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Daoist Immortality and Buddhist Holiness
A Study and Translation of the *Honchō shinsen-den*

Christoph KLEINE * *and Livia KOHN* **

The *Honchō shinsen-den* 本朝神仙伝 or *Accounts of Japanese Immortals* is a collection of miraculous stories that belongs to the Japanese *setsuwa* 説話 (edificatory tale) tradition. This genre includes collections such as the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記, which treats the law of karma; the *Hokkekyō genki* 法華経験記, which focuses on the virtues of the Lotus Sutra; and *Ōjō-den* 往生伝 collections, which contain tales about the birth in Amida's Pure Land. In contrast to these collections, whose themes are based on Buddhism, the stories of the *Shinsen-den* are Daoist in their perspective. They treat a number of men and one woman who supposedly attained the rank of immortal or at least gained extreme longevity. The stories are of varying length and portray different kinds of people, including monks, saints, political figures, and thaumaturgists. They are collectively referred to in this collection as *shinsen* 神仙, "immortals," which in fact denotes an ancient Chinese Daoist ideal, though in this text most of the figures described are more generally identified with Japanese Buddhism. By considering how immortals are described in Chinese Daoist texts and then examining how such portrayals were adapted and transformed in medieval Japan, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of the interaction between medieval Buddhism and Daoism, as well as that of Chinese and Japanese culture.

Daoist Immortals in Ancient China

Immortals in Chinese Daoism are the successors of shamans and mountain recluses of old. This fact is made clear in the character for "immortal" (*xian* 仙), which shows a man next to a mountain or, in an older version, a figure dancing with flying sleeves 僊. Immortals appear on the scene in the late Zhou and early Han dynasties (300-200 B.C.E.), when concepts of the immortality of the soul were expanded to include physical forms of long and even eternal life.

There is a strong suspicion among scholars of ancient China that increased interaction with various indigenous tribes and their methods of

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healing and mountain survival fascinated Chinese seekers of esoteric practices and inspired them to learn the tribes' arts of making the body stronger and lighter. Contact with foreign cultures, especially Persia, also may have enhanced the belief in a magical paradise of pure power where wondrous figures live that are nourished on the life-force (*qi* 氣) and can appear and disappear at will. This Persian influence is suggested by the fact that the isles of the immortals in the eastern sea are known as Penglai 蓬萊, an expression which makes little sense in Chinese and is phonetically similar to the ancient Persian *pairidaeza* (from *pairi*, "around," and *diz*, "to form"), which referred to the elaborate hunting gardens of the shah and his aristocrats and is also the predecessor of the English word "paradise."[1]

Immortals in this early period were characterized first of all by their reclusive nature, their superhuman bodies, and their inhabitation of deep mountains or far-off islands. The classical description of them in these terms is found in the philosophical Daoist text *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Writings of Master Zhuang, DZ 745)[2] of the third century B.C.E. It says:

> There are spirit people living on faraway Gushe mountain, with skin like ice or snow, gentle and kind like young girls. They do not eat the five grains, but suck the wind, drink the dew, climb up on the clouds and mist, ride the flying dragons, and wander beyond the four seas. By concentrating their spirits, they can protect creatures from sickness and plague and make the harvest plentiful (ch. 1; WATSON 1968: 33).

As this passage indicates, immortals live apart from ordinary people, are spirit beings of a superior quality who do not depend on earthly food or air, and have wondrous powers that can control everything. At the same time, they are shy and gentle, kind souls that will come to aid those in need, never struggling with others, quarreling or doing harm.

In the Han dynasty, immortals were sometimes depicted on mirrors and murals found in tombs, expressing the hope that the deceased might go to join them. They generally are shown as thin, etheric figures, often prancing or flying about, sometimes clad in feathered garb, sometimes growing feathers on their bodies (KOMINAMI 1997: 9; LOEWE 1979).

Another piece of visual evidence showing some of the training methods linked with immortality was uncovered in the tomb of the Marchioness of

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1 On the development of the concept of immortality from a belief in the soul, see YÜ 1964: 87 and WEN 1956: 159. The relation of the ideal to practices of aboriginal tribes is outlined in KALTENMARK 1953: 12-16 and 1969: 76. The connection with outside, as well as indigenous, cultures is mentioned in WEN 1956: 153. On the etymological connection between Penglai and the Persian paradises, see HAYASHI 1975: 128.

2 The abbreviation "DZ" stands for *Daozang* 道藏, the Daoist Canon as printed in 1445. The numbers follow the concordance in SCHIPPER 1975.

Dai at Mawangdui 馬王堆, dated 168 B.C.E. It is the so-called *Daoyin tu* 導引圖 or "Gymnastics Chart," which depicts in colorful illustrations various ways of prolonging life and making the body supple. These exercises, as much as the feathered garb and mountain lifestyle of the immortals, connect them with animals whose movements they imitate: rambling like a bear, stretching one's neck in the manner of a bird, pulling and extending their limbs like a tiger, and so on (DESPEUX 1989: 226). To become part of the superior forces of nature and go beyond the life of an ordinary mortal, it was necessary to leave society behind and recover a more natural and essential way of being. A related early collection of pictures of specific immortals subsequently led to the first instance of a specific type of hagiographic literature known as "biographies of immortals." This was the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Biographies of the Immortals), which was compiled by the Han official Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6 B.C.E.) and contains seventy short descriptions of famous immortal figures. A fairly typical example of an immortal's biography is that of Chijiang Ziyu 赤將子輿:

> Chijiang Ziyu lived under the reign of the Yellow Emperor 黃帝. He did not eat the five grains but lived only on the hundred kinds of herbs and flowers. Under the reign of Yao, he served as the director of woods. He could follow the wind and the rain, moving up and down as he pleased. From time to time he would appear on the market and sell cords for birdcatching. For this reason he was also known as the Old Cordseller. (KALTENMARK 1953: 48).

As this example indicates, the biography of an immortal usually begins by giving the place of the person's origin and when he lived. In this case, we see that Chijiang Ziyu lived during the reign of the Yellow Emperor, a mythical sage-ruler of the distant past. It then outlines specific methods used and/or powers possessed by the immortal; often these are of a dietary nature and include the avoidance of all grains. Then the longevity of the person is illustrated. In the story above, this is accomplished by mentioning Chijiang Ziyu's service under Yao, another sage-ruler who reigned centuries after the Yellow Emperor. The immortal's particular supernatural powers are emphasized next, in this case, Chijiang Ziyu's power over physical realities and his ability to fly and be at one with the elements. The story of Chijiang Ziyu ends on a rather discordant when it mentions his market activity, but this kind of abrupt shift is intended to show the immortal's eccentricity and his defiance of social conventions and rules, including those pertaining to rank and proper behavior.

By the first century B.C.E., the ideal of the immortal was already well formulated: he or she was a person beyond the bounds of common society,

an eremitic and eccentric practitioner of health methods and unusual diets, one who had conquered the physical boundaries of time and space and the limitations of his or her own body. Sometimes the immortal was an eternal spirit being made up of pure energy who could appear and disappear at will; he could be called upon for help but might or might not assist people as whim would take him.

The Shenxian Zhuan

Following the *Liexian zhuan*, several collections of immortals' biographies appeared in Han China, though none of these survive (CAMPANY 1996: 63). The next major extant text of this kind is the namesake and forerunner of the *Honchō shinsen-den*: the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Spirit Immortals) by Ge Hong 葛洪, who lived in the early fourth century C.E. Ge Hong (283-341), a low-ranking aristocrat in south China, was an enthusiastic practitioner of all things immortal and desired nothing more than to set up an alchemical laboratory in order to concoct a "cinnabar" (*dan* 丹) drug of eternal life for himself.

Unfortunately, although he was born in a lineage of alchemical practitioners which included his great-uncle Ge Xuan 葛玄, he did not have the means to procure the valuable metals and minerals necessary to create the cinnabar drug and so had to content himself with writing about it after collecting ancient manuscripts and consulting learned masters. The result was a book in two sections, known as the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity, DZ 1185) which was Ge Hong's Daoist agnomen. The inner part of this work (*neipian* 內篇) in particular specifies the various magical and dietetic, alchemical and ritual methods necessary for the attainment of immortality on earth.[3]

The *Baopuzi* is a vast compendium of the techniques and practices of the immortals. It details the protective measures one has to take in order to keep demons and evil spirits at bay. It describes how to reach alignment with the yin and yang energies of the universe, how to absorb the energies of the sun and the moon, how to use various herbs and minerals to improve one's health and extend one's life. It tells how to gain magical powers, such as the ability to be in several places at once, to become invisible, flying in the air, etc. It also describes how to prepare various kinds of elixirs or "cinnabars" which have the power to instantly transform one into an immortal or at least to bestow very long life on earth and power over life and death.

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3 The *Baopuzi* is translated in SAILEY 1978 (Outer Chapters) and WARE 1966 (Inner Chapters). Ge Hong's autobiography is translated as part of the latter; for more on his life, see SIVIN 1969.

Most of the text is written in dialogue form, presenting a critical nonbeliever's questions about the possibility of attaining immortality and offering patient and persuasive arguments for its rightness in response. The concrete procedural documentation of immortality is then further supplemented in Ge Hong's collection of immortals' biographies, the clear purpose of which is to demonstrate that the process really works and immortals really do exist. The *Shenxian zhuan* is extant today in two versions, both of which consist of ten chapters, contain about ninety biographies, and date back to Song editions and collections of the text. The original version is said to have had 190 biographies, parts of which remain in citations in medieval Daoist literature but many of which have been lost.[4]

The biographies here are significantly longer and contain more concrete detail than those collected in the *Liexian zhuan*. A number of historical people, such as the first Celestial Master Zhang Daoling 張道陵, the exorcist Luan Ba 欒巴, and the sponsor of Daoist learning Liu An 劉安 are described as immortals, along with largely legendary figures such as the "Chinese Methuselah" Pengzu 彭祖, the divine master Guangchengzi 廣成子, and the Gourd Master Hugong 壺公. In addition, an entire chapter is dedicated to the description of female immortals (ch. 7), and many shorter biographies on lesser known but probably historical personages of Ge Hong's own time appear at the end.

Ge Hong, in claiming a critical scholarly position and aiming to convince his readers of the historical accuracy of his work, does not merely list data but cites various sources and different viewpoints, typically introducing them with the phrase *huoyue* 或曰, "some say" or "according to another account." This becomes a typical feature of the entire genre, which is also significantly shaped by Ge Hong's overall organizational scheme, at the center of which is the presentation of biographies. The *Shenxian zhuan* biographies, as well as later biography collections, follow the pattern seen in the biography of Chijiang Ziyu presented above, and then culminate in the description of the immortal's ascension to the otherworld and end with a laudation of his superhuman powers and wondrous nature.

The *Shenxian zhuan* served as a model for later biographies of immortals in both its formal organization and its content. It has examples for all the classical arts of the immortals, and focuses on their physiological and

4 For a critical discussion of the text's editions and compilation history, see FUKUI 1951; KOMINAMI 1974; and YAMADA 1974. A recent discussion is found in CAMPANY 1996: 62-63. The Daoist edition of the text is contained in the *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要 of the seventeenth century. A complete translation is found in GÜNTSCH 1988; for English renditions of some of the biographies, see GILES 1948.

dietary practices as much as their magical powers and their eccentric behavior toward humanity. Gertrud GÜNTSCH (1988: 325-26), at the end of her translation of the text, gives a coherent summary of these key features, describing a total of seventeen classical immortal stereotypes, including the drop-out, the bohemian, the recluse, the elect, the lucky man, the seeker, the master, the herbalist, the hygienist, the alchemist, the healer, the diviner, the exorcist, the muscleman, the magician, the eternal youth, and the ascetic. These types range from social misfits and eccentries (the dropout, bohemian) on the one hand, to serious seekers of spiritual freedom and enlightenment (the recluse, ascetic), on the other. They include powers such as faith-healing, exorcism, divination, diet restriction, and gymnastics. The image of the immortal that emerges from this text, and which becomes standard in later literature, is thus multifaceted; it is not limited to one or another role or type but includes many different characteristics and techniques.[5] The ideal of immortality and the tales of the immortals' wondrous exploits soon extended outside the Daoist tradition and became part of the broader Chinese culture; the tales then came to be collected in a group of texts known as the "accounts of the marvelous" (*zhiguai* 志怪) and were integrated into Chinese literature, both poetry and prose.[6]

Japanese Immortals

Given that these tales came to be such an integral part of Chinese literature, folklore, and popular religion, it is not surprising that immortality myths and ideas of long life were also actively transmitted to Japan – not as specifically Daoist but as part of Chinese worldview in general. Typical examples of these stories in Japan are those about the eternal land, meetings of emperors with strange men in the mountains, the unexplained disappearance of corpses, and visions of Tang-style figures riding on dragons through the sky. In all cases, there is a certain degree of Daoist worldview in the background, but the stories serve less to present Chinese, let alone Daoist, ideas than to offer legitimation to the ruling emperor.[7]

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5 A certain degree of variation in the ideal emerges with the rise of Highest Clarity Daoism in the fourth and fifth centuries C.E., when immortals become celestial figures in addition to eccentric seekers in the world. For a discussion, see SPIRO 1990.

6 On the "accounts of the marvelous" see CAMPANY 1996. The clearest example of literary adaptation is Tao Yuanming's 陶淵明 rewriting of the Lingbao myth in his "Peach Flower Font." See BOKENKAMP 1986.

7 The story of the "eternal land" (*tokoyo no kuni* 常世國) is found in *Nihonshoki* 日本書紀 6 (ASTON 1956 I: 186-87) and is treated as an example of Daoism in Japan in NAKAMURA 1983: 7-8. For the appearance of the auspicious immortal to Emperor Yūryaku 雄略, see ASTON 1956 I:341-42; NABA 1952:5; and NAKAMURA 1983: 8.

Daoist ideas had a great impact on the Buddhist traditions of Japan, however, as can be seen from the fact that the *Honchō Shinsen-den* takes its title directly from the Chinese model and clearly imitates both its formal structure and the hagiographical characteristics of Daoist immortality literature. However, as the immortality ideal was transferred to Japan and into a Buddhist context, its nature and some of its features changed. As MATSUDA Tomohiro (1990: 25) points out, while there was a popular belief in immortals in ancient Japan, the ideal of the immortal was different from that found in China and was closely linked with the concepts of *kami* 神 and buddhas. It is thus not accidental that the word *shinsen* in the *Honchō shinsen-den* is frequently glossed as *ikibotoke* or "living buddha." Moreover, the practice of immortals in Japan involved prayers to the *kami* or the buddhas and acts of personal purification, in order that they might become closer to the gods.

Aspiring immortals in Japan thus observed regular fasting periods and times of intense worship. The more a person practiced perfect moral conduct and purified him- or herself, the closer he or she was thought to come to the divine. Japanese immortals, then, were similar to the mountain hermits and holy men (*hijiri* 聖) who undertook extreme purifications and were considered almost on par with the gods themselves. They lived in isolation, mortified themselves through ascetic practices, and ate only herbs and the pure essences of plants and minerals – in other words, doing exactly what ancient Chinese immortals were so famous for (MATSUDA 1990: 36). Human beings hardly ever had the opportunity to meet these wondrous creatures, but they could be approached with proper purity and humility and would every so often comply with a properly voiced plea.

Immortals in Japan, like hermits and holy men and unlike Chinese immortals who were entirely beyond the human sphere and even controlled the gods, thus stood between humanity and the gods, their nature still essentially human, their abilities divine. They were intermediaries between the worlds, unlike the immortals of ancient China who were beyond them altogether. As a result, the *Honchō shinsen-den* characterizes some of its figures as important in religious organizations and politics, includes their literary attainments among their outstanding characteristics, and describes the strife and competition they faced in the world, characteristics that are never attributed to Chinese Daoist immortals. The *Honchō shinsen-den* also

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The dragon rider gracing the imperial court is found in ASTON 1956 II:248-49; see NABA 1952: 2; and NAKAMURA 1983: 13. For officials disappearing after death, see ASTON 1956 I: 210-11 and NAKAMURA 1983: 8.

has several stories about immortals who worked hard to uncover the true form of one or another deity, or who are otherwise being subject to the whim and power of a god. This, too, would not occur in a Daoist context, where immortals are superior even to the gods, spontaneously knowing the true nature of the gods and having the means to outwit or control them.

Among the twenty-nine subjects in the *Honchō shinsen-den*, however, some classical types of immortals appear that are also found in the *Shenxian zhuan*. They include the muscleman, the eternal youth, the drop-out, the exorcist, the recluse, and the ascetic, but significantly leave out some of the most popular and important types: specialized representatives of typical Daoist techniques such as the alchemist, the hygienist (that is, the practitioner of gymnastics and breathing), and the herbalist; members of an organization or group of practitioners who learn techniques from one another and pass them on to the next generation, including the healer, the seeker, and the master; and those who refuse to conform to society's conventions but still live actively in the world, namely the bohemian and the lucky man. The entire social organization of the immortals is thus left out, as is their specialization in certain techniques, their eccentric behavior when confronted with ordinary people, and the lineages of immortal masters and disciples they are part of. This conforms to the overall tendency in the transmission of Daoism to Japan: anything highly organized or tied to specific lineages did not make its way over; individual motifs and techniques, more general characteristics, and features easily compatible with established ideas and practices were willingly integrated.

The Text, Its Author, and Its Religious Context

Manuscripts, Editions, Translations

Unfortunately, no complete manuscript of the *Honchō shinsen-den* is extant, nor is the original. The following is a list of extant manuscripts accompanied by some remarks about their treatment by modern editors and translators.

(1) The "Maeda manuscript"

The full title of this manuscript is *Maeda ikutoku kai songyōkaku bunkozō hon* 前田育徳会尊経閣文庫蔵本 (manuscript of the scripture hall library of the Maeda Society for the Promotion of Virtue). This handwritten manuscript consists of ten pages in one fascicle. A note on the wrapping paper indicates that it was copied in 1720 by the feudal lord Maeda Tsunanori 前田綱紀 (1642-1723) from an older manuscript preserved in the Shaka-in temple. The Maeda manuscript is a selection of eight stories about

immortals based on Ōe no Masafusa's *Honchō shinsen-den.*[8] In a note it is stated that bishop Kōken Sōjō 弘賢僧正 brought a copy made in 1368 by the imperial prince of the second rank of Henji-in temple to the Shaka-in (?) and that lord Maeda's text was an extract or abriged copy of that older manuscript. Most of the extant versions of the *Honchō shinsen-den* included in collections such as the *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 續群書類従 (Further Collection of Writings about a Variety of Related Topics) or the *Shiseki shūran* 史籍集覧 (Collected Views on Historical Records) are based on the same textual tradition as the Maeda manuscript.

(2) The "Dai Tōkyū manuscript"

The full title of this manuscript is *Dai Tōkyū kinen bunkozō hon* 大東急記念文庫蔵本 (manuscript of the Grand Memorial Library of the Tōkyū [Railway Company]). This handwritten manuscript in one fascicle consists of eighteen pages and 107 lines, each containing fifteen or sixteen characters written by Great Dharma Master Kenpō 大法師賢寶. Dated 1356, the Dai Tōkyū manuscript is the oldest and most detailed extant version of the *Honchō shinsen-den.* Twenty-five of the original thirty-seven stories have survived in it.[9]

(3) The "Shoryō manuscript"

The full title of this manuscript is *Kunaichō shoryōbuzō hon* 宮内庁書陵部蔵本 (manuscript in the collection of the Department of Books of the Imperial Household Agency).

According to the postscript, the "Shoryō manuscript" consists of one scroll copied in the Edo period (1603-1867) from an old copy made by the famous Tōdai-ji priest Shikan-bō Gyōnen 示観房凝然 (1240-1321) in 1293. The scroll contains 21 stories beginning with that of Kōbō Daishi; the first

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8 These eight are: (1) En no Gyōja 役行者, (2) Taichō 泰澄, (3) The nun Toran 都藍尼, (4) The monk Kyōtai 教待和尚, (5) Great Master Hōon 報恩大師, (6) The monk of Tō-ji who used the services of a *yaksa* demon 東寺僧仕夜叉神, (7) Nichizō 日藏, (8) Great Master Jikaku 慈覺大師.

9 (1) Yamato-takeru no Mikoto 倭武命, (2) Prince Jōgu 上宮太子, (3) Lay Recluse Gyōei 行叡居士, (4) The monk Kyōtai 教待和尚, (5) Great Master Hōon 報恩大師, (6) Great Master Kōbō 弘法大師, (7) Great Master Jikaku 慈覺大師, (8) Yōshō 陽勝, (9) Yōshō's disciple 陽勝弟子童, (10) The attendant of the Grand Minister of Kawara-in 河原院大臣侍, (11) The lords Fuji and Hara 富士太主・原太主, (12) The old seller of white chopsticks 売白箸翁, (13) Miyako no Yoshika 都良香, (14) The monk under a tree in Kawachi province 河内國樹下僧, (15) The riverside man of Mino province 美濃國河辺人, (16) The stone cave immortal of Dewa province 國石窟仙, The monk of Ōmine 大嶺僧, (18) The hermit of Ōmine 大嶺仙, (19) The stick-beaten immortal 竿打仙, (20) The long-lived old man of Iyo province 伊予國長生翁, (21) The lad of the venerable Chūsan 忠算上人童, (22) Tachibana Masamichi 橘正通, (23) The monk of Tō-ji 東寺僧, (24) The monk of Mt. Hira 比良山僧, (25) The immortal of Mt. Atago 愛宕護山仙.

part of this account, however, has been lost (see INOUE and ŌSONE 1995: 768-770).[10]

In 1957, the German scholar Hermann BOHNER translated the eight accounts of Japanese immortals following the "Maeda manuscript" as it appears in the *Zoku gunsho ruijū*. A partial reconstruction and critical edition of the *Shinsen-den* published by Kawaguchi Hisao in 1967 is mainly based on the Dai Tōkyū manuscript, which the editor collated with the Maeda manuscript, the Shoryō manuscript, and related materials. Kawaguchi tried to reconstruct all thirty-seven accounts by resorting not only to the manuscripts of the *Shinsen-den* itself but also to other sources. However, we have no real evidence that the stories lost in the variant extant versions of the *Shinsen-den* actually agree with those taken from other texts by Kawaguchi.

