

Committee 6
Life, Death and Eternal Hope

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THE JAPANESE VIEW ON LIFE AND DEATH
THROUGH ITS VIEW OF THE NEXT WORLD

by

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Summary:

The subject of this essay is the Japanese concept of the next world, or afterlife, which is one of the most important factors composing the traditional view on life and death in Japan.

As my study method, I adopted a primarily iconographical approach to the subject. This was because: 1) My essay includes the prehistoric period when literacy was lacking on the Japanese archipelago. As a result, there were many cases where I could not find any written materials or historical documents; and 2) As pointed out by Philippe Aries, a French social historian famous for his study on death, visual expressions retain some significant meanings which are often left out of written materials or sometimes vague and hidden in the depths. I tried to emphasize the reading (or understanding) of iconographies (or design motifs), including archaeological materials, from the viewpoint of the science of religion. When documents were available, I collated them with the visual materials as accurately as possible in order to understand the people's images of the next world at that time.

The periods which I investigated were from the Jomon (5000 years ago) to the Kamakura period (14th century), when the medieval age attained maturity in Japan. The oldest age was determined by the oldest extant historical materials and the latest was decided by the fact that a variety of Japanese views of the next world appeared all together in that period and did not change much thereafter.

In the Jomon period, people thought that all creatures had souls, which would slip away from their bodies when they died. This conception is still common among contemporary Japanese. The Jomon people thought the distance between the dead and the living was not so far and that the dead would return to this world within several generations.

In the Yayoi period (300 BC - AD 300), when agriculture was the nucleus of the community, the interval between the dead and the living

gradually became more distant. In the Kofun (Tumulus or ancient burial mounds; AD 400-700) period, the dead and the living became definitely separated and the world after death was thought to be gloomy and dominated by darkness. Chinese culture was rapidly infiltrating into Japan and the influence of Taoistic culture can be found in the Japanese view of the next world.

In the 6th century, Buddhism was introduced into Japan, but its influence did not eradicate the native view of the next world. However the introduction of the beautiful image of the heavenly land of happiness (sukhāvati in Sanskrit) changed the Japanese image of the gloomy after world.

Esoteric Buddhism which was introduced to Japan in the 9th century, brought the concept that all forms of life, including human beings, are manifestations of Dainichi Nyorai (Mahāvairocana in Sk.), the supreme Buddhist deity. This concept opened the way to establishing the thought superposing this world and next world, which had some common elements with the Jōmon view of the next world.

The popularity of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan from the 11th to the 14th centuries stirred up among the people a longing for the Pure Land (Amitabha's heaven in the West) as the ideal world to be reborn in after death. The idea of rebirth in Pure Land, which was negated in original Buddhism, had become part of the mainstream of Japanese thought. According to the original Buddhist conception, the Pure Land was not the final place of rebirth for souls which were locked in a cycle of transmigration (samsāra in Sk.), repeating birth and death perpetually among the three worlds and six realms of existence. Even though the Pure Land seemed to be the best and most ideal world in which to be reborn, it was thought that all sentient and insentient beings could not escape from the transmigration system. However, this Buddhist concept was not well accepted by the Japanese, who developed and expanded the concept of the Pure Land. So that the distance between this world and the Pure Land, which was infinitely far at the beginning, came to be reduced. The concept of hell was slow to be popularized in comparison with the concept of the Pure Land heaven. In the turbulent eras from the 13th

century on, the fear of hell developed and strengthened. Eventually, the concepts of the Pure Land and esoteric Buddhist view of hell became blended into one, which became popular throughout Japan. As a result, Japanese people came to conclude that both Pure Land and hell co-existed in nature. This fact was greatly influenced by the native view of nature and the concept of kami (divine beings) in Japan.

1. Death and Life in the Jomon Period

The oldest extant record in Japan showing the relationship between the dead and the living may be a painting of the mid-Yayoi period (5000 to 4000 years ago). This is a strange line-drawing (Fig. 1) on the lower side of an earthenware vessel in the shape of a jar, called idogame (H. 64.5 cm.; owned by Idojiri Museum of Archaeology), which was excavated from the Totonomiya site at Fujimi-cho, Nagano Prefecture. As is usual with archaeological discoveries in Japan, there are many opinions about this drawing. It looks like a sketch of the moment when a child's soul is returning to its mother's womb. This interpretation is based on the following two facts: 1) This type of clay jar was specially designed for the burial of a stillborn baby; and 2) Until comparatively recently, the folk custom still remained in Japan of burying a stillborn baby near the household entrance where the mother often passed through.¹

In this drawing, the soul of a baby was delineated with a dotted line, as if it were a ray of light ascending from the earth to the mother's genitals, depicted in the shape of a flattened long-oval. This expression of the dead baby as a ray of light reveals to us that the soul was probably thought to be invisible but that sometimes its existence could be sensed. This painting suggests that in the mid-Jomon period, the soul of a dead baby or a child was thought to remain near its mother while waiting for an opportunity to be reborn. Judging from the following example, the concept of the soul staying near its close relatives is not only found in the cases of dead babies.

This is an example of the stone circles peculiar to the ruins of the late Jomon period (4000 to 3000 years ago). This was found at Nonakado

site in Kazuno City, Akita Prefecture (Fig. 2). Here, a group of long and narrow stones were placed around a standing stick-shaped stone, encircling it in a radial manner. There are various opinions with regard to the purpose of this unique and strange monument. When fatty acid thought to be that of a human was found recently in the ground underneath this stone circle, the academic dispute came to an end as scholars concluded that it was built as a tomb. If so, this may reveal a very interesting fact. Since this type of stone circle was usually situated in the center of a community, we may say that the community structure of that period consisted of the domain of the dead at the center surrounded by the living. As a matter of course, in this type of community the distance between the dead and the living might be very close, as if the space may intimately shared by the dead and the living, who existed happily together or met face to face whether willing or not.

My hypothesis is endorsed by the fact that most of the interred bodies of this period were found in bending or stretching positions with a big stone on the chest or a clay jar on the head, presumably to restrict their physical liberty (Fig. 3). Since the Jomon people thought that the soul of the dead could drift away from the body, enter into this world and exert a bad influence on the living, they aimed to deprive the dead souls of their physical liberty.

In addition, when considering the great number of huge stones in the form of a male genitals (Fig. 4) and clay figurines stressing the female sexual character (Fig. 5) which were produced, the people in the mid to late Jomon period probably believed that the dead and the living were not clearly separated, and therefore, the rebirth was thought to be easy. In other words, they perhaps thought the distance between this world and the other one was practically nothing or zero.

