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IMAGES OLD AND NEW

Buddhist Painting Preservation and the Transmission of Tradition in Premodern Japan

ABSTRACT

For the past two decades, scholarship has made great strides uncovering the multifaceted ways in which Buddhist objects provide insights into the beliefs, practices, and worldviews of the people who used and viewed them. Having moved past iconographic analysis as the sole lens with which to evaluate Buddhist art, scholars have demonstrated, for instance, how the religion's visual and material culture served as conduits between the physical world and the intangible, and operated as nodes linking networks of people and places. This article adds another perspective to the study of Buddhist art objects by considering how their physical condition prompted new forms of engagement in religious practice in premodern Japan. In particular, it investigates differences between three ways to preserve images—to copy, to repair, and to re-create—and demonstrates that while both copying and repair kept objects in a good and presentable state, repair could additionally serve as a means for the production and diffusion of Buddhist cultural knowledge. Re-creation combines the practice of copy and repair and reveals how an object's material properties, an aspect of any conservation effort, could also transmit information about associated miracles or numinous qualities.

Introduction

Japanese Buddhist images have been central to the religion's dissemination since its establishment on the archipelago from at least the sixth century. Buddhism's visual and material culture had the power to structure belief and practice, to serve as a mediator between the physical and intangible world, and to operate as a powerful source of legitimization for the devout. Even though Buddhist objects conceptually crossed the boundaries between the physical and the transcendent, they were nevertheless made by human hands and subject to the vagaries of time. Just as the Buddha taught, nothing lasts forever. Could an icon still function in the way that it was intended if it was damaged and did not appear in its original form? Were there notions of image maintenance in premodern Japan, and if so, what did they consist of? Given the sheer number of Buddhist objects in existence at any given time, how did a patron even decide what to preserve in the first place?

This article interrogates the practice of conserving Buddhist painting in premodern Japan and proposes the existence of three predominant ways to preserve images: to copy, to repair,

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and to re-create. Copying as a form of maintenance implies reproducing a composition due to the deterioration or destruction of the original medium. This practice pointedly differs from other forms of copying prevalent throughout Japanese artistic production that were carried out for different reasons.[1] As well, repairing an image in the context of premodern conservation refers to physically modifying the original. Re-creation combines these two modalities and entails copying an image while treating the newly made one as if it were the original and embodied the same historical, social, and religious associations.

Very few textual records exist that describe the exact treatments that premodern conservators executed in routine object care. Instead, inscriptions were customarily written on the back of a painting, its roller bars, or its storage box to commemorate the completion of a project and generally contained the names of the sponsors or a dedicatee and the date.[2] An investigation into the processes of preservation thus requires a look at these inscriptions to understand who was involved, as well as beyond them to other textual records and related extant objects in order to glean how an object was conserved to ensure its survival through generations.

I have derived the forms of image preservation presented above from three historical case studies that form the core of this article. The first investigates the preservation histories of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds (*ryōkai mandara* 両界曼荼羅; see fig. 1 for a seventeenth-century copy of these images; the originals are no longer extant) and the portraits of Shingon patriarchs that the eminent monk Kūkai 空海 (774–835) brought back from China to establish and propagate esoteric teachings in Japan (figs. 2–6). These sets of paintings were employed frequently together, and both met with significant damage around the same time in history. Yet, while the Mandalas of the Two Worlds were copied as new paintings, the original portraits of Shingon patriarchs were repaired. Analyzing the motivations behind the goals for these

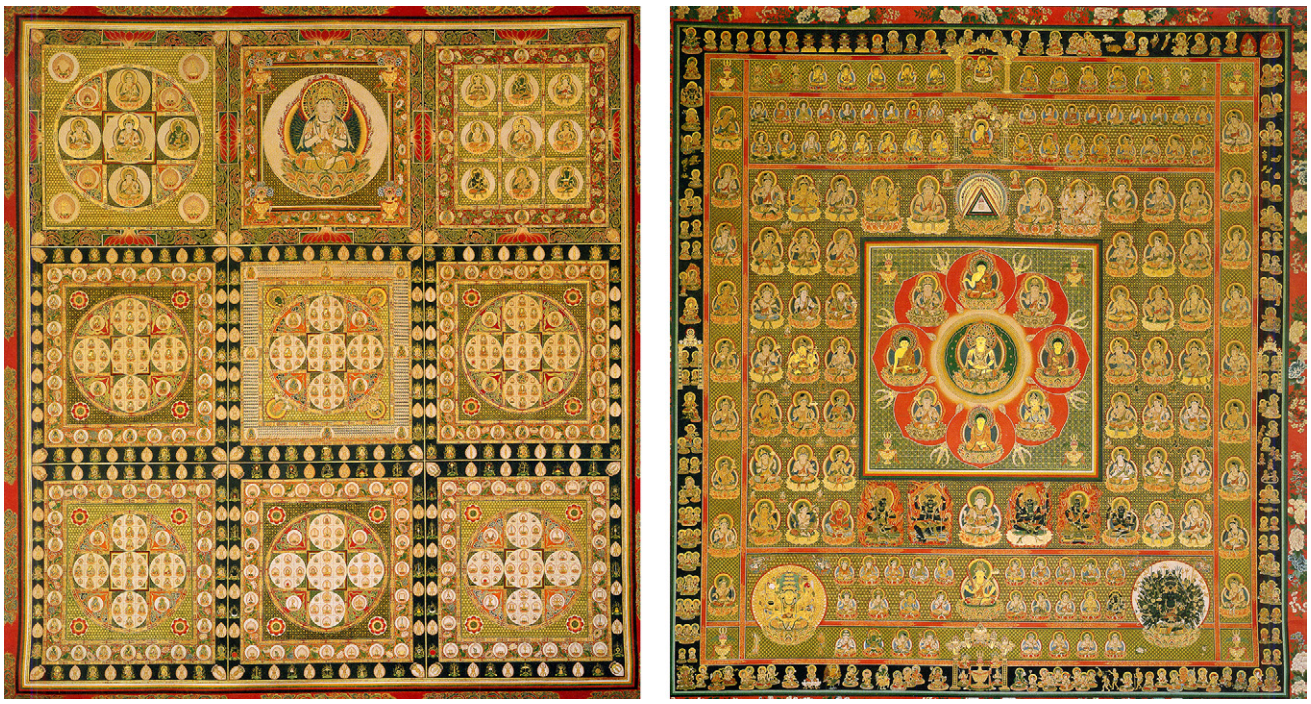

FIGURE 1. Mandalas of the Two Worlds, Genroku version, 1693. (left) Diamond World Mandala. (right) Womb World Mandala. Hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk; H x W: each 410.9 x 379.0 cm. Tōji, Kyoto

FIGURE 2. Vajrabodhi, from *Five Shingon Patriarchs*, 805. Hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk; H x W: 211.5 x 157.2 cm. Tōji, Kyoto

FIGURE 3. Śubhakarasiṃha, from *Five Shingon Patriarchs*, 805. Hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk; H x W: 211.2 x 150.6 cm. Tōji, Kyoto

FIGURE 4. Amoghavajra, from *Five Shingon Patriarchs*, 805. Hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk; H x W: 212.3 x 150.6 cm. Tōji, Kyoto

FIGURE 5. Yixing, from *Five Shingon Patriarchs*, 805. Hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk; H x W: 210.9 x 148.5 cm. Tōji, Kyoto

FIGURE 6. Huiguo, from *Five Shingon Patriarchs*, 805. Hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk; H x W: 211.1 x 147.9 cm. Tōji, Kyoto

projects sheds light on how physically modifying paintings in premodern Japan for the sake of their preservation had the capacity to advance religious and institutional agendas in ways not possible through copying alone. The second case study examines the preservation history of the *Takao mandara* 高雄曼荼羅, a ninth-century version of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds executed in gold and silver ink on a dark background of purple-red twill weave (fig. 7). This object was copied anew and its original was also repaired, and provides additional insight into

FIGURE 7. *Takao mandara*, 9th century. Hanging scrolls, gold and silver ink on purple damask. (left) Diamond World Mandala. H x W: 400.0 x 350.6 cm. (right) Womb World Mandala. H x W: 437.2 x 388.7 cm. Jingoji, Kyoto.

how its material qualities informed the divine presence contained within. The final object under consideration is the *Taima mandara* 当麻曼荼羅, an eighth-century textile depicting Amida's Pure Land (fig. 8). This object was also poorly cared for in its early history, which consequently led to significant damage. Unlike the above objects, however, repairing the *Taima mandara* proved impossible due to limitations of technology, so the patrons decided to re-create it. This section of the article uncovers the nuances of re-creation as preservation and demonstrates how a painted version of the *Taima mandara* came to be understood as if it were one and the same as the eighth-century woven tapestry.

Before moving forward, it may be instructive to contextualize these analyses within two larger discursive fields: Buddhist materiality and studies of premodern Japanese Buddhist painting conservation. The former is an area that seeks to understand what the religion's visual and material culture reveals about those who used and interacted with it, rather than how it reflects doctrinal content. For instance, Halle O'Neal has employed the framework of reuse, recycle, and repurpose to document transformative moments in an object's biography. Studying afterlives in this way, she argues, provides a lens to understand how and why people over time inscribed new meanings and significance onto Buddhist artifacts.[3] Other work in this sphere includes research by Caroline Hirasawa and Benedetta Lomi, who understand the study of materiality as an excavation of a network of relationships that place the object as the central node linking people, both past and present, and environment.[4] Their work complements other divergent approaches including that of Fabio Rambelli, who exposes the porous boundaries between deity, living practitioner, and inanimate object, especially within esoteric Buddhist thought, to demonstrate the various ways in which all ultimately partake in the same universal

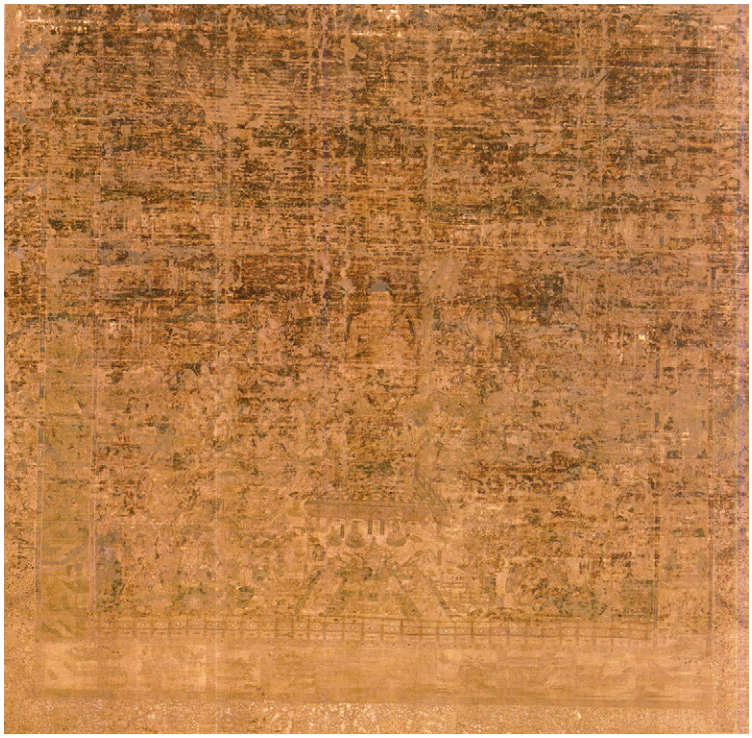

FIGURE 8. *Taima mandara*, 8th century. Woven silk, H x W: 394.8 x 396.9 cm. Taimadera, Nara Prefecture. From Nara National Museum, ed. *Ito no mihotoke: Kokuhō Tsuzureori Taima mandara to shūbutsu* 糸のみほとけ―国宝綴織当麻曼荼羅と繍仏―(Nara: Nara National Museum, Yomiuri Terebi, and Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 2018), 54

principle.[5] Further inquiries by O'Neal as well as Karen Gerhart seek to show how interaction with tangible objects enabled people to grieve the death of a loved one or gain control over the death process.[6] All of these studies follow the pioneering work of Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, who paved the way to understanding how objects functioned within belief and practice apart from their iconography or artistic style.[7] In drawing on these studies, this article offers additional possibilities that consider how the physical condition of images allowed patrons to participate in Buddhist practice in highly personalized and personally meaningful ways not possible through ritual practice alone.

Studies in the conservation of premodern Japanese Buddhist paintings grew out of the custom of documenting processes for the preservation of a particular image. A recent report commemorating the restoration of the twelfth-century painting of the bodhisattva Fugen, now designated a National Treasure, brings together the expertise of scholars, curators, and conservators. After detailed analyses of the religious, historical, and cultural framework of the image and the painting techniques that artists used to communicate these ideas, the study delves into the choices modern-day conservators made for their treatments. Crucially, it emphasizes that they did not add anything extraneous to the visible surface and that they even went so far as to remove noticeable traces of earlier restoration projects. The result is an image that does not look brand new, but one that is instead free from debris and creases to allow, to the extent possible, the original artists' hands to shine through.[8] While premodern painting conservators undoubtedly shared the same concern to manage damage, they generally chose from a greater range of treatment options, as proposed above.

