

A VISION OF SALVATION:  
RAIGŌ PAINTING

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## ABSTRACT

Pure Land, referring to the belief in the Western Paradise of Buddha Amitābha, was a form of Mahāyāna Buddhism that emphasized faith as an easy route to salvation. It had begun in North-west India by A.D. 100, then spread north-east to China and Japan, rising in popularity in the latter country between the late tenth and twelfth centuries. During this initial period of popularization in Japan, a new genre of Buddhist scroll painting called raigō-zu arose from the Pure Land tradition. Raiqō-zu depicts the vision seen by a person at the point of death. The vision is of Amitābha and his hosts descending to welcome the soul to the Pure Land; it is the sign of salvation. The subject of the vision of Amitābha's descent is taken from the Three Pure Land Sūtras, which promise salvation to all who have faith in and reflect upon Amitābha.

The raigō theme can be seen in the wall murals of Tun-huang in China, but continental examples of raigō paintings in scroll form are rare. In Japan, however, such paintings are numerous. This thesis examines the religious and social conditions in Japan that contributed to the popularization of independent raigō images on silk scrolls.

The artifact under investigation is The Descent of Amitābha and His Holy Multitude, a painting kept at the Treasure House of Mount Kōya. This work is the earliest extant example of a fully developed raigō painting.

According to popular tradition, the Tendai monk Genshin (942-1017) is credited with creating many raigō works, including the above image. In order to investigate the origins of the introduction of the raigō theme to Japanese Buddhist art, Genshin's philosophy, life, and artistic reputation must be explored. His teachings and practices, as stated in his treatise, the Ōjōyōshū, are a synthesis of Tendai and Pure Land doctrines. Genshin is part of the Pure Land historical continuum in which the mental condition of faith gradually eclipses meditative practices as the most important prerequisite for salvation; he represents an intermediate stage in the continuum.

Raigō painting is a manifestation of the doctrines of Genshin and the degree of faith of his patrons, the aristocrats of the Fujiwara period (896-1184). Without a wealthy class of secular patrons, raigō painting could not have become an accepted genre of Buddhist art. Such paintings were necessary because the religious capacity of these aristocrats was weak; they required images to inspire their faith and direct their worship. A raigō image, such as The Descent of Amitābha and His Holy Multitude, is a product of a materialistic society in search of salvation and a religion in pursuit of an all powerful faith. It is an artifact of the process of change within religious beliefs and practices.

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要約

仰うおち年始方伝でか。初し  
 信にで100年東日本に初  
 を信つ暦ト北日本に普及  
 楽をと西ン、日本に普及  
 極道は、イラて、12世の  
 方ののは西か国しから教  
 西清教教北水中かま土の  
 の救仏土にそ、半ち淨い  
 仏は、衆淨で、り、た。後  
 陀教大のすりま、紀に  
 彌土るこにおついで日本  
 阿淨え。でて、て10人日  
 する。ま。ま。に。は。の。過  
 期は。様。起。て。た。陀。か。る。の  
 い。か。に。も。彌。魂。え。こ  
 淨土のこにおついで日本  
 のすりま、た。後  
 衆淨で、り、た。後  
 淨土のこにおついで日本  
 のすりま、た。後  
 淨土のこにおついで日本  
 のすりま、た。後

からいし 一迎形に於けるほき古的なる、聖毛は之  
 経北條東 毛来の姿、かあるまゝ、社会には陀のてを  
 部之を納 にはのりはかくこくを社証図陀存し 図  
 三、仏を 函に毛まて之をせいに仏校在「阿現と迎  
 土り陀清 壁かき本でれなけうよ、の、図 来  
 淨者弥陀救 のるまは日形きでかよおて蔵は迎。の  
 、一阿は 煌きく例、の之本編る的いと所れ来るく  
 はの、人。敦やいするのそ日か此教つ象館に在あ多  
 題毛はのるははイイか毛か、図か家に対室、しでは  
 図在経てあてとかてなまかは迎かの由の靈で成のに  
 うれ部全で国にかれしま例文来之れ「理究の図完毛般  
 とら三る典中るマかかくる論くに、研山迎はの一  
 下と土い経 見一えしにい本よのか件 野来で古  
 降ら淨念在 部テイ。サテ。と毛の茶 高衆の最

僧とに入、美交はて土で神大、すそ段彼のす層  
 信者術導は、は「仏浄の精毛をたあ信間と代明ち  
 源作美ににれ念現ともう最何いに源中義時表持  
 のの教うわれり」とに教たいに修て遷、の教原を全  
 宗國仏よ在りな之集」台北とぬ、い変ち遷の藤この  
 台迎ののる、れし要天さ仰たての的わ変信る深家  
 天来本どへ活さお生、合信のしし史な的源あの在  
 るの日がら生究の往は統、清とに歴史。、て仰・  
 れこ・マし、探信著れのは救件々の・歴るはち信る  
 さか「一を奔が源のれ之信か又徐教るのあ國在のあ  
 と「いテか信量。身、し源件要を立いにて迎者ちて  
 在「ての在の技い自かあ・茶必と浄てか現来援在の  
 いれ迎れ信の交彼るのるななこのっ人具後族毛  
 都(942-1017) 此の迎の信の交彼るのるななこのっ人具後族毛  
 か都の迎の信の交彼るのるななこのっ人具後族毛  
 源術ら、い教あ的切るやか入階の費る

仏さま来いあ仰方す要清強生まお  
 ははらくて倍のと必陀救とのつと  
 國とれはのちるが弥、社会と仰程  
 迎門このもちるこの「阿は社教る信過  
 来部。力を在自分どもこの國を宗教的のる  
 、一う容要分自りる山迎的るで教化あ  
 は在る受必自、よ文野来義すの宗変て  
 てしあ的に、つう見高と主求な、るの  
 し立で教層はかなに。ま質追のはりな  
 く確た宗族ら、行目在「國」物を毛國お態  
 なのっ、貴彼れと、の迎る心在迎に形  
 助術かはら・高れれれ来れ仰し来と術  
 援美な國れれをと在→衆求信出、行美  
 の教ら迎こっ心つる在「聖をなみり修り

### Technical Note

Japanese words have been transliterated according to the Hepburn system, except words having a commonly-accepted English spelling, such as Tokyo or Kyoto. The characters used are Tōyō-kanji.

Chinese words have been transliterated according to the Wade-Giles system.

Standard Sanskrit transliteration is used for Indian Buddhist terms.

Where existing translations have been adopted, the author of this thesis has tried to use the same Chinese or Japanese text, but there are small differences between the texts used by other translators and the ones presented in this thesis. All unattributed translations in this thesis are by the author.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the vow of Amitābha Tathāgatha, he will come with many Bodhisattvas and ten thousand monks, brilliant rays of light will shoot forth, and he will stand distinctly before your eyes. At that time the merciful Kannon, with hands of happiness and good fortune, will offer a jewelled lotus dais; then he will appear in front of the believer. The great Seishi and infinite hosts will say blessings together and joining hands, they will lead the believer.<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of the Japanese Tendai monk Eshin 惠心, better known as Genshin 源信 (942-1017). They describe the sign of salvation, a vision commonly referred to in Japanese as raigō 来迎, which means "coming to welcome." The Buddha of the vision, who vowed to come and welcome the Buddhist believer, is Amitābha (J. Amida 阿彌陀), the Buddha reigning over the Pure Land in the western direction. According to certain sūtras, everyone who has faith in him will experience the kind of vision described above at the point of death.

The raigō vision portends imminent death, the end of the physical body. However, it is not a frightening or sad vision; on the contrary, it equally portends imminent salvation and joy. In the vision, Amitābha and his hosts appear as saviours and guides to the Pure Land. Taken upon the lotus dais carried by the Bodhisattva Kannon 觀音 (S. Avalokiteśvara), the soul of the dead person will be reborn for the last time in the Pure Land. The continuous cycle of rebirth (S. samsāra) is finally broken. Once in the land of Amitābha,

the being will not experience desire, pain or suffering; it is a land without impurities or bad things. Here one is able to see Amitābha Buddha and hear him preach; and thus salvation will be achieved. The raigō vision is a sign of becoming, reaching one's full potential as a human being, to become enlightened, as the Buddha Śākyamuni was enlightened under the bodhi tree.

### Amitābha and His Pure Land

The belief in the descent of Amitābha to lead the dead to paradise is part of a tradition of Buddhism generally called Pure Land (C. Ching-t'u, J. Jōdo 淨土). Amitābha is worshipped by all streams of Mahāyāna Buddhism, but, within the Pure Land schools in China and Japan, he is worshipped exclusively. Pure Land appeared in north-west India as part of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the first century A.D.<sup>2</sup> The main text of Pure Land Buddhism--the Larger Sukhāvātī-vyūha Sūtra (J. Muryōju-kyō 無量壽經)--was translated into Chinese in the fifth century, although other texts concerning the belief in Amitābha were translated earlier.<sup>3</sup>

Pure Land Buddhism gained popular support amongst the common people in China under the leadership of Tan-luan 曇鸞 (476-542), Tao-ch'o 道綽 (562-645), and Shan-tao 善導 (613-681). Pure Land Buddhism was known in Japan as early as the seventh century. In A.D. 640, the Monk Eon 惠隱 (n.d.), after a trip to China and Korea, lectured on the Larger Sukhāvātī-vyūha Sūtra at the imperial palace at the request of Emperor Kōtoku 孝德 (r. 645-654).<sup>4</sup> However, a strong

interest in Amitābha and his Pure Land did not develop until the tenth and eleventh centuries. It emerged on Mount Hiei as part of the Tendai (C. T'ien-t'ai) 天台 sect, but Pure Land Buddhism did not become a separate sect of Buddhism until the appearance of Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212) and his followers.

Pure Land Buddhism attracted adherents because it was approachable by the laity. Original Buddhism, as taught by Sākyamuni, was extremely difficult, calling for intense moral and physical discipline and requiring the serious follower to join the monkhood. Pure Land was chiefly concerned with practices that could be accomplished even by the householder and, for this reason, it was referred to as the Easy Path. Faith, primary to the worship of Amitābha, was the mental condition essential for the practice of visual contemplation (C. nien-fo, J. nembutsu 念仏) and the related practice of oral recitation of the name of Amitābha.<sup>5</sup> From the tenth to the thirteenth century in Japan, the interpretations of Amitābha worship and practice changed, and faith and oral recitation became increasingly important, overriding the difficult practice of contemplation. Changes in the Pure Land tradition were reflected in its artistic productions. Paintings of the raiqō vision in Japan reflected the change from esoteric Tendai and contemplative Pure Land Buddhist traditions to a more spiritual, simpler religion.

#### Contemplation and Raiqō Visions

The concept of the raiqō vision is based on the Three Pure

Land Sūtras--the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra, the Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra (J. Amida-kyō 阿彌陀經), and the Kanmuryōju-kyō 觀無量壽經.<sup>6</sup> The last sūtra, the Kanmuryōju-kyō, lists nine types of visions to be encountered by the dying person. The nine types of visions correspond to nine levels of moral and spiritual development and consequently to nine modes of rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land. This sūtra is a text for visual contemplation; using real objects or works of art as foci of attention, the practitioner enters the state of intense concentration called samādhi (J. sammai 三昧), in which the mind becomes purified. All of the objects of concentration are depicted in painted charts (Kanmuryōju-kyō Mandala or Jōdo Mandala), which are used as aids for visualization.<sup>7</sup> The nine types of raigō visions are equally divided into three topics of contemplation, depicted along the lower edge of the diagram.

The most crucial form of visualization was rinjū-nembutsu 臨終念佛, which means "contemplation on Buddha at the point of death." Rinjū-nembutsu is less a mental discipline than a rite providing an environment suitable to inducing the dying person to experience the vision of Amitābha coming to greet him. The vision is evidence of the person's salvation. Art objects were used as points of focus and to mimic the vision.

### Raigō Paintings

Individual diagrams of the raigō vision, depicting one of

nine levels, are called raigō-zu 来迎図, which means a "diagram of [Amitābha's] coming and welcome." These raigō-zu or raigō paintings were popularized in the late tenth to twelfth centuries in Japan and became a separate genre of painting. The Monk Genshin amplified the raigō theme amongst his followers through his treatise, the Ōjōyōshū 往生要集,<sup>8</sup> and he is credited with creating the first paintings in Japan of Amitābha's descent.

The raigō theme was known and depicted on the Asian continent. It can be found as part of the paintings of Amitābha's Western Paradise on the walls of Tun-huang in China. Independent raigō paintings also existed on the continent, but none of those presently extant are dated earlier than the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> Continental examples of raigō painting are rare, but in Japan such paintings are numerous. Raigō painting is considered a Japanese phenomenon, a sign of the indigenization of Buddhism on Japanese soil after five centuries of presence. Modern Japanese scholars have not yet come to terms with the reasons why it became so popular in Japan. Yamamoto Kōji, in one of the most important catalogues of Pure Land painting, offers this explanation:

... although the concept of Amitābha's descent was an important element in Pure Land philosophy, the Chinese rarely painted Amitābha's descent as an independent subject, while the majority of Japanese Pure Land paintings centered around this theme. Such differences in preference may ultimately relate to the difference between a continental and island people. The Chinese, closer to the birthplace of the belief in the Pure Land, concentrated on a faithful visualization of the

Pure Land sutras. The Japanese, further from the place of origin of the belief in the Pure Land, selected only the ideal of Amitābha's Welcoming Descent from the same sutras.<sup>10</sup>

His explanation fails to grasp the problem, and he has misinterpreted the development of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. Nakamura Kōji, in a five part series of articles, has provided a very good background on the doctrine of raigō and its pictorial evolution, yet he avoids making direct statements as to why raigō paintings became prevalent in Japan.<sup>11</sup> Raigō as a separate genre of painting evolved because certain conditions of faith and practice were present in Japan. These conditions also existed to a certain degree in China, but they required the catalyst of the specific personality of a man such as Genshin, whose teachings were practised by an influential class of patrons.

#### Faith, Practice and Raigō Painting

Faith in Buddhism has not been the subject of much analysis, as it has been in the Christian tradition. With the exception of the work of Japanese scholars on the faith of Shinran's 親鸞 (1173-1262) Jōdo-Shinshū 浄土真宗 form of Pure Land Buddhism, the concept of faith has been almost totally ignored, although it is a very important and integral component of Buddhism.

Faith is a condition of the mind; it is trust and reliance in another being, who, in this case, is Amitābha. The Pure Land teachers interpreted faith as a sincere mind and profound confidence in Amitābha, as well as an intense desire to reach the Pure Land to

become enlightened. The faith of Shinran, as total reliance upon the divine grace and love of Amitābha, is used as a barometer to measure the faith of Genshin and his aristocratic followers. D. T. Suzuki describes Shinran's faith as spiritual (reisei 霊外生), a condition of non-duality, unity with Buddha and all things.<sup>12</sup> Suzuki believes that spirituality in Buddhism did not arise in Japan until the Kamakura period (1185-1333) with the advent of Shinran. Extant raigō paintings of the late Heian period (Fujiwara 896-1184) are evidence of the movement towards the spirituality described by Suzuki.

Religious practice is the manifestation of faith; it is exercising the philosophy, customs, and rituals set forth by religious leaders and texts in the belief that there will be a beneficial effect. Practice involves the people, who may not understand the full meaning of their practices, but who, out of faith, persevere all the same.

This thesis will examine the increasing simplification of the Buddhist practice of meditation, which becomes object contemplation in the early and intermediate stages of Pure Land development and then, under Hōnen and Shinran, is replaced by vocal recitation of Amitābha's name.<sup>13</sup> Raigō paintings are part of the accoutrements of the simplified intermediate stage of Genshin's Pure Land practices. Moreover, the religious attitude of the Heian aristocrats who patronized Genshin was such that images were required to substantiate their faith. The making of images was one of their most favoured practices.

### The Descent of Amitābha and His Holy Multitude

This thesis takes one raigō image and its inscription as an example of the relationship between religion and art. The image is The Descent of Amitābha and His Holy Multitude [(J. Amida Shōju Raigō-zu 阿彌陀聖衆來迎圖) hereafter called The Descent of Amitābha], a twelfth-century work now kept at the Treasure House of Mount Kōya, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan (Fig. 1). It is designated a National Treasure (J. Kokuhō 国宝) of Japan, and is one of Asia's finest paintings. The image is made of colours on three silk scrolls.<sup>14</sup> The central panel is the largest, measuring 210 centimeters by 210 centimeters, while each of the flanking scrolls is 105 centimeters by 210 centimeters.

On the back of the painting there are three inscriptions; the longest is dated the fifteenth day of the fifth lunar month, fifteenth year of Tenshō (June 21, 1587), and the two shorter ones are respectively dated the same as the first and the fifteenth day of the sixth lunar month, seventh year of An'ei (July 10, 1778).<sup>15</sup> The longer June 21, 1587 inscription provides a brief history of the painting. It was originally from a temple in Anraku Valley 安楽谷, a place on the outskirts of the Tendai monastery of Mount Hiei. The artist is claimed to have been Genshin, who painted this work at the age of twenty-four. The painting had an imperial seal on it, and every year on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month the work was displayed by imperial command. In the sixteenth century the Tendai sect offended the warlord Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534-1582), who ravaged and

burned Mount Hiei. The painting was saved and eventually came into the possession of Shingon monks on Mount Kōya, where it remains.

The painting depicts Amitābha seated on a lotus dais, flanked by Kannon and Seishi 勢至 (S. Mahāsthāmaprāpta). Behind them are three figures in the guise of monks. Bodhisattvas, dressed as Indian princes, play instruments, sway, and move across the three scrolls. At the rear of the cloud vehicle are the three figures of Amitābha, Kannon, and Seishi again. The scene of the descent is placed against a backdrop of a vast body of water edged by landscape elements.

The depiction of the raigō theme in this painting is no longer a diagram for an exercise in visualization, as it was used in the Kanmuryōju-kyō Mandala. The Descent of Amitābha is a devotional object of worship. Once more, the very beauty of the painting is intended to inspire loving devotion. The depiction of the most crucial vision and moment of life widens the field of vision of the Pure Land follower. With this painting, without the difficult discipline of contemplation or waiting until the point of death, the believer can perceive salvation. The vision depicted is immediate, direct, and vivid. The painting makes the vision accessible to all who have eyes. Raiḡō painting is a manifestation of the move towards an easy path of devotion.

Intricately connected to this idea of seeing salvation is the mudrā, the hand sign, of Amitābha, not only in this painting but all raigō depictions. Amitābha in this particular work forms

the mudrā of upper class-lower rebirth; the right hand is raised with the first finger and thumb forming a circle, while the left hand is lowered with the first finger and thumb forming a circle. This mudrā is part of a series of related mudrās peculiar to Amitābha, popularly known as raigō mudrās. Raigō mudrās are variations of the seppō-in 説法印 mudrā, the sign of the Buddha preaching the Dharma. Early Buddhist texts, such as the Sanyutta-Nikāya, teach that those who see the Buddha will see the Dharma.<sup>16</sup> Implicit in this teaching is the idea that by looking upon the form of the Buddha, one will come to know the Dharma, and achieve enlightenment. Raigō paintings depicting Amitābha forming the preaching of the Dharma mudrā are visual statements of the type pronounced in the Sanyutta-Nikāya.

This study of the relationship of raigō painting, faith and practice in Japan consists of five aspects, thus five chapters.

Chapter One provides a definition of faith and explains how to achieve the raigō vision, according to the sūtras. The rest of the chapter is a comparison of the faiths of Genshin, Hōnen and Shinran.

Chapter Two is concerned with the historical development of Pure Land philosophy and practice and other Buddhist traditions on the Asian continent that influenced Genshin.

The development of Pure Land in the Tendai monastery of Mount Hiei and Genshin, the man, his philosophy, and practice are the topics of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four discusses the Pure Land practices of the Heian aristocrats and the art that resulted from them.

The last chapter, Chapter Five, concerns the pictorial evolution of The Descent of Amitābha.

## Footnotes

1 弥陀如来。以本願故。与諸菩薩。  
百千比丘衆。放大光明。皓然在目前。  
時大悲觀世音。申自福莊嚴。手擊宝  
蓮台。至行前。大勢至菩薩。与無量  
聖衆。同時讚嘆。授手引接。

Hanayama Shinshō 花山信勝, ed. Ōjōyōshū:  
Genpon Kochū Kanwa Taishō 往生要集:原本校註・漢和对照  
(Tokyo: Sankibō-Busscho-rin, 1937, Reprint, 1976): p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Matsunaga Daigan and Alicia Matsunaga, Foundation of Japanese Buddhism, 2 vols. (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1974):2: p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Fujita Kōtatsu 藤田宗達, Genshi Jōdo Shisō no Kenkyū 原始浄土思想の研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970): p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Fukuyama Toshio, trans. Ronald Jones, Heian Temples: Byodoin and Chusonji (Tokyo: Weatherhill Heibonsha, 1976): p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>See below: footnote number 13.

<sup>6</sup>Taizō Daizō-kyō (hereafter called T.): 12/360, 12/363, 12/365.

<sup>7</sup>For a more complete explanation of the Kanmuryōju-kyō Mandala, see Gotō Masao 後藤貞雄 and Yoshida Yoshio 吉田嘉雄 Kan-gyō Mandara Zusetsu 観経曼陀羅図説 (Tokyo: Toyo-bunka Shuppan, 1980).

<sup>8</sup>See above: footnote number 1.

<sup>9</sup>At the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, there is a Central Asian raigō image in the collection; for an illustration see Ogushi Sumio 大守純夫, Raigō Geijutsu (Kyoto: Hōsōsen-sho, 1983): p. 11. There is also one extant Korean example of raigō painting; see Kikutake Junichi 菊竹淳一, "Koryō Jidai Raigō Bijitsu no Hitotsu Iretsu" 高麗時代来迎美術の一遺例, Yamato Bunke 272 (Feb. 1984): pp. 15-23.

<sup>10</sup>Kyoto National Museum, Jōdo-kyō Kaiga 浄土教絵画 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1975): p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Nakamura Kōji 中村興二, "Raigō Bijutsu-shi Kenkyū Josetsu" 采迎美術史研究序説, Ars Buddhica 144, 145, 147, 149, 151 (Sept., Nov., 1982; Mar., July, Nov., 1983).

<sup>12</sup>D. T. Suzuki, Japanese Spirituality (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1972): p. 14.

<sup>13</sup>Techniques for inducing mystical experiences may be divided into two categories: meditation and contemplation. Meditation is defined as the disciplined but creative application of the imagination and discursive thought to an often complex religious theme or subject matter. Contemplation, while in many respects another development of meditation, bypasses purposeful imaginative and intellectual activities to begin with a substantial item, such as an object, image, or idea, upon which to concentrate. Peter Moore, "Mystical Experience, Mystical Doctrine, Mystical Techniques," Steven Katz, ed., Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978): p. 113. The meaning and function of vocal recitation changed dramatically after the advent of the philosophies of Hōnen and Shinran. Chapter One of this thesis will deal with oral recitation in conjunction with faith.

<sup>14</sup>The painting is now divided into three scrolls, but it may have been a single scroll originally.

<sup>15</sup>See Appendix A for a translation and annotation.

<sup>16</sup>F. L. Woodward, trans., The Book of the Kindred Sayings (Sanyutta-Nikaya) 3 vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1925, reprint, 1975): p. 103.

## CHAPTER I

## FAITH AND RAIGO VISIONS

The Raigō Vision

Raigō paintings are based upon the Three Pure Land Sūtras, which promise all believers a vision of the coming of Amitābha at the point of death, provided certain conditions are met. The type of vision seen is described vividly in the Kanmuryōju-kyō (hereafter called Kan-gyō).<sup>1</sup> According to this sūtra, there are nine categories of visions corresponding to the nine grades of rebirth (J. kuhon 九品). These nine levels are classified according to three categories of spiritual and moral attainment (J. sanpai 三輩)--superior (J. jōbon 上品), average (chūbon 中品), and inferior (gebon 下品). In the upper category (jōbon) are those persons who have departed from ordinary life to become monks and nuns and have aroused the bodhi mind.<sup>2</sup> Householders form the middle class; they possess the bodhi nature and practise Buddhist precepts as far as they are able to within ordinary life. In the lowest class are householders and other people who possess the bodhi nature but do not abide by Buddhist virtues. These three levels of spiritual and moral attainment were used as subjects for contemplation. In the Ōjōyōshū, contemplation of the three grades and nine levels of rebirth was considered a primary prerequisite for rebirth in the Pure Land.<sup>3</sup>

In the description of the kuhon contemplations of the Kan-gyō, the type of person belonging to each category is described, along with the accumulated merits or demerits that will cause him to experience a certain type of passage into the Pure Land. These descriptions generally consist of telling how a person will be greeted by the heavenly hosts, the form and length of rebirth, and the scene to be encountered when awakening into the Western Paradise. Readers of this sūtra are given a concise and clear image of the nine levels of human spiritual development, and of the form of passage from one world to another.

In the Kan-gyō, the iconography of the descent of Amitābha varies according to each level. In the upper rebirth of the superior grade, the candidate for rebirth sees Amitābha with his great host of Bodhisattvas and devas.<sup>4</sup> He is offered a diamond seat to transport him to paradise.<sup>5</sup> The raigō painting at Mount Kōya depicts the vision of a person of lower rebirth of the superior grade. According to the Kan-gyō, the dying person will receive a vision of Amitābha with many Bodhisattvas, who offer him a golden lotus dais.<sup>6</sup> The painting pursues the following iconography, as given in the sūtra: Amitābha, in the centre of the painting, forms the mudrā of the lower rebirth of the superior grade, while Kannon offers the lotus dais, and Seishi welcomes with praying hands (figs. 1, 2). In contrast, sentient beings of the least spiritually advanced levels, gebon, are greeted only by an apparitional body of the Buddha (J. kebutsu 化仏) or by no hosts at all but only a lotus dais.<sup>7</sup>

Raigō painting is clearly based upon the iconography of the Kan-gyō.

Independent raigō paintings are derived from the lower section of the Kanmuryōju-kyō Mandala. The mandala is an illustration of the Kan-gyō and is used as an aid to contemplation. The most famous version of the mandala is the Taima Mandala 当麻曼荼羅, a ninth century Chinese tapestry, now enshrined at Taima Temple in Nara. Genshin may have been influenced by the Taima Mandala, as he grew up in the area of Taima Temple.

The central area of this woven diagram depicts the glories of Amitābha's Western Paradise as the central focus. The paradise scene is flanked on the left by a narrative depiction of the sorrows of Queen Vaidēhi<sup>8</sup> and on the right by the thirteen purifying contemplations,<sup>9</sup> while each of the nine levels of rebirth is illustrated along the lower edge (figs. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). This tapestry provided the prototype from which painted versions of Pure Land mandalas were derived. Mandalas of the Taima type are but one strain of the broad expression of Pure Land art.

### Achieving the Raigō Vision

Crucial to the understanding of Pure Land Buddhism and the concept of raigō is the eighteenth vow of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara, who is the Buddha Amitābha-to-be (J. Hōzō-bosatsu 法藏菩薩) in the Larger Sukhāvātī-vyūha-sūtra (hereafter called the Larger-sūtra). Dharmākara says:

If I become a Buddha, the sentient beings of the ten directions will achieve a mind of joyful faith. They will desire to be reborn in my country, [even though they have only] achieved mindfulness [of me] to the extent of ten fold. If they are not reborn, they will not achieve enlightenment. This encompasses all beings, except those who have committed the Five Deadly Sins and have slandered the Dharma.<sup>10</sup>

Dharmākara makes this vow to save all sentient beings by having them reborn in a perfect Buddha-land, where, without any hindrances, they can achieve enlightenment. The Bodhisattva fulfils his vows and becomes the Buddha Amitābha. The Pure Land believer must believe in the enlightenment of Amitābha and his promise of rebirth as a prerequisite for receiving the raigō vision.

The concept of raigō is presented in the nineteenth vow.

Dharmākara says:

If I become a Buddha, the sentient beings of the ten directions will be reborn [in my Pure Land], if they arouse the bodhi mind, perform many virtuous acts, and arouse the desire to be reborn in my country with a consistent heart. Nearing the time of death, [a sentient being] will not achieve enlightenment unless I appear with a great host in front of him.<sup>11</sup>

In this passage Dharmākara vows to appear as Amitābha with his hosts at the time of death provided certain conditions are met. The conditions are interpreted by Pure Land believers as the basis for the rinjū-nembutsu. Clarification of how to attain raigō vision is given in a later section of the same text:

The Buddha said to Ananda, "[Concerning] the lowest class of rebirth, in all the world, among the many heavenly beings and common people, if there are those who desire to be reborn in [Amitābha's] country with a consistent mind but who are

unable to perform many virtuous acts, they should arouse the supreme bodhi nature in the mind and concentrate the mind in one direction to perfect mindfulness, calling upon the Buddha of Infinite Life and desire to be reborn in his country. If a person hears the profound Dharma, he will be overjoyed with the happiness of faith, and will not feel doubt or hesitation. Then he will attain the single mind and call upon this Buddha, and therefore have a sincere mind, and he will desire to be reborn in his country. That person on the point of death, will see [Amitābha] in a dream, and he will certainly achieve rebirth."<sup>12</sup>

Further instructions concerning the raigō vision and how to achieve it are given in the Smaller Sukhāvātī-vyūha-sūtra (hereafter called the Smaller-sūtra). The narrator of the sutra is Śākyamuni, who explains:

One cannot achieve the karma of rebirth in Amitābha's country through the virtue of a few good works.

