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## Poetics of Acculturation: Early Pure Land Buddhism and the Topography of the Periphery in Orikuchi Shinobu's *The Book of the Dead*

Ikuho Amano

### Introduction

Known as the exponent practitioner of *kokubungaku* (national literature), modernist ethnologist Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953) readily utilized archaic Japanese experiences as viable resources for his literary imagination. As the leading disciple of Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), who is known as the founding father of modern folkloric ethnology in Japan, Orikuchi is often considered a nativist ethnologist whose works tend to be construed as a probing into the origin of the nation. He considered the essence of national literature as “the origins of art itself,” and such a critical vision arguably linked him to interwar fascism.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, his nativist effort as a literatus was far from the nationalist ambition of claiming a socio-cultural unity. On the contrary, Orikuchi invested his erudition to disentangle the concatenation of the nation, religion, and people and thus presented ancient Japanese experience as discursive molecules rooted in each locality. In this regard, his novel *Shisha no sho* (*The Book of the Dead*, 1939) plays an instrumental role of insinuating the author's nuanced modernist revisionism. Within the context of the 1930s interwar period, modernist discourses by intellectuals such as writers and scholars endeavored to search for a fixed identity. For example, Harry Harootyan comments on Japanese people of the time—they tried to configure themselves “in relation to the pre-capitalist origin” through articulation of “a poetics of historical repetition” that could counter the socio-cultural discontinuity that preoccupied the country since the age of the Meiji Restoration (1868–1912).<sup>2</sup> Through Orikuchi's retrospective gaze upon the remote past, the novel belongs to the collective modernist



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effort in quest of the origin of a national folk tradition and its experience. As the title symbolically renders, the story invokes the voices of the dead that were left unheard, and as a result implicitly dismantles Japan's singular ambition to be an empire, an idea propagated during the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> In the service of his trans-temporal intervention to the Nara period (710–794) when the imperial court placed the capital in Heijōkyō, Orikuchi delves into (as Harootunian states) the primordial “origins of art” before “being aestheticized,” and thereby “contest[s] the conception of [ancient Japanese people as] a unified subject.”<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the novel, the narrative recuperates indigenous local conditions that later led to the formation of Pure Land Buddhism prior to the establishment of the Jōdo School (Jōdoshū) by Hōnen (1133–1212), the first organized sect devoted to the faith in Amitāhba Buddha and the reincarnation in Pure Land as the ideal after death. The modern notion of Pure Land Buddhism is rooted in Meiji Buddhist leaders who created the discourse on Kamakura New Buddhism (Kamakura Shin-Bukkyō, ca. the mid-twelfth century through the thirteenth century). They overemphasized the achievements of denominational founders, such as Hōnen, Shinran (1173–1263), Nichiren (1222–1282), and Dōgen (1200–1253), and Eisai (1141–1215), and set aside other Buddhist figures in medieval Japan of the Kamakura period (1185–1333). In the effect of the Meiji government's policy of separating Shintō from Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*) in 1868 and the subsequent abolishment of Buddha and Buddhist privileges (*haibutsu kishaku*) in 1871, the syncretic elements in the rituals were severed and completely expelled from the official sphere.<sup>5</sup> By differentiating the two religions, the Meiji leaders intended, as Allan Grapard writes, to “return to the ‘real’ source of Japanese identity and religious consciousness,” though such attempts undeniably negate realities of religious practices and deny the true cultural history.<sup>6</sup> In response to the governmental policy, the religious institutions modified their doctrines in order to avoid potential persecution. An example includes *the Myōkōnin-den* (The lives of pious folk), a biographical sketch of pious people from multifarious social classes (farmers, merchants, samurai, and outcasts), which was published by the Honganji sect of Pure Land Buddhism from the eighteenth century through the 1920s. Reflecting an idea of national unity through religions, *Myōkōnin-den* collections published during the Meiji period underscored that the respect for the emperor is in accord with the Imperial Rescript on Education and the Pure Land ideal of “the debt of gratitude,” by almost identifying the emperor with Amitāhba Buddha.<sup>7</sup> Through the portrayal of pious people, then, the collections implicitly eulogized the virtue of social

collaboration, piety, and morality under the unified imperial nation. Given this social climate in Japan's post-restoration through to its interwar phase (between the late 1880s and 1939), Orikuchi's *The Book of the Dead* can be read as an attempt to recuperate the discursive cultural memories handed down from antiquity but obscured by national politics. For this line of interpretation, the following discussion reads the novel as the author's contrivance where his historical revisionism is implicitly interwoven in the motifs of Buddhism and indigenous cultural elements. In so doing, this article inquires what the unified nomenclature called "Buddhism" or "Pure Land Buddhism" signifies to Japan, and how Japan has embraced this religious form that has undergone multilayered receptions, local adoptions, and modifications.