However, this does not mean that the Jomon people were only practical and materialistic. It may be that this world for the Jomon people was also a spiritual space, which was wrapped in mystery like the other world in later ages. It should be noted that this type of thought has ceaselessly continued to exist at the bottom of the Japanese mind, not only in the ancient Jomon period but also in

contemporary Japan, changing the strength of its rhythmical movements as time went on. I would like to continue to think of this as much as possible in the future.

2. The Segregation of the Dead

In the period when rice cultivation from the Chinese continent became widespread throughout Japan, that is to say the Yayoi period (ca. 300 BC - ca. 300 AD), a great change occurred in the relationship between the dead and the living. This is exemplified by change of tomb styles. The Hokei Shuko-bo, or square-shaped burial mound surrounded by a ditch, a style of which was predominant in the Kinki area, the center of culture at that time, became widespread over the Tokai and Kanto areas, Central and Eastern Japan. In this type of tomb we can see a conception of the next world which cannot be found in the tombs of the preceding period.

The Hokei Shuko-bo style of mounded tomb was constructed on a square plot of land which was marked off by a ditch. This type of tomb primarily took the form of a family tomb. In most cases, the head of the family was buried at the center with his wife at his side, surrounded by their children, and then their babies placed along the outer side encircling all members of the family (Fig. 6). This type of tomb was not always used just for one family, for there is one example which was used for the family members of three generations. Here we can find the signs of serious consideration of the family lineage and ancestral worship. Moreover, the plot of land used for this type of tomb was generally larger than the living's residential space.

This seems to suggest that the world of the dead exceeded that of the living, and that the authority of the dead was enhanced. But when considering the location of this type of tomb, it is not so simple. This type of tomb was usually built outside the village. The new tomb system required a vast space for the dead which was separated from the space of the living.

Judging from this fact, I can imagine that the Yayoi people were

struggling to find a way of getting the dead out of the village, while still treating the dead with respect. As time went on, the dead and the living were no longer happily together and the living were no longer distressed at bad influences of the dead. This fact can be gleaned from the apparent separation of the two worlds -- the world of the dead and the world of the living. A village of the Yayoi period consisted of the space for the living at the center, surrounded by tombs. The space for the dead was located at the outskirts of the village. This type of village structure was generally found everywhere in Japan before modern times. Except the difference in the land space for the dead and the living, I propose that this type of Japanese village structure may have begun in the Yayoi period.

It should not be necessary to point out here again that there was a comparatively short distance between this world and the next world in the period before Buddhism was introduced into Japan. In addition, the land for the dead was far larger than that of the living. This fact reveals that the power or might of the dead was still strong enough to take possession of the living people's mind.

3. The Next World Found in Kofun or Ancient Burial Mounds

The oldest extant examples of visual materials providing evidence of the concept of the separation of this world and the next are datable to the 6th century. These were found on the inside walls of large burial mounds called soshoku kofun or ornamented tombs. Because of the lack of written materials, we have to speculate on the meanings of the design motifs in the wall paintings. Moreover, these paintings are far from accurate depictions of the manners and objects of the period when the tombs were constructed. However, I have no doubt that the separation of this world and the next one was achieved in that period. Precisely speaking, the people who constructed these ornamented tombs thought that the worlds of the dead and the living were completely separated.

For example, on the inside wall of Mezurashizuka burial mound, Yoshii

-cho Town, Fukuoka Prefecture (Fig. 7), three quiver-like or shield-like objects were painted large in size at the center, and fern frond design swirls on both the left and right sides of the upper part of the painting, splitting the wall painting into two parts. On the left side of the painting is a boat with an oarsman and a bird perched on the bow. Perhaps this rower of the boat is the dead soul who was buried in this tomb, and the bird is playing the role of a guide to the next world. Another interpretation might be the bird is none other than the soul of the dead who traveled to the next world.

The boat suggests water in my mind. It is interesting that the concept of water parting this world and the next world which must be crossed by a boat is similar to the later Japanese Buddhist concept of *Sanzu-no-kawa*, or the River of Three Crossings which the dead must cross. There are varied opinions on the reason why the water area appearing here relates to the dead. According to one, this is reminiscent of the custom of water burials during a certain period of ancient times². Another opinion regards this as evidence of the influence of Taoism, which advocated the existence of a world of the dead (the land of the immortals) beyond the sea.³ Perhaps this would be an important point relating to the origins of *Ne-no-kuni*, or the land of the underworld, and *Tokoyo-no-kuni*, the eternal land beyond the sea, which are mentioned in the Japan's oldest historic documents, *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters, 712) and *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicle of Japan, 720).

If we limit our discussion to ornamentation found at the Mezurashizuka tomb, Chinese Taoistic influence is predominant. This is because the sun is depicted on the upper left of the tomb's wall, and a toad is painted on the right. When the Early Han Dynasty tomb Mawangdui, Changsha, China was excavated, a piece of silk cloth with a painting was found. The celestial world was depicted on the uppermost part of this painting: Centering around Mt. Kunlunshan are a bird with three legs within the red sun and a toad in a white moon (Fig. 8). In Taoism, the toad symbolizes the moon. This suggests that the next world, which was pictured on the wall of a tomb for the first time in Japan, had already been influenced by Taoism, the imported Chinese thought,

instead of native Japanese conceptions.

Ornamentation with boat and water designs was discovered in number of ancient tombs in Japan, including Takaida Yokoana at Kashihara city in Osaka Prefecture (Fig. 9) and Torifunezuka at Yoshii-cho, Fukuoka Prefecture. In addition, several boat-shaped clay figurines were excavated from ancient tombs, including Saitobaru No. 110 tomb (Fig. 10) and Kankoji site, Habikino city, Osaka Prefecture. And an actual boat was found at the Kuhoji site in Osaka Prefecture. Although I hesitate to say positively that all of these examples show the influence of Chinese thought, it would be closer to the truth to say that some Chinese influence and relationship with China should be considered in the production of these paintings.

According to the spiritual geography of Taoism, which was said to have been established in China in the 4th century, the world of the dead was located at Mt. Loufeng beyond the sea in the northend of the world. As a result, it seems natural that the soul of the dead was thought to cross the water by boat. But there are some doubts as to what degree such Taoistic thoughts were known by the people who constructed the ornamented tombs in Japan in the 6th century. It is also possible that there might have been a Japanese concept in which the world of the dead existed somewhere beyond the sea before Taoism was brought from China.