Śaripūtra, if there is a good man or good woman, who hears the name of Amitābha spoken, and, if he holds that name with a whole mind undisturbed for one day, two days, three days, four days, five days, six days, or seven days, as that person is approaching the end of life Amitābha with many hosts will appear before him. This person at the end, without a faltering mind, will be reborn in Amitābha's paradisiacal country.<sup>13</sup>

The above passages deny the worth of good acts for achieving the raigō vision, then teach of the power of holding the name of Amitābha in mind.

The conditions of rebirth and the manners of Amitābha's descent are presented most clearly in the Kan-gyō in the section concerning the three classes of the nine levels of rebirth:

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidēhi, "The superior

group's superior grade of beings are those sentient beings who resolve to be born in that land, arouse the three devotional hearts, and are therefore reborn. What are the three? The first is sincerity; the second is deep faith; the third is dedicating [merit] and longing [for rebirth]. If they possess the three devotional hearts, they will necessarily be reborn into that country. There are also three types of beings [within this grade] who will attain rebirth. What are these three? The first is beings who compassionately do not kill and keep the precepts. The second is beings who recite the Mahāyāna vaipulya scriptures.<sup>14</sup> The third is beings who cultivate the six reflections and dedicate their merit in longing for rebirth. If they maintain this merit for from one to seven days, they will then attain rebirth. When they are reborn in that country, because these men have striven diligently, Amitābha Tathāgata with Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, innumerable apparition-Buddhas, a great host of a hundred thousand bhiksus<sup>15</sup> and śramanas,<sup>16</sup> and innumerable devas and seven-jewel palaces will come and appear before the practitioner, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva and Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva holding a golden dais. Amitābha Buddha will release a great beam of light illumining the practitioner and with all the Bodhisattvas will offer his hand in welcome. Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, with innumerable Bodhisattvas, will praise the practitioner and encourage him. When the practitioner sees this he will dance for joy. He will find himself riding the golden dais. Following after the Buddha, in the snap of a finger he will be reborn into that country."<sup>17</sup>

This passage says that sentient beings who "arouse the three devotional hearts" will receive the raigō vision and be reborn in Amitābha's land. Shan-tao and other Pure Land teachers interpreted the "three hearts" (J. sanshin 三心) as the components of faith.

In the above passages there are some common points concerning the conditions that will enable sentient beings to see Amitābha and cause their rebirth. A being should have (1) a consistent or sincere mind; (2) deep faith, and (3) the desire to be reborn. He must be (4) "mindful," reflecting or contemplating on the Buddha. He must (5)

arouse the bodhi mind and (6) perform virtuous acts and not kill other sentient beings. He should (7) listen to the Dharma, the words of Buddha and (8) recite the sūtras.

The sūtras from which the above passages have been taken are not consistent in setting forth the conditions necessary for salvation. Many of the above conditions are cancelled by this following passage from the section concerning the rebirth of persons of the lowest grade.

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidēhi, "The inferior group's inferior grade of beings are those sentient beings who commit evil karma such as the five irredeemable evils, the ten violations,<sup>18</sup> and all other evils. Because of his bad karma, a foolish man such as this ought to descend into a bad existence in the next life and spend many kalpas receiving limitless suffering. When such a foolish man is about to die, he will meet a good friend and teacher who will console him in various ways, preaching the good Dharma and urging him to be mindful of the Buddha. But, oppressed with sufferings, this man will not be able to reflect on the Buddha. Then the good friend and teacher will say, "If you cannot reflect, you should call on the Buddha of Eternal Life. In this way, not letting your voice cease, accomplish ten reflections calling, 'Reverence to the Buddha Amitābha.' Because of calling the Buddha's name, with each reflection he will cancel eight billion kalpas of samsaric sinful deeds. At the end of his life he will see before him a golden lotus blossom dais like the sun's disk, and in an instant he will attain rebirth in the land of Utmost Bliss. He will remain in the closed lotus blossom for a full twelve great kalpas, and then the lotus blossom will open. With a voice of great compassion Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta will preach for him the Dharma on Suchness and on the cancellation of sinful karma. When he has heard this, he will rejoice and immediately arouse the enlightened mind. This is called the inferior grade of the inferior group."<sup>19</sup>

In this passage the candidate for rebirth has not accomplished any good deeds or read the sūtras. He may have committed murder or

slandered the Dharma, and at the time of death he cannot be mindful of the Buddha, yet by verbally calling on the Buddha as evidence of his repentance and faith, he is able to achieve an unglorified vision of a lotus dais and achieve rebirth.

Among these three scriptures, which form the basis of the Pure Land schools of Buddhism, there are many inconsistencies, leaving much room for individual interpretation. In order to make some sense of the above passages and to show how they relate to the main topic of raigō painting, one must look at how the passages have been interpreted within the history of Buddhism, particularly in Japan. Of the eight points enumerated above, the first three are considered to be the attributes of faith. They are of major importance to understanding of Genshin and the appearance of individual raigō painting.

### Faith

A sincere mind, deep belief, and the desire to be reborn and to turn one's merit to others form the core of the attributes of the faith required of the believer within the Pure Land stream of Buddhist thought in China and Japan. These three are called the Three Minds or Three Devotional Hearts. The above attributes are clearly set forth in the passage concerning the highest grade of rebirth from the Kan-gyō. The Chinese Pure Land master, Shan-tao 善導 (613-681), also points out these three attributes of faith in his treatise, the Wang-sheng li-tsan chieh 往生禮讚偈.<sup>20</sup>

Shan-tao's definition of faith is based on the above Three Pure

Land Sūtras. These sūtras clearly emphasize faith as the major practice. In the Sanskrit text of the Larger-sūtra the words śraddhā,<sup>21</sup> prasāda,<sup>22</sup> and adhimukti<sup>23</sup> are the key terms. Although each individual Sanskrit term has a different meaning, they are related to the definition of faith, and they have been translated into Sino-Japanese as such. The character shin 信 has been used for the translation of each of the three. With shin as the root, numerous character compounds are formed, with a variety of meanings. Within the text of the Larger-sūtra, the following compounds involving the character shin are found: meishin 明信 (clear belief), shinraku 信樂 (joyous faith), shinjin 信心 (believing mind), shinkai 信解 (faith and interpretation), shinju 信受 (to believe and receive).<sup>24</sup> The concept of shinjin is expressed in the following passage of this sūtra:<sup>25</sup>

All sentient beings hearing that name [of Amitābha] will have a believing mind and glad heart, if they are mindful [of him] to the extent of even one thought. And, if [a being] desires rebirth in [Amitābha's] country from the depths of his heart, [he will] without doubt achieve rebirth, residing in resoluteness.<sup>26</sup>

In this passage faith is clearly a condition for rebirth. This is further stressed in the next passage involving the words meishin and shinjin.

If there are beings who clearly believe in the Buddha's wisdom; they will perform meritorious acts and, if their faithful minds will turn towards it; these beings will naturally be reborn sitting crosslegged in a lotus of seven jewels.<sup>27</sup>

The course of the Buddhist believer searching for salvation was expected to follow the Thirty-seven Dharmas, thirty-seven attitudes and modes of behaviour. These include self-awareness, contemplation of various types, moral behavior, faith, and so forth.<sup>28</sup> Faith was regarded as the first basic step in the complex system of cultivating Buddhist virtues that would lead to nirvāna.<sup>29</sup> In the Majjhima-nikāya, one of the early Buddhist texts, faith is described as:

of much service to approaching; for should faith in him not be born, one could not approach him; but if faith is born, then he approaches; therefore faith is of much service to approaching.<sup>30</sup>

From this passage faith may be interpreted as a basic element in apprehending the meaning of Buddhism and the Buddha. For monks and laity alike faith was essential for spiritual development. Without faith, wisdom (S. prajñā) could not be achieved.<sup>31</sup> In India if a person could achieve faith in the Buddha, his teachings and his ordained followers, he could attain rebirth in heaven. However, rebirth, even in heaven, was regarded by the early Buddhists as another turn on the perpetual wheel of suffering. Such an achievement was deemed inferior to nirvāna, and only suitable for inferior people. In China and Japan faith and rebirth were given meanings of much greater importance. The achievement of nirvāna through the conventional means taught by Śākyamuni was considered too difficult by the Chinese and the Japanese, so they sought the convenience of Pure Land

practices.

### Stages in the Interpretation of Faith and Practice

As shown above, the Three Pure Land Sūtras have many inconsistencies and can be interpreted in many ways. Japan had many interpreters of Pure Land faith, but the three best known were Genshin, Hōnen, and Shinran. Each of them represents a phase in the growing simplification of practice and the increasing emphasis on faith.

Genshin defined faith according to Shan-tao:

In the Kan-gyō it says: "If there are beings who want to be born into that land they should produce the three devotional hearts and they will be born there. The first is sincerity, the second is deep faith, and the third is dedicating and longing."

Meditation master Shan-tao says: "The first, sincerity, is so called because the three kinds of karma--veneration, praise, and contemplation--are without fail true. The second, deep faith, is so called because, on the one hand it is deep conviction that we ourselves are passion-ridden ordinary beings (bombu) with but slight stock of merit, transmigrating in the triple world and unable to escape this burning house, and because on the other hand it is deep faith, without even a single moment of doubt, that now by Amitābha's great original vows, and by calling Amitābha's name as few as ten times or even once, we will surely gain rebirth. The third, dedicating and longing, is longing toward rebirth. If one possesses these three devotional hearts he will necessarily gain rebirth."<sup>32</sup>

In Genshin's view, the above conditions are necessary for rebirth in Amitābha land; if a person lacks one of these three, he will not be reborn. Genshin goes on to explain that, while the three conditions are taught at the highest level of rebirth, they apply equally to all levels.

In Genshin's system of Buddhism, faith is not given by

Amitābha. Faith is aroused within each person's own heart by himself with the help of upāya, convenient means of teaching. The first two chapters of his treatise, the Ōjōyōshū, present vivid images of hells, the raigō, and the Western Paradise. They are designed as preliminary contemplations to arouse people's desires to be reborn in Amitābha's paradise and to instil faith in his mercy.<sup>33</sup> These two chapters are the most popular chapters of the Ōjōyōshū, stimulating the imagination of the Japanese reading public and artists for many centuries, causing them to aspire to rebirth in the Pure Land. As will be shown in Chapter Four, the arts, particularly those related to the theme of raigō, may have been essential instruments in arousing faith amongst the aristocrats in Heian Japan.

According to Genshin, the principal practice that would lead to rebirth was nembutsu-sammai 念仏三昧, object contemplation or "mindfulness" to induce the state of śūnyatā. Faith, as previously defined, was the condition of mind that was prerequisite for practising nembutsu. Without faith, one could not properly perform nembutsu.<sup>34</sup>

Successful nembutsu allowed the practitioner to see the Buddha and the Pure Land, which purified him in preparation for rebirth, but not all could achieve Genshin's ideal. For those who were unable to contemplate, Genshin prescribed verbal invocation of Amitābha's name:

If there are those who are incapable of contemplating the Buddha-marks, while dwelling on taking refuge in Him, on His coming to welcome them, or on their own rebirth, they should single-mindedly call and reflect (shōnen 稱念) on the Buddha.<sup>35</sup>

For the time of death, Genshin prescribed two methods of rinjū-nembutsu, one by Shan-tao that was a form of visualization and another by Tao-ch'o that was vocal. The verbal nembutsu was used only by those believers of Amitābha who could not properly practise visualization. Genshin did not provide an interpretation of calling the name of Amitābha in the Ōjōyōshū but in writing the Amida Kan-jin shū 阿彌陀觀心集, he explained it in an esoteric Tendai manner.<sup>36</sup> Genshin said that invoking the name had the power to secure rebirth in the Pure Land and achieve nirvāna.<sup>37</sup> He thought of the three syllables of the Japanese name of Amida as a mantra, sounds that could affect the spiritual and temporal conditions of the practitioner. Genshin urged the use of invocational nembutsu in much the same manner as the Chinese Pure Land masters, as the last resort for those unable to visualize, but his interpretation of the name of Amitābha was esoteric in nature. In this aspect of invocational nembutsu, Genshin combined his Tendai teachings with Pure Land ones. His form of vocal nembutsu was an inferior practice meant for the common person, falling short of the emphasis on faith and recitation urged by Hōnen and Shinran.

Genshin taught that faith alone would not secure the raigō vision. Rinjū-nembutsu was one of his main concerns; a person had

to die with particular environmental trappings requiring images, incense and flowers, and special friends.<sup>38</sup> The raigō vision was the ideal and reward of contemplation.

Genshin was a more traditional Buddhist of the Tendai persuasion. The aim of his nembutsu was to arouse the bodhi mind, to reach for the Bodhisattva path of self-denial, succouring the universe to aid others.

Hōnen was also a Tendai monk; he learned of Chinese Pure Land doctrine through Genshin's Ōjōyōshū. He interpreted the eighteenth vow of Amitābha in the Larger-sūtra differently from Genshin. He believed that "jūnen" 十念 meant verbally calling upon Amitābha ten times.<sup>39</sup> According to Hōnen's interpretation of the vow, vocal nembutsu--calling the name of Amitābha with faith that was defined by the Three Minds--was sufficient to gain rebirth in the Pure Land. Even if a person did not understand the full intellectual meaning of Pure Land Buddhist faith but practised invocation, he would come to realize faith through practice.<sup>40</sup> Hōnen taught the unceasing form of recitative nembutsu. It was to be practised in order to accumulate merit for rebirth. It required the believer's conscious purpose to achieve a specific goal; therefore Hōnen's practice required faith that was generated within the believer.

Hōnen addressed his teachings to the common person, who had difficulty practising visual nembutsu in the age of the Latter Dharma.<sup>41</sup> His followers came from all classes of Japanese society,

ranging from the peasantry to the aristocracy. He always insisted that he was a simple monk and urged his followers to live simply and be sincere in their faith in Amitābha. Hōnen did not cater to the false religiosity of the aristocrats.

Hōnen prescribed rinjū-nembutsu for his followers, although through continuous vocal nembutsu they were always prepared for the final moment of life. However, at the time of Hōnen's own death he refused to use an image of Amitābha for rinjū-nembutsu, claiming that he could already see the raigō vision.<sup>42</sup> His refusal left his followers with an ambivalent view of the necessity of rinjū-nembutsu.

The most radical interpreter of the Pure Land sūtras was Shinran who exalted the importance of faith above all other teachings. According to the eighteenth vow of the Larger-sūtra, Shinran claimed that faith is represented by the three aspects of sincerity, deep belief, and the desire for rebirth with a willingness to transfer merit. These aspects are the same that Genshin and other Pure Land theorists found in the Kan-gyō. Previous to Shinran, faith was an attitude which was self-arising in the hearts and minds of sentient beings; it was a form of self-discipline. But Shinran believed that faith was a gift from Amitābha. According to Shinran, Buddhist discipline and practice cannot be performed by the common person, the bombu 凡夫 (S. prthagjana), without ulterior motives. All common people are incapable of good; their nature is evil, and people must accept themselves as such. Their salvation lies within the mental attitude of

total reliance upon Amitābha (J. tariki 他力), whose grace permits the common person to achieve rebirth.<sup>43</sup> The only practice that Shinran endorsed was the recitation of Namu Amida-butsu (Praise to Amitābha), as the expression of faith. However, recitation of the name is not intended to insure one's own rebirth, it is an appreciation of Amitābha's gift, and it allows others to hear the name of Amitābha, who will give them the gift of faith.<sup>44</sup>

Shinran altogether disclaimed rinjū-nembutsu; such rites separated the believer from absolute faith in Amitābha.<sup>45</sup> The true believer did not require an image or rite for salvation; salvation was already promised by Amitābha in his Bodhisattva vows.

Shinran's form of Buddhism may be considered realistic in that he is concerned with the real everyday behaviour of the common person. His type of Buddhism is for the real person who cannot practise the vigorous rules of discipline that were taught by Śākyamuni. Hōnen was the transition point between Genshin and Shinran, using the treatise of the former and simplifying the practices even further for the latter. Genshin, on the other hand, obviously believes that sentient beings may not be able to follow every form of Buddhist discipline, but by the very fact of his writing the Ōjōyōshū, he acknowledges that they are capable of faith and simplified contemplation. Furthermore, he provides simple teachings of certain modes of behaviour to be followed by the common person. Therefore, he obviously believes people are capable of self-discipline and are not entirely debased. His standards of faith

are set according to the highest level of rebirth, as previously pointed out. Genshin expects even the most evil of beings to aspire for the highest level. Therefore, in comparison to Shinran and Hōnen, Genshin may be regarded as an idealist.<sup>46</sup>

### Summary

The raigō vision signified salvation to the believers of Pure Land Buddhism. To procure this vision the practitioner was required to have faith. Faith was always an integral part of Buddhism, but in Japan it was particularly emphasized. Within Japan the three most influential interpreters of Pure Land Buddhism represented varying stages in the simplification of practice with growing concern for a more spiritual form of Amitābha belief. Shinran constructed a historical lineage to provide doctrinal support for his form of Pure Land beliefs. He recognized Genshin as the sixth patriarch in his Pure Land historical continuum. Accordingly, Genshin, with his practices and faith, may be seen as an intermediary stage leading to a simpler but all powerful faith.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Translated into modern Japanese by Nakamura Hajime et al. 中村 元, Kanmuryōju-kyō, Jōdo Sanbu-kyō 淨土三部經, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964; Reprint 1982) 2: pp. 9-74.

<sup>2</sup>The bodhi mind refers to the aspiration for the highest wisdom and the Buddha nature.

<sup>3</sup>Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, pp. 404-05.

<sup>4</sup>Devas are supernatural beings dwelling in heaven.

<sup>5</sup>Nakamura, Kan-gyō, Jōdo Sanbu-kyō, 2: p. 63.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 71. Kebutsu refers to the nirmana-kāya, the physical body that the Buddha displays in the temporal world. See Nagao Gadjin, "On the Theory of Buddha-body (Buddha-kāya)" Eastern Buddhist 6(May 1973): pp. 25-53.

<sup>8</sup>Queen Vaidēhi is the heroine of the Kan-gyō, who is imprisoned by her son. While imprisoned she calls upon Śākyamuni for aid, and he teaches her about Amitābha and his Pure Land. The escape from sorrow, according to Śākyamuni, can be achieved through object contemplation and consequent rebirth into Amitābha's paradise.

<sup>9</sup>The thirteen contemplations are (1) the setting sun; (2) pure water; (3) the ground; (4) the trees; (5) the lakes; (6) the palaces of the Western Paradise; (7) the throne of Amitābha; (8) Amitābha on his throne; (9) the form of Amitābha; (10) Avalokiteśvara; (11) Mahāsthāmaprāpta; (12) the practitioner himself born in the Pure Land; (13) Amitābha in a formed image.

<sup>10</sup> 設我得仏、十方衆生、至心信樂、欲  
生我國、乃至十念、若不生者、不取正覺。  
唯除五逆、誹謗正法。

Nakamura, Larger-sūtra, Jōdo Sanbu-kyō, 1: p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> 設我得仏、十方衆生、發菩提心、修  
諸功德、至心發願、欲生我國、臨壽終

時、假令子与大衆圍繞、現其人前者、  
不取正覺。

Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 136.

<sup>12</sup> 仏告阿難、其下輩者、十方世界、諸  
天人民、其有至心欲生彼國、假使不能  
作諸功德、當發無上菩提之心、一向  
專意、乃至十念、念無量壽仏、願生其  
國。若聞深法、歡喜信樂、不生疑惑、乃  
至一念、念於彼仏、以至誠心、願生其國、  
此人臨終、夢見彼仏、亦得往生。

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 165.

<sup>13</sup> 不可以少善根福德因緣得生彼國。  
舍利弗、若有善男子善女人、聞說阿  
弥陀仏、執持名号、若一日、若二日、若  
三日、若四日、若五日、若六日、若七日、  
一心不乱、其人臨命終時、阿弥陀仏、  
与諸聖衆、現在其前。是人終時、心不  
顛倒。即得往生阿弥陀仏極樂国土。

Smaller Sūtra, 2: p. 93.

<sup>14</sup>The Vaipulya sūtras refer to Mahāyāna sūtras of a later date, containing prophecies and dhāranīs.

<sup>15</sup>Bhiksus are monks.

<sup>16</sup>Sramanas are novices in the Buddhist order.

<sup>17</sup> 仏告阿難及韋提希、上品上者、  
若有衆生、願生彼國者、發三種心、即  
使往生。阿等為三。一者至誠心、二者

深心、三者迴向發願心。具三心者、  
 必生彼國。復有三種衆生、當得往生。  
 何等為三。一者慈心不殺、具諸戒行。  
 二者誦誦大乘方等經典。三者修行  
 六念。迴向發願、願生彼國。具此功德、  
 一日乃至七日、即得往生。生彼國時、此  
 人精進勇猛故、阿彌陀如來、與觀世  
 音大勢至、無數化仙、百千比丘、聲聞  
 大衆、無數諸天、七寶宮殿、觀世音菩  
 薩、執金剛台、與大勢至菩薩、至行者  
 前。阿彌陀仙、放大光明、照行者身、與  
 諸菩薩、授手迎接。觀世音大勢至、與  
 無數菩薩、讚歎行者、歡進其心。行者  
 見已、歡喜踊躍、自見其身、乘金剛台。隨  
 從仙後、如彈指頃、往生彼國。

Nakamura, Kan-gyō, 2: pp. 62-64; trans. by Allan Andrews, The Essential Teachings of Rebirth (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1973): p. 16.

18 The Five Deadly Sins are killing one's father, one's mother, killing an arhat, shedding the blood of a Buddha, and disturbing the Buddhist sangha. The ten violations are killing, stealing, adultery, lying, double-tongue, coarse language, filthy language, covetousness, anger, and perverted views (Andrews, p. 16).

19  
 仙告阿難及韋提希、下品下生者、或  
 有衆生、作不善業、五逆十惡、具諸不善。如  
 此愚人、以惡業故、應隨惡道、經歷劫、  
 受苦無窮。如此愚人、臨命終時、愚善  
 知識、種種安慰、為說妙法、教令念仙。  
 此人苦逼、不遑念仙。善友告言、汝若不  
 能念者、應稱無量壽仙。如是至心、命

声不絕、具足十念、稱南無阿彌陀仏。  
 稱仏名故、於念念中、除八十億劫生  
 死之罪、命終之時、見金蓮華、猶如日  
 輪、住其人前、如一念頃、即得往生極  
 樂世界、於蓮華中、滿十二大劫、蓮華  
 方開。觀世音勢至、除滅罪法、聞已歡  
 喜、心時即發菩提之心。是名下品下生  
 者。

Nakamura, Kan-gyō, 2: pp. 71-72; trans. by Andrews, pp. 16-17.

<sup>20</sup>T.47/1980, pp. 438-48.

<sup>21</sup>Śraddhā is traditionally translated as 'faith,' referring to having 'confidence in' or having 'faith in.'

<sup>22</sup>Prasāda refers to calmness, gladness, and purity; these are the qualities that accompany faith.

<sup>23</sup>Adhimukti is used to describe the inclination or propensity of faith.

<sup>24</sup>Fujita Kotatsu, Genshi Jōdo, pp. 610-13.

<sup>25</sup>Nakamura says that in this case shinjin is used for prasāda. However, the Chinese do not consistently translate prasāda as shin-jin (C. hsin-hsin). (Nakamura, Jōdo Sanbu-kyō, 1: p. 313).

<sup>26</sup>
 諸有衆生、聞其名号、信心觀喜、乃  
 至一念、至心迴向、願生彼国、即得往  
 生、往不退轉。

Nakamura, Larger-sūtra, 1: p. 163.

<sup>27</sup>
 若有衆生、明信仏智、乃至勝智、作  
 諸功德、信心迴向、此諸衆生、於七宝  
 華中、自然化生、跏趺而坐。

Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 205.

<sup>28</sup>Har Dayal, The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature (New York: Samuel Weisner, Inc., 1932; Reprint: Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978): p. 82.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>30</sup>I. B. Horner, trans., The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings (Majjhima-Nikaya), 2 (London: Luzac & Co., Ltd., 1954): p. 365.

<sup>31</sup>Faith and wisdom are closely associated and these words are often used in succession. (Fujita, p. 610).

<sup>32</sup>答『觀經』云。若有衆生。願生彼國者。發三種心。即使往生。一至誠心。二深心。三迴向發願心。善導禪師云。一至誠心。謂禮拜讚歎念觀。三業必須真實故。二深心。謂信知自身是具足煩惱凡夫。善根薄少。流轉三界。未出火宅。今信知弥陀本弘誓願。及稱名号。下至十声一声等。定得往生。乃至一念。無有疑心。三迴向發願心。謂所作一切善根悉皆迴向。願往生故。具此三心。必得往生。若少一心。即不得生。

Hanayama, pp. 208-09; translation by Andrews, p. 71.

<sup>33</sup>Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞, Seiritsu no Kenkyū 日本淨土の成立の研究 (Tokyo: Nihon Jōdo-kyō Shuppansha, 1956; Reprint, 1982): p. 141.

<sup>34</sup>Hanayama, p. 129.

<sup>35</sup>若有不堪觀念相好。或依歸命想。或依引攝想。或依往生想。念一心稱念。

Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, p. 191; Andrews, p. 64.

<sup>36</sup>Genshin, Amida Kan-jin Shu, Eshin Sōzu Zenshū (Hiei-zan: Hiei-zan Toshokan Kōshō, 1927): pp. 575-76.

37 理觀十念決定往生業也....生死  
即涅槃也念阿字時。

"By contemplating the ten invocations, one will certainly achieve the karma of rebirth. . . . Birth and death is nirvāna at the time of reflecting on the character 'A.'" Ibid., p. 575.

38 Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, pp. 299-304.

39 Compare Hōnen's interpretation with my translation of the eighteenth vow above, p. 17.

40 Coates Harper and Ishizuka Ryugaku, Honen The Buddhist Saint, 5 vols. (Kyoto: Chion-in, 1925, Reprint, 1949) 3: pp. 405-06.

41 The Latter Dharma is the last period of three in which morality and the ability to practise Buddhism would degenerate before the coming of Maitreya.

42 Coates and Ishizuka, 4: p. 636.

43 Alfred Bloom, Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965): pp. 45-59.

44 Ibid., p. 70.

45 Ibid., p. 63.

46 Ishida Ichirō 石田一良, Jōdo-kyō Bijutsu (Kyoto: Heiraku-ji Shoten, 1956): p. 230.

## CHAPTER II

## THE FORMATION OF GENSHIN'S PHILOSOPHY

The influences upon the formation of Genshin's thoughts were numerous; in the Ōjōyōshū alone, Hanayama enumerates well over one hundred different writings that were quoted. However, Genshin's emphasis upon faith and nembutsu clearly show that he was influenced by the Chinese Pure Land leaders, T'an-Luan (476-542), Tao-ch'o (562-645), and Shan-tao, while his interest in awakening the bodhi mind and achieving sūnyatā through nembutsu are clearly influenced by Hui-yüan 慧遠 (334-385) and Chih-i 智顛 (538-597). Genshin was the heir of the Chinese masters, and he was the transmitter of the Pure Land doctrines to Hōnen, then to Shinran.

Genshin's treatise, the Ōjōyōshū, introduced the doctrines of the continental Asian Pure Land masters to Japan. A brief survey of the philosophy of Genshin's Indian and Chinese mentors casts light upon Genshin's development as a man, a scholar-monk and as an artist. Moreover, such a survey clearly points out Genshin's position in the religio-historical continuum, and shows that raigō painting is the product of a Genshin-influenced interpretation of faith of an intermediate stage, standing clearly between Nāgārjuna in India and Shinran in Japan. This chapter traces the development of two lines of devotion to Amitābha. The Pure Land lineage stressed faith as an easy path to salvation, while the teachings of Hui-yüan and Chih-i

looked to Amitābha for the insight of wisdom. In examining the historical background that leads to Genshin, faith, the practice of contemplation, and the function of images and image making will be stressed.

### India

Images were used in India for contemplation,<sup>1</sup> and art historians generally believe that Buddha images came into being because the followers of Śākyamuni wanted to be reminded of him. The twenty-eighth chapter of the Ekottarāgama<sup>2</sup> tells that when the Buddha visited the Thirty-three Heavens to preach to his mother, his followers on earth yearned for him. Udayana, the king of Kausāmbī, and Prasenjit, the king of Srāvastī, each made images of him, so they could be reminded of his features.<sup>3</sup> There is a difference between using an image as an aid to recollection and using it for contemplation, but there is a connection between the two uses in that both cause the user to think of Buddha. The development of Mahāyāna Buddhism with its pantheon of Buddhas and complex metaphysical concepts altered simple remembrance into an exercise of the mind.<sup>4</sup>

Little is known of Pure Land Buddhism before it arrived in China. The Chinese and Japanese Pure Land Buddhists generally recognized two Indian philosophers as patriarchs of their faith; they are Nāgārjuna (ca. A.D. 2nd-3rd C.) and Vasubandhu (ca. A.D. 5th C.).

Nāgārjuna was the formulator of the Mādhyamika school of philosophy. His work, the Daśabhumika-vibhāsāśāstra,<sup>5</sup> has a chapter commenting on an easy method of attaining enlightenment by means of faith. However, he considers this path to be inferior and only for the incapable. Nevertheless, the Chinese and Japanese consider him to be one of the first teachers of the easy way.

