōmon palace to Yoshiakira, who was now twenty years old. Takauji's proprietary demand suggests that he still maintained a vested interest in the site because it had been, for many years, the locus of the Ashikaga government and the physical location most closely associated with it; and now Takauji wanted it for his son. At this time, an exchange of sorts was engineered; Yoshiakira set off for Kyoto on 9.9 to take his place beside his father in his on-again off-again power struggle, and his younger brother, the ten-year-old Motouji, was sent to Kamakura to fill the position of shogunal deputy, a position he held for over a half century until his death in 1367.⁶⁶ On 10.2, Tadayoshi moved to the residence of Hosokawa Akiuji 細川賢氏 (d. 1352) at Nishiki no kōji 錦小路, north of Shijō 四条.⁶⁷ When Yoshiakira arrived in the capital (1349.10.22), he proceeded to Sanjō bōmon.⁶⁸ With Yoshiakira now ensconced in the shogunal headquarters, Tadayoshi realized he had little chance of making his own young son the shogunal heir. He took the tonsure on 12.8 and fled Kyoto a week later and took up arms against Takauji and Yoshiakira.⁶⁹

The years that followed between 1350 and 1352 were a period of familial infighting and precarious alliances known as the Kannō Disturbance 観応擾乱.⁷⁰ Sources say that Takauji abandoned the Tsuchimikado-Takakura Palace under pressure from all sides, and took temporary refuge with a relative, Uesugi Tomosada 上杉朝定 (1321–1352), who was married to his niece.⁷¹ The court noble Tōin Kinkata describes a fire that broke out near Takauji's residence on Kannō 2 (1351).2.21, but says the *shinden* was already vacant and the place ut-

terly in ruins.⁷² Nariko may have sheltered with Takauji at Tomosada's house because by 1351 all of their living children had left home—Yoshiakira was living at Sanjō bōmon, Motouji was in Kamakura, and Tayoko had married Sukō—and the other four children were dead.

In the tenth month of 1353, after an illness that required the performance of three days of intense healing rituals, Takauji and his wife moved to a house at Nijō-Made no kōji that belonged to the poet and courtier, Mikohidari Nijō Tamesada 御子左二条為定 (1293–1360).⁷³ Political circumstances were so dire, however, that Takauji seems to have spent little time there after he recovered. Nariko, however, lived there until Takauji died on Enbun 延文 3 (1358).4.30, after which she may have moved in with Yoshiakira at Sanjō bōmon. After Takauji died, Yoshiakira also bought a large plot of land with buildings from Muromachi (Yotsutsuji) Sueakira 室町(四辻)季顕 (d. 1373) to use as a “second home,” but little is known about the site or his plans for it at this time.⁷⁴ It was not until Jōji 貞治 3 (1364).8.12 that Yoshiakira was able to begin work on a new palace at Sanjō bōmon and Made no kōji.⁷⁵ The new residence was said to be even larger than the original, taking up an entire block bordered by Sanjō bōmon, Made no kōji, and Tomi no kōji, and probably included quarters for his mother.⁷⁶ Presumably this is where Nariko died later that same year.

Nariko's Final Years with Yoshiakira: 1358–1364

Records for Nariko in the twenty-one years between the birth of her last child in 1344 and her death in 1365 are

65 DNS 6:12 (pp. 565–66, 718, 840).

66 DNS 6:12 (pp. 920–21).

67 DNS 6:12 (p. 993).

68 DNS 6:12 (p. 1009).

69 *Entairyaku*, vol. 3, Jōwa 5 (1349).12.11, p. 123; Kannō 1 (1350).10.27, p. 360.

70 For details of the struggle between Takauji and Tadayoshi, see Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, pp. 117–29.

71 DNS 6:14, Kannō 2 (1351).2.27 (p. 846).

72 *Entairyaku*, vol. 3, pp. 421–22; DNS 6:14 (p. 779).

73 DNS 6:18, Bunna 2 (1353).10.16 (p. 400). See also figure 220 in Kyōto-shi, *Chūsei no meian*, p. 530. Tamesada also became the compiler of *Shinsenzaishū* 新千載集, an imperial poetry anthology produced with Emperor Gokōgon's 後光嚴天皇 (1338–1374) sponsorship under orders from Takauji in 1356.

74 In the 1350s, the site was referred to as “Imadegawa Sansō 今出川山莊.” In 1368, it was used by Retired Emperor Sukō as a detached palace called Hana Goshō 花御所. The buildings were destroyed by fire in 1377, and later the land was given to Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, who built his new palace there in 1379. DNS 6:24 (p. 929).

75 DNS 6:26 (p. 132).

76 The *shinden* for the new palace was brought from Shiba Takatsune's 斯波高経 (1305–1367) former residence and reconstructed on the new site in 1364. Entry for “Shiba Takatsune,” *Kokushi daijiten*.

few. By the early 1360s, only her oldest and youngest sons, Yoshiakira and Motouji, were still living.⁷⁷ Motouji was in Kamakura serving as commander of the eastern area (*Kantō kubō* 関東公方) after 1349, and so Nariko, who lived in Kyoto, saw little of him. Many of those years were difficult ones because of the constantly fluctuating political situation in Kyoto. In 1362, for example, the army of the Southern court entered Kyoto yet again, and Yoshiakira was forced to leave without a fight. Nariko, then fifty-six, must have stayed behind, but no mention is made of her plight. Less than a month later, however, Yoshiakira was back with a strong force, causing the Southern court to again withdraw. To reward Yoshiakira for his aid, on Jōji 2 (1363).6.29, the Northern court promoted Nariko to “Northern court, Yoshiakira’s mother,” junior second rank (*junii* 従二位), from senior third rank (*shōsanmi* 正三位), and Yoshiakira’s primary wife, Shibugawa Kōshi 渋川幸子 (1332–1392), was raised to junior third rank (*juanmi* 従三位).⁷⁸

Most of what we know about the last decade of Nariko’s life suggests that mother and son took short trips together for relaxation and jointly fulfilled family ritual duties. After Takauji’s death on Enbun 3 (1358).4.30, Nariko and Yoshiakira participated in mourning services for forty-nine days. On Takauji’s one-year death anniversary (*ikkai ki* 一回忌), they sponsored two extravagant ceremonies at Tōjiji. Yoshiakira sponsored a Hoke Hakkō 法華八講 from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month of 1359 and Nariko a Kechien Kanjō 結縁勧請 on the twenty-ninth.⁷⁹ A *fujumon* 諷誦文, attributed to Amahōkan 尼法観 and dated Enbun 4 (1359).4.29, describes the latter ceremony.⁸⁰ Amahōkan is likely a name given to Nariko, per-

haps when she took the tonsure after Takauji’s death.⁸¹ That the record is written entirely in Sino-Japanese and includes specialized knowledge about Buddhist rituals, including details about the number and types of sutras and *darani* offered that day, suggests it was not written by Nariko, but under her direction. A section of the text specifically emphasizes her closeness to Takauji and praises her son-and-current-shogun, Yoshiakira. The *fujumon* would probably have been read aloud during the memorial ceremony, serving, therefore, as a public testimony of Nariko’s deep personal feelings for and support of her husband and his successor.

Her name does not appear again until the spring of Jōji 3 (1364).3.9, when Nariko and Yoshiakira went flower viewing in the eastern hills at Jōzaikōin, the temple her husband had sometimes occupied when he first entered Kyoto in the 1330s and also an area of great natural beauty.⁸² In the fourth month of that same year (Jōji 3.4.21–29), Nariko and Yoshiakira sponsored another elaborate and costly week-long memorial service for Takauji’s seventh-year death anniversary.⁸³ Temples throughout the capital were ordered to conduct Bud-

東京史料編纂所), and the participants in the 2018 University of Michigan Medieval Komonjo Workshop for helping me to better understand its contents.

81 The annotator of the *Kanagawa-ken shi* document says Amahōkan is “Takauji’s wife” (*shitsu* 室), probably based on its contents. Nonetheless, I have not found any other record confirming that Nariko took the tonsure or that Amahōkan was a name that she used. It is likely, however, that Nariko was tonsured at this time and possible that two of the characters of her Buddhist name were taken from Yasaka Hōkanji, a Kyoto temple rebuilt by Minamoto Yoritomo in 1191 and now closely connected to Takauji and Musō Soseki. I have found only one other reference to a contemporary woman with this name—the mother of Ōhara Tokioya 大原時親 (n.d.), who was the land steward (*jitō* 地頭) of Tane no shō 田根莊, was called Amahōkan. See *Ashikaga Tadayoshi saikyōjō* 足利直義裁許状, cited in Okano, *Chūsei Kuga-ke*, p. 425.

82 DNS 6:25 (p. 639). Jōzaikōin was located in the area of Higashiyama Chion’in’s present-day Abbot’s Quarters. The building served as a temporary residence for Ashikaga Takauji when he was in Kyoto in the early 1330s, but in the late Kamakura period, the temple had been connected with the Hōjō serving in Kyoto as *Rokuhara tandai*. Throughout the medieval period, it was a popular site for flower viewing and was much written about in poetry by Gozan monks, many of whom later used the temple as a retirement residence. Hosokawa, “Kūkan kara mita Muromachi bakufu,” p. 40 (2084); Takemura, *Shōwa Kyōto meisho zue*, vol. 1, p. 246.

83 Takauji died on Enbun 3 (1358).4.30, which is counted as his first year, so 1364, by Japanese count, is the seventh year after his death. For an in-depth analysis of the various components of Takauji’s seventh-year memorial, see Ōta, “Muromachi bakufu no tsuzen butsuji,” pp. 43–47.

77 Tadafuyu was also still living at this time, but it is unlikely that Nariko ever met him in person because he had always posed a threat to her son Yoshiakira. Seno suggests Nariko had been influential in convincing Takauji to question whether he was the child’s father, so clearly there was no love lost between the two. Seno, *Ashikaga Tadafuyu*, p. 176.

78 DNS 6:25 (p. 126).

79 Hoke Hakkō is an esoteric ritual that consists of eight lectures on the eight fascicles of the *Lotus Sutra*, two per day. Kechien Kanjō is an esoteric ritual for establishing karmic bonds with a buddha.

80 *Fujumon* is a term used for a written record of requests made, usually by family members, to Buddhist monks asking them to perform special rituals, sutra readings, *darani* chanting, etc., for a memorial service. The *fujumon* is reproduced in DNS 6.22 (pp. 527–30) and in *Kanagawa-ken shi*, vol. 3., pt. 1, pp. 434–35, doc. 4358. I am grateful for the anonymous reviewer for bringing it to my attention and to Takahashi Shin’ichirō (Tōkyō Shiryō Hensanjo

dhist services and perform ceremonies: incense was offered at Jōzaikōin, Tōjiji, Tōjiin 等持院, and Tenryūji, countless sutras were chanted, a Hoke Hakkō was held at Tōjiji, *nenbutsu* 念佛 recitations took place in several locations, and donations of alms were made to the poor—all to increase merit for Takauji.⁸⁴ On the twenty-eighth day, Nariko and Yoshiakira requested the Sanbōin head monk, Kōzei 光濟 (1325–1379), to perform a special service (*mandara kuyō* 曼荼羅供養) at Tōjiji in which a mandala served as the locus of worship.⁸⁵ On the following day, mother and son visited Takauji's grave at Tōjiin, another Ashikaga mortuary temple in northwest Kyoto, where they made additional offerings of incense.⁸⁶ We know, therefore, that memorial services for Takauji were held at several temples with which he had been closely connected during his lifetime and that Nariko both participated in and cosponsored these services with her son, evidence that Ashikaga wives served as both patrons and caretakers of their husbands' after-lives. In sum, Nariko and Yoshiakira had an unusually deep relationship, one forged by the political upheaval in their lives and Nariko's fierce determination to protect her son's interests.⁸⁷

A few months later, in the ninth month of 1364, Nariko became ill, and Yoshiakira summoned Ajari Sondō Nyūdō Shinnō 阿闍梨尊道入道親王 (1332–1403), the eminent head abbot of the Tendai sect and *monzeki* of Shōren'in, to perform a special Buddhist healing ceremony (*myōdōku* 冥道供) that lasted three nights at Jūrokuin in an attempt to alleviate her suffering.⁸⁸ Traditionally during Myōdōku, offerings of five grains,

bast fiber cloth, coins, food and drink, and candles were offered before an image, usually of Enma, King of the Dead. The Ashikaga seem to have regularly depended on Jūrokuin and the power of its abbots' healing prayers because earlier, in 1353, Takauji had requested the performance of this same service from the temple to help both himself and his young daughter Tayoko when they were ill.⁸⁹ Although Nariko initially recovered, perhaps aided by the ministrations of Sondō, she relapsed the following year, suffering once again from swelling and severe scabbing. She died on the fourth day of the fifth month of 1365 (Jōji 4) at the age of sixty.⁹⁰

Nariko's Funeral and Posthumous Identity

After her death, Nariko received a number of new appellations that were chosen to form her posthumous identity. She was identified upon death as "Taira Nariko, Sagami no kami Lord Moritoki's daughter (平登子相模守守時朝臣息女)."⁹¹ Although her natal family, the Akahashi, were a powerful force within the Hōjō in the early fourteenth century, the Hōjō had descended from the Taira, a provincial warrior family who, over time, gained court office and, at one time, succeeded in marrying their daughters into the imperial family. Nariko was given a Buddhist name (*kaimyō* 戒名), Tōshin-in-den Teikai Daizen-ni 登真院殿定海大禪尼, and an alternate shortened form (*gō* 號), Tōshin-in 登真院. Many texts also refer to her as "Zen nun" 禪尼, suggesting she took Buddhist precepts after Takauji's death or before her own death, although we have no record of either. Alternately, she was referred to as the "shogun's mother" 將軍母, and "Ōkata dono" 大方殿, an honorific term that designated her position as the eldest and most important woman in the household that included Yoshiakira's several wives and children.

Ironically, the greatest outpouring of information

84 For details, see *Moromoriki*, vol. 7, pp. 136–42.

85 *Moromoriki*, vol. 7, p. 135. Kōzei succeeded Kenshun as the head of the Daigoji sub-temple of Sanbōin, located southwest of Kyoto. Although Tōjiji was a Zen temple and Kōzei a Shingon monk, he was permitted to perform the ceremony because of his status as Yoshiakira's "protector monk." For a study of the power and influence of Kenshun and Kōzei on the Ashikaga shoguns, see Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*.

86 *Moromoriki*, Jōji 3.4.29, vol. 7, pp. 135–36. Yoshiakira also attended an earlier *mandara kuyō* for Takauji on 4.21 at Jōzaikōin, but Nariko did not attend that ceremony. *Moromoriki*, Jōji 3.4.21, vol. 7, p. 130.

87 During this period, when lineage disputes affected all strata of power, other women, such as Hino Meishi/Nako 日野名子 (1310?–1358), also struggled to support the rights of their progeny. Nako, too, raised her son, Saionji Sanetoshi 西園寺実俊 (1335–1389), after her husband was executed.

88 DNS 6.26, Jōji 3.9.22 (p. 287). Sondō was the eleventh son of Gofushimi Tennō 後伏見天皇 (1288–1336; r. 1298–1301); entry for "Sondō Nyūdō Shinnō," *Nihon jinmei daijiten*. He served as an important ritual specialist for Yoshiakira and later for the third

shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, pp. 164, 174.

89 DNS 6:18 (p. 449).

90 The notation in *Moromoriki* says Nariko was sixty-two when she died; vol. 8, p. 201. *Moromoriki* in DNS, however, gives her age as sixty; DNS 6:25, Jōji 4.5.4 (p. 824). All other sources in DNS give her age at death as sixty.

91 DNS 6:26 (pp. 824–25). The identification of Nariko as Moritoki's daughter here is by *Moromoriki*. As mentioned earlier, it is more likely that she was Hisatoki's daughter and that she was adopted by her older brother Moritoki.

about Nariko appears after her death. Her funeral was described in numerous sources, but most notably and in greatest detail in the fourteenth-century record, *Moromoriki* 師守紀, suggesting that her social position as the mother of the reigning shogun mandated significant attention. While other wives of important political figures in medieval Japan went virtually unnoticed, women who produced male children who inherited or achieved positions of public prominence were well remembered in historical records, albeit usually after death. In part, this is because these mothers contributed significantly to the continuation of a lineage, but also because they were remembered and memorialized by their famous sons who had filial obligations to perform funerary rituals for their parents and to continue making offerings for their well-being in the afterlife. Such was the case with Nariko; her son-and-shogun Yoshiakira made the detailed plans for her funeral and memorial services.

Immediately after Nariko died, her body was treated in a ritual manner “as if she were still living,” a practice called *nyozai no gi* 如在の儀 (also *heizei no gi* 平生之儀) that was popular among members of the court and the military elite at this time.⁹² As early as the eleventh century, the practice was in use for sovereigns and involved treating the deceased ruler as if he were still living by continuing to perform various court rituals on his behalf until his successor could take over.⁹³ Thus, the practice was originally a safeguard to ensure that important state rituals were not halted by an inopportune death. Since no state rituals were endangered by Nariko’s death, we must assume that the phrase was mainly used in this context to connote her high status.

Nariko’s corpse was transported to Tōjiin in a palanquin, presumably on the night she died or early the next morning, and her funeral was held on the sixth day of the fifth month of Jōji 4 (1365), two days after her death.⁹⁴ While the funerals of shoguns took much lon-

ger to arrange, usually a week to ten days, those for their wives and mothers were customarily performed within two days after death because they did not require the attendance of mourners traveling from distant provinces to pay their respects. Funerals of women associated with men of high rank were, however, attended by officials in the capital. On the day of the funeral, the Miscellaneous Claims Court of the Records Office was closed and the recording of lawsuits halted for thirty days—much longer than for her children—to denote respect for the shogun and to allow important officials, many of whom were his friends and relatives, to attend Nariko’s funeral.⁹⁵

Precedents for how earlier funerals and memorial services had been conducted and how government closures had been handled at the deaths of previous shogunal mothers were thoroughly investigated before any decisions were made on Nariko’s funeral. Among those consulted were the funerals of Takauji’s mother, Uesugi Kiyoko, and Hōjō Masako 北条政子 (1157–1225), the wife of Minamoto no Yoritomo, founder of the Kamakura bakufu.⁹⁶ Such precedents were intended to reflect the status of the deceased. Thus, by using the funerals of Uesugi Kiyoko and Hōjō Masako as the precedents for Nariko’s funeral, Yoshiakira was honoring his father’s mother and also reinforcing his own mother’s natal roots, while also emphasizing her position as the wife of the founder of a new military government.

Yoshiakira arrived at Tōjiin late in the afternoon on the sixth day of the fifth month to prepare for his mother’s cremation that night.⁹⁷ The description of the funeral in *Moromoriki* is rather brief and lacks detail because the writer, Nakahara Moromori 中原師守 (n.d.), did not himself attend, but rather wrote about the event secondhand:⁹⁸

Today, I heard that in the late afternoon,
Kamakura Dainagon [Yoshiakira] went to
Ninnaji’s Tōjiin because tonight will be Ōkata
Zenni’s [Nariko’s] funeral. Ōgi [shogun] rode in

92 *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, p. 201.

93 See also discussions in Katsuda, *Shisha-tachi no chūsei*, pp. 102–105; Gerhart, *The Material Culture of Death*, p. 56; and Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, p. 16.

94 *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, pp. 203–204. Tōjiin is located in northwest Kyoto. It served as an Ashikaga mortuary temple and even today houses the wooden portrait sculptures of Takauji, Yoshiakira, and a number of the other Ashikaga shoguns. Many, if not all, of the mothers of Ashikaga shoguns also received funerals at this temple, but no portraits, grave markers, or memorial tablets for any of the women remain there today.

95 *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, pp. 203–204; DNS 6:26 (p. 840). As noted earlier, the office was closed for only seven days for Takauji’s children.

96 *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, pp. 205, 208.

97 The temple is identified in the text as the “Ninnaji no Tōjiin 仁和寺の等持院” to distinguish it from Tōjiji.

98 That Moromori did not attend is evidenced by the phrase “云々” throughout the passage, roughly translated as “it was said that...” or “it was told to me that.”

a carriage without curtains. I heard he wore a black jacket. Four ox handlers walked in front; the head handler wore a long robe with loose pants. [The procession] exited from Tōjiin's east-facing gate. Following the bakufu adjutant came approximately one hundred attendants riding on horseback.⁹⁹ The shogun's wife and other women followed in three carriages.¹⁰⁰ Ōkata Zenni's corpse was placed in the coffin and cremated. I heard this took place around midnight and that Yoshiakira carried the coffin.¹⁰¹ Afterwards, I heard everyone returned home.¹⁰²

The above description, unsatisfyingly general as it is, is nonetheless the most complete account that we have of Nariko's funeral; other reports have little to add.¹⁰³ Yoshiakira returned to Tōjiin two days later on 5.8 to receive his mother's remains.¹⁰⁴

We know from other entries in *Moromoriki* that offerings were made on behalf of Tōshin-in's spirit on each seventh day for a period of forty-nine days after her death. The first ceremony (*shonanoka* 初七日, "the first seventh day") was held on 5.10. On this day, Yoshiakira sponsored a Kannon Senbō 観音懺法 at Tōjiji, presided over by the head priest of Rinsenji 臨川寺, during which incense and prayers to increase merit for the deceased were offered before a Kannon image.¹⁰⁵ Those in attendance burned incense on Nariko's behalf.¹⁰⁶

The remaining memorial services were held regularly, one per week.¹⁰⁷ Early on the morning of her first monthly memorial on 6.4, Yoshiakira paid his respects at Nariko's grave and attended a Buddhist service for her at Tōjiji later that day.¹⁰⁸ On 6.9, Nariko's thirty-fifth-day memorial, a priest from Kenninji 建仁寺 presided over a special service at Tōjiji, and an imperial messenger came to proclaim the award of a posthumous promotion with the title and court rank of "Lady Taira Nariko, junior first."¹⁰⁹ On 6.11, the official court-rank diploma (*iki* 位記) was brought to the main hall of Tōjiji at Sanjō bōmon and placed on the temple's altar. Lesser Counselor Sugawara Hidenaga 少納言菅原秀長 (n.d.) read aloud the royal proclamation (*senmyō* 宣命) and two priests placed offerings of lit candles on the altar.¹¹⁰

Nariko's final seven-day memorial service was held on 6.23 at Tōjiji.¹¹¹ This service, on the forty-ninth day after her death, marked the end of deep mourning for the family and was distinguished by extensive offerings given on Nariko's behalf and the transference of her ashes from Tōjiji to Tōjiin. Several important abbots participated in this service, including Mōzan Chimyō 蒙山智明 (1277–1366), a former abbot of Zenrinji, who offered incense and chanted five sections of Mahayana sutras, and Bōshō 房聖 (n.d.) who officiated, assisted by five abbots.¹¹² Shogun Yoshiakira gave Nariko's remains, wrapped inside a silk pouch decorated with gold embroidery on a red ground, to Shun'oku Myōha 春

99 The bakufu *shitsuji* 執事 at this time was thirteen-year-old Shiba Yoshimasa 斯波義將 (1350–1410).

100 The annotator's gloss for *Moromoriki*'s entry for Jōji 4.5.4 in DNS names Yoshiakira's primary wife as Ki no Yoshiko 紀良子 (1336–1413), which is incorrect; DNS 6:26 (p. 825). She is correctly identified as Shibugawa Kōshi in *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, p. 204.

101 This probably means that he shouldered the heavy cords that were attached to her coffin.

102 *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, pp. 203–204.

103 See DNS, 6:26 (pp. 824–40).

104 *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, p. 208. Yoshiakira also requested Hekitan Shūkō 碧潭周皎 (1291–1374), a Rinzaï monk of Musō Soseki's lineage, to read sutras on his mother's behalf for one hundred days at Tōjiji. See entry for "Hekitan Shūkō" in *Kokushi daijiten*.

105 Rinsenji is a Rinzaï Zen temple located in western Kyoto near Tenryūji. Originally the site was a detached palace for Retired Emperor Kameyama 龜山法皇 (1249–1305; r. 1259–1274). The palace was then passed down to his grandson, Godaigo, who then gave it to his son, Prince Tokiyoshi 世良親王 (d. 1330). When Tokiyoshi died, Godaigo reopened it as a Zen temple dedicated to his deceased son; entry for "Rinsenji," *Kokushi daijiten*.

106 Yoshiakira is said to have worn a black robe of woven hemp and a folded court cap. Nakahara Moromori, author of *Moromoriki*,

is very attentive to the clothing worn at ritual events because in his position as senior secretary (*dai geki* 大外記) in the Records Office of the Imperial Palace he dealt with recording and looking up ritual precedents for members of the court. See Gerhart, *The Material Culture of Death*, p. 47.

107 The first monthly memorial (*gekki* 月忌) was held on 6.4, and while it was typical for a grave marker to be erected about a month after death, no such details are given in the text. *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, p. 235.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 253.

109 *Ibid.*, p. 268.

110 *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, p. 275. The sixth seventh-day memorial followed on 6.16; *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, p. 280.

111 *Moromoriki*, vol. 8, p. 286.

112 Chimyō was a Rinzaï monk who studied first with Kian Soen 規庵祖円 (1261–1313) at Nanzenji 南禅寺 in Kyoto and later with Issan Ichinei 一山一寧 (1247–1317). He entered Shōfukuji 聖福寺 in Hakata on Takauji's command and later became head of Kyoto's Kenninji, Nanzenji, and Tenryūji. Entry for "Mōzan Chimyō" in *Nihon jinmei daijiten*. Konoezaka Hōin Bōshō 近衛坂法院房聖 was a monk at Onjōji's 園城寺 Enmain 閻魔院 who conferred the precepts on Gyōjo Nyūdō Shinnō 行助入道親王 (1360–1386), Gokōgon's third son. See entry for "Gyōjo Nyūdō Shinnō" in *Nihon jinmei daijiten*.

屋妙葩 (1311–1388), abbot of Tenryūji, who then took them to Tōjiin.¹¹³ A sutra scroll, written in Emperor Gokōgon's 後光嚴 (1338–1374) own hand with gold ink on indigo paper, was presented to Yoshiakira in a willow box decorated with silver.¹¹⁴

About a month later, on Jōji 4 (1365).7.16, Yoshiakira ordered Nariko's remains be divided and portions transferred to Kōfukuji 光福寺 in Tanba and An'yōin 安養院 on Mt. Kōya.¹¹⁵ These two sites were already significant for the Ashikaga as Kōfukuji and An'yōin (and a third site, Tadanoin 多田院 in Settsu) were secondary interment sites for Takauji's remains, and the remains of Takauji's mother, Uesugi Kiyoko, were already interred at Kōfukuji.¹¹⁶ An'yōin would become a popular secondary site of interment for later Ashikaga shoguns and their wives, but the placement of Nariko's remains in Tanba was unusual because Tanba was not her natal home. Yoshiakira made this choice because he intended to solidify Kōfukuji's reputation as an ancestral site to honor the founders of the Ashikaga dynasty—his grandmother, father, and mother—and likely because the Hōjō family temples in Kamakura were in disrepair with few left to care for them. The choice of Tanba as a site for her remains also adds weight to the theory that Nariko spent time there after fleeing Kamakura many years earlier. The act of dispersing Nariko's remains to several temples was an indication of her great importance, as dividing remains among different sites was most commonly practiced for men of high status, particularly shoguns, in order to accommodate numerous offerings and ceremonies at several locations.

Yoshiakira made additional efforts to provide for his mother's afterlife. On Jōji 4.8.5, in preparation for Nariko's one-hundredth-day memorial service (Jōji 4.8.15), he transferred the estate rights of the village of

Idōta 井戸田 in Ōwari Province to Tōjiin to pay for future prayers for the repose of Tōshin-in's soul there and donated money for rice offerings and oil for lamps for her future annual death memorials.¹¹⁷

The third-year anniversary of Nariko's death was a grand affair that was reported in numerous sources. It involved services held over the course of several days, beginning on the second day of the fifth month of Jōji 6 (1367) and continuing through the fourth day, and was presided over by no fewer than seven high-ranking Buddhist abbots.¹¹⁸ On 4.26, less than a week before this important memorial, Yoshiakira's younger brother Motouji died, and the shogun had to hurry to Kamakura to attend his funeral and make arrangements for the protection of Motouji's young son, Ujimitsu 氏満 (1359–1398), and the interim governance of the Kanto region. He then hastily returned to Kyoto for Nariko's service.¹¹⁹

On 5.2 and throughout the following day, a Shingon ritual called Rishu Zanmai 理趣三昧 was conducted at Tōjiji on Nariko's behalf.¹²⁰ The seven high-ranking monks who officiated at this grand Buddhist offering service (*shichisō hōe* 七僧法会) included Deputy Chief Sangha Administrator [Agui] Ryōken Hōin [安居院] 良憲法印 (n.d.), who served as lecturer; Seijō Hōin 静盛法印 (n.d.), who read out the title of the sutra; Former Sangha Prefect [Takeuchi] Jinō [竹内] 慈能 (n.d.), who read aloud the organizer's wishes; Deputy Chief Sangha Administrator Jishun Hōin 慈俊法印 (n.d.), who performed the triple prostrations; Deputy Chief Sangha Administrator Kyōtan Hōin 經探法印 (n.d.), who led the chanting of verses eulogizing the Buddha's virtue; Deputy Chief Sangha Administrator Ingaku 印學 (n.d.), who led the scattering of flowers; and the Great Buddha Master Kyōhan 經斑大法師 (n.d.), who managed the

113 Shun'oku Myōha was a Rinzai Zen priest and follower of Musō Soseki. He worked closely with the early Ashikaga shoguns, heading both Tōjiji and Daikōmyōji 大光明寺 and helping to rebuild Tenryūji and Rinsenji after fires destroyed both temples. Entry for "Shun'oku Myōha" in *Nihon jinmei daijiten*.

114 Moromoriki, Jōji 4.6.23, vol. 8, p. 286.

115 DNS 6:26, Jōji 4 (1365).7.16 (pp. 969–70). Yoshiakira's letter of instructions for a portion of Nariko's remains to be interred at Kōfukuji is reproduced in Uejima, *Ashikaga Takauji monjo*, vol. 2, p. 120. It was common practice in elite military families at this time to divide the deceased's cremated remains (*bunkotsu* 分骨) and inter them in several graves in different locations.

116 Tadanoin, located at Kawanishi in Hyōgo Prefecture, was founded in the late tenth century by Minamoto no Mitsunaka 源満仲 (912–997). The dispersion of Takauji's remains to this site reinforced his Minamoto heritage.

117 DNS 6:27, Jōji 4.8.5 (p. 6); entry for "Idōta no shō," *Nihon rekishi chimei taikai*; DNS 6:27 (pp. 10–11). Her sub-temple at Tōjiin no longer exists and was probably destroyed during the Ōnin War of 1467–1477.

118 DNS 6:28 (pp. 1–3).

119 The stress of the two events must have been tremendous on Yoshiakira. He died only six months later at age thirty-eight; his heir, Yoshimitsu, who would become the third Ashikaga shogun, was just ten years old.

120 The Rishu Zanmai focuses on the "Heart of Perfection of Wisdom Sutra" (*Rishukyō* 理趣經; *Hannya haramita shingyō* 般若波羅蜜多心經) and employs fire offerings, chanting, and sutra reading at two altars.

entire service.¹²¹ The importance of this service cannot be missed. Not only were its officiators Buddhist monks of the highest office and those attending of the highest levels of society, the service itself was modeled after one held for Kyōgoku-in 京極院 (1245–1272), queen consort of Emperor Kameyama 龜山天皇 (1249–1305; r. 1259–1274), Godaigo's great-grandfather.¹²² The implications of Yoshiakira choosing a memorial service held for a queen consort as precedent are clear: Nariko was being accorded the highest possible honor. Additionally, the cost of such a large and elaborate service, which was born by Yoshiakira, was extraordinary and a tribute to his enduring devotion to his mother. Each of the seven officiating Buddhist monks received monetary gifts of five thousand *hiki* 疋, and twenty other participating monks received five hundred *hiki* each, an astounding total of forty-five thousand *hiki*.¹²³ A month later, on Jōji 6 (1367).6.11, Yoshiakira moved his young son and heir, the ten-year-old Yoshimitsu, into his mother's former residence, presenting him with a suit of gold armor, banners, and a great sword.¹²⁴ Yoshiakira had waited until this date to move the child because that amount of time, two years, was required to remove the pollution caused by her death, appease her spirit with offerings, and settle it safely in a new life in the afterworld.

Although the dangers that accompanied death had passed by the third anniversary, annual incense offerings for Nariko continued to be sponsored by later generations of shoguns. Such services allowed Nariko's descendants to remember and honor her.¹²⁵ The con-

tinuing performance of memorial services for Nariko by succeeding generations of shoguns indicates their great regard for her role in perpetuating the Ashikaga line of shoguns.

Conclusion

In sum, it is evident that Akahashi Nariko had a significant impact on the fortunes of the Ashikaga dynasty. Although her marriage to Takauji started as a useful political alliance intended to cement relations between two important military houses, the birth of Yoshiakira secured the continuation of the shogunal line and Nariko's place in it. She was little noticed as "a wife of Takauji," but after she gave birth to Yoshiakira chroniclers began to record her appearances around the capital. Still, much of what we know about her can be determined only through accounts of events and people around her. We suspect she fled to Tanba at the fall of Kamakura because there was nowhere else safe to go and because Takauji's mother was there; and we assume she joined Takauji in Kyoto early in 1337, then lived in a series of residences near the Ashikaga political and ritual center of Sanjō bōmon until her death, because records written by Kyoto courtiers and monks from that period mention her and a number of her children and because a mid-fourteenth century drawing shows living quarters for a family at Takauji's early residence at Tōjiji.

Sources note that Nariko visited religious sites, enjoyed leisure activities such as flower viewing, attended to family graves, and made offerings in conjunction with official and/or family duties undertaken by her husband and/or son. We also know that Nariko sponsored large Buddhist offering services for her deceased husband and made pilgrimages to shrines and temples with her children in active support of Ashikaga cultic sites established by Takauji and the powerful Shingon priest, Sanbō-in Kenshun. Takauji, in turn, was protective of his wife and children and often commissioned Kenshun to perform powerful rituals to protect members of his family, such as Fugen Enmei Hō, to protect Nariko during her last pregnancy, Aizen'ō Hō for one

121 All of the monks who officiated at Nariko's memorial held very high rank and had performed Buddhist ceremonies at the court. DNS 6:28 (pp. 1–4). I have followed Conlan's translation of *gon daisōzu* 權大僧都 as deputy chief sangha administrator and *zensōjō* 前僧正 as former sangha prefect. Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, p. xiii.

122 DNS 6:28 (p. 2).

123 DNS 6:28 (p. 2). Conlan has calculated that at this time 15,300 *hiki* had the purchasing power of US\$153,000, making the monetary gifts given to officiating and attending priests at Nariko's third-year death anniversary the equivalent of close to a half million dollars in today's money. Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, p. 156, fn. 43.

124 DNS 6:28 (p. 102).

125 On Ōei 18 (1411).5.4, for example, her great-grandson Ashikaga Yoshimochi 足利義持 (1386–1428) sponsored an incense-offering ceremony for her at Tōjiin, presided over by Nanzenji's Tōzen Ken'eki 東漸健易 (1344–1423), who was Yoshimochi's Zen teacher. A large number of sutras were recited on Nariko's behalf, among them the *Mahayana Garland Sutra* (*Daijō kegon kyō* 大乘華嚴經), the *Great Collection Sutra* (*Daishū kyō* 大集經), *Daibon hannya kyō* 大品般若經 (also *Makahannya haramitsu*

kyō 摩訶般若波羅蜜經), the *Lotus Sutra* (*Hoke kyō* 法華經), and five parts of the *Nirvana Sutra* (*Nehan kyō* 涅槃經). DNS 7:14 (pp. 327–28).

of his daughters, and a special Myōdōku for Tayoko's recovery from a grave illness. Nariko and Yoshiakira continued their patronage of Sanbōin even after Takauji's death, commissioning Kenshun's successor, Kōzei, to perform a *mandara kuyō* for Takauji's seventh-year memorial service.

The occasion of Nariko's funeral became a means for Yoshiakira to honor his mother and to further Ashikaga political aspirations, as he intentionally chose the funerals of Uesugi Kiyoko (Takauji's mother) and Hōjō Masako as precedents for his mother's funeral in order to emphasize her position as the wife of the founder of a new military dynasty. That Nariko was a woman of high standing and political import is reflected in the many honors granted her after death: she was awarded a posthumous promotion and the title of "Lady Taira Nariko, junior first rank" and the precedent chosen for her third-year death anniversary, officiated by Buddhist monks of the highest office and attended by the highest levels of society, was that of a queen consort, a choice intended to underscore her position as equal to the highest in the land.

Finally, the distribution of Nariko's cremated remains made it clear that Yoshiakira intended her to be remembered by a wider segment of society than just her immediate family. The two sites chosen to receive her remains—Kōfukuji in Tanba and An'yōin on Mt. Kōya—held special significance for the Ashikaga, as Takauji's remains were also interred at both sites and Takauji's mother was interred at Kōfukuji. It is believed that Yoshiakira's intent was to make Kōfukuji an ancestral worship site centered on his grandmother, his father, and his mother. His decision to divide his mother's remains between several sites marked her as someone of great importance to the lineage, as this process was generally reserved for public figures because it served to facilitate memorial ceremonies in multiple locations. Indeed, generations of later Ashikaga shoguns continued to honor Nariko for her role in perpetuating the Ashikaga line by sponsoring and attending Buddhist services at these sites.

Nariko was highly invested in the success of her children, which gave her great influence over the course of events in the mid-fourteenth century. She raised the children herself—the girls until they died or married and the boys until they took up official duties—a change from earlier (and later) tradition where elite warrior

children were often raised by wet nurses.¹²⁶ Yoshiakira, perhaps because of the great turmoil of the era, lived with his mother when he was very young, an experience that led to a much closer bond between them.¹²⁷ Although Takauji fathered other children with several other wives, only one contested Yoshiakira's position. Takauji steadfastly refused to recognize this son, in part because Nariko fought persuasively against it.

To date, scholars have written much about the military and political machinations involving the Ashikaga shoguns in the fourteenth century, but very little about their wives and mothers. My essay on Akahashi Nariko represents a step toward integrating her into the culturally constructed historical narrative of the fourteenth century that is still dominated by famous men. Although still lacking some details, we now have a clearer picture of who Nariko was—where she lived, with whom she interacted, the types of activities in which she participated, her relationship with and influence over her husband and son, and her undeniable importance to the Ashikaga.

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- HJAS *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
- KST *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* 新訂増補国史大系. 66 vols. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929–1964.

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¹²⁶ Until 1333, the children of the Hōjō, for example, like those of courtiers, were raised by wet nurses. Conlan, "Thicker than Blood," p. 194.

¹²⁷ This same pattern can be found with Hino Meishi/Nako, who also raised her own child, Saionji Sanetoshi. Tyler, *From the Bamboo-View Pavilion*, p. 12.

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Poets on the Periphery: Kūkai's Vision of Frontier Governance

WILLIAM MATSUDA

Introduction

DURING the early ninth century, northeastern Japan was a liminal space not completely under the control of the Heian capital (Heiankyō¹ 平安京). Although the Japanese had made numerous attempts to pacify and colonize the eastern hinterlands since the seventh century, frequent uprisings by the Emishi 蝦夷, an ethnic group not recognized as Yamato 大和 Japanese,² were a constant source of irrita-

The author wishes to express his sincere gratitude to the anonymous reviewer for their invaluable insights and advice.

- 1 In 794, Emperor Kanmu 桓武 (735–806; r. 781–806) moved the capital to Heiankyō (present-day Kyoto City) from its former location at Nagaokakyō 長岡京 (present-day Nagaokakyō City, Kyoto Prefecture).
- 2 There is a lack of consensus among historians and archaeologists as to the exact identity of the Emishi. Some suggest that they were genetically different from the Japanese and are closer to the Ainu, others suggest that they were “uncivilized Japanese,” while others hypothesize that they were a mix of the two. Anthropologist Hanihara Kazuo proposes that the Emishi represent a stage where the Ainu and non-Ainu Japanese separated from their common ancestor, the Jomonese. Hanihara, “Emishi, Ezo, and Ainu,” p. 46.

In the texts presented below, Kūkai does not actually use the word “Emishi,” but instead uses the Chinese names for peripheral barbarians (details below) or simply Hairy People (Jp. *mōjin*, Ch. *māoren* 毛人). For the purposes of this study, an “Emishi” is anyone who lived along Japan’s northeastern frontier, did not

tion. Since the Taika 大化 Reforms of 645, the region was nominally incorporated into the Japanese state and christened Mutsu 陸奥 Province, but government control remained tenuous. In the government halls of Heiankyō, far removed from the action on the frontier, Mutsu’s status in the Heian state was perhaps one more of perception and imagination than reality.

Court-sanctioned histories narrate details of specific encounters with the periphery—dates, locations, and casualties—but literary writings also provide insight into the underlying ideologies, and how they were transformed over time. The “border guards” (*sakimori* 防人) poems found in the eighth-century poetic anthology *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (Anthology of Myriad Leaves, ca. 759) depict the frontier in romantic terms, focusing on such themes as homesickness or longing for one’s wife and children. By the early Heian period, this pastoral view of the outlying provinces was supplanted by one rooted in the Chinese center-periphery worldview, where borderland tribes were seen as savages not blessed by the sovereign’s grace. This shift can be traced to the reinforcement of the Chinese-inspired *ritsuryō* 律令 legal-bureaucratic state in the early days

recognize the authority of the emperor, and was not included in the household registry system.

of the Heian period. Emperor Saga 嵯峨 (786–842; r. 809–823), a sinophile through and through, strengthened the *ritsuryō* system in the wake of the Kusuko Incident (Kusuko no hen 薬子の変) in 810, where the abdicated Emperor Heizei 平城 (774–824; r. 806–809) attempted to come out of retirement by staging a coup d'état against Saga with the help of his chief consort Fujiwara no Kusuko 藤原薬子 (?–810).³ As Jonathan Stockdale observes, the *ritsuryō* codes were more than mere words on a page; they reflected a “legal cosmology” that “rested on metaphysical assumptions about the nature of the universe and place of humanity within it.”⁴ He further comments:

As a result, a fundamental concern in the codes of both Japan and China centers around the maintenance of social order, premised on vertical relations of hierarchy and subordination, which themselves are presented as reflections of a larger cosmic principle in which “heaven overspreads, and earth unbears.” This order is further reproduced in the archetypal Confucian relationships: those between ruler and subject, husband and wife, father and son, elder and young brother, and between friends. In this system, the correct functioning of each set of relations was portrayed as crucial not just to the proper ordering of society but to the harmonious functioning of the cosmos as well, including the proper course of the seasons and spheres.⁵

Concomitant with the reinforcement of the *ritsuryō* system was the deployment of “statecraft through writing” (*monjō keikoku* 文章経国) as the dominant ideology of textual production. The origins of *monjō keikoku* can be traced to the *Dianlun lunwen* 典論論文 (Discourse on Literature), a seminal essay authored by Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226), the first emperor of the Cao Wei 曹魏 (220–266) dynasty during China’s tumultuous Three Kingdoms period (220–280). Here, he pens a line that would have a tremendous impact on the act of

writing in the sinosphere for centuries to come: “Writing is a major enterprise in governing the state and shall flourish for eternity” (Ch. *wenzhang jingguo daye buxiu zhi shengshi* 文章経国大業不朽之盛事). The *Dianlun lunwen* was later anthologized in fascicle 52 of the *Wenxuan* 文選 (Selections of Refined Literature, c. 520–530), a collection of Chinese poetry and prose exemplars from the Warring States (475–225 BCE) period to the sixth century. The *Wenxuan* served as the vehicle that first transported *monjō keikoku* thought to eighth-century Japan. In short, this philosophy valorized the metaphysical properties of the written word, asserting that it possessed the power to enable proper governance, and its correct use would create a harmonious society under the emperor’s rule. Sinologist Harada Ai, a scholar of the Song-dynasty (960–1279) poet Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), notes that Cao Pi’s dictum motivated numerous eminent poets (or their descendants) to compile anthologies of their poetic *oeuvre*.⁶ As premodern Japanese literary scholar Gustav Heldt observes, such distinguished Japanese sinologists as Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之 (1913–1998) initially discounted the influence of Cao Pi’s thought on Nara and Heian Japanese writing, claiming that its usage was “haphazard and devoid of any ideological content.”⁷ Over the past two decades, a number of researchers, including religious studies scholar Ryūichi Abé and premodern Japanese literary scholars Thomas LaMarre, Saeko Shibayama, Jason Webb, and Heldt have called this view into question, convincingly demonstrating how *monjō keikoku* was utilized as a practical technology for the management of state affairs.⁸ Although the *monjō keikoku* ideology had been introduced to Japan prior to Saga’s ascension to the throne, it was under his reign that the ideology was used to justify the compilation of three imperially commissioned *kanshi* 漢詩 anthologies, the *Ryōunshū* 凌雲集 (Collection Soaring Above the Clouds, 814), *Bunka shūreishū* 文華秀麗集 (Collection of Masterpieces of Literary Flowers, 818), and *Keikokushū* 経国集 (Collection for Managing the State, 827).⁹ The *Keikokushū* was actually officially commissioned by Saga’s successor Junna 淳和 (785–840; r.

3 Some contemporary Japanese scholarship now refers to this failed uprising as the “Incident by the Heizei Retired Emperor” (Heizei Daijō Tennō no hen 平城太上天皇の変) to reflect new research indicating that Heizei, not Kusuko, was the mastermind behind the plot. Nishimoto, “Kusuko no hen,” p. 75.

4 Stockdale, *Imagining Exile*, p. 93.

5 *Ibid.*

6 Harada, *Soshi bungaku*, p. 111.

7 Heldt, *The Pursuit of Harmony*, p. 47.

8 See Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*; LaMarre, *Uncovering Heian Japan*; Webb, “In Good Order”; and Shibayama, “Ōe no Masafusa.”