In 1974 INOUE Mitsusada and ŌSONE Shōsuke partly reconstructed the text, though in contrast to Kawaguchi, they used only the three manuscripts plus one story which is taken from another source. For the most part, their edition is, like Kawaguchi's, based on the Dai Tōkyū manuscript. Stories 1, 2, 6, 8, 11-25, and 27 are taken from this text, while 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 26, and 29 are taken from the Maeda manuscript, and number 28 is from the Shoryō manuscript. INOUE and ŌSONE have added the account of Urashima no Ko 浦島子 to the 29 stories extant in the three versions of the *Shinsen-den*. This famous account, which appears as story no. 4 in the table of contents of the Dai Tōkyū manuscript has been preserved in the *Shaku Nihongi* 釋日本記 (Records of Japan Explained), whose author claims that his rendering of the story quotes the *Shinsen-den*. It was thus possible to reconstruct thirty of the original thirty-seven stories, the number suggested by the extant table of contents of the Dai Tōkyū manuscript. Since the lords Hara and Fuji appear together in story no. 14 of the INOUE and ŌSONE text but are treated seperately in the table of contents of the Dai Tōkyū manuscript, six accounts are missing, namely the stories about Takeuchi no Sukune 武内宿禰, Tokuitsu

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10 (1) Great Master Kōbō 弘法大師, (2) Great Master Jikaku 慈覺大師, (3) Yōshō 陽勝, (4) Yōshō's disciple 陽勝弟子童, (5) The attendant of the Grand Minister of Kawara-in 河原院大臣侍, (6) The lords Fuji and Hara 富士太主・原太主, (7) The old seller of white chopsticks 売白箸翁, (8) Miyako no Yoshika 都良香, (9) The monk under a tree in Kawachi province 河内國樹下僧, (10) The riverside man of Mino province 美濃國河辺人, (11) The stone cave immortal of Dewa province 國石窟仙, (12) The monk of Ōmine 大嶺僧, (13) The hermit of Ōmine 大嶺仙, (14) The stick-beaten immortal 竿打仙, (15) The long-lived old man of Iyo province 伊予國長生翁, (16) The lad of the venerable Chūsan 忠算上人童, (17) Tachibana Masamichi 橘正通, (18) The monk of Tō-ji 東寺僧, (19) The monk of Mt. Hira 比良山僧, (20) The immortal of Mt. Atago 愛宕護山仙, (21) Nichizō 日藏.

徳一, the immortal or *hijiri* of Kume 久米仙, Zenchū 善仲, Zensan 善算, and Dharma Master Kisen 窺詮法師. These can be found in other texts.[11]

The INOUE and ŌSONE edition has been published in the well-known *Nihon shisō taikei* series (vol. 7) and may be regarded as the most frequently used standard version of *Shinsen-den.* It contains the original text written in *kambun* (classical Chinese), and has a lavishly annotated Japanese translation. Our English translation is based on this edition.

The Compiler

Since none of the *Shinsen-den* editions contains a preface or compiler's name, some have doubted its attribution to Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房 (1041-1111). However, Miyoshi no Tameyasu, a contemporary of Masafusa, in his *Shūi ōjō-den* (Gleanings of Birth Accounts; written prior to Masafusa's death in 1111) criticizes "governor [Ō]e the counselor" for incorporating the accounts of Zenchū 善仲 and Zensan 善算 in his *Shinsen-den* (I.1). This clearly indicates that Masafusa was the author of our text. In Tameyasu's eyes, however, these accounts did not belong to immortality literature, but rather were accounts of "people who have attained birth in the Pure Land in their present bodies" (*genjin ōjō no hito* 現身往生之人) according to the typology of the "Birth Accounts of India"[12] (NST 7: 281-82). Unfortunately, Masafusa's accounts of Zenchū and Zensan are lost and their names appear only in the table of contents of the Daitōkyū manuscript.

In summary, it seems safe to assume that the original *Shinsen-den* was written by Ōe no Masafusa some time before 1109, which is the latest probable date of the *Shūi ōjō-den*. The Ōe family, to which Masafusa belonged, produced a number of renowned scholars, literati, and statesmen. It is said that Masafusa could read at the age of four, started to study the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian) of China at the age of eight, and composed his own poems at the age of eleven. Masafusa also gained various official ranks. He became Gon-chūnagon 權中納言 (Vice Middle Rank Counselor) and in 1074 subsequently became governor of Kyūshū (*Dazaifu gon no sotsu* 太宰府權帥), achieving Senior Second Rank 正二位. Around 1087, however, he left government service to devote himself to writing (BOHNER 1957: 138; and HIOKI 1994: 896).

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11 Accounts of the legendary statesman Takeuchi no Sukune can, for instance, be found in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*; Tokuitsu appears in the *Genkō shakusho,* the *Nanto kōsō den,* and the *Honchō kōsō den*; the *hijiri* of Kume is portrayed in the *Washū Kume-ji ruki*, stories about Zenchū and Zensan are given in Miyoshi no Tameyasu's *Shūi ōjō-den* and in the *Genkō shakusho* (XV); accounts of Kisen are contained in the *Genkō shakusho* and the *Honchō kōsōden,* among others.

12 This apparently refers to *Tenjiku ōjō genki* 天竺往生驗記 (JZ-Z 16: 337-344), a work traditionally attributed to Vasubandhu, the Chinese version allegedly being a translation by Kumārajīva. It is more likely, however, that the text was written in Japan.

Among his numerous literary works one is of particular interest in the context of the *Shinsen-den* because it belongs to the hagiographic sub-genre of "birth accounts" or *ōjō-den*. Sometime between 1099 and 1103 Masafusa compiled his *Zoku honchō ōjō-den* 續本朝往生傳 (Further Accounts of Japanese Who Have Attained Birth [in Amida's Pure Land]). We therefore know that Masafusa was not only interested in immortals' stories but also in the life accounts of devout Buddhists.

The Accounts of Japanese Immortals *in Its Religious and Literary Context*

Stories of longevity are by no means unknown in Buddhism. In Indian, Tibetan and Chinese legends[13] of the popular sixteen *arhats*, for instance, it is maintained that the enlightened disciples of Śākyamuni, being commissioned by their master to protect the Dharma after his attainment of *parinirvāṇa*, extended their lifespans almost to the end of the present *kalpa*. The Buddhist saint's quest for longevity was typically either motivated by compassion for the sentient beings he wished to benefit or by the desire to experience the advent of the future Buddha Maitreya (RAY 1997).

Although the accounts of immortals in the *Shinsen-den* do not seem to be directly influenced by the *arhat* legends or other traditionally Buddhist precursors, but rather by Daoist or popular Chinese models, the varied contents of the text indicate that the line between Buddhist saints and Daoist immortals was thin, a fact also suggested by the criticism of Tameyasu noted above. To demonstrate that Zenchū and Zensan were not immortals but people who had attained birth in the Pure Land – though both Zenchū and Zensan ascended to the sky like immortals and flew away towards the west – Tameyasu argued that both had constantly vowed to be born in the Pure Land in their present bodies, and that three people had predicted that they would attain the Five Kinds of Wisdom in this present life and let the Five [Miserable] Paths be shaken by the Thunder of the Dharma (NST 7: 281-82). Interestingly, neither their religious practice nor their life-style or the circumstances of their deaths distinguish Zenchū and Zensan from the immortals. The only thing that does so is their commitment to Buddhism. As will be shown below, religious commitment was not a criterion used by Masafusa to classify someone as an immortal. A considerable number of the protagonists of the *Shinsen-den* are people whose commitment to Buddhism

13 Perhaps the most famous legend stressing the longevity of *arhats* is the *Nandimitrāvadāna*, which is preserved in both Tibetan and Chinese (*Da Aluohan Nantimiduoluo suo shuofa zhuji* 大阿羅漢難提蜜多羅所說法住記; T 2030). It has been particularly popular among Chan and Zen Buddhists.

is undisputed and whose life accounts are also included in purely Buddhist hagiographic collections. What, then, is the distinguishing feature of the *Shinsen-den* in contrast to related Buddhist works?

For one, the *Shinsen-den* contains stories adopted from various sources belonging to a number of different genres. Accordingly, individual accounts vary considerably in structure, style, and content. Some stories are taken from historical works such as the *Kojiki* or the *Nihongi*, others from *engi* 縁起 stories, i.e., legends that describe the miraculous beginnings of certain temples or shrines; yet others come from "serial biographies" (*retsuden* 列傳) or "separate biographies" (*betsuden* 別傳).[14] As noted in the introduction, the work as a whole is generally regarded as a member of the genre of edificatory tale collections or *setsuwa shū* 説話集. One of the characteristic features of this genre is its edifying and religiously moralizing undertone. *Setsuwa* tales were told not only for entertainment but also in order to teach people the basic concepts of Buddhism, beginning with the concept of karmic retribution. The protagonists of *setsuwa* for the most part functioned both as models for imitation and as objects of veneration. The tales are thus basically hagiographic in outlook. The telling of these life accounts of exemplary figures was intended to make the laity aware of the possibility of salvation by doing good (either in their religious or secular conduct), as well as the danger of condemnation that would result from doing evil. Needless to say, certain specific ideals are emphasized depending on the particular cult the author was trying to foster.

Viewed from this perspective, however, the most striking feature of the *Shinsen-den* is its complete lack of explicit morals. Unlike his Chinese predecessor Ge Hong, Masafusa does not seem to consider moral integrity a prerequisite for achieving immortality.[15] Moreover, Masafusa mentions hardly any particular conditions or methods for obtaining immortality. There is no indication that the author wanted his audience to follow in the footsteps of his protagonists or that he intended to promote an organized immortality cult. Unlike many of the protagonists of the *ōjō-den*, for example, the

14 For a detailed discussion of Masafusa's source materials, see INOUE and ŌSONE 1995: 737-739.

15 In his *Baopuzi* Ge Hong states that, "Anyone who intends immorality should base his effort on loyalty, filial piety, friendliness, obedience, humanity, and trustworthiness. Those who do not tend to the cultivation of virtues but only concentrate on the magical methods will not be able to achieve immortality in the end" (POO 1995: 179). In his examination of Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan* and Liu Xiang's *Liexian zhuan*, however, POO (180-181, 185-186) comes to the conclusion that moral virtues were actually of minor importance. He supposes that, as far as morality is concerned, Ge Hong and others "conceived the immortalization process as a mechanical accumulation of benevolent deeds."

immortals of the *Shinsen-den* are merely awe-inspiring figures. INOUE and ŌSONE (1995: 741) suggest that Masafusa's interest in writing the "Accounts of Japanese Immortals" was intellectual and literary rather than religious or apologetic. It is reasonable to assume that he was inspired by Chinese accounts of immortals and decided to compile a collection of a similar type, because it was a challenge for him as a patriot and a man of letters interested in religion. For the Japanese of the Heian period, the highest cultural goal was to prove that they were on a par with the Chinese, be it in the field of arts or of religion, and Masafusa was by no means the first man of letters who was interested in stories about immortals.[16]

The Religious Context: Buddhist Mountain Ascetics and Itinerant Priests

Although Masafusa's immortals form a rather heterogeneous crowd, as will be shown in detail below, one group clearly dominates: that of mountain ascetics, hermits, and recluses who shun human habitation, withdraw to remote sacred mountains, and cultivate their spiritual and magical faculties by practicing certain austerities and keeping a specific diet. From the middle of the eleventh century, eccentric recluses who turned their backs on the corrupt and decadent monasteries of established Buddhism were extremely popular figures in Japanese tale literature.[17] These extra-monastic practitioners in the Nara and early Heian periods were known as *ubasoku* 優婆塞 (Skt. *upāsaka*, i.e., Buddhist lay-believer), *zenji* 禪師 (lit. "meditation master"), *shami* 沙彌 (Skt. *śrāmaṇera;* "novice") or simply *gyōja* 行者 ("practitioner"). From the middle of the Heian period onward they were mostly called *hijiri* 聖 ("holy man") or *shōnin* 上人/聖人 ("venerable person, holy person"). Despite the fact that there were various types of extra-monastic practitioners, they all shared the common characteristic of being only loosely affiliated with Buddhist institutions or not at all, either because they were never officially ordained or because they decided to retire not only from the life of a householder but also from the secularized life of an official

16 Miyako no Yoshika (*ca.* 833-879, see account # 16) in his *Shinsen saku* 神仙策 (Plan of the Immortals) and *Fujisangi* 富士山記 (Records of Mt. Fuji); Ki no Haseo 紀長谷雄 (ca. 844-912) in *Bai hakucho ō jo* 売白箸翁序 (Introduction to the Old Man who Sold White Chopsticks) and *Shiraishi Sensei den* 白石先生傳 (Account of the Master of the White Stone); and Miyoshi Kiyotsura 三善清行 (847-918) in *Zenka hiki* 善家秘記 and *Zenka isetsu* 善家異説 indicate their interest in *shinsen* (INOUE and ŌSONE 1995, 734-735).

17 *Shōnin* and *hijiri* figure prominently first in the *Hokkekyō genki* (compiled between 1040 and 1044), then in *Shūi ōjō-den* (probably compiled between 1099 and 1111), and then in subsequent *ōjō-den*. See also INOUE 1971: 213-215.

priest.[18] Although viewed with suspicion by the religious establishment, they were all held in high regard by the laity, in sharp contrast to ordinary clerics whose engagement in worldly affairs cost them their credibility.[19] Even the high nobility of Heian Japan tended to rely on the services of hermits and itinerant priests when it came to banning demons, curing illness, or conducting certain rites. Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 (966-1027), for example, employed a great number of *hijiri* to take part in his "Myriad-Light Service" (*mandō-e* 萬燈會) of 1023 and to function as reciters for the funeral of his daughter Kanshi 寛子 in 1025 (*Eiga monogatari;* NKTB 76: 109-10 and 198-9; McCULLOUGH 1980: 588 and 668). Even the rite of "transmission of the precepts" was performed at court by rankless holy men. The regent Fujiwara no Kanezane 藤原兼實 (1147-1207), for instance, regularly summoned holy men such as the Kōya *hijiri* Butsugon 高野聖佛嚴, Daigan Shōnin Honjō 大願上人本成, and Hōnen-bō Genkū 法然房源空 (1133-1212) to court so he could receive the precepts from them (KLEINE 1996: 46). Once criticized for inviting a rankless *nenbutsu* practitioner such as Hōnen to court, he defended his decision, saying:

> The famous monks know absolutely nothing of the precepts. Up to the time of Zennin 禪仁 (1062-1134), Chūjin 忠尋 (1064-1138), etc., all the famous monks loved to confer the precepts. Thereafter, this completely came to naught. Nowadays holy men (*shōnin* 上人) all study this way, and there is efficacy [in what they do]. (IKAWA 1978: 966b)

There was quite a variety of Buddhist "dropouts" who left the monasteries to live a life of arduous practice and moral purity. Among the Buddhist ascetics described in the *Shinsen-den,* the *hijiri* is clearly dominant. Emperor Go-Shirakawa 後白河 (1126-1192; r. 1156-1158) in his *Ryōjin hishō* (probably 1157-1179; see KWON 1986: 3) described them as follows:

> The dwelling places of the *hijiri* are Ōmine 大峯, Katsuragi 葛城, Ishi no Tsuchi 石の槌, Minoo 箕尾, Kachio 勝尾, Mt. Shosha in Harima 播磨の

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18 For information on *hijiri* and related religious figures, see GOODWIN 1994; GORAI 1990; HIRABAYASHI 1981; HORI 1958; ITŌ 1995; KLEINE 1997; MURAKAMI 1979; and ŌHASHI 1977.

19 KENKŌ (1967: 3) in part one of his *Tsurezure gusa* describes the poor reputation of clerics as follows: "The clerics [*hōshi* 法師] impress nobody, even when they flaunt their authority and their importance is loudly proclaimed. It is easy to see why the holy man [*hijiri*] Sōga [i.e. Zōga 增賀] should have said that worldly fame is unseemly in priests, and that those who seek it violate the teachings of Buddha. A true hermit [*seshajin* 世捨人] might, in fact, seem more admirable" (cf. KIDŌ 1977: 22). In a similar way, SEI Shōnagon (1967: 26) remarks in her *Makura no sōshi* (#6) of the late tenth century that "... most people are convinced that a priest is as unimportant as a piece of wood, and they treat him accordingly."

> 書, Nachi 那智 in Kumano 熊野, and Shingū 新宮, etc. They like wooden knots, staffs with antlers,[20] deerskins, rosaries of special wood [*mokurenji* 木欒子], umbrellas and raincoats, flintstone boxes, and clothes made of the moss of caves. (GORAI 1990: 33)

This description corresponds closely with the numerous portraits of *hijiri* in Chingen's 鎭源 *Hokkekyō genki* 法華経験記 (*Miraculous Accounts of the Lotus Sūtra*, compiled between 1040 and 1044).[21] Due to the brevity of the accounts in the *Shinsen-den*, there are almost no details about the outer appearance of the mountain practitioners. However, the lifestyles of many of protagonists evidently fit the pattern of typical *hijiri* as described in the *Hokkekyō genki*. They lived in caves on holy mountains, abstained from grains, and had supernatural faculties.

The term *hijiri* occurs often in the *Shinsen-den*.[22] However, instead of the standard 聖 it is usually written 仙. Unfortunately, we do not know who originally attached this reading to the Chinese character 仙, but apparently either the author or a later copyist found it appropriate to call some of the ascetics and hermits in that text *hijiri*. And in fact they do have the common characteristics of *hijiri*. One might criticize Masafusa for blurring the differences between Buddhist and non-Buddhist practitioners; it seems more likely, however, that the distinction was not as sharp as modern scholars might suppose. Religious commitment was basically non-confessional, and it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of religion in the singular rather than of religions in the plural.

Very early on, local and indigenous deities became an integral part of Japanese Buddhism, and the Chinese belief in immortals and longevity techniques was adopted by practitioners with a Buddhist background. Ancient and medieval Japanese Buddhism was a highly syncretic construct, especially that found outside the large monasteries and intellectual centers. This kind of syncretism, which is reflected in the *Shinsen-den*, was not unknown in China either. It is reported, for instance, that the famous Tiantai patriarch Huisi 慧思 (515-577) of the "Southern Peak" practiced immortality techniques in order to experience the descent of the future Buddha Maitreya in his present incarnation.[23] Furthermore, we know that the "Southern Peak"

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20 "Deer were regarded as sacred messengers of the gods, and their antlers and skins were thought to possess supernatural properties" (HIROTA 1989: 68).

21 NST 7. For a translation see DYKSTRA 1983.

22 In stories 13, 14, 19, 22, 23, 25, 27, and 30.

23 See ROBSON 1995. MAGNIN (1979: 104-113) doubts the authenticity of the "Text of a vow made by Meditation Master [Hui]si of Nanyue" (*Nanyue Si Chanshi li shiyuan wen* 南嶽思禪師立誓願文; T 46.786b-793b). This question need not concern us here, however, since Japanese Buddhists from Saichō onwards took Huisi's authorship for granted.

was a center for Buddhist monastics of the Tiantai school, who settled on its south side, as well as Daoist practitioners, who dwelled on its north side. There probably was some interchange between the two groups.[24]

Also, the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (Further Biographies of Eminent Monks) claims that the Pure Land thinker Tanluan 曇鸞 (476-542), worried that he might die before completing his studies in Buddhism, traveled south in search of a recipe for longevity or immortality. During this trip he received ten volumes of immortality texts (*xianjing shichuan* 仙經十卷) from the famous Daoist master Tao Yinju 陶隱居 (Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 [455-536] according to BDJ [3972c] and CORLESS [1987: 36]). On his return, however, he met Tripiṭaka Master Bodhiruci, who spat on the ground in disgust and convinced him that longevity or even immortality could never liberate him from *saṃsara*. As a result, Tanluan burnt his immortality texts and devoted himself to the *Guan jing* 觀經 (Sūtra of Contemplation [on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life]).[25] We may therefore assume that the Chinese concept of immortality did not come to Japan independently but in "the baggage of the Japanese students and pilgrim monks who brought Tantric Buddhism" (SEIDEL 1989-90: 302).

Despite certain syncretic tendencies in Chinese religion,[26] Chinese authors generally distinguish between Daoist immortals and Buddhist saints. As is well known, Buddhism and indigenous religions were much more antagonistic in China than they were in Japan. Consequently, there are no Buddhists in the extant Chinese collections of immortals' lives, while more than half of the protagonists in Masafusa's collection are Buddhist monks. This may also be explained by the fact that no organized Daoist asceticism existed in Japan and that most of the recluses, thaumaturgists, and ascetics were in one way or the other affiliated with, or influenced by, Buddhism. It seems therefore that Masafusa was eager to write a collection of stories about Japanese immortals mainly for literary (and possibly nationalistic) reasons, following Chinese literary models. As most of the figures who fit the literary ideal of immortals were Buddhists, Masafusa could not help but end up with a collection of "immortals" who were mostly Buddhists.

The remainder of the immortals in the *Shinsen-den*, however, are clearly distinguishable from their Buddhist counterparts. Some of them are neither typical immortals in the Daoist sense nor venerable ascetics in the Buddhist

24 See VERELLEN 1995. It would require further investigation to answer the question as to whether the proximity of Tiantai Buddhism and Daoism in China was one cause of the dominance of practitioners with a Tendai background among the *hijiri* of Heian Japan.

25 T 50.470a-b; see CORLESS 1987: 36-37; and MICHIHATA 1961.

26 For the influence of Buddhism on early Daoism, see ZÜRCHER 1978.

sense. Figures such as Yamato-takeru no Mikoto and Urashima no Ko are simply popular legendary or mythological heroes who carry no particular religious association.

Typology of Immortals in the Shinsen-den

So what are Japanese Immortals according to Masafusa? Though it is possible to present a typology of the different kinds of immortals described,[27] it is not always easy to clearly distinguish the different types of immortals, and the categories presented below are by no means exclusive.

1. Prominent historical and political figures

Only two of the protagonists belong to this group, namely Yamato-takeru no Mikoto (no. 1) and Prince Jōgu (i.e., Shōtoku Taishi; no. 2). These two characters have almost nothing in common besides the historical importance ascribed to them. While the half-mythological national hero Yamato-takeru no Mikoto exemplifies the brave and bold army commander, Shōtoku stands for the ideal Buddhist ruler in the tradition of king Aśoka of India. Evidently, Yamato-takeru no Mikoto is treated as an immortal by Masafusa because, being a national hero, his soul was destined to live on eternally in a another world (such as Tokoyo no Kuni 常世國) after his death on earth. As stated above, the concept of an immortal soul merges with the concept of physical immortality that appears in the *shenxian*, that is, *shinsen* in its original sense. Therefore, the old legend that his soul was transformed into a white bird after his death, a typical sign of becoming an immortal, may have been the main reason that Masafusa included Yamato-takeru's life account in his *Shinsen-den.* Prince Shōtoku, on the other hand, had long been venerated by Buddhists for his contributions to the establishment of Buddhism in Japan, and people believed that he had gained birth in Amida's Pure Land. Unfortunately, the last part of this account in *Shinsen-den* is lost, so we do not know how Masafusa described and interpreted the prince's death. Anyhow, it is safe to assume that Masafusa not only mingled the concept of gaining immortality with the belief in the Eternal Country but also with the concept of *ōjō* 往生, or birth in Amida's paradise.

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27 INOUE and ŌSONE distinguish five types of characters in the *Shinsen-den:*
1. Popular historical and legendary figures (e.g., Yamato-takeru no mikoto, Shōtotoku Taishi, Urashima no ko);
2. Prominent figures who played a vital role in Buddhist history (e.g., Kūkai, Ennin);
3. Ascetics and thaumaturges with some Buddhist orientation (e.g., En no Gyōja, Yōshō, the monk of Ōmine);
4. Literati (e.g., Miyako no Yoshika, Tachibana Masamichi);
5. Unknown laymen (e.g., the attendant of the Grand Minister of Kawara-in, the lords Fuji and Hara, the old seller of white chopsticks).

