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Tourists in Paradise

Writing the Pure Land in Medieval Japanese Fiction

Late-medieval Japanese fiction contains numerous accounts of lay and monastic travelers to the Pure Land and other extra-human realms. In many cases, the “tourists” are granted guided tours, after which they are returned to the mundane world in order to tell of their unusual experiences. This article explores several of these stories from around the sixteenth century, including, most prominently, *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, *Tengu no dairi*, and a section of *Seiganji engi*. I discuss the plots and conventions of these and other narratives, most of which appear to be based upon earlier oral tales employed in preaching and fund-raising, in order to illuminate their implications for our understanding of Pure Land-oriented Buddhism in late-medieval Japan. I also seek to demonstrate the diversity and subjectivity of Pure Land religious experience, and the sometimes startling gap between orthodox doctrinal and popular vernacular representations of Pure Land practices and beliefs.

KEYWORDS: *otogizōshi* – *jisha engi* – *shaji engi* – *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* – *Bishamon no honji* – *Tengu no dairi* – *Seiganji engi* – hell – travel

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ACCORDING to an anonymous work of fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century Japanese fiction by the name of *Chōhōji yomigaeri no sōshi* 長宝寺よみがへりの草紙 [Back from the dead at Chōhōji Temple], the Japanese Buddhist nun Keishin dropped dead on the sixth day of the sixth month of Eikyō 11 (1439), made her way to the court of King Enma, ruler of the underworld, and there received the King's personal religious instruction and a traumatic tour of hell. Enma later returned her to the human world so that she might tell of what she had seen, and so that others, too, might avoid the pains of the various evil realms (SNKBZ 63: 418–50). Back-from-the-dead-type stories such as Keishin's are relatively common in Muromachi-period fiction, including the genres of *setsuwa* 説話, *otogizōshi* お伽草子, and *jisha engi* 寺社縁起 (temple and shrine histories),¹ and there is ample textual and pictorial evidence to suggest that these “hell-tour tales” were frequently employed in medieval preaching.² In contrast, accounts of human travelers to Amida's Pure Land are less common in late-medieval textual sources. Still, there are a few, and they are intriguing for the glimpse that they provide of popular conceptions and representations of the Pure Land in the Muromachi period, as well as the ways in which medieval preachers and storytellers drew upon and manipulated Pure Land images and ideas to enlighten and entertain.

For the educated and elite in medieval Japan, elaborate descriptions of Amida's Pure Land were available in numerous Chinese and *kanbun* 漢文 texts, including the three core Pure Land sutras designated by Hōnen 法然 (*Jōdo sanbukyō* 浄土三部経), Shandao's 善導 seventh-century *Guan jing shu* 観経疏 [Commentary on the Visualization Sutra], and Genshin's 源信 tenth-century *Ōjō yōshū* 往生要集 [Essentials for pure land rebirth]. However, such sources were inaccessible to the majority of medieval audiences, who were required to receive their information

1. In the *otogizōshi Daibutsu no go-engi* 大仏の御縁起, for example, an empress of Emperor Shōmu 聖武天皇 is reported to have returned to life in the year 735 and recounted her experiences of hell (MJMT 8: 431–48), and in the *otogizōshi Mokuren no sōshi* 目連の草紙 (and related *setsuwa*), the priest Mokuren (Maudgalyāyana) is said to have discovered his mother in a boiling cauldron in hell (MJMS 2: 413–29; GLASSMAN 1999). Other famous examples include those of Nichizō 日藏 in *Kitano tenjin engi* 北野天神縁起 (*Kenkyū-bon* 建久本 of 1194, in NST 20: 158–61; WAKABAYASHI 2004, 299–301); Honda Yoshisuke 本田善佐 and Empress Kōgyoku 皇極天皇 in the Muromachi-period *Zenkōji engi* 善光寺縁起 (ZGR 28: 1: 173a–78b; McCALLUM 1994, 49), and Jishinbō Sonē 慈心房尊恵 in *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (Kakuichi text, in NKBT 32: 412–16; McCULLOUGH 1988, 213–15).

2. Mokuren, for example, has been identified in two (and possibly three) scenes in the painted *Kumano kanjin jikkai mandara* 熊野観心十界曼荼羅 (KURODA 2004, 115–17), copies of which were widely employed in *etoki* 絵解き preaching in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. OGURISU Kenji (2004, 133) lists 42 extant copies of the *mandara*.

second-hand, either in the form of preachers' sermons or from vernacular textual accounts (or a combination of the two). While it is true that the authors of some medieval literary works made careful use of sutras and scholastic treatises and commentaries in composing their explanations of the Pure Land,³ others were less fastidious in their approach, choosing to describe Amida's paradise in whatever ways they saw fit. Nevertheless, their sometimes unorthodox descriptions of the Pure Land, couched as they often are in improbable narratives of lay and monastic pilgrims' journeys to the Western Paradise and back, are an important aspect of Pure Land Buddhism as it was actually experienced by the people of Muromachi Japan. A consideration of these supernatural travelers' tales is thus revealing of a wider and more popular world of Buddhist practice and belief than may otherwise be seen as a result of more traditional studies of doctrinal or "orthodox" Buddhist texts.

The Grand Tour: Nitta no Shirō Tadatsune and "The Tale of the Fuji Cave"

It is a convention of Muromachi-period Pure Land tour narratives that travelers pass through hell and many of the other six planes of transmigratory existence before making their way to Amida's Western Paradise. Their typical progress through the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, and *ashura* 阿修羅 (a world of never-ending battle) suggests a passage through the pains of non-enlightened existence (or a kind of difficult ascetic practice) before achieving the bliss of Pure Land salvation. The travelers in these stories are invariably guided by one or more supernatural beings, which, considering their final destination, is doctrinally appropriate to their tales. For rather than being shown to follow their own paths to the Pure Land—even simply as tourists—the travelers are made to rely upon *tariki* 他力, "other power," to reach the Realm of Tranquility and Bliss.

In its scale, ambiguity, and medieval textual representations, the Japanese Pure Land-traveler's tour is not unlike the "Grand Tour" of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British imagination. As Chloe Chard has explained it, in its most basic form, the Grand Tour comprised a continental journey from the cold north to the warmer south, including passages through France, Switzerland, and Italy, and culminating in a visit to Rome, the "Eternal City" of classical grace and culture. It was inevitably punctuated by a difficult crossing (or, in some cases, sea-circumvention) of the Alps: a literal and metaphorical barrier that supplied "the drama required to mark a major symbolic and geographical transition" (CHARD 1996, 6). The Grand Tour was an abstraction—an "imaginative

3. For example, in *Sangoku denki* 三国伝記 6: 22 (ca. 1407–1446), the Tendai priest Gentō 玄棟 draws upon Genshin's *Ojō yōshū* in composing his own account of a Pure Land emissary's description of the Western Paradise (IKEGAMI 1997, 340–42). And in the *otogizōshi Chūjōhime no honji* 中将姫の本地, Amida Buddha appears before the saintly young Chūjōhime in the sixth month of 754 and describes for her—in standard spoken Japanese—the attributes of the Pure Land as they are depicted in the *Taima mandara* 当麻曼荼羅 (*Chūjōhime emaki* 中将姫絵巻 of ca. 1596–1610, in MJMT 9: 283b).

geography,” in Chard’s words—and a vague one at that.⁴ Like its more fantastic counterpart in medieval Japanese fiction and storytelling, it was open to seemingly endless variation, inspiring a great number and variety of artistic, dramatic, and literary works.

The *otogizōshi Fuji no hitoana sōshi* 富士の人穴草子 (The Tale of the Fuji Cave) is one such Muromachi-period work of the Japanese Grand Tour type. Each of the earliest extant Fuji texts—six hand-copied manuscripts that pre-date the widely reproduced 1627 woodblock-printed edition—is unique in its phrasing and in its organization of tortures on the protagonist’s tour of hell, indicating the story’s likely roots in an oral narrative tradition.⁵ Who the principal purveyors of that narrative may have been is a matter of speculation. Nishino Toshiko has suggested that they were a combination of *zatō* 座頭 (blind minstrel priests), who are specifically praised within the work (MJMT 11: 442b), and *etoki bikuni* 絵解比丘尼 (picture-explaining nuns), who may have entertained audiences by confessing to their own lurid sins in the course of reciting the *Fuji* tale (and who may have been married to *zatō*).⁶ KOYAMA Issei (1983, 38 and 48–50) has more recently (and more persuasively) argued that the medieval purveyors of the *Fuji* story were *yamabushi* 山伏 mountain ascetics and, possibly, mendicant *miko* 巫女 from the Fuji mountain region. While the origins of *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* are obscure, its Buddhist contents are not, and it is widely agreed that the account is derived from a popular medieval storytelling and proselytizing tradition.