9 Takigawa, “Keikoku no bunshō ni,” p. 365.

823–833), but the compilers were largely from Saga’s poetic coterie, and thus can be viewed as an extension of Saga’s poetic reign. The title accorded the third anthology clearly demonstrates the early Heian state’s commitment to *monjō keikoku* thought.

Kūkai 空海 (774–835), the putative founder of the Shingon 真言 school of Japanese esoteric (*mikkyō* 密教) Buddhism, was well-versed in the classical Chinese textual tradition. Upon the appointments of court literati Ono no Minemori 小野峯守 (778–830) and Ōtomo no Kunimichi 大伴国道 (768–828)¹⁰ to governorships in the hinterlands, Kūkai composed congratulatory epistle-poems to commemorate their new postings. These poems were included by Kūkai’s disciple and amanuensis Shinzei 真濟 (800–860) in the *Henjō hokki seireishū* 遍照發揮性靈集 (The Literary Essence of the Priest Henjō, ca. 835–840, henceforth *Shōryōshū*), a posthumous anthology of Kūkai’s literary writings. This paper presents these poems¹¹ in their entirety, and argues that Kūkai’s deft appropriation of, and allusion to, a wide variety of Chinese literary texts contributed to the Heian court’s perceptions of its northeastern frontier. These poems also demonstrate that despite Kūkai’s ostensible aloofness toward secular matters, his conceptualizations of writing and statecraft were thoroughly informed by the *ritsuryō* and *monjō keikoku* discourses prevalent in his era.¹² Furthermore,

10 Kunimichi actually changed his family name to Tomo 伴 in 823 but will be referred to as Ōtomo throughout this study to maintain consistency and to keep his familial connection to the Ōtomo clan clear in the eyes of the reader.

11 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author. The poems presented in this essay can be found in fascicles one (Minemori) and three (Kunimichi) of the *Shōryōshū*. The version edited by Buddhist studies philologists Watanabe Shōkō (1907–1977) and Miyasaka Yūshō (1921–2011) in volume seventy-one of the NKBT was the principal source text used for this study. The commentary provided in the version edited by sinologist Imataka Makoto et al. in volume six of the KDKZ was used as a supplement.

12 On numerous occasions Kūkai expressed his desire not to be involved in secular matters and to focus on his meditative and doctrinal endeavors. One such example occurred in Daidō 大同 4 (809), just shortly after Kūkai was allowed to return to Heiankyō from Dazaifu 大宰府 and took up residence at the Takaosanji 高雄山寺 Temple in the mountains outside the city. Saga requested that Kūkai produce Chinese calligraphic works for the court. Apparently dismayed by the imposition on his spiritual endeavors, he replied, “I, Kūkai, am a rotten branch in the forest of black-robed monks; a decomposing corpse on the Sea of the Dharma. The only things I know are carrying a bowl and staff while begging for alms, and humming in the woods and engaging in contemplation.” *Shōryōshū*, fascicle four, Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, 229. Indeed, Kūkai did not respond to the

Kūkai’s writings underscore how the northeastern periphery existed more as a discursive construct than a geopolitical reality.

Heian Japan and its Periphery

Peripheral regions and their inhabitants were a concern for the ancient Japanese state virtually from its inception. As the Kinai-based Yamato clans extended their influence throughout Honshu and the northern reaches of Kyushu, they inevitably clashed with the non-Yamato peoples inhabiting the fringes of their sphere of influence. Indeed, the proper title accorded to the shōgun—*seii taishōgun* 征夷大將軍, or “generalissimo who conquers the barbarians”—emphasizes his original mandate to quell frontier rebellions. References to frontier peoples date as far back as Japan’s oldest extant historical works, the *Kojiki* 古事記 (Records of Ancient Matters, 712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan, 720). In particular, the more Sinitic *Nihon shoki* represents the Emishi with the sinographs 夷 or 蝦夷. The character 夷 underscores the continental influence on the early Japanese worldview, as it was also used by the Chinese as a label for the *dongyi* 東夷, the non-Han tribes to the east. The same histories named the non-Yamato peoples residing along the southern boundaries of the Japanese area of control as the Hayato 倭人. Historian Sakaue Yasutoshi notes that the Hayato were fully incorporated into the Japanese household registry and agricultural land distribution system by the early 800s, in effect making them Japanese subjects on an equal footing with the Yamato Japanese.¹³ Despite the court’s success in pacifying its southern borderlands, the Emishi were a constant annoyance. Entries in the *Nihon shoki* present an unstable relationship between the Yamato state and its northern neighbors: the Emishi

emperor’s request until two months after receiving the folding screens, as he was unwilling to interrupt a meditative retreat to accommodate Saga’s request. Abé observes, “Kūkai’s behavior, suggestive of lack of respect, or even disloyalty, to the throne, seems to have invited criticism from his fellow courtiers” (Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, p. 308). Rhetorical declarations aside, Kūkai was actually actively involved in court affairs, as he served in the Ministry of the Center (Nakatsukasashō 中務省) at Saga’s behest in 819, supervised the repairs to the Mannoike 満濃池 reservoir in his native Sanuki 讃岐 in 821, and established Japan’s first private school, the Shugeishuchiin 綜芸種智院 (School of Arts and Sciences) in 828.

13 Sakaue, *Ritsuryō kokka*, p. 104.

are depicted as either docile bearers of tribute or rebels requiring military pacification. In any case, relations with the Emishi are narrated in solely military or diplomatic terms. Official histories are replete with instances of unfortunate encounters with borderland clans and decades of military pacification campaigns that took up the better part of the eighth century. Yet as historian Karl Friday observes:

[D]espite their prominent place in the court's historiography, the wars themselves accomplished little. The government declared victory in 811, but with the better part of Mutsu and Dewa under no firmer court control than it had been before 774. Where the state's grasp over the northeast broadened or deepened during the war era, it did so primarily because of the continuation of older techniques for extending Yamato influence in the region, techniques that persisted for decades after the subjugation campaigns officially ended. In point of fact, most Japanese scholarship on conditions and events in the northeast during the Nara (710–94) and Heian (794–1185) periods supports this conclusion, without voicing it directly.¹⁴

Friday's analysis demonstrates that the northeastern frontier cannot be viewed strictly in terms of territorial gains and extent of actual state control. Equally as important to any discussion on Mutsu and Dewa 出羽 is how these territories were perceived textually. Despite the court's unilateral declaration of victory in 811, Kūkai's description of the borderlands in his epistle-poems to Minemori in 815 and Kunimichi in 825 indicate that the Emishi did not share the court's appraisal of the situation.

On the dawn of the ninth century, aristocratic policymakers viewed the frontier problem in both militaristic and ideological terms. In particular, the year 797 is crucial to understanding the Heian court's relationship with its frontier and Kūkai's place within this political and intellectual milieu. According to the *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀 (Later Chronicles of Japan, 840), another official history, court scholar Sugano no Mamichi 菅野真道 (741–814) reported to Emperor Kanmu 桓武 (735–806; r. 781–806) that the first half of the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 (Continued Chronicles of Japan, 797)

had been completed.¹⁵ More importantly, the report lauds Kanmu for his enlightened governance that extends beyond the Yamato ethnocultural sphere, reaching such distant regions as the mixed Korean-Tungusic kingdom of Bohai 渤海 (located in present-day northeastern China, North Korea, and the southern portion of the Russian Far East) and the Emishi territories to the northeast.¹⁶ The juxtaposition of these references—namely, the partial completion of the *Shoku Nihongi* and the pacification of the northeastern frontier and its inhabitants—amply demonstrates the power of the written word as a technology of statecraft. Like its continental cultural benefactor, early Heian Japan could claim nationhood because it produced written histories, tamed its frontier barbarians, and then textually incorporated them into these histories. This was just a few short years after Kūkai's brief stint at the State Academy (Daigakuryō 大学寮), where he had been exposed to a curriculum saturated with *monjō keikoku* ideology.

Continental castaways were also not spared the Emishi's wrath. The *Shoku Nihongi* records an incident in 727 where a tributary mission from Bohai came ashore in Emishi territory. Only eight of the twenty-four members managed to survive the Emishi slaughter and safely reach the Yamato court in the south.¹⁷ Another Bohai delegation that drifted into Emishi territory in 786 fared better: this time, only twelve people from the sixty-five member delegation were killed.¹⁸ Another entry from the *Nihon kōki* reports a third Bohai embassy in 795 also had the misfortune of unintentionally trespassing on Emishi land, but does not specify the number of casualties, only that “the people were scattered and goods were lost.”¹⁹ These three Bohai missions all had the same result: considerable loss of lives and property. The 786 and 795 incidents are particularly noteworthy because they occurred despite the large-scale military campaigns by government forces in the 770s and 780s where armies of tens of thousands of troops were raised and

15 *Nihon kōki*, Enryaku 延暦 16 (797).2.13.

16 *Nihon kōki*, Enryaku 16.2.13.

17 *Shoku Nihongi*, Jinki 神龜 4 (727).12.29.

18 *Shoku Nihongi*, Enryaku 5 (786).9.18.

19 *Nihon kōki*, Enryaku 14 (795).11.3. This entry is preserved in the *Ruijū kokushi* 類聚国史 (Classified National History of Japan, 892), a compendium and reconstruction of prior official histories edited by Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845–903) at the behest of Emperor Uda 宇多 (867–931; r. 887–897). *Ruijū kokushi*, 193 Bokkai 渤海, Enryaku 14 (795).11.3.

14 Friday, “Pushing Beyond the Pale,” p. 2.

dispatched to Mutsu. Friday notes that the numerical, technological, and strategic superiority of the Japanese forces did not fare well against the hit-and-run guerilla tactics of the Emishi bands.²⁰ Thus, in reality, the conquered frontier proclaimed in the 797 *Nihon kōki* entry represented more of an optimistic Heiankyō ideal of the northeast than the actual situation on the ground.

Enter the Poet-Governor: Kūkai's Epistle to Ono no Minemori

Kūkai witnessed the aftermath of these events unfold in the capital. He was personally affected by the Heian court's policies regarding the renegade region, as over a ten-year period two people close to him were appointed its governor: the aforementioned Ono no Minemori and Ōtomo no Kunimichi. Both were seemingly unlikely choices due to their lack of experience as military commanders or outlying provincial governors. On the eve of their respective departures to their new postings, Kūkai presented them with congratulatory epistle-poems written in literary Chinese. In these texts, Kūkai presents a new ideal for the frontier administrator—a literati-bureaucrat who is also an accomplished poet and will serve as a cultural emissary that brings the ideology of *monjō keikoku* to the benighted hinterlands.

Minemori was appointed governor of Mutsu Province in 815. He was known as one of Saga's court poets and for his involvement with the compilation of the *Ryōunshū*, the first imperially commissioned anthology of Chinese poetry. In addition to having thirteen of his compositions included in the ninety-one poem collection (he was tied with Kaya no Toyotoshi 賀陽豐年 (751–815) and outdone only by Saga, who had twenty-two entries), Minemori also had the honor of penning the preface. His prelude is nothing less than a testament to the *monjō keikoku* ideology, as he opens by quoting Cao Pi's axiom from the *Dianlun lunwen*. Although personally unexperienced in military or frontier administrative affairs, he did have the proper lineage for the assignment, as he was the third son of Ono no Nagami 小野永見 (d.u.), a previous Vice-Generalissimo who Pacifies the Barbarians (*seii fukushōgun* 征夷副將軍) and Vice Governor of Mutsu (*Mutsu no*

²⁰ Friday, "Beyond the Pale," pp. 15–16.

suke 陸奥介). Yet, Minemori's lack of experience was superseded by his status as a poet of the first rank, making him exactly the kind of person needed to bring the emperor's civilizing force to the frontier.

Kūkai's sinocentric orientation is evident from the beginning of his epistle.²¹ He opens with the greeting:

戎狄難馴、邊笮易感、自古有、今何无。公抱大廈之材、出鎮豺狼之境。堂中久闕定省之養、魏闕遠阻龍顏之謁。雖云天理合歡然、人情豈无感歎。貧道與君遠相知、山河雲水何能阻。白雲之人、天邊之吏、何日无念。聊抽拙歌、以充邊霧之解頤。

The Rong and Di are difficult to tame, so the sound of the reed flute in the frontier stirs the heart. It has been this way since ancient times, why would it have changed now? You will take your immense talents and pacify the frontier of wild dogs and wolves. For quite some time you will not perform the customary courtesies to your parents at home and your distance from the court will prevent you from having an audience with the emperor. In principle your appointment is worthy of congratulations, yet who with feelings would not lament? You and I have known each other for a long time; how can the mountains, clouds, and waters keep us apart? Though I am a man in the white clouds and you a bureaucrat on earth, will there be a day when we do not think of each other? I dash off the following poem for you in the hope it dispels the frontier fog.

The Emishi are given the uncomplimentary appellations of Rong 戎 and Di 狄, references to two of the non-Han barbarian tribes that traditionally inhabited the regions north of the Chinese sphere of influence. Labelling the Emishi as such serves to transpose the Chinese world-view onto the early Heian Japanese state, where the Heian capital becomes the "Middle Kingdom" and the periphery is relegated to the status of barbarian terri-

²¹ This text is in fascicle one of the *Shōryōshū* under the title *Ya Rikushū ni okuru uta jo o awasetari zōgen* 贈野陸州并序雜言 (Poem on the Occasion of Ono no Minemori's Departure to Mutsu, Preface Attached, Unregulated Verse). Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, pp. 164–67.

tories. This is an attempt by Kūkai to textually shape the Japanese state along Chinese lines, complete with its own “difficult to tame” barbarians who have yet to be brought into the fold of Confucian rationalism, and describing them as “wild dogs and wolves” serves to further dehumanize them in the eyes of his reader. His mention of the “reed flute” calls further attention to the alien nature of the Emishi, a reference likely inspired by a phrase in the *Houhanshu* 後漢書 (Book of the Later Han, ca. fifth century) depicting “barbarian reed flutes stirring the frontier horses to bray” (Ch. *hujia dongxi bianma ming* 胡笳動兮邊馬鳴). In Chinese diction, the “barbarian reed flute” (Ch. *hujia* 胡笳) was associated with the tribes to the north of the Han sphere of influence, thus perfectly corresponding to the Emishi insofar as cardinal direction. A crude instrument made from coiled reeds, its very appearance was likely intended to evoke images of untamed wilderness. Also, the sound produced by the flute was considered plaintive and melancholy, adding an additional layer of forlornness to the landscape. Reed flutes as emblems of the frontier were well-established in Tang poetry, and appeared in a subgenre of Tang poetry that later came to be known as “frontier poems” (Ch. *biansaishi* 邊塞詩).²²

While Kūkai’s poem uses slightly different diction than the *Houhanshu*—he refers to the flute as a “frontier reed flute” (*henka* 邊笳) as opposed to “barbarian reed flute”—one can reasonably infer that Kūkai was

inspired by the imagery presented in the *Houhanshu*. As the *Houhanshu* was a core text in the early Heian Chinese classics curriculum, Minemori probably would have understood the allusion.

These salutatory remarks serve as a preface to the poem itself. From the opening stanzas, Kūkai narrates the extreme difficulties previous emperors, generals, and governors faced in dealing with Mutsu Province:

日本麗城三百州
就中陸奧最難柔
天皇赫怒幾按劔
相將幄中爭馳謀
往帝伐 今上憂
時々牧守不能劉
自古將軍悉啾々

In the three hundred islands that comprise the beautiful land of Japan,
The province of Mutsu has been the most difficult to tame.
On numerous occasions the emperor has gripped his sword in fury,
Ministers and generals argue in battlefield tents and hatch strategy,
Previous emperors have taken up the battle cry, and the current emperor laments.
Previous governors have been unable to vanquish the barbarians
From ancient times, generals have cried in agony.

Kūkai’s opening declaration, “In the three hundred islands that comprise the beautiful land of Japan / The province of Mutsu has been the most difficult to tame,” underscores the belief held by the Heian state that the region was unequivocally theirs. In addition to textually claiming the contested region, Kūkai provides a thumbnail sketch of earlier engagements with their northeastern frontier. Prior attempts to subdue the region by force were unsuccessful, with previous emperors, governors, and generals returning to the capital in defeat.

The historical context of Japanese encounters with the northeastern frontier is followed by several lines that provide an overview of the culture, customs, and habits of the Emishi:

22 One such example is the “Poem on Liangzhou” (Ch. *Liangzhoushi* 涼州詩) by the early Tang poet Wang Han 王翰 (687–726):

秦中花鳥已應闌
塞外風沙猶自寒
夜聽胡笳折楊柳
教人意氣憶長安

Though the blossoms and birds in Qin [Shaanxi, location of Chang’an] are surely at their peak
The sandstorms outside the frontier fortress are still ever so cold
At night, hearing the song of the broken willow bough on the barbarian reed flute
Heart aroused, one cannot help but long for Chang’an

Liangzhou is the former name for present-day Wuwei City in Gansu Province, and during the Tang dynasty was one of the frontier outposts of Han Chinese civilization. The poem by Wang Han above is presented as it appears in fascicle 156 of the *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 (Complete Tang Poems), a forty-nine-thousand-poem compendium of Tang poetry compiled in the eighteenth century. Peng Dingqiu, *Quan Tangshi*, p. 1605.

毛人羽人接境界
 猛虎豺狼處處鳩
 老鷓目 猪鹿裘
 髻中插著骨毒箭
 手上每執刀與矛
 不田不衣逐麋鹿
 靡晦靡明山谷遊

The Hairy People²³ and Feathered People threaten
 our borders,
 Forming packs like ferocious tigers, wild dogs, and
 wolves.
 With eyes like an old crow, they don skins made of
 boar and deer,
 Poisoned arrows made of bone pierce their hair
 knots,
 Swords and spears are ever present in their hands.
 They do not cultivate rice fields nor do they weave
 clothes, they hunt for deer.
 Day and night, they wander around the mountains
 and valleys.

Once again, these frontier “barbarians” are depicted in rather deprecatory terms. Kūkai highlights differences in physical appearance and mode of dress: the Emishi are a “hairy” and “feathered” people, and unlike capital aristocrats attired in the proper Chinese-inspired robes, they “don skins made of boar and deer.” The “poisoned arrows” doubling as hairpieces and the weapons “ever present in their hands” impart a sense of lethal danger. Indeed, the Emishi are portrayed as being nothing but animals guided by their basest instincts that form packs “like ferocious tigers, wild dogs, and wolves.” The use of the sinograph 鳩 to represent the verb “gather” adds a visual element to the poem by amplifying the animalistic nature of the Emishi through his suggestion that they flock like wild pigeons in the sky. Kūkai’s most

damning judgment, however, is that “[t]hey do not cultivate rice fields nor do they weave clothes, they hunt for deer.” Here, he makes the sweeping assertion that the Emishi have rejected the foundations of East Asian agricultural communalism and social organization.²⁴ In his estimation, the Emishi are uncivilized because rather than engage in wet-rice cultivation—a mode of agricultural production considered to require coordinated physical labor and harmonious social relationships—they opt to lead a subsistence lifestyle centered on hunting and gathering. Furthermore, their unwillingness to weave clothing is viewed as just additional evidence of their uncivilized nature. The Emishi satisfy their basic food and clothing needs through roaming the mountains and valleys hunting for deer.

This seven-line description of Emishi customs leads into another stanza describing the conflicts between the aboriginal Emishi and Japanese colonists:

羅刹流 非人儔
 時々來往人村里
 煞食千萬人與牛
 走馬弄刀如電擊
 彎弓飛箭誰敢囚
 苦哉邊人每被毒
 歲々年々常喫愁

They are like the man-eating Raksasa devils, they
 are not human
 They frequently come to our settlements,
 Where countless people and oxen are massacred
 and eaten
 Their galloping horses and brandished swords are
 like flashes of lightning

23 References to the Hairy People and Feathered People (Ch. *yuren* 羽人) appear in the *Shanhaijing* 山海經 (The Canon of Mountains and Seas, date uncertain), an Early Han mythic geography. Imatake et al., *Henjō hokki shōryōshū*, p. 185. The material in this extensive collection is considered the source of many myths and legends that appeared in later ages. Hu Ying writes, “A fantastic map of a largely imagined universe, it is a collection of strange flora and fauna, gods and goblins, and humans of every imaginable shape.” Hu, “Records of Anomalies,” pp. 544-45.

24 While Kūkai’s writings depict the Emishi as aggressive, socially unorganized, non-agricultural subsistence hunters and gatherers, the archeological record actually tells a different story. Although climactic conditions until around the sixth century did not make wet-rice agriculture practical on a large scale in the Tōhoku region, there is archaeological evidence that it was practiced in parts of modern-day Aomori Prefecture from as far back as the early Yayoi period (ca. 300 [400] BCE–300 CE). Furthermore, the Emishi were clearly a match militarily for the Heian court: Kūkai is not engaging in hyperbole when he claims that large-scale military engagements were unsuccessful. Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, p. 198; Okamura, *Jōmon no seikatsushi*, pp. 338–39, 361.

When they pull their bowstrings and let loose their
arrows, people get hit
How terrible it is! The locals are always getting
injured
And suffer year in and year out.

Kūkai likens the Emishi to the “man-eating Raksasa devils” of Buddhist lore, claiming they have engaged in acts of cannibalism against the Japanese. Frequent incursions by the Emishi into Japanese settlements have apparently resulted in tragedies where “countless people and oxen are massacred and eaten.” Kūkai’s description of the Emishi, and his lament over the fate visited upon the Japanese colonists serves as a prelude to Minemori’s appointment as Mutsu’s new provincial governor:

我皇爲世出能鑿
亦咨焉刃局
千人萬人舉不應
唯君一箇帝心抽
山河氣五百賢
允武允文得自天
九流三略肚裏吞

For the sake of the realm, our emperor set out and carefully observed the present situation.²⁵
He consulted both soldiers and officers.²⁶
Although tens of thousands of soldiers volunteered for the governorship, none were suitable.

25 Watanabe and Miyasaka interpret 鑿 as “to examine various precedents” (*rei ni terashite yoku kangaete* 例に照らしてよく考えて). Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, p. 166.

26 The precise meaning of this line is unclear. The commentaries in the NKBT and KDKZ editions of the *Shōryōshū* both suggest that a character is probably missing from this line since the final sino-graph 局 does not fit the rhyme scheme of the poem. Imataka (KDKZ) proposes that 刃局 refers to the “offices responsible for military affairs” (*gunji tantō no yakusho* 軍事担当の役所). Imataka et al., *Henjō hokki shōryōshū*, p. 185. He renders this line as *mata kore jinkyoku ni hakaru* 亦た焉刃局に咨る and translates it as *kono koto o gunmu no yakusho ni sōdan sareta* この事を軍務の役所に相談された (“The emperor consulted the military affairs bureaus on this matter”). Imataka et al., *Henjō hokki shōryōshū*, p. 168. Watanabe and Miyasaka (NKBT) provide an alternative interpretation, glossing this line as *nageite yaiba osamu* 咨いて刃局む (“Sighing, he returned his sword to its scabbard”). Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, p. 166. I am indebted to the anonymous reviewer, who pointed out that 刃局 can be treated as a compound meaning the “officers and soldiers.”

Only you were chosen by the emperor.
With wisdom tall as a mountain and deep as a
river,
You are a genius that appears once every five
hundred years.
Your talent in military and literary arts was be-
stowed by the heavens.
Your belly contains the teachings of the Nine
Schools and the Three Strategies.

Continued instability in the northern reaches required a new strategy. As reigning emperor, Saga is depicted as a paragon of Confucian virtue, “carefully observing the situation” and wisely concluding that mere application of brute force would not resolve the situation. Ultimately, the combined strength of “tens of thousands of soldiers” could not match the wit and talent of one learned poet. Although Minemori’s biography does not indicate any actual military or combat experience, Kūkai lauds him as one equally versed in the martial and belletristic arts. While it is tempting to view this as an early Heian manifestation of the medieval warrior ethos of *bunbu ryōdō* 文武両道, where proficiency in warcraft and letters were valorized as the warrior’s creed, here Kūkai turns the concept on its head. The idealized Japanese swordsman, such as Taira no Atsumori 平敦盛 (1169–1184) and Taira no Tadanori 平忠度 (1144–1184) of *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (Tale of the Heike, ca. thirteenth century) fame, were soldiers first and poets second. Minemori, on the other hand, is first and foremost a man of letters who also happens to be conversant in military tactics. Kūkai’s invocation of the “Nine Schools” can be interpreted literally or figuratively—either as a generic designation for the nine traditions of classical Chinese thought, or as a kaleidoscopic term encompassing the entire landscape of sinic learning. Concomitant with Kūkai’s exhortation of Minemori’s erudition is an implicit assertion that the Emishi are uncivilized precisely because they lack this body of learning. This is followed by a specific description of how Minemori will bring civilization to the frontier:

鵬翼一搏睨此境
毛人面縛側城邊
凶兵蘊庫待冶鑄
智劍滿胸幾許千
不戰不征自無敵

或男或女保天年

With one flap of your mighty roc wings, you
survey the terrain below.
The Hairy People are rounded up and brought to
the castle.
Their lethal weapons are stored away and await
being melted and reforged.
How many thousands of wisdom swords fill your
bosom?
No need to fight, no need to conquer, you are
naturally without enemies.
Men and women are now able to live out their
heaven-bestowed life spans.

Commentaries on Kūkai's poetry identify "mighty roc wings" as an allusion to "Enjoyment of Untroubled Ease" (Ch. *xiaoyaoyou* 逍遙遊), one of the "inner chapters" (Ch. *neibian* 內篇) of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (ca. third century BCE). In the universe of the *Zhuangzi*, the roc (Ch. *peng* 鵬) is a massive bird whose wings appear to cover the entire sky upon taking flight. The seas below are moved by powerful flaps of the bird above. Kūkai expands upon this image to depict Minemori as a roc bearing the emperor's virtue, fanning the wings of enlightened governance to bring the unruly territories below under its sway. The use of the sinograph 境 to refer to Mutsu allows for a certain degree of interpretive ambiguity, as it can mean a demarcated region, boundary, or frontier. The discrepancy between Heiankyō geopolitical dogma and the reality in the contested region make all three renderings equally tenable. Once Minemori swoops into Mutsu Province, the Hairy People will be forced to capitulate and surrender their weapons. Kūkai's declaration that "their lethal weapons are stored away and await being melted and reforged" suggests that their instruments of war will be recast into useful agricultural implements. In an ironic twist, Kūkai acknowledges the potential for weapons to be useful in the proper hands, as Minemori's vast learning is likened to a sword. Nevertheless, in the following lines Kūkai reminds Minemori that scholarship, not the sword, will carry the day:

昔聞媯帝于舞術
今見野公略无正

I heard that long ago Emperor Shun mastered the
art of dancing with his shield,
Now I see your tactics are in a league of their own.

The tale of the fabled Shun placating his enemies by performing a shield dance inside their encampment is well established in traditional Chinese historiography. Here, however, another narrative thread provides an additional dimension to his verse. In the *Baihutongyi* 白虎通義 (Virtuous Discussions of the White Tiger Hall, 79), a first-century commentary on the classics authored by historian Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), the following juxtaposition between barbarian tribes and dances can be seen:

東夷之樂持矛舞助時生也。南夷之樂持羽舞助時養也。西夷之樂持戟舞助時祭也。北夷之樂持干舞助時藏也。誰制夷狄之樂。以為先聖王也。先王惟行道德和調陰陽覆被夷狄故夷狄安樂來朝中國於是作樂樂之。

In the music of the Eastern Barbarians, they dance holding spears, and aid in the creation [of music]. In the music of the Southern Barbarians, they dance holding feathers, and they aid in the development [of music]. In the music of the Western Barbarians, they dance holding halberds, and they aid in the paring down [of music]. In the music of the Northern Barbarians, they dance holding shields, and they aid in the storage [of music]. Who composes the barbarians' music? It was none other than the sage-kings of old. The kings of old practiced only virtue, they harmonized yin and yang. Their virtues engulfed the barbarians, so the barbarians became peaceful. They paid tribute to the Middle Kingdom, so music was produced for their enjoyment.²⁷

Kūkai deftly blends the two narratives by situating Shun's shield dance within the context of pacifying barbarians without resorting to brute force. Shun defeated his enemies by performing a shield dance in their midst; Minemori will bring peace and harmony to the barbarians of the north in a similar manner.

Aside from the poisoned arrows and man-eating

²⁷ Ban Gu, *Baihutongyi*, fascicle two.

barbarians, Minemori's posting in the far reaches of the Japanese periphery had another major downside. While serving his tour of duty in the wilds of Tōhoku, he would be denied the privilege of serving the emperor in the capital. Kūkai warns his friend about what awaits him:

京邑梅花先春開
 京城楊柳茂春日
 邊城遲暖無春藥
 邊壘早冬无茂實

In the capital the plum blossoms herald the arrival of spring,
 The willows at the imperial palace flourish under the spring sun.
 Yet at your provincial citadel warmth arrives late and there are no spring blossoms
 Winter comes early to your frontier fortress and the branches bear no fruit.

Because Mutsu Province was indeed located at a higher latitude than the Kinai plain, in fact spring did arrive later and winter sooner. Yet Kūkai is not concerned with such matters of cartography and climatology. Rather, in his sinic worldview, the radiance and benevolence of the Japanese emperor, and thus the early Heian state, radiate outward from its center in Heiankyō. Also, under the ideology of *monjō keikoku*, properly deployed language has the power to regulate the state, and by extension, the seasons. The northeastern fringes of Japanese civilization were bereft of the emperor's munificence, thus resulting in the delayed arrival of the warm season. Here, Kūkai appropriates the rhetoric and diction of the aforementioned Tang frontier poems, juxtaposing the luxuriant warmth of the capital with the barren cold of the periphery.

In the end, Kūkai admonishes Minemori to not despair over his assignment, as he will certainly reap the rewards of loyal service:

高天雖高聽必卑
 況乎鶴響九臯出
 莫愁久住風塵裏
 聖主必封萬戶秩

Though the emperor may be in the heavens, his ears are always close to the ground
 All the more will the cry of the crane be heard from the deepest marsh!
 Do not lament your extended residence in the land of wind and dust,
 Our emperor will surely make you the lord of ten thousand households.

This conclusion represents a departure from the tone evident in continental frontier poems, where the poet generally laments their posting far removed from the capital. The borderlands of Han civilization are depicted in bleak, foreboding terms, and being posted to these regions is akin to exile or banishment. Kūkai reminds Minemori, however, that his term of service in Mutsu will be a limited one, and he will be rewarded by the emperor upon his return.

Minemori's tour of duty in the frontier appears to have been successful. In 817, he reported that the Emishi "surrendered barbarian" (*fushū* 俘囚) Kimikobe no Tohashiko 吉彌侯部等波醜 (d.u.) had capitulated after years on the run from the Japanese authorities. Saga praised Minemori's capture of Kimikobe, stating "This bandit has escaped punishment for far too long. Minemori has tamed his wild heart and taught him to submit to the will of the imperial court. Such measures at pacification are truly gratifying."²⁸ Kūkai's final words to Minemori were apparently prophetic—upon completing his assignment in Mutsu, he served as governor of Ōmi 近江, where he implemented a number of relief measures to alleviate a drought-induced famine in the capital. Ultimately, his bureaucratic accomplishments resulted in a promotion to councilor (*sangi* 参議) and senior assistant governor general of Dazaifu (*Dazaifu daini* 大宰府大貳) in 822. The following year, Minemori proposed what scholars would later consider his signature policy initiative—the experimental implementation of agricultural land nationalization (*kueiden* 公當田) in Kyushu to bolster sagging tax revenues.²⁹

28 *Nihon kōki*, Kōnin 弘仁 8 (817).7.5. This entry is also preserved in the *Ruijū kokushi*. *Ruijū kokushi*, 190 *Fushū* 俘囚, Kōnin 8.7.5.
 29 Gotō, "Ono no Minemori shōron," p. 17.

Kūkai's Epistle-Poem to Kunimichi

Despite Minemori's success, problems persisted. Ten years later, in 825, Saga's successor Junna decided to dispatch another official to manage the troubled region. Chosen this time was Ōtomo no Kunimichi, an aristocrat with a checkered past due to his affiliation with the Ōtomo clan. Kunimichi was no stranger to the periphery of the Heian state, as he was exiled to Sado Island at the age of seven after his father Ōtomo no Tsuguhito 大伴繼人 (?–785) was executed for his involvement in the assassination of Fujiwara no Tanetsugu 藤原種繼 (737–785) at Nagaokakyō. Kunimichi remained on the island until he was pardoned in 803 (his father was posthumously pardoned and had his rank restored in 806). Although his eighteen-year exile removed him from the mainstream of Heiankyō politics for what should have been the formative years of his career, he distinguished himself upon his return to the capital and quickly rose through the ranks. He was also intimately familiar with the Mutsu region, having previously served as its junior provincial inspector general (*shōen* 少掾) in 811 and provisional vice governor (*gonnosuke* 権介) in 812. As a seasoned veteran of the provinces—both personally and professionally—he was well prepared for his new assignment as regional inspector for the northeastern frontier (*rikufu azechi* 陸府按察使). At least on paper, Kunimichi's posting could be considered higher than Minemori's because as regional inspector he had oversight over both Mutsu and Dewa provinces.³⁰

Like Minemori before him, Kunimichi embodied the essence of the scholar-bureaucrat. While his predecessor was deeply steeped in the Chinese poetic tradition, Kunimichi came from a line of distinguished poets who also wrote in Japanese. Certainly, the Ōtomo are well known in the history of Japanese literature, producing such outstanding poets as Tabito 旅人 (665–731) and his son Yakamochi 家持 (ca. 718–785). Tabito's mater-

nal half-sister Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume 大伴坂上郎女 (ca. 695–active until 750) had over seventy poems included in the *Man'yōshū*. Once again, Kūkai presented the newly appointed governor with a congratulatory epistle-poem:³¹

夫膚寸無心南北。遇風則飛。順之德也。人臣無意東西。銜命則馳。忠之至也。叢爾毛夷。迫居良垂。豺心蜂性。歷代爲梗矣。昔景行皇帝。撫運之日。東夷未賓。日本武尊。率左右將軍。武彥武日命等。征之。毛人面縛之。日命則君之先也。

The clouds have no desire to go north or south, but should they encounter the wind, they fly off—this is the virtue of obedience. The emperor's retainers have no desire to go east or west, they go where they are ordered—this is the pinnacle of loyalty. The petty Hairy Barbarians have been closing in on our northeastern frontier and making a nuisance of themselves for generations with their wolf-hearts and bee-like natures. Long ago, when Emperor Keikō³² pacified the nation, the Eastern Barbarians had yet to submit to his authority. Yamato Takeru led the generals Takehiko no Mikoto and Takehi no Mikoto into battle to subjugate them, and the Hairy Barbarians surrendered. Takehi no Mikoto is none other than your ancestor.

Kūkai's missive to Kunimichi shares a number of rhetorical similarities with the earlier one presented to Minemori. Once again, the Emishi are accorded the uncomplimentary appellation of "Hairy Barbarians," and this time, they are depicted as "petty." Comparing their character to wolves and bees immediately con-

30 Some biographical information on Kunimichi can be found in *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三大実録 (The True History of Three Reigns in Japan, 901), the last installment of the Six National Histories (*rikkokushi* 六国史). In Jōgan 貞觀 8 (866) members of the Tomo (Ōtomo) clan had once again found themselves embroiled in political intrigue. Kunimichi's fifth son Tomo no Yoshio 伴善男 (811–868) and Yoshio's son Tomo no Nakatsune 伴中庸 (d.u.) were implicated in the arson of the palace's Ōtenmon 応天門 Gate. Yoshio and Nakatsune were exiled to the provinces of Izu 伊豆 and Ōki 隱岐, respectively. *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, Jōgan 8.9.22.

31 This text is in fascicle three of the *Shōryōshū* under the title *Han anzatsu heishōshi ga Rikufu ni okuru uta* 贈伴按察平章事赴陸府歌并序 (Poem Sent to Councilor Ōtomo no Kunimichi on the Occasion of His Appointment to the Regional Inspectorship of Mutsu, Preface Attached). Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, pp. 218–22.

32 Emperor Keikō 景行 (d.u., traditionally late first to early second century), the twelfth emperor, is held in semi-legendary status but there is a lack of actual documentation about his reign. He is traditionally credited with ordering his son, Yamato Takeru 日本武尊 (see below) to lead an expedition into the northeast to pacify the Emishi. Farris, *Heavenly Warriors*, p. 84.

pires images of aggressive creatures governed solely by instinct and functioning solely within a pack or hive mentality. They are the exact opposite of Japanese court officials, who are viewed as exemplars of the Confucian virtues of obedience and loyalty. Kūkai also claims that Kunimichi is descended from a general who served the semi-mythical Yamato Takeru 日本武尊, thus situating him as the progeny of a military hero.

History has amply demonstrated that Japanese victory in the troubled region was not fated to endure. Kūkai elaborates on this point, mentioning that another of Kunimichi's esteemed forefathers was dispatched into the wilderness to disabuse the inhabitants of their mistaken belief that they were not part of the Japanese state:

延曆中亦反之。桓武皇帝。令大將軍。伴弟滿等
即罪。從武日平之已來。每時時作逆。遣諸氏
將。令罰其辜。然猶。人面獸心。不肯朝貢。今
上。乾坤爲德。仁義其心。麒麟不踏昆蟲。鳳凰
來巢阿閣。風調不暴。刑厝不尸。太平之治。五
稔于今矣。

During the Enryaku years, the Hairy Barbarians rose up again. Emperor Kanmu ordered General Tomo no Otomitsu to immediately subjugate them. Since the time of Takehi's pacification, there have been frequent rebellions. Various ministers and generals were sent and ordered to punish them for their transgressions. However, although they have the faces of humans, they have the hearts of beasts and refuse to offer tribute to the emperor. The present emperor displays the virtues of heaven and earth, directing his heart toward benevolence and righteousness. The [mythical chimera] *kirin* does not trample on insects, and the phoenix makes the grand palace its nest. The winds are calm and do not flare up. Although the Penal Law is on the books, it is never used. It has been five years since Junna ascended the throne, and peace has prevailed throughout the land.

Kūkai simultaneously frames the problem in militaristic and legalistic terms. Such diction as “rose up,” “rebellions,” “subjugate,” and “pacify” describe tensions between the Japanese and Emishi as antagonistic and combative. Yet the dispatch of “ministers” to “pun-

ish” the Emishi for their “transgressions” suggests that Heiankyō policy toward the Emishi was also being viewed as a legal matter that could be addressed via civil government. In effect, as subjects of the Heian state the Emishi were bound by its laws, and the Japanese were justified in dispatching punitive forces to reassert their legal right to govern the region.

Yet the Heian court's sole reliance on military force and legalistic reasoning proved insufficient. Kūkai provides a third alternative: the enlightened governance of the Confucian philosopher-king. Junna follows in Saga's example and exemplifies the virtues of benevolence and righteousness. Kūkai also observes that while a written Penal Code is in effect, Junna's righteous rule has made its implementation unnecessary.

Nevertheless, the situation in Japan's northeastern fringe required action. Once again, Kūkai turned to Chinese history for a solution. Events occurring during the reign of two mythical Chinese emperors are used to further justify Japanese actions in Emishi territory:

夫無爲之世。致有苗之伐。垂拱之時。有涿鹿之
戰。時已澆季。仁義之鄉。返爲胡越。此屬。神
光怪氣發東。地震流星起西。皇帝納陸軫慮。卽
欲遣文翁孫子。鎮押東夷。

During the reign of Emperor Shun, a time when the realm ruled itself, he ordered the invasion of the Kingdom of Youmiao; during the reign of the Yellow Emperor, and the sleeves of the emperor's ceremonial robes flowed free,³³ there was the battle at Zhoulu. In this time of moral decay, realms of benevolence and righteousness will become

33 “Sleeves flowing free and hands folded” (Ch. *chuigong* 垂拱) is an abbreviated form of *chuiyi gongshou* 垂衣拱手, a cliché found throughout the Chinese classics that refers to a self-governing realm under a benevolent emperor. Since righteousness prevails throughout the land, the monarch does not need to doff his court robes for military attire. Both the NKBT and KDKZ annotators point to a line in the *Shujing* (refer to explanation below) as the *locus classicus*: “The sleeves of the emperor's robes draped down, he folded his hands, and order prevailed throughout the realm” (Ch. *chuiyi er tianxia zhi* 垂拱而天下治). Imataka et al. observe that while the *Shujing* passage originally referred to King Wu of Zhou 周武王 (?-1043 BCE; r. 1046-1043 BCE), here Kūkai uses the line to describe the virtues of the Yellow Emperor. Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, p. 220; Imataka et al., *Henjō hokki shōryōshū*, p. 263.

barbaric like the lands of Hu and Yue.³⁴ Recently, there have been mysterious lights and strange phenomena in the east, and earthquakes and shooting stars in the west. The emperor takes the plight of the villages into account and wants to send you to conquer the Eastern Barbarians, since you are just like Wen Weng³⁵ or Sun Zi.

According to the *Shujing* 書經 (Book of Documents, date unknown, traditionally attributed to Confucius) the Youmiao 有苗 were a non-Han tribal people living on the periphery of the Chinese state.³⁶ Youmiao tribes traditionally resided in the southern mountains of modern-day China, and are related to the Hmong of northern Vietnam and Cambodia. Zhoulu 涿鹿 was the site of the famous battle between the Yellow Emperor and Chiyu 蚩尤, the leader of the Nine Li (Ch. Jiuli 九黎), another non-Han tribal league. In both instances, the Han sovereign is depicted as an exemplary leader capable of ruling without effort. Traditional Chinese political philosophy valorizes the concept of “effortless governance” (Ch. *wuwei* 無為), a leadership style possible in realms where morality and virtue prevail. Despite the tranquility in the Han sphere of influence, the presence of frontier tribes that would not accede to Chinese authority were perceived as a threat, thus justifying preemptive action. Kūkai draws parallels between continental precedent and the ensuing crisis in Mutsu Province.

A sense of urgency is also present in Kūkai’s epistle to Kunimichi. Reports of “mysterious lights and strange phenomena in the east” and “earthquakes and shooting stars in the west” suggest anxiety over the court’s handling of frontier affairs; after all, if imperial virtues were properly maintained, such phenomena should not occur. Sinologist Nakatani Masamitsu observes that Kūkai borrowed the aforementioned diction and associated imagery directly from two continental classical histories, the *Hanshu* 漢書 (Book of Han, 111) and the

Guoyu 國語 (Discourses of the States, ca. fifth century BCE).³⁷ Despite these harbingers of doom, Kūkai expresses his confidence in Kunimichi’s ability to bring order to the frontier:

君智而謀。果而惠。門則累葉。人寔平章。吐議允聖心。衆亦推之。是故。授斧節於龍顏。撫皇化于蝦荒。賜錢。賜詩。天澤霽然。侍坐奉和詩則爲什。當是。暉榮史策。舉音絲竹。

While you possess sharp intelligence and strategic prowess, you are also courageous and compassionate. Your family is an accumulation of the leaves of learning; truly you possess the qualifications of an imperial scribe. You present arguments that please the emperor, and you enjoy the support of the people as well. Therefore, you were presented the ceremonial sword by the emperor, and you will instill his virtues in the vulgar barbarians. You were given a farewell banquet and presented with poems; the emperor showered you with a deluge of benevolence. You sat before the emperor and exchanged many poems with him. Your glory shall be recorded in the history books and the rhythm of your poetry shall be set to music.

Kūkai’s assertion that the Ōtomo family is “an accumulation of the leaves of learning” may be a nod to Kunimichi’s ancestor Yakamochi, who is generally credited as the final compiler of the *Man’yōshū*. As with Minemori prior, Kūkai appeals to the power of lineage as a way to promote the legitimacy of his addressee: just as Minemori was the son of former Vice-General Ono no Nagami, Kunimichi is firmly situated within the literary and intellectual legacy of the Ōtomo clan. Also, much like Minemori, Kunimichi enjoyed an audience and poetic exchanges with the emperor. Finally, Kūkai’s claim that Kunimichi’s deeds will be “recorded in the history books and the rhythm of your poetry shall be set to music” is the ultimate form of praise in the Confucian universe, as history and music were viewed as

34 Hu 胡 and Yue 越 are generic appellations referring to the non-Han peoples on the periphery of the Chinese sphere of influence. “Hu” was used for those in the north, and “Yue” the south. Imataka et al., *Henjō hokki shōryōshū*, p. 263.

35 Wen Weng 文翁 (187–110 BCE) was the regional magistrate (Ch. *junshou* 郡守) of Shu 蜀 (present-day Sichuan Province) and reputedly fond of scholarship. He devoted himself to “civilizing” the Shu, who in turn developed an interest in learning as a result. Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, p. 220.

36 Imataka et al., *Henjō hokki shōryōshū*, p. 263.

37 Nakatani, “Kūkai kanshibun no kenkyū,” p. 58. He also notes that it is difficult to ascertain whether there were unusually high levels of geophysical and astronomical phenomena at the time since the relevant section of the *Nihon kōki* is missing (ibid).

the highest forms of expression. Through this detailed narration of Kunimichi's background, Kūkai declares that much like his predecessor Minemori, he is the ideal candidate to civilize the untamed northeastern frontier. He concludes his missive to Kunimichi with words of farewell and a list of gifts, followed by a poem extolling his virtues:

加之。舉城。寮族知舊。悉皆餞惜。貧道。與君
淡交。玄度遠公。緇素區別。伴佐昆季。送人以
言。古人道之。三軸祕錄。一篇拙詩。加持神
藥。以弁別後之思。人至乞垂檢。春辭秋入。聖
君之明詔。載馳載驟。早奏刃烽之無塵。云爾。

In addition, your colleagues, relatives and friends throughout the city have presented you with farewell gifts and lament [your departure]. Our friendship is like plain company,³⁸ and we are like Xuan Du and Yuan Gong.³⁹ Although priests and laymen are separate, the Ōtomo and Saeki clans are brothers. The ancients said that a person should be sent off with words. I present you with the Three Strategies, a piece of poetry, and medicines that have been esoterically blessed.