### **The Book of the Dead and the Legend of Taima Mandala**

*The Book of the Dead* is loosely based on the widely-known folk legend of the Taima Mandala, which accounts for the eighth century life of Chūjōhime (Princess Chūjō), an alleged daughter of the noble statesman Fujiwara no Toyonari. According to the popular legend, she escaped her stepmother's harshness and afterwards devoted herself to Amitābha Buddha. Her intense dedication to the deity enabled the woman to weave an exquisite mandala out of lotus threads within a day. Upon her death, she was welcomed to the Pure Land by the deity. While there are a number of versions of the legend, this general set of religious piety combining the miraculous has afforded the princess a position as a folktale heroine. Inspired by the legend of Princess Chūjō, *The Book of the Dead* sets the narrative in the Nara period (710–794), transforming the religious allegory into a discursive cultural landscape of antiquity. Simultaneously, the novel problematizes the interlocked relation of Buddhism, the princess, and the Yamato State developed, by and large, under the religious tutelage. Instead of reinstating the harmony among these elements, the novel creates a new palimpsest of socio-cultural memories while exploring the early stage of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan.<sup>8</sup> To this end, what constitutes the novel are fragments of indigenous cultural practices, religious beliefs, and cartographical designs of space built around polyphonic narrative voices. These narrative components, in essence, critique the legitimacy of the Yamato State as the socio-culturally unified national polity. Within the political context of the 1930s, the novel thus implicitly resists the totalitarian imperialism, revealing nothing but the discursive cultural landscape of antiquity through the social and cultural realities sketched by Orikuchi's scholarly and artistic panache as a modernist.<sup>9</sup> Whereas the

novel revives the folk legend of the Taima Mandala, the narrative considerably modifies the allegorical representation of the heroine who corresponds to Princess Chūjō (Chūjōhime) and her devotion to Buddhism. As the following discussion visits more details, Orikuchi's design of the space of Tagima (an old phonetic rendition of "Taima" as employed by Orikuchi) refutes the overarching unity of the ancient Yamato state as imagined by the imperialist regime during the interwar years. Whereas Harry Harootunian states that Orikuchi endeavored to "rescu[e]...religious principles that unified Japanese since the beginning," it is precisely such a wholeness in timelessness that the novel shuttered by means of discursive religious and cultural factors.<sup>10</sup> As the holistic title suggests, the narrative engages with a strikingly multicultural range of motifs, and therein ancient Japan presents itself as a locality within the Pan-Eurasian cultural sphere that participates in a universal notion of modernity.<sup>11</sup>

### ***The Book of the Dead as the Site of Cultural Multiplicities***

*The Book of the Dead* derives multifarious motifs from Buddhism, Shintō, indigenous cultural practices, legends, and historical references. In terms of structure, the fusion of first and third-person voices defies a clear plot and a linear progression of narrative. Within such discursiveness, the novel develops the thread of a subtle love story built around the mystical encounters experienced by the heroine Nanke Fujiwara no Iratsume (the daughter of the Southern Branch of the Fujiwara Clan, "Iratsume" from here on), whose role loosely parallels that of Princess Chūjō in the popular legend of the Taima Mandala.<sup>12</sup>

Holding a shamanistic role within the Fujiwara family, Iratsume has been initially out of contact with the world outside the household. One day she decides to copy by hand one thousand pieces of the *Shōsanjōdo Busshōjūkyō* (the Sutra in Praise of the Pure Land), Genjō's translation of a Buddhist sutra imported from China that was brought back by her father Toyonari, the former governor of Dazaifu (the administrative headquarter in today's Fukuoka, Kyūshū).<sup>13</sup> Devoting her days to the work, Iratsume becomes increasingly fascinated with the Pure Land described in the sutra. Meanwhile, she begins to see the image of nobleman (*omokagebito*, the person of afterimage) over the distant ridges of Mt. Futakami on the middays of the vernal and autumn equinox:

She had seen him as plain as day above the brightly shimmering clouds, illuminated by the sun on the spring and autumn equinoxes. He didn't look like he could possibly be from here in Yamato, but perhaps there were men somewhere in the country who looked like that but whom

she hadn't encountered yet. The locks of hair that fell from his temples were the color of gold. His golden hair fell in rich abundance around his fair, white skin, which extended downward toward his beautiful, exposed shoulders. His plump countenance had a pronounced nose, and the ridge of his brow was turned downward as if he was in a reverie. His right hand was raised to his chest, while his left hand hung at his side, revealing its well-rounded palm to full view...*Ahhh...I saw him...in a vision...his vermillion lips smiling fragrantly over the clouds...*<sup>14</sup>

As the third-person narrative reads, the visual sensation outgrows her excitement, and she gradually looks forward to seeing his image. However, on the day of the vernal equinox she cannot see him due to heavy clouds and rain. Yearning for him, she walks westward from her home in Heijōkyō (city of Nara today) to the village of Tagima (Taima, about twenty kilometers/twelve miles), and by the next morning she reaches the area of Manhōzō-in (Taimadera today) located at the foot of Mt. Futakami. While entering the precincts, she unwittingly crosses the temple's religious boundary prohibited to women (*nyonin kekkai*). With a hope to atone for the sin, Iratsume decides to make a retreat at the hermitage within the temple.

Soon after, believing that Iratsume's disappearance is caused by the separation of her spirit from her body, the Southern Branch of the Fujiwara family holds a ritual of recalling the spirit in Mt. Futakami. When the shamanistic practitioners begin the session, the spirit of Prince Ōtsu (Shigatsuhiko) (663–686 CE), who has been buried in the mountain, awakens fifty years after being executed for his treason against Empress Jitō (645 – 703 CE). Ōtsu's first-person voice announces that at the moment of his death he fell in love at first sight with a woman called Mimimo no Toji. Since she was a younger sister of Iratsume's grandfather Fujiwara no Fuhito, the spirit of Ōtsu mistakenly approaches Iratsume. However, she begins to see once again the image of the nobleman on the days of the equinox. Feeling pity for the man whose skin is exposed to the cold air, she decides to weave a robe out of lotus threads for him. Upon completion of the fabric, Iratsume paints the images of the nobleman and Manhōzō-in on it. In the epilogue of the novel, those images magically turn into a thousand deities in the Pure Land.

