

THE PRESENCE OF THE BUDDHA:
TRANSMISSION OF SACRED AUTHORITY AND THE FUNCTION OF
ORNAMENT IN SEIRYŌJI'S LIVING ICON

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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In 985, a Japanese monk named Chōnen commissioned a statue of Śākyamuni Buddha during a pilgrimage to China, which was later enshrined in the temple Seiryōji near Kyoto, Japan. The statue was lavishly ornamented both on its exterior and interior and came to be considered a “living icon” modeled after the legendary first portrait of the historical Buddha made under the patronage of the Indian king Udāyana. Through a holistic examination of historical context, textual evidence, and the diverse forms of ritual adornment (*shōgon* 莊嚴), I argue that the Seiryōji statue was designed to function as a field for the perpetual generation of karmic merit (*fukuden* 福田). This statue, through the careful selection of inserted objects and their resonance with its external appearance, embodies the multiplicity of the “Buddha body” as the “living” body of the historical Śākyamuni and the eternally present Buddha of the *Lotus Sutra*.

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For my parents
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The popular literature of East Asian Buddhism abounds with tales of miraculous images and sacred icons capable of performing magical feats that reflect their abilities to bestow salvific and worldly rewards on those who encounter or worship them. Images fly, bleed, sweat and cry – acting within the world of their own agency and will. These images exist in the popular imagination as more than immobile statues and paintings, and are often regarded as “alive,” or as the “true forms” of Buddhist saints and deities, not infrequently possessing their own unique sacred biographies. As they aged and in many cases traveled to distant regions of the continent, their histories grew longer and their stories came to resemble epic sagas. In turn, the spread of these stories and the growing celebrity of auspicious icons lead to the desire for access to and control of their images – ideally the original but in many cases its copy.

Unlike their Christian counterparts, the Buddhist practice of reproducing numerous copies of an auspicious icon often resulted in a “conceptual ambiguity,” in which the practical and ontological distinctions between the original prototype and its copy became blurred.¹ Variations in iconography and style may cause modern scholars to question the degree to which a reproduction replicates the qualities of its prototype, in turn challenging the authority of the copy to partake in the sacred presence of the original. Even today, however, the distinction in efficacy or so-called authenticity between a copied image and its prototype is a question of little concern among religious

¹ Wu Hung, “Rethinking Liu Sahe: The Creation of a Buddhist Saint and the Invention of a ‘Miraculous Image,’” *Orientalism* Vol. 27, No. 10 (1996), 39.

practitioners.² As such, the reproduction of religious icons poses a number of interpretive challenges from religious and aesthetic perspectives.

Concerns over the sacred efficacy of images has led to complex systems of iconography and iconometry that seek to establish sacred presence within replicated images as well as to regulate a shared visual culture of identifiable types. Within this framework lies a tension between likeness and differentiation, conformity and (from a modern perspective) artistic expression. Even when the religious goal is identical replication, expressive ideals of aesthetic individuality have contributed to the creation of exceptionally auspicious, often exquisite works of religious art. As Gilbert Dagron argues in particular reference to Christian art, the icon evokes not simply the imagination of the individual sculptor or painter, but the collective imagination of a religious society that “recognizes itself in its holy images and possesses the codes for them.”³

However, if as art historian Nagaoka Ryūsaku describes, the creation of Buddhist images can be understood as physical manifestations of personal prayer, the creator’s voice should remain inextricable from the icon’s meaning, however obscured by the context or location of the object.⁴ Indeed the significance of religious and non-religious contexts and locations has recently become a renewed concern for scholars of Buddhist art. Works of Buddhist sculpture placed in the context of museums are presented as

² On a visit to the temple Saidaiji 西大寺 in summer of 2013, although the author and a friend hoped to see the famous thirteenth century principle icon of the Aizendō 愛染堂, Aizen-Myōō 愛染明王, the priest proudly directed us to what was clearly a much later copy. When asked where the *real icon* was, he informed us that it was not currently on display, concealed in a small shrine behind the later copy. Showing little sympathy for the 800 year old original, he then matter-of-factly insisted that we weren’t missing much, because the copy was the exact same.

³ Gilbert Dagron, “Holy Images and Likeness,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 45 (1991), 25.

⁴ Nagaoka Ryūsaku, *Nihon no butsuzō: Asuka, Hakuhō, Tenpyō no inori to bi* (Tokyo: Chūkō Shinshō, 1988), 5.

representative works of a particular artist or as examples of the aesthetic sensibilities of a time period and culture. In the ritual context of a Buddhist temple or monastery, where Buddhist images are a powerful, magical presence, ornamented with lavish adornments, an icon is not simply a referent to an invisible, abstract divinity, but is venerated for its physical resemblance to and embodiment of the deity itself. It is this dual collective-individual imagination that serves to infuse these objects with both religious and aesthetic power, and which may lend to a more holistic interpretation of individual sacred images as their histories extend into modern times. In turn, it also provides a nuanced perspective on the phenomenon of copying cult icons, the identities of which may be influenced by different parties that view the image through the lens of their own ideologically driven interests.

As already suggested, of particular concern to the study of these replicated icons is the ontological relation of the copy to its prototype. In this regard, there are even cases in which a copy may equal or transcend the importance of its model. A tenth century sculpture of the Buddha Śākyamuni housed in the temple of Seiryōji 清涼寺 on the western outskirts of Kyoto (MAP 1) is a unique example of just such a replicated icon that surpassed its model and became the prototype for a new lineage of auspicious icons (FIG. 1). Historically, the Seiryōji icon is itself only one among a long line of copies, and yet by the Kamakura 鎌倉 Period (1185-1333) the icon in the popular imagination of the time had come to be viewed as the first image made of the historical Buddha. The Seiryōji image continued well into the pre-modern period to be the prime object for replications that possessed varying degrees of resemblance, including both sculpted and painted icons. In modern times, the icon has become a subject of further scholarly interest



Figure 1. Zhang Yanjiao and Zhang Yanxi. *Standing Shaka* (“Seiryōji Shaka”). Wood with traces of polychromy. Northern Song, 985. 160 cm. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (From *Jingoji to Rakusei Rakuhoku no koji*, 28)

following the discovery in 1954 of various deposits concealed within the statue.⁵ While the hidden deposits most likely remained unknown prior to their recent investigation, their often supposed function of enlivening or enhancing the sacred power of the statue seems to have been equally validated by the recognition among medieval Japanese of the statue as a *shōjin Shaka* 生身釈迦, a “living image” of the Buddha Śākyamuni.⁶

By examining the statue’s relation to its auspicious prototypes and the religious function of the dedicatory objects included within it, the following study of the Seiryōji Shaka will explore how its identity as a “living image” was constructed. Historical records suggest that the statue was copied after a Chinese image that was believed to have been modeled on the legendary first Buddha image made during the lifetime of the historical Buddha under the patronage of the Indian king Udāyana (J: Udennō; C: Youtianwang 優填王). While the icon’s introduction to Japan initiated a series of domestic copies, it remains the only extant sculpture of a Chinese Udāyana-type from the tenth century, and even came to be regarded as the original Udāyana image. This alone suggests the statue’s importance as a rare Chinese example of a unique aesthetic lineage of images that developed outside of the mainstream traditions of East Asian Buddhist art.

According to legend, because the Udāyana image was both the first image made of the Buddha and the only image made in the direct presence of the Buddha, it was

⁵ While many Japanese and western scholars believe the statue’s contents remained unknown prior to the 1954 discovery, Helmut Brinker has argued that it is highly likely either that the statue’s contents were investigated sometime in the early thirteenth century, or that a list of objects included had been preserved outside of the statue. See Helmut Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 41-42. For a preliminary study of the 1954 find, see Gregory Henderson and Leon Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryōji: New Finds and New Theory,” *Artibus Asiae* 19, no. 1 (1956), 9-15.

⁶ *Shōjin* means literally “living body,” but is often translated as “living image” in the context of Buddhist icons. In this study, the terms are used interchangeably.

regarded as the most authentic portrait of his divine figure. It was also much more than an inanimate statue. It was an object that took on the attributes of the Buddha's body, that could interact with its human patron and worshipper, and that could function as a conduit for the preservation of the Buddhist law.⁷ Images within the Udāyana tradition, therefore, became intrinsically tied to the idea of a "living image," relying on the concept of likeness and a direct visual connection to the historical Buddha to infuse the image with numinous power and sacred authority.

That the Seiryōji version of the Udāyana statue was intended to function as a living image has been further supported by the cache of objects and texts deposited within the icon's body by the community of Chinese and Japanese monastics under the principle patronage of the Japanese pilgrim-monk Chōnen 齋然 (938-1016). Scholars of Buddhism and Buddhist art have argued that, among other methods of image consecration, the insertion of sacred texts, relics and other dedicatory items known in Japanese as *zōnai nōnyūhin* 像内納入品 was understood to enliven the icon with the embodied presence of the deity and to establish karmic bonds between the donors and the statue.⁸ Most recent considerations of the Seiryōji image and its interior adornment have also interpreted the interred objects like other cases of *zōnai nōnyūhin* as functioning to increase the icon's sacred power through ritually animating the statue.⁹ The sheer variety of objects hidden inside of the Seiryōji statue, however, lends to more multivalent

⁷ Concerning the Udāyana story and its historical development, see Martha L Carter, *The Mystery of the Udāyana Buddha* (Naples: Istituto Universitrio Orientale, 1990).

⁸ Richard Goepper, "Icon and Ritual in Japanese Buddhism," in *Enlightenment Embodied: The Art of the Japanese Buddhist Sculptor (7th-14th Centuries)*, ed. Reiko Tomii et al. (New York: Japan Society, Inc., 1997), 73-77.

⁹ See, for example, recent works by Helmut Brinker: *Secrets of the Sacred* and "Anointing with Eyes, Raiment and Relics," *Impressions* 34 (2013): 151-169.

readings of the image's *zōnai nōnyūhin*. Amidst handwritten and printed texts are a variety of ritual objects, jewels, images, and items of direct personal connection to Chōnen and other donors. Fortunately as well, documents concealed within the statue have provided us with the names or titles of particular donors both Chinese and Japanese.

And yet, what were the underlying motivations for such a diversity of objects? Was there perhaps a more sophisticated ritual logic that was utilized in the choice of objects and the manner in which they were deposited? How did these internalized objects relate to the exterior image of the statue as a manifestation of the original Udāyana image? Certainly, what has largely been lacking in scholarship on the Seiryōji icon is a convincing explanation of the sheer variety of objects deposited inside of the statue. This thesis will seek to establish a holistic approach to the icon that reevaluates the connection between the Seiryōji image, its cache, and its patron, within the context of what will be argued was the principle ritual function of the image – to serve as a vehicle for the generation and distribution of karmic merit. In doing so, the icon's *zōnai nōnyūhin* will not only be considered as gift offerings to the Buddha, but also as a specific form of Buddhist ornamentation or ritual adornment called *shōgon* (C: *zhuangyan* 莊嚴). The use of *shōgon* as a religious-aesthetic concept complements the objects' nature as offerings and functions to both preserve and enhance the iconic identity of the copied icon while establishing a private identity and personal connection to the principle patron and donors. Through the utilization of *shōgon* as a ritualistic and artistic device, the Seiryōji icon maintains its outward visual connection to the Udāyana lineage, while enhancing its identity as a living Shaka and retaining physical traces of its patron's unique salvific

agenda. Thus, the religious ideas of *shōgon* should be considered as a central motivating factor behind the array of objects used to adorn the icon.

Because a central concern of this study is the construction of identity in religious images, the first half will focus on the historical production of identity. Chapter two will provide an overview of current scholarship on the history of the Seiryōji Shaka and its patron, Chōnen, with specific focus on the contested histories of the statue's origins and its relation to the Udāyana lineage. As the textual analysis of two critical documents will demonstrate, both the record of Chōnen's pilgrimage recorded by the Chinese monk Jianduan 鑿端 (fl. late tenth-early eleventh century) and a record of the statue's origins written by Chōnen's disciple Jōsan 盛算 (923-1015) reveal the conflicting nature of the icon's identity from the time of its creation.

While the second chapter briefly considers the relation of Chōnen's image to influential Chinese traditions of miraculous icons, chapter three will explore the impetus for commissioning such as statue and the desire for bringing a "living image" of the historical Buddha to Japan by considering other famous "living images" that were widely known in Japan prior to Chōnen's pilgrimage. In the late tenth century, a cult of replicated icons had already existed in Japan around such now-lost icons as the seventh century seated Shaka from Daianji (hereafter "Daianji Shaka" 大安寺釈迦) and the standing Yakushi (S: Bhaisajyaguru; C: Yaoshi 藥師) image made by the monk Saichō 最澄 (767-822).¹⁰ An iconographical analysis of the Seiryōji Shaka in relation to what is known of the Daianji Shaka and Saichō Yakushi will reveal considerable visual and

¹⁰ The names of Buddhist deities are given in Japanese throughout this study. Exceptions include the use of "Śākyamuni" to refer to the historical Buddha and other Sanskrit names when used to refer to deities in the abstract.

conceptual overlap. Like the Seiryōji image, both statues shared close ties to the Udāyana legend and offer insights into the understanding of “living images” during the time that Chōnen commissioned the creation of the Seiryōji Shaka.

Having established the background of the Seiryōji Shaka’s early history and its relation to other known “living images,” the second half of this study will offer a re-examination of the the Seiryōji icon’s now famous deposits, with a particular focus on the variety of objects and their relations to other known examples of *zōnai nōnyūhin*. Chapter four will explore this relationship by considering the objects’ connections to relics and their nature as gifts to the Buddha. This will suggest a more nuanced interpretation of the ‘animating’ potential often attributed to the items, and will illustrate that the primary motivation for both creating the image and inserting objects was the ambition to establish a powerful field for the generation of merit that would stretch beyond the community of Chinese and Japanese monks immediately involved with the image’s production.

Chapter five will further this argument by illustrating how the principles of *shōgon* were applied to both the external and internal ornamentation of the image in order to provide a ritual mechanism for this production and distribution of merit. In response to the recent work of art historian Kumagai Takafumi, this chapter will at the same time argue for a revised approach to and emphasis on the role of *shōgon* as a religious and aesthetic concept unique to Buddhism and of central importance to the interpretation of Buddhist icons.¹¹ This approach to *shōgon* will reveal how both the invisible interior adornment and the visible exterior adornment of the Seiryōji icon were utilized to manifest the spiritual authority and identity of the icon as a “living image” of the

¹¹ Kumagai Takafumi, “Shōgon kenkyū no tame no oboegaki: shisō to zōkei no sōkan o meguru kenkyūshi oyobi tenbō,” in *Bukkyō Daigaku Sōgō Kenkyūjo kiyō* 20 (2013) 49-64.

historical Buddha while enhancing the ability of the image to produce a perpetual field of merit. In doing so, it will emphasize the multiple-layering of identity on and within the image that lent to the image's conflation with not only the original Udāyana image, but with the Buddha himself.



Map 1. Location of Seiryō-ji. Saga, Kyoto. (From Google Maps)

CHAPTER II

ORIGINS OF THE SEIRYŌJI SHAKA

Introduction

Within major religious traditions, the impartation of identity and divine status to sacred images does not rely solely on the moment of creation. Considering that relatively few worshippers are privy to the initial ritual consecration and that even fewer would be aware of the complex doctrinal considerations and metaphysical significance of these sacraments in their own right, the ultimate source of an image's divine status often lies in the popular myths and stories that circulate among the community of worshippers.¹² One cannot, however, discount the initial moment of creation entirely. Certainly, as religious historian Richard Davis has described, religious icons can be understood as social entities, having several "lives" that are constructed through their complex interactions with different religious and secular communities.¹³ The intentions of the craftsman and patron, who together establish in their work a particular sacred identity, may eventually be lost or altered as time passes or as the icon travels into regions unimagined at the time of its creation.

The complex and contested history of the auspicious sandalwood image of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni enshrined in the Shaka Hall (Shakadō 釈迦堂) (FIG. 2) of Seiryōji is certainly a prime example of Davis's claim, possessing a provenance that has been obscured by both popular legend and willful fabrication. In the case of the Seiryōji image, however, the particular identity of the statue as the "living body" of Śākyamuni

¹² Robert Sharf, "Prolegomenon to the Study of Japanese Buddhist Icons," in *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 14.

¹³ Richard Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3-13.

established during the icon's initial consecration under its principle patron Chōnen (FIG. 3) came to be further validated and amplified following the icon's importation to Japan. Although the image itself was a copy made after what was likely a Chinese prototype housed in the imperial capital of Song 宋 China at Kaifeng 開封 in 985, apocryphal accounts of the statue's unique status as an image "transmitted across three countries" (*sangoku denrai* 三国伝来) and as a true "living body" of the historical Buddha found wide reception in the popular imagination of medieval Japanese.¹⁴ The image came to be viewed as not only the original Buddha image of ancient Indian provenance, but as an image that was to the fullest extent alive and capable of acting in the world of its own agency.



Figure 2. View of *Shakadō* (Shaka Hall). Edo Period, reconstructed in 1602. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (Photography by the author)

¹⁴ The appellation "Sangoku denrai," meaning "transmitted (*denrai*) across three countries (*sangoku*)" refers to the popular belief that the statue originated in India and was later brought to China and Japan. The statue's nickname itself, therefore, implies that the statue is the original first image made under the patronage of King Udāyana.



Figure 3. Statue of Chōnen outside Shaka Hall. Bronze. Seiryōji, Kyoto.
(Photography by the author).

This popular narrative of the image, a narrative still relayed to visitors of Seiryōji today,¹⁵ came to be supported by two sources, Taira Yasuyori's 平康頼 (fl. 1177-1220) late twelfth century collection of *setsuwa* 説話 tale literature, the *Collection of Treasures* (*Hōbutsushū* 宝物集), and a sixteenth century illustrated scroll painted by Kanō Motonobu 狩野元信 (1476-1559) that recounts the history of Seiryōji, the *Origin Tale of the Shaka Hall* (*Shakadō engi* 釈迦堂縁起). While the former introduced the idea that the priest Chōnen himself switched the original image and its copy prior to his return

¹⁵ Sarah J. Horton, *Living Buddhist Statues in Japan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 30.

departure for Japan, the latter embellishes the story even further, claiming that the statue secretly changed places with its prototype the night before Chōnen’s departure, acting of its own agency and evincing its own desire to cross the sea to Japan (FIG. 4).¹⁶ These embellishments and fabrications of the statue’s history reflect an undeniable concern for the statue’s potentially derivative status as a copy, and an anxiety over the very nature of the relationship between the copy and the sacred prototype. The circumstances that led to the established identity of the Seiryōji icon as a “living Shaka,” however, can be traced further to documentary and material evidence produced at the time of Chōnen’s pilgrimage to China, which are not unconnected to the icon’s own unique historical position as a fulcrum between the separate yet interconnected social, artistic, and religious traditions of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism – both of which drew from a transcontinental narrative concerning the eastward spread of not only Buddhism, but the Buddha himself.

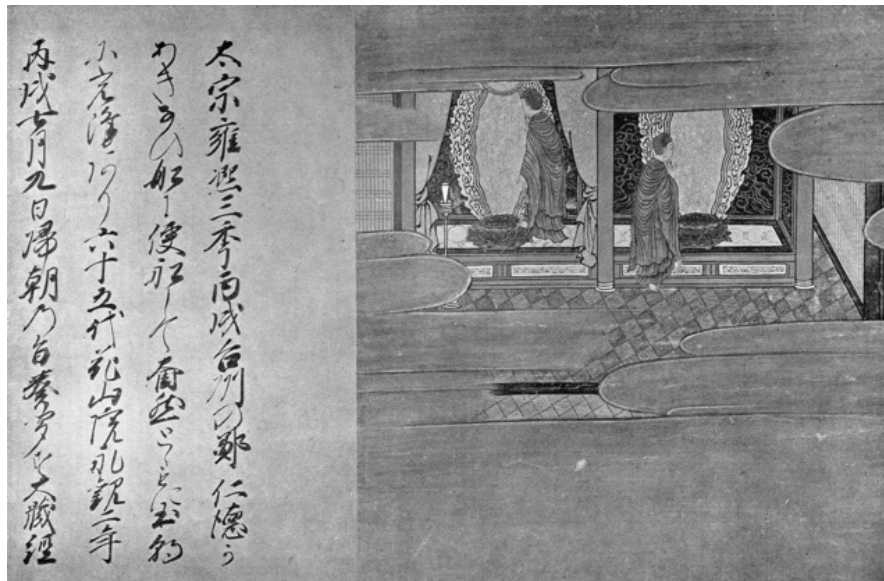


Figure 4. Seiryōji Shaka magically switching places with its auspicious prototype. Kanō Motonobu. *Origin of the Shaka Hall*. Muromachi Period, 1515. Handscroll set of 6, ink and color on paper. 34.8 x 1589 cm. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (From *Seiryōji engi*)

¹⁶ Horton, *Living Buddhist Statues*, 28.

This chapter will examine the documentary evidence of the statue's origins produced during the course of Chōnen's travels in Song China. At issue are two primary documents, the authenticity and contradictory nature of which has been a major focus of recent scholarship on Chōnen and the Seiryōji statue.¹⁷ As the only extant records from the time that fully document Chōnen's travels, both texts have been invaluable in tracing the monk's route through China and in authenticating the true origins of the statue. The first document, the *Record of Chōnen's Pilgrimage to Song in Search of the Law and the Making of the Auspicious Image* (*Chōnen nissō guhō junreikō narabini zuizō zōryū ki* 齋然入宋求法巡礼行並瑞像造立記 [hereafter *Record*]) was recorded in Chinese by one Jianduan, a Chinese monk who may have accompanied Chōnen during his journey through China, but of whom little else is known (FIG. 5).¹⁸ Unknown prior to its recent discovery within the statue, the *Record* has proved instrumental in constructing a realistic timeline for Chōnen's travels.

¹⁷ The major sources relevant to the present study are Inoue Kazutoshi's "Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō to Chōnen," in *Hōhō toshite no bukkyō bunkashi: hito, mono, imēji no rekishigaku*, ed. Nakano Genzō et al. (Tokyō: Bensei shuppan, 2010), 80 – 114, Kamikawa Michio's "Chōnen Nissō no rekishiteki igi," in *Aichi Kenritsu Daigaku Bungakubu ronshū* 50 (2001), 1-40, and Nagaoka Ryūsaku's "Seiryōji shaka nyoraizō to Hokusō no shakai," *Kokka* No. 1269, (July 2007), 11-24.

¹⁸ Takeuchi Rizō, ed. *Heian ibun* vol. 9 (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1963), 3481-3484. The text of the *Record* was translated into English by Leon Hurvitz in 1956, and can be found in full in Hurvitz and Henderson, "The Buddha of Seiryōji," 49-54.



Figure 5. Jianduan (postscript by Chōnen). *Record of Chōnen's Pilgrimage to Song in Search of the Law and the Making of the Auspicious Image*. Northern Song, 985. Ink and paper. 17.1 x 150 cm. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (From *Shaka Shinkō to Seiryōji*, 91)

The second, and in many ways more problematic of the two documents, was composed by Chōnen's disciple Jōsan who accompanied Chōnen to China and wrote a chronicle called the *Record of Pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai by the monk Jōsan of Tōdaiji, Japan* (*Nihonkoku Tōdaiji tokai junrei Godaisan Jōsan ki* 日本国東大寺渡海巡礼五台山盛算記 [hereafter *Jōsanki*]). The *Jōsanki* was written as an appendix to a third document also of great interest to the present study, the *History of the Auspicious Sandalwood Image of King Udāyana* (*Udennō shozō sendan Shaka zuizō rekki* 優填王所造梅檀釈迦瑞像曆記 [hereafter *Udennōki*]), which was copied by Jōsan in the Chinese capital from imperial records of the Kaifeng statue. Because Jōsan's appears to be the only such record known prior to the discovery of Jianduan's record in 1954, the *Jōsanki* has historically played a greater role in medieval and pre-modern understanding of Chōnen's travels and the origins of the Seiryōji Shaka.¹⁹ The influence of this record is

¹⁹ Although it is possible that copies of the *Record* and other documents found deposited within the Seiryōji Shaka could have been made prior to their insertion into the statue, no convincing evidence has surfaced to accommodate this possibility.

seen in the texts of the *Hōbutsushū* and the *Shakadō engi*, both of which offer dramatic embellishments of the events recorded in the *Jōsanki* and the accompanied *Udennōki*.²⁰

While recent scholarship has focused on the largely fabricated nature of the *Jōsanki* in light of the recently discovered *Record*, the latter should not be left without scrutiny as an unbiased historical record. Rather, as will become clear, each document offers conflicting interpretations of the icon's origins and the relation to its Chinese prototype, and yet neither text possesses the degree of reliability of a record such as that of the monk Ennin 円仁 (794-864), whose classic *Record of a Pilgrimage to Tang in Search of the Law* (*Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡礼行記) was itself most certainly studied by Chōnen prior to his departure to China.²¹ At issue are the questions of not only when and where Chōnen's statue was made, but when he first conceived of the idea to copy the auspicious sandalwood image housed in Kaifeng, and how the miraculous nature of the image was viewed in relation to its prototype. Through a comparative analysis of the two documents in relation to other Chinese sources, in addition to the issue of origin becoming clearer, so will the varying intentions of the vested interests involved with the replication. These ranged from Chōnen and his disciple Jōsan to the Song emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 975-997) himself, all of whom appear to have possessed varying interpretations of the statue and of its relation to the original image of King Udāyana.

²⁰ Jōsan is in fact directly mentioned by name in the *Shakadō engi*, strongly supporting the possibility that the *Jōsanki* was the primary reference for its composition. *Nihon emaki zenshū vol. 1: Seiryōji engi* (Tokyo: Tōhō Shoin, 1928).

²¹ Inoue, "Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō to Chōnen," 84-85.

Records of Pilgrimage

On the first day of the 8th month of the first year of Eikan 永觀 (983), the Tōdaiji priest Chōnen embarked on an eighteen day journey aboard a Chinese merchant ship on an imperially sanctioned pilgrimage to Song China. According to Jianduan's *Record*, Chōnen had requested permission to travel to China not as a representative of the Japanese state, but as a private pilgrim. Jianduan records a sincere longing in Chōnen to visit the holy mountains Wutaishan and Tiantaishan 天台山 that inspired him to petition the imperial office to undertake the journey of a faithful pilgrim.²² Chōnen thus required approval from the court as well as letters of introduction from Japanese monasteries that had affiliation with Chinese monastic institutions. These he received from his own temple Tōdaiji, addressed to the prominent esoteric center of Qinglongsi 清龍寺 in Chang'an 長安, and from Enryakuji 延曆寺 (FIG. 6), addressed to the Tendai affiliated complex of Guoqingsi 國清寺 on Mt. Tiantai. Eventually, he was granted permission to accompany a Chinese commercial vessel that was preparing to depart on a return voyage to Song China, and it was these two documents that would effectively function as Chōnen's passport during his journey.²³

²² This distinction is itself a significant marker of the nature of international pilgrimage for monks in East Asia at the time, as the two means for a Japanese monk to obtain official sanction from the court to travel to China were as either an official emissary of the court for the purposes of seeking the Law *guhō* 求法, or as an individual monk engaged in personal pilgrimage, *junrei* 巡礼. "Law" in this case refers to the dharma, or Buddhist teachings (*hō* 法). Kamikawa, "Chōnen," 7.

²³ Kamikawa, "Chōnen," 9.



Figure 6. Central Hall of Enryakuji, Mt. Hiei, Shiga.
(From *Mikkyō jīin to Jōgan no chōkoku*, 68)

As both the *Record* and the *Jōsanki* record, the merchant ship and its Japanese passengers landed in the prosperous port city of Taizhou 台州 (FIG. 7) in Zhejiang 浙江 province eighteen days after setting off from Dazaifu 太宰府 on the southern Japanese island of Kyūshū 九州. Within a few days, on the ninth day of the ninth month, the party made a pilgrimage to the first major holy sight of their journey, the nearby monastic complex at Mt. Tiantai, where according to the *Record*, Chōnen sought the ghost of Zhi Yi 智顛 (538-597), the eminent founder of the Tiantai school of Chinese Buddhism, later established in Japan by the monk Saichō as Tendai. Departing from Mt. Tiantai on the eighth day of the tenth month, the party set off north to the Northern Song imperial

capital at Kaifeng (FIG. 8), where they arrived on the nineteenth day of the twelfth month, precisely four months after landing in Taizhou.

Following an audience with the emperor Taizong, Chōnen and his delegation were granted permission to travel to Mt. Wutai (FIG. 9). As Donald McCallum notes, this particular pilgrimage was “perhaps the most important event of his trip to China for Chōnen,” considering the significant place the sacred mountain held in the religious imagination of East Asian Buddhists.²⁴ Indeed, a significant portion of the *Record* is taken up with the party’s experiences at Mt. Wutai, as it was here that Chōnen’s party witnessed a number of auspicious miracles that for Chōnen affirmed the monk’s commitment to religious life. One such miracle witnessed in the afternoon of the party’s first day on the mountain, was the emission of a white light from “the top of the Bodhisattva’s right side.”²⁵ No doubt this bodhisattva mentioned was an auspicious image of the bodhisattva Monju 文殊 (C: Wenshu; S: Mañjuśrī), encounters with which were often reported by pilgrims and monks on the mountain.²⁶ Moreover, it was most likely the same image described in great detail in Ennin’s travel diary during his stay at Dahuayansi 大華嚴寺 on Mt. Wutai, which was said to occasionally emit light and to manifest auspicious signs.²⁷ The mountain as the mythical residence of the bodhisattva Monju doubtless held personal significance to Chōnen, who along with Sākyamuni and

²⁴ Donald McCallum, “The Saidaiji Lineage of the Seiryōji Shaka Tradition,” *Archives of Asian Art* 49 (1996), 52.

²⁵ Translation from Henderson and Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryōji,” 51. For original text, see *Heian ibun*, 3482.

²⁶ Inoue, “Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō to Chōnen,” 84.

²⁷ This portion of Ennin’s travel is documented in Edwin O. Reishauer’s *Ennin’s Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), 231 – 233.

Miroku (S: Maitreya; C: Mile 弥勒) was known to be highly devoted to this bodhisattva. Other auspicious signs witnessed on the mountain were the appearances of miraculous birds, a five-colored cloud, and the emissions of other strange lights. His descriptions of a strange old man carrying a rosary who suddenly vanished before the travellers' eyes may as well be an allusion to the accounts of the bodhisattva's appearances in transfigured forms, many accounts of which are also described in Ennin's account of his travels on Wutai.²⁸



Figure 7. View of Mt. Wutai, Shanxi province, China.
(From <http://chinatravel.onsugar.com/shanxi-mount-wutai-landscape-photos-10957047?page=0%2C0%2C1>)

²⁸ Reishhauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 256 – 266.