2. Thaumaturgic recluses and mountain ascetics

Beginning with the progenitor of powerful mountain ascetics, En no Gyōja, there are fourteen protagonists who may be classified as such.[28] Among them, at least nine share the characteristics of the *hijiri* as described above.[29] They live primitive and isolated lives, usually in remote mountain areas, where they practice esoteric Buddhism and gain supernatural faculties. Except for En no Gyōja, whose connection with Buddhism was constructed by hagiographers after Masafusa, the *hijiri*-type immortals are clearly Buddhists, although admittedly of a somewhat syncretic and unorthodox kind. They were probably treated as immortals by Masafusa because of their awe-inspiring supernatural faculties and the places where they lived. Mountains were regarded as the netherworld, the sphere of demons and souls of the dead. Mountain ascetics thus lived on the border between this world and the netherworld, and it was easy to imagine that they vanished after a lifetime of arduous practice without leaving a trace of their physical existence and continued to live on as immortal spiritual beings, which qualified them as immortals. Only Nichizō's corpse was buried; the other *hijiri*-type immortals were either simply not seen again (3, 17, 20, 22, 24), flew away (3), or were still alive (19) when the *Shinsen-den* was compiled. Immortals of this type were endowed with supernatural faculties such as telekinesis, in particular, causing their begging bowls or jars to fly (nos. 3, 20, 27, 28); levitation (nos. 3, 4, 11, 21?, 22, 26); or the ability to control demons, spirits and deities (nos. 3, 4, 26). The nun Toran (no. 5), the only woman in the *Shinsen-den,* might be classified as a would-be mountain ascetic because she engaged in ascetic practices like the male hermits and ascetics but was prevented from entering their holy places owing to her "female impurity."

3. Prominent and influential Buddhist masters

Unlike the *hijiri*-type immortals, Kōbō Daishi Kūkai (no. 9) and Jikaku Daishi Ennin (no. 10) are representatives of orthodox Buddhism or the so-called "great tradition." Both, moreover, stand for the two major esoteric strands of Japanese Buddhism, namely Shingon or *tōmitsu* 東密 and Tendai-esotericism or *taimitsu* 台密, and they are regarded as cultural heroes. Kūkai

28 This is the largest group by far (nos. 3, 4, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, [22?], 24, 27, 28, 29).

29 If we take into account the lost stories, the share of *hijiri*-like immortals in the *Shinsen-den* becomes even bigger. The story about the "*hijiri* of Kume," as included in the *Washū Kume-ji ruki* portrays three typical *hijiri* immortals. Dharma Master Kisen is described in the *Genkō shakusho* as a mountain ascetic abiding on Mt. Uji who attained longevity, abstained from grains and lived on bait and eventually flew off on a cloud. And according to the *Shūi ōjō-den* both Zenchū and Zensan practiced sūtra recitation on Mt. Kachio and finally flew away to the west.

in particular came to be regarded as an immortal relatively soon after his death in 835. People believed, and some still believe, that he "remains in eternal samādhi in his bodily form within the inner shrine on the mountain [i.e., Mt. Kōya]."[30] Ennin, the esoteric master and representative of the rival Tendai tradition, on the other hand, was usually venerated as a man who had attained birth in Amida's Sukhāvatī.[31] However, Ennin could also be connected with Daoist beliefs in the afterlife. Ennin founded the Sekisan Zen'in temple in the northeast of Kyōto in fullfilment of a vow he had made before the god Qishan in the region of Taishan during his sojourn in Tang China. The Daoist god of Taishan[32] was regarded by tantric Buddhists as an assistant of the netherworld judge Yama (SEIDEL 1989-90: 303). Perhaps for this reason, Masafusa felt entitled to deviate from the established image of Ennin and press him into the *shinsen*-scheme by claiming that "he suddenly disappeared and was nowhere to be seen." It is noteworthy in this context that Masafusa does not mention Ennin's second religious predelection, namely Amida devotion. Evidently, esoteric Buddhism, rather than the Amida cult, was believed to produce immortals.

4. Legendary temple founders

Three of the thirty stories of INOUE and ŌSONE's reconstruction of the *Shinsen-den* deal with figures who are credited with the founding of a temple, or rather the detecting of a sacred place on which a temple was to be built (nos. 6, 7, 8). Such "*engi*-type" immortals were either ordained priests (nos. 7, 8) or non-ordained recluses (no. 6). They had the ability to find sacred places and the gift of precognition inasmuch as they knew that someone would eventually come to take over the abbacy of the sacred place. It is perhaps more appropriate, however, to identify the protagonists of these *engi*-like stories simply as such rather than by common characteristics shared by the persons themselves. Since *engi* stories were important tools for binding the populace to a certain temple or shrine, which again was a prerequisite for the economic prosperity of religious institutions from the Heian period onward, such legends were actively circulated and very popular. The popularity of the stories may have caused Masafusa to integrate them into his work.

5. Revealers of the true nature of holy beings

Closely related to the protagonists of *engi*-like stories in the *Shinsen-den* are two figures who visit sacred places in order to reveal the true (i.e., Buddhist) natures or original forms (*honji* 本地) of the holy beings that

30 SONODA 1994: 51. See *Shingon-den* III, *Genkō shakusho* III, etc.

31 *Nihon ōjō gokuraku ki* 4, *Hokke genki* I.4, *Shingon-den* III, *Genkō shakusho* III, etc.

32 Jpn. Taisan fukun 太山府君.

preside over these places (4, 29). Stories of the discovery of the *honji* of some native deities or *kami* 神 served roughly the same ends as stories about the auspicious beginnings of a temple. Furthermore, the elevation of local *kami* to the rank of buddha or bodhisattva contributed much to the acculturation of Buddhism in Japan. As Masafusa was obviously eager to demonstrate that Japan was a truly Buddhist country at least equal to India, Central Asia and China,[33] he must have welcomed the development of the *honji suijaku* doctrine, which in his time had only just begun to become systematized.

6. Men of letters and literati

The above types of immortals were, with the exception of the first, purely religious figures inasmuch as they were exclusively devoted to religious activities even if they were not officially ordained Buddhists. There are some protagonists, however, whose religious inclination is obscure at best. This is the case with Tachibana no Masamichi (no. 25) who unlike Miyako no Yoshika (no. 16), the other man of letters in the *Shinsen-den*, shows no sign of religious interest. It seems that the simple facts that he promised to "serve the prince for ten thousand years" by writing poetry and that "some say that he crossed over into Koryŏ [Korea] where he attained the rank of an immortal" sufficed to make Masafusa include the life account of his "colleague" in the *Shinsen-den*. Yoshika's activities as an official writer seem to be unconnected with his attainment of immortality except for the fact that his disappointment with his career might have been a major driving force for his decision to withdraw and pursue the way of immortality. The second part of his life, therefore, pretty much resembled that of any other mountain ascetic of type two. It is possible that Masafusa was eager to demonstrate that men of letters like him could also attain immortality.

7. Unknown laymen

There are six laymen in the *Shinsen-den* who do not fit in the above categories (nos. 13, 14 [2x], 15, 23, 30). They share no significant common characteristics which would enable us to positively define them as a particular type or a specific group. It may be that Masafusa simply adopted popular tales he thought would enrich his collection of immortals' stories and show that immortality could be attained even by ordinary laymen. One among the six, Urashima no ko (no. 30), is a clearly legendary but extremely popular figure even today.

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33 See for example his remarks in story no. 9, "The people of our country even surpass those of Central Asia and of China." and his quotation of Yixing in story no. 27, "This is a remote country, but you cannot say that there is no true learning as long as there are people like this."

Immortality motifs

Despite of the diversity of characters in the *Shinsen-den,* morover, some typical features of Masafusa's immortals – in combination or alone – can be extracted from the accounts:

1. eternal youth, longevity, or miraculous disappearance, which make people believe that the protagonist has attained immortality (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23);

2. the faculty to ascend to the skies and fly (2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 14, 21, 22, 24, 26);

3. exorcist or magical faculties such as banning demons, controlling spirits, causing ones almsbowl to fly, etc. (1, 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 14, 20, 21, 29);

4. dwelling in mountains, living a primitive life in isolation (3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 29);

5. living on a certain diet, i.e., abstaining from all food or certain kinds of food (6, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21) or taking special kinds of "immortality herbs" (22); (INOUE and ŌSONE 1995: 735)

6. possessing typical physical features of an immortal, such as "immortals' bones" (13, 23)

As indicated above, none of these features of an immortal's life are exclusive to immortals' stories, with the exception of immortality itself and the usage of specific herbs, though the latter is mentioned only once in the text. All other motifs are common topoi in numerous Buddhist edificatory tale collections, especially when it comes to the description of *hijiri.*

As regards the only truly exclusive feature of immortals significant in the *Shinsen-den*, i.e., immortality itself, there are, roughly speaking, three concepts intermingled in the *Shinsen-den.*

1. the Buddhist concept of spiritual liberation through birth in a Buddha land or through becoming a "living buddha" (*ikibotoke* 生佛; written 神仙 in the *Shinsen-den*) realized by devout Buddhists, especially mountain ascetics or *hijiri*;

2. the Daoist concept of immortality as represented by *shenxian/shinsen* 神仙 in a narrower sense;

3. the traditional belief in the immortality of the souls of outstanding historical figures (mostly emperors) who go to the Eternal Country (Tokoyo no Kuni) beneath the sea after finishing life on this earth.[34]

Apparently Masafusa did not clearly distinguish between the Daoist concept of immortality, the Buddhist concept of deliverance through birth in

34 As a matter of fact, the souls of deceased rulers or heroes are called *hijiri* in the *Kojiki, Nihongi,* and *Man'yōshū* (HORI 1958a: 129-130). See KAMSTRA (1967: 448) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書記 VI (NKBT 67: 280).

a paradise or the attainment of Buddhahood in this life, and the belief in immortal souls. In this respect, he is probably typical of the majority of his contemporaries, who were interested in religion, and his work properly reflects the syncretic attitude of ancient Japanese religiosity.

Conclusion

It appears that Masafusa had no clear concept of immortality or immortals, given that it is not possible to derive a definition of a typical Japanese immortal from his *Shinsen-den*. If we summarize the most frequently mentioned features, faculties, dwelling places, etc. of the immortals, we find that they correspond perfectly with those of the protagonists of any Buddhist *setsuwa* text. The immortals subsumed under the categories 2, 3, 4, and 5 could be and actually are found in various Buddhist hagiographic collections or collections of miracle stories popular in the Heian period. In the end, the explicit assertion or implicit suggestion that the protagonist may have attained longevity or even immortality remains as almost the only element that qualifies the stories as immortals' stories. Only in a few accounts are there more specific references to an original immortal's techniques (nos. 16, 22, 27), signs (nos. 13, 23), and medicines (no. 22), references which apparently distinguish the stories from other genres. However, as is the case with Masafusa's remarks concerning the miraculous disappearance or eternal life of the protagonists and his allusions to methods, techniques and medicines of immortals, (none of which he specifies), seem to be mere insertions for the purpose of making the stories fit into the schema of accounts of immortals. Only the mention of the "immortals' bones" (13) and "horns on the forehead" (23) refer to genuine concepts of Chinese immortality lore.

It seems that Masafusa was not too well acquainted with, or simply not particularly interested in the more specific details of immortality teachings and practices. In all likelihood, as a man of letters and as a Japanese patriot he felt compelled to compile a collection of accounts of Japanese immortals mainly owing to the prestige of the Chinese precedent. The inconsistency of his work clearly indicates that there was no real tradition of immortality lore in Japan, or at least if there was, he was not familiar with it. Unless he was willing to invent his own accounts, he had no choice but to collect extant stories from different genres that in some way resembled immortals' stories. In some cases the attempt to force a person into the type of an immortal is too obvious and clumsy to be convincing. The stories most consistent with the Chinese model are some of those concerning protagonists of type two. However, it should be noted that the *hijiri*-like immortals had already

become an integral part of Buddhist *setsuwa* collections and were therefore generally treated as Buddhist saints.

Presumably Masafusa was eager to show that immortals had existed in Japan before and independent of the systematic introduction of Chinese religious ideas and practices. Furthermore, he doubtless wished to demonstrate that the art or privilege of attaining immortality was not uniquely Chinese but was universally innate in human nature and therefore accessible to all human beings, whether cleric or lay. This explains why he did not care much about the particular techniques or means for gaining longevity or immortality described in Chinese immortals' collections. He was not interested in and probably not capable of showing how one might become an immortal but simply wished to provide evidence for the existence of immortals in Japan and their particular qualities.

Accounts of Japanese Immortals
Translation of the *Honchō shinsen-den*

(Contents)

[1] Yamato-takeru no Mikoto 倭武命
[2] Prince Jōgu 上宮太子
[3] En no Gyōja 役行者
[4] Taichō 泰澄
[5] The nun Toran 都藍尼
[6] Layman Gyōei 行叡居士
[7] The monk Kyōtai 教待和尚
[8] Great Master Hōon 報恩大師
[9] Great Master Kōbō 弘法大師
[10] Great Master Jikaku 慈覺大師
[11] Yōshō 陽勝
[12] Yōshō's disciple 陽勝弟子童
[13] The attendant of the Grand Minister of Kawara-in 河原院大臣侍
[14] The lords Fuji and Hara 富士太主・原太主
[15] The old seller of white chopsticks 売白箸翁
[16] Miyako no Yoshika 都良香
[17] The monk under a tree in Kawachi province 河内國樹下僧
[18] The riverside man of Mino province 美濃國河辺人
[19] The stone cave immortal of Dewa province 國石窟仙
[20] The monk of Ōmine 大嶺僧
[21] The hermit of Ōmine 大嶺仙
[22] The stick-beaten immortal 竿打仙
[23] The long-lived old man of Iyo province 伊予國長生翁
[24] The lad of the Venerable Chūsan 忠算上人童
[25] Tachibana Masamichi 橘正通
[26] The monk of Tō-ji 東寺僧
[27] The monk of Mt. Hira 比良山僧
[28] The immortal of Mt. Atago 愛宕護山仙
[29] Śramaṇa Nichizō 沙門日藏
[App.:] Urashima no ko 浦島子[1]

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1 The following persons appear in the table of contents of the Daitōkyū manuscript but the accounts themselves are lost: The corpse of Takeuchi 武内宿禰 (?), Great Virtue Tokuitsu 徳一大徳, The immortal from Kume 久米仙, Zenchū 善仲, Zensan 善算, and Dharma Master Kisen 窺詮法師.

[1] Yamato-Takeru no Mikoto[2]

Yamato-takeru no Mikoto 倭武命 [81-113] was the son of emperor Keikō 景行天皇 [(71)-130?]. Immediately upon birth he possessed superhuman martial powers and he was so strong that he could lift 1,000 *kin* [~180 kg].[3]

In his early days, while he was still a child, he changed his name and became a woman (i. e. disguised himself as a young woman).[4] Then he went to Bitchū 備中國 province [modern Okayama prefecture] and penetrated the camp of the rebellious Kumaso 熊襲 [tribe] in order to kill them personally.[5] The Kumaso [chief] said: "We have never encountered someone like you before. Therefore I would like to offer you an august name. You shall be called 'Crown Prince Hero of Yamato.'"[6] [Yamato-takeru] pacified the world and performed great [acts] of benevolence and majesty.[7] Following

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2 Yamato-takeru no Mikoto, also known as Yamato-dake no Mikoto, is "the most famous hero of legendary times" (PAPINOT 1992: 747-748). Much more detailed accounts can be found both in the *Nihongi* (VII, "Keikō"; see ASTON 1993 I: 200ff) and the *Kojiki* (ch. 79-80; see PHILIPPI 1968: 232ff). His name is also written 日本武尊 (*Nihongi*) or 倭建命 (*Kojiki*). According to the *Kojiki*, Yamato-Takeru, also called Wo-usu 小碓 ("Small Mortar"), killed his elder brother Ō-usu 大碓 ("Great Mortar") because he refused to show up at the morning and evening meals. When Yamato-take was asked by the emperor what he had done to make the prince participate in the meals, he answered: "Early in the morning when he went into the privy, I waited and captured him, grasped him and crushed him, then pulled off his limbs, and wrapping them in a straw mat, threw them away" (PHILIPPI 1968: 232). According to *Nihongi*, however, Yamato-take(ru) and Ō-usu were twins, and nothing is said about the killing of Ō-usu.

3 Unusual appearance or faculties at birth are a typical sign of the Daoist immortal. The divine Laozi 老子 himself was born with various wondrous physiognomic characteristics and had the ability to walk and speak upon birth. See *Shenxian zhuan* 1; GÜNTSCH 1988: 39; KOHN 1996b: 59; and KOHN 1998a. Extreme physical strength, too, is part of the immortal repertoire, usually attained through ingestion of an elixir or wondrous pill. Immortals showing this feature include the Gourd Master who lifts heavy caskets with his little finger, among others. See GÜNTSCH 1988: 163; KOHN 1993: 124; and DEWOSKIN 1983: 79. The notion of an immortal being like a young woman, in turn, goes back to the ancient text *Zhuangzi* (DZ 745), which describes the "spirit man" on Mt. Gushe as having "skin like ice or snow" and being "gentle and shy like a young girl" (ch. 1). See WATSON 1968: 33.

4 According to the *Nihongi* Yamato-takeru was sent to attack the rebellious Kumaso on the 13th day of the 10th month in the year 97, when he was only 16 years old. Interestingly, KITABATAKE Chikafusa (1980) in his *Jinnō shōtōki* (97; dat. 1339), does not explicitly mention Yamato-takeru's disguise as a woman. We may assume that this reflects a certain change in the Kamakura period, both in the general attitude of Japanese men towards women and the professional ethics of then dominant warrior class.

5 The Kumaso were inhabitants of southern Kyūshū and are believed to be a branch of the Sow tribe from Borneo. Their subjection was completed only after the expedition of emperor Chūai 仲哀天皇 and Jingū-kōgo 神功皇后 (193-200). (PAPINOT 1992: 323)

6 The chief of the Kumaso, who bestowed the name of Yamato-takeru upon the man who had defeated him, was – according to the *Nihongi* – called Kawakami 川上. Yamato-takeru killed him right after having received the honorary title from him.

7 Obviously, "benevolence" 仁 in this case is not the universal moral concept that it is in Buddhism. The term is used here to denote deeds which serve a certain ethnic group,

the sea road to the east, he attacked rebellious barbarians and defeated malignant deities. He returned following the mountain-road.

When he reached Mt. Ibuki, the deity of that mountain transformed into a grass snake and appeared on his path.[8] The crown prince stepped over the snake and went his way, thinking that it was [only] an attendant snake deity and that he should kill its master. However, he became intoxicated by its poisonous vapors. Only when he went down to "the Well of Soberness" (Samegai 醒井)[9] in Ōmi province [modern Shiga prefecture] and drank from its water did he sober up and became clearheaded again. For the sake of the people he then disposed of the [obnoxious] spirit.

Yamato was no ordinary human being. After his death he transformed into a white bird and flew away.[10]

How could one think that he was not a "living buddha" [*ikibotoke* 神仙]?

[2] Prince Jōgu

Prince Jōgu 上宮 [Shōtoku Taishi; 572-621] was the son of emperor Bidatsu [r. 572-585; sic, his father was actually Yōmei].[11] His mother, the

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namely the Yamato. Perhaps the most striking feature of this whole account is the denial of any moral prerequisites for becoming an immortal. Hagiographic collections of this type which were produced around the same time usually insist on the importance of morality in a Buddhist sense. Every act of killing living beings is considered a grave offense and a serious obstacle for attaining deliverance from the cycle of birth-and-death. This is one feature which distinguishes the Accounts of Immortals from comparable accounts of pious Buddhists. Whereas immortality does not necessarily require proper moral behavior, birth in a Buddhist paradise typically does.

8 According to the *Kojiki* the deity of Mt. Ibuki took the shape of a huge white boar. According to both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*, the deity caused an icy rain to fall upon Yamato-takeru which made him ill.

9 They call the well "the spring of *isame* 居醒泉" ("the spring of sitting soberly"). Nasty spirits in snake form are very common in traditional China, the best known being the white snake. See KURAICHI 1957; MÜLLER 1967; WU 1969; and HSÜ 1973.

10 Death in immortality lore is typically described as a transformation. See ROBINET 1979; KOHN 1993: 303-32; and CAMPANY 1996: 302. KALTENMARK (1953: 10) has noted the close relationship between immortals and birds, with their feathered garb and their increasingly light bodies. A classical case of an immortal closely surrounded by white birds is found in the *Liexian zhuan* (DZ 294; KALTENMARK 1953: 127). For Ōe no Masafusa the climax of the story is probably Yamato-takeru's transformation into a white bird, which distinguishes him as an immortal. According to the *Nihongi* (210) and the *Jinnō shōtōki*, Yamato-takeru died at the age of 30. The *Kojiki* claims that the white bird, Yamato-takeru's soul, "flew off from that county and stopped at Shiki in the land of Kafuchi" (275) where a mausoleum was erected and his remains buried. "Nevertheless the bird soared up thence to heaven again. The *Nihongi* and *Jinnō shōtōki* have that the white bird "flew over to Kotohiki-no-Hara in Yamato" and then "again to Furuichi in Kawachi." In both places, in addition to Nobo in Ise, tombs or tumuli were erected. (ASTON 1993 I: 210-211; KITABATAKE 1980: 98-99).

11 Masafusa's account of Prince Shōtoku's life contains some historical errors. His parents were actually emperor Yomei and his half-sister Anaho-be no mahito 穴太部の眞人 (*Kojiki* III.178; *Nihongi* 21). Why Masafusa gives Bidatsu as Shōtoku's father, however,

empress, once dreamt of a golden-colored figure who said to her: "I wish to entrust to your womb [a child] who will spread the dharma."[12]

After his birth and even from the early days of his childhood, Jogu's sageliness and virtue [*shōtoku* 聖徳] spread throughout the world, and [stories about] the divine marvels [which happened in his presence] reached everywhere within the four seas.[13]

People who touched him even once were imbued with a lasting fragrance. He was able to judge the legal claims of eight men at the same time. Hence he was called Prince of Eightfold Understanding.[14]

Illa 日羅 from Silla[15] once bowed to the prince and said: "I pay respects

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remains unclear, since Yoshishige no Yasutane in his *Nihon ōjō Gokurakuki* correctly has "Toyohi no Tennō 豊日天皇," another name of Yōmei.

12 Conception in dreams occurs in a variety of ways in ancient China, especially in the myths of the Confucian sage kings. See BIRRELL 1993. In Daoism, it appears most importantly in the myth of Laozi, which imitates the birth story of the Buddha. See KOHN 1998: 50. The golden-colored figure is a statue or image of a deity, a notion also inspired by Buddhism. The first such vision occurred in 50 C.E., when emperor Ming of the Han dreamt of a golden sage in the west, then identified as the Buddha and heralding the advent of Buddhism in China. For a discussion, see CH'EN 1964: 29-31; TSUKAMOTO and HURVITZ 1985: 41-50. As regards Shōtoku's conception, Masafusa's version differs a little from others. Whereas the *Nihongi* does not mention any unusual circumstances of the Prince's conception and birth, *Gokuraku ki* (1, p. 12), *Konjaku monogatari* (XI.1, p. 13), *Sambō'e* (II.1: 401a), and others maintain that the golden figure was a golden colored monk who left no doubt about the fact that he was an incarnation of Kannon by saying: "I am a bodhisattva who will save the world. My dwelling is in the West [i.e. Amida's Pure Land]." Although the deviation is minor, it is noteworthy because it serves as yet another piece of evidence of the fact that Masafusa did not use the current versions of Shōtoku's life. We know neither what sources he utilized nor why he did not use the *Gokuraku ki*, *Sambō'e* (or *Konjaku monogatari*, if already completed then).