According to Mr. Toji Kamata, a scholar specializing in Shinto studies, the oldest form of the Japanese conception of the next world was ne (beyond the sea) contrasting to shima (this world)⁴. The term ne refers to ne-no-kuni, or ne-no-katasu-no-kuni, which is the sacred land where the dead return. This land is the original home or the birthplace of the soul of the Japanese.

It is almost certain that the next world, which was depicted in the ornaments of the above-mentioned ancient tombs, was completely separated from this world by water and was located far in distance across the water. The term Tori no Iwakusu-fune, (literally, Celestial strongly-built boat of a bird), also called Ame no Torifune (Celestial bird's boat), appears in the Kojiki. This term gives us an impression

of a celestial boat with the soul flying in the sky. But having seen the ornaments of the tombs in Japan, we have rather a strong image of a boat crossing the water.

4. Yomi-no-Kuni (The Land of Darkness)

Another important point relating to Japanese ancient tombs is the relationship between the structure of Yokoana-shiki kofun, or the tomb with a horizontal hole, and the origin of the concept of the world of the dead located beneath the ground. Concerning this point, one scholar said that the stone chamber of the tomb with a horizontal hole was constructed beneath the ground far deeper than the earlier the burial mounds. As a result, the concept of the realm of the dead located beneath the ground was created.⁵ Here, the world of the dead beneath the ground refers to Yomi-no-Kuni or the land of darkness.

In the myth recounted in the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki, Izanagi no Mikoto visited Yomi-no-kuni in order to see his deceased wife, Izanami no Mikoto, whom he could not forget. But what he saw there was his wife's decomposed ugly body. Panic-stricken, he dashed up Yomotsu-hirasaka, a narrow sloping path connecting the land of darkness and this world. Izanami, who learned that her husband saw her decayed body, became furious at what he did and angrily chased him and tried to catch up with him. He threw her three peaches growing at the base of the path to her, and while she ate them he was able to escape and reach this world safely...

According to the above-mentioned opinion, Yomi-no-kuni in this myth refers to the stone chamber of the tomb with a horizontal hole, and Yomotsu-hirasaka is the corridor entrance of the tomb which connects the tomb entrance and the stone chamber where the bodies were placed. In Japanese the term saka, which is included in the name of the path Yomotsu-hirasaka refers to a slope or a grade, and a border splitting two different worlds as well.⁶ In this type of tomb, all members of one family were buried by turns. Once an epidemic broke out, it often caused the deaths of family members in succession. Consequently, the

surviving members of the family had to enter the family tomb's stone chamber to bury the newly deceased. On these occasions, they had to see the previously deceased family members' decaying bodies with putrid smell laying in the dark stone chamber. This type of experience became one of the potential elements in establishing the image of Yomi-no-kuni (the land of darkness), which was peculiar to Japan.

This opinion may seem plausible. According to Dr. Mitsushi Fukunaga, an authority on Taoism in Japan, however, the term yomi, consisting of two Chinese characters meaning the underworld, and the action of throwing out or scattering peaches for the protection from evil, were borrowed from Taoist teachings in China. If so, while it may seem to be a little bit of a hasty conclusion, it is possible to conclude that the concept of the afterworld, called Yomi-no-kuni, was established through the amalgamation of the Taoistic conception brought from China and the actual burial custom in tombs with horizontal holes in Japan. In comparison with other countries, the concept of the afterworld appeared relatively late in Japan. Yomi-no-kuni began to be mentioned from the mid-6th century on when tombs with horizontal holes became popular in Japan. This fact also endorses my hypothesis.

Since Yomi-no-kuni was thought to be located within the walking distance, it seemed to be nearer to this world than Ne-no-kuni or the underworld, and Tokoyo-no-kuni beyond the sea. It is important that the image of Yomi-no-kuni gives us an impression that its location is near to this world. This is because our ancestors' memories of abominable scenes in the tombs beneath the ground were never blotted out, but remained continuously at the bottom of Japanese mind even after Buddhism was introduced. The concept of the afterworld was revived some time later along with the development of Buddhist movements in Japan. This type of concept of the afterworld formed a pair with some ideal world as its counterpart. People believed that there was paradise or a land of happiness in the sky at a certain place in Japan, and hell or infernal region beneath its ground, although they could not actually be seen. In short, the land of happiness and the inferno are hidden in this world.

5. The Illusion of Tenjukoku (The Land of Heavenly Life)

The oldest extant detailed representation of the next world is an embroidered silk curtain or wall hanging, known as Tenjukoku Shucho, depicting a land called Tenju, or Heavenly Life, in which Prince Shotoku (574-622) is said to have been reborn (Fig. 11). This embroidered curtain is said to have been woven by female attendants of Tachibana-no-oiratsume, Prince Shotoku's wife, at her request after Prince Shotoku's death. His rebirth in Heaven seems to have been widely accepted at that time, for it is related in the Nihon Shoki that a Korean Buddhist priest from Koguryo (an ancient kingdom on the Korean peninsula) lamented Prince Shotoku's death saying "I will definitely die on the 5th day of the 2nd month next year and then will meet Prince Shotoku in heaven. Together with him I am planning to save sentient beings from suffering."

The production date of this wall hanging is Suiko 30 (622). Historically this was in the late Kofun period and also at the early stage of the development of Buddhism in Japan. Today, only few fragments of the original work remain and are patchworked together with some fragments of repaired parts dating to a later time (1275). As a result, it is hard to imagine the original scene of Tenjukoku in its entirety.

When looking at the details of the work, however, we can find some design motifs, including a Buddha (tathāgata in Sk.) image seated on a lotus, several figures of monks and donors, and scattered lotus petals. Judging from these motifs, the design of this work is suggestive of the scenery of the Buddhist ideal world, namely a type of heaven. In the Kamakura period (13th century) when the long-lost wall hanging was found again, the document Taishi Mandara Koshiki described it as follows:

"In Tenjukoku there are four-storied buildings and no discrimination among men, women and animals." Consequently, it is possible to regard the Tenjukoku as the heaven mentioned in Buddhist teachings.