Figure 8. View of Taizhou.
(From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taizhou,_Jiangsu)



Figure 9. View of Kaifeng.
(From http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010festivaltour/2010-09/03/content_11253345.htm)

Following the expedition to Wutai, the party returned to the capital, arriving on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of 984. The party remained in Kaifeng until the second day of the third month of 985, after which they began the southward journey back to the port of Taizhou, where they would spend their last two months before returning to Japan. It is at this point in the *Record* that the commissioning of a statue of Śākyamuni is first mentioned. While lodging under the care of the abbot of Taizhou's Kaiyuansi 開元寺 (J: Kaigenji), Chōnen was told of an auspicious Indian statue of the historical Buddha that had come to China. In Hurvitz's translation, this particular passage reads at length:

Then he heard that in antiquity King Udāyana had carved a holy image of Śākya in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, that it had appeared in the Western Lands, and that a copy had reached China. Since the territory of Japan was remote and, though one might think of the Indian form, yet one might not easily see it, therefore Chōnen gave up his robe and begging-bowl, and with them bought fragrant wood. He recruited cunning artificers to carve according to the same form. In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day, the work was begun, and in the eighth month, on the eighteenth day, it was finished.

因聞往昔優填國王於忉利天、雕刻釈迦瑞像、顯現既當於西土、寫貌或到於中華、以日域之遐陬、想梵容而難覩、（奮然）遂捨衣鉢、收買香木、召募工匠、依樣彫鏤、七月二十一起功、八月十八日畢手²⁹

The passage that follows records the prayers offered by Chōnen to his parents, his teachers, the Chinese emperor, the people of China and Japan, as well as to the many buddhas in thanks of their offerings of salvation.

²⁹ Translation from Henderson and Hurvitz, "The Buddha of Seiryōji," 53; original text from *Heian ibun*, 3482.

It is worth noting as well how the *Record* ends. After construction of the statue begins, Chōnen is said to have initiated a reading of the newly printed Song version of the Buddhist canon (J: *Daizōkyō*; C: *Dazangjing* 大藏經) given him by Taizong on their final meeting prior to departing from the capital. Jianduan's historical account of Chōnen's travels then shifts from a documentation of the actions and offerings of Chōnen to a number of various prayers for the pilgrim, that he may return safely to Japan and succeed in propagating the "True Law" of the Mahāyāna. It continues by documenting the completion of the "holy image" (the Udāyana-type statue) and the insertion of the "five innards," noting that the record was meant to serve as a commemoration of this event.³⁰ The date is recorded as the eighteenth day of the eighth month, exactly two years after Chōnen arrived in Taizhou. The document may then be understood as both a chronicle of Chōnen's pilgrimage across Northern Song China as well as a written prayer offered on behalf of Chōnen by Jianduan and the community of Chinese monks who traveled with and supported the foreign pilgrim. This latter function may largely explain the document's inclusion inside of the statue. Indeed, considering the exclusion of such mundane exchanges and travel bureaucracy that make up so much of Ennin's record (and which make it such a valuable document in its own right), Chōnen's *Record* is less a historical document than a selective account of miraculous encounters and auspicious events that defined Chōnen's pilgrimage. One could further argue that Jianduan's

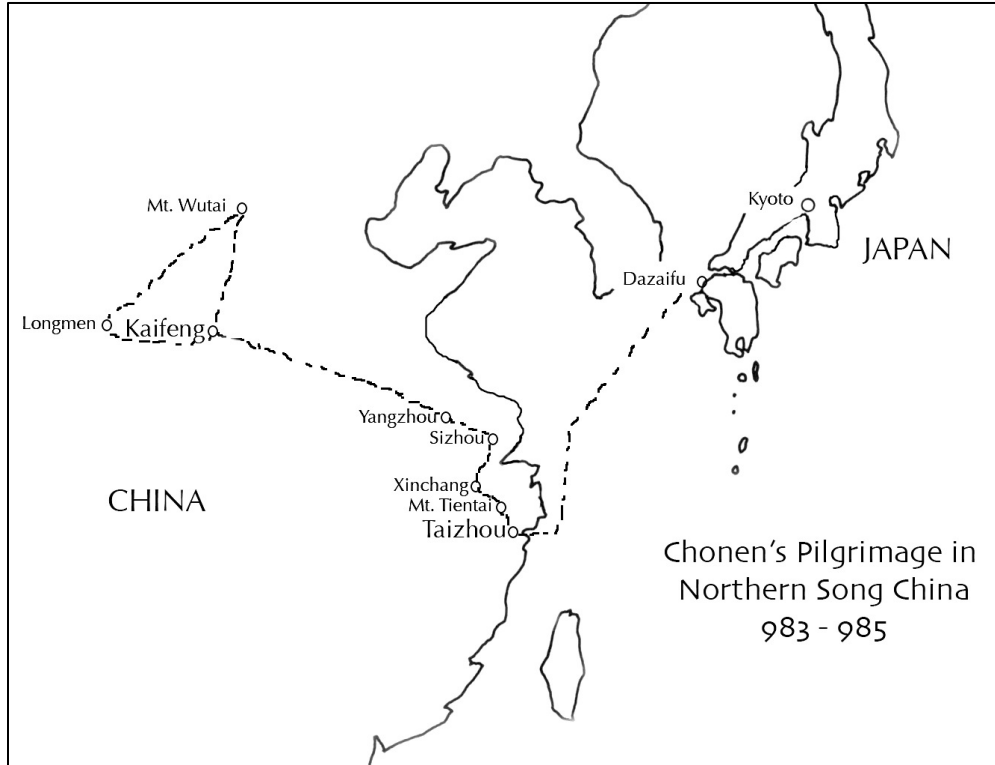
³⁰ The "five innards" refers to a set of silk organs deposited among other items that will be discussed in more detail below in chapters four and five.

chronicle reads much closer to the kind of sacred biography of Buddhist monks recorded by the Chinese scholar-monks Huijiao 慧皎 (497-554) and Daoxuan 道宣 (596 – 667).³¹

Furthermore, as seen in the above passage, the *Record* has little to say about the origins of the statue itself, emphasizing Chōnen’s willing sacrifice of his robe and bowl for the purpose of buying fragrant wood and hiring artisans to carve the image.³² The description that the statue was modeled in the *likeness* (J: *yō*; C. *yang* 樣) of an Udāyana image, however, is of great interest and a striking divergence from Jōsan’s record. In addition, the only information offered about the statue that Chōnen’s copy was modeled after is that Chōnen had heard about an Udāyana statue that had somehow come to China. There is not the slightest suggestion in the text that the statue was modeled after the Udāyana statue in Kaifeng specifically, nor that the provenance of the Kaifeng image was known in any great detail. This striking disconnect between the statue’s most directly contemporaneous documentation and the more historically influential account propagated by Jōsan demands further scrutiny. Consideration of whether this was the historical truth or a willful omission first requires a look at the account put forth in the account of Jōsan.

³¹ For an analysis of this tradition, see John Kieschnick’s *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997).

³² *Heian ibun*, 3483.



Map 2. Chōnen's pilgrimage route in Northern Song China.
Largely based on account in the *Record*.

Jōsan's Record

As already suggested, the record of Chōnen's travels recorded by his disciple offers a considerably different view of the Seiryōji Shaka's origins (see APPENDIX A). According to the *Jōsanki*, while traveling north to the capital the Japanese party stopped in the province of Yangzhou 揚州 (FIG. 10) on the eighteenth day of the eleventh month to see an auspicious sandalwood statue housed in the temple Kaiyuansi.³³ Unfortunately, the statue had been moved to the capital some years prior to the party's arrival. While spending winter in Kaifeng, both documents, the *Record* and the *Jōsanki* record that Chōnen was received by emperor Taizong on the 21st day of the twelfth month, from

³³ Both the temple in Yangzhou and the temple that the party stayed in Taizhou prior to their return to Japan were each called Kaiyuansi. This is explained by the fact that a Kaiyuansi" temple was ordered by emperor Xuanzong to be established in every prefecture in 738, the twenty-sixth year of Kaiyuan.

whom he was gifted a purple robe. It's likely that Taizong's reception of Chōnen was a means of gaining information from the monk and his party about the state of affairs in Japan, in exchange for which he granted them permission to visit Mt. Wutai.³⁴ Based on the timeline of the *Jōsanki*, it is at this time that the emperor may also have granted permission to worship the sandalwood statue then enshrined in the Imperial Palace's Hall of Nourishing Happiness (C: Zifudian 滋福殿), which Jōsan's document claims they saw the following month. The *Jōsanki* further notes that it was during their three-month pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai that Chōnen conceived of the idea to have the sandalwood image copied. Upon returning to the capital, craftsmen were employed to go about the copying of the statue on the palace grounds.



Figure 10. View of Damingsi, Yangzhou.
(From <http://arts.cultural-china.com/en/85Arts6286.html>)

³⁴ Kamikawa argues that of the three possible receptions with the emperor granted the Japanese party, all would have been initiated by Taizong in order to advance his own political interests, having recently consolidated political power following the fall of the Southern Tang; Kamikawa, "Chōnen," 17.

The *Jōsanki*, as seen in this brief summary of its contents, is concerned principally with the nature of Chōnen's statue and its prototype in the capital of Kaifeng. Unlike the *Record*, in Jōsan's account, the Seiryōji icon is described as a direct copy of its prototype, unmediated by distance or the use of other *likenesses*. As seen in later Japanese versions of the icon's history, including the *Collected Treasures* and Kanō Motonobu's *Origin Tale of the Shaka Hall*, this indeed came to be regarded as the official legend of the icon's origins.³⁵

Considering their historical accounts (with minor variations in dating aside), the party's visit to Yangzhou, the worship of a sandalwood image in the Hall of Nourishing Happiness, and the very provenance of Chōnen's statue appear to be the three most glaring differences between the *Jōsanki* and the *Record*.³⁶ While the *Jōsanki* records a visit to Yangzhou on the eighteenth day of the eleventh month of 983 to worship the auspicious sandalwood image enshrined at the Kaiyuansi, the *Record* includes no mention of this visit. Also unlike the *Jōsanki*, the *Record* lacks any mention of worshipping the auspicious image in Kaifeng. Lastly, while Jōsan's record claims that the statue was copied in the capital at the Zen Hall of Saintly Revelation (C: Qisheng Chanyuan 啓聖禪院 [hereafter Zen Hall]), the *Record* places the copying in the party's port of entry at Taizhou. In part because of the overwhelming support of material evidence found inside the statue, including documents written and donated by the monks and laity of Taizhou, the location of the statue's copying can be almost certainly placed in Taizhou. The truth of whether the party visited Yangzhou or encountered the statue in

³⁵ Taira Yasuyori, *Hōbutsushū*, ed. Fukuhara Shōgo (Tokyo: Kindai Bungeisha, 1993), 11-13.

³⁶ These three discrepancies are particularly stressed as irreconcilable by Nagaoka in "Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō," 12-15.

Kaifeng, however, is less simple to ascertain. Nagaoka presumes that there can only be two explanations for the absence of these accounts from the *Record* – either they were intentionally omitted or they did not occur.³⁷

Because there is little evidence that Chōnen would intentionally exclude the Yangzhou visit, and virtually no known evidence in Chinese or Japanese sources that Chōnen visited Yangzhou, Nagaoka contends that the visit must simply have not occurred. Nagaoka interprets Jōsan’s account of the sandalwood image as a fabrication that would enhance the authority of the icon following its introduction to Japan.³⁸ While this is largely supported by the nature of Jōsan’s document (as will be seen below), the problems inherent in the *Jōsanki* should not distract from the liberties taken in the account recorded by Jianduan. As Inoue has argued, one facet of Chōnen’s thinking that both records verify is the monk’s great sense of historical awareness. Chōnen’s itinerary was almost certainly inspired by his study of the well-known accounts of earlier Japanese monks who embarked on pilgrimages to China during the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907). Of these, Ennin’s perhaps held the greatest influence over Chōnen’s own journey.³⁹ Ennin’s itinerary, which includes records of miraculous encounters and his devotion to the three Buddhas Śākyamuni, Maitreya and Mañjuśrī all bear stark similarities to what we know of Chōnen and his own journey. Ennin’s travels may even have influenced Chōnen’s

³⁷ Ibid., 13.

³⁸ Ibid. This claim is perhaps further substantiated by the *Jōsanki*’s influence on the *Hōbutsushū* and *Shakadō engi*, although as texts that were compiled much later this is not itself evidence for Jōsan’s own intentions in recording the *Jōsanki*.

³⁹ Inoue, “Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō to Chōnen,” 84-85.

personal Buddhist faith.⁴⁰ Of particular note in Ennin's account is an entry that describes his visit to the Kaiyuansi monastery in Yangzhou, where he venerated an auspicious sandalwood image of the Buddha.⁴¹ The account of a similar sandalwood Buddha image in Ennin's travel record, the presence at the time of which is largely verified by other historical documents, suggests it is highly conceivable that Jōsan's account of Chōnen visiting the Kaiyuansi temple at Yangzhou may have occurred. Considering the absence of the then-relocated sacred image or any auspicious events (perhaps even a degree of disappointment on the part of the pilgrims), one could imagine various reasons for the omission of the Yangzhou visit from the *Record*.

Throughout the *Record*, the locations documented by Jianduan are highlighted almost exclusively by miraculous events, the worshipping of sacred images, or divine encounters. Jōsan's record, on the other hand, has little mention of such events, but is rather an abbreviated account of their voyage in relation to the Udāyana image. A visit to Yangzhou would certainly appear out of place in Jianduan's account if the statue had not been seen. In addition, it is clear that Jianduan may have omitted other events as well, intentionally or not. While the *Record* essentially ends with good wishes for Chōnen's good fortune to accompany the insertion of objects into the statue, a post-script follows Jianduan's name and the recorded date. The post-script, distinct and presumably in Chōnen's own hand, further notes a visit the previous year to Longmen Grottoes 龍門石窟, where Chōnen worshipped the body of the Shingon (C: Zhenyan 真言) patriarch Śubhakarasiṃha (J: Zenui; C: Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637-735), and where he received the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 85.

⁴¹ Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, 49.

diamond and womb realm mandala precepts. This account of yet another encounter with a sacred image must certainly have been an important event for Chōnen, himself a student of Shingon esotericism, leading him to record the event as a final addendum to Jianduan's completed draft. It also verifies Chōnen's knowledge and confirmation of the document's contents.

Just as the possible visit to Yangzhou should not be completely excluded from the possibility of historical reality, neither should Jōsan's claim that Chōnen knew of the sandalwood image and possibly encountered the statue during his time in Kaifeng. The *Jōsanki* records that Chōnen and his entourage worshipped the Kaifeng Udāyana statue in the Imperial Palace's Hall of Nourishing Happiness on the first year of Yongxi 雍熙 (984) prior to departing to Mt. Wutai. The statue was then moved from the Imperial Palace to the Zen Hall while the party was on pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai. Nagaoka notes that a later Southern Song Dynasty Tiantai history, the *Comprehensive Annals of the Buddhas and Patriarchs* (C: *Fozu tongji*; J: *Busso tōki* 仏祖統記), compiled by Zhipan 志磐 (fl. mid-thirteenth century) between 1258 and 1269, cites the date of the statue's move to the Zen Hall as 980 when the hall was built, so they would not have seen it at the palace in 984.⁴² This, Nagaoka claims provides convincing proof that the pilgrims could never have seen the statue in the first place. However, other documents suggest that the Zen Hall had not yet been completed or the sandalwood image installed prior to Chōnen's visit.

The *Sea of Jade* (C: *Yuhai* 玉海), an encyclopedic record compiled by the scholar Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1292) in 1229 records that the Zen Hall was completed on

⁴² Nagaoka, "Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō," 14.

the fourth month of 984.⁴³ Further, Tsukamoto notes that the *Record of Treasures of Taizong of Song* (C: *Song Taizong baolu* 宋太宗寶錄) records that the construction of the Zen Hall began in the middle of the Taiping Xingguo 太平興國 era (976-984) and lasted 6 years, being completed in 985, soon after which the sandalwood image and a true image of the Daoist monk Baozhi 宝誌 (J: Hōshi) were enshrined.⁴⁴ Tsukamoto conversely argues that this document essentially agrees with the *Comprehensive Annals of the Buddhas and Patriarchs*' record that construction of the Zen Hall began in 980.⁴⁵ While all evidence thus points to the fact that Chōnen could not have copied the statue in Kaifeng in 984, there is little to prove that the pilgrims could not have seen the statue at the Hall of Nourishing Happiness during their stay in Kaifeng. Thus, while the material evidence points to the statue's construction in Zhejiang, the historical fidelity of both documents should be regarded with some degree of skepticism.

For the purposes of this study, however, the issue of central importance that is raised by the discrepancies in these two texts relates to how the status of Chōnen's statue was perceived and promoted as a "living body" of Śākyamuni. It also raises the question of why Chōnen's encounter with the Kaifeng image would not have been recorded by Jianduan (if it did take place). Jōsan's account places considerable focus on the image as being copied in the direct presence of the original, a central feature of the various accounts of the original Udāyana image, which for all purposes came to be seen as an

⁴³ Inoue, "Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō to Chōnen," 88-89.

⁴⁴ Tsukamoto Maromitsu, "Kōtei no bunbutsu to hokusō shoki no kaifū (jō): Keisei Zen'in, Daishōkokujī, kyūtei o meguru bunbutsu to sono imi ni tsuite," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 404 (2011), 186-187.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

effective surrogate for the Buddha in this world. Jianduan's account, however, distances the connection between the Kaifeng image and his own. By appending his account to the *Udennōki*, the *Jōsanki* places the statue within the historical context (or lineage) of the original Udāyana image, setting the stage for the statue to assume the position of the original once brought to Japan.

Chōnen, however, appears to have been less concerned with the issue of *direct* reproduction in the manner of Udāyana's original.⁴⁶ In order to consider the position of the Seiryōji statue in the context of the original Udāyana statue and other miraculous "living" icons, it is, therefore, important to recount the legendary story of Udāyana, his sandalwood image and its significance to the production of Buddhist images in East Asia. In addition, the status of the Kaifeng prototype in relation to other famous miracle-working images must also be questioned. As a treasure of the Northern Song emperor, the prototype was viewed both as an Udāyana image and as part of a tradition of "royal images" with long precedent in Chinese history for performing miracles and legitimizing imperial rule that is a little discussed aspect of the Seiryōji Shaka's contested lineage.

Udāyana's Sandalwood Image

The story of the Indian King Udāyana and his famous sandalwood statue has been told, retold and embellished in numerous forms from as early as the third century in

⁴⁶ Nagaoka has discussed elsewhere the perception of images that were created after *likenesses* and which were nonetheless seen as equally efficacious. See Nagaoka's "Butsuzō hyōgen ni okeru 'kata' to sono denpa: Heian shoki bosatsu-gyō chōkoku ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu (ge)," *Bijutsu kenkyū* 352, 255-269.

China.⁴⁷ Apocryphal sutras and other miscellaneous texts of Central Asian and Chinese origin that promote the story of King Udāyana and his auspicious statue, while perhaps appearing to be little more than “inventories of the karmic rewards to be gained through the dissemination and worship of Buddhist icons,” in effect contributed greatly to both the spread of the Udāyana cult and the ubiquitous production of Buddhist images in East Asia more broadly.⁴⁸

Perhaps the most widely repeated version of the Udāyana tale recited today is the version recorded by the Chinese monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (596-664) in the account of his pilgrimage to India, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions* (C: *Da Tang xiyou ji* 大唐西遊記) from 646. According to the story, during the life of the Buddha, the great King Udāyana of Kauśāmbī became an ardent follower of Śākyamuni and the Buddhist teachings, and could not bare being away from the presence of the Buddha. When Śākyamuni ascended to the Tuśita Heavens for three months to preach to his mother, Māya, the king despaired over the sage’s absence and eventually ordered Śākyamuni’s disciple Maudgalyāyana (J: Mokuren; C: Mulian 目連) to transport an artist

⁴⁷ Versions of the story were introduced to Japan by the 730’s, where the legend had become the basis for a conceptual model for the production of Buddhist images. The *Scripture on the Production of Buddhist Images* (C: *Zuo fo xingxiang jing* 作佛形像經), translated into Chinese toward the end of the Eastern Han (25-220 C.E.), is the earliest extant work that directly associates the Indian King Udāyana with the production of a Buddhist image. This short text was popular during the Tang dynasty for its promise of merit for those who produced Buddhist images, as was a more complex elaboration of the text, the *Mahāyāna Scripture on the Merit Gained through the Production of Images* (C: *Dacheng zuoxiang kunde jing* 大乘造像功德經), which was translated into Chinese in 691 C.E. See Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 50 and Sharf, “The Scripture on the Production of Buddha Images,” in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 262. Other legends claim that another king, Prasenajit of Srāvasti, had a golden image made during the historical Buddha’s lifetime. See Alexander C. Soper, “Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China,” *Artibus Asiae. Supplementum* 19 (1995), 259.

⁴⁸ Sharf, “Prolegomenon,” 2.

to heaven to copy the thirty-two aspects of the Buddha in a fine piece of fragrant sandalwood (J: *sendan* 梅檀).⁴⁹ After returning to the king's court, the sculptor created an exact sandalwood portrait of the Buddha, which greatly eased the king's restlessness. When the Buddha finally returned from heaven and was received by the king, the statue miraculously came to life and rose to greet and praise the real Śākyamuni. Pleased by the awakened statue, Śākyamuni returned its praise and proclaimed that once he himself should pass on from this world, the statue will take his place and continue to spread the Buddhist law throughout the world. Consequently, according to the legend and those who believed and transmitted it throughout Asia, King Udāyana's image was both the original first image of the Buddha. It was also much more than an inanimate statue. It was an object that took on the attributes of the Buddha's body, that could interact with its human patron and worshipper, and that could function as a conduit for the preservation of the Buddhist law. It was a living image.

Certain details of the Udāyana story, in all its variations, are particularly notable. All accounts include the interaction of the two buddhas (the historical Buddha and the iconic image) and the exchange of their mutually recognizing gaze.⁵⁰ By directly communicating with the copied image on a mutual level, the Buddha seems to be not only legitimizing the production of Buddhist images, but to be enthusiastically declaring

⁴⁹ In some versions there is one artist, Maudgalyāyana himself, while in others 32 artists are sent to each record one aspect of the Buddha's special marks. Xuanzang's record matches the present account, with one anonymous artist being sent to carve "the fine features of the Buddha" in fine sandalwood; Xuanxang, *The Great Record Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, trans. Li Rongxi (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1996), 160.

⁵⁰ It has been suggested that the originators of the Udāyana story may have been addressing concern that early Buddhists had concerning idolatry and the worship of images; Donald K. Swearer, *Becoming the Buddha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 18.

their efficacy as substitutes for himself.⁵¹ The statue described here is certainly “more than a mere reminder of the Buddha.”⁵² In relation to the two accounts so far discussed by Jōsan and Jianduan, the latter suggests the Seiryōji image was in fact lacking this direct interaction, while the *Jōsanki* seeks to replicate the process of the story more closely by essentially giving Chōnen’s statue the opportunity for direct connection with its prototype.

A second shared feature of the Udāyana stories, and perhaps most significant to the tradition of images that it inspired, is that the first Buddha image attributed to King Udāyana was created during the lifetime of the historical Śākyamuni. This point is particularly important for the later copies of certain images, because it establishes a direct link between the replicated icon and the living historical Buddha through likeness.⁵³ While possibly a contemporary of Udāyana, there is little historical evidence to suggest that the Buddha in fact visited the king’s domain of Kauśāmbī, although such historical oversights held little sway in medieval China and Japan, where the story flourished. Interestingly, by the second century B.C.E. the Kauśāmbī region was becoming a prominent center for Buddhist study. This has led some scholars to assign the development of the Udāyana story to the influence of the Kauśāmbī school as a means of

⁵¹ Ibid., 2. Much discussion has been generated in recent years with regard to the origins of the iconic image of the Buddha. See Susan Huntington’s “Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism,” *Art Journal* 49, no. 4, *New Approaches to South Asian Art* (Winter, 1990), 401-408.

⁵² Richard Gombrich, “The Consecration of a Buddhist Image” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 26, no. 1 (Nov. 1966), 24.

⁵³ The same logic is applied to later copies of images believed to have been made in the presence of other Buddhist saints and deities, including the Atsoyah Avalokiteśvara in Yunnan province, and the lost Manjusri image on Mt. Wutai. For the latter see Reischauer, *Ennin’s Diary*, 232-234.

enhancing the area's growing importance.⁵⁴ The authors' motivations would thus presage the later uses of the cult of the image to secure doctrinal, cultural, and political legitimacy through the possession of images that established a direct connection to the Buddha. An Udāyana-type image, whether in the possession of Udāyana himself, a temple in Eastern China, or in the Japanese capital, would be regarded as possessing a level of veracity and spiritual authority surpassing all other Buddhist images made after the Buddha's lifetime. The Udāyana images, including the statue commissioned by Chōnen, are thus a prime example of what Schober describes as the intertwining of the Buddha's biography with the biography of his image, which extends the life of the Buddha "into the social and historical contexts of contemporary, local actors who perform ritual acts of merit in the Buddha's presence in order to participate in an ongoing cosmogonic regeneration of his biography."⁵⁵

Miraculous Images in China

Udāyana's living statue, however, was by no means the only famous miracle-performing statue known in medieval China. Indeed, the reasons that the Udāyana image tradition came to be so widespread by the time Chōnen reached China is partly due to its association with the historical buddha and partly due to the mutually influencing relation the legend had with other traditions of miraculous images that flourished in medieval China. These images often drew on their associations with both Indian and Chinese secular rulers, with some achieving the status of what Shinohara calls "royal images,"

⁵⁴ Swearer, *Becoming the Buddha*, 21.

⁵⁵ Juliane Schober, "In the Presence of the Buddha: Ritual Veneration of the Burmese Mahāmuni Image," in *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, ed. Juliane Schober (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 262.

that were utilized for both religious and political purposes.⁵⁶ Similar to the Udāyana image's miraculous feat of self-animation before the real Buddha, chronicles and developing genres of tale literature recorded additional miraculous acts performed by uniquely auspicious images. Few stories or records of miraculous images even mention explicitly the particular Buddha or Bodhisattva that is represented in the image. Rather, the image's value and religious power derive from who made the image, how it was discovered, or various miracles the particular image was known to have performed.⁵⁷

Famous images of Indian origin often arrived in China via the luggage of pilgrims like Xuanzang or via merchants engaged in trade along the Silk Road.⁵⁸ These images have largely existed outside the mainstream of Buddhist artistic development in East Asia, tending to resist stylistic domestication in an attempt to heighten their visual connection to the land of the historical Buddha. As their fame within China spread, however, they became increasingly associated with traditional Chinese conceptions of auspicious images (C: *ruixiang*) that are known to have predated the introduction of Buddhism in the late Han 漢. The appearances and actions of *ruixiang* often represented political omens and were believed to express the will of Heaven, foretelling events ranging from the fortuitous to the downfall of an emperor no longer worthy of his title. Miraculous

⁵⁶ Shinohara, "Gao Li's Discovery of a Miraculous Image: The Evolution of Ashoka Image Stories in Medieval China," in *The Flowering of a Foreign Faith: New Studies in Chinese Buddhist Art*, ed. Janet Baker (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1998), 27.

⁵⁷ Shinohara describes the lack of concern for the image's identity as a noticeable feature in the miracle stories of Daoxuan in his essay "Changing Roles for Miraculous Images in Chinese Buddhism: A Study of the Miracle Image Section in Daoxuan's 'Collected Records,'" in *Images, miracles, and Authority in Asian Religious Traditions*, ed. Janet Baker, 148-149.

⁵⁸ The popularity of a number of "famous images" are recorded in stories like those collected by the 7th century Vinaya master and historian Daoxuan in his collection *Collected Records of Three Treasure Miracle Stories in China* (C: *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄), many of which have been translated and commented on by Soper in "Literary Evidence."

occurrences initiated by man-made images were thus often interpreted as signs of the current ruler's legitimacy, and such thought naturally carried over to the interpretation of portentous events provoked by Buddhist icons.⁵⁹

The accounts of famous miraculous images recorded by Daoxuan emphasize many of these images' close association with secular rulers.⁶⁰ Images believed to have been made by the pro-Buddhist Indian king Aśoka (or in some cases his family members) became especially desirable among pro-Buddhist rulers in China who perhaps envisioned themselves as Chinese counterparts to the celebrated Indian king, and came to see their own fortune reflected by Aśokan images.⁶¹ The golden statue that legend claims was made by king Aśoka's fourth daughter was one such "royal image" that performed a number of miracles following its discovery in a bay near Nanjing 南京 and was later enshrined in Changguangsi 長光寺, leading to its credit for repelling a southeastern uprising when the emperor Wu of Liang (Liang Wudi 梁武帝, r. 502-549) prayed before the image. The icon later appears to have become an important royal image for the Liang dynasty and a miracle-performing treasure that was kept secure within the capital.⁶²

When the empire appeared threatened by the western rulers, the emperor of the Chen 陳 dynasty reportedly sought favor from the same statue by creating an exquisite

⁵⁹ Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1989), 85-93.

⁶⁰ In addition to Shinohara's work, several accounts from Daoxuan's writings are recorded by Soper in "Literary Evidence."

⁶¹ Shinohara, "Changing Roles," 155.

⁶² Daoxuan records that during draughts the emperor would worship and anoint the image with oils, causing downpours – a sign both of the icon's miraculous abilities as well as the sovereign's ability to assure the welfare of his kingdom through magical means; Shinohara, "Changing Roles," 153.

tiara that repeatedly fell off, a sign that eventually portended the fall of the Chen to the Sui 隋 (581-618). The new rulers, familiar with the image's ominous powers, claimed the statue from the Chen and enshrined it in the imperial palace. In this aspect of the story, which likely circulated under the succeeding Sui dynasty, the crown symbolizes the mandate to rule in accordance with the will of Heaven, and as such the story may be read as narrating the transfer of mandate from one dynasty to another. Because, as Shinohara notes, the rule of a dynasty came to an end when it lost its mandate, the story suggests that the Sui dynasty knew about the special role that this statue held as a "royal image" of the Chen.⁶³

Other examples of miraculous images are recorded as crying, smiling, glowing, moving, losing body parts, or performing other miracles that were interpreted as portentous signs of either fortuitous or disastrous consequence for the emperor and his realm. In response, the emperor sought possession of the images in order to worship, protect, and control the icon; controlling as well the production of copies that could be disseminated to those in good favor for worship and devotion. In political and economic terms, the derivation of countless images functioned to heighten the level of sacred authority possessed by the original and its possessor, and perhaps to allow the original to work through its copies.