The clarification of "mindfulness" of the Buddha (buddhānusr̥ti) was provided by Vasubandhu, who wrote the Sukhavātī-vyūhōpadeśa, based upon the Larger-sūtra. In this work he formulates five methods of being "mindful" of Amitābha: (1) veneration of the form of Amitābha; (2) calling his name; (3) having a determined mind to seek the Pure Land; (4) concentrating and visualizing it; (5) benefitting others through the practice of the foregoing.<sup>6</sup> This work greatly influenced the Chinese, and Genshin's Ōjōyōshū is based upon Vasubandhu's outlines.

### China

Indian Buddhism arrived in China via Central Asia during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). The monks who carried it were of many diverse schools, but were chiefly Mahāyāna believers who practised meditation and concentration. These monks were not adept in the Chinese language and therefore could not transmit a proper understanding of the complex philosophical nature of Buddhism.<sup>7</sup> Chinese Buddhists were confused as to the Buddhist view of certain

issues, such as the existence of a soul and the concept of the void (śūnyatā),<sup>8</sup> mistakenly assuming them to be identical with indigenous Taoist ideas.<sup>9</sup> However, the Chinese themselves, led by such men as Tao-an 道安 (312-385), Hui-yüan, and Seng-chao 僧肇 (370-414), soon realized their misconceptions and sought to make reforms, but their interests continued to reflect distinctly Chinese leanings. Assisting these Chinese Buddhist scholars were many Central Asian monks, most notably Kumārajīva (350-409?). In A.D. 418 Ch'ang-an was sacked by the Hsiung-nu, and their leader exiled the scholar-monks of that place to the south. Northern Chinese Buddhists emphasized good works, meditation, and faith; while in the south Buddhists concentrated upon metaphysical speculation (ch'ing-tan 清談). Pure Land, or Ching-t'u 淨土, was one development of northern China.<sup>10</sup>

#### Hui-yüan of Mount Lu

The beginning of Pure Land Buddhism as a separate current in sectarian thought is marked by Hui-yüan and his followers making vows in front of an Amitābha image on Mount Lu 廬山 in A.D. 402.<sup>11</sup> This group was called the White Lotus Society (Pai-lien-she 白蓮社), a society dedicated to mutually helping one another to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land. It was not a group formed for philosophical discussions, although there was such activity. Concrete methods of contemplation were practised, and a community of people bound by faith with a common goal was created. Hui-yüan's group was a precursor of the Nijūgo-sammai Society 二十五三昧會, which Genshin formed in

A.D. 986 on Mount Hiei. Hui-yüan's group contributed three important features to Pure Land Buddhism: the vow in front of an Amitābha image and the offering of flowers and incense allowed the participation of the laity; through the practice of samādhi, there developed a spiritual closeness to the Bhagavat by believers; lastly, the act of making a group vow fostered the Mahāyāna ideal of a community bound by faith.<sup>12</sup> The Buddhism practised by Hui-yüan and his followers was very concrete, marked by a very strong desire for a tangible phenomenon to direct worship.<sup>13</sup>

Hui-yüan and his followers' main text was not the Three Pure Land Sūtras, but the Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra (J. Hannya-sammai-kyō 般若三昧經) (hereafter called the Samādhi-sūtra),<sup>14</sup> which provides instructions for samādhi. This sūtra has been considered by modern scholars to be the synthesis of an easy meditation practice with the concept of śūnyatā.<sup>15</sup> It is regarded as one of the oldest Mahāyāna sūtras, and belongs to the prajñā (J. chi-e or hannya 智慧) line of thought.<sup>16</sup> Like the Kan-gyō, the Samādhi-sūtra is a manual of contemplation but with Amitābha as the teacher. There are two features in this sūtra that should be noticed. The first is that images are used as tools of concentration. The second is that this type of samādhi can be practised not only by ascetics, but also by the laity.

The Samādhi-sūtra states that through the awesome spirit (J. i-jin 威神) of Amitābha, a person who cleanses his body and

mind and reflects upon Amitābha for a period of seven days or more will be able to see the Buddhas as though they were standing before his eyes.<sup>17</sup> A person who desires to enter the state of samādhi may make a Buddha image.<sup>18</sup> It is obvious here that images were essential tools of contemplation. An interesting point is the sūtra's constant comparison of samādhi visions to "seeing in a dream"<sup>19</sup> and "images in a mirror."<sup>20</sup> Hui-yüan was disturbed by the sūtra's comparisons and wrote to Kumārajīva concerning the real meaning of Buddha visions.<sup>21</sup> Kumārajīva was a central link in the transmission of Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika philosophy from India to China. Mādhyamika is a Mahāyāna system of logic in which the understanding of śūnyatā is the key.<sup>22</sup> Kumārajīva answered with digests of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise (Ta-chih-tu-lun 大智度論),<sup>23</sup> which is spuriously attributed to Nāgārjuna. In the San-san-mei-yi 三三昧義 section of the treatise it is stated that realizing samādhi is realizing the void (śūnyatā) and that the mental state within samādhi approaches nirvāna.<sup>24</sup> Hui-yüan's understanding of Kumārajīva's teachings is indicated in his preface to the treatise Ch'u-san-tsang-chi-chi 出三藏記集;<sup>25</sup> here he states that in the attainment of samādhi, one realizes the true nature of things as empty (śūnyatā).

Within the state of śūnyatā one can visualize Buddhas. According to Kumārajīva, there were three ways of seeing

Buddhas: (1) through super powers (S. abhijnā); (2) by intensive meditation; (3) by concentration upon objects.<sup>26</sup> He considered object contemplation appropriate only for inferior practitioners, and he called it nien-fo san-mei (J. nembutsu-sammai 念仏三昧).<sup>27</sup> Hui-yüan differed from his mentor, emphasizing nien-fo as the most easily performed and effective practice for entering samādhi.<sup>28</sup>

The connection between samādhi and śūnyatā should be clarified at this point. The Samādhi-sūtra compares Buddha visions to dreams and mirror images, because they are just that--devoid of form and non-existent; they are "empty." In the practice of samādhi concentration, one is expected to exercise discernment; to revel in mystic visions is not the aim of being mindful of Buddha, but rather to see intuitively and learn about ultimate reality. Only then can one can be liberated from ignorance. Samādhi visions are not evidences of metaphysical Buddhas; on the contrary there are no Buddhas, only emptiness.<sup>29</sup>

While Hui-yüan came to understand the nature of samādhi visions in this way, others of his followers did not. They read the sūtra's dream reference literally and interpreted their visions as real manifestations. Dreams and visions of Buddhas were considered concrete evidence of the existence of supernatural beings and paradise, in that they affirmed the rebirth of the samādhi practitioner, forecasting future happiness in the next life, where Buddha could be seen and heard preaching the Dharma.<sup>30</sup> These multiple levels of understanding of the significance of visualizations, Amitābha, and

the Pure Land permeate the history of Pure Land Buddhism in China and are clearly visible in Japan.

Images were of primary importance to Hui-yüan and his followers. There is no way of completely understanding or knowing about all the functions and types of images, but, on the basis of extant evidence, we may conclude that some of them were used for contemplation. Images consisted of both sculpture and individual paintings on silk.<sup>31</sup> Images, particularly paintings, from the fifth century are rather rare, and it is only from the remains at Tun-huang that some idea of the Pure Land art that was created on Mount Lu may be perceived.<sup>32</sup>

#### The Pure Land Masters

Hui-yüan is recognized as a contributor to Pure Land development, but the earliest Chinese master to be recognized as a patriarch by the Japanese schools<sup>33</sup> is T'an-luan (476-542?). T'an-luan developed the two path doctrine of Nāgārjuna and the nembutsu teachings of Vasubandhu in the Sukhāvatī-vyūhō-padeśa. He believed that in his own day the age of the Latter Dharma had arrived, and that people of such a time were incapable of practising the difficult way, the way of the original teachings of Śākyamuni. Therefore, he recommended the easy practice of devotion to Amitābha.

Pure Land in China and Japan came to be developed on the basis of the concept of the period of the Latter Dharma in which not only the ability to follow the precepts given by Buddha had degenerated but also

the cosmos itself. The reign of Sākyamuni was believed to be divided into three periods: in the first period the Buddha's teachings were correctly followed; thus it was called the True Dharma Age (J. shōbo 正法); in the second, the Resemblance Dharma (J. zōbō 像法), appeared outwardly like the first period, but there was a failure to understand the inner meaning of the teachings; the third period, the Latter Dharma (J. mappō 末法) was one in which the teachings still remained, but people were unable to properly understand or practise them.<sup>34</sup> In northern China in the fifth century, many people believed that they lived in the last age, as they were besieged by persecutions of Buddhism and by natural disasters.

T'an-luan taught that people could not attain enlightenment in this life through the normal channels taught by the historic Buddha; therefore, salvation could only be attained through faith in Amitābha's vows. Moreover, T'an-luan was the first to recognize the oral recitation of the name of Amitābha as an act of merit.

Tao-ch'o (562-645) extended and popularized the Pure Land ideas of T'an-luan.<sup>35</sup> Tao-ch'o considered the Western Paradise of Amitābha to be more than a condition of the mind. To him it was a real place. Although he practised nien-fo (contemplation, J. nembutsu) in the traditional sense, Tao-ch'o was a devotee of the even easier practice of invoking the name of Amitābha, which he taught to the common people.

Of all the Chinese Pure Land masters, the one most influential upon the Japanese schools was Shan-tao (613-681). He stressed the

need for an easy path to salvation for the common person; this path led the seeker to perform contemplative and invocational nien-fo.<sup>36</sup> Shan-tao prescribed invocation practice for the prthagjana, not in lieu of contemplation, but only for those who were incapable of entering into samādhi.

At all times Shàn-tao made his interpretations of Pure Land beliefs according to the sūtras, and was particularly influenced by the Kan-gyō. For Shan-tao the nine levels of beings in this scripture were not only discourses for contemplation; they also represented the real conditions of the broad masses of people of his time, most of whom he classified in the inferior category, including himself.<sup>37</sup> Here Shan-tao connects Mahāyānist theories to a mundane human society. This view was not a sudden revelation peculiar to him. Shan-tao was part of the long process in which complex Mahāyāna philosophy and practices were being made approachable for the common person.

Shan-tao considered the first thirteen methods of concentration in the Kan-gyō to be designed for advanced practitioners. The last three, the nine levels of beings with their respective types of concrete ethics, and subsequent scenes of death and rebirth, he saw as more suitable subjects of concentration for the unskilled Buddhist, the common person.<sup>38</sup>

Considering Shan-tao's intimate knowledge of the Kan-gyō, it is perhaps safe to assume that he was familiar with the thirteenth contemplation upon a Buddha image. In relation to this, what would

Shan-tao's opinion of images and image making be? Through Shan-tao's extant biographies and inscriptions, it is known that he created art based upon the sūtras. He may have supervised the work at the Lung-men Caves and painted many representations of the Western Paradise and hells.<sup>39</sup> None of the works which he personally produced remain today, but many of the paintings at Tun-huang are believed to bear his influence.<sup>40</sup> His biographies refer to his artistic works as pien-hsiang-t'u 變相圖, didactic images. In China this category of art was associated with a type of popular Buddhist literature called pien-wen 變文 that was prevalent in T'ang times. Both were used by the monks as teaching materials for the laity.<sup>41</sup> Shan-tao may have considered Buddhist representations to be a form of upāya (hōben 方便),<sup>42</sup> allowing very large and spiritually varied groups of people to see the Buddha and the Pure Land without the difficulties of contemplation.

Shan-tao has been pictured as a vibrant man, one who could preach amongst the people and convert them to devotional practices that almost anyone could perform. One of these was vocal recitation of the name of Amitābha. Yet he was also a highly disciplined Buddhist monk, skilled in meditation, art, and Buddhist scholarship. Shan-tao's works, such as the Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching shu 觀無量壽經疏<sup>43</sup> and the Kuan-nien fa-men 觀念法門,<sup>44</sup> are devoted to visualization of Amitābha and the Pure Land. Chappell says that artistic influences were sources for transforming Shan-tao's life and suggests that Shan-tao's artistic sensitivity and ability to visualize

were linked.<sup>45</sup> The psychological aspect of the relation between creativity and the ability to visualize are beyond the scope of this paper, but certainly both require a speculative mind that has the ability to transform thought into images.

In his Kuan-nien fa-men, Shan-tao's methods of visualization and preparations for the last passage are very similar to those prescribed by Genshin in the Ōjōyōshū. Genshin was highly influenced by Shan-tao, as were all the Japanese Pure Land leaders.

Shan-tao provided Genshin with the iconography of the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas.<sup>46</sup> In his Wang-sheng li-tsan and Kuan-nien fa-men Shan-tao points out that the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas will protect the person who is mindful of Amitābha.<sup>47</sup>

#### Chih-i and the T'ien-t'ai Tradition

Chih-i is considered the first patriarch of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism.<sup>48</sup> He was profoundly influenced by Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika thought and was an avid practitioner of contemplation. His intellectual capacities produced a system of organizing all the teachings of Buddha, both Hinayāna and Mahāyāna, into five periods. Of all the scriptures, Chih-i considered the Saddharma-pundarīka-sūtra [(J. Myōhō-rence-kyō 妙法蓮華經 (hereafter called the Lotus-sūtra)], as the text which contained the Ultimate Teachings.<sup>49</sup> Chih-i's propensity towards eclecticism produced a syncretic form of Buddhism within which the Japanese sects of Jōdo 淨土, Jōdo-Shinshū 淨土真宗, and

Nichiren 日蓮 could arise.<sup>50</sup>

Chih-i's view of Nirvāna and the Absolute was an ontological one. The method of comprehension was not through the intellect but through the unmediated perceptive mind. Upon realizing the intuitive state, one did not stand back and look at the Ultimate Truth but became one with it.<sup>51</sup> This intuitive, non-cognitive mind is that of śūnyatā.<sup>52</sup> For Chih-i, śūnyatā was not a matter of what was real or unreal, since the receptive mind and object were interdependent.<sup>53</sup> Śūnyatā was a mental state wherein the mind did not differentiate between reality and emptiness or between I, the devotee, and thou, the Buddha. When all the dichotomies were vanquished, then a person was in a position to view the Truth and be one with it.

The mind as the perceiving agent was highly important to Chih-i; for within his view, the states of one's existence are within the mind only,<sup>54</sup> and within one moment of consciousness exist three thousand thousand (i nien san chien 一念三千) moments of life. The choice of heaven, hell, or another is completely dependent upon the mind of the person.<sup>55</sup> However, it cannot be concluded that Chih-i is of the opinion that reality exists within the mind. For that matter, one cannot deduce that he believed anything is real or rational, not even Chih-i's philosophy, as that is his philosophy, a tradition that clearly follows Nāgārjuna.

Entry into Chih-i's form of Buddhism is through the exercise of the contemplative mind, dhyāna (C. ch'an, J. zen 禪). He called

his system of viewing chih kuan 止觀.<sup>56</sup> He had three general types of contemplation: "'gradual' (chien tz'u 漸次); 'rounded and sudden' (yüan tun 圓頓); 'indeterminate' (pu ting 不定)."<sup>57</sup> Of these it is the second which is most important in the link between Japanese Tendai and Pure Land beliefs.

Yuan tun chih kuan is begun by making twenty-five observances that involve preparing oneself physically, emotionally, and spiritually for extended periods of numinous exertion. The observances are followed by any of four kinds of preliminary concentration: (Four Kinds of Samādhi) (1) constantly seated samādhi (J. jōza-sammai 常坐三昧); (2) constantly walking samādhi (J. jōgyō-sammai 常行三昧); (3) half-walking, half-seated samādhi (J. hangyō-hanza-sammai 平行半坐三昧); (4) neither walking nor seated samādhi (J. higyō-hiza-sammai 非行非坐三昧).<sup>58</sup>

With respect to these four kinds of concentration, a Buddha of any direction could be the focus of attention, but Amitābha was the most usual one. The period of time required of a practitioner was from seven to ninety days. Contemplation consisted of not only keeping one's mind constantly fixed upon a Buddha image or an imagined Buddha personage, but also involved penance, reciting the Lotus-sūtra, calling upon and worshipping the Buddha, thinking of various aspects of what is considered good and evil according to Buddhist terms, and so forth. When these four preliminary samādhi are contemplated, the practitioner proceeds to cheng kuan 正觀 contemplation which is more recondite. It is a procedure in which there is a simulation to a

certain degree of the process of enlightenment experienced by Sākyamuni while seated under the Bodhi tree.

Within this discussion of contemplation and enlightenment in regards to T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, what is the position of Amitābha? The T'ien-t'ai sect acknowledges the theory of the Triple Body of the Buddha.<sup>59</sup> Amitābha is considered to be the Reward Body (S. sāmbhoga-kāya). This body of "reward" or "pleasure" is the reward for the fulfillment of vows taken by the Bodhisattva Dharmākara. The "reward" or "pleasure" refers to the enjoyment of the Pure Land and hearing the Dharma being expounded, most specifically the latter, which is conducive to the attainment of enlightenment.<sup>60</sup>

In contemplation Amitābha was often the Buddha favoured by T'ien-t'ai practitioners. This was perhaps to some extent due to the influence of sūtras, such as the Samādhi-sūtra and the Kan-gyō, where Amitābha was directing samādhi practices or the focus of them; these sūtras gave precedence to Amitābha seeking him over other Buddhas. As well, he represents the virtue of wisdom. Within the state of samādhi, one can listen to Amitābha preach the Dharma, hence all illusions are destroyed and the bodhi nature of the listener is aroused, resulting in enlightenment. The T'ien-t'ai sect values Amitābha for his metaphysical qualities; he is an object of devotion, and moreover he is the Buddha who could reveal the Eternal Truth, if contacted through the contemplative mind. T'ien-t'ai believers thought that enlightenment could be achieved in this life through contemplation.

### Summary

As Buddhism moved from its Indian place of origin to China and through time, there was an increasing distance between the historical Buddha and his followers. With the rise of transcendent and limitless numbers of Buddhas under Mahāyāna philosophy, Amitābha, Buddha of the west, was singled out for worship. Through image contemplation believers sought to see, to hear, and to be close to the form of the Tathāgatha, called Amitābha. When one was incapable of performing contemplation or meditation in the Age of the Latter Dharma, the invocation of the name of Amitābha was permitted, although it was never a practice that was advocated in preference to the two former. Amitābha was worshipped by many schools of Buddhism but was supreme in the eyes of the Pure Land Buddhists, and was favoured by the T'ien-t'ai followers, who believed that he could destroy illusions. It is from this background of devotionism and contemplation that Genshin, the Tendai monk and inheritor of Pure Land teachings, emerged from Heian aristocratic Buddhism to be a transmitter, interpreter, and patriarch of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Takada Osamu, Butsu-zō no Kigen 仏像の起源 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967) 14: pp. 429-34.

<sup>2</sup>T.2/126, pp. 703-04.

<sup>3</sup>Takada, pp. 9-15.

<sup>4</sup>Sawa Ryūken, "Kyōten to Butsu-zō no Aida" 仏像のありか, Ars Buddhica (Dec. 1968) 69: pp. 87-97.

<sup>5</sup>T.26/1521.

<sup>6</sup>T.26/1524; Kiyota Minoru, "A Study of the Sukhāvātīvyūpadeśa," Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation: Theory and Practice, Kiyota Minoru, ed. (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978): pp. 249-96.

<sup>7</sup>E. Zürcher, The Buddhist Conquest of China (Leyden: Sinica Leindensia, n.d.; reprint: Taipei, 1970).

<sup>8</sup>See below, footnote number 15.

<sup>9</sup>Alicia Matsunaga, The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the Honji-suijaku Theory (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1969): pp. 97-119.

<sup>10</sup>Mochizuki Shinkō, Chūgoku Jōdo-rishi 中国の浄土理想史 (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1975).

<sup>11</sup>Julian Pas and others believe that this may be dubious, since Hui-yūan's Amitābha worship was chiefly contemplative, rather than devotional. Julian Pas, "The Meaning of Nien-fo in the Three Pure Land Sutras," Studies in Religion 7 (4:1978): p. 403.

<sup>12</sup>Ingram S. Seah, "Shan-tao, His Life and Teachings" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1975): p. 90.

<sup>13</sup>Zürcher, p. 220.

<sup>14</sup>T.13/418; Japanese translation by Mochizuki Shinkō, Kokuyaku Issai-kyō Indo senjutsu-bu, 4 (Tokyo: Daitō Shūppansha, 1973):255-318; there is also a partial translation from the Tibetan by Paul Harrison, "Buddhānusr̥ti in the Pratyupanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra," Journal of Indian

Philosophy 6 (no. 1, Sept. 1978): pp. 35-57.

<sup>15</sup>The concept of śūnyatā or devoidness is the logical argument that negates logic, offered by Nāgārjuna as an answer to the Sarvāstivādins and other early Buddhist schools of philosophy. The Sarvāstivādins believed that the dharmas, elements of human consciousness, were real. Nāgārjuna argued that these dharmas could not be predicated as real, because they depended upon each other for their existence. If one is to realize reality, Nāgārjuna said, one must go beyond normal deductive thinking processes. Through intuition, which can negate logical thought, human beings can achieve a sense of what is real and know that nothing is real. Nāgārjuna's dialectic is a mental preparation for contemplation practices in which the mind of the participant becomes devoid of sophistic thinking; this is the state of śūnyatā. If within this state, a phenomenon can be perceived as it is, then human life can be illuminated, as such a life will not be ruled by absolutes. A person who has realized this void will be as a "mirror," meeting and reflecting the phenomenal world without subjectivity. Śūnyatā cannot be said to be nihilistic, as to realize this state one must exercise one's total capacity as a human being, thus bringing fullness and unity to what it means to be human as the historical Buddha was human. However, the realization of śūnyatā is not to be dwelled upon by the practitioner; one must not confer reality upon it. For a fuller treatment see: T. R. V. Murti, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1980); Th. Stcherbatsky, The Central Conception of Buddhist Nirvana (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978): pp. 36-44; Leon Hurvitz, Chih-i (538-597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1960-1962): pp. 8-36.

<sup>16</sup>Prajñā is an element of consciousness, a dharma; it may be translated into English as "transcendent wisdom" or "intuitive insight." It has the ability to discriminate and suppress the other dharmas; the elimination of all elements of consciousness leads to the realization of śūnyatā. In this state prajñā continues to work, eventually leading to Nirvāna. In this sūtra the form of buddhānumṛti propounded is one that leads to the state of pratyupanna-samādhi in which one can view the buddhas of the ten directions and listen to their teachings, and realize the doctrine of śūnyatā. Rebirth in Amitābha's buddhaksetra is mentioned briefly in this sūtra, but it is not the central issue. The exact relationship of devotionalism and the teachings of śūnyatā is not entirely clear. However, the Samādhi sūtra and the Pure Land sūtras are mutually supportive. For further discussions regarding these points see: P. Harrison, "Samādhi sūtra," pp. 35-57, and J. Pas, "The Meaning of Nien-fo," p. 403.

- 17 T.13/418, p. 904B. 現在仏念在前立三昧
- 18 Ibid., p. 906B. 為求是三昧者. 当作仏像
- 19 Ibid., p. 418C. 於夢中見
- 20 Ibid., p. 418A. 一切人如鏡中
- 21 T.45/1856, for a summary of the correspondence see Zürcher, pp. 227-29, and Richard Robinson, Early Mādhyamika in India and China (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978): pp. 89-91.
- 22 For an analysis of the transmission see Robinson, pp. 108-14.
- 23 T.25/1509.
- 24 Ibid., p. 206A, paraphrased by Robinson, p. 60.
- 25 T.55/2145, translated by Robinson, pp. 200-05.
- 26 T.45/1856, p. 134B.
- 27 Haneda Nobuo, The Development of the Concept of Prthagjana, Culminating in Shan-tao's Pure Land Thought: The Pure Land Theory of Salvation of the Inferior (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1979): p. 34.
- 28 T.52/2103, p. 351B; discussion by Haneda, pp. 34-36.
- 29 For a fuller discussion, see Robert Gimello, "Mysticism and Meditation," Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis, Steven Katz, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978): pp. 170-99.
- 30 Zürcher, pp. 221-23.
- 31 Ibid., p. 224.
- 32 Kawahara Yoshio, "Tonkō Jōdo hensō no seiritsu" 敦煌浄土變相の成立と展開, Ars Buddhica, 68 (August 1968): pp. 85-107.
- 33 Jōdo, Jōdo-shinshū.
- 34 For a listing of the sūtras that discuss the periods see: Robert Rhodes, "Saichō's Mappō Tomyōki," Eastern Buddhist (n.s.) 13 (1:Spring, 1980): pp. 79-103.
- 35 David Chappell, "The Formation of the Pure Land Movement in China: Tao-ch'o and Shan-tao" (unpublished paper, University of

Hawaii).

<sup>36</sup>There is some controversy as to which type of practice he stressed more. The Japanese scholars believe that vocalizing the name of Amitābha was primary to his beliefs, but Julian Pas ("Shan-tao's Interpretation of the Meditative Vision of Buddha Amitayus," History of Religions, XIV (1, 1974): p. 98) believes that visualization was equally or more important in his teachings. Haneda Nobuo disputes Pas' claim, see Haneda Nobuo, "The Development of the Concept of Prthagjana, Culminating in Shan-tao's Pure Land Thought: The Pure Land Theory of Salvation of the Inferior" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1979): pp. 170-84.

<sup>37</sup>Haneda, p. 180.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>39</sup>Seah, pp. 173-82.

<sup>40</sup>Kawahara Yoshio, "Sai-iki, Chūgoku no Jōdo-kyō Kaiga" 西域・中国の浄土教絵画, Jōdo-kyō Bijutsu no Tenkai: Symposium (Kyoto: Kyoto National Museum, Nov. 1973), pp. 1-3.

<sup>41</sup>Seah, p. 181.

<sup>42</sup>"Expedient means": actually the word has many meanings, but in this case it refers to a practical method of communication; the efficacy of it is judged by its ability to convey the Truth, which leads to enlightenment.

<sup>43</sup>T.37/1753.

<sup>44</sup>T.47/1959.

<sup>45</sup>Chappell, p. 22.

<sup>46</sup>Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, p. 187.

<sup>47</sup>Taya Yoritoshi 多屋頼後, "Raigō no shōju to Nijūgo Bosatsu" 来迎の聖衆と二十五菩薩, Chiri 歴史と地理, 30 (2:n.d.): p. 136.

<sup>48</sup>Some may also consider him to be the founder of the sect, but he was preceded by Hui-wen 慧文 (ca. 6th c.) and Hui-ssu 慧思 (515-677).

<sup>49</sup>T.9/262; refer to Leon Hurvitz, Chih-i (538-597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinese, 1960-1962): pp. 229-44.

<sup>50</sup>For a discussion of T'ien-t'ai history see: Takakusu Junjirō, The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy, Wing-tsit Chan and Charles A. Moore, eds. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1947; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975): pp. 131-36.

<sup>51</sup>Hurvitz, p. 271, refers to the realization of Truth as a "religious experience"; others might use the term "mystical" as well.

<sup>52</sup>I use this word, śūnyatā, to mean that the dharma elements are suppressed.

<sup>53</sup>Hurvitz, p. 273, uses the analogy of a mirror and its reflected object.

<sup>54</sup>The ten states are: hell dwellers, pretas, animals, asuras, men, gods, çravakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and buddhas. Hurvitz, p. 300.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>56</sup>Chih = samādhi, kuan = vipasyanā; "quietening the mind and obtaining right knowledge"; the Chinese and Japanese Buddhists' common interpretation is closer to "giving up illusions and obtaining enlightenment." (Daitō Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, p. 278).

<sup>57</sup>Hurvitz, p. 319.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 320-31.

<sup>59</sup>The Triple Body or Trikāya theory has been explained as an answer to questions regarding the nature of transcendental Buddhahood and the historical Sākyamuni. In Mahāyāna Buddhism the three bodies are: Dharma body, 法身; Reward body, 報身; and the Manifested body 化身. See Nagao Gadjin, "On the Theory of Buddha-body (Buddha-kāya)," Eastern Buddhist, 6 (1: May, 1973): pp. 25-53.

<sup>60</sup>Theoretically, any bodhisattva who fulfills his vows and becomes a buddha can be regarded as a sāmbhoga-kāya. Therefore, the Reward Body is not limited to Amitābha alone.

CHAPTER III  
THE RISE OF PURE LAND BUDDHISM  
ON MOUNT HIEI AND GENSHIN

For what reason is Genshin important to this study of raigō painting? What is his relationship to the painting The Descent of Amitābha and His Holy Multitude? On the back of this painting there is a lengthy inscription dated 1587, which presents two points of particular interest to this study. The first is that the painting originated from Anraku Valley, an area of the Buddhist Tendai monastery of Enryaku-ji 延暦寺 on Mount Hiei. The second is that this image was painted by Genshin.<sup>1</sup>

At present the painting is kept at Mount Kōya, the Shingon monastery established by Kūkai 空海 (posthumous name, Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師, 774-835) in A.D. 816.<sup>2</sup> The Shingon sect, under the influence of Kakuban 覚鑿 (1095-1143), does accept the practice of devotion to Amitābha and aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land for the believer of a weak religious capacity. There are raigō paintings associated with the Shingon sect, but they are different from the painting that is the focus of this thesis. An example of an esoteric or Shingon-influenced raigō painting is a work from Zenrin-ji 禅林寺 (fig. 8). The iconography of Amitābha in the centre, flanked by Kannon and Seishi, is inherent in most Amidist raigō art, but at the lower edge are the Four Guardian Kings, and

the Sanskrit letter A appears in the upper left-hand corner.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, the Descent of Amitābha is different as depicted here, and it does not belong to the Shingon Pure Land tradition but to that which evolved on Mount Hiei.