13 The expression *shenyi* 神異 (Jpn. *shin'i*), "divine marvels," is closely associated with the wonders of strange lands and the immortals. They include wondrous features, such as unusual objects, fascinating beasts, and marvelous plants that are found in foreign lands or deep in the wilderness, as well as exceptional events that all have a transformative effect on their recipient or observer. See CAMPANY 1996: 9-11. A collection of such marvels was compiled in the text *Shenyi jing* 神異經 (Classic of Divine Marvels), dated to the second century C.E. See CAMPANY 1996: 43-45. A more Daoist vision of the same notion is moreover found in the *Shizhou ji* 十洲記 (Record of the Ten Continents, DZ 1331), which speaks of the cloth that does not burn and the fierce beast that looks cute and tiny yet makes a nerve-shattering sound. See SMITH 1990.

14 See *Ryōiki* 4, which says that he could attend to the legal claims of ten men at a time. This passage is somewhat obscure. *Nihon ryōiki* 4 explains why Shōtoku was also called "Toyotomimi": "[he came to be called] 'Toyotomimi' [which means "intelligent ear"] because he was by nature so wise that he could attend the legal claims of ten men at a time and decide them without missing a single word." (MOTOMOCHI NAKAMURA 1997: 108). With respect to the number of men, Masafusa's account accords with *Nihon ōjō Gokuraku ki,* of which it seems to be an abstract.

15 Illa was not from Silla but a resident of Paekche, although born in Kyūshū. As a "wise and brave man" he was summoned by the Japanese who planned to restore Mimana (or Kaya), a Japanese foothold on the coast of the Korean peninsula in the 4th century,

to you, oh Kannon who saves the world, oh king who transmits the lamp [of the dharma] to the East."[16] In response the prince emitted a light from between his eyebrows, and Illa too emitted a light.[17]

Some said that he was the incarnation of the Great Master of the Southern Peak [Nanyue Dashi, i. e. Huisi; 515-577). Because of this he sent Ono Imoko to the Tang court to transmit [to Japan] a *sūtra* he had owned in a previous life, as well as other sacred texts.[18] At this time, too, the prince

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which was destroyed by Silla when it expelled the Japanese in 562. Illa warned the emperor of Paekche's plans to establish a settlement in Tsukushi (modern day Kyūshū), and recommended that the Japanese pretend to grant the requested settlement and then slay all the settlers, women and children included. In the same year, 583, he was assassinated by two men hired by a Korean official (*Nihongi* XX.9-12). The *Nihongi* remains silent about any relationship between Illa and Shōtoku. As a matter of fact, when Illa was killed, Prince Shōtoku was only 11 years old. This might serve as an explanation for Masafusa's claim that Shōtoku was a son of Bidatsu, because if this had been the case, a meeting between the two would have been possible. However, the *Gokuraku ki* suggests that Shōtoku was a child when he met Illa, who recognized the boy's saintliness and identified him as the bodhisattva Kannon (NST 7.12), while Shōtoku said that Illa was his disciple in a former life. Because he had worshiped Sūrya, the sun-god, his body emitted light.

16 The *Jinnō shōtōki* claims that the prince was not only an *avatāra* of a buddha (129), but also an *avatāra* of a "divine *kami* spirit [...] and seem[s] to have intended, in accordance with the wishes of Amaterasu to spread and make people fully aware of the way of our country" (KITABATAKE 1980: 78). In the author's eyes, however, there is no contradiction in the assertion that Shōtoku was an incarnation both of a buddha/bodhisattva and a *kami*. In the 14th century, when the *Jinnō shōtōki* was compiled, theory of the fundamental identity of Buddhist holy beings and Japanese *kami* (the so-called *honji suijaku* theory) was already fully developed. See MATSUNAGA 1969.

17 The point between the eyebrows in Daoist body lore is known as *mingtang* 明堂 or "Hall of Light." It is the first of the nine palaces in the head and the entrance way to the arcane grottos within. At the same time, it also serves as the main gate through which the spiritual strength manifests itself on the outside. For details, see HOMANN 1971 and ROBINET 1993. In Buddhism it is believed that every buddha is furnished with a white tuft of hair between the eyebrows (Jpn. *byakugō* 白毫) which may emit light. According to the "Sūtra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life," "the World-Honoured One [i. e., Śākyamuni] sent forth from between his eyebrows a flood of light," and the "face of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is the color of gold from the Jambu River, while the tuft of white hair between his eyebrows has the colours of the seven jewels, and from it issue forth eighty-thousand different rays of light." (T 12.341b, 343b; quoted from INAGAKI 1994: 320, 334).

18 While the reasons for sending Ono Imoko to China remain obscure in the *Shinsen-den*, the *Gokuraku ki* explains Shōtoku's intentions as follows. The monk Eji 恵慈 (Kor. Hyecha) from Koguryo 高麗 (one of the three kingdoms on the Korean peninsula) – who was in a former incarnation a disciple of Shōtoku on Mt. Nanyue – taught the Buddhist doctrine to the Prince whose understanding was incomparable. The prince noticed that in a certain verse of the *Lotus sūtra* a character was missing. Eji replied that in the versions from other countries this character was also missing. Thereupon, Shōtoku said that in a former life he had owned a version of the text in which the character was extant. When Eji asked where this *sūtra* was, the Prince answered that it was in a temple on Mt. Hengshan 衡山 in the Nanyue range. He sent Ono Imoko to China to get the scripture. Upon his arrival he met three old monks who had been Shōtoku's former companions.

closed the door and entered the state of samādhi. After he emerged from it, he brought out the true scripture and presented it saying: "This is the one I have ordered the divine spirits to bring back [to me]. In only half a day they went across 10,000 *ri* [ca. 4,000 km] of sky and sea." Later a monk from the [Southern] Peak said: "On that very day a golden figure striding in the sky appeared in order to take away the *sūtra*. A host of saintly beings surrounded him, a cloudy vapor darkened the atmosphere [like] fog. He was mounted on a black steed from Kai province and ascended to heaven in broad daylight. In a single moment he came and went, covering [the distance of] 1,000 *ri*.[19]

[Later] Prince Jogu composed the "Constitution in Seventeen Articles" and thus the politics of Japan were regulated for the first time. He erected the Shitennō-ji [Temple in Osaka] in order to worship the [Buddhist] teachings of the Yuezhi 月氏 [a Central Asian people]. He built many temples, installed [statues of] Buddhas and composed innumerable essays, commentaries, and treatises on the scriptures. To his princess he said, "I cannot sojourn long in this defiled world." Accordingly, without having yet reached the Great Rank [of an emperor] he transformed himself and passed on.[20] The populace of the whole country mourned as if for their parents.[21]

Merchants [...] (The following is lost.)

[3] En no Gyōja[22]

The three monks rejoiced when they heard of their old associate and gave the messenger the *sūtra*. When Ono Imoko returned to Japan, Shōtoku realized that the *sūtra* his messenger had brought was not his. While the *Gokuraku ki* does not explicitly claim that Shōtoku's former incarnation on Mt. Nanyue was Huisi, the alleged second patriarch of the Tiantai tradition and teacher of Zhiyi, the "Great Master of Tiantai," the *Shinsen-den* maintains that some people believed that this was the case. In many hagiographies, Shōtoku is indeed presented as an incarnation of both Kannon and Huisi.

19 The covering of huge distances, such as 1,000 or 10,000 *ri* 里 or Chinese miles (1 *ri* = 440 m), as well as the instantaneity of transport are further key characteristics of the immortals, showing not only their physical strength but also their magical powers. See GÜNTSCH 1988: 349. The vision of the deity mounted on a steed accompanied by a heavenly host reflects the typical Daoist revelation setting. It is described in the *Shenxian zhuan* in the biography of the first Celestial Master Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (ch. 4; GÜNTSCH 1988: 136) and in historical documents in the *Weishu* 魏書 (History of the Northern Wei, ch. 114). See WARE 1933.

20 Unfortunately accounts of miracles which occurred after the prince's death are missing in the extant manuscript of the *Shinsen-den*. The *Gokuraku ki* maintains that Shōtoku's corpse looked as if alive, was as light as fabric, and emitted a fragrance. In accordance with the *Nihongi* (XXII.33-34), Yasutane reports that Hyecha decided to die shortly after the prince and predicted that they would soon meet again in Amida's Pure Land.

21 The last sentence is fragmentary. For references, see *Sanbō ekotoba* II.1 and KAMENS 1988: 174-76.

22 Stories about the legendary figure En no Gyōja, also known as En no Ubasoku, E[n] no Kimi Ozunu, or E[n] no Ozunu, are among the most frequently retold ones in Japanese history, for example, in *En no Gyōja hongi* (written by Gigen 義元, one of the so-called

Ubasoku[23] En [or E] 役優婆塞 came from the province of Yamato [modern Nara prefecture].[24] He cultivated the dharma, and his supernatural powers were without bounds.[25]

In his early days, he climbed to the top of Mt. Fuji; later he went to live on Mt. Yoshino. From there he frequently wandered to Mt. Kazuraki, enjoying its rocks and hills. Following his desire, he ordered the spirits and demons to build a stone bridge connecting the two mountain tops.[26] They all yielded to the power of his spells, and gradually the foundations of the structure took shape.[27] Gyōja by nature was rather mean and violent; not a

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five successors of En no Gyōja, in 724); *Shoku Nihongi* I (Monmu 5:5: 24); *Ryōiki* I: 28; *Sanbō'e* II: 2 (dat. 984, KAMENS 1998: 191-196); *Fusō ryakki* (Monmu); *Konjaku Monogatarishū* XI: 3; *Sangoku denki* 2; *Genkō shakusho* 15, *Shingon-den* IV (pp. 162-167), and *Honchō kōsō den* 69, to name a few. En no Gyōja is regarded as the progenitor of Japanese mountain asceticism (*shugendō* 修験道).

23 Originally, an *ubasoku* 優婆塞 (Skt. *upāsaka*) constitutes one of seven categories of Buddhists. These are: (1) *bhikṣu* (monks); (2) *bhikṣuṇī* (nuns); (3) *śikṣamāṇā* (female novices between the age of eighteen and twenty who observe the six precepts); (4) *śrāmaṇera* (male novices); (5) *śrāmaṇerikā* (female novices); (6) *upāsaka* (laymen); and (7) *upāsikā* (laywomen). In early Japanese Buddhism, however, the terms *ubasoku* and *zenji* (meditation master) were generally used to denote all kinds of non-ordained ascetics and magicians. Although En is also known as an *ubasoku*, that is, a Buddhist laybeliever, he is certainly not depicted as a typical Buddhist saint here. En no Ubasoku's approach to Buddhism was probably rather practical. That is, he used Buddhist practices such as gestures (*mudrā*), incantations (*mantra* or *dhāraṇī*), and recitations mainly, if not only, as a means to obtain magical powers. Besides that, he obviously did not care much about Buddhist doctrines and ethical prescriptions. Nevertheless, his legend was used to foster belief in the miraculous power of the Buddhist dharma. In fact, En no Gyōja is a perfectly syncretic sage who is able to fly and subdue deities by his magic, and who finally ascends to heaven and disappears.

24 According to the *Gunsho ruijū* (XXV: 38; see also MATSUNAGA 1969: 206) he was born in 634. Masafusa does not give his family background which according to the *Ryōiki*, *Konjaku monogatari*, *Sambō'e*, and others, was as follows: he was an offspring of the Kamo no E no Kimi 賀茂行君 clan and born in the village of Chihara, Upper Kazuraki district, Yamato province.

25 The expression here is *jinriki* 神力 or "divine strength." The more commonly used term is *jinzu* 神通, "supernatural faculties," or *jinzuriki* 神通力, which describe the ability of a buddha to shake the earth, issue light from his body, extend his tongue to the heavens, and so on. See SOOTHILL and HODOUS 1937: 335. In Buddhist literature, however, it is often used as a rather unspecified term which does not necessarily refer to the ten supernatural faculties of a buddha.

26 Ordering spirits and demons about is one of the main activities and powers of the immortals, who often also serve as exorcists. For a description and list of typical cases, see GÜNTSCH 1988: 347.

27 Spells or incantations are a key way of exerting divine power over nature and spirits. An early Daoist collection is found in the school of the Celestial Masters of the fourth century, the *Zhougui jing* 呪鬼經 (Scripture of Spells against Demons, DZ 1193), which places the practitioner in the position of an overseer in heaven and gives him powers over life and death, spirits and demons, fortune and disaster. For a discussion of spells, demons, and exorcism in medieval Daoism, see MOLLIER 1990.

day passed that he would not scold them.[28]

The deity Hitokoto-nushi was very ugly in appearance. He addressed Gyōja, saying: "I am deeply ashamed of my body and face, therefore I cannot work during daylight." Gyōja, however, did not allow him to desist. Out of revenge, the deity gave an oracle to the imperial court, saying: "Ubasoku En is plotting rebellion." As a result, court officers imprisoned Gyōja's mother. Being very filial and respectful [of his parent], Gyōja could not bear this and gave himself up to be bound and thrown into prison.[29]

Later, as soon as he received an imperial pardon and was let go, he bound up the deity Hitokoto-nushi and fastened him to the bottom of a ravine.[30] To the present day one can still see the seven knots in the vine. The deity, although he tried a myriad different ways, was unable to free himself; for many years the sound of his groans and moans was heard without ceasing. [The bridge was never completed.] Today one can still see the supporting pillars [of its foundation] on both the mountains, Yoshino and Kazuraki, each over one hundred feet in height. Later Gyōja climbed into an

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28 This is not typical of Daoist immortals, nor is the following tale of conflict and violence. Classical immortals, while not always in harmony with human society, usually find more cheerful and beneficient means of getting their way. A good example is Zuo Ci 左慈 who, being chased by imperial guards, first vanishes through the palace wall and then simply hides by running into a crowd and changing everyone so they look exactly alike. See *Shenxian zhuan*, ch. 5. GÜNTSCH 1988: 157.

29 According to the *Ryōiki*, *Sambō'e*, *Konjaku monogatari*, and *Shingon-den*, En no Gyōja was exiled to one of the Izu islands 伊豆島 (modern Shizuoka prefecture; acc. to *Sambō'e* in 699, according to the *Shingon-den* [p. 73b] in 700) after he had surrendered to the government in order to free his mother.

30 The conflict between En no Gyōja and the deity Hitokoto-nushi no Ōkami ("Great Deity Lord of the Single Word") may be regarded as the core of most accounts of his life. In detail, however, the various accounts differ considerably. According to the *Ryōiki*, *Sambō'e*, and *Fusō ryakki*, En no Gyōja ordered a bridge to be built between Mt. Kimpu 金峰山 (or Kane no Take, or Mitake; a mountain peak located in the Yoshino district of modern Nara prefecture) and Kazuraki, a mountain located about 30 km west of Mt. Kimpu. Unlike *Shinsen-den*, *Sambō'e*, and *Konjaku monogatari*, *Ryōiki* has a variant version of the cause of the conflict. According to Kyōkai's *Ryōiki* the deities were simply "not happy about" En no Gyōja's order to build the bridge. All other versions agree that Hitokoto-nushi no Ōkami was ashamed of being seen in daylight. Remarkably, En no Gyōja is not described as a gentle or nice man. Masafusa in particular frankly states that he "by nature was rather mean and violent." As for the punishment of the deity, the *Shinsen-den* roughly accords with the *Sambō'e* and the *Konjaku monogatari*, although the latter two say that En no Gyōja punished the deity because of his disobedience and not because of his denunciation at court. The subjugation of a deity by a saintly man (mostly voluntarily on the part of the deity) who takes possession of some sacred place (usually a mountain) is a standard topos in Buddhist hagiographies. See, for instance, the hagiographies of Huiyuan, Huisi, and Zhiyi. The motif of a deity converted to Buddhism, however, goes back to the earliest hagiographies of Śākyamuni himself. The forceful subgjugation of local deities is not typical of the behavior of Buddhist saints.

iron begging bowl with his mother and set off across the ocean.[31] Using neither boat nor raft, nobody knew where they went.[32]

Much later, a priest from our country [Japan] by the name of Dōshō[33] went to Koryŏ[34] to lecture on the dharma. Among the listeners there was one who spoke Japanese. He was Gyōja, although over a hundred years had passed since his departure. Dōshō was greatly surprised and descended from his platform to question him. He did not answer, however, and never again came to a lecture.[35]

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31 The account of his journey with his mother in an iron begging bowl is peculiar to the *Shinsen-den*. Only an appendix to En's life in the *Sambō'e* refers to the "stories told by the elders" (*kojin-den* 古人傳; KAMENS (1988: 192) reads this as "Long ago someone said") which say: "E no gyōja could fly on a grass mat, and he put his mother in a bowl and they flew off to China together." The ability to fly in a begging bowl is also ascribed to Huisi. The motif of using a bowl or cup as a vessel seems to be quite old. Huijiao in his *Gaoseng zhuan* (Biographies of Eminent Monks), for instance, presents the story of the wine-drinking and meat-eating monk Beidu 杯度 ("Cup Crosser") who crossed a river in a cup in order to escape his persecutors. (T 50.390b) Xuankui expressed his unfulfilled desire to visit India in a poem asking, "When will I ever arrive there riding in a cup?" (*Datang sanzang siyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan*; T 51.7c)

32 Leaving across the ocean is a favored way of immortals to vanish, especially since Penglai, the group of isles of the immortals, is located in the eastern sea. See KALTENMARK 1953: 163. According to Eikai 榮海 (1288 or 12781348), author of *Shingon-den*, En no Gyōja went to Tang China in 701, that is, 16 years before the official founding of the Shingon school in China and 104 years before Kūkai brought esoteric Buddhism to Japan. This raises the question of who introduced En to the esoteric tradition. Eikai believes that En paid a visit to Nāgārjuna's Pure Land where he received initiation in the teachings personally from the bodhisattva and Mahāyāna philosopher.

33 The life of Dōshō (629-700) is found in the *Shoku Nihongi* I (Monmu 4:3:10), *Nihon ryōiki* I.22, *Fusō ryakki* (IV, V), *Shūi ōjō-den* III.10, *Konjaku monogatari* (XI.4), *Sambō'e* (II.2), *Genkō shakusho* (I), and elswhere. He went to Tang China upon imperial order in 653 where he became the disciple of the famous Tripiṭaka Master Jianzhen 鑑眞三藏 (688-763). After his return, he "traveled far and wide, proclaiming Buddhist teaching to all beings." (MOTOMOCHI NAKAMURA 1997: 134). He is generally regarded as the founder of the Hossō school 法相宗 in Japan.

34 INOUE and ŌSONE suggest that Masafusa confused Koryŏ and Silla here, probably because during his lifetime the Korean peninsula was ruled by the Koryŏ dynasty (936-1392). It is also possible, however, that Masafusa misinterpreted the character 唐 (*kara*) as referring to Korea instead of Tang China, since the name *kara* was also used to denote Korea or even any foreign country (see MOROHASHI 1957 II: 1023b).

35 One indication of the unusual longevity and power of the immortals is their being spotted in unlikely places after long periods of time. See *Liexian zhuan*, KALTENMARK 1953: 93, 114. In the *Konjaku monogatari*, the story about En no Gyōja's meeting with Dōshō in Silla is included in the life of Dōshō, who is credited with transmitting the Hossō teachings to Japan. According to the *Ryōiki* and *Sambō'e*, Dōshō went to lecture on the *Lotus sūtra* in Silla at the request of 500 tigers. The *Konjaku monogatari* speaks of 500 "masters of the way" (*dōshi* 道士), which might refer to Daoist monks or mountain ascetics. But according to Eikai's account (see n. 32 above), the alleged meeting with Dōshō in Silla or China could hardly have actually taken place because Dōshō died in the year 700, one year before En left Japan for the west (BUSSHO KANKŌ KAI 1984: 166a).

These events are also told in Miyako no Yoshika's "Report on Mt. Yoshino." Ours is only an abbreviated retelling.[36]

[4] Taichō[37]

Taichō came from the province of Kaga [modern Ishikawa prefecture]. People of the world called him the Little Daitoku (Great-Virtue) of Koshi[38] because he was blessed with numerous divine manifestations.[39]

He could cover even a distance of a thousand miles in just a moment; he was able to fly without wings.[40] First, he revealed the traces of the holy ones [*shōjaku* 聖跡][41] on Mt. Hakusan (White Mountain) and composed a prose-

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36 At the end of this account, Masafusa mentions that it was "only an abbreviated retelling," probably of Miyako Yoshika's (see below account 16) *Yoshinosangi*, a work now lost. It is unclear why Masafusa chose to use a source which differed slightly from the standard versions of En no Gyōja's life, but maybe he preferred it because of its literary quality. In terms of content, however, the *Shinsen-den* account roughly accords with that in the *Ryōiki*, *Sambō'e*, and *Konjaku monogatari*.

37 See also: *Hokke genki* (III:81; *Jin'yū hosshi* 神融法師 is apparently the same person), *Genkō shakusho* (XV; XVIII: 354), *Shingon-den* (IV), *Tōkoku kōsō-den* (I), *Honchō kōsō-den* (XLVI), *Nara ehon* (incorporated in the legend of En no Ubasoku).

38 The *Hokke genki* (III.81) mentions a certain *Lotus sūtra* devotee named Jin'yū, who might be identical with Taichō, since he is called "Shōdaitoku of Koshi" (due to the fact that he was from Koshi district 古志 in Echigo province [modern Niigata prefecture]). It is stated that he "had many names which need not be mentioned here." In terms of content, however, the *Hokke genki* version differs completely from the other accounts (DYKSTRA 1983: 101). Furthermore, *Genkō shakusho* asserts that emperor Genshō bestowed the honorary name Jin'yū (r. 715-724) on him (BUSSHO KANKŌ KAI 1987: 315b).

39 The expression used here is *shingen* 神驗, a more common term for the same idea is also *ryōken* 靈驗 or "numinous manifestations," "evidence for the numinous," or *ryōō* 靈應, "response of the numinous." All these terms are the Chinese equivalent of our word "miracle" and indicate marvelous powers of individuals, such as levitation, omniscience, and multilocation, as well as wondrous events happening around certain people, such as exceptional healings, exorcisms, or resurrections of the dead. For a discussion, see VERELLEN 1992: 227-28.

40 His ability to fly clearly distinguishes him as a powerful sage and thaumaturge and qualifies him to be included in a collection of immortals' legends.

41 Perhaps the most interesting feature of this account is the description of Taichō's activities as someone who "publicized the traces of the holy ones." As is clear from the legend, this refers to Taichō's attempts to find out the "true nature" (*honji* 本地) behind the manifestations or traces (*suijaku* 垂迹) of buddhas and bodhisattvas. In China, and in a more systematic way in Japan, Buddhism assimilated local deities to its pantheon, claiming that they were buddhas or bodhisattvas who manifested themselves in the form of indigenous deities as a means to save people. This syncretic doctrine became dominant in medieval Japanese Buddhism because it could easily be used to legitimize claims of political and economic power and to sanctify the nation and its emperor. We may assume that Taichō's significance for the development of Japanese Buddhism lies in his propagation of the *honji suijaku* doctrine by traveling to holy places in order to reveal the "true nature" of their respective deities. In the *Shinsen-den* account, Taichō is credited with the "unmasking" of two manifestations of Kanzeon or Kannon. Kannon, or Avalokiteśvara in Sanskrit, may perhaps be regarded as the prototype of the *honji suijaku* concept. Chapter 25 of the *Lotus sūtra* says that the bodhisattva "Regarder of

poem about them which is still well-known today.[42]

Later he went to Mt. Yoshino, where he decided to free the deity Hitokoto-nushi from his fetters. He worked very hard at it, using his occult powers [*kaji* 加持], but after he had loosened three knots, a voice sounded in the dark scolding him.[43] As a result, he retied the fetters back the way they had been.