It was in this context that the Udāyana statue in the court of emperor Taizong was likely revered both as an authentic portrait of the historical buddha and as a *ruixiang*,

⁶³ Similarly, an eighteen-foot tall rock-cut image in Liangzhou 涼州, the creation of which was predicted by the monk Liu Sahe 劉薩訶 (J: Ryū Sakka), also predicted the downfall of an emperor who failed both in protecting the image and in supporting Buddhism. The image repeatedly lost its head prior to the Northern Zhou emperor Wu's 武 (r. 560-578) persecution of Buddhism in 572, which at the time was interpreted as a sign for the coming downfall of the dynasty; Shinohara, "Changing Roles," 156.

installed in his Hall of Nourishing Happiness to be not only worshipped, but controlled and protected. The account recorded on a sixteenth century Ming 明 dynasty rubbing of an Udāyana image in the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, which through the tenth century largely coincides with Jōsan’s account of the history of Taizong’s image, also records a continuous effort by the new rulers of succeeding dynasties to retrieve the Udāyana image to be installed in their own capitals (FIG. 11). The image’s last known whereabouts was a hall inside the Forbidden City, which was sacked and the image lost during the Boxer Rebellion in 1901 – an ominous foreshadowing of the fall of the Qing 清.⁶⁴ A passage from the history recorded on the Field Museum image suggests a metaphorical interpretation of the image from the perspective of the Chinese rulers: “the royal virtue [of King Udāyana] manifested itself in a material object [the statue of Śākyamuni he commissioned], and its reverent fidelity exhorted the populace to conversion.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ A full translation of the account is found in English in Marsha Weidner, *Later Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850 – 1850* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994), 221 – 225.

⁶⁵ Weidner, *Later Days of the Law*, 221 (bracketed text included in original translation).



Figure 11. *Sandalwood Auspicious Image*. Artist unknown. Ming dynasty, 1597. Ink rubbing from a stone engraving. 136 x 77 cm. Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (II6437). (From *Latter Days of the Law*, 222)

Defining Lineage in the *Jōsanki* and the *Udennōki*

Returning to the documents under discussion, however, it is perhaps the *Jōsanki* itself, or rather the *Udennōki* to which it was appended, that offers the most important link in connecting the Seiryōji image and its Kaifeng prototype to their auspicious lineage. Unfortunately, the original text of the *Jōsanki/Udennōki* is no longer extant, but has been preserved in a later copy stored in the collection of Seiryōji, which was published in a

volume of the *Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書 in 1979.⁶⁶ While the text is believed to be an accurate transcription of the original, Tsukamoto has noted several key historical discrepancies that, whether owing to Jōsan’s original mistakes or those of the later copyist’s, reveal new dimensions to the historical perception of the Seiryōji image and its prototype.⁶⁷

As noted above, the *Jōsanki* was written as an appendix to a much longer document, the *Udennōki*, which records the history of the Seiryōji statue’s prototype at Kaifeng. During the second month of Yongxi 雍熙 2 (985), a month prior to the party’s departure from Kaifeng, while residing at the capital’s Guanyin Hall (C: Mingsheng Guanyin yuan 明聖觀音院), Jōsan obtained permission from Taizong to copy the *Udennōki*, which at the time was stored in the Hall of Eternal Peace (C: Yong’an yuan 永安院 of Kaibaosi 開寶寺. The *Udennōki* was itself a revision of another text that had been recorded in 932 by the monk Shiming 十明 when the statue was in the possession of the temple Kaiyuansi in Yangzhou.

Shiming’s document is an extensive record of the various legends relating to the story of the Udāyana image drawn from various Buddhist texts and tale literature that ends by recording the transmission of the true Udāyana image from India to the Yangzhou Kaiyuansi. According to its account of the image at hand, the statue was brought by the father of the famous Chinese translator of Indian sutras Kumārajīva (334 – 413) to Kucha (in modern Xinjiang province) between 307-313, after which it was taken by Kumārajīva himself to the capital at Chang’an in 401. In 415 it was taken to the

⁶⁶ Tsukamoto, “Kōtei no bunbutsu,” 180.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 180 – 185.

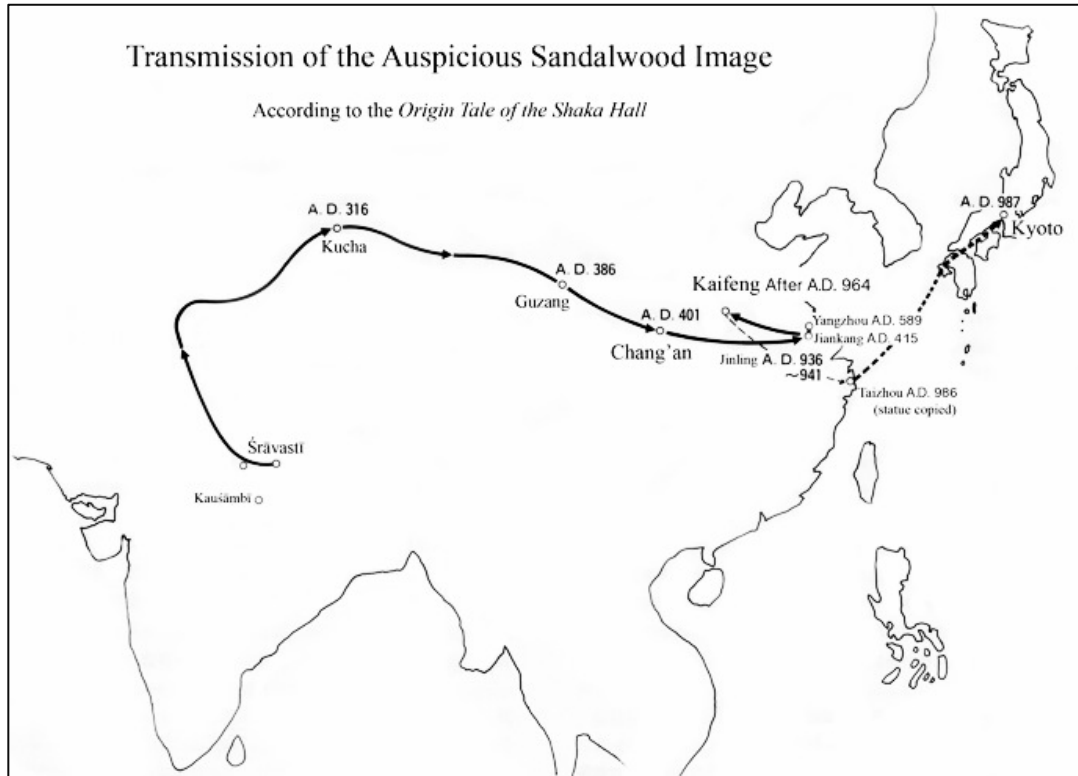
Longuansi 龍光寺 temple in Jiankang 建康. In 589, it was taken to Yangzhou and enshrined in the Changlesi 長樂寺 (later named Dayunsi 大雲寺, and then Kaiyuansi in 738). There are records of an Udāyana statue at the Yangzhou Kaiyuansi from 614, and it is likely the same statue as was encountered by Ennin on his visit to Yangzhou in 838 by which time the temple was called Kaiyuansi.

The annotation of the document copied by Jōsan picks up where Shiming's account leaves off, recording the statue's journey to Kaifeng. According to this annotation, the statue was moved from the Yangzhou Kaiyuansi to the Southern Tang capital at Jinling 金陵 (modern Nanjing) between 937-939, where it was enshrined in the temple Changxiansi 長先寺. In the third year of Qiande 乾德 (965), the record notes that the statue was taken to Kaifeng following the Southern Tang's fall to the Northern Song in the same year, where it was kept temporarily in the Hall of Eternal Peace in the Kaibaosi where Shiming's text was further annotated and later brought to the attention of Jōsan.⁶⁸

Concerning the above transmission of the statue recorded in the *Udennōki*, Tsukamoto notes two important inaccuracies. First, the fall of the Southern Tang and its capital at Jinling to the Northern Song actually occurred on the tenth month of the eighth year of Kaibao 開寶 (975), a full ten years later than the *Udennōki* records. Over the several years that followed the fall of the Southern Tang and its sack of Jinling, the Song began importing a vast number of important cultural properties and treasures from Jinling to the new imperial capital at Kaifeng. As Tsukamoto argues, this was part of Taizong's

⁶⁸ As shown in Map 2, this entire account of the statue's journey from India to Kaifeng is directly mirrored in the *Shakadō engi*, giving support to the influence that Jōsan's record had in medieval perceptions of the Seiryōji Shaka.

intentional appropriation and use of material culture to exert his newly consolidated political hegemony, and it's during this time, between 976 and 984 that the sandalwood Udāyana image would have been moved on imperial orders from Jinling to Kaifeng.⁶⁹



Map 3. Transmission of the Auspicious Sandalwood Image.
(Adapted from *Shaka Shinkō to Seiryōji*, 13)

Tsukamoto further suggests the likelihood of a second major error in the *Udennōki*, although unfortunately it cannot be known at what point in the replication process the error began, whether owing to the Seiryōji copy of Jōsan's version, Jōsan's copy of the Kaibaosi version, or the Kaibaosi's original addendum to Shiming's text. While the document records that the statue was moved from Yangzhou's Kaiyuansi to Jinling's Changxiansi, there is no recorded documentary evidence of the existence of a

⁶⁹ Tsukamoto, "Kōtei no bunbutsu," 185-188.

temple called Changxiansi in Jinling at any point in its history.⁷⁰ As has already been mentioned, however, there was a temple in Jinling called Changguangsi that was famous for its possession of a golden image made by Aśoka's fourth daughter that was worshipped in Jinling by Liang Wudi. Tsukamoto argues that the record of Chiangxiansi (長先寺) in the *Udennōki* was in fact a mistranscription of Changguangsi (長光寺), and that it was this latter temple that is actually referred to in the text.⁷¹ While little is known of the authenticity of Wudi's Aśokan image, Jinling was known to be the center of the Jiangnan region's relic and Aśoka cults, with the Changguangsi possessing an Aśokan pagoda that had been venerated by pro-Buddhist rulers since the Sui dynasty.⁷²

Partly due to the various legends and tales associated with Wudi, the Jiangnan region possessed a number of connections with miraculous images, one of which was another version of the Udāyana image. As recorded by Daoxuan in his 664 compilation of miracle stories, "Collected Records of Three Treasure Miracle Stories in China," when Wudi dreamed in 502 that a sandalwood image of the Buddha had entered the kingdom, he sent a General Qian 騫 and eighty men to retrieve the original image from the Jetavana monastery. In Daoxuan's version, Wudi was aware of the version of the Udāyana legend described at length above in which the king had thirty-two artisans transported to the Tuśita Heaven to copy the thirty-two marks of the Buddha.⁷³ While the envoy was unable

⁷⁰ Ibid., 181.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 182.

⁷³ Takakusa Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, eds. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924-1932), hereafter "T." For the story of Wudi's image see T51:829a. English translation of Daoxuan's account of the image is recorded in Soper, "Literary Evidence," 70 and a Japanese summary is found in Tsukamoto, "Kōtei no bunbutsu," 182.

to remove the statue from the monastery, however, they were given permission to make a copy. The copy was brought to the capital Jinling in 511. In 549, with the fall of the Liang, it was brought up the Yangtze and enthroned in the Chengguangdian 承光殿 at Jiangling 江陵. Later in 562, it was enshrined in the newly erected Damingsi 大明寺 and widely copied.

While this Damingsi image was regarded by Daoxuan as the original Udāyana image of Wudi's, Tsukamoto argues based off evidence of Matsumoto Bunsaburō 松本文三郎 (1859-1944) that the statue at Longguangsi during this time (that would later be our Kaifeng model) in fact came to be conflated with Wudi's image.⁷⁴ Moreover, Shiming's account of the various Udāyana histories at the beginning of the *Udennōki* includes the account of Wudi's copy that was brought to the Damingsi. Following his account of the Wudi version, Shiming notes that “although there are now two auspicious images in China, that carried back by [general] Qian is not the true statue made by King Udāyana.”⁷⁵

Therefore, while there were two well-known auspicious Udāyana images at the time, Shiming's account in the *Udennōki* traced its lineage to the original story of the image brought into China by Kumārajīva, rather than that of Wudi's. However, as the twelfth century Song scholar Cai Tao 蔡條 (? – 1126) recorded in the *Tieweishan congshan* 鐵圍山叢談, the statue brought from Jinling to Kaifeng was the copied statue associated with Wudi, not the original statue brought back into China by Kumārajīva.

⁷⁴ Tsukamoto, “Kōtei no bunbutsu,” 182.

⁷⁵ Bussho Kankōkai, ed. *Udennō shozō sendan shaka nyorai zuizō rekki*, in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho: Yūhōden sōsho* Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1979), 316.

Because the true image of Baozhi statue that would be enshrined with the auspicious sandalwood image in the Zen Hall also had a strong connection to Wudi, it is clear that from the perspective of Taizong and the Northern Song, the Udāyana image in their possession must have been Wudi's image.⁷⁶ As is seen with the legend of the golden statue of Aśoka's fourth daughter, such "royal images" were regarded for their efficacy in stabilizing and protecting the emperor and his rule. Following the conquest of the Southern Tang, Taizong seems to have sought such images and would later build the Zen Hall to house them, for the purpose of safeguarding his reign, just as Wudi had been protected by his worship and control of miraculous images. Wu had come as early as Daoxuan's seventh century writings to be viewed as a Chinese counterpart to the pro-Buddhist king Aśoka, and his role as a Buddhist sage greatly affected the perception of images associated with him. Taizong's retrieval of the statue from Jinling, just like the Chen's loss of the Changguangsi image to the Sui, reflects the same issues of dynastic mandate that such images represented.

Jōsan's record, however, appears to have sought a different lineage and identity for its image. Rather than allowing the Kaifeng image to be regarded as a copy of the original Udāyana image, his document claims that the Kaifeng image was brought by Kumārajīva to Chang'an, Jiangnan, Yangzhou, Jinling, and then finally Kaifeng. Further, his description of the replication process, that the Seiryōji image was copied in the presence of the original reflects both the original Udāyana legend of copying in the presence of the Buddha himself, and the Wudi image, which was directly copied from the original first image. The Seiryōji image thus takes the place of the Wudi image as the

⁷⁶ Tsukamoto, "Kōtei no bunbutsu," 183-184.

second auspicious image in China, although once brought to Japan it would eventually assume the position of the original.

To summarize the discussion of the historical lineage of the Seiryōji Shaka and its prototype so far, as the *Jōsanki* documents, its model was the auspicious Udāyana image in the imperial capital of Kaifeng. Although the *Jōsanki* and the *Record* largely agree with respect to many of the events of the Japanese party's journey in China, the specific details in relation to the Kaifeng statue and the process of copying the Seiryōji statue remain unclear. While the construction of the image can most certainly be placed in Taizhou, the question of whether or not the party saw the statue in Kaifeng remains open to further consideration and research. As this chapter has shown, Chōnen's failure to record the event does not in itself decrease the likelihood that they did see the image, as a variety of factors could explain its omission from the *Record*. Moreover, it has been shown that the very identity and pedigree of the Kaifeng statue itself had been reinterpreted as it changed hands throughout succeeding dynasties, holding claim to two distinct Udāyana lineages.

The contested histories seen so far in the accounts of the Seiryōji Shaka and other miraculous images reveal the great importance that both political and religious institutions placed both in controlling access to the images and in manipulating their histories. As Davis has suggested of the nature of religious icons, these images occupied interconnecting spaces in the medieval Chinese cultural landscape that reflect their nature as inherently social beings, constantly re-identified and re-appropriated by individuals and institutions with varying degrees of vested interest.⁷⁷ This manufacturing of sacred biographies for miraculous images was certainly not an uncommon practice in medieval

⁷⁷ Davis, "Introduction," *Lives of Indian Images*.

China. With respect to images attributed to Aśoka, such stories often developed around existing images, and stories of miraculous discovery served to authenticate their extraordinary status.⁷⁸ As for Wudi's sandalwood image, there is in fact little evidence to support its tale of Indian origin, which was likely conceived by the monks of Damingsi in the last days of the Liang to enhance the prestige of its temple and image.⁷⁹

One may see the same process at play in Taizong's confiscation of the image and in Jōsan's fabricated account of the Seiryōji Shaka's construction in the Kaifeng capital. While Taizong may have sought the "royal image" so closely associated with secular ruler Wudi, Jōsan sought an image that possessed the religious authority of the first Buddha image that had been validated by its historical and physical connection to the historical Śākyamuni. Chōnen, however, as head of the Japanese delegation and the principle actor who requested and presided over the construction of the Seiryōji image, was responsible for establishing an image that would fulfill his own social and salvific agendas. While Jōsan takes credit for defining the image's sacred lineage, it was Chōnen who utilized material means to establish a sacred identity for the image, and who, as will be shown, may have been influenced by his own familiarity with the first buddha image legend through its conceptualization in a number of famous Japanese icons that claimed spiritual connections to both the historical Buddha and Udāyana's famous icon.

⁷⁸ Shinohara, "Changing Roles for Miraculous Images," 145-146.

⁷⁹ Soper, "Literary Evidence," 72.

CHAPTER III

LIVING ICONS IN JAPANESE TRADITION

Introduction

The widespread cult of Udāyana images in China from the fourth century and its later medieval Japanese cults testify to the significance of belief in the story's claims that the copied image could function as an effective surrogate for the original. This problematic distinction between the copy and the original, however, is continually redefined through different historical, religious, and scholastic interpretations. Many scholars have gone so far as to interpret the Udāyana legend as suggesting that copies made within the tradition maintained the efficacy of the original and were regarded as effective substitutes for the historical Buddha himself, possessing his physical traits and salvific abilities.⁸⁰ Rather than following complex, established systems of iconography, the power of these icons, or as Bernard Faure describes, their "aura," derived from "an unbroken line of mimesis and contact between the first icon and its later reproduction," ultimately connecting the copy to the historical Buddha himself.⁸¹ How this "unbroken" line was constructed, interpreted, and in some cases circumvented through ritual or material means provides insight into both the complex nature of the copied image and the aesthetics of the religious imagination.

Chōnen's copy, with the Kaifeng statue as its most direct conceptual prototype, recreated many of the standard iconographic features of images in the Udāyana lineage, yet as will be seen, Chōnen may have attempted to circumvent its prototype through

⁸⁰ Yui Suzuki, *Medicine Master Buddha: The Iconic Worship of Yakushi in Heian Japan*, (Boston: Brill, 2012), 52; Swearer, 18.

⁸¹ Bernard Faure, "The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (Spring, 1998), 801.

material and ritual means. The statue is a life-size, five *shaku* 尺 tall (approx. 162 cm) standing image of Śākyamuni assembled using the joint-wood technique from approximately fourteen pieces of Chinese cherry (*Prunus wilsonii koehne*).⁸² Just as sculptors throughout East Asia have drawn from the Udāyana legend in their use of sandalwood, so did Chōnen. His choice of cherry, a much denser yet easily obtainable wood, conformed to the popular view at the time that it was an effective substitute for sandalwood, which was difficult to procure in China. The icon's intimate association with the Udāyana legend is reflected in this aspect alone, as the statue to this day continues to be regarded as an "auspicious sandalwood image" (*byakudan zuizō* 白檀瑞像). The view of the statue as an Indian sandalwood image contributed to the icon's perceived connection to the Udāyana lineage among medieval and pre-modern Japanese, upholding its status as an exact copy of the historical Buddha, which doubtless increased the magical "potency" of the icon's auspicious power.⁸³

The robes of the Buddha, perhaps the Seiryōji icon's most visibly distinct feature, are formed in the *tsūken* 通肩 style, which covers both shoulders and the entire body from the neck to the ankles (FIG. 12 and 13). The outer layer of robes cascades in stylized ripples down the body, forming concentric rings of folds that divide into near-symmetrical patterns of folds along each leg. Clinging tightly in a manner often described as that of wet cloth adhered to its body, this style of robes is seen as early as Indian Gupta sculpture, and is a prominent feature of what Morse describes as the "Indian mode" of

⁸² A preliminary analysis of the figure in English is found in Henderson and Hurvitz. "The Buddha of Seiryōji," 9-15.

⁸³ Donald McCallum, "The Saidaiji Lineage," 54.

Buddhist sculpture prominent in China during the Tang dynasty.⁸⁴ Under the robes, the figure's supple body is suggested along the shoulders, chest and stomach, however the form becomes less articulated below its belly, owing to the stylized patterns along the front of the legs and the absence of clearly defined knees. From the image's mid-calves, two layers of under robes protrude from beneath the outer robes, reaching to the figure's ankles. These various idiosyncratic characteristics of the figure's robes were all reproduced to varying degrees in later domestic copies of the Seiryōji image and came to be defining elements of the so-called "Seiryōji style" (J: *Seiryōji-shiki* 清涼寺式).



Figure 12. Seiryōji Shaka, *detail*. Robes in *tsūken* style.
(From *Shaka Shinkō to Seiryōji*)

⁸⁴ Samuel Morse, "The Standing Image of Yakushi at Jingo-ji and the Formation of the Plain-Wood Style," *Archives of Asian Art* 40 (1987), 38.



Figure 13. Seiryōji Shaka. Detail of figure 1.

Although often regarded for the austere presence of its seemingly bare lacquered wood surface, the image was once colorful and highly decorated. The body of the image was originally covered in gold leafing that has mostly flaked off, leaving only traces scattered and barely visible on the deep walnut-brown surface. The outer robe was painted crimson, the inside of the robes ultramarine, and the under-robles rust green, although the original pigments have also mostly faded. Over the paint, the robes were decorated with overlays of decorative gold flower patterns, typical of many later Japanese statues from the eleventh century. This same patterning is seen in the surface of its later

copy at Saidaiji 西大寺, an image that also utilized the Udāyana image's association with sandalwood to establish its religious superiority within the lineage (FIG. 14).⁸⁵

Despite the image's associations with the living body of the historical Buddha, the rigid stance and overly symmetrical geometry of the cascading robes provoke an overwhelming sense of the statue's materiality. Leaning forward at a stiff angle, the figure's arms cling rigidly to its sides, the hands open wide with palms facing forward. The raised right hand displays the *abhaya mudra* (J: *semuiin*; C: *shiwuwei* 施無畏印), while the left arm falls to the upper thigh in the position of the *varada mudra* (J: *yogan'in*; C: *yuyuanyin* 与願印). The statue's disproportionately large head is carved with a smooth, broad face, gently rounded at the bottom with full cheeks that create a wide, rounded expanse from the ears to the sharply angled nose and mouth. Flanked by exceptionally long ears, with a deeply carved brow that recedes sharply into broad, sweeping eyelids, the face of the Buddha was rendered by its Chinese artists in an exotic fashion, maintaining a clear visual reference to the statue's mythical origins in India while exposing the firm rigidity of the cherry wood. The stylized hair atop the Buddha's large head is formed from a dark clay, arranged in a spiraling pattern of interlocking arrow-shaped forms that radiate outward from the front, wrapping around above and behind the head. This pattern is mirrored as well in the Buddha's prominent *uṣṇīṣa*, or cranial protrusion, appearing from the front as a stylized figure eight (FIG. 15).

⁸⁵ The Saidaiji statue's status in relation to the Seiryōji Shaka is discussed in detail in Matsuoka Kumiko, "Saidaiji Eison ni yoru Seiryōji-shiki Shaka nyorai no mozō seisaku," *Bijutsu Forum* 21 vol. 22 (2010): 61-66.



Figure 14. Zenkei and assistants. *Standing Shaka* in Seiryōji style. Kamakura Period, 1249. Wood with polychromy. 167 cm. Saidaiji, Nara.
(From *Saidaiji to Nara no Koji*, 127)



Figure 15. Seiryōji Shaka. Detail of ushniṣa.
(From *Nihon no bijutsu* 513, 23)

The statue's upright posture, hand positions, spiraling patterns of hair and *uṣṇīṣa*, as well as the peculiar pattern of robes are all iconographic features shared by images of the Udāyana tradition and the majority of later copies of the Japanese Seiryōji-type icons, as well as many of the extant Chinese models that were influenced by the same tradition, although some later copies like that at Saidaiji would seek a more naturalizing style.⁸⁶ While this stylistic *influence* of the Udāyana/Seiryōji tradition is visible in some earlier Chinese statues that draw authority from their resemblance to Indian forms, it is important to note that whereas the Seiryōji icon's introduction to Japan initiated a series of domestic copies, it remains the only extant version of a Chinese Udāyana-type statue of wooden construction.⁸⁷ Aesthetically and iconographically, the Seiryōji image is thus in many ways an anomaly among extant tenth century Chinese and Japanese sculptures of the Buddha. Arguably the most important example of a unique lineage of Buddha images that developed outside of the mainstream traditions of East Asian Buddhist art, the icon marks both the eastern terminus of an India-China composite image, and the beginning of a new tradition in Japan.⁸⁸ Indeed, from the moment of its appearance in Japan, the icon must have been perceived as an extraordinary and highly exotic figure, giving the impression that it was not merely a Chinese creation, but had originally been sculpted in

⁸⁶ Maeda Motoshige records 70 known versions of the Seiryōji image in Japan, along with 23 variations (*henkeizō* 変形像) in "Seiryōji-shiki Shaka nyoraizō genzonhyō." *Kanazawa Bunko kenkyū kiyō* 2 (1974): 163-169.

⁸⁷ Other extant Udāyana-type images in China with iconography quite distinct from that of the Seiryōji image can be found at the Longmen Grottoes, dating from the latter half of the seventh century. There are, in addition, a number of extant standing images that seem to suggest the influence of the Udāyana style, but this can be difficult to distinguish from other Indian stylistic imports; Oku Takeo, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, *Nihon no bijutsu* vol. 513 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 2009), 29-41.

⁸⁸ Inoue Tadashi, "Chōnen to Udennō shibozō no tōden," in *Tokubetsu tenrankai: Shaka shinkō to Seiryōji* (Kyoto: Kyoto National Museum, 1982), 4.

even more distant India. Legend and image had merged in the form of the statue that reached Japan from foreign seas, and were expressed through the icon's very materiality.

Yet, what were the expectations that this peculiar and legendary image fulfilled for the Japanese who witnessed its arrival in the capital and who vouched for its authority as a living image? The previous chapter has demonstrated that a number of famous and miraculous image lineages relating to the Udāyana tradition already existed in China when Chōnen's image was commissioned, and yet because its primary patron was a Japanese pilgrim whose own salvific agenda and religious worldview is arguably largely reflected in the statue's iconography, a study of specifically Japanese traditions of living images will serve to illustrate the ritual mechanisms and beliefs that made the Seiryōji Shaka into an effective living icon. Indeed, by the time of Chōnen's pilgrimage, the Seiryōji Shaka was not the only such living image known in Japan at the time. Just as Chōnen's journey to and within Song dynasty China took cues from earlier Japanese records and pilgrimage traditions, his commissioning of an Udāyana-type statue of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni may have been motivated by Japanese traditions of uniquely efficacious images that were regarded as living icons. Certainly, his icon was not the first Buddhist statue in Japan to utilize the well-known legend of Udāyana as a conceptual basis for not only the justification of image production, but for establishing religious authority in a single image.

Although neither icon is extant, both the Daianji Shaka and Saichō's legendary Yakushi icon were earlier prototypes for a cult of copied images that regarded the original as a living body. As will be shown, of central importance in early Japanese society's conception of these icons as *shōjin* was the same legend of the first Buddha

image that influenced the proliferation of miraculous images in medieval China. Never having had access to images of true Indian origin at this time, however, these statues relied on conceptual or spiritual associations with the Udāyana legend that allowed for the transmission of sacred identity and religious authority across time and space through the use of form and material.

Daianji Temple's *Shōjin* Shaka

The Daianji Shaka, according to the 747 *Origin of Daianji Temple and its Inventory of Treasures* (*Daianji garan engi narabini ruki shizaichō* 大安寺伽藍縁起並流記資財帳) was commissioned under Tenji 天智 (r. 626-672) as the principle icon of the once prominent temple complex of Daianji in Nara 奈良. While little is known of the actual appearance of the Daianji icon, the *Daianji garan engi* records that it was in the format of a monumental *jōroku* 丈六 dry lacquer statue.⁸⁹ A 775 record compiled by government official and poet Ōmi no Mifune 淡海三船 (722-785), the *Daianji Epigraph* (*Daianji hibun* 大安寺碑文), in addition to confirming the *Daianji garan engi*'s basic account of the statue's height and material, is the first text to describe the Daianji Shaka as possessing the thirty-two auspicious marks of the Buddha. In addition, the statue is said to have been made by the hands of a superior craftsman, the likes of which will not come again.

⁸⁹ The measurement *jōroku* means literally 'one *jō* and six *shaku*,' or about 485 cm for a traditional standing image. Seated *jōroku* images were half that size, or about 242 cm; Mimi Yiengpruksawan, "In My Image: The Ichiji Kinrin Statue at Chūsonji," *Monumenta Nipponica* 46 (Autumn 1991), 330.

By the time of the first recorded Buddhist tale literature of the Heian 平安 Period (794-1185), the early ninth century *Nihon ryōiki* 日本靈異記, the Daianji Shaka had achieved a position of unique spiritual authority within the popular religious imagination of the time. Two stories recorded in the *Nihon ryōiki* describe miracles that occur in response to devout worship of the Daianji statue.⁹⁰ The apparent source of the Daianji Shaka's auspicious powers and what made the icon superior to other sculptural representations of the historical Buddha was its possession of the thirty-two auspicious marks and "eighty minor marks of a superhuman being" (J: *hachijisshugō*; C: *bashi zhonghao* 八十種好). Over time, the icon more and more came to be singled out among other ancient statues of Śākyamuni for its possession of the thirty-two marks, also known as the Buddha's auspicious "characteristics" (Sk: *lakṣaṇa*; J: *sō*; C: *xiang* 相). Because these marks were believed to signify the Buddha's transcendence of profane existence following his enlightenment, images that possess these marks are often described in Buddhist texts as the only appropriate means of portraying the human body of the Buddha.⁹¹ As a result, Nagaoka argues, the possession of the Buddha's auspicious marks

⁹⁰ *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: the Nihon ryōiki of the monk Kyōkai*, trans. and ed. Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) 1973, 199 – 202.