As briefly summarized above, *The Book of the Dead* shies away from a cohesive narrative structure but leaves certain elements unaccounted. Most notably, the novel does not clarify the fate of Iratsume, Ōtsu, and the nobleman in the end. Whereas the hint for interpretation is scarce in the

novel itself, Orikuchi's essay titled "The Motif of Amitābha Buddha over Mountains" ("Yamagoshi no Amidazō no gain," 1944) acknowledges the symbolic trans-temporal connection among the narrative figures. In the essay Orikuchi explains that the novel is built upon indigenous local traditions like *nissōkan* (meditation on the sun) during the equinox, which made a significant contribution to the eclectic formation of ancient Buddhism in Japan.<sup>15</sup> At first glance, the novel recounts the legend of Princess Chūjō whose devotion to Buddhism leads to the completion of the fabric that illustrates the Pure Land and Buddha's teaching from *Kanmuryōjukyō* (Amitayurdhyana Sūtra, Sutra of the Meditation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life).<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, the narrative achieves far beyond a simple re-transmission of the popular legend that implicitly extols Princess Chūjō's virtue, her lineage of the Fujiwara no Fuhito, and the clan's patronage for Buddhism.

Whereas Harootunian locates Orikuchi's work in proximity to interwar fascism based on his nativist search of artistic origins, *The Book of the Dead* radically refutes a single lineage of such origins and in turn constructs a kaleidoscopic montage inclusive of both the capital and the rural perceptions of cultural traditions and politics. It is apparent that the legend of Princess Chūjō plays a major reference in the novel, but the narrative takes a form of metaphorical mandala, as though presenting an antithesis to any artistic origins. Further, traversing the simple revisiting of the legend, the narrative incorporates a wide range of foreign sources and peripheral local traditions. Such a broad spectrum of narrative design is suggested primarily in the title *The Book of the Dead*, the novel of which Orikuchi considers "a pseudo-Egyptian book" (*ejiputo-modoki no hon*).<sup>17</sup> Indeed he borrows the title from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, the text with which he became familiar after the first Japanese translation by Tanaka Itaru was published in 1920.<sup>18</sup> Orikuchi does not explicitly imitate the ancient Egyptian funeral text; however, as Ishiuchi Tōru points out, the text echoes overall the episode of Osiris and Isis that originates in the mythology included as part of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*.<sup>19</sup> In the ancient Egyptian world of spirits, the supreme god Osiris, who used to be a human being, was executed by having his head, torso, limbs, and heart torn apart. After his body parts were buried, his younger sister Isis excavates them. She then recites the spell taught by Toto, the creator of the spiritual universe, and by effect Osiris is resurrected.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Ōtsu in *The Book of the Dead* was convicted of treason, executed, and fifty years after the incident his spirit is called back to his body by ritual.<sup>21</sup> Further, although in the record of *Nihon shoki* (The Chronicles of Japan, 720)<sup>22</sup> the

prince was executed by hanging, Ōtsu's monologue recollects that he died after his neck was torn off, as if being wrung like a duck (*kamo mitai ni kubi o nejichigirarete*) and therefore offers a striking parallel to the account of Osiris's death.<sup>23</sup> Then finally, Ōtsu's resurrection remotely assimilates the case of Osiris whose dissected body parts undergo the process of assemblage by means of a magical prayer.<sup>24</sup>

The Chinese legend of *Bokutenshiden* (The Legend of King Mu, Son of Heaven, publication year unknown),<sup>25</sup> a travelogue featuring the adventure of King Boku who lived in the tenth century (his reign was either 976–922 or 956–918 BCE; the year he was born is unknown but he died in 922 BCE) is another notable foreign reference Orikuchi relates to *The Book of the Dead*.<sup>26</sup> Whereas it was omitted later, the first edition of the novel employs the epitaph that depicts the scene of the death and funeral of Seki, beloved wife of King Boku.<sup>27</sup> The excerpt plays only a symbolic role in the prologue without being part of the novel, but the foreign reference suggests the author's aspiration to explore a comparative worldview regarding the postmortem journey of human spirits. Hence, *The Book of the Dead* can be likened to a palimpsest that superimposes the historical memories of the Japanese on Chinese and Western (Egyptian) books of the dead.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, these foreign references determine the novel's nature as, in Orikuchi's words, a sketch of ancient life filtered through the author's modern worldview (*kindaikan ni eijita, arujiki no kodai seikatsu*).<sup>29</sup>

Contextualized within the international texts of the dead, *The Book of the Dead* shuns away from the reductive depiction of Pure Land Buddhism in eighth century Japan. Consequently, the novel subverts the artificially built history of Buddhism after the Meiji Restoration. In terms of semantics, the story deviates from, to borrow Harootunian's words, "the primacy of an official, public, voluntary memory enshrined in a variety of practices...commemorating...mnemonic sites strategically located to...remind the nation's subject of its narrative."<sup>30</sup> On this ground, a synchronic as well as diachronic site of cultural memories, traditions, and religious beliefs replaces the fabricated political picture of Buddhism. The narrative interweaves a pre-institutionalized image of ancient Buddhism through multiple local factors including the aforementioned *nissōkan* (meditation on the setting sun); women's indigenous practice called *no-asobi* and *yama gomomori* (ritualistic excursions in the wild fields and mountains); the local legend of the Taima Mandala; the historical tragedy of Prince Ōtsu as described in *Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihon shoki*); women's salvation as described in the *Lotus Sutra*, which encourages



Iratsume to reproduce the *Sutra in Praise of the Pure Land*; the actual landscape of Mount Futakami and the Taima (Tagima) region; and the visual images of the descent of Amitābha Buddha who welcomes the spirits of the dead (*raigō*). These details will be discussed in due course.