Fuji no hitoana sōshi tells the tale of the second Kamakura shōgun, Minamoto no Yoriie 源頼家 (1182–1204), and his purported obsession with a mysterious cave on the side of Mount Fuji. Having heard rumors about the cave, Yoriie commands his retainer Wada no Heida Tanenaga 和田平太胤長 (1183–1213) to explore it and report what he finds. “Heida,” as he is referred to in the text, sets out with a porter bearing a bundle of sixteen torches, but he turns back after encountering a strange young woman who prophesies his death and orders him to leave. Next, the shōgun dispatches Nitta no Shirō Tadatsune 仁田四郎忠常 (d. 1203), the true protagonist of the story. Like Heida before him, Nitta sets off on his quest, but rather than finding a woman inside the cave, he discovers a wondrous

4. CHARD 1996, 27, note 10. Also see page 11, on which Chard defines the Grand Tour as “an imaginative topography to which various forms of representation, including travel narratives, attach themselves.” Jeremy Black has observed that on the Grand Tour, “there was little rigidity in itineraries,” and that thus, “while certain repeated itineraries can be discerned, the list of regions and cities frequently visited has to be expanded to include the Low Countries, Hanover, Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Munich and Geneva” (BLACK 2003, v).

5. NISHINO 1971, 40b–42a; KOYAMA 1983, 47. The six early texts are the five listed in NISHINO 1971, 38b, and the late Muromachi-period Keiō University manuscript, typeset in ISHIKAWA 1997.

6. NISHINO 1971, 42a–43b. Kumano *bikuni* 熊野比丘尼 are known to have employed elaborate paintings of hell (*Kumano kanjin jikkai mandara*) in their preaching, but the hell scenes described in *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* are inconsistent with the hell scenes depicted in extant *Kumano kanjin jikkai mandara*. The *etoki bikuni* of Nishino’s theory are therefore unlikely to have been Kumano *bikuni*.

world with a fantastic palace—the abode of the Great Asama (Sengen) Bodhisattva 浅間大菩薩, the resident deity of Mount Fuji—which he mistakenly believes to be the Pure Land. The narrator of the 1603 *Fuji* text explains:⁷

Nitta entered the palace grounds. Water dripped from the eaves with a sound like that of *ge-ke-shu-jō* 下化衆生, “the salvation of all sentient beings,” played upon a lute, and the rustling sound of wind in the pines was such as to awaken a person from the cycle of birth and death. Proceeding further inside, Nitta saw hanging strands of threaded jewels. Night and day were as one, distinguishable only by the periodic opening and closing of lotus blossoms. In one place Nitta found a lute left standing as if it had just been played. The ceilings were draped with sheets of red-ground brocade, and the pillars were wrapped in similar bolts of blue. The red and blue brocade was in turn adorned with gold and silver. When Nitta and his companion spoke, their voices echoed like the bells of Gion Shōja,⁸ beyond the heart to fathom or words to express. Supposing that he had arrived in the Pure Land, Nitta was overjoyed.

Exploring a road that ran to the northeast, Nitta found a lake with an island. There was a palace there that glowed with the radiant light of Jambu River gold.⁹ A bridge with eighty-nine sections connected the island to the shore, and for the eighty-nine sections there were eighty-nine bells. The first bell rang the name of the *Lotus Sutra*, after which the others rang out every syllable of the twenty-eight chapters of the eight-fascicle *Lotus*. In addition, the eighty-ninth bell rang the following prayer: “Tamon, Jikoku, Zōjō, Kōmoku, and you Ten Rakṣāsa Daughters: by the power of the *Lotus Sutra*, lead all sentient beings to the Pure Land of Nine Grades.”¹⁰ It also rang, “May this merit be spread equally so that all alike will aspire to enlightenment and achieve rebirth in the Land of Tranquility and Bliss.”¹¹ (MJMT 11: 434a–35a)

7. The 1603 *Fuji* text, a hand-copied manuscript from the former Akagi Bunko 赤木文庫 archives, is dated the fifth month of Keichō 8 慶長八年 (1603). Unless otherwise stated, all subsequent references to *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* are to this particular text, which is translated in its entirety as a digital supplement to this article at <http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/welcome.htm> (select publications; periodicals; English periodicals; *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*; Cumulative Contents; 2006, 33/2).

8. The legendary bells at the Indian temple where Śākyamuni Buddha is said to have preached.

9. The word “palace” is interpolated from the 1607 *Fuji* text (MJMS 2: 322a). The Jambu River runs through the great mango forest in northern Jambudvīpa, which, in Buddhist cosmology, is the island-continent at the foot of Mount Sumeru inhabited by human beings. The Jambu River is known for its purple gold. INAGAKI 1995, 403; NAKAMURA 2001, 1: 146d.

10. The term “Nine Grades” (*kuhon* 九品) refers to the nine ranks of possible rebirth within the Pure Land. The words “eighty-ninth bell” are interpolated from the 1607 *Fuji* text. Tamonten 多聞天 (Bishamonten 毘沙門天), Jikokuten 持国天, Zōjōten 增長天, and Kōmokuten 広目天 are the Four Guardian Kings (*shitenō* 四天王). Together with the Ten Rakṣāsa Daughters 十羅刹女, they are divine protectors of Buddhism.

11. This is an apparent quotation from the preface to Shandao’s “Commentary on the Visualization Sutra” (T 37: 246a, lines 9–10). The “Land of Tranquility and Bliss” is the Pure Land.

The Asama Bodhisattva's palace is a pure land of sorts, but it is not *the* Pure Land—Amida's Pure Land—and thus, for both Nitta and the reader, it serves as a kind of false paradise within the tale. Imposter Pure Lands are a significant danger for Pure Land Buddhist devotees in medieval Japanese fiction. In the late Muromachi-period *otogizōshi Bishamon no honji* 毘沙門の本地 [Bishamon in his original form], the Golden Prince (*konjiki taishi* 金色太子)—the Buddhist guardian deity Bishamonten in his previous human existence—encounters no less than three false paradises, two of which are claimed to be “the Pure Land,” in the course of his own Grand Tour through hell and the outer cosmos.¹² The Prince avoids them thanks to the bodhisattva Jizō, whom he meets beside the Sanzu River in the Land of the Dead (*meido* 冥途), and who warns him to beware. Upon passing the third and final imposter realm, the Prince is besieged by handsome young men and women who call out to him, “If you're to be reborn in the Pure Land, then come this way! This is the real Pure Land Paradise! That know-nothing priest you met by the Sanzu River—the ascetic in the monkish robes—he gave you bad directions! His way leads to *muken jigoku* 無間地獄, the Hell of No Respite! Quickly, come in here!”¹³

Fukuda Akira has argued that before it was set to paper, *Bishamon no honji* circulated in the oral repertoires of *shōmonji* 唱門師, medieval street-preachers known for beating small metal gongs (*konku* 金鼓), performing divination and *kusemai* 曲舞, casting spells, and chanting the *Bishamon Sutra* (*Bishamonkyō* 毘沙門經), among other texts.¹⁴ Fukuda's theory is intriguing for several reasons. First, it suggests that groups of popular (non-elite) Muromachi-period preacher-entertainers sought to exploit a type of Pure Land Buddhist salvation-anxiety by first encouraging and then addressing audiences' fears of spiritual failure: the possibility of being lured into a false Pure Land. Second, it suggests that some forms of popular Pure Land Buddhism—Pure Land Buddhism as it was preached and experienced on the streets, and in society at large—required more

12. The Golden Prince rides through the sky on a magical horse, asking directions of various stars that he meets along the way. His quest is a kind of Grand Tour, but it does not include the realms of animals, *ashura*, and hungry ghosts, and its final destination is the palace of the Buddhist guardian deity Daibonten 大梵天 (just beyond the Tosotsu 兜率 heaven), rather than the Pure Land. All references to *Bishamon no honji* in this and the following paragraph are to the Keiō University *nara ehon* 奈良絵本 (seventeenth century), in SNKBT 55: 143–98.