The second point, concerning Genshin as the creator of the Descent of Amitābha, is highly dubious. The art historian Minamoto Toyomune and others have firmly established a twelfth-century date for this painting, long after Genshin's death.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the name of Genshin is synonymous with raigō art. There are numerous pieces of art attributed to Genshin, but none of these attributions can be substantiated.

#### The Rise of Pure Land Buddhism on Mount Hiei

In A.D. 788, Saichō 最澄 (posthumous name, Dengyō Daishi, 伝教大師 767-822), the founder of Japanese Tendai Buddhism, established a small temple on Mount Hiei. He did not study the doctrines of the established sects of Nara<sup>5</sup> but those of Chih-i. Impressed by the Chinese T'ien-t'ai master, Saichō went to China to study at the source of this new Buddhist doctrine. After less than a year he returned to Japan with new ideas of Buddhist devotion.

Saichō's form of Tendai was not a faithful copy of the Chinese original. He brought esoteric, Pure Land, and Ch'an aspects into the teachings, with the first of these elements being very strong. As well, in Japan, Saichō's form of Buddhism was intended as a reform and an alternative to the Nara sects. He sought to involve the

larger society to create a Bodhisattva sangha,<sup>6</sup> and he made Tendai the protectorate faith of the Japanese nation, with Enryaku-ji, its temple on Mount Hiei, guarding the north-east side of the new capital city of Heian Kyō from evil spirits.

As in their Chinese T'ien-t'ai parent sect, contemplation was practised by the Tendai monks. Of prime importance were the rounded teachings of Chih-i, the Four Kinds of Samādhi. Tendai monks prepared themselves with the twenty-five observances for daily life, then engaged in the four preliminary contemplations. In these four samādhi, the Japanese addressed themselves to four different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: (1) jōza-sammai--Monju 文殊 (S. Manjusri); (2) jōgyō-sammai--Amitābha; (3) hangyō-hanza-sammai--Fugen 普賢 (S. Samantabhadra); (4) higyōhiza-sammai--Kannon (S. Avalokiteśvara). When all four types were practised in the same hall, the central image was that of Amitābha. These contemplations were practised in special halls called Hokke-dō 法華堂 or Jōgyō-dō 常行堂.<sup>7</sup>

Saichō's disciple Ennin 円仁 (794-864) also studied in China.<sup>8</sup> Upon his return to Japan in 851, he brought music that praised the Pure Land, and he revived jōgyō-sammai contemplation that centred around an esoteric Amitābha. The contemplation involved singing and chanting while circumambulating an image of Amitābha surrounded by four Bodhisattvas of the esoteric type, bearing the attributes of the hook, rope, bell, and chain.<sup>9</sup> This contemplation was performed in the fall during the period of the full

moon from the dawn of the eleventh day to the night of the seventeenth day. The contemplation was not addressed to enlightenment through rebirth, but to enlightenment in this life.

Ennin built a hall in the eastern section of Mount Hiei for this practice; then after his death another such hall was built in the western region. The walls of both halls were painted with portraits of the Tendai patriarchs and scenes of the nine modes of rebirth. Neither the halls nor the wall paintings exist today, but those scenes of the descent and welcoming may have been similar to those that survive at the Amida Hall of the Byōdō-in 平等院.<sup>10</sup>

During his lifetime, Saichō was very interested in esotericism (taimitsu 台密) and he tried to learn it from Kūkai. Not only was esotericism a form of Buddhist learning in itself, but it was an attraction in the recruiting of aristocratic patrons, who were impressed by its magico-religious aspect and could strengthen the Tendai institution politically and economically. The taimitsu tendency grew within the Tendai sect after Saichō's death, and the sect underwent periods of severe crisis. Tendai, a syncretic form of Buddhism, was being torn apart by its very nature. The monks of Mount Hiei struggled with one another, championing various aspects of Tendai belief, and at several stages the Tendai sect verged on losing its identity to the rival esoteric Shingon sect of Kūkai. Accompanying the religious crisis were both an overall moral decline of the monks and physical disasters, in the form of fires on Mount Hiei. By the tenth century there was a definite need for reform within Tendai, ironically perhaps,

because it had been intended originally by Saichō as an answer to the corruption of the Nara sects. The monk Ryōgen 良源 (912-985), who was the eighteenth abbot of Mount Hiei and the teacher of Genshin, met the challenge.

Ryōgen, in his youth, studied esotericism, but he became interested in Pure Land devotion through his contacts with the Nara sects, particularly the writings of the Monk Chikō 智光 (ca. 8th C.) of the Hōssō sect. Ryōgen wrote an exposition on the meaning of the nine levels of rebirth of the Kan-gyō, the Kuhon Ōjo-gi 九品往生義. It was based upon numerous writings, including those of Chih-i, but the single most important influence was Chikō's Yonjū-hachi-ganshaku 四十八願經.<sup>11</sup>

In 954 Ryōgen built a jōgyō hall in the northern region of Yokawa 横川 on Mount Hiei. This hall enshrined images of Amitābha with four Bodhisattvas, but this set of five figures was not from the esoteric pantheon; the four surrounding figures were from the Pure Land tradition of iconography. The four Bodhisattvas were Kannon, Seishi, Jizō 地藏 (S. Ksitigarbha), and Ryūju 菴樹 (S. Nāgārjuna); the same four that surround Amitābha in the Mount Kōya painting that is under study in this thesis.

This change in iconography may have been affected by non-Japanese influences as well. Nakano Genzō, in his investigation of the Kakuzen-shō 覺禪鈔, believes that there may have been an influx of Chinese beliefs.<sup>12</sup> The Kakuzen-shō mentions that the possible source may have been Ping-chou, an area of T'ang China near

Mount T'ien-t'ai, where people worshipped Amitābha with Kannon, Seishi, Jizō, and Ryūju, and believed in the welcoming descent (figs. 9 and 10).<sup>13</sup> Presumably, sometime in the late T'ang or Five Dynasties period (907-959), Japanese monks learned of the iconography of Amitābha with the four Pure Land Bodhisattvas.

By the mid-tenth century the central iconography of Amitābha with Kannon, Seishi, Jizō, and Ryūju appeared on Mount Hiei, functioning as statuary subjects for jōgyō contemplation by Tendai monks. On the walls behind the statuary were scenes of the descent and welcoming of Amitābha. The pictorial vocabulary of the raigō theme for the Descent of Amitābha was clearly part of the Tendai tradition of Pure Land faith. Genshin, the pupil of Ryōgen, applied the raigō vocabulary to art and amplified the doctrine of the descent of Amitābha.

#### Genshin: His Life and the Ōjōyōshū

Very little is known of Genshin's life, and most information comes from a variety of legends. He was born in 942 in the village of Taima 大和当麻寺 in the area of Yamato.<sup>14</sup> Near his birthplace was Taima Temple, where the Taima Mandala was enshrined. His father was called Urabe 占部, and his mother was of the Kiyohara clan 清原氏, which was related to the Minamoto clan.<sup>15</sup> Legend claims that his father was not a religious man, but that his mother's faith in Buddhism was profound. It is said that as a child, Genshin was quite spiritually inclined and devoted himself to ascetic practices. His parents grieved

when he left home to take up the robes of a monk, which suggests that he was rather young at the time. Upon entering Mount Hiei, Genshin became a follower of Ryōgen at Yokawa, where he studied esoteric Tendai (fig. 11). He was very successful as a monk, but it was success in the worldly sense. By the age of thirty-two (A.D. 973), he became a tandai hakase 探題博士; this title refers to a chairman who handles discussions of Buddhist religion and philosophy that were given in front of the general population. At approximately the same time Genshin became one of the ten master monks serving the imperial altars. Moreover in 975 he took part in a religious debate held at the imperial palace; this was a recognition of his scholastic astuteness. However, it is said that Genshin's mother was not pleased with her son's triumphs and admonished him. After this Genshin retired from public activities to take up Pure Land practices in seclusion.<sup>16</sup> He was about the age of forty at this time. In his seclusion he wrote the Ōjōyōshū sometime between the ages of forty-three and forty-six (984-987). At approximately the same time (985) his master Ryōgen and his beloved mother died; their passing marked a turning point in Genshin's life, a turn towards religious zeal with an emphasis on concrete religious practices. Genshin's influence was not limited to Tendai religious circles and aristocrats; it spread amongst the common people. His writings were also known to Sung Chinese (960-1280), as copies of the Ōjōyōshū were sent to Kuo-ch'ing Temple 國清寺 on Mount T'ien-t'ai, and other exchanges of writings and correspondence followed.<sup>17</sup>

The Ōjōyōshū<sup>18</sup> is a manual of contemplation and was written specifically for the Nijūgo-sammai Society 二十五三昧会, a lay religious group directed by Genshin, with the aid of minor aristocrats, such as Yoshishige Yasutane 慶慈保胤 (religious name, Jakushin 寂心, ?-1002).<sup>19</sup>

The Ōjōyōshū is intended for those who cannot comprehend the more complex forms of Buddhism, and Genshin includes himself as one of the foolish in need of an easier path to salvation. Pure Land philosophy and Mahāyāna Buddhism are digested and formed into concrete stepping stones that led the way to rebirth in Amitābha's paradise. The Ōjōyōshū is composed of quotes and paraphrases from the sūtras and scholarly Buddhist commentaries; very little is original to Genshin. The importance of Genshin and the Ōjōyōshū lies within their relation to the organization, transmission, and popularization of Pure Land Buddhism.

The Ōjōyōshū consists of ten chapters altogether. The first two describe the ways of the various existences, presenting horrifying views of the dark existences and exalting the joys of heaven (fig. 12). Chapter three argues for the superiority of Amitābha's Pure Land over other Buddha-lands. Chapter four discusses the various forms of nembutsu, while in the following chapter, there is a discussion of ways to aid the performance of nembutsu. Chapter six presents nembutsu for special cases and occasions; this includes the form for the dying. The benefits of nembutsu practice are

given in the seventh chapter, and the eighth chapter presents proof of nembutsu's value. Chapter nine discusses further practices that will enable one to be reborn in the Pure Land. The last chapter attempts to answer any queries that the user of the manual may have concerning the Pure Land, rebirth, and so forth.

Genshin's form of nembutsu, as explicated in the Ōiōyōshū, is concrete and simple. In accordance with the teachings of Vasubandhu, there are five kinds of nembutsu: (1) veneration of Amida (raihai-mon 礼拝門); (2) praising Amida (sandai-mon 讚難門); (3) aspiring for the Pure Land (sagan-mon 作願門); (4) contemplation (kanzatsu-mon 觀察門); (5) dedicating and transferring merit achieved through the above to others (ekō-mon 廻向門). Genshin considers contemplation to be the most important of these five forms, devoting nearly half of the book to it. His form of contemplative nembutsu is a synthesis of Chih-i's T'ien-t'ai methods, with the object contemplation of Hui-yüan, and the Pure Land contemplations of Shan-tao. In order to practise nembutsu, the practitioner must have faith in Amitābha and his vow to save sentient beings.

The aim of Genshin's contemplative nembutsu is to realize śūnyatā and to accumulate merit for rebirth in Amitābha's paradise. In the following passage Genshin clearly states the goal of his chief practice of kannen nembutsu.

The person who performs nembutsu should reflect in the following manner. These Buddhas, they come from no place and they go no

place, they are only active in the mind. In the three worlds,<sup>20</sup> the karma of this body is only made by the heart. I contemplate according to awareness, and if I wish to see more, then I see much; if I wish to see less, I see little. The many Buddhas are just this mind of mine. What is the reason for this? It is that they appear in accordance with my mind. My mind is my body, and my body is emptiness. I, on account of conscious contemplation, see endless Buddhas. I, through the awakened mind, see Buddhas and come to know the Buddhas. The mind does see the mind. When I contemplate the Dharma-dhātu,<sup>21</sup> its nature is without solidity. If many Buddhas all follow from awakening and contemplation, they rise according to karma. For this reason the nature of dharma is emptiness, and the nature of space, this again is emptiness.<sup>22</sup>

The aim of realizing sūnyatā through contemplative nembutsu was a Tendai trait of Genshin. Hōnen and Shinran did not believe in the necessity for the common person to realize such an abstruse goal.

Rinjū-nembutsu was an important element of Genshin's practices. The instructions for it are contained in the sixth chapter of the Ōjōyōshū. Genshin first presents a model rite, which he claims is based upon an Indian form; then he offers two forms of nembutsu reflection, contemplative and vocal.

The model rite is quoted from the summary of the Four Part Vinaya<sup>23</sup> from the "Chapter on Watching Sick Persons at Their Dying Hour" of the Chūgoku Honden 中國本伝.<sup>24</sup>

In the north-west corner of the Jetavanatha-pindarama,<sup>25</sup> where the sun sets, the Hall of Evanescence was built. If there was a sick person he was made to lie quietly in there. Foolish persons were seized with evil passions, and when they saw clothing, eating utensils, and assorted articles in the monks' quarters, many engendered worldly attachments, never despising such worldly things in their hearts, and so it was decided to move elsewhere. This hall was called "Evanescence," and there were many who came to it, but only one or two who returned.

Adapting to the shape of the setting sun, they proceeded to deepen their thoughts concerning impermanence with undivided attention.<sup>26</sup> In that hall there was enshrined a standing image, covered with gold leaf, and turned towards the west. That image's right hand was raised and to the left was fastened a long five-coloured streamer that trailed on the ground. In order to calm the sick person, he was placed behind the image, made to take hold of the end of the streamer, and thus he was caused to think of following the Buddha to the Pure Land. The nursing attendants burned incense, scattered flowers and adorned the patient in a dignified manner. If there were any bodily wastes, such as vomit or sputum, these were disposed of. So it was said. In another source it is written: face the Buddha image east and place the sick person in front of it. And giving my own views, I say, if there is no special place, then turn the patient's face west, burning incense and scattering flowers. Advise meditation or make him worship a correct and sublime Buddha image.<sup>27</sup>

The form of nembutsu for the dying is less a form of contemplation than a means of allaying fear for the dying person and his relatives.<sup>28</sup> The need for the use of images in rinjū-nembutsu to simulate the coming of Amitābha no doubt spurred the evolution of painted raigō images.

The rinjū-nembutsu rites required the aid of a special friend who could attend to the dying person. The chief purpose of the formation of the Nijūgo-sammai Society was for its members to aid one another at the time of death by providing the proper conditions and rites for passage into Amitābha's Western Paradise. This was specified in both the pledge of the society<sup>29</sup> and in the sixth chapter of the Ōjōyōshū.<sup>30</sup> A person who did not die under these specific conditions could not be entered into the records of rebirth as having reached the Pure Land.<sup>31</sup>

Genshin's Pure Land practices allowed the participation of the

laity, who were more than mere spectators or subjects of esoteric rites. The simplified contemplation techniques of the Ōjōyōshū allowed ordinary people to take an active part in their own salvation.

The Nijūgo-sammai Society was composed of religious adepts and lay people. It met once every lunar month on the night of the full moon, when Amitābha's presence was said to be the strongest, to read the sūtras and practice "ceaseless nembutsu" (J. fudan nembutsu 不断念仏). From 1 to 3 P.M. the group gathered; from 3 to 5 P.M. there were lectures, "merit transfer," and the reading of the society's pledge. From 7 P.M. nembutsu began; the next morning at 7 A.M. vows were made, twelve fascicles of sūtras were read, and the name of Amitābha was called two thousand times.<sup>32</sup>

Aside from teaching techniques of contemplation, Genshin in the Ōjōyōshū also provides acts that will facilitate rebirth in Amitābha's land. Genshin commented that many sūtras only provided summary teachings that were unclear as to the many ways of rebirth.<sup>33</sup> Briefly but clearly he clarified the scriptures by presenting thirteen acts that could be practised by a believer: (1) almsgiving; (2) learning the Buddha's teachings and entering into his service; (3) persevering; (4) diligence; (5) quietly calming the mind; (6) receiving wisdom through the true teachings; (7) desiring enlightenment; (8) performing contemplation; (9) reading and chanting the Mahāyāna sūtras; (10) protecting the Buddhist teachings; (11) respecting parents, teachers, and elders; (12) not disdain-

persons filled with conceit; (13) not overindulging in bodily pleasures.<sup>34</sup> The Ōjōyōshū was clearly written as a handbook of daily practices for the laity.

### Genshin's Art and the Raigō Theme

Like Shan-tao before him, Genshin had a reputation as an artist. There are numerous works of art attributed to him; the three most famous of these are: (1) the painting of Mount Kōya; (2) the Yamagoshi-raigō-zu of Konkai-komyō-ji (fig. 13); (3) the Amida Triad of Sanzen-in in Ōhara. All of the above attributions are considered dubious by art historians, but popular sentiment acknowledges them as works by Genshin.

Before approaching the question of whether Genshin was an artist or not, or whether he painted the Descent of Amitābha at Mount Kōya, an examination of his liaisons with the raigō theme and art is necessary. With such a study, Genshin's artistic attributions will appear viable and less mythologized.

For what reasons would Genshin select the theme of the descent of Amitābha to paint? As a child, Genshin was most likely familiar with the scenes of kuhon along the lower edge of the Taima Mandala. Then as a monk on Mount Hiei, Genshin's teacher Ryōgen introduced to Japan the iconography of Amitābha with the four Pure Land Bodhisattvas. Moreover, Ryōgen stressed an understanding of kuhon in his writing of the Kuhon Ōjō-gi, which he passed on to Genshin. Genshin, himself, believed that contemplations on kuhon, as

part of the sixteen meditations of the Kan-gyō, were a prime cause (J. gen-in ) of rebirth in the Pure Land.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, Genshin presented the raigō scene as part of the chapters on hells and heavens in the Ōjōyōshū.<sup>36</sup> Inoue believes that these two chapters were intended to be read aloud and contemplated upon, as the sūtras were.<sup>37</sup> His theory is highly plausible, considering the nature of the treatise. The raigō theme, as part of these chapters, was intended as upāya, an expedient means of teaching. Also, these chapters present the horrors of hells, the joy of seeing Amitābha descending, and the pleasures of the Pure Land in order to arouse the mind of faith in the reader in preparation for nembutsu.

The subject of Amitābha descending with a great host on cloud vehicles can be found in the Pure Land sūtras and the Taima Mandala, but it was not a major theme in Japanese Buddhist art until Genshin popularized it in the opening section of the second chapter of the Ōjōyōshū. After the vivid descriptions of the tortures of hells, the horrors of human life, and the inadequacies of deva heaven, the reader is presented with the imagery of salvation.

According to the vow of Amitābha Tathāgatha, he will come with many Bodhisattvas and ten thousand monks, brilliant rays of light will shoot forth, and he will stand distinctly before your eyes. At that time the merciful Kannon with hands of happiness and good fortune, offering a jewelled lotus dais will appear in front of the believer. The great Seishi and the infinite hosts will say blessings together and joining hands, they will lead the believer.<sup>38</sup>

This is not only the climax of the Ōjōyōshū but the culmination of the fruit of faith and nembutsu. All Pure Land followers aspire to achieve this vision of salvation. The Japanese were not content to read of Amitābha's descent in the sūtras or see it along the lower edge of the Taima Mandala, they desired the reality of that most splendid moment in this life. They devised raigō art to encourage the human imagination.

One of these art forms was the mukae-kō 迎講, which was believed to have been originated by Genshin. The mukae-kō is a dramatic performance of the descent of Amitābha.<sup>39</sup> Mukae means "to welcome"; kō refers to a "lecture" or an "association."

On the back of the Mount Kōya painting, the inscription says that the teachings of Amitābha ("the guiding hand") were transformed into a dramatic performance, during which time the offering encountered this "honoured image."<sup>40</sup> The "dramatic performance" refers to mukae-kō; this means that in the sixteenth century, when the inscription was written, this image was used for the mukae-kō ceremony.

The mukae-kō is a form of gyōdo 行道.<sup>41</sup> Gyōdo has two meanings: the first suggests walking the path of the Buddha; the other means a procession around an image with the right shoulder towards it, in other words, circumambulation. There are many forms of the mukae-kō, depending upon the master of the temple, but, in general, the characters consist of Amitābha with his main bodhisattvas and twenty-five minor bodhisattvas who descend to this world. The

performers are selected from resident monks and parishioners. This performance has engendered many artistic creations, such as masks, costumes, sculpture, and painting (figs. 14, 15).

The earliest references to the mukae-kō are associated with Yokawa, the area of Mount Hiei where Genshin lived. The Shuryōgon-in Nijūgo-sammai Kechien Kako-chō 首楞嚴院二十三昧結緣去過中岳, dated 1014, makes the earliest reference to it being performed at Yokawa.<sup>42</sup> Ōgushi Sumio believes that the mukae-kō grew out of Genshin's nembutsu meetings with the laity.<sup>43</sup>

Concerning the early function of raigō painting, there is the the story of Taira-nō-Koremochi 平維羅 (ca. 10th c.) in the Goshūi Ōjō-den 後拾遺往生伝. Koremochi, a warrior, was dying in a remote area far from Kyōto. He sent for Genshin, but the latter was unable to attend in person, and instead sent a "mandala of Amitābha welcoming [one] to paradise."<sup>44</sup>

The type of image Genshin sent to Koremochi is unknown. However, in the Ōjōyōshū and the pledge of Genshin's nembutsu lay society Genshin emphasized the rite of rinjū-nembutsu.<sup>45</sup> This rite involved the use of images, which were used as foci for a simplified remembrance of the Buddha and as props to simulate Amitābha's act of leading the believer to the Pure Land. Rinjū-nembutsu will be discussed further in Chapter IV in relation to Genshin's aristocratic lay followers.

Genshin, as a child and monk, was familiar with the iconography

of the descent of Amitābha. And, within his own work, the Ōjōyōshū, contemplation of kuhon raigō held an important position in his doctrine of Pure Land Buddhism. Therefore, his association with the raigō theme is not without justification. Yet Genshin's association with raigō painting has been obscured by legends and hearsay, so that art historians disregard his true contributions to this Pure Land genre of painting. Having discussed the raigō theme within the context of Genshin's life, doctrine, and quasi-legendary reputation, it is now possible to view his creation of raigō paintings with a certain degree of credence.

Numerous biographies of Genshin mention that he created works of art, but there are two that specifically state that he created raigō art. These biographies, the Enryaku-ji Shuryōgon-in Genshin Sōzu-den 延曆寺首楞嚴院源信僧都伝 (dated 1040-1044?) and the Shuryōgon-in Nijūgo-sammai Kechien Kako-chō 首楞嚴院二十五三昧結象去過幅 (dated 1013), both say that Genshin painted the form of Amitābha's descent and welcoming according to the sūtras. His raigō paintings showed many monks and very few bodhisattvas.<sup>46</sup>

It comes as no great revelation to be told that Genshin painted or made other art objects. Shan-tao, Kūkai, Chinkai 珍海 (1091-1152), and others painted or sculpted as part of their vocation as monks. In regard to Genshin as an artist, the real question is: How well did he paint or sculpt? Was he truly capable of producing a major masterpiece such as that of Mount Kōya?

The Mount Kōya painting is generally considered to be a twelfth century copy of an earlier work.<sup>47</sup> However, the inscription on the back claims that it was painted by Genshin at the age of twenty-four. The painting shows remarkable control of brush, colour, and form. These are signs of a very talented and mature artist, hardly the work of a young man, unless he were truly an artistic genius. Since there are no works that are of certain authorship by him, his talent cannot be assessed. The inscription may be overenthusiastic in its attribution of the painting to a twenty-four year old Genshin, as he did not devote himself solely to Pure Land faith until reaching his late thirties. Therefore, it is extremely dubious that he created such a major piece of Pure Land art.

Aside from the possibility of creating works himself, Genshin may have been a patron of art. The Asaba-shō 阿婆抄 says that he commissioned a picture of the welcoming to the Pure Land by Kasube Tsunenori 春部常則.<sup>48</sup> There are no records of a painter by this name, but art historians believe that there is a mistake in the transcription of the Asaba-shō and that the artist was Asukabe Tsunenori 飛鳥部常則 (ca. 10th c.), who was a painter of the imperial court.<sup>49</sup>

Genshin did not paint the Descent of Amitābha at Mount Kōya, but he may have painted other raigō images from which this painting was copied. It is almost certain that he painted and commissioned images, and, in view of his strong affiliation with the raigō theme, his images were most likely of the descent of

Amitābha. However, the creation of a whole genre of Buddhist painting was not contingent upon him alone. The raigō theme and the making of images of that theme had the popular support of the aristocratic laity. Genshin's doctrine and art particularly appealed to them.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup>Shingon is a sect of Vajrāyāna (esoteric) Buddhism, which believes in the cultivation of the three secrets of mind, body, and word to bring about enlightenment in the present life.

<sup>3</sup>The Four Guardian Kings are the four deva kings who guard the four quarters of the world. The letter Ā in esoteric Buddhism symbolizes the unity of the world; it is the origin of all elements of the world. The letter is used for meditation.

<sup>4</sup>Minamoto Toyomune 源豊宗, "Kōya-san no Shōju Raigō-zu ni Tsuite" 高野山の聖衆來迎圖に就いて, Ars Buddhica, 16 (June 1930): pp. 106-17.

<sup>5</sup>The Six Nara Sects are Kusha 俱舍, Jōjitsu 成実, Ritsu 律, Sanron 三論, Hōssō 法相, and Kegon 華嚴.

<sup>6</sup>A religious community composed of the laity and ordained persons living in the path of Buddha.

<sup>7</sup>Matsunaga Daigan and Alicia Matsunaga, Foundation of Japanese Buddhism 2 vols. (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1976)1: p. 158.

<sup>8</sup>Ennin, trans. by Edwin O. Reischauer, Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law (New York: Ronald Press, 1955).

<sup>9</sup>It is generally believed that this group was derived from the Taizō Mandala 胎藏曼荼羅. However, Nakano Genzō believes that it may be an abbreviation of another type of mandala called the Kuhon Mandala 七品曼荼羅. "Mikkyō Amida-zō kara Jōdo-kyō Amida-zō e" 密教阿彌陀像から浄土教阿彌陀像へ, Museum, 386 (May 1983): p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Nakano Genzō, Jōdo-kyō no Bijutsu: Byōdō-in Hōō-dō 浄土教の美術: 平等院鳳凰堂 (Tokyo: Gakken, 1978): p. 149.

<sup>11</sup>Inoue Mitsusada, Nihon Jōdo-kyō, pp. 139-45.

<sup>12</sup>Nakano, "Mikkyō Amida-zō," p. 7.

<sup>13</sup>Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zenshū Butsu-sho Kankō-kai,  
eds., 大日本仏教全集仏書刊行会, Kakuzen-shō (Tokyo:  
Meichō-fukyū-kai, 1978):45: p. 178.

<sup>14</sup>This is the area of present day Nara prefecture.

<sup>15</sup>Andrews, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup>This was an official declaration, but in truth he mixed with Kyoto aristocratic society in order to serve his patrons. He did not openly evangelize, but rather the aristocracy came to him. This topic will be dealt with more thoroughly in Chapter IV.

<sup>17</sup>Ishida Mitsuyuki 石田充之, "Genshin," Genshin, ed. by Osumi Kazuo and Hayami Tasuku (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1983):2-9.

<sup>18</sup>At present there are numerous versions of Genshin's Ōjōyōshū available. Hanayama's collated version is considered the best contemporary copy of the Kambun text. Ishida Mizumaro has translated the Ōjōyōshū into two modern Japanese versions: one is the Nihon Jōdo-kyō Yōyake for the lay reader and the other is in the Shisō Taikei series for scholars. For all references see the bibliography.

<sup>19</sup>Yoshishige was the compiler of the Nihon Ōjō Gokuraku-ki 日本往生極樂記, Japanese stories of rebirth in the Western Paradise. See Inoue Mitsusada, ed., Ōjō-den Hokke-ken-ki 往生伝法華験記, Shisō Taikei, 7 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982): pp. 9-41.

<sup>20</sup>This refers to sentient beings, non-sentient beings, and the five skandas.

<sup>21</sup>The phenomenal world.

<sup>22</sup> 行者作是念。是等諸仏。無所從來。去無所至。唯我心作。於三界中。是身因緣。唯是心作。隨覺觀。欲多見多。欲少見少。諸仏如來。即是我心。何以故。隨心見故。心即我身。即是虛空。我因覺觀。見無量仏。我以覺心。見仏知

似。心不見心。心不知心。我觀法界性  
 無牢固。一切諸法。皆覺觀。因緣而生。  
 是故法性。即是虛空。虛空之性。亦復是空。  
 Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, pp. 336-37.

23A T'ang dynasty summary and explanations of the Vinaya, rules of monastic life; actually Genshin's form of rinjū-nembutsu can be traced to Tao-hsuan's 道桓 (346-417) Four Part Vinaya, T. 40/1804.

24 It is not known whether this book actually existed or not. Ishida, Ōjōyōshū, p. 154.

25A garden in the south of Śrāvastī in Kosala, Central India. It was used as a retreat by Śākyamuni during his lifetime.