⁹¹ Not simply an ideal, one apocryphal Chinese scripture goes so far as to threaten the maker of Buddhist images with the punishment of "having incomplete sense-organs during five million lives" for failing to include all thirty-two *lakṣaṇa* when making images of the Buddha; Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Art in Medieval China: The Ecclesiastical View," in *Function and Meaning in Buddhist Art: Proceedings of a Seminar Held at Leiden University, 21-24 October 1991*, ed. K.R. van Kooij (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995), 8. Contradictory texts suggest that such an accurate depiction was impossible for human hands to produce, leading to the association of the more accomplished sculptors of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods with divine status. Considering the seemingly immaterial nature of many of the thirty-two marks, which are often further subdivided into eighty minor marks, the copying of an auspicious icon that already claimed authority from its direct visual lineage to the historical Buddha no doubt assured craftsmen and patrons of the authenticity of their portrayal.

in ancient Japan was directly associated with theoretical understandings of the *shōjin* body of the Buddha.⁹²

A principle source at the time for interpreting the interrelated concepts of the *shōjin* body and the Buddha's thirty-two auspicious marks was the *Daichidoron* 大智度論 commentaries on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (J: *Dai hannya haramitsu kyō*; C: *Dabore boluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜經) attributed to Nāgārjuna (J: Ryūju 龍樹, ca. 150-250 CE). Since the death of the historical person Śākyamuni, religious communities articulated theories of varying complexity to reconcile the contradictory nature of the Buddha as both a human figure and a superhuman deity, whose absolute, transcendent nature became the object of increasing devotion.⁹³ The *Daichidoron*'s account was the first systematized articulation of a two-body theory that would serve as the foundation for later, more complex theoretical explanations of the various bodies (S: *buddhakāya*) the Buddha was believed able to possess. While *buddhakāya* theory would develop more complex doctrinal explanations for three or more bodies, the early accounts represented by the *Daichidoron* proposed a clearer two-part division of a “physical body” (S: *rūpakāya*; J: *shikishin* 色身) or “living body” (*shōjin*) and a “dharma body” (S: *dharmakāya*; J: *hōshin* 法身).⁹⁴

The *rūpakāya* is therefore understood as the Buddha seen in human body, while the *dharmakāya* is the eternally transcendent aspect of the Buddha, each corresponding to the *Daichidoron*'s division of reality into two realms of conventional and ultimate truth,

⁹² Nagaoka, *Nihon no Butsuzō*, 45-48.

⁹³ Gadjin M. Nagao, “On the Theory of the Buddha-Body (Buddha-kāya),” in *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*, ed. L.S. Kawamura (Albany: Statue University of New York, 1991), 103-122.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 106-107.

otherwise known as the doctrine of the twofold truth (J: *nitai*; C: *erdi* 二諦). Within this dichotomy, *shōjin* is the true physical body of the Buddha in the world of appearances, bearing the thirty-two major and eighty minor auspicious marks of a *tathāgata* (J: *nyorai* 如来). In Nagaoka’s reading of the *Daichidoron*, the finite “living body” is that which the infinitely expansive “dharma body” manifests in this world, and is capable of expounding the law for the salvation of sentient beings.⁹⁵ It is perhaps not difficult to imagine that this conceptual interaction between the physical *shōjin* body and the limitless *hōshin* body could be seen as serving to justify the creation of Buddhist images, which while grounded in the materiality of the physical world expressed the divine truth of the Buddha’s teachings. What are required, however, are the hands of a craftsman skilled enough to recreate the Buddha’s thirty-two marks. Like the Udāyana image’s magical artisan, the *Daianji hibun* records just such a divine craftsman, the likes of which, it declares with assurance, will not be seen again in this world.

The divine status that the Daianji Shaka had already acquired by the time of Chōnen’s journey to Song China can be further seen in the statue’s second epithet: *Ryōzen no Shaka* 靈山の釈迦, or Śākyamuni of Vulture Peak. According to the *Daianji engi*, the auspicious marks possessed by the Daianji Shaka were no different than those possessed by the true body of Śākyamuni on Vulture Peak (S: *Grdhrakūta*; J: Ryōjusen 靈鷲山).⁹⁶ In the 16th chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* (J: *Hokke kyō*; C: *Fahua jing* 法華經),

⁹⁵ Nagaoka, *Nihon no butsuzō*, 47-48.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 51. The site “Vulture Peak” refers to an actual mountain located near the present day Indian city of Rajgir. The area was once part of the ancient Indian state of Magadha that was frequented by the historical Buddha, and the mountain is famously the site for many of the Buddha’s sermons in such texts as the *Lotus Sutra*.

entitled “The Life-Span of the Tathagata,” the Buddha addresses his audience concerning his death (S: *parinirvāna*) as follows:

At that time I tell the living beings
that I am always here [on Vulture Peak], never entering extinction
but that because of the power of an expedient means
at times I appear to be extinct, at other times not,
and that if there are living beings in other lands
who are reverent and sincere in their wish to believe,
then among them too
I will preach the unsurpassed Law.⁹⁷

According to this chapter, one of the most widely copied and explicated passages from the *Lotus Sutra* in both medieval China and Japan, the death of Śākyamuni and his disappearance from this world is explained as merely a “skillful means” (S: *upāya*; J: *hōben* 方便). In reality he remains on Vulture Peak eternally preaching the divine law of the *Lotus Sutra*.

The Daianji Shaka, therefore, while directly connected to the living Shaka through its possession of his auspicious marks, also symbolically occupied the space of the real and eternally present Shaka. In turn, the statue was able to localize the world of the *Lotus Sutra* around the icon – in the temple of Daianji, as well as on the Japanese archipelago. The eminent priest of the esoteric Shingon school, Kūkai 空海 (774-835), is recorded in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* 東大寺要録 as explicitly stating his belief that Shaka’s eternal residence was within Daianji temple and that the temple’s Western Pagoda was

⁹⁷ *The Lotus Sutra*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University, 1993), 230.

Vulture Peak itself.⁹⁸ A later account in the 1140 travel diary of Ōe no Chikamichi 大江親通 (d. 1151) describes the statue's "awe-inspiring beauty [that] must be no different than Shaka on the Vulture Peak where heavenly beings hover about in perpetual acts of offering."⁹⁹

The widespread popularity of the *Lotus Sutra* in Japan at the time, and the statue's ability to manifest the immediate physical presence of the eternally present Shaka fostered the "paternal position" that the icon held in relation to later images.¹⁰⁰ A late Heian Buddhist iconographer, Shinkaku 心覚 (1117-1180), records the ubiquity of the images derived from the Daianji tradition in his twelfth century *Shoson zuzō* 諸尊圖像, claiming that "the Shaka Buddha images everywhere have been modeled after that of Daianji."¹⁰¹ The sculptor Kōjō's 康尚 (fl. late-tenth century) "principle icon" (J: *honzon* 本尊) at the Kawara-in 河原院 in Kyoto, datable to 991, is perhaps the most well documented example of a Daianji copy, and was reported to have retained the original's auspicious marks. As Oku Takeo suggests, the Kawara-in Shaka may have even been made as a superior replacement for Chōnen's Udāyana icon that was brought to Japan just four years before, more suitable for the oncoming period of the "Latter Days of the Law" (J: *mappō* 末法), when the provisional teachings of the historical Śākyamuni would

⁹⁸ Citation of *Tōdaiji yōroku* taken from Matsumoto Moritaka, "The Iconography of Shaka's Sermon on the Vulture Peak and Its Art Historical Meaning," *Artibus Asiae* 53, no. 3/4 (1993), 370.

⁹⁹ Translation of *Shichidaiji junrei shiki* 七大寺巡礼私記 (Personal Record of a Pilgrimage to the Seven Great Temples) taken from Matsumoto, "Shaka's Sermon," 370 (brackets added by author). For original text, see *Kōkan bijutsu shiryō jinhēn (jōkan)*, ed. Fujita Tsuneyo (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1972), 43.

¹⁰⁰ Matsumoto, "Shaka's Sermon," 369.

¹⁰¹ Citation of Shinkaku's *Shoson zuzo* taken from Matsumoto, 369.

no longer be satisfactory.¹⁰² In addition, the Daianji statue's legendary origins by the hands of a divine craftsman and the importance of its accurate resemblance to the living Buddha suggest both strong connections to the Udāyana story of the first Buddha image and the possibility for overcoming the difficulties of accurately replicating the historical Buddha's body. Moreover, in the Daianji Shaka, the cult of the Udāyana image came to be mixed with and perhaps to an extent conflated with the increasingly influential cult of Śākyamuni worship that developed around faith in the *Lotus Sutra*.

The Cult of Saichō's Yakushi

In addition to the Daianji Shaka, a second somewhat legendary icon of the Medicine Buddha, Yakushi 藥師, believed to have been carved by the Tendai priest Saichō in 788 also appears to have drawn heavily from the Udāyana story. As Yui Suzuki has shown in her study of the cult of Yakushi icons in Heian Japan, Saichō's Yakushi icon was likely modeled after the late eighth century standing Yakushi statue from the former Lecture Hall (J: *kōdō* 講堂) of Tōshōdaiji 唐招提寺 in Nara (FIG. 16).¹⁰³ The Tōshōdaiji Yakushi icon is believed to have been produced under the supervision of the Chinese priest Ganjin (C: Jianzhen 鑑真, 688-763), and to have largely been conceptualized as a *danzō* 檀像, a sandalwood image. In a conversation between Saichō and his disciple Ninchū 仁忠 (dates unknown) recorded in the ninth century account *Menju kuketsu* 面授口訣, Saichō relates the mysterious circumstances in which he acquired the wood for making his Yakushi statue. As he recalls, he discovered in the

¹⁰² Oku Takeo, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, 54-55.

¹⁰³ Suzuki, *Medicine Master Buddha*, 49.

forest a beautiful tree that was enveloped in a purple cloud during the day and that emitted a radiant purple light at night. Ninchū informed his master that this tree must have been a kind of *haku* 栢 (*Quercus dentata*), the wood of which had been recognized in East Asia as a valid substitute for true sandalwood.¹⁰⁴

The auspicious nature of sandalwood images, as related through the legend of the Udāyana image and other texts regarding the construction of Buddhist images that had entered Japan prior to the mid-eighth century, was already well acknowledged during Saichō's time.¹⁰⁵ As Morse describes, this was a period in Japanese sculptural history that marked “the beginning of the practice of conferring high sanctity to unpainted statues carved from aromatic woods throughout East Asia.”¹⁰⁶ In addition to the inherent nature of sandalwood – its fragrant smell, the delicate quality of the material, not to mention the expense involved in procuring it – the material's ubiquity in the sculpting of Buddhist images in East Asia largely originated through its connection to the auspicious Udāyana image.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹⁰⁵ Morse, “Standing Image of Yakushi,” 37.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 37-38.



Figure 16. *Standing Yakushi*. Nara Period, late 8th century. Wood. Tōshōdaiji.
(From *Medicine Master Buddha*, 49)

As Suzuki further suggests, there may have also been an iconographical association between Saichō's standing Yakushi icon and the Udāyana image.¹⁰⁷ While standing images of Yakushi were rare at the time, Ganjin's Tōshōdaiji Yakushi image stands life-size at 165 centimeters, both hands, although now missing, seeming to project forward in the *abhaya* and *varada* mudras, not unlike the iconography of the Udāyana images. The above-mentioned *Nihon ryōiki* also includes the tale of a miraculous standing Yakushi image that "was similar to the sandalwood statue made by [Udāyana]."¹⁰⁸ As Suzuki argues, considering Saichō's known religious beliefs in the connection between the three buddha's Shaka, Yakushi, and Amida, it would not be unrealistic to assume that Saichō would draw from an iconographical tradition so closely associated with the historical Buddha for his construction of an image of Yakushi. Later replications evoked associations with Saichō's Yakushi icon primarily through the standing form and the sacred nature of the wood used, hearkening to both the memory of Saichō and the Udāyana image.¹⁰⁹

What can be inferred from Suzuki's analysis of Saichō's lost Yakushi icon is that both its form and medium clearly referenced the Udāyana legend and its miraculous image. In doing so, the icon belonged to an ever-expanding tradition of auspicious East Asian icons believed "to be invested with miraculous powers and associated with sacred narratives."¹¹⁰ Saichō's statue may have also gone further than Ganjin's Tōshōdaiji Yakushi in attempting to utilize the known stylistic motifs of the Udāyana icon. While his

¹⁰⁷ Suzuki, *Medicine Master Buddha*, 54.

¹⁰⁸ *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition*, 212.

¹⁰⁹ Suzuki, *Medicine Master Buddha*, 65.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

standing Yakushi icon was originally unpainted, reportedly following Saichō's last wishes, his disciple Gishin 義真 (781-833) eventually added gold and polychrome decoration to the icon.¹¹¹ According to a fourteenth century source, the icon's outer robe was painted red, with the underside painted greenish-blue. The outer robe was further decorated with delicate *kirikane* 切金 cut gold leaf patterning. Suzuki suggests that Saichō was most likely influenced by the coloring of auspicious images he and Gishin had encountered during their pilgrimage to Tang China between 803 and 805. While she compares the color patterning of the Yakushi image with auspicious images at Dunhuang, this was in fact the same pattern of coloring used for the Seiryōji icon. By having his icon polychromed in the same decorative pattern, it's likely that Saichō was not only referring to contemporary Tang practices of decorating auspicious Buddhist images, but to the Udāyana icon more directly.

In addition, the Yakushi icon was also well known in Japan in the tenth century as a living statue. This status was maintained by applying to it a similar logic utilized in the Daianji Shaka and appropriated from the Udāyana legend. As Oku suggests, the Yakushi icon maintained authority as a "living image" (*ikeru zō* 生ける像) because it was made by the hands of Saichō, whose reputation as the founder of Enryakuji and the monastic complex on Mt. Hiei granted him a semi-divine status. Just as the Daianji Shaka and Udāyana statue required the hands of a divine artisan to recreate the living body of the Buddha, so was a monk such as Saichō believed capable of endowing his Yakushi image

¹¹¹ Ibid., 67.

with life and sacred authority.¹¹² Indeed, the influence of the Udāyana legend may have been even more significant to Saichō's Yakushi than Suzuki has suggested.

The many themes of the Udāyana image and its miraculous connection to the historical Buddha were thus well known in Japan prior to Chōnen's journey to Song China. However, before Chōnen's return, no authentic copies of this tradition had been brought to Japan. Rather, these images sought formal and conceptual means to bridge the gap between the manifest image and its sacred prototype, relying on a divine artisan for the accurate replication of the Buddha's thirty-two marks and his iconography, or the use of sacred wood. These examples of two auspicious Japanese cult icons that became objects of cults of replication during the Heian period suggest the efficacious nature of the Udāyana image that was understood in Japan at the time of Chōnen's departure to Song China, as well as notions concerning the ability of manmade icons to manifest the living body of Śākyamuni in the immediate presence of the worshipper that did not rely strictly on the record of an unbroken historical lineage.

Chōnen's Shaka and Copying Images

As this study has already made clear, while Jōsan and other Chinese figures utilized historical chronicles to establish direct lineages to their most desired prototypes, direct replication was not a requirement for icons in Japan to claim a spiritual association to a distant prototype, whether the Udāyana image itself or the efficacious image made by an important religious figure. While many of the famous miraculous images in China and Japan professed some connection to the historical Buddha or the sacred sites of Śākyamuni's life, it was certainly the Udāyana image that held the greatest claim to the

¹¹² Oku, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, 54.

reproduction of the Buddha's living body. Conceptions of what marked "resemblance" and "mimesis" in medieval China and Japan no doubt differed greatly from modern notions, and as Suzuki has shown, the subtle nature of the relation between copy and prototype often lead to the replication of cult icons that today would be unrecognizable as exact copies.¹¹³

Chōnen may himself have been well aware of the status that the Saichō Yakushi and the Daianji statues had acquired as cult objects of replication by the late tenth century. As a highly educated monk, Chōnen had received training from a number of temples to which he held strong ties at the time of his 983 departure, including the two powerful monastic centers of Tōdaiji and Enryakuji that had granted him letters of introduction for Chinese temples he would visit during his pilgrimage. His most important temple affiliation was certainly with Tōdaiji, where at the very latest he is known to have resided from 972. Prior to his residence at Tōdaiji, Chōnen had studied Shingon esotericism at Tōji 東寺, where he received precepts under his teacher Kanjō 寬靜 (901-979) in 959.¹¹⁴ Although its influence greatly diminished throughout the medieval period, the Nara temple Daianji was itself a major center of esoteric practice during the ninth and tenth centuries, a time in which it also held close ties with Tōdaiji. Indeed, the involvement of Daianji priests at three Eye-Opening Ceremonies (J: *kaigen-e* 開眼会) for the colossal Buddha at Tōdaiji, the priests Eun 惠運 (798-869) and Reii 令辰 (856-941) of whom performed as master of ceremonies for the 862 and 934 ceremonies respectively, suggest not only the intimate connection between the two temples, but again the paternal position

¹¹³ Suzuki, *Medicine Master Buddha*, 65-66.

¹¹⁴ Kamikawa, "Chōnen," 2.

that the Daianji Shaka held in relation to Tōdaiji’s icon (FIG. 17). As Matsumoto argues, the extent to which the Shaka image at Daianji had become the object of lavish devotion is reflected in the fact of the Daianji priests’ immediate involvement in the symbolic act of giving life to Tōdaiji’s own central icon.¹¹⁵ Chōnen, whose knowledge of Shingon esotericism and devotion to Śākyamuni are directly recorded in the *Record* and his 972 oath to build a temple for the worship of Śākyamuni, would surely have been aware not only of Daianji’s *honzon* from his time at Tōdaiji, but also of its reputation as the “living Shaka” of Vulture Peak.



Figure 17. Recreation of Eye-Opening Ceremony for Tōdaiji Great Buddha in 2002. Nara. (Image reproduced from http://www.bell.jp/pancho/k_diary-3/2010_0410.htm)

Importantly, Chōnen’s monastic dealings from 972 were not restricted to Tōdaiji alone. With Tōdaiji as his base residence, he continued to study a variety of both esoteric and exoteric Buddhist teachings, including Kegon 華嚴, Sanron 三論, and Tendai.

¹¹⁵ Matsumoto, “Shaka’s Sermon,” 369.

Although many scholars have attributed his later difficulties in establishing a temple for housing his Shaka image to bad relations with the powerful Tendai complex of Enryakuji, evidence suggests that he actually maintained strong relations and was held in high esteem prior to his departure to China. Chōnen was especially regarded for his erudition in teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*, and in 974 was invited to Mt. Hiei to participate as a respondent (*tassha* 答者) to Genshin 源信 (942-1017) at a seasonal sutra chanting (*kinomi dokyō* 季御読経).¹¹⁶ He was later invited to participate in a debate with Fujiwara no Sanesuke 藤原実資 (957-1046) in 982 concerning the “mysteries of the *Lotus Sutra*” (*Hokke kyō ōgi* 法華經奧義). Although no extent records prove his knowledge of the Yakushi statue, at the time of his stay on Mt. Hiei in 974, Saichō’s icon was enshrined in the Enryakuji’s Central Hall (*chūdō* 中堂), the monastic complex’s oldest and most important ritual space.¹¹⁷

That knowledge of the Daianji Shaka, Saichō’s Yakushi, and their respective cults of replication may have influenced Chōnen’s own Shaka image has bearings on how Chōnen conceived the auspicious nature of his image in relation to its Udāyana lineage. The Daianji image intermixed conceptions of the Buddha’s thirty-two marks with the Śākyamuni on Vulture Peak, emphasizing the importance of both the Udāyana lineage and the Buddha of the *Lotus Sutra* to the establishment of the historical Buddha’s sacred presence in material form. Unlike the Daianji copies, which sought to evoke the immediate presence of the physical body of the eternally present Śākyamuni, the copies of Saichō’s Yakushi evoked the spiritual authority and memory of the prototype’s carver,

¹¹⁶ Kamikawa, “Chōnen,” 2.

¹¹⁷ Suzuki, *Medicine Master Buddha*, 46.

the monk Saichō. Thus, the idea of copying an established prototype during the Heian period indeed did not demand “exact, physical replications of the original.”¹¹⁸ While direct copies of the icon made on site at Enryakuji appear to have existed, numerous copies were made at temples in the capital as well as the distant provinces in order to establish an authoritative link with Enryakuji, the head temple of the Tendai sect. Neither variation in size and style, nor lack of proximity between the copy and prototype necessitated a hindrance to the replicated icons’ ability to channel the spiritual authority of the original image’s carver. Therefore, both lineages of copied icons emphasize the claims to religious authority particular images could possess in East Asian Buddhist traditions that did not necessarily rely on direct copying.

Despite the narrative put forth by Jōsan, the creation of the Seiryōji Shaka was also unable to rely on a direct process of replication, and would require the utilization of more conceptual means to frame the image within the Udāyana lineage. Lacking a direct model, the artisans maintained the basic Udāyana *likeness* noted above but were unrestricted in their manipulation of material and use of style. For example, the carvers of the Seiryōji image did not seek to capture the powerful physicality and presence seen in the work of late Tang sculpture, nor the transcendent ethereality beginning to emerge in the work of late Heian artists in Japan. Rather, following its status as heir to a historical and artistic tradition of auspicious icons that emphasized the very material nature of the icon *as* an image, the Seiryōji Shaka projects a great and immediate sense of its own materiality, perhaps emphasizing all the more the ability of the man-made image to act and perform miracles in this world as a living image. Through the intentional archaizing of the image and its association with sandalwood, the icon’s very material nature

¹¹⁸ Suzuki, *Medicine Master Buddha*, 66.

supported its participation within the Udāyana lineage and its potential as the original Buddhist image.

Ornamentation certainly appears to have been a major concern in the making of this statue, and a means through which the image could replicate existing prototypes while establishing a high degree of individuation and salvific potency. Atop the image's head, a round amber-colored crystal protrudes from a slight indentation between the hair and *uṣṇīṣa*. While many examples of this form of ornament exist, the insertion of crystals into the hole of each ear is quite rare. Also unusual is the flat silver disk with the incised image of a Buddha inserted into the image's forehead just below the hairline. As will also be discussed in the following chapters, this particular image in the place of the Buddha's *urna* likely signifies the position of a relic that was installed in the image's head at the time of its creation.

The interior contents of the image, which will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter provide insight into Chōnen's conception of the image that differed considerably from Jōsan's historically articulated version of the image's identity. The cache included four printed images of great interest: three of the bodhisattvas Monju, Fugen 普賢 (S: Samantabhadra; C: Puxian), and Miroku (FIG. 18), in addition to a *Lotus Sutra* Tableau of Śākyamuni preaching before a royal assembly (FIG. 19). The first three are recorded as having been donated by Chōnen himself, while the tableau was gifted by a Japanese monk named Kain. Based on the 972 oath that Chōnen composed with his fellow Tōdaiji monk Gizō 義藏, the monk's faith in Śākyamuni was also closely associated with his faith in Miroku, the future Buddha whose descent from the Tuṣita Heavens he hoped to accompany in his future rebirth. The remaining print subjects reflect

Chōnen's great faith in the *Lotus Sutra*, Monju and Fugen of whom appear alongside Śākyamuni as prominent figures. The *Lotus Sutra* Tableau is itself a densely arranged masterpiece of Northern Song woodblock technique that portrays Śākyamuni in his eternal paradise at Vulture Peak, surrounded by his royal retinue of disciples, bodhisattvas, deities, and worshippers presenting the Buddha with offerings.

In his analysis of the prints, Brinker postulates that while the *Lotus Sutra* tableau appears to stand alone, the smaller prints may have been included as a triptych with Miroku in the center flanked by the two attendant bodhisattvas.¹¹⁹ Considering Chōnen's devotion to Miroku, the arrangement of objects within the statue seems to suggest a sophisticated expression of Chōnen's soteriological worldview that encompasses his devotion to the two buddhas Śākyamuni and Miroku. There is perhaps, however, another reading of the prints, in which the inclusion of the *Lotus Sutra* tableau, along with Śākyamuni's two principle bodhisattvas Monju and Fugen, suggests the statue's identification not only with the original Udāyana image, but also with the transcendent Śākyamuni of the *Lotus Sutra*. As Brinker himself notes, this practice of including a Buddha image inside of another image is a widely known phenomenon. These "enshrined buddhas" (J: *nōnyū butsu* 納入佛), may be inserted into images that are called "sheath buddhas" (J: *saya butsu* 鞘佛), wherein the container becomes the recipient of the animating presence of the interred image, possessing the embodied identities of each.¹²⁰

Chōnen's identification of his Udāyana image with the Śākyamuni of Vulture Peak was certainly influenced both by Chōnen's own faith in and knowledge of the *Lotus*

¹¹⁹ Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 38-40.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

Sutra, as well as the living image of Śākyamuni at Daianji, the most well known Śākyamuni icon in Japan at the time of his pilgrimage. The creation of this association through his inclusion of printed images further highlights Chōnen’s use of materiality over historicity in establishing the identity of the Seiryōji image as an auspicious *shōjin* image. Thus while the Udāyana image was believed throughout most of East Asia to most effectively reproduce the Buddha’s living body, in late Heian Japan the Daianji Shaka had come to assume authority in this regard, and would have been a major motivating factor in establishing an iconographic program for reproducing the living body of the historical Buddha.

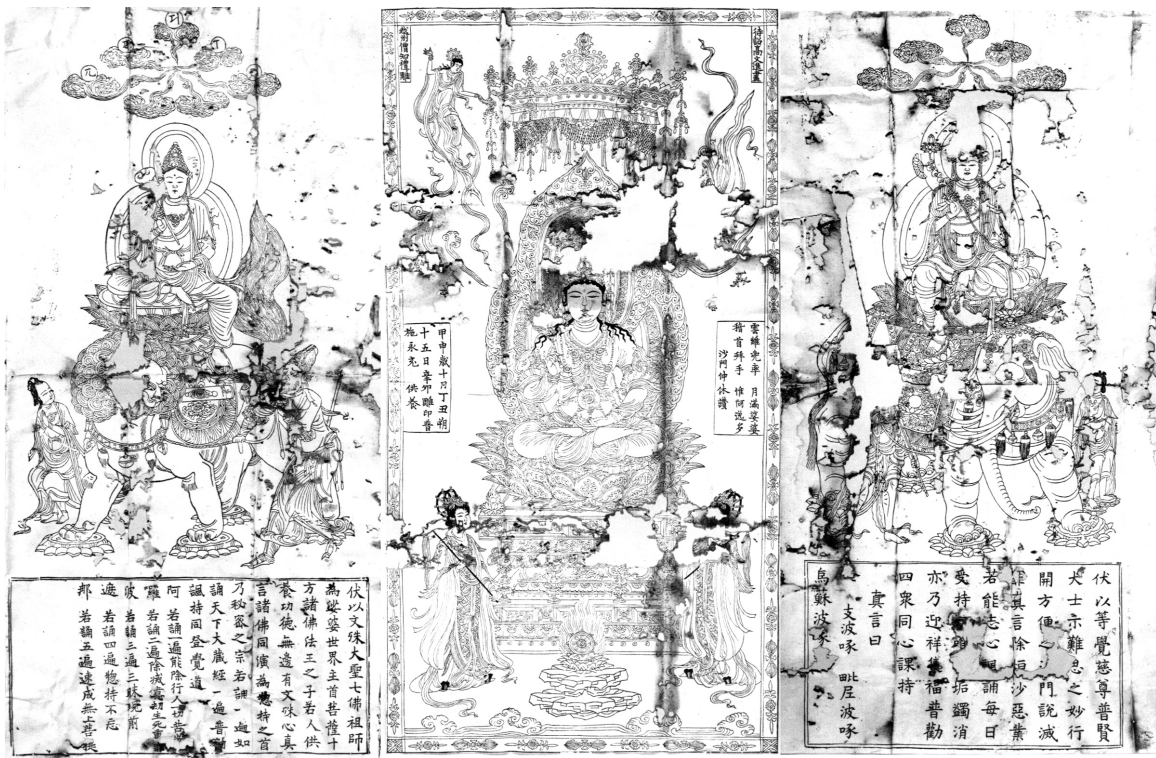


Figure 18. Gao Wenjin. Three Buddhist prints found inside Seiryōji Shaka. Monju (*left*), Miroku (*center*), Fugen (*right*). Northern Song, 984. Black-and-white woodblock prints on paper. *Left* 57 x 30 cm, *center* 54.5 x 28.5 cm, *right* 57 x 29.7 cm. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (From “Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō,” 9)

Returning to the distinctions between Chōnen’s account of the statue as a *yō* and Jōsan’s as a direct copy, the former’s commissioning of a miraculous image closely

mirrors that of Xuanzang, who returned from a sixteen-year pilgrimage to India with a copied image of the famed Udāyana image, whereas Jōsan's account places Chōnen in the position of Udāyana himself, whose image was modeled directly off of the ultimate divine prototype – the historical buddha. In addition, Jōsan's account of the image's origin and replication highlights the historical lineage of the statue's prototype as it passed through the hands of Central Asian and Chinese rulers. While Faure argues that the power of such images is derived from their unbroken chain of mimesis directly to the original historical buddha, within the context of Chinese miraculous images and *ruixiang*, the image's power arguably derived from its political history with regard to the rulers who possessed and protected it.

Chōnen's account of the image in the *Record* removes the history from the description of the image's creation. From his perspective, establishing religious authority within a copied image meant to recreate the sacred conditions – the materials, the basic iconography, as well as the sacred space occupied by the eternally present “living buddha” that resides on Vulture Peak, circumventing history to establish the presence of Śākyamuni as he appeared in the past and in the present. For Chōnen, sacred presence could not be achieved through the direct replication of an image alone, but required the metaphysical associations of an image with its auspicious referent – a conceptual practice that already had centuries of precedent in Japan. In this manner, materiality served as an effective vehicle for those associations.

In summary, both sculptures discussed above, the Daijūji in Nara and Saichō's standing Yakushi at Enryakuji each established iconic traditions that to varying degrees sought to replicate the sacred nature of the prototype. Their influence on the Seiryōji

Shaka can be seen in the importance placed on materiality over historicity in imparting religious function and identity on a sacred icon. This is a subject that will be further explored in the following chapters, which will examine Chōnen's use of the image's interior space and its relation to exterior ornamentation. Chōnen would rely not only on the veracious authenticity of the image's external connection to the historical Buddha (that is, the Udāyana Buddha), but on the very material substance of the Buddha in the form of his relics, as well as on an ornamental program to create an icon that functioned not merely as a copy of a prototype, but as a physically embodied portrait of the historical and eternally present Buddha that transcended time and space.

While Jōsan's account of a direct copy portrays the transmission of sacred authority through precise replication of form, the omission of the Kaifeng prototype from Chōnen's account suggests a fundamentally different conception of this transmission process. His model, likely a two-dimensional diagram or sketch, would have provided only a relatively loose basis for the construction of a three-dimensional image, requiring a conceptual intermediary on the part of Chōnen and the artisans, who would have drawn from their repitoires of scriptural knowledge, ritual aesthetics, and religious imagination to bridge the gap between model and actualized icon. Here, the lack of direct access to a prototype is not a detriment to the transmission of sacred authority, and it may be argued that by only having been created on a loose model rather than being directly copied from a known sculptural prototype, the image's prototype could only be Śākyamuni himself.