### **The Legend of Princess Chūjō as the Politico-Religious Grand Narrative**

According to the version of the legend recorded in *Kokon chomonjū* (The collection of old and contemporary stories, ca. 1254), Princess Chūjō (747–775), the daughter of Fujiwara no Toyonari (704–766) who was a renowned cabinet minister, contributed to the production of a Buddhist mandala by planting lotus shortly after she completed one thousand copies of the Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra. Because of her virtuous effort, according to the record, she was welcomed to the Pure Land by Amitābha Buddha upon her death at the age of twenty-nine. While this version is widely known, the quasi-hagiographic legend is not available in another well-known document, *Taimadera engi emaki* (The visual history of Taima temple, 1531), a pictographic scroll that consists of three volumes (*jō, chū, gekan*).<sup>31</sup> The legend in this document was illustrated by court painter, Tosa Mitsushige, and the text was composed by Emperor Go-Nara and eight other authors, with the date confirmation by Sanjōnishi Sanetaka.<sup>32</sup> It has been allegedly considered an official chronicle of the temple; however, the visual document simply describes local traditions such as the practice of worshipping mountains, the allegorical story of Princess Chūjō as a founding, and nursery tales about a child bullied by her stepmother.<sup>33</sup> In this manner, *Taimadera engi emaki* treats the episode of Princess Chūjō as of rather minor significance, without placing emphasis on the miracle associated with her. It appears that the mission of the document is literally “to record” cultural traditions and episodes as a set of locally shared memory.

In contrast, *Kokon chomonjū* dramatizes the religious piety embodied in the form of the mandala woven by Princess Chūjō. The narrative does not specifically highlight her virtue but implicitly eulogizes the lineage of the Fujiwara clan as the legitimate patron of Buddhism as the state religion.<sup>34</sup> Since Fujiwara no Fuhito’s male offspring assumed high ministerial positions and the family’s daughters married the emperors of the time, the clan enjoyed the privileged status as regents and occupied the political core of the eighth century Yamato State. In fact, the Fujiwara clan’s patronage of Buddhism epitomizes the vigorous ties between politics and religion in the Nara period (710–794). This tendency culminated during the reign of Emperor Shōmu (701–756), who built the

great statue of Vairocana-Buddha of Tōdaiji in order to pray for the security of the state. Along with the Emperor, his consort Empress Kōmyō (701–760) and their daughter Empress Kōken/Shōtoku (718–770) were also devout Buddhists who belonged to the direct lineage of Fuhito. Aiming to consolidate the national polity, Shōmu, together with Kōmyō, established the prominence of Buddhism by adopting a provincial temple system (*kokubunji*) based on a Tang Chinese model.<sup>35</sup> Assuming this historical context, *The Book of the Dead* situates its narrative in the mid eighth century when Buddhism was under the state’s auspices and the statue of Buddha waited for *kaigen*, the ritualistic dedication ceremony.

In contrast to the urban capital of Heijōkyō, where the emperor designated Buddhism as the state religion, the village of Tagima (Taima) in *The Book of the Dead* remains a religiously liminal space where Buddhism has gradually grown entrenched. The novel appears to assume the dispersed accounts in *Taimadera engi emaki* and to fill, through fictional interpretation, a number of hiatuses that exist among historical events and episodes pertaining to Princess Chūjō, as described in the two versions of legendary narratives. Here, Orikuchi’s narrative is noteworthy because it sheds new light on the rural region not only as a historical topos but also as a repository of indigenous cultural memories. Historically, the region is significant as a cradle of Buddhism in Japan, thanks to its connection with renowned Prince Shōtoku (574–622). Tachibana no Narisue, the author of *Kokon chomonjū*, documents that Taima Temple (Manhōzō-in) was built during the reign of Empress Suiko (554–628), when her regent Senior Prince Shōtoku urged his younger brother Prince Maroko to develop the regional faith in Buddhism, the new teaching imported in the mid sixth century from Kudara (today’s south western part of the Korean peninsula).<sup>36</sup> Although the Soga clan (the familial lineage of both Suiko and Shōtoku) strongly advocated Buddhism, other clans such as the Mononobe and Nakatomi (forerunner to the Fujiwara clan) rejected it by arguing for the supremacy of Shintō as the state religion.<sup>37</sup> Representing that political stance, Mononobe no Yuge Moriya, along with his ally Nakatomi no Katsumi, initiated the coup d’état against Emperor Yōmei (Prince Shōtoku’s father). To fight back, Shōtoku ordered Hata no Kawakatsu to sculpt the wooden statues of Four Deities of Buddhism (Shitennō) and promised to build a temple (Shitennōji, in today’s Osaka) for them if he could defeat the enemies.<sup>38</sup> Backed by Soga no Umako no Sukune, an avid advocate of Buddhism and a powerful statesman, Shōtoku won the battle. As a result, Buddhism gained political eminence and the state’s tutelage. Because of these historical events, Ta(g)ima, though

located in a rural area, used to be a bureaucratic satellite of the state capital.