When my messenger arrives, I ask that you inspect these items. It is the emperor's esteemed wish that you depart in the spring and return in the autumn. Gallop away, gallop away! I present the following poem in the hope that you will quickly dispatch the fires and dust on the frontier.

君門開闢皇王將
智勇英謀允聖神
持節犯霜如松柏
含貞凌雪似竹筠
良將折衝何出塞
賢才妙略帳中陳
毛夷螳陣一把草
羽狄豺營半掬塵
飛禽也識恩將義
猛虎尚智慧與仁
治亂在吾不在敵
歸心叛意爲己身
天簡在君不須讓
忘家爲國之忠臣
鳥聲悲啣園花落
雲旆飛馳軍令申
孫子張良彼何物
六韜三略用此春
東涯萬里少一步
一啞早馳荒服馴

Since the founding of our nation, your clan served
the emperor as generals,
Your wisdom, bravery, insight and strategy are
truly divine.
You possess loyalty that resists the frost, like pine
or cypress,
Your righteousness withstands the snow, like
bamboo.
Why does the skilled general leave the fort to
engage the enemy?
Superior strategies by a brilliant talent are
conceived inside a battlefield tent.
The Hairy Barbarians are like a legion of ants; they
are merely a handful of grass,
The Feathered Barbarians are like a pack of wolves,
merely half a handful of dust.
Birds are aware of gratitude and righteousness,
Vicious tigers know about generosity and
benevolence.
Pacifying the insurrection is incumbent upon you,
not the enemy
Whether they submit or revolt depends upon your
intent

38 Kūkai uses a line from the *Zhuangzi* to demonstrate the depths of his friendship with Kunimichi and how it transcends the interests of the vulgar world: "Moreover, the intercourse of superior men is tasteless as water, while that of mean men is as sweet as new wine. But the tastelessness of the superior men leads on to affection, and the sweetness of the mean men to aversion" (且君子之交淡若水小人之交甘若醴君子淡以親小人甘以絕). Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, p. 501; Legge, *Chuang Tzu*, p. 35. The character 淡 means "bland" or "simple," and describes human relations that are "refreshing" in contrast to the "cloying relations of the 'petty man which are sweet as sugar.'" Pollack, *The Fracture of Meaning*, p. 85.

39 The identity of Xuan Du 玄度 cannot be ascertained, but it may be another name for Xu Xun 許詢 (fl. ca. 358?), a Daoist poet who enjoyed mountaineering, but was also present at Wang Xizhi's 王羲之 (303-361) poetry gathering at the Orchid Pavilion 蘭亭 in 353. Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, 501; Imataka et al., *Henjō hokki shōryōshū*, p. 263.

Yuan Gong 遠公 (d.u.) was a monk who lived in the wilderness. In the poem above, Kūkai presents Xuan Du as Kunimichi, and Yuan Gong as himself. Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, p. 501.

The emperor has appointed you, and this
 appointment cannot be declined
 Forgetting one's home for the nation—such is a
 loyal retainer
 The birds cry in their sad voices and blossoms fall
 in the garden
 War banners fly like clouds and marching orders
 are issued
 Sun Zi and Zhang Liang—what are they?
 The Six Secret Teachings and Three Strategies will
 be used this spring
 The ten thousand *li* eastern frontier is just a step
 away
 Just shout and gallop in on your horse—the
 ruffians will submit.

Kūkai's declaration that "a person should be sent off with words" yet again underscores the valorization of the written word in early ninth-century Japan. Kunimichi is presented with a poem (assumedly the one appended to the epistle), and treatises on military strategy. Kūkai's cultural chauvinism is evident in the line "pacifying the insurrection is incumbent upon you, not the enemy." His attitude exudes a *noblesse oblige* where the Yamato Japanese bear the burden of civilizing their less-fortunate neighbors. In Kūkai's dispatches to both Minemori and Kunimichi, he emphasizes the importance of cultural colonization and assimilation, a stance that was aligned with contemporaneous Heiankyō thought.⁴⁰

Kūkai's epistle and poem focuses on the literary

40 Despite sharing a number of rhetorical similarities, there is a key functional difference between the epistle-poem sets sent to Minemori and Kunimichi. Aside from congratulating Kunimichi on his new posting and extolling his many literary and martial virtues, the letter and poem sent to Kunimichi serve to politically rehabilitate the Ōtomo lineage. The Ōtomo were also known as a powerful warrior clan, and their involvement in court politics from the Nara period on led to their decline. Tabito himself was implicated in the Prince Nagaya 長屋王 (684(?)–729) incident, where members of the Fujiwara clan falsely accused the prince of treason. Naoki, "The Nara State," p. 248. The prince was sentenced to death and eventually committed suicide, and Tabito was temporarily relegated to Dazaifu and charged with pacifying the Hayato due to his association with him. Ōtomo no Komaro 大伴古麻呂 (?–757) was tortured to death for his suspected involvement in the unsuccessful plot to overthrow Empress Kōken 孝謙 (718–770; r. 749–758, 776–770), led by Tachibana no Naramaro 橘奈良麻呂 (721(?)–757). Komaro's son was none other than the aforementioned Tsuguhiito. Furthermore, while Tsuguhiito was held responsible for the incident at Nagaokakyō, many historians believe that Yakamochi was actually the ringleader. Cranston, "Asuka and Nara Culture," 480; Sakaue, *Ritsuryō kokka*, p. 30.

tradition of the Ōtomo clan, and makes no mention of their political troubles in the late eighth century. Kunimichi's ancestors are depicted as loyal servants of the emperor and the nation, leading armies into battle to subjugate barbarians on the frontier. In addition to lauding the past military accomplishments of the Ōtomo, Kūkai also lavishly praises Kunimichi's abilities as an orator and a poet: "Your glory shall be recorded in the history books and the rhythm of your poetry shall be set to music." Kūkai's testament to Kunimichi completely elides the past transgressions committed by his ancestors and recasts him as a loyal, competent retainer at the court's service. Like his predecessor Minemori, Kunimichi would return to the capital and continue to ascend the court ranks. In 826, Kunimichi supervised the completion of the Masudaikē 益田池 reservoir in Yamato Province, one of the greatest civil engineering projects of the Heian period.⁴¹

Conclusion

Kūkai's epistle-poems to these literati-bureaucrats headed for the frontier demonstrate that literary works played a significant part in delineating the discursive terrain of Japan's northeastern periphery. His writings served to textually circumscribe the borders of the Heian state along the lines of a sinic center-periphery ideology. While this idea was certainly not new, Kūkai innovated upon this concept by recasting Minemori and Kunimichi as poet-bureaucrats who would literally bring the word of civilization to the frontier. Although Kūkai certainly drew on continental precedents in formulating his arguments, he did not uncritically superimpose continental geopolitical sensibilities onto the Heian state. Particularly noteworthy is Kūkai's appropriation and reception of the rhetoric found in Tang frontier poems. In Kūkai's literary imagination, while the frontier was far from the capital and the emperor it was far from being a place of exile. Kūkai recast the frontier as a productive space where the barbarians could be civilized and careers could be made.

Aside from further elucidating the linguistic and geopolitical discourses of the time, these poems are

41 Kūkai composed a memorial stele commemorating the completion of the Masudaikē reservoir. The text of the stele can be found in fascicle two of the *Shōryōshū*. Watanabe and Miyasaka, *Shōryōshū*, pp. 191–96.

also extremely valuable as primary source texts. First, while these poems are not doctrinal or theological per se, they add to the body of knowledge regarding one of Japan's most important religious figures. Scholars of sinospheric languages and literatures can use these texts to better understand how the continental tradition was appropriated, reimagined, and deployed in one of the sinosphere's cultural satellites. In effect, Kūkai successfully reinterpreted and transformed the Chinese model onto the Japanese linguistic and political terrain.

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- JJS *Journal of Japanese Studies*
 KDKZ *Kōbō Daishi Kūkai zenshū* 弘法大師空海全集. 8 vols. Chikuma Shobō, 1983–1986.
 KST *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai* 新訂増補国史大系. 66 vols. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929–1964.
 NKBT *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 日本古典文学大系. 102 vols. Iwanami Shoten, 1958–1968.

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Artist as Disciple: Miyajima Tatsuo and Sōka Gakkai

JEREMY WOOLSEY

MIYAJIMA Tatsuo 宮島達男 (b. 1957) is a Japanese artist known for his sprawling installations of digital light-emitting diode (LED) counters, which he calls “gadgets.” Each gadget counts down from nine to one at a distinct, preset, or computer-determined speed, before resetting during a moment of darkness (in lieu of displaying zero); when placed together, they form a twinkling network that he likens to the interaction of individual lives passing in and out of history, or, on a macro scale, the creation and destruction of worlds.¹ In addition to these installations, the artist has experimented with performance and socially engaged art, most notably through his *Revive Time: Kaki Tree Project* tree-planting series, which started in 1996 and continues to this day. Miyajima graduated with an MA from the Tokyo University of the Arts, Graduate School of Fine Arts (Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku Daigakuin Bijutsu Kenkyūka 東京藝術大学大学院

美術研究科) in 1986, and worked as an editor before making his international debut in the 1988 Venice Biennale with *Sea of Time* (figure 1).² He also participated in the influential 1989–1990 *Against Nature* exhibition, which introduced his work to a general American audience.³

Although his oeuvre’s visual appeal and philosophical commentary on time and life has garnered much attention, one aspect of Miyajima’s career has been for the most part consigned to the shadows in critical reception: his relationship to Sōka Gakkai 創価学会, a Japanese new religion (*shinkō shūkyō* 新興宗教) based on the teachings of Nichiren 日蓮 Buddhism.⁴ This ten-

I would like to thank Chelsea Foxwell, Levi McLaughlin, and James Dorsey for their thoughtful feedback. The suggestions of an anonymous reader also greatly helped to improve this article.

1 “Each unit represents one human or world, and these interrelate to form a greater space: society or the universe.” Miyajima, *Miyajima Tatsuo kaitai shinsho*, p. 136. I clarify here that there are many different versions of these LED counters: some are analog, some count up, and some show two digits instead of one. In addition, the size of these counters varies greatly from work to work.

2 Figure 1 and other images used herein may be found on the artist’s website: <https://tatsuomiyajima.com/>.

3 The exhibition traveled to a number of major US cities, including San Francisco, New York City, and Houston, among others. See <https://listart.mit.edu/exhibitions/against-nature-japanese-art-eighties>.

4 Sōka Gakkai was established in the 1930s by the educator Makiguchi Tsunesaburō 牧口常三郎 (1871–1944) as a study group before growing into a religion informed by the teachings of Nichiren Buddhism, particularly the Nichiren Shōshū 日蓮正宗 sect. It grew rapidly after the conclusion of World War II under the leadership of Toda Jōsei 戸田城聖 (1900–1958), while also advancing into the Japanese political world with the formation of the Kōmeitō 公明党 party in 1964. This party attracted intense criticism for its perceived threat to the democratic ideals of postwar Japan, particularly the separation of religion and state.



Figure 1. Miyajima Tatsuo. *Sea of Time*. 1988. Light-emitting diode (LED), integrated circuit (IC), electric wire. Installation view at Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. H 700 cm, W 700 cm, D 2.5 cm. Site-specific installation. Photograph by Hirose Tadashi. Permission of the artist.

dency to downplay the artist's faith is no surprise given the increased stigmatization of so-called new religions following the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin attack perpetrated by the religious group Aum Shinrikyō オウム真理教. Furthermore, Miyajima's religious affiliation remains difficult to account for in a highly secularized contemporary art world.⁵ In response to these trends, this article seeks to illustrate how Miyajima subverts the supposed binary between individual and organizational expression in contemporary art through his affiliation with Sōka Gakkai. It represents Miyajima's artistic career as inseparable from his religious practice,

one which asserts communal bonds over individual achievement, and in effect offers a unique commentary on the modern myth of the autonomous artist.

My methodology differs from past studies of Miyajima in that I focus primarily on the ways that Miyajima understands his own work and seeks to defend it through writing, rather than the reception of his work among critics. The conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth's (b. 1945) essay "Art After Philosophy" plays an important role in this approach.⁶ In this essay, Kosuth describes how the concept behind the artwork is the key to participating in the art experience:

Today it is no longer directly overseen by Sōka Gakkai but the two remain closely linked. Ikeda Daisaku 池田大作 (b. 1928) took over leadership of the group in 1960 and continues to lead de facto as the "honorary president." The author is not affiliated with Sōka Gakkai.

5 Here I refer to the dominant understanding of the development of modern art (and by extension, contemporary art) as the ascendance of secular, individual expression over religious-allegorical, collective forms of expression. See, for example, Groys, *Art Power*, p. 2; Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, p. 12.

6 The art critic Chiba Shigeo 千葉成夫 has criticized the use of Western models of conceptual art in the Japanese context, asserting that conceptual art reduced art to the dimension of language and thus allowed anything to be called "art," while Japanese conceptualists such as Matsuzawa Yutaka 松澤宥 (1922–2006) attempted to "return" art to a state beyond art (to take art out of art) and restore it with the world and universe (*sekai* 世界, *uchū* 宇宙). I see Miyajima's use of language-based concepts, however, to be more in line with "Western" conceptualism and this is why, in part, I reference Kosuth here. Chiba, *Gendai bijutsu itsudatsushi*, pp. 107–10.

Advance information about the concept of art and about an artist's concepts is necessary to the appreciation and understanding of contemporary art. Any and all of the physical attributes (qualities) of contemporary works, if considered separately and/or specifically, are irrelevant to the art concept. The art concept ... must be considered in its whole.⁷

Joseph Kosuth's understanding of art is tautological: he theorized that a work of art "[provides] no information what-so-ever about any matter of fact.... A work of art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the artist's intention, that is, he [sic] is saying that a particular work of art is *art*, which means, is a *definition* of art."⁸ As such, art, for Kosuth, primarily refers back to itself as a collective body of statements about "art." Benjamin Buchloh has criticized him on this count for repeating the modernist tendency of separating art from the economic and institutional systems that support it, as well as "[foregrounding] intentional declaration over contextualization."⁹ While I agree that the artist cannot dictate how his or her art is received, and that art must always be evaluated in relation to its institutional context, it should not be overlooked that the knowledge of the conceptual basis for an artist's work is paramount to its critical assessment and contextualization in art history.¹⁰

Significantly, Miyajima Tatsuo has expressed a similar understanding of his artistic process to that of Kosuth's definition. In an interview he mentions: "I produce all my work aware of the path I've traveled and the different routes of thought I've taken. I haven't shown anything to date that doesn't derive from these. Actually, I've created unrelated work, but I just don't display it."¹¹ Consequently, I seek to understand his production in relation to this "path," in other words, the concep-

tual underpinnings of his work, even if this approach is but one of many possible ways to interpret his art. As the total art concept is not limited to the artworks alone, I also analyze the persona Miyajima has created through his writing and interviews. Going forward, I divide my assessment of the artist's concept and career into two sections that mirror the two central aspects of Sōka Gakkai doctrine and practice: Nichiren Buddhism and the worship of Sōka Gakkai's honorary president Ikeda Daisaku 池田大作 (b. 1928). In the first half I analyze three representative Miyajima works and their relationship to the *Lotus Sutra* and Nichiren Buddhism, the basis of Sōka Gakkai doctrine. In the second, I transition to an analysis of Miyajima's understanding of the ideal artist, arguing that it can be understood as a mimetic representation of Ikeda Daisaku in the art world.¹²

Nichiren Buddhism and the *Lotus Sutra* in Miyajima's Work

Miyajima's art is often labeled "Buddhist," but little critical work has been put into looking beyond this vaguely Oriental notion of a monolithic "Eastern" entity to understand the specific tradition of Buddhism that informs his work. Art critics in printed media have been especially negligent in assessing Miyajima's work, incorrectly attributing content to "Miyajima's Zen interests,"¹³ for example, or attaching essentializing remarks related to the artist's nationality: "By employing alarm-clock technology to say deep Buddhist things about the relentless passage of time and the unstoppable rhythms of life, Miyajima is, of course, being fully Japanese."¹⁴ Academic literature has at times emphasized the centrality of the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of emptiness (*kū* 空) in the artist's work; closer inspection of his life reveals it to be far more indebted to Nichiren Buddhism, especially the Nichiren Shōshū

7 Kosuth, *Art after Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990*, p. 23.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

9 Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969," p. 126.

10 Boris Groys argues that the artwork, with the development of conceptual art in the 1960s, became a "poetic instrument of communication rather than an object of contemplation." Groys, *In the Flow*, p. 130.

11 Miyajima, *Miyajima Tatsuo kaitai shinsho*, p. 62. Here I do not mean to imply that the concept completely fixes Miyajima's process. He has characterized his production as a dialogue between the ongoing development of his concept and the physical act of creation. Instead, I draw attention to the artist's careful presentation of his work to reflect a unified progression.

12 Here I draw on terminology suggested by the religious studies scholar Levi McLaughlin, who argues that Sōka Gakkai resembles a mimetic nation built on both Buddhist practice and worship of the current honorary president Ikeda Daisaku. McLaughlin, "Sōka Gakkai in Japan," p. 297.

13 Bywater, "Mediarena Govett-Brewster Art Gallery," p. 239.

14 Waldemar Januszczak, "Countdown conundrum: How can a room of flashing LED numerals be sentimental?" *The Guardian*, 2009.11.29.

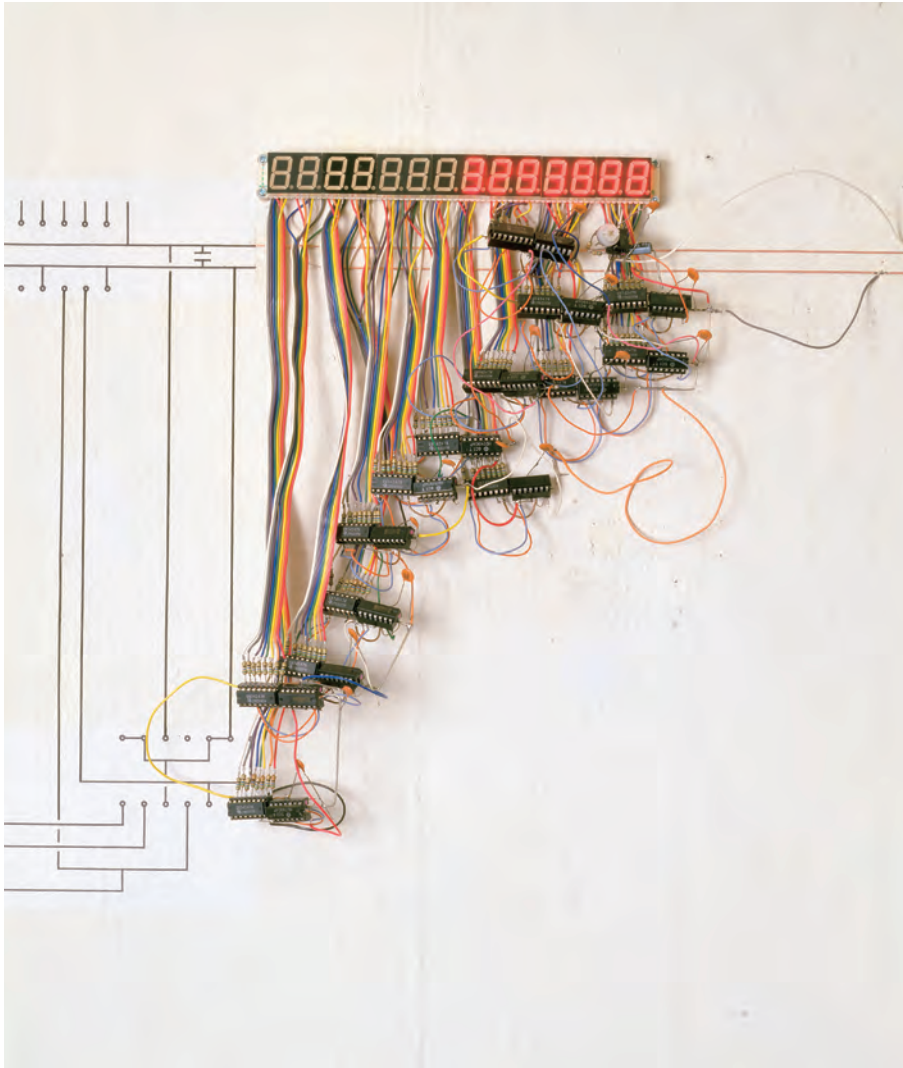


Figure 2. Miyajima Tatsuo. *Clock for 300 Thousand Years*. 1987. LED, IC, electric wire, line tape, etc. Installation view at Runami Gallery. H 173 cm, W 630 cm, D 5 cm. Site-specific installation. Photograph by Hirose Tadashi. Permission of the artist.

日蓮正宗 sect and today's Sōka Gakkai.¹⁵

The artist himself has been highly strategic in explaining his work's relation to Buddhism, in part to avoid being contained by Orientalist tropes:

At the time when I made the three concepts [1987; explained in the following section], the West only recognized meditation and Zen as Eastern wisdom and this didn't really leave the territory of Orientalism, of fetishizing outside culture. For this reason, I avoided Buddhist rhetoric and tried to get at something deeper about what they were seeing in a language that would get across to them.¹⁶

¹⁵ See De Jongh, "Time in the Art of Roman Opalka, Tatsuo Miyajima, and Rene Rietmeyer," p. 102; Tzou, "Cultural-Specific and International Influences," p. 258. Shwu-Huoy Tzou briefly touches on the artist's relation with Sōka Gakkai; here I address its practices and doctrine more rigorously.

¹⁶ Miyajima, *Geijutsuron*, p. 17.

Of course, Miyajima is just one of many Japanese artists who employ Buddhist motifs in their work. In the postwar period alone, such artists range from Shiraga Kazuo 白髪一雄 (1924–2008)—who trained at the Tendai 天台 sect’s head temple Enryakuji 延暦寺 starting in 1971¹⁷—and Matsuzawa Yutaka 松澤宥 (1922–2006), to Mori Mariko 森万里子 (b. 1967) and Murakami Takashi 村上隆 (b. 1962) in more recent years.¹⁸ Indeed, there is no way to convincingly connect the diverse body of Japanese artists who either practice, reference or have been inspired by Japanese Buddhism, to say nothing of the international context. To differentiate Miyajima from the bulk of these artists, I emphasize his underlying art concept as a direct and unified representation of Sōka Gakkai doctrine and practice—not as a unique synthesis of Buddhist themes and personal interests that attests to the artist’s originality.¹⁹

A comparison with Matsuzawa Yutaka proves informative here, as this artist’s work was also steeped in Buddhism at a conceptual level. The art historian Reiko Tomii characterizes Matsuzawa’s relationship to religion as follows:

Despite Matsuzawa’s heavy reliance on Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism, his conceptualism was universalist. Aiming to reach out to all humans in a nonsectarian language, he standardized the

Eastern wisdom and used the sharable and communicative form of art. Moreover, his sources were not just Eastern and ancient; he scoured the peaks and valleys of knowledge to identify ways to see the invisible in its visible states and codified the method as *kannen*.²⁰

Matsuzawa’s art concept can hence be likened to an elaborate bricolage: his interest in exoteric and esoteric Buddhist practices and doctrine, including, for example, the Pure Land (Jōdo 浄土) tradition’s meditative visualization (*kansō* 観想) and the Shingon 真言 tradition’s moon meditation (*gachirinkan* 月輪観), merged with parapsychology and contemporary science to form a conceptual base for his desire to “vanish the object” as well as create “non-sensory” painting. In short, he creatively synthesized the doctrines of various Buddhist traditions with many other forms of knowledge to further his personal artistic goals. I would argue that this is the dominant paradigm for understanding religion in art today—the assumption that religious motifs somehow pass through the black box of individual interest and interpretation before being materialized in the artwork. Significantly, Miyajima’s art necessitates a departure from this paradigm—it represents not the endless customization of religious themes or “spiritual” interests, but concrete religious affiliation with Sōka Gakkai and an attempt to portray a unified system of belief and practice through art. In the following sections, I will analyze three representative works of Miyajima—*Clock for 300 Thousand Years* (1987), *Mega Death* (1999), and *HOTO* (2008)—and their relationship to the *Lotus Sutra* and Nichiren Buddhism. The latter form the basis of Sōka Gakkai doctrine and consequently inform Miyajima’s personal life as well as his artistic production.

▪ The Lotus Sutra and Clock for 300 Thousand Years

In 1987, Miyajima produced his first artwork showcasing his now signature style of LED counters, entitled *Clock for 300 Thousand Years* (figure 2).²¹ The artist ex-

17 Art historian Namiko Kunimoto characterizes Shiraga’s period of training as “a continuation of his ceaseless testing himself as an artist and a man.” Here we see an example of the modernist tradition of equating religion with a heroic, personal quest. Kunimoto, “The Buddhist Hero,” p. 76.

18 The very notion of “Buddhist fine art” contains an inherent contradiction. Patricia J. Graham characterizes contemporary Japanese Buddhist art as being primarily divided between two factions: “Monks and lay practitioners associated with [Buddhism’s] traditional institutions, and individuals [fine artists] inspired by Buddhist philosophy as propagated by secular scholars.” Graham, *Faith and Power in Japanese Buddhist Art, 1600–2005*, p. 251. This divide occurred in tandem with the rise of a hierarchy of forms that placed fine arts (*bijutsu* 美術) above technical arts (*kōgei* 工芸). Traditional Buddhist crafts were generally classified as the latter. On the rise of this hierarchy of forms, see Kinoshita, *Bijutsu to iu misemono*, pp. 29–49.

19 The tendency for artists and critics alike to downplay or disregard religious affiliation reflects the influence of the literary group Shirakaba-ha 白樺派 on the development of modern art in Japan. Its members were not affiliated with organized religions; instead, they were connoisseurs of religion, synthesizing many creeds into a universal, non-sectarian understanding of “inner life” (内部生命 *naibuseimei*). See Kuno and Tsurumi, *Gendai Nihon no shisō*, pp. 7–8; Kitazawa, *Kishida Ryūsei to Taishō avangyarudo*, pp. 59–67.

20 Tomii, *Radicalism in the Wilderness*, p. 75.

21 This project featured a simple design—a 14-digit monitor that would (could) count up to 300,000 years.

plains the concept behind this piece in his 2017 book *Theories of Art* (*Geijutsuron* 芸術論):

In the chapter “The Life Span of the Tathāgata” [*nyorai juryōbon* 如来寿量品] of the *Lotus Sutra*, the historical Buddha, thought to have appeared in India and awakened under a bodhi tree, is revealed to have existed in the infinite past [*kuon* 久遠]—an incalculable 500 dust-particle kalpas [*gohyaku jinten gō* 五百塵点劫] ago. Our minds can’t conceive of a timescale this vast. My 1987 *Clock for 300 Thousand Years* was created to show this concept of eternity [*eien* 永遠].²²

This description quotes the doctrine of the Tendai and Nichiren sects, namely the partitioning of the *Lotus Sutra* into *shakumon* 迹門 and *honmon* 本門 sections. While the *shakumon* describes the truth of the One-Buddha vehicle (*ichibutsujō* 一仏乗), i.e., the ability of all to obtain buddhahood, the *honmon* contains an even deeper truth (particularly from the perspective of the Nichiren sect)—namely, that the Buddha did not really die at the age of eighty but awakened in the close to eternal past as the primordial Śākyamuni Buddha and continues to return as a bodhisattva to preach the ultimate truth, that is, the *Lotus Sutra*. What gives meaning to the endless progression of time in Miyajima’s clock is this *honmon* section of the *Lotus Sutra*. This is clear enough from the artist’s above description, and is further expanded upon in the following paragraph:

What I was trying to see in [*Clock for 300 Thousand Years*] was “now,” constantly changing from moment to moment. Another name for the Buddha—*nyorai* 如来—is a translation of the Sanskrit term Tathāgata.... This word contains the meaning “he who comes from moment to moment” [*nyonyo toshite kitarishi mono* 如如として来たりし者].²³

Judging from these descriptions, the concept behind this work refers to a sense of purposeful time as described in the *Lotus Sutra*: From moment to moment,

one continues to maintain a relationship with the historical Buddha and the primordial Buddha on the way to one’s own buddhahood, especially through the practice of chanting the title (*daimoku* 題目) of the *Lotus Sutra* as is advocated in the Nichiren tradition.²⁴

Here I want to contrast this vision of time with the works of two other influential conceptualists: On Kawara (1932–2014) and the abovementioned Matsuzawa Yutaka. Kawara is known for his date paintings, and postcard and telegram art.²⁵ Though he began his career as a painter as part of the social realism movement in postwar Japan, Kawara left Japan in 1959 and subsequently spent the rest of his life based in New York City, traveling all over the world while creating a diverse body of conceptual art.²⁶ Matsuzawa is famous for having a mystical epiphany that compelled him to “vanish the object” through his art, and represented the vanguard of conceptualist practices in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s. The differences in the three artists’ attitudes and methods become most apparent in a comparison of Kawara’s *One Million Years* project (1970–1971, 1980–1998) and Matsuzawa Yutaka’s 1970 *My Own Death* with Miyajima’s *Clock for 300 Thousand Years*. In *One Million Years*, Kawara created two books (*One Million Years [Past]* and *One Million Years [Future]*) that collectively represent the passage of time in typed calendar years from “999,031 B.C. to 1969 A.D.” and “1981 A.D. to 1,001,980 A.D.” The artist dedicated *Past* to “all those who have lived and died” and *Future*

24 The *Lotus Sutra* is a central part of the monk Nichiren’s 日蓮 (1222–1282) thought as well as Sōka Gakkai’s doctrine and practice. Nichiren, in accordance with the Tendai sect’s interpretation (Nichiren originally trained under this sect), put principle emphasis on the *honmon*, and went so far as to advocate that chanting the *Lotus Sutra*’s title alone (*namumyōhōrengkyō* 南無妙法蓮華經) was enough to realize the mind of the primordial Śākyamuni Buddha inside a practitioner. This practice is known as *daimoku*. Asai, “The ‘Lotus Sutra’ as the Core of Japanese Buddhism,” p. 61.

25 See Woo, “On Kawara’s ‘Date Paintings’: Series of Horror and Boredom,” pp. 63–68, for a detailed description of his process. The “date painting” series, which began in 1966, was completed through Kawara’s death. He painted each day’s date in white on a monochrome surface and destroyed the painting if it was not completed by the end of that day, while keeping a journal, and occasionally attaching newspaper clippings.

26 Miyajima has mentioned Kawara’s influence on his art: “At the time [1987], I liked On Kawara. I really liked his work. His concepts were clear, and more than that his works were good. I felt them to be precious. He’s called a conceptual artist, but if the work that expresses the concept isn’t beautiful in itself, then it’s not going to be remembered.” Miyajima, *Miyajima Tatsuo kaitai shinsho*, p. 73.

22 Miyajima, *Geijutsuron*, p. 29. There are many definitions of a “kalpa” in Buddhism, but it can be generally understood as a cyclical unit of time that contains the creation and destruction of the world or universe.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

to “the last one,” evoking a sense of the empty, meaningless passage of time and the possibility of human extinction. Matsuzawa’s piece is even simpler in design: just a sentence inscribed on a placard that reads (in Japanese and English):

When you go calmly across this room, [let] go my own death across your mind in a flash of lightning, that is my future genuine death and is similar not only to your future death but to the past hundred hundred millions of human beings’ deaths and also to future thousand trillions of human beings.²⁷

On the difference between these two works, Reiko Tomii notes that “Matsuzawa’s time can be meditated by the viewer in the stretch of time required to pass through a gallery, while Kawara’s time must be experienced in a prolonged manner through reading it or listening to its recitation.”²⁸ I would add here that Miyajima’s clock, which automatically ticks away time and provides a more robust, independent sense of physical existence than Kawara or Matsuzawa’s text-based works, operates whether the viewer is present or not—its concept depends less on interaction with the viewer than the other two works. Put another way, it signifies an independent law or process at work through the passage of time, one that began in the infinite past—what the artist in this case calls *kuon*.

While all three pieces focus on numerical scales or timescales that utterly relativize the importance of an individual’s existence, Miyajima’s clearly draws on a cosmological view based on Nichiren’s understanding of the *Lotus Sutra*. As a depiction of *kuon*, it contains the positive connotation of salvation, of the gradual awakening of all beings aided by the endless return of the Śākyamuni Buddha as a bodhisattva (this aspect of salvation differs decisively from the role of time in Kawara’s and Matsuzawa’s works). It is no coincidence that this specific reading of the *Lotus Sutra*, an important doctrinal aspect of Nichiren Buddhism and Sōka Gakkai, represents the conceptual base of the work, one not so much creatively synthesized or altered by the artist at the conceptual level as simply given poetic, concrete shape as a clock endlessly accumulating time.

27 This is the original text used for the work. See Tomii, *Radicalism in the Wilderness*, p. 148.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

▪ *Mega Death* and Toda Jōsei

One of Miyajima’s best-known works, *Mega Death* (figure 3), portrays a more cyclical vision of time than his early work *Clock for 300 Hundred Thousand Years*. This work comprises over 2,450 blue-light LED counters (in its iteration at the 1999 Venice Biennale) that flash, count, and disappear at random intervals; it is immersive in its scale and color. After roughly an hour elapses with more and more counters activating throughout, all counters suddenly extinguish and the room goes pitch black. Shortly after this dramatic rupture, the LEDs start up once more, and the blue light slowly gains strength—this cycle repeats endlessly. The artist uses these periods of absolute darkness as a metaphor to signal the atrocities of the twentieth century.²⁹

Miyajima’s art is often considered in relation to the “Buddhist” notion of reincarnation, and this piece would be a prime example as it works on two different levels—the constant “death” and “rebirth” of each individual LED counter as well as the periodic extinction of the entire system. Art historian Richard Dorment assesses the role of reincarnation in Miyajima’s art as follows:

At the core of Miyajima’s work is the belief that time is life itself. Only death brings an end to time—at least in Western thought. [Miyajima], as a Buddhist, believes in reincarnation. When each counter reaches the number nine, the numerical cycle begins anew. When one counter “dies” it leaves a void for a few moments before returning again.³⁰

The rupture of all “life” in *Mega Death*, and its subsequent return, provides a good opportunity to examine

29 “According to the calculation of Brzezinski, former national security advisor to Jimmy Carter, 167,000,000 lives have been lost in the events caused by human acts such as war, revolution and conflict in the 20th century. This figure, a terrifying number, equals to a [sic] total population of Italy, France and England of 1997. In a way, this century has been an era of ‘Artificial Mega Death.’” “Mega Death,” <https://tatsuomiyajima.com/work-projects/mega-death-3/>.

30 Richard Dorment, “A little light in the darkness,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 1997.7.12. I am in general agreement with Dorment’s assessment, though one wishes that art critics would abandon the monolithic notion of “Buddhism”: there are far too many interpretations of reincarnation inside the diverse religion to make such a categorical statement.

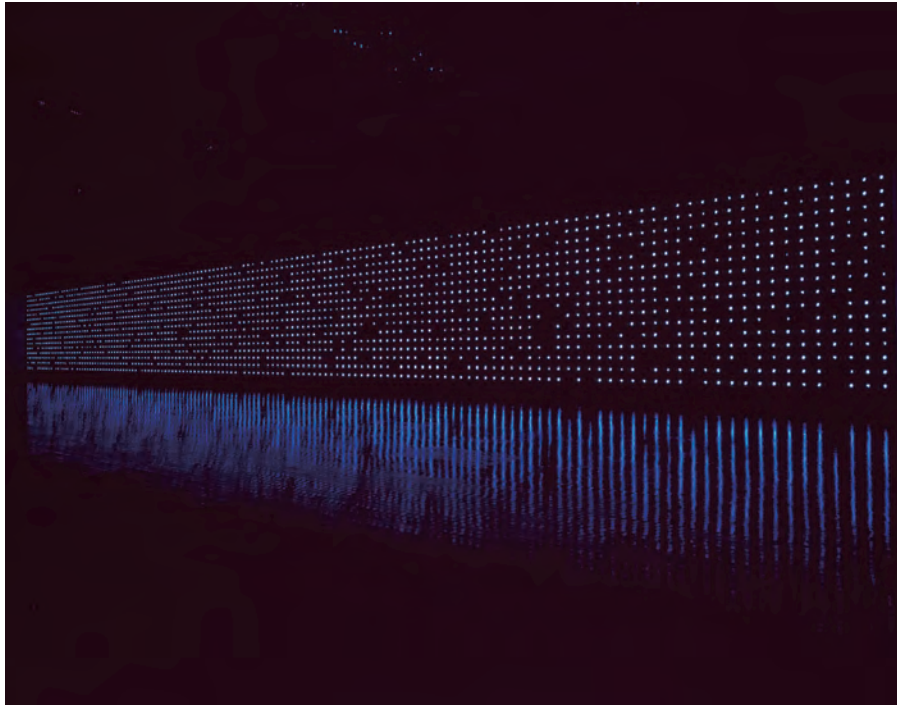


Figure 3. Miyajima Tatsuo. *Mega Death*. 1999/2016. LED, IC, electric wire, light sensor. Collection of Domus Foundation. Installation view at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery. H 500 cm, W 3,400 cm, D 1.8 cm. Site-specific installation. Photograph by Ueno Norihiro. Permission of the artist.

the conceptual basis for reincarnation in Miyajima's work, which echoes Sōka Gakkai doctrine, and especially the thought of the group's second president, Toda Jōsei 戸田城聖 (1900–1958). To understand the constant change displayed through the resetting of the LED counters in the artist's installations, it is necessary to assess the "three concepts" that Miyajima claims are the basis of his project to date: "It keeps changing. It connects with everything. It continues forever." Here is the artist on the meaning of these concepts, which he determined in 1987:

What I wanted to communicate with this "it" was the brilliance of "human life," what is called Buddha-nature [*busshō* 仏性] in Buddhism. I was worried about how I should communicate this concept to others. If I said life [*inochi* 命] or Buddha-nature directly, these were already ... fixed images

for people in the East, and, conversely, Westerners wouldn't understand them.³¹

Miyajima went on to use time as a means to express this "it" ("life" or "Buddha-nature"), but I want to emphasize here that this equation of life with the Buddha has a special significance in Sōka Gakkai doctrine through a mystical experience of Toda Jōsei—and later, its dramatic re-depiction in Ikeda Daisaku's *Human Revolution* (*Ningen kakumei* 人間革命)—which I will summarize briefly below.³²

While imprisoned during the Asia-Pacific War along with Sōka Gakkai's founder, Makiguchi Tsunesaburō

31 Miyajima, *Geijutsuron*, pp. 13–14. Miyajima frequently and uncritically invokes the binary between the "West" and "East" in his writing.

32 See Shimada, *Sōka Gakkai*, pp. 43–46. As I will later describe, Ikeda's *Human Revolution* was a pivotal factor in Miyajima's conversion to Sōka Gakkai. This twelve-volume novel, originally published in 1965, depicts various individuals, including the abovementioned Toda Jōsei, who have conversion experiences and go on to improve their lives through the diligent practice of Nichiren Buddhism.

牧口常三郎 (1871–1944), for refusing to enshrine State Shinto talismans, Toda Jōsei had a profound religious awakening that set the tone for his aggressive efforts to grow the organization after the war. Alternating between sessions of *daimoku* and slowly reading the entire *Lotus Sutra* in Chinese a total of three times, he experienced a revelation upon encountering the Thirty-four Negations, a passage that defines the Buddha in the *Immeasurable Means Sutra* (*Muryōgikyō* 無量義經), essentially an introduction to the *Lotus Sutra*. He describes the content of his religious awakening in the novel *Human Revolution* (*Ningen kakumei* 人間革命)³³ under the pen name Gan-san 巖さん in the following ecstatic outburst: “The Buddha is an expression of life! He’s not on the outside, but the inside of one’s own life. No, he’s on the outside, too! He’s the single, unified substance of the life of the universe!”³⁴

Here I want to focus on the language of this mystical experience, especially its conflation of the Buddha with life, as Miyajima begins his 2017 *Theories of Art* by quoting several of the Thirty-four Negations of the *Innumerable Means Sutra* (“his body is neither existing nor not existing, neither caused nor conditioned, neither square nor round, neither short nor long”) that inspired Toda’s experience. After doing so, he essentially reiterates Toda’s rhetoric in the following passage of the book: “The ‘he’ in this text is the Buddha [*hotoke* 仏] or Buddha-nature [*bussō* 仏性], but in contemporary parlance, it might be easier to understand [him] as life [*inochi* 命].”³⁵ Through his mystical experience, Toda also came to liken death to merely a brief period of sleep, supported by the eternal life of the Buddha;³⁶ Miyajima borrows this notion in his explanation of *Mega Death*, asserting that “in Buddhist Philosophy, the life of man is interpreted as the repetition of ‘life’ and ‘death.’ In other words, ‘death’ is not an end, but is similar to a [sic] sleep as a preparation for the ‘next life.’”³⁷ As per

33 This is a different novel than Ikeda Daisaku’s twelve-volume series of the same name that I mention above.

34 “仏とは、生命の表現なんだ！外にあるものではなく、自分の命にあるものだ！いや、外にもある！それは宇宙生命の一実体なんだ！” Toda, *Ningen kakumei*, p. 238. The Japanese text is provided as it is a central tenet of Sōka Gakkai’s theology and a reader of Japanese may find it important to reference.

35 Miyajima, *Geijutsuron*, pp. 13–14.

36 Shimazono, “Hotoke sunawachi seimei: Toda Jōsei,” p. 315.

37 Miyajima, “Mega Death,” <https://tatsuomiyajima.com/work-projects/mega-death-3/>. Here Miyajima himself is not immune to the frustrating tendency to essentialize Buddhism, writing as if there was any such unified entity as “Buddhist philosophy.”

the language of Toda’s religious awakening, this endless process of life and death is a manifestation of the Buddha’s eternal life, that is “Buddha-nature” (or what the artist calls *kuon* in his *Clock for 300 Hundred Thousand Years*), reflecting a specific lineage of Buddhism with its origins in Japan through the Tendai sect, Nichiren sect, and, in modernity, Sōka Gakkai. Put another way, the constant change and flux in Miyajima’s art, and especially the extinction of all life in *Mega Death* and its rebirth, paradoxically emerges as an illustration of this “Buddha-nature.” The artist also uses the term “unchangingness” (*jōjū* 常住)³⁸ to describe how this “Buddha-nature” acts as a sort of phenomenological base for all existence: “The stable can only appear through the unstable.”³⁹ It should not be overlooked, however, that Miyajima’s rhetoric reflects an understanding of life and the Buddha unified in Toda’s mystical experience, one which remains an “integral part of [Sōka Gakkai’s] doctrinal training.”⁴⁰ Miyajima’s conceptual notion of time and related rhetoric closely follows the logic of this experience as it is portrayed in Sōka Gakkai doctrine; hence, *Mega Death* can be understood as the artist’s attempt to create a visual representation of this doctrine through art.

▪ The Treasure Tower

The 2008 *HOTO* (figure 4) is the most concrete manifestation of the artist’s religious devotion so far: a massive mirrored object covered in his signature LED counters (in all sizes, shapes, and styles), the work depicts a central scene in the *Lotus Sutra*. The artist describes the significance of the piece as follows: “My works until now were more indirect, but I don’t have the leisure or time to do that anymore. I want to express concretely: ‘This is a symbol of life!’”⁴¹ The treasure tower (*hōtō* 宝塔) appears in the “Emergence of the Treasure Tower” chapter (*kenhōtōhon* 見宝塔品) of the *Lotus Sutra*. In this chapter, a jeweled stupa rises from the earth and hovers above the historical Buddha, who has finished

38 The term *jōjū* derives from the Mahāyāna *Nirvana Sutra*, which further develops the *Lotus Sutra*’s concept of the One-Buddha vehicle, i.e., the reality that all beings can awaken, to assert that Buddha-nature is universal and everlasting.

39 Miyajima, *Geijutsuron*, p. 26.

40 McLaughlin, “Sōka Gakkai in Japan,” p. 284.

41 Miyajima, *Miyajima Tatsuo kaitai shinsho*, p. 406.



Figure 4. Miyajima Tatsuo. *HOTO*. 2008. LED, IC, electric wire, specular stainless steel, mirror glass, plexiglass. Collection of MGM Resorts International. Installation view at Art Tower Mito. H 549 cm, W 208 cm. Photograph by Ano Daici. Permission of the artist.

teaching the One-Buddha vehicle (that is, the truth that all can awaken as bodhisattvas) and pledging the future enlightenment of many of his followers. Inside the pagoda is Tahō Nyorai 多宝如来, a buddha who promised in the infinite past to confirm the truth of the *Lotus Sutra* each time it is preached. The chapter is significant as it presages the second half (the *honmon* section) of the *Lotus Sutra*, namely the arrival of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth (Jiyu Bosatsu 地涌菩薩), and the revealing of the Buddha's eternal life in "The Life Span of the Tathāgata" chapter.⁴² It also has special meaning for Sōka Gakkai members because the scene where the Buddha sits face to face with Tahō Nyorai in this tower is depicted in Nichiren's calligraphic

mandala *daigohonzon* 大御本尊 (a replica of which is enshrined in Sōka Gakkai members' homes).⁴³ The Soka Gakkai International website mentions that the tower in the *Lotus Sutra* represents "the unfathomable Buddha-nature inherent within the life of all people," which is consistent with the rhetoric that Miyajima uses to discuss the work; Ikeda himself asserts that this tower is the "grand and dignified original form of our lives."⁴⁴ While my above analysis of *Clock for 300 Thousand Years* and *Mega Death* argued that Miyajima's art can be read as a substantiation of Sōka Gakkai doctrine at the level of the concept, this work goes beyond the conceptual and presents a central image from the *Lotus*

42 This is the chapter that Miyajima uses to ground the concept of his *Clock for 300 Thousand Years*, as I have mentioned above.