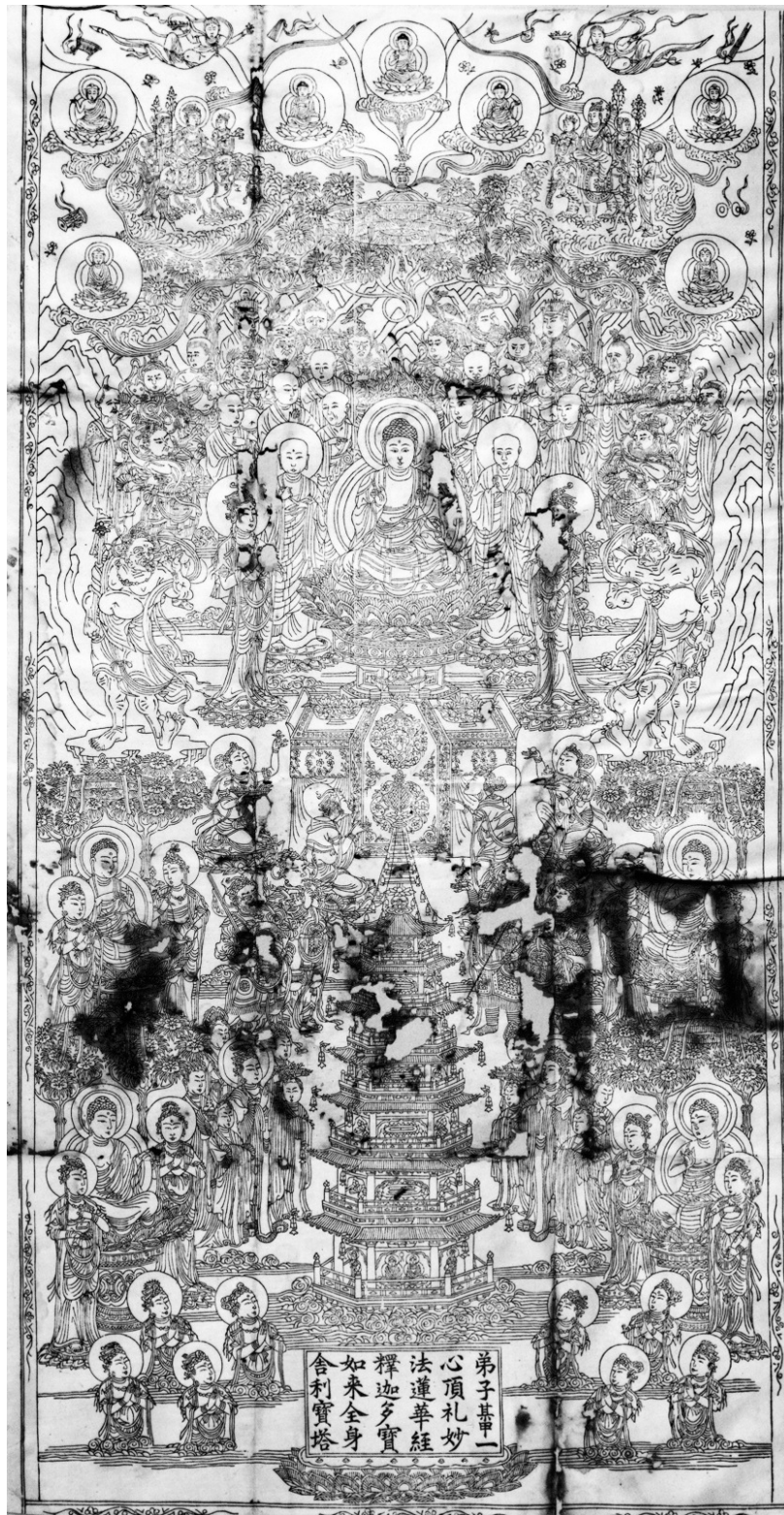


Figure 19. Lotus Sutra *Tableau*. Northern Song, 10th century. Black-and-white woodblock print on paper. 77.8 x 42.2 cm. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (From “Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō,” 7)

CHAPTER IV
GIFTS AND DIVINE OFFERINGS

Introduction

The preceding chapter has illustrated the iconographic program for the Seiryōji statue's exterior surface that was employed by the monks involved with its production to establish the icon as a "living image." As has been outlined so far, likeness, proximity and materiality were central concerns that utilized the legend of the Udāyana image to position the Seiryōji Shaka within a lineage of miraculous icons known to varying degrees and functions in both China and Japan. The authenticity of the statue's direct connection to its prototype and in turn the historical Śākyamuni was further strengthened through the embellishments of Chōnen's disciple Jōsan, whose recorded history suggests a direct replication process that helped to legitimate its status as an accurate copy. This history of the statue later took firm root in Japan, where its miraculous nature was further substantiated by the belief that proliferated in the medieval period that the copy had in fact magically assumed the position of the original prior to Chōnen's return departure to Japan, an event recorded and illustrated in the sixteenth century *Origin Tale of the Shaka Hall*.

With its lineage of copies and prototypes throughout both the continent and Japan, the Seiryōji Shaka reveals the degree to which likeness, or at least the belief in likeness, can establish presence and sacred authority within an iconic Buddhist image. This perception is based on accumulated knowledge and the perpetuation of the story of the first Buddha image, the miracles performed by other statues, and in the case of future copies, the miraculous deeds attributed to the image in question. However, the imparting

of likeness onto an image, like the ritual Eye-Opening Ceremony, the inscribing of sacred text, or the insertion of relics, is only one form through which an image is consecrated, that it may bridge the gap between inanimate statue and living deity. In addition to the religious community's shared stories of the image's miraculous origins, the ritualized acts of the community itself at the time of its creation are essential to the sacralization of the icon.

In 1954, a cache of objects was discovered concealed within the Seiryōji statue that suggests a more complex cultic identity imparted onto the statue by its patron Chōnen, whose personal salvific agenda for the statue was intended to far exceed the grounds of Seiryōji. The staggering variety of dedicatory objects discovered inside the statue included a number of texts, printed images, gems, relics, model viscera, textiles, metals and Chinese coins (see APPENDIX B). Various interpretations have been put forth by Japanese and western scholars to explain the function or reason for the insertion of particular items into the statue, and yet no one has yet to convincingly suggest a unifying theory to support the sheer variety of objects included.¹²¹

Following widespread efforts to repair and document Japanese works of Buddhist art throughout the mid-twentieth century, and supported in large part by advances in x-ray technology, scholars have discovered the seeming ubiquity of the practice of depositing items into Buddhist statues. Often described in English as dedicatory or votive objects, in Japanese they are given the term *zōnai nōnyūhin*, which means literally “objects contained inside statues.” Known examples range from the inclusion of a single object or text to such broad arrays of items as seen in the Seiryōji Shaka. Although

¹²¹ See, for example, Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, Oku, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, and Nagaoka, “Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō,” the latter of which perhaps comes closest to a comprehensive theory.

exactly when or where the practice began remains unknown, the inclusion of *zōnai nōnyūhin* in Buddhist images likely originated in Gandhāra or western India sometime around the first or second centuries AD and were long established by the time of Chōnen's pilgrimage to China.¹²² Derived from the practice of enshrining relics into Buddhist images, objects included as *zōnai nōnyūhin* became more diverse and idiosyncratic as the practice spread throughout China and the rest of East Asia. Their underlying ritual functions as well became more eclectic and often suggest the unique religious motivations behind the construction of particular images.

The Seiryōji image's inclusion of model organs, for example, has aroused much curiosity that has lent to the specific interpretation of the interred objects as functioning to animate the image – an interpretation further justified by the inclusion of relics.¹²³ However, while animating the image through the inclusion of numinous substance in the form of both “corporeal relics” and “dharma relics” was likely a motivating factor for the inclusion of actual relics and sacred texts, the wide variety of *zōnai nōnyūhin* and the diversity of their donors suggest that animation was not necessarily their sole function. Rather, a closer analysis of the range of items suggests that the interior space of the statue served a variety of purposes, principle of which was arguably the generation and distribution of karmic merit.

This chapter will attempt to offer a unifying theory for the statue's *zōnai nōnyūhin*, arguing for not only the acceptance of a multiplicity of meanings, but for an interpretation that considers the complex network of objects as gifts to the Buddha that

¹²² Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 7.

¹²³ Ibid.; Oku, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, 42-48; Hasuike Mio, “Butsunai nōnyūhin kara mita Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō ni tsuite,” *Bunkazaigaku zashi* 2 (2006): 18-21.

function together to establish the image as a powerful “field of merit” (J: *fukuden* 福田). An aid in cultivating the path to enlightenment, a field of merit can be described as a suitable recipient for one’s offerings and donations, the two richest fields being the Buddha and the Saṃgha (*sōbō* 僧坊).¹²⁴ The Saṃgha’s use of icons like the Seiryōji Shaka to cultivate a field of merit further reinforces the argument that the icon was actually worshipped *as* a manifestation of the Buddha and the interpretation of the interred objects as gifts to the Buddha. As the subsequent chapter will argue, this system of merit generation further operated through principles established by a particular form or ritual adornment unique to Buddhism called *shōgon*. The interior adornments of the Seiryōji icon reveal that Chōnen had utilized an established cult prototype (the Kaifeng Udāyana image) as a model for creating a specific, highly individualized icon, rich in personal meaning and salvific potency that a surface level study alone only begins to suggest.

Zōnai Nōnyūhin: Form and Function

In February of 1954, during a restoration of the Seiryōji icon, a team of scholars led by officials of Japan’s Education Ministry and the abbot of Seiryōji, Tsukamoto Zenryū opened the back of the Seiryōji Shaka statue to investigate its contents. A 5½” by 11” rectangular plank of wood was removed to reveal a cavity roughly three inches deep, concealing a remarkable cache of objects (FIG. 20 and 21). In their study of the icon,

¹²⁴ “The reasoning behind this idea is that the Buddha and the monks who follow his teachings are the primary sources of merit, which they produce by the good deeds of maintaining moral precepts, practicing meditation, and developing wisdom. Lay followers who make donations of food, clothing, or shelter in support of those activities can gain a share of the merit accumulated by the monks;” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, “field of merit” (article by Charles Muller and T. Griffith Foulk).



Figure 20. Seiryōji Shaka, *back*.
 With visible plank that
 concealed the cache.
 (From *Nihon no bijutsu* 513, 2)

Henderson and Hurvitz note that the possibility of the existence of objects within the statue had already been proposed by Minamoto Toyomune in 1924, and yet the sacred nature of the statue had long prevented its contents from being examined.¹²⁵ Minamoto's assertion was perhaps premised on the increasing awareness that the insertion of relics and other items for consecratory purposes was widely practiced across Asia, and would not have itself proven an entirely revelatory discovery. Nonetheless, while scholarship on the Seiryōji Shaka prior to World War Two had been principally concerned with the relation of the image to its continental prototypes of the Udāyana lineage, the objects became the central concern for scholars of the post-war period.

Included amidst the countless items uncovered from inside of the statue was an invaluable record of items that accompanied the insertion of the five model organs (*Nyūzuizō gozōguki shabutsu chūmon* 入瑞像

五臟具記捨物注文) (FIG. 22). The catalogue was signed by Chōnen, the sculptor Zhang Yanjiao 張延皎, and a Kaiyuansi monk Ju Xin 居信, and completed on the eighteenth day of the eighth month of 985, the same day that Jianduan's record of Chōnen's

¹²⁵ Henderson and Hurvitz, "The Buddha of Seiryōji," 6.

pilgrimage was signed. The catalogue contains eight entries that record the offerings of the Archbishop of Taizhou, nine Kaiyuansi monks, a monk from Suzhou 蘇州, three nuns from Miaoshansi 妙善寺 (J: Myōzenji), the statue's sculptors, a one-year-old child, Chōnen himself, and the Japanese monk Kain (see APPENDIX A). The record concludes by noting that on the seventh day of the same month, when the image was completed, a tooth relic of the Buddha was installed behind the statue's face, after which a blood-spot emitted from the top of the Buddha's head.¹²⁶ Although appearing at the end of the document, it suggests that this relic was in fact the first item interred.



Figure 21. Cache of objects packed upon opening of Seiryōji Shaka.
(From *Nihon no bijutsu* 513, 42)

¹²⁶ *Heian hibun*, 3484-3485; translated in Henderson and Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryōji,” 48.

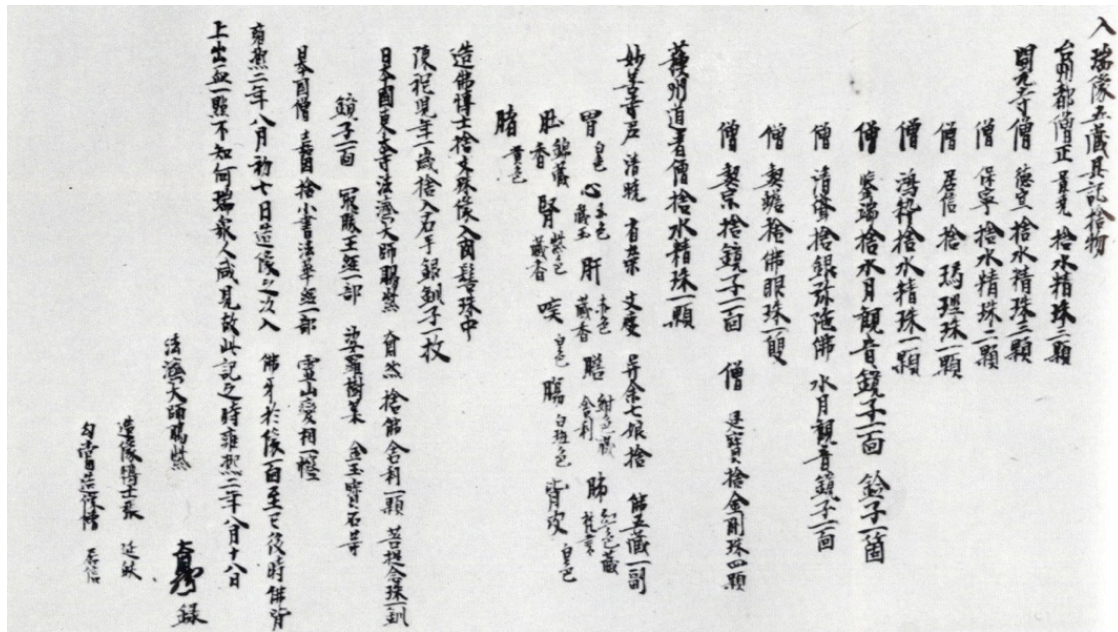


Figure 22. Catalogue of deposited items (*Nyūzuizō gozō kaiki shabutsu chūmon*). Northern Song, 985. Ink and paper. 17 x 37 cm. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (From *Shaka shinkō to Seiryōji*, 91)

Importantly, however, the catalogue of items does not offer a complete account of the objects found in the statue, and many of the objects recorded have not been recovered. The offerings of the archbishop and monks included a total of nine crystal beads, one piece of agate and four diamonds. While only three crystals were found inside of the statue, the three crystals inserted into the statue's *uṣṇīṣa* and ears were likely those offered by the monks, leaving three more unaccounted (FIG. 23). Likewise, the four diamonds were also unrecovered. In addition to gems, the monks Jianduan and Qingsong 清聳 each offered a mirror engraved with an image of Water Moon Kannon (J: *Suigetsu Kannon* 水月觀音) (FIG. 24), only one of which was found inside, while the monk Qizong 契宗 offered a small mirror. Jianduan further included a small bell, and Qingsong a silver image of Amida. The silver image of Amida likely refers to the round image

inserted as the statue's urna. The monk Qichan 契蟾 is recorded as offering a pair of Buddha irises (J: *butsugenzu* 佛眼珠) (FIG. 25).



Figure 23. Crystal inserted into ear of Seiryōji Shaka.
(From *Nihon no bijutsu* 513, 26)



Figure 24. *Suigetsu Kannon mirror*. Northern Song, 10th century. Bronze.
Diameter 11.4 cm. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (From *Secrets of the Sacred*, 34)



Figure 25. Seiryōji Shaka, face. With inset irises and engraved urna.
(From *Jingoji to Rakusei Rakuhoku no koji*, 27)

Following the items offered by the monks is a description of the set of multicolored silk organs offered by the nuns of Miaoshansi (FIG. 26). These included a white stomach, a red heart containing a gem, a red liver containing incense, a blue bladder containing a relic, and a crimson set of lungs inscribed with Sanskrit calligraphy. As Oku argues, the inclusion of incense and relics into the statue possibly derives from the text of the *Fukūkenjaku Mantra and Supernatural Transformations* (J: *Fukūkensaku jinhen shingon kyō*; C: *Bukong juansuo shenbian zhenyan jing* 不空羼索神變真言經; S: *Amoghapāśa-kalparāja*), an esoteric ritual manual largely concerned with the worship of Fukūkenjaku Kannon, in which offerings of sandalwood incense together with relics are placed inside of a golden image of Kannon.¹²⁷



Figure 26. Silk model organs donated by nuns of Miaoshansi. Northern Song, 985. Silk and miscellaneous textiles with ink inscriptions. Seiryōji, Kyoto. (From *Zōnai nōnyūhin*)

¹²⁷ Oku, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, 46-47.

The next entry in the catalogue is a Monju image offered by the statue's sculptors, which was placed into the gem of the buddha's uṣṇīṣa and has also not been verified. The one-year-old child offered a silver bracelet, which is extant. Chōnen himself offered one buddha relic, believed to have been included in the now shattered reliquary although unrecovered.¹²⁸ He also inserted a *bodhi* rosary (J: *bodai nenzu* 菩提念珠), a mirror, a copy of the *Golden Light Sutra* (J: *Konkōmyō saishōō kyō*; C: *Jinguangming zuisheng wang jing* 金光明最勝王經), a *śāla* leaf and other precious stones, all of which have been recovered. Of the two mirrors gifted by Chōnen and Qizong, however, only one has been confirmed, found inserted into the base of the statue's lotus pedestal. X-ray imaging has revealed what may be a mirror inside the statue's head, however it is unknown whether it is of the kind offered by Chōnen and Qizong or the second Water Moon Kannon mirror offered by either Jianduan or Qingsong (FIG. 27). The final items, as noted in the previous chapter, are the *Lotus Sutra* "transformation tableau," gifted by the Japanese monk Kain along with a copy of the *Lotus Sutra*.

¹²⁸ Nagaoka, "Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō," 17.

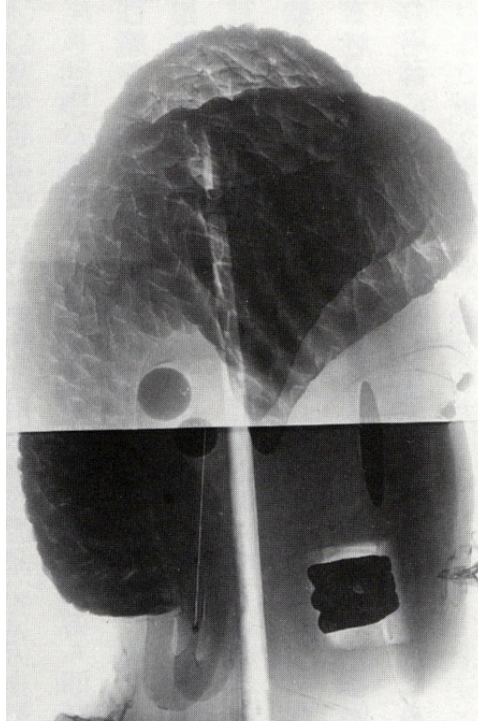


Figure 27. X-ray image of Seiryōji Shaka's head containing a mirror and tooth relic.
(From *Nihon no bijutsushi* 513, 45)

Aside from those items recorded in the catalogue, the interior of the statue was filled with a number of other documents, records, images and objects. Documents included *kechien* 結縁 lists of names of those who contributed to the statue's building, Jianduan's *Record*, and several texts of clear importance to Chōnen that will be discussed below. An illustrated printed edition of the *Diamond Sutra* (J: *Kongō hanyaharamitsu kyō*; C: *Jingang bore buluomi jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜經) was offered by a Chinese monk named Wu Shouzhen 吳守真, and images of Monju, Fugen, and Miroku were most likely deposited by Chōnen, as noted in the previous chapter. Other objects included a shattered glassware (possibly a reliquary containing the relic gifted by Chōnen), a silk bag, a piece of calcite, string, silk netting, a mica banner, and various fragments of gold and silver foil. Over 400 fragments of small, cleanly cut textiles of various materials and patterns likely

cut from Buddhist robes were also left from the list. In addition, 132 coins were included, believed to have been donated by devotees and women of Taizhou, attached to the back of the inserted panel and scattered throughout the cavity (FIG. 28).

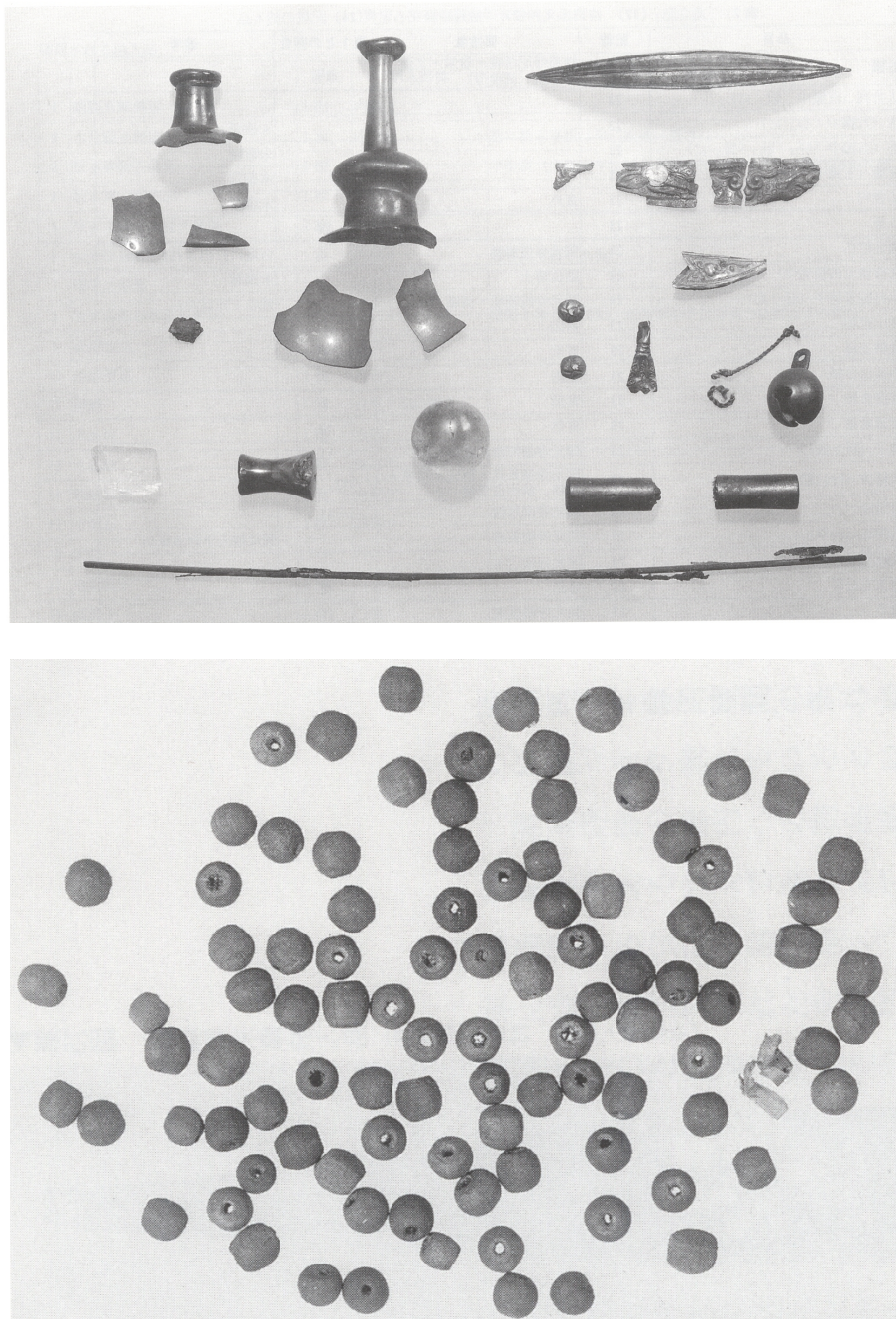


Figure 28. Some objects removed from inside of Seiryōji Shaka.
(From *Nihon no bijutsu* 513, 46-47)

Considering the items included in the catalogue and their placement both inside and outside of the image more specifically, the offerings must have been considered as key compositional elements of the statue from early on in the image's conception. As suggested by the presence of the three crystals in the statue's *uṣṇīṣa* and ears, the pair of eyes, the Amida image as its urna, the mirror in its pedestal, as well as by the inclusion of a tooth relic and mirror inside of the statue's head, the sculptors Zhang Yanjiao and Zhang Yanxi 張延襄 must have worked together with Chōnen and the Kaigenji monks to construct a statue that could incorporate the offerings into both the image's interior space and its outer surface. This is further supported by Kurata Bunsaku's observation that the style of multi-block construction utilized for the statue did not necessarily require the amount of hollowed interior space that the image possesses, and that the enlarged cavity must have been planned from the beginning to contain a significant number of offerings.¹²⁹ These factors point to the likelihood that the objects found in (or on the surface of) the statue were by no means an afterthought, but rather made up an ornamental and iconographic program that was of central importance to the design of the statue from the outset. Why then were these objects considered integral to the conception of the image, and how can their intended function be considered in relation to other examples of statues that incorporated similar hidden caches?

Compared to its Gandhāran origins in the practice of inserting relics, a look at other accounts of Buddhist statues that contained dedicatory objects reveals uses of interior space that reflect the increasing complexity that had come to be seen in the practice by the tenth century. While the majority of extant continental statues containing

¹²⁹ Kurata Bunsaku, "Butsuzō-Nai Nōnyūhin – Objects Found Inside Buddhist Statues," in *European Studies on Japan* (Tenderdon, Kent: Norbury), 185-186.

caches that predate 985 are few, it is clear that the practice began to depart from the sole inclusion of relics and became more diverse as early as the early eighth century. In particular, the earliest known reference to a statue that contained model organs suggests that this specific practice became popular around this time.¹³⁰ The ninth century Tang collection of tales *Miscellaneous Morsels of Youyang* (C: *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎) contains an account of the early eighth century bodhisattva statue at Baoxiangsi 宝相寺 in Chengdu 成都 that always looked newly made because it possessed a set of five organs.¹³¹ According to Oku, this story came to be widely known, and the inclusion of organs became a common practice in the creation of later statues for the purpose of endowing images with vitality and a sense of living presence.¹³²

Later surviving Chinese statues from the Song dynasty that contained a broader array of *zōnai nōnyūhin* include the 1282 wooden statue of Guanyin in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Similar to the Seiryōji statue, a plaque removed from the back of the statue was inscribed with the name of its carver and the date of its production. Inside the statue was found, in addition to a set of silk organs, a small copper mirror, a variety of grains, fragrant wood and precious stones.¹³³ While the practice of placing model organs made of silk, bronze, or other precious metals continued well into the Ming period, the practice was not as widely adopted in Japan. Rather, patrons of Buddhist

¹³⁰ Tanabe Saburōsuke, “Zōnai nōnyūhin,” in *Zōnai nōnyūhin*, Jūyō bunkazai bekkān vol. 1 (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1978), 30.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹³² Oku, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, 46.

¹³³ Tanabe, “Zōnai nōnyūhin,” 31.

images in Japan appear to have preferred the inclusion of texts in the form of *kechien*, *dharani*, or sutras.¹³⁴

The earliest account of *zōnai nōnyūhin* in Japan is seen in the *Shōsōin Records* (J: *Shōsōin monjo* 正倉院文書), which describes the inclusion of a relic inside the 762 statue of Kannon at Ishiyamadera 石山寺. A later example of inserting text is seen in the various esoteric sutras specific to their related deities that are recorded as having been deposited into the main statues in the Lecture Hall of Tōji 東寺 in 839 along with relics and incense. Kūkai, abbot of Tōji from 823, wrote on the relation between sutras and the cosmology of the *dharmakāya*:

The word sutra means stringing or weaving. The [Dharmakāya's] secret voice, the woof, and mind, the warp, weave themselves into the brocade depicting the assembly as vast as an ocean of Buddhas and bodhisattvas.¹³⁵

The text wove together the deity's voice and mind, and united its body (the statue's iconic image) to the transcendent *dharmakāya*. This suggests one of the earliest examples of utilizing text inside of a Japanese statue to evoke the numinous power of a deity and its roots in esoteric practice.

By the Heian Period, the range of objects used as *zōnai nōnyūhin* had become much more eclectic, perhaps reflecting the evolving nature of Buddhism and its popularity among the Kyoto aristocracy not only as a religion for the protection of the state (*Gokoku Bukkyō* 護国仏教), but as a salvific faith. The hidden Yakushi statue at

¹³⁴ Tanabe, "Zōnai nōnyūhin," 32.

¹³⁵ Translation of *Dainichikyō kaidai* 大日經解題 (*Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sutra*) from Ryuichi Abé, *Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 293-294 (bracketed text in original).

Shitennōji 四天王寺 is an intriguing example of the changing function of such caches under the patronage of late Heian Period aristocrats (FIG. 29). Discovered following repairs in 1914, in addition to a copy of the *Sutra of the Original Vows of the Medicine-Master Tathāgata of Lapis Light* (J: *Yakushi Rurikō Nyorai hongan kudoku kyō* 薬師琉璃光如来本願功德經), a *kechien* list of names and a list of contributors (*kōshinjō* 貢進状), the statue was found to contain a bronze mirror, three wooden combs, lacquer ribs of a fan, sewing needles, dice, and charms for safe child birth (FIG. 30). According to the text of the *kechien* and *kōshinjō*, the Yakushi statue was sponsored by a lady named Mononobe Misao 物部美沙尾, who commissioned the statue as an aid to her prayers for recovery from a grave illness. Unfortunately, however, Mononobe appears to have succumbed to her illness prior to the statue's completion. The priest in charge of the statue construction then utilized the *kechien* list to appeal for funds to complete the image in accord with the lady's dying wish, finishing the statue on the second month of 1077. The conceptual link that connects the items interred within the statue is their relation to the everyday items that a woman would own during the Heian Period, and as Tanabe suggests, they may well have been some of Lady Mononobe's cherished possessions.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Tanabe, "Zōnai nōnyūhin," 12.



Figure 29. *Seated Yakushi*. Heian Period, 1077. Wood. Shitennōji, Osaka.
(From *Zōnai nōnyūhin*, 46)



Figure 30. Objects found inside of Shitennōji Yakushi. Lacquer fan ribs, silver mirror, combs, sewing needles, shells, glass, dice made from teeth. Shitennōji, Osaka.
(From *Zōnai nōnyūhin*, 13)

These items of personal connection to the donor bound the patron to the image and imbedded the statue with Lady Mononobe's memory, suggesting an evolution of the utilization of *zōnai nōnyūhin* in Heian Japan to bind Buddhist icons to their patrons as a means of generating karmic merit for the next life. Although the lady was unable to show devotion to the Yakushi image in life, the priest in his role as an intermediary between the laity and the Buddha saw that her wishes could be carried out in death by physically inserting material objects of some personal connection into the statue. Such items are not relics of the Buddha, but rather relics of those responsible for the image's creation.