But when examining its details once again, I found some motifs which were not Buddhist. For example, the design of the moon is found at the

upper left corner of the work. And within the moon is a jar at the center, a rabbit at the left and a tree at the right. Moreover, the above-mentioned Taishi Mandara Koshiki includes the following description: "The sun and the moon are depicted side by side." Please remember the silk cloth with picture excavated from the early Han tomb Mawangdui, China, which I mentioned previously. In the depiction of the heavenly world in that picture "the sun and the moon are side by side." Therefore I would like to posit that the moon on the Tenjukoku Shucho was also derived from Chinese Taoism. I am sure that the jar in the moon is the Taoist medicine jar with an elixir of life, the rabbit is the legendary moon rabbit, and the tree is Katsura, the legendary tree in the moon.⁷

When considering the above facts, Tenjukoku where Prince Shotoku is said to be reborn is a mysterious paradise where Buddhism and Taoism are blended together into one. This conjecture is reinforced by the fact that the sun with a tri-legged bird and the moon with a toad were depicted on the upper left and right of Mt. Sumeru, the highest mountain rising in the center of the Buddhist world, decorating the back of the Tamamushi Zushi (a wooden portable shrine covered with bronze plates on which iridescent elytra of the Japanese beetle tamamushi (Chrysochroa fulgidissima) are mounted) preserved by Horyuji Temple, Nara, a Buddhist temple with a strong connection to Prince Shotoku as its founder.

The structure of the universe with the sun and the moon at both sides of the mid-slope of Mt. Sumeru is a typical example of the Buddhist universe which had already been described in the Kusha-ron (a Chinese translation of Abhidharma-kośa in Sk.) compiled in India in the 5th century.⁸ Although this structure itself is not a special case in Buddhism, it is unusual to find in Buddhist imaginary depictions of a tri-legged bird and a toad which are the products of Taoism.

Approximately 3,000 items in total, including gold and silver ingots, ring-shaped gold, meno (agate), and kudadama (jasper ornaments resembling whorls), were found at the bottom of the main pillars of the towers of Buddhist temples, including Asuka-dera (present-day Hokoji or

Gangoji) which was said to have been constructed in Suiko 1 (539) when Prince Shotoku took over the reins of the government. These items were mostly the same as funerary goods of Kofun tombs in the same period, evidence of the amalgamation of Shintoism and Buddhism. As I mentioned before, if we assume the existence of Taoism behind the Shinto belief, this fact might also reveal the intimate relationship between Japanese Buddhism and Taoism. Apart from Prince Shotoku's real intention, the people surrounding him probably considered his thought to consist of Buddhism and Taoism. Precisely speaking, they, including Prince Shotoku himself, probably could not make distinctions between Buddhism and Taoism.

6. The World of Mandala

A great number of paintings of the Buddhist paradise were produced from the time of Prince Shotoku to the end of the Nara period (710-794). These paintings, however, were not made with the assumption that people should go there after death. Rather they were offered memorials for the repose of the soul of the dead.⁹ This was characteristic of that period. In other words, while people of that period had a vague longing for the Pure Land, they did not recognize that the Pure Land was the place they should go to after death. This idea corresponds with the Tenjukoku Shucho, which was produced after Prince Shotoku's death for the repose of his soul. The Taima Mandala of Taimadera Temple (Fig. 12) and Chiko Mandala of Gangoji Temple (Fig. 13) are famous as masterpieces of mandala (diagrammatic picture representing the cosmic nature of the Buddhist divinities) depicting the Pure Land of Amida (Amitabha in Sk.) in the Nara period, but actually these works are said to have been produced in the mid-Heian period or later. In particular, the Taima Mandala is said to have been imported to Japan from Tang China, and the legend of beautiful Lady Chujo-hime who wove this tapestry with lotus thread is said to have been created in the medieval days after this work became popular.¹⁰ If I may offer a conclusion at this point, it was after the mid-Heian period that people

began to seek rebirth in the Pure Land of Amida after death as an ideal world for the dead.

At the beginning of the Heian period a major event occurred which heavily influenced the Japanese view of the Pure Land. This was the introduction of esoteric Buddhism to Japan from China by the Japanese priest Kukai (774-835). According to the esoteric doctrine of sokushin jobutsu (becoming a Buddha immediately or Buddhahood in this lifetime, namely to ready the world of nirvana or the same state of enlightenment attained by Sakyamuni on earth), Buddhahood can be attained in this world, which makes this world a sacred land for esoteric Buddhists. Their paradise is not the same as the Pure Land of Amitabha located far away from this world, but the paradise of Mahavairocana which can be found on earth. As a result, it is unnecessary to search for paradise or the Pure Land outside this world. In short, we may say that this is a religion rejecting the concept of the Pure Land outside this world and, on the contrary, highly valuing this world -- the world of birth and death called shigan (this shore).

Instead of rejecting the concept of the Pure Land outside this world, the esoteric Buddhist doctrine of sokushin jobutsu played the role of the restorer, resurrecting an old Japanese feeling about the existence of the world of the dead somewhere on earth. Moreover, along with the changing trends of the times, this esoteric Buddhist doctrine acted as a compass, leading to the ultimate equation of their fundamental theory, by pulling the Pure Land or Buddhist paradise near to this world, and establishing it on earth.

This world seemed to be in a disordered and confused state in the eyes of ordinary people. But esoteric Buddhists looked upon it as the manifestation of Buddhahood on earth. For them, all things in nature are manifestations of Buddhahood expressing the truth. As Kukai stated in his book Shoji Jissogi (lit., voices and letters of the real state of all things containing the universal truth), that was because "Each of the five elements -- earth, water, fire, wind, and air -- has its own voice or sound telling the truth. From hell at the bottom to Buddhahood at the top, each of the ten realms of rebirth has a

different language speaking the truth. Each of the six types of defilement, or the six objects of cognition corresponding to the six sense organs, has an individual letter or language in written form expressing the truth. Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana), the supreme Buddha, is the universe itself. ¹¹

As a result, Mandala painting as the visualization of the above mentioned truth also takes the form of an orderly diagram. It shows us the esoteric Buddhist perception in which this world can be the Pure Land. For example, the Mandala of the Diamond World (vajradātsu mandala in Sk.) is said to symbolize the ideal world on earth (Fig. 14). This represents the state of Buddhahood in the form of the images of all Buddhist divinities (sarvatathāgata in Sk.),¹² gathering together at the Palace, called Kongo Manihocho Rokaku (a building decorated with diamonds and peach-shaped gems) on the top of Mt. Sumeru, rising in the center of the world. These divinities are depicted in a bird's eye view, and some portions are depicted as the images are looking up from the lower part. The world structured in this mandala is grand and magnificent, and it would be impossible to compare it with a human insignificance.

It is said that an esoteric Buddhist can become Dainichi Nyorai if he completes the following fivefold meditation, known as Goso jojin (five steps to attain Buddhahood). First he must imagine in his mind to be like a pure full moon, and next he must imagine the image of Mahavairocana in the moon, and then, at the end of the five-step practice, he can attain Mahāvairocana's perfect body. When completing this practice, the Kongo Manihocho Rokaku Palace in the Mandala appears in front of his eyes and the place where he practiced becomes immediately the Palace in the Mandala, and then he becomes one with Mahāvairocana.¹³ Again, it is no exaggeration to say that the above mentioned esoteric Buddhist doctrine is definite evidence of the long standing Japanese sensitivity to the relationship between this world and the other one.