43 McLaughlin, "Sōka Gakkai in Japan," p. 271.

44 "The Treasure Tower," <http://www.sgi.org/about-us/buddhist-concepts/the-treasure-tower.html>.

Sutra. Its meaning is recognizable by name alone: any dedicated Sōka Gakkai practitioner could see the title and understand it as an allusion to the *Lotus Sutra* and the arrival of Tahō Nyorai. As such, it functions as an assertion of collective identity in the celebration of an important moment in the sutra.⁴⁵ This work represents Miyajima's most direct expression of affiliation to the organization to date and offers a compelling basis for trying to address this affiliation as a principle source (both at the conceptual and material levels) of his artistic production rather than decontextualizing or disregarding it as simply a matter of the artist's private life.

I have attempted here to give a brief example of the ways in which Sōka Gakkai doctrine supports Miyajima's work. I believe this consistent adherence to Sōka Gakkai teachings to be rare in the contemporary art world, wherein Buddhism is often invoked as a (fashionable, modernist) symbol of individuality over affiliation with an organized group. I argue that the art concept that underlies Miyajima's work comprises the tenets of Nichiren cosmology, and that the centrality of these tenets is too often overlooked in art criticism, where Miyajima's work is deemed "Buddhist" without reflection on the ambiguity of this term. The language invoked in Miyajima's explanations of his work—*kuon*, *seimei*, *jōjū*, *hōtō*, etc.—is all part of a doctrinal system that represents the foundation of the religious group he belongs to, and thus signifies this belonging. In the following section, I shift toward the other axis of contemporary Sōka Gakkai doctrine and practice: worship of Ikeda Daisaku. If I have focused more on Miyajima's artistic production up to this point and how it relates to the Nichiren Buddhist doctrine of Sōka Gakkai, I now assess Miyajima's ideal image of the artist, which I argue is a mimetic representation of Ikeda Daisaku in the context of art.

The Artist as a Disciple of Ikeda Daisaku

The relationship between Miyajima Tatsuo and Ikeda Daisaku is often framed as a matter of Ikeda's "in-

45 Here my understanding of collective identity operates on two levels: ideally (speaking from the perspective of Miyajima) that of all humans, who recognize that they have the ability to become a buddha, and more specifically, that of Sōka Gakkai, whose members will be able to recognize this image as a central part of their doctrine.

fluence" on Miyajima. It is questionable, however, whether this word is appropriate in this context (in the sense that it is used in art writing, for example, "Pablo Picasso influenced Jackson Pollock").⁴⁶ Looking at Miyajima's art and his positioning himself as a "teacher" in the art world, it is clear that the relationship is far more complex than one of mere influence in the artistic sense. Instead, I want to look at what Clark Chilson has termed the importance of discipleship in the increasingly Ikeda Daisaku-centric doctrine of contemporary Sōka Gakkai.⁴⁷

Those in the Gakkai today, following Ikeda's lead, create a self-conception of themselves as not simply Gakkai members or Nichiren Buddhists, but as disciples of a helpful and caring mentor. Because they conceive of themselves as disciples with Ikeda as their mentor, Gakkai members are more likely to act beyond their own narrow self interests and for the accomplishment of the Gakkai's goals.⁴⁸

Indeed, Miyajima is not an "autonomous," romantic, or avant-garde artist so much as he is a devoted disciple of Ikeda's. The mentor-disciple relation plays a key role in determining the ideal model of the "artist" and "human" that Miyajima posits in his writings and art.⁴⁹ I argue that it reflects *shiteifuni* 師弟不二, an inseparable bond between mentor (Ikeda) and disciple in contemporary Sōka Gakkai's doctrine. *Shiteifuni* represents a constant striving to exemplify Ikeda's ethos through

46 "Miyajima has spoken at length about the profound influence of Buddhism on his practice. He cites the writings of Buddhist philosopher Daisaku Ikeda, a key figure within the Sōka Gakkai Buddhist organization, as particularly influential." Rachel Kent, "Tatsuo Miyajima: Connect with Everything," <https://tatsuomiyajima.com/texts/tatsuo-miyajima-connect-with-everything-essay-by-rachel-kent/>.

47 Levi McLaughlin points out that this shift in the group's priorities from Nichiren Buddhism to worship of Ikeda ultimately caused its split from the Buddhist temple parent Nichiren Shōshū in 1991. McLaughlin, "Sōka Gakkai in Japan," pp. 298-300.

48 Chilson, "Cultivating Charisma," p. 70.

49 His 2017 book *Theories of Art* is dedicated to his two "teachers," Ikeda Daisaku and Enokura Kōji 榎倉康二 (1942-1995), an artist affiliated with the loosely organized group Mono-ha もの派: "I've never thought that I was a genius, and I've managed to stay this way thanks to two teachers: he who taught me the way of the human, Ikeda Daisaku, and he who taught me the way of art, Enokura Kōji" (p. 133). While Enokura was highly influential as a mentor to Miyajima, he was critical of the young artist's style, and as such did not encourage him to pursue a PhD at Tokyo University of the Arts.

one's own life and work. As such, it becomes difficult to distinguish between mentor and disciple—the two come to mutually reinforce one another. Consequently, I seek to assess how Ikeda serves as a spiritual guide for Miyajima, as well as how this model of discipleship, of *shiteifuni*, in contemporary Sōka Gakkai radically challenges the notion of artistic autonomy and individuality that remains dominant in contemporary art.

▪ Conversion

Miyajima's (re)conversion to Sōka Gakkai (he was born a *fukushi* 福子, a child of Gakkai members) took place shortly before he entered art school. The following account is found in the book-length interview *Unraveling Miyajima Tatsuo* (*Miyajima Tatsuo kaitai shinsho* 宮島達男解体新書). It is a typical example of conversion stories (*taikendan* 体験談) shared in group meetings, known as *zadankai* 座談会, to reinforce members' faith.⁵⁰ In short, this is less a story of Miyajima's unique discovery of himself, or his style, so much as it represents just one of many members' paths to affiliation with the group, one that would provide the artist with the confidence to pursue a career in art.

By 1978, Miyajima had already twice failed his admission test to Tokyo University of the Arts and was losing hope of being admitted to the prestigious university and pursuing an art career. He had been creating all-over paintings—dripping paint on the canvas to emphasize its physicality—under the influence of American abstract-expressionist painters such as Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), Mark Rothko (1903–1970), and Barnett Newman (1905–1970), but was at an artistic impasse. This proved to be an existential question for the young artist, full of the desire to be recognized but lacking concrete direction. He retreated to his room and his increasingly antisocial behavior worried his parents. Around this time, as Miyajima tells the story, a neighbor gave him a copy of Ikeda Daisaku's *Human Revolution*. The artist's parents were already members of Sōka Gakkai, which was presided over directly by Ikeda at the time, but Miyajima had stubbornly refused to join the religion. Here he recounts his adolescent attitude: "I was very resistant to it [Sōka Gakkai]. I had my doubts about faith—I thought faith was too easy a way to im-

prove one's life. Faith was for the weak, so I ignored it completely."⁵¹ Feeling lost at this juncture, Miyajima read Ikeda's twelve-volume work, which changed the course of his life, convincing him immediately to join Sōka Gakkai. By reading central portions of the *Lotus Sutra* and practicing *daimoku* daily, the artist slowly began to remake himself and his regimen for the university entrance exam:

I felt like I could see myself accurately ... it made complete sense what I had to do to improve. I was able to recognize that it was my fault that I had failed the exams, because my drawings weren't good.... By facing myself and pushing through, channels opened up to the outside—I began to hear outside voices. I listened to people's opinions and entered into a proper dialogue with others."⁵²

Ultimately, he spent a year diligently improving his drawing skills and passed the admissions test, entering the Department of Painting at the Tokyo University of the Arts as an undergraduate in 1980. Reflecting on the process, he concludes with a representative remark: "My work and life rest on Ikeda Daisaku and my faith in Sōka Gakkai—these are my essence. If they weren't there, there would be no Miyajima Tatsuo, nor any of his work."⁵³

▪ Ikeda's Buddhist Humanism

Miyajima's affiliation with Sōka Gakkai began shortly before he entered art school and continues to this day. Indeed, the artist goes far beyond private practice at home in his support of the group: he regularly contributes articles to Sōka Gakkai publications and campaigns publicly for bills sponsored by Kōmeitō (the political party originally directly overseen by Sōka Gakkai).⁵⁴ The artist has also represented his local Sōka Gakkai community in the organization's bureaucracy

51 Miyajima, *Miyajima Tatsuo kaitai shinsho*, p. 385.

52 Ibid., p. 389.

53 Ibid., p. 393.

54 See, for example, his tribute to the organization's honorary president, Ikeda Daisaku: Miyajima, "Sekai ga motomeru ningen no tetsugaku," pp. 129–34, as well as a vivid account of his relations with Sōka Gakkai, "Hito toshite sosei shite kara hajimatta geijutsu e no michi," pp. 89–104.

50 I thank Levi McLaughlin for alerting me to this similarity.

as a regional captain (*chiiki buchō* 地域部長).⁵⁵ This involvement has attracted scrutiny from older artists, especially those on the left, which historically has aligned itself against Sōka Gakkai and Kōmeitō.⁵⁶ Hori Kōsai 堀浩哉 (b. 1947), one of the representative members of the 1970s art group Bikyōtō 美共闘, an extension into art of the student movement in the late 1960s, for example, has criticized Miyajima for petitioning for a 2001 Kōmeitō-sponsored bill to make donations to art institutions tax-deductible, admonishing readers “not to be deceived by Kōmeitō and Miyajima Tatsuo.”⁵⁷ The artist Shirakawa Yoshio 白川昌生 (b. 1948) has called Miyajima Sōka Gakkai’s “poster child” (*kanbansakka* 看板作家) in art.⁵⁸ It is hard to deny this claim, though whether one perceives it as an insult or not depends on one’s already conceived opinion of Sōka Gakkai. Miyajima is the most famous contemporary artist working in Japan visibly associated with the group, and so inevitably takes on the role of its spokesman in matters artistic.

Putting aside the issue of how one feels about Ikeda Daisaku, I emphasize that the language Miyajima uses to describe his art, which he asserts is a tribute to “humanity” and “life,” reflects *shiteifuni*.⁵⁹ Once situated as borrowed from Ikeda, these terms take on new meaning as collective reference points, and perhaps more importantly than any independent meaning they might possess is the reality that they derive from such a hallowed figure (for Sōka Gakkai members) as Ikeda. Indeed, Miyajima has been very vocal in praising the accomplishments of Ikeda and his “Humanism,” as such performing a central duty of Sōka Gakkai members:

55 See Miyajima, “Hito toshite sosei shite kara hajimatta geijutsu e no michi,” p. 104.

56 The Japanese Communist Party was fiercely critical of the group’s growth in the 1960s, regarding its proselytization of blue-collar workers as disruptive to the organizing of the proletariat and awakening of class consciousness. Shimada, *Sōka Gakkai*, pp. 86–90.

57 Hori was not so much opposed to the content of the bill itself as to what he saw as Kōmeitō’s use of the bill to gain support in upcoming elections. He also suggested that Miyajima’s *Kaki Tree Project* (discussed below) was being funded by Sōka Gakkai (though the executive committee of this project vehemently denied this suggestion). Hori, “Kōmeitō to Miyajima Tatsuo ni wa damasareruna,” p. 19.

58 “Hikosaka Naoyoshi-san, bijutsu hin kansatsu gakkai mēringu risuto de, mondai teiki! sono 2,” <http://www2a.biglobe.ne.jp/~yamaiku/honhon/lr/lr.hikosaka02.htm>.

59 The subtitle of his *Unraveling Miyajima Tatsuo*, for example, reads “All for Human Existence,” a phrase which seems overblown without further contextualization.

It’s incredible that he’s been recognized across the boundaries of language, thought, religion, culture, and ideology. Ikeda has raised the banner of Humanism [*ningenshugi* 人間主義] and transcended these barriers. If you go abroad, you can experience for yourself how the world’s intellectuals seek out President Ikeda’s thoughts and praise his actions.⁶⁰

Ikeda’s “Humanism” represents a fusion of Nichiren Buddhism and the writings of European and American writers and philosophers such as Henry Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy, with the thought of civil rights leaders including Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.⁶¹ It emphasizes an image of individuals (“humans”) rising above sectarian differences and working to save themselves and improve their own lives through material gains and spiritual edification, while simultaneously helping others do the same.⁶² This lauding of individual agency and collective action deeply resonated with a young Miyajima when he read Ikeda’s *Human Revolution*, and he has put it into practice through his art: it is clear that the artist’s fixation on the “human” level should be read in light of his worship of Ikeda and his “Buddhist Humanism.”⁶³

Clark Chilson has evaluated the dynamic of the relationship between mentor and disciple in Sōka Gakkai, noting that “simple followers are not good disciples because they do not adequately seek ways to use their own individual talents to help realize their mentor’s vision.... Good disciples protect and promote the mentor’s vision, with which they identify.”⁶⁴ This would seem to reflect the position of Miyajima, who essentially translates Ikeda’s ethos into the art world: “I’m nothing compared to my teacher [Ikeda], but for over

60 Miyajima Tatsuo “Sekai ga motomeru ningen no tetsugaku,” p. 134.

61 McLaughlin, “Sōka Gakkai in Japan,” p. 303.

62 “From the perspective of Buddhist humanism it is human beings themselves, rather than a higher power, who possess the ultimate wisdom about their condition. This view regards the individual as the pivotal force of change within the interdependent network of phenomena that comprises life. A fundamental change in the life of an individual, in other words, will affect the entire web of life.” “Buddhist Humanism,” <http://www.daisakuiked.org/main/philos/buddhist/buddh-05.html>.

63 The art historian Shwu-Huoy Tzou also correctly assesses the importance of Ikeda’s thought in Miyajima’s desire to “create ‘a global unity’ of humankind.” Tzou, “Cultural-Specific and International Influences,” p. 259.

64 Chilson, “Cultivating Charisma,” p. 69.

twenty years, I've believed that encouraging others is what a true human does."⁶⁵ The importance of the mentor role in Miyajima's art is especially apparent in his *Kaki Tree Project* (which he started in 1996). His desire to activate viewers' belief in themselves and to serve as a "humanist" artist can be interpreted as a mimetic representation of Ikeda in the art world, and as such a form of religious practice, of aspiring to constantly strengthen his bond with his mentor by putting his principles into action.

▪ *Revive Time: Kaki Tree Project*

In 1996, Miyajima debuted his *Revive Time: Kaki Tree Project*, which at first glance appears to be a radical departure from his time-based art.⁶⁶ The story behind the project is simple enough: Ebinuma Masayuki 海老沼正幸, an arborist in Nagasaki, managed to foster back to health a persimmon tree (kaki tree) scarred from the atomic bombing of Nagasaki on 9 August 1945.⁶⁷ The tree began producing seedlings and, eventually, Ebinuma started to hand these out to children in Nagasaki to plant as symbols of peace. Miyajima met the arborist in 1995 when he was in Nagasaki for an exhibition, and, with his permission, began *Revive Time: Kaki Tree Project* in 1996 (modeled on Ebinuma's approach), with the first planting at the former Ryuhoku Elementary School. His aim was to decenter the role of the artist and allow each individual to make an artistic statement by planting a kaki sapling. Here, the kaki tree can be seen as a symbol of the continuity of life through horrific destruction, expressed in the cessation and rebirth of time in other projects such as *Mega Death*.

The project, which continues to this day with participating groups throughout Europe and Africa, bears clear resemblance to *7,000 Oaks*, Joseph Beuys' contribution to the 1982 Documenta 7 in Kassel.⁶⁸ Indeed,

the artist Hikosaka Naoyoshi 彦坂尚嘉 (b. 1946), one of Miyajima's most vocal critics (and, significantly, a member of *Bikyōtō* alongside Horii Kōsai), has called the work a second-rate imitation of Beuys' project.⁶⁹ Significantly, Beuys visited Tokyo University of the Arts in 1984 while Miyajima was enrolled there, and participated in a debate with both students and faculty; he clearly influenced the young artist. Miyajima, however, has asserted a fundamental difference between his and Beuys' approaches:

It's been indicated that my ... concept is similar to Beuys' statement that "everyone is an artist." They may seem similar, but in Beuys' case, the existence of the "artist" is prized above everything else; for me, however, there is something "artistic" in everyone. I don't worship art. For me, humans are most important.⁷⁰

Elsewhere, he expands on this notion in more cryptic language:

Looking back it's painfully clear that Beuys was seeking a revolution from inside of capitalism. When he tried to do so by participating in the Green Party at the political level, however, it created a lot of friction. To avoid making the same mistake, I want to expand my work at the level of the human.⁷¹

It would be impossible to understand this notion of a "level of the human" that trumps the power of art or political participation (i.e., how is art-making or political participation not "human"?) without keeping in mind Ikeda's notion of "Buddhist humanism," that is, various individuals recognizing each other as humans first before considering their affiliations or abilities.⁷² This humanism, as well as the image of Ikeda

65 Miyajima, *Miyajima Tatsuo kaitai shinsho*, p. 399.

66 This assessment would be inaccurate as the artist has been practicing performance art since his tenure at Tokyo University of the Arts as an undergraduate student. In reality, it is a return for him to his origins in performance and socially engaged art.

67 I paraphrase here from information found on the project's website: "The Beginning," https://kakitreeproject.com/english/?page_id=5385.

68 Joseph Beuys advanced the concept of "social sculpture" in the 1970s—of directly engaging society through art. This concept can be summed up in Beuys' famous line "everyone is an artist." One concrete example of his theory in action, which advocated

for the democratization of creative expression, is this *7,000 Oaks* project. It took five years for volunteers from the community to plant the trees throughout the city of Kassel as well as to place a basalt rock at the base of each tree.

69 "私なんか、宮島達男氏の『柿の木プロジェクト』で一番気になったのは、ボイスの仕事の垂流だと言う事です。" <http://www2a.biglobe.ne.jp/~yamaiku/honhon/lr/lr.hikosaka02.htm>.

70 Miyajima, "Wakatchairu kedo kandō dekiru," p. 155.

71 Miyajima, *Miyajima Tatsuo kaitai shinsho*, pp. 355-56. This quote refers to the artist's founding of "Artists Summit Kyoto," but has bearing, I believe, on the *Kaki Tree Project*.

72 See Ikeda, "Buddhist Perspective on Conflict Resolution."

as a peace builder, echoes rhetorically in the *Kaki Tree Project*, described (unsurprisingly) as “an art project through which people can learn about peace and the importance of life.”⁷³ This message is extended in the project’s goals, which represent an attempt to “revive” three disparate elements in the context of daily life: “Awareness of Peace” (in short, to “revive the dormant awareness of peace within people”), “The True Way to Live,” and “Quality in Art.”⁷⁴ These aims are nebulous (how is it possible to determine a “true way to live” or “quality in art” in a radically fragmented, multicultural society?), and in general the project may seem quite naive in a contemporary art world dominated by postmodern critical discourse, in which artists are expected to “recognize and lay bare the hidden ideological devices which govern our routine lives without our knowledge.”⁷⁵ Miyajima is largely uninterested in addressing the systemic economic problems or ideologies that prevent the development of worldwide peace, in confronting his own complicity in a highly speculative global art market fueled by fashion magnates and arms dealers, or using the “brand theory” that is so pervasive in the international art world to justify his work. Rather, through *Kaki Tree Project*, he takes it upon himself to teach people to appreciate their lives—and peace (if they have it)—by having them plant trees, as well as more indirectly to remember the horror of the atomic bombings. While the themes and aims of *Kaki Tree Project* are ambiguous enough that they could be taken in any number of ways (and many may criticize him on this count), I argue that the rhetoric supporting it—which seems quite vague without proper contextualization—is clearly recognizable to Gakkai members as the language of Ikeda Daisaku. As such, it serves as a symbol of collective identity in *shiteifuni*—an homage to Ikeda’s own peace-building activities in the microcosm of art. Unlike Beuys, who appealed to a romantic image of the heroic artist, that is, self-mythology, to legitimate his pedagogic practice, Miyajima becomes a teacher in art precisely because Ikeda is his teacher.

73 Ikeda has met with heads of state and diplomats including Henry Kissinger, Zhou Enlai, and Nelson Mandela to discuss issues such as the proliferation of nuclear weapons, environmental degradation, and atrocities committed by Japan during World War II.

74 “Concepts,” https://kakitreeproject.com/english/?page_id=5381.

75 Grant Kester, “The Device Laid Bare: On Some Limitations in Current Art Criticism,” *e-flux* 50 (2013), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/50/59990/the-device-laid-bare-on-some-limitations-in-current-art-criticism/>.

Conclusion

In 1996, the same year that he started *Kaki Tree Project*, Miyajima contributed an essay to *The Flowering of Human Culture* (*Ningen bunka no hana hiraku* 人間文化の華ひらく), a collection of the abovementioned *taikendan* or conversion experiences regularly shared at Sōka Gakkai group meetings. In this essay, Miyajima touches on the centrality of *daimoku* (chanting the name of the *Lotus Sutra*) in his artistic practice, especially for giving him the intuitive ability to look at his works objectively. The essay closes with a powerful sentiment that symbolically frames, I argue, his entire career:

When I started thinking about art on the basis of eternal life, *daimoku* [*namumyōhōrengyō*], Sōka Gakkai and its great leader, Teacher Ikeda, were there to show me how to judge my works.... Because we subscribe to this vision of eternal life, we can rigorously judge each moment. My mission as an artist is to render the accumulation of these judgments into powerful works of art.⁷⁶

Here, the term “judgment” implies both a basis for aesthetic value (that is, the ability to view one’s work objectively and assess its quality), but more importantly, a source of ethical certitude. I argue that Miyajima sees his ability as an artist as necessarily deriving from the latter—his art is first ethically and then aesthetically justified by the notion of eternal life that underlies it. In this collapsing of religious and artistic expression, one also sees the profound sense of community that the artist experiences through his affiliation with Sōka Gakkai (hence the plural first-person) and the way that this affiliation itself forms the basis of his art—his art serves as a collective symbol of the organization and its rhetoric.

Miyajima’s art and underlying art concept prove hard to evaluate in contemporary art, a realm in which artists are still generally expected to form their own unique viewpoints and opinions that they convey to viewers through their work. Even if the ideal of autonomy has been increasingly challenged by the rise of socially engaged art and its study in the past twenty years,

76 Miyajima, “Hito toshite sosei shite kara hajimatta geijutsu e no michi,” pp. 103–104.

and despite the continuing diversification of contemporary art practices, artists who visibly associate with new religions like Sōka Gakkai are difficult to assess due to the persistent stigmatization of these religions in Japan.⁷⁷ In spite of strong indications that their art represents a form of organized religious practice, their projects are assimilated into modernist visions of the heroic artist freely synthesizing various “spiritual” and religious interests into compelling works of art. The explicit links between Miyajima’s art and the organization he belongs to may make some uncomfortable—indeed it could be said that he has elevated *shōju* 撰受 (Nichiren’s term for nonaggressive proselytization) to the level of “fine art” by creating visually appealing and persuasive representations of Sōka Gakkai doctrine and practice through his work. Those inspired to look beyond its façade for a rationale will find it supported by a body of ideas (and occasionally concrete forms, for example, as in the abovementioned 2008 *HOTO*), shared by millions of believers worldwide.

I have attempted to argue in this article that what is most “unique” about Miyajima’s project is the artist’s meticulous re-creation of the system of values implied in Sōka Gakkai’s doctrine and practice, both through Nichiren Buddhism and the worship of Ikeda Daisaku, inside the art world. Miyajima is first and foremost a member of Sōka Gakkai, and then an artist—it is clear that this affiliation has sustained his personal life while providing him with an expansive trove of content for his art. Furthermore, Miyajima’s art and art concepts can be interpreted as substantiations of *shiteifuni* in contemporary Sōka Gakkai practice and doctrine: the representation of Miyajima’s devotion to Ikeda Daisaku, and an attempt to embody this devotion through his life and work. The ideal of *shiteifuni* entails the idea that the disciple will never be able to live up to the mentor—Ikeda himself asserts this principle in his own unflinching devotion to his mentor, Toda Jōsei. Miyajima’s relationship to Ikeda constantly renews him, it provides him with the courage to keep producing his art, to aspire to approach ever more closely to the ideals

provided for him by his organization, ideals that form the bedrock of his identity: “Originality in the West comes from individualism, itself rooted in Christianity. Supporting us, starting with Teacher Ikeda, is a view of life in the *Lotus Sutra* that spans *sanse* 三世 [the three temporal worlds—past life, present life, future life].”⁷⁸ For Miyajima, art is first and foremost a matter of association.

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77 The stigmatization (and at times persecution) of new religions has been prevalent in Japan since the prewar period (see, for example, the infamous suppression of the Shinto new religion Ōmotokyō 大本教 in 1935). In the postwar period, Sōka Gakkai was the most heavily smeared religious organization in the media until attention shifted to Aum Shinrikyō following the 1995 subway gas attack. See McLaughlin, “Did Aum Change Everything?”

78 Miyajima, “Hito toshite sosei shite kara hajimatta geijutsu e no michi,” p. 103.

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The Currency of “Tradition” in Recent Exhibitions of Contemporary Japanese Art

EXHIBITION REVIEW BY CHELSEA FOXWELL

THE tone of several recent exhibitions in New York, Honolulu, Chicago, Boston, and Tokyo shows that the theme of tradition, however construed, remains prominent in contemporary Japanese art. This is perhaps unsurprising: as Keith Moxey emphasized in his book *Visual Time* (2013), “Modernity and its artistic partner, modernism, have always been tied to the star of temporal progress. The time of modernity is teleological, and its home lies in the West.”¹ From the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day, artists who were born, trained, or who work in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America, and whose artistic heritage may be unfamiliar to many viewers, seem to field more than their fair share of questions about the role of “tradition” in their art.

Tradition is sited far from modernism’s historic centers because “it was only possible for Western powers to aspire to control the rest of the globe’s culture if [non-Western locales] were characterized not only as spatially exotic but also as temporally backward.”² With Euro-America serving as modernity’s home base, the

local culture of a place like Japan was instantly consolidated as “tradition,” a word that had no precise Japanese counterpart in the noun form prior to the 1880s.³ Japanese interlocutors in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries were more likely to speak of cultural practices as foundations or transmissions (*honrai no gihō* 本来の技法, *denju* 伝授, etc.), concepts that emphasize the past while still accommodating development and renewal. It was only in the face of modernism’s emphasis on rupture, disinheritance, and critical resistance to the past that the concept of transmission began to seem inadequate or unmodern.⁴

Modernism expressed antipathy toward art’s transmissive function and consequently expressed tradition as something static and tangible. In Japan, accordingly, it was only with the growing reliance on concepts of the modern and stylishly occidental that *dentō* 伝統 (tradition) emerged as an important term in artistic discourse.⁵ Modernity and tradition were conceptually opposed within a mode of thinking that associated Euro-American culture with progress and power. Since then, one important function of tradition-based art has

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1 Moxey, *Visual Time*, p. 11.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Foxwell, “The Painting of Sadness?”

4 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, p. 10; Horowitz, *Sustaining Loss*.

5 Foxwell, “The Painting of Sadness?,” pp. 39–40.

been the positing of other roles for inherited materials and techniques apart from that oppressive binary. Examples of tradition-based Japanese art in the spotlight include The Metropolitan Museum's showcasing of the contemporary porcelains of Fukami Sueharu 深見陶治 (b. 1947) and the bamboo installations of Tanabe Chikuunsai IV 田辺竹雲齋 (b. 1973).⁶

In 2007, Gennifer Weisenfeld considered the role of tradition in contemporary Japanese art in her article, "Reinscribing Tradition in a Transnational Art World (2007)." Focusing on themes from the Edo period (1615–1868) in the work of Murakami Takashi 村上隆 (b. 1962) and Araki Nobuyoshi 荒木経惟 (b. 1948), Weisenfeld's article warned that in the hands of successful artists and art promoters, Japanese "tradition" is far from neutral or genteel. At times a seemingly shallow and "lucrative commodification of difference," tradition can also be "slyly inverted to support nationalist ideologies of cultural essentialism." In short, Weisenfeld found the concept of tradition being put to multiple, sometimes conflicting, uses in contemporary Japanese art.⁷ In the intervening decade or so since the publication of her article, tradition has maintained a continued if not increased prominence in contemporary exhibitions of Japanese art. This suggests that far from subsiding in the face of caveats, tradition-based art has developed and expanded in ways that warrant renewed attention.

Why has the overt allusion to past Japanese art become so popular among younger and mid-career Japanese artists, especially those looking to establish themselves abroad? The present review, rather than offering new research, takes stock of recent developments in the international field of tradition-based contemporary art. I hope to offer a new hypothesis by proposing two opposing poles, namely, criticality and the suspension of criticality, along which contemporary Japanese art's visual discourse on "tradition" might be ranged. Artists to be considered include Kimura Ryōko 木村了子 (b. 1971), Tenmyouya Hisashi 天明屋尚 (b. 1966), Teraoka Masami 寺岡政美 (b. 1936), Murakami Takashi, Mori Mariko 森万里子 (b. 1967), teamLab チ

ームラボ (estd. 2001), and Kambe Tomoyuki 神戸智行 (b. 1975). Rather than simply discounting certain tradition-based works for a seeming lack of criticality, a more audience-centered approach can examine the appeal or currency of such works among viewers worldwide, including younger viewers and art world outsiders.

In the exhibition *Imayō: Japan's New Traditionists* (今様: 昔と今をつなぐ *Imayō: Mukashi to ima o tsunagu*; University of Hawai'i and Honolulu Museum of Art, 2016; Tokyo, Shōtō Museum, 2017), John Szostak used the term "historicism" to describe the overt allusion to and embrace of past Japanese art. He points out that historicism has become popular among younger and mid-career Japanese artists of international repute, and his approach brings to mind the works presented in the exhibition *Garden of Unearthly Delights: Works by Ikeda, Tenmyouya, and teamLab* (curated by Miwako Tezuka, Japan Society New York, 2014). The pieces in these two exhibitions look visibly Japanese, and overtly reference past Japanese art. Visible references to past Japanese art are also apparent in consecutive American exhibitions featuring recent work by Murakami Takashi at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in late 2017. Murakami, who holds a PhD in *nihonga* 日本画 (modern Japanese-style painting), had long incorporated light-hearted or satirical references to Japanese art history as part of his appropriation-based artistic strategies.

Together, all the exhibitions mentioned above challenge the old working premise of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western modernism, which treated the persistence of "tradition" as a form of conservatism. Yet, as others have noted, the celebration of Japan's successful mastery of modernism while maintaining the authentic elements of Japanese culture is a trope found in both Orientalist and nationalist discourse.⁸ The many expectations supporting "tradition" oblige us to look, once again, at recent developments in the field.

Tradition in a Globalizing Art World

Even more so than a decade ago, global modernity and contemporary art have come into their own as clearly

6 Tanabe Chikuunsai IV, *Japanese Bamboo Art: The Abbey Collection*, 13 June 2017–4 February 2018; Fukami Sueharu, *A Sensitivity to the Seasons: Spring and Summer*, 17 December 2005–4 June 2006, and *Birds in the Art of Japan*, 2 February 2013–28 July 2013. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

7 Weisenfeld, "Reinscribing Tradition," p. 372.

8 Weisenfeld, "Reinscribing Tradition"; Weisenfeld, "Publicity and Propaganda"; Yiengpruksawan, Review of *Nihonga*.

defined fields of collecting, curation, and display. Experts have expanded their purviews to admit works previously deemed lacking in the ability to “fit with the narrative,” a phrase that modern art curatorial staff in Chicago and Los Angeles used circa 2010 when explaining to me why certain pieces, although actively acquired by the museum, had not yet appeared in the exhibition galleries.⁹ “Modern,” observed Bruno Latour, is “doubly asymmetrical: it designates a break in the regular passage of time, and it designates a combat in which there are victors and vanquished.”¹⁰ In the current museum climate of culturally pluralistic narratives, the concept of tradition has developed in tandem with changes to the definition of modern or contemporary art, which is expanding to accommodate what Latour might describe as new victors.

In a similar vein, historian Dipesh Chakrabarty has suggested that amid the tendency to narrate history in a more trans-regional fashion, modernity has become a prize awarded by the reviewer or historian. Chakrabarty evokes the image of clipboard-wielding historians who vet objects of study from around the globe according to a checklist of laudatory “modern” qualities. As historians introduce this imaginary checklist to an ever-expanding roster of geographical regions and historical moments, says Chakrabarty, a choice emerges: either we can “dilute” the definition of modernity so that it applies more broadly, or we can revert to the earlier model, rooted in Marxism, of deploying modernity as an exclusionary criterion.¹¹ Under the latter model, modernity is conferred on some societies and withheld from others who fail to meet the criteria. Understanding that historians will continue to apply and debate the term, Chakrabarty urges scholars to maintain academic precision around the concept of the modern even as they avoid the pitfalls of Western centrism. He cites the words of historian Sheldon Pollock:

There is no doubt that the non-West participated in major ways in the material transformation that marked modernity as a global phenomenon ... [but] it seems that modernity across Asia may have shown simultaneity without symmetry. But should this symmetry turn out to reveal continuity and

9 Foxwell, “Crossings and Dislocations.”

10 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, p. 10.

11 Chakrabarty, “The Muddle of Modernity.”

not rupture, no need to lament the fact. There is no shame in premodernity.¹²

Chakrabarty lets this statement hit without weighing in on it directly. Is Pollock counseling Asia to be satisfied with its own ostensibly limited modernity? By beginning with the image of undifferentiated “non-Western” parties sharing in the achievement of Western modernism, it would seem that the outcome of his narrative is predetermined. Further, by implying that there are varied but simultaneous discourses of early modernity based on region, this approach would appear to justify the old disciplinary model of each historian remaining tied to his or her geographical area of specialization. This old approach is intellectually limiting and leaves intact the privileged position of the non-“non-West.”

Pollock goes on to propose intellectual rupture, the ability to think of the past as something separate from and critically removed from oneself, as a major criterion of modernity.¹³ His thesis also reflects the terms on which members of the Paris-, Berlin-, London-, or New York-based contemporary art world have judged or segregated tradition-based artists, who are mostly from non-Western or indigenous communities located in other parts of the globe and maintain a distance, unintentional or intentional, from the world’s most financially and culturally active centers for contemporary art.¹⁴ The artist Nicholas Galanin (b. 1979), a member of the Northwest Coast Tlingit indigenous population, has called attention to the unspoken assumptions shaping impressions of the type of person who produces “traditional” art. One of Galanin’s most frequently exhibited works is *White Carver*, a piece that puts a white woodworker on view in the galleries to demonstrate traditional whittling techniques (figure 1). The incongruousness of seeing a member of the white Euro-American majority population producing wooden handcrafts in an art museum environment compels viewers to revisit their expectations about whose “tradition” is enshrined therein. Many of Galanin’s works leverage his status as a contributing member of two

12 Pollock, cited in Chakrabarty, “The Muddle of Modernity,” p. 671.

13 For evidence and an elaboration of this argument, see Bann, *The Clothing of Clio*.

14 For an attempt to compile a list of such cities, which, however defined, are by no means confined to the “West” (but which do not, in fact, contain any cities in Japan), see Artsy Editors, “The 15 Most Influential Art Cities of 2015”; see also Gray, “China Has Overtaken the U.K.”



Figure 1. Nicholas Galanin. *White Carver*. 2016. Mixed media. Photograph courtesy of Nicholas Galanin, with permission to publish.



Figure 2. Nicholas Galanin. *Indian Children's Bracelets*. 2014. Metalwork. Portland Art Museum, accession number 2014.130.1. Reproduced with permission of the artist.

usually separate groups of artists: the producers of Tlingit wood and metal objects, and conceptual artists throughout the globe. His trenchant works, as in *Indian Children's Bracelets*, a pair of hand-wrought metalwork handcuffs (figure 2), offer strategies relevant to tradition-based artists in Japan and from other locales outside modern art's historic Euro-American center.¹⁵

Similar to Galanin, the six artists featured in Szostak's *Imayō* exhibition of contemporary Japanese art embrace and extend materials and techniques transmitted from the past. Like Galanin, their subject matter prompts viewers to do a double-take, either by questioning what viewers are hoping to get out of tradition, or by topicalizing distinctly contemporary issues, as in

¹⁵ Fidler, "Stumbling Through a Stony Field." See also Russel, *Shapeshifting*.

Competitive Society by Ishii Tōru 石井亨 (b. 1981) (figure 3). Ishii's wax-resist Yūzen-dyed silks reflect years of training in carefully transmitted techniques. The designs feature imagery from the Japanese past that has literally been warped. In *Competitive Society: Sararīman*, Japanese white-collar employees, are inflected with the features of samurai warriors and pixelated and stretched in ways that evoke the use of picture-editing software. In various ways, the other artists in the *Imayō* exhibition similarly combine technical and sometimes iconographic continuity with thematic or conceptual rupture, thereby creating their own means of both embracing and questioning inherited ideas. This art leaves behind the formalism of late twentieth-century Japanese *kōgei* 工芸 (craft) and commands the viewer's self-consciousness.

Similarly, Kimura Ryōko's works, also featured in the *Imayō* exhibition, use detailed, labor-intensive modern *nihonga* techniques to provoke discussion about the objectification and idealization of women and of agrarian labor that dominated prewar *nihonga* and are perpetu-



Figure 3. Ishii Tōru. *Competitive Society*. 2014. Yūzen resist dyed silk. H 160 cm, W 100 cm. Photograph by Ishii Tōru, with permission to publish.



Figure 4. Kimura Ryōko. *Boys Paradise: East*. 2011. One of a pair of folding screens. Ink, mineral pigments, gold leaf on paper. H 207 cm, W 406 cm. Photograph courtesy of Kimura Ryōko, with permission to publish.

ated even today by contemporary *nihonga's* successful, male-dominated cohort (figure 4). In contrast to contemporary Japanese textile art and pictures of (female) beauties (*bijinga* 美人画), which maintain continuities with past iconography, functions, and techniques, the works of Ishii, Kimura, and in some cases Galanin accomplish the continuity of technique while breaking with the concepts and functions of past art. Instead of supporting male patriarchal heterosexual desire through *bijinga* painting, textile production for use as garments, or Tlingit crafts that aid in the objectification of a passive indigenous population, these new tradition-based works address the contemporary art market and perform the type of intellectual rupture that Pollock identifies as modern.

Tradition-Based Art and Social Critique

The works of Ishii, Kimura, and Galanin combine tradition-based techniques with social critique. In contrast to the suffering and anger embodied in the *Indian Children's Bracelet*, which represents widespread post-war U.S. policies of removing Native American children from their homes and placing them in foster care, the critique offered by Ishii and Kimura is gentle and

presumably causes little discomfort.¹⁶ Mild as it may seem, however, their venture into social commentary needs to be considered within the roughly century-old history of tradition-based art in Japan.

Ishii and Kimura, among others, represent a new generation of artists post-Murakami Takashi for whom the ironies and potential of cross-cultural marketing and exhibition have always been apparent. Having elected not to enroll in the major Japanese professional organizations for their respective fields, these artists also shoulder a greater share of the burden of securing patrons and exhibition venues. It could even be said that their efforts to define and recruit a worldwide audience for their works shaped the art itself. This can arguably be said of Murakami, who, after moving to New York, began to produce works that indirectly address the question of how foreign audiences understand Japanese art. Cross-cultural understanding of Japan and Japanese art also figure prominently in the work of Tenmyouya Hisashi, whose work arose connected to the art of Japanese tattoos and consequently to *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 styles of the shogunal (Edo) era, and to Teraoka Masami, an artist from Hiroshima who attended

¹⁶ See, for example, Hearn, *Ink Art*.



Figure 5. Teraoka Masami. *McDonald's Hamburgers Invading Japan: Chōchin-me*. 1982. Thirty-six color screenprint. H 54 cm, W 36.4 cm. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

art school in California and later moved to Hawaii. For such artists, playing with references to past art and producing works that are visibly Japanese was intimately related to their own experiences with cultural identity, self-marketing, and expectations from the Euro-American-centered art world of the late twentieth century.

In his New York exhibition *Little Boy: Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture* (2005), Murakami held that Japanese *otaku* おたく (catering to people with obsessive interests) and *kawaii* 可愛い (cute) subcultures are symptomatic of certain ills or challenges in postwar and contemporary Japanese society. He has also encouraged (Japanese) viewers who have expressed disgust with or hesitation at his works to consider directing those sentiments back toward Japan or to the Japanese art world as a whole: "I'm representing the current situation of Japan. It's proof that I was born and grew up in such

a place."¹⁷ Murakami entered Tokyo University of the Arts in 1982, well prior to the internet age. Compared to Ishii and Kimura, he represents an earlier phase in the experience of producing Japanese contemporary art, and particularly *nihonga*, in simultaneity with art in New York. In a 2002 interview with curator Hélène Kelmachter, Murakami looked back on his first residency in New York, describing the misunderstanding and unnecessary seriousness with which the American art world approached his attempts at absurdity and meaninglessness:

When I created the character of Mr. Dob out of that meaningless pun ... I was convinced that I would have no trouble finding a way into the contemporary art scene in the U.S. I thought I'd be recognized as a Japanese "slapstick artist" who made absurd puns ... but I soon realized that this stuff didn't work over there at all ... art world people over there listened to it all very seriously, all the more so since it was formulated in Japanese. And so I gave up using the character of Mr. Dob over there.... But I found myself thinking more and more about my cultural background.¹⁸

Murakami describes the trial-and-error process by which he began to produce and present art that would reach English- or French-speaking audiences, all the while coming to new conclusions about his cultural identity and the animation and manga that had captivated him in the 1970s and 1980s. Murakami's New York exhibition *Little Boy: Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture* should likewise be read in light of the artist's experiences in New York. "What I am trying to create is neither commercially acceptable nor sustainable in Japan," he said in his 2000 interview with Mako Wakasa. He speculated that non-Japanese, on the other hand, "listen to me" with a sort of anthropological fascination, "because they want to understand" contemporary Japan and *otaku* culture.¹⁹

When Murakami produced his PhD thesis on *nihonga* in 1993, he was already making use of his initial brief experience in New York to gain a fresh perspective on the place of Japanese art, and particularly of *nihonga*

17 Wakasa, "Interview with Takashi Murakami."

18 Kelmachter, "Interview with Takashi Murakami."

19 Wakasa, "Interview with Takashi Murakami."

(his own area of specialization) in the international art world.²⁰ Perhaps not since 1904, when Yokoyama Taikan 横山大観 (1868–1958) and Hishida Shunsō 菱田春草 (1874–1911) gained a positive reception in New York and Boston with their tonalist works, had *nihonga* artists seriously considered making their main audience outside Japan.

When viewing the paintings of Kimura or the woodblock-print-style works of Tenmyouya Hisashi, it is relevant to recall the mid-1970s screen prints of Teraoka Masami, which juxtaposed images of traditional Japanese culture in a *ukiyo-e* style with the logos and products of McDonald's, then spreading rapidly in Japan (figure 5). Further, while Teraoka's works provoke reflection on and possibly critique of globalization, the direct juxtaposition of a visibly "traditional" Japanese *ukiyo-e* mode and an icon of American-born fast food ensured that his prints themselves became easily consumable global commodities that required almost no cultural interpretation.

Today, the market for *nihonga* within Japan has contracted, while the ease of circulating images and people worldwide has led to an unprecedented degree of simultaneity. Just because images and people can travel, however, does not mean that the same work of contemporary art is equally legible in all places. Within this reality, and under the pressure of self-marketing, certain artists naturally experiment with the channels of communication.

As they address the expectations of diverse international and Japanese audiences, artists such as Kimura and Ishii have developed certain shared characteristics. Their work produced for *Imayō* is, first, visually Japanese in appearance; second, a source of minimally offensive social critique and intellectual stimulation; and third, demonstrative of inherited craft techniques demanding intense labor and skill. Further, as the artist Aida Makoto 会田誠 (b. 1965) discovered in the course of satirizing the *bijinga* and *sensōga* 戦争画 (war propaganda paintings) genres, paintings "of girls" (*onna no ko* 女の子)—attractive or sexualized girls—sell well. We might call this the libidinal plus-alpha, and it appears in Kimura's works, albeit with the added benefit of upending gender stereotypes: drawing on the legitimacy of early modern Japanese erotica (*shunga* 春画) and erotic contemporary Japanese fan fiction, Kimura's

more explicitly sexualized images of beautiful young men (*bidanshi* 美男子) (not shown in the *Imayō* exhibition) literally address an undersupply in the modern and contemporary high art market, which was long focused on images of beautiful women.²¹

In this way, the smartly critical and visually Japanese works of the *Imayō* artists fit a certain model of contemporary artists who critically engage with "tradition" around the globe. Yet Szostak relates that Ishii, Kimura, and the other *Imayō* artists considered themselves outliers who had difficulty finding their place in the Japanese art world.²² Murakami and Aida's success notwithstanding, critically and intellectually ambitious work was not common among artists of *nihonga* and *kōgei*; these artists typically devoted a decade or more of their lives to mastering techniques transmitted from the past, and their artistic activities are closely monitored by professional organizations such as Nitten 日展, the Japan Art Institute (Nihon Bijutsuin 日本美術院), or the Japan Kōgei Association (Nihon Kōgeikai 日本工芸会). In exchange for controlling supply and pricing and providing access to patrons, these professional organizations have enforced a respectful, apolitical stance toward artistic production and society as a whole. The seniority system on which they are based, moreover, arguably runs counter to the premise of modernism, which has historically entailed irreverence toward (or revolt against) the senior generation. The rhetoric of respect established by artists' professional organizations is couched in terms of respect for time-honored techniques, for the senior artists who have carried on the trade, and for the patrons of traditional craft wares. This generalized atmosphere of respect, however, tacitly extends to encompass the personal lives and actions of the member artists, making it difficult for them to engage in activism or critique. Consequently, tradition-based craft and painting had also established a legacy of formalism that refrains from commentary on current events.