13. SNKBT 55: 188–89. The “know-nothing priest” is a reference to Jizō. The prince is warned of the imposter realms on pages 184–86, and he encounters them on pages 188–89. The *otogizōshi Kuruma-zō sōshi* 車僧草子 (late Muromachi period) also contains the threat of an unreal Pure Land, in this case conjured by *tengu* 天狗, a kind of demon-bird-men with supernatural powers. See MJMT 4: 28ob.

14. FUKUDA 1985. Fukuda builds a strong case, despite the fact that exceedingly little is known about the lives and activities of *shōmonji* in the Muromachi period. Fukuda explains (page 96a) that the *Bishamon Sutra* is likely the *Bishamon no kudoku kyō* 毘沙門功德經, which Fukuda says (citing ODA 1929, 1487a) is a sutra that praises the virtues of Bishamonten and that corresponds to (but is not itself) T 1245, *Bussetsu Bishamon Tennō kyō* 仏説毘沙門天王經. I have been unable to find a reference to the *Bishamon no kudoku kyō* in any source other than ODA 1929.

than the nenbutsu for Pure Land salvation. In *Bishamon no honji*, the Golden Prince is said to have made it his constant practice to recite the nenbutsu, yet he is also said to have concluded that he “would certainly have entered” the third imposter paradise—a gateway to 80,000 different hells—“if not for Jizō’s instruction” (SNKBT 55: 177 and 189). The implication is clear: while the



FIGURE 1: Jizō leads the Golden Prince through the Land of the Dead. From *Bishamon no honji* (seventeenth-century *nara ehon*), courtesy of the Keiō University Library.



FIGURE 2: Jizō leads the Golden Prince through the Land of the Dead. From *Bishamon no honji* (seventeenth-century *nara ehon*), courtesy of Tokuda Kazuo.

nenbutsu may be necessary for Pure Land rebirth, reliance on Jizō is necessary for avoiding the pitfalls along the way.¹⁵

In *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, Nitta embarks upon his Grand Tour from the Pure Land-like world of the Great Asama Bodhisattva, who is at first enraged by Nitta's violation of his sacred space, but then mollified by a gift of Nitta's swords. The Bodhisattva offers to lead Nitta on a tour of the six realms, whereupon the two set out on their journey through the planes of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, *ashura*, humans, heavens, and finally the Pure Land (which exists outside of the six realms). Like many medieval travel tales of its type, *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* is dominated by descriptions of the brutal punishments of evildoers, particularly women. Its narrator displays a fetishistic fascination with female torture and suffering, from the woman who is sawn in half at the crotch for setting her heart upon one man while being committed to another, to the woman who has nails pounded into the bones of her hips for having had multiple sexual partners in the course of her life.¹⁶ Other examples include a woman who has her tongue pulled out for making false accusations; a woman who has the skin of her face peeled back and burning oil dripped on the flesh underneath for having used cosmetics in order to make herself more attractive to men; and a woman in elegant robes who rips apart her own flesh and feeds it to demons for having engaged in prostitution.¹⁷ A description of Nitta's tour of the Pure Land is included toward the end of the story as an apparent afterthought:

“Well, Nitta,” the Bodhisattva said, “that’s pretty much the gist of hell. Shall I show you some of the better places now?” The Bodhisattva led Nitta to the

15. Doctrinally speaking, there should be no “along the way” in the matter of Pure Land rebirth. However, this is not the case in Muromachi fiction. In *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, Nitta witnesses a woman from Hitachi 常陸 province and a couple from Mikawa 三河 province achieving *ōjō* 往生 (Pure Land rebirth) from within the evil realms (MJMT 11: 442a–b and 446a), and in the *otogizōshi Tengu no dairi* 天狗の内裏 (late Muromachi period), Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経 witnesses a woman achieving *ōjō* from the Blood Pool Hell (*chi no ike jigoku* 血池地獄; MJMT 9: 563a–b). In *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, the Great Asama Bodhisattva advises Nitta that “those who wish to go to the Pure Land should wash their hands at dawn every day and chant Jizō's name one or two hundred times” (MJMT 11: 438a). Incidentally, although neither *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* nor *Bishamon no honji* explicitly identify Jizō with Amida, the sixteenth-century Tendai *Lotus Sutra* commentaries *Hokekyō jurin shūyōshō* 法華經鷲林拾葉鈔 and *Hokekyō jikidanshō* 法華經直談鈔 and some other texts do, which suggests that the substitution of Jizō's name for the nenbutsu, as *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* recommends, is less radical than it might seem. See *Jurin shūyōshō* 1991, 2: 421–22; *Jikidanshō* 1979, 2: 243–44; and WILLIAMS 2004, 519.

16. MJMT 11: 439a (1603 *Fuji* text); MJMT 11: 468a (1627 *Fuji* text). Punishments are often symbolic of their crimes: the first woman is divided at her genitals as a result of her divided sexual loyalties, and the second woman has the same number of nails (read: iron phalluses) driven into her hips and pelvis as the number of her lovers.

17. MJMT 11: 441a, 439a–b, and 439a (1603 *Fuji* text). NISHINO argues that the preponderance of women's torments suggests that *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* was disseminated by women who preached in a confessional mode (1971, 42); Koyama disagrees, maintaining that it suggests that the story was intended for a largely female audience (1983, 50 and 55). In addition to women, *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* is especially concerned with bad priests and the punishments awaiting them in hell.

west. They came to a place where there were four bridges. The Bodhisattva explained: “Those are for Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and venerable people to cross over into the Pure Land of Nine Grades.”¹⁸

Radiating a brilliant light, Amida Buddha was awesome to behold. Around the lake, the wonderful cries of ducks, geese, and male and female mandarin ducks rose up from among the waves.¹⁹ Golden flags fluttered in the merciful breeze, and twenty-five bodhisattvas played music and danced for joy. Flowers rained from the sky, beyond the heart to fathom or words to explain.

(MJMT 11: 447b–48a)

The narrator’s effusive tone functions to emphasize the sublime nature of the Pure Land, placing it in direct opposition to the various hells that Nitta visits first. Chloe Chard has observed that in the European literary tradition, hyperbolic language is considered to be a hallmark of travel writing because it “serves to map out, more insistently than plainer and more moderate forms of language, a plot of traversing limits and boundaries, both geographical and symbolic, that is often envisaged as a crucial part of the experience of travel” (CHARD 1996, 5). Whether or not it is possible to speak of “hyperbolic description” in the case of the Pure Land is difficult to say.²⁰ Nevertheless, the effect of the *Fuji* narrator’s idyllic description—that of suggesting the real and symbolic transcending of boundaries—is the same. The story continues:

Nitta wished to stay, but the Bodhisattva said that he would show him where the buddhas and bodhisattvas dwelled, and he led him on and made him pray.

They visited the abodes of Jizō, Ryūju, Kannon, Seishi, and all the Buddhas of the Three Ages. Among them were places where the inhabitants engaged in seated meditation, places where they meditated on the *Lotus Sutra*, places occupied by esoteric practitioners, and places inclined toward righteousness. There were also places where ignorant people, beset with desire, had nails pounded into their six sensory organs.²¹

In one place, Nitta saw a woman screaming as she was being eaten by a venomous snake. The Bodhisattva explained: “This woman failed to give up her

18. The Keiō University *Fuji* text (late Muromachi period) explains that of the four bridges, the first three were made of gold, silver, and copper, and that they were intended for those destined for the upper, middle, and lower ranks of Pure Land rebirth. The fourth bridge, which was made of iron, was for evildoers’ use (ISHIKAWA 1997, 43a). According to the 1607 *Fuji* text, the iron bridge leads to the Hell of No Respite (*muken jigoku*) on Mount Tateyama 立山 in Etchū 越中 province (MJMS 2: 336a).