7. The Pure Land in the West

In Tibet and China, and of course in Japan, Gokuraku Jodo (Pure Land of Amitabha; sukhāvati in Sk.) is the most popular among the varied Buddhist paradises. Although the Tusita Heaven of Miroku Bosatsu (Maitreya bodhisattva in Sk.) is also popular, it is not to be compared with that of Amitabha.

According to the Amida-kyo (The Glorious Adornment of Sukhāvati (the Land of Happiness); Sukhāvati-vyūha in Sk.), one of the three major scriptures of Pure Land teaching, the Pure Land of Amida is said to exist somewhere in the West, say, ten thousand billion lands away from this world. Since "one land" here is said to be far distant beyond human imagination, the distance from here to the Pure Land is equivalent to infinity.

The Pure Land has a very artificial environment without changes of the four seasons (or the four seasons occur all at the same time), and there are no disasters and no cognizance of time. In sum the Pure Land has facilities for everyone's satisfaction. In my opinion, the influence of artificially constructed ancient gardens in Central Asia, such as Babylonian hanging gardens, was indispensable in the formation of this type of Pure Land.¹⁴

It is only in China and Japan that the Pure Land of Utmost Pleasure is the best and the last place for all creatures -- in other words, the final resting place for souls set free from the cycle of transmigration. In Tibet, however, where Buddhism was brought directly from India and Pure Land teaching has been preserved more intact to the original doctrines, the Pure Land of Utmost Pleasure is the best place to receive training in order to reach the final destination where one can be free from the cycle of transmigration. Thus, the Pure Land is nothing but a place to stay temporarily.¹⁵ There is probably a great deal of influence of other religious systems, such as Taoism and Japanese native beliefs, in the concept of the Pure Land in China and Japan.

8. Who or What will be reborn in the Pure Land of Utmost Pleasure?

There is a question about what or who will be reborn in the Pure Land. In Japan, it is usually thought that the soul goes to the Pure Land. But this is wrong, because Buddhism is one of the rare religions in the world history which does not acknowledge the existence of a long-lasting soul. Even Indian religion, which sets forth the transmigration (samsāra in Sk.) as an absolute premise, includes the idea of a soul or self (ātman in Sk.) as the subject of the transmigration. On the contrary, the existence of "self" has never been mentioned in Buddhism which adopts the standpoint of "transmigration without ātman."

When asked what was the subject of the transmigration, the Buddhist's answer was often karma (act or deed produced by the action of the mind). However, this sounded too abstract. In comparatively later ages, the Yōgacāra school Buddhists came to think that "store-consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna in Sk.)" or "the sixth consciousness (nonsensuous consciousness; vijñāna in Sk.)" was stored at the bottom of everyone's mind and that it became the subject of transmigration after death, because they regarded all phenomena as manifestations of one's consciousness. This is supported by the fact that Tibetan Buddhists of the dGe lugs pa school, who were assumed to be the authentic successors of the original Indian Buddhism, have advocated "the sixth consciousness" as the subject of transmigration since the days of the Patriarch Tson kha pa (1357-1419).¹⁶

Of course, this matter was debated in Japan. However, it seemed difficult for the Japanese to accept that the subject of the transmigration was karma or the sixth consciousness which was derived from the original Indian Buddhist thought. It was already pointed out that the priest Genshin (942-1017), who played an important role in the formation and popularization of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan, did not discuss the subject of transmigration or what would go to the Pure Land in his book Ojo Yo Shu (The Essential Collection Concerning Birth in Amida's Pure Land). Instead he wrote that the soul was the subject to be reborn in the Pure Land in the religious pledge of a private

organization, Niju-go Sanmai-e.¹⁷ I believe that Genshin's selection was the result of the conflicts between authentic Buddhist thoughts about the Pure Land and the Japanese native view of the soul continuing from the Jomon period.

The view that the soul was the subject of rebirth in the Pure Land was not Genshin's invention. It had already been a topic of long dispute in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. The term "dispute," may sound silly, because there were some descriptions concerning the existence of the soul after death in the Chinese version of the Pure Land Buddhist scripture Muryoju-kyo (Sukhāvati-vyūha sūtra in Sk). These descriptions are found at the end of the sutra, called "The section of three poisons (or three major evil passions) and five kinds of evil deeds."

In this section the Buddha tells Maitreya bodhisattva about the evil deeds of human beings. In the passage explaining the first evil deed, we can find the following description: "Although the continuity of a given life may differ individually in length, long or short, (whichever realm the life should be reborn,) the soul will follow it (the body in the next world)..."

In the passage on the second evil deed, it was said "When a person's life comes to an end, his soul will leave from (the body) and will turn into hell...."

In short, in the above mentioned section on the "three poisons and five evil deeds" of the Muryoju-kyo sutra, the soul is apparently recognized as the subject of transmigration.

Scholars in the past, have had many opinions, including one which stated that the above-mentioned section of "three major evil passions and five kinds of evil deeds" was not included in the original Indian text, but added in China,¹⁸ and another saying that this section was included in the original text.¹⁹ As a result, there is no definite conclusion on this matter as of today. When this text was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in Wei China, Taoism was at the zenith of its popularity. The Taoist's favorite term "nature" is appears frequently in this Buddhist scripture, suggesting that there was a

strong influence from Taoism.²⁰ If so, it is natural to find the Taoistic concept of the soul here as well.

Since Genshin was said to have been a preeminent Buddhist priest of ability, he must have understood the disparity between the view of the soul in the Buddhist sutra's section of "three poisons and five evil deeds" and the original doctrine of the Buddhist teaching. But, at the same time, as a Japanese he probably was sympathetic to the Japanese feeling about the continuous existence of the soul after death. Again, I would like to repeat that the above-mentioned conflict was the reason why Genshin did not formally discuss the subject of transmigration or what would be reborn in the Pure Land in his Ojo Yo Shu. Instead he proclaimed the soul's rebirth in the Pure Land as part of a private Buddhist organization's religious pledge, a pragmatic manifest.