Masuki Ryūsuke has argued for two approaches to Buddhist painting conservation before the modern era. Patrons could discard an old painting and request the production of an entirely new copy, which Masuki notes was entirely common through at least the twelfth

century, or they could repair the original.[9] At first glance, his argument on copying seems to run counter to injunctions in sutra literature that equate the repairing of "reliquaries, images, and scriptures that are ramshackle or ruined" to an act of great merit.[10] As Benedetta Lomi further elaborates, however, the choice of when and how to repair a damaged or destroyed object was not always straightforward in premodern Japan. Although she notes a great deal of concern for the upkeep of stupas and sculptures, Buddhist painting presented a completely new set of challenges due to the comparatively fragile nature of the objects.[11] If keeping an object looking new or presentable was crucial for religious practice, copying a painting as a form of maintenance as Masuki describes most likely occurred when it was deemed that no amount of repair or modification could render the image functional again.

The case studies explored below build on these fields and demonstrate that while all three proposed modalities of preservation served to keep the image in a good state for viewing, studying, or ritual use, repairing and re-creating an image could additionally serve as a means for the production and diffusion of Buddhist cultural knowledge—although in different ways. Finally, special consideration is given to how the materiality of the object—its medium, pigments, or other materials that it comprises, as well as any manifest traces of engagement, either by makers or later viewers—structured the understanding of its meaning and function.

Copy or Repair? Kūkai's Mandalas of the Two Worlds and the Portraits of the Shingon Patriarchs

An illustration from the *Miraculous Legends of the Kasuga Shrine Deity* (*Kasuga Gongen genki-e* 春日権現験記絵, fourteenth century; fig. 9), depicts a typical Japanese esoteric Buddhist worship space. A court official dressed in black bows before the Diamond World Mandala, placed just out of view, while an identical altar to his right contains an image of the Womb World Mandala, identifiable by the central eight-petaled court. Together, these paintings comprise the Mandalas of the Two Worlds and represent the totality of the esoteric Buddhist teachings,

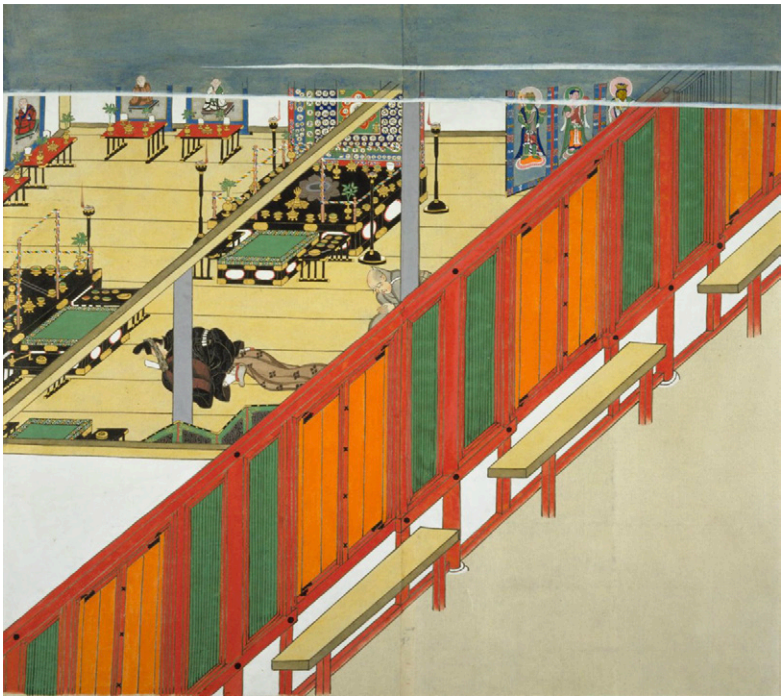

FIGURE 9. *Illustrated Miracles of the Kasuga Deity*, 1309, detail. From an 1870 reproduction by Itabashi Tsurao. Scroll 8. National Diet Library Digital Collection, info:ndljp/pid/1287493

in which the Diamond World Mandala denotes the cosmic nature of the Buddha and the Womb World Mandala the manifestation of the Buddha in the natural world. In the right corner of the composition, a half-hidden folding screen reveals three of the twelve celestials (*jūni ten* 十二天) who guard the ritual space, and in the left corner are portraits of three Shingon patriarchs, with more located outside the picture plane.

The Mandalas of the Two Worlds and the five portraits of Indian and Chinese Shingon patriarchs were among the more than two hundred objects that Kūkai brought back to Japan from China to help establish and propagate the esoteric teachings.[12] Both sets of images were given to Kūkai by his teacher Huiguo 恵果 (746–806) and produced in the workshop of the noted Chinese Buddhist painter Lizhen 李真 (dates unknown).[13] Even though Kūkai received both sets of images from Huiguo, their inclusion in one space as illustrated in the *Miraculous Legends*, for instance, was Kūkai's own design.[14] His understanding of the Shingon ritual arena thus consisted of two core elements: the totality of the esoteric Buddhist teachings represented by the mandalas and its authenticity as demonstrated by the lineage of patriarchs represented in the portraits.[15] For Kūkai, both sets of images were of equal importance for the successful spread of esoteric practice.

Upon Kūkai's initial return to Japan in 806, he presented the objects he brought back with him, including the two mandalas and the portraits, to the court of Emperor Heizei 平城天皇 (774–824). Three years later, Heizei abdicated the throne due to illness and returned Kūkai's objects.[16] The monk then presumably deposited them at Jingoji 神護寺, a temple atop Mount Takao 高尾山, located to the northwest of the Heian capital, where he took up residence that same year. Although at this early date Kūkai had yet to codify what became a typical esoteric ritual space as exemplified in the *Miraculous Legends*, he must have used the mandalas and the portraits together and with a similar degree of frequency because both sets of images started to deteriorate around the same time. In the case of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds, Kūkai notes in his "Vow of the Four Debts of Gratitude in the Making of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds" (*Shion no ontame ni nibu no daimandara o tsukuru gammon* 奉為四恩造二部大曼荼羅願文):

> The silk is damaged, and the colors are flaking [so much] that the faces of the deities have started to change. Students will express lament viewing [the paintings in this way] and it is a pity that [the damaged mandalas] will bring misfortune to all living beings. . . . Reverently, beginning in Kōnin 12 (821), fourth month, third day and until the end of the eighth month, I had the Mandala of the Womb of Great Compassion made up of eight widths of silk, the Diamond World Mandala made up of nine widths of silk . . . and portraits of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi all newly painted.[17]

Kūkai bemoans the fact that the mandalas' deterioration had rendered the iconography illegible, which he fears would hinder proper teaching and even cause misfortune for others. Yet the monk does not stop at requesting copies of the paintings; he commissions entirely new objects, including two additional patriarchal portraits of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi, the significance of which I will return to below.[18] Although it is impossible to speculate what the actual condition of the objects might have been at this time, copies of Kūkai's mandalas were produced throughout the premodern period, with the oldest extant example dating to 1191 (fig. 10).[19] Recent restoration work has sought to stabilize the two paintings, which have been heavily damaged and fragmented, especially in the lower third of the image.[20] Even if the deterioration of Kūkai's images at that time was only a fraction of that seen today on the twelfth-century version, it is not difficult to imagine that any distortion of the detailed

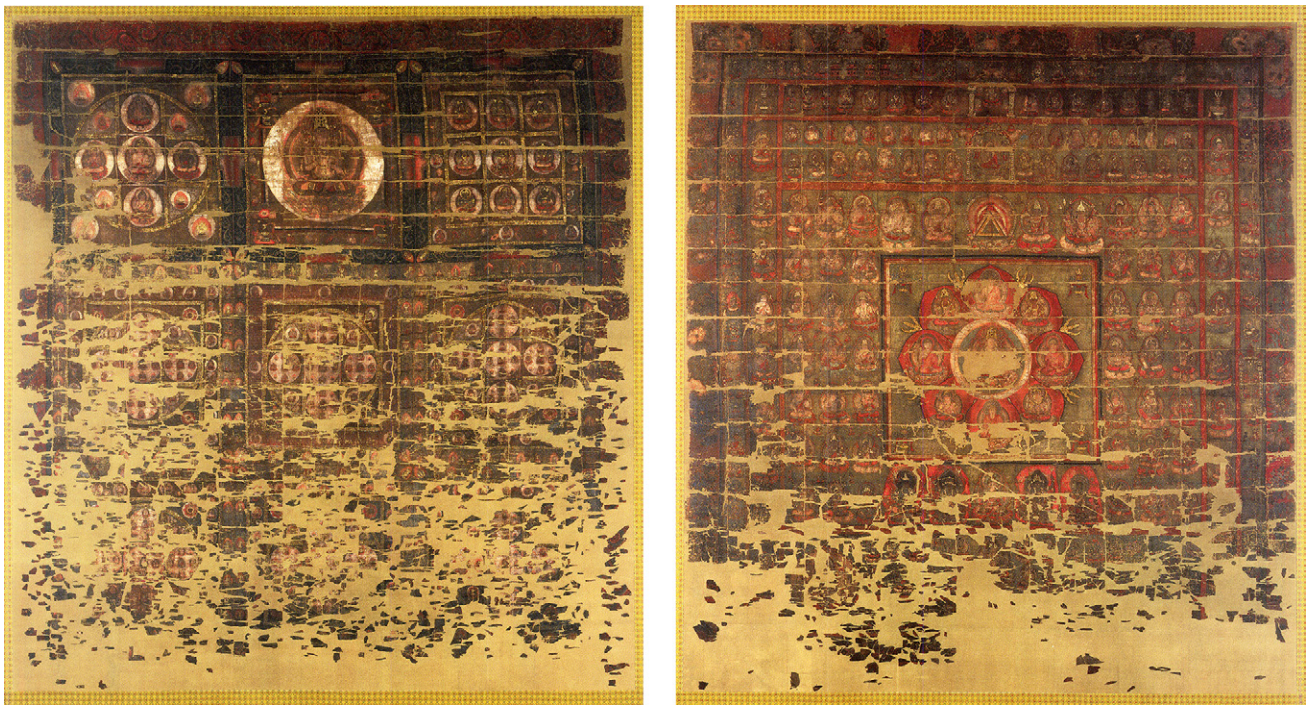

FIGURE 10. Mandalas of the Two Worlds, Kōhon version, 1191. Hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk. (left) Diamond World Mandala. H x W: 428.8 x 395.8 cm. (right) Womb World Mandala. H x W: 433.3 x 396.4 cm. Tōji, Kyoto

iconography, however major or minor, could render the images ineffective for teaching or even ritual viewing in the eyes of a master attempting to establish veneration of the objects in Japan for the first time.[21]

Masuki Ryūsuke has argued that the practice of commissioning a copy of a painting instead of restoring the original was an altogether common practice before the thirteenth century.[22] Nonetheless, the deterioration of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds did not simply spur Kūkai to request unblemished copies of the iconography; it also allowed him to refine and implement his vision for systematizing the totality and demonstrating the authenticity of the esoteric teachings, as indicated by his commission of the two new portrait paintings.[23] Abé Ryūichi has postulated that one of the reasons Kūkai was so vested in this project was that he was planning to implement a grand initiation rite in 822, the first of its kind in the archipelago, for Heizei and Prince Takaoka 高丘親王 (799–865) that was to be sponsored by the reigning emperor Saga 嵯峨天皇 (786–842).[24] A rite of the utmost importance required the most luxurious objects, and Kūkai must have been keen to present the mandalas, and by extension the Dharma, in spectacular fashion. In preparation for the very same event, however, Kūkai made a completely different decision when faced with the deterioration of the set of five portraits of Shingon patriarchs. He describes the damaged portraits in a letter addressed to the Minister of the Left Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu 藤原冬嗣 (775–826):

> The fog atop the mountain [i.e. Mount Takao] is thick; the figures [of the patriarchs] are damaged and everything is covered with dust. I am afraid they are not adequate for imperial viewing. My request today is to ask for a specialist to immediately repair [the paintings]. I would be most grateful for this.[25]

Kūkai requests that the damaged images be restored, not copied. Moreover, he took advantage of the occasion and added the two newly painted portraits of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi (figs. 11, 12) to the original set of five. Why did Kūkai choose to copy one set of images while repairing the other, and what might the distinction have been between these two modes of preservation?