19. According to the *Visualization Sutra* (*Kanmuryōjūkyō* 觀無量壽經), Pure Land ducks, geese, and male and female mandarin ducks (*fugan ennō* 鳧鴈鶯鶯) all expound the Dharma (T 12: 343b, lines 7–8; INAGAKI 1995, 331).

20. In an alternate religious context, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) asserted that “it is impossible to engage in hyperbole when speaking of the divine perfection.” HUNDERSMARCK 2000, 174.

21. The “six sensory organs” (*rokkon* 六根) are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. The term is often used to signify the body as a whole. NAKAMURA 2001, 3: 1777d–78a.

FIGURE 3: Nitta and the Great Asama Bodhisattva visit the Pure Land. From *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* (eighteenth-century *nara ehon*), courtesy of Nakano Kōichi and the Waseda University Press.





attachments to men. She'll suffer constantly like this for fifteen thousand years." Nitta also saw a woman who had flushed with anger when her husband sought to plant good karmic roots. "This life is all that's important," she had thought to herself. "Who cares about the next? My husband and his damned 'good roots.' He should be worrying about my clothes!" The woman was impaled upon the point of a sword. Her punishment would last for fifty million *kalpas*.²² (MJMT 11: 448a–b)

Although the narrator sets out to describe Amida's Pure Land, he (she?) is soon drawn back to reporting the many torments awaiting women in hell. It would thus seem (in the 1603 and 1607 *Fuji* texts, at least) that Amida's paradise is most remarkable for the punishments that it lacks.²³ By juxtaposing the respective joys and horrors of the more and less desirable realms, the author/storyteller would appear to follow a strategy of alternately enticing and cajoling readers and listeners to "plant good roots" and strive for the Pure Land.²⁴ The same coercive tone is employed until the end. As the narrator asserts in the concluding passage of the 1607 *Fuji* text, "to read this story is better than to make a pilgrimage to Mount Fuji; to read it once is to make three such trips. Those who keep a scroll of this story in their homes will enjoy the *Gongen's* favor, and all those who doubt it will fall into the Hell of No Respite. Have no doubt, have no doubt! *Namu Fuji Asama Daibosatsu* 南無富士浅間大菩薩."²⁵

Finding Father: Minamoto no Yoshitsune and "The Palace of the Tengu"

In a discussion of the essential natures of travel and travel writing, Tzvetan Todorov has observed that the travel narrative as we recognize it today is marked by "a certain tension (or a certain balance) between the observing subject and the

22. A *kalpa* (劫) is a measurement of time which Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250) described in his commentary *Daichidoron* 大智度論 as being greater than the time that it takes for a heavenly being to wear away a forty *ri* 里 (one hundred square mile) rock by brushing it with its delicate sleeve once every one hundred years (NAKAMURA 2001, 1: 423b).

23. In the Keiō University, Iwase Bunko 岩瀬文庫, and 1627 *Fuji* texts, the final torments are described before Nitta's visit to the Pure Land. Nishino argues that their post-Pure Land inclusion in the 1603 and 1607 *Fuji* manuscripts is suggestive of the story's oral transmission. Specifically, Nishino writes that the account of the woman who interfered with her husband's planting of good karmic roots is "recorded as if the storyteller had suddenly remembered it" and then quickly slipped it in. NISHINO 1971, 41a.

24. The Keiō *Fuji* text explicitly admonishes that "those who hear this story should recite the nenbutsu, plant good roots, perform reverse rites, and pray for rebirth in the Pure Land" (ISHIKAWA 1997, 44a). Reverse rites, or "reverse-order rites" (*gyakushu* 逆修), are (theoretically) posthumous rites commissioned by the beneficiary for the beneficiary's well-being in the next life, and performed while the beneficiary is still alive. NAKAMURA 2001, 1: 272d–73a.

25. "Hail the Great Asama Bodhisattva of Mount Fuji" (MJMS 2: 337b). *Gongen* 権現 is a term for a buddha or bodhisattva that has taken on a temporary manifestation as a Japanese deity in order to save sentient beings (NAKAMURA 2001, 1:516a). For a further discussion of *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, see KIMBROUGH forthcoming [c].

observed object. This is what, in its way, the term *travel narrative* designates: narrative, that is, personal narration and not objective description; but also travel, and therefore a framework of circumstances exterior to the subject” (TODOROV 1996, 293). Todorov’s distinction is crucial to understanding the difference between an expository work like Genshin’s *Ōjō yōshū*, the first chapter of which includes impersonal descriptions of the Eight Great Hells (*hachi daijigoku* 八大地獄; NST 6: 11–29 and 324–29; ANDREWS 1973, 47–48), and *Chōhōji yomigaeri no sōshi*, the purportedly first-person narrative of the nun Keishin’s experiences passing through the Land of the Dead. According to this criterion, *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* might also be classified as a “travel narrative,” because it, too, explores an imaginative topography through the eyes of an identifiable and ever-present traveler (Nitta), despite being told from a third-person narrative perspective. The same can be said of the *otogizōshi Tengu no dairi* (The Palace of the Tengu), another late-medieval Grand Tour-type Pure Land-visitation tale, and one in which Todorov’s tension (or balance) between “the observing subject and the observed object” is especially pronounced.

Dating from around the early sixteenth century, *Tengu no dairi* is the story of the Genpei War hero Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189) and his fantastic journey, at the age of thirteen, through the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, *ashura*, and the Pure Land. Little is known about the origins of the story, but scholars agree that the language of the oldest *Tengu* texts reveals that, like *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, *Tengu no dairi* circulated orally before it was transcribed.²⁶ Shimazu Hisamoto proposed in 1928 that the tale is an adaptation of Virgil’s *Aeneid* (Book Six, in which Aeneas travels to the underworld and meets his dead father, Anchises, who prophesizes his future), but his argument suffers from a lack of corroborating evidence, and while it is true that the two works share similar plots and narrative structures, the question of influence remains unresolved.²⁷

In its opening passage, *Tengu no dairi* explains that Yoshitsune was a reincarnation (*saitan* 再誕) of the Buddhist guardian deity Bishamonten (who, in his former existence, is the Golden Prince described in *Bishamon no honji*). His father, Yoshitomo 義朝 (1123–1160), was the Minamoto general responsible, in part, for the Heiji Disturbance 平治の乱 of 1159 against Taira domination of the court, and it was as a result of that rebellion that he lost his life when Yoshitsune was an infant. In *Tengu no dairi*, Yoshitsune takes up residence at Kurama Temple

26. MUROKI 1992, 31 and 41–42; TOKUDA 1988, 288. The oldest *Tengu* texts include the versions of the story contained in the Keiō University manuscript of ca. 1504–1528, and a two-volume *nara ehon* (ca. 1688–1704) in the former collection of Moriya Kōzō 守屋孝藏. Tokuda Kazuo refers to these, together with a three-volume *nara ehon* (first half of the Edo period) in the Katei Bunko 霞亭文庫 archives in the Tokyo University Library, as the “old *sekiyō*” 古説経 textual line. TOKUDA 1988, 263–64.

27. See SHIMAZU 1928, 609–15. Shimazu’s proposition is intriguing, but his analysis is occasionally misleading. He notes on page 611, for example, that the “palace of the *tengu*” corresponds to “the Sibyl’s Palace,” John Dryden’s English translation of Virgil’s *tecta Sibyllae*, “the dwelling of the Sibyl.” However, he fails to mention that Dryden was born in 1631, well after *Tengu no dairi*’s composition.

鞍馬寺 in the mountains north of the capital from the age of seven, and there, in response to his prayers to the Kurama Bishamonten (the principal image at Kurama Temple),²⁸ he receives directions to the hidden palace of the *tengu* on Mount Kurama. Once inside, Yoshitsune learns from the wife of the Great Tengu that his father has been reborn in the Pure Land of Nine Grades—Amida’s Pure Land—as Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来 (Mahāvairocana), the universal Buddha of the esoteric Buddhist tradition. The Great Tengu agrees to take Yoshitsune to see him, but for some unstated reason, he decides that first he will show Yoshitsune the six planes of existence, beginning with the 136 different hells.