9. From the Invisible Subject of Rebirth in the Pure Land to a Visible Representation

I would like to show you two examples of artwork relating to this subject. The first one is the oldest extant example of Raigo-zu or a painting depicting the descent of Amida and his attendant Buddhist deities to welcome and escort back to his Pure Land paradise a dying devotee who called Amida's name. This painting, known as Kuhon Raigo-zu (Nine Grades of Rebirth in Amitabha's Pure Land), is kept at the Hoo-do (Phoenix Hall) of Byodoin Temple in Uji, Kyoto Prefecture (12th century; Fig. 15). This is the section of Jobon Gesho-zu (the lowest birth of the highest class) depicting the sacred delegation returning to the Pure Land escorting a newly deceased devotee of the lowest birth within the highest class. The second painting kept by Ryujoji Temple in Nara, depicts the same scene and bears the same title, Kuhon Raigo-zu, (13th century; Fig. 16). This is also a scene of Amida's delegation returning to the Pure Land. This picture is one of a pair of paintings depicting the descent and return of Amida and his attendants to the Pure Land for Jobon Chusho, a devotee of the middle birth within the highest class.

In the first painting, owned by Byodoin Temple, Amida is depicted at the top leading his delegation and a golden lotus behind him. This lotus looks as if it were surrounded by a group of Buddhist deities. In the painting of Ryujoji Temple, a golden lotus with several beams of golden light is depicted at the forefront of the sacred delegation, as if it were leading Amida and his attendants. Although the design of a golden lotus is slightly different in these two paintings, the subject of being reborn in the Pure Land is depicted as enclosed within the lotus flower rushing to the Pure Land in the West, surrounded by Amida and his sacred attendants.

The composition of this type of painting, in which the subject of rebirth in the Pure Land is enclosed in a lotus, was derived from the following description of the rebirth of the lowest grades of the highest class in Kuhon Raigo (nine grades of rebirth in the Pure Land) section in the Kan Muryoju-kyo (The Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra):

...Amida Nyorai (Amitabha) and Seishi Bosatsu (Mahāsthama-prapta) are coming down to welcome a devotee on his death bed... At this moment you should imagine in meditation that you are sitting on a golden lotus.

The lotus will then fold its petals enclosing you inside. It will follow to Amida to the Pure Land, and then you will be reborn on the lotus in a pond decorated with seven kinds of jewels.

The Byodoin painting adheres closely to the above mentioned description. The Ryujoji painting depicts the rebirth of the middle grade of the highest class in the Pure Land. This scene is based on the following account in the Kanmuryoju-kyo (The Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra):

...Amida Nyorai and Seishi Bosatsu are coming down to welcome a devotee on his death bed...They say "We have just arrived here to welcome you to the Pure Land."...At the moment when the devotee thought he was sitting on the golden lotus and praising the Buddhas and Buddhist

divinities with his hands clasped in prayer, he can be reborn on the lotus in the pond decorated with seven kinds of jewels in the Pure Land.

According to the above description, the devotee should be sitting on flowering golden lotus. But in the painting of Ryujoji Temple, the devotee is inside of the closed lotus flower moving upward to the Pure Land.

There are a few extant examples of this type of painting depicting Amida's return trip to the Pure Land. What follows is my hypothesis. As seen in the above two examples, it was very convenient to hide the subject of rebirth in the Pure Land in the lotus. If it were a soul, the soul is invisible. The soul is also shapeless. As a result, the painters probably chose to depict only a lotus as the container for the soul on its way to the Pure Land.

As time went on, this problem seems to have been neglected, and in the Nanbokucho period (1336-1392), the devotee to be reborn in the Pure Land was depicted in the form of a human being as seen in the painting in the Kosetsu Museum in Hyogo Prefecture (Fig. 17). This was a time when a revolutionary incident took place in Japan and the traditional standard of value declined. This type of turbulence may have forced the Japanese to change their view on death and led to the creation of a new pragmatic view on death as seen here in the depiction of the dead in the form of a human being.

10. The Two Types of Raigo-zu (Descent of Buddhist Deities)

The Raigo-zu paintings, which developed under the heavy influence of Genshin's vision, are divided into the following two groups. One is popularly called the Shomen-muki Raigo-zu (Descent of Amida and his heavenly host in a frontal view), in which all the deities are depicted in a frontal view and symmetrically placed centering around the full face image of Amida. The other is called the Naname Raigo-zu (Diagonal Procession of Amida and his heavenly retinue), in which the deities are depicted in profile and proceeding down diagonally from the Pure Land

to a dying devotee on earth. Historically speaking, the former appeared first, and then the latter followed it.

The best example of the former type, is the Amida Shojū Raigo-zu (Descent of Amida and his heavenly host) presently kept by Koyasan, Wakayama Prefecture (12th century; Fig. 18). It is said that this work was originally kept at Yokawa Anrakudani on Mt. Hiei, Shiga Prefecture. This painting was said to have been saved from the destructive fire set by Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), and transferred to Mt. Koya. It depicts the following heavenly deities: Amida and his two attendants, Kannon Bosatsu and Seishi Bosatsu, two monks (Jizo Bosatsu (Ksitigrabha) and the Indian monk Ryuju (Nāgarjuna)) -- these five figures are also popularly called "Amida quintets", and there are also twenty-five bodhisattvas playing music and holding offerings. This design is said to have been composed by arranging the sketches of the actual statues of an Amida quintets and twenty-five bodhisattvas, which are installed in the Jogyodo hall of Enryakuji temple on the top of Mt. Hiei.

It is notable that there are depictions of red-colored maple leaves and other natural objects suggestive of an autumn landscape on both of the lower sides of the delegation of heavenly figures on this painting (Fig. 19). In the Raigo-zu painting of the Hoodo Hall of Byodoin Temple, landscape fills much of the space, while the main subject matter -- the figures of descending deities -- look comparatively small. In contrast, the depiction of landscape and natural objects is of secondary, not primary importance in the Koyasan Amida Shojū Raigo-zu. Here the descending figures of Amida and attendants are painted comparatively large in scale with a symphonic dynamism. In general, landscape and natural objects were omitted in Raigo-zu paintings with full face images shown in a front view. Why was there this difference in the depiction of the same theme of the descent of Amida? This was because of the changing temperature of people's enthusiasm in the Buddhist faith along with the change of times. In the period when the latter days of the Buddhist law were said to be coming, people stood in fear and awe of the destiny of the Buddhist law, as if the earth were crumbling beneath their feet. Consequently, they were probably too

busy calling for deliverance to examine the artistic and elegant quality of Raigo-zu paintings.