While Kūkai's concern with the mandalas was the legibility of the represented deities, his interest in the portraits lay in the information they conveyed about the sitters rather than the images of the sitters themselves. Kūkai's goal for restoring the five patriarchal portraits and adding two new ones was twofold: to prepare the paintings for an imperial viewership, as he states in his letter to Fuyutsugu, and also to involve Emperor Saga in the completion of the project. Each of the now-seven portraits is nearly identical in size and scope. That of Śubhakarasiṃha is a representative example (fig. 3). The image illustrates the patriarch in three-quarters view atop a dais. His name in both Sanskrit and Chinese characters appears to his right and left, respectively. Below, a brief biography summarizes the figure's major accomplishments. The portraits of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi that Kūkai commissioned to complete the series follow the same conventions. They depict the sitter facing left or right on a platform and contain their names in Sanskrit and Chinese characters as well as their biographies below. The five portraits that Kūkai brought back from China, however, initially lacked text.

FIGURES 11 and 12. *Two Additional Shingon Patriarchs,* 821. Hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk. (left) Nāgabodhi. H x W: 213.0 x 151.2 cm. (right) Nāgārjuna. H x W: 212.4 x 150.6 cm. Tōji, Kyoto.

During their repair, craftsmen appended new strips of silk to give space for Kūkai to compose biographical entries for each sitter. The two new portraits were created with space to inscribe the relevant information so that all in the set would be identical. Kūkai also added the names of the sitters on the five original portraits. He then asked Emperor Saga to inscribe Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi's names on the newly completed paintings.[26] The act of repairing these paintings effectively transformed them into images that additionally transmitted information about the patriarchs, including their accomplishments and their ethnicity.[27] Saga's involvement in the completion of the set extended the line of transmission from the Shingon masters through Kūkai to the emperor himself as the head of the realm.

Saga's act of inscribing the names of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi takes on additional significance when considering the calligraphic style he employed for this task. For example, in the upper right corner of the portrait of Śubhakarasiṃha that Kūkai completed, the monk wrote "Indian name 梵號" in Chinese characters and below that the sitter's name "Śubhakarasiṃha" in Siddhaṃ script. On the left, the word "Chinese name 漢名" appears at the top, and then the figure's name "Shanwuwei" in Chinese characters below.[28] All of these characters are composed in flying white (*hihaku* 飛白), a technique that renders the vertical lines thick and horizontal lines thin, sometimes with ribbonlike strokes as most clearly visible in characters in the upper right and left corners. Emperor Saga followed Kūkai's precedent and completed his paintings by writing characters in flying white as well.

Both Kūkai and Emperor Saga were noted calligraphers in their own right; Saga studied with Kūkai, who was widely versed in both writing and calligraphic theory. In particular, Kūkai understood that characters written in the style of mixed script (*zattaisho* 雜体書), which encompassed flying white, had the power to communicate ideals of the natural world, peaceful rulership, political power, and the protection of the state. Flying white in particular was also a technique favored by Chinese emperors to mark the auspicious. Kūkai had given Saga manuals of mixed script and flying white to study, and the emperor must have been well attuned to the potential of these techniques to project imperial authority.[29] Thus, when Saga completed the repair of the patriarchal paintings by inscribing the two masters' names, he was simultaneously marking the auspicious nature of the initiation rite to be held for Heizei—when the renewed paintings would be displayed—while at the same time proclaiming a foundation for a harmonious and prosperous realm. Saga's involvement also served Kūkai's goals of establishing and disseminating Shingon Buddhism. His participation was concrete proof that he now belonged to the lineage of figures memorialized in the portraits and had inherited their teachings.

The choice to copy the Mandalas of the Two Worlds and repair the portraits of the patriarchs reveals distinctions about these two modes of preservation and the role of each set of images in the ritual arena, especially given the fact that both most likely started to deteriorate around the same time, as previously noted. Creating a clean copy of the mandalas ensured the images would be suitable for viewership both by the emperor as well as by students who studied the teachings, while preserving the portraits facilitated the creation and dissemination of religious and cultural knowledge, which here consisted of codifying a lineage of Shingon masters in Japan. Additionally, both modes of preservation were intertwined with the patron's authority. Kūkai capitalized on the occasion of copying the mandalas by requesting wholly new patriarchal portraits to be produced, in order to more fully express his vision of the Shingon teachings and their diffusion from India, China, and Japan. Emperor Saga's participation in repairing the older portraits legitimized Kūkai's interpretation and expression of esoteric teachings and history.

The *Takao mandara*

The *Takao mandara* refers to a version of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds rendered on purplish-red twill with gold and silver paint (fig. 7). The paintings were created sometime between 829 and 833 under the patronage of Emperor Junna 淳和天皇 (786–840) and were installed at Jingoji, albeit after Kūkai had left the temple and taken up residence at Tōji 東寺 in the capital. Although Kūkai himself did not play a role in the production of the *Takao mandara*, the fact that the paintings were produced at Jingoji rendered them conceptually associated with the monk soon after their production.

Like the polychrome Two Worlds Mandalas, the *Takao mandara* was copied due to damage. This act allowed the patron to display the images in a superior condition as part of his plan to revive Jingoji and elevate the temple. Unlike the polychrome versions, however, the gold and purple examples were also repaired on a separate occasion, not for religious use but in an attempt to preserve their perceived link to Kūkai. In this case, the *Takao mandara*'s gold and silver ink on a dark background stand out as a key element that structured the understanding of the images' cultural significance, solidifying their inextricable relationship to the esoteric monk. A comparison between the driving factors behind the decisions to copy the *Takao mandara* versus to repair it reveals the role these special pigments played in informing the historical legacy the patron wished to retain through its restoration.

The story of these mandalas' preservation begins roughly three hundred years after their production, when the Jingoji monk Mongaku 文覚 (1139–1203) sought to revitalize the temple after it fell into a period of neglect.[30] Part of Mongaku's push to revive Jingoji included reinstalling the *Takao mandara* in the Initiation Hall (built 823–35), as they had been evacuated from the temple for safekeeping sometime prior.[31] Mongaku petitioned Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa 後白河法皇 (1127–1192) to bring the objects back, arguing not only that they properly belonged at their place of origin but also that it was particularly appropriate given that he believed they were painted by Kūkai himself. Mongaku writes:

> The Mandalas of the Two Worlds in gold paint were painted by [Kōbō] Daishi himself . . . long ago when Daishi was still alive, these objects were the original mandalas enshrined at this temple. . . . [I], Mongaku, have revived this temple. On the day when the rituals of old are carried out again, the mandalas should be installed at this temple as they were. I urgently make this appeal [to bring the paintings back].[32]

Mongaku's assessment that the *Takao mandara* was painted by Kūkai is significant, for the same designation was not extended to the polychrome mandalas, which have the same composition and were also inextricably connected to the monk. For instance, the *Illustrated Activities of Kōbō Daishi* (*Kōbō daishi gyōjō ekotoba* 弘法大師行状絵詞, fourteenth century) depicts Kūkai, identifiable by a three-pronged vajra on the table in front of him, overseeing Lizhen and his workshop painting the Mandalas of the Two Worlds for the monk to bring back to Japan (fig. 13). While the image depicts Kūkai's involvement in the production of these paintings, he is not the figure who is making them. Mongaku thus distinguished the *Takao mandara* from other versions by positing them as the manifest traces of Kūkai himself.

The petition to return the gold-inked paintings to Jingoji was successful, yet in lieu of displaying them in their original home, Mongaku opted to place them in a box and shut them away in the storehouse. He then proceeded to commission a copy of the paintings instead.[33] Mongaku's decision to copy the *Takao mandara* while placing the originals out of view may

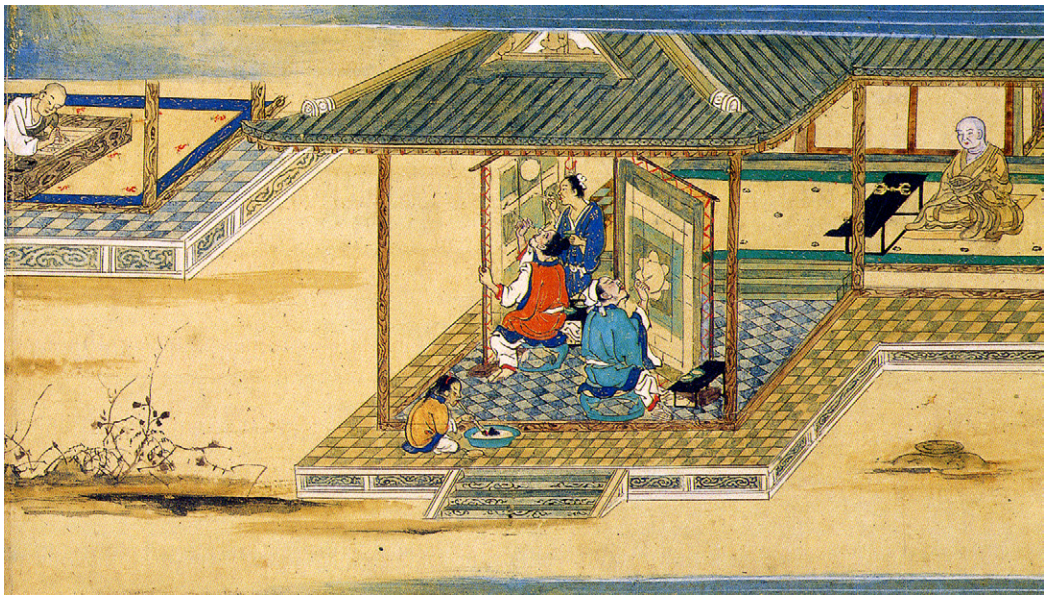

FIGURE 13. *Illustrated Activities of Kōbō Daishi*, 14th century, detail. Scroll 4. Handscroll, ink and color on paper; H x W: 33.7 x 1927 cm. Tōji, Kyoto

seem like a striking decision considering his aspirations to return Jingoji and all its constituent elements, images included, to their ninth-century state. Mongaku's treatment of the objects, however, is consistent with attitudes toward damaged iconography raised in the previous discussion, namely, that instead of repairing an icon for posterity, it was simply rendered afresh. Doing so reflected the patron and his agenda in superb light and demonstrated Mongaku's success at returning Jingoji to its perceived original state.

Over one hundred years later, in 1308, Retired Emperor Go-Uda 後宇多法皇 (1267–1324) visited Jingoji and viewed the original ninth-century mandalas. He was intensely aware of their reputed connection with Kūkai, but whereas Mongaku chose to copy the paintings and take the old ones out of circulation, Go-Uda commissioned their repair. He documented the process, along with his sentiments, in a record titled *Account of Repairing the Takao Mandara* (*Takao mandara go shūfukuki* 高雄曼陀羅御修復記, 1309), where he first reiterates his understanding of the paintings' importance:

> The Mandalas of the Two Worlds housed in the Initiation Hall at Jingoji consist of the true brushstrokes of the founder [Kōbō] Daishi. It is the chief object of worship for all of [Shingon Buddhism].[34]

It was also perhaps because of the mandalas' perceived provenance that Go-Uda expressed dismay to see them in a damaged state. He goes on to write:

> When the venerable monk Mongaku revived the temple long ago, a new copy of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds [was made] and venerated. The originals were put in storage and have not yet been repaired. Moreover, when I visited this temple on the twenty-fourth day of the third month in the first year of Engyō [1308], I viewed these sacred objects. There were many visible signs of damage, and fragments [of paint] had fallen off and are gathered at the bottom of the storage box. The exalted deities [appear] lacking and incomplete, and it is difficult to identify the names of the assemblies. The icon has been destroyed and is imperfect, and the true forms of the deities are deficient. With all due reverence, even though these are the brush traces of

> the esteemed [Kōbō Daishi], the object has been hidden away and one can only feel pity about its damage.[35]

Emperor Go-Uda, like many sovereigns before him, recognized the unique power of Shingon Buddhist ritual to protect and fortify both imperial rulership and the realm. Shingon Buddhist practice had splintered in Japan after Kūkai's lifetime, and Go-Uda differed from his predecessors in that he sought initiation in multiple lineages, believing ritual mastery could be used as tool for political legitimization.[36] Although each system of practice had its own distinct protocols, all were united through Kūkai and the Mandalas of the Two Worlds. When Go-Uda viewed the *Takao mandara* and lamented its physical state, his concern was not simply a pair of paintings that had become damaged over time; they were the images at the very center of Kūkai's teachings, and thus the object from which the emperor drew his authority to rule. Furthermore, Go-Uda's description of the inability to recognize the iconography due to deterioration echoes the way Kūkai recounts the condition of the mandalas that he requested to be copied. While Kūkai understood the afflicted state of the mandalas to hinder ritual practice and be an obstacle in the propagation of the teachings, Go-Uda felt the loss of pigmentation to be regrettable because of their inability to facilitate a direct connection to Kūkai by proxy through his supposed brushstrokes.