After this, he went around visiting various shrines and inquiring into their deities' original nature as enlightened beings [*hongaku* 本覚]. Chanting and reciting prayers over several days at the Inari [rice or fox deity] sanctuary, he had a dream during which he saw a woman come forth from behind a curtain. She told him: "In my original body I am Kannon and as such reside permanently in Fudaraku.[44] To save all living beings, however, I show myself also as this spirit of great illumination [Inari]."[45]

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the Cries of the World" appears in numerous forms corresponding to the respective needs and dispositions of the sentient beings he is going to save. See MATSUNAGA 1969.

42 Literary activity is only to a limited extent typical of immortals. Daoism, described as the "teaching without words" in the ancient *Daode jing* 道徳經, prefers to showing rather than telling. Still, some famous immortals also wrote poetry, such as the notorious Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 of the Tang-Song, who wrote his sexy graffitti on the walls of taverns wherever he went. See BALDRIAN-HUSSEIN 1986.

43 This account appears also in in the "*hōō*-section" ("numinous responses," 方應 = misspelling of 報應?) of the *Genkō shakusho* and in the *Nara ehon* where it forms a part of the En no Gyōja legend. It is not quite clear what kind of ritual Taichō performed to free the deity. According to NAKAMURA (1989: 343), the sanskrit term *adhiṣṭhāna,* from which the Japanese term *kaji* is derived, originally meant "subduing others (by spiritual power)." As a generic term in Japanese esoteric Buddhism, however, it came to mean "adding and retaining." It "indicates great compassion on the part of the Tathagata and faith on the part of sentient beings. The compassion of the Buddha pouring forth on the heart of sentient beings ... is called *ka* [adding], and the heart of sentient beings which keep hold of the compassion of the Buddha ... is called *ji* [retaining]" (HAKEDA 1972: 92). In practice, the term *kaji* came to denote all kinds of esoteric rituals believed to endow the practitioner with the mysterious powers of a buddha. Out of fear of the mighty En no Gyōja, however, Taichō had to undo the results of his successful *kaji* ritual.

44 The first Kannon manifestation in Japan appeared in the Inari shrine of Fushimi, south of Kyōto. Fudaraku is the Japanese transliteration of Potalaka, the paradise of Kannon. The belief in a mountain or island located in the south is originally based on a passage in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (Flower Garland Sūtra). Several places in Asia are identified with Potalaka, but in Japan the two mountains of Nachi and Nikkō are most often identified with it. In ancient and medieval times, however, it was also believed that the realm of Kannon was an island to the south of Japan, and a considerable number of people, especially ascetics from Kumano, committed ritual suicide (called *fudaraku tokai* 補陀落渡海, i.e., "crossing the sea to Potalaka") by embarking on boats to this mythical place. See also GORAI 1975: 133. It is likely that in popular religion the concept of Potalaka merged with Daoist concepts such as the isles of the immortals, and the indigenous belief in mountains and islands as the realms of the dead.

45 The term translated here as "spirit of great illumination" is *shinmyō* 神明, which is an ancient Daoist term. Literally "spirit" and "light," it was first used in ancient meditation texts to indicate the power of energy concentrated in certain parts of the body which

Following this, Taichō went to Aso Shrine where the nine-headed dragon king[46] appeared to him, hovering above the pond. Taichō addressed him: "How can you rule this numinous place in the body of an animal? Show me your true form [*shinjitsu* 眞實]!"[47]

As a result, just as day was gradually dimming into night, a thousand-armed Kannon[48] three feet high and emitting a golden hue, appeared above the waters of the lake, [shining] before the evening sun. Taichō lived for several hundred years without dying.[49] Nobody knows what became of him.[50]

[5] The Nun Toran[51]

The nun Toran came from the province of Yamato. She practiced the

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shines forth with intense spirit power. See HOMANN 1971. Later identified with specific deities or body gods, these kinds of spiritually radiant powers were also externalized and worshipped as gods. In the Buddhist context, then, the term *myō* or "light" took on the additional connotation of "illumination."

46 The "nine-headed dragon king" belongs to the *nāga* species, mythological figures of early Indian origin. The *nāga-rājas* ("snake kings") are snake-like demi-gods who live in the water and control the rain. As early as the *rgveda* (I.32, II.12), a snake holds back the water until it is killed by Indra who wants to make water accessible to humanity. In Buddhism the *nāgas*' function as controllers of rain is preserved. See VISSER 1913. Despite their relatively good reputation, *nāgas* are classified as animals, which makes them – in the eyes of Taichō – an inappropriate form to be taken on by the ruler of a numinous place such as the Aso Shrine (modern Kumamoto prefecture).

47 According to Daoist worldview, everything has its true or perfected form either in heaven (such as the gods and scriptures) or deep in its inner essence. Knowing the true form of something or someone, moreover, gave the knower power over it. For example, maps showing the distilled, abstract shape of a country were considered keys to rulership and held sacred. In the same vein, demons, given to manifold disguises, could be forced to reveal their true form with the help of magical mirrors and then banished. The classic Daoist map of the universe is the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* 五嶽眞形圖 (Chart of the True Form of the Five Sacred Mountains, DZ 1223), in use as early as the fourth century and still on sale at Daoist mountains today. See SCHIPPER 1967. Mirrors and their uses against demons are described in Ge Hong's *Baopuzi*, also of the fourth century. See WARE 1966: 281; and VERELLEN 1995: 270.

48 The "thousand-armed Kannon" is one of the six forms of Avalokiteśvara with a thousand arms and a thousand eyes. The image usually has forty-two arms and twenty-seven faces and represents the virtues of life, the extinction of sins, and the exclusion of illness. In general terms, however, the "thousand-armed Kannon" most prominently represents limitless compassion.

49 Masafusa's attempt to make Taichō a real immortal by asserting that he could not only fly but that he also "lived for several hundred years without dying" is inconsistent with the account in the *Genkō shakusho*, as noted above. The Taichō of the *Genkō shakusho* is clearly a Buddhist saint rather than an immortal. Accordingly, his lengthy biography is not included in the "*shinsen* section" of the *Genkō shakusho* but in the "*hōō* section."

50 This is a classical ending for an immortal's biography, indicating the mysterious nature of these divine beings. It it first appears in the biography of Laozi in the *Shiji* 史記 (ch. 63). See GRAHAM 1990; and FUNG and Bodde 1952 I:170. It occurs in various places in the *Liexian zhuan*. See KALTENMARK 1953: 86, 90, 122, 129, 130, 135.

51 For further references, see *Genkō shakusho* XVIII. Toran's dates are unknown.

dharma and attained long life, for how many hundred years nobody knows.[52]

She lived at the foot of Mt. Yoshino. Devout and sincere [in her practice] day and night, she wished to ascend the top of Mt. Mitake (also read Kimpu, Golden Peak), but thunder and lightning crashed and raged, and she did not make it. Being the place of the future coming of the Compassionate Lord [Maitreya], the earth of this mountain is filled with gold and is guarded by the King of the Diamond Matrix (Kongōzaō 金剛藏王). Hence it is a restricted area and no woman is ever permitted to enter it.[53]

[Still, Toran was a very sacred lady.] Her walking stick changed into a tree and wherever she struck the ground, a spring would bubble forth.[54]

Traces of her footsteps can still be seen today.

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52 Lifetimes of several hundred years are quite common among the immortals. Early examples include Wo Quan 偓佺, Wu Guang 務光, Pengzu 彭祖, Qiong Shu 邛疏 (KALTENMARK 1953: 53, 78, 82, 85), as well as the famous Li Babai 李八百 (Li Eight hundred; GÜNTSCH 1988: 88).

53 This form of discrimination is not Daoist at all. On the contrary, immortality in Daoism was never limited to men only, and the *Shenxian zhuan* has an entire chapter on wondrous women (ch. 7; GÜNTSCH 1988: 201-25). These women have numerous magical powers, live for hundreds of years, and serve the community in a variety of ways. For more on Daoist women practitioners and immortals, see DESPEUX 1990, and CAHILL 1990. As with many other sacred mountains in Japan, Mt. Mitake of Yoshino (see note 30 above), one of the favorite places of mountain ascetics, was restricted to men. Women were regarded as impure by nature, chiefly because "blood of both menstruation and childbirth was spiritually polluting" (REED 1992: 165; see also OVERMEYER 1991: 107; and TAKEMI: 1983). Women were also not permitted to climb Mt. Hiei or Mt. Kōya. Thus, despite her supernatural powers, which enabled her to gain longevity as well as the faculty to make springs (a rather common faculty not only in Buddhist hagiography), the nun Toran was prevented by the guardian deity of Maitreya's mountain from entering the sacred realm. The *Genkō shakusho* version tells the story in much more detail. According to this version, the nun argued with the guardian deity, saying:

> 'Although I have a female body, my discipline is pure and I have numinouos experiences. How can you think that I am an ordinary woman?' So she climbed up Mitake. Suddenly there were thunder and lightning, it became dark, and she lost her way. She abandoned the staff she was holding. This staff spontaneously grew thicker and gradually became a big tree. Thereupon [To]ran chanted a spell, mounted a dragon, and ascended the mountain on its back. When they arrived at the fountain, however, they could not proceed any further. In anger [To]ran stamped her foot so that the rocks on the mountain peak broke into pieces. The pond of the dragon is [therefore] covered by rocks. Two traces [of Toran] still exist today. People say that she attained the way of longevity, and nobody knows where she is. BUSSHO KANKŌKAI 1984b: 346a.

On the gender and discrimination problem in Buddhism in general, see HORNER 1975; and PAUL 1979. For the treatment of women in Chinese and Japanese Buddhist hagiography see KLEINE 1998; TSAI 1994.

54 This is one expression of the power Daoists have over nature. Others include being able to make rivers flow backwards, trees wither, and the dead come back to life. See GÜNTSCH 1988: 350.

[6] Lay Recluse Gyōei[55]

The Lay Recluse[56] Gyōei was the original resident of Kiyomizu-dera in Higashiyama.[57] Although he lived for several hundred years, only a few visitors came [during this time], and he made the constant practice of refinement the main focus [of his life],[58] living in purity, never marrying and abstaining from rice and avoiding grains.[59]

The waterfall of Kiyomizu-dera was the place were the recluse went to practice.[60] His original complexion was yellow-gold.[61]

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55 For further Japanese references to Gyōei, see *Kiyomizu-dera kenritsu ki*, *Kiyomizu-dera engi*, *Fuso ryakki sho* II, *Ryaku junananen jo no kenji (Kiyomizu-dera) engi*, *Konjaku monogatari* XI.32, *Genkō shakusho* 28).

56 *Koji* 居士. Originally the term *koji* refers to the Sanskrit term *grha-pati* which means "head of the houshold." In Chinese and Japanese Buddhism *koji* was used to denote a non-ordained Buddhist practitioner. From the Nara period onwards the number of those practitioners who were not officially ordained – ordination was a privilege granted only to a very limited number of persons by the emperor – increased significantly. Until the early Heian period the distinction between fully ordained monks and non-ordained practitioners was quite strictly observerd. From the middle of the Heian period, however, the official system of ordination by imperial order gradually declined and the strict terminological distinction between non-ordained recluses and ascetics, who almost constituted a mass movement by that time, virtually lost its meaning. See KLEINE 1997. Today the term *koji* is mainly used as a title attached to the *hōmyō* (a posthumous Buddhist name) of a deceased male.

57 The account of Gyōei is obviously part of an *engi* 縁起 that explains the numinous origins of a temple or shrine. In this case, the founding of Kiyomizu-dera is explained. Historically, Gyōei's contribution to the erection of Kiyomizu-dera was immaterial, and the famous temple was first built by the priest Enchin 延鎮 (another disciple of Hōon; not to be confused with Chishō Daishi Enchin 智證大師圓珍, founder of Mii-dera) with the support of the military commander Saka-no-ue Tamuramaro 坂上田村麻呂 (758-811) in 798 in the hills of Higashiyama to the south-east of Kyoto. In the Heian period it became a center of Kannon worship. It now belongs to the Kita Hossō sect.

58 The word "refinement" (*ren* 練, also 煉) is originally taken from the context of Daoist alchemy, where it refers to the gradual transformation of base substances into the elixir of immortality. Applied on the physiological level, it means the purification of the material and emotion-ridden body into a pure vehicle of the Dao through various physical and meditational methods. See ENGELHARDT 1987. In Buddhism, however, the term was used quite unspecifically for any kind of religious practice and is a synonym of *shugyō*.

59 The basic tenet of the Daoist religious diet is to avoid all grains, the reason being that they were believed to feed the Three Deathbringers (*sanshi* 三尸) inside the body (see KOHN 1995) and thus cause defilement and decay. On a more analytical level, the practice can also be seen as an attempt to recover the more simple and primordial life that existed before the transition into civilization and the cooking of food. See Levi 1983. Such diets, however, were also observed by Buddhist ascetics in China. (See, for example, *Hongzan fahua zhuan*, V; T 51: 24b; and STEVENSON 1995: 432). The abstinence from all grains (*kokudachi* 穀断) was a typical practice of mountain ascetics whether called *sennin* 仙人 or *hijiri* 聖 / 仙 (KLEINE 1997).

60 Religious practices performed under a waterfall, like the avoidance of grains, have long been a typical feature of mountain asceticism and are still frequently observed in Japan today. Usually the adept stands upright under the waterfall, with the palms of his hands pressed together, and recites a sūtra, a *mantra* or *dhāraṇī*.

61 A yellow-golden complexion is one of the results of immortality practice, it is a sign of

Later he met the Great Master Hōon. Hōon passed on to him the buddha [image] he possessed as well as his place of residence, saying: "I have been waiting for you to come.[62]

You shall be the lord of this place and spread the Buddha dharma. I [on the other hand] will go to benefit the barbarians and therefore will settle in the eastern provinces."[63] Thereupon he went off to the east. When he reached Mt. Otoba he spontaneously passed away, leaving only his straw sandals and his staff behind.[64]

Later people thought he had ended his life there, so they divided his sandals, hanging one above the waterfall of his original temple and the other on Mt Otaba.[65]

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glowing health and the radiating forth of spiritual powers. See *Baopuzi*, ch. 4 (WARE 1966: 89).

62 Meetings between two immortals are often characterized as divinely ordained and thus known in advance. Examples are manifold, but one classical case is Laozi's encounter with Yin Xi 尹喜 on the Hangu Pass 函谷関, which is described as the cosmically ordained meeting of two major forces, which both went to in full knowledge of its relevance. See KOHN 1998a.

63 Although the *Shinsen-den* and the *Konjaku monogatari* seem to use the same legend, they disagree about whom Gyōei entrusted with the responsibility for the sacred place. According to the latter (XI.32), the ascetic Kenshin 賢心, a disciple of Hōon, once dreamt that he was told to go north. After waking, he headed north toward the newly established capital until he reached the Long Valley. There he saw a creek in which the water shone like gold, but found that he alone could perceive this and so knew it to be an auspicious sign. Accordingly, he followed the creek to its source. After a while he came to a waterfall, and when he looked more closely, he saw a grass hut on top of a rock to its west. There was an old non-ordained recluse in this hut. His hair was white and he looked as if he was about seventy years old. Questioned by Kenshin, the old man answered that his name was Gyōei and that he had dwelled there for two-hundred years. He had been waiting for someone all those years, but nobody had come. In his heart he had constantly contemplated the miraculous powers of Kannon and with his mouth he had chanted the mantra of the thousand-armed deity. Now he was delighted to see this visitor and handed over this auspicious place to Kenshin, instructing him to replace the old hut with a chapel and make a Kannon statue. Thereupon, Gyōei left for the east where he wished to practice.

64 The ideal of giving all one's possessions away to the benefit of the dharma was already formulated in ancient Indian Buddhism, where the king invited the *saṃgha* to a major feast and – at least temporarily – gave all his wealth, his kingdom, and even himself to the religious institution. For a discussion, see STRONG 1990. One famous example of a Buddhist saint distributing his belongings in preparation death is that of Zhiyi (see *Sui Tiantai Zhishe dashi biezhuan*, T 50.196a, 9-14; and *Xu gaoseng zhuan* XVII, T 50.566a)

65 Sandals as the sole remnant of a divine person's power and earthly traces also appear in the ancient story of the Yellow Emperor and his ascent to heaven on the back of a dragon. In his case, the imperial slippers dropped during his ascent and were buried in his stead. See YÜ 1964. It may be assumed that Gyōei – provided he is a historical figure at all – actually ended his life on Mt. Otoba, not far from Kiyomizu-dera. If not, it is impossible to see how anyone could have gotten access to his sandals, which we are told he did not leave behind.

[7] The Monk Kyōtai[66]

The monk Kyōtai came from the district of Shiga in the province of Ōmi [modern Shiga prefecture]. Although he was several hundred years old, he still looked very young. [Despite his great age and holiness], he loved young girls and indulged in meat and fish. Whenever he spat something from his mouth, it would turn into a lotus leaf.[67]

Later he met the great master Chishō (i.e. Enchin)[68] and handed over the abbacy of Onjō-ji temple to him, saying: "I have waited for you to come, and have maintained this marvelous place [for you]. May you now spread the Buddha [teaching] everywhere!"[69] This affair concluded, he was seen no more.

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66 For further references, see *Kokon chōmonjū* II, *Konjaku monogatari* XI.28 ("Chishō"), *Genkō shakusho* XV ("Kyōtai" and "Onjō-ji"); and *Shingon-den* ("Chishō"). Kyōtai's exact dates are unknown, but since Chishō or Enchin lived between 814 and 891, we know that he lived in the 9th century.

67 Spewing forth from the mouth as a form of creation is typical of the so-called earth-diver creation myth, found among a variety of indigenous peoples. See DUNDES 1962. In Daoism, it occurs in the *Kaitian jing* 開天經 (Scripture of Opening the Cosmos, DZ 1437), according to which Laozi brings forth order in the world by spitting forth sacred scriptures containing essential teachings. See KOHN 1993: 35-43. Among immortals, the most famous case is Zhang Guolao 張果老, one of the Eight Immortals (*baxian* 八仙), who, upon arrival at his destination, shrinks his donkey to a size small enough to fit into his sleeve by spraying water on it from his mouth. Ready to depart again, the donkey is raised back to standard size by the same means. See YETTS 1916.
As in other stories told in the *Shinsen-den*, at first sight the protagonist is by no means an exemplary figure in terms of his commitment to Buddhist ethics, as here when Masafusa says that "he loved young girls and indulged in meat and fish." The *Genkō shakusho*, *Shingon-den*, and *Konjaku monogatari* do not mention Kyōtai's sexual activities, but the *Shingon-den* asserts that he also drank alcohol. We do not know what happened to the girls and the alcohol; as far as the animals are concerned, however, we are informed that their remains were transformed into lotus leaves [sic]. In Buddhism the lotus flower symbolizes salvation, as those who are born in Amida's Pure Land are seated in a lotus blossom. The transformation of bones into leaves thus symbolizes the transformation of sin into benefaction. A seemingly cruel and immoral act turns out to be an act of benevolence if done by a bodhisattva. This clearly suggests that Kyōtai, the manifestation of bodhisattva Maitreya, saved sentient beings by eating them.

68 See *Konjaku monogatari* XI.28.

69 This *engi*-type story resembles the one of Gyōei above: A mysterious monk (evidently a manifestation of a holy being) is waiting at a sacred spot for another monk to take over the abbacy of the future sanctuary. In this regard, his name is noteworthy. Kyōtai means "waiting for the teaching" or "the one who is waiting for the teaching." The person who brought the teaching was Enchin, and we may assume that the name Kyōtai was chosen precisely in order to construct a kind of fateful karmic link between the two monks whose original vocation was the re-establishment of Onjō-ji, also known as Miidera, in 859. It is therefore also likely that Kyōtai was a purely legendary figure used to legitimize the Jimon-ha's contention that the head-temple of the sect was built on holy ground and in accordance with some supernatural plan. This contention may have been important in demonstrating that the headquarters of the Jimon-ha made up of Enchin's disciples expelled from Mt. Hiei by the followers of Ennin, was by no means inferior to Enryaku-ji, the headquarters of the rival Sanmon-ha. For more on this schism, see

[8] Great Master Hōon[70]

Great Master Hōon [?-795] was a man from the province of Yamato [modern Nara prefecture].[71] He first lived in Kojima-dera and later came to Kiyomizu-dera.[72] There he met recluse Gyōei, received all he possessed and began to spread the Buddha-Dharma. Although several decades had passed, there were only a few visitors. The walking distance between the two temples was about two or three days, yet the Great Master was often at Kojima in the morning and came to Kiyomizu at noon. Although he had no wings, it was as if he flew.[73]

How could he possibly not have been a living buddha [*ikibotoke*]?[74]

McMULLIN 1984. The *Konjaku monogatari* asserts that Kyōtai was a manifestation of Mio Myōjin 三尾明神, one of the guardian deities of Onjō-ji. According to the *Genkō shakusho* (319b), *Shingon-den* (156a), and *Konjaku monogatari*, Kyōtai in his original form was Maitreya whose manifestation at Onjō-ji was that of Mio Daimyōjin 三尾大明神, who appeared in human form as the *bhikṣu* Kyōtai.

70 For further references, see *Konjaku monogatari* XI.32, *Genkō shakusho* IX.

71 According to the *Genkō shakusho*, Hōon was a Kannon devotee and practicioner of the *Avalokiteśvara dhāraṇī* (*kanzeonju* 觀世音呪). He was blessed with supernatural perception (*ryōkan* 靈感). Before his full ordination, he lived as a novice (*shami* 沙彌, Skt. *śrāmaṇera*) on Mt. Yoshino. In 760, he erected Kojima-dera in the district of Takaichi 高市 in Yamato province (modern Nara prefecture), were he installed an image of Kannon. He died in 795.

72 As we have seen above, according to one tradition, Hōon was not only credited with the erection of Kojima-dera in 760, but also with the founding of Kiyomizu-dera. Accordingly, he appears in the *kanjin* section (感進; probably a misspelling of 勸進) of the *Genkō shakusho* (9: 240a), the section about campaigns for the erection or restoration of temples.

73 Instantaneous transportation is another classic feature of Daoist immortals. Zuo Ci 左慈 in particular was famous for his ability to procure delicious spices from far-off places within an instant. See *Soushen ji* 搜神經 (In Search of the Supernatural) 1; and KOHN 1993: 129-99. In this story, Masafusa again seems to completely lack interest in Hōon's more "orthodox" religious activities while stressing his alleged supernatural faculties, that is, his ability to cover a considerable distance in an extremely short time "as if he was flying."