The origin of Raigo-zu paintings with diagonal compositions can be traced back to one of the nine sections in the Kuhon Raigo-zu (Nine Grades of Rebirth in Amida's Pure Land), based upon the description in the Kan Muryoju-kyo (The Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra). In this type of painting, a heavenly delegation is coming down diagonally juxtaposed against a landscape. At the end of the Heian period (12th century), a type of Raigo-zu with a seated Amida triad was established. This was followed by Raigo-zu with the Amida triad shown standing. These types of paintings became the mainstream in the Kamakura period (1185-1333), replacing the Raigo-zu with the full face images in a frontal view.

As examples of Raigo-zu with a seated Amida triad descending diagonally, I would like to discuss the following two paintings: Amida Sanzon Raigo-zu (Descent of Amida Triad) kept by Shinrensha in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, and Amida Shoju Raigo-zu (Descent of Amida and His Heavenly Host) owned by Hase-dera temple in Nara. Landscape is not included in these paintings, which date to the Heian period. However, a simply depicted landscape can be found in the background of the recently discovered Amida Shoju Raigo-zu (Descent of Amida and His Heavenly Host) of Jogan'in temple in Shiga Prefecture. In addition, a dying devotee's small cottage is also depicted in this painting. This fact reveals that Raigo-zu with a descending delegation of deities within a landscape began to be depicted in the late Heian period and became the mainstream in the Kamakura period.

As I mentioned before, the type of Raigo-zu painting with a diagonal descent reached its zenith in the Kamakura period, when a great quantity were produced. But why did this type of Raigo-zu painting supersede the one with full face images of deities in a frontal view? The reason lies in the following difference between them: Raigo-zu with full face images in a frontal view were basically produced as visual aids to promote Buddhist meditation. In contrast, Raigo-zu with diagonal depictions aimed to show the details of the descending Amida and his

attendants -- what they were, how they came down, where or for whom -- as did narrative literature. The above difference, of course, is related to the difference in their audiences. The former were probably painted for professionals or Buddhist monks, and the latter for amateurs or ordinary people. My assumption is in accord with the fact that the latter increased in number when Pure Land Buddhism was popularized throughout Japan.

11. Raigo-zu with Diagonal Compositions and the Japanization of Pure Land Buddhism

As part of the background of the painting, landscapes, sometimes including a dying Buddhist devotee's small cottage, are usually included in Raigo-zu depicting Amida and his delegation of Buddhist deities descending diagonally. This type of composition may have been designed to enhance the realistic effect for viewers.

In addition, the depiction of Amida's delegation descending down diagonally shows effectively the speediness of the descent from the Pure Land ten thousand billion lands away from earth. At the moment when a dying devotee is calling Amida's name, Amida is coming down to escort him back to the Pure Land, in spite of the nearly infinite distance between the Pure Land and this world. There are some paintings in which the rapidity of Amida's descent was further emphasized called Haya Raigo (quick descent). It was natural that this type of painting became popular when Pure Land Buddhism was at its zenith in the Kamakura period.

The best example of this type is the masterpiece (13th century; Fig. 20) kept by Chion'in temple, Kyoto, which was established by the priest Honen (1133-1212), the founder of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. This painting is exquisite: Most part of the landscape looks like an evening in spring. Amida and his attendants are coming down from the Pure Land to welcome a devotee reciting the name of Amida in a small cottage at the lower right corner of the painting. In the left half of the painting cherry blossoms are depicted blooming on the bright green

mountainside, against which Amida's heavenly delegation rapidly descends amid rising clouds. A number of diminutive Buddhist figures, which are incarnations of the Buddha, are dancing over the roof of the devotee's cottage.

I would like to point out that cherry blossoms became a leitmotif in this type of painting. Usually the lotus is the flower depicted with Amida and other Buddhist images. In place of the lotus, the painter probably chose to depict cherry blossoms because they symbolized the beauty of the Heian court and Japan. Death under cherry blossoms -- this is the ultimate way to die according to Japanese aesthetics. This is in common with the world of the monk poet Saigyō (1118-1290), who was the author of the following waka poem: "I wish to die under a blossoming cherry tree on the night of the full moon in spring."

However, this is not an entirely spring landscape. When examining the painting in detail, I found all four seasons depicted on the mountain on the left side. From the bottom to the top, are the changing landscapes of spring, summer, autumn and winter, respectively. According to one scholar, this painting depicts the landscape of the Pure Land where the four seasons existed at the same time, as described in the Pure Land Buddhist scriptures. At the moment when Amida descended, this world changed into the Pure Land. Whether this opinion is right or wrong, it was amazing to create an aesthetic realm where the four seasons existed at the same time.

Although the numbers of heavenly figures differ, most of paintings of this type are substantially the same. It is possible to say that the Japanese came to create the Raigo-zu in accordance with Japanese aesthetic sensibilities. Or perhaps the Japanese religious consciousness accorded with aesthetic sensibilities at that time when creating Raigo-zu of this type. This can be called the Japanization of Raigo-zu painting.

The Japanization of Pure Land Buddhism took place simultaneously with the creation of Raigo-zu paintings in Japanese style. The initial signs can be found in the wall paintings of the Hoodo of Byodoin Temple and the Amidado hall of Fukkiji Temple in the late Heian period, and this

trend becomes apparent in the Kamakura period. Examples of this kind are the Pure Land paintings of Kaijusenji and Seiryoji temples in Kyoto. The perfectly symmetrical composition of the early Heian period almost disappears in the Kamakura period. The base of the jeweled tower is no longer in the shape of a rectangle, and the jeweled pondside became softly curved. These depictions became closer in style to the Heian period court nobles residences depicted in narrative picture scrolls.

Although the Japanese Raigo-zu lost its brilliant, visionary and mysterious otherworldly appearance, the reality of life in the painting became increased. As a result, the Pure Land seemed to stop being a world strictly separated from this world.

12. Conclusion: The Pure Land in the Reality of This World

Finally let me introduce the Yamagoshi Amida (Amida coming over the mountain), a new type of Raigo-zu painting which was a product of the above mentioned trends. There are two examples of this type: one is owned by Zenrinji Temple in Kyoto (13th century; Fig. 21) and another is owned by Konkai Komyoji Temple, Kyoto (13th century; Fig. 22). Both are regarded as masterpieces. The Zenrinji Amida was based upon the esoteric Buddhist concept of becoming a buddha immediately with one's body and the doctrine of the Shingi Branch of the Shingon sect, founded by the priest Kakuban (1095-1143). The Konkai Komyoji Amida was depicted according to Pure Land Buddhist teachings. There are slight differences in the details of these two paintings, but both depict the image of Amida from the waist up appearing over a mountain. This composition gave us the impression that Amida appears all of a sudden. The Konkai Komyoji Amida still remains fragments of a sets of five color threads attached to his hands. Dying devotees such as Fujiwara no Michinaga (966-1027) held onto the other end of these threads as they departed for the Pure Land led by Amida.