Notwithstanding their similarities as imaginative travel narratives, *Tengu no dairi* and *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* are very different works, both in content and in tone. Although *Tengu no dairi* includes some graphic descriptions of hell—particularly the Blood Pool Hell for women²⁹—it lacks the consistently misogynistic rhetoric and apparently sadistic joy of *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*. And while *Tengu no dairi* also lacks the heavy-handed didacticism of the other work, it contains seemingly Zen Buddhist elements that *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* does not, from Yoshitsune’s decision, at the age of ten, to embark on a course of Zen study (*sangaku* 参学) so that he “might see a bit of that ‘enlightenment’ thing” (as a result of which, before the age of fourteen, he is said to have fathomed the 1,700 traditional Zen *kōan* 公案),³⁰ to the Great Tengu’s advice in the *ashura* realm that when warriors in the human world find themselves in battle, they should “imagine that the enemy they strike is a bell, and their sword, a wooden clapper, keeping in mind that the present is what it is because of the karma of the past, and that in the future, they and their enemy will attain Buddhahood together.”³¹ Finally, whereas *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* is principally concerned with exploring the “other” (the external cosmos beyond the human realm), *Tengu no dairi* is concerned with the “other” largely for the light that it can shine on the “self” (Yoshitsune’s self). Its Grand Tour is thus, in part, a journey of self-discovery, which is manifested as a “real” (actual) peregrination through the six realms and the Pure Land.

In *Tengu no dairi*, Yoshitsune’s and the reader’s experience of the extra-human realms is shaped by Yoshitsune’s inner turmoil over whether to become a warrior or a priest. His indecision is fueled by his two opposing, but equal filial needs to avenge his father’s death and to perform Buddhist services for him in

28. According to the woodblock-printed *Bishamon Tennō no honji* 毘沙門天王之本地 (a variant of *Bishamon no honji* published in 1654), after becoming Bishamonten, the Golden Prince moved to Mount Kurama in Japan (MJMS 2: 126b).

29. The Blood Pool passage is translated and discussed in KIMBROUGH forthcoming [b], chapter 9.

30. TSUJI 1999, 353b (late Muromachi-period British Library text). Yoshitsune thinks to himself, *satori to yaran iu koto wo sukoshi mibaya* (“I think I’ll have a little look at that ‘enlightenment’ thing”), which is a comically colloquial thought, given the profundity of his undertaking.

31. TSUJI 1999, 363 (British Library text). Apparent Zen influence can also be seen in the nonsensical question-and-answer (*mondō* 問答) exchange between Dainichi and the Great Tengu, which Shimazu describes as a “Zen *mondō*” (SHIMAZU 1928, 616).

the afterworld. In the course of his tour, Yoshitsune's conflict first surfaces in the realm of hungry ghosts, where he encounters a *gaki* 餓鬼 (a hungry ghost) who laughs and dances because one of his seventh-generation descendants has taken monastic vows (and for this reason the *gaki* will be saved). Yoshitsune is immediately besieged by feelings of doubt and remorse because of his own recent inclination to pursue the martial path.³² Next, in the *ashura* realm, Yoshitsune witnesses ferocious fighting between people “who seemed to have died without having avenged their fathers' deaths.”³³ His perception is a strange one, and only explicable as a product of his conflicted psyche, for as the Great Asama Bodhisattva explains in *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, the *ashura* realm is widely known as a place simply for “people who died in battle,” or, as the nun Keishin learns upon meeting a murdered *chigo* 稚児 (acolyte) in the course of her own supernatural tour, for those who have suffered violent deaths.³⁴ Lastly, in the Pure Land, Yoshitsune's obsession dominates—even dictates—his experience of the so-called Land of Tranquility and Bliss, for it is there that his father Yoshitomo (now Dainichi Buddha) urges him to forgo the priesthood and other Buddhist practices in order to concentrate on killing the Taira.³⁵

In the earliest *Tengu no dairi* texts,³⁶ the narrator's description of the Pure Land as Yoshitsune first encounters it is restricted to the recent fortifications established by Yoshitomo in his new capacity as Dainichi. In the Keiō University manuscript of ca. 1504–1528, the narrator explains:

Yoshitsune and the Great Tengu arrived at the Pure Land of Nine Grades. It was here that Yoshitsune's father Yoshitomo had become Dainichi Buddha. Since he had been enshrined as the central image (*chūzon* 中尊), the guards at the gates in each of the four directions had taken on a fearsomely stern appearance. The eastern gate was defended by the bodhisattva Seishi, and the

32. MJMT 9: 564a–b (Keiō text of ca. 1504–1528); MJMS 2: 384a–b (Moriya text); TSUJI 1999, 361b–62b (British Library text). The British Library text contains a particularly detailed description of Yoshitsune's inner conflict; unfortunately, its account is interrupted by a large misplaced passage (page 361b, line 11, through page 362b, line 3), which should be moved to the space before illustration 9 on page 360b (after line 7, that is).

33. TSUJI 1999, 363a (British Library text). Also see MJMT 9: 564b and MJMS 2: 384b (Keiō and Moriya texts).

34. MJMT 11: 446b (*Fuji no hitoana sōshi*); SNKBZ 63: 441–42 (*Chōhōji yomigaeri no sōshi*). In the *otogizōshi Akimichi* 秋道 (late Muromachi/early Edo period), the protagonist Akimichi claims that he, too, will be punished in hell (although not in the *ashura* realm) if he fails to avenge his father's murder. NKBT 38: 397; McCULLOUGH 1990, 501.

35. In the British Library text, Yoshitomo/Dainichi tells Yoshitsune that he would rather be avenged than have his son transcribe “a thousand or ten thousand sutras” for him. TSUJI 1999, 367b. Also see the similar passages in MJMT 9: 571a–b, and MJMS 2: 390a. As Drake Langford has suggested to me, Yoshitomo's request functions to re-cast *The Tale of the Heike* as an epic vendetta story.

36. The versions of the story contained in the Keiō and Moriya manuscripts, in Tokuda's “old *sekkyō*” textual line, and not including the late Muromachi-period British Library manuscript. See footnote 26, above.



FIGURE 4: Yoshitsune meets his father in the Pure Land. From *Tengu no dairi* (woodblock-printed *tanrokubon* 丹緑本, ca. 1624–1648), courtesy of the Keiō University Library.



FIGURE 5: Yoshitsune and his father in the Pure Land. From *Tengu no dairi* (late Muromachi-period *nara ehon emaki* 奈良絵本絵巻). By permission of The British Library, OR 13839.

southern, by Fugen. After considering their options, the Great Tengu suggested that they enter from the north.

Yoshitsune and the Tengu proceeded to the northern gate, where they pushed upon the doors, making them creak. “Open up in there!” the Great Tengu shouted. The bodhisattva Miroku heard them from inside. “Who is it?” he demanded. “Sorry to bother you,” the Tengu replied. “I’m a Tengu Buddha on a visit from the human realm. Please open up your gate for a while.” “Alright,” Miroku said, and he removed the wooden crossbar and swung the doors apart.³⁷ The sound rumbled throughout the twelve directions and the three countries of India, China, and Japan.

(MJMT 9: 565a–66a, with reference to the Moriya text, in MJMS 2: 385a–b)

Yoshitomo’s military fortification of the Pure Land is intriguing, and it invites several interesting questions. Is Yoshitomo anticipating an invasion of dead Taira Pure Land devotees? And if a Taira warrior were to attain rebirth in the Pure Land, what would he think when he learned that it was ruled by the patriarch of his former enemy, now Dainichi Buddha?³⁸

Stranger still, Yoshitomo/Dainichi appears to have replaced Amida in his own paradise. Although Yoshitomo and the Great Tengu encourage Yoshitsune to recite the nenbutsu,³⁹ most *Tengu no dairi* texts contain no mention of Amida in conjunction with his Western Pure Land.⁴⁰ Yoshitomo’s transformation into a Buddha is moreover problematic (or simply farcical) insofar as he is said to weep at the sight of his son, and to explain that his anger with the Taira remains unabated.⁴¹ So what is the reader to make of Yoshitsune’s Pure Land experience? While it is possible that Yoshitsune has been deceived by the Great Tengu, who may have falsely conjured the six realms and the Pure Land for him to see, this seems unlikely; there are no statements in *Tengu no dairi* to suggest that Yoshitsune’s journey is anything but real, or that the Great Tengu acts in anything other than Yoshitsune’s best interest.⁴² A metaphorical reading of the story suggests

37. Miroku’s opening of the doors to the Pure Land may be allusive to his opening of the doors of the Vairocana Tower for the pilgrim Zenzai Dōji 善財童子 (S. Sudhana) in Book 39 of the *Kegon Sutra* (*Kegonkyō* 華嚴經). T 10 (279): 435a, line 2; CLEARY 1993, 1489.