Likewise, *Kokonchomonjū* deals with the legend of the Taima Mandala in the light of political significance. Immediately after describing the virtues of Shōtoku, the author provides details of Princess Chūjō's devotional work—the episode that supposedly took place a hundred and fifty years after Taimadera was built. In a hagiographical tone, the third-person narrative describes the princess as a mystical embodiment of Buddhist virtue and an avid devotee of Amitābha Buddha. Taking a vow on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the sixth month in 735, she promised to perpetuate her dedication to his teaching if she could see the living form of the deity.<sup>39</sup> After spending seven days in prayer, a mysterious nun suddenly appeared and told the princess that she should plant one hundred lotuses if she wished to see “the lord of the nine teachings” (i.e., Amitābha Buddha) because the plant is born in the providence of Buddha.<sup>40</sup> Delighted to hear this oracle-like message, she planted a lotus. It magically grew into ninety stems in a single day. She pulled the threads out of those stems and dyed them with five different colors in pure well water. When the mysterious nun returned shortly after, the princess handed the dyed threads to her. Then the nun wove a mandala of five feet square (*go shaku*) and disappeared as if evaporating.<sup>41</sup> Later the princess learned that the weaver was actually a Bodhisattva, an Amitābha Buddha's disciple. Twelve years after this occurrence, when the princess died, she was immediately welcomed by sacred deities to the Pure Land (*shōju no raigō ni azukaru*).<sup>42</sup> Both the legends of Prince Shōtoku and Princess Chūjō narrate the religiously-inspired episodes that took place over a span of more than one hundred years. The juxtaposition of these episodes is awkward in terms of the temporal gap. Its daunting layout however consciously reinforces the authority of Buddhism as the state religion and assures the reader of its influence over the provincial region of Ta(g)ima. Alongside the manipulation of the temporality, the accounts compensate the Fujiwara clan's previous disapproval of Buddhism, and as though mending the political blunder, construct a streamlined link between Princess Chūjō, the members of the clan, and Prince Shōtoku, the powerful imperial regent who was the influential advocate of Buddhism.

### **Ancient Pure Land Buddhism in Transit at the Local Contact Zone**

As discussed above, the episode of Princess Chūjō in *Kokon chomonjū* portrays her as the exemplary Buddhist devotee, and therein elevates the religious tradition into the political grand narrative of the Yamato state. Then, the disjuncture between the collection and the novel lies in the

representations of the marginal area of Tagima. Whereas the episode in the collection does not clarify the location where the miracle took place, *The Book of the Dead* sets the narrative in the temple Manhōzōin and its vicinity, consciously portraying the area as the dramatic locus of Buddhism in transit. In addition, the novel fictionally fills blank spaces among fragmented episodes in *Taimadera engi emaki* so as to create a cultural topography of the liminal space where local traditions, history, and Buddhism collide and intermingle through the visionary experience of Iratsume from the Fujiwara household.<sup>43</sup> Here, the liminal space of Tagima actualizes what Mary Louise Pratt calls “the contact zone,” a social space where “cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other ... in context of a highly asymmetrical relation of power.”<sup>44</sup> Given the presupposition that the Fujiwara clan’s power influenced the formation of the popular legend of Princess Chūjō, the semantic role of Tagima is to vocalize the dead and the forgotten who have left behind the political façade of the urban capital. In this light, Iratsume’s encounter with Prince Ōtsu’s spirit at the temple in Tagima holds the foremost importance. His awakening from the grave announces a remnant of unsettled politics, his plea for Empress Jitō who purged him and exterminated his blood lineage. Born to be the most promising son of Emperor Tenmu (631–686 CE), Ōtsu planned a mutiny with an intention to take over his father’s throne and power. At the time, his half-brother/cousin Prince Kusakabe, the son of Tenmu and Empress Jitō (Ōtsu’s aunt, the younger sister of his mother), was already elected as crown prince; nonetheless, Ōtsu, backed by his advocates, tried to undermine Kusakabe’s legitimacy as the successor shortly after Tenmu died. Infuriated, Jitō quickly executed Ōtsu and buried him near the “male” peak of Mt. Futakami, located outside the perimeter of the capital and adjacent to Tagima.<sup>45</sup> To pacify his soul, though executed as a traitor, Ōtsu was consecrated as a guardian deity for the border, the god who ironically protects the rulers from intruders.<sup>46</sup> The politics behind the tragic death of Ōtsu is not detailed in *The Book of the Dead*, but the narrative apparently assumes it as historical knowledge attached to Mt. Futakami, a well-known literary topos in *Man’yōshū* (Collection of ten thousand leaves, 785).

At the onset of the novel, the ritual of spirit calling (*tama yobawari*) by the Fujiwara household accidentally awakens Ōtsu’s spirit, instead of tracing Iratsume’s whereabouts. Their encounter, generated by the shamanistic ritual, provokes a diachronic linkage between the dreadful past, the present, and Japanese Buddhism in its formative stage. While the narrative illustrates their uncanny encounter, their contact symbolically

brings back the margin of history and politics to the forefront of the fictional narrative. What pacifies the lingering spirit is the sutra uttered by Iratsume (this will be discussed in detail below), which implicates the arbitrating power of Buddhism in the country of Shintō. Alongside the religious implication in the dialogic contact, the location also sets forth a powerful intersection between two political regions. Situated at the border between the western edge of Yamato (today's Nara) and the eastern edge of Naniwa (today's Osaka), Tagima (Taima) is the liminal contact zone where multiple religions and cultural traditions meet, intermingle, and negotiate for Buddhism in the local contexts. In the capital of Heijōkyō, Buddhism has established itself as the state religion by the mid eighth century. However, the village of Tagima, as part of the esoteric Katsuragi region, maintains its own secluded cultural territory. The area is historically known as the stronghold of En'no Ozuno (En'no Gyōja) (634–701) who initiated Shugendō, the religious practice that combines mountain worshipping, Shintō tradition, and esoteric forms of Buddhism. Physically located halfway between two political centers, Tagima's mountainous landscape divides the two major civilizations of the time without keeping strong ties to either urban area. There Buddhism still exists as a foreign system of thought, even after being introduced to the region by Prince Shōtoku.<sup>47</sup> In the novel, the austere monastic ambience governs the rural temple, and the environment echoes the disciplined esotericism embraced by Shugendō practitioners. Simultaneously, the oral tradition represented by *kataribe* (raconteur) characterizes the old folk mentality, while the practice is gradually fading away even in the rural area.<sup>48</sup> Further, in a larger significance, Iratsume herself also embodies the metaphorical contact zone in the novel. By completing the one thousand copies of the *Sutra in Praise of the Pure Land*, she initially represents the logocentric culture of the capital. In turn, her entrance to Tagima implies her epistemic transition—from the rational, logocentric form of knowledge to the realm of empirical knowledge based on sentient forms of experience.