As a further analysis would show, the types of objects included in statues in Japan and China became increasingly diverse, reflecting the individual proclivities and religious agendas of the image's creator and patron, while also allowing the larger Buddhist community to share in the collective benefits of the image's creation through the inclusion of *kechien* and donated objects. Such interred objects could also provided the opportunity for devotees to form bonds with the Buddha through his image that would exceed death by uniting the patron with the potentially endless source of merit that an image could generate. By the time of its creation in 985, the range of objects deposited in the Seiryōji icon encompassed virtually all types of *zōnai nōnyūhin* known to date, including a wide range of what have been termed "corporeal" and "dharma-body" relics.¹³⁷ In addition to these relics, the discovery of the Seiryōji deposits provides insight into the more expansive functions that had come to be applicable to *zōnai nōnyūhin* at the time. In particular, the inclusion of numerous items of personal connection to Chōnen and the diversity of the items' donors call further into question any simple explanation for the function of such objects, of which the status of "relic" was itself only one. However,

¹³⁷ Ibid., 34.

because the statue did contain multiple relics of the Buddha, including a tooth relic that was allotted for what is arguably the most auspicious position in the image, the conceptual distinction between actual relics and other forms of *zōnai nōnyūhin* is a distinction that must be considered.

***Zōnai Nōnyūhin* and Relics**

As Juhyung Rhi has argued, *zōnai nōnyūhin* directly evolved from the practice of installing relics of the Buddha into statues, which is an association largely retained in later images – even when the objects inserted claim only symbolic ties to relics.¹³⁸

As Rhi and Brinker have advocated, and as Tanabe has demonstrated in his own study of the subject, not only was the inserting of relics into Buddhist statues a widespread practice throughout Asia, but it emerged relatively early and was highly significant in the development of Buddhist art and the ritual function of icons. This has often been explained by the need for devotees of Buddhist icon to “animate” the figure or to endow it with sacred substance.

In the case of the Seiryōji Shaka, for example, Oku argues that the inclusion of the Buddha’s corporeal relics with model organs, a variety of jewelry, precious materials and incense, along with their relation to the *Fukūkenjaku Mantra and Supernatural Transformations* points to the objects’ function of enlivening the image with numinous

¹³⁸ What can be considered symbolic relics are mundane objects that become relics only retroactively through their inclusion within the body of the Buddha, as occasionally seen in the use of such objects as gems, stones or grains; Juhyung Rhi, “Images, Relics, and Jewels: The Assimilation of Images in the Buddhist Relic Cult of Gandhāra: Or Vice Versa,” *Artibus Asiae* 65, no. 2 (2005), 169. True relics traditionally fall within one of three classifications that derive from Indian relic veneration: (1) bodily relics, (2) contact relics (objects that the Buddha owned, used, or was associated with, such as his robe, bowl, or the *bodhi* tree), (3) dharma relics; John S. Strong, *Relics of the Buddha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 8.

power (*reisei* 靈性).¹³⁹ Drawing support from two later Kamakura examples, Oku suggests that the inclusion of such materials was meant to animate the five sense organs (*gokan* 五官) relating to the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.¹⁴⁰ Brinker, likewise, while discussing the animatory power of physical relics also emphasizes the use of *textual* relics in the Seiryōji Shaka and other statues that are manifested in the form of sacred texts.¹⁴¹ While this practice is intimately connected to the worship of the Buddha's relics, it would later develop into a consecratory method that gave individual patrons the ability to exceed the limits of established iconographies to endow their images with unique identities and salvific potential.

The origins and eventual ubiquity of this phenomenon is therefore closely related to the prolonged discourse concerning the nature of Buddhist images and the appropriateness of their veneration. Not unlike similar discourses on iconoclasm throughout the history of Christian art, Buddhist icons continued for centuries after their acceptance in established cult practice to face questions of legitimacy as substantial objects of worship and devotion. These images evolved from an early Buddhist devotional tradition that placed enormous focus on the worship of relics, and which was hesitant to shift its focus of devotion to images that were potentially devoid of sacred

¹³⁹ Oku, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, 42-48.

¹⁴⁰ Specifically, Oku references a 1463 seated Buddha in the collection of the Italian National Oriental Museum of Art and a Kamakura period Amida statue in Ankokuji 安国寺 in Hiroshima 広島. The practice of inserting a bell into the head or throat of a Kamakura period statue, he notes, symbolically imparted the ability of speech to an icon; *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁴¹ Brinker, "Facing the Unseen: On the Interior Adornment of Eison's Iconic Body," *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 50 (1997/1998), 51-53.

substance.¹⁴² Rhi notes that this problem of insubstantiality could be countered in two ways, both of which required the image to contend with the symbolic power and cultic importance of relics. First, the image could receive validation as an appropriate cult object by linking itself to the physicality of the historical Buddha through claims of verisimilar authenticity. As discussed in the previous chapter, icons utilized legendary traditions, like that of the Udāyana statue and other famous images replicated throughout Central Asia and China, to establish connections to both the physical Buddha and the sacred sites of India associated with his biography and miraculous activities. Examples of other images within this category include those believed to have been created by the Indian kings Aśoka and Prasenajit.¹⁴³

The second method was to directly install a relic within the image. Gregory Schopen has shown that relics were a key aspect of early Buddhist devotional practices among monastics and the lay community in India long before either the emergence of the so-called “cult of the book” or the widespread dissemination of anthropomorphic images of the Buddha.¹⁴⁴ Just as the containment of relics of the Buddha could legitimate the worship of stupas in India and Central Asia, the possession of a relic could transform an image into a suitable object of devotion by forming a direct connection with the body of the historical Buddha. As Rhi further shows, sculptors from Gandhāra to western China often transformed the Buddha’s uṣṇīṣa into a hollowed vessel for storing a relic (FIG. 31).

¹⁴² Rhi, “Images, Relics, and Jewels,” 169. The significance of the cult of the relic to early Buddhist communities has been studied in depth by Gregory Schopen. Many works focused on this aspect of his studies are compiled in Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997).

¹⁴³ Soper, “Literary Evidence,” 259 – 273.

¹⁴⁴ Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, 99 – 111.

An important gilt bronze seated statue of Śākyamuni dated between the second and third centuries in the collection of Harvard University Art Museums possesses an uṣṇīṣa that was most likely constructed to function as such a container (FIG. 32).¹⁴⁵ The symbolic significance of the uṣṇīṣa as the most elevated point of the figure likely speaks to the importance of the relic to the functioning of the image.¹⁴⁶ The presence of a physical remainder of the Buddha himself, objects known as “corporeal relics” (C: *shengshen sheli*; J: *shōjin shari* 生身舍利), could infuse the image with the bodily presence of the Buddha.¹⁴⁷ It also, however, problematizes the relation of relic to image. Was the image subordinate to the relic or the relic to the image?



Figure 31. *Standing Buddha*. Gandhāra, 2nd-3rd century A.D. Schist. 122 cm. Lahore Museum. (From “Images, Relics, and Jewels,” 198)



Figure 32. *Seated Buddha*. Gandhāra, 2nd-3rd century A.D. Gilt bronze. H. of figure 32.0 cm, base 24.0 x 13.0 cm. Arthur M.Sackler Museum, Harvard. (From “Early Buddha Images from Hebei,” 89)

¹⁴⁵ Originally believed to be of Chinese origin, Roderick Whitfield and others argue that this image was most likely a Gandhāran import, carried across the silk road by Central Asian merchants shortly following the the early years of Buddhism’s introduction to China; Whitfield, “Early Buddha Images from Hebei,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (2005), 87-98.

¹⁴⁶ Rhi, 174.

¹⁴⁷ Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 7-8 (bracketed text included in original translation).

The insertion of relics into Buddhist statues further evolved in China to incorporate the inclusion of not only corporeal relics and such appropriate substitutes as jewels or precious stones, but texts and images as well. In many cases, the inclusion of Buddhist sutras and incantations (S: *dharani*) came to be conceived of as superior to corporeal relics. A 1742 Chinese translation and commentary by Gongbu Chabu 工布查布 (ca. 1690-1750) of a much older text, the *Scripture of Measurement for Making Buddhist Images* (C: *Foshuo zaoxiang liangdu jing* 佛說造像量度經) reveals the practice's association with both Buddhist relics and image adornment:

Both doctrines, the Exoteric and the Esoteric, discuss the usage of adornment of the [concealed] treasures [of Buddhist images], and the term generally used is “relic” [Sk: *śarīra*; C: *sheli*; J: *shari* 舍利]. Central are two kinds of relics or, some say, four kinds. The first [and most important] is the use of “Dharma-Body relics” [C: *fashen sheli*; J: *hosshin shari* 法身舍利], and the second [less important] is that of “corporeal relics.” Therefore, in the Western regions the “Dharma-Body relics” were used to a greater extent.¹⁴⁸

顯密兩教。俱有裝藏之說。而悉言用舍利。中具二種。或曰四種。法身舍利作第一。生身舍利次之。故西土風俗。多用法身舍利。¹⁴⁹

Besides the fact that the corporeal relics had the detriment of serving as a reminder of the Buddha's absence or his extinction from the world, the above text's relegation of

¹⁴⁸ Translation by Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 7-8. Translated readings and bracketed text from Brinker's original translation.

¹⁴⁹ Adhering to Brinker's translation of the *Foshuo zaoxiang liangdu jing*, I inserted a full stop after “或曰四種” in the Chinese original cited from the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association version of T21:51a.

corporeal relics as subordinate to dharma relics may also be explained by Buddhist philosophic principles of rejecting the physical body.¹⁵⁰ Dharma relics remain able to embody the Buddha's presence in the world through his recorded words and doctrine, which ultimately reflects the absolute reality of a transcendent dharma-body. This practice in particular came to be widespread in Japan during the Kamakura Period, as seen in a number of statues associated with the monk Eison 叡尊 (1201-1290), and may to some degrees reflect growing eschatological anxieties associated with the decline of the Buddhist law in the age of *mappō*, a concern that escalated in the decades following Chōnen's return to Japan.¹⁵¹ In either case, relics serve to make up for the physical, historical, and geographic disconnect from the Buddha by "charging" the statue with the Buddha's presence.¹⁵²

Just as the lack of a physical connection to the historical Buddha posed problematic for early Buddhist attitudes toward images, the very idea that the Buddha appeared in India in physical form and that statues could become embodiments of sacred presence also raised doctrinal problems for early Buddhists.¹⁵³ From the perspective of a belief system that rejects the physical body and promotes salvation through the extinguishing of form, Mahāyāna Buddhists developed a theory of the "triple body" (S:

¹⁵⁰ Eugene Wang, "Of the True Body: The Famen Monastery Relics and Corporeal Transformation in Tang Imperial Culture," in *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture*, ed. Katherine R. Tsiang et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 81.

¹⁵¹ Brinker, "On the Interior Adornment of Eison's Iconic Body," 42-61; Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 46-50. On the anxieties surrounding *mappō* and the associated practice of preserving sacred texts, see D. Max Moerman, "The Archaeology of Anxiety: An Underground History of Heian Religion," in *Centers and Peripheries in Heian Japan*, ed. Mikael Adolphson et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 337-370.

¹⁵² Swearer, *Becoming the Buddha*, 20.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

trikāya; J: *sanshin*; C: *sanshen* 三身), wherein the Buddha’s body is understood as “numerically single but functionally multiple.”¹⁵⁴ The historical Śākyamuni epitomizes the concept of the manifestation-body or transformation-body (S: *nirmānakāya*, J: *keshin*, C: *huashen* 化身) as a unique manifestation of the Buddha in the physical world that is capable of renouncing the world, attaining enlightenment, and teaching the Buddhist law to his followers.¹⁵⁵ The reward-body (S: *sambhogakāya*, J: *hōjin*, C: *paoshen* 報身), which takes individualized names – Amitābha, Bhaisajyaguru, Maitreya, Vairocana, etc. – is not immediately visible to those in the physical world, but is apprehended by those who have reached an advanced stage of understanding.¹⁵⁶ The Buddha’s dharma-body or truth-body, however, is not a body at all, but is understood as “a collection of transcendental qualities of which all buddhas [partake].”¹⁵⁷ The dharma-body has no physical form, and is therefore not visible in the physical world, but is believed to be manifested in the “truth” of the Buddha’s discourse.¹⁵⁸

Debates over the Buddha’s body/bodies in China had become exceedingly complex by as early as the mid-Tang and played a major role in debates concerning the

¹⁵⁴ This tripartite division was one among various interpretations of *buddhakāya* theory that developed out of early Mahāyāna debates on the nature of the Buddha’s body, including the two-part division described in chapter two above; Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 134.

¹⁵⁵ Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, “Buddha Bodies and the Iconographical Turn in Buddhism,” in *Buddhist Spirituality: Later China, Korea, Japan, and the Modern World*, ed. Takeuchi Yoshinori, 391-416 (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 396-97.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 396-97.

¹⁵⁷ Donald S. Lopez Jr, ed, *Buddhist Scriptures* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 52 (bracketed text a tense adjustment by author).

¹⁵⁸ Shi Zhiru, “Scriptural Authority: A Buddhist Perspective,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 30 (2010), 96-97.

nature of Buddhist images among both iconophiles and iconoclasts. Considering both the complexity of doctrinal issues among an increasingly diverse range of Buddhist schools and the variations in Chinese translations of Indian texts, it is difficult to postulate any generally accepted “canonical” theory.¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless, *trikāya* theory eventually came to be largely accepted in China and Japan, as evidenced in such widely influential Chinese commentaries as the *Awakening of Faith in the Greater Vehicle* (J: *Daijō kishin ron*; C: *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 and the *Daichidoron*. Because Buddhist icons possess materiality and occupy physical space, yet require a degree of visualization, mental projection or remembrance on the part of the viewer that relies on a collective imagination and recollection to see the statue *as* a manifestation of a particular deity, such images may be read as embodiments of the reward-body. As such, they are intended “to exercise salvific effects on the minds of those who perceive them.”¹⁶⁰ This interpretation is perhaps, however, not definitive by any means and complicated by the different interpretations of both *buddhakāya* theory and the status of manmade icons.

The variety of items included as *zōnai nōnyūhin* may also reflect different understandings of the relation of an image to the body/bodies of the Buddha. The insertion of the two kinds of relics into statues may be understood as reflecting a desire on the one hand to ground the image in the localized physical reality of the devotee’s immediate presence with aspects of the Buddha’s corporeal body (the internalization of the *nirmanakāya*), while simultaneously serving as a conduit for the embodied presence of the *dharmakāya* in the words of sutras and other sacred texts. The *sambhogakāya*,

¹⁵⁹ Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 100-111.

¹⁶⁰ Yiengpruksawan, “Buddha Bodies,” 398.

however, is suggested by the emphasis on practicing visualization before an image, and claims that an icon may possess all thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of the Buddha, as discussed in the previous chapter. For images of the historical Buddha in general and the Udāyana-type Seiryōji Shaka more specifically, however, the inclusion of a relic was a natural compliment to the icon, as both image and relic can be understood as “expressions and extensions of the Buddha’s biographical process.”¹⁶¹

In his analysis of the Seiryōji statue’s contents, Nagaoka has described three kinds of corporeal relics among the objects inside of the Seiryōji statue.¹⁶² These are not symbolic relics, but are rather relics that were believed sacred prior to their insertion into the statue. First is the granular relic (J: *busshari ikka* 佛舍利一顆), which although unconfirmed upon investigation of the cache was most likely contained in a now-shattered glass container (J: *hariki* 玻璃器). The second set noted in the catalogue is the relics that were contained inside one of the silk organs. The third relic, which has been verified by x-ray, is the same tooth relic (J: *butsuge* 佛牙) recorded in the catalogue that describes the emission of blood following its insertion behind the icon’s face – a miraculous sign, perhaps, of the icon’s transformation from a statue into a living icon.¹⁶³ Considering the original role of *zōnai nōnyūhin* as relics that were placed atop the statue

¹⁶¹ Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 5. Importantly, because the Buddha’s various bodies were considered as interdependent, none were necessarily viewed as subordinate to the others. In fully developed *trikāya* theory, the various attributes and virtues of the Buddha also have their correspondences with one of the three bodies. For example, the *dharmakāya* is associated with the Buddha’s wisdom, the *sambhogakāya* with his will, and the *nirmanakāya* with his acts; Gadjin, *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*, 112.

¹⁶² Nagaoka Ryūsaku, “Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō, 17.

¹⁶³ Henderson and Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryōji, 48.

in the Buddha's uṣṇīṣa, one could speculate that this last relic, in its preeminent position, was intended as the primary relic of the image.

In the case of the Seiryōji Shaka, where the differentiation between relic and other objects is made clear through the privileged position of the tooth relic, this multiplicity of functions is visible in a single image. While the tooth relic is privileged for its ability to effectively animate the image and perpetuate the living Buddha's ongoing biographical process, an explanation for the variety of other offerings must rely on an analysis of the diverse nature of the objects, the order of their inclusion, their donors and their ritual function as offerings. Important to this analysis is the acknowledgement that just as bodily relics could "charge" an image with the animating presence of the Buddha, they could also establish the space of the image as a virtuous field of merit.

Offerings, Relic Veneration and Karmic Debt

As the catalogue notes, the tooth relic was inserted immediately following the completion of the statue, eleven days prior to the recording of the catalogue. Once the icon was endowed with the power of the historical Buddha's corporeal relic, the auspicious nature of the image was validated by a miraculous appearance, the emission of blood. As seen in many stories of auspicious copied images in China and the west, the completed image was often expected to perform some kind of miracle as validation of its auspicious nature, to show that even as a copy it maintained a sacred authority no less than that of its prototype.¹⁶⁴ This miracle both affirmed the auspicious nature of the statue as a now living image, while simultaneously reaffirming the power of the relic that

¹⁶⁴ Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 47.

brought the image to life. The statue was from this moment both a miraculous icon and a figurative reliquary. Thus, while Brinker and other scholars have emphasized the importance of *zōnai nōnyūhin* to “animating” the icon and endowing it with sacred presence, the Seiryōji statue had already been effectively animated by the insertion of a single tooth relic.¹⁶⁵ All items that followed, those that were inserted into the body of the image, may be better understood for their merit producing potential as gifts to the Buddha.

In his study of the culture of relic veneration in Medieval Japanese society, Brian Ruppert argues that reliquaries often served as localized sites for the direct offering of gifts to the Buddha for the generation of karmic merit and the paying back of karmic debt. This practice owes directly to the belief among Medieval Chinese and Japanese that all beings are inherently indebted to the Buddha and that through giving, in the context of donations and offerings vis-à-vis a temple or the Buddha directly, believers had the opportunity “to repay their own debts and, they hoped, to generate good for themselves, their ancestors, or others.”¹⁶⁶ The principle initiator of this system of giving and indebtedness was the Buddha himself, whose repeated acts of sacrifice were viewed as generating the ultimate benefit for all sentient beings, and to which all are forever indebted, making the site of the Buddha’s presence the most effective field of merit and the most appropriate location for directing offerings.

¹⁶⁵ Traditional accounts of tooth relics bear striking similarity to famous images (i.e. the Udāyana image), as they are often the subject of long sagas that recount their various movements from country to country, exchanging hands between famous monks, rulers and institutions. Rather than stupas, they tend to be enshrined in temples, palaces, or monastic buildings, and may occasionally be put on display or carried in processions on special occasions. This idea of being able to “move” is particularly prevalent in various accounts of tooth relics. For descriptions of various accounts of famous tooth relics; Stone, *Relics of the Buddha*, 179-210.

¹⁶⁶ Brian Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 40.

Numerous *jātaka* tales illustrate the source of this debt as reflected in the bodily sacrifices the Buddha made in previous lives for the good of others. As Ruppert notes, one of the better-known tales in East Asia, that of Prince Mahāsattva, who offered his body to feed a hungry tigress, finds its pictorial representation in Japan on the mid-seventh century Tamamushi Shrine (Tamamushi no zushi 玉虫厨子) in the temple Hōryūji 法隆寺 (FIG. 33). In the version of the Mahāsattva story portrayed on the Tamamushi Shrine, which is based on the *Golden Light Sutra*, the Buddha shows the relics remaining from his sacrifice to his assembly, describing his parents' efforts to build a stupa at the site for containing his relics as the ultimate field of merit (FIG. 34).¹⁶⁷ Relics and their containers are not only a visual reminder of the Buddha's sacrifice, but also the ultimate site for the production of merit, and a means for the paying back of karmic debt.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 18.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.



Figure 33. *Tamamushi no zushi*. 7th century. H. 2.4m. Hōryūji.
(From *Hōryūji to Ikaruga no koji*, 140)



Figure 34. Mahāsattva jataka as depicted on *Tamamushi no Zushi*.
(From *Hōryūji to Ikaruga no koji*, 141)

While the Buddha's sacrifice established a field of merit so great that it could never be repaid, the bodily remainder of his sacrifice in the form of the relic gave believers an object of veneration that could allow for the repayment of their debt and the generation of more merit. This veneration of relics could take many forms, a principle form of which was the giving of offerings to the relic. Although self-sacrifice as a reenactment of the Buddha's own bodily sacrifice was often regarded in China as the supreme offering, the giving of one's possessions (in some cases a lock of hair or severed finger) was regarded as a significant merit-making activity.¹⁶⁹ In this manner, Ruppert argues, the monkhood operated within an economy of gift giving and indebtedness based on the production and exchange of karmic merit. All levels of society from peasants to rulers participated by generously donating offerings to the relics and the monastics, whose performances of rites and rituals centered on reliquaries "encouraged ongoing, indefinite, efforts to repay the Buddha and his community for their establishment and maintenance of an infinite field of merit."¹⁷⁰

Returning to Jianduan's record of Chōnen's pilgrimage and his impetus for creating a statue of Śākyamuni modeled on the holy Udāyana image, a similar expression of the feeling of indebtedness and karmic repayment that seems to have permeated the consciousness of medieval monastics as outlined by Ruppert is clearly reflected in Chōnen's thoughts as well. After giving up his begging bowl and purchasing fragrant wood, the record notes the following:

Chōnen's thought was to repay his father and mother for their nurture and upbringing, his teachers and masters for their instruction and care, the sovereign

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 41.

of his country for his protection, the buddhas for their salvation: by this great act of goodness to repay the four kindnesses. He humbly prays that the great works of the Emperor of the land of Tang be equal to the limitless transfiguration [of the Buddha], that the lofty foundations of the Sovereign of his own country extend for an unperishing period, that the great men of this realm and the governor of this prefecture each receive the reflected joy [of this act of piety], and that together they enjoy long years.¹⁷¹

Judging from this passage, Chōnen's motivations for the production of the statue are principally concerned with the creation and transfer of merit to his parents, his teachers, the Japanese sovereign, and to the various buddhas. In turn, he hopes that the production of merit that creating the statue may accrue will benefit the prosperity of the Chinese emperor and his people. Chōnen's desire to "repay the four kindnesses" points directly to his concern for the Chinese concept of "four debts" (J: *shion*; C: *si-en* 四恩), as reflected in the ninth century Chinese text *Great Vehicle Sutra of Contemplation of the Mind Ground in the Buddha's Life* (C: *Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing*; J: *Daijō honjō shinchi kan kyō* 大乘本生心地觀經). In East Asian Mahāyāna Buddhism, these are the four blessing, or debts that all beings share, including debts to one's parents, sentient beings, the sovereign, and the three treasures (J: *sanbō* 三宝).¹⁷² The printed copy of the *Diamond Sutra* offered by Wu Shouzheng as well directly reflects a similar concern for karmic repayment. In an inscription on the back of the sutra, Wu records his contribution of the sutra for the purpose of repaying the four debts, with specific reference to the

¹⁷¹ Henderson and Hurvitz, "The Buddha of Seiryōji," 53.

¹⁷² *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, "sien" (article by Charles Muller).

support that he received from his mother and father. The inscription is dated the sixth month of Yongxi 2 (985), two months prior to the statue's completion.¹⁷³

Following the logic of gift giving and merit exchange discussed above, it appears that with the insertion of the tooth relic, the statue commissioned by Chōnen and modeled on a lineage of Buddhist statues that claimed direct visual connection to the historical Buddha had become a site that functioned as a receptacle for the offering of gifts that sought to repay the karmic debt owed to the very figure the image embodied. The statue as both a reliquary containing the bodily remains of the historical Buddha and a visual embodiment of the first Buddha image can be seen as a manifestation of the convergence of two cultic traditions that placed unique salvific potential on the materiality and visuality of the historical Buddha. The variety of objects included speaks to the range of people that the statue's field of merit would envelope, and the extent to which the Buddhist merit economy was tied up with the actual material economy of the time. Men and women of the area donated 132 real coins. The Archbishop and monks of the area gifted crystals and other valuable gems, creating a trail of merit that included not only themselves, but the donors from whom they had received the precious materials. Any gift of a monastic renunciant, one can imagine, possessed traces of an original act of gifting. This includes, as well, the roughly 400 patches of fabric found inside the statue, likely cut from monks' robes, and gifted from the monks to the statue.¹⁷⁴ Henderson and Hurvitz imagine in this performance of giving how "the priests of Kaifeng symbolized their support [for Chōnen to establish a new temple in Japan], congratulations and

¹⁷³ Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Tokubetsu tenrankai: Shaka shinko to Seiryōji* (Kyoto: Kyoto National Museum, 1982), 94.

¹⁷⁴ One may recall the *Record's* claim that Chōnen himself traded his own robe for fragrant wood to carve the image.

participation by snipping fragments of cloth from their own garments and adding them to the objects to be inserted into the Buddha” prior to Chōnen’s departure from Kaifeng.¹⁷⁵ It may be more accurate to consider the cutting and offering of robes to the Buddha image as a symbolic act of bodily sacrifice, from which the merit generated sent reverberations back to the original donors and makers of the robes, or the Saṃgha of which they were a symbol. With these contributions, the Saṃgha, which next to the Buddha is the second most appropriate recipient of offerings, becomes symbolically and karmically brought into the fold of the icon’s (and relic’s) now established field of merit.

Just as Lady Mononobe’s bond to the Yakushi statue she commissioned exceeded the limitations of her own mortality, the gifting of objects as *zōnai nōnyūhin* established karmic bonds that were permanently tied to the life of the Seiryōji statue. By placing these gifts *inside* of the statue rather than outside as is commonly practiced by worshippers of Buddhist images even today, the ritual act of giving and merit making became internalized by the statue and an intrinsic aspect of the icon’s identity. As should be clear by now, the choice of the Udāyana prototype was significant for its *active* nature as a living image that was sanctioned by the historical Buddha himself with the authority to continue spreading his teaching long after his death. Although this aspect of the story was interpreted broadly as a mandate for *all* Buddhist images, it applied to the Udāyana image specifically. Unlike immobile representations, however, the historical Buddha was both a living, mobile agent and the greatest field of merit. These internalized gifts allowed the Seiryōji Shaka to continue that critical aspect of the original Buddha’s

¹⁷⁵ Henderson and Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryōji, 34 (bracketed text added by author). Except for the oath written by Chōnen and Gizō, there seems little evidence that the Chinese monks involved in the creation of the statue and the donations of offerings knew of Chōnen’s intentions to use the statue of Śākyamuni to erect his own temple outside of Kyoto.

biography – to travel and interact directly with a community of worshippers, and to serve as a localized field of merit. Just like the gems and crystals visible on the exterior of the image, the internal gifts became a part of the Buddha figure that is not only a passive recipient of the worshipping community’s good virtues, but an active generator and provider of compassion and merit.

Oaths and Prayers for Merit

Although this interpretation of the statue as a living image that would serve as an active locus of merit accrual for future worshippers reveals one aspect of the medieval merit economy within which the statue participated, a number of individuals were granted immediate karmic benefit from its creation and the depositing of *zōnai nōnyūhin*. Just as the priest of Shitennōji documented the financial support received for the completion of the 1077 Yakushi statue by including a *kechien* list in the image, three slips of paper found inside of the Seiryōji statue list the names of people who collected or donated funds for the icon’s construction. The first includes the names of the Zhang brothers and notes their assistance in gathering funds. The second contains a prayer for future rebirth in a buddhaland, together with the funding activities of one Li Wenjian 李文建 and his family. The third simply lists the names of twenty-four Chinese monks. A separate list, recorded by Chōnen, contains the names of his own personal benefactors in Japan who assisted the preparations for his pilgrimage, including the names of the current and previous sovereigns, and prominent nobles among the Kyoto aristocracy. Chōnen’s list ends with his wish for his parents and the “six blood relations” (J: *rokushin* 六親) of

all people to benefit from the merit accrued by the production of the statue.¹⁷⁶ Aside from what could be regarded as karmic thanks for financing his expedition, Chōnen’s inscription of texts that promote the sovereign and other court aristocrats reflects the state of tenth century Japanese Buddhism as a religion for the support and protection of the state. This is further seen in Chōnen’s inclusion of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, which along with the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Sutra of Benevolent Kings* (J: *Ninnōkyō*; C: *Renwang jing* 仁王經) was one of the “three scriptures for the protection of the state” (*chingo kokka sanbukyō* 鎮護国家三部經).¹⁷⁷ While Chōnen like any priest of a major government sponsored monastery relied on the auspices of the sovereign to exercise properly sanctioned practice, the sovereign as well relied on the *kami* and Buddhist deities for protection and stability of their reign.

Chōnen’s own motivations of “repaying the four kindnesses” are further suggested in an additional document, an oath composed by Chōnen and his fellow Tōdaiji monk Gizō in 972, *Gizō and Chōnen’s Oath of Karmic Bond Sealed in a Handprint* (J: *Gizō Chōnen kechien shuinjō* 義藏奄然結縁手印状), nine years prior to Chōnen’s departure for China (FIG. 35).¹⁷⁸ While little is known of Gizō, the oath is itself a moving pledge between the two friends to one day establish a temple on Mt. Atago 愛宕山 in Kyoto, where as they write: “with hearts united and strength joined, we will build a

¹⁷⁶ Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Shaka shinko to Seiryōji*, 91.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁷⁸ *Heian ibun*, 3480-3481; for a full translation of the oath, see Henderson and Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryōji,” 45-47.

monastery and raise up the Law left behind by Śākyamuni.”¹⁷⁹ After establishing a temple, they commit to be reborn in the Tuṣita Heaven where they will see and hear the Law of the Buddha, before eventually returning to the world with the future Buddha Miroku.¹⁸⁰ The document is signed by both monks and sealed in their own blood with handprints. The unequivocal sincerity and intentionality of the pledge, demonstrated in the sacrifice of their own blood, should not be ignored from consideration of Chōnen’s patronage of the Śākyamuni statue or his pilgrimage to China. Certainly, in the history of the Seiryōji Shaka, the *shuinjō* may well be considered its preface. For Chōnen, the commissioning of a true image of Śākyamuni was no doubt a major step toward completing his vow to establish a monastery and spread the Buddhist law in Japan, and was likely a major factor of personal consideration in commissioning the statue.