38. Taira no Koremori 平維盛 (1157–1184?), for example, is reported in *Heike monogatari* to have drowned himself after chanting the nenbutsu one hundred times (NKBT 33: 284; McCULLOUGH 1988, 350). One can only imagine that he would have been surprised.

39. The Great Tengu encourages Yoshitsune to recite the nenbutsu in MJMT 9: 565b and MJMS 2: 385b (Keiō and Moriya manuscripts). In the British Library text, Yoshitomo/Dainichi tells Yoshitsune “not to forget the nenbutsu, not even for a moment” (TSUJI 1999, 370a; there is no corresponding passage in either the Keiō or Moriya text).

40. The 1659 woodblock-printed text refers to Amida one time (SHIMAZU 1928, 271, last line).

41. MJMT 9: 570b and 571a; MJMS 2: 389a–b and 389b–90a; TSUJI 1999, 366b and 367a–b.

42. *Tengu* are generally known for perverting Buddhism and leading people astray. In the noh play *Daie* 大会 (possibly by Konparu Zenchiku 金春禪竹, b. 1405) and its related *Jikkishō* 十訓抄 account (1: 7), a mischievous *tengu* conjures a false scene of Śākyamuni preaching at the assembly on Eagle Peak for a Hiei monk to see. SANARI 1931, 1777–88; SNKBZ 51: 37–41.

a different explanation: that Yoshitsune's journey was formulated by the *Tengu no dairi* author in order to evoke the internal, psychological process by which Yoshitsune makes up his mind to avenge his father. Considered in this way, his Grand Tour (like all travel narratives, to greater or lesser extents) constitutes an inner journey through outer realms.⁴³

On a literal, textual level, Yoshitsune's travels are "real," and his encounter with his father in the Pure Land is therefore significant to our understanding of the subjectivity of personal religious experience in medieval Japan. If the reader does not simply dismiss *Tengu no dairi* as parody or farce, then he or she must ask, "If I were to be born in the Pure Land, would I discover that my own father is Dainichi?" The question is not as silly as it seems, because it addresses the place of extraordinary individual experience in a (purportedly) doctrinally determined religion. In a discussion of non-duality in Tendai Pure Land thought, Jacqueline Stone has written that Tendai Pure Land writings from around the twelfth century "may describe the Pure Land as both a real place in the western part of the universe and immanent in this world, and Amida, as both a transcendent Buddha and identical to one's own mind" (STONE 1999, 203). Stone's observation pertains to a typically Tendai-type hermeneutical twist in which the concepts of *koshin no mida* 己心の弥陀 and *yuishin no jōdo* 唯心の浄土—the notions that Amida and the Pure Land are projections of the human heart-mind—are simultaneously confirmed and denied. Although *Tengu no dairi* takes no obvious sectarian stance, it is tempting to read its representation of the Pure Land in just this way: as both a real place in the west, and an emanation of Yoshitsune's own mind.

Straight to the Pure Land: The Lay Priest Ennō and "A History of Seiganji"

The East Asian Buddhist *locus classicus* for the motif of the spiritual journey as material travel is the story of the pilgrim Zenzai Dōji 善財童子 in the thirty-ninth book of the *Kegon Sutra* (*Kegonkyō* 華嚴經). Known independently in Sanskrit as the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, this thirty-ninth book rearticulates the *Kegonkyō*'s explanation of the fifty-two stages of enlightenment by describing them in the context of Zenzai Dōji's meetings with fifty-three teachers in a fifty-two-stage quest.⁴⁴ Zenzai Dōji begins his journey after visiting the bodhisattva Monju, who sends him off on a wandering course that eventually leads to Miroku in the Tosotsu heaven. His trek turns out to be a circular one, because like Nitta and

43. Todorov, for example, writes that in travel narratives, "although the spiritual and material categories are opposed, they are not incompatible, nor do the narratives belong exclusively to one genre or the other. On the contrary, both categories are almost always present simultaneously; only the proportions and the hierarchies vary" (TODOROV 1996, 289).

44. See Thomas Cleary's translation of Siksānanda's seventh-century Chinese translation (T 10 (279): 319–444), in CLEARY 1993, 1135–1518. For a useful synopsis, see CLEARY 1989. I am grateful to James Heisig for bringing this sutra to my attention.

Yoshitsune and other alleged Grand Tour tourists who are sent back from the Pure Land to their former lives in the human world,⁴⁵ Zenzai Dōji is returned to Monju, whereupon he attains a vision of Fugen and achieves ultimate enlightenment. Although apparently well-known in medieval Japan (MOERMAN 2005, 67), Zenzai Dōji's story is unlike those of his native Japanese counterparts, if for no other reason than that Muromachi fiction is largely unconcerned with philosophical Buddhism in the manner of the *Kegon Sutra*. Nevertheless, as an archetype, the Zenzai Dōji narrative is illuminating for its demonstration that the Tosotsu heaven (or in the case of *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* and *Tengu no dairi*, the Pure Land) is important as a stage, rather than a goal, within the larger enlightenment experience that the journey represents. Both the Zenzai Dōji story and Japanese Grand Tour-type fiction would thus appear to be incompatible with dominant Pure Land Buddhist thought as it is known today, because such thought rejects the ideal of a lengthy "journey" to enlightenment in favor of some simpler schema.

Among medieval Pure Land visitation tales is a story of the lay priest Ennō (*shami* Ennō 沙彌円能), which was employed in centuries of Seiganji 誓願寺 temple-based Pure Land preaching, and which in fact contests the necessity of the Grand Tour for the Pure Land faithful. Ennō's story is moreover remarkable for its assertion that Ennō, a fervent devotee of the statue of Amida at Seiganji (now located in central Kyōto),⁴⁶ encountered none other than the Seiganji Amida upon his arrival in the Pure Land. (Like Yoshitsune's meeting with his father, it suggests the possibility of radical subjectivity in Pure Land religious experience.) The earliest textual rendition of Ennō's account is contained in *Honchō shinshū ōjōden* 本朝新修往生伝 (New compilation of Japanese Pure Land rebirth biographies; 1151), according to which Ennō was granted a tour of the Pure Land by six mysterious monks—six statues of Jizō in disguise—who showed him the Seiganji Amida at his home-away-from-home in the Western Paradise (NST 7: 692b–93b). An illustration of Ennō's tour is contained in the Kamakura-period *Seiganji engi* 誓願寺縁起 (History of Seiganji) hanging scrolls, a pair of large painted-silk tableaux employed as visual aids in preaching and storytelling, indicating Seiganji's use of the account in preaching and fund-raising from as

45. Possibly one of the most famous Grand Tour-type narratives dates from the early eighteenth century. Rinsuiken Den'a 臨水軒伝阿 writes in his preface to *Nyonin aishū kairoku* 女人愛執怪異録 (1739) that his *Kōkan meishōroku* 孝感冥祥録 of 1734, which tells of how the Pure Land devotee Matsuno Zennojō 松野善之丞 was taken by Jizō on a tour of hell and the Pure Land in the second month of 1716, had a print-run of more than 10,000 woodblock-printed copies. Quoted in USHIROSHŌJI 1990, 134, note 3.