After the emperor articulated his sorrow at having seen the paintings in a less-than-spectacular state, he then decided to sponsor their repair. In his *Account*, he writes that he consulted with the monks of the temple to find a priest from another institution who excelled in painting restoration. The repairs were then completed after a period of five and a half months. Upon the completion of the project, Go-Uda returned to Jingoji to view the paintings for a second time. The emperor concludes the *Account* overjoyed by asserting:

> The forms of the exalted deities look [now] as they did in the past and they glitter again as they did in the old days. [It was as though] Kūkai has reappeared in our time through his brushstrokes; it bestows his blessing and the inconceivable protection of [the deity] Hachiman! . . . What is even more joyful is that this is the object that allows karmic connections to form to the teachings [i.e., it allows the teachings to prosper].[37]

In the very same year that Emperor Go-Uda requested the repair of the *Takao mandara*, he also patronized the revival of Tōji, the temple where the copies of Kūkai's polychrome mandalas were held and where Kūkai spent the bulk of his career after he left Jingoji. The emperor's main goal for the restoration of Tōji, however, was to enhance the education of monks by building residences and expanding facilities for lectures and other religious events.[38] While the restoration of both the *Takao mandara* and Tōji's temple compound was meant to facilitate a greater access to the esoteric teachings, Go-Uda understood that only the paintings, after being properly repaired, were able to channel Kūkai's numinous powers.

The motivations behind commissioning the repair of the *Takao mandara* mirror those for the restoration of the Shingon patriarchal portraits. The patrons of both projects aimed to foster connections to the past for self-legitimization, and to gain cultural authority as well as religious benefits. Whereas Kūkai enabled Emperor Saga to become a participant in the lineage of Dharma transmission by inscribing the sitters' names on two of the paintings, Emperor Go-Uda brought Kūkai back to life through his purported brushstrokes, simultaneously enabling anyone who viewed the paintings to form a connection to the monk and to the teachings.

Doing so also served to elevate his own rulership, as he placed himself as close to the apex of Shingon Buddhism as possible. The question remains: why did the *Takao mandara* capture Mongaku's and Go-Uda's imaginations in a way that the more colorful mandalas did not? Why did they believe the former to contain Kūkai's true brushstrokes without applying the same designation to the latter, even though it had the same iconography and was also intimately associated with Kūkai and his teachings?

The *Takao mandara*'s medium of gold and silver paint on a dark ground played a role in structuring the perception of the paintings' historical and cultural significance and allowed the emperor to feel especially close to Kūkai. This occurred in two ways. First, the color scheme of gold, silver, and purple or indigo at once signified the realm of the ethereal, approximated the lands of the deities, and, more broadly, suggested a world wholly removed from the present. These associations easily aligned with the fact that Kūkai had long been dead and existed only as an intangible religious and cultural force. Second, the gold and dark blue colors were closely related to the practices of calligraphy and sutra copying. The *Takao mandara* is clearly not an example of writing, but both Mongaku and Go-Uda describe them as consisting of Kūkai's brush traces as if they were. Kūkai's talents as a calligraphic master were widely known while he was alive. By the fourteenth century, legendary stories recast Kūkai's calligraphy as possessing wondrous qualities in much the same way as a Buddha image, and reimagined Kūkai as effecting miracles through the power of his calligraphy alone. The combination of a set of paintings produced at Jingoji during Kūkai's lifetime (even though it was after his residence there) with gold and silver pigments refigured them into objects that were particularly suited to transmit Kūkai's aura of authority.

Images in gold and silver paint on a dark background were known in Japan as early as the eighth century. The earliest record of a painting with these characteristics dates to 754 and describes "a purple hanging scroll of Amida's Pure Land with gold and black paint brought over by the great Tang monk [Jianzhen 鑑真, 688–763]."[39] Paintings employing this combination of pigments, however, seem to have been rare, and none are extant. On the other hand, sutra transcriptions completed in gold and silver on indigo-dyed paper were far more common. An account describing a copy of the *Lotus Sutra* produced for Emperor Kanmu 桓武天皇 (735–806) in 826 captures how the medium of gold ink on an indigo background elevated the object into the realm of the extraordinary:

> It was gold letters on indigo paper and the rollers were made of jewels with an embroidered case. Everything down to the smallest detail [was exquisite, and the characters had] body and power. [They looked like] a string of jewels and a row of stars! It glittered and filled the eyes to the brim [with beauty]. A viewer exclaimed, "What a precious object! The calligraphy is nearly equal to [the great Chinese calligraphy masters] Zhong Yao (151–230) and Wang Xizhi (303–361)."[40]

The night sky is a powerful analogy suggesting that the golden characters glittering on a dark background had their own light-emitting properties similar to a celestial body. This visual property served to suffuse the entire object with an otherworldly character that was made even more palpable by the jeweled rollers and embroidered case.[41] Furthermore, the commentary that the calligraphy resembled that of the lauded masters from the distant past not only rooted the object in the cultural authority of China, it also provided a way for the author to remark on how the object appeared as if it could exist in a world that was superior to the present.

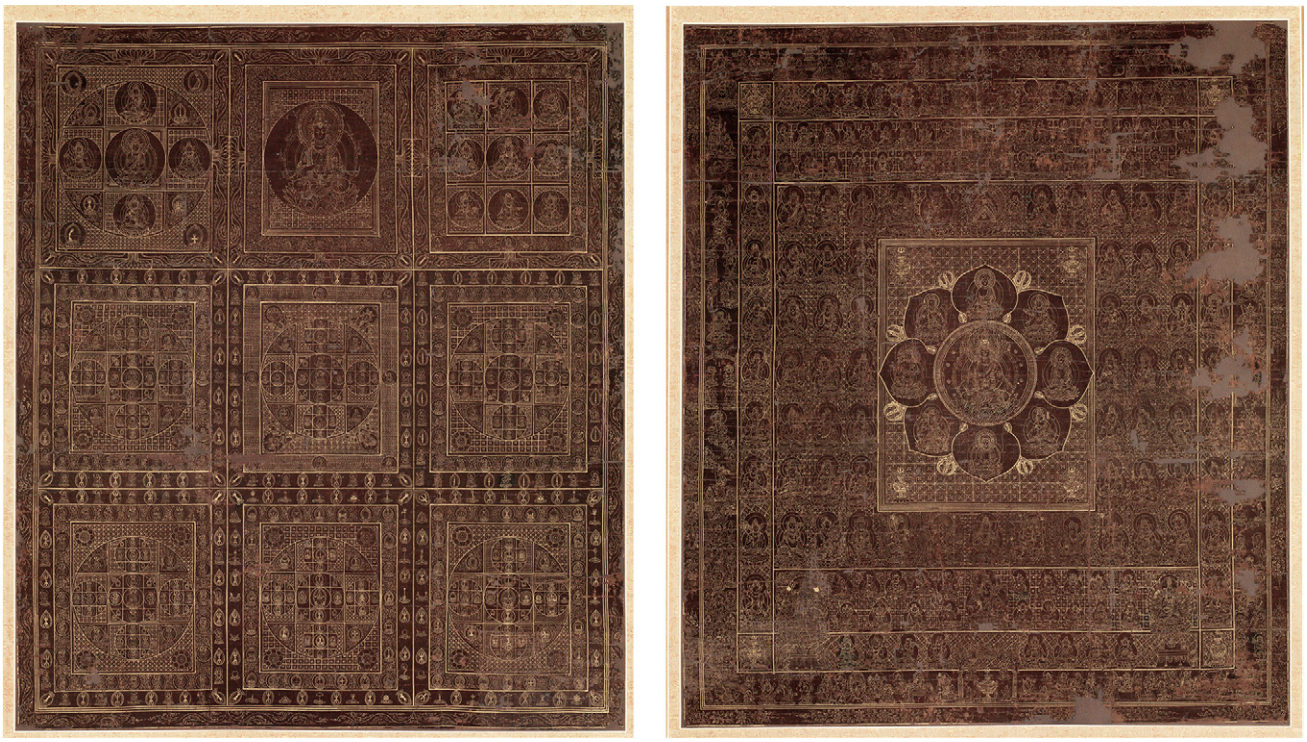

FIGURE 14. *Ryōkai Mandara* (Mandalas of the Two Worlds), Japan, Muromachi period, 12th century. Set of two hanging scrolls, gold on purple-dyed silk. (left) Diamond World Mandala. H x W: 166.8 x 82 cm. (right) Womb World Mandala. H x W: 166.3 x 81.8 cm. National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Freer Collection, Purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1966.4

The *Takao mandara* was not the only version of Two Worlds iconography executed in silver and gold. At least three other versions are extant, including a version owned by the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art (fig. 14), and evidence for several more, now-lost copies are found in the historical record.[42] Most significantly, a copy of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds in gold and silver ink on a purple woven background with mother-of-pearl inlayed rollers was produced in 1152 as part of the celebrations for Emperor Toba's fiftieth birthday. For the occasion, the paintings accompanied a number of other objects such as Buddhist statues, bronze ornaments in the shape of tortoises and phoenixes, and embroidered textiles with Chinese twill.[43] Of note is the fact that the mandalas were hung and venerated in a space completely different from a typical esoteric ritual altar, a space that, as discussed above, included the Shingon patriarchal portraits. The mandalas here were not employed for rites of initiation into a Shingon lineage, but instead took on a celebratory character that required the use of precious materials to match the event of an emperor's fiftieth birthday, a milestone not experienced in every generation. The medium of gold and silver ink on a purple textile raised the object up to a rarefied world filled with auspicious forces.[44]

The *Takao mandara*'s specific color scheme and its close associations to sutra transcriptions take on greater significance in light of Kūkai's fame as a calligrapher. One of the best-known examples of calligraphy with gold and silver ink on indigo-dyed paper associated with Kūkai is a copy of the *Heart Sutra* penned by Emperor Saga. Photographic reproductions of this particular object are prohibited, but later emperors followed in Saga's footsteps and produced their own copies of the *Heart Sutra* in exactly the same format; an image of the work by

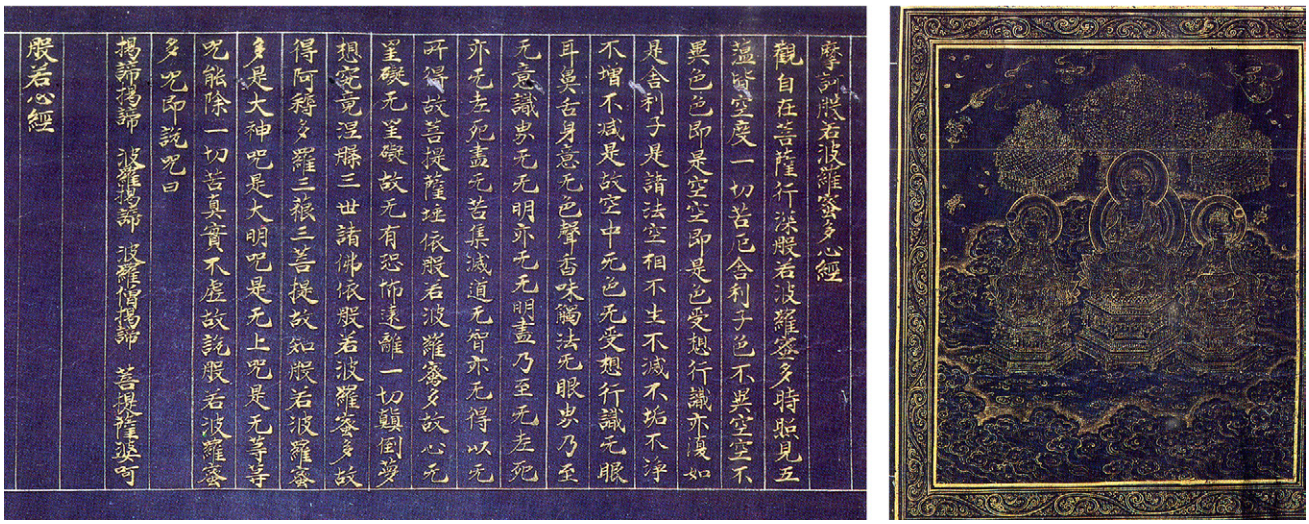

FIGURE 15. Handwriting by Emperor Go-Hanazono: Heart Sutra (*Hanashingyō*) (left) with frontispiece (right), 1461. Handscroll, gold ink on indigo-dyed paper; H x W: 26.8 x 70.8 cm. Daikakuji, Kyoto

Emperor Go-Hanazono 後花園天皇 (1418–1471) is shown here for expediency (fig. 15).[45] Saga completed his copy of this short text, which was accompanied by a frontispiece depicting the Buddha's assembly, in an attempt to slow the spread of an epidemic that caused widespread suffering. Accounts describe that Kūkai then sought to amplify Saga's act by reciting a commentary on the sutra, which later became codified in a new text titled *The Secret Key to the Heart Sutra* (*Hannya shinkyō hiken* 般若心経秘鍵, early ninth century).[46]