Along with the oral tradition still viable in Tagima, the onomatopoeic phrases in the narrative intervene the official history rendered by logos, and revitalize the voices of primordial existence (the spirit of Ōtsu, and nature, etc.) as part of the local reality. To this end, the onomatopoeias mimic the sounds of the natural world such as raindrops, chirping of birds, and the movement of insects, providing a sort of sound effect which creates an organic dimension of the rural space. Notable examples include the phrases like *shita shita shita*<sup>49</sup> and *tsuta tsuta tsuta*.<sup>50</sup> The former (akin

to raindrop sounds) accompanies the awakening of Ōtsu's spirit, and the latter simulates the steps of the insect when the prince's ghost approaches Iratsume in the midst of night. Both sounds vocalize the spirit whose physical body and voice no longer exist but attachment to the world of living has not ceased yet. Another onomatopoeic pattern, *hohoki hohokii hohohokii*,<sup>51</sup> transmits the voice of the nightingale, which mimics the word *hōki* (rapture felt for the Buddha's teaching) as well as that of *hokekyō* (the Lotus Sutra).<sup>52</sup> The onomatopoeia appears when Iratsume listens to the chirping of *hohoki*-birds (the name derived from the sounds they make) and wishes to attain wings like them. Here the sound semantically links both her desire to visit the nobleman over the mountain like the birds and the possibility of attaining enlightenment by virtue of the Lotus Sutra. In another scene, the voice of a warbling nightingale is juxtaposed with the sutra that teaches the pathway for women's salvation. Enabled by the polyphonic narrative, the textual condition of heteroglossia creates a polysemic effect on the narrative. The poetic strategy Orikuchi implements here equals to what Mikhail Bakhtin considers dialogic tensions between languages and the author's multiple belief systems.<sup>53</sup> That is to say, the primitive wordplay vocalizes the alternative logic operating in the marginalized rural area, which goes beyond the limit of the logocentric history and politics of the urban capital.

### **Orikuchi's Modernist Revisionism in Rewriting the Legend of Princess Chūjō**

As Orikuchi claims, *The Book of the Dead* is his attempt to sketch out the image of "the ancient life in a certain period ... in the light of a modernist worldview" (*kindaikan ni eijita aru jiki no kodai seikatsu*).<sup>54</sup> Unlike the politically charged nationalist ambition in 1930s Japan, Orikuchi's modernist vision manifests itself in his revisionism that problematizes the national impulse of totalizing heterogeneous cultural realities. With this spirit, eighth century Buddhism in the novel portrays an aggregate of foreign and local traditions that gradually gained access to the peripheral area of the Yamato state. In this regard, the author's vision is undeniably modern because, to borrow Alan Tansman's words, Orikuchi "fails to distinguish voice from writing" in oral storytelling, and thus confines the former to the latter.<sup>55</sup> The allegation, nonetheless, points at the innate shortcoming in the process of writing novels. Negotiating between the two modes of discourse, the narrative explores a middle ground by means of stream-of-consciousness—stylistically a quintessence of Modernism reflecting a painstaking unification of human consciousness and *écriture*.

Within such a fluid structure, the narrative gradually builds a single thread of a subtle love story while modifying the popular Buddhist legend. In this narrative design, the heroine undergoes multiple phases of rites of passage: her separation from the Fujiwara household and abstinence at the temple; mystical encounters with Ōtsu's spirit and Amitābha Buddha (*omokagebito*, the nobleman) over Mt. Futakami; and, finally, the creation of the robe dedicated to the nobleman. These stages illustrate her gradual immersion to the visionary world existing outside her initial epistemic limit.

The one that most symbolically announces Iratsume's immersion in her new world is the visual image of *raigō* (Amitābha Buddha's welcoming of the deceased to the Pure Land). Included by Orikuchi as part of the text, the scene of *raigō* was conceived by early Pure Land Buddhism as the awe-provoking epiphany over the peaks of Mt. Futakami.<sup>56</sup> From the village of Ta(g)ima, the mountain can be viewed toward the direction of the west. In this locational context, the pantheistic conditions of Buddhism in flux are kept alive side by side with the indigenous tradition of worshipping the setting sun over the two peaks of the mountain. In the cartographical setting, then, the heroine's westbound movement from the capital to Tagima metaphorically ties her longing for the nobleman and the direction of the Pure Land.