46. The original Seiganji is said to have been built in Nara by order of Emperor Tenji 天智天皇 (626–671), and it seems to have been moved to Kyōto ca. 1150–1209 (YUTANI 1999, 308–309). It was moved to its present location along Shinkyōgoku Avenue 新京極通 by order of Hideyoshi 秀吉 in 1591, and it is now the head temple (*sōhonzan* 総本山) of the Seizan Fukakusa 西山深草 branch of the Pure Land sect.

early as the thirteenth century.⁴⁷ The story is reproduced in *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釈書 (A history of Buddhism to the Genkō era), completed in 1322, and, in its fullest textual version, in the sixteenth-century *Seiganji engi* (in its *sankan-bon* 三卷本, or “three scroll,” textual line).⁴⁸

According to *Seiganji engi*, Ennō was a man of Fushimi Village 伏見の郷 in the Soekami district 添上郡 of Yamato Province 大和国. He set out to become a priest at the age of eighteen, but because he was naturally dim-witted, he was unable to advance in his studies. Nevertheless, he was exceptionally devout, and “constantly placing his trust in Amida, he devoted himself solely to the practices of the Western Pure Land” (ZGR 27: 1: 227b). One time Ennō heard a priest lecture on a passage from the *Yakushi Sutra* (*Yakushikyō* 薬師經):

If a person should call upon the name of World-Honored Yakushi, Lapis Lazuli Buddha of Light, eight bodhisattvas will come flying through the air at the moment of death in order to show the way.⁴⁹

Taking the sutra at its word, Ennō set about a hundred-day course of pilgrimages to a Yakushi image at a certain Kōbun'in 弘文院 temple, where he “prostrated himself three thousand times a day in prayer that he might pay his respects to the living Yakushi and Amida in this present life.”⁵⁰ Like many Pure Land devotees who make such earnest and uncompromising requests—Gen Daibu 源大夫, for example, who walks west calling out Amida’s name until he receives a response, and Chūjōhime, who pronounces a “great prayer-vow” at Taima Temple⁵¹—Ennō is eventually granted his wish: on the ninety-sixth day

47. The hanging scrolls are photographically reproduced in Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 1975, 45–46, and discussed in KIMBROUGH forthcoming [b], chapter 6. There are written records of their use in *etoki* in 1477 and 1502. Ennō’s story is also included in *Seiganji shin engi* 誓願寺真縁起, ca. 1209–1288, typeset and photographically reproduced in YUTANI 1999, 323.

48. See KUROITA 1930, 282–83 (*Genkō shakusho*), and ZGR 27: 1: 227b–30b (*Seiganji engi*). Yoshida Kōichi dates the *sankan-bon* textual line (what he calls the “second textual line”) to sometime between 1565 and 1595, and probably between 1574 and 1591. YOSHIDA 1966, 8a and 13a; KIMBROUGH forthcoming [b], appendix (“Extant Texts and Textual Lines”). All of the following references to *Seiganji engi* refer to the Jingū Bunko 神宮文庫 manuscript (*Rakuyō Seiganji engi* 洛陽誓願寺縁起, hand-copied in 1751), typeset in ZGR 27: 1: 206–43 and DNBZ 117: 340–72 (83: 148–62), and translated, in part, in KIMBROUGH forthcoming [b].

49. T 14 (450): 406b, lines 10–12. The full title of the sutra is *Yakushi rurikō nyorai hongan kudoku kyō* 薬師琉璃光如来本願功德經.

50. ZGR 27: 1: 228a. On the location and history of Kōbun'in, see YUTANI 1999, 304–309.

51 *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 19:14 (SNKBT 36: 153–59); *Chūjōhime no honji* (woodblock-printed text of 1651, in SNKBZ 63: 411; SHIRANE forthcoming, 1150). In a story with an allegorical bent, *Hokekyō jikidanshō* (ca. 1546) tells of an unnamed “mountain priest” who prays to see Amida in a living manifestation, and who then receives a dream-oracle directing him to the Paradise Priests’ Quarters (Gokurakubō 極楽坊) at Enkyōji 円教寺 in Harima 播磨 province. At Enkyōji, the priest watches from the shadows as the Gokurakubō master hangs his robe in the sun. Fleas and lice crawl out of the robe, and when the master picks them up and places them in the breast of his inner garment, the priest realizes that Amida, in his living form, is none other than compassion of this very sort. *Jikidanshō* 1979, 2: 127.

of his vow, he encounters Yakushi, Amida, and all of Amida's Pure Land host hovering in the sky above an open field.

Seiganji engi explains that because Yakushi and Amida (the Yakushi and Amida of Ennō's vision) later disappeared into Seiganji, Ennō placed his faith in the Seiganji Amida. Three years later, in the third month of 1146, he fell into a coma. His fellow priests thought that he was dead, but because his body remained warm, they waited two weeks before abandoning him in a field. Birds and animals left him alone, and after approximately one month, he awoke. He was unable to speak at first, but after three years he explained:

"I was on my way to the Land of the Dead after I died that year, when six priests called out to me and led me through the air. As I went with them, I asked, 'What is this place?' 'We are on our way to King Enma's palace,' one of the priests said. I protested, saying, 'But I've been performing the Pure Land practices for a long time so that I could be reborn in the Western Paradise. So what are we doing going to see Enma?' 'First we're going to the King's palace to show you the karmic torments for living beings,' the priest explained. 'Then we're going to take you to Paradise.' But when I refused, the priest said, 'In that case, we'll let you pay homage to the Pure Land first.'" (ZGR 27: 1: 228b–29a)

The issue of Ennō's dim-witted simplicity is central to his tale, because in addition to demonstrating the importance of worshipping the Seiganji Amida, his account is concerned with illustrating the superiority of simple-minded faith over learning and intelligence. In his refusal to first visit the various hells, Ennō subverts the traditional tale pattern, ignorantly insisting upon a non-standard tour of the afterworld. Ennō does not know much, but he does know that his years of reciting the nenbutsu entitle him to proceed directly to the Pure Land, and in this case, that is enough. By demanding his rights as a nenbutsu practitioner, he succeeds in both repudiating the Grand Tour and affirming the efficacy of the sole practice of the nenbutsu (*senju nenbutsu* 専修念仏).⁵² If the normally prerequisite tour of hell suggests a kind of ascetic Buddhist practice, then as a Pure Land Buddhist devotee, Ennō is to be commended for avoiding it. Still, considering the *Kegonkyō* account of Zenzai Dōji's journey to enlightenment, one cannot help but wonder if Ennō has not missed out on something "along the way."⁵³

52. *Seiganji engi* is unambiguous in its advocacy of the *senju nenbutsu*. It reports that the Seiganji Amida once appeared to the poet Izumi Shikibu 和泉式部 in the early years of the eleventh century and instructed her to "put aside all other vows and practices; simply keep me in your heart and single-mindedly chant my name" (ZGR 27: 1: 224b; KIMBROUGH forthcoming [b]).

53. The religious literature of the European Middle Ages can be illuminating here as well. In the twelfth-century *Vision of Tundal*, in which the soul of an Irish knight travels through purgatory and hell on its way to Heaven, we learn that "the blessed see hell and its punishments so that they can 'burn more fervently with love and praise for their Creator'" (EMERSON 2000, 29, note 4). Likewise,

As the *Seiganji engi* story continues, Ennō describes his visit to the Pure Land:

“The priests seemed to lead me onward, and in a moment we were at the eastern gate of Paradise. We passed through the barrier and gazed upon the many palace halls, each of which was lavishly adorned with the seven kinds of jewels. They cast a myriad forms of sparkling light, and the buildings stood upon the water. Thinking this strange, I wondered whether it was the doing of some heavenly being, or an example of the Buddhas’ miraculous powers. ‘It’s unheard of!’ I cried. One of the priests spoke: ‘This is lapis lazuli, not water.’ I felt the ground with my hand. It was indeed hard, and my hand was not wet in the least.

“When I gazed out upon the Lake of Eight Virtues, I saw great jeweled lotus blossoms with tall buildings on each. Bodhisattvas and the Heavenly Host and countless divine protectors played music and praised the virtues of the Buddhas. The marvelous cries of swans and peacocks were softened by the waves of the jeweled lake, and the air was filled with chanted meditations on the Buddhas and the Sangha. The seven-jeweled trees were adorned with seven-layered nets of gems. There were palace halls among the trees, mixing their radiance in a dazzling display. Bodhisattvas beyond number rained wondrous flowers from the sky as they flew back and forth in homage to the Buddhas. I worshiped each and every aspect of the realm’s virtue and magnificence every moment I was there.