Later legendary tales systematize this relationship into a wondrous exchange, clarifying that while Saga's copying of the sutra was meritorious in and of itself, it was Kūkai's exegetical performance of it that caused miracles to occur. For instance, the *Illustrated Acts of the Great Master of Mount Koya* (*Kōya Daishi gyōjō zuga* 高野大師行状図画, fourteenth century) depicts two scenes related to this event. In the first, Emperor Saga sits behind a desk with his newly completed, indigo-dyed scroll, which rests between a brush and an inkstone (fig. 16). Kūkai sits across from the emperor, and ritual implements placed in front of him indicate that he is in the process, or has just completed, his lecture on the *Heart Sutra*. The next scene focuses on a purported miracle that Kūkai raised the dead as a result of this lecture. The scene depicts the monk in a cemetery; figures in the background who were previously deceased begin to stir while Kūkai bestows perfumed water to alleviate the sufferings of others (fig. 17).[47]

Other narratives describe Kūkai's writing itself as having the ability to spontaneously effect miracles, much in the same way as Buddhist icons. One such story in the *Illustrated Acts*, for instance, tells of how Kūkai offered his calligraphy as compensation for a ferry ride. Long after he disembarked, other passengers physically ate fragments of the character he gifted to the captain as it became known to cure illness.[48] Stories such as this did not simply exist in the realm of fiction but were indicative of broader beliefs. Allegedly, Emperor Go-Uda also kept a fragment of Kūkai's calligraphy in his personal medicine cabinet.[49]

The above evidence demonstrates that Go-Uda's conflation of the *Takao mandara* with Kūkai's brushstrokes was rooted in the paintings' place of origin at Jingoji as well as its medium of gold and silver ink on a dark background. The combination of the optical effect generated by the paintings' colors, which imparted a sublime quality, and the elevation of writing

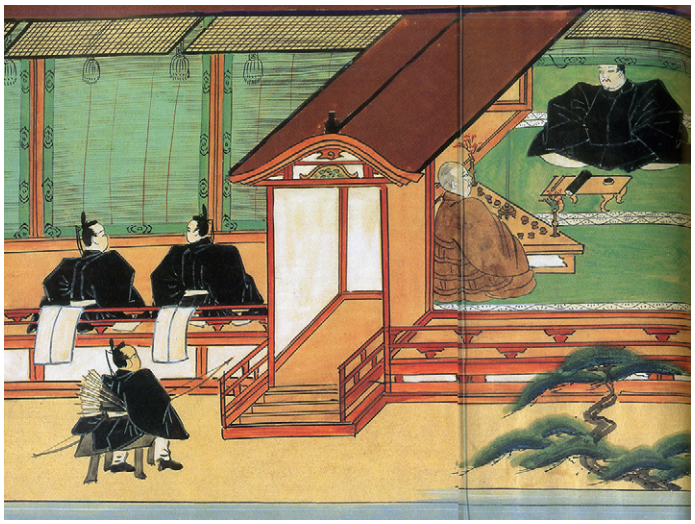

FIGURE 16. *Illustrated Acts of the Great Master of Mount Koya*, 14th century, detail. Scroll 7. Handscroll, ink and color on paper; H x W: 33.0 x 1839.3 cm. Shin'ō-in, Mount Kōya. From Tsuji Eiko, *Kōya Daishi gyōjō zuga* 高野大師行状図画 (Wakayama, Kōya-san: Shin'ō-in bon gyōei bunko, 2005), 159

FIGURE 17. *Illustrated Acts of the Great Master of Mount Koya*, 14th century, detail. Scroll 7. Handscroll, ink and color on paper; H x W: 33.0 x 1839.3 cm. Shin'ō-in, Mount Kōya. From Tsuji Eiko, *Kōya Daishi gyōjō zuga* 高野大師行状図画 (Wakayama, Kōya-san: Shin'ō-in bon gyōei bunko, 2005), 160–61

associated with Kūkai to an otherworldly realm must have served as a powerful motivation for the emperor to request the repair of this specific object instead of, for instance, the polychrome mandalas. Of note are Go-Uda's goals for this project. As an emperor who legitimized his rule by receiving ordination rites in competing lineages of Shingon Buddhist practice, he had also become an expert at invoking Kūkai to promote himself as the unifier of these traditions to solidify his authority. Go-Uda was involved in numerous projects to achieve these aims. He wrote a laudatory text on a portrait of Kūkai, for instance, that posits Tōji as the center of all esoteric ritual (fig. 18).[50] His sponsored restoration of Tōji, introduced above, also placed renewed focus on it as a place for the performance of rites dedicated to the protection of the state. The repair of the *Takao mandara* occurred as part of Go-Uda's concerted effort to consolidate his reign around Kūkai and esoteric practice. Rather than copying the object, as Mongaku did to demonstrate his success in reviving Jingoji, Go-Uda requested its repair to further strengthen his privileged relationship to the ninth-century monk, and to emphasize his benevolence by preserving Kūkai's perceived miraculous brush traces for the sake of the realm.

FIGURE 18. Portrait of Kōbō Daishi with text purportedly written by Emperor Go-Uda. Dangi version, 14th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; H x W: 141.9 x 61.7 cm. Tōji, Kyoto.

The *Taima mandara*

The final example of the preservation of a Buddhist image pivots from Kūkai and the Mandalas of the Two Worlds to examine a very different but equally important iconography in the premodern Japanese Buddhist landscape: the *Taima mandara*, an eighth-century tapestry consisting of a representation of Amida's Pure Land (fig. 8). Little is known about the object's early ritual use. By at least the thirteenth century, however, veneration of the tapestry, either by

listening to pictorial recitations explicating its iconography (*etoki* 絵解き) or by contemplating and directing prayers to it, came to be widely understood as particularly conducive to aiding in the achievement of a Pure Land rebirth. Furthermore, the object's medium—woven tapestry—rendered it efficacious for women. The *Taima mandara*'s status as an object tailored to women's devotional practice is captured in the *Miraculous Origins of the Taima mandara* (*Taima mandara engi emaki* 当麻曼荼羅縁起絵巻, second half of the thirteenth century). The tale describes how the bodhisattva Kannon descended to earth disguised as a woman of the court to weave it at the request of a princess-turned-nun named Chūjōhime 中将姫. The miraculous narrative concludes when Chūjōhime, after a lifetime of learning about the tapestry through pictorial recitation and veneration, dies and achieves rebirth in the Amida's Land of Bliss.[51]

Despite the object's sacred iconography and perceived miraculous origins, records indicate that the *Taima mandara* was preserved poorly in its early history; from at least the twelfth century, the lower register had already become abraded to the point of being illegible.[52] Unlike the versions of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds discussed above, the *Taima mandara* presented a unique challenge for those who wished to preserve it: sometime between the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the monks at Taimadera 当麻寺, the temple where the *mandara* was kept, pasted the tapestry onto a wooden backing board in an attempt to prevent further deterioration.[53] Any restorations that were to take place would have to contend with the additional elements such as glue and wood that were introduced to the object's storage environment. Despite these challenges, three major attempts to restore it took place in the premodern period, in 1217, 1505, and 1677. In each case, patrons opted to re-create the *mandara* to preserve its connection to Chūjōhime and its association with women, as they may have determined that repairing the original was too difficult. As stated above, re-creation as a third category of preservation combines the practice of copying an image afresh with the conceptual concerns of transmitting Buddhist cultural knowledge that could accompany repair projects. Within these three types of interventions, the efforts that took place in 1505 stand out as particularly illustrative of re-creation as a means of image maintenance and demonstrate how a newly made object could come to embody the same cultural connotations and numinous properties as the original miraculously created centuries before.[54]

This repair project began with a nun named Kakuen 覚円 (dates unknown), who lived at Saihōniji 西方尼寺, a convent known for its dedication to Pure Land devotion and practice.[55] Saihōniji also housed a smaller version of the *Taima mandara* that is extant today (fig. 19). Despite Kakuen's access to the iconography of the Pure Land, the nun expressed regret that the original tapestry was continuing to deteriorate, so she set off to raise funds to preserve it. Kakuen's efforts are recorded in *Getsuan's Record of Soberness and Intoxication* (*Getsuan suiseiki* 月庵酔醒記, sixteenth century), a literary work written by Isshiki Naotomo 一色直朝 (Getsuan, d. 1597?). Getsuan was a samurai who served in present-day Ibaraki Prefecture, but his vocation was acquiring knowledge of events in the capital.[56] Getsuan writes about Kakuen and notes her visit to Kyoto-area weavers to solicit threads as part of her fundraising efforts. According to Getsuan, Kakuen expresses sorrow regarding the fact that the mandala's threads had begun to rot and decay. A weaver then responds to her sentiments: "Shouldn't it be known that long ago, Chūjōhime, with the help of the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas of the three ages, set up a loom and wove [the *Taima mandara*] with hand-spun thread?" This directive prompts Kakuen to state her resolve: "No matter what, I will weave the object."[57] The author then asserts that the nun set out to re-create the mandala using the same weaving techniques as employed for the original. While the resultant object is the same size as

FIGURE 19. Copy of the *Taima mandara*, 13th–14th century. Hanging scroll, color on silk; H x W: 167.0 x 166.8 cm. Saihōniji, Kyoto. From Nakano Genzō, *Raigōzu no bijutsu* 来迎図の美術 (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985), 120

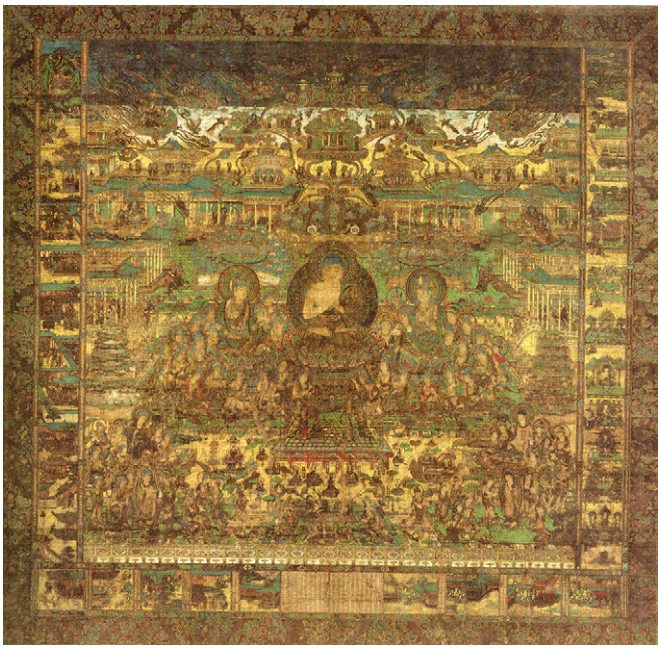

FIGURE 20. *Taima mandara*, 1505. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk; H x W: 374.8 x 391.2 cm. Taimadera, Nara Prefecture. From Nara National Museum, ed., *Taimadera: Gokuraku jōdō no akogare* 当麻寺ー極楽浄土へのあこがれ (Nara: Nara National Museum and Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 2013), 136

the eighth-century tapestry, it is executed entirely by a brush and in ink, color, and gold pigments (fig. 20).

The conflation of Kakuen with Chūjōhime, as described in the above account, is reflective of a broader effort to refigure the painted 1505 copy into an object that embodied the cultural authority of the original. The nobleman Sanjōnishi no Sanetaka 三条西実隆 (1455–1537) and the reigning emperor Go-Kashiwabara 後柏原天皇 (1464–1526) also engaged with the sixteenth-century version as if it were couched in the same religious framework and miraculous account that defined the tapestry. For instance, the original object used to contain an inscription at the center of the bottom register recounting the story of how Kannon came down to earth to weave it. As noted above, by Sanetaka's time the *Taima mandara*'s entire lower register had become abraded and illegible; moreover, none of the extant copies made in the centuries beforehand bore a full inscription. Sanetaka remarks: "None of the [copies] of the *mandara* in wide circulation have a complete [inscription]; the characters appear only in places. This time, just as in the original [at the time of its creation], all will be recorded."[58] As there was no way to verify the contents of the original inscription, Sanetaka inscribes a version of the story of Chūjōhime as it grew out of oral lectures and written commentaries beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[59] The tale he recorded at the bottom of the painted copy could not have appeared on the original. It was through the process of defining the story and recording it on the sixteenth-century copy, however, that he solidified the painting's connection to Chūjōhime and reinforced the work as created by divine intervention.

Inscriptions found on the roller bars of the 1505 version also offer a glimpse of the perceived efficacy of the re-creation itself. They note Kakuen as the primary patron and detail that,

in addition to Sanetaka, the temple also sought Emperor Go-Kashiwabara's hand to finish the calligraphic passages found in the cartouches around the edges. It further notes that the emperor intended for his involvement to serve as a memorial offering to his late mother, stating, "the new *mandara*'s inscriptions were intended for the salvation of [the emperor's] late mother and were completed on the 20th day of the seventh month."[60] Just as Chūjōhime achieved birth in the Pure Land for her devotion to the *Taima mandara*, so too did Go-Kashiwabara wish for his mother's religious awakening as he demonstrated his devotion by contributing to the new version's completion. The process of rendering the woven tapestry anew by re-creating its form in ink and color and appropriating its history provided the opportunity for the emperor to draw on the proven efficacy of the original to direct women's prayers to his mother's postmortem well-being.