26 This refers to the first of the sixteen meditations of the Kan-gyō.

27 祇 洹 西 北 角。日 光 沒 處。為 無 常  
 院。若 有 病 者。安 置 在 中。以 凡 生 貪 染。  
 見 本 房 內 在 蓋 衆 具。多 生 戀 著。無 心  
 厭 背。故 制 命 至 別 處。堂 另 無 常。來 者  
 極 多。還 反 一 二。即 事 而 求 專 心 念 法。  
 其 堂 中 直 一 立 像。金 薄 塗 之。西 向 西  
 方。其 像 右 手 與。在 手 中 繫 一 五 綵 幡。  
 脚 垂 曳 地。當 安 病 者。在 像 之 後。左 手  
 執 轆 脚。作 從 人 往 人 淨 刹 之 意。瞻 病  
 者。燒 香 散 華。莊 嚴 病 者。乃 至 若 有 尿 病  
 尿 吐 唾。隨 有 除 之。或 說。如 像 向 東。病  
 者 在 前。私 云。若 無 別 處。但 命 病 者。西  
 向 西。燒 香 散 華。種 々 勸 進。或 可 令 見。  
 端 嚴 似 像。

Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, pp. 299-301.

<sup>28</sup>Fujita, Genshi Jōdo, p. 581.

<sup>29</sup>Yokawa Shuryōgon-in Kishō, Genshin (Tokyo: Chūō-kōron-sha, 1983) 2: p. 77.

<sup>30</sup>Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, pp. 299-300.

<sup>31</sup>McCullough et al., 2 vols., A Tale of Flowering Fortunes (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980) 2: p. 771.

<sup>32</sup>Yokawa Kishō, p. 339.

<sup>33</sup>Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, p. 379.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 370-80.

<sup>35</sup>Hanayama, p. 378.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71; these two chapters have been translated by A. K. Reischauer, "Genshin's Ojo Yoshu: Collected Essays on Birth into Paradise," The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, 2nd series, 7 (Dec. 1930):16-97.

<sup>37</sup>Inoue, Nihon Jōdo-kyō, p. 134.

<sup>38</sup>Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, pp. 70-71.

<sup>39</sup>For a description of the mukae-kō at Taima Temple see Appendix B.

<sup>40</sup>See Appendix A.

<sup>41</sup>Ōgushi Sumio 大串純夫, Raigō Geijutsu  
来迎芸術 (Kyoto: Hoso-sensho, 1983): p. 14.

<sup>42</sup>Kawasaki Tsuneyuki, ed., Shuryōgon-in  
Nijūgo-sammai Kechien Genshin (Tokyo:  
Kako-chō, Chūōkōron-sha, 1983): p. 380.

<sup>43</sup>Ōgushi, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup>極樂迎接曼荼羅, Goshui Ōjō-den,  
Shisō Taikai, 7 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982): p. 659.

<sup>45</sup>The pledge is the Yokawa Shuryōgon-in  
Nijūgo-sammai Kishō 横川首楞嚴院二十五三昧起請,

Kawasaki Tsuneyuki, ed., 川崎庸之, Genshin (Tokyo: Chūōkōron-sha, 1983): pp. 339-57.

<sup>46</sup> 僧都往年自案經文. 因給弥陀来之影像.  
其中比丘衆多. 菩薩衆少

Enryaku-ji Shugon-in Genshin Sōzu, Eshin Zenshu, 5 (Iwamoto, Hiei-zan: Senshu-in, 1927): p. 7.

僧都はみづから經文案いて弥陀来迎の姿を描いた。

Kawasaki Tsuneyuki, ed., Shugon-in Nijūgo-sammai Kechien Kako-chō, Genshin (Tokyo: Chūōkōron-sha, 1983): p. 382.

<sup>47</sup> Minamoto Toyomune, "Kōya-san no Shōju Raigō-zu Ni Tsuite," Ars Buddhica, 16 (June 1930): p. 116.

<sup>48</sup> Bussho Kankō-kai, eds., 仏書刊行会, Asaba-shō, Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho, 35-41 (Tokyo: Meichō-fukyu-kai, 1978): p. 807.

<sup>49</sup> Fukuyama Toshio, trans. by Ronald K. Jones, Heian Temples: Byodo-in and Chuson-ji (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1976): 32.

## CHAPTER IV

## ARISTOCRATIC PATRONAGE

In his biographies, Genshin is represented as a religious recluse.<sup>1</sup> However, as a monk of Mount Hiei, he was required to serve the aristocratic patrons of that monastery. Genshin's Pure Land beliefs would not have grown into individual sects, branching off from Tendai Buddhism, if he and his doctrines had not enjoyed the support of a wealthy class. Genshin was not a hypocrite, but he had to serve his patrons.

According to the Eiga Monogatari 栄華物語 (hereafter called the Eiga),<sup>2</sup> for example, Genshin was present at the funeral of Kanshi 寛子 (before 999?-1025), the daughter of Fujiwara-no-Michinaga 藤原道長 (966-1027).<sup>3</sup>

The Holy Teacher Genshin and his people were there, as was the Ohara Novice Akinobu, who felt that he could not absent himself from such an event, even though he had renounced the world.<sup>4</sup>

The "Bishop of Yokawa" in the Genji Monogatari 源氏物語 (hereafter called the Genji)<sup>5</sup> is frequently identified with Genshin.<sup>6</sup> He is described as a "holy and learned man."<sup>7</sup> This bishop had renounced the world, but he left his mountain retreat to attend his sick mother and take her on a pilgrimage. During the pilgrimage, the bishop was called to court to cure the First Princess of

an illness.<sup>8</sup> He is a pious man, yet he serves as a link between the Buddha and the sentient world.

Both of the above books are historical novels; through them an image of Genshin as one who "could not absent himself" from the affairs of the Heian aristocracy is drawn. This image of a learned and reclusive monk bound by duty to his family and society is perhaps more true than the biographies that extol his virtues to the point of myth.

The writer(s) of the Eiga was very familiar with the Ōjōyōshū, particularly in the later chapters, which were written sometime between 1042 and 1101.<sup>9</sup> The characters of these last chapters often quote or paraphrase Genshin's treatise. During the scene of Michinaga's last moments, the author of the Eiga offers this paraphrase from the beginning of the second chapter of the Ōjōyōshū's section preceding the joys of the raigō vision and the Pure Land.

When the doer of evil works dies, wind and fire depart first. Movement and heat result, and there is thus much pain. In the case of a person with good roots, earth and water depart first, so that death is gentle and there is no pain.<sup>10</sup>

In the next scene Michinaga is dead. The author is very familiar with Genshin's work and knows how to use it in appropriate situations. One may guess that amongst upper class people of the Heian period, Genshin and the Ōjōyōshū were well known.

#### The Buddhism of the Heian Aristocrats

Buddhism was introduced to Japan by the sixth century. It was

not initially received as a philosophy or faith, but as a superior form of magic from the continent. Knowledge of Buddhism was at first the possession only of authorized persons from the upper echelons of Japanese authority. By the tenth to twelfth centuries Japanese Buddhism had not lost its magical aspect, although it had spread widely amongst the ruling classes and was practised by some of the common people.

The most common application of Buddhist magic or esoteric rites was to cure illness and secure safe childbirth. Upon the illness of the Grand Empress Kenshi 賢子 (994-1027), another daughter of Michinaga, she received the following rites:

A twenty-one day series of esoteric rites undertaken by Bishop Meison had produced no improvement. The Bishop's efforts were reinforced by those of other notable monks, who were directed to perform two- and three-altar rites, but the disease proved impervious to their outpourings of mystic invocations; the Grand Empress did not so much as yawn. Every purification and oblation ritual was tried.<sup>11</sup>

The rites for illness were common; sometimes they were efficacious, but in the case of Kenshi, they were not.

For the happier occasion of pregnancy, Buddhist rites and prayers were eagerly sought after to insure the safety of the mother and child. When the Empress Ishi 威子 (999-1036) was pregnant,

Michinaga, both happy and apprehensive, sent messengers to temples and shrines everywhere to enlist the services of prayer-monks. As seemed only right under the circumstances, the prayers were to be incomparable--even more impressive than in the past.<sup>12</sup>

Buddhist rites and prayers were also applied to ward off bad

luck, bad weather, evil spirits, and a host of other problems. In the Genji there are prayers for longevity,<sup>13</sup> but the Eiga is even more specific in stating that Buddhism can prolong life. In the case of Kenshi, the Eiga provides this passage: "If she directs a single thought to the 100 Śākyamuni images,' one monk declared, 'it will mean another 100 years of life.'"<sup>14</sup> During Michinaga's last days on earth, the emperor "arranged to have 300 bolts of silk and 1000 rolls of other cloth sent from the court to the temple to support sutra-chanting for the prolongation of Michinaga's life."<sup>15</sup>

In both the Genji and Eiga Monogatari there is a steady growth of pessimism and a focus upon death, as well as more interest in Pure Land Buddhist rites and doctrines, as the reader approaches the closing chapters. This is natural, in that the characters are growing older and are falling victims to the evanescence of life, and that Pure Land Buddhism is essentially eschatological in nature.<sup>16</sup> The Pure Land Buddhism of the Heian period was spurred by the belief in the Age of the Latter Dharma (J. Mappō), the final age. The concept of Mappō was not new to Japan; as early as the eighth century, Saichō wrote the Tōmyō-ki 燈明記, a treatise defending the loose morals of monks, because that was a sign of the final age.<sup>17</sup> By the time of Michinaga's latter years, epidemics of smallpox and measles, as well as a diminishing of aristocratic morals and power were making the Age of the Latter Dharma appear to be a reality. The dark pessimism is reflected in this passage from the Eiga: "All the world was dark after Śākyamuni entered nirvāna. And now that the lamp of the world

was extinguished, many indeed were those who groped in the long night's darkness."<sup>18</sup>

One of the primary functions of Buddhism was to provide rites for the dying and the dead. The native Shintō religion of Japan did not have any provisions to deal with death, while Buddhism provided doctrines to explain death, rites to give hope to the dying, and services to remember the dead. The Buddha most important for the dying and dead was Amitābha. In Genji, upon the death of Yūgao, forty-ninth day services<sup>19</sup> were held at the Lotus Hall on Mount Hiei, and Genji "committed the one he had loved and lost, though he did not mention her name, to the mercy of Amitābha."<sup>20</sup>

Genshin, in the Ōjōyōshū, provided a special form of nembutsu for the dying, rinjū-nembutsu. And according to the pledge of the Nijūgo-sammai Society, the function of the group was not only to practise nembutsu but to aid one another at the time of death and to record the rebirth. The Eiga says "that a person has been reborn into paradise is based on reports about dreams and the manner of his death, . . . ." <sup>21</sup> Genshin's model for rinjū-nembutsu, provided in the second section of the sixth chapter of the Ōjōyōshū, was closely followed by Michinaga in the Eiga. In preparation for his death, Michinaga built an Amitābha Hall, a hall of evanescence, at Hōjō-ji 法成寺, enshrining nine images of Amitābha that were symbolic of the nine categories of rebirth (fig. 16). On the doors of this hall were painted scenes of kuhon.<sup>22</sup> Nearing his end, Michinaga shaved his head and took the

vows of monkhood, resigning himself to his departure from the sentient world.

Altogether detached, it seemed, from worldly concerns, Michinaga fixed his gaze on the nine Amitābha images, . . . . His only desire was to concentrate his thoughts on Amitābha Buddha as death approached. . . . He lay facing west with his pillow to the north, his eyes on the signs and attributes of the Tathāgatha Amitābha, his ears filled with holy invocations of the Buddha's name, his heart fixed on the Land of Ultimate Bliss, and his hands grasping the braids held by the Amitābha statues.<sup>23</sup>

Attending Michinaga was the novice monk Narinobu, who exhorted him to invoke the name, and who received dreams concerning the fate of his charge. Several days after Michinaga's death, his daughter received a note from her father saying that he had achieved rebirth in the lowest category of kuhon.<sup>24</sup> There may be some fictional embellishment in this passage, but, on the basis of extant images used for rinjū-nembutsu and numerous volumes of rebirth accounts, one may assume that rinjū-nembutsu rites were not uncommon, though perhaps less ostentatious than Michinaga's.

The funerals of the wealthy aristocrats were splendid affairs that were as magnificent as they were sad. They displayed the assets and power of the aristocrats even in death, as reflected in this passage concerning the funeral of the Grand Empress Kenshi.

The funeral procession was a melancholy spectacle, utterly different in customs and general appearance from the imperial lady's usual progress, but it was also very grand as it moved along beneath the fine cloudless sky, . . . .<sup>25</sup>

For her Thirty-fifth Day services, magnificent offerings of images were made, as seen in this passage:

dedicatory rites were held for the recently completed statues of the Five Great Mystic Kings,<sup>26</sup> and for 10,000 Fudō images. The purpose was to try to ensure Kenshi's rebirth in paradise, . . .<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, for the final Forty-ninth Day service a silver Amitābha Triad was offered.<sup>28</sup> Such fine funeral processions and offerings could only be afforded by the very wealthy and powerful.

In all of the above quotations there is the aristocratic consciousness of pageantry and pomp. Buddhism provided the Heian aristocrats with occasions to display their riches and status. In preparation for the dedication of the Amitābha Hall of Hōjō-ji, the imperial ladies fussed over clothing of "damasks and bombycines in willow, cherry, wisteria, and yamabuki combinations."<sup>29</sup> Later at the dedication of a copy of the Lotus-sūtra, the lecturing monk is dressed in "gorgeous red garments, and the anticipation of the congregation mounted as he raised his censer in an impressive gesture of homage to Buddha," while "the ladies basked in reflected glory."<sup>30</sup> These religious occasions speak less of piety than of wealth, power, and glory.

The aristocrats expressed their piety towards the Buddha in a number of ways. They copied and chanted the sūtras, sponsored and attended Buddhist services, made pilgrimages and offerings.

Chanting and reading the sūtras were the most common methods

of expressing piety for the Heian individual. In the Eiga the wife of Prince Tametaka and the daughter of Koretada read the Lotus-sūtra two or three thousand times.<sup>31</sup> Intoning the name of Amitābha was another practice believed to be suitable for affecting karma. Kenshi was said to have invoked the name one million times.<sup>32</sup> Making a religious pilgrimage was a very popular practice, because it was not only a devout act, but it afforded the aristocrats an occasion for gathering together and sponsoring religious events. Senshi (n.d.), an Imperial consort, upon her arrival at Ishiyama,

presented damask curtains and silver bowls as offerings, gave vestments to the abbot and all the others, held a feast for the monks, added to the temple's lands, commissioned recitations of every description, and arranged for a myriad-light service. . . . In every detail, as may be imagined, the services far surpassed any of the similar rituals she had sponsored in other years.<sup>33</sup>

Another manner of expressing faith was to renounce secular life to take up the robes of a monk or a nun. This was a very popular action, particularly amongst the emperors, who could resign from their official posts to enjoy the privacy of an elegant cloister.<sup>34</sup> The aristocrats almost all took religious vows towards the end of their life, in hope that their action would bring good effects upon their next rebirth. The Empress Kenshi became a nun on her deathbed, as did Kaneie, the Chancellor and Regent.<sup>35</sup> However, taking the tonsure of a monk or nun was deemed suitable only for persons near death or very elderly; it was not considered appropriate for young people, particularly young women. Ukifune, the reluctant lover of Niou in the

Genji, was told by a nun when she decided to renounce the world, "But you are so young and so pretty. How could you possibly want to become a nun?"<sup>36</sup> Young people were expected to enjoy life; the life of a monk or nun was only for those who had passed their youth and were ready to retire to the cloister.

The Buddha not only taught his ordained and lay followers to perform contemplation or chant sutras, but he also left a moral code of charity, diligence, non-violence, non-indulgence, and celibacy, rules of good behaviour. Genshin in his Ōjōyōshū restated some of the Buddha's precepts, but the Genji and Eiga rarely mention piety expressed through moral behaviour. The outer trappings of rituals and offerings predominate over a moral spiritual faith.

### The Patronage of Art

The Heian aristocrats expressed their faith in Buddhism most profoundly in images and architecture. The later chapters of the Eiga are filled with descriptions of lavish offerings of images, and of Michinaga's building of Hōjō-ji.

When Tadanobu's wife was dying, Tadanobu "collected thirty or forty Buddhist artists, provided them with silk, and told them to paint innumerable life-sized sacred images,"<sup>37</sup> while ten thousand images of Fudō were made for Kenshi's Thirty-fifth Day service.

The grandest display of Buddhist art was created by Michinaga. The Amitābha Hall of Hōjō-ji (fig. 17) was built in preparation for Michinaga's demise; it was destroyed by fire long ago,

but the Eiga left this record of its glory.

The building that greeted the eyes of those companions was a tile-roof edifice in the western part of the compound, facing toward the east and extending for more than ten bays from north to south. The rafter ends were the color of yellow gold, and there were mother-of-pearl flowers inlaid with colored gems at the intersections.<sup>38</sup>

The interior grounds of Hōjō-ji were patterned after descriptions of the Western Paradise.

Along the shores of the spotlessly clean lake there stood rows of jewelled trees made of the seven treasures, with lamps in silver and gold nets suspended from their branches. There were wheel lamps made to resemble flying chariots and waterwheels, and gem-net lamps tied with cluster-dyed braid in different colors, or shaped like peacocks, parrots, and kalavinkas. . . . It was all wonderful to behold. . . .<sup>39</sup>

Compare the preceding passage describing the garden of Hōjō-ji with the account of the Pure Land from the Kan-gyō.

All the jewel-trees have flowers and leaves consisting of seven jewels all perfect. All flowers and leaves have colours like the colours of various jewels:--from the colour of lapis lazuli there issues a golden ray; from the colour of crystal, a saffron ray; from the colour of agate, a diamond ray; from the colour of diamond, a ray of blue pearls.<sup>40</sup>

In the Shaka Hall of Hōjō-ji Michinaga placed one hundred images of Śākyamuni.

The central image was a golden figure sixteen feet tall. The other ninety-nine, also gilt, were life-sized, and thus equal in height to the spectators, but the spaciousness of the hall made them seem no taller than seated five or six-year-old children. The sixteen-foot image rode in a special cart, attended in a stately procession by all the invited monks, and the other

ninety-nine were moved in hand litters, each borne by four men wearing dark green silk trousers with glossed linings. The reflections of the statues floated more like buddhas on the surface of a lake.<sup>41</sup>

The scale of image making and temple building in the Heian period was tremendous. Most of those paintings, statues, and Buddha halls have perished in the temporal world, but the Byōdō-in 平等院 (1053) and Chūson-ji 中尊寺 (early twelfth century) remain to speak of the "flowering fortunes" of Heian Buddhism (fig. 18).

Art and architecture were important to the Heian aristocrats not only as a material extravagance; their creative impulse was inspired by particular sūtras.

The primary sūtra read by the Heian aristocrats in both the Eiga and Genji was the Lotus-sūtra, which was central to the doctrines of the Tendai sect. In the Eiga alone the Lotus-sūtra is mentioned more than twenty-five times. In the second chapter of the Lotus-sūtra Śākyamuni Buddha is speaking to Śāriputra, and the assembly of holy men has departed because they cannot comprehend the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha says:

Those who with many-colored designs create Buddha images,  
 Adorning them with the marks of hundredfold merit,  
 Making them themselves or having them done by others,  
 Have all achieved the Buddha Path.  
 Even children in play,  
 With grass, sticks, and brushes.  
 Or with their fingernails,  
 Draw Buddha images.  
 Persons like these,  
 Gradually accumulating merit  
 And perfecting thoughts of great compassion,  
 Have all achieved the Buddha Path.<sup>42</sup>

The Buddha is explaining that by making art one can approach the single Eternal Truth, and that all sentient beings possess the bodhi nature. Through the expedient means of art, one can realize the nature to become a Buddha; whether by chanting a sūtra or making an image all ways lead to the way of Buddhahood. This teaching is considered primary to the doctrines of the Tendai sect.

Furthermore, in the Ōjōyōshū, image making and temple building are two of four forms of innen 因縁 (S. hetu-pratyaya). Innen is a compound word, consisting of "in" which means a direct cause, while "en" refers to a secondary cause, and all results or actions are caused by the interaction of the two. These four forms of innen were: (1) offering flowers, fruit, and incense, and building temples and pagodas; (2) not injuring others intentionally; (3) making Buddha images and enshrining them on a lotus pedestal; (4) having a deep and perfect faith in the enlightenment of the Buddha. Performing one or all of these acts will result in the believer being reborn inside a lotus flower in front of the Buddha.<sup>43</sup>

Not only was the creation of images important, but the mere sight of a Buddha image was believed to be meritorious. At the dedication of the Yakushi Hall of Hōjō-ji seven images of Yakushi (S. Bhaisajya-guru) were unveiled, and the writer of the Eiga says:

All those who were present on that occasion must have been endowed with immense merit. One pities the people of the past and future! Denied the privilege of gazing on those holy images, they can only be compared to sentient beings who live

between the times of the Former and Latter Buddhas.<sup>44</sup>

The notion of gaining merit from gazing upon a Buddha image is based upon the thirteenth meditation of the Kan-gyō. The sūtra says:

If there are those who, with a sincere mind, desire to be reborn in the Western Paradise, they should meditate on a sixteen-foot Buddha image placed on the surface of a lake. It was previously said that the body of the Buddha of Infinite Life is boundless, and that it is beyond the comprehension of the mind of the common person. However, through the long cherished vow of the Tathāgatha, the person who recollects and reflects upon the Buddha body will achieve his goal. And, if he reflects on a Buddha image, he will attain limitless happiness.<sup>45</sup>

Images were used for kannen nembutsu to realize the state of śūnyatā in which Buddhas could be seen; the realization of this state and the visualization of Buddhas was part of the progress towards Enlightenment. In the Eiga there is a convoluted interpretation of śūnyatā. The writer of the Eiga carefully described the Buddha marks on an Amitābha image; contemplation of the marks was the process by which to attain śūnyatā. However, rather than continuing to describe entrance into a state of emptiness in which one could discern Buddhist doctrines, the text reverts back to describing wonderful golden images, and then this passage is presented: "'But now that we see the buddhas,' the nuns thought as they offered their prayers, 'there can be no doubt of our achieving enlightenment.'"<sup>46</sup> The writer of the Eiga obviously considers the sight of wondrous human-made images the equivalent of mental images seen within the state of śūnyatā. Here the difficult practice of kannen nembutsu has been replaced by gazing upon images.

Heian society was materialistic, and its people needed tangible objects to worship, specific acts to perform, and substantial results. A purely abstract and aniconic religion would not have appealed to them. Not only was image making an expedient means of achieving Buddhahood, rebirth, or merit, but the existence of images provided Heian Buddhists with a substantial point of focus for their worship. Would Michinaga have devoted himself to Buddhism had there not been eschatological promises or if there were no images of Amitābha Buddha to attach the five-coloured banners to at the time of his death? The aristocrats were not content to read the accounts of the Pure Land in religious writings; they needed to have a heaven on earth inhabited by images of innumerable Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and themselves as Buddhas-to-be. At the dedication of the Golden Hall of Hōjō-ji, dances and music were performed "so beautifully that one could only suppose paradise to be little different."<sup>47</sup> Then later, "As the number of halls at the Hōjō-ji increased, people began to feel that the Pure Land must present a very similar appearance."<sup>48</sup> No doubt the sight of festivals in Hōjō-ji and the temple itself must have inspired Buddhist followers to aspire to the Pure Land. In Heian times visual images inspired religious thoughts in its believers, and religion inspired art, thus creating a situation where art and religion mutually sustained one another. The most inspiring image was the depiction of salvation, raigō painting.

### The Evolution of Raiqō Painting

The inscription of The Descent of Amitābha at Mount Kōya says that "that there was an Imperial Seal affixed to it, and that it was stored in a chamber of the treasure house. Since long ago, an Imperial Messenger would arrive and command it to be unfurled."<sup>49</sup> Moreover, the poet Sanjō Nishi Sanetaka 三条西実隆 (1455-1537) wrote in his diary on the fifteenth day of the tenth month in 1509 that he asked for permission from the Imperial House to view the painting of Amitābha and the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas by the Monk Eshin (Genshin) that was kept at Anraku Valley.<sup>50</sup> These two pieces of information indicate that there was some distinct link between the imperial house and the Mount Kōya painting. There may even be the possibility that the painting was commissioned by imperial patronage or by some other closely related aristocrat. It is probable that the painting is an artifact of the aristocratic society depicted in the Genji and Eiga.

Neither the Genji nor the Eiga mention single independent paintings of the raiqō theme for rinjū-nembutsu or as devotional objects, although the Eiga describes kuhon raiqō scenes that were painted on the doors of the Amitābha Hall of Hōjō-ji.<sup>51</sup>

The explanation of the door paintings is obviously based upon the Pure Land sūtras, and the reasons for rebirth are carefully described. Then this description of the welcoming is presented:

Riding a cloud, Amitābha came to the believer in a burst of light. He was accompanied by Kannon and Seishi, who held up a

lotus pedestal; and all the bodhisattvas and other members of the holy multitude joined in the joyous welcome, singing and playing their instruments.<sup>52</sup>

The writer of the Eiga was obviously very familiar with the doctrine of raigō. The mukae-kō is also mentioned in conjunction with Michinaga attending the Enlightenment Lecture at the Rokuharamitsū-ji.<sup>53</sup> The Eiga carefully describes all types and manners of Buddhist images; it is strange that single raigō paintings are not described. Although images of the descent of Amitābha are not mentioned in these two novels, Pure Land mandalas are used as offerings for the Forty-nine Day Services.<sup>54</sup>

Esoteric rites are most prominent in the first half of the Eiga, written between 942 and 1017, while the latter chapters written between 1042 and 1101 speak frequently of Amitābha and Pure Land practices.<sup>55</sup> One must assume that in the intervening years Genshin, with the Ōjōyōshū, and other Pure Land leaders had a tremendous effect upon Heian religious beliefs.

In 834 the Zoku-Nihon-kōki 続日本後記 recorded a raigō-like descent of beings from heaven.<sup>56</sup> The first Japanese record of a person dying while holding threads attached to a Buddha image can be found in the Nihon Gokuraku-ki 日本極樂記, compiled in 981. The Nihon Gokuraku-ki recorded the death of Enshō 延昌 (880-964), a Tendai monk, who believed in Amitābha and the Pure Land.<sup>57</sup> Between 984 and 987 Genshin wrote the Ōjōyōshū. In 986, a year prior to the completion of

the Ōjōyōshū, the Nijūgo-sammai Society was formed. In the latter half of the tenth century, Genshin sent Koremochi a raigō image to be used for rinjū-nembutsu; this was recorded in the Goshūi-ōjō-den (n.d.), compiled by Miyoshi Tameyasu 三善為康 (1049-1139). Three years prior to the death of Genshin in 1014, his biography in the Shūgon-in Nijūgo-sammai Kechien Kako-chō was compiled. In this biography, it was said that Genshin painted images of the welcoming of Amitābha. Also, in this same document, the first mention of the mukae-kō was made. In 1079 Yōkan 永観 (1033-1111), a Sanron monk, held a religious meeting to arouse the bodhi mind. For his meeting, he instructed that an image of Amitābha welcoming the sentient being be enshrined on the west wall.<sup>58</sup> This was the first written record of a raigō painting being used for worship. By 1079, when Yōkan instructed that a raigō image be used, the Eiga's latter chapters were still in the process of formation. In the space of time between 834 and 1079 the raigō theme took shape in the form of ritual, drama, literature and painting. Painting evolved as part of the religious fervour surrounding art and salvation in the Heian period.

In Yōkan's Ōjō-kōshiki 往生講式, he wrote that "If a person gets free of his disordered mind, then he will arrive at a single lotus flower, and, performing rituals in front of a painted image, he will gradually behold infinite Buddhas."<sup>59</sup> The first half of the sentence refers to collecting one's thoughts through contemplation, in order to be reborn in paradise. The latter half

claims that rituals conducted in front of a painted image will allow the practitioner to see visions of Buddhas. The effect on society of Yōkan's words on image making and viewing is unknown, but the aristocrats needed little impetus to impel their patronage of the arts.

The reasons for the development of the painted image of raigō probably paralleled those for the mukae-kō. The purpose of the mukae-kō was to allow participants to form a relationship with Buddha (J. kechien 結縁).<sup>60</sup> Executing, sponsoring, or viewing a raigō image may be presumed to have had a similar benefit.

Faith, according to Genshin, was self-arising in the hearts of the individual Buddhist, not a gift from Amitābha. The mukae-kō's function was to arouse faith amongst its participants. In the Konjaku Monogatari<sup>61</sup> there is a very interesting story concerning the mukae-kō and Minamoto Mitsunaka 源満中 (912-997). Mitsunaka was an aristocratic warrior, who was briefly mentioned in the Eiga.<sup>62</sup> Mitsunaka's son was a monk and he was worried about his father's fate in the next life, since Mitsunaka had killed so many living things. The son desired to save his father and asked the advice of Genshin and other holy men. Genshin and the others visited Mitsunaka and advised him to enter the order of monks, and he acquiesced. Then, in order to arouse Mitsunaka's faith, an enactment of the descent of Amitābha was held.<sup>63</sup> Raigō paintings were also regarded as objects that could inspire faith.