Despite an official commitment to Japanese techniques and materials from the past, the mainstream craft objects and *nihonga* of the professional organizations are in many ways distant from the techniques, subject matter, and functions of past art.²³ As an ex-

20 Murakami, *Little Boy*.

21 Aida et al., *Makoto Aida: Cynic in the Playground*.

22 Szostak, personal communication, November 2016.

23 Foxwell, "The Painting of Sadness?"; Furuta, *Nihonga to wa nan datta no ka*; Kitazawa, "Rettō" no kaiga.

ample, we can turn to Murakami Yūji 村上裕二 (b. 1964), the younger brother of Murakami Takashi. In contrast to the elder Murakami's youthful antipathy toward *nihonga* as an artistic and pedagogical institution, Murakami Yūji became a prize-winning member of the Japan Art Institute, the group that had been founded by Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覚三 (1862–1913) in the Meiji period in order to raise the profile of tradition-based modern Japanese painting. The younger Murakami's painting *Kazeiro* 風色 (The Color of the Wind, 1996, ink and mineral pigments on board) represents the features of twentieth-century *nihonga* that the well-funded and seniority-based Japan Art Institute maintained across decades through its carefully selected juries.²⁴ Murakami Yūji applied intense mineral pigments and ink washes based on transmitted methods, while the painting's compositional framework and draftsmanship adhere to European standards. The use of a bird's-eye perspective to skew the picture surface toward the ground plane might allude to East Asian art, but the painting's spatial logic is European, and it does not necessarily depict Japan. The work's serenity and its lack of strong movements or emotions are deeply familiar within the genre of *nihonga* painting.²⁵

In a sentiment that echoes Galanin's frustration with the limits observed by Tlingit artists today, Murakami Takashi wrote with exasperation in 1993 that most of his classmates seemingly never even bothered to reflect on the definition of *nihonga* or on what they, as artists in the present day, were trying to achieve through their careers.²⁶ But here, I would argue, Murakami Takashi's youthful critique of *nihonga*'s limits is only part of the story. We must entertain the possibility that artists like Murakami Yūji or countless others were not remiss when it came to thinking critically about what they were doing; rather, bolstered by membership in professional organizations and the attendant networks of teachers, students, and patrons, their works represent a conscious choice to eschew the deep-seated cynicism, self-awareness, and social critique that we have come to expect from the *Imayō* artists or from Murakami Takashi. The conscious choice to avoid contentious or unsettling topics despite their high level of repute among critics and curators worldwide might also be

related to what scholars such as Kitazawa Noriaki, Satō Dōshin, Adachi Gen, and Mori Hitoshi have linked, in discussions of both art and craft, to the unhappy history of *bijutsu* 美術, the formal concept and system of the fine arts that was imposed through government arts policy in a top-down fashion. In the process of imposing *bijutsu*, officials marginalized *kōgei* and effectively blocked the avant-garde by refusing to provide a platform for art that flouted conservative expectations of political, social, and moral propriety.²⁷ From the Meiji period through the post-bubble era, the Japanese government's outlay of funding and institutional planning for the fine arts was guided by the expectation that artists would edify the public and support a positive image of Japan on the world stage rather than highlighting problems in Japanese society, history, or politics. This is a tradition that goes back to the Meiji period. In this sense, I would like to suggest that the reposeful formalism and other predominant visual qualities in tradition-based contemporary art cannot be fully ascribed to a lack of self-examination. They also reflect the will to create something else: a third thing that is neither the heavily policed, public realm of *bijutsu*, nor the unsettling, intellectually demanding world of critically ambitious contemporary art. In positive terms, this third thing might be expressed as a work that constructs and engulfs the viewer in a harmonious, meditative environment encouraging the suspension rather than the activation of critical self-consciousness. This type of work can be termed immersive.

Patronage and the Immersive Art Environment

Modernist art has repeatedly sought to surround and absorb the viewer in an immersive environment that represents, at times, the dissolution of boundaries between art and life; and at times has asked viewers to reflect on modes of attention, display, and interaction between a work and themselves.²⁸ From the philosophy and studio environment of Piet Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism in the 1920s to Kurt Schwitters' *Merzbau* of the

24 "Murakami Yūji," Taigadō. <http://www.masacor.com/taigado/murakami.html>.

25 Foxwell, "The Painting of Sadness?"

26 Foxwell, "The Total Work of Art."

27 Kitazawa, *Me no shinden*; Satō, *Modern Japanese Art*; Adachi, *Zen'ei no idenshi*; Mori, *Nihon 'kōgei' no kindai*; Kitazawa, "The Genesis of the *Kōgei* (Craft) Genre."

28 See the discussion of modern display modes in Sutton, *The Experience Machine*, pp. 147ff.

1930s, Stan VanDerBeek's *Movie-Drome* of the late 1960s, and James Turrell's "skyspaces" of the 1970s onward, inhabitable, immersive works have a long history in modernism and need not be associated with the suspension of judgment and criticality; indeed, a work like the *Movie-Drome* was designed to activate the spectator through the simultaneous and open-ended presentation of multiple images and image types which could not be reconciled or resolved into a single thesis.²⁹

Even so, modernism's endorsement of classical, restrained, and contemplative viewing environments and universal concepts has at times migrated to the realm of generalized spirituality or actual religious devotion. Often, this migration occurs through patronage and public audiences, as with the overwhelming success of the concrete Church of the Light (1989) by Andō Tadao 安藤忠雄 (b. 1941), or, as art historian Anna Chave has observed, with the Dia Foundation's extensive support of American Minimalist art. Chave has pointed out the extent to which the Minimalists' most prominent patrons, Heiner and Fariha Friedrich, who founded the Dia Foundation, "[employ] words like holiness, truth, clarity, beauty and inspiration" when discussing land-based art and other sites to which visitors can journey to view Minimalist art.³⁰

In Japan, where the art market is much smaller and artists even more susceptible to pressures from influential patrons or sponsors, the migration of modernist self-referentiality into the zone of spiritualism has occurred with some regularity and arguably has its roots in prewar patronage, which was heavily patterned on tea gatherings (*chanoyu* 茶の湯; the tea ceremony). The Japanese art collector and entrepreneur Fukutake Sōichirō 福武總一郎 (b. 1945), who conceived and funded the art museums on Naoshima, showed a longing to create spiritually uplifting spaces of modern and contemporary art; like the Friedrichs, he patronized the American West Coast artist Walter de Maria (1935–2013) and invited him to design site-specific works for his museums. In this sense, Chave might as well have included Fukutake when she wrote, "the Minimalists' primary patrons successfully ensured a fuller development of a spiritualized and epic chapter to the Minimalist story than would otherwise have been possible."³¹

The fact that patrons, when purchasing contemporary art, might also be seeking to purchase a source of spiritual or somatic regulation has been downplayed or indirectly criticized in the discourse on contemporary art. This is likely due, as media historian Paul Roquet has noted, "to the resistance toward mood found in much twentieth-century modernism."³² By contrast, notes Roquet, "in 1980s Japan, people began using a wide range of media with the specific aim of mood regulation," including background music and ambient music. The turn to music, art installation, and digitally altered environments in order to achieve solace and spiritual equilibrium also relates to what architectural historian Jonathan Reynolds has described as "the relentless pursuit of a cultural 'lost home' in modern urban Japanese visual culture since the 1940s."³³ No longer embodied in an inhabitable physical structure from the past, the allegorical home, the space of inner peace and belonging, needed to be recreated through architecture, art installation, poetry, and other media, which collectively gave rise to the image of the Tokyo urban nomad, someone whose place of rest was ideally a mobile, sparse, and capsule-like resting place for the physical and somatic self, "small, self-contained modules that provided minimal shelter from their urban environment."³⁴ Even as modern and contemporary artists and art critics emphasized the autonomy of the work and its maker, patrons and viewers saw themselves as purchasing or accessing an experience that would have a positive effect on their lived reality.

The attentiveness of modern Japanese art collectors to mood and to the construction of a mood-regulating environment through art, architecture, and garden design has strong prewar antecedents. The late medieval to early modern Japanese teahouse (*cha'an* 茶庵), and the experience of the tea gathering generally, was a focal point of most major private art collectors from the Meiji era onward.³⁵ The teahouse was at once a compact art exhibition space and a building small and intricate enough to be treated and collected like an object; at the same time, it served as an antidote to the "displayism" of modern museum and gallery spaces through its functional engagement of three-dimensional objects and visitors. Finally, given its close relation to Zen

29 On the genesis of the modern spectator and modes of attention, see Cray, *Techniques of the Observer*.

30 Chave, "Revaluing Minimalism," p. 474.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 479–80.

32 Roquet, *Ambient Media*, p. 16.

33 Reynolds, *Allegories of Time and Space*, p. 189.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 189.

35 Guth, *Art, Tea, and Industry*.

practice, the teahouse was, unabashedly, a spiritual refuge. As such, tea practice was, quite literally, an instant sell for the industrialist art collectors and founders of Japan's first private museums. The teahouse also represented the fusion of traditional crafts, modernist aesthetics, and spirituality: what Okakura Kakuzō interpreted as "teatism" to English-speaking audiences as early as 1906.³⁶

While Japanese tea practice is brimming with ethnic particularity, it also served as an antidote to the ethnic particularism that threatened to dominate discussions of tradition-based artistic production in the mid-twentieth century. In postwar Japan, the faith healer Okada Mokichi 岡田茂吉 (1882–1955), founder of the MOA Museum of Art in Atami, openly named art, tea, care for the environment, and the commitment to organic farming as essential accompaniments to spiritual devotion. Okada's vision, like Fukutake's, was universal and nationless, addressing believers and art audiences across Asia and the world even while committing to support the continuation of tradition-based Japanese arts and crafts, and the overall environmental, spiritual, and financial health of the Japanese countryside.

The cosmopolitan patronage of Okada or Fukutake accommodated tradition-based works among the patronage of other types of art. Okada supported tradition-based contemporary craft. Fukutake was a supporter of artist Lee Ufan 李禹煥 (b. 1936), whose *From Line* and *From Point* series, although sometimes referencing ink techniques or incorporating Asian mineral pigments, "owe[d] no debt to the incorporation of symbols or signs whose meanings are derived and perpetuated by the world outside of the painting."³⁷ Lee's work represented, in the words of Joan Kee, "a desire for freedom" from cooptation as an agent of the modern, ethnically based nation-state.³⁸ But the key comes in understanding that these relationships are not fully reciprocal: while the collecting philosophy of a patron such as Fukutake or the Friedrichs can embrace Lee Ufan or Donald Judd, these artists, working autonomously to explore visual ideas through their work, typically resisted cooptation by spirituality, the objectives of a powerful patron, or other manifestations of "the world outside of the painting."

In sum, prevailing scholarship casts a jaundiced eye toward idealist collectors who attempt to situate abstract and contemporary art within a transcendent, immersive space, but this form of patronage had been well established in Japan since the prewar era, when wealthy collectors designed private art museums for their collections, sometimes on the grounds of their own former estates, to be complemented by a strolling garden and the culture and architecture of tea gatherings.³⁹ Though art historians like Chave call attention to tension between the work of art's individual project and the collector's broader designs toward spiritualism, the transcendent, immersive aesthetic is both prominent and historically grounded within Japanese contemporary art.

From Criticality Toward Transcendence

This section considers a number of recent works, whether serious or lighthearted in nature, that focus on what Roquet has described as the "mediated provision of calm," and seem to entail the alleviation from psychological strain, accompanied by the suspension or allaying of aggressive criticality and self-consciousness. The Tokyo-based group teamLab is key to thinking about the prominence of ambient and transcendent aesthetics in the art world and their long-standing relationship both to tradition-based contemporary art and to decades-old Japanese patterns of private collecting and aesthetic appreciation. In the work featured in their 2016 Japan Society New York exhibition, the teamLab programmers and artists used interactive digital panels to engage and extend premodern Japanese visual and spatial concepts and in some cases even recreate specific masterpieces of past Japanese art. As the ultimate expression of the postmodern state of the arts, in which many top art and music school graduates secure jobs in the world of video game design, teamLab was originally not beholden to any institutional expectation that their work function as gallery art; in Seoul, their exhibit can be found within the theme park Lotte World; with the support of Mori Building Co., Ltd., they recently installed *teamLab Borderless*, a multi-room exhibition

36 Okakura, *The Book of Tea*.

37 Kee, "Points, Lines," p. 418.

38 Ibid.

39 Such museums include Seikadō Bunko in Tokyo (f. 1924), Nezu in Tokyo (f. 1941), Yamato Bunkakan in Nara (f. 1946), and Dai Tōkyū Bunko (f. 1949).

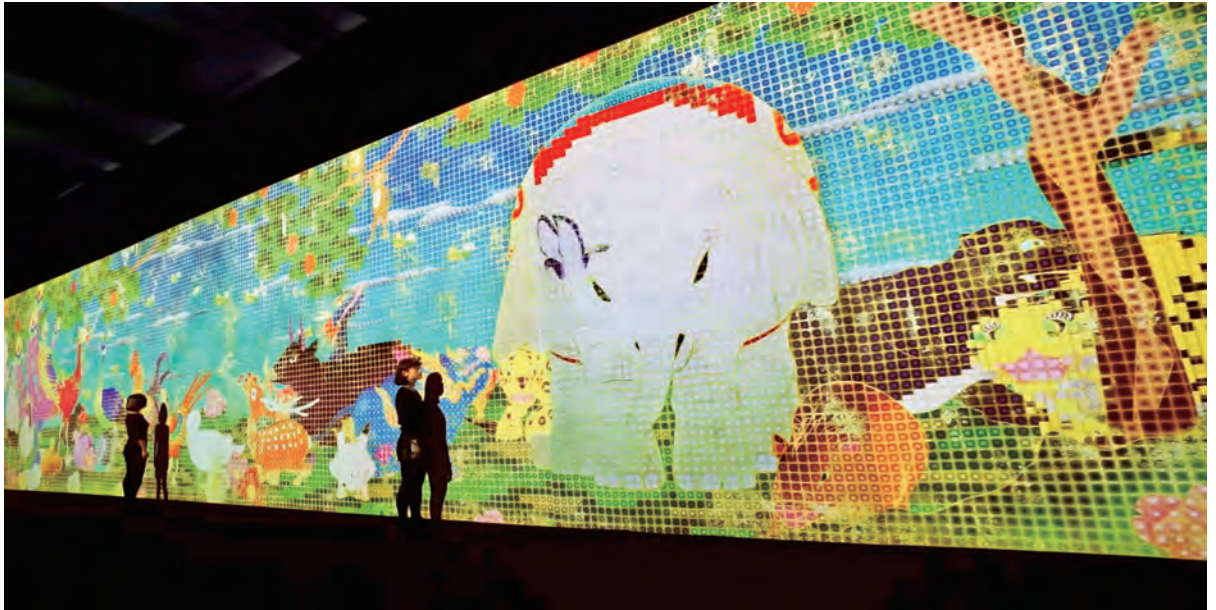


Figure 6. teamLab. *Nirvana*. 2013. Digital work, 8 channels, 6 min. 20 sec. (loop). Website: <https://www.teamlab.art/w/nirvana>. Photograph courtesy of teamLab, with permission to publish.

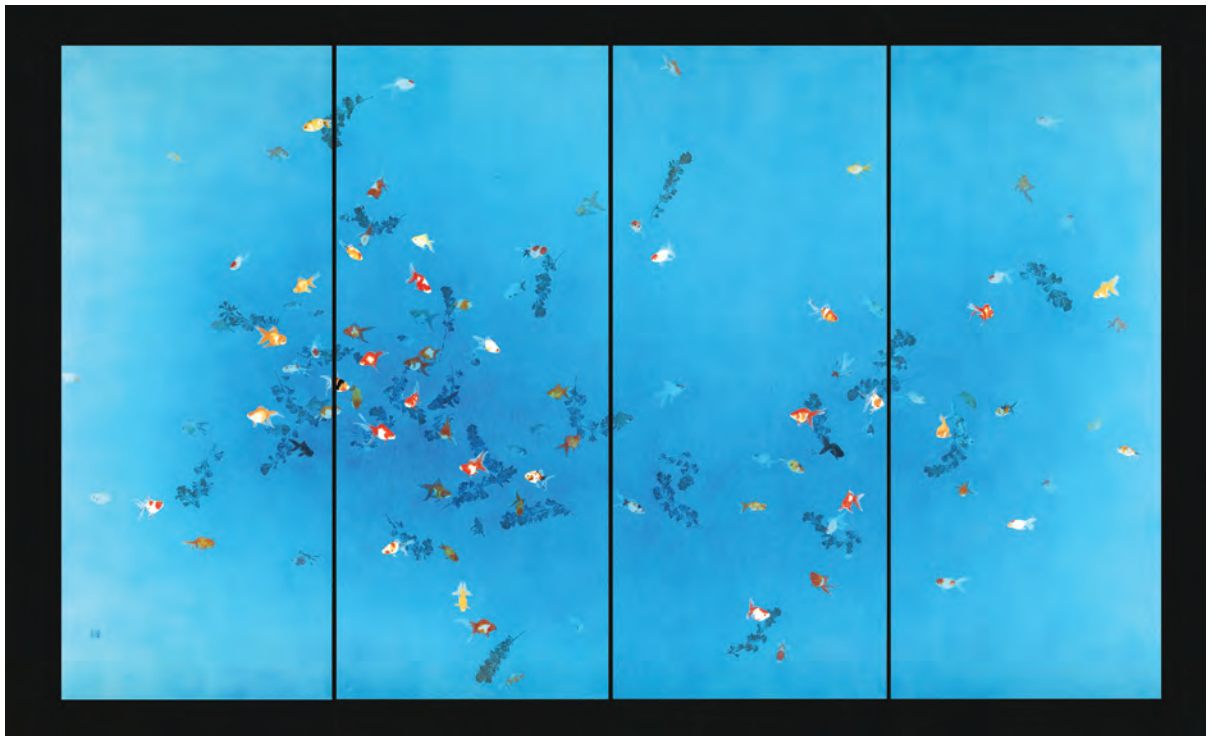


Figure 7. Kambe Tomoyuki. *Wish Upon a Star (Hoshi ni negai o)*. 2010. Ink, mineral pigments, gold leaf on paper. Photograph courtesy of Kambe Tomoyuki, with permission to publish.

within the entirety of Mori's newly constructed Digital Art Museum, which is located, together with Madame Tussauds, on the attraction-laden strip of Odaiba. The work of teamLab and the enthusiasm it inspires are a prime example of an absorptive or transcendent mode in tradition-based contemporary Japanese art, a mode that is unconcerned with preserving contemporary art's aura of exclusivity and erodes the boundary between art and attraction.

The work of teamLab at the 2016 Japan Society exhibition made strong use of tradition-based iconography. In its recreation of a screen of a pair of animals by the eighteenth-century Japanese master Itō Jakuchū 伊藤若冲 (1716–1800), teamLab upped the color spectrum to fuchsia and lime green, rendered the animals in slightly more rounded forms and cuter expressions, and programmed the image so that the animals moved, breathed, and gently responded to the viewer's presence (figure 6). Viewers were enthralled as an eighteenth-century image of a paradise garden literally fluttered and breathed before them. The work does not demand historical context or critical analysis; rather, it exudes a quiet, gentle presence by simply *existing* in its marvelous way and allowing the viewer in turn to exist.

Another contemporary artist whose work embraces this absorptive, transcendent, spatially and temporally unbounded approach is the *nihonga* artist Kambe Tomoyuki, who, similar to the artists featured in *Imayō*, remains deliberately unaffiliated with Japan's powerful *nihonga* associations. Kambe exhibits in Japan and abroad through the Gallery Hirota Bijutsu. His large, multi-panel *Wish Upon a Star*, exhibited in the Okakura Tenshin Memorial Museum in Izura in 2010, is a temporally and spatially unbounded large-scale picture surface with goldfish rendered in mineral pigments, gold foil, and a translucent Japanese paint (figure 7).

The artist controlled the intensity of the glinting gold foil through exterior applications of translucent Japanese paper or powdered mineral pigments. Functioning as an experience rather than an object of scrutiny, the painting engulfs viewers like a massive aquarium or like a colossal color field painting.⁴⁰ After the work was installed, the artist led local children in the production of small goldfish out of pliable Japanese paper that were then suspended in the corridor where the work hung, illuminated by the natural light pouring in from floor-

to-ceiling glass windows. This summertime community art project converted the work from a painting to an installation, heightening the phenomenological experience of being engulfed by the work and suspended peacefully into what the artist calls its "innocent world." In interviews, Kambe has repeatedly expressed the importance of involving the community and introducing children to age-old Japanese materials like *washi* 和紙 paper, ink, and gold foil. For him, the extension of the work from the second to the third dimension was specifically also the extension of the art and of *nihonga* techniques outward into the community, and onward to the next generation.

Kambe's goldfish belong to a set of works exhibited under the title *Innocent World*, and are precisely the commitment to "innocence" that might be seen as the artist's critical contribution, however modest it may seem. This tendency, which he has no desire to abandon, also seals the artist's fate as someone who would always function in the domain of tradition-based contemporary art and never in the realm of contemporary art at large. Kambe is not ambitiously conceptual, or at least not in the vein of contemporary art usually featured at major global art biennials. His choice to exist apart from such status markers in the world of contemporary art was actually never a problem for him, or for countless top-tier *nihonga* artists before him. These artists, who command a relatively rare set of skills in the application of ground mineral pigments, were in such demand within Japan, where they also served as teachers, that it did not matter whether they had achieved recognition outside Japan so long as they remained in their *métier*.

While some may question whether the avoidance of criticism could really be a critical position, Kambe's unwavering commitment to "innocence" is in any case not naive. Kambe has emphasized that his own time is far from the *nihonga* heyday of the 1970s and 1980s, much less the 1920s or 1930s, when glittering, technically refined surfaces presented tranquil, temporally and spatially unbounded scenery, flowers, animals, and beautiful women to audiences that the late John Rosenfield described as hushed and reverent.⁴¹ In Japan's bubble years, relates Kambe, top-tier *nihonga* artists lived comfortably, even lavishly, supported by income from wealthy and sometimes reclusive private patrons.

40 Glaser, "Transcendence in the Vision."

41 Rosenfield, "Nihonga and Its Resistance."

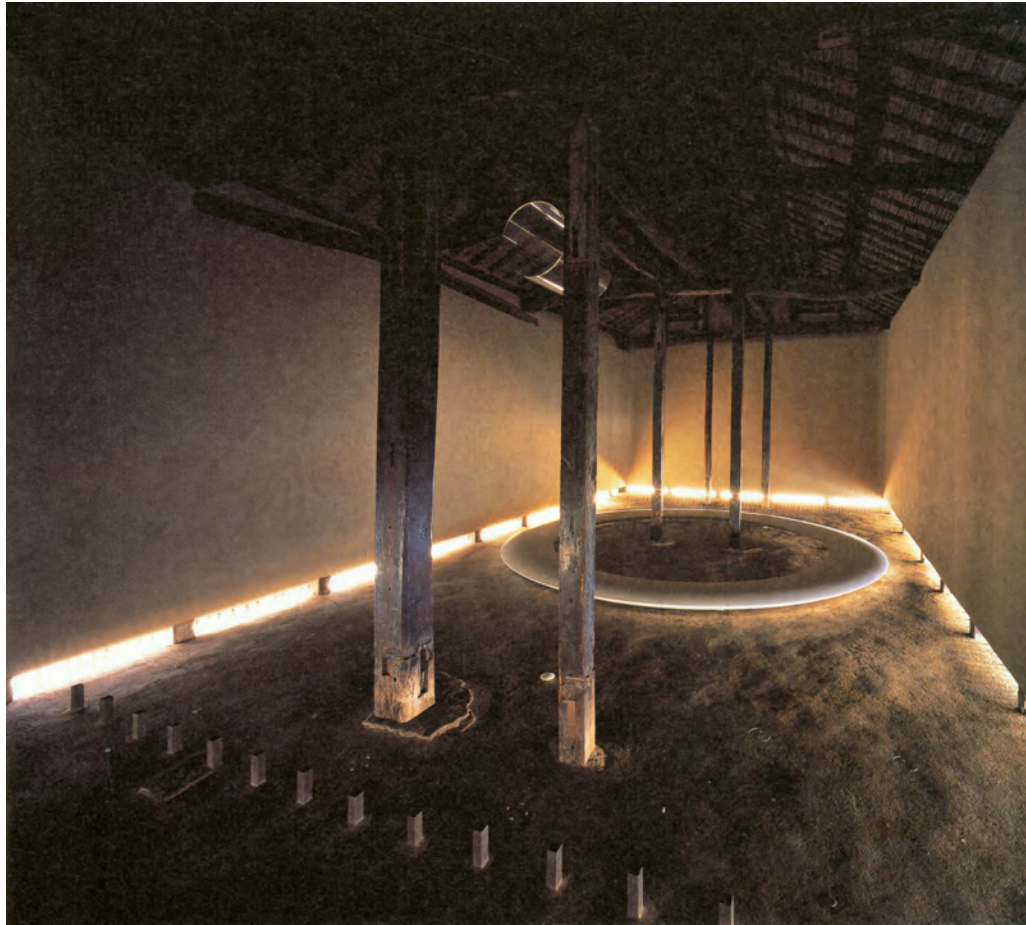


Figure 8. Naitō Rei. *Kinza (Being Given)*. 2001. Installation. Naoshima Art House Project. Photograph courtesy of Benesse/Naoshima Art House Project, with permission to publish.

Today, he notes that few professional *nihonga* painters can survive without a teaching position, even as they face continual pressure, often through their own Japanese dealers, to exhibit abroad, not only in America and Europe, but also in Hong Kong, Singapore, Beijing, and Taiwan. The shrinkage of the market in Japan and *nihonga*'s limited currency beyond the nation's borders makes us question the extent to which *nihonga* can continue to live in its own "innocent world," unconcerned with the critical trends and concerns of global contemporary art.

The overwhelming success of teamLab helps to contextualize the significance of Kambe's innocent world to an increasingly globally synchronized art market. At some point, when even criticality, self-consciousness, and cynicism become routine and universally distributed throughout the globe, just like McDonald's and

the work of Teraoka or of Murakami Takashi, the creation of a transcendent space in which time and criticality are suspended might itself be an art historically informed and critical gesture. For example, teamLab forges a connection with viewers by adopting the sentimental, idealized, and sensorily immersive environment of the Japanese role-playing video game, or RPG. On the islands of Teshima and Naoshima and in global venues, the artist Naitō Rei 内藤礼 (b. 1961) created installations such as *Being Given (Kinza きんざ)*, 2001 or *Matrix (Bokei 母型)*, 2010 where the critical contribution centers around transcendence and the suspension of the viewer in a space that offers womb-like insulation from the everyday (figure 8). These are works with the highest level of visual and conceptual ambition, but ones that banish cynicism, aggression, and self-consciousness, instead fostering a durational, meditative



Figure 9. Image by author.

experience whose foothold in the global contemporary art world can be traced back to the earlier border- and disciplinary-crossing boundaries of artists like VanDerBeek or John Cage.⁴² Further, as we can see with both Naitō and her architectural collaborator, Nishizawa Ryūe 西沢立衛 (b. 1966), a yielding, nurturing stance toward environment, materials, and the past is often conceived by the creators as persisting in spite of trends initiated by forces that are more male-dominated and corporate.

Tradition-based contemporary art has been criticized for being overly precious, uncritical, or self-Orientalizing, but I am proposing that some notable tradition-based contemporary Japanese art makes a self-conscious critical stance out of banishing cynicism and self-conscious criticality. This stance holds that there are things in need of our protection, our support, and our belief. These include the environment, rural communities, traditional craft and theater techniques, voiceless people in disadvantaged situations, and, most fundamentally, contemporary beings' own capacity to trust and believe. In advocating for the visibility and continued viability of craft and performance techniques

that have been transmitted in Japan for centuries, some tradition-based contemporary art will likely find itself in the position of thematizing its own endangered survival in a fast-paced, aggressively for-profit world, and doing so as a critical and intellectual component of the work.

A Spectrum

Art that queries the fate of Japanese tradition in a globalizing world becomes monotonous after a point—just like too many French fries. It is partly for this that we might today be witnessing the rise of an anti-critical critical turn; that is, the measured strategies of certain artists to repudiate self-consciousness in order to redirect viewer attention, create a transcendent environment, and change the tone of reception around tradition-based art. Such works fit with Roquet's definition of ambient media: "Unlike more purely utilitarian forms of 'healing' media, ambient works open up spaces within the overall calm to register a wider range of uncertainty, even anxiety."⁴³ This stance can be critical because, to quote Roquet, in contrast to "more

42 Sutton, "Stan VanDerBeek's Movie-Drome"; Martin, "The Asian Factor in John Cage's Aesthetics."

43 Roquet, *Ambient Media*, p. 18.



Figure 10. Mori Mariko. *Transcircle 1.1*. 2004. Glass, light-emitting diodes, stones, computer. Photograph by Ole Hein Pedersen provided courtesy of Mori Mariko; Sean Kelly, New York; and SCAI the Bathhouse, with permission to publish.



Figure 11. Sugimoto Hiroshi. *Appropriate Proportion (Go'o Shrine)*. 2002. Naoshima Art House Project. Photograph courtesy of Benesse/Naoshima Art House Project, with permission to publish.

straightforward 'new age' or 'healing' genres, ambient media hint that therapy culture's mediated provision of calm may ultimately be a fragile cover for larger social landscapes that are anything but relaxing.⁴⁴ Just as a commuter with earbuds or a smartphone can still respond to contingencies of the commute and thus simultaneously occupy two sensory worlds, ambient media and immersive artworks impart a calm or uplifting sensory experience without fully cancelling out the surrounding reality; stopping short of pure escapism, they highlight the strategies of escape, mood management, and self-care in which we periodically indulge in order to cope with the demands of daily life. In visual art, ambient, immersive works today have a strong affinity with or debt to works by Kusama Yayoi 草間彌生 (b. 1929), such as *Narcissus Garden* (1966–present) or *Infinity Mirror Rooms* (1965–present), and in particular the lyrical *Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity* (2009) and similar installations.

I propose a spectrum to understand the critical investments of contemporary Japanese art and of tradition-based contemporary art (figure 9). These poles diverge at the very point where, for anthropologist James-Henry Holland II, ritual diverges from theater. Holland points out that in theater, "the creativity of the individual performer is highlighted, and a critical viewing ... by the audience is encouraged."⁴⁵ By contrast, he notes that it is meaningless to attempt a performance critique, in this sense, of a religious ritual. Practitioners can invite an outsider to observe the ritual without necessarily believing, but critique is not an available option. Moving beyond tradition-based art to contemporary Japanese art at large, it is apparent that Japanese artists since the 1990s have explored the absorptive power of ritual, which stretches the boundary between "appreciation" and "belief." Examples range from Mori Mariko, who interrogates contemporary spirituality in *Transcircle 1.1*. (2004) (figure 10) to Sugimoto Hiroshi 杉本博司 (b. 1948), who stretches the boundary between architectural and religious spirituality in his restoration of Goō Shrine 護王神社 (2002) on Naoshima 直島, Kagawa Prefecture (figure 11). The ambiguities of racial and cultural identity, of political and cultural commitments, and most importantly, of belief (as the suspension of judgment) are chief concerns among the

post-economic bubble generations searching for something to invest and believe in.

At the extreme other end of the spectrum, at cynicism, we have the late 1990s works of Murakami Takashi. In the *Milk and Cream* (ca. 1998) series, for example, Murakami used a meticulous style to depict white bodily fluids projected in jagged arabesques across the matte acrylic surface of the canvas. Several pieces in these series refer to specific works of premodern Japanese art that emphasize the two-dimensionality of the picture surface through the use of dynamic lines. The young Murakami might have been the anti-Kambe, confessing a "hidden ambition of forcing *nihonga* to its death"⁴⁶ and encouraging others to see him not as an active creator, but in his words, as the flawed product of the problematic system of art education and display in postwar Japan. Yet it is significant that Murakami, since his student days in the early 1990s, was deeply concerned with the uneasy relationship between *nihonga* and contemporary art at large, even declaring in his 1993 PhD dissertation that he sought to "synchroniz[e] *Nihonga's* rules with the rules of contemporary art."⁴⁷ Since 1993, a number of artists have shown similar ambitions, successfully escaping the financial and ideological control of conservative *nihonga* groups and reaching a broader audience. The same can be said of artists working in bamboo, lacquer, textiles, ceramics, and calligraphy, and these groups have had the additional advantage of being able to reach back to the progressive 1950s to 1970s discourse of the nonfunctional *objet*.

What is most notable about the recent three-dimensional works surveyed in this exhibition is that in contrast to an artist such as Yagi Kazuo, who was catholic in his references to Euro-American, Russian, or Japanese cultural heritage, artists like Someya Satoshi 染谷聡 (b. 1983) return to the past in order to reevaluate a tradition-based medium and format like lacquer and its relation to Japanese cultural heritage. *Mr. Owanjūzaburō* (2011) is a small, nonfunctional lacquer *objet* with a golden miso soup bowl (*owan* お椀) in place of a face (figure 12). The figure sits atop a tray of rice grains and sports a severed foot; its arms are folded in defiance and its body is covered in Someya's hallmark iconography, a cryptic set of elements that seem to reference tradi-

44 Roquet, *Ambient Media*, p. 18.

45 Holland II, "A Public Tea Gathering," p. 33.

46 Murakami, "Bijutsu ni okeru," n.p.

47 Murakami, "Bijutsu ni okeru," n.p.



Figure 12. Someya Satoshi. *Mr. Owanjūzaburō*. 2011. Lacquer, gold, silver, miso soup bowl, and human hair. 30 x 30 x 64 cm. Photograph courtesy of Someya Satoshi, with permission to publish.



Figure 13. Someya Satoshi. *Displayism: Deer 2*. 2016. Lacquer, gold, silver, deer bone, and antler. 37 x 43 x 37 cm. Photograph courtesy of Someya Satoshi, with permission to publish.

tion, mythology, and violence. As a maker of the first generation of nonfunctional craft objects, Yagi firmly established the autonomy of his non-vessels; Someya's *Mr. Owanjūzaburō*, by contrast, embodies ambivalence: it represents the post-1990 trend of reflecting on the fraught boundaries between functionality and display, tradition-based and modernist art.⁴⁸ Like Murakami or Aida, Someya also asks viewers to reflect on the ideological functions of art and of iconography that looks Japanese. The appeal of such artists outside Japan shows that the questions they address have widespread currency. At the same time, these artists leave open the question of whether the global contemporary art market and art audiences can maintain interest in art that lacks any obvious visual reference to the Japanese past.

Conclusion

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Japanese artists and commentators debated whether and how Japanese art should be allowed to “progress” to the level of contemporary Western art; they also speculated about how the emphasis on preserving past techniques could possibly be combined with young artists' ambitions to create something new and unprecedented (*shinki* 新奇, *kakushin* 革新).⁴⁹ In the early 1900s and again in the 1950s, some people opined that the past was crippling Japanese art.

At the same time, as Someya alludes to in his *Displayism* series, the intense changes of the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and beyond made it difficult for twentieth-century Japanese creators to establish a sense of total continuity with Edo-period artists and craftspeople. Before the institution of public exhibitions modeled on the world's fairs and other European exhibitions began in the early 1870s, there were few spaces in Japan where an artist would have been obliged to produce a painting or vessel and show it to a vast number of unfamiliar viewers. The lacquered deer in Someya's *Displayism* series allude to the disjuncture and distortion that continue to accompany lacquer arts' fundamental shift from the temple or individual patron's home to the exhibition space: one forlorn-looking deer in Someya's series

gleams with lavish *maki-e* 蒔絵 (lacquer with sprinkled decoration), but its feet are composed of weathered and eroded driftwood. Another deer in the series has no head, but only a delicate antler that morphs directly into a lacquered body covered in minutely detailed but cryptic Japanese-style iconographic elements (figure 13). A third *Displayism* work consists of a deer skull that underwent *kintsugi* 金継ぎ, the lacquer and gold repairs reserved for precious objects. Rather than restoring the skeleton, however, Someya's *kintsugi* interventions seem to highlight its macabre state.

In “The Muddle of Modernity,” Chakrabarty writes:

Modernity in the West thus alludes to two separate projects that are symbiotically connected. One refers to processes of building the institutions (from parliamentary and legal institution to roads, capitalist businesses, and factories) that are invoked when we speak of modernization. The other refers to the development of a degree of reflective, judgmental thinking about these processes. The latter is what is often invoked by the term “modernity.”⁵⁰

Japanese art entered the age of modernist self-reflection and analysis in the 1890s, when artists outside Europe and America's great metropolises were rarely afforded consideration. Within Japan, there were limits on free expression and the domination of the art market and exhibition spaces by politically and artistically conservative forces whose power continued into the postwar era.⁵¹ In the wake of this fraught history, some critically and financially successful works of modern Japanese art used large, alluring surfaces, the suspension of time, and, eventually, an immersive environment to minimize self-consciousness and reflection on problems such as whether and how art must address the problem of a modern construct called “tradition.”

In their spirituality and transcendentalism, such works trace a partial legacy back to the *nihonga* of the 1910s to 1930s that, particularly in the folding screen format, began to envelop the viewer in a motionless, geographically unbounded and peaceful space (figure 14).⁵² If these *nihonga* works can be seen as occupying one end of a spectrum, the other end of the spectrum

48 In art history, these reflections were stimulated by works by Kitazawa (*Me no shinden*), Satō (*Modern Japanese Art*), and Mori (*Nihon “koge” no kindai*), among others.

49 Foxwell, “The Painting of Sadness?” pp. 34–35.

50 Chakrabarty, “The Muddle of Modernity,” p. 669.

51 Kitazawa, “The Genesis of the *Kōgei* (Craft) Genre.”

52 Foxwell, “The Painting of Sadness?”



Figure 14. Tsuchida Bakusen. *Spring*. 1920. Ink and mineral pigments on silk; framed triptych. Kodansha Noma Memorial Museum.

contains art such as Murakami's or Aida's from the mid-1990s to around 2010, which cite tradition only to make viewers aware of the culturally essentialist forces behind it. Somewhere in the middle, Kimura Ryōko and Someya Satoshi transmit time-honored techniques and attitudes from the past, but they also call attention to the modern institutional history that forever changed Edo-period Japanese painting, lacquerware, textile design, and other mediums. If modernism, as Chakrabarty notes, almost always involves some degree of self-conscious "judgmental thinking" about one's own *modus operandi*, then the artists featured in the *Garden of Unearthly Delights* and *Imayō* exhibitions have no trouble meeting those criteria. It remains to be seen, however, whether the global contemporary art world has room for contemporary Japanese artists who are not interested in "tradition."

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Justin Jesty. *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan*. Cornell University Press, 2018.

Namiko Kunimoto. *The Stakes of Exposure: Anxious Bodies in Postwar Japanese Art*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

BOOK REVIEW BY REBECCA JENNISON

ART and *Engagement in Early Postwar Japan* and *The Stakes of Exposure: Anxious Bodies in Postwar Japanese Art* are both ambitious and original works that make important contributions to the fields of art history, social history, and cultural and media studies in postwar Japan. Both works build on groundbreaking studies of avant-garde art in Japan and raise questions about the “frame” of discourse on such art in English-language-based studies.¹ At the same time, the approach and methodology of the two authors differ in significant ways.

Jesty looks at the period from 1945 to 1960 in an in-depth exploration of three movements in the early postwar era that set the stage for the emergence of what later came to be called *gendai āto* 現代アート (contemporary art). He argues that a clearer understanding of this dynamic and complex period is critically important, especially one that includes an analysis of critical forms of social engagement that are often associated with left-wing movements sometimes elided from later histories. This is not only for a more complete under-

standing of the past, but also to understand the present.

Kunimoto focuses on two key words—“exposure” and “anxious bodies”—to discuss the work of four artists whose works span the period 1930–1970; the author’s aim is to shed new light on “some of the most visually compelling, politically surprising, and often overlooked” (p. 16) works by these artists, paying close attention to the effects of the changing social context (including media) on their works.

Art and Engagement offers timely and urgent insights into the complexities of the early postwar era. Based on years of research and fieldwork, the volume enables the reader to understand ways in which a range of artistic and cultural practices initiated by collective action and movements during the postwar period are inextricably intertwined with the history of art in that period. This 326-page volume consists of an introduction, four parts that are further divided into fourteen chapters, and an epilogue; two sets of eight color plates provide the reader with quality images that complement the analysis in the text. Jesty’s engaging writing style guides the reader on a journey through the early postwar period where they discover a wealth of new information, including references to important primary sources, interviews, and critical cultural theory.

The introduction begins with a detailed, vivid description of Maruki Iri 丸木位里 (1901–1995) and

¹ See, for example, Tomii, “Historicizing ‘Contemporary Art’ in the 1960s”; Winther-Tamaki, “Oil Painting in Postsurrender Japan”; Munroe, *Japanese Art after 1945*; and Tiampo and Munroe, *Gutai: Splendid Playground*.

Maruki Toshi's 丸木俊 (1912–2000) *Genbaku no zu* 原爆の図 (Atomic Bomb Panels), the first of which appeared in 1950; many more works in the series followed and they were shown in a wide range of locations, mostly outside galleries and museums. Jesty stresses that the works of this series are “filled with people” — references to the human figures in the paintings. He adds that “issues of speech, beckoning and sharing are central to the production and reception of the paintings” (p. 2); he shows that the *Atomic Bomb Panels* are “one part of an expanding network, part of a community and a communication that was only possible to the extent that people sustained it, kept contributing to it, and kept the images visible” (p. 4). Jesty uses this example to set the stage for his argument about the larger project of the study, which he describes as “a cultural history of the relationship between art and politics in a particular place: Japan from 1945 to 1960” (p. 5). His primary goals are to “reframe the history of that moment and its relevance to the present day,” and “to demonstrate a method of examining the relationship between art and politics that approaches art as a mode of intervention, but insists artistic intervention move beyond the idea that the artwork or artist unilaterally authors political significance, to trace how creations and expressive acts may (or may not) actually engage the terms of shared meaning and value” (p. 5). Throughout the volume, Jesty points consistently to artists’ connections to and engagements with communities and issues; in terms of methodology, he elaborates on a range of collaborations that form the underpinnings of the artists’ creative practices as he offers insightful readings of their works.

In the two chapters comprising part 1, “Arts of Engagement and the Democratic Culture of the Early Postwar,” Jesty stresses that artists were not isolated but engaged in diverse ways through circles or other informal forums “outside their usual social roles” (p. 5); he cites the collaborations of Senda Umeji 千田梅二 (1920–1997) and Ueno Eishin 上野英信 (1923–1987), noting that the “seemingly organic relationship among discussion, research, expression and political involvement” is “the most important aspect of the linkage between cultural activity and public participation that characterizes the early postwar’s democratic culture” (p. 28). This perspective is at the core of his analysis of three movements in the early postwar era: reportage art (*ruporutāju kaiga* レポルターージュ絵画), the Society for Creative Aesthetic Education (Sōzō Biiku Kyōkai 想像

美育協会) or Sōbi, and Kyūshū-ha (Group Kyūshū 九州派). This line of inquiry leads Jesty “to relativize and critique the tendency to find the greatest aesthetic value in spontaneity, disruption and immediacy,” or what he calls “a volcanic model of the avant-garde” (p. 34). Here he also draws on the work of Grant Kestor, Shannon Jackson, and Doris Sommer, who propose a different model in which “commitment, organization, goal-directedness, and incremental change” are valued (p. 34).² Jesty’s in-depth research on these three movements that center on the visual arts but have much in common with many cultural groups in the early postwar period, reveals that artists were “devoted both to their artwork and to the task of finding new terms for art and culture’s social existence” (p. 9).

Part 2, “Avant-Garde Documentary: Reportage Art of the 1950s,” is organized into four chapters that trace “theories and practices that would come to define the reportage style” or what Jesty terms “avant-garde realism” (p. 88).³ Jesty shows how this movement emerged in 1950 as “the Cold War heated up in East Asia,” and as “Japan was becoming an ever more important bulwark against communism in East Asia” (p. 55). In the chapters that follow, he undertakes close readings of works by Yamashita Kikuji 山下菊二 (1919–1986), Katsuragawa Hiroshi 桂川宏 (1924–2011), Ikeda Tatsuo 池田龍雄 (b. 1928), and Nakamura Hiroshi 中村宏 (b. 1932), situating them in the context of shifting and increasingly complex developments both in contemporary sociopolitical movements and experimentation with a range of media. Jesty first discusses developments in the late 1940s and early 1950s, carefully delineating the political and cultural context of works like Yamashita’s *Akebono mura monogatari* あけぼの村物語 (The Tale of Akebono Village, 1953). In the first three chapters of the book under discussion he highlights various ways in which the artists engaged in activism and how their activities helped shape their artistic choices. In chapter 6, he goes on to give close readings of works by Yamashita, Ikeda, Katsuragawa, and Nakamura, and finally discusses the shift in Nakamura’s work in the 1960s and 1970s, noting that “Nakamura became concerned with vision as the very thing that needed to be made visible” (p. 120). In a discussion of

2 Kestor, *Conversation Pieces*; Jackson, *Social Works*; Sommer, *The Work of Art in the World*.

3 See also Jesty, “The Realism Debate.”

works that are also treated by Namiko Kunimoto in the other monograph under discussion here, Jesty notes that the artist's evolving interest in machines led him to a "vision of vision as something which pulls people into the thrall of the nation and the operations of commercial culture" (p. 121). While acknowledging the shift away from "reportage" art, Jesty ends with observations about ways in which "avant-garde realism and the project of reportage resonates with some of the art and film of the 1960s," thus situating "reportage" more firmly in the picture of postwar art in Japan (p. 123).