However, the narrative never clearly treats the heroine's devotion to Buddhism as *religion*, a set of faith and beliefs institutionally organized; in lieu of religious piety, all her actions are motivated by her individual will, a modern psyche that traverses her social attribute. Most significantly, her efforts of copying the sutra and weaving the (mandala-like) fabric (conceived as a robe) are the labor motivated by her *personal* interest in Amitābha Buddha as well as in the mystical nobleman she longs for. In these actions, Iratsume is constantly driven by her passion and excitement. She copies the *Sutra in Praise of the Pure Land* a thousand times simply because doing so (rather than the contents of the sutra) excites her (*kokoro o nigiyaka ni shita*).<sup>57</sup> Similarly, her escape from the aristocratic household attests to the same mindset in the degree of transgression. Even more, the act of violating the religious boundary prohibited to women reflects her persona as the willful modern subject with no fear for the patriarchal and religious norm. In this way, the novel decisively uproots Iratsume from the legend of Princess Chūjō in *Taimadera engi emaki*, which treats the princess as an unfortunate foundling who is rather passively drawn to Amitābha Buddha's compassion. The heroine's labor also amplifies her vigorous subjectivity as the modern conqueror of

personal desire. In contrast, *Kokon chomonjū* attributes the ultimate completion of the mandala to the mystical nun, limiting Princess Chūjō's contribution to planting the lotus. All in all, the novel implicitly shakes off the image of the princess as a passive agent of the Fujiwara clan.

Another modernist mission of the novel lies in the representation of Pure Land Buddhism in the transitional phase. Regarding the point, the most compelling moment arrives when Iratsume encounters the spirit of Ōtsu. Fifty years after his death, Iratsume unwittingly beckons his spirit because of her physical resemblance with Mimimo no Toji, her biological aunt. When Ōtsu's spirit approaches Iratsume at night, she happens to utter a devotional phrase for Amitābha Buddha out of fear: *Namo Amida hotoke. Anatahuto, Amida hotoke* ("I place my sincere faith in Amitābha Buddha. All hail Amitābha Buddha").<sup>58</sup> Simultaneously, she intuitively remembers the tragic past of Ōtsu that was told by the old raconteur of Tagima.<sup>59</sup> Immediately after, he visually reveals himself, displaying his shining white fingers grabbing a drapery in Iratsume's room.<sup>60</sup> After the chilling moment, the subsequent scene suggests the transmigration of Ōtsu into another apparition:

The patches of light grew brighter until the light seemed to spill into the darkness between them. As the outer edges of the patches of light oscillated between darkness and dusky light, they seemed to gradually congeal, and in the light, the outline of a chest, shoulders, head, and hair began to appear. Beautiful, exposed white skin. Pure eyes looked down upon the reclining maiden. The man who had appeared to her over the mountains that evening ... was it the same person? The area around his chest... the hands by his body ... those fingers, those fingers of white jade....<sup>61</sup>

The third-person narrative does not clarify the identity of the apparition while the luminous figure clearly overwraps the multiple images of the nobleman and Amitābha Buddha over the mountain. After the scene thereafter, the spirit of Ōtsu completely disappears from the novel. This implicitly suggests the soteriological power of Amitābha Buddha who appeases his postmortem attachment to Iratsume, while his presence fuses into the holistic image of the nobleman who amalgamates all the mystical figures in the novel. Within this context, Iratsume's prayer for Amitābha Buddha enacts a powerful speech act, fulfilling the deity's vows to save all sentient beings who recite his name.<sup>62</sup> And yet, the story veers away from a simple development of her devotion to Buddhism per se. The following dream-like passage reinstates that the heroine longs for the nobleman as a corporeal man but not explicitly as the Buddhist deity:



The patches of light on the beams above the maiden grew slightly brighter. Here and there, the darkness that surrounded the patches of light shifted, separating into vertical bands. As she gazed at the ceiling, suddenly everything grew bright. There was a gigantic flower—a bluish white flower with many petals, each outlined by darkness. She had read about blue lotus flowers—they were associated with the buddhas, after all. Was that what she was seeing? The flower looked unbelievably pure to her. It opened into the surrounding space, radiating outward like the spokes of a wheel. The area at the center was still darker than the surrounding petals, but the stamens billowed forth like a cloud. The golden stamens divided. They were his golden hair. In the middle, she could detect the traces of his solemn, magnificent face. There was melancholy in his closed eyes, which floated above her.  
—Ah, his shoulders, his chest, his exposed skin.... His cold, cold, white skin. Oh, the poor fellow....<sup>63</sup>

With the image of the lotus flower, the narrative for the first time provides a clear linkage between the nobleman and Amitābha Buddha. However, here once again the nobleman/deity's golden hair stands out as a peculiar element of the narrative and thereby universalizes the origins of Buddhism that reached the Yamato State. According to Takashi Asada, his physical traits reflect the provenance of Buddhism imported to Japan, and the deity's golden hair implies the influence of Nestorian Christianity, a doctrine introduced to China in the seventh century from which elements transmigrated to Buddhism.<sup>64</sup> Whereas the hand sign identifies him with Amitābha Buddha, the bodily image typical of the West exhibits the multiple roots of the religious form ancient Japan inherited from the Asian continent that were reduced to a monolithic term, Buddhism.<sup>65</sup>