The aristocrats, believing themselves living in the Age of the

Latter Dharma, needed a Buddha in whom they could place their faith and hope. The Pure Land teaching of Amitābha offered salvation through the easy path of faith and nembutsu. When the daughters of Michinaga saw their father praying to Amitābha and reciting the name, they "felt immensely hopeful about the future, both in this world and the life to come."<sup>64</sup> These patricians and their monk teachers required art forms that not only symbolized salvation but simulated it. The simulation of salvation in the rinjū-nembutsu and the mukae-kō provided Japanese Buddhists with specific experiences with which to raise their faith. Mimetic painting stimulates the human imagination in much the same manner. The figures of the painting of The Descent of Amitābha at Mount Kōya are very close to human size, and the expansive size of the painting envelops the viewer; one feels as though the holy multitude is present. Raigō painting developed as a response to the need for an image that would synthesize the reality of the passage from one world to the next, in order to arouse faith. Raigō paintings evolved through the interaction of Genshin's doctrines and the aristocratic need to materialize Buddhist concepts in order to sustain and inspire their faith. The Descent of Amitābha is the product of a Genshin-influenced aristocratic faith.

### Summary

The magico-religious aspects of Buddhism served useful functions in Heian society, and faced with the natural process of death, the Heian aristocrats looked to Amitābha for hope. Buddhism in

general endorsed the aristocrats' position, wealth, and power in Japanese society. As the greatest patrons of Japanese Buddhist art, the aristocrats made images according to the sūtras and gazed upon them. However, they were not satisfied with static images of Buddhas in meditation; they desired to see the vision, the raigō vision, that would assure them of their imminent salvation.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>There are three primary biographies of Genshin; these are the Shūgon-in Genshin Sōzu 首嚴院源信傳都 from the Honchō Hokke-kenki 本朝法華驗記, the Yokawa Genshin Sōzu Monogatari 横川源信傳都物語 from the Konjaku Monogatari, and Kudashō Sozu Genshin 權少傳都源信 from the Zoku Honchō Ojō-den 続本朝往生伝.

<sup>2</sup>The Eiga Monogatari is a semi-fictional account of the career of Fujiwara-no-Michinaga. It was written by more than one writer in two parts. The first part was written between 942 and 1017, and the second part between 1042 and 1101.

<sup>3</sup>Fujiwara-no-Michinaga was a powerful Heian aristocrat. He held the office of regent to the emperors. His influence and power was consolidated by the marriage of his daughters to successive emperors.

<sup>4</sup>源しむ阿闍梨なと、大原の入道  
君なと、よつ背かせ給ふしかと、  
ま作、いかいかほとて仕うまつら  
せ給ふ。

Matsumura Hiroshi 松村博司, ed., Eiga Monogatari Zenchūshaku 花物語全注釈, 8 vols. (Tokyo: Kadogawa Shoten, 1976) 5:160; translated by William McCullough and Helen Craig McCullough, Tales of Flowering Fortunes, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980) 2: p. 667.

<sup>5</sup>The Genji Monogatari is one of the greatest novels in world literary history, telling the story of the shining Prince Genji and his many loves. Written in the early eleventh century, the novel covers the time period from the tenth to eleventh centuries. It was written by a woman named Murasaki Shikibu (?-ca. 1015), who was in the service of an empress.

<sup>6</sup>Abe Akio et al., Genji Monogatari (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1976, Reprint, 1981) 17: p. 267.

<sup>7</sup>いと尊于人。

Murasaki Shikibu, Yamagishi Toku 山岸徳, ed., Genji Monogatari 6 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965, Reprint, 1976) 6:227; translated by Edward Seidensticker, The Tale of Genji, 2 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976)2: p. 1043.

<sup>8</sup>Seidensticker, 2: p.1071.

<sup>9</sup>McCullough, 1: pp. 19-20.

<sup>10</sup>『臨終の折は、風火まづ去る。かゝるが故に、勤熱して苦多かり。善根の人は地水まづ去るが故に、緩慢して苦しみなし』

Matsumura, 6: p. 142; McCullough, 2: p. 764.

<sup>11</sup>明尊僧都、御修法三七日仕うまつり仕うまつり給へれど、おこならせ給はねは、並へさるへま人人二壇三壇仕まつり給ふに、さはかり苦しむにおはしすに力を尽し加持参るに、さらば御あくむをなせさせ給はず。

Matsumura, 6: p. 17; McCullough, 2: p. 734.

<sup>12</sup>殿の御前は、いみじうおほされながら、その恐しう御胸つふれ、よもやまの仏神をなつねつ、祈の節(と)も据島させ給ふ。さきさきのより、この度の御祈、世に仏ぬまでおほしせさせ給ふ。いとことわりに見えさせ給ふ。

Matsumura, 5: p. 397; McCullough, 2: p. 722.

<sup>13</sup>Seidensticker, Genji, 1: p. 734.

<sup>14</sup>「目体の釈迦の一念の故に、御命を延べさせ給ふとも、百年は延べさせ給ふへし」

Matsumura, 6: p. 59; McCullough, 2: p. 745.

15 公よりこの御堂に、絹三百疋・布千段、  
誦經に行はせ給ひり。殿の御壽命の在り  
の御誦經なりし。

Matsumura, 6: p. 127; McCullough, 2: p. 761.

<sup>16</sup>McCullough, 1: p. 18.

<sup>17</sup>Robert Rhodes, "Saichō's Mappō Tōmyōki,"  
Eastern Buddhist (n.s.) 8 (no. 1, Spring, 1980): pp. 79-103.

<sup>18</sup>世の燈火消えさせ給ふぬれば、長き  
夜の闇を在とる人、なくせば、くかは  
ある。

Matsumura, 6: p. 187; McCullough, 2: p. 775.

<sup>19</sup>Forty-nine Day services are held for the dead every seven days for seven weeks. The soul of the deceased is believed to be held in a purgatory state, in which he is being judged and sentenced to another state. During the Forty-nine Day services, the family of the deceased may aid the deceased's fate by making offerings and prayers.

20

その人の、ほか安んずるまに在るを、  
阿彌陀仏に申つり聞ゆるよし、あは  
れ申しに、書き出せ給へれば

Yamagishi, 2: p. 159; Seidensticker, 1: p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> 人の終の有様・夢などこゝは聞か  
置きて、往生と定められた。

Matsumura, 6:167; McCullough, 2: p. 771.

<sup>22</sup>McCullough, 1: p. 164.

<sup>23</sup> この立てたる御屏風の西面をお  
しらせ給へ、丸体の阿彌陀仏をま  
くらへさせ奉らせ給へり。... 御目に  
彌陀如来の相好を見奉らせ給ひ、  
[御]耳にはかう尊き念仏をまこしめし、  
御心には極樂をおほしめしやりて、御  
手に彌陀如来の御手の糸をひかへさせ  
給へ、....

Matsumura, 6: pp. 134-35; McCullough, 2: pp. 762-63.

<sup>24</sup>McCullough, 2: p. 770.

<sup>25</sup> 常の行啓にあらず、おし返しな  
り、有様もおはれに悲しきは、... 曇なく  
わてなまに、繞るなちなる御有様な  
と"もいみじ"うこゝ。

Matsumura, 6: p. 80; McCullough, 2: p. 750.

<sup>26</sup>The Five Mystic Kings are the Five Dhyāni Buddhas, who display fierce aspects.

<sup>27</sup>Fudō is a Japanese form of Dainichi (Mahāvairocana), who vowed to destroy evil;

日來造らせ給へる五大尊、万の不動尊供養し奉らせ給ふ...。今は「右左」極楽へ」とのみ御心過しなり廿リ。

Matsumura, 6: p. 90; McCullough, 2: p. 752.

<sup>28</sup>McCullough, 2: p. 753.

<sup>29</sup>宮宮などもおはしますへりれば、柳・樺・藤・山吹などいふ綾織物ともをいさわかさせ給ふ。

Matsumura, 4: p. 143; McCullough, 2: p. 521.

30

赤色の装束いとうまはしうして、めでたくて、香炉も右サて仏持り奉る程、...

Matsumura, 4: pp. 199-200; McCullough, 2: p. 533.

<sup>31</sup>McCullough, 1: p. 249; 1: p. 163.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 2: p. 752.

33

綾織物の御帳のかたといら・銀の金本とも、僧ともにも、別当よりはしめて、教を尽して法服とも配らせ給ふ。同じく僧供養せさせ給て、御身の封などかへさせ給て、御誦經など心こころせさせ給へ

り。又、万燈会などせさせ給へ、またて  
 せ給ふといも、……すへて年来の御八  
 講には勝れ召る程推し量るべし。

Matsumura 2: pp. 261-66; McCullough, 1: p. 239.

<sup>34</sup>Sansom provides a good account of the cloister government system in the Heian period. (Sansom, G., A History of Japan to 1334 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958, Reprint, 1978) I: p. 197).

<sup>35</sup>McCullough, 2: p. 247; 1: p. 153.

<sup>36</sup>

いとほしがる御様を。いかてか、さほ、  
 なしおてまつらん』

Yamagishi, 6: p. 245; Seidensticker, 2: p. 1051.

<sup>37</sup>まに仏師といをも二三十人召し集めて、  
 給とも取り出させ給へ、等身の仏達を数  
 知らず現させ給ふ。

Matsumura 5: p. 285; McCullough, 2: p. 694.

<sup>38</sup>うち達れて、御堂に参り見奉れば、西に  
 よりて北南がまに東向に、十余間の瓦葺の  
 御堂あり。檼の端端は黄金の色なり。よろづ  
 金物皆かねなり。御前の方の犬防は皆金の  
 漆のやうに塗りて、遠目ごとく、螺鈿の花の  
 形を掘り、色色の玉を入れて、上に村濃  
 の紐して、網を結はせ給へり。

Matsumura, 4: p. 331; McCullough, 2: p. 587.

<sup>39</sup>

いみじうお磨かせ給へる池のぬ

ぐりには、宝樹どもを廻りて立て並  
めさせ給へり。七宝をもて皆造りた  
り。それに皆銀・黄金の赤網をかき、  
火の燈したり。車輪燈には車の形  
を造り、水車の形を造り、羅網燈と  
して、あるいは村濃の組のろのろに  
して結ひわらし、孔雀・鸚鵡・鷓鴣・迦  
陵頻などの形を造りて燈。

Matsumura, 4: p. 422; McCullough, 2: p. 587.

<sup>40</sup> 其諸宝樹、七宝華葉無不具足。一  
一華葉、作異宝色。瑠璃色中、出金色  
光、玻瓈色中、出紅色光、瑪瑙色中、出  
砗磲光、砗磲色中、出綠真珠光。

Takakusu Junjirō, Meditation on Buddha Amitāyus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894, Reprint, New York: Dover Press, 1969): p. 172.

<sup>41</sup> 中等は皆金色にて丈六にておはします。  
今九十九体は等身の仏にて、昔金色にて  
おはします。されは“人の参る程おは  
しますと”、広き御堂の程は、五つ六つ  
ばかりの児の居る丈は“かりき見え  
させ給ふ。丈六は力車といふに、さるへ  
き構へをしておはします。請僧皆威儀  
をつくしうして参りたる。九十九体は  
手輿といふ物に乗せ奉りて、青く喜

瑩に在る絹袴着て、四人づつ持ち奉りたり。御堂の池の上に仏の影を写りて、また顯れ給へる仏と見え給へり。

Matsumura, 6: p. 38; McCullough, 2: p. 741.

42 線画作仏像。百檀莊嚴相。自作若使人。皆已成仏道。乃至童子戲。若草木及筆或以指爪中。而画作仏像。如是諸人等。漸漸積功德。具足大悲心。皆已成仏道。

Sakamoto Yukio 坂本幸男 and Iwamoto Yutaka 岩本裕, eds., Hokke-kyō, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1962, Reprint, 1976) 1: p. 114.

43 Hanayama, explanation of ōjōyōshū, innen see p. 238; Ishida Mizumaro, for ōjōyōshū, an ōjōyōshū, 2: p. 236.

44

この庭に参り合はるる人人、おほりしの功德の身と覺ゆ。過ぎにしも今末も、今日の仏にあは奉らざるなりぬる人、前仏後仏の衆生の心地す。

Matsumura, 4: p. 546; McCullough, 2: p. 624.

45 若欲至心生西方者、先当觀於一丈六像在池水上。如先所說、無量壽仏身量無邊、非是凡夫心力所及。然彼如來宿願力故、有憶想者、必得成就。但想仏像、得無量檀。

Nakamura, Kan-gyō, 2: pp. 61-62.

46

Matsumura, 4: p. 350; McCullough, 2: p. 568.

47 「右に極樂をかくこはは」

Matsumura, 4: p. 299; McCullough, 2: p. 557.

48 御堂をまににならせ給ふまゝに、浄土  
はかくこはは見えたり。

Matsumura, 4: p. 311; McCullough, 2: p. 564.

49 Appendix A.

50 Ōgushi, p. 66.

51 McCullough, 2: p. 564.

52 弥陀如来雲に乗リて、光放ちて行者  
の計におはします。観音、勢至、蓮台を捧  
がてとまに來たり給ふ。諸々の菩薩、聖  
衆、音声伎樂をして喜ひ迎へたり給ふ。

Matsumura, 4: p. 331; McCullough, 2: p. 565.

53 McCullough, 2: p. 513.

54 Seidensticker, Genji, 2: p. 732; McCullough, Eiga, 2:  
p. 594.

55 McCullough, 1: p. 22.

56 Fujii Chikai 藤井智海, Ōjōyōshū  
Bunkashi-teki Kenkyū 往生要集の文化史的研究, (Kyoto: Heiraku-ji  
Shoten, 1978): p. 109.

57 Inoue Mitsusada, Ōjō-den, p. 28.

58 Yōkan, Ōjō-kōshiki, Jōdo-shū  
Zenshō, 23 vols. (Tokyo: Jōdo-shū-ten Kankō-kai,  
1936): 15: p. 467.

59 若人散乱心。乃至以一華。供養於  
圖像。漸見無數仏。

Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ogushi, pp. 18-28.

<sup>61</sup>The Konjaku Monogatari is a collection of tales that are predominantly Buddhist in nature. The compilation, which was probably completed by 1120, is traditionally ascribed to Minamoto Takakuni. The first ten chapters take place in India, the next five in China, then the next twenty take place in Japan. For a partial translation see: Marion Ury, Tales of Times Now Past (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

<sup>62</sup>McCullough, 1: p. 184.

<sup>63</sup>Mabuchi Kazuo 馬淵 和夫, Kunisaki Fumimaro 国東 文磨, Kono Tōru 今野 達, eds., "Settsu-no-kami Minamoto Mitsunaka Shukkei no Monogatari," Konjaku Monogatari Shū, Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū, 4 vols. (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1971-1973):3: pp. 504-11.

<sup>64</sup>殿の御前の御有様に、いつ(水)の御前  
達も、頼しくめでたく見奉らせ給ふ。  
Matsumura, 4: p. 311; McCullough, 2: p. 560.

## CHAPTER V

THE PICTORIAL EVOLUTION OF RAIGŌ PAINTING

Raigō painting did not emerge suddenly as a new form of art. The religious doctrines of Genshin and the aristocratic society's penchant for beautiful objects had created conditions favourable to the growth of an independent genre of Buddhist painting, and raigō developed gradually from the tenth century to the twelfth in Japan. Artists worked according to the Pure Land sūtras and to the requirements of their patrons; they needed a vocabulary of imagery that would suit both, yet at the same time be different and new. The process by which The Descent of Amitābha was conceived was quite complex. The pictorial elements that make up the Mount Kōya image are derived from statuary, Pure Land and esoteric mandalas, and decorative wall painting. Artists selected models from many different and accepted images to arrive at The Descent of Amitābha, which is a blending of various well-known types of images. The problem of tracing the development of raigō painting is complicated by incomplete evidence, evidence that has either perished in the passage of history or has not yet been researched. The problem of copying further complicates the study. As was previously mentioned above in Chapter Three, The Descent of Amitābha may be a copy based upon an earlier non-extant painting. Once more the image has been heavily repainted, obscuring earlier workmanship. The following diagram showing the lineages of raigō

painting is incomplete and overly simplified, but it is an attempt to present graphically a concise history of the evolution of the raigō genre of painting (fig. 19).

The Descent of Amitābha at Mount Kōya consists of thirty-three figures mounted on lotus daises on clouds or just on clouds (fig. 1). The central figure is Amitābha Buddha, who is flanked by Kannon and Seishi. Three monk figures sit behind Amitābha. Twenty-four Bodhisattvas accompany the six main figures, while in the distance, an Amitābha Triad can be seen. The figures are depicted against a landscape background, showing a vast body of water with mountains and autumn trees. The composition of the Mount Kōya image consists of essentially four main elements: (1) Amitābha by himself; (2) Amitābha with his main Bodhisattvas (Kannon, Seishi, Jizō, and Ryūju); (3) twenty-four Bodhisattvas; (4) landscape. Each of the above elements were derived from or influenced by other types of images to be discussed in this chapter.

### Amitābha

The central figure of the Mount Kōya painting is the golden Amitābha, who is two or three times larger than the other figures in the same work. Amitābha is seated in the Indian style (kekkaфуza 結跏趺坐) on a lotus dais. His hair consists of conchshell curls (rahatsu 螺髻), painted in azurite blue and outlined in black ink. He possesses the major Buddha marks: an ūrṇā, an usnīsa; his ears are long, and his neck is lined with the three

folds. His dress is also Indian style with the left arm completely draped and the right shoulder covered, but the right arm is bare, as is the chest. This drapery is painted gold and laced with cut gold leaf.

According to the Kan-gyō, Amitābha Buddha's body is golden and immensely large, possessing eighty-four thousand signs of perfection and eighty-four marks of excellence;<sup>1</sup> these would include the ūrnā, usñisa, three folds, and so forth. The sūtra describes him seated on a flower dais. In general the image of Amitābha of the Mount Kōya painting follows the iconography of the sūtra.

Sawa Ryūken has remarked that this image of Amitābha has specific features that were peculiar to sculpture, such as the blue hair and red lips.<sup>2</sup> However, all images of the Buddha are controlled by a strict set of iconographic rules, and, whether an image is sculpted or painted, there are bound to be similarities. In his remark, Sawa hinted that the Mount Kōya Amitābha image may be a painted copy of a piece of sculpture of the same subject. This is entirely possible. The central scroll depicting Amitābha of the Hokke-ji Amitābha Tryptich (fig. 20) is a painted copy of the sculpted image from Kōryū-ji 広隆寺.<sup>3</sup> The painting of lower class-upper rebirth on the door of the Hōō-dō, Byōdō-in, shows Amitābha descending on an elaborate lotus throne (Sung throne) that was frequently used for sculpture, but its heavy appearance makes it look odd moving through painted space (fig. 21). Furthermore, Yamamoto Kōji has found passages in the Nihon Gokuraku-ki and other books of

rebirth stories that suggest that sculpture and iconographic books for sculpture were sources of imagery for raigō painting.<sup>4</sup> This borrowing from sculpture and iconographic manuals for sculpture suggests that in the tenth to twelfth centuries the Japanese did not have models for painting the raigō theme and were forced to resort to available sources of imagery. Iconographic borrowing also implies that the raigō theme was either not highly developed or not a common theme in China and Korea, the sources of Japanese Buddhism.

Sawa does not specify a particular sculpted prototype as the ancestor of the Mount Kōya Amitābha image. Models for it were perhaps derived from sculpture, such as the Amitābha sculpture forming the raigō mudrā of lower class-lower rebirth, dating from the eighth century (fig. 22). A century later, the Amitābha Triad from Shi-tennō-ji, Osaka was made.<sup>5</sup> This triad is a rare image; Amitābha is forming the raigō mudrā of upper class-lower rebirth, while the two attendants appear to be dancing (fig. 23). This is the earliest example of the raigō theme in any medium in Japan, and it pre-dates Genshin. However, sculpture was not the only source from which the Japanese could borrow elements to form the raigō vocabulary.

#### Amitābha and His Main Bodhisattvas

In the Mount Kōya painting, immediately surrounding Amitābha are Kannon offering the lotus dais, Seishi to his right, and three monks: Jizō holding the cintāmani,<sup>6</sup> Ryūju, and

another monk.<sup>7</sup> As mentioned above, the first four Bodhisattvas (two in princely garb and two dressed as monks) with Amitābha were enshrined in the jōgyō hall at Yokawa by Ryōgen. Amitābha, Kannon, and Seishi form a common group and are mentioned in the sūtras as a grouping, but the monks, Jizō and Ryūju do not have scriptural justifications. The two monk figures are probably substitutes for esoteric Bodhisattvas of the Taizō mandala (S. garbha-datu).

A group of Bodhisattvas surrounding Amitābha is not an unusual composition; it is common in esoteric mandalas, such as the T'ang dynasty (618-906) Amitābha Mandala, now kept at Kaihō-ji, Kagawa, Japan (fig. 24). This relief carving is a detail of the Taizō Mandala in which Amitābha represents the aspect of faith of Mahāvairocana-tathāgatha. Amitābha sits in the centre of the sector surrounded by eight Bodhisattvas.<sup>8</sup> He is crowned and his hands form the mūdra of meditation (J. jō-in-sō 定印相, S. dhyānamudrā).<sup>9</sup> The jōgyō-sammai practice of Ennin used statuary images of a crowned Amitābha with four esoteric Bodhisattvas. Ennin's group was perhaps a simplified version of this T'ang mandala.

Another rare image, which depicts the transformation of iconography from esoteric Tendai to Pure Land Buddhism, is a bronze mirror dated 987 (fig. 25). A crowned Amitābha is the central figure; his hands form the meditation mudrā. In front are two Bodhisattvas, while two monks are seated in the rear; it is possible that they are the

same four as in the Mount Kōya image, but this is uncertain as there are no attributes that clearly identify them. There is another bronze mirror at Daigō-ji, Kyoto, dating from the eleventh century which may depict the type of imagery that existed in the jōgyō hall of Ryōgen (fig. 26). In this mirror engraving Amitābha does not wear a crown and his hands form the raigō mudra of lower class-middle rebirth. He is surrounded by two Bodhisattvas and two monks. This later image (eleventh century) is close to the prototype from which The Descent of Amitābha was derived. A painting much closer to the Daigō-ji engraved mirror is one from Ichijō-ji, Hyōgo Prefecture (fig. 27). Although this particular painting is dated to the Kamakura period (1185-1333), it may be a direct descendant of the earlier images, either in painting or sculpture, that influenced raigō paintings with frontal compositions, such as the Mount Kōya image.

Yamamoto, in another article, claims that the arrangement of Amitābha and his Bodhisattvas was derived from the central compositions of Pure Land mandalas, such as the Taima Mandala. He bases his claim upon certain similarities in handling colours, such as the use of red lines in forming the Amitābha image, the white pigment of the Bodhisattvas, and the use of ochre in certain areas of both types of paintings.<sup>10</sup> The central figures of the Mount Kōya image may well be derived from Pure Land mandalas as Yamamoto claims, but the musical Bodhisattvas behind Amitābha and his main group come from another source.

### The Musical Bodhisattvas

In the Mount Kōya image the Bodhisattvas, behind the arrangement of Amitābha with Kannon, Seishi, and the three monks, are caught in the midst of merry-making, scattering flowers, waving incense, playing instruments, and so forth. This depiction of the multitude of Bodhisattvas is a trait common to early individual raigō paintings dated from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Their relationship to Amitābha can be traced to a spurious scripture, the Jūōjō Amida Bukkoku-kyō 十往生仏国経<sup>11</sup>, which influenced Shan-tao and Genshin. Genshin does not mention Twenty-five Bodhisattvas in his section on the joys of the descent of Amitābha, although he names them all in his chapter telling of the benefits of nembutsu.<sup>12</sup>

He is also regarded as the author of a hymn entitled Nijūgo Bosatsu Wasan 二十五菩薩和讃<sup>13</sup>, but this attribution may be incorrect.<sup>14</sup> This group of twenty-five Bodhisattvas is mentioned in the Eiga as the protectors of those who invoke the name of Amitābha.<sup>15</sup> This interpretation is consistent with the Jūōjō Amida Bukkoku-kyō. However, there is no scriptural source that says that they descend with Amitābha to welcome the sentient being to the Pure Land.<sup>16</sup> The Three Pure Land Sūtras do not specify any particular number of Bodhisattvas accompanying Amitābha, offering only vague descriptions of "a host," "an assembly," or "many," and leaving much room for interpretation. In the Mount Kōya image there are only twenty-four Bodhisattvas, not

twenty-five. The difference in number may be attributed to repainting in the sixteenth century, and with the loss of one Bodhisattva during conservation.<sup>17</sup>

The image of the musical Bodhisattvas, such as seen in the Mount Kōya image, is related to the kuhon raigō paintings on the walls and doors of jōgyō halls of Mount Hiei and the Amitābha halls, such as the Byōdō-in; ultimately it is related to the imagery of Pure Land mandalas, such as those found on the walls of the caves of Tun-huang. The Bodhisattvas in the nine scenes of the descent of the Byōdō-in are instilled with a spontaneity of line and movement. In this door painting of lower-class-upper-rebirth, the Bodhisattvas are depicted as individual personalities, bearing vividly detailed instruments, caught amidst flowing scarves (fig. 21). This same vibrancy and mood of joyousness can be seen in The Descent of Amitābha. In the upper left corner behind Amitābha, the Bodhisattvas lean and sway as though they were moving in rhythm with the music (fig. 28). The same feeling for line, form, and characterization is felt in both works.

The presence of the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas, or a large number of them, as part of the descent of Amitābha creates a very inspiring and impressive sight, much more so than just three (Amitābha Triad) or five (Amitābha Gozon) figures. The Twenty-five Bodhisattvas are part of the Taima Temple mukae-kō held every year on the fourteenth of May. Without their presence the entire ceremony would lose its impact, and it is entirely possible that the iconography of the musical

Bodhisattvas was included in early raigō paintings precisely for this psychological reason, in conjunction with vague doctrinal justifications.

A further trait shared by the Byōdō-in door painting of lower-class-upper birth and the Mount Kōya work is the curious Amitābha Triad trailing behind the descending multitude (fig. 29). This is rather unusual amongst raigō paintings. Nakano Genzō believes that the triad represents the apparitional bodies of Amitābha and his guardian Bodhisattvas,<sup>18</sup> an interpretation which has a scriptural basis.<sup>19</sup>

### Landscape

The figures of the descent in the Mount Kōya image are placed against a background of water, traditionally explained as Lake Biwa, which can be seen from Yokawa on Mount Hiei. On the lower left corner of the tryptich there is a small landscape of a cliff and rolling hills with various trees and bushes. The landscape and vegetation are similar to those indigenous to Japan (fig. 30). This same type of rolling hills covered with lush vegetation can be seen in the Byōdō-in door paintings.

Neither the Three Pure Land Sūtras nor Genshin's Ōjōyōshū describes landscape in conjunction with the descent of Amitābha. The addition of landscape elements into raigō paintings was part of the native Yamato predilection in the late Heian period to create land forms in art that were familiar to the

Japanese as inhabitants of the Eight Islands. The use of indigenous landscape images is evidence that Buddhism, which was introduced in the sixth century, had by the eleventh and twelfth become integrated into the national life of the Japanese people. The very depiction of the descent of Amitābha called for the use of a certain degree of imagination and interpretation, more or less free from the rules of dogmatic religion. The artist working under a patron took his vocabulary of the raigō theme from existing models to create the paintings, and the natural landscape around him was one source.

#### The Synthesis of Pictorial Elements

An image such as The Descent of Amitābha of Mount Kōya did not appear suddenly out of the minds of Genshin or other Buddhist artists. The process of amalgamating all the components of the raigō scene, then synthesizing them into a coherent and aesthetically pleasing image that was religiously and socially acceptable required time and many stages of development.

The earliest Japanese prototype for raigō imagery was the Amitābha Triad of Shi-tennō-ji. This set of three figures pre-dates Genshin, thus indicating that the raigō theme as a religious artistic subject was present in Japan as early as the ninth century, though not popular. Ryōgen introduced to Japan the iconography of Amitābha with Kannon, Seishi, Jizō, and Ryūju. It was used in sculpture for contemplative objects. Genshin, through his treatise, the Ōjōyōshū, the

mukae-kō and rinjū-nembutsu ceremonies, and possibly also his paintings, popularized the theme of the descent of Amitābha. There are no extant independent raigō scroll paintings remaining from the period before the twelfth century; they are known only through written records. Two twelfth-century works that cast light on the evolution of the composition of raigō painting are the paintings of Hokke-ji Amitābha Tryptich and the Amitābha of Isshin-in, Kyoto (figs. 31 and 32). The Isshin-in image and the central panel of the Hokke-ji Tryptich are of Amitābha forming variations of the raigō mudra, seated on a lotus dais supported by cloud vehicles. The Hokke-ji Amitābha is a painted copy of a piece of sculpture. Nakamura Kōji believes that it functioned as an object for contemplating Buddha marks (kannen nembutsu).<sup>20</sup> The existence of painted images of Amitābha descending by himself may possibly have pre-dated or have been contemporary with Genshin. Raigō painting may have evolved from these relatively simple images of Amitābha. The two flanking panels of the Hokke-ji tryptich are believed to be later additions.<sup>21</sup> The panel on the left depicts Kannon holding the lotus dais, while Seishi carries the umbrella. On the right panel a small boy, standing on a cloud, carries a banner. The combination of the three panels brings together the essential elements of raigō painting. The Mount Kōya image is a full development of the theme begun in the Hokke-ji Tryptich.