In part 3, "Opening Open Doors: Sōbi and Hani Susumu," Jesty draws extensively on primary materials cited in four chapters to discuss the work of film director Hani Susumu 羽仁進 (b. 1928) and Sōbi. He gives a detailed account of how Sōbi, "a grassroots movement comprised at its base by local study groups of teachers" (p. 133) that was founded by Kubo Sadajiro 久保貞次郎 (1909–1996), and other early postwar movements such as Asocio de Artistas Demokrat (Association of Democratic Artists) founded in 1951 by Ei-Kyū 瑛九 (1911–1960) played an important role in redefining art education and innovative art practices in the postwar period. Through a discussion of two artists, Ay-O 愛嘔 (b. 1931) and Saitō Takako 齋藤陽子 (b. 1929), members of the Demokrat and Sōbi groups respectively, Jesty highlights ways in which the educational philosophy of these groups influenced the work of these artists who later became active in the Fluxus movement, an avant-garde art movement started in 1963 by George F. Maciunas. Jesty adds valuable new information to the story of these innovative artists who left Japan to join Fluxus in New York.⁴ Jesty concludes that although Sōbi's aim was to develop and spread an "idealistic vision of a society that celebrated individual exploration and creativity," that vision was ultimately "undermined by bureaucratic demands to administer education and democracy" (p. 196).

In part 4, "Kyushu-ha Tartare: Anti-Art Between Raw and Haute," Jesty's aim is to revisit discussions about "the end of the avant-garde 前衛 (*zen'ei*) in this period and the consolidation of another paradigm, the contemporary (*gendai*)" (p. 195). He writes, "At stake was a replacement of historically, narratively articulated social movements (of a mostly left wing variety) with

a spatially expansive, non-developing flux of international contemporaneity (*kokusaiteki dōjisei*)" (p. 195).⁵ Jesty argues that Kyushu-ha is a group that "does not fit anywhere easily" (p. 196), one that was "born partly out of the communal, enlightened spirit of popular participation that was so characteristic of the 1950s," but "was also subject to the emerging field of contemporary art that would structure the art world of the 1960s and later" (p. 196). Situated between three worlds—circles, established art societies, and the emergent field of contemporary art—Kyushu-ha was "on the edge of two formations of culture, with little hope of becoming a mass movement, but also unable to adapt itself to an increasingly professionalized and internationalized art field" (p. 196). Jesty's aim is to use this position "to shed light on and question the worlds themselves rather than the other way around" (p. 196). What we learn from this, Jesty argues, is that the shift to a more professionalized and internationalized art world fostered conditions in which "Actually ignoring the institutions of contemporary art, or developing a substantial critique in the form of wholly alternate accounts of value, results in being ignored" (p. 218).

Jesty's aim in this study is not to consolidate a linear (and progressive) historical narrative of three movements that ultimately fall behind mainstream movements, but through looking at these movements, to "revisit the issue of contemporary art as an institutional paradigm" (p. 197). In "Epilogue: Hope in the Past and the Future," he returns to his opening question concerning "art as intervention," and presses the reader to continue thinking outside the frame of contemporary art. He also notes that when he began the project in 2005, he did not feel as acutely as he does now that it is closely linked to events and trends unfolding in the present moment. Jesty writes, "The sense that our lives and our world are at a precarious moment of major historical change grows ever more intense and discomforting. The intensity and scale of the crisis now approaches what I imagine people in the 1950s saw themselves confronting" (p. 267). Jesty gives the last word to writer, historian and activist Rebecca Solnit who reminds us that "telling this history is part of helping people navigate toward the future" (p. 256).⁶

In *The Stakes of Exposure: Anxious Bodies in Postwar*

4 See also Yoshimoto, *Into Performance*; especially her chapter "Playful Spirit: The Interactive Art of Takako Saito."

5 See also Tomii, "Historicizing Contemporary Art."

6 See Solnit, *Hope in the Dark*.

Japanese Art, Namiko Kunimoto takes a different approach to look at the history of art and cultural politics in postwar Japan. The work also provides a rich body of information about selected artists active in the period. Like Jesty, Kunimoto's aim is to broaden the discussion of English-language studies in the field that have tended to focus on the "interventionist" avant-garde artists whose works began to attract attention in the international media in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Works by the four artists who are the focus of the study—Katsura Yuki 桂ゆき (1913–1991), Nakamura Hiroshi 中村宏 (b. 1932), Tanaka Atsuko 田中敦子 (1932–2005), and Shiraga Kazuo 白髪一雄 (1924–2008)—span the decades between 1930 to 1970. As the title suggests, Kunimoto's aims are to examine "the stakes of exposure" through looking at selected works by these artists, to highlight questions of gender and representation, and to explore links between the art and broader forms of visual culture, or "visual aspects of political history" (p. 4) prevalent at the time.

This 263-page volume consists of an introduction, four parts, and a conclusion, and includes thirty-four color plates of the artworks and dozens of black and white figures that include such materials as Katsura Yuki's illustrations of James Baldwin's novel, *Another Country*, Nakamura Hiroshi's *Jogakusei* 女学生 (Schoolgirl) scrapbooks, and sketches by Tanaka Atsuko and Shiraga Kazuo. In the conclusion, Kunimoto also includes images of such popular manga as *Omoitsuki fujin* 思ひつき夫人 (Conscientious housewife) by Hirai Fusando 平井房人 (1903–1960) and Burondi ブロンディ (Blondie) by Chic Young (1901–1973)—popular in the 1930s and resurrected in the early postwar period—thus expanding the range of research materials to include popular media and culture. Kunimoto's aim is "to reveal the disorienting diversity of aesthetic strategies, examining rather than obscuring the contradictions at play in this moment of heightened creative production" (p. 18).

In "Introduction: Gendered Bodies and the Minamata Disaster," Kunimoto begins with images of two young female Minamata disease patients, Matsunaga Kumiko 松永久美子 (1950–1974) and Isayama Takako 諫山孝子 (b. 1961), taken by photojournalists Kuwabara Shisei 桑原史成 (b. 1936) and W. Eugene Smith (1918–1978). She cites a diverse range of media in which these images appeared, arguing that "events such as the Minamata disaster reveal that hard-and-fast distinc-

tions between 'art' and 'visual culture' are unsustainable," and that "the Minamata disease unfolded across different media in a manner that heightened anxieties about bodily exposure in postwar Japan" (p. 4). These examples alert the reader to the author's ambitious aim to include many examples of visual culture in the study, but this reader would have been helped by a more thorough discussion of how the author intends us to read these images in relation to the question of "gender and nation" and to the analysis in later chapters.

Kunimoto also cites a range of important theoretical works on gender and representation, and draws on previous studies by William Marotti and Bert Winther-Tamaki that explore a range of questions about postwar artists' practices and their engagement with "discourses on gender and nationhood."⁷ She writes, "I examine how political contention over Japan's new democracy (including tension between Japan and the United States) was expressed, disavowed, and reimagined through representations of the gendered body. How could the body be represented in postwar Japan? Why did artists often represent the body as under duress, fragmented, covered or disaggregated?" (p. 15).

Kunimoto's approach to analyzing the four artists whose works are at the center of each of the four following chapters (Katsura, Nakamura, Tanaka, and Shiraga) is to build on existing research on these artists, and to highlight the connections that each artist developed in their practices that linked their works to a wide range of new media emerging in the postwar era, including news, popular advertising, fashion, technology, television, and manga.

In chapter 1, "Katsura Yuki's Bodies of Resistance," Kunimoto argues that by "experimenting with exposure and concealment of the body through allegory and material layering, Katsura reoriented aesthetic-political sensibility and disrupted forms of belonging, thereby fostering wider discourse on gender and nationhood in Japan" (p.23). For example, Kunimoto discusses Katsura's mass-culture illustrations and the artist's assemblage paintings, arguing that "these satirical allegories evaded the overdetermined masculine heroics of abstract expressionism and action art that had taken Japan by storm in the postwar period, forging an in-

7 Marotti, *Money, Trains, and Guillotines*, p. 2; Winther-Tamaki, "Oil Painting in Postsurrender Japan"; Tiampo, "Body, War and the Discourses of History."

novative mode of expression that was whimsical and strange in its tone but nonetheless had a potent political thrust” (p. 18). Kunimoto’s reading of Katsura’s works reveals connections with other media such as book illustrations and the world of fashion design.

In chapter 2, “Nakamura Hiroshi and the Politics of Embodiment,” Kunimoto acknowledges the attention Nakamura has received for his earlier reportage works, but aims to expand our understanding of this artist by looking more closely at how the male body was “exiled” from his work in the 1960s and replaced by “masculinized machinery.”⁸ Drawing on the artist’s *Jogakusei* scrapbooks, and discussing a number of the works that are also discussed by Jesty, Kunimoto argues that “From the 1960s onward, he simultaneously critiqued and participated in the visual culture of the schoolgirl fetish that perpetuated sexist consumption, employing visual signs of movement both to provoke the viewer and to secure a masculine viewing position within the picture” (p. 111).

In chapter 3, “Tanaka Atsuko and the Circuits of Subjectivity,” Kunimoto situates the pivotal performance pieces by this artist, *Denki fuku* 電気服 (Electric Dress, 1956) and *Butai fuku* 舞台服 (Stage Clothes, 1956) in the context of the industrial transformation of Osaka and the shifting status of women in society, arguing that “Tanaka’s art explored subjectivity as a process reliant on visual signifiers, bodily performance and the context of industrialization, urbanization and the encroachment of technology into all aspects of everyday life” (p. 20). Kunimoto also touches on questions concerning gender dynamics both in terms of the critical response to Tanaka’s works and the dynamics within the Gutai group (Gutai Bijutsu Kyōkai 具体美術教会), an avant-garde art group based in the Kansai area. Her comparison between Katsura Yuki’s and Tanaka Atsuko’s comments on fashion suggest interesting possibilities for further inquiry (p. 130). Throughout the chapter, Kunimoto raises a number of interesting questions about Tanaka’s artworks, gender, and subjectivity. She also notes that Tanaka was “one of a small minority of women artists in Japan” (p. 134) but that “Tanaka and other female members of the Gutai were given ample space in exhibitions and in the pages of *Gutai*, the group’s newsletter” (p. 134). This discussion resonates with work by other scholars, such as Reiko

8 See Hoagland, *ANPO: Art X War*.

Kokatsu, Midori Yoshimoto, and Alicia Volk, who continue to explore gender dynamics in artists’ groups and their effect on women artists in Japan.⁹

Kunimoto concludes that “As the visibility of women’s bodies skyrocketed in advertising, *Electric Dress* offered an alternative visualization of the female body, one that neither collaborated with the commercialized female body nor affirmed it as empowered” (p. 130), and that this pivotal work “displays gender subjectivity as unstable and uncertain rather than declaratively individualistic” (p. 145).

In chapter 4, Kunimoto focuses on the work of Shiraga Katsuo, particularly his engagement with “heroic violence.” Shiraga’s references to archetypal models of the hero appear frequently in the work. As Kunimoto writes, “Shiraga’s compositions and his persona as an artist were fraught with concern over the role of the hero” or the “performative male posturing that expresses a sense of power through the stance and gesturing of the male body” (pp. 150–51). Kunimoto’s reading of such works as *Doro ni idomu* 泥に挑む (Challenging Mud, 1955), *Dōzo ohairi kudasai* どうぞお入りください (Please Come In, 1955), and her discussion of Shiraga’s interpretation of *The Water Margin* (a fourteenth-century classic Chinese novel with 108 heroes), as well as Shiraga’s own Buddhist practice and initiation into the rigorous, ascetic Tendai Shugendō practice on Mt. Hiei, lead her to conclude that “On and off the stage, Shiraga’s strategic performances revealed that art might be used to question what the state could be and what role the artist-hero might have within that field, just as his violent actions molded and shaped his own body into one that enacted and idealized the trope of the masculine artist-hero” (p. 181).

The conclusion, “Thresholds of Exposure,” takes the reader one step further, citing Judith Butler’s theory of gender and performance in a discussion of three manga, *Omoitsuki fujin* and *Burondi*, both noted above, and *Sazae-san* サザエさん by Hasegawa Machiko 長谷川町子 (1920–1992) as examples of “hegemonic mainstream media” (p. 183) of the period that can be considered relevant to the works of the artists discussed in her study. Kunimoto writes, “While one might read these comics as presenting gender roles as stable, homoge-

9 Kokatsu, “Avant-garde Movements after World War II and Japanese Women Artists, 1950s–1960s”; Yoshimoto, “A Woman and Collectives”; Volk, “Katsura Yuki and the Japanese Avant-Garde.”

neous, and defined by familial bonds and obligations, the multiple opposing narratives and the freighted representational variations between the comics implied transition and uncertainty, a tone that was often conveyed in the anxious bodies created by Katsura, Nakamura, Tanaka and Shiraga” (p. 183). While this raises new and interesting questions, my sense is that a much more careful and in-depth analysis with attention to the burgeoning amount of literature on gender and manga studies that has emerged in recent years would be required to answer them.

In conclusion, both books provide rich sources of new knowledge, explore new territory, and provide fresh insights that will spark further discussion in the field. In *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan*, Justin Jesty consistently focuses on uncovering the connections between avant-garde artists’ engagement with a range of communities and social practices and their artistic and aesthetic choices. Jesty’s project points the way to new methodologies that help us broaden, deepen, and rethink the framework of postwar art in Japan. As Bert Tamaki-Winther writes in a comment on the book’s jacket, the book “offers a persuasive revision of the historiography of the postwar period, and challenges us to rethink the basic premises of radical art.” For this reader, the study is very helpful in suggesting new directions and intersections with recent discussions about transnational and transpacific art practices in the postwar and Cold War periods and with emerging dialogues on “socially engaged art.”¹⁰

Taking a rather different approach, Namiko Kunimoto’s *The Stakes of Exposure: Anxious Bodies in Postwar Japanese Art* also ambitiously raises a range of important questions and broadens previous research on the four artists studied in significant ways. At the same time, the author’s broad aims and references to a wide range of theoretical materials left me wondering whether she could have engaged more selectively and deeply with the texts most pertinent to her argument. She could then more carefully delineate the connections between them and the works of the artists discussed. It should also be noted that, in a number of places, the numbering for notes in the text and the endnotes are out of sync.

I have no doubt that the rich body of new information and challenging questions raised by *Art and En-*

agement and *The Stakes of Exposure* will enrich and enliven discussions in the field. Both books provide valuable lists of sources and introduce or point to materials in Japanese that have not previously been accessible to English readers. These volumes will not only be of interest to specialists, but will also make valuable additions to syllabi in courses on postwar art history, social history, and gender and media studies. These works will make significant contributions at a time when a deeper understanding of this complex period in history appears to be increasingly important.

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Hong-key Yoon, ed. *P'ungsu: A Study of Geomancy in Korea*. SUNY Press, 2018.

BOOK REVIEW BY OLE BRUUN

IN this impressive new book, Hong-key Yoon and a select team of Korean academics have gathered a comprehensive and interdisciplinary account of the role and development of *p'ungsu* (geomancy) in Korea. Spanning a range of disciplines, including cultural and historical geography, environmental science, architecture, landscape architecture, religious studies, and psychology, it is undoubtedly the most exhaustive work on geomancy in Korea to date and among the major works on geomancy in general. The book consists of seventeen chapters and is divided into two parts: "Toward a History of Geomancy in Korea," and "Selected Topics in Korean Geomancy." The first part is authored by Yoon, while the second part has nine different chapter authors. A rich collection of photos, figures, maps, and plans illustrate the text and give the book an attractive appearance.

The first part of the book is devoted to Yoon's work on the history of geomancy in Korea, including a periodization of its uses and development, government approaches to geomancy, major uprisings related to geomancy, and its role in environmental management. Chapter 2, titled "The Eight Periods in the History of Korean Geomancy," documents its social and cultural history to the present, including how it was accepted, adapted to Korean circumstances, and practiced by Koreans after its introduction from China. Chapter 6,

on the principal characteristics of Korean geomancy, is thought-provoking and somehow departs from other parts of the work, which mostly evaluate it as human ecology. This chapter shows that a key characteristic of Korean geomancy is an obsession with practicing grave divination, even to the point where it has created numerous social problems. The construction of massive royal tombs ousted both Buddhist temples and commoner's graveyards from auspicious sites and often modified the natural environment. However, common people's passion for auspicious burial sites had even worse consequences, as it resulted in countless local disputes that caused injury and death. Such fanaticism was also well known in China and included the excavation of graves for reburial, as reflected in historical documents from the Chosŏn dynasty. Yoon quotes a contemporary scholar who states that it had turned into such a problem that half of the court cases were due to these local disputes, pushing the government to introduce regulations (p. 101).

The concise but very interesting chapter 3 deals with historical social movements and political contestations in which geomancy has played a prominent part. A primary example is that of the twelfth-century Buddhist geomancer-monk Myoch'ŏng who, as part of a rebellion against the central government, used geomantic political rhetoric to persuade the king to move the Ko-

rean capital to Sögyöng in the northwest, arguing that its geomantic energy was rising while that of the capital was dwindling. Nevertheless, the odds were stacked against him and Myoch'öng ended up losing both the battle and his life. Geomancy has continued to influence Korean politics, however, and auspicious grave positioning has been a recurrent theme in presidential elections.

A number of interesting chapters on various aspects of Korean geomancy follow in the second part. Several chapters draw on the same ecological approach to examine historical water management schemes in water deficient areas, the geomantic significance of groves in traditional settlements, geomantic principles of site selection in traditional Korean architecture, and geomantic aesthetics in the construction of traditional Korean gardens. Other chapters in the second part deal with geomantic landscape modifications, and the historic interrelationship between geomancy and Buddhism and also between geomancy and Confucianism. The chapter that most decisively parts with the ecology approach looks into how deep psychology may interpret Koreans' desire to obtain auspicious geomantic sites, not only for their own dwellings but also for those of their ancestors. Cheol Joong Kang shows, by means of Jungian psychology, the origins in the geomantic division between the four quarters, four seasons, four animals, and so on that influence human beings, and that this represents not only an unconscious fact, but also a conscious and differentiated totality that adds up to harmony and perfection in the auspicious geomantic site. This is combined with the circular form that naturally arises around a dwelling and which is represented on the geomantic compass, a circle at the same time having divine meaning and being a symbolic representation of the human psyche, such as in the mandala. Thus, the auspicious place is not only a symbol of wholeness, but as much a representation of the self, consisting of both the nucleus and the whole psyche. The really interesting aspect of this interpretation is that the auspicious place replenishes, adjusts, and supplements people's whole psyche, and does so in the context of a world (or a culture?) "that does not value their inner life" (p. 307). I believe this interpretation can explain at least in part why geomancy has continued to thrive in East Asia.

Although Yoon and his colleagues explicitly write for an academic audience and emphasize that this is a work of rigorous scholarship, at the same time they acknowledge that Korean intellectuals tend to dismiss

the subject. A curious aspect of geomancy studies in Asian countries since the late nineteenth century and up until recently is that they primarily were conducted by outsiders, while most local scholars have felt uncomfortable with the popular tradition. The overall purpose of the book may at the very least be to raise the standing of geomancy, and possibly feed into a modern or post-modern Korean identity.

Yoon makes a strong point about translation as an interesting aspect of the discussion on how academic *p'ungsu* differs from commonly practiced forms. The Chinese "feng shui" has now become a commonplace term for what was initially perceived as geomancy in the international literature, akin to certain forms of Arab or European divination. However, for various reasons this term may not be appropriate. First, feng shui is only one among many Chinese terms for this tradition, apparently of a more recent date, and according to my own experience from Chinese rural areas it may not even be the most common term. Second, it focuses attention on the specific Chinese forms, while the important work of Yoon and many others has proven that Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and even Southeast Asian societies have developed their own independent varieties. Last but not least, many academics believe that the term "feng shui" has been compromised by the succession of popular manuals and self-taught experts that have appeared since the 1980s.

However, these social processes of adaptation and translation have a tendency to take on a life of their own. For instance, the rise of both academic feng shui studies and popular practices in the Western world provided powerful new backing to the modern form of feng shui in China, particularly against the backdrop of the authoritarian state's categorical rejection of popular religion. Moreover, the Western interest in feng shui provided new material for contemporary Chinese identity-building and even tourist promotion, which could be exploited by state agencies. Although the popular practice of feng shui has given rise to many new and perverted forms that may be seen as misrepresentations of the "true" art, and no less so in Asia than in the Western world, they still form part of the "globalization" of feng shui, which I believe Yoon and his colleagues also include themselves in. But this is a double-edged sword: popular forms of geomancy both generate public interest and at the same time discredit it as an academic subject. Although I fully agree with Yoon that "geomancy" is a better generic term, we should take great care that

academic work is not being used to legitimize such top-down state regulation of popular culture and interference with religion, as has been a recurrent trend in China for over five hundred years.

The overall perspective chosen for the book mostly follows that of Yoon's previous work on human ecology. Yoon argues that geomancy cannot be classified as a superstition, religion, or science, because it does not fit comfortably into any of these Western categories, nor can it be understood properly using conventional Western notions. In a bid to define geomancy, Yoon suggests "a unique and comprehensive system of conceptualising the physical environment that regulates human ecology by influencing humans to select auspicious environment[s] and build harmonious structures such as graves, houses, and cities on them" (p. 373). Yoon further notes that given the way it is practiced and perceived by the public, geomancy definitely includes a range of "superstitious" elements. Yet it should not be discarded as a simple superstition, since it contains "a complicated and sophisticated body of environmental ideas and knowledge covering valuable ecological wisdom of premodern times" (p. 373). For the non-Asian reader, however, this may sound like the Oriental Wisdom literature that Yoon so vigorously refutes.

A narrow definition of geomancy, whether in general or referring to a specific country, may run into a host of problems. Many previous attempts—from those of sinologist J.J.M. de Groot and the missionary E.J. Eitel onward—have fallen short of covering its countless facets. Contrary to Yoon's interdisciplinary intent, a narrow definition may in fact justify the appropriation of geomancy studies by a certain discipline, in this case that of human ecology. As an anthropologist I would rather leave the power of definition with those people most actively involved, arguing that geomancy is what its primary users, practitioners, and chroniclers make it to be, that is, a living and highly dynamic tradition. Strict conceptualisations are born out of those academic disciplines that traditionally have researched geomancy, but they vary fundamentally from religious studies to anthropology to human geography, and so forth.

In support of his human ecology perspective, Yoon points to a range of scattered historical sources that indicate that kings and royal ministries have ordered pine trees to be planted, patches of forest to be protected, or people to be barred from collecting timber and firewood, all for the protection of geomantic influences

on palaces, royal tombs, and the capital city. Similarly, when common people save a few trees around a family grave "as a final effort to save its auspiciousness," Yoon argues that "these small graves with nearby trees are monuments of the common people's endeavor to keep the land auspicious and the signs of positive geomantic impact on Korean environmental management" (p. 85). I take it to mean that when people fell the forest but keep a few pine trees around a grave—and certainly not in front of it—geomancy induces sound environmental management! Challenging the notion that geomancy is inherently oriented toward a harmonious relationship with the physical environment, many observers have described the devastating impact that pompous elite graves or excessive numbers of small family graves may have on mountain forests and hillside vegetation. Trees protecting one grave may block the geomantic influence on the grave behind it, and the compromise is often no trees at all. It is not without reason that state administrations across the East Asian region have attempted to regulate grave construction or enforce cremation.

Even if it were true that "people were very enthusiastic about conserving vegetation in auspicious places" and that this "contributed to the Koreans' harmonious relationship with nature" (p. 87), you cannot brush aside the geomantic taste for dressed-up landscapes, advice for establishing artificial hills and scenery, and preferences for certain types of vegetation, almost like the re-creation of a painting—such as when Yoon quotes a seventeenth-century source for advising the planting of weeping willows to the east of a house and green bamboo to the west of the house in order to create wealth and prosperity. These patterned uses of vegetation around houses and graves illustrate well how any user of geomancy will establish a small self-centered entity to tap into natural and cosmological forces. It is difficult to ignore the conflict between geomancy's anthropocentric outlook and the common vision of ecology, which values interactions among all organisms and their environment, thus studying the full scale of life processes. Concepts of biodiversity, wilderness, and ecocentrism have no place in geomancy.

Nevertheless, *P'ungsu: A Study of Geomancy in Korea* is an invaluable resource in the study of geomantic traditions in the Asian world, and in the true interdisciplinary spirit in which it was written I believe scholars and laypeople from all disciplines and persuasions can benefit from reading it.

Dorothy C. Wong. *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645-770*. National University of Singapore Press, 2018.

BOOK REVIEW BY ABIGAIL I. MACBAIN

DOROTHY C. Wong's *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks* is a sizable volume that discusses the transmission of an artistic form that she refers to as the "Tang International Style" or "East Asian International Buddhist Art Style" during the seventh to eighth century. Wong argues that a shared visual language and common interest in a Buddhist utopia among rulers throughout East Asia provided the underpinnings for this period's circulation of Buddhist arts and materials, facilitated by those she identifies as "pilgrim-monks."

The author, professor of art history at the University of Virginia, has discussed several of the key themes and individuals mentioned in this text in prior publications.¹ Here she takes a unique approach by focusing on the method of transmission and conveyance of religious art and architecture. She posits that traveling pilgrim-monks actively spread this Chinese-developed artistic style, which resulted in it becoming the uniform way of depicting Buddhist images, from the Mogao caves (*Mogaoku* 莫高窟) in Dunhuang 敦煌 to the temples of Nara 奈良. Indeed, much of her book focuses on the Japanese capital of Nara and some of

its oldest remaining religious icons crafted during the Nara period (710–784). The book's approximately 150 images, tables, and maps vividly illustrate her discussion of the dynamism and mobility of the artistic styles, motifs, and techniques circulating throughout the seventh to eighth century.

The period and scope of this text bring to mind several other recent publications regarding the spread of Buddhism throughout East Asia.² Wong emphasizes that the pursuit of a Buddhist state was an underlying catalyst for the transmission of Buddhist art and material culture; this is particularly interesting when juxtaposed with Bryan Lowe's recent work,³ where he argues against overreliance on the state Buddhism model. Wong posits that her kingship-focused, "transmission-transformation" (p. 5) model is an alternative to

1 See, for example, *Chinese Steles*; "The Case for Amoghapaśa"; "The Huayan/Kegon/Hwaōm Paintings in East Asia"; "The Mapping of Sacred Space"; "The Art of Avataṃsaka Buddhism"; and "An Agent of Cultural Transmission."

2 See Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*; Sen, *Buddhism across Asia*; Sen, *India, China, and the World*; Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*; Wang, *Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals*; Washizuka et al., *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity*; and Wong and Heldt, *China and Beyond in the Mediaeval Period*. Wong regularly refers to chapters from her co-edited work with Heldt throughout *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks*, and the sixth chapter in the volume under discussion was originally published in *China and Beyond in the Mediaeval Period* (abbreviated in *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks* as CBM).

3 See Lowe, *Ritualized Writing*.

the well-known center-periphery construct, although her treatment of the East Asian International Buddhist Art Style's development and distribution is clearly informed by the latter, older theoretical framework.

Despite the title and Wong's insistence that her book is not intended to be an overview of seventh- and eighth-century Chinese and Japanese Buddhist art, it is the art, more than the conveyance, that is the focus of this volume. With three exceptions, the titular pilgrim-monks are largely relegated to passing reference. While this is undoubtedly due in part to a general dearth of biographical information about these monks, this is also a conscious decision on Wong's part to treat these select three individuals as case studies for pilgrim-monks in general, as well as a framing mechanism for the book's organization.

The three monks on whom Wong largely focuses in each of the book's three parts, respectively, are Xuanzang 玄奘 (ca. 602–664), Dōji 道慈 (d. 744), and Jianzhen 鑑真 (688–763). These sections cover the years 645–710, 710–745, and 745–770 and contain two chapters each, for a total of six chapters plus an introduction and a conclusion. Part I is dedicated to Xuanzang, probably the best-known premodern Chinese monk both within and outside Asia; as such, the author has chosen to omit his biographical details and voyage to India, stating that Xuanzang's "multifaceted contributions cannot be fully addressed in a single volume, let alone a chapter" (p. 23).⁴ Considering that significant space is dedicated to establishing Dōji's and Jianzhen's histories and travels in chapters 3 and 6 respectively, this lack of even a brief overview gives a sense of incongruity with the following sections. The author also risks distancing readers by beginning the first chapter with this assumption of prior knowledge.

Chapter 1, "Xuanzang and His Image-Making Activities," focuses on Xuanzang's return to China from India, the objects and images he took back with him, and his influence on the incorporation of Indian themes into the art and architecture of the period. The

majority of this chapter is focused on mass-produced clay tablets that Wong refers to as *dharmasārīras* (*fāsheli* 法舍利), which, she notes, Xuanzang introduced to China and are connected to the monk's vow to produce one hundred million images of the Buddha. The chapter proceeds into a lengthy description of the two categories of tablets: merit-clay (*shanyeni* 善業泥) and Indian Buddha image (*Yindu foxiang* 印度佛像). She notes that similar mold-pressed tablets are found in Japan, indicating the spread of stamps and molds to fabricate multiple images of the Buddha. The chapter also contains an analysis of what Wong refers to both here and elsewhere as the "earth-touching gesture" (i.e., the "earth witness mudra;" Sk. *bhūmisparśa mudrā*; Ch. *chudi yin* 觸地印 or *xiangmo yin* 降魔印) iconography present in most of these tablets.

Chapter 2, "Genesis of the Bejeweled Buddha in Earth-Touching Gesture," examines what Wong identifies as a hybrid of the "earth-touching gesture" and "bejeweled and crowned Buddha" depictions (i.e., the "bejeweled Buddha in earth-touching gesture"), resulting in a uniquely regal iconography that appealed principally to Buddhist rulers. In particular, she highlights the development and spread of this iconographic form under the reign of empress regnant Wu Zhao 武照 (624–705) from 690–705. Alongside detailed descriptions of the two independent motifs, this chapter contains multiple examples of this amalgamated iconographic form from Chang'an 長安, Longmen 龍門, Sichuan 四川, and Dunhuang, demonstrating not only the vast range of this particular representation but also the magnitude of Wu Zhao's patronage and influence. Wong attributes this emphasis on Buddhist kingship to the influence of numerous foreign monks at Wu Zhao's court in Luoyang 洛陽, several of whom are mentioned on pages 90–92 in a detailed list of notable translators.

With its many examples and a lengthy analysis of this hybridized art form's development and emanation from the two Chinese capitals, this section aptly demonstrates the author's strengths as a scholar of Silk Road art. However, chapter 2 is heavily unbalanced, with all

4 Wong defers to Arthur Waley's *The Real Tripitaka* and Wu Cheng'en's 吳承恩 (c. 1500–c. 1582) sixteenth-century *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*Journey to the West*) as exemplary of the many historical and fictional accounts of Xuanzang's life and travels (p. 258, n. 1). For more recent works, see Sen, "The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims"; Gordon, *When Asia Was the World*; and Eckel, *To See the Buddha*. For a translation of the biography by Xuanzang's disciples Huiji 慧立 (615–c. 675) and Yancong 彦棕 (fl. 649–688), see Li, *A Biography of the Tripitaka Master*.

5 Wong does not provide Sanskrit or Chinese titles for the "bejeweled and crowned Buddha" motif, but she mentions that statues with this type of ornamentation typically demonstrate the teaching gesture (*dharmacakra mudrā*) or argumentation gesture (*vitarka mudrā*) and occasionally the fearlessness gesture (*abhaya mudrā*) (p. 59). She provides various terms for the "bejeweled Buddha in earth-touching gesture" composite on pages 57–58.

but the final four-and-a-half pages dedicated to Wong's theory about the Bejeweled Buddha in Earth-Touching Gesture's creation and circulation. The discussion of foreign monks at Empress Wu's court appears almost as an afterthought, and only minor consideration is given as to how any of these monks may have aided with spreading such synthesized iconography. When considering Xuanzang's limited role in both chapters, part I sets up an ultimately unresolved tension regarding whether *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks* is actually focused on the monks and their role in circulating the East Asian International Buddhist Art Style or on examining multiple occurrences of particular artistic themes.

Part II features the Japanese monk Dōji, who is the least known of the three monks mentioned here but was nonetheless an important figure in his day. Chapter 3, "Dōji's Activities in China and Japan," looks at the general phenomenon of Japanese scholar-monks traveling with official missions (*kentōshi* 遣唐使) to China during the seventh to ninth century and the material items with which they returned. Wong states that she selected Dōji due to his "known involvement in Buddhist art and architecture" (p. 99), especially his role with the rebuilding of the state temple Daianji 大安寺. Despite Wong's citing the lack of an official biography as a significant impediment in compiling this biographical material, the details she pieces together from a handful of sources are an impressive example of how to work with seemingly scant material and could arguably be more reliable than a posthumous hagiography.

Alongside introducing us to Dōji, chapter 3 provides readers with information about important motifs that link together texts, images, and countries. In the latter half, Wong features works that, while not necessarily bearing a direct connection with the monk, "represent the character of Nara Buddhist art associated with the time when Dōji was active" (p. 115). She then connects a number of these selected works to sutras or Chinese prototypes. A striking example is the bronze figurine she describes as "Kagenkei, Lion stand with two pairs of dragons encircling a gong (drum)" (pp. 120–21) at Kōfukuji 興福寺 Temple in Nara. Wong states that in its original portrayal, there would have been a statue of a Brahman striking the drum, and the two pieces would have been located underneath a statue of the historical Buddha. This configuration harkens back to the Buddha's assembly in the *Golden Light Sutra* (Sk. *Suvarṇaprabhāsa sūtra*; Ch. *Jin guangming jing*; Jp. *Konkōmyō kyō* 金光明經) and Wong ties it to the

Transformation Tableau of the Golden Light Glorious King Sutra wall mural in Cave 154 at Dunhuang, which also includes an image of a Brahman hitting a drum.

From this examination of golden drum depictions, Wong launches into a discussion of the Four Heavenly Kings (Ch. *sitianwang*; Jp. *shitennō* 四天王), who were also featured in the *Golden Light Sutra*. As protective deities, the Four Heavenly Kings are among the most commonly created Buddhist figures in China, Japan, and Korea, although discussion of these figures in Korea is absent from this text.⁶ These pieces connect with Wong's larger discussion of state Buddhism and how Buddhist scriptures that promised divine protection to the rulers who embraced them, such as the *Golden Light Sutra*, prompted the development and spread of tutelary deities and their artistic representations. The chapter goes on to discuss the Dharma Assembly connected to the *Golden Light Sutra* (Misai-e or Gosai-e 御齋会), which was held annually at the Japanese court for the protection and well-being of both the emperor and state.⁷ This passage is one of the few times where the book considers Buddhist material culture within its associated ritual or temple context; on the whole, the images and statues are typically treated as religiously inspired *objets d'art* rather than components in religious practice with which the pilgrim-monks and other Buddhist practitioners would have interacted.

In chapter 4, "The Rebuilding of Daianji," Wong expands her examination of the East Asian International Buddhist Art Style to include temple architecture. Dōji is again referenced, since Daianji Temple was rebuilt in the capital of Nara during Dōji's term as preceptor. Here, though, the focus is on the temple's art and architecture. The chapter begins with a discussion of Daianji's background and rebuilding, including a detailed analysis of whether or not the layout was based upon the Chinese temple Ximingsi 西明寺. Although acknowledging uniquely similar features, Wong points to their opposite orientations (lateral vs. longitudinal) as evidence that Dōji was not copying Ximingsi but rather following an idealized monastic blueprint written by

6 For more on the Korean usage and examples of the Four Heavenly Kings (*sach'ōnwang*), see Kim, "(Dis)assembling the National Canon"; Lim, "Images of the Four Heavenly Kings"; and Shim, "Four Heavenly Kings."

7 See Sango, *The Halo of Golden Light*, and Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, for more on the Misai-e and the *Golden Light Sutra* at the Japanese court.

Ximingsi's first head monk, Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667).

The chapter transitions to examine written references to icons created for Daianji, including donated and sponsored statues, wall paintings, and embroidery hangings, many of which are no longer extant. Wong particularly makes use of the temple's inventory from 747, titled *An Account of Daianji and Inventory of Its Property Assets* (Daianji garan engi narabi ni ryūki shizaichō 大安寺伽藍縁起并流記資財帳) and later textual references in order to postulate what these inventoried objects were and, in the case of lost works, what they looked like. She then draws in contemporaneous icons and art works from other locations, including the Asian mainland, to indicate the prevalent trends and styles of the period. One notable example appears on pages 150–54, where Wong looks to embroidered pieces from the Dunhuang caves as well as one example at Kajūji 勧修寺 Temple in Kyoto, all dated to the late seventh to early eighth century, in order to speculate on the appearance of Daianji's three lost "embroidered paintings." Although Wong's approach relies on the premise that there is indeed a universal artistic style linking these distant and disparate places, the author nonetheless adds an important visual and descriptive dimension to these textual records as well as contextualizes the non-extant pieces' subject matter and significance.

Part III largely looks at the building of Nara's Tōdaiji 東大寺 Temple and the Chinese precepts master Jianzhen's eleven-year attempt to reach Japan. Chapter 5, "The Art of Avataṃsaka Buddhism at the Courts of Wu Zhao and Shōmu/Kōmyō," builds on Wong's essay from a 2012 volume.⁸ Here Wong returns to Wu Zhao and expands her view to consider how this formidable female ruler influenced Japan's Emperor Shōmu 聖武天皇 (701–756) and his daughter, who independently ruled twice under the names Kōken 孝謙天皇 and Shōtoku 称徳天皇 (718–770). The chapter contains references to influential monks during this period, notably the Sogdian monk Fazang 法藏 (643–712) and Japanese monk Genbō 玄昉 (d. 746); however, it is the only chapter that does not attempt to incorporate the pilgrim-monk with which it is categorized.

This densely packed chapter includes a detailed ex-

planation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*'s⁹ (Ch. *Huayan jing*; Jp. *Kegon kyō* 華嚴經) cosmology and associated artistic motifs, Wu Zhao's sponsorship of large-scale rock carvings and statues, and the creation of the large Vairocana statue, Birushana butsu 毘盧舍那仏, also called the Tōdaiji Daibutsu 東大寺大仏, at Tōdaiji. Wong also includes an analysis of the art and architecture of Sökkuram 石窟庵 Grotto in South Korea. This is the only section in *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks* that looks at art on the Korean Peninsula, and it is a necessary inclusion that provides some insight into how significant the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* was to early Korean Buddhism and art. Its insertion here, however, also serves to highlight that this book on the East Asian International Buddhist Art Style is overwhelmingly concerned with China and Japan to the general exclusion of not only the Korean Peninsula, but also border areas in Central and Southeast Asia that fell within the broad umbrella of Chinese cultural influence during this time.

The final chapter, "Jianzhen's Travels to Japan and the Building of Tōshōdaiji," perhaps best demonstrates Wong's stated goal of using the pilgrim-monks as lenses through which to view the spread of Buddhist art and artistry. Of particular interest is Wong's consideration of Jianzhen's five unsuccessful attempts to reach Japan, the types of materials he attempted to bring, and his additional activities and travels when blown off course.¹⁰ There is also a tantalizing, albeit brief, description of Jianzhen's three years spent in the southern part of China following his fifth attempt, where he encountered traders and commodities from the Middle East and Asia (pp. 227–28). This is one of the only passages demonstrating that these pilgrim-monks encountered and interacted with locations other than the Chinese capitals and Nara, and it hints at the multicultural and transnational exchanges occurring during this period.

9 The *Avataṃsaka sūtra* is often translated as the *Flower Garland Sutra* or *Flower Ornament Sutra*, but the Sanskrit title is used here to maintain consistency with Wong's primary reference to the text.

10 For example, following his ship's third failed attempt, Jianzhen and his party stayed at Ayuwangsi 阿育王寺 Monastery near modern-day Shanghai. The monastery contained an Aśoka stupa covered with scenes depicting four stories from the historical Buddha's prior lives, known as *jātaka*. Wong connects this episode to the miniature gilt-bronze Aśoka stupa reliquary that Jianzhen brought to Japan on his final, successful attempt, and postulates that this gift was almost certainly modeled after the original at Ayuwangsi (pp. 225–27); the reliquary is shown on page 236.

8 See Wong, "The Art of Avataṃsaka Buddhism"; the book in which this essay appears is also the basis for much of her discussion on the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*'s cosmology and art.

This chapter also examines building projects overseen by Jianzhen, notably his temple Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺 and the ordination platforms that were to take on particular significance in the late Nara to early Heian periods. In particular, Wong points to Chinese influence in the temple's architecture as well as the symbolic Buddhist landscape exemplified in the ordination platforms. This conscious choice to harken back to Chinese and Indian ideals suggests Jianzhen's feelings about what comprised a "proper" Buddhist environment, and could be an interesting topic for future research. That said, considering that Jianzhen lost his sight after his fifth attempt to reach Japan, it is unclear what level of direction he was able to give. Presumably it was the craftsmen who accompanied him who determined the exact style and finishes.

Given that there were skilled workers from China and the Korean Peninsula going to Japan during this period, this begs the question of just how great an impact these monks truly had on the transmission of this East Asian International Buddhist Art Style. Wong focuses largely on the monks' role in transporting a vast array of material culture as the primary evidence for their role in this artistic conveyance. She also mentions stopping points for Xuanzang, Dōji, and Jianzhen during their travels as suggestive of the individuals, temples, sutras, and artwork that they would have encountered. However, as Wong herself notes on page 98, *kentōshi* were regularly accompanied by painters, sculptors, and other craftsmen. It is unclear what the monks saw or received that artists themselves did not or could not receive and utilize in their activities.

In her treatment of the pilgrim-monks, the author brings a refreshing degree of research and attention to Dōji and Jianzhen. However, her assumption that readers will automatically be familiar with Xuanzang's background on the basis of his notoriety could exclude those not immediately familiar with the monk's biography and exploits. This omission is all the more striking in light of the fact that Dōji and Jianzhen are the only monks who receive significant attention. Wong discusses several other monks throughout the book, but as a whole their potential is underutilized. Her decision to classify all mobile monks as "pilgrim-monks" also overly simplifies their varying reasons for travel. Of her case studies, Xuanzang is the only one whose voyage corresponds with the concept of a pilgrimage,

Dōji is essentially studying abroad,¹¹ and Jianzhen is a very determined immigrant. These differences in purpose also indicate differences in motivation, mobility, and resources. For the amount of material that these monks are purported to have collected and moved, they must have had access to some form of commerce and manpower, which is little considered here.

Just as the monks' varying rationales for travel are not fully considered, there is surprisingly little attention paid to the appearance, features, and development of the East Asian International Buddhist Art Style. Its history is covered in a short and wide-ranging introduction (p. 1), and its general portrayal is as a solely Chinese rendering of Indian subject matter that developed in and emanated out of Luoyang and Chang'an to become a universal art style throughout East Asia. The ancient state of Gandhāra and its crucial role as an artistic and cultural nexus for the creation of Buddhist art is barely referenced, Greco-Roman influences on Buddhist iconography are unmentioned, Middle Eastern motifs are represented by a single mention of Tang-Iranian floral medallions, and Central Asian contributions are seemingly limited to the Kingdom of Khotan's minor role in making auspicious images of the Buddha known as *ruixiang* 瑞像. At most, non-Chinese artists are seen as duplicating rather than actively contributing to this art form. When taken in association with the book's overwhelming focus on China and Japan, this limited portrayal of the art form's multicultural influences and existence outside these two countries does little to support Wong's argument that this art style was truly ubiquitous throughout East Asia. In particular, considering that two of the six chapters build upon her previously published material, the book does not expand the field's awareness of this art form, its circulation, or its transnational existence as much as it might have.

These criticisms notwithstanding, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks* breaks new ground by examining the role of traveling monks in disseminating Buddhist art, whether by transporting physical items or exposure to the art and architecture they encountered on their journeys. The volume's images complement Wong's arguments and provide a much-needed visual counterbalance to the text-dependent publications mentioned

¹¹ It is worth noting that Wong identifies Dōji and other Japanese monks who similarly went abroad to study as "scholar-monks," although little is made of this distinction.

earlier. Moreover, this book serves as a reminder that religious promulgation is not restricted to philosophies or rituals but also includes items meant to appeal to the senses. *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks* has established some extremely important groundwork that will hopefully inspire more art historians and religion scholars to further expand our understanding of this rich and engaging religious art form's multicultural creation and distribution.

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Bryan Lowe. *Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan*. University of Hawai'i Press (Kuroda Institute), 2017.

BOOK REVIEW BY YOKO HSUEH SHIRAI

A FASCINATING investigation into a hard-to-access trove of paper documents written over a millennium ago, Bryan Lowe's first book, *Ritualized Writing*, is unexpectedly refreshing and reader-friendly—especially for those with a fundamental grasp of the historical setting of Nara-period Japan (710–784)—and will generate much excitement in multiple fields of study. Gaining access to the primary documents originally stored within the Shōsōin repository, part of the Buddhist temple complex of Tōdaiji located in the modern-day city of Nara, is a challenge in itself. To further complicate matters, scholars like Lowe focus on what was written during the eighth century on the reverse side (verso) of already-used paper—scrap paper—an instance of government officials reusing a valuable, handmade commodity for administrative record-keeping. An accident of history, it seems, led to the reused paper scrolls being stored inside the Shōsōin (p. 24), a wooden storehouse that has miraculously survived centuries of warfare and fires. These writings can be jumbled, and the black ink has frequently seeped from one side to the other, making some of the writing on the verso almost illegible; yet these records inform us about the daily workings of scribes, among others, employed within the eighth-century institutional network that produced these papers.