74 From the account of Taichō, we know that the actual and reported death of a protagonist did not keep Masafusa from claiming that he attained superhuman longevity. In the case of Hōon, however, although the Chinese characters *shinsen* 神仙 are used, the *furigana* read *ikibotoke*, "living buddha." This term appears several times in *Shinsen-den* – Yamato Takeru was also called *ikibotoke* – and the question must be raised as to whether there is a particular reason why 神仙 is sometimes read one way and sometimes the other. Originally, the term *ikibotoke* 生佛 was applied to eminent monks who were honored as if they had attained buddhahood in their present incarnation. The *Shinsen-den* is the only text in which 神仙 is read and interpreted as "living buddha." Neither the meaning nor the standard pronunciation of the characters suggest such an interpretation. It therefore seems safe to assume that Masafusa simply attempted to fuse the Daoist concept of immortals and the Buddhist concept of living buddhas. It seems that Masafusa did not see a real difference between the two. For him, Buddhist saints and Daoist immortals were both holy persons who were endowed with supernatural powers. Doctrine and ethics did not concern him. On the other hand, it must be kept in mind that the popular mountain asceticism of Heian Japan was actually highly syncretistic.

[9] Kōbō Daishi[75]

The great master Kōbō, also known as Kūkai, came from the province of Sanuki [modern Kochi prefecture]. He left his family and became an ordained monk, serving the Bishop Gonzō 勤操 [754-827] as his teacher. He began his studies with the teachings of the Sanron and Hossō schools, but later entered the Diamond Vehicle [Tantrism], and then traveled to China to grasp the esoteric essence of the Shingon teaching more completely. There he served the abbot Huiguo 恵果 [746-805] as his teacher. Due to his efforts, since that time the path of the two *maṇḍala* worlds and the three divisions [of the Garbha-dhātu] as well as the secret rites of the various buddhas and the host of the saints have been spread in our country [Japan]. Kōbō also became the seventh patriarch of the followers of the Tathāgata Dainichi[76] and the first *ācārya*[77] of Japan. All this can be found in other biographies; it need not be described in more detail here.

Once Huiguo told him: "I have long waited for you, because it is you to whom I will transmit my entire dharma. You are a bodhisattva of the third of the ten stages, full of right efforts and spontaneous love [for all beings].

Therefore, we may also suggest that Masafusa did not blur the concepts because he was unfamiliar with religious reality but instead in fact reflected this reality much better (although probably unconsciously) than other contemporary authors such as Yasutane, Tameyasu, etc., who tended to idealize their protagonists and perhaps projected Buddhist concepts onto them.

75 So much has been written about Kūkai both in pre-modern and in modern times that it will suffice here to comment upon some issues which might contribute to a better understanding of the *Shinsen-den* as a piece of religious literature. In fact, however, the story does not contain many peculiarities which would distinguish it from all the other accounts of Kūkai's life. Kūkai's hagiography was probably too well known to be reconfigured into an account which would have completely fit the pattern of the *Shinsen-den*. Apparently Masafusa included Kūkai in his list of the *Shinsen-den* only because of his high reputation as a Buddhist master and cultural hero. A certain nationalistic undertone can be perceived in the last sentence of the account. It seems that one objective of the *Shinsen-den* was to provide evidence of Japan's being equal or superior to Central Asia, China and Korea. This hypothesis is backed by the inclusion of the national hero Yamato Takeru and by a passage in biography 28, where it is said that the Chinese monk Yixing appreciated the attainments of Japanese practitioners. In addition, the title "Accounts of Japanese Immortals" clearly suggests that Masafusa was eager to present the biographies of Japanese saints and sages in order to elevate the reputation of Japanese religious tradition.

76 According to the Shingon genealogy the successors of the Tathāgata Dainichi (Skt. Vairocana) up to Kūkai were (1) Vajrasattva, (2) Nāgārjuna, (3) Nāgabodhi, (4) Vajrabodhi, (5) Amoghavajra, (6) Huiguo.

77 Jpn. *ajari* 阿闍梨. A honorary title and official rank with varying meanings. In the broadest sense *ācārya* simply denotes a spiritual master. The title was bestowed upon priests of the Tendai and Shingon schools by the court. More specifically, in the Shingon tradition *ācārya* were entitled to transmit the esoteric teachings and rituals. Thus, in this context, it is indicated that Kūkai was the first Japanese priest authorized by his teacher Huiguo to teach and transmit esoteric Buddhism.

Most certainly I will later come back to be your disciple, when I am born in the eastern country."

While still in China, the great master threw his bell[78] to divine the location of superior places [for the spread of Buddhism] in our country.[79] Once it fell on Tō-ji, and then it landed on Mt. Kōya in the province of Kii, and a third time it came down on Mt. Muroro in the province of Tosa. After his return home, Kōbō sought out these locations and spread the dharma from them.

A Buddhist vicar general (*sōzu* 僧都) named Shuen 修圓 practiced avid recitation of the *Gokokukai kyō* 護國界經 (*Sūtra* for the Protection of the State) and was blessed with spiritual faculties.[80]

Once he sent a Buddha-Dharma-protecting spirit [*gohō* 護法] to China as a way to steal Huiguo's transmission. The great master, however, sensed a trace of this intention and said: "There is someone here to steal the dharma!" Thus, when he was about to receive the Diamond World [*maṇḍala*], he set up a sacred precinct surrounded by fire so that nobody could enter. Eventually he also received the Womb World [*maṇḍala*] and returned home. Yet even after the great master had come back home, he was continuously pestered by Shuen's spirit. So he decided to vanquish him once and for all. Inviting Shuen to a joint ritual at the high altar, the great master [Kōbō] then appeared to die.[81]

Shuen was suspicious and had someone examine him closely. The disciples cried and wailed and began to perform the mourning rites as if for their father. Again Shuen ordered someone to take a close look at the disciples' mourning. Only when they actually carried the great master's body off to be buried did Shuen finally believe in his death. He cried and wailed for a long time, performing rites of repentance. The great master, on the other hand, undertook rites of suppression and vanquishing[82] for a full

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78 The *reisho* 鈴杵 Kūkai allegedly threw to Japan is a small hand-bell with a pestle shaped like a *vajra*, the thunderbolt or diamond club of Indra. It is an important tool in esoteric rituals.

79 This is not a typical action for an immortal. Daoist immortals would know spontaneously which place was right and would have no need to resort to means of divination.

80 The idea of rivals and competition among immortals or harm to them is not a Daoist motif. Typically, immortals interact cheerfully with each other or at least stay out of each other's way.

81 Apparent deaths are common among Daoist immortals, not in order to deceive but to spare the feelings of common mortals. A classical example is Fei Changfang 費張房, who left a bamboo stick behind to appear as his corpse when he decided to follow the Gourd Master into immortal training. See GÜNTSCH 1988: 164, and DEWOSKIN 1983: 79. Apparent deaths are also common in the mode of transformation knowns as "deliverance from the corpse" (*shijie* 尸解). See ROBINET 1979; and CAMPANY 1996: 298.

82 *Jōbukuhō* 調伏法; i. e., a *goma* ritual directed towards Fudō and other *myōō* performed to vanquish evil spirits and enemies.

seven days, with the result that Shuen suddenly developed a large boil and dropped dead. After that he performed rites of repentance for a further seven days, causing Shuen to descend once again into the Three Worlds and manifest [himself] at the fire altar. He spoke to the great master: "I am Shuen. In order to make you open and spread your dharma to the world, I became your fierce enemy for a time."[83]

The great master was also very skilled at writing in grass style. He was able to write holding the brush with either his left or right hand, his left or right foot, or his mouth.[84] For this reason people in the Tang court called him the "five-brush monk." He composed and calligraphed various inscriptions at the Tang imperial palace, notably those found on the Great Southern Gate and on the Gate of Matching Heaven. In the latter inscription, the dot on the character *ying* 應 fell off. To remedy this, because the inscription already had been properly placed, the great master just threw his brush at it from a distance and thus completed the character.

The inscription he prepared for the Southern Gate, the Gate of the Vermilion Bird, on the other hand, was truly of numinous essence. Ono no Michikaze nevertheless criticized its style, saying: "This could just as well be read 'Gate of the Vermilion Rice'." But then he had a dream in which a man appeared who called himself the messenger of great master Kōbō. He subdued Michikaze and placed his foot on his neck. Michikaze looked up at him and saw that the tip of his shoe was so big it disappeared into the clouds. He never managed to see the entire figure.

The great master had to write the inscription for the Yin-Yang Calendar Office three times. After he had completed the first version, he had a dream in which a "spirit man" (*shinjin* 神人) told him: "This inscription is rather common. You'd better change it." He accordingly changed both its words and its style. But then he had another dream, in which the man said: "This inscription is too awe-inspiring. Nobody would dare pass beneath it." So he redid it again.

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83 This last sentence renders the episode into a form of divine testing, whereby apparent cruelty serves to bring out the stronger determination in a given immortal-to-be. This happens in various Daoist stories, the most famous cases being Zhang Daoling's disciples, Fei Changfang, and Lü Dongbin. See KOHN 1993: 119-32; GÜNTSCH 1988: 138-40.

84 Calligraphy was an ancient art not only of the Confucian gentleman but also of the inspired Daoist. In fact, China's most famous calligrapher, Wang Xizhi 王羲之, was a devout Daoist (see FUKUNAGA 1960), and the divine nature of certain Daoist revelations was demonstrated by their outstanding calligraphy (see LEDDEROSE 1984; and STRICKMANN 1978). Writing as a form of magical control, moreover, goes back to the Shang dynasty (see CHAVES 1977), and Daoist charts and talismans, written in a divine script, were believed to contain the power over life and death. See ROBINET 1993.

Then there was the inscription for the Building Office, which was supposed to go on the gate at the entrance to the office. Someone suggested, "Let the building officials ask the great master for a suitable inscription." Complying with this, they sent a messenger, but he missed his appointment with the great master and could not find him. Faced with this situation, he offered a devout prayer saying: "Oh, great master, you are a man of superb powers! May you lend me the force of your five brushes! Let their power come into my incapable hand!" At that moment he produced an inscription written as if by the great master himself.

The great master was also very skilled at literary composition, creating numerous works, as represented especially in the seven-volume *Shōryōshū* 性靈集 (Collection on the Nature of the Numinous).

Once, in the Garden of the Spirit Spring, he performed the scriptural rites of praying for rain. Shuen, however, had cast a spell over all the rainmaking dragons and sent them into a bottle, and so the great master did not garner any divine response.[85]

However, he soon became aware of his rival's intention and requested the benevolent dragon king of Akuda Lake [in the Himalayas] to come to him. A small gold colored dragon, he duly came riding on a ten-foot snake accompanied by two snake attendants. Upon his arrival a great downpour occurred. Later, the Garden of the Divine Spring became the dragon king's main residence and a special place for the performance of esoteric rites. The precious wish-fulfilling pearl, sent to our country by the Tang court as a present, is also housed in this garden, and the future rebirth of Huiguo is expected here, [something that is] a deeply kept secret of the Shingon school. At the end of his life, the great master went to the Kongōbu-ji (Temple of the Diamond Peak, on Mt. Kōya) and entered the deep meditative trance of the Diamond World. He remains there even today. In the beginning, people could observe his hair still growing while his appearance remained unchanged. [86]

He drilled about half a mile right through the top of the mountain and set up his meditation chamber. To the present day, there are no cruel wild birds such as ravens or hawks on this mountain, nor are there any wild animals that

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85 Dragons and snakes in China are commonly associated with rainmaking (see SCHAFER 1973). Their suppression or control is part of the power of immortals. See Fei Changfang's biography in *Shenxian zhuan*; GÜNTSCH 1988: 166.

86 The continued freshness and lifelike appearance of the corpse is an indication of the immortal quality of the person. Many Daoist masters were thus characterized, such as Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 of the Tang (see ENGELHARDT 1987) and the immortal Flower Maiden (Huagu 華姑 ; see CAHILL 1990) for example.

might chatter or bray noisily. This is [a result of] the vow [Kūkai] took during his lifetime.

He always proclaimed: "For the spread of the dharma the [conversion of the imperial] family is most important." Therefore, this [Shingon] school continuously [converted] the princes and the nobility without interruption.

After the emperor of the Kanpyō reign [889-897] received ordination in the school, Ninna-ji 仁和寺[87] saw a succession of princes join up. Emperor Enyū [r. 969-984] also came to this holy place, contributing to the school's brilliant efflourescence.

It is also said that the great master attained and manifested the highest state of great enlightenment. How could anything in our age be higher or better than that? Many of the great master's intentions and actions can be seen from the twenty-two chapters of declarations he left behind. They do not need to be repeated here.

Around the Engi period [912-922], he was first given an honorary posthumous title [*shigō* 諡號]. The followers of the [Shingon] school [then] filed a petition, saying: "With the exception of the great master, nobody should receive [this kind of] title." Thus, although there were many wise and virtuous men, they were not proposed for the honor.

During the great master's lifetime, ten dhyāna masters were performing religious services at the palace, all belonging to the Tendai school. Later, although they received employment in the Office of Monks, they did yet not give up these palace services. The great master said: "It is not proper to have two rice bowls; one should not have more than one needs. Once employed by the Office of Monks, one must give up the palace services."

Shinnyo,[88] an imperial prince of the Daidō period [806-809], was inspired by this and left his family to become the great master's disciple. Attaining great understanding of the Shingon teaching, he later traveled to China and even India in search of the dharma. Once he wrote a letter to the great master, saying: "There may be many enlightened teachers, but none

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87 Ninna-ji, also known as Omuro, was founded by emperor Kōkō in 886, northwest of Kyoto. From the time of the abdication of Uda Tennō in 899, the head of the temple has always been an imperial prince. The temple therefore belongs to the category of *miya monzeki* 宮門跡.

88 Shinnyo Shōnin 眞如上人; also known as Kōgaku Shinnō 高岳親王 or Takaoka Shinnō 高岡親王, was the son of emperor Heijō 平城天皇 (r. 806-809). His political carreer was interrupted because he was involved in a conspiracy. As a result, he shaved his head and received the precepts in 822, taking the clerical name Shinnyo. He retired to Tō-ji (temple) where he became a disciple of Kūkai. After his teacher's death he wandered about the land, recruiting disciples. In 861 he left for China, where he stayed for only six months because he decided to travel on to India. He died, however, in the mountains of Laos in 865.

surpasses the great master. There may be many lofty palaces, but none surpasses the Daigokuden (Palace Council Hall)." This one must know: The people of our country even surpass those of Central Asia and of China.

[10] Jikaku Daishi[89]

The great master Jikaku was also called Ennin.[90] His lay family name was Mibu and he came from the province of Shimotsuke [modern Tochigi prefecture]. From birth he had supernatural perception and when he grew up he developed a keen sharpness of mind. Accordingly, he went to live in the Enryaku-ji monastery [on Mt. Hiei], where he served his teacher the great master Dengyō.[91]

Later, his former teacher told him in a dream: "It is my order that you go to the Great Tang and thoroughly study the teachings of the mantra [*shingon* 眞言] as well as those of Cessation and Insight [*shikan* 止観, i. e. Tendai]!" [He indeed went and] met seven saintly monks who transmitted the secret teachings to him. In addition, Ennin also encountered the persecution of Buddhism under the Huichang emperor,[92] but despite the large-scale destruction and disorder, he managed to obtain numerous Buddhist images, *sūtra*s, and treatises, and returned home with them. Here he was installed as the high patriarch of the Tendai school and as such ordained the emperor and many high officials.

By nature Ennin was empathic and compassionate, and never gave himself over to the emotions of joy and anger. His teachings and disciples, moreover, spread widely through the entire country and he created a formal ritual service for the two [*maṇḍala*] worlds. While praying for signs to

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89 For further references, see *Hokke genki* I, *Konjaku monogatari* XI.11; *Uji shūi monogatari* XIII, *Shijū hyakuin'en shū* VII, *Genkō shakusho* III, and *Shingon-den* III.

90 The Tendai priest Ennin 圓仁 (794-864), posthumously called Jikaku Daishi 慈覺大師 ("Great Master of Compassion and Awakening"), was the third head priest (after Saichō 最澄 and Gishin 義眞) of the Enryaku-ji monastery on Mt. Hiei. He travelled to Tang China in 838 and returned in 847. In China he studied esoteric as well as Tiantai teachings and witnessed the persecution of Buddhism under Wuzong 武宗 in 842-845. He also adopted practices of the Pure Land cult. He is credited with – or criticized (by Nichiren for instance) for – giving esotericism and Pure Land Buddhism a firm basis in Japanese Tendai. During his travels in China he wrote a diary, giving us firsthand information about an important part of his life (see REISCHAUER 1955a, 1955b).

91 Dengyō Daishi 傳教大師 ("Great Master Transmitter of the Teachings") is the posthumous title of Saichō (767-822), founder of the Japanese Tendai community on Mt. Hiei (see GRONER 1984).

92 I. e., Wuzong, r. 841-847. The persecution of Buddhism under emperor Wuzong was the third of four major persecutions of Buddhism in pre-modern China, the so-called *sanwu yizong fanan* 三武一宗法難 or "the suppression of Buddhism by three Wu emperors and one Zong emperor. In 845 emperor Wuzong ordered by imperial decree that every monk and nun return to lay status and that all property of the *saṃgha* be confiscated. The suppression did not last long, however, and was stopped by Wuzong's successor.

indicate whether the Buddha agreed to this or not, he dreamt that he shot at the sun and hit it dead center. From this he knew that his project accorded with the Buddha's will. When the time came for him to die, he suddenly disappeared and was nowhere to be seen. His disciples looked for him everywhere, fearing that he had fallen into a ravine on Mt. Nyoi. They could find no trace of him, however, and thus came to know that he had been an avatar of a great divine being. How could he not have been one of the divine immortals [*ikibotoke*]?[93]

The details of his life are recorded in other biographies. I offer only a brief outline here.[94]

[11] Yōshō[95]

Yōshō was a person from the province of Noto. His family name was Ki. His mother once dreamt that she was swallowing sunlight. Becoming pregnant, she gave birth to Yōshō.[96]

In the year Genkei 3 [879], he went to Mt. Hiei where he lived in the Hōdō-in temple. Eleven years old at the time, he served the *vinaya*-master Kūnichi as his teacher.[97] He was extremely intelligent and perceptive by nature, and when he was studying he never asked [the same question] twice. He deeply worked his way through the Lotus, the Yoga, and the "Great Cessation and Insight."[98] During his whole life he was not given to emotion, nor did he sleep much.[99] Although he had nothing he did not need, he gave

93 The sudden vanishing of a person is a form of ascension and sign of his or her immortal nature. It usually confuses his worldly associates. A famous case in China is the ascension of Lad Qu 翟童, who vanished before the astounded eyes of his fellow monks. They, like Jikaku's followers, looked everywhere for him fearing the worst, but in the end concluded that he had disappeared into the higher spheres. See SUNAYAMA 1987; KOHN 1993: 328-30.

94 The "brief outline" of Ennin's life presented by Masafusa is perhaps the most typical piece of Buddhist hagiography in the *Shinsen-den*. Information about his origin and descent are followed by a summary of his life and deeds. Some notes about his character traits and extraordinary talents complete the image. The account ends with a description of his auspicious death. There is only one thing that distinguishes Masafusa's version from all other Ennin biographies: He forces Ennin into the type of an immortal by asserting that he vanished without leaving a trace of his body.

95 For references, see *Hokke genki* 44, *Fusō ryakki* 23/24, *Nihon kōsō den yōmonshō*, *Konjaku monogatari* XIII.3, *Uji shūi monogatari* shū VIII, *Genkō shakusho* XVIII, etc.

96 Birth after swallowing sunlight is part of the hagiography of both the Buddha and Laozi. See KARETZKY 1992; KOHN 1998a.

97 Nothing is known about Kūnichi. Moreover, according to the Daitōkyū edition of *Shinsen-den* and *Fusō ryakki*, Yōshō's teacher was a certain Gennichi 玄日 (d. 922; see INOUE and ŌSONE 1995: 107).

98 These texts are the *Lotus sūtra*, the *Yogācāra-bhūmi-śāstra* (according to the *Yōshō sennin den*), and the *Mohe zhiguan* (Jpn. *Maka shikan* 摩訶止觀) by Zhiyi. All are revered in the Tendai school. The second might also refer to esoteric materials in general.

99 This reflects the ideal of the perfected Daoist (*zhenren* 眞人) as first formulated in the *Zhuangzi*, which describes such a person as free from all worries and concerns, neither

clothing and food to the hungry and cold. Later he went up Mt. Mitake where he set up his residence in the grounds of Muta-dera. He practiced severe austerities for three years, eating only one grain of rice each day.[100] Still, his gait was strong and nimble, and he could fly without wings. Even during the winter months he did not wear clothes or [use] a quilt.[101]

In the autumn of the year Engi 1 [901], he ascended to the immortals. In the eighteenth year of the same period [918], a monk from Tōdai-ji reached the peak of the immortals. He abstained both from rice and water, and when he was about to die, he heard a voice [reciting] the Lotus sūtra. Bewildered, he got up to look for its origin and, as a result, unexpectedly encountered Yōshō, who was reciting spells over his begging bowl and water jar. In an instant delicious food filled the bowl and rich broth overflowed the jar.[102]

Yōshō [said]: "My grandfather, [who lives] in my old village, is a close friend of this old mountain. Please tell [him] that I can see the Buddhas and hear the dharma, ascend to heaven and enter the earth; I can change supernaturally [my appearance] as I wish."[103]

In the twelfth month, [Yōshō's] grandfather became ill. He said: "Although I have many sons and grandsons, Yōshō has been my dearest. But

loving life nor hating death, sleeping lightly, and breathing deeply. See WATSON 1968: 77-78. Attaining equanimity is one of the highest goals of Buddhists as well. Moreover, drowsiness or sleepiness (Skt. *middha*) is regarded as a hindrance to spiritual progress. The combination *fu-kido fu-suimen* 不喜怒不睡眠 is a standard stereotypical characterization of the protagonists of Buddhist hagiographies.

100 This is a form of abstinence from grain. See Levi 1983.

101 Complete immunity to temperatures and other natural phenomena is a typical characteristic of the immortals, mentioned as early as the *Zhuangzi* and later in the *Baopuzi* (see WATSON 1968: 78; and WARE 1966: 305. The most famous immortal not needing clothes to protect himself against heat or cold is Lan Caihe 藍采和 of the Eight Immortals (see YETTS 1916).

102 The magical procurement of food is also one of the classic powers of immortals. See biogr. 8, note 73 above. The most frequently mentioned magical accomplishment of the hermits in the *setsuwa* texts is their telekinetic control over jars and begging bowls. Some are capable of making their jars fly to a creek or a well and have them fill with water, others dispatch their bowls to a donor and have them return filled with food. In some cases, the ascetics do not need to move their bowls or jars at all but fill them by merely thinking of food or water. Some are served by animals or demons, others simply dream of food and their stomach feels full and their mouth holds a delicious taste when they awake. The frequency of such "nutrition stories" indicates that nutrition was a serious problem for every mountain ascetic. See KLEINE 1997: 18. The art of the flying bowl was closely connected with Mantrayāna Buddhism in China already. Yijing 義淨 (614-713) the famous pilgrim-monk in his *Datang sanzang siyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan* 大唐三藏西城求法高僧傳 relates the following story of Nanda, a disciple of Nāgārjuna: "Every mealtime he chanted the mantras and food would fall from the sky. He recited the mantras at will and before long he would obtain whatever pleased him in his bowl. When he stopped reciting spells, the bowl would disappear." (T 51.6c-7a)

103 Entering the earth is the immediate precursor to ascending to heaven. For a discussion, see ROBINET 1979.

he went away and never came back. Alas! How sad! If he has become a living buddha [*ikibotoke* 神仙], why does he not come to see me?" In response to [his grandfather's] voice, Yōshō appeared above the house and recited the *sūtra*. One could only hear his voice, but not see his body.