While the *Taima mandara*'s restoration project of 1505 was closely linked to the desire to preserve the object's association to the legendary Chūjōhime, the act of re-creating a sacred icon for reasons other than conservation had long been a common practice in Japanese Buddhist art production. The best-known example is the statue of Shakyamuni housed at Seiryōji 清凉寺. The tale of this statue begins with the Indian king Udayana, who sent his artisans up to the heavens to observe the historical Buddha preaching, whereupon they sculpted his true likeness out of fragrant sandalwood. Sometime later, the statue was evacuated from India to China due to political unrest, at which time a Japanese monk by the name of Chōnen 奝然 (938–1016) came across it. Wishing to possess an exact copy of the legendary artwork, Chōnen commissioned a second object. When the monk was making preparations to return to Japan, the two sculptures miraculously switched places and Chōnen ended up bringing the version supposedly carved at the behest King Udayana back with him to Japan.[61] Scholars have determined that the extant "original" now housed at Seiryōji was most likely produced in the tenth century and sculpted out of cherrywood, not sandalwood as the story states. Nevertheless, documentation found deposited inside the sculpture refers to the image as a "sandalwood image."[62] In the same way as a premodern viewer might understand the sixteenth-century *Taima mandara* to be one and the same as the eighth-century original, the conflation of the sculpture at Seiryōji with the legendary Indian object occurred by imagining its materials to be those that originated within its perceived production context.

More recently, Samuel Morse has demonstrated similar logics at play in the re-creation of the Eleven-Headed Kannon at Hasedera 長谷寺, first carved in 727.[63] While the original statue was thought to have special miracle-granting powers, it was destroyed by fire; copies were created including one example by the renowned sculptor Kaikei 快慶 (d. before 1227) and another sculptor in his artistic lineage named Chōkai 長快 (act. mid-thirteenth century), in an attempt to reproduce the statue's unique properties. Kaikei's sculpture burned in 1238, but Chōkai's is extant. Morse details how Chōkai sought to endow the new statue with the same numinous presence as the original Eleven-Headed Kannon. The sculptor did so, not by creating an exact copy of the appearance of the original, which had long disappeared, or of Kaikei's version of it, but rather by incorporating fragments of wood and iconographic features associated with the original's legendary history. In particular, Morse describes how the Eleven-Headed Kannon came to be associated with wood that came from trees struck by lightning. Subsequent sculptors sought out this kind of wood when fashioning their copies to demonstrate that their object comprised the same materials as the original.

Like the statue of Shakyamuni housed at Seiryōji and the Eleven-Headed Kannon at Hasedera, the patrons of the *Taima mandara* repair project in 1505 sought to transmit the object's

history and perceived efficacy for women by engaging the painted image as if it were woven tapestry thread. To be sure, any consecrated Buddhist object could serve as the seat of the deity in ritual practice, no matter its material. The above examples suggest, however, that Buddhist objects were not simply vectors for the deity; they also had the potential to transmit information about their own cultural and religious histories, institutions of which they were a part, and historical persons with whom they were associated. For instance, while multiple versions of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds executed in blue and gold were produced, it was only the *Takao mandara* created in the ninth century that had the power to transmit Kūkai's powers by means of his purported brushstrokes. Likewise, although the nun Kakuen had access to a version of the *Taima mandara* at Saihoniji, where she practiced, only the eighth-century original was able to fully express Chūjōhime's divine vision.

It is clear from Kakuen's encounter with Kyoto-area weavers that she was highly cognizant of the legendary story of Chūjōhime and the miraculous conditions under which the original tapestry was understood to be made. Since repairing the eighth-century tapestry was not possible due to its unique storage conditions, Kakuen made use of a third mode of preservation, already in practice in premodern Japan, and re-created it by copying the image but treating it as if it were the restored original. Through the process of its re-creation, Kakuen and others involved in the project referenced both the narrative framework and the materials of the original: the nun commissioned a specially woven piece of silk, the same size as the tapestry, on which to paint the iconography; she imagined the painted surface to be woven; and Sanetaka inscribed an expanded version of the Chūjōhime story to emphasize the legendary princess's role in the creation of the *mandara*. Blurring the boundaries between copy and repair, re-creation ensured the continued existence of Buddhist objects and their associated miracles and divine qualities.

Conclusion

Today, the conservation of Buddhist painting has largely become divorced from premodern modes of thought and instead centers on tasks such as removing creases or debris and stabilizing the object by remounting it to prevent further destruction. In the examples examined above, premodern patrons of Buddhist art were also concerned with the condition of objects, but unlike today, the preservation techniques that they drew upon also provide a valuable lens through which to examine the range of attitudes that existed toward these religious objects, especially for the elite. Patrons who sponsored the copying of an image, for instance, sought pristine iconographies to keep them in a superior state for viewing, studying, or ritual use, which also positively reflected larger agendas; at the same time, the preservation of an existing image also entailed the curation and perpetuation of cultural knowledge, such as information about Dharma transmission in the case of the Shingon patriarchal portraits and Kūkai's role in legitimizing political authority as demonstrated by the *Takao mandara*. Re-creating Buddhist images combined the practices of copy and repair, and also transmitted information about production contexts, such as the efforts of the devout Chūjōhime, whose actions served as a paragon for women's engagement in Pure Land practice as evidenced by the *Taima mandara*.

Crucially, the choice to copy, repair, or re-create an object necessarily entailed an engagement with its material properties, which played a significant role in structuring understandings of its meaning and function. The *Takao mandara*'s colors, for instance, enveloped the object in the glow of the divine. Its close associations to the practice of sutra copying, along with both Kūkai's reputation as a famed calligrapher and the understanding that his calligraphy

effected miracles, positioned the *mandara* as uniquely suitable for conveying Kūkai's authority. The eighth-century *Taima mandara* could not be repaired, so patrons produced a painted re-creation of it in 1505 while imagining it to be, and engaging with it as if it were, produced from the same materials and circumstances as the original. Emperor Go-Kashiwabara's prayer for the salvation of his mother also drew upon Chūjōhime's precedent of venerating the tapestry, as the textile medium was particularly suited for women's religious practice.

It is notable that the patrons of all three case studies examined in this article acknowledge the practice of calligraphy as central to a project's completion. Emperors Saga and Go-Kashiwabara partially inscribed the patriarchal portraits and the 1505 version of the *Taima mandara*, respectively, and the *Takao mandara* was lauded for representing Kūkai's brushstrokes. Writing allowed for privileged interaction with these images that was not necessarily possible through ritual practice. While these three examples are not representative of every instance of Buddhist painting repair in the premodern period, they are indicative of the ways in which the act of preserving an object could lead to highly personal forms of engagement with one's set of beliefs. Premodern Buddhist painting repair went far beyond fixing damage. It provided opportunities to engage with and reaffirm worldviews and practices.

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Notes

1 The practice of copying both painting and calligraphy was carried out with regularity in Japanese and East Asian painting practice for any number of reasons that did not necessarily presuppose a damaged original. For instance, sutra texts were copied for the acquisition of religious merit, calligraphy was copied to excavate the style and expression of masters long deceased, and painting was copied to teach young disciples about certain techniques employed in workshops. The term as I define it in this article is particular to the practice of premodern image conservation. See, for instance, Halle O'Neal, *Word Embodied: The Jeweled Pagoda Mandalas in Japanese Buddhist Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018); Bryan D. Lowe, *Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017); Robert E. Harrist Jr., "Copies, All the Way Down: Notes on the Early Transmission of Calligraphy by Wang Xizhi," *East Asian Library Journal* 10.1 (2001): 176–96; and Yukio Lippit, *Painting of the Realm: The Kano House of Painters in 17th-Century Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011).

2 For a comprehensive compilation of inscriptions found on extant paintings produced from the tenth through the fifteenth centuries or on their roller bars, see Tokyo bunkazai kenkyūjo bijutsubu, jōhō shiryōbu 東京国立文化財研究所美術部·情報部資料部, ed., *Nihon kaigashi nenki shiryō shūsei: Jisseiki–jūyon seiki* 日本絵画史年紀資料集成：十世紀一十四世紀 (A compilation of records pertaining to the history of Japanese painting: The tenth through the fourteenth centuries) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1984); and Tokyo bunkazai kenkyūsho kikaku jōhōbu hen 東京文化財研究所企画情報部, ed., *Nihon kaigashi nenki shiryō shūsei: Jūgo seiki* 日本絵画史年紀資料集成一十五世紀 (A compilation of records pertaining to the history of Japanese painting: The fifteenth century) (Tokyo: Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppan, 2011).

3 Halle O'Neal, "Introduction: Reuse, Recycle, and Repurpose: The Afterlives of Japanese Material Culture," *Ars Orientalis* 52 (2023): 1–9. Each arti-

cle in this special issue of *Ars Orientalis* follows the transformations of a selected Japanese object over time by showing how people reused it for a purpose different from the intentions of its original makers. The issue demonstrates how these human interventions generated both material and conceptual palimpsests and emphasizes the coexistence of multiple visions and significance that these objects could come to encompass.

4 Caroline Hirasawa and Benedetta Lomi, "Introduction: Modest Materialities; The Social Lives and Afterlives of Sacred Things in Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 45.2 (2018): 217–25.

5 Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhist Materiality: A Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

6 Halle O'Neal, "Inscribing Grief and Salvation: Embodiment and Medieval Reuse and Recycling in Buddhist Palimpsests," *Artibus Asiae* 79.1 (2019): 5–28; Karen Gerhart, *The Material Culture of Death in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009). For a nonmaterial counterpart to these two studies, see also Jacqueline Stone, "Death," in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 56–76.

7 Robert H. Sharf, "Prolegomenon to the Study of Japanese Buddhist Icons," in *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, ed. Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 1–18. For a recent review of the state of the field of Buddhist materiality and possible future directions of study, see Halle O'Neal, "Materiality," in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Japanese Religions*, ed. Erica Baffelli, Andrea Castiglioni, and Fabio Rambelli (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 129–35.

8 Tokyo National Museum, ed., *Kokuhō: Fugen bosatsu Reiwa no daishūri zenkiroku* 国宝一普賢菩薩令和の大修理全記録 (National treasure: The full records of the Reiwa-era major restoration of Fugen Bosatsu) (Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu, 2023). See also Ōhara Yoshitoyo 大原嘉豊, "Bunkazai no hozon to shūri: Nihon no bunkazai o mamoru" 文化財の保存と修理一日本の文化財を守る一 (Maintaining and repairing cultural properties: Preserving Japan's cultural properties," in *Bunkazai shūri no saisentan: Tokubetsu kikaku bunkazai hozon shūrijo kaisho 40-shūnen kinen* 文化財修理の最先端：特別企画文化財保存修理所開所４０周年記念 (Conservation of Japanese art: Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Conservation Center for Cultural Properties), ed. Kyoto National Museum (Kyoto: Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2020), 5–6. For other studies and exhibition catalogues that document the modern treatment and restoration of Japanese artworks, see, for example, Kyoto National Museum, *Bunkazai shūri no saisentan*; Iwasaki Noriko 岩崎奈緒子 and Mori Michihiko 森道彦, eds., *Nihon no hyōsō: kakejiku no rekishi to yosoi* 日本の表装一掛軸の歴史と装い (Soukou: Japan Way to Beauty and Preserve Cultural Heritage) (Kyoto: Kabushiki Kaisha Akutibu KEI, Kyōto Daigaku Sōgō Hakubutsukan Myūjiamu Shoppu, 2016); Kokuhō shūri sōkōshi renmei 国宝修理装潢師連盟, ed., *Sōkōshi* 装潢史 (A history of mounting) (Kyoto: Kokuhō shūri sōkōshi renmei, 2011); and Koyasan Bunkazai Hozonkai 高野山文化財保存会, ed., *Kokuhō Ōtoku hotoke nehanzu no kenkyū to hozon* 国宝応徳仏涅槃図の研究と保存 (The study and preservation of the Ōtoku Parinirvana image), 2 vols. (Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu, 1983). For an approach that pertains to sculpture, see Hamada Akira 濱田宣, "Kokuhō Myōō-in gojūtō-nai no Fudō Myōō, Aizen Myōōzō: Hozon shūri kiroku oyobi Saidaijiryū risshū tono kanrensei ni tsuite" 国宝明王院五重塔内の不動明王·愛染明王像一保存修理記録及び西大寺流律宗との関連性について (The national treasures Fudō Myōō and Aizen Myōō statues inside the five-storied pagoda of the Myōō-in: Records of their preservation and repair and their relationship to Saidaiji lineage of the Vinaya school of Buddhism), *Hiroshima Kenritsu Rekishi Hakubutsukan kenkyū kiyō* 20 (2018): 1–30.