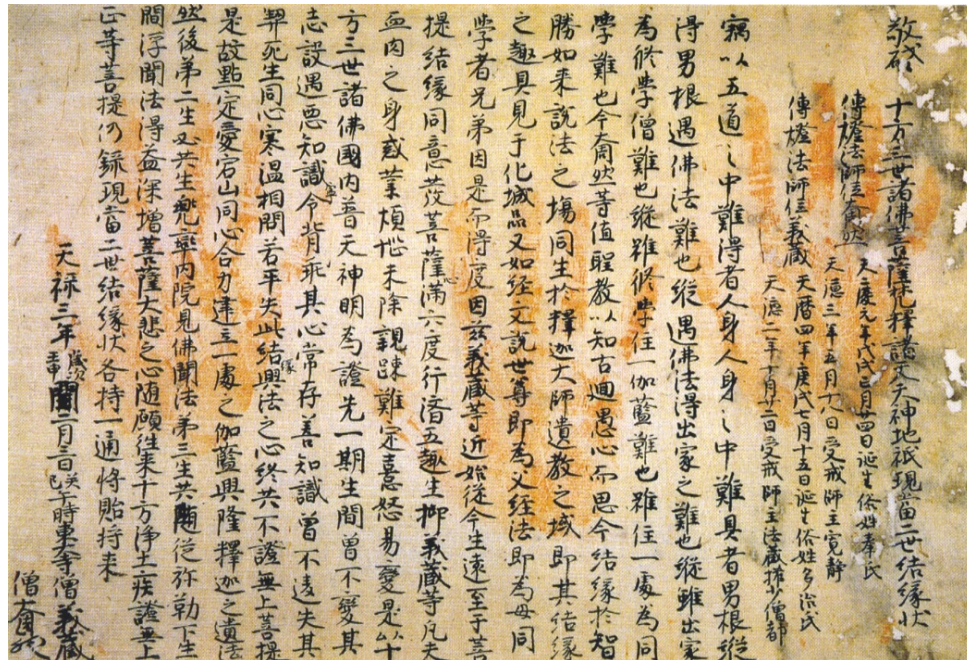


Figure 35. Gizō and Chōnen. Gizō and Chōnen’s oath. Heian Period, 972. Ink on paper with blood hand prints. 31.9 x 47.1 cm. Seiryōji, Kyoto.
(From *Shaka Shinkō to Seiryōji*, 33)

¹⁷⁹ 同心合力、建立一處之伽藍、興陸積迦之遺法; *Heian ibun*, 3481.

¹⁸⁰ Henderson and Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryōji,” 45-47.

Along with the oath, another text brought from Japan was Chōnen's original birth certificate (*Chōnen seitan kakitsuke* 齋然生誕書付) from 938, recorded on two strips tied together by his preserved umbilical cord (FIG. 36). While known instances of this practice are rare, Bernard Faure's account of the fourteenth century Zen monk Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾 (1258-1325) explains that following the death of his mother, the monk took his umbilical cord along with the hair taken from his head when he was born and placed them into a statue of Kannon, symbolically associating his mother with the deity.¹⁸¹ Here, a connection may be drawn between the birth certificate (with umbilical cord), the oath (which bestows thanks on the parents of Chōnen and Gizō), and the *kechien* list of names written by Chōnen in 985 that includes among Chōnen's mother and father, the names of the Japanese emperor and Chōnen's revered teachers.¹⁸² Unlike the later monk Keizan, Chōnen's inclusion of items associated with his mother do not owe to any form of maternal fetishization, but rather reflect his willing redirection of karmic merit toward those to whom he was spiritually indebted. Just as the inclusion of corporeal relics of the Buddha into his own image proved mutually beneficial in making the Buddha present, bodily remainders of others – the umbilical cord as well as his and Gizō's sacrificed blood – act through synecdoche to heighten the connection between the gift and the recipient of its karmic rewards, all within the field of merit that is the Seiryōji statue/reliquary. Not unlike the possessions of Lady Mononobe in the Shitennōji Yakushi, Chōnen's insertion of objects intimately connected to him served to infuse the statue with the patron's memory, an act that may have also been conceived as aiding his fortuitous

¹⁸¹ Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 41.

¹⁸² Oku, *Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō*, 19.

rebirth in the Tuṣita Heaven in accord with the desires expressed in his and Gizō's oath. These personal goals as well would receive immediate and future assistance through the statue's eventual interactions with other worshippers, as it was certainly Chōnen who through material, financial and bodily contributions possessed the strongest karmic bond to the living Buddha.

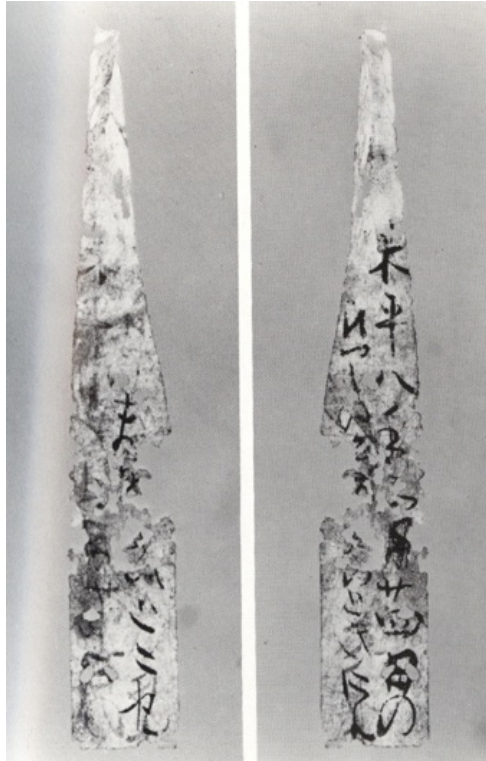


Figure 36. Chōnen's birth certificate. Heian Period, 938. Ink on paper. 19.7 x 0.7 (top), 2.1cm (bottom). (From *Shaka Shinkō to Seiryōji*, 92)

Also seen in the Shitennōji Yakushi, a later example shows that it was not uncommon for patrons of Buddhist statues to utilize the interior of the image to establish their own religious or salvific program for the icon. The sculpture of the bodhisattva Jizō 地藏 (S: Kṣitigarbha) in the Nara temple Denkōji 伝香寺 from 1228 that was investigated in 1950 contained a dedicatory text by the commissioning nun Myōhō 妙法 (1146-1159) that reveals a specific program of deposited treasures. The objects were

divided into three groups: a miniature sandalwood buddha enshrined in the icon's head, a chamber in the chest that contained handwritten and printed sutras, and a miniature statue of an Eleven-headed Kannon deposited in the icon's left thigh.¹⁸³ In her dedication, the nun Myōhō explains that the three treasures inside the icon represent the three treasures. Those in the head represent the Buddha and his Law (*buppō* 仏法), the chest chamber represents the Buddha's sacred teachings (*hōbō* 誨法), while the icon in the thigh represents the Saṃgha.

While the Jizō statue as a ritual icon is empowered by the insertion of sacred images and textual dharma relics, the objects also possess a highly personal connection to the donor. As she also explains in her dedication, her intention for the offerings of the three treasures and the commissioning of the statue was the desire to ensure salvation for her deceased parents.¹⁸⁴ Amidst the many texts in the central chamber was a list of names of more than two-hundred-sixty people with some spiritual connection to the project, similar to the *kechien* list found in the Seiryōji statue. Both statues, then, were commissioned with the intention of providing karmic merit for the community of faithful immediately involved with the project as well as for the benefit of the commissioning monks' familial and spiritual relations. The Seiryōji statue, however, went beyond the written word in establishing meritorious karmic ties to those involved and of particular significance to Chōnen.

¹⁸³ Brinker, "Anointing with Eyes, Raiment and Relic," *Impressions* 34 (2013), 157-58; for more on the Jizō statue, see Hank Glassman "The Nude Jizō at Denkōji: Notes on Women's Salvation in Kamakura Buddhism," in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch. Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies 43 (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), 383-413.

¹⁸⁴ Brinker, "Anointing," 158.

As illustrated so far, the connections created between the statue and the recipients of its merit were not limited to inscriptions, prayers, and *kechien* lists found inside of the statue. Rather, connections were formed through the ritual *act* of gifting items, many of which resemble typical items of adornment in Buddhist ritual contexts. In this way, the Seiryōji Shaka utilized conceptions of *zōnai nōnyūhin* already widely practiced in China with practices which may have been of distinctly Japanese origin. Further, as this analysis has begun to show, a connection can begin to be seen between the objects as both gifts to the Buddha and adornment of the Buddha. This latter association proves significant to a further consideration of the objects within the statue as concealed forms of ritual adornment, or *shōgon*, which finds expression in almost all areas of Buddhist art, but has yet to be sufficiently explored in English language scholarship. In the context of the present analysis of the interior contents of the Seiryōji Shaka, the concealed nature of the image's ritual adornment emphasizes the material/immaterial, visible/invisible dynamics of *shōgon* in Buddhist art and ritual. The following chapter will seek to establish a connection between the statue's contents and objects of ornament found in Buddhist ritual practice, in part by questioning how the hidden objects maintained their efficacy even as they were hidden from view. This connection aims to reveal a more nuanced interpretation of the mechanics through which karmic merit is dispersed through the utilization of Buddhist images.

CHAPTER V
RITUAL ADORNMENT

Introduction

After its carving was completed and prior to the depositing of the statue's *zōnai nōnyūhin*, the body of the Seiryōji Shaka was ornamented in gold, its hair polychromed in blue and its outer-robos painted a deep crimson that was further embellished with delicate cut-gold patterns. This overall color scheme, now mostly faded, was a form of *shōgon* common to auspicious Chinese images at the time and is also seen in later statues and paintings that followed the Seiryōji tradition in Japan. The image's exterior ornamentation also included several of the objects that are listed in the catalogue of items donated. Offerings were inserted into the ears, eyes, *uṣṇīṣa* and *urna*, as well as the statue's lotus pedestal. While many of these remain visible to viewers of the image even today, the majority of objects offered to the statue were concealed invisible within the body of the image, and from what can be inferred were entirely unknown until 1954. How then could the objects continue to function, and in what way could they have had an effect on the image's future worshippers once the statue was sealed and relocated from Taizhou to its eventual home in the temple at Seiryōji in Kyoto?

In analyzing the ritual function of these objects, it is important to also consider them not only as gifts, but as forms of *shōgon*. Rather than mere objects of conspicuous embellishment, these various gems, precious stones, pieces of jewelry, as well as the items of more symbolic value that adorned both the surface *and* interior of the statue should be understood as forms of ritual ornamentation, which as this chapter will argue, were essential to the image's ritual function. Although the gifts interred within the statue

were not visible like the exterior ornaments, specific consideration of the objects as *shōgon* provides insight into not only the ritual mechanics of the Seiryōji image, but the nature of *shōgon* more broadly as a religious system that was utilized for the generation of a field of merit.

Indeed, Kumagai Takafumi has recently suggested the great potential for re-evaluating works of Buddhist art from the perspective of an aesthetics based on a concept of *shōgon* that emphasizes its active and multidirectional elements.¹⁸⁵ In his historiographical analysis, Kumagai describes the narrow scope within which *shōgon* as a concept has been considered in previous studies, in contrast to the more complex, multifaceted range of meanings that *shōgon* possesses in doctrinal or ritual contexts. Drawing largely from the works of Inoue Tadashi and Ando Yoshika, and following as well the works of western scholars like Dietrich Seckel and Christopher Boehm, Kumagai proposes a more expansive interpretation of *shōgon* that may serve as an alternative to the craft-based study of *shōgon* that has dominated the field to date. Doing so requires establishing first a definition of what *shōgon is*, through an investigation of its etymological origins and its uses in Buddhist texts, as well as understanding its importance in the context of Buddhist ritual and material production. Following this conceptual approach to *shōgon*, this chapter will consider the connection between the Seiryōji statue's cache and a form of *shōgon* frequently found in reliquaries. Such a perspective also allows for the consideration not only of what was placed in the statue, but of what was transmitted *out*.

¹⁸⁵ Kumagai, "Shōgon kenkyū," 49-64.

***Shōgon* and Ornament**

According to Sekine Shun'ichi, the term *shōgon* has come to be associated in modern Japanese with both the idea of decoration (*kazari* 飾り, *sōshoku* 装飾) and solemnity (*ogosoka* 厳か).¹⁸⁶ In reference to Buddhist art, it is often equated with the decorative forms, materials, and instruments of ornamentation, including ornaments applied to both Buddhist images and their “Buddha halls” (J: *butsuden* 仏殿). Within its religious context, three forms of *shōgon* are often differentiated: (1) beautiful things that adorn Buddha bodies, (2) beautiful things that adorn a buddha land, and (3) the virtues and good deeds with which buddhas and bodhisattvas adorn themselves.¹⁸⁷

The first category is perhaps seen most clearly in the embellishment of a Buddhist image's surface with colorful pigments, gold-leaf, cut-gold patterning, and other costly ornamentation. Iconography and the materials used to make the image may also be regarded as elements of this first category. This is particularly the case with sandalwood images, the material of which is prized for its aromatic quality and delicate beauty.¹⁸⁸ The second category, *shōgon* as adornment of a buddha land, generally refers to the ornamentation of image halls and more broadly the entire temple compounds that are meant to be the site of the Buddha's presence. As a means of transforming mundane

¹⁸⁶ Sekine Shun'ichi, *Hotoke – Bosatsu to dōnai no shōgon*, Nihon no bijutsu vol. 281 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1989), 17.

¹⁸⁷ Some sources categorize *shōgon* into two, three, or four main divisions, each of which may be further divided into numerous subcategories. The *Sutra of the Meditation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* (J: *Kanmuryōju kyō*, 觀無量壽經) for example describes three categories (Buddha land *shōgon*, Buddha *shōgon*, Bodhisattva *shōgon*) which are further divided into twenty-nine sub-categories; *Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten* Vol. 3, 2607-2609.

¹⁸⁸ Christian Matthias Boehm, *The Concept of Danzō: “Sandalwood Images” in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture of the 8th to 14th Centuries*, (London: Saffron Books, 2012), 111.

space into a localized Buddhist paradise or pure land, such ornamentation is described as Pure Land *shōgon* (J: *jōdo shōgon* 浄土莊嚴). The ornaments, materials and ritual instruments used – banners, canopies, incense burners, bells, mirrors, gold and silver objects, jewels – are called “instruments of *shōgon*” (J: *shōgonju* 莊嚴具). These ornaments are essential in ritually recreating the sacred space of the Buddha’s presence or the site of his enlightenment.

Perhaps due to its more intangible and conceptual nature, the third category is often absent from the decorative and craft-based approaches that have dominated the study of *shōgon* in Japan. A ubiquitous motif in Buddhist sutras, this category refers to the spiritual adornment of buddhas and bodhisattvas with their own good deeds and virtues that are created through religious practices of meditation, ascetic discipline and wisdom.¹⁸⁹ As Kumagai argues, however, although categorized by different forms and functions, the term’s use in such Buddhist scriptures as the *Flower Garland Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra* encompasses all of these various meanings of *shōgon* that unite the formless spiritual adornment of religious virtues with the worldly material adornment of precious metals, jewels and other physical ornamentation.¹⁹⁰ This dual religious-aesthetic meaning can be clearly derived from the word’s original Chinese and Sanskrit roots.

The Japanese word “shōgon” is a transliteration of the Chinese word *zhuangyan*, which is itself a Chinese translation of two concepts of Indian philosophy: *alamkāra* and *vyūhā*. As Seckel has revealed in his study of East Asian cut-gold decoration, the original meaning of *alamkāra* connoted not only the aesthetic goal of “adorning, beautifying, [or]

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 108.

¹⁹⁰ Kumagai, “Shōgon kenkyū,” 51-52.

adding grace and beauty” to an object but also encompassed more ritual meanings of “providing, making ready and fit for a purpose, or preparing.” In this sense, it meant “to put into the state of holiness and numinous efficacy by magical means.”¹⁹¹ In India, the term *alamkāra* was often used in this specifically religious context, in which ornaments and adornments were manifestations of the sacred in the material world that consecrated their wearer with magical power.¹⁹²

The term *vyūhā* has the meaning of “distribution, ordering the parts of a whole, individual description, form, manifestation, appearance, structure, group, multitudes,” and often refers to sanctification.¹⁹³ In this term there appears a conceptual relationship to the original Greek word for ornament, “kosmos,” which originally possessed a primary meaning of “order,” whether in relation to the physical arrangement of things or to the world order (and by extension cosmic order).¹⁹⁴ As Seckel describes, this understanding of *vyūha* suggests “a filling of the abstract emptiness of [absolute reality] with variety,” and it “may occasionally also be equated with individualization and individual objects.”¹⁹⁵ This aspect of *vyūha*, to which Kumagai adds the connotations of “sacred arrangement” and *samādhi* (J: *sanmai* 三昧) has only recently begun to find consideration in art historical references to *shōgon*, and yet is ubiquitous throughout

¹⁹¹ Dietrich Seckel, *Buddhist Art of East Asia*, translated by Ulrich Mammitzsch, (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 1989), 184.

¹⁹² Boehm, *The Concept of Danzō*, 108.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 108; also Cynthia Bogel *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 54-56.

¹⁹⁴ Ananda Coomaraswamy, “Ornament,” *The Art Bulletin* Vol. 21, No. 4 (Dec., 1939), 380.

¹⁹⁵ Seckel, *Buddhist Art*, 184.

Buddhist sutras and ritual texts.¹⁹⁶ As Bogel notes, an instance of *vyūha* occurs in the 24th chapter of Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Lotus Sutra* in its description of the bodhisattva

Fine Sound:

This bodhisattva’s eyes were as big and broad as the leaves of the blue lotus, and a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand moons put together could not surpass the perfection of his face. His body was pure gold in color, adorned with immeasurable hundreds and thousands of blessings. His dignity and virtue were splendid, his light shone brilliantly, he was endowed with many special marks and as stalwart in body as Narayana.¹⁹⁷

While combined with visual descriptions of magisterial beauty, *vyūha* in this case refers to the more abstract, intangible aspects of the deity’s glorious array of attributes or spiritual virtues that emanate from him and manifest on his body. These emanations of *shōgon* often accompany the description of the body’s “sacred marks,” and are thus further visible signs of the divine being’s superhuman status.

Like its Chinese counterpart *zhuangyan*, the Japanese word is composed of two Chinese characters. The character *shō* (莊) is translated by Seckel as “festive, noble, a wealth of splendor,” and *gon* (嚴) as “sacred, festive, awe-inspiring.” Together, Seckel translates the full term as “sanctification through a wealth of splendor,” a translation that

¹⁹⁶ Kumagai, “Shōgon kenkyū,” 52.

¹⁹⁷ *The Lotus Sutra*, 293. Nārāyana 那羅野拏 is a powerful Indian god equivalent to Visnu adopted into the Buddhist pantheon, often associated as a vajra warrior (*kongō rikishi* 金剛力士). Bogel refers to a different translation of this particular passage in her brief discussion of *shōgon* in *With a Single Glance*, 55.

seems to have found some agreement in western discussions of the term.¹⁹⁸ Kumagai has offered a general definition of the term as “image of the awesome divine powers of the devinities spreading and filling the universe,” or “visual representation of divine miracles.”¹⁹⁹ In Kumagai’s interpretation, he argues for an emphasis on the performative or active nature of *shōgon*, as well as the multi-directionality inherent in its formal and formless expression.

Whereas the definition found in the *Mochizuki Buddhist Dictionary* (*Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten* 望月佛教大辞典) describes two forms of *shōgon* – that created from divine power (buddhas and bodhisattvas as the source of *shōgon*) and that related to form (temple and image ornamentation) – these two aspects of *shōgon* should be grasped as two sides of the same concept working in two directions. A deity generates *shōgon*, and an icon is decorated by *shōgon*, although the source of *shōgon* is always divine power.²⁰⁰ It operates, thus, in a cyclical and regenerative process in which divine power creates *shōgon*, which spreads the seed of enlightenment, and is therefore always a reciprocating act. A metaphor of this cyclical process is seen in the standard configuration of a Buddhist icon atop a lotus flower, a symbol of *shōgon* par excellence. As a symbol of enlightenment conquering ignorance, the Buddha emerges from the abstract lotus as form, and is further adorned with gifts of *shōgon* by human artisans and worshippers, although the source of these adornments is the spiritual virtue of the Buddha himself. As Kumagai

¹⁹⁸ Seckel, *Buddhist Art*, 184. Boehm (2012) and Bogel (2009) cite Seckel’s study in their own discussions of *shōgon*.

¹⁹⁹ “‘shoson no ishinryoku ga kakusan, henmansuru jōkei,’ tsumari ‘shinpen no yōsō o jōkeiteki ni arawashita mono’” 「諸尊の威神力が拡散、遍満する情景」、つまり「神変の様相を情景的に表したもの」; Kumagai, “Shōgon kenkyū,” 50.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 52.

argues, *shōgon* is not simply a decorative intervention on the part of a human agent, but is the product of a Buddhist deity that acts through humans to produce more *shōgon* and in turn more deities (icons) in perpetuum.²⁰¹

These self-perpetuating productions are in essence continuous generators of karmic merit, expressed physically in the forms and actions of *shōgon*. In turn, the adornment of Buddhist images with material ornament reflects formless concepts of religious virtues, where *shōgon*'s ritual-instrumental meaning of “putting into a state of holiness,” as derived from *alamkāra*, simultaneously adorns both the Buddha's form-body and the transcendent dharma-body. That is, the *physical* ornamentation of a statue that represents the Buddha's form-body also *spiritually* adorns the intangible dharma-body. As Boehm describes, “both bodies are dynamically interrelated and harmoniously unified in the concept of *shōgon*,” implying that the concept of *shōgon* may be critical to the religious meaning of all Buddhist icons.²⁰²

One of the most prominent early examples we find in Japanese records that exhibits the importance of *shōgon* to the consecration of a Buddhist image appears in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s entry of the 752 Eye-Opening Ceremony of the “Great Buddha” at Tōdaiji – arguably the most important religious ceremony of the eighth century. As recorded in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*, the interior of the temple was decorated with various sculpted flowers and elegant banners, including 5-colored “consecration banners” (J: *kanjōban* 灌頂幡) in addition to real flowers that were scattered throughout the

²⁰¹ Ibid, 60.

²⁰² Boehm, *The Concept of Danzō*, 109.

ceremony.²⁰³ These forms of visual ornamentation in addition to other sensorial ritual activities, including music and the burning of incense that accompanied the image's consecration and eye-opening, were meant to recreate the original moment of awakening experienced by the Buddha in such texts as the *Flower Garland Sutra*, in which his enlightenment is accompanied by an outpouring of *shōgon* that sanctifies the world and makes virtuous all beings who witness it:

There were banners of precious stones, constantly emitting shining light and producing beautiful sounds. Nets of myriad gems and garlands of exquisitely scented flowers hung all around. The finest jewels appeared spontaneously, raining inexhaustible quantities of gems and beautiful flowers all over the earth. There were rows of jewel trees, their branches and foliage lustrous and luxuriant. By the Buddha's spiritual power, he caused all the adornments of this enlightenment to be reflected therein.²⁰⁴

As seen in this passage, the ultimate source of *shōgon* is the Buddha himself, and the spread of *shōgon* throughout the Buddha realms is a catalyst for the awakening of Buddhahood among bodhisattvas and other sentient beings.

The relation of *shōgon* to the body of the Buddha and its environment is further seen in a key passage from Sharf's translation of the *Awakening of Faith in the Greater Vehicle*, which describes the body of the *sambhogakāya* as follows:

This body possesses innumerable forms, and each form has innumerable [major] marks and each major mark has innumerable minor marks. The place where [this

²⁰³ Sekine, *Hotoke – Bosatsu to dōnai no shōgon*, 24.

²⁰⁴ *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra* Volume 1, translated by Thomas Cleary (Boulder: Shambhala, 1984), 55.

body] dwells is *possessed of innumerable and multifarious adornments*.

Accordingly, its manifestations are boundless, inexhaustible, and indivisible.²⁰⁵

The language used in this passage reflects similar language found in Chinese Buddhist ritual manuals for the purpose of ritual invocation, and as Sharf further explains, “the recompense-body (*sambhogakāya*) is perceived abiding in a place ‘possessed of innumerable and multifarious adornments.’”²⁰⁶ Ritual adornment was thus significant in both worshipping images, establishing sacred space and ritually invoking presence.

A more in-depth study would further illustrate that the range of meaning inherent in the idea of *shōgon* found in numerous Buddhist scriptures and commentaries suggests a highly active nature that extends beyond physical appearance and ornament. While *shōgon* is manifested in the world of appearances through the physical ornamentation of images and architecture, the source of *shōgon* in its various forms is always the divine power and supreme virtue of the Buddha or bodhisattva. The forms of *shōgon* or *shōgon* that ornament temples are found throughout Buddhist scriptures both as expressions and manifestations of virtuous merit and enlightenment, and as the catalysts for enlightenment. Although Boehm describes the adornment of Buddhist images and temples with *shōgon* as a means of veneration and offering, it may also be seen as a recreation of the acts of the buddhas and bodhisattvas whose virtues are the source of *shōgon*. Both patrons and artisans who create *shōgon* and adorn images create or contribute to fields of merit, establishing karmic bonds with the deities and expressing

²⁰⁵ “Adornments” in the italicized portion of the translation that in the original reads “you wuliang zhongzhong zhuangyan” 有無量種種莊嚴 (J: *muryō shuzhu shōgon ari*) is a translation of “zhuangyan” (*shōgon*); T32:579b. Translation from Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 108.

²⁰⁶ Sharf, *Chinese Buddhism*, 109.

their own virtuous nature. This aspect of *shōgon* is of immense importance to the study of Buddhist art and ritual, and of unique importance to the interpretation of the Seiryōji Shaka and its concealed contents.

Unseen Ornament

The act of adorning, as suggested in this analysis of *shōgon*, is itself viewed as a merit-generating activity and a means of imbuing an image with sacred power, but it is also an act that is regenerative and able (perhaps intended, as presently argued) to continue in perpetuity. This means in part that the ornamenting of images with *shōgon* does not necessitate the strict application of precious materials to the exterior, but that it can be applied even to surfaces that may be invisible to the perception of later devotees. In a sense, this restriction of visible access to the sacred contents of the Seiryōji image can be considered not only as infusing the image with sacred power, but as enhancing the efficacy of the initial ritual offerings. It is certainly the case that in the context of Buddhist temples, the most sacred objects in a temple's possession were often concealed from the view of ordinary people. As Fabio Rambelli has described in his study of "secret buddhas" (*hibutsu* 秘仏), invisibility often had the effect of intensifying the sacred power of objects.²⁰⁷ The Seiryōji Shaka itself eventually became a *hibutsu*, placed in a small shrine and hidden behind a curtain for all but a few days of the year – a placement that continues to allow viewers (or non-viewers) to engage with similar dynamics of visibility and invisibility that have infused the image with sacred power since its creation in 985.

²⁰⁷ Fabio Rambelli, "Secret Buddhas: The Limits of Buddhist Representation," *Monumenta Nipponica* Vol. 57, No. 3 (Autumn, 2002), 273.

The concealment and ornamentation of sacred substance within the Seiryōji image in the form of relics, and the diversity of objects that were included as *shōgon* both outside and inside of the image highlight the centrality of *shōgon*'s ritual-instrumental meaning to the overall construction of the statue. It also suggests a strong connection between the icon's cache and forms of *shōgon* commonly found inside of Buddhist reliquaries. While the exteriors of images and sacred spaces have largely remained the principle sites for the study of *shōgon* as a decorative phenomenon, the interior ornamentation of reliquaries with *shōgon* suggests the more complex ritual function that such adornment could provide to devotional objects. In addition, like the *hibutsu* discussed by Rambelli, the Seiryōji image and the reliquaries discussed below share a number of significant commonalities with regards to the dialectics of invisible/visible, interior/exterior, and sacred/profane space.

As discussed above, at the time these objects were inserted into the body of the image, the statue had already become a living icon and a figurative reliquary with the insertion of the tooth relic and miraculous emission of blood. The variety of *shōgon* included with the relic inside the body of the image – a bell, mirrors, a banner (J: *hata/ban* 幡), incense, a shattered reliquary, various jewels, a bracelet and precious metals – largely resemble *shōgon* (or *shōgongu*) that frequently adorn and infuse temple halls and other sacred spaces. Yet, they may in fact draw more influence from forms of *shōgon* specifically used for adorning the relics of the Buddha (J: *busshari shōgon* 仏舍利莊嚴).²⁰⁸ Relics and reliquaries had by the tenth century a long tradition of adornment

²⁰⁸ Nagaoka has also discussed a similar relation between the objects found in the Seiryōji statue and objects found specifically in “pagoda reliquaries” (*sharitō* 舍利塔). Nagaoka understands the objects as representing the individual anticipations or expectations (*kitai* 期待) of the various

with *shōgon* in both Japan and China. The reliquary uncovered from beneath the pagoda of Asukadera 飛鳥寺, for example, contained a wide array of *shōgongu* dating back to the sixth century, offering evidence that supports the intimate association between relics and *shōgon* from as early as the Asuka 飛鳥 Period (552-645) (FIG. 37).²⁰⁹

Although reliquaries in Japan would later come to occupy central positions of direct worship within temple halls, many of those dating from the Asuka and Nara (710-794) periods like those at Asukadera and the seventh century temple Sūfukuji 崇福寺 were buried beneath the main pillar of a temple's pagoda. Especially in the case of a temple like Asukadera, the pagoda occupied a preeminent position *physically* in the center of the temple complex and *cosmically* as an *axis-mundi*.²¹⁰ Like the ancient stupas of India, these pagodas marked the sacred remains of the Buddha's body not only symbolically, but quite literally as containers for his relics. The buried relics were not seen and were not worshipped directly, and yet the symbolic location of the reliquary

donors, and their diversity as relating specifically to the conceptual equation of the Seiryōji statue itself with a pagoda reliquary. The objects inserted, he argues, drew from prior practices of pagoda reliquary *shōgon*, and were intended for specific, immediate worldly benefit (*genze riyaku* 現世利益). See Nagaoka, "Seiryōji Shaka Nyorai zō," 18-20.