In addition, the Konkai Komyoji painting was a part of three-fold screen with designs of hell and the Pure Land. This folding screen was often placed at the bedside of a dying devotee. Grasping the ends of

(Fig. 23)

the five-color threads stretching down from the hands of Amida depicted on the screen, the devotee could see the scenes of hell and the Pure Land on the screen. This type of dramatic presentation at the deathbed was always performed as realistically as possible. A screen of Rokudo Rinne-zu (The Six Realms of Rebirth) was added later to the Koyasan Amida Shojū Raigo-zu in order to form a set of paintings to be used at the bedsides of dying devotees.

I would like to add here that there is probably a close relationship between the birth of the new concept of hell which was found in the reality of this world and the creation of this new type of Raigo-zu painting.

The creation of new types of Raigo-zu paintings came to an end with the Konkai Komyoji Amida as the last work. Thereafter, no new types of paintings in this category appeared. This fact indicates that the spirit of the age changed and moved on to the next stage.

There is no doubt that the concept of the Pure Land on earth came on stage at the time when Raigo-zu and other type of paintings depicting the Pure Land began to express the reality of life. Actually, the concepts of hell and paradise on earth became popular all over Japan during the periods from the Late Kamakura to the Nanbokucho (14th century). This was perhaps a religion unique to Japan, in which Pure Land Buddhism, esoteric Buddhism, and Shinto were amalgamated.

There are a number of paintings representing the above concepts. For example, the Kasuga Mandala (Kasuga Shrine Mandala; kept by Noman'in Temple, Nara) affirming the existence of Kannon's paradise on Mt. Kasuga, Nara, and the Kumano Nachi Yogo-zu (kept by Dano Horinji temple, Kyoto; Fig. 24) affirming the existence of Amida's Pure Land in Kumano, Wakayama Prefecture. This type of painting features in common with the Miya Mandala or the Mandala paintings of Shinto shrines. As a result, the Japanese belief or religion was deeply involved in this matter from that period on. Many sacred places in Japan with both hell and the Pure Land at one place became popular.

As a result, the distance between the reality of this world and the Pure Land rapidly diminished, and the other world, which was thought to

be located far away in an infinite distance from this world, became closer to this world. In particular, the other world was thought to be located somewhere within this world, especially within nature. This concept resembles the Jomon concept of the relationship between death and life. Therefore, as the Japanese traditional view of the next world, this concept has survived until the days of high economic growth in the 1960's.

Notes:

- 1 Takeshi Umehara & Makoto Watanabe, Jomon no Shinpi (The Mysteries of Jomon), Ningen no Bijutsu (Human Art) Vol. 1, Tokyo: Gakushu Kenkyu-sha, 1989, p.75
- 2 Taryo Obayashi, Sosei no Kigen (The Origin of Burial Customs), Kadokawa Shoten, 1979, p. 199
- 3 Mitsuji Fukunaga, Dokyo to Nihon Bunka (Taoism and Japanese Culture), Jinbun Shoin, 1982, p. 31
- 4 Toji Kamata, "Fukuzatsu Kaikina Shinwa no Kamigami (Complicated and Mysterious Deities in Mythology)," Nihon no Kami (The Japanese Deities), Heibon-sha, 1990, p. 42
- 5 Koichi Arakawa, Kodai Nihonjin no Uchukan (Ancient Japanese Outlook on the Universe), Kaimei-sha, 1981, p. 120
- 6 Ibid, p. 118
- 7 Kazu Uehara, Bukkyo no Genwaku (The Fascination of Buddhism), Ningen no Bijutsu (Human Art) Vol. 3, Gakushu Kenkyu-sha, 1989, pp. 59--61
- 8 Akira Sadakata, Sumisen to Gokuraku (Mt. Shumeru and Paradise), Kodan-sha, 1973, p.29
- 9 Yoshio Kawahara, Jodo-zu (Paintings of the Pure Land), Shibundo, 1989, pp. 21-22
- 10 Ibid, pp. 26-28 and 39-40
- 11 Akira Masaki, Kukai no Sekai (The World of Kukai), Kosei Shuppan-sha, 1991, pp. 66-68
- 12 Shinichi Tsuda, Han Mikkyogaku (Anti-Esoteric Buddhist Studies), Riburopoto, 1987, pp. 175-176
- 13 Akira Masaki, Kukai no Sekai (The World of Kukai), Kosei Shuppan-sha, 1991, pp. 90-92 and 139-157
- 14 Akira Masaki, "Jodo Henyo (Transformation of the Pure Land)," Tetsuo Yamaori ed., Koza Bukkyo no Juyo to Henyo: Nippon (The Acceptance and Transformation of Buddhism in Japan), Kosei Shuppan-sha, 1991, pp. 154-158

- 15 Kaiun Shiratate(Tshul Khrims skal bzan Khang dkar), Chibetto no Jodo Shiso (Pure Land Thought in Tibet), Kodan-sha, 1993
- 16 Tshul khrims skal bzan Khang dkar and Nobuchiyo Kotani, "Chibetto no Jodo Shiso (Pure Land Teaching in Tibet)," Jodo Bukkyo no Shiso (Pure Land Buddhism), Vol. 3, Kodan-sha, 1993, p. 230 and other pages.
- 17 Tetsuo Yamaori, "Shi no tame no Dantai Keisei (The Formation of Organizations for Death)," Nihon Shukyo Bunka no Kozo to Sokei (The Structure and the Original Form of Religious Culture in Japan), University of Tokyo Press, 1980
- 18 Eki Yamaguchi, Ken Sakurai and Mikisaburo Mori co-trsl., "Muryoju-kyo (Sukhavati-vyuha)," Jodo Sanbukyo (The Three Scriptures of Pure Land Buddhism) in Daijo Butten (Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures) Vol. 6, Chuo Koron-sha, 1976, p. 302 (cc: Mr. Sakurai's essay)
- 19 Hajime Nakamura, Kyosei Hayashima, Kazuyoshi Kino co-trsl. with notes, Jodo Sanbukyo (The Three Scriptures of Pure Land Buddhism) Vol. 1, Iwanami Shoten, 1990, p. 358
- 20 Eki Yamaguchi, Ken Sakurai and Mikisaburo Mori co-trsl., "Muryoju-kyo (Sukhavati-vyuha)," Jodo Sanbukyo (The Three Scriptures of Pure Land Buddhism) in Daijo Butten (Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures) Vol. 6, Chuo Koron-sha, 1976, p. 94

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