9 Masuki Ryūsuke 増記隆介, "Heian jidai no butsuga seisaku to sono shūri" 平安時代の仏画制作とその修理 (The production of Buddhist painting in the Heian Period and their repair), in *Nihon no hyōsō to shūri* 日本の表装と修理 (Japanese mounting and repair), ed. Iwasaki Naoko 岩崎奈緒子, Nakano Noriyuki 中野慎之, Mori Michihiko 森道彦, and Yokouchi Hiroto 横内裕人 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2020).

10 Kyoko Tokuno, "The Book of Resolving Doubts Concerning the Semblance Dharma," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 192.

11 Benedetta Lomi, "Refurbish, Reconsecrate, Repurpose: Handling Old and Incinerated Icons in Medieval Japan," *Ars Orientalis* 52 (2022): 151–71.

12 Kūkai initially brought back portraits of Vajrabodhi (671–741), Śubhakarasiṃha (637–735), Yixing (683–727), Amoghavajra (705–774), and Huiguo (746–806). Portraits would later be added to this set for a total of eight. For a list of all the objects that Kūkai brought back to Japan, see Kōbō Daishi chosaku kenkyūkai 弘法大師著作研究会, ed., *Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū* 定本弘法大師全集 (Revised

edition of the completed works of Kōbo Daishi) (Kōya-san, Wakayama-ken: Mikkyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1991), 1:3–39. See also Cynthea Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 112–38.

13 See, for instance, Takata Osamu 高田修, "Tōji no ryōkai mandara zu" 東寺の両界マンダラ図 (The Two Worlds Mandalas of Tōji), *Bukkyō geijutsu* 47 (1961): 41; and Kyōōgokokuji 教王護国寺, ed., *Kyōōgokokuji shozō juyō bunkazai kenpon chakushoku ryōkai mandarazu zanketsu (Kōhon) nifuku shūri hōkokusho* 教王護国寺所蔵重要文化財絹本著色両界曼荼羅図残闕(甲本)二幅修理報告書 (Conservation report of the important cultural property color on silk Two Worlds Mandalas (Kōhon version) two scrolls owned by Kyōōgokokuji) (Kyoto: Kyōōgokokuji, 2004), 42.

14 Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 120–21. Bogel grounds her argument that the esoteric ritual space in Japan developed as Kūkai's design in an examination of his *Catalog of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items* (*Go shōrai mokuroku*, 806). She notes that Kūkai lists the portraits in the section of the catalog devoted to icons next to the mandalas, which she argues suggests their function as initiation ritual icons. Bogel also notes that the lineage of transmission Kūkai sought to establish in Japan through the portraits is not substantiated by any texts found in Japan, again suggesting his intervention in the creation of a ritual space differentiated from those he must have encountered in China.

15 Ryūichi Abé, "The First Royal *Abhiṣeka* in Japan: Kūkai's Esoteric Buddhist Ordination for the Grand Emperor Heizei," in *Rituals of Initiation and Consecration in Premodern Japan*, ed. Fabio Rambelli and Or Porath (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 139.

16 For a timeline of the major events involving Kūkai and Emperor Heizei, see Abé, 118–19.

17 絹破彩落。尊容欲化。顧後学而興歎。悲群生之無福。中略、謹従弘仁十二年四月三十日起首。至八月尽。奉図大悲胎蔵大曼荼羅一鋪八幅。中略、竜猛菩薩。竜智菩薩真影等。This particular request is found in fascicle 7 of the *Shōryōshū* 性霊集, a ten-volume collection of letters, vows, poetry, liturgical texts, and epitaphs traditionally attributed to Kūkai and compiled by his disciple Shinzei 眞濟 (800–860). Kōbō Daishi chosaku kenkyūkai 弘法大師著作研究会, *Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū* 定本弘法大師全集, 8:109.

18 To mark the occasion of requesting a new set of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds, Kūkai commissioned twenty-six additional paintings, including the two new portraits. See Kōbō Daishi chosaku kenkyūkai 弘法大師著作研究会, 8:109; and Nishimoto Masahiro 西本昌弘, "Shingon gosozō no shūfuku to Saga tennō: Sadaishōkō ate Kūkai shojō no kentō o chūshin ni" 真言五祖像の修復と嵯峨天皇：左大将公苑て空海書状の検討を中心に (Restoration of the Portraits of the Five Patriarchs and Emperor Saga: Focusing on Kukai's Letter Addressed to the Left Chief of the Guards), *Kansai Daigaku Tōzai gaku jutsu kenkyū kiyō* 38 (2005): 16.

19 An older extant version of the Two Worlds Mandala is currently housed at the Sai-in sub-temple of Tōji and dates to the ninth century. This version, however, is based on a set of paintings that the monk Enchin (841–891) brought back from China, and not those brought back by Kūkai. They are thus considered to be from a distinct albeit similar lineage. Takata Osamu 高田修, "Tōji no sanfuku kohon ryōkai mandara ni tsuite: Iwayuru 'Shingon-in mandara' no kentō" 東寺の三副古本両界曼荼羅について―いわゆる「真言院曼荼羅」の検討― (An investigation of the Sanpuku version of the Two Worlds Manadals, the so-called 'Shingon-in Mandara'), *Bijutsu kenkyū* 189 (1957): 1–32; Yanagisawa Taka 柳澤孝, *Yanagisawa Taka Bukkyō kaiga shironshū* 柳澤孝仏教絵画史論集 (The complete works on Buddhist painting history by Yanagisawa Taka) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2006), 642–33 (reverse pagination). Four copies of the Mandalas of the Two Worlds based on the paintings that Kūkai brought from China were produced in the premodern period. For an overview of all four, see Tōji hōbutsukan 東寺宝物館, ed. *Kōhon shūfuku kansei kinen: Tōji no dai mandarazu, yomigaeru mihotoke, hana saku bi* 甲本修復完成記念：東寺の大曼荼羅図ー甦るみ仏花開く美ー (The great mandala of Tōji Temple: The restoration of Buddhist images, the flower of Buddhist beauty) (Kyoto: Benridō, 2004).

20 These paintings were restored in the 1950s following their rediscovery in the Tōji storehouse. Tōji hōbutsukan, *Kōhon shūfuku kansei kinen*, 51–54; Kyōōgokokuji, *Kyōōgokokuji shozō juyō bunkazai*, 5–13.

21 Robert Sharf's argument that the mandalas served as the seat of the deity to ensure the success of the ritual supports the interpretation that Kūkai must have regarded damaged images as unable to properly embody a sacred presence. Robert H. Sharf, "Visualization and Mandala in Shingon Buddhism," in *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, ed. Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 151–97.

22 Masuki Ryūsuke, "Heian jidai no butsuga seisaku to sono shūri," 244–54.

23 Abé Ryūichi has suggested that Kūkai requested the portraits of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi to fill in perceived gaps in the direct line of transmission and to visually complete his understanding of the entire Shingon patriarchal lineage. Abé, "First Royal *Abhiṣeka*," 143–44.

24 Abé further notes that the rite was part of Saga's effort to reestablish cordial relations with Heizei, with whom he had been estranged, for the purpose of garnering his support to ensure a peaceful transition of power to Emperor Junna. Abé, "150–51; and Abé Ryūichi 阿部龍一, "Heian shoki tennō no seiken kōtai to kanjō girei" 平安初期天皇の政権交替と灌頂儀礼 (Regime change and the consecration rites for early Heian-period emperors), in *Nara, nanto bukkyō no dentō to kakushin* 奈良·南都仏教の伝統と革新 (Nara and the traditions and innovations of the Buddhism of the Nara schools), ed. Samueru C. Mōsu サムエル·C.モース and Nemoto Seiji 根本誠二 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2010), 89–160.

25 山房霧濃、像多折損、毎事塵機、恐触高覧、今望、命工手便加繕修、幸甚幸甚, quoted in Masuki Ryūsuke, "Heian jidai no butsuga seisaku to sono shūri," 247; and Nishimoto Masahiro, "Shingon gosozō no shūfuku to Saga tennō," 11.

26 There is some debate about the timing and the calligrapher of each sitter's name and laudatory text, but recent scholarly consensus suggests that the biographical entries were all added at the time of the paintings' repairs and were brushed by Kūkai, and only Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi's names were written by Saga. Abé Ryūichi further hypothesizes that one of the reasons that the names of Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi could not have been written by Kukai is due to mistranscriptions of the Sanskrit. If it were inscribed by Emperor Saga, Abé continues, it would have been inappropriate for Kūkai to correct him. Abé, "First Royal *Abhiṣeka*," 148. See also Katō Shino 加藤詩乃, "Tōji zō 'Shingon shichisozō' no saikentō: Sono myōgō oyobi gyōjōbun no shippitsusha o meguru mondai" 東寺蔵『真言七祖像』の再検討—その名号及び行状文の執筆者をめぐる問題 (A Reconsideration of the Seven Patriarchs of the Shingon Sect of Buddhism in Toji Temple: About the Calligrapher of Myogo and Gyojo-bun), *Aoyama gakuin daigaku bungakubu kiyō* 59 (2017): 61–72. For a competing theory that argues Kūkai inscribed the biographical entries of the original five portraits in China, see Nishimoto Masahiro, "Shingon gosozō no shūfuku to Saga tennō," 16–20.

27 Cynthea Bogel observes that other visual aspects of the portraits, such as the patriarchs' robes, daises, and shoes, and the shapes of the ewers also indicate the sitters' respective ethnicities. Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 122.

28 See also Abé, "First Royal *Abhiṣeka*," 145.

29 Katō Shino, "Tōji zō 'Shingon shichisozō' no saikentō," 70–72; Katō Shino 加藤詩乃, "Kūkai no zattaisho: Kūkaifū no sho no seiritsu to sono keishō" 空海の雑体書—空海風の書の成立とその継承 (Kūkai's mixed script: The establishment and inheritance of a Kūkai style, *Bijutsushi* 67.2 (2018): 227–28; Mizuno Arisa 水野有砂, "Kūkai kenkyū: 'Shingon shichisozō' ni miru hihakutai no sho ni tsuite" 空海研究—「真言七祖像」にみる飛白体の書について— (A study of Kūkai: The flying white style of calligraphy as seen on the 'Portraits of the Seven Shingon Patriarchs'), *Bukkyō daigaku daigakuin kiyō* 45 (2017): 235–45.

30 Yamada Shōzen 山田昭全, *Mongaku* 文覚 (Mongaku) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2010), 27–30.

31 Mongaku notes, for instance, that after leaving the temple the objects were housed at various locations including Ninnaji, Rengeō'in, and Mount Koya. Sakamoto Ryōta 坂本亮太, Suegara Yutaka 末柄豊, and Murai Yūki 村井祐樹, eds., *Takaosan Jingoji monjo shūsei* 高尾山神護寺文書集成 (Collected documents of Jingoji on Mount Takao) (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2017), 29.

32 大師御自筆金泥両界曼荼羅、中略、昔大師御在世之時、所被安置当寺之根本曼荼羅也。中略、文覚興隆当寺、擬令復旧儀之日、以彼曼荼羅、如本可被安置本寺之由、頻依令訴申、後略。Sakamoto, Suegara, and Murai, 29.

33 Fujita Tsuneyo 藤田経世, ed., *Kōkan bijutsu shiryō* 校刊美術史料 (Publication of art historical documents) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1975), 2:266. See also Masuki Ryūsuke, "Heian jidai no butsuga seisaku to sono shūri," 255.

34 当寺濯頂院両界曼荼羅者、高祖大師之真筆、一宗規模之本尊也。Sakamoto, Suegara, and Murai, *Takaosan Jingoji monjo shūsei*, 524.

35 而文覚上人再興之昔、写新図、而致尊崇、納旧本、未及修復、而延慶元年三月廿四日、参詣于当寺、拝見於霊像、多現破壊之処々於図上、或拾脱落之片々、唯納箱底、尊位闕、而未満、難名一切衆会。図像破、而不全、欠諸尊真容。合掌、雖貴筆跡、掩面、唯愍損壊。Sakamoto, Suegara, and Murai, 524.

36 Thomas Donald Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An Age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth Century Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 84–86.

37 尊位如旧、復金容於曩日、高祖再来、似筆跡於当時、偏是大師冥鑑之加持力、八幡擁護之不思議

也、中略、又喜、伝法結縁之本尊、後略。Sakamoto, Suegara, and Murai, *Takaosan Jingoji monjo shūsei*, 524. Jingoji was also dedicated to Hachiman, to whom both Saichō (767–822) and Kūkai prayed for success in finding the Dharma in China. See Abe Yasurō, "The Cultural History of *Kanjō* in Japan: The Integration of the Sacred and the Profane," in *Rituals of Initiation and Consecration in Premodern Japan*, ed. Fabio Rambelli and Or Porath (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 199.

38 Uejima Tamotsu 上島有, *Tōji, Tōji monjo no kenkyū* 東寺·東寺文書の研究 (A study of Tōji and Tōji's archives) (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1998), 12–17.

39 阿弥陀浄土一鋪（大唐和上進内紫帳金黒像）. Transcribed in Sudō Hirotoshi 須藤弘敏, "Uesugi jinjazō kindei ryōkai mandara ni tsuite 上杉神社蔵金泥両界曼荼羅について (The Uesugi Shrine version of the Two Worlds Mandalas in gold ink)," *Bijutsushigaku* 4 (1982): 40.