Although Lowe makes use of modern reprints when

necessary (p. xiv), on the one hand his analysis of the ancient documents reveals the great breadth of detailed, literal information based on what was written; on the other hand, he also reads between the lines to offer broader theories, especially with regard to the lives of scribes such as Karakuni no Hitonari, who were not from the highest levels of the social hierarchy and were not included in official chronicles, but nonetheless left behind limited traces of personal history through their workplace duties. And a lot of documentation remains extant: “[Due to] a wealth of manuscript evidence, both in the form of a few thousand extant sutra manuscripts from the late seventh through the early ninth centuries and in more than ten thousand documents detailing the activities of a scriptorium [located at Tōdaiji], early Japan offers unrivaled sources for studying sutra transcription” (p. 7).

According to Lowe's own stated goals, “I should stress that this book is not purely a social or cultural history in the sense of a work that primarily concerns itself with [Buddhist] practice at the expense of doctrines” (p. 7). I agree and also believe this book offers a far-reaching social history of eighth-century Japan, primarily focusing on the Nara capital, that crosses interdisciplinary boundaries. *Ritualized Writing* has something for just about anyone with an interest in early Japan. My perspective, as an art historian with

a background in Buddhist icons, occasionally departs from Lowe's and his own field of religious studies, but this does not dampen my enthusiasm for the publication.

Lowe tells us many things, but at its most basic level the core message that essentially drives the narrative might be found in the final page of the epilogue: the Buddhist rituals associated with the copying of scriptures and initially sponsored by the ruling class trickled down the social hierarchy, in particular to scribes who held government jobs and did the actual copying of the Buddhist texts. The texts were inaccessible to all but the most elite social groups, so from their (unglamorous, low-paying) jobs the scribes were able to gain "exposure to traditional refinements," and "in this way, the practices of elite patrons enabled a more diverse participation in Buddhism, and elites and commoners alike shared a common ground made up of ritual practices, cosmological conceptions, and even social organizations [associated with sutra transcription]" (p. 213; see also p. 18). Throughout the book, Lowe builds on his thesis regarding the relationship between patrons and those employed in the service of a patron's projects—those that hired and those that were hired. My thoughts on such notions appear at the end of this review.

Before proceeding with an outline of each chapter, a final note about the enviable degree of foresight and discipline on display by the author. At a little over two-hundred-and-fifty pages, including the appendix and bibliography, the book is pleasantly slim. Lowe was probably able to write a tightly focused, streamlined book because he apparently removed a great deal of research that was not relevant to the book's main thesis, and instead of stuffing this information into footnotes or endnotes, he published separate articles that expand, in considerable detail, on related topics. As we read along, the author directs us to one of his nine articles published between 2011 and 2016 for further details on a specific topic. Lowe's method worked well for me and was in effect quite brilliant.

The introduction sets up the background for this book and discusses a descriptive term often used to label the perceived, dominant historical characteristic of Nara-period Japan, "State Buddhism," or according to Lowe, "state Buddhism." The significance of using a lowercase "s" reflects a major concern argued repeatedly by the author as he attempts to shift focus away from the directives of a monolithic state documented in official historical annals, and instead seeks to uncover what took place at the level of individual actors,

whether as patrons or as scribes. Lowe reacts against "traditional rubrics for understanding Japanese Buddhism, which have focused primarily on the state's patronage and control of the religion" (p. 3; see footnote 32 on p. 14 for references in English on this subject). Especially interesting is his analysis of Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞 (1917–1983), a leading scholar whose influence remains hard to break, but that is exactly what Lowe attempts; he indicates that Inoue saw parallels between eighth-century Japan, "with its heavy-handed involvement of the state," and Inoue's contemporary life in postwar twentieth-century Japan, "a period that Inoue viewed with retrospective contempt in his published memoirs" (pp. 15–16). According to Lowe, Inoue viewed Nara-period state Buddhism as "an obstacle that needs to be overcome in the name of a liberal project [the 'eventual reform of Buddhism in the Kamakura period (1185–1333)'] that valorizes freedom of religion from state control" (p. 16), much like what Inoue presumably anticipated in the postwar reformation of twentieth-century Japan. Lowe moves away from this model, stating that "Nara Buddhism was far more diverse than the label 'state Buddhism' suggests" (p. 16) and showcases this "diversity" in his book, in particular the idea that Nara Buddhism was not just a political tool used by governing bodies to both unify and consolidate power into a centralized system, but served other purposes and groups—including non-state affiliated actors—in various ways. The remainder of the introduction provides a wonderful outline and history behind the document cache stored inside the eighth-century Shōsōin repository (pp. 21–26).

Lowe divides the rest of the book in a straightforward manner, three parts with two chapters each, for a total of six chapters. The author's summary of each chapter appears on pages 19–21.

Part one, "Ritual Practices," chapter 1, "Merit, Purity, and Ceremony," informs readers about the three topics appearing in the chapter title, and how writing was ritualized in East Asian Buddhism. Regarding "merit," I found it interesting that in "sutra copying, even hiring others to transcribe a text represented a form of virtuous conduct. Patrons gained merit without lifting a brush" (p. 31) as this "allowed lay Buddhists to fulfill one of their primary moral responsibilities: patronage" (p. 31). "Purity" played a critical role in the transcription process: "Impurely copied works not only threatened the empowerment of the manuscript but could also, in extreme cases, bring death to the scribe" (p. 36).

Achieving purity required both “bodily practice” and “wholesome mental states” (p. 37), and usually involved avoiding the consumption of meat and alcohol; sexual abstinence; ritual bathing; wearing “pure garments” that were often white clothing; upholding precepts; and transcribing scripture in “sanctified spaces” (p. 38). “Ceremony” was the final step that ensured the proper transfer of merit into the hands of patrons, allowing them the opportunity to announce, celebrate, and dedicate the merit gained from the scripture transcription project. Without a proper dedication ceremony, the “ritual remained incomplete” (p. 50).

Chapter 2, “Ritual Compositions,” examines what was announced during the dedication ceremony mentioned in chapter 1. This involved reading aloud written compositions known as *ganmon* 願文 (prayer texts) that were “performed in a ritual setting” and “were not purely personal supplications but socially sanctioned literary compositions” (p. 57). Most of chapter 2 explores the literary aspects of *ganmon*, a “recognizable genre in both medieval China and ancient Japan, and probably the Korean peninsula as well” (pp. 60–61), providing several instances of *ganmon* with translation and analysis. The authors of *ganmon* are unknown and Lowe suggests that speechwriters may have been hired, but this did not matter in the eighth century because the “sponsor of the rite becomes the subject of the prayer regardless of who the author [of the *ganmon*] may have been” (p. 60). In the case of Nara-period Japan, “prayers were most commonly [but not solely] performed on behalf of the deceased, asking that they be born in a better place such as a heaven or a pure land” (p. 61). Lowe proceeds with a compelling discussion about the kinds of pure lands mentioned in the prayer texts. “By the Nara period, patrons were readily conversant in the terminology of pure lands and heavens that had only recently been introduced to Japan, as evidenced [in *ganmon*]” (p. 74). References were made to Amitābha’s realm using a “variety of names” (listed on p. 74), and “perhaps most common were invocations of the future buddha Maitreya’s Tuṣita heaven” (p. 74). Most exciting to me was learning that “patrons creatively imagined the heavens and pure lands they invoked,” as in the case of Dōgyō 道行 (n.d.), a monk who led a fellowship group (*chishiki* 知識) (p. 74). In the prayer, Dōgyō referred to both Amitābha’s Land of Bliss and Maitreya’s Tuṣita heaven; in this sense, “creatively imagined” indicates that individuals made up their own wishes that could be unorthodox, such as an odd mixing of sepa-

rate entities like Amitābha and Maitreya (see footnote 48 on p. 75 for Chinese precedents and other instances).

Part two, “Organizations,” chapter 3, “Writing Societies,” addresses fellowship groups or “writing societies” made up of those who joined together to pool resources and jointly sponsor a scripture transcription project; *chishiki* members “commonly referred to themselves with terms rendered literally as ‘wholesome friends’ (*zen’u* 善友) [among other similar terms]” (p. 99). Because individual donor names appear in the documents, scholars discovered that *chishiki* membership was not limited to aristocrats, and many groups were rooted in specific geographic communities, including villages. In his examination of *chishiki* located outside the Nara capital, Lowe emphasizes that although these projects were not sponsored by the state, the fellowship groups had to rely on state-funded institutions and staff: those with the requisite skill sets as well as the scriptures needed for copying were not readily available in the private sector. Based on this dynamic, the author highlights the interconnectedness between such non-state and state projects, drawing particular attention to “straddlers” (p. 85) or individuals that did the connecting by straddling the state and non-state/grassroots organizations. Scribes in the employ of the state submitted official requests for time off to participate in such non-state scripture transcription projects (pp. 134–39). Why would the state approve this? “It appears that personal connections helped patrons secure permission to use the human resources of the [Tōdaiji] scriptorium for private projects” (p. 135), and this makes sense. In this manner, chapter 3 supports Lowe’s thesis regarding “state Buddhism” by showing the diffuse, porous nature of the relationship between the state and its people. Before moving on to the next chapter, there is one paragraph on page 87 I wish to clarify since it pertains to my field, but is not especially relevant to the book’s main concerns. Regarding the early origins of *chishiki*, Lowe mentions the “commissioning of images and temples in the capital, as evidenced by... a 623 inscription on an image of Śākyamuni at Hōryūji.” Located in present-day Ikaruga-chō, Ikoma-gun, Nara Prefecture, Hōryūji was never situated “in the capital.” There is also reference to “inscriptions on a Maitreya image and roof tiles originally from the Kaya temple site in Bitchū province.” The “Maitreya image” is the icon housed at Yachūji 野中寺 in the city of Habikino, Osaka Prefecture, and the “Kaya temple site” in Japanese appears to be Kayadera haiji ato 柏寺廢寺跡 in the city of Sōja,

Okayama Prefecture. Another intriguing monument associated with *chishiki*, but not mentioned by Lowe, is a pyramidal, mounded earth structure covered by roof tiles inscribed with donor names, known today as Dotō 土塔 and built within the Ōnodera 大野寺 precinct in the city of Sakai, Osaka Prefecture.¹

Part two, chapter 4, “Instituting Transcription,” shifts the focus to the most powerful aristocratic patrons of scripture transcription projects in the Nara capital, Heijōkyō. There is much to unpack here, but much of the focus seems to be centered on highlighting the ambiguous, messy distinctions between the “state” (public) and the most influential “aristocratic households” (private) as staff and funding intermixed or were tangled together (see pp. 142–45). The key players in this chapter were political rivals, Prince Nagaya (676/684–729; see p. 190 for a lineage chart), grandson of a former *tennō* 天皇 (literally “heavenly sovereign” or more commonly “emperor”; see footnote 33 on p. 69), and Fujiwara no Asukabe-hime or Kōmyōshi (701–760, p. 122), a non-royal who was named *kōgō* 皇后 (Queen consort) to Shōmu Tennō (701–756) in 729, as Queen consort Kōmyō. Household estates of the highest-ranking government officials like Prince Nagaya were “granted a staff of administrators from the central government to manage household affairs” (p. 119); his massive estate operated like a mini-state with personal “saddle makers and doctors” (p. 119) as well as a “bureau that managed sutra transcription and image production” (p. 119) that likely involved six or seven scribes holding official state posts and working on a project to copy six hundred scrolls of Buddhist scripture (p. 120). As for Kōmyōshi’s household scriptorium, this bureau was appended to the most powerful state temple, Tōdaiji, after she became Queen consort. Described as “likely the most prolific sutra-copying bureau in the Nara period” (p. 122), the scriptorium at Tōdaiji served the interests of the Queen consort and appears to have closed its doors after 776, following the death of Queen consort Kōmyō in 760 and the 770 death of her only surviving child, who reigned twice as Kōken and Shōtoku Tennō (718–770) (pp. 130–34). Chapter 6 also discusses Queen consort Kōmyō and her involvement in scripture transcription projects, but chapter 4 introduces the extent of blurred lines between the public state and private aristocratic

estates. This chapter also defines scriptoria as a place where scribes “produced mountains of paperwork” (p. 107) on matters both secular and sacred, and is a term used by the author “to refer to primarily lay-administered bureaucratic organizations with ready access to library collections and skilled laborers who copied sutras commissioned by patrons on demand” (p. 107). Lowe includes a step-by-step process of how a scripture transcription project progressed and the length of time required for each step. Scribes were “paid per sheet” (p. 114), for example, and “sat on the floor to copy the text on a low table” (p. 111). Completed sets of copied scriptures were then distributed to selected temples and presumably used during memorial rituals of the deceased person to whom the merit was directed (p. 114).

Part three, “Microhistories,” chapter 5, “Disciplinary Regimes,” returns to individuals, and in particular the life history or “microhistory” of someone toward the bottom of the social hierarchy: a scribe by the name of Karakuni no Hitonari, who worked at the Office of Sutra Transcription (hereafter, OST) at Tōdaiji. After eight years holding various positions at OST, Hitonari became a Buddhist monk (p. 150). According to Lowe, Hitonari imposed an enormous amount of self-discipline in his daily regime (hence the title of chapter 5) to further his own education, gaining access to texts that would otherwise have been out of his reach (pp. 150 and 168). Self-discipline was likely necessary because the life of a government scribe was not easy: there was “little opportunity for social advancement”; salaries were low; the meals provided by the state lacked nutrition and possibly contributed to disease; and the cramped working conditions led many to submit written requests for “medicinal wine” to ease their physical pain (p. 149). The scribes also “slept at the scriptorium and were only able to return home for vacation once every two or three months” (p. 156), making them virtual prisoners. This made me wonder about scribes who had no aspiration to become Buddhist monks. Was Hitonari an exception? Were individuals like him with a burning desire to read and copy Buddhist scriptures drawn to this job, and thereby more likely to endure harsh working conditions as government scribes? Or was this the standard of living for all low-level government workers in the capital? There might not be enough surviving evidence to answer my questions, but I was intrigued.

Part three, chapter 6, “Haunted by Demons, Watched by Kings,” the final chapter, tells the narrative from the

1 Yoshikawa, *Shōmu tennō to butto Heijōkyō*, pp. 156–67; Sakaishi Kyōiku linkai, *Shiseki Dotō: Ikōhen*.

point of view of those at the top of the social hierarchy, reflecting on possible intentions and agendas behind Queen consort Kōmyō's sponsorship of massive transcription projects. These concerned three sets of scriptures in particular: *Scripture on Saving and Protecting Body and Life* (hereafter, *Scripture on Saving*), *Golden Light Sutra*, and *Scripture on Brahma's Spirit Tablets*, all copied "from the middle months of 748" (pp. 171–72). Regarding the *Scripture on Saving*, Lowe mentions that this scripture "has received no attention in any language" (p. 174). Fear of demons and divine punishment for bad deeds were serious and real concerns, effectively shaping policy and practice in Nara Japan. For example, black magic was blamed for a particularly critical event: the death in 728 of Shōmu Tennō's firstborn son with Kōmyōshi, when she was still just one of several consorts. The son was less than a year old at the time of death, and "never before had an infant been formally granted this title [of crown prince]." This indicates to Lowe the "value of this prince ... and the shock that must have accompanied his passing" (p. 191). Buddhist structures established to pray for the deceased prince evolved into the massive Tōdaiji complex during the eighth century, further corroborating the presumed significance of the prince to his family.² Less than six months later, Prince Nagaya (mentioned in chapter 4) was accused of practicing *sadō* 左道 (black magic), casting curses that led to the crown prince's death (p. 192); Nagaya was then promptly condemned to death. Two decades later, in 748, Princess Abe, the only surviving child of Shōmu Tennō and Queen consort Kōmyō, was named crown princess (p. 193). The "Queen Consort's Palace Agency" shipped over highly valued, fine paper to the scriptorium (OST) at Tōdaiji to "transcribe one hundred copies of [*Scripture on Saving*]" (p. 171) because this scripture claimed to offer protection against "venom magic" (pp. 199–200), which involved filling a vessel with poisonous creatures that consumed one another. Princess Abe succeeded her father to become *tennō* in 749, "in a climate filled with uncertainty and potential threats" (p. 194). Lowe informs readers that the Queen consort sought protection for her daughter against demonic threats via scripture transcription projects because "Princess Abe would need all the help she could get" (p. 195).

The epilogue reaffirms notions from the book, such

2 Morimoto, *Tōdaiji no naritachi*, pp. 2–25.

as "Early Japanese Buddhism cannot be understood in terms of clearly demarcated and static social groups," and "social organizations and institutions, beliefs and practices ... transcended social class" (p. 212). While persuasively argued, to erase class lines like this in Nara Japan sounds extraordinarily bold and contemporary, and contrasts sharply with the standard Japanese scholarship; however, for Lowe to venture into unfamiliar, uncharted territory does not disqualify the essence of his thesis. A seed has been planted in my mind, and I will continue to ponder the significance and meanings of Lowe's subtly radical scholarship.

Ritualized Writing offers a wealth of new ideas, and here are a few more to consider. First, scripture transcription is an act of replication, not the creation of a new or original work; there are many parallels from the study of Buddhist icon production, primarily based on the concept that a faithful *copy* is *more authentic* to the true image of a buddha.³

Second, Lowe presents a convincing picture of the Nara state's porous, hard-to-define nature, one that is rather messy, with blurred distinctions like those between "public" and "private" as well as "secular" and "sacred." On this point, Lowe explains that "the concept of 'secular' as completely divorced from 'religion' did not even exist" (p. 172) during the Nara period. My perspective of the Nara state includes an image of a huge, relatively efficient bureaucracy whose scale of force was newly enabled by fairly high literacy rates for the first time on the Japanese archipelago. This allowed the state and its institutions to maximize tax revenues from village units under its jurisdiction and to initiate monumental construction projects. Economic history as documented in the Shōsōin collection may not have been especially relevant to this book but was a major concern for the Nara state.

Third, Lowe's terminology, or more broadly, word choice, was at times puzzling and potentially misleading in a few, isolated examples. It would have been helpful if the author had defined basic yet key terms in English at first mention, such as "scriptorium" (which appears on the first page but is not defined until page 107) or "colophon." I wondered, for example, about the specific meaning of "scriptorium," and whether it ap-

3 A useful note about replication traditions in East Asia appears in McCallum, *Zenkōji and Its Icon*, footnote 4, p. 213; see also pp. 180–84.

plied only to the building itself, or included conditions such as a certain number of scribes, was restricted to only religious texts, or possibly served to copy secular documents, and so on. On a separate point, somewhat distracting was the inconsistency in names given to the modern countries of China, Korea, and Japan. In the eighth century, China was called Tang and Korea was dominated politically by the Silla Kingdom; questions remain about the name of the Japanese islands. When Lowe writes about “tales circulating in China, Silla, and Japan” (p. 46; also see p. 53), it is unclear why he lists “Silla” and not “Korea.” Also, “in both medieval China and ancient Japan, and probably the Korean peninsula as well...” (pp. 60–61), why is there no mention of “ancient Korea”? Or “Japanese archipelago” to match “Korean peninsula” instead? Finally, a different set of issues relates to the challenge of translating nouns from the Japanese original to English equivalents.

In the case of the scriptorium at Tōdaiji, the author carefully lists chronological shifts in the Japanese name and the location of the scriptorium that served Queen consort Kōmyō (pp. 122–34). The modification in name closely follows changes in authority or the political status of its main patron, as “institutional structures [and their names] changed in accord with political realities” (p. 127). So when an institution’s funding sources increased or decreased in connection with shifting political fortunes due to power struggles, immediate adjustments were made to staff numbers, place of operation, and official name. Since I had not paid much attention to this phenomenon until reading Lowe’s book, I became curious about another institution mentioned by the author, “Queen Consort’s Palace Agency.” This institution appears in the index under various subcategories but without reference to its name in the Japanese primary sources, although footnote 49 on page 124 offers further readings in the Japanese secondary literature. As it turns out, a change in this powerful office’s name—primarily known as *shibichūdai* 紫微中台 and *kōgōgūshiki* 皇后宮職—was directly tied to critical and complicated political developments.⁴ Providing an English translation of an institution’s name appears deceptively simple, but, as here, underscores the many challenges Lowe faced in his study of ancient docu-

ments. And when I encountered gaps in my knowledge of Nara-period institutional, social, and religious history during my reading, I was enticed to learn more, beyond the interests of this book.

Ritualized Writing reminds me of the joy I felt after turning the final page of Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). This is no coincidence, as Lowe informs readers that he proceeded in “accord with the approach of the famed microhistorian Carlo Ginzburg” (p. 169). The scribe Hitonari was Lowe’s counterpart to Ginzburg’s miller—an indicator of what was happening in the margins, in the shadows of the lineage groups that controlled the state and its institutions. While much remains unknown about Nara Japan and how life was actually lived, for those of us who have trouble mastering the primary documents, Lowe’s study will get us closer. The secondary Japanese scholarship examining these materials often focuses on extremely narrow topics and are highly technical studies that address mostly specialist concerns. Lowe’s new addition to the field is an even more welcome contribution because his own brand of methodology departs from such specialized, technical writings in Japanese. Instead, he offers a broader, more comprehensive synthesis without sacrificing the attention to detail that can be found only through a close reading of the primary documents. Moreover, his accessible and lively writing style captivates the reader and makes his task seem easy, *almost* inviting me to challenge myself and attempt to read the corpus of primary documents from the Shōsōin. But I know better, and eagerly await the author’s next book.

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4 For definitions in English of *shibichūdai*, see Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, pp. 269 and 324, and for *kōgōgūshiki*, p. 316; discussion of these terms and their significance appear throughout Piggott’s book.

Research Note on Brahmanical Deities in Mikkyō Astrological Art

JEFFREY KOTYK

Introduction

AN ancient manuscript titled *Goma rodan yō* 護摩爐壇樣 (Model for the Homa Altar) is found in volume seven of the modern compilation of images, the *Taishō zuzō* 大正圖像.¹ This same title appears in the catalog of texts brought back from China by the Japanese monk Jōgyō 常曉 (d. 867) in 839, hence the document at hand was originally a Chinese composition.² Here I would like to draw attention to the icons therein of the *nakṣatras* (lunar mansions, that is, constellations along the orbital path of the Moon) in anthropomorphic forms and their relationship to the Brahmanical deities associated with the *nakṣatras* described in the Japanese recension of the *Xiuyao jing* (Jp. *Sukuyō-kyō* 宿曜經; Sutra of Constellations and Planets).³ We will then examine these same deities as they

are portrayed in later “star mandalas” (*hoshi mandara* 星曼荼羅) from the Japanese medieval period, a time when horoscopy—an art monopolized by a community of monks called Sukuyōdō 宿曜道—flourished among the Japanese aristocracy.⁴

Historical Background

Early Buddhists in India observed the lunar cycle as a means of coordinating their ecclesiastical schedule, and to determine astrologically auspicious days to carry out practices or ceremonies. The lunar phases were divided into two periods (*pakṣa*), each comprised of fifteen days, called *tithis* (a day running from sunrise to sunrise), namely the *śukla-pakṣa* (waxing period) and *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa* (waning period). In addition, the orbital path of the Moon was divided into twenty-eight or twenty-seven lunar stations of varying dimensions called *nakṣatras*.

The earliest datable Buddhist text that explains *nakṣatras* and the astrological lore of each of them is the

1 *Goma rodan yō*, *T zuzō*, vol. 7, pp. 815–41.

2 This document is discussed in Kotyk, “The Sinicization of Indo-Iranian Astrology,” pp. 14–15.

3 As Yano Michio has explored, there are two recensions of the *Xiuyao jing*: the Japanese and the Chinese recensions. The former line is traced back to manuscripts brought to Japan by monks such as Kūkai 空海 (774–835), and best represents the original text in contrast to the latter, which displays a number of significant modifications. See Yano, “‘Sukuyō-kyō’ no Daizōkyō,” pp. 6–10.

4 The introduction of astrology and its related practice of astral magic have been documented in Kotyk, “Japanese Buddhist Astrology and Astral Magic.” For an earlier study, see Momo, “Sukuyōdō to sukuyō kanmon.”

Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna, which was likely produced in Magadha (a region roughly corresponding to modern Bihar state in India) during the third century CE. This work was first translated into Chinese between 307–313 by Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 as the *Shetoujian Taizi ershiba xiu jing* 舍頭諫太子二十八宿經 (T 1301) or *Sūtra of Prince Śārdūlakarṇa and the Twenty-Eight Nakṣatras*. A separate recension, most likely stemming from Central Asia, was translated by Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 (394–468) as the *Mātaṅga-sūtra* 摩登伽經.⁵

In the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, each *nakṣatra* is associated with a Brahmanical deity. It is considered auspicious to make offerings to the specific deity associated with the *nakṣatra* in which the Moon is stationed. For example, the *Mātaṅga-sūtra* furnishes the following details concerning the *nakṣatra* named Śravaṇa (traditionally equated with the Chinese lunar station Nü 女):

女有三星，形如穰麥。一日一夜，共月而行。
鳥肉用祀。屬毘紐神。

Śravaṇa consists of three stars, shaped like a cereal grain. The Moon transits through it over the course of one day and one night. Offer fowl as a sacrifice. [Śravaṇa] is associated with the god Viṣṇu.⁶

The presence of such Vedic deities indicates that *nakṣatra* astrology was non-Buddhist in origin, although it was observed by Buddhists.

The *Mahāsaṃnipāta* 大方等大集經 (T 397), a collection of various Buddhist scriptures, includes the *Candraḡarbha-parivarta* 月藏分 and *Sūryaḡarbha-parivarta* 日藏分, translated by Narendrayaśas 那連提耶舍 (490–589) in the years 566 and 585 respectively. These two texts explain some astrology, albeit with errors. In the *Sūryaḡarbha-parivarta*, Śrāvaṇa as the name of a month is conflated with a different *nakṣatra* called Punarvasū, and furthermore is associated with the “solar deity” (*ri tian* 日天). Curious as such an anomaly might be, it does not appear that Chinese Buddhists observed any type of *nakṣatra* astrology until the eighth century when Mantrayāna was introduced.

Śubhakarasiṃha 善無畏 (637–735) and his team, which included the eminent astronomer-monk Yixing 一行 (673–727), translated the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* or **Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (*Dari jing* 大日經; T 848) in 724. Yixing compiled a commentary to the text based upon the oral remarks of Śubhakarasiṃha sometime before 727, which became the *Dari jing shu* 大日經疏 (T 1796). This commentary explains the essential features of Indian hemerology as Śubhakarasiṃha understood it, but it lacks sufficient detail to be able to determine an auspicious time to create a mandala without recourse to Sanskrit texts or an Indian specialist.⁷

The absence of an accessible manual of Indian astrology in Chinese likely motivated Amoghavajra 不空 (705–774) to compile the *Xiuyao jing*, first in 759 and with a subsequent revision in 764.⁸ Amoghavajra compiled this text from disparate and evidently non-Buddhist sources. He then attributed its authorship to Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, likely as a means of validating the text for Buddhist use in China, especially in light of the many elements in the text that are antithetical to Buddhist precepts, such as encouraging the production of weapons and alcohol on specific days. Other evidently non-Buddhist elements in the text are Brahmanical deities.

Brahmanical Deities in the *Xiuyao jing* and *Goma rodan yō*

The 764 version of the *Xiuyao jing* lists primarily Vedic deities in two sections (no illustrations are present in either recension of the text). The first set is found in chapter 2, which explains each of the twenty-eight *nakṣatras*, including their respective shapes and number of stars, in addition to their associated deities, *gotras*, and foods. The text also describes the activities to be done or avoided when the Moon converges with each of the *nakṣatras*, as well as providing predictions about the personalities and fortunes of people born under each of them. These features are similar to the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, but not identical. The second set of Vedic deities is listed in chapter 6. These are deities associated with each of the *tithis* in a *paḡṣa*. Each deity is believed

5 *Mātaṅga-sūtra*, pp. 399–410. For further details, see Kotyk, “Buddhist Astrology and Astral Magic in the Tang Dynasty,” pp. 55–58.

6 *Mātaṅga-sūtra*, p. 405a.

7 The astrology in this commentary is discussed in Kotyk, “Early Tantric Hemerology in Chinese Buddhism.”

8 The first fascicle of the text is the 764 version, while the second is the 759 version. Yano, *Mikkyō senseijutsu*, p. 264.



Figure 1. Urukiboshi in *Goma rodan yō*. T zuzō 3163 7 (appended item no. 43).

to descend into the world on the *tithi* associated with it.

The first set is our present concern, given its clear connections to the aforementioned *Goma rodan yō*. One striking parallel between this text and the *Xiuyao jing* is the *nakṣatra* Śravaṇa, which as noted above is associated with Viṣṇu in the *Mātaṅga-sūtra*. This is also so in the *Xiuyao jing*, in which the associated deity of Urukiboshi (the Japanese name for the Chinese lunar station Nü, which is used as an equivalent for Śravaṇa) is named Bisōjū-shin 毗藪紐神 (the god Viṣṇu).⁹ Turning to the *Goma rodan yō*, we see Urukiboshi/Nü in an illustrated form (figure 1). The traditional attributes of Viṣṇu are apparent here: the four arms, conch (*śaṅkha*), flaming wheel (*sudarśana-cakra*), and the *garuḍa* mount (*vahana*). This association between Viṣṇu and Śravaṇa is relatively ancient, given that the *Nakṣatrakalpa* of the *Atharvavedaparīṣiṣṭā* (4.6) gives an identical assignment (“śravaṇe viṣṇur ucyate”).¹⁰

Another notable example is that of Ārdṛā, or in Japanese, Karasukiboshi (Ch. Shen 參). The *Xiuyao jing* associates this *nakṣatra* with Rodatsura-shin 魯達羅神 (the god Rudra). Similarly, the *Atharvavedaparīṣiṣṭā* (4.2) also gives Rudra (“rudrasyā ārdṛā”).¹¹ The icon in this context is reflective of the god Śiva and his reclin-



Figure 2. Karasukiboshi in *Goma rodan yō*. T zuzō 3163 7 (appended item no. 26).

ing bull, nowadays commonly called Nandi (figure 2). Rudra is one of the names of Śiva. Rudra is also considered to be the predecessor of Śiva in the Vedas.¹²

We must note that the *nakṣatra* deities in the *Taizō zuzō* 胎藏圖象, which represent the original icons of the *taizōkai mandala* 胎藏界曼荼羅 (the “Womb Matrix Mandala” or *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*), are uniformly male and bodhisattva-like in appearance with otherwise few distinguishing features. The *Genzu mandara* 現圖曼荼羅, the mandala of the Taizōkai used in Shingon, uses this set of Indian Buddhist icons, which differs from those of the Brahmanical set.¹³ The twenty-eight *nakṣatras* in anthropomorphic forms are found in the “Outermost Court” 最外院 of the Taizōkai. There is nothing in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* or its commentary to indicate that the *nakṣatra* deities of the Taizōkai are connected with specific Brahmanical deities, especially considering that Brahmanical deities, such as Maheśvara 大自在天 (Śiva) and Śakra 帝釋天 (Indra), are already present as individual icons in the Outermost Court.¹⁴ The Brahmanical icons under present investigation therefore stem from a separate line of transmission that was arguably non-Buddhist, which is reasonable to assume in light of the fact that Amogha-

9 *Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu* 宿曜經縮刷, vol. 1, p. 23.

10 *Atharvavedaparīṣiṣṭā*, p. 4.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 3. *Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu*, vol. 1, p. 17.

12 Bisschop, “Śiva,” p. 741.

13 See Somekawa, *Mandara zuten*, pp. 170-239.

14 *Ibid.*, 178, 208.



Figure 3. Star mandala. 79 1/8 × 48 13/16 in. (201 × 124 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Promised Gift of Sue Cassidy Clark, in honor of Bernard Faure, with permission to publish.

vajra produced the *Xiuyao jing* from clearly non-Buddhist sources.¹⁵ The *Xiuyao jing*, we must iterate, does

not appear to have ever included visual icons.

¹⁵ The *Xiuyao jing* lists prescriptions for alcohol and weapon production according to an astrological schedule. This is clearly reflective of non-Buddhist sources, although the text itself never

names these works since it is attributed to Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. See Kotyk, “Can Monks Practice Astrology?”, pp. 511–12.

▪ Star Mandalas

Apart from the *Goma rodan yō*, these specific *nakṣatra* icons of the Brahmanical type also appear in star mandalas (*hoshi mandara*). These are a unique Japanese development commencing from the mid-Heian period (794–1185). They normally display an array of astral deities (planets, zodiacs, *nakṣatras*, the seven stars of the Big Dipper, etc.) surrounding a buddha.¹⁶ These were incorporated into Mikkyō practices during the medieval period, the aim being to placate or appease the deities depicted therein. Buddhist astrologers from the Sukuyōdō community, which itself was strictly neither associated with Tōmitsu 東密 (Shingon Esoteric Buddhism) nor Taimitsu 台密 (Tendai Esoteric Buddhism), cast horoscopes and subsequently advised their clients to make offerings to specific astral deities that were determined to govern fortune and fate, based upon the client's natal chart.¹⁷ Star mandalas, I argue, appear to have been connected to this practice.¹⁸

Sukuyōdō was a lineage of Buddhist astrologer-monks active from the late tenth to the fourteenth century, sometimes competing with Onmyōdō 陰陽道 (yin-yang practices).¹⁹ The former practiced horoscopy, while the latter worked primarily with divination methods sourced from native Chinese materials. Why suspect a link between star mandalas and Sukuyōdō? A noteworthy example of a star mandala in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York is important in this regard. In it, the positions of the planets in the mandala, represented in anthropomorphic forms of the Iranian-Mesopotamian type, do not appear to be

placed at random; rather, they reflect the planetary positions at a specific point in time (figure 3).²⁰ Other star mandalas do not generally show such configurations.²¹

In the Metropolitan Museum's painting, Saturn is in Capricorn, Jupiter is in Sagittarius, Mars is in Leo, the Sun is in Libra, Venus is in Scorpio, Mercury is in Libra or Scorpio, the Moon is in Libra, Rāhu is in Pisces, and Ketu is in Gemini. I was able to determine that this configuration corresponds approximately to the date 3 October 1225, give or take a few days, and likely around 21:00, assuming that the Sun in the painting is positioned relative to the hour in question. This dating is relatively straightforward, since first we look at the years in which Saturn is in Capricorn and Jupiter is in Sagittarius. On 3 October 1225 we find the following configuration: Sun in Libra, Mercury in Libra, Venus in Scorpio, Mars in Leo, Jupiter in Sagittarius, Saturn in Capricorn, ascending node (Rāhu) in Pisces, and lunar apogee (Ketu) in Gemini.²² We ought to ignore the position of the Moon in the painting (it was actually in Cancer, not in Libra), since East Asian horoscopes from the medieval period—Chinese and Japanese—fail to accurately calculate the position of the Moon, due to the absence of accurate calculations of the apsidal precession in relation to the lunar orbit. Ketu in Japanese horoscopy is uniquely the lunar apogee, rather than the descending node of the Moon.²³

Assuming that this star mandala in question represents a natal horoscope, we might imagine that the time of birth of the client specifically was illustrated in this fashion, and thus it was likely produced sometime between 1225 and 1325. The Metropolitan Museum of Art dates this mandala to the second half of the fourteenth century. This mandala would have been produced for ritual purposes, specifically as a means

16 Star mandalas appear in circular and rectangular forms. A comprehensive study of these was carried out by Takeda Kazuaki. He briefly mentions the icons of the *Goma rodan yō* in *Hoshi mandara no kenkyū*, p. 192. An important illustrated manuscript depicting astral deities—which itself is not a mandala—that functioned as an essential foundation for star mandalas is the *Fantian huoluuo juyao* 梵天火羅九曜 (**Brahmadeva-horānavagraha*; T 1311). This work is spuriously attributed to Yixing but dates to the ninth century. For details on this text, see Kotyk, "Yixing and Pseudo-Yixing," pp. 16–20.

17 A natal chart is a table indicating the positions of the planets at the time of a person's birth. An astrologer uses this to make predictions about the person's fate. This practice of prescribing worship of specific astral deities is seen in medieval Japanese horoscopes. See Kotyk, "Japanese Buddhist Astrology and Astral Magic," pp. 64–65.

18 For a relevant study of these mandalas, see Aruga, "Hoshi mandara to Myōken Bosatsu."

19 For a recent survey and introduction to Onmyōdō, see Yamashita Katsuaki's *Onmyōdō no hakken*.

20 "Iranian-Mesopotamian" is a designation given to one set of icons of planetary deities. These were the most widely used in East Asia. They are seen in Chinese, Tangut, Korean, and Japanese contexts after the early ninth century. See Kotyk, "Astrological Iconography of Planetary Deities in Tang China," pp. 46–48. I utilized the ephemerides at www.astro.com. See also Tuckerman, *Planetary, Lunar, and Solar Positions*, p. 630.

21 The work is *Star Mandala*, accession number L.2013.4a–d. Elizabeth Tinsley, a Metropolitan Museum of Art research fellow at the time, originally approached me with this specimen and, suspecting it was reflective of a horoscope, asked if I could calculate its date on the basis of the planetary configurations relative to zodiac signs.

22 In calculating these planetary positions, I utilized the ephemerides at www.astro.com.

23 Yano, *Mikkyō senseijutsu*, pp. 186–87.



Figure 4. Urukiboshi, detail in Star mandala. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Promised Gift of Sue Cassidy Clark, in honor of Bernard Faure. Photograph by Elizabeth Tinsley.

to counteract unfavorable prognostications connected uniquely to the client, but an ordinary Mikkyō monk would not have had the tools or knowledge available to produce a horoscope, since such technical expertise in medieval Japan was limited to Sukuyōdō. Only a Sukuyōshi 宿曜師 (a master astrologer of the Sukuyōdō lineage), trained in basic calendrical science and in possession of the necessary tables (ephemerides showing planetary positions over time), could have made the necessary calculations. The identities of both the astrologer and client in the present context, however, remain uncertain.

The Brahmanical deities as lunar stations described above also appear in this mandala, such as Urukiboshi/Śravaṇa. Although the section with this divinity is slightly damaged in the painting, it is clearly modelled after the same motif seen in the *Goma rodan yō*, with the *garuḍa* especially visible, as seen in figure 1.

With respect to other examples, the Philadelphia Museum of Art (#1978-45-2) possesses a pristinely preserved star mandala dated to the Edo period in which the Brahmanical icons are depicted. Their presence here reveals that this set of icons was in continual use until even the early modern period. Another relevant specimen dated to the eighteenth to nineteenth century

is found at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (#11.7123). This mandala in rectangular form also uses the Brahmanical icons.²⁴

Brahmanical Planetary Icons

As a final observation, we should note that the *Goma rodan yō* also includes representations of the seven planets (the five visible planets plus the Sun and the Moon). The Moon rides a white goose while the Sun rides a horse. These motifs reflect the standard motifs of Candra and Sūrya (the ancient Vedic deities of the Moon and Sun) respectively. The other five planets, however, are unique among the documented sets of astral icons in premodern East Asia. Most striking is that Mars rides a white lion, Saturn (his name in the manuscript also given as Kēwān from Sogdian) rides a white elephant (figure 5), and Jupiter (Urmazt) rides a bull (figure 6). These animals are not of the Iranian-Mesopotamian type that became standard across East Asia, but instead represent a unique set unattested elsewhere in East Asia, so far as I am aware. Nevertheless, with some degree of confidence we can assert that these icons are of Indian origin, given that Saturn atop an elephant and Jupiter atop an equine creature are attested in an Indian mandala published by William Jones in 1790.²⁵ One complicating issue is that the names of the planets in the *Goma rodan yō* are given in Sogdian transliterated into Chinese characters. This might have been done for simple reference on the part of a scribe, since the Sogdian loanwords for the planets were widely used in China during the late Tang period.²⁶

24 One curious feature of this painting is the depiction of Scorpio on the right side as a prawn, rather than as a scorpion. This error likely stems from a misreading of *sasori* 蝎 as *ebi* 蝦. This point illustrates that the artists who produced these pieces were not necessarily familiar with astrological lore. They seem to have worked from iconographical manuals.

25 Pingree, "Indian Planetary Images and the Tradition of Astral Magic," pp. 11-12. See appended plate 3a. See also Jones, "On the Antiquity of the Oriental Zodiack," p. 303.

26 The Sogdian names of the planets, which are transliterated into Middle Chinese, are transliterations from Middle Persian. See table 1 in Kotyk, "Iranian Elements," p. 43.



Figure 5. Saturn (Kēwān) in *Goma rodan yō*. TZ 3163 7 (appended item no. 22).



Figure 6. Jupiter (Urmazt) in *Goma rodan yō*. TZ 3163 7 (appended item no. 2).

Conclusion

I propose that we call the specific set of *nakṣatra* icons connected to predominately Vedic deities “Brahmanical.” This set as it exists in Japan seems to have been introduced through the *Goma rodan yō*, which was brought to Japan by Jōgyō in 839. These icons were often employed in star mandalas from the mid-Heian period onward. I have argued that these mandalas were, at least in some cases, produced in collaboration with monks from the Sukuyōdō community (Sukuyōshi). Last, we observed in passing that the *Goma rodan yō* contains five planetary icons that are unattested elsewhere in the East Asian art record, although Saturn atop an elephant and Jupiter atop a quadruped are attested in India.

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- T zuzō Print version: *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō zuzō* 大正新脩大藏經圖像. 12 vols. Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1933–1935. Online version: SAT Taishō zō Image Database (SAT 大正藏圖像 DB). University of Tokyo. <http://dzkings.l.u-Tokyo.ac.jp/SATi/images.php>.

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- Mahāsaṃnipāta* 大方等大集經. T 397 13: pp. 1–407.
- Mātāṅga-sūtra* 摩登伽經. T 1300 21: pp. 399–410.
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- Xiuyao jing* 宿曜經. See *Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu*.

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Demon Roof Tiles: A Study of the Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-A

SUSUMU IGATA

TRANSLATION BY CYNTHIA J. BOGEL AND LINDSEY E. DEWITT

Translators' Preface

Within the large surviving body of fired earthenware roof tiles from ancient Japan, among the most striking are the expressive tiles known as *onigawara* 鬼瓦, “demon tile.” High- and low-relief *onigawara* show a demon or ogre’s face, sometimes with all or part of a simplified torso. Its exaggerated brow and eyes, face creased by a scowl, and gaping mouth with bared fangs are cleverly arranged on a distinctive tile shape that in the final product melds function with form. Demon tiles, still in use today, were typically placed on the outer ends of the main roof ridge or on the lowermost end of various descending ridge forms (see figure 7), where they would be most visible from the ground. This article considers distinctive demon tiles from Dazaifu, northwest Kyushu, where a regional government office was in place from the end of the seventh century through the Nara (710–784) and beyond the Heian (794–1185) period, when Nara and Kyoto were capitals. The term “regional” may conjure an image of something less than significant. The north of Kyushu,¹

however, was the “gateway to Asia” for centuries, second in historical significance during the late seventh through twelfth century only to the area around the capitals. Envoys and other important visitors from kingdoms on the Korean peninsula or the Chinese Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) dynasty courts, among others, were required to report to Dazaifu after they entered the bay of Hakata, modern Fukuoka. Buddhist monks, merchants, and other travelers visited Dazaifu to pray for a safe journey, complete paperwork, or wait for a ship to be repaired. The appearance and visual history of the Dazaifu *onigawara* type of roof tile embodies this fascinating history and, as the author argues, embodies characteristics and showcases techniques both distinct from and dependent on the influence of the Korean peninsula and Tang-dynasty tiles, and those of the Heijō capital (Nara).

added to the English adapted translation. For the readers’ ease of reference, the translators have indicated the original note number in brackets (e.g., [1]), at the end or midway through the note.

1 Northern Kyushu (*Kyūshū hokubu* 九州北部 or *Hokubu Kyūshū*) has had constant contact with other parts of East Asia since ancient times. Until 1963, when the city of Kitakyūshū 北九州, “north Kyushu” or “northern Kyushu,” was formed, the area encompassing all or part of the modern prefectures of Fukuoka, Saga, Kumamoto, Oita, and Nagasaki was referred to by the same name, Kitakyūshū.

This article is based on Igata, “Dazaifu-shiki onigawara kō: I-shiki A o chūshin ni.” Permission to adapt and publish the article and illustrations is given by the publisher, Koshi Shoin (its trademark name) 高志書院 (Kōshi Shoin). Additional footnotes have been



Figure 1. Roof tile, Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-A. 720s to mid 8th c., Nara period. Fired earthenware. Collection Kyushu Historical Museum. Note: all figures except 7, 12, and 17 are reproduced from Igata, "Dazaifushiki onigawara kō: I shiki A o chūshin ni," with permission of the publisher.



Figure 2. Roof tile, Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-B. 8th c., Nara period. Fired earthenware. H 34 cm. From Nikkanji, Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture.



Figure 3. Roof tile, Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style II. 8th c., Nara period. Fired earthenware. H 44.5 cm. Collection Kyushu Historical Museum.



Figure 4. Roof tile, Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style III. 8th c., Nara period. Fired earthenware. H 38.2 cm. Collection Kyushu Historical Museum.



Figure 5. Roof tile, Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-A. 720s to mid 8th c., Nara period. Fired earthenware. H: 48.7 cm, H 44.4 cm to the shoulder/corner, W of shoulder 35 cm, thickness (maximum) 13.4 cm. Collection Kyushu Historical Museum.