²⁰⁹ According to the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720), the Asukadera reliquary was placed under the base of the pagoda in early 593. Their discovery in the 1950's was in fact a re-discovery, as the reliquary and its contents had been examined previously in the early Kamakura Period. The original pagoda was destroyed by a fire in 1196, and when the reliquary was dug out the following year, bronze objects and several hundred pieces of relics were found. The description of the re-enshrinement, however, is too brief to be able to say for certain that the objects in their series of nested containers were deposited in the original fashion, and a number of objects appear to have been removed and others added. Therefore, while one of the oldest examples of reliquary *shōgon* in Japan, its complex history creates a number of problems for the present study. See Donald McCallum, *The Four Great Temples: Buddhist Archaeology, Architecture, and Icons of Seventh-Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 66-68.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 65. The description of the Asukadera pagoda's placement in the temple complex owes to McCallum's description, although the equation of the pagoda with the cosmic *axis-mundi* is the author's.

beneath the sacred space of the pagoda cannot be overestimated in considering their religious significance. In addition, just as stupas, pagodas, temples and images were adorned with *shōgon*, so was the immediate space of the Buddha's presence within the reliquary.



Figure 37. *Reliquary cache*. Asukadera. Asuka Period, 7th century.
(From *Hōryūji to Asuka no koji*, 136)

The 1939 discovery of Sūfukuji's pagoda reliquary uncovered a cache of beads and jewels, incense, a bronze bell, an iron mirror, and a scattering of coins (FIG. 38 and 39).²¹¹ The relic itself was contained in a green glass bottle and encased inside of three nested containers made of gold, silver and gilt bronze. Deposited in the innermost portion,

²¹¹ Unlike the Asukadera cache, the items found inside the Sūfukuji reliquary appear to have been undisturbed from the time of their initial burial; Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, ed., *Busshari no shōgon* (Kyōto: Dōhōsha, 1983), 303.

the relic was surrounded by three layers of containment, each adorned with a variety of *shōgon*, and each made of materials that grew increasingly mundane (gold to silver to gilt-bronze) as they progressed away from the sacred center. The crystals, precious metals, gems and mirrors that accompanied the inclusion of relics in the Seiryōji image have been discovered as ornamental offerings in reliquaries in Japan, Korea, and China, suggesting the widespread and international adoption of similar forms of reliquary *shōgon*.²¹²



Figure 38. *Nested reliquary* uncovered from beneath Sūfukuji pagoda. Sūfukuji. Asuka Period, 7th century. Gilt bronze, silver, gold and glass containers, bronze mirror, coins and other items of *shōgon*. (From *Busshari no shōgon*, 46)

The inclusion of a wide variety of precious objects into reliquaries suggests a related logic of *shōgon* and gift giving that can be seen in the offerings of similar objects inside Chōnen’s icon. As gifts of *shōgon* to the relic or the icon, the items included maintain the connotations of both *alamkāra* and *vyuha* seen above, including “[putting] into the state of holiness and numinous efficacy by magical means,” “a filling of the

²¹² The statue’s inclusion of a *sāla* leaf, donated by Chōnen, is itself a common motif in reliquary ornamentation as well, representing the tree under which the Buddha is said to have entered Nirvana; Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 94.

abstract emptiness of [absolute reality] with variety,” and “sacred arrangement.”

Arguably, the inclusion of these items of reliquary *shōgon* within the Seiryōji statue reinforces both the interpretation of the deposited items as a form of ritual ornamentation and the image’s dual function as icon and reliquary. The hidden adornment of the statue with instruments of *shōgon* served to simultaneously enhance the spiritual efficacy of the image by physically expressing the icon’s divine virtue through the filling of space with variety and to piously adorn the interred relic. In addition, Bogel’s understanding of *shōgon* as a form of “pious offering” (J: *kuyō* 供養; S: *puja*)” would further equate the offering of these objects with the generation of merit through gift giving.²¹³

And yet, like the Sūfukuji reliquary, this virtue and efficacy of the sacred that is accentuated through the use of *shōgon* appears to be deliberately masked by multiple layers of concealment. Not only does this seem to be the case with the statue’s cache, but as a *hibutsu* concealed behind a curtain, even the image’s auspicious visual appearance as the historical Buddha is rendered invisible. Was the efficacious and meritorious nature of the Seiryōji Shaka that was known to Chōnen and the monks involved with its consecration (and that is now known to modern scholars and devotees) actually something that was accessible to worshippers in the medieval and pre-modern periods when the cult of the Seiryōji Buddha was at its height? In this regard, it is worth considering further the implications of the similarities between the statue and the nested reliquary.²¹⁴

²¹³ Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 54.

²¹⁴ Thank you to Professor Akiko Walley for suggesting this particular consideration.

In the case of the reliquary, the most sacred substance is completely inaccessible physically, concealed in a glass reliquary that is surrounded by three layers of containers, each of which is adorned with varieties of *shōgon*.²¹⁵ As the space becomes increasingly sacred moving from the exterior gilt bronze to the gold container and eventually the relic itself, all of these containments themselves are ornaments that adorn the relic and intensify its sacred power. This efficacy extends beyond the reliquary to the base of the pagoda, itself a symbol not only of the Buddha's body, but of the Buddhist cosmos, imbuing the site with the sacred power of his presence in the form of hidden relics.

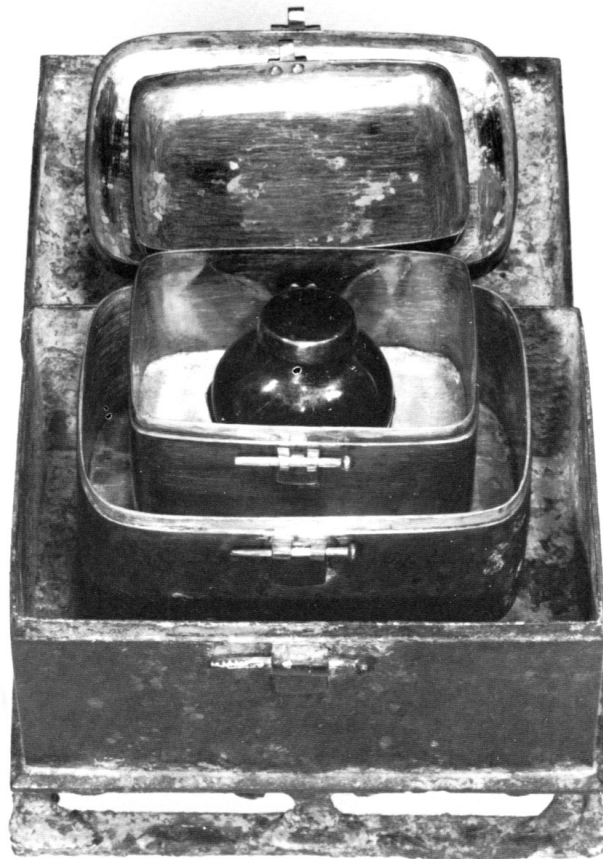


Figure 39. *Nested reliquary*, Sūfukuji.
(From *Busshari no shōgon*, 46)

²¹⁵ A number of exquisite examples of elaborately decorated nested and non-nested reliquaries have been uncovered in China as well. A number can be seen in Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred*, 98-107.

The Seiryōji Shaka as well, hidden from view inside of a small shrine in the Shaka Hall, is not unique among Buddhist images in its limited accessibility. Not only are exceptionally efficacious objects frequently hidden from the eyes of the lay public, but the ritual space of a Buddhist temple complex is itself inherently constructed with layers of obstruction that mediate the worshipper's access to (and the Buddhist priests' control of) the sacred. Wherein the entire complex may be conceived of as an architectural *maṇḍala*, the icon occupies the space of the most sacred center, surrounded by multiple layers through which the worshipper must ritually traverse.²¹⁶ To approach the icon, the devotee must at a minimum enter the temple gate, cross the courtyard and enter the sanctuary, all levels of mediation that are also adorned with *shōgon* in the various forms of incense, chanting and music that fill the temple grounds. All of these layers, both the architectural and the ephemeral, may be considered as the more peripheral adornments of the principle icon that further intensifies the sacrality of its concealed cache, serving to enhance the accrual of merit from which the devotees will benefit through accessing the “field of merit” generated by Chōnen and the Chinese monks' offerings.

As Rambelli notes, the emphasis on secrecy and concealment of Buddhist objects possibly derived from esoteric texts and practices, and was often of great concern to the display of icons in particular. The *Kōryūji raiyūki* 広隆寺来由紀, a text compiled in 1499 by Saishō 済承 (1442-after 1499) offers an extreme position in defense of concealing particularly efficacious images from public sight:

²¹⁶ The Sanskrit word “*maṇḍala*” itself implies the adorning or setting apart (*maṇḍ*) of a sacred center (*la*); Elizabeth Ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of sacred Geography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 2.

Buddhas [icons] have a spirit, and should not be soiled [by easy contact]. They should be placed in a clean hall and should not be worshipped in an uncontrolled way. If an ignorant lay person touches the icon he will be subjected to divine punishment.²¹⁷

The Seiryōji Shaka was not restricted to such degrees of concealment and secrecy as advocated above; however, as a *shōjin* Shaka, the image must certainly have been viewed as possessing something akin to the same “spirit” that contributed to its sacred nature. As a “living image,” this “spirit” may have been something internal – a sacred core concealed like the relic behind layers of visible and invisible adornments. These layers were not impenetrable, but as the logic of *shōgon* suggests were interpenetrating and reciprocal. By internalizing the objects and their meritorious efficacy (just as by concealing the image), their sacred power is invisible to the viewer’s visual field of perception but not inaccessible. Particularly when considering that the Seiryōji Shaka was perceived as a “living image” because of its visual *likeness* to the historical Buddha and the eternally present Śākyamuni on Vulture Peak, that the image was alive, active and fully present in this world suggests an expectation of the image among worshippers that it was not a passive receiver of prayers but an active generator and bestower of karmic rewards that were in part perpetuated through the internalized gifts. Gifts adorned relics, worshippers adorned the image, and the image reciprocated with the creation and bestowal of karmic merit.

Certainly, other examples can be provided to support the idea that despite the common image and interpretation of *shōgon* as sensuous *visible* adornment of the buddha

²¹⁷ Citation of *Kōryūji raikyūki* taken from Rambelli, “Secret Buddhas,” 277 (bracketed text in original).

body and buddha land, the invisibility and concealment of objects of *shōgon* was not necessarily problematic for their ritual purpose. In his forthcoming study of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves 敦煌莫高窟, Sharf makes the bold suggestion that many of the caves were not in fact meant to be used after their initial creation, and thus did not need to be seen to accomplish their ritual function.²¹⁸ Images of donors offering gifts to the Buddha painted on the walls in many sites were intended for the accrual of merit for the donors and donors' families, and yet once painted, there is little evidence that the images or icons were worshipped directly.²¹⁹ These memorializing portraits are images suspended in time, combining members of several generations that, like the offerings of the Seiryōji image, were meant to generate merit for themselves and others. Once gifted, the generation of merit continues in perpetuity, regardless of whether or not it is seen or venerated directly.

Furthermore, as hidden adornment concealed within the statue, the objects speak to the dual characteristics of *shōgon* as both invisible and visible – formal and formless aspects of the icon's miraculous nature and virtuous attributes. Through the principles of *shōgon* discussed so far, these aspects are self-generating and cyclical, resulting in an endless chain of manifestations of *shōgon* that further generates divine beings and virtues. Connected by karmic bonds to the donors of gifts that function internally *as shōgon*, the human agents themselves partake in this endless accrual of karmic merit that, although manifested through material means, remains unseen. Unlike the paintings of the Mogao Caves, however, the merit generated by Chōnen and the others was not restricted to

²¹⁸ Robert Sharf, "Art in the Dark: The Ritual Context of Buddhist Caves in Western China," in *Art of Merit: Studies in Buddhist Art and its Conservation*, ed. David Park et al. (London: Archetype Publications, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2013), 38-65.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

themselves, but instead, by internalizing the offerings within the body of a living image of Śākyamuni that was able to continue the biography of the historical Buddha into the future, this merit became accessible to all who interacted with and worshipped the image.²²⁰

The *Lotus Sutra* Tableau Reconsidered

That the ideas discussed so far concerning gift giving, *shōgon*, images, relics, and reliquaries should all be considered as mutually influencing aspects both of the Seiryōji Shaka's exterior and interior compositions and of its ritual function draws further support once again from the *Lotus Sutra* Tableau found among the various offerings. The print's provenance is unknown, but it was likely acquired along with the prints of Monju, Fugen, and Miroku in Kaifeng. This masterful Northern Song print portrays Śākyamuni preaching on Vulture Peak, surrounded by a crowded assembly of disciples, deities and other worshippers. The Buddha is positioned atop a lotus pedestal as the assembly's object of worship and the viewer's point of focus just above the center of the image. Beneath his pedestal, a treasure pagoda (J: *tahōtō* 多宝塔), one of the most frequently recurring motifs of art derived from the *Lotus Sutra*, rises from the print's lower register and is itself surrounded by worshipping figures of deities, guardian kings and buddhas. The image presents two objects of devotion – Śākyamuni in his form as the eternally

²²⁰ John Strong interprets relics as functioning similar to how others like Schober and Swearer have regarded particular Buddhist images in that they could be seen as “expressions and extensions of the Buddha's biographical process.” In citing cases of relics being enshrined in spaces that celebrate the Buddha's life story, he suggests that they should not strictly be seen as transcendent manifestations of the Buddha's sacred presence, but instead the summation of his whole biographical narrative. See Stone, *Relics of the Buddha*, 5-8.

present Buddha on Vulture Peak, and the treasure pagoda, both a symbol of the *Lotus Sutra* itself and the site of the Buddha's relics.

A closer look at the image reveals that at the center of the image, the point in the print's overall composition where the pagoda and the figure of the Buddha meet, are the figures of four devotees, two of which the artists have depicted in the act of offering gifts to the Buddha (FIG. 40). The figure on the right raises a round jewel, while the figure on the left offers a single flower. Amidst the raining flowers and musical instruments that descend from the print's upper register and the crowded figures and abundant ornamentation that fill the bulk of the printed scene with *shōgon*, this act of offering is rendered with quiet and subtle clarity against a background of empty space in the center of the image. As seen in other artistic representations, the location of the Buddha's sermon on Vulture Peak was popularly imagined as a site where heavenly beings engaged in acts of perpetual offering.²²¹

It is this same act of perpetual offering that Chōnen established as a principle component of his own image. In turn, the *Lotus Sutra* Tableau presents a condensed, two-dimensional portrayal of the same faith in the eternally present Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha's relics, the *Lotus Sutra*, and the merit produced through offerings of *shōgon* that informed Chōnen's patronage of the Seiryōji Shaka. As well, the interior space of the icon may be conceptualized as a microcosm of the very buddhaland portrayed in the image. The diversity of objects of *shōgon* inserted symbolize the diverse assembly of worshippers, and make the donors present as the Buddha's divine assembly within the statue through karmic bonds of gift giving that are perpetuated eternally within the Buddha's field of merit.

²²¹ Matsumoto, "Shaka's Sermon," 370.

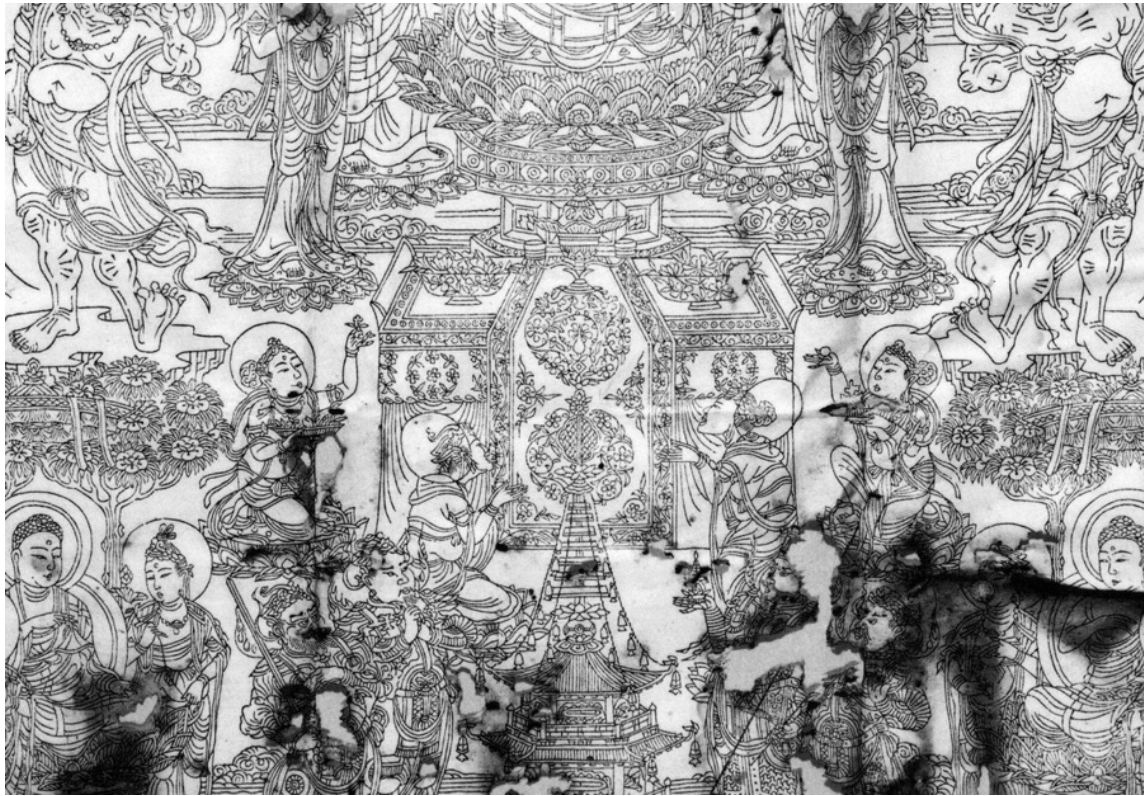


Figure 40. Divine figures raising offerings of *shōgon* to the Buddha on Vulture Peak.
Lotus Sutra *Tableau*, Northern Song, 10th century.

Chōnen's statue, therefore, offers a reconceptualization of Śākyamuni on Vulture Peak from the immobile form of the Daijū Shaka to the mobile, living Shaka that could travel across continents to spread the Buddhist Law. Within this conceptualization, the internalized cosmology of the most auspicious field of merit, the presence of the living Buddha, expands outward through the multiple layers of adornments and offerings to further envelope as well the living devotees who worship the iconic form of the historical Buddha as embodied by the Udāyana image.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In modern times, over the brief period that witnessed the mass-purging of Buddhist institutions in the tumultuous years that followed the 1868 Meiji Restoration, the Seiryōji Shaka survived, but saw yet another shift in its identity from the “living image” of the historical Buddha to an object of artistic and scholarly fascination. In 1955, the statue was registered as a “National Treasure” (*kokuhō* 国宝) under the 1950 Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties.²²² Today it remains concealed behind a curtain within a shrine, and is only visible during *kaichō* 開帳, special days when the statue is unveiled for viewing by the general public (FIG. 41).²²³ This attempt at maintaining the statue’s status as a *hibutsu* reveals the image’s continuing existence as a site of contested identity. On the one hand, the statue is recognized by the Japanese government as an important cultural property that should be preserved and studied as a unique cultural heritage of the Japanese people, while on the other it remains a sacred image of worship, possessing a miraculous story of origin as the first image of the founder of Buddhism.

This contestation and the multiplicity of perspectives on the statue’s sacred origins has been part of its history from the moment of its construction in eastern China in 985. The creation of a direct and unbroken lineage to the historical Buddha seen in the account of Jōsan provided the image with historical validation as the very image that had

²²² Okada Ken, “Shaka Nyorai ryūzō – Zōnai nōnyūhin issai,” in *Nihon no kokuhō* 6, no. 16 (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1997), 165.

²²³ Alternatively, a visitor today may pay a slightly higher admission cost to the temple (about ¥1,000) to have a private viewing or worship of the image.

as yet only been known in Japan through scripture and legend. Although little is known of Chōnen's disciple, and the absence of material evidence related to him among the various offerings remains puzzling, the account put forth in his *Jōsanki* suggests from a modern perspective a more cynical view towards the nature and ontological status of the statue that required the composition of a partially fabricated record of lineage. In this historical conceptualization, the Seiryōji Shaka found value by fitting into what had become an institutionalized myth of the *ur* image in East Asia, and was perceived as efficacious both by its validation of that legend and by expanding its sacred narrative to Japan.

For Chōnen, however, the commissioning of the Seiryōji image was certainly a highly personal undertaking that utilized more conceptual methods to endow the image with a specific religious identity. Indeed, the discovery of the statue's secret cache reveals a conception of the image based on a diverse religious community's shared beliefs in an ahistorical ritual construction of identity and meaning to establish sacred authority in the image. This aspect of the statue's identity has been concealed for most of its existence, and at the same time was always suggested by the inclusion of crystals, gems and the engraved mirror on the external surface that bridge the gap between the seen and unseen aspects of the statue. Although future worshippers of the image were almost certainly unaware of either the original consecratory acts or the nature of the deposited items that were only suggested, for Chōnen and the community of monastics involved in its production this was likely of little concern. Although unseen, the objects were sacred and conceptual complements to the statue's outer appearance as the living Udāyana image. Just as the invisible offerings had contributed to the construction of the

image as a field of merit that would perpetuate a generation of karmic merit and a repayment of karmic debt, so did the outer appearance and its legendary associations visually endow the icon with the same traits of the historical Buddha.



Figure 41. Early 18th century painting of the Seiryōji Shaka during *kaichō*. Hanabusa Itchō. *Seiryōji Shaka nyoraizō*. Edo Period, early 18th century. (Image reproduced from *Nihon no bijutsushi* 513)

Although the acceptance of impermanence is a familiar trope to any student of Buddhist philosophy, the death of Buddhism's founder Śākyamuni (or his "extinction from this world") was a historical trauma that many later devotees suffered to accept, and Chōnen was perhaps no exception. Such dilemmas are reflected in the Mahāyāna cult of faith in the *Lotus Sutra*, which insists that Śākyamuni is eternally present on Vulture Peak. Sculptures and paintings of Śākyamuni and other figures of cultic worship could offer the monastic community a locus of devotion that attempted to take the place of the Buddha's absence, and yet the question (as Jōsan's account suggests) always remained of whether images of buddhas, bodhisattvas and other deities were not intrinsically deficient in the attributes with which their sacred referents were so fully endowed. Chōnen's statue, however, suggests that an icon could not only recover the attributes and salvific potential of its sacred referent, but that it could perpetuate the Buddha's unending and undying biography.

Study of the Seiryōji image offers the opportunity to, as Bernard Faure describes, "free ourselves from the obsession with meaning (symbolism, iconology in the Panofskian sense) and form (style) in order to retrieve the affect, effectivity, and function of the icon."²²⁴ This "obsession" is, however, not entirely worth abandoning, as form and meaning can to an extent suggest the very religious functions and effectivity that were intended for and expected of icons like the Seiryōji Shaka. Although other images had sought to make the Buddha present through the visual likeness of the Udāyana tradition and the materiality of his relics, Chōnen's statue sought to combine these strategies with a perpetuation of the Buddha's acts of compassion and self-sacrifice – acts associated, in other words, with the *living* Buddha. These are attributes that conventions of iconography

²²⁴ Faure, "Buddhist Icons," 787.

may suggest, but that must be established through ritual acts. As such, they are aspects that may be overlooked by studying this or any image only as a part of, or a deviation from, shared visual traditions.

The present study suggests that while Buddhist images in their East Asian contexts tended to rely on established conventions of iconography and shared cultural beliefs, they could also function as complex sites of intensely personal meaning. At the time that Chōnen was active during the latter half of the Heian Period, Buddhism and Buddhist material culture maintained strong ties to the state, and yet it's increasing perception as a salvific faith was broadening understandings of the auspicious powers with which icons were endowed. An image's identity was therefore intrinsically malleable, positioned within the intersecting spaces of public norms and private desires. The increasingly diversified forms of *zōnai nōnyūhin* also reflect this practice of inscribing established models with personal and unique religious agendas.

Moreover, these evolving practices also maintained a consistency in forms of ritual logic. The concepts employed by the endowment of *zōnai nōnyūhin* followed principles established in the enshrinement of relics and the adornment of sacred objects and sacred space. The building up of multiple layers of concealment functions not merely to make the sacred inaccessible to worship, but rather to adorn, protect, and intensify the efficacy of sacred substance, and to perpetuate its active regeneration and disbursement of karmic merit. These acts were utilized in Chōnen's image to establish a particular identity within the image that would be ever-present and that would maintain as well the possibility of some control over the image's later life. In a way, to say that the original ritual identity with which Chōnen had cast his image was essentially forgotten or lost is

to disregard the multiple levels of being that even the Buddha himself possessed. Appearing in various forms and guises was one of the Buddha's "skillful means," and a method for spreading the seed of Enlightenment among a wide and diverse range of followers. Chōnen's statue's adoption of the Udāyana image as its exterior appearance was the most important factor contributing to its fame in medieval and premodern Japan and the means through which it became the object of devotion, a sacred center, among countless Japanese. It was, in other words, a "skillful means" to bring devotees to worship not the copied image of Udāyana, but the *real* Śākyamuni that was embodied in the image through its internalized identity as the Buddha on Vulture Peak. In this sense, not only is the distinction between interior and exterior blurred, but so is the role of agency. Is this a skillful means employed by the image's creator Chōnen or by the Buddha himself? Just as the present study's discussion of *shōgon* as a ritual mechanism has illustrated, such concerns cause one to question the multidirectionality of agency, the intersecting layers of meaning, and the regenerative nature of ritual that are all present in an encounter with the Buddha's image – perhaps even for those of us in the modern age.

APPENDIX A

ACCOUNTS OF CHŌNEN'S PILGRIMAGE AS RECORDED IN THE *RECORD* AND

JŌSANKI

		<i>Record of Chōnen's Pilgrimage to Song in Search of the Law and the Making of the Auspicious Image</i> (齋然入宋求法巡礼行並瑞像造立記)	<i>Record of Pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai by the monk Jōsan of Tōdaiji, Japan</i> (日本国東大寺渡海巡礼五台山盛算記)
983	8/1	Depart Japan on Chinese merchant ship	Depart for China
	8/18	Arrive Taizhou, stay Kaiyuansi	
	9/9	Pilgrimage to Mt. Tiantai	
	10/8	Depart Mt. Tiantai	
	11/11	Worshipped 100 <i>shaku</i> Miroku image at Xinchang 新昌	
	11/15	Worshipped Buddha at Jinguangwangsi 晋光王寺	
	11/18		Visited Yangzhou Kaiyuansi to worship auspicious sandalwood statue, heard from a temple monk that the statue was moved to Kaifeng
	12/19	Arrive Kaifeng	Arrive Kaifeng
	12/21	Received by Taizong, awarded purple robe	Received by Taizong
984	1 st month		Worshipped auspicious statue in Hall of Nourishing Happiness
	3 rd month		Depart for Mt. Wutai
	3/13	Depart Kaifeng for Mt. Wutai	
	4/7	Saw body of bodhisattva that emitted light in the "Hall of the True Form of the Bodhisattva" at Mt. Wutai's Dahuayansi (Wutaishan Dahuayansi Pusa Zhenrongyuan 五台山大華嚴寺菩薩真容院)	
	5/29	Depart Mt. Wutai	
	6/18	Visit Longmen 龍門 (worshipped true body of Shingon patriarch Zenmui (<i>post-script by Chōnen</i>))	
	6/24	Enter Kaifeng	Copied auspicious statue at the Zen Hall of Saintly Revelation
	10/7	Two disciples received the precepts	
985	2/18		Jōsan copies "History of Udayana Statue" in Kaifeng
	3/2	Depart Kaifeng	
	6/27	Return to Taizhou	
	7/21	Begun making auspicious sandalwood image	
	8/18	Sandalwood image completed	
	unclear		Boarded ship with statue

APPENDIX B

SEIRYŌJI SHAKA'S ZŌNAI NŌNYŪHIN

	Item	Donor(s)	Date	Exists	Notes	
Documents	Chōnen's Birth Certificate	Chōnen	938	O		
	Gizō/Chōnen's Sealed Oath	Chōnen Gizō	972	O		
	Record of Chōnen's Travels	Chōnen (written by Jianduan)	985 (8/18)	O		
	Chōnen's Memorial Record	Chōnen	985	O		
	Catalogue	Chōnen Zhang Yanjiao Ju Xin	985	O		
	Kechien List (3 Sheets)	Zhang Brothers Ju Xin Li Wenjian 24 Chinese	985	O		
Sutras	Golden Light Sutra	Chōnen	804 (3/5)	O		
	Lotus Sutra	Kain (Japanese)		O		
	Diamond Sutra	Wu Shouzhen	985 (6)	O		
Prints	Lotus Sutra Tableau	Kain (Japanese)		O		
	Monju Bosatsu	Chōnen (?)		O		
	Fugen Bosatsu	Chōnen (?)		O		
	Miroku Bosatsu	Chōnen (?)	984 (10/15)	O	Acquired in Kaifeng	
Symbols of Buddha's Body	1 Relic	Chōnen		X		
	Glassware (reliquary?)	Chōnen		O		
	Silk (relic bag?)	Chōnen		O		
	Buddha's Tooth		985 (8/7 inserted)	O	Possibly confirmed by x-ray behind statue's face	
	5 Organs	5 Miaoshansi Nuns	985 (8/5)	O		
	Sara Leaf	Chōnen		O		
Metals, Gems, and Jewels	Silver Bracelet	1 Year old Girl		O		
	Crystal (3 Pieces)	Kaigenji Monks		O	Crystals installed in statue's uṣṇīṣa (1), ears (2)	
	Crystal (3 Pieces)			?		
	Crystal (2 Pieces)			?		
	Crystal (1 Piece)			?		
	Crystal (1 Piece)			?		
	Agate (1 Piece)			O	Maybe oldest item	
	1 Mirror				O	
	Diamond (4 Pieces)				X	
	Calcite			O		

Ritual Instruments	Bell	Jianduan			
	Bodai Rosary	Chōnen			
	2 Small Mirror	Chōnen Kaigenji Monk		O	One in Lotus Pedestal
Buddhist Images	Silver Amida Buddha	Kaigenji Monk		O	Possibly silver Buddha image in urna
	2 Suigetsu Kannon Mirrors	Kaigenji Monk Jianduan Other		O/?	Second one possibly inside the Buddha's face
	Monju Image	Zhang Brothers		?	Unconfirmed, but likely in <i>uṣṇīṣa</i>
Fabric	Miscellaneous silk textiles	Monks		O	Possibly cut from monks' robes
Other	Silk Netting	?		O	
	132 Coins	Taizhou laity		O	
	Mica Banner	?		O	
	Fragments of gold & silver foil	?		?	
	String	Taizhou nun			Likely attached to Suigetsu Kannon mirror

*Items found but not recorded in Catalogue

This list is largely based on similar lists compiled by Nagaoka Ryūsaku in “Seiryōji Shaka nyōrai zō,” 16 and Oku Takeo in *Seiryōji Shaka nyōrai zō*, 44-45.

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