Every year in the eighth month he went to Saitō [the "Western Pagoda," one of the three compounds on Mt. Hiei], without fail to listen to the "continuous *nembutsu*" [*fudan nembutsu* 不斷念佛].[104] He told people: "The mountain receives so many believers' donations, that the air is always filled with fire and smoke [from incense]. Only during the [continuous] *nembutsu* does the smoke clear so that I can come down."[105] [He descended] together with the autumn leaves so that nobody could see him. This can also be read in his Separate Biography.

[12] Yōshō's disciple[106]

Yōshō's disciple was originally the lad of the Venerable Enzai of Senkō-in. He practiced the way of the Buddha and eventually attained longevity.[107]

Then he served Yōshō as his teacher. Once a monk from Gangō-ji occupied a mountain cave on the south-east slope of Mt. Mitake. For one entire summer retreat[108] he continuously recited the *Lotus sūtra*; even during the rainy season when the rain went on for weeks, he did not cease but

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104 The *Sambō'e* III describes the practice as follows: "The Nenbutsu was introduced from China and practiced here first by Master Jikaku in the seventh year of the Jōgan era [865]. Among the four types of meditation, this is the one called 'continuous moving meditation [*jōgyō zanmai* 常行三昧].' When the cool mid-autumn wind is blowing and the clear mid-month moon is shining, the meditation is begun at dawn, on the eleventh day of the eighth month, and it continues without interruption until the seventeenth. The two thousand monks of the monastery are divided into four watches. Their bodies constantly circle the Buddha and all the sins of the body are negated. Their mouths constantly chant the sūtra, and all the transgressions of speech disappear. Their minds constantly contemplate the Buddha, and all confusion comes to an end" (KAMENS 1988: 342; and DNBZ 111: 467a).

105 In the *Hokke genki* account (44) Yōshō's criticism of the monastic institution is much more explicit. When asked why he never visited Mt. Hiei at times other than the continuous *nembutsu*, he reportedly answered: "Mount Hiei is filled with the hot fire of bribery by donors and believers and I can not bear the vulgar smell of the various priests in the mountain" (DYKSTRA 1983: 71; and NST 7: 109).

106 For further references, see *Fusō ryakki* XXIII, *Hokke genki* 44, *Konjaku monogatari* XIII.3, and *Genkō shakusho* XVIII. In these texts, the account of the disciples' encounter with a monk, which is virtually the entire story in the *Shinsenden*, is incorporated into the account of Yōshō.

107 "Longevity" or "long life" (*chōsei* 長生) is an expression for the basic attainment of immortality.

108 *Ango* 安居 is an abbreviation of *u'ango* 雨安居 which is a translation of the Sanskrit term *vārṣāvāsa* (peaceful dwelling during the rainy season). According to the *Mahāvagga* (III, 1), the Buddha ordered the monks to stay at a fixed place during the rainy season because people critcised the *saṃgha* for walking around in the rainy season and killing young plants and small animals (BECHERT 1993: 329-30).

abstained from food and drink for many days. One day at dusk, a lad suddenly appeared before him dressed in blue. He came and gave him something and ordered him to eat it.[109]

It tasted sweet and delicious. The monk asked: "Who are you?" [The lad] answered: "I am a lad of Enzai who also served Yōshō for a long time. I have completely realized the Way [*dōjō* 道成],[110] and I can now descend [to earth], and even ten thousand *ri* is not a long distance [for me].There is not one among the three mountains [of the immortals] or the five sacred peaks [of China] that I have not passed.[111] I came because I felt sorry about your suffering and depravation."

Saying thus he vanished. This [story] can be read in the "Separate Biography of Yōshō."

[13] The attendant of the Grand Minister of Kawara-in

The Grand Minister of Kawara-in had an attendant who was very close to him. When the Grand Minister took a bath, the attendant saw his back and commented: "You have the bones of an immortal.[112] Please take good care of yourself. I myself have studied the way of the immortals[113] for many years and my complete realization of the Way [*dōjō* 道成] is drawing near. If you wish to attain immortality, you can come away with me." The minister agreed and several months passed, during which the attendant was not seen. Then, one evening as the Grand Minister was leaning against the southern ballustrade, he saw something shadowy under the garden trees. It [was the attendant, who] spoke to him: "I have now attained complete realization of the Way. What about the agreement we made the other day?" The minister

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109 Often immortality is transmitted in the form of food, typically small, sweet fruit, such as peaches or dates. The most famous case is the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母) having the peaches of immortality brought to emperor Wu of the Han (see SCHIPPER 1965), but there are many later stories that also involve other food (see KNAUL 1981: 99).

110 The expression *dōjō* 道成, "Dao/Way complete," indicates the realization of the person's immortal destiny, the complete fulfillment of himself as part of the Dao. It is used in the same manner in a Buddhist context to indicate the realization of the Buddhist Way or enlightenment.

111 The three mountains of the immortals are the group of islands in the eastern sea known as Penglai (Jpn. Hōrai), center of the world of the immortals. The five sacred peaks are the highest mountains in central China, the mainstays of the world in Chinese sacred geography.

112 The idea behind this concept is that immortals are originally made in heaven and come to earth to regain their original celestial status. Their otherworldly nature is revealed clearly in their bones. See KOHN 1996b: 204-6. Ge Hong in his *Shenxian zhuan* relates the story of the poor man Yen Qing who was told by an immortal that his "bone feature" was that of an immortal, whereupon the immortal gave him a scroll which contained the secret of immortality (POO 1995: 179).

113 The *furigana* added to the character 仙 indicate that the proper reading is *hijiri* in this case.

said: "I would still like to join you, but I must first inform my wife about my intentions." The immortal said: "On the path of divine immortality there is no looking back to one's flesh and blood. If your desire is [as weak] as that, how can you ever achieve perfection?"[114] Having said this, he vanished.

[14] The Lords Fuji and Hara[115]

The two lords Fuji and Hara lived in the Yoshino district of the province of Yamato. They always wore loose clothing and feathered caps, not wishing to wear the restrictive garb [of officialdom]. They abstained from grains and could go without food; they could fly without wings.[116]

Once the dharma master Jōzō [891-964] wished to cross the Yoshino River. The waters were rapid and overflowing, and there was no way he could reach the stepping stones. Then the two immortals [*hijiri* 仙] appeared and said to him: "Let us try our powers!" Lord Fuji accordingly exerted his occult powers [*kaji* 加持] and ordered a dharma-protecting spirit [*gohō* 護法] to cut down a huge tree south of the river. Lord Hara similarly ordered it to come and place itself across the flooding river.[117]

Their voices were very doleful, and anyone hearing them felt like crying.[118]

Jōzō eventually stepped on the felled tree and got across the roaring river. The two immortals were pleased and told him: "You may have made it across – but who really got to go over that beam?"[119]

Saying this, they suddenly flew off.

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114 This notion is commonly expressed in a series of examinations or tests administered to aspiring immortals. See biogr. 9, note 83 above. Fervent faith and strong will were regarded as necessary conditions for achieving immortality. According to one account in Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan*, an immortal asked an aspirant to eat excrement. "Since he hesitated to do such an abominable thing, he did not pass the test" (POO 1995: 179).

115 For further references, see *Shingon-den* V and *Genkō shakusho* XVIII.

116 Immortals commonly wear nonrestrictive, naturally-made clothes to demonstrate their closeness with nature and rejection of officialdom. Their feathery garb, also seen in Han-dynasty images on mirrors, shows their assimilation with birds, also expressed in the notion that they can fly. See KALTENMARK 1953: 10-12.

117 See note 54.

118 The voices of immortals are often described as soft and sweet, again reflecting their similarity to young girls (*Zhuangzi*, ch. 1). In addition, they are also associated with the sound of whistling and/or flute playing, again indicating their closeness to the birds. See KALTENMARK 1953: 125 and SAWADA 1974.

119 This raises the question of personal identity as independent self versus as part of the Dao – planting a doubt in the wanderer's mind and questioning the importance of his achievement. The question is formulated in a Zen style, which is reminiscent of episodes in the *Zhuangzi*. Among immortals' stories, the most famous "identity question" appears in the biography of Lü Dongbin who dreams that he passes through a lifetime of official advancement before the yellow millet has even been cooked, then realizes that his worldly identity is worthless and decides to join the Dao. See YETTS 1916. In Jōzō's biography in the *Shūi ōjō-den* (II.1), a different account of his river-crossing is given. It

[15] The Old Seller of White Chopsticks

The old seller of white chopsticks came from the capital.[120] Nobody knows for how many years he lived at the market gate, always selling white chopsticks in order to earn his daily food.[121] People asked him how old he was, but he never gave an answer, one way or another. Then he suddenly took off and vanished. Later someone said he had seen [him] in a mountain cave, burning incense and reciting a *sūtra*.[122] The [man who saw him] asked him the reason he was there, but [the old man] kept silent and gave no answer. The same story is also found in the preface to the [collection of] Ki 紀.[123] Here I give only its general outline.

[16] Miyako no Yoshika[124]

Miyako no Yoshika [ca. 833-879] came from the capital. His literary style was unsurpassed in his times. Quickly he attained [the rank of a] candidate of Confucian learning and became an official dressed in scarlet [i.e., the fourth or fifth rank]. He was fond of drinking mountain water and practiced the methods of the immortals (*senbō* 仙法). His body was extremely strong and in his youth he could run faster than galloping horses seven or eight *shaku* (2.5 or 2.8 meters) in height.[125]

Once when he was serving as palace secretary, he took a prostitute on an excursion to Kitano on children's day. A messenger from Dewa province was sent [after him] with the order that he should compose an imperial decree. However, nobody knew where he was, and in the end a secretary of

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says that, when Jōzō was on his way to Yoshino, he encountered a flood, whereupon a boat miraculously appeared (NST 7: 319). This account suggests that the boat appeared in accordance with Jōzō's miraculous powers and without the help of others. It is noteworthy that the *Shinsen-den* depicts the famous and highly venerated holy man Jōzō as inferior to the two rather unknown immortals Fuji and Hara not only in terms of their magic faculties but apparently also in terms of wisdom, as the "identity question" indicates.

120 This refers to the capital Kyoto, although the text uses the Chinese name Luoyang (Jpn., Rakuyō 落陽).

121 Many immortals and Daoists earned their living by selling herbs or wine or telling peoples' fortunes. Famous among them are the Gourd Master (GÜNTSCH 1988: 162) and the philosopher Yan Zun 嚴遵 (see ROBINET 1977).

122 Caves or caverns in the depths of mountains are preferred residences of immortals because they are subterranean tunnels that lead to the heavens, known as "grotto-heavens" (*dongtian* 洞天), and often contain a completely different world within themselves. See MIURA 1983; VERELLEN 1995

123 This refers to Ki no Haseo 紀長谷雄 (c. 844-912), a man of letters who composed a number of poems. "Preface to the [collection of] Ki" points to Ki no Haseo's preface to the ninth scroll of the *Honchō bunsui* 本朝文粋 (INOUE and ŌSONE 1995: 458).

124 For further references, see *Genkō shakusho* (28, p. 359)

125 This matches the description of ancient immortals, who also were said to be able to outrun horses. See GÜNTSCH 1988: 349.

the second class[126] was entrusted with the composition. As it was getting dark, Yoshika rode back, quite drunk. When he saw the writing of the minor secretary, he tore it into pieces without even reading it.

Yoshika would dip his brush and compose sentences without the slightest hesitation, which were nevertheless so good that people quote them even today. At the time of his examination, he had a secret affair with the concubine of Lord Yoshinawa, senior official in the Bureau of Examination and also the head of Yoshika's exam commission. While stealthily sharing a straw mat with her, he made up his mind to become an eccentric immortal. From ancient times there had been a great number of men who passed the examination, but his was the best of all, so much so that once a graffitti appeared on a pillar in the academy calling him "the world's greatest maniac, Miyako Kotomichi."[127]

It was only after this that his fame really took off. As for his names, he himself changed his original surname from Haraaka to Miyako.[128]

Later the emperor's reign was cut short, and Miyako's career too was interrupted. [To get back on track], he changed his first name from Kotomichi to Yoshika, using a phrase he found in a poem exchanged with an offical of the Kōrokan 鴻臚館 [Foreign Office] which described the Japanese capital as "smelling fragrant" [*yoshika* 良香]. When a visitor from the north saw his name, he [knew it was from the poem] and immediately said: "This man must have changed his name."[129]

Prince Tomohiro [964-1009] praised him saying: "If a letter is to be sent to another country, there can be no doubt that it should be composed by Yoshika." Once he wrote a poem containing the line: "The weather clears up

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126 *Naiki* 内記. "Officials of the *Narakatsukasa-shō* entrusted with the making of the decrees *(mikotonori, semmyō)* that were to be promulgated in the name of the emperor. There were the *dai-naiki*, secretaries of the first class, and the *shō-naiki*, secretaries of the second class" (PAPINOT, 1992: 708-9).

127 Daoist immortals in the world are often described as highly eccentric and even crazy or maniacal. They refuse to bend to common rules and tend to make fun of the worries and concerns of ordinary people. Famous examples include a group of medieval poets knowns as the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove (see HOLZMAN 1956) as well as the later Eight Immortals.

128 His original surname was actually Kuwahara 桑原. Haraaka is unknown as a Japanese surname. It may be a misreading of Kuwahara.

129 Changing one's name upon a major life change is an ancient practice. The *Shenxian zhuan* describes one case of this in its biography of Laozi: "When people face difficult situations in their lives, they should change their name or appellation to accommodate the transformation of cosmic energy that is taking place. By doing so, they can extend their lives and overcome the difficulty. ... Laozi, living for over three hundred years under the Zhou, was bound to encounter many difficulties. Thus he has rather a lot of names" (KOHN 1996a, ch. 1; and GÜNTSCH 1988: 38).

and the wind combs the hair of a young willow." When people recited this while passing the Gate of the Vermilion Bird, the demon living in its upper story was greatly moved. Prime minister Suga[wara] had been examined for his first degree [*xiucai* 秀才; Jpn. *shūsai*] by Yoshika but later rose to a much higher rank. Yoshika was greatly angered by this [injustice], gave up his career, and entered the mountains in search of immortals and the cultivation of their techniques, in the process passing through Ōmine thirty-three times.[130]

Nobody knows what became of him. More than one hundred years later someone saw him in a mountain cavern. His facial complexion was unchanged and he still looked as if [he was] in the prime of life. This part is also described in the "National History" [*kokushi*, i. e. the *Sandai jitsuroku* 三代實録]. I have written down a different story here.

[17] The Monk under a Tree in Kawachi

There was a monk under a tree in Kawachi [in the eastern part of modern Osaka prefecture]. Nobody knew which country he was from. He lived deep in the mountains and built himself a grass hut. In order to keep people away, he went to and from his place by confusing routes. Anyone seeing the hut of this *śramaṇa* would notice that it was entirely devoid of cooking utensils. They would see only him constantly sitting with his eyes closed, practicing seated meditation [and] being mindful of the Buddha [*zazen nembutsu* 坐禪念佛]. His hair grew long and hung down his back, but he did not cut it off.[131]

Has he not become an immortal [*shinsen* 神仙]? Who else could be like that? Later nobody ever saw or encountered him again.

[18] The Riverside Man of Mino

There was a man beside a river in the province of Mino [modern Gifu prefecture]. He used stones to go through the current, never coming and going by road. He abstained from food and drink for a prolonged period, yet his body was always suffused with warmth. Once the official aspirant[132] Minamoto Shigezane[133] went hunting and came to the riverside place.

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130 Unhappiness or disillusionment with a worldly career is a common, if not the foremost, reason for seeking the Dao. GÜNTSCH (1988: 327) characterizes such immortals as "drop-outs." The number thirty-three plays an important role in Buddhism, especially in Kannon worship. Based on the contents of the Kannon chapter of the *Lotus sūtra*, it is believed that the bodhisattva appears in thirty-three different forms in respondence to the needs of the sentient beings he is going to save. For this reason the Kannon pilgrimage routes usually lead to thirty-three places where Kannon is enshrined.

131 Hairstyle was an expression of the person's mental state. Long and dishevelled hair was commonly associated with social outcasts as well as people in mourning, tramps, immortals, and demons. For a discussion, see ŌGATA 1995.

132 *San'i* 散位, refers to someone who has a rank but no office.

133 Minamoto Shigezane was a military officer of the guardian troups of the right. In 1079, he was thrown into prison by regent Fujiwara Morozane (1042-1101). Later he received ordination and became a monk.

[Seeing the man lying there,] he touched his belly with his bow and found the skin soft and pliant like that of a living person.[134]

Later people went to look for him again, but nobody knew where he was.

[19] The Stone Cave Immortal of Dewa Province

There was an immortal [*hijiri* 仙] in Dewa province [modern Yamagata and Akita prefectures] who lived in a stone cavern. Nobody knew how old he was. He stayed in a stone cave for several hundred years, abstaining from grains and giving up all eating. Regardless of whether it was cold or hot, he constantly practiced meditative concentration [*zenjō* 禅定]. He is still alive today.

[20] The Monk of Ōmine[135]

Once Jōzō passed through Mt. Ōmine, located between Mt. Mitake and Mt. Kumano, and lost his way. Entering a valley, he found five monks' huts with three rooms each, in one of which a meditation monk was lazily having a nap. No one else was there. Jōzō, peeking at the monk, wondered if he was not perhaps [a transformation of] the devil.[136] Just as he was about to perform an esoteric ritual [*kaji* 加持], the monk woke up and covered his face with his hands, saying: "There must be some wicked spirit around here." Accordingly, he grabbed his staff which was lying on his pillow, sprinkled perfumed water over it and whirled it about. Suddenly a fire appeared and began to burn Jōzō's straw raincoat. The monk [looked at him and] said: "As you have managed to get this close to me, you must be a most excellent sort of person." He then performed a *kaji* ritual to extinguish the fire. Later he explained that he was one of the *shinsen* and gave Jōzō a persimmon to eat.[137] For one month after he had tasted it, he did not even think of eating.[138] When Jōzō asked [how] to get back to the road, the monk called his water jar and ordered it to guide him. The jar flew high up in the sky and moved away. Jōzō followed it and eventually reached the road. Later he tried to find the place once more but never came across it or the monk again.[139]

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134 The immortal has no need for ordinary food, drink, or movement; he may appear as if dead, but is in fact still full of cosmic energy and among the living. This story is yet another variant of the theme of apparent death. See biography no. 9 above.

135 This account does not appear in the other hagiographies of Jōzō.

136 Temma 天魔. Skt. Deva Māra. One of the four Māras, evil demons who dwell in the sixth heaven at the top of the "realm of desire," from where they obstruct Buddhism.

137 The persimmon was believed to give a lovely complexion, and was a symbol of vitality.

138 This is another example of the "miraculous nutrition motif." According to the *Hosshin shū* (IV.2), Jōzō was himself capable of making his bowl fly and bring him food.

139 This is a tale with the grotto-heaven theme, in which an innocent traveler enters a mysterious mountain area and finds another world. He stays for some time and enjoys it, but is never able to find it again after his return to the common world. The classic story

[21] The Hermit of Ōmine[141]

Once when he was young, Dharma Master Jōzō entered Mt. Ōmine and suddenly encountered rain, snow, and extremely cold weather. The path was obscured and he did not know where it was headed, so he stopped under a big tree, gathered dead wood and lit it. Because the wood was drenched with water the flames immediately went out again and again. He decided to give it up and instead focused his mind on the main object of worship [probably the Buddha; *honzon o nenzu* 念本尊].

Suddenly a figure appeared in the treetop and said to Jōzō: "How are you tonight?" Jōzō said: "I cannot light a fire. This darkness and cold are extremely hard to bear." The figure in the tree said: "Let me try my supernatural powers [*jinriki* 神力]." He then recited a spell twenty or thirty times, with the result that the wood finally caught fire. This done, he said: "I am the immortal [*sennin* 仙人] of this mountain. I came because I took pity on your plight." With this he flew away and was not seen again. Jōzō on the other hand studied the spells of great compassion [that the immortal had used]. People who heard this could not help but cry.[142]

[22] The Stick-Beaten Immortal

The Stick-Beaten immortal [*hijiri* 仙] came from the province of Yamato. Although he had studied immortality, his ordinary bones were still heavy.[143]

However, with the help of various medicines, he managed to lift off the earth and fly.[144]

Since he could not [rise] any higher than seven or eight shaku [2.5-2.8m], the little children chased him about and beat him with a stick, hence his name. Nobody knows what became of him.

[23] The Rod-Striking Immortal

In the province of Iyo [modern Ehime prefecture] there was an old man of great longevity. He did not use any medicine but developed small horns

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of this type is the original myth of the Numinous Treasure, which in its literary format is known as Tao Yuanming's "Peach Flower Font." See BOKENKAMP 1986; and KOHN 1993: 43-48. The *Hokke genki* (XI) and *Hosshin shū* (IV.1) contain similar stories of an ascetic's encounter with a strange priest in the remote wilderness.

141 This anecdote from Jōzō's life appears nowhere else.

142 Daoist immortals typically come uncalled but then help very efficiently. The characterization as a representative of great compassion, on the other hand, reveals a more Buddhist perspective.

143 As opposed to his immortals' bones, which he may have but needs to discover or which he yet has to achieve.

144 Medicine in a Daoist context usually refers to parts of trees (especially pines), herbs, or minerals such as mica. More complex medicines involve the concoction of an elixir. For an overview, see AKAHORI 1989.

on his forehead,[145] and the lintel of his gate had demon-banishing properties. He said of himself: "I first heard about the possibility of saintly transformation [*hijiri no megumi* 聖化] in the Engi period [901-922]." Although he had seen seven generations of descendants, his face and body looked as if he were fifty or sixty years old. By nature he was extremely alert and could make things grow and multiply. As a result, his family prospered and was able to avoid all kinds of burdens and entanglements for a long time.[146]

From the prefect on down, everybody deeply revered him. That man so blessed with long life is still alive today.

[24] The Lad of the Venerable Chūsan[147]

The Venerable Chūsan was a junior talent at Kōfuku-ji monastery. In his studies, he illuminated all things, both secular and holy, and especially excelled at separating the heretical from the orthodox. By nature he was a free spirit who intensely disliked all duties and offices. Although he was a master-lecturer on the *Vimalakīrti* [*nirdeśa sūtra*] and people asked him to explain the text, three times he let others go ahead of him and even then did not accede to their request.

In his early days, he once went to the Ryōgon-in [on Mt. Hiei], where he took on a small lad and returned with him to the southern capital [Nara]. He greatly loved and cherished the boy at first, but later became more distant and remote. The little lad therefore left him and entered the mountains to practice *sūtra*-recitation. He gave up all food for several months, made himself a robe of feathers, and lived in free spontaneity.

Later Chūsan went to search for him and found him at his hermitage. The lad said: "As I have already attained the status of an immortal (*ikibotoke* 神仙), I would rather you did not come any closer.[148] However, ever since my

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145 This refers to the sun-horn (*rijiao* 日角) and the moon-crescent (*yuexuan* 月懸), two small bumps in the bones of the forehead that indicate great immortality. Among the sage rulers of old, the flood-hero Yu 禹 had them, Laozi is characterized by them, and various renowned immortals managed to develop them. See KOHN 1996b: 203, 216-18.