Introduction

Onigawara 鬼瓦 roof tiles portraying an ogre or demon have been excavated at Dazaifu's landmark historical sites and ruins (*Dazaifu Shiseki* 大宰府史跡), in particular at the Dazaifu Government Office (*Dazaifu Seichō* 大宰府政庁). Works similar in style have also been found throughout northern Kyushu at or near government offices, temples, and shrines in the premodern provinces of Chikuzen 筑前, Chikugo 筑後, Hizen 肥前, northern Higo 肥後, Bungo 豊後, and Buzen 豊前.² Together these demon tiles constitute a group referred to as the "Dazaifu lineage" (*Dazaifu kei* 大宰府系); the category also includes tiles excavated from the southern part of Kyushu, far from Dazaifu. Given this range of distribution, it becomes clear that the "Dazaifu Type demon tile" exerted influence throughout all of Kyushu, justifying the designation of this type. The earliest of the Dazaifu Type *Onigawara*, named, literally, "Dazaifu Style Demon Tile I Style A" (*Dazaifu shiki onigawara I*

shiki A 大宰府式鬼瓦I式A), is the subject of this article. It is rendered here as "Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-A" and similar names to fit better with English nomenclature.

Today, Japanese archaeologists and art historians broadly divide Dazaifu Type demon tiles into three styles: Style I (figures 1, 2, and 5), Style II (figure 3), and Style III (figure 4).³ Even though the production dates for the three styles differ, we may conclude that all three date to the Nara period. Style I is the fundamental Dazaifu Type tile; it was probably manufactured during the second phase of construction at the Dazaifu Government Office, that is, during the first quarter of the eighth century, making it the oldest of the three. Dazaifu Type *onigawara* are divided into groups A and B based on their size, with Style I-A the larger of the two. The sophisticated mode of representing the demon

2 Reports on the Dazaifu historic sites and Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* roof tiles are compiled in Kyūshū Rekishi Shiriyōkan, *Dazaifu Seichō ato*. [n1]

3 These names and styles follow Morimitsu, "Nihon kodai no kimenmon onigawara," whose method other researchers have followed. Kyūshū Rekishi Shiriyōkan, *Dazaifu Seichō ato* additionally cites Oda, "Kyūshū ni okeru Dazaifu-kei kogawara no tenkai (4)," and Kurihara, "Dazaifu-shiki onigawara," and seems to regard those three works as the major preceding studies. The present research is based on those same three essays and, in addition, Kameda, "Kogasen yori mita Dazaifu to Chōsen." [n2]

with realistic modeling distinguishes Style I-A. In keeping with this assessment, when both Style I-A and Style I-B were deployed on a roof, Style I-A appears to have been the tile used for the crowning roof ridge (*ōmune* 大棟), while Style I-B was used for the descending corner ridge (*kudarimune* 降棟) and corner ridges (*sumimune* 隅棟).⁴

Style I-A has been excavated only at Dazaifu sites, save one example, and the majority of tiles have been found at the site of the Dazaifu Government Office. Because the use of this *onigawara* style was essentially limited to the central part of Dazaifu and demonstrates a higher standard of craftsmanship than other Dazaifu types, Style I-A has been treated not only as representative of the Dazaifu Type but has come to symbolize Dazaifu itself. There has been very little study of this important type of artifact to date.⁵ Building on the author's previous studies on Dazaifu demon tiles, this article focusses on Dazaifu Style I-A, and in doing so hopes to cast further light on *onigawara*—and on Dazaifu as well.

Dazaifu Type Onigawara Style I-A Tiles

Let us return now to some specifics about Style I-A. Tiles in this category are on average 48.5 cm high, bottom width 43.5 cm, shoulder width 35 cm, 5 cm thick at the edges, and 15 cm at the thickest part.⁶ Apart from



Figure 6. Mold for a demon tile. 7th–8th c., Unified Silla period. Fired earthenware. H 21.5 cm. Collection Gyeongju National Museum. Reproduced from Kungnip Kyōngju Pangmulgwan, *Silla wajōn*, p. 403, no. 1321.

one piece excavated from a Chinese-style mountain castle, Itojō 怡土城, in the city of Itoshima, Fukuoka Prefecture, the tiles have been excavated mainly from the Dazaifu Government Office, with additional findings at the ruins of Mizuki Castle 水城, Ōno Castle 大野城, and the convent Chikuzen kokubunniji 筑前国分尼寺. Figure 5, the best-known example, designated an Important Cultural Property (*jūyō bunkazai* 重要文化財), was reportedly found in a field north of the Dazaifu Government Office site at the end of the Taishō period (1912–1926). The surface of the Itojō tile is severely damaged, having deteriorated not only through use and due to preservation issues but also as a result of the use of a worn mold at the start, the surface of which had deteriorated from repeated use for tile making. I surmise that the production of Style I-A had become essentially obsolete contemporaneous with the building of Itojō (castle), for which construction started in Tenpyō Shōhō 天平勝宝 8 (756) and ended in Jingo Keiun 神護景雲 2 (768). Clearly, the production of Style I-A was concentrated around the time of the second phase

4 Oda, “Kyūshū ni okeru Dazaifu-kei kogawara no tenkai (4),” p.12. Style I-B was used independently outside the Dazaifu sites. In those cases, either *shibi* 鷗尾 (decorative roof tiles on both sides of the ridge) or Style I-B were likely used for the *ōmune*. [n3; nb: the above carries a correction to original note 3] Note that the corner ridge can be on the same line as the descending corner ridge or at an angle to it (perpendicular or other). For images of *onigawara* placement and definitions of other architectural components, see JAANUS <http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/k/kudarimune.htm> and <http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/t/tsu-makudarimune.htm>.

5 Major articles on Dazaifu Style *onigawara* roof tiles by the author include “Dazaifu-shiki *onigawara* shōkō”; “Dazaifu-shiki *onigawara* shōkō hoki”; and “Dazaifu-shiki *onigawara*: I-shiki A.” [n4]

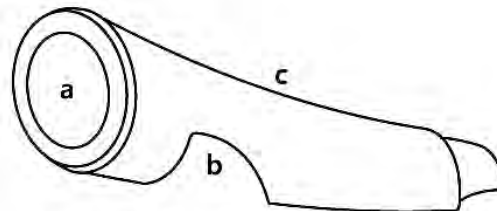
6 Kurihara, “Dazaifu-shiki *onigawara*,” p. 581. The dimensions of other styles are as follows (numbers in parentheses indicate restored sizes):
 Style I-B: Height: 34 cm; Bottom width: (33.5 cm); Thickness: 10 cm
 Style II: Height: (44.5 cm); Shoulder width: 27.5 cm; Bottom width: (34 cm); Thickness: 9.5 cm
 Style III: Height: 38.2 cm; Shoulder width: (30.2 cm); Bottom width: 36.1 cm; Thickness: (11.3 cm)

Style I-A, figure 5 was measured by the author as follows: Height: 48.7 cm; Height to the shoulders: 44.4 cm; Width of shoulder: 35.0 cm; Thickness (maximum): 13.4 cm; Thickness of edge: 4.0–4.8 cm. The top edge tends to be a little thinner than the bottom edge. [n5]

of construction at the Dazaifu Government Office, as we have noted. There, its use differed from that of other tile types. We can thus hypothesize that Style I-A was featured at Dazaifu's landmark buildings. In trying to pinpoint the specifics of when Style I-A began to be produced and how long its use continued, we can reference debates about the dates of the second phase of construction at the Dazaifu Government Office to conclude that the likely origins of Style I-A fall at the end of the first quarter of the eighth century, in the 720s, and that production ended no later than the middle of the eighth century.

As regards color, the surface is ash-gray or grayish white and the interior is off-white, but some tiles with pure white surfaces have been found. Fine clay mixed with a small quantity of sand is used for the tiles. We can determine from the three-dimensionality of the whole and the extremely varied thickness of various parts that clay was placed into the mold layer by layer.⁷ As figure 5 shows on the angled view, the lateral surfaces of the demon tiles are smooth; in general the tiles are cast with a smooth backside as well, although a rope pattern can be seen on one excavated example.⁸ The process seems to have been as follows: clay was placed in the mold layer by layer, then removed immediately, after which the front (face) side was cleaned up and a hole made between the eyebrows. The tiles were then dried and fired at a relatively low temperature.

The clay mold is thought to have been created using a three-dimensional prototype (such as another tile) to which details were added by hand before firing. Another theory proposes that a wooden mold was created for the process.⁹ Wood might well have been used for



a) gatō 瓦当 b) ago 顎 c) sori 反り

Figure 7. Roof tiles and corresponding diagram. Great South Gate, Hōryūji, Nara Prefecture. Adapted from JAANUS online (*toribusuma*).

- 7 Regarding production techniques, in addition to visual inspection of numerous fragments excavated from the Dazaifu site, I draw from the advice of Katō Kazutoshi, who conducted research of Dazaifu Style *onigawara* with a CT scanner at Kyushu Historical Museum. On this research, please refer to the catalogue Kyūshū Rekishi Shiryōkan, *Dazaifu o saguru saiensu*, headed by Katō. [n6]
- 8 This was found during the sixth survey of Dazaifu (大宰府史跡の第6次調査); see Kurihara, "Dazaifu-shiki onigawara," p. 583; Kyūshū Rekishi Shiryōkan, *Dazaifu Seichō ato*, p. 213. The author of the relevant passage is Kurihara. [n7]
- 9 Kurihara, "Dazaifu-shiki onigawara," p. 591. On the other hand, in a column called "Jiman no ippin" 自慢の逸品 in the evening edition of *Nishinippon shinbun* 西日本新聞, 1996.10.12, Kurihara introduces Dazaifu Type *onigawara* as a noteworthy attraction of the Kyushu Historical Museum. He states that a negative mold made of sand was found among demon roof tiles in Silla (see also note 12 below), "thus it may be the case that Dazaifu Type demon tiles were produced by creating a negative mold in sand

making tiles with a fairly standardized design, as in the motifs used for *gatō mon'yō* 瓦当文様 (circular antefixes to which patterns, motifs, and designs are applied),¹⁰ or a tile with a more planar design (as is the case with most other Japanese demon tiles from the same period), but it would be difficult to carve realistic forms like those

from an original carved mold." The author concurs with this view. [n8]

¹⁰ JAANUS online: see www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/g/gatoumon-you.htm.

of the Style I-A—richly pliable and inflected as they are—into wood, and to invert the concave and convex dimensions. The number of demon tiles required for construction, especially those of Style I-A, would have been insignificant compared to other types of roof tiles. Apart from an improvement in strength and durability, little justification can be found for wood being an essential component in making tiles. We may reference roughly contemporaneous clay molds for clay plaques, or *senbutsu* 埴仏, from Tachibanadera 橘寺 and Yamadadera 山田寺 in Nara, where clay is also the material for small, simple clay statues from these same temples.¹¹ Clay molds have also been found on the Korean peninsula—for example, a demon tile mold from the Unified Silla period (Kr. T'ongil Silla shidae; Jp. Tōitsushiragi jidai 統一新羅時代) (668–935) (figure 6).¹² Given that tile-making technologies from the Korean peninsula influenced Japan, with the influence on northern Kyushu being especially notable, it is probable that clay molds were used for Style I-A. We will return to the relationship between Unified Silla period tiles and Dazaifu Style I tiles later in this article.

The shape of the Style I-A tile is a trapezoid, the top side of which swells into an arch and the bottom center of which utilized the cut-out of a half circle. A fleshy demon face is framed by a bordering row of low-relief hemispherical beads (*shumon* 珠文) set within two relatively fine raised lines, and another fine raised line at the outer edge. Twenty-four beads dot each side, with forty-eight in total. On the upper part of the tile, above the demon's forehead, we find a semicircle hollowed flat to accommodate a long cylindrical tile called a *toribusuma* 鳥衾 that rests on top of it.¹³ At the glabella (between the eyes) is a hole that pierces through front to back, also likely related to the assembling of multiple tile types (figure 7). The downward-glaring pupil and iris of the ogre are represented as concentric circles on bulging eyes that threaten to pop from their sockets. Although the outlines of the iris and pupil appear to

be carved lines, they are in fact slightly stepped. The surface of the eyeball is set closer to the tile than the downcast iris and the pupil hangs lower than the iris. The nose is broad and high, the flared nostrils are rounded, and the tip of the nose seemingly tugged upward. The nostrils are not hollowed out but rather slightly convex. The full high cheeks carry a single diagonally oriented shallow engraved line, although what it represents is unclear. Turning to the gaping mouth, a pair of large fangs protrude from the upper jaw, each with an engraved single vertical striation at the center and modeled slightly outward toward the viewer's space. Between them are lined up six rectangular teeth. In place of the lower jaw is the cut semicircle, from the sides of which peep out small and slightly convex fangs. Represented on the sides of the demon's undulating lips are two deep wrinkles, while the hair, the thick outer tips of the eyebrows, and the beard are expressed with slender gathered convex lines that fringe and frame the demon's face. To the left and right of the gaping mouth are what appear to be a vertical lining up of three beads that are in fact beads enveloped by the scrolling tips of the demon's beard.

The ferocity of the tile's demon face is expressed through a combination of elements operating organically and synchronically such that we can understand the complexity of the demon face design by referring to this expression. This concept is extremely important for the study of Style I-A. Fury causes the eyebrows and eyes to slant upward and the mouth to open widely, forcing the cheekbones to swell. Wrinkles stretch from the corners of the eyes under the movement of the swollen cheekbones. The furrowing of the space between the brows causes a vertical wrinkle between the start of the eyebrow and the bridge of the nose that accompanies deep horizontal curved wrinkles formed in the space between the eyes, flared nostrils, and the turned-up nose tip. The fleshy forehead is pushed upward by the raised eyebrows, forming a bundle-like sequence of downward arching concentric circles, and the ridged and severe contours of the eyebrows and eyelids strain the facial expression. The upper half of the tile is composed of widening ripples that in design terms flow downward, owing to contours such as the semicircular flattened hollow at the top and the downward arc of the eyebrows and eyelids. The structure of the lower part, on the other hand, moves upward due to the visual thrust of the half circle cut out at the bottom and a mouth distorted in anger into an upside-down

11 The author observed the actual mold in the archaeological exhibition room of Tokyo National Museum's Heiseikan (hall). Also noted in Kuno and Mochimaru, *Oshidashibutsu to senbutsu*. [n9]

12 Kungnip Kyōngju Pangmulgwan, *Silla wajeon*, pp. 402–403, introduces six demon tile molds from the United Silla period and explains that they are ceramic, made by taking a negative mold made of clay blended with sand based on a prototype and firing it. [n10]

13 See [http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/\(toribusuma\)](http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/(toribusuma)), the basis for figure 7.



Figure 8. Roof tile, Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* Style I-A. First quarter of 8th c., Nara period. Fired earthenware. H 39.5 cm. Collection Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.



Figure 9. Roof tile, Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* Style II-A. Second quarter of 8th c., Nara period. Fired earthenware. H 39.3 cm. Collection Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.

U-shape. These upper and lower halves artfully converge at the tip of the nose. The way in which the direction of the gaze and the facial hair are represented also plays a role in perfecting the parts converging at the tip of the nose. This naturalistic, organically composed expression and accomplished modeling confirms that the concept and craftsmanship of Dazaifu Style I-A is a high point among demon tiles in Japan.

The Formation of Style I-A

The realistic, three-dimensional forms of Style I-A, with its organically linked parts, is unique among Nara-period demon tiles. Heijō Palace Type demon tiles (*Heijō-kyū shiki onigawara* 平城宮式鬼瓦), the cornerstone of eighth-century Nara-period *onigawara* (figures 8 and 9), have been divided roughly into six styles (Styles I–VI).¹⁴ Style II and onward, which show a complete demon face, began to be made after Dazaifu Style I-A demon tiles, during the second quarter of the eighth century or later. Style I, however, which shows

¹⁴ On Heijō Palace Type *onigawara* and the so-called Nara Great Seven Temples Type *onigawara* (*Nanto shichidaiji shiki onigawara* 南都七大寺式鬼瓦), I follow Morimitsu, “Nihon kodai no kimonon onigawara,” and also reference Iwato, “Nara jidai no kimonon onigawara.” [n11]



Figure 10. Mold for a demon tile. 7th–8th c., Unified Silla period. Fired earthenware. H 27.7 cm. Collection Gyeongju National Museum. Reproduced from Kungnip Kyōngju Pangmulgwan, *Silla wajōn*, p. 330, no. 1080.

the whole body of the demon, was made during the first quarter of the eighth century, when Heijō-kyō 平城京 was built. Heijō Palace tiles are important to consider alongside Dazaifu style tiles owing to their contemporaneous provenance and overall significance.

That said, although some examples of Heijō Palace Type tiles have skillfully designed demon faces, most are designed to be flat, and the visual impact of their modeling is very different from the Dazaifu Type. The same can be said of the demon faces of *onigawara* from the so-called Seven Great Temples of Nara Type (*Nanto shichidaiji shiki* 南都七大寺式), which have been divided into six main categories and which began to be used in the state-sponsored temples of the Nara capital beginning with Tōdaiji in the middle of the eighth century. The shape of both the Heijō Palace Type and Nanto shichidaiji Type tiles is a nearly half circle, and on this point as well they differ from the Dazaifu Type. It is hard to posit any direct link between these tiles of the capital and those from Dazaifu in terms of modeling and shape.

The standard view has long been to attribute the development of Dazaifu Type demon tiles to the influence from examples made on the Korean peninsula during the Unified Silla period (such as figure 10), and indeed the two share the same trapezoidal shape. Demon tiles from both places have beads along the peripheral edge and, despite differences in the composition and general tenor of the demon face, in both cases the facial features fill the tile save the borders; in a general way, we can regard the two as similar. Although the Unified Silla period demon tiles are smaller than the Dazaifu *onigawara*, among other notable differences, the influence of the peninsular works is indisputable and there can be no doubt that Unified Silla works are among the key sources for Dazaifu *onigawara*. As with the demon tiles from Dazaifu, other tiles from Kyushu are larger than the peninsular examples of the period, particularly those found at temple sites dating to the end of the seventh century in the northeastern area; a representative example is from the ruins of Tendaiji 天台寺 in Tagawa City 田川市, Fukuoka Prefecture.¹⁵ Tiles from the two places differ in that respect as well, but the discovery of eave-end tiles (*nokigawara* 軒瓦)¹⁶ with features charac-



Figure 11. Roof tile, Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* Style V-A. 8th c., Nara period. Fired earthenware. H 36.8 cm. Collection Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.

teristic of Unified Silla tiles—elaboration, delicacy, and a striking and lively demeanor—around northeastern Kyushu is worthy of note.¹⁷

That said, I have differed many times with descriptions that give the impression of a one-to-one influence between Unified Silla tiles and Dazaifu Style *onigawara* tiles simply because the tiles share such common elements as a trapezoidal outline, beading along the periphery, and a demon face that fills the entire surface. Even if we can posit a relationship between the two, to conclude that there is a one-to-one relationship between them is problematic. Such an approach fails to account for the different types of crafting and representational strategies for demon faces used for tiles from various sites around Nara-period Japan, and for those of the Unified Silla period, compared with those from Kyushu, as noted at the outset. The most striking features of the Dazaifu Type *onigawara* are the three-di-

15 The height of most demon roof tiles from United Silla is approximately 25 cm or less, as are round roof tiles and flat roof tiles. Roof tiles from Silla were used in Kyushu at the end of the seventh century. They are considerably smaller than Japanese roof tiles made in the Silla style, which clearly express Silla influence in their designs. This reflects differences between the two regions and their production and use of roof tiles. Kungnip Kyōngju Pangmulgwan, *Silla wajōn*, pp. 323-47. [n12]

16 Roof tiles placed along an eave line, including the semicircular *nokimarugawara* 軒丸瓦 (see <http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/n/nokimarugawara.htm>) and the bow-shaped broad concave

pendant tiles *nokihiragawara* 軒平瓦 (see <http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/n/nokihiragawara.htm>) are usually covered with a decorative design. They protect the ends of the eaves from rainwater and dampness.

17 On the so-called Silla lineage or Silla-style (*Shiragi kei* 新羅系) eave-end tiles in Kyushu, see Oda, “Buzen ni okeru Shiragi-kei kawara to sono igi,” and Kameda, *Nikkan kodai kawara no kenkyū*, pp. 353-422. [n13]



Figure 12. Ring pommel of a sword, *shigami* (biting lion) type. 6th c., Kofun (Asuka) period. Bronze. W 5.5 cm. Excavated from Kanzaki burial mound 1, Fukuoka Prefecture. Collection Fukuoka Prefecture Board of Education.

mensionality of the demon face, high standard of craftsmanship, and skillful design. Ultimately, we cannot attribute the source for this paradigmatic demon face to the observation of works from the Unified Silla period.

To determine a possible source for the representation of a demon on Dazaifu *onigawara*, we point to a similar design on the Heijō Palace Style V-A (figure 11). Comparing the two frontally, we see some common elements: raised eyes in the shape of a fava bean, round pupils, a nose with flared nostrils and horizontal transverse wrinkles at their base, an upside-down U-shaped mouth, a rectangular row of teeth between fangs, and a fringe of facial hair blowing upward. As has been mentioned, the Dazaifu *onigawara* style emerged while the construction of the second phase of the government office was taking place during the second quarter of the eighth century. On the other hand, the Heijō Palace demon tiles were used exclusively after the second half of the eighth century. Given this time difference and considering the planar Heijō Palace Type Style V-A, with its more developed design, we should not offer a facile connection between the Dazaifu and Heijō Palace styles. The common features of these *onigawara*, however, do prompt us to ponder a Japanese source for the design of both types of demon face.



Figure 13. Bell (*bonshō*). Late 7th c., Asuka period. Bronze. H 159.9 cm. Kanzeonji, Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture.

If we look beyond *onigawara* at other artifacts we find further support for the idea of a Japanese source. A good example is the beast face (*jūmen* 獸面) seen within the sword ring pommel of a *shigami* (literally, “biting/gnawing lion,” *Shigamikantō tsukagashira* 獅嚙環頭柄頭), excavated from Kanzaki 神崎 burial mound (figure 12). Although much smaller and more elaborately designed, there are similarities between this beast’s face and that of the Dazaifu Type demon tile. These include eyebrows that seem to burst into flames, slanted eyes, round pupils, a nose with flared nostrils that have a horizontal crease at the sides, and squared teeth between two long fangs. Despite its purported sixth-century provenance, its fierce demeanor seems to be even closer to the Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* than to the Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* tile Style V-A. Pursuing this, it becomes possible to presume a relationship between Dazaifu Style I-A and a preceding demon or beast face in Japan, if not Kyushu. Subsequently—after the sword pommel and continuing into the Nara period—we can observe in Kyushu the pattern of a beast with a high-level of design and modeling, as



Figure 14. Statue of Shūkongōjin, detail. Mid 8th c., Nara period. Clay with polychrome and gold. H 173.9 cm. Hokkedō, Tōdaiji, Nara Prefecture.

seen in a dragon head on the top of the late seventh-century temple bell at Kanzeonji 觀世音寺 (figure 13).¹⁸

We can consider the formation of the Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* as situated at the intersection of demon tiles of the Unified Silla period and the flow of the formation of the beast face and demon face. Yet merely placing a Japanese demon face on the outline of a demon tile from the Unified Silla period does not make a Dazaifu style *onigawara*. Various other elements beyond outline and face converged to form this new creation. A key characteristic of the Dazaifu Type is a demon face that seems to jump out of the frame, with its natural expression and organically linked movement of bone and muscle. This could be realized only through the

efforts of craftsmen capable of configuring an advanced design and finishing it in high relief, with the ability to craft skillfully with speed or deliberation and in deep and shallow relief. My assertion is that the craftsmen who created the prototype for the mold, which is thought to have been made of clay, were likely makers of Buddhist images, who were specialized in making complicated three-dimensional works with handbuilt (*nenso* 捻塑的) techniques.¹⁹ The special characteristic of eighth-century sculptural works in clay such as the Shūkongōjin 執金剛神 of Tōdaiji's Hokkedō 東大寺法華堂 (figure 14) is the combination of more naturalistic forms and facial expressions, using mainly handbuilt techniques, with the representation of more natural textures and surfaces. Looking at the faces of the Nara works, we see that the artist was certainly conscious of the movements of bone and muscle, the organic coordination of which enables the expression of an intended emotion. This naturalism and sense of unity in the modeling and composition of the face is not seen on all Nara-period demon tiles, with their strong linear design sense and planar presentation, while it is striking in Dazaifu Type demon tiles.

Surely the artisans of Buddhist objects and statues played leading roles in the technical aspects for and conceptualization of the face on the Dazaifu Style demon tiles. Clay statues were made for many temples, like Kanzeonji, that were under Dazaifu's jurisdiction at that time. Beyond appearing in historical documents,²⁰ the existence of such statues is clearly proven by fragments that have survived at Kanzeonji (figures 15 and

18 The bell at Kanzeonji is in keeping with the style of Japanese bells, yet the influence of styles from the Unified Silla period can be discerned in the design of the upper band and the lotus pattern on the *tsukiza* 撞座 (the part hit by the hammer). See Igata, "Kanzeonji no bonshō," which discusses previous scholarship. This bell is important not only as a precedent for the representation of a beast, but also as a work that responds to outside trends created before the Dazaifu tiles under discussion. [n14]

19 Such a view is championed by Yahiro Izumi, who offered many insights that inform the present author's perspective. [n15]

20 A representative example is a group of clay statues of the Four Guardian Kings (Shitennō 四天王) made for Shiōji, Shiōin 四王寺·四王院 (i.e., Shitennōji 四天王寺), six *shaku* tall, in Hōki 宝亀 5 (774). These statues were created to combat maledictions from the Korean peninsula (Silla). See a document issued by the Grand Council of State (*Dajōkanpu*, *Daijōkanpu* 大政官符), 「応奉造四天王寺埴像四軀事」, dated 774.3.3 in *Ruijū sandaiyaku* (*Ruijū sandaiyaku*, *zenhen*, *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai*, p. 45). Further, most of the statues listed in a 905 document from Kanzeonji seem to have been crafted of clay. See: "Engi gonen Kanzeonji shizaichō" (Tokyo University of the Arts collection), reproduced in *Dazaifushi shi henshū iinkai*, *Dazaifushi shi kodai shiryōhen*, pp. 705-70. Yahiro discusses these examples in *Dazaifushi shi henshū iinkai*, *Dazaifushi shi kenchiku bijutsu kōgei shiryōhen*, pp. 579-88. See also several short studies by Igata, including "Shiōji to Shitennōzō o tazunete" and "Seichi Dazaifu no hotoke tachi." [n16]



Figure 15. Fragments of a Fukūkenjaku Kannon statue. 8th c., Nara period. Clay with traces of lacquer and polychrome on the surface. Kanzeonji, Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture.



Figure 16. Fragment of the arm of a protective divinity, likely a Shitenno. 8th c., Nara period. Clay with traces of lacquer and polychrome on the surface. Kanzeonji, Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture.

16).²¹ We can say that the circumstances that allowed for the foregoing idea to materialize, a proposition guided by the mode of representation and the execution (modeling) of the *onigawara* roof tiles, were well established: the Dazaifu Type demon tile was a new representational model created in the Nara period at Dazaifu that was accompanied by techniques of craft not found in other tile types, one that referenced various earlier models yet clearly differed from them.

It is also possible that Dazaifu *onigawara* from that time were conceived with an awareness of tiles not only from works made during the Unified Silla period but also during the Tang dynasty (618–907). Dramatic developments at Dazaifu in the eighth century are linked to major shifts in governance from a system modeled on Korea in the seventh century to one

modeled on Tang China entering the eighth century.²² Both tangible and intangible cultural elements were oriented toward Tang China, important examples being the Taihō Code and the creation of the Nara capital. In such circumstances, we should acknowledge that those in Dazaifu may have been aware of the Tang dynasty system of using demon-face tiles on the outer edges of roofs, a possibility that was reflected in the features of the richly three-dimensional demon face.²³

As noted above, in terms of overall shape, Dazaifu Type *onigawara* are similar to demon tiles from the Korean peninsula during the Unified Silla period. Because Dazaifu tiles are clearly crafted differently from

²¹ On the fragments of clay statues at Kanzeonji, see Dazaifushi shi henshū iinkai, *Dazaifushi shi kenchiku bijutsu kōgei shiryōhen*; Kyūshū Rekishi Shiryōkan, *Kanzeonji: Ibutsuhen*; and Kyūshū Rekishi Shiryōkan, *Fukuoka no shinbutsu no sekai: Kyūshū hokubu ni hana hiraita shinkō to zōkei*. [n17]

²² Kanegae, *Zenshū Nihon no rekishi* 3, pp. 79–91; and Kanegae, “Nihon no nanaseiki shisaikō: Kenzuishi kara Taihō ritsuryō made,” pp. 73–75. [n18]

²³ Morimitsu points to the modeling of the *ritsuryō* system based on the influence of Tang precedents and the possible influence of Tang models on the design of the tiles. Morimitsu, “Nihon kodai no kimenmon onigawara,” pp. 59–61. Following Morimitsu’s lead, this study also considers possible Tang dynasty influence on the modeling and style of Dazaifu *onigawara*. [n19]

Silla tiles, however, it is possible that we should be looking toward Tang China for connections in this regard. However, though *onigawara* featuring a demon-face design and rich three-dimensionality can be found among Tang-dynasty demon tiles, no known example seems to be a direct predecessor of the Dazaifu types. Even if there had been an attempt to imitate Tang-dynasty demon tiles, in the absence of craftsmen with precise knowledge of the styles and modeling techniques a faithful imitation would not have been possible. We can hypothesize in such a case that imaginative imitations or replicas would have been made based on demon tiles from Silla or some other reference material.²⁴ The circumstances for the systemic adoption of the demon face on the tile (as opposed to other types of presentations, such as the whole or partial body of the ogre) cannot be the same as those underlying the establishment of specific representational models. We should take care not to conflate the two processes.

This is to say that the particular modeling and manner of expression used for the ogre face on the Dazaifu Type *onigawara* finds no parallels. Demon roof tiles originally functioned both as tiles that protected against weather elements and as striking ornamentation of the roof edges; tiles with a demon face also functioned, in a general sense, to ward off evil. Although these roles are important to bear in mind when considering Dazaifu Style demon tiles, if the tiles functioned merely as a kind of device, ornament, or talisman, there would be little motivation to develop a new mode of three-dimensional and realistic modelling with its many concomitant technical challenges to effectively carry out the representational schema. At the time this new mode was developed, however, a need certainly did exist. We can think of that need as intimately connected to the character of the location, which in this case pivots around Dazaifu during the second construction phase of the Dazaifu Government Office, for which preparations were underway in the first quarter of the

eighth century. Here, then, I would like to consider the function of the Dazaifu Type demon tile from another angle, in terms of its context—its relationship and interconnectedness with the role of Dazaifu.²⁵

During the eighth century, Dazaifu developed into a center of diplomacy and regional control, along with its continued function as a military base. Addressing the deployment of Dazaifu Style I-A demon tiles at administrative facilities, we know that they were principally used at the Dazaifu Government Office area and environs. There was Ōno Castle on the hilltop to the rear of the government office area, an area called Jōbōiki 条坊域 to its front, and beyond Jōbōiki, atop another hill, Kii Castle (Kijō 基肆城). The site felt like Heijō Palace (Heijō-kyū 平城宮) on a reduced scale. Impressive structures, built in a uniform style called the Chōdō'in style (Chōdō'in yōshiki 朝堂院様式) and aligned in an orderly fashion, the Dazaifu Government Office would have manifested the grandeur of the place. These types of buildings fulfilled more than purely practical functions. We can think of them as dual purpose: enabling the execution of administrative affairs and formal ceremonies and at the same time serving as symbols of Dazaifu's power and character. We can surely see the *onigawara*, the roof tile, as critical for the embellishment of these buildings, performing a function of symbolic significance. The demon faces of the *onigawara* would have projected a refined power through the chiaroscuro effects produced by sunlight, making a strong impression on those who visited Dazaifu. The demon tiles are an aggregate of all that Dazaifu exemplified or what it sought to exemplify. Demon tiles were crafted to elicit an instinctive response and perhaps "authority and strength" (*ibu* 威武) would be the most apt characterization of their message. The term *ibu*, to give one example, is found near the beginning of an imperial decree dated Hōki 宝龜 11 (780).7.26 in the 797 *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀. It notes that Dazaifu in Tsukushi 筑紫 on the distant Saikai[dō] 西海 is dependent on tribute and supplies from many provinces sent by boat such that trained and experienced warriors and horses of the best quality should be dispatched to reinforce its authority and strength and to equip it in extreme circumstances.

24 Although different in terms of both time and place, Western-style architecture in the Meiji period (1868–1912) can serve as a helpful reference. At the dawn of the Meiji period, Japanese carpenters sought to construct Western architecture but lacked a clear understanding of it, so they ended up building Western-style structures based on the information that was available and the skills they had mastered. The intention was to create Western architecture, but what was built was architecture unique to Japan during the Meiji period. I believe a similar situation exists in the case at hand. [n20]

25 For a survey of Dazaifu based on current understanding in the academic literature, see Sugihara, *Tō no mikado*. This study draws primarily on Sugihara for its overview of Dazaifu. [n21]

Six articles of defense (Kegorokujō 警固六条) are given for the several provinces fronting the sea along the Hokurikudō 北陸道 to alert them to prepare for possible threat from the Korean peninsula.²⁶

Kimen: The Demon Face

The “demon face” (*kimen* 鬼面) of the Dazaifu style demon tiles is generally called just that, a demon face, but what that means exactly has escaped attention. Only one study by Oda Fujio, to my knowledge, makes an effort to interpret the meaning of *kimen*:

[The Japanese tile] *kimen* derive directly from Unified Silla period demon tiles with beast face designs (獸面文鬼板瓦), but their origin can be traced to the Chinese *qitou* “ghost heads” (Jp. *kitō* 魘頭), tomb guardian beasts (Ch. *zhenmushou*, Jp. *chinbojū* 鎮墓獸) of the Sui (581–618) and Tang dynasties. The original meaning of “ghost heads” derives from the idea of warding off evil, such that we might imagine that the Japanese demon-face design holds the same meaning. The creativity of culture in Dazaifu should not go unnoticed: their demon face tiles express sublime ferocity and rage, do away with the legs of the beast seen on Silla demon tiles, and incorporate many facial elements similar to humans.²⁷

These words were written more than half a century ago, yet they still offer crucial insights into the study of Dazaifu Type *Onigawara*, including several key aspects of the present examination. I would therefore like to consider the demon face depicted on Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* in the manner suggested above.

The demon face is humanlike but not human, beast-like but not that of a beast. Some aspects of the shape of its eyes, nose, and so forth relate to the fierce expressions of Buddhist images, but other elements dif-

fer, such as the large mouth, fangs, and body hair. This unusual demon form also differs from demon tiles of the Unified Silla period, which were once regarded as direct sources for the Dazaifu tiles and which are widely believed to have influenced the general shape of the Dazaifu *onigawara*. Although we cannot simply lump together all demon tiles from the Unified Silla period, generally speaking their demon faces have angry eyes, fangs, wavy hair, and on many appear a pair of horns that resemble deer antlers. Their appearance does not bring to mind humans or Buddhist images but rather a sort of sacred beast. Some tiles show forelegs beneath the demon face, legs similar to those of four-legged animals. In terms not only of design and modeling but also of the emotions expressed, the demon face of Dazaifu Style I-A *onigawara* differs from that of Unified Silla period tiles. Although demon tiles from Silla have been described as having a demon-face design and beast-face design, Kang Ubang has proposed that they depict dragon faces.²⁸ Judging from the shape of the tile, I find his theory rather convincing. In this conception, the ridge lying on the roof forms the body of the dragon. Kang points out that the major motivations for creating these tiles are protection against fire and, of course, protection against evil. Surely, the Dazaifu Type *onigawara* and those from the Unified Silla period differ in both the design of the demon face and its function. As argued above, it is difficult to posit a direct one-to-one connection between the two.

The Dazaifu Type demon tile is generally regarded as the first example of a demon-face design to be adopted for use as a roof-edge tile in Japan.²⁹ Even so, that is not necessarily indicative of Dazaifu’s innovation. Consider here that the decision to adopt the demon face was issued from the center. Dazaifu was originally a branch office of central government, and we know from historical sources that *onigawara* with a demon-face design spread throughout Japan on the heels of their production in Dazaifu. It would be overly simplistic to think of the flow as proceeding from Dazaifu to the

26 Takeuchi, *Dazaifu, Dazaifu Tenmangū shiryō*, pp. 216–18. [n22] See also *Ruijū sandaiyaku, kōhen*, p. 547 (*Shintei zōho kokushi taikai*, vol. 2-7). 「(七八〇)七月戊子《廿六》戊子。勅曰。筑紫大宰僻居西海。諸蕃朝貢舟楫相望。由是簡練士馬。精銳甲兵。以示威武。以備非常。今北陸道亦供蕃客。所有軍兵未曾教習。屬事徵發。全無堪用。安必思危。豈合如此。宜准大宰依式警虞。事須緣海村邑見賊來過者。當即差使速申於國。國知賊船者。長官以下急向國衛。應事集議。令管內警虞且行且奏。』 With Ross Bender.

27 Oda, *Shiragi no kogasen*, p. 47. [n23]

28 Kang, “Han’gug wadang yesullon sōsōl,” pp. 424–28. [n24]

29 Morimitsu notes that demon-face *onigawara* may have existed as far back as the seventh century, based on materials excavated from the Koyagi 小八木 temple ruins in Shiga 滋賀 Prefecture and the Senbon 千本 ruins in Hyogo. The location of these materials (relative to the whole) is not entirely clear, however, and each are isolated examples, so I feel it is inappropriate to regard them as the first examples. Morimitsu, “Nihon kodai no kimenon onigawara,” pp. 58–59. [n25]

Nara capital, and subsequently to the whole country, I think that around the time Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* production began, a decision was made in the capital to use a demon face on the roof-edge tiles of government buildings to ward off evil; the first time they were made was when work began on the second construction phase of the Dazaifu Government Office in the first quarter of the eighth century. If this is the case, we should reference Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara*—not those from the Unified Silla period—to better understand the meaning of the demon face on tiles. We can think of both Dazaifu and Heijō Palace *onigawara* as having in common a “demon.” Among the Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara*, it is significant that Styles II and later, which show a large demon face, were likely created after Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I roof tiles began to be made, but Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* Style I tile production began prior to that of Dazaifu Style I. More specifically, however, Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* Style I-A is the first tile in Japan to use the *form* of a demon, but not a demon *face*. The shift from an auspicious pattern applied to roof tiles, such as the prevalent lotus flowers, especially at temples, to a demon shape occurred at this point, after which came tiles with a demon face filling the entire surface. In short, even though the Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* Style I-A and Style II-A tiles look different, the faces of the two can be similarly described and it is possible that the two styles are consecutive. In short, we should take close note of the Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* Style I-A, which precedes the Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-A.

Chinese dragons described as *taotie* (Jp. *tōtetsu* 饕餮), local divinities (*shenxiang* 神像), “ghost heads,” lions (*shiji* 獅子), and more creatures have been proposed as possible sources for the Japanese *onigawara* demon face.³⁰ Here I reconsider the demon representation on Heijō Palace Type *Onigawara* Style I-A with

these points in mind. Referring to figure 8, the demon wears nothing but knee-length shorts and crouches with knees bent and hands clenched in fists on the thighs. Its large eyes slant upward, and the corners of the mouth are upturned. The tongue hangs out, with upper teeth and fangs exposed, and a long, curly beard fringes the face. Aura or cloud-like forms fill the space that surrounds the demon’s body. The body is muscular but not excessively so; there is also an intensity to the face, with its angry expression, yet it imparts an almost light-hearted and humorous feeling with its protruding tongue and oversized head reminiscent of a child (*dōji* 童子). Surveying East Asia, what comes to mind as something that functions to ward off evil and has these kinds of characteristics are the various spirits or demonic gods called *guishen* (Jp. *kishin* 鬼神), generally referred to as monsters, or *weishou* (Jp. *ijū* 畏獸), that first appeared in the Han dynasty in connection with tombs but later flourished in Buddhist imagery.³¹ An excellent example relatively proximate in time and one cited in previous studies is a demonic winged kneeling creature of composite animal form in relief from the mountainside limestone Chinese caves of Xiangtangshan 北響堂山石窟 in the village of Hecun 和村, Hebei Province 河北省 (figure 17), dating to the early part of the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577). In the cave, the kneeling creatures hold up elaborately decorated columns.³² Due to differences in period and place, representation of the beast differs and the figure has wings on the shoulders, which also differs, but generally it also has many features in common with the demon figures of the Heijō Palace tiles Style I-A. Such Chinese *weishou* or monsters that functioned to ward off evil are thought to be the source for the demon face of Japan’s *onigawara*. *Weishou* first appeared in China in connection with tombs but eventually their use spread to Buddhist monasteries, with their very different philosophical basis, wherein their representation diversified. Of great interest here is that this evolution is similar to that of the demon-face *onigawara* in Japan, which first appeared in palaces but then was deployed in Buddhist temples. Despite the single term *weishou* for the monsters, their great variety of types and forms means that a

30 Yamamoto, in “Shitadashi jūmen kō,” introduces previous studies that posit various origin theories, including the *taotie* pattern on bronzeware of the Yin and Zhou dynasties, images of deities from the Six Dynasties period, and *qitou* of the Sui and Tang dynasties. After introducing these studies, Yamamoto makes the novel proposition that *shishi* (lions) constitute the origin. Morimitsu supports the theory introduced in Kobayashi, “Onigawara kō,” which views deity statues as the origin. Morimitsu considers the demon-face design in terms of gods from ancient China who invite good luck and ward off evil. This essay follows Morimitsu’s theory based on design analysis and advances it using a discussion of Dazaifu Type demon tiles. [n26]

31 On Chinese monsters, I draw primarily from Hayashi, “Kandai kishin no sekai”; Azuma, “Hokuchō, Zui Tō to Kōkuri”; and Tamura, “Ijū-zō shōkō.” [n27]

32 Tsiang, et al., *Echoes of the Past: The Buddhist Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan*, p. 159.



Figure 17. Kneeling winged monster in relief from Xiangtangshan Buddhist caves. Ca. second half of 6th c., Northern Qi dynasty. Limestone. North Cave, Northern group of caves, Hebei Province. Reproduced from Shōgakukan, *Sekai bijutsu zenshū*, p. 246.

proper definition is impossible. At some point, *weishou* were probably understood in the big picture as a spirit or demonic god to ward off evil, although even if there had been a rigorous distinction among definitions it was lost at some point in time. There is no doubt, however, that at least by the time demon-face *onigawara* appeared in Japan there was certainly an awareness of the existence of Chinese monsters.

Returning to the Dazaifu Style demon tile, it is an example of an early demon-face *onigawara*, it is humanlike but not human, beastlike but not a beast, and like a wrathful Buddhist image but different from Buddhist images. Ultimately the *onigawara* demon face is a creature that functions to ward off evil, and we can assume that the tile was specifically designed to emphasize the demon face. Note, however, that the face of the Dazaifu Style I-A demon does not show a tongue owing to the semicircular cutout in the bottom middle section and also lacks the sense of whimsical humor present in representations of the Chinese *weishou*, but these same

features are seen in the Heijō Palace Style I-A and the subsequent II-A demon depictions.

Sculptural works of the Nara period, including Buddhist clay statues, elicit a sense of awe through their classically chiseled beauty. Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* share these characteristics because, I believe, it was Buddhist craftsmen who made the prototype for Dazaifu Type *Onigawara*. In this way they differ from both Heijō Palace Type demon tiles and the monsters of China that protected against evil, despite appearing at the same time as the former and continuing the lineage of an evil monster of the latter. The Dazaifu tiles were created as representations full of refinement and intensity. We can suggest that what brought about these features is the character of Dazaifu itself. From the time it was established in the seventh century, Dazaifu was of exceptional military significance within Kyushu and within East Asia. In the eighth century Dazaifu continued this role while coming into its own. Dazaifu and the *onigawara* produced in Dazaifu served as symbols of “authority and force” in East Asia and Kyushu.

Conclusion

Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-A emerged as a new type of tile during the first quarter of the eighth century, which coincides with the second phase of the construction of the Dazaifu Government Office. It offers an amalgamation of ideas and modes of representation seen in Unified Silla period demon tiles from the Korean peninsula, the representation of beast faces in Japan, and Chinese monsters. The superb skills in handbuilt techniques of the Buddhist artisans who crafted the Dazaifu *onigawara* underpins their most distinguishing characteristic: each part of the demon tile is organically coordinated to form an imposing wrathful countenance through a sense of dimensionality and the use of refined modeling. Tiles like these from the eighth century are not found elsewhere in Japan. We are tempted to describe the style as “Dazaifu-esque,” echoing a phrase used in the early ninth century to describe Dazaifu as “neither capital nor province but somewhere in between” (非京非国、中間孤居), that is, neither center nor periphery.³³ High-relief surfaces

³³ From a document issued by the Grand Council of State on Jōwa 承和 5 (838).6.21. See *Ruijū sandaikyaku, kōhen*, p. 333 (*Shintei*

became an increasingly common feature of *onigawara* when their main function became less about warding off evil than of dramatically presenting the stateliness of buildings while demonstrating the integrity of the tile. Considering differences of both period and location for production, however, it is difficult to claim that Dazaifu Type demon tiles were the direct source for subsequent *onigawara*. Dazaifu tiles did foreshadow later developments, yet at the same time they are unique through all times and places.

Dazaifu Type demon tiles exerted an influence on the entire Kyushu region, but only during the eighth century of the Nara period, when Dazaifu ruled Kyushu through the great power of the *ritsuryō* state. The unique nature of the tiles is underscored by the fact that no works that continue the style during the Heian era have been found in Kyushu or elsewhere. This notion of uniqueness may be inappropriate beyond the confines of *onigawara*: “Kyushu” is frequently mentioned as if it formed a self-evident framework, but no other examples readily come to mind in the design of new forms created or developed within the confines of Kyushu itself. This necessitates caution when using such a framework.

The same critical elements that shaped the development of Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* are also key to the history and culture of Kyushu: influence from the Nara capital, influence from the continent, and local traditions. Symbols of Dazaifu’s *ibu* (authority and power) in the past, and still symbols of Dazaifu’s historical sites, Dazaifu’s demon tiles are important cultural remains for the study of Kyushu’s history and culture.

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