The creator of The Descent of Amitābha, with the knowledge of images like the Isshin-in Amitābha and the Hokke-ji Tryptich,

synthesized the well-known elements discussed above and developed them into a more complex raigō scene. The central composition of Amitābha and his chief retinue in the Mount Kōya image has strong affinities with other twelfth century paintings of Amitābha, which are related to sculpture. The other elements--the musical Bodhisattvas, the rear Amitābha triad, and the landscape--were derived from other types of painting or from the environment around the artist.

The depiction of Amitābha and others directly facing the viewer and worshipper has a psychological impact that generates a powerful loving devotion. The golden Amitābha, forming the mudrā of welcoming and enlightenment and placidly seated on a lotus dais, is a figure who can assure and comfort the believer. The single lotus dais held by Kannon symbolizes the vehicle by which the individual will arrive at salvation. And, in order to create an even more inspiring and aesthetically pleasing image, the artist of the Mount Kōya image added the figures of the holy multitude to enhance the realism and the joy of faith in Amitābha. The painting is the materialization of the vision of salvation. The Descent of Amitābha was the product of a society that loved to produce exquisite images that could arouse faith in the believer.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Nakamura Hajime, Kan-gyō, 2: p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>Sawa Ryūken 佐知隆研, Nihon no Bukkyō Bijutsu  
仏教美術 (Tokyo: Sanreisha, 1981): p. 293.

<sup>3</sup>Kameda Tsutomu 亀田敦, "Hokke-ji Amida Sanzon no  
Isō" 法華寺阿彌陀三尊の意想, Yamato Bunka 20, 22 (June  
1930-Feb. 1932): p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Yamamoto Kōji 山本綱二, "Raigō-zu no  
Shōmen-kan kara Naname Kōzu e no Tenkai" 来迎図の正面から  
斜め構図の展開, Ars Buddhica 178 (Oct. 1970): p. 43.

<sup>5</sup>The Nara National Museum catalogue of Pure Land art dates the  
Shi-tennō-ji image as being from the ninth century (Nara Museum,  
Jōdo Mandara, p. 43). Fukuyama dates this same triad to the  
eleventh or twelfth centuries. Since he originally wrote this in 1964,  
I prefer to use the more recent research of the Nara Museum (Fukuyama,  
p. 33).

<sup>6</sup>The cintāmani is a flaming jewel, which grants all  
wishes.

<sup>7</sup>The third monk is not readily identifiable. The biographies  
of Genshin say that his paintings of the descent showed many monks. See  
above, p. 68.) Moreover, in the Ojōyōshū Genshin  
writes of "many bodhisattvas and ten thousand monks" (Hanayama,  
pp. 70-71). The Mount Kōya painting may have been influenced by  
this description by Genshin. Also the monk may be the soul being taken  
to paradise. This is a guess based upon the mudrā of upper  
class-lower rebirth. Monks were usually, though not always, reborn in  
this category. The kuhon paintings of the Byōdō-in doors often  
depict the rebirth candidate as part of the holy multitude (Taguchi  
Eiichi, "The Depiction of Raigō Scenes in the Door Paintings of the  
Hōō-dō and the Nine Phases of Rebirth in the Sūtra known  
known as the Kangyō," Bijutsushi 25 (May 1976): pp. 1-34).

<sup>8</sup>The eight bodhisattvas are Kanjizai 觀自在, Kakushi 慈氏,  
Kokuzō 虛空藏, Kongōshū 金剛手, Monjū 文殊,  
Chogaishu 除蓋障, Fugen 普賢, and Kongōge 金剛華.

<sup>9</sup>The jō-in mudrā is common to seated figures of the  
Buddha, particularly statues of Amitābha of the eighth to tenth  
centuries in Japan. Its symbolism is closely related to samādhi  
practice; the mudrā's symbolism refers to the concentration and

tranquility of the enlightenment of the Buddha. Furthermore, the two hands together symbolize the unity of the Buddha and sentient beings.

<sup>10</sup>Yamamoto Kōji 山本 興二, "Amida Jōdo-zu to Amida Raigō-zu" 阿彌陀淨土圖と阿彌陀來迎圖, Symposium: The Development of the Art of Jōdo Buddhism (Kyoto: Kyoto National Museum, Nov. 1973): pp. 19-20.

<sup>11</sup>Manji 1/84/4.

<sup>12</sup>Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, p. 341.

<sup>13</sup>Genshin, Nijūgo Bosatsu Wasan, Eishin Sōzu Zenshū, 5 vols (Sakamoto, Japan: Hiei-zan Senshu-in, 1927):1: pp. 667-70.

<sup>14</sup>Okazaki, p. 114.

<sup>15</sup>McCullough, Flowering Fortunes, 2: p. 560.

<sup>16</sup>Taya Yoriyoshi 多屋 頼俊, "Raigō no Shōju to Nijūgo Bosatsu" 來迎の聖衆と二十五菩薩, Rekishi to Chiri 30 (No. 2, n.d.): p. 136.

<sup>17</sup>When I examined The Descent of Amitābha at the Treasure House of Mount Kōya in August, 1983, I could observe at least two distinct layers of paint that were of differing degrees of freshness. The repainting may have been done during the process of remounting. (Note the inscriptions--June 25, 1587 and July 10, 1778.)

<sup>18</sup>Nakano Genzō 中野 玄三, Jōdo-kyō no Bijutsu 淨土教の美術 (Tokyo: Gakken, 1978): p. 191.

<sup>19</sup>Nakamura Hajime, Kan-gyō, 2: p. 69.

<sup>20</sup>Nakamura Kōji 中村 興二, "Amida Raigō-zu no Seiritsu" 阿彌陀來迎圖の成立, Ars Buddhica, 147 (March 1983): pp. 100-17.

<sup>21</sup>Kyoto National Museum, ed., Kaiga 淨土教絵画 (Kyoto: Heibonsha, 1973): p. 238. Jōdo-kyō

## CONCLUSION

Thin as the locust's wing, these summer robes,  
Reminders of the fragility of life.<sup>1</sup>

The "fragility of life" was deeply felt by the people of the Heian period. Life could abruptly end with the onset of diseases, such as smallpox and measles; even the joy of birth was dangerous. The Heian aristocrats, though powerful and wealthy, knew of their mortality and sought to come to terms with it. Buddhism provided them with comforting guidance, allaying their fears and anxieties. According to Buddhism, being mortal was not an inferior condition; of all sentient creatures, the human being stood closest to Buddha and enlightenment. The Pure Land form of Tendai Buddhism especially appealed to the aristocrats because it was an easy practice that promised greater glory in the next life. The aristocrats were entranced by the promise of a life after death in a paradisiacal land. They created sumptuous gardens and temples on earth patterned after descriptions of paradise in the Three Pure Land Sūtras, blurring the borders between this world and Amitābha's Pure Land.

The chief Buddhist mentor of the Heian age was Genshin, who transmitted the teachings of the Chinese Pure Land masters to Japan. Genshin's philosophy was put forth in his book, the Ōjōyōshū, which was read not only by the Heian aristocrats but by generations of Japanese to come. The treatise was a

manual of concrete practices reinforced by faith; it was intended for the laity and all others who considered themselves "common people" in front of Amitābha Buddha. The great reward, the result of faith and practice, was to receive the vision of raigō, the coming of Amitābha and his hosts at the point of death. Rather than aiming towards the extinction of the ego (nirvāna) in this life, Genshin popularized rebirth in Amitābha's land as the simplest route to salvation. Rebirth, riding on the lotus dais of Kannon and awakening inside a lotus flower, was a wondrous journey, another gala affair in the lives of Genshin's followers.

Faith was the primary prerequisite for achieving salvation in Amitābha's land. All practices had to be subordinate to and exercised with faith. Faith was defined as a sincere mind, deep belief, and a longing to be reborn with unselfish dedication of merit towards others. This was Genshin's definition of faith. However, Genshin's faith did not have the pristine qualities of Shinran's. Genshin was still very much a Tendai monk, one who retained some esoteric traits in his Pure Land teachings and prized the discipline of contemplation. The form of Genshin's faith and practice was a necessary stage leading towards the simpler spiritualism of Hōnen and Shinran, who considered faith in Amitābha to be the only path to salvation.

Within the intermediate stage of the development of Pure Land Buddhism, images were extremely important in sustaining the faith of Genshin's followers. Genshin provided not only concrete practices but the idealized image of a golden Amitābha descending from the Western

Paradise. The vision was made into a wondrous reality through paint and brush. Raiḡō painting became a devotional image that inspired longing for the Pure Land.

The first extant and fully developed raiḡō painting that was used as a main image of worship (honzon 本尊) was The Descent of Amitābha and His Holy Multitude of Mount Kōya. The iconography of the main figures in this painting was developed on Mount Hiei in the mid-tenth century. This iconography was combined with elements from wall and door paintings of kuhon raiḡō scenes. The painting is a synthesis of pictorial elements common to Pure Land art with the sensitive aestheticism of the Heian aristocrats. It is one of the great artistic monuments of Japan and Asia. In order to understand the beginnings of the raiḡō genre, one must consider The Descent of Amitābha of Mount Kōya.

Raiḡō painting and its significance within Buddhism differed with each religious leader's interpretation of the raiḡō doctrine. Hōnen only worshipped a simplified raiḡō image of Amitābha with Kannon and Seishi, condemning the more complex images as inconsistent with the scriptures.<sup>2</sup> At the time of his death, Hōnen refused to gaze upon an image of the Amitābha, because he claimed that he could already see the Buddha coming to welcome him.<sup>3</sup> Shinran declared that the necessity of achieving a certain state of mind in order to receive the raiḡō vision distanced the believer from Amitābha's love. He believed that such a doctrine required self-generated faith that could falter, depending upon the

mental ability of the believer, whereas faith given by Amitābha was complete and unshakeable.<sup>4</sup> A mind filled with total trust in Amitābha did not require images to sustain faith.

As such, the arts were particularly affected by Shinran's philosophy. There were many forms of art associated with his new form of Pure Land Buddhism, such as portraits of the Pure Land patriarchs and paintings of the characters Namu Amida-butsu.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the production of Buddhist art declined for various reasons. Because faith was given to the people by Amitābha, they no longer needed images, pageantry, or the other trappings of religion to arouse their faith. People no longer needed to make or commission images as offerings, as all deeds were considered to have ulterior motives. The decline was paralleled by the waning of the wealthy aristocratic class, whose attention was diverted from Buddhism to civil wars and survival. The followers of Shinran, who displaced the powerful Tendai and Shingon sects of the aristocrats, did not have the economic ability or the same religious inclination to make impressive large-scale images. In the post-Shinran age Buddhist art lost its doctrinal importance and its prime patrons. Buddhist arts that had flourished in the Nara (644-794) and Heian periods began to die out after the Kamakura period. With the exception of Zen 禅 painting in the Muromachi 室町 period (1392-1573), Buddhist artistic activity in Japan virtually ceases in the following centuries.

Genshin and his followers left a grand legacy of beautiful images as proof of their faith and practice. The doctrine and art of

raigō were part of the necessary intermediate stage leading to a more spiritual and less materialistic form of Pure Land Buddhism. However, one should not regard the faith of the Heian aristocrats as inferior to that of later ages; it was merely different. Through the painting of The Descent of Amitābha and others like it, one can still hear the voices of Genshin and his followers declare:

If a person at the time of death achieves rebirth [in Amitābha's] country, then one will have infinite virtue, therefore, I dedicate my life to Amitābha.<sup>6</sup>

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> 羽衣のうすまにかはる今日よりは空蝉  
のせがみとさ悲しき

Yamagishi, Genji, 4:315.

<sup>2</sup> Okazaki Jōji, trans. Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, Pure Land Buddhist Painting (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977), p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Coates, Harper and Ishizuka Ryugaku, Honen the Buddhist Saint, 5 vols. (Kyoto: Chion-in, 1925, reprint, 1949):4:635-36.

<sup>4</sup> Bloom, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Ishida Ichirō 石田一良 presents a survey and comparison of art created under the influence of Genshin, Hōnen, and Shinran. Jōdo-kyō Bijutsu (Kyoto: Heiraku-ji Shoten, 1956).

<sup>6</sup> 若人命終時。得生彼国者。即具無量  
德。是故我歸命。

Hanayama, Ōjōyōshū, p. 72.

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Appendix A  
Inscriptions

Inscription No. 1

At Anraku Valley, an outlying place on Mount Hiei, there existed a holy image of the Great Amitābha and Twenty-five Bodhisattvas with a sacred triad that was a nirmāna-kāya crossing the mountains; the above thirty-three figures are ones that the Monk Eshin [Genshin] himself painted in the autumn of his twenty-fourth year. It remained a thing that was a numinous treasure matchless under heaven. In the past there was an Imperial Seal affixed to it and it was stored in a chamber of the treasure house. Since long ago, an Imperial Messenger would arrive and command it to be unfurled on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month, thus benefiting the myriad affairs of state. Year after year without change, in a period of one day, [so many people], rich and poor, came and visited the temple that their numbers were unknown. The four clouds of the four directions arose and were enriched, marvellous, and auspicious in accordance with renewed heartfelt prayers. However, in the second year of Genki [1571], under the cyclical sign of Shinbi, on the second day of the ninth lunar month [September 21], a period of troubles arrived. Up and down the mountain [of Hiei] there was the violence of destruction and ruin; the smoke from the burning and loss of the temple halls and pagodas did not abate. Although [the painting was] briefly snatched by the hands of the rebel

crowd of military bullies, the Buddhist monks again collected the rare treasures on the summit of the mountain. Entirely for the sake of scattering the turbid world of the Final Dharma, they transformed the guiding hand into a dramatic performance, causing the offering to encounter this honoured image comparable to the appearance of the Udumbara and [the meeting of] the blind tortoise and the floating log. One can have earnest hopes! Joy! It can be venerated. It can be relied on. Thus it was urged by many people that, as a small token, the mounting be made significant. One should not be of two minds, but should be seriously and continually devoted to the cultivation of rebirth [in the Western Paradise]. As for the beseecher, at a gathering at the moment of death, the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas will descend and welcome him. This is surely as doubtless and easy as laying a finger on one's palm.

15th day of the 5th lunar month, 15th year of Tenshō [June 21, 1587], the cyclical year of Iggai.

Respectfully yours,

Sonshū, Dānapati, Rank of Hōin,

The Master of Mounting,

Masugi Jinzaburō Hidemasa.

Inscription No. 2

Sonshū of the Rank of Hōin rejoiced that [although] his past karma was profound he [could] inscribe his respectful protection and make the mounting magnificent. I yearn that [my deed of mounting this work] will benefit the foolishness of the direction of my heart in the Final Age.

15th day of the 5th lunar month, 15th year of Tenshō [June 21, 1587].

The Master of Mounting,  
Masugi Jinzaburō Hidemasa  
Kōsan-ji.

Inscription No. 3

15th day of the 6th lunar month, 7th year of An'ei [July 10, 1778], the cyclical year of Bojutsu.

Dedicated on the completion of the mounting.

The Master of Mounting,  
Takagi Ihei Masanobu.

## Inscription I - June 21, 1587

Mizuhara Takaie, "Amida Raigō-zu no Kōya Nyū-san  
ni Tsuite", Kokka 391 (Feb. 1922):pp. 184-85.

山越 寂岳別所安樂谷大阿彌陀尊像廿五菩薩同  
 依為一天無双之靈室常者 被付勅封納寶藏之  
 宣從往昔已來當七月十五日 弘觀喜日有勅使參  
 降開之命利万機例年無替一日之間貴賤參詣不  
 知數四雲華四方潤奇瑞隨念願新然元龜戴天 年  
 歲九月中二日澆季時至山上山下破滅之刻不消 未  
 堂塔燒失之烟乍被奪或勇逆徒手中再集 似家末  
 山希代靈駿併為播濁世末法化導手於戲命奉遇  
 此尊容譬似曇華出現盲龜浮木賴哉喜可仰可信  
 仍勸諸人寸志致壽具莊嚴勵無二懇篤凝往生修  
 同冀者一結衆臨終二十五菩薩來迎引接指掌無  
 疑失而已

天正十五  
亥 巳  
年五月十五日

表補衣飾

施主法印尊秀  
白 敬

馬摺甚三郎秀昌

Inscription II - June 21, 1587

法印尊秀奉守久刻喜宿習深厚致表具  
 症嚴請利末世愚昧意趣

天正十五年己亥五月十五日

表補衣師馬相甚三郎秀昌

Inscription III - July 10, 1778 .

宇  
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AnnotationInscription No. 1

At Anraku Valley, an outlying place on Mount Hiei . . .

The name Anraku Valley has disappeared from modern day maps of Mount Hiei; it is a valley to the south-east of Yokawa, where the temple of Anrakuritsu-in 安楽律師院 remains.

. . . the Great Amitābha and Twenty-five Bodhisattvas . . .  
thirty-three figures. . . .

In this phrase it is stated that Twenty-five Bodhisattvas accompany Amitābha in the painting, but this does not correspond with the actual number visible. This may mean that in or before 1587 twenty-five heavenly beings were depicted, but one became obscured in the process of repainting. Or, more simply, the writer of the inscription made an arithmetical error or merely assumed that there were twenty-five, since that is the set number. However, the total of thirty-three figures in the inscription correlates with the number found in the painting.

. . . a sacred triad that was a nirmāna-kāya crossing the mountains . . . .

The phrase yamagoshi sanzō in Japanese Buddhist art refers to images of Amitābha flanked by Kannon and Seishi standing behind a group of mountains. The scriptural authority for this type of

configuration comes from the section on sun meditation from the Kan-gyō. The sun and Amitābha, the Buddha of Infinite Light, are considered synonymous and, just as the sun sets in the west behind the mountains, so too, Amitābha waits in the Western Paradise. An example of this type of image is the Yamagoshi Sanzon of Konkaikōmyō-ji 金戒光明寺; such paintings were used specifically for worship and rinjū-nembutsu.

According to the Kan-gyō, there are kebutsu in the halo of Amitābha that are as many as the grains of sand on the banks of the Ganges River, and attending each kebutsu there are countless kebosatsu 化菩薩, manifestations of Bodhisattvas. In the crown of Kannon there is a standing kebutsu that is the height of twenty-five krosas.<sup>1</sup> And at the time of Amitābha's descent to welcome beings into Paradise, innumerable kebutsu will appear.

Nirmāna-kāya (J. kebutsu) may be roughly described as the transformed body of a Buddha manifested to sentient beings. The Image of the Buddha provides this definition of the nirmāna-kāya: "the 'Manifest Body' or 'Phenomenal Body,' as displayed by Sākyamuni or any other Buddha who appears in our world as imagined by the Buddhists. The translation 'human form' would do, were it not that Buddhas can appear in other forms to suit other forms of existence, especially as gods, titans, and animals."<sup>2</sup>

. . . the Monk Eshin (Genshin) himself painted in the autumn of his twenty-fourth year

Genshin (Eshin) was twenty-four years of age in A.D. 966. Minamoto Toyomune has dated this painting as a twelfth century work possibly based on older models.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Genshin himself painted this work.

It remained a thing that was a numinous treasure matchless under heaven. In the past there was an Imperial Seal affixed to it and it was stored in a chamber of the treasure house. Since long ago, an Imperial Messenger would arrive and command it to be unfurled. . . .

It is stated that there is an Imperial Seal on the painting. This is evidence of Imperial patronage and it is known that the Emperor Yōzei 陽成 (reigned 877-884) was a patron of Anraku Valley, probably one of many.

. . . fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month . . .

The 15th day of the 7th lunar month is the day of Urabon 盂蘭盆 (S. Ullabana). It is the day of making offerings to the Three Treasures--the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Samgha--in order to save the hungry spirits of dead ones. It may have originated from the custom of offering alms to the samgha at the end of ango 安居 (S. vārisika), the retreat that ended in the middle of the 7th lunar month. The custom of Urabon is based upon the Urabon-gyō 盂蘭盆經,<sup>4</sup> which tells of the Monk Mokuren 目連 (S. Maudgalyāyana), who asked the Buddha how he could help his mother, who had become a hungry ghost. He was advised to make offerings of food to the Three Treasures on behalf of ancestors for seven generations. However, it became the popular custom

in China and Japan to make the offerings to the dead. In Japan on the 13th day of the 7th lunar month the dead return to their earthly homes and on the evening of the 16th day they return to other worlds. During the three day interval, lanterns are lit, food is offered, the Urabon-gyō is read and prayers are said. The prayers invoke Amitābha, the Buddha who offers mercy especially for the dying and dead, and Jizō, the Bodhisattva who rescues beings from hells.

Year after year without change, in a period of one day, (so many people), rich and poor, came and visited the temple that their numbers were unknown.

This line would indicate that the painting was very well known by the people of the past. The request of Sanjō Nishi Sanetaka (1455-1537) to view the work in 1509 adds credence to its fame.

The four clouds of the four directions arose and were enriched, marvellous, and auspicious in accordance with heartfelt prayers.

Not only was the painting famous, but like many things that are esteemed, it was endowed with mythical qualities. It was believed that on the day of its display auspicious clouds would appear. Clouds, the bearers of rain, were considered a symbol of the fertility of the land, hence good fortune for all.

However, in the second year of Genki (1571), under the cyclical sign of Shinbi, on the second day of the ninth lunar month, a period of troubles arrived. Up and down the mountain (of Hiei) the violence of destruction and ruin did not abate the smoke from the burning and loss of temple halls and pagodas.

This passage relates the destruction of the Tendai monastery by the warlord Oda Nobunaga in 1571. The background of the event is highly complex.

In the year preceding the disaster on Mt. Hiei, Nobunaga fought the Asakura 朝倉 and the Azai 浅井 families, defeating them at the Battle of Anegawa 姉川. However, his enemies regrouped their forces with the aid of the Jōdo Shinshū Ikkō sect 浄土真宗一向 at Ishiyama Hongan-ji 石山本願寺 in Osaka.<sup>5</sup> The Shinshū Ikkō group was powerful, commanding the respect of numerous lords, and their Osaka headquarters was considered an impenetrable garrison. Once more, Shinshū members took part in a disturbance in Kyoto that Nobunaga's forces could not quell. Not only was Nobunaga plagued by this sect and the Hiei monks, but the Nichiren and Shingon sects were also sources of irritation. When the monks of Mt. Hiei sided with the Asakura and Azai too, it was necessary to make an example of one of these militant and meddling Buddhist groups and, while it was not possible to defeat the Shinshū Ikkō, Mount Hiei was an attainable mark.

On the second day of the 9th lunar month in 1571 Nobunaga led some 25,000 samurai for a surprise attack on the Tendai mountain. Over 3,000 monks and lay people were slaughtered, and with the help of fire every kind of human structure was destroyed. The attack was ruthless and complete, short only of leveling the mountain. Nobunaga made an example of Mt. Hiei to be remembered by all and while he lived, no restoration of the mountain monastery was permitted. Immediately upon his assassination in 1582, plans were made to rebuild the lost temples.

As has been said in the introduction, Mt. Hiei was one of the oldest Buddhist institutions in Japan; it protected the Imperial city of Kyoto from harmful spirits from the north and it was the site where the rites for benefiting the nation and the Imperial family were performed.

Although (the painting was) briefly snatched by the hands of the rebel crowd of military bullies, the Buddhist monks again collected the rare treasures on the summit of the mountain.

According to this passage, the painting was taken by Nobunaga's samurai, then retrieved by the monks. This differs from Okazaki Jōji's statement that it was removed from Mount Hiei to Mount Kōya as a measure of safekeeping in anticipation of the attack.<sup>6</sup> The attack caught everyone by surprise; no one expected Nobunaga to commit such an act of sacrilege as destroying one of the holiest places in the country. Okazaki's statement lacks convincing evidence.

Entirely for the sake of scattering the turbid world of the Final Dharma, they transformed the guiding hand into a dramatic performance. . . .

The Final Dharma or mappō is the last age of the Buddhist world, when neither the practice of Buddhism nor enlightenment was believed possible, although the writings that contain the laws of Buddhism remain.

The "guiding hand" may be interpreted as the scriptures upon which the theme of the descent of Amitābha is based; these are: the

Larger and Smaller Sūtras, the Kan-gyō, and Genshin's Ōjōyōshū. The mukae-kō ceremony, the "dramatic performance," follows the "guiding hand."

... causing the offering to encounter this honoured image. . . .

This passage explains how the painting was used in conjunction with the ceremony of the mukae-kō; it was a sacramental image to which the taking of a being to encounter Amitābha was acted out.

... comparable to the appearance of the Udumbara and (the meeting of) the blind tortoise and the drifting log.

The Udumbara and [the meeting of] the blind tortoise and the drifting log are metaphors for something that is rare and wonderful.

Donge 曇華 is an abbreviated form of udonge 優曇華 (S. Udumbara). It is a mythical tree that blooms once in three thousand years, at the same time that a cakravartin, a universal Buddhist ruler, appears.

The blind tortoise appears in a Buddhist allegory which can be found in the Zōagon-gyō 雜阿含經 (S. Samyuktagāma),<sup>7</sup> one of the four Āgamas<sup>8</sup> of the Chinese. Human beings are the tortoise and the floating log is the teachings of Buddhism. When the earth was completely submerged by an ocean, there was a blind tortoise of great age who stuck his head out of his shell once every hundred years. In the ocean there was a floating log with only a single notch by which one could climb up to rest. The log drifted in the ocean,

moving east and west. The tortoise stuck his head out and tried to catch hold of the log, but missed; again it tried and finally succeeded. Through foolishness and stupidity, common people drift through the five gati<sup>9</sup> and must retain their earthly forms for some time to come as their plight is more difficult than that of the blind tortoise and the floating log.

One can have earnest hopes! Joy! It can be venerated. It can be relied on. Thus it was urged by many people that, as a small token, the mounting be made magnificent. One should not be of two minds, but should be seriously and continually devoted to the cultivation of rebirth (in the Western Paradise).

The exhortation to cultivate rebirth indicates that the writer of this inscription was a believer in Amitābha and his Western Paradise. In this case, "cultivation" most likely refers to the cultivation of the practice of nembutsu.

As for the beseecher, at a gathering at the moment of death, the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas will descend and welcome him.

Genshin believed that a dying person required attendants, "a gathering," at the critical hour to purify the death area, scatter flowers, burn incense, and so forth; these things were part of the ceremony called rinjū-nembutsu. His formation of the Nijūgo-sammai Society was to provide a support group for dying persons, as well as a nembutsu society.

. . . the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas will descend and welcome him.

This line reflects the popular belief that can be found in a sūtra called the Jū-ōjō Amida Bukkoku-kyō which is a spurious writing and is not included in the Taishō Tripitaka, the modern standard collection of Buddhist writings.

This is as surely as doubtless and easy as laying a finger on one's palm.

This is an allusion to, but not a direct quotation from Confucius' 孔子 Book of Rites 礼记. In the twenty-fifth chapter of this book Confucius is at home talking to his disciples:

An intelligent understanding of the idea of border sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, and of ceremonies of the autumnal and summer services, would make the government of a state as easy as to point to one's palm.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, our sentence in the inscription means that by following the prescribed methods of nembutsu and rinjū nembutsu rebirth in the Western Paradise will be completely without doubt.

15th day of the 5th lunar month, 15th year of Tenshō (1587), the cyclical year of Iggai.

According to the transcription of the text by Mizuhara, the cyclical year of this first inscription is Iggai, but this does not correspond with the year 1587; also in the second inscription the year of Kigai is written, but this does not match the year of 1587 either. The correct year corresponding to the Gregorian calendar year of 1587 is Teigai 丁亥. The cyclical years of the inscription may be errors of

transcription or printing.

Respectfully yours, Sonshū, Dānapati, Rank of Hōin.

Dānapati is the Sanskrit equivalent of seshu, and the more correct form of seshu is either dana-hotei 檀那波底 or danotsu-seshu 檀那施主. Both are related to the act of almsgiving, but in the former term the meaning conveyed is that of "master," one who is in charge of regulating material benefits and needs, while the latter does not necessarily carry the same implication of authority or status.

The system of the samgha hierarchy in which the position of hōin existed began in A.D. 864 when the Emperor Seiwa 清和 (reigned 858-876) was petitioned to reorganize the temple institutions. Apparently the point of dissatisfaction with the old system was that it did not clearly distinguish between persons of high and low births. Therefore, three new ranks were created above the level of the master of discipline 律師; they were: Hōin-daiwa-shōi 法印大和尚位, Hōgen-wajō-idai-sōzu 法眼知上位大僧都, and Hōgen-wajō-igon-shōsōzu 法眼知上権少僧都. Hōin is the shortened form of the first title. At the beginning the rank of hōin was highly prestigious, but in 1003 this title was conferred upon a monk of humble social origins and after this time the position became of lesser importance. By the Tokugawa period (1600-1867) Enryaku-ji 延暦寺, the chief temple of Mt. Hiei, petitioned the throne to have all novices over the age of twenty-six promoted to the rank of hōin. Not to be outdone, the Shingon sect of Mount Kōya wanted

to promote everyone to the status of hōin. Both requests received Imperial sanction.

Inscription No. 2

Sonshū of the Rank of Hōin rejoiced that [although] his past karma was profound, he [could] inscribe his respectful protection and make the mounting magnificent.

Within Buddhism it is believed that every act has a cause which may be related to past births. The above passage may be paraphrased as follows: Sonshū rejoiced that although his deeds of former lives were weighty, he was blessed with the privilege of performing an important act.