“I asked the six priests, ‘Which is the hall where Amida Buddha abides?’ One of them replied, ‘I’ll go first and see.’ He entered one of the palace halls and then returned. He led me and the other five priests into the hall, and then he spoke: ‘This is the Amida Buddha of Seiganji. Since you have been at that temple for so many years single-mindedly chanting the nenbutsu and paying reverent obeisance, he has deigned to appear here now.’ When I prayed to the Amida, he shone a brilliant reddish light from each of his distinguishing Buddha marks, illuminating the ten directions. The majesty of it was beyond words to describe.” (ZGR 27: 1: 229a–b)

Since *Seiganji engi* (in its *sankan-bon* textual line) was likely composed for use in a temple fund-raising campaign after Seiganji burned in the fourth month of 1573,⁵⁴ it should come as little surprise that it would maintain that the Amida that Ennō encountered in the Pure Land was the Seiganji Amida. (The earlier versions of the Ennō account are also likely rooted in Seiganji proselytizing and fund-raising traditions, as suggested by the story’s inclusion in the Kamakura-period *Seiganji engi* hanging scrolls and the thirteenth-century *Seiganji shin*

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) is said to have maintained that “the happiness of the blessed is enhanced in their awareness of the damned” (HUNDERSMARCK 2000, 172).

54. YOSHIDA 1966, 8a and 13a. For a chronology of Seiganji history, see YUTANI 1999, 311–16.

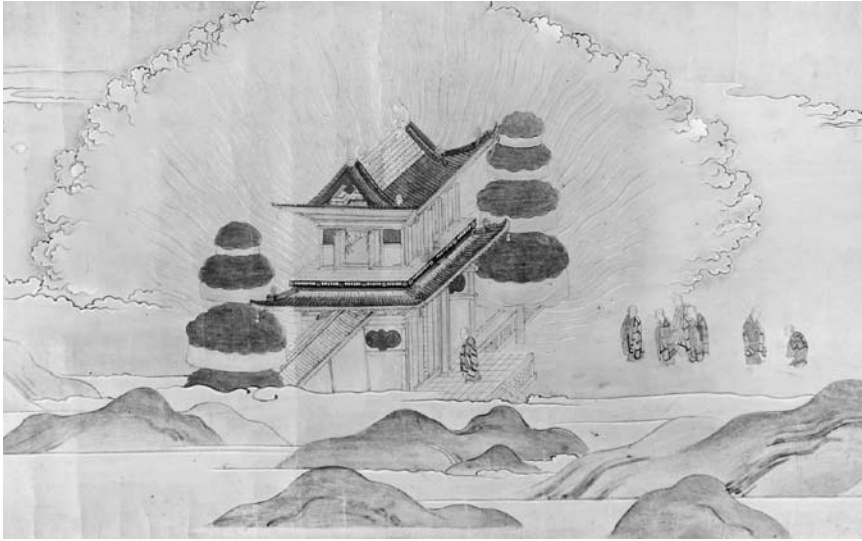


FIGURE 6: Ennō visits the Pure Land with the Six Jizō. From *Seiganji engi emaki* (seventeenth century). Courtesy of Seiganji Temple and the Kyoto National Museum.

engi.) As a travel narrative, the Ennō story is unusual for its demonstration of the utter superfluosity of travel. By identifying Amida in the Pure Land with the Seiganji Amida, it suggests that Pure Land devotees can visit Amida in this world—Kyoto, in fact—just as well as in the next. The late-medieval effort to associate Seiganji with the Western Paradise was not limited to *Seiganji engi*: a Seiganji solicitation scroll (*kanjinchō* 勧進帳) from the eighth month of 1574, for example, describes the devastating Kyoto fire of 1573 as an expedient means for allowing people to establish karmic links by contributing to Seiganji’s reconstruction, and it explains that contributing to the refurbishing of Seiganji “is the same as ornamenting the Pure Land.”⁵⁵ The *Seiganji engi* Ennō story and its contemporaneous Seiganji lore thus demonstrate that it is unnecessary to travel to the Pure Land in this life, as Ennō did, when one can simply patronize Seiganji.

Conclusion

As an alternative to scholastic Buddhist treatises and commentaries, Muromachi fiction offers intriguing insights into medieval Japanese religiosity. *Fuji no hitoana sōshi*, *Tengu no dairi*, and the *Seiganji engi* Ennō account demonstrate that far from being a sacred, untouchable constant, the Pure Land was considered open for relatively free interpretation and manipulation (including satire, in the case of *Tengu no dairi*) by different authors and institutions. While the Pure Land

55. The *kanjinchō* is typeset and photographically reproduced in YUTANI 1999, 331–37. The passage quoted here is from page 336.

sutras promise rebirth in Amida's Pure Land by means of the nenbutsu, and the *Lotus Sutra* promises Pure Land rebirth for women who hear and uphold the *Lotus Sutra*,⁵⁶ medieval literary works reveal a larger world of popular Pure Land practice and belief. The *otogizōshi Tameyo no sōshi* 為世の草子 (The Tale of Tameyo), for example, tells of two orphaned children who attain Pure Land rebirth as a result of their extraordinary filial piety;⁵⁷ and the six-scroll *Seiryōji engi* 清涼寺縁起 (History of Seiryōji Temple; ca. 1515) reports that the Imperial Lady Kitashirakawa 北白河女院 achieved Pure Land rebirth from the realm of animals, where she had been reborn as a yellow cow, because of her daughter's performance of memorial services on her behalf.⁵⁸ As these and other examples suggest,⁵⁹ Pure Land-oriented practices and beliefs were far more varied in pre-modern Japan than is generally recognized today. If we are to accurately understand Pure Land Buddhism in the diversity of its medieval permutations, then it is essential that we consider such extra-orthodox expressions of faith, as well as the nature of the Pure Land itself as a changeably subjective site in the popular imagination.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DNBZ *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書. 150 vols. Bussho Kankōkai 仏書刊行会, ed. Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912–1922. Also published in 100 vols. by the Suzuki Research Foundation, 1970–1973. All DNBZ entries refer to both of these editions.

56. T 9 (262): 54b–c; WATSON 1993, 287 (“Medicine King” chapter).

57. The two children (a brother and a sister) are said to have given their single valuable possession (a handbox left to them by their mother) to a priest so that he would perform services for their parents. They then drown themselves in a river, after which they are reported to have achieved Pure Land rebirth. The *Tameyo no sōshi* narrator explains that Amida came to receive them “because of their deep filial devotion” (*oya kōkō no kokorozashi fukaki yue ni, hotoke no raigō ni azukaru to oboetari* おやかうかうの心さし、ふかきゆへに、ほとけのらいかうに、あつかると、おほえたり). MJMT supp. 2: 203b; late Muromachi-period *emaki* in the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard.

58. ZGR 27: 1: 406a–407a; DNBZ 117: 480b–81a (83: 292c–93a); KIMBROUGH forthcoming [a]. *Seiryōji engi* (also known as *Shakadō engi* 釈迦堂縁起) is photographically reproduced in Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 1975, 275a–309a. Kitashirakawa *nyōin* was the mother of Ankamon'in 安嘉門院 (1209–1283), who is said to have performed the services (*tsuizen* 追善) that rescued her first from hell and then from the animal realm.

59. See James Ford's discussion of the Hossō priest Jōkei's 貞慶 (1155–1213) advocacy of devotion to Miroku as a means of attaining rebirth in Amida's Pure Land (Ford 2005, 60 and 71), and Gorai Shigeru's discussion of the popular (Edo period?) belief in the efficacy of Zenkōji 善光寺 seals and talismans as “Zenkōji Pure Land passports” (*Zenkōji no gokuraku pasupooto* 善光寺の極楽パスポート). GORAI 1990, 606–607.

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- MJMT *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei* 室町時代物語大成. 13 vols. Yokoyama Shigeru 横山重 and Matsumoto Ryūshin 松本隆信, eds. Tokyo: Kado-kawa Shoten, 1973–1985. Also 2 supp. vols. ed. by Matsumoto Ryūshin, 1987–1988.
- NKBT *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系. 100 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958–1968.
- NST *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想体系. 67 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970–1982.
- SNKBT *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系. 100 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989–2005.
- SNKBZ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集. 88 vols. Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1994–.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. 85 vols. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, eds. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932.
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