146 This reflects the idea of inherited good fortune, the direct corollary of "inherited evil" (*chengfu* 承負), according to which, as formulated as early as the second century C.E., the acts and inclinations of the forefathers determine the position and fortune of their descendants. For a discussion, see HENDRISCHKE 1991.

147 Also written 仲算. According to one theory, Chūsan died in 976 at the age of 42; according to another, in 967 at the age of 71 (TSUKAMOTO 1973: 4, 3657b). For further references, see *Senjū shō* VI, *Genkō shakusho* IV, and *Honchō kōsō den* IX.

148 In Daoism this would be an unusual request. Immortals are usually so free from worldly entanglements that a bit of contact does not do them harm. On the other hand, an eighth-century manual encourages advancing immortals to move away from their old homes because "it is better not to be too old an acquaintance of the local folk." See Sun Simiao's 孫思邈 *Cunshen lianqi ming* 存神練気銘 (Visualization of Spirit and

way has been perfected, I have not harbored any grudges against you because of your earlier deeds. You can therefore proceed from now on with good karma."[149] Saying this, he vanished. For a more detailed account, see the "Record of Chūsan."[150]

[25] Tachibana Masamichi[151]

Tachibana Masamichi came from the capital [lit. Rakuyō 洛陽, i. e., Kyoto]. He was rich in talents and skilled at literary composition in the style of the Northern Hall. On days when heavy rain was falling, people at this time often sent letters to their friends saying: "Such-and-such prefect of this-or-that province is ordering wine and food to be offered." People called these letters "rain letters." Their authors were esteemed men of their time. Masamichi, who was benevolent by nature, often wrote such letters; they are still extant today. They can be described as a form of Beautiful Talk [*bidan* 美談].[152]

Masamichi's fate was exremely unfortunate. In the Tenryaku reign [947-957], he went to the Court of the Vermillion Bird to undergo the examination for the rank of Disciple of Composition [*gimonjōshō* 擬文章生]. He submitted a poem of banal content that spoke about flying leaves and joined boats. This poem cost him the degree because it was not composed in the prescribed rhyme. However, he still climbed as high as certain branches of the cinnamon tree [of officialdom] and served as an official in the palace. Still, the blue color of his robe [indicating his low rank] did not change, and he never moved on to higher office. He had his ups and downs in the world of

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Refinement of Energy, DZ 834; see also KOHN 1987: 122). In Buddhist *setsuwa*, on the contrary, the saints usually abhore any kind of contact with other human beings, regardless wether they were clerics or laymen. See KLEINE 1997.

149 Evidently, Chūsan is not actually the main figure in this story, since he is only an "ordinary" exegete (note that his account is given in the chapter on exegetes [*ege* 慧解] in the *Genkō shakusho* IV). Masafusa leaves no doubt as to which kind of practitioners he respects more, the rankless recluse who gains superhuman faculties and eventually immortality by his austerities in the mountains, or the well educated official priest. Buddhists believed that one can profit from the good karma of others. There are several ways of establishing karmic connections (*kechien* 結縁) with another person who has reached his spiritual goal, including the method used here, i. e., by friendship or the joint establishment of a vow to ensure the salvation of the survivor. Connecting karmic ties with the protagonists of their stories was one of the major motives of the authors of the *ōjō-den* ("birth legends"), who collected the life stories of people supposedly born in Amida's Pure Land (see, e.g. Tameyasu's preface to the *Shūi ōjō-den*; NST 7: 280).

150 Unidentified.

151 His exact dates are unknown, but he probably died shortly before 982 (INOUE and ŌSONE 1995: 462a). For further references, see *Kokon chōmonjū* IV.

152 This seems to be a Japanese variant of the medieval Chinese fashion of "Pure Talk" (*qingtan* 清談), a similar aristocratic pastime that made use of much literary association and gave expression to current gossip and concerns. A collection of such Pure Talk is translated in MATHER 1976.

poetry until his hair turned white.

Later he was honored with the task of composing the preface to a literary collection by Prince Tomohiro [964-1009]. In this preface he said: "On the long path to honor, my head has become speckled [with white hair]. My life comes to an end and I am about to hide my traces. I will serve the prince for ten thousand years with my poems. I still do not know where I am heading for hereafter." Some say that he crossed over into Koryŏ [Korea] where he attained the rank of an immortal [*hijiri* 仙].

[26] The Monk of Tō-ji

The Monk of Tō-ji – his real name has been lost – pursued long life. Using the services of a *yakṣa* demon,[153] he planned to ascend to heaven in broad daylight and attain the powers of the immortals. As his plans neared readiness, he announced to the people: "On such-and-such a day, I will go off to pace the void."[154]

As a result, numerous folk – noble and humble, of high rank and low, in carriages and on horses – assembled to see him off. The monk, dressed formally in ritual vestments and holding an incense burner, knelt in silent contemplation. Then the *yakṣa* took him on his back, and very gradually they ascended into heaven. The people, however, could not see the *yakṣa* and only perceived the monk rising higher and higher. Eventually the monk entered the clouds and was no longer to be seen. The people, both priests and laymen, were deeply moved and sighed, rang bells and chanted the *sūtra*s [in adoration]. Then suddenly the incense burner came tumbling down from the sky. A minute later the monk too came tumbling down from the ninth heaven; he dropped to the earth head over heels and collapsed.[155]

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153 *Yakṣas* are ambiguous demi-gods who constitute one of the eight kinds of beings (*hachibushū* 八部衆; i.e., *devas, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṃnaras*) that protect the Buddhist teaching. Members of the household of Vaiśravaṇa (Jpn. Bishamon-ten), they function as protectors of the north. On the other hand, they are also depicted as fearful and malevolent demons who devour the flesh of human beings. *Yakṣas* are believed to dwell in secluded places, i. e., in the same places as hermits. Typically, advanced mountain ascetics gain the faculty of controlling *yakṣas* and making them their servants.

154 This was done in preparation for public ascension, as successfully accomplished by Lad Qu. See biogr. 10, note 93 above. "Pacing the void" is a metaphor for frolicking among the immortals in the stars. See SCHAFER 1987.

155 Practical implements or even household animals are depicted as being taken up to heaven as early as the biography of Liu An in the *Shenxian zhuan*. In his case, the elixir that allowed him to ascend was also picked up by dogs and chickens, as a result of which "one could hear barking and crowing from the clouds" (GÜNTSCH 1988: 126). People dropping back to earth are mentioned in the ascension story of the Yellow Emperor in the *Liexian zhuan*. Being fully qualified himself, the emperor was picked up by a celestial dragon, whose claws and whiskers then became the immortal lifeline for his various officials who for the most part, however, did not manage to hang on and tumbled back to

[Once he was somewhat recovered,] he explained: "When the four heavenly kings descended to meet us, the *yakṣa* dropped me and made off!"[156]

[27] The monk of Mt. Hira[157]

There was a monk at Mt. Hira, whose spiritual miracles were unparalleled. He whole-heartedly studied the way of the immortals[158] and practiced the art of the "flying bowl." [Once] the bowl was blocked by a boat which was coming to Ōtsu. The sailors took a deep disliking to the bowl and threw a bale of rice upon it [to keep it there]. When the bowl finally got away, all the other rice bales on the boat followed it. They speckled the clouds and the sky like wild geese in autumn. Still tied together, they took refuge with [the monk], paid obeisance to him, and then returned to the boat.[159] It is said that, when dhyāna Master Yixing[160] came to our country, he

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earth. See KALTENMARK 1953: 51. The unsuccessful attempt of an ascetic to go to another, better world *coram publico* is a common topos of Buddhist hagiography and *setsuwa* literature. The *Jikkinshō* (VII.1), for example, relates the story of an ascetic who publicly announced that he would jump down from a spur of rock to land first on the branch of a pine below and from there ascend to the sky. However, he entirely missed his target and almost died when he hit the ground (For a translation, see TYLER 1987: 130-131). In the *Uji shūi monogatari shū* (XI.9), there is the account of a *hijiri* who declared that he would drown himself in the Katsura river north-west of Kyoto in order to attain quick birth in Amida's paradise – religious suicide being widespread in China and Japan. However, he was so clumsy and his performance so inadequate that one of the many spectators finally grabbed his hand and pulled him out of the water. The *hijiri's* gratitude was without limits, and he promised that he would mention the benefaction of his savior in paradise. The angry crowd, however, threw stones at the would-be *jusui hijiri* 入水聖 (a holy ascetic who commits self-sacrifice by drowning himself) until his head broke. See TYLER 1987: 168-169.

156 According to Buddhist cosmology, four heavenly terraces surround the *axis mundi*, Mt. Sumeru. The upper terrace, also known as *Lokapāla,* is the realm of the "Four Great Kings" (*Cātur mahārāja kāyikāḥ*) who protect the four corners of the universe. They are: (1) in the east: Dhṛtarāṣṭra (Jpn. Jikoku-ten 持國天 ; white), (2) in the south: Virūḍhaka (Jpn. Zōchō-ten 增長天 ; blue), (3) in the west: Virūpākṣa (Jpn. Kōmoku-ten 廣目天 ; red), (4) in the north: Vaiśravaṇa (also known as Dhanada; Jpn. Tamon-ten/Bishamon-ten 多聞天 / 毘沙門天 ; yellow).

157 Unidentified. INOUE and ŌSONE (1995: 273) suggest that the protagonist of this story might be identical with the *hijiri* Renjaku 蓮寂, portrayed in *Hokke genki* (XVII). There is no convincing evidence for this, however.

158 The *furigana* added to the character 仙 indicate that the proper reading is *hijiri* in this case.

159 As mentioned earlier, the flying bowl theme is a common *topos* of Japanese *setsuwa* about advanced ascetics. This account, however, particularly resembles a story contained in the *Uji shūi monogatari* (VIII 3), in which a *hijiri* from Shinano 信濃 province regularly has his bowl fly to a wealthy man's house. It always returns loaded with food. One day it erroneously gets locked up in the storehouse which does not, however, keep it from returning home to its master, carrying the whole storehouse with it.

160 Yixing Chanshi 一行禪師 (678-727) was a follower of the esoteric tradition and a disciple of Śubhakarasiṃha. The assertion that Yixing visited Japan is historically not correct.

occasionally saw such things and said, "This is a remote country, but you cannot say that there is no true learning as long as there are people like this."

[28] The Immortal of Mt. Atago[161]

Nobody knows where the Atago immortal came from. Once, when a woodcutter came to visit, a copper bowl came flying through the air and poured out water from the Oigawa river. He watched where the bowl returned to and went to stay on that mountain.[162]

Long ago, eight disciples of the holy man Zōga 増賀[163] were staying on this mountain. Zōga made them all study the way of immortality [*sen no michi* 仙道], with the result that they could tread so lightly that even a very thin board would not crack under their feet, and that their minds became superior to the minds of others. Every morning the immortal would go to look at the mountain's spectacular scenery. Looking at the beauty he sighed and said: "In the end, there is only shit from rice." Someone like this – how could he not have attained immortality?

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161 Unidentified. According to the *Nihon koten zensho* edition (KAWAGUCHI 1968: 390), the character 仙 must again be read *hijiri* here. INOUE and ŌSONE give no *furigana*.

162 This is yet another variation of the flying bowl theme. A monk – often a great magician himself – follows the flying bowl or jar of another, even more powerful hermit. According to the *Hosshin shū* (IV.2) for instance, Jōzō used to make his bowl fly to get himself food. One day, however, his bowl returns empty. This happens on three successive days, whereupon on the fourth day Jōzō leaves the mountain following his bowl. He witnesses how another flying bowl approaches from the north, takes the contents out of Jōzō's bowl, and returns to where it had come from. Jōzō follows the thieving bowl and finally comes to a grass hut where an old monk lives. In response to Jōzō's complaints, the old monk says that he had no idea what he was talking about. Therupon the old monk's fourteen or fifteen year old lad appears from the rear of the hut and embarrassedly admits that he was responsible for the bowl. In compensation he offers Jōzō four *karanashi* 唐梨 (= *akaringo* 赤林檎) on a plate made of lapis lazuli. In a comparable story in the *Uji shūi monogatari* (XIII.13), a hermit who lived at the Kiyotaki River northwest of Kyoto follows another hermit's jar upstream, jealously asking himself who else could possibly perform the art of the flying jar. When he reaches the hut of the other jar's master, he sees that the old ascetic is fast asleep. In order to test his magic faculties he performs a ritual which sets fire to the hut. Still asleep, the old hermit sprinkles the four directions with holy water, so that the flames are extinguished and the jealous offender's robe begins to burn instead. At this point the old hermit awakes and extinguishes the fire, again by sprinkling holy water, and says that he has no idea what happened. For a translation, see TYLER 1987: 126.

163 Zōga (c. 917-1003) was a famous and typical *hijiri* of the so-called *jikyōsha* (*sūtra* holder) type, ascetics who devoted themselves to a particular *sūtra* (usually the *Lotus sūtra*). He entered the Tendai monastery on Mt. Hiei at the age of ten and became the disciple of abbot Jie 慈恵 (913-985). Being neither interested in a clerical carreer nor in human contact, he eventually went to Mt. Tamunomine and sequestered himself. See *Hokke genki* 82, *Honchō ōjō-den* XII, *Konjaku monogatari* XII.33, *Shijū hyakuin'en shū* VIII. We do not know who the eight disciples are.

[29] Nichizō[164]

The *śramaṇa* Nichizō – from an unknown province[165] – in his early days lived in Tō-ji [temple]. Later he resided in the Ryūmon-ji, located on Mt. Murou in Uda district of Yamato.[166] He studied and grasped [the teachings of] Shingon and was blessed with spiritual faculties without limits. Thus, once he dug up the earth and recovered a bell which he had owned in a former life, proving thus that he was a "twice-born man."[167]

When he reached the mountain [where he would reside], his feet became swollen and he could walk no further; the mountain deity did not want him to go elsewhere. Similarly, at another time the bishop Ningai 仁海[168] came to his hut to study the esoteric teachings with him. Nichizō said: "Go back quickly! Do not linger! Take me as a cautionary example!"

Also in his younger days, he was once on Mt. Kimpu, where he entered a deep trance and saw the King of the Diamond World[169] and the spirit of prime minister[170] Suga[wara].[171] The story can be found elsewhere.[172] He had

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164 The exact life dates of Nichizō are unknown. According to the *Genkō shakusho* he was born in 905, while *Shingon-den* suggests that he was born in 901. For further information see *Konjaku monogatari* XIV.43, *Genkō shakusho* IX, *Shingon-den* V. The accounts in the *Genkō shakusho* and *Shingon-den* differ only slightly. A version of Nichizō's life that is based on the same source as, or directly on, the *Shinsen-den*, is attached to the story and opens with the phrase "According to another account ... 或傳二云."

165 According to the *Genkō shakusho* IX, he was from Rakujō 洛城 (Kyoto).

166 The *Genkō shakusho* asserts that he took the tonsure in the Tsubakiyama-dera 椿山寺 (or Chinzan-ji) on Mt. Kimpu in 916 at the age of twelve (acc. to the *Shingon-den*, sixteen). There he abstained from grains for six years. When he heard that his mother had fallen ill, he went back to the capital and stayed at Tō-ji for a while. In 939, he went back to Mt. Kimpu. Later he took up his residence in the Ryūmon-ji on Mt. Murou.

167 The term *nishōjin* 二生人 refers to someone who knows about his former incarnation. The unearthing of divine treasures from a former age is part of the legitimation of both Daoist practictioners and imperial dynasties. Thus the scriptures of Numinous Treasures were recovered from the depth of Baoshan, where the sage emperor Yu had buried them (see KOHN 1993: 47), and the Tang dynasty saw the uncovering of many talismans and sacred stones documenting heavenly approval of their rule (see SCHAFER 1987).

168 Ningai (951 or 955-1046) is regarded as the founder of the Ono branch of Shingon Buddhism. His clerical rank, *sōjō* 僧正, was the highest in the *sōkan* system. This system is comprised of three degrees, namely *dai-sōjō, sōjō,* and *gon-sōjō.* The rank of a *sōjō* corresponds with the secular rank of a *chūnagon* 中納言, the Middle Counselor at the court.

169 Kongō Zōō 金剛藏王 (Skt. Aṣṭottaraśatabhujavajradhara) is a bodhisattva of the esoteric Buddhist pantheon. He dwells in the extreme right of the Ākāśagarbha Hall of the "*Maṇḍala* of the Matrix Realm." His "secret name" is Himitsu Kongō 祕密金剛 and his *bīja mantra* is *hūṃ.* His *samaya* or distinguishing object is the five-pronged *vajra.* His complexion is bluish black, he has either 16 or 22 faces and 108 arms.

170 *Jōshō* 丞相 is another term for *daijin* 大臣, which can be translated as "minister of state" or "secretary of state." A *jōshō* was therefore among the highest officials at the imperial court.

171 This refers to Sugawara Michizane 菅原道眞 (845-903). As a counselor of emperor Uda

excellent hearing and perception and was highly skilled at playing both flute and zither.[173]

His years grew great in number yet he still had the appearance of a young person. People suspected that he was several hundred years old. At one time he visited Matsuo Shrine in order to determine the original form [*hongaku*] of its deity. For three times seven days and nights he practiced continuously, chanting [*sūtras*] and reciting prayers. On the last day of his practice, thunder and lightning crashed and raged, a storm arose and rain came pouring down, creating darkness all around. Then suddenly an old man appeared and scolded Nichizō while the rain beat down the grass and bushes and the storm blew the sanctuary's doors back and forth hundreds of times. Still, Nichizō merely covered his ears and stayed calmly in the sanctuary. Then he heard a voice calling "Vipaśyin Buddha."[174] Nichizō was startled and looked up, only to discover the old man who had appeared earlier.

Later, one morning he returned to the [world of the yellow] springs.[175] His body was lowered into the coffin, but then all of a sudden his corpse was gone. Some claim that he attained deliverance from the corpse [*kabane tokete* 尸解] and left.[176]

宇多 (r. 889-897), Michizane tried to diminish the power of the Fujiwara clan and reestablish imperial authority. On grounds of the false accusation that he planned to dethrone emperor Daigo, son of emperor Uda, he was exiled and died soon after. People venerate him as an example of great loyalty and believe that he has become a "heavenly spirit" (*tenjin* 天神; a title normally applied to imperial ancestors). He is enshrined as the deity Tenmangū 天満宮. Ōe no Otondo 大江音人 (811-877), Masafusa's ancestor, was a disciple of Michizane who was also famous for his literary accomplishments.

172 The account of Nichizō's trip to the netherworld, where he meets the heavenly spirit of Sugawara and is informed about emperor Daigo's suffering in hell, is given in Dōken's *Myōdo ki* 冥土記. Variant versions of this story are contained in *Genkō shakusho* (IX) and *Shingon-den* (V).

173 The playing of musical instruments is part of classical Confucian education and often is undertaken by immortals as well. See the Fluteplayer in the *Liexian zhuan* (KALTENMARK 1953: 125) and the arts of the Seven Sages (HOLZMAN 1956).

174 The first of the six Buddhas that preceded the historical Buddha Śākyamuni.

175 This refers to Yomi no Kuni 黄泉國 (a Japanese reading of the Chinese *huangquan guo*), an underworld, the underground land of darkness. It resembles the Greek *hades* rather than a Buddhist hell, since *Yomi no Kuni* is not a realm of punishment but simply a dark and dreary netherworld where people go after death. It is quite unusual in a Buddhist context to describe the death of a holy person as a "return to the [land of the yellow] springs," because Yomi no Kuni is not a Buddhist concept and by no means a desirable place to go. Rather, an outstanding Buddhist is expected to be born in Amida's Pure Land, in the Tuṣita heaven where Maitreya resides, or in Potalaka, the paradise of Kannon.

176 The corpses of Immortals vanish from their coffins in a variety of ways. A good example is the Flower Maiden, whose body vanished with a clap of thunder, leaving a big hole both in the gauze covering the coffin and in the ceiling of the room. See CAHILL 1990. The disappearance of the corpse of a saint is a common topos in Buddhist hagiography as

[Appendix] Urashima No Ko[177]

According to the *Honcho shinsen-den*, Urashima no Ko came from Mizunoe in the province of Tango [modern Kyōto prefecture]. Once [when he was fishing] he caught a large tortoise[178] which transformed into a woman. Her elegant appearance was incomparable and she became his wife. He was taken to Hōrai 蓬萊 [island][179] by her, and after they had arrived, he attained supernatural longevity [*satorite chōshō suru koto o etari* 通得長生]. There were towers of silver, palaces of gold, curtains of silk and walls of figured cloth. The music of the immortals [*hijiri* 仙] followed the wind and the manifold food offerings increased daily. He stayed [on the island] for three years. In the first mildness of spring, flocks of birds sang harmoniuosly, smoke and mist floated [over the water], and flowers and trees competed with each other in blooming. When he asked his wife about his plans to return [to his home], she said: "Once you leave the isles of the immortals, it is difficult to come back again. And if you return to your old village, it will certainly not be as before."

Because he wanted to visit his old friends and acquaintances, he strongly thought much about what vehicle would bring him back. Thereupon his wife gave him a round basket and said: "Be cautious and never open this basket. If you open it, you will never see me again." When Urashima no Ko arrived at his old village, the groves and gardens were ruined and his parents and elders had all died.

When he met someone and asked him [what had happened], the person said: "A long time ago I heard that Urashima no Ko was transformed into an immortal and disappeared. A hundred years have passed since then." Thereupon Urashima no Ko went away sadly as if to [study in] Hantan (i. e.,

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well. See, for instance Zhiyi's hagiography in *Fozu tongji* VI.2. More frequent, however, are stories about the saint's unscathed corpse emitting light and/or fragrance.

177 The account of Urashima no Ko's trip to the isle of the immortals is probably one of the best known tales even in modern Japan. The story can be found in the *Nihon shoki*, where it appears under the 22nd year of emperor Yūryaku (r. 456-479). See also *Man'yōshū* IX.1740, 1741 and *Fusō ryakki* II, Yūryaku 22. In none of the extant *Shinsen-den* manuscripts has the account been preserved. Since the story of Urashima no Ko appears in the table of contents of the "Dai Tōkyū manuscript," and since the *Shaku Nihongi* account is taken directly from the *Shinsen-den*, INOUE and ŌSONE (1995: 735), in contrast to Kawaguchi, have decided to incorporate it in their edition.

178 The tortoise symbolizes longevity.

179 Also known as 蓬萊山, 蓬萊宮, 蓬山, etc. The Chinese believed that this island was the home of the immortals. The island is thought to be shaped like a mountain on which palaces of gold, silver, and jade are built and on which the herb of immortality grows. It may be assumed that the belief in the island of the immortals gradually merged with the belief in Kannon's Potalaka in the Buddhist milieu of medieval Japan. A description of the isles in Daoist literature can be found in *Shizhouji* 十洲記 (DZ 1331). See SMITH 1990.

without a will of his own). A great sadness filled his heart, and he opened the basket to look inside. In an instant he changed into a weak, old white[-haired] man and died on the spot. This story can be read in a Separate Biography as well as in the *Man'yoshū*. Here I give only its general outline.

ABBREVIATIONS

BDJ	*Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten*
DNBZ	*Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho*
DZ	*Daozang* (see note 3)
JZ-Z	*Jōdo-shū zensho, zoku*
NKBT	*Nihon koten bungaku taikei*
NST	*Nihon shisō taikei*
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*

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