40 紫震（紙カ）金字。玉軸繡帙。一点一画。有体有勢。珠連星列。爛然満目。観人称曰。真（書カ）聖。鍾繇逸少猶未足　云々。Transcribed in Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美, *Nihon shoryū zenshi* 2 日本書流全史、二 (A history of Japanese schools of calligraphy, 2), vol. 16, *Komatsu Shigemi chosakushū* 小松茂美著作集 (The complete works of Komatsu Shigemi) (Tokyo: Ōbunsha, 1999), 478. Other famous examples of sutra transcriptions completed entirely in gold and silver ink on indigo-dyed paper include those produced at the politically powerful center of Hiraizumi in northern Japan in the twelfth century and the jeweled pagoda mandalas located at several institutions across Japan. See Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 111–19; and O'Neal, *Word Embodied*.

41 For a discussion of the relationship of light to Buddha images and the role that it plays in effecting religious benefits, see Dorothy Wong, "The Light-Emitting Image of Magadha in Tang Buddhist Art," *Ars Orientalis* 50 (2020): 42–49.

42 These include the versions owned by the Uesugi jinja in Yonezawa, Kojimadera in Nara, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art in Washington, DC. Of the images extant, only the *Takao mandara* and the versions owned by Uesugi jinja and Kojimadera were executed on a background of twill, and only the *Takao mandara* and that owned by Kojimadera were produced with the emperor's involvement. Sudō Hirotoshi, "Uesugi jinjazō kindei ryōkai mandara ni tsuite," 31–33. For an overview of the version owned by Kojimadera, see Kasuya Makoto 加須屋誠, "Kojima mandara shiron" 子島曼荼羅試論 (An essay on the Kojima mandara), *Kyoto Daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 9 (1988): 42–99.

43 The entry that describes the accoutrements present at Toba's celebration is dated to the second year of Ninpei (1152), eighth month, twenty-eighth day. Transcribed in Sasagawa Taneo 笹川種郎 et al., eds. *Hyōhanki* 兵範記 (The Dairy of Taira Nobunori), vol. 15, *Shiryō taisei* 史料大成 (Compilation of historical documents) (Tokyo: Naigai Shoseki, 1934), 138–39; and Sudō Hirotoshi, "Uesugi jinjazō kindei ryōkai mandara ni tsuite," 43.

44 Manabe Shunsho describes an experiment where he hung a gold and silver Womb World Mandala in a temple hall in the middle of the night, lit a candle, and viewed the image. As the flickering light bounced off the golden contours of the deities, he comments, it made the deities appear to be floating in the sky. Manabe goes on to observe that the indigo background furthermore blended into the darkness of the ambient light so that only the contours of the deities stood out in a three-dimensional space, creating a spatial effect impossible with the polychrome versions of the same paintings. Manabe Shunshō, "Mandalas Embody Two-and Three-Dimensional Spaces of Enlightenment," in *Ryōgai Mandara: Tōji-Zō Kokuhō "Den Shingon-in Ryōgai Mandara" No Sekai, Ishimoto Yasuhiro* 両界曼荼羅ー東寺蔵国宝「伝真言院両界曼荼羅」の世界ー石元泰博 (Ryogai Mandala: The world of "Den-Shingon-in" ryogai mandara at Tōji in Kyoto by Yasuhiro Ishimoto (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2011), viii. For a theory on the effect that gold- and silver-painted images might have on ritual participants, see Manabe Shunshō 真鍋俊照, "Mandara to kyōten no kingindei hyōgen 曼荼羅と経典の金銀泥表現 (The representation of the mandara and associated scriptures in gold and silver paint)," *Indo Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 60.2 (2012): 187–95.

45 For reproductions of five extant copies of the *Heart Sutra* penned by emperors and modeled after Saga's original, see Kyoto National Museum, ed., *Saga gosho Daikakuji no meihō: Saga tennō 1150-nen gyoki* 嵯峨御所大覚寺の名宝：嵯峨天皇 1150年御忌 (The treasures of Saga gosho Daikakuji: The 1150th anniversary of Emperor Saga's death) (Tokyo: Keizai Shinbunsha, 1992), 51–55.

46 Recent scholarship has called into question the historical relationship between Saga's copy of the *Heart Sutra* and Kūkai's exegetical recitation to it, as there is no record that connects Kūkai's commentary to any lecture that he may have given

in response to Saga's completion of copying the scripture. Thomas Eijō Dreitlein, "An Annotated Translation of Kūkai's *Secret Key to the Heart Sutra*," *Kōyasan Daigaku mikkyō bunka kenkyūsho kiyō* 24 (2011): 43–44.

47 Takeuchi Kōzen 竹内考善, *Kōbō Daishi denshō to shijitsu: Eden o yomitoku* 弘法大師伝承と史実—絵伝を読み解く (Kōbo Daishi folklore and historical fact: Reading the illustrated biography) (Osaka: Toki Shobō, 2008), 122–23. See also Tsuji Eiko 辻英子, *Kōya Daishi gyōjō zuga* 高野大師行状図画 (Illustrated Acts of the Great Master of Mount Koya) (Wakayama, Kōya-san: Shin'ō-in bon gyōgyō bunko, 2005), 159–61. The *Secret Key to the Heart Sutra* also contains an appendix written sometime after Kūkai's death that describes how the monk woke the dead and turned night into day upon reciting this commentary. Dreitlein, "Annotated Translation," 44.

48 Takeuchi Kōzen, *Kōbō Daishi denshō to shijitsu*, 112; Tsuji Eiko, *Kōya Daishi gyōjō zuga,* 104–5.

49 Komatsu Shigemi, *Nihon shoryū zenshi, 2*, 483.

50 Abé Ryūichi, "Mikkyō Performance and the Formation and Development of Kūkai Portraiture," in *In Vimalakirti's House: A Festschrift in Honor of Robert A. F. Thurman on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. Christian K. Wedemeyer, John D. Dunne, and Thomas F. Yarnall (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2015), 163–64. See also Tokyo National Museum, *Kokuhō Tōji: Kūkai to butsuzō mandara* 国宝東寺—空海と仏像曼荼羅 (National Treasures of Tōji Temple: Kūkai and the sculptural mandala) (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 2019), 227.

51 The earliest written record of the legend of Chūjōhime appears in in the *Kenkyū gojunreiki* 建久御巡礼記 in 1191, which records that the priest Jitsuei 実叡 recalled the tale to an unnamed noble woman whom he was leading on a pilgrimage of Nara area temples. Jitsuei's familiarity with the story suggests that it was in circulation from a much earlier date. See Fujita Tsuneyo 藤田経世, ed., *Kōkan bijutsu shiryō* 校刊美術史料 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1972), 1:158. For an introduction to the earliest pictorializations of the tale captured in the *Miraculous Origins of the Taima mandara*, see Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, "Chūjōhime: The Weaving of Her Legend," in *Flowing Traces: Buddhism in the Literary and Visual Arts of Japan*, ed. James H. Sanford, William R. LaFleur, and Masatoshi Nagatomi (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 183–88. For other examples of Buddhist images that reveal the relationship between weaving and women's artistic output and religious devotion, see Yuhang Li, *Becoming Guanyin: Artistic Devotion of Buddhist Women in Late Imperial China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020); and Carolyn Wargula, "Embodied Objects: Chūjōhime's Hair Embroideries and the Transformation of the Female Body in Premodern Japan," *Religions* 12.9 (2021): 773.

52 The tapestry's damage is confirmed in the *Kenkyū gojunreiki* when Jitsuei visits the Taimadera to view it and comments on the fact that the entire lower register had become damaged and illegible. Fujita Tsuneyo, *Kōkan bijutsu shiryō,* 1:158.

53 The exact date when this occurred is unknown, but Ōga Ichirō surmises that *mandara* could have been affixed to the board as early as 1161, when the temple hall housing the tapestry underwent major renovations, but not later than 1242. Ōga Ichirō 大賀一郎, "Taima mandara ni tsuite" 當麻曼荼羅について (About the Taima mandara), in *Kokuhō tsuzureori Taima mandara* 国宝綴織当麻曼荼羅 (National treasure, the woven Taima mandara), ed. Bunkazai hogo iinkai (Kyoto: Benridō, 1963), 12–13.

54 Very little documentation survives regarding the 1217 project, and the resulting re-creation is no longer extant. The 1677 project was a multiyear effort that resulted in removing the tapestry from its backing board and repairing it, and also in the creation of a new object to commemorate the successful restoration of the original. For further details about these two projects, see Hioki Atsuko 日沖敦子, *Taima mandara to Chūjōhime* 当麻曼荼羅と中将姫 (The Taima mandara and Chūjōhime) (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2012), 99–101; and Nara National Museum, ed., *Chūjōhime to Taima mandara: Inori ga tsumugu monogatari* 中将姫と當麻曼荼羅—祈りが紡ぐ物語—貞享本當麻曼荼羅修理完成記念特別展 (Chūjō-hime and the Taima mandala: weaving tales of faith; celebrating the conservation of the Jōkyō-era Taima mandala, special exhibition), *Jōkyōbon Taima mandara shūri kansei kinen tokubetsuten* (Nara: Nara National Museum, 2022).

55 Hioki Atsuko, *Taima mandara to Chūjōhime*, 161–66.

56 Hattori Kōzo 服部幸造, Minobe Shigekatsu 美濃部重克, and Yuge Shigeru 弓削繁, annotators, *Getsuan suiseiki* 月庵酔醒記 (Getsuan's Record of Soberness and Intoxication) (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 2007–10), 1:9–14.

57 「たいまのまんだらは、むかし中将姫のをり給ひしも、三世諸仏・諸菩薩の、手ぐりの糸にて、はた物をたて、をり給ひし事は、まなぶ事かたかるべきに、いかがせむ」、、、「いかがしても、おりてみむ。」 Hattori Kōzo, Minobe Shigekatsu, and Yuge Shigeru, 3:88–89.

58 世間流布本、全分無共字、所々在之、今度如本曼荼羅、全被載之也。Transcribed in Nakano Akimasa 中野顕正, "Bunki-bon Taima mandara no seiritsu 文亀本當麻曼荼羅の成立 (The formation of the Bunki version of the Taima mandara)," *Nihon bungaku kenkyū jānaru* 19 (2021): 47.

59 Abe Yasurō 阿部泰郎, "Taima mandara engi no tenkai to Chūjōhime monogatari to seisei 当麻曼荼羅縁起の展開と中将姫物語の生成 (The development of the *Legendary Origins of the Taima mandara* and the creation of the legend of Chūjōhime)," in *Taimadera: Gokuraku Jōdō No Akogare* 当麻寺ー極楽浄土へのあこがれ (Taimadera: Yearning for the Pure Land paradise), ed. Nara National Museum (Nara: Nara National Museum and Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 2013), 267–69; Nakano Akimasa, "Bunki-bon Taima mandara no seiritsu," 47–52.

60 此新曼荼羅像銘文者被擬七月廿日国母准三宮尊儀御菩提被染。Transcribed in Nara National Museum, *Taimadera*, 298–99.

61 Oku Takeo 奥健夫, "Seiryōji Shaka Nyoraizō 清凉寺釈迦如来像 (The sculpture of Shaka nyorai at Seiryōji)," *Nihon no bijutsu* 513 (2009): 29–31; Donald F. McCallum, "The Replication of Miraculous Icons: The Zenkoji Amida and the Seiryoji Shaka," in *Images, Miracles, and Authority in Asian Religious Traditions*, ed. Richard H. Davis (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998), 210–13; Martha L. Carter, *The Mystery of the Udayana Buddha* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1990), 1–17.

62 Inoue Tadashi 井上正, "Chōnen to Uden-ō shibozō no tōden 斎然と優填王思慕像の東伝 (Chōnen and the transmission of King Udayana's sculpture to the east)," in *Shaka shinkō to Seiryōji* 釈迦信仰と清凉寺 (Shakyamuni worship and Seiryōji temple), ed. Kyoto National Museum (Kyoto: Kyoto Shinbunsha, 1982), 11–12. At least one document deposited inside the sculpture refers to it as the one made from sandalwood, and another refers to it as being made of "fragrant wood," a characteristic for which sandalwood was famous. See Kyoto National Museum, *Shaka shinkō to Seiryōji*, 91; and Oku Takeo, "Seiryōji Shaka Nyoraizō," 20–21. For a translation of the document that describes how Chōnen bought fragrant wood to produce the image, see Gregory Henderson and Leon Hurvitz, "The Buddha of Seiryōji: New Finds and a Theory," *Artibus Asiae* 19.1 (1956): 49–54.

63 Samuel C. Morse, "Kaikei, Chōkai, and the Sacred Image of Eleven-Headed Kannon at Hasedera," *Ars Orientalis* 50 (2020): 65–70.