I yearn that [my deed of mounting the work] will benefit the foolishness of the direction of my heart in the Final Age.

In the final age of mappō it was believed that human beings were incapable of following Buddha's teachings, even though the Dharma, the written words, existed. The mounter hopes that the act of preserving the painting will correct the foolish inclinations in his heart that have been planted by mappō.

15th day of the 5th lunar month, 15th year of Tenshō, the cyclical year of Kogai [June 25, 1587].

The Master of Mounting,  
Masugi Jinzaburō Hidemasa,  
Kōsan-ji

Kōsan-ji was a temple on the plateau of Mt. Kōya; it was situated on the western half of the inner grounds of the

Kongōbu-ji 金剛峯寺, the main temple of the Shingon mountain. It was a gyōnin temple, that is, it was staffed by monks who performed manual labour. The chief image of worship was one of Amitābha. The temple became defunct in 1869 when the three lines of Shingon monks were dissolved. The group of temples, the Jūhakkā-in of Yūshi Hachiman Association 有志八幡十箇院, which now officially possesses the painting, formerly belonged to the gyōnin lineage.

### Inscription No. 3

15th day of the 6th lunar month, 7th year of An'ei [July 10, 1778], the cyclical year of Bojutsu.  
Dedicated on the completion of the mounting.

From the time of the first inscription to this one a total of 191 years elapsed. Exactly what sort of work is entailed by the words "hyōqu sogon" is not known but much of the painting has been repainted. It is highly possible that the retouching occurred during this long interval.

### The Writers of the Inscriptions

The name of Sonshū 尊秀, the author of the first inscription, cannot be found in modern day records of Japanese monks; we do not know his dates or the sect to which he belonged, but by examining this inscription of 1587 it is possible to learn something of the man. It is obvious that he had some education, for not only did he have a knowledge of Buddhism, but he also showed an acquaintance with the

Chinese Classics. It is clear from the vocabulary and the phrasing of words that he took the opportunity of writing this inscription to display his erudition. He was a devotee of Amitābha pietism, believing in the efficacy of nembutsu, rinjū-nembutsu, and the promised descent of the holy multitude. Within his temple as dānapati and hōin he may have held a certain amount of authority and respect, although the rank of hōin may have been an empty title by the sixteenth century. Certainly his act of honouring and preserving a holy image that may have come from a rival sect is evidence that he possessed certain qualities of magnanimity, tolerance, and the Buddhist spirit.

Mizuhara Takaei believes that Sonshū was a Shingon monk, belonging to the gyōnin order.<sup>11</sup> He bases his belief upon the presence of the temple name of Kōsan-ji at the end of the inscriptions. This temple was a Shingon gyōnin abode and the principal Buddha of worship was Amitābha. The records of Mount Kōya's gyōnin members have all been lost. Within the Shingon sect, it is believed that one can attain enlightenment in this world through the three esoteric practices.<sup>12</sup> However, under Kakuban (1095-1143), nembutsu became a means for the inferior person to attain enlightenment through rebirth within the Shingon sect. Considering these factors, Mizuhara's hypothesis may be valid.

Masugi Jinzaburō Hidemasa, a mounter, was the writer of the third inscription. There is no information about him either, but the act of preserving the painting was a deed of devotion intended to

counter the effects of mappō.

The mounter of the second and shortest inscription was Takagi Ihei Masanobu. Other craftsmen, who may have also worked to restore the painting, remain even more anonymous, but the painting that remains today speaks for all who strove to preserve it.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>One krosa corresponds to approximately 5 Chinese li and there are about 3 li in an English mile.

<sup>2</sup>Snellgrove, David, The Image of the Buddha, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978, reprint (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982), pp. 137-39.

<sup>3</sup>Minamoto Toyomune, Kōya-san, p. 116.

<sup>4</sup>T. 685.

<sup>5</sup>The Jōdō Shinshū sect was founded by Shinran (1173-1262) who believed in total faith in Amida, the tariki (literally means "other power"). Most of his followers were peasants who were taught by the Shinshū monks that the local Shintō gods of their overlords and the protection of the samurai were not needed, as Amitābha would show them the way to salvation. Throwing off the shackles of serfdom, they banded together to live in democratic congregations; these rebellions were called Ikkō Ikki. They were widespread in Nobunaga's time, and the peasant became his most formidable opponent in the struggle for power.

<sup>6</sup>Okazaki Jōji, Pure Land Buddhist Painting, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977, trans. by Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis.

<sup>7</sup>T. 103.

<sup>8</sup>Āgamas is a body of literature that corresponds to the Pali Nikāyas, the discourses of the Buddha.

<sup>9</sup>Gati means "paths" of existence; there are five gati: hell, ghosts, animals, humans, and devas.

<sup>10</sup>明乎郊社之義曾禮治國其如指諸掌而已乎。

Shih-san Ching Chu-shu 十三經注疏, Taipei: Yi-wen, 1955. Translated by James Legge, The Li Ki, XI-XLIX, pt. 4, The Sacred Books of China, (London: Clarendon Press, 1885, Reprinted Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966): p. 272.

<sup>11</sup>Mizuhara, p. 185.

<sup>12</sup>Physical practice: the making of mudrās, vocal practice: mantras, mental practice: meditation.

## Appendix B

The Taima Temple Mukae-kō

The mukae-kō is still performed in numerous temples today, the best known being at Taima Temple in Nara, near Genshin's native place. It is performed on the fourteenth day of May every year, marking the rebirth of Chushō-no-hime 中将姫. She was a nun at Taima Temple sometime during the years A.D. 727-784. She was a pious believer in Amitābha Buddha, and it is traditionally believed that she wove the Taima Mandala out of thread made from lotus stems.

The Taima Temple mukae-kō is performed in front of the main hall (hondō 本堂). The Taima Mandala is enshrined in the hondō; it represents the Pure Land in the west from which Amitābha and his hosts will descend. In the opposite direction is the Saha-dō 娑婆堂, representing the temporal world. The two buildings are linked by a ramp. The ceremony begins with the ringing of the temple bell. At this point a small statue of Chushō-no-hime is placed in a palanquin and brought down to the Saha-dō. The second ring brings a group of monks up to the main temple where they offer their respects to the mandala. On the third sounding of the bell, the monks descend to the Saha-dō and prepare for the ascent of Chushō-no-hime to the Western Paradise. The descent of the holy multitude begins from the main temple to the Saha-dō upon the fourth ring. The multitude of Bodhisattvas and devas are played by the temple's parishioners dressed

in elaborate costumes and wearing masks. First the devas and the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas descend, then Seishi and Kannon, carrying the empty lotus platform. Upon arriving at the Saha-dō, the monks sing a hymn, they then take a small statuette out of the back of the larger statue of Chushō-no-hime and place it on Kannon's lotus dais. In the meantime, a standing statue of Amitābha is brought out to the front of the main temple, where he will be able to greet Chushō-no-hime to the Pure Land. Carrying the statuette of the nun, Kannon leads the Bodhisattvas and devas back to paradise.

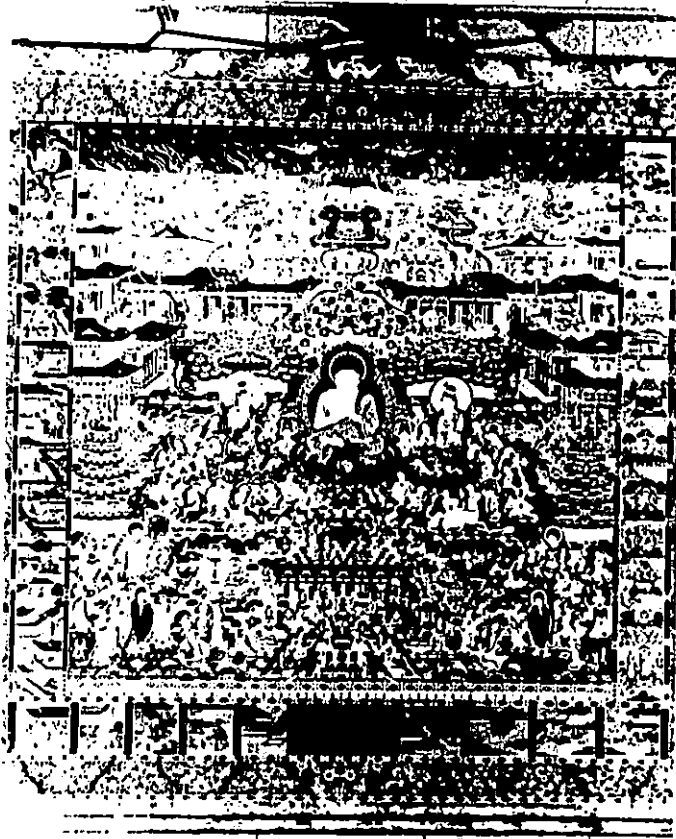
1. The Descent of Amitābha and His Holy Multitude,  
tryptich, colours on silk,  
Yūshi Hachiman-kō Jūhatsuka-in, Mount Kōya,  
12th century,  
central scroll 210 cm. x 210 cm., flanking scrolls  
105 cm. x 105 cm.,  
(Nakano Genzō, Jōdo-kyō no Bijutsu: Byōdō-in  
Hōō-dō,  
Tokyo: Gakken, 1978, p. 97.)



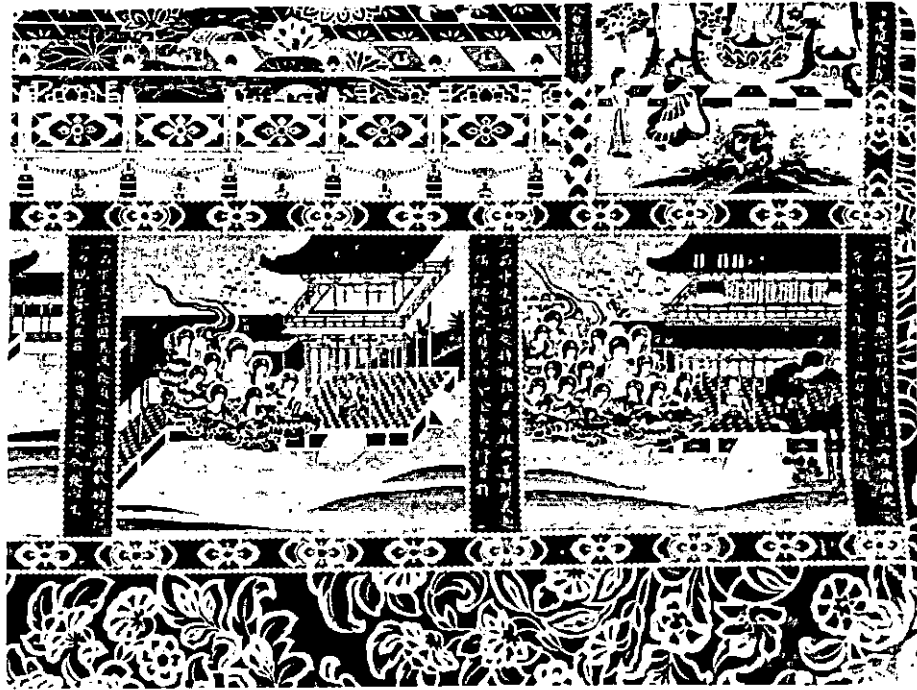
2. Detail of The Descent of Amitābha,  
Kannon offering the lotus dais.



3. Taima Mandala,  
Kyonen-ji, Nagano Prefecture,  
Edo period (1709),  
480 cm. x 425 cm.



4. Detail of the Taima Mandala  
upper rebirth-superior grade,  
average rebirth-superior grade.



5. Detail of the Taima Mandala,  
lower rebirth-superior grade,  
upper rebirth-average grade.



6. Detail of the Taima Mandala,  
average rebirth-average grade,  
lower rebirth-average grade,  
upper rebirth-inferior grade.



7. Detail of the Taima Mandala,  
upper rebirth-inferior grade,  
average rebirth-inferior grade,  
lower rebirth-inferior grade.



8. Amitābha Crossing the Mountains,  
hanging scroll, colours on silk,  
Zenrin-ji, Kyoto,  
138.7 cm. x 118.2 cm.



9. Amitābha with the Four Pure Land Bodhisattvas,  
 woodblock print,  
 (Kakuzen-sho, Tokyo: Meichō-fukyū-kai, 1978, p. 181).

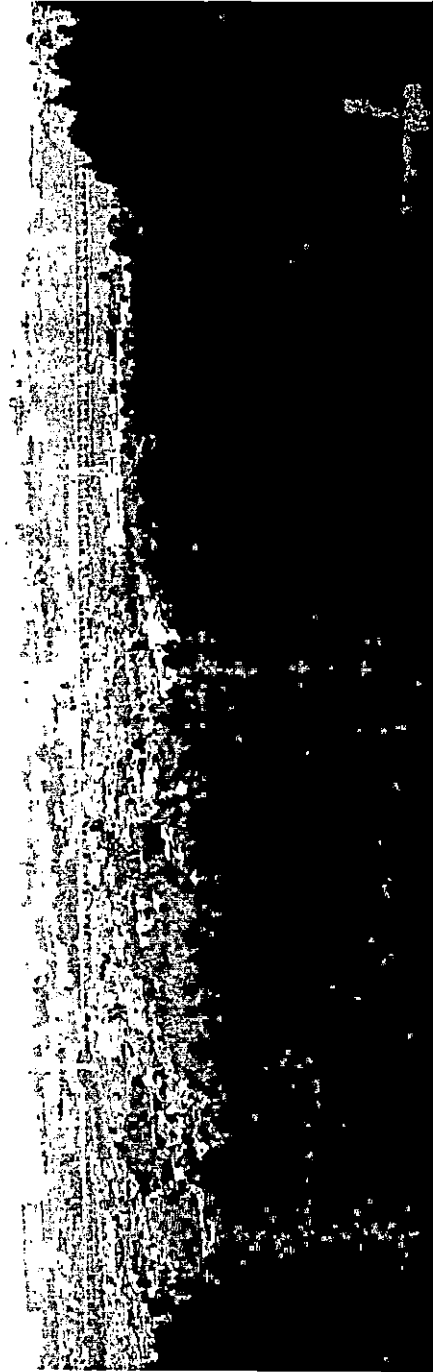


覺禪鈔  
阿彌陀下

10. Detail of The Descent of Amitābha,  
Amitābha.



11. A view of Lake Biwa from Yokawa, Mount Hiei.



12. Hell scene from the Ōjōyōshū,  
woodblock print,  
Showa period (1931)  
(Ōjōyōshū, Kyoto: Nagata Bunyu, 1931,  
Reprint, 1983, p. 24).



13. Amitābha Crossing the Mountains,  
Three fold screen, colours on silk,  
Konkaikōmyō-ji, Kyoto,  
101 cm. x 83 cm.



14. The Mukae-kō at Taima Temple,  
May 14, 1983.



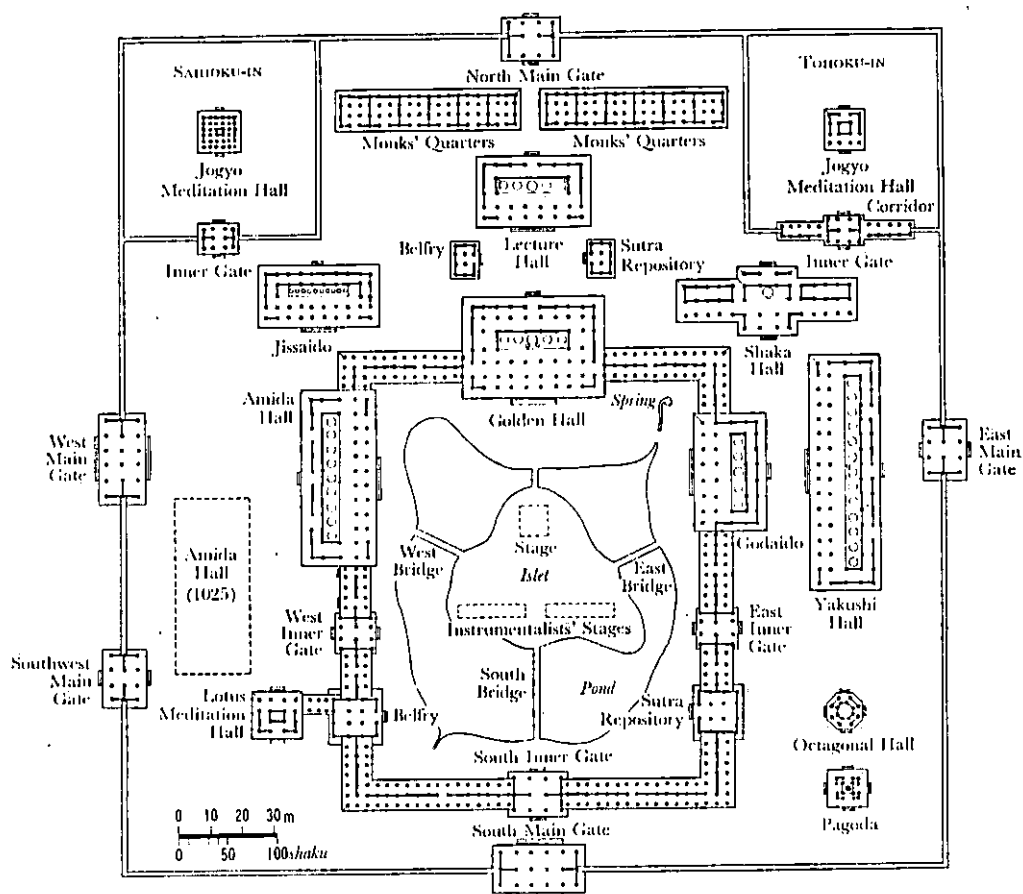
15. Mukae-kō at Taima Mandala,  
May 14, 1983.



16. Amitābha Buddha,  
Jōcho (?-1057)  
joined wood with gold leaf and lacquer,  
Hōō-dō, Byōdō-in, Uji,  
295 cm.

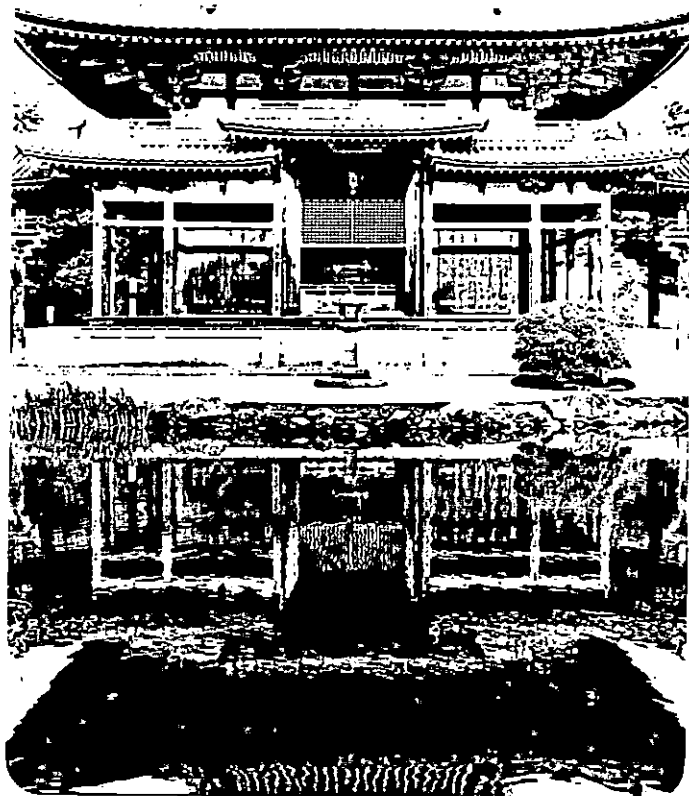


17. Hōjō-ji, restored ground plan,  
 (Fukuyama Toshio, Heian Temples: Byodoin and Chusonji, p. 47).

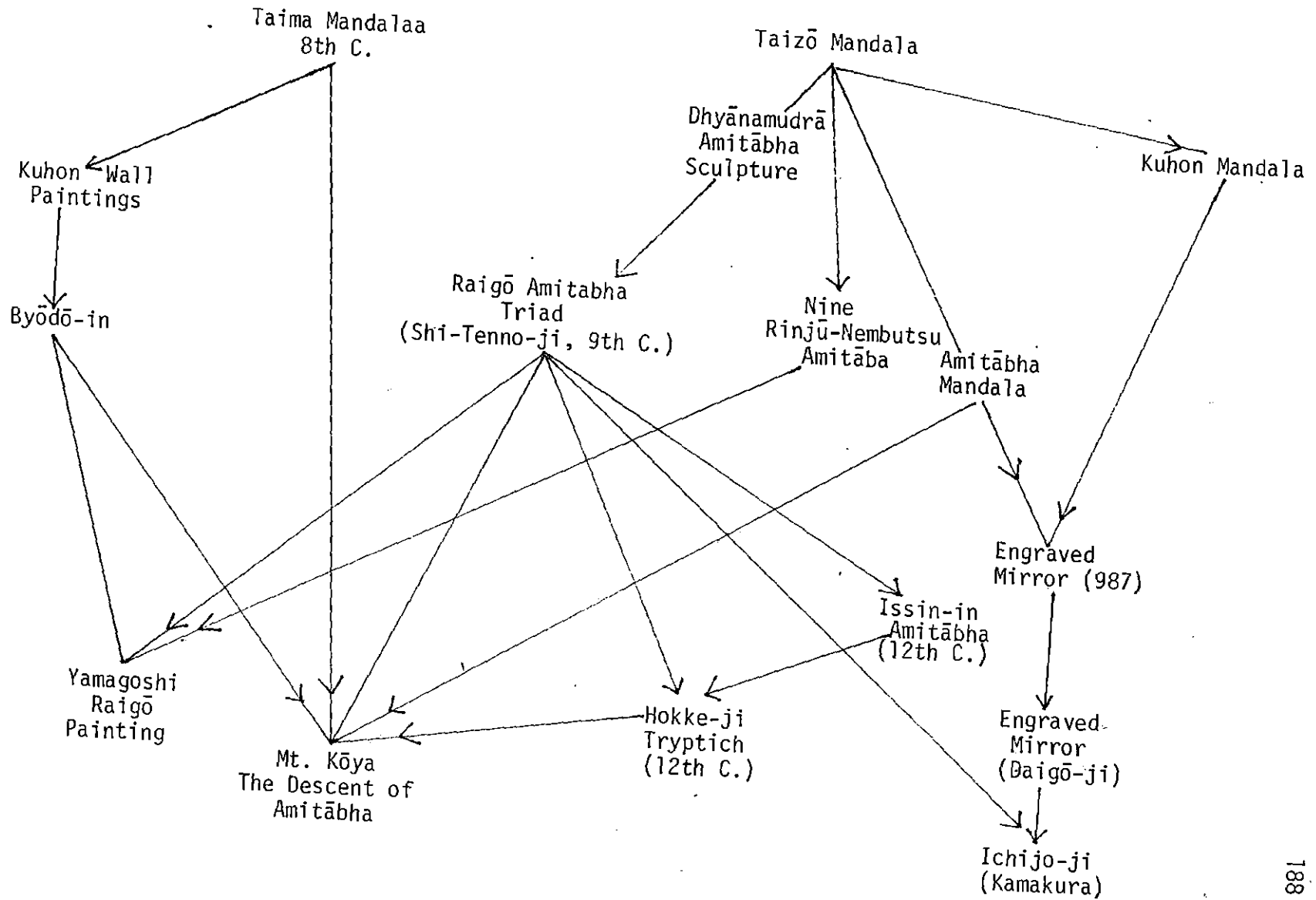


41. Restoration of Hojo-ji ground plan.

18. Hōō-dō, Byōdō-in, Uji,  
1053.



19. Diagram of the lineage of raigō painting.



20. Amitābha Buddha (central scroll of tryptich),  
Hanging scroll, colours on silk,  
Hokke-ji,  
Heian period, twelfth century,  
185.5 cm. x 146.1 cm.



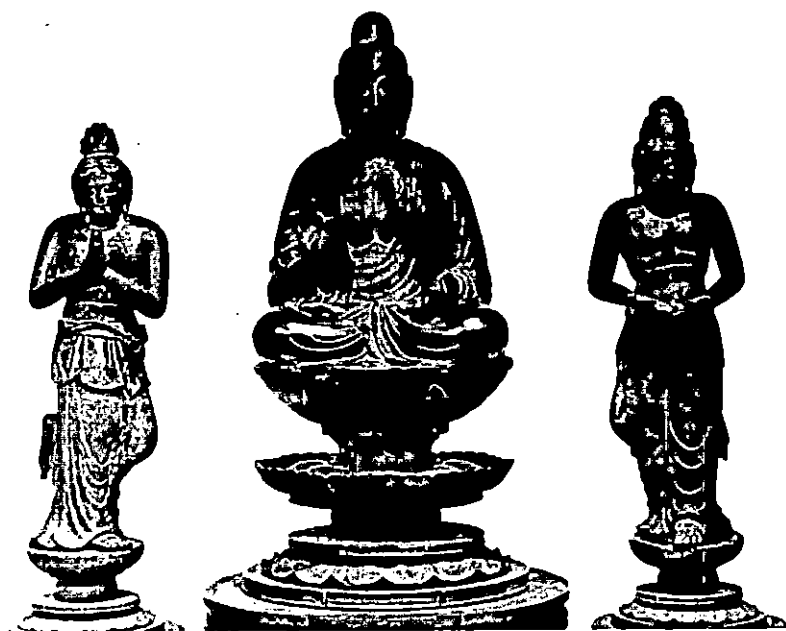
21. Lower class-upper birth (detail)  
colours on wood,  
Hōō-dō, Byōdō-in,  
1053.  
(Nakano, Jōdo-kyō no Bijutsu, p. 30).



22. Amitābha,  
wood,  
Saidai-ji, Nara,  
eighth century, Nara period,  
75 cm.



23. Amitābha Triad,  
wood,  
Shi-tenno-ji, Osaka,  
Heian period, ninth century,  
Amitābha 49.7 cm., attendants 58.5-55.9 cm.



24. Amitābha Mandala,  
relief carving on wood,  
Kaiho-ji, Kagawa Prefecture,  
T'ang dynasty, ninth century, China,  
13.6 cm. x 12.6 cm.



25. Mirror with line engraving of Amitābha with four attendants,  
Bronze,  
Private collection, Hiroshima,  
Heian period, 987,  
diameter 11.8 cm.  
(Nara National Museum, Jōdo Mandara: Gokuraku Jōdo to  
Raigō Roman [Nara: Nara National Museum, 1983]: p. 54).



26. Mirror with line engraving of Amitābha with four attendants,  
Bronze,  
Daigō-ji, Kyoto,  
Heian period, eleventh century,  
diameter 12 cm.,  
(Nara National Museum, Jōdo Mandara, p. 55).



27. Amitābha and Four Bodhisattvas,  
Hanging scroll, colours on silk,  
Ichijō-ji, Hyogo Prefecture,  
Kamakura period,  
173.5 cm. x 103.7 cm.  
(Okazaki Jōji, Pure Land Buddhist Painting [Tokyo: Kodansha,  
1977]: p. 89).



28. Detail of the Musical Bodhisattvas,  
The Descent of Amitābha,  
Mount Kōya.



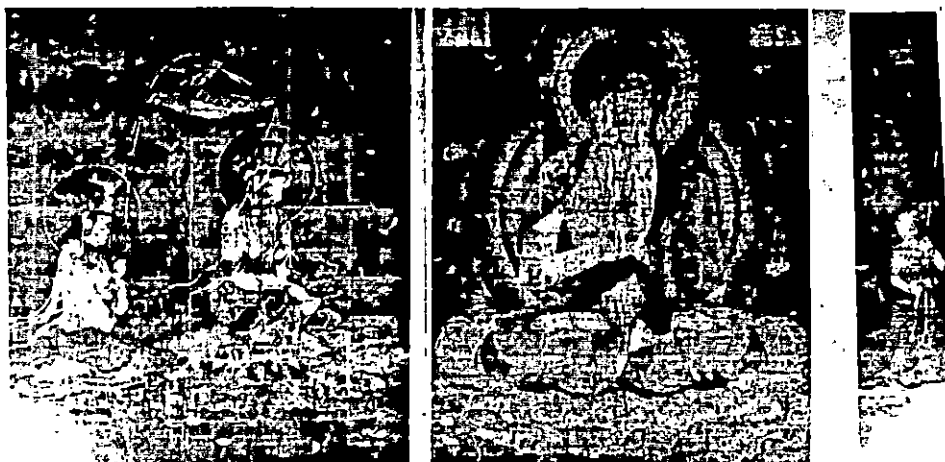
29. Detail of the rear Amitābha Triad,  
The Descent of Amitābha,  
Mount Kōya.



30. Detail of landscape,  
The Descent of Amitābha,  
Mount Kōya.



31. Amitābha Tryptich,  
Three hanging scrolls, colours on silk,  
Hokke-ji, Nara,  
Heian period, twelfth century,  
Amitābha 185.5 cm. x 146.1 cm., two  
Bodhisattvas 186.4 cm. x 173.6 cm.,  
boy 183.3 cm. x 55.2 cm.



32. Amitābha,  
Hanging scroll, colours on silk,  
Isshin-in, Kyoto,  
Heian period, twelfth century;  
83.5 cm. x 55.3 cm.



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