Meanwhile, throughout the novel, the narrative draws on the modern bifurcation of the urban capital and the rural periphery of the Yamato State. Most notably, Prince Ōtsu and the nobleman are the narrative agents who equally mark the anthropological significance of the rural space. They are not a mere narrative device for mysticism but are rather the tropes who actualize Orikuchi's ethnological belief in the existence of *marebito*, spiritual entities who periodically visit rural communities to bless people from another world called *tokoyo* (eternal and afterlife world). According to Hayakawa Yoshie, to design Ōtsu as a *marebito* figure, Orikuchi created a fusion of images that constitute Prince Ōtsu in *Nihon shoki*, *Kaifūsō* (Fond recollections of poetry, 751) as well as in the *Man'yōshū*, and the legendary deity of Ame no waka miko (the young prince of the heaven) as

portrayed in the *Kojiki* (Records of ancient matters, 712) and *Otogi zōshi* (The collection of illustrated nursery tales, 1573).<sup>66</sup> Consequently, Ōtsu, the prince who was executed for his treason against the state, animates the image of *marebito*, an antipode to the existence known as *jōmin* that refers to Yanagita Kunio's concept of "ordinary people" who live a communal life tied to rice-farming lands and abide by local rules. Unlike such collective people, the physical trait (white skeleton) of Ōtsu's apparition who visits Iratsume signifies an astounding outlook of an individual who has escaped the ordinary social ground. His uncanny attribute, then, reflects the author's intention to create a tale of intermarriage between human and non-human creatures (*irui kon'in tan*).<sup>67</sup> Further in the constellation of characters, Iratsume is implicitly assigned to the archetypal role of *Tanabatsume* (the virgin who weaves fabric for gods) that appears in the *Kojiki*.<sup>68</sup> Her dedication of the fabric to the nobleman is almost unconsciously superimposed on her compassion for the drifting spirit of Ōtsu, who initially shivers in the graveyard and laments for his decayed clothes. In this intricate foreshadowing and juxtaposition, multiple figures of *marebito*—Prince Ōtsu, Ame no waka miko, and Amitābha Buddha—are syncretized as the Buddha and sublimated to return to the Pure Land.<sup>69</sup> In the novel, the visiting of the *marebito* figures takes place only in the land of Tagima so that the narrative blesses the rural space as the receptacle of the visitor from the other world.

Similar to the multiple functions embedded in those characters, Iratsume's labor also reflects the polysemic revisionism, contributing to the destabilization of the political functions within the legend of Princess Chūjō in *Kokon chomonjū*. While the chain of mystical events connects her to Amitābha Buddha, Iratsume dedicates her labor not to the deity but primarily for the nobleman as a sentient human being. So much so that the fabric she weaves is not meant to be a mandala in the first place. It is meant to be the robe to cover his naked body and created as her intimate gift for him.<sup>70</sup> The robe is woven out of the lotus threads planted and harvested by Iratsume herself as well. On the other hand, the legend tells that the threads were collected from various regions, and thereby eulogizes Princess Chūjō at the social center representing the virtuous act for Buddhism.<sup>71</sup> However, the most significant converging point hammered out by the novel is that Iratsume is the person who physically weaves the fabric, unlike in the legend where the Bodhisattva appears to complete the work. In the novel, Iratsume semantically wipes off Princess Chūjō's passivity, replacing the religious piety with her proactive labor motivated by her personal feeling. When completed, the square-shaped textile first turns out to be a fabric

akin to a coffin cover for a funeral. To mend the disappointing appearance, the heroine paints the image of Manhōzō-in, and it magically turns out to be the Tūshita's palace, the edifice often considered as the place where Bodhisattva Miroku resides.<sup>72</sup> To describe the moment, the third-person narrator displays a noticeable degree of detachment, stating that the image might be simply an illusion: "it looked like something equipped with the image of mandala."<sup>73</sup> Finally, her servants witness the miracle that thousands of Bodhisattvas emerge on the fabric. Nevertheless, the narrative comes to an end by a simple assertion: "[the image] might be a sort of daydream the people saw together."<sup>74</sup> Unlike the legendary episode in which Princess Chūjō is invited to the Pure Land by Amitābha Buddha when she died, the novel abruptly concludes the story without touching upon the fate of Iratsume thereafter.<sup>75</sup> In this epilogue, the narrative places an emphasis on the dream-like epiphany that is collectively observed but not on a solipsistic reflection of the heroine. In so concluding, the novel tacitly announces the fulfillment of its mission – to present the collective ancient life filtered through the modernist vision.

### **Off-Centered Buddhism and the Modernized Legend of Princess Chūjō**

As we have seen thus far, *The Book of the Dead* defies the grand narrative implicitly set forth by the popular legend of Princess Chūjō in *Kokon chomonjū*. The latter appraises the princess's religious piety and dedication to Amitābha Buddha, and therein invigorates the Fujiwara clan's advocacy of Buddhism. The legend is shaped into the form of Buddhist allegory (*setsuwa*) that meets the patriarchal social norms and demands; yet by modifying details, *The Book of the Dead* deconstructs the quasi-hagiographical narrative expounded on the concatenation of morality, politics, and religion. To conclude the novel, the fabric that *appears like* the mandala is noteworthy here. This phenomenological rendition of the material plays a powerful counter narrative to the popular legend. As though negating the materialized form of Princess Chūjō's legacy and the glory of the Fujiwara clan altogether, the novel claims that the mandala is fundamentally illusory and only existed in the collective sense of fulfilling a wish. Further, at a sub-textual level, the epilogue plays another twist. In the legend the princess attains a soteriological pathway, as if Amitābha Buddha compensates her hardship and devotion to the deity—this harmonious epilogue affirms her religious piety as the condition entailed for the female membership within the patriarchal society. In stark contrast, the modernist novel portrays Iratsume in a

different light: she is the privileged protégé of the Fujiwara clan but willfully steps out of her privilege, for nothing but strenuous labor without any trophy reward. In this regard, the novella takes a subtle form of Bildungsroman that portrays her growth to become an autonomous individual who departs from the religious dogma. What constantly motivates her labor are volition, affection, and even daringness to transgress social norms rather than faith in Buddhism. Likewise, her sense of achievement and affection celebrate her own effort, as symbolized by the “teardrops on her shining face” (*hime no kagayaku yō na hoho no ueni, hosoku tsutau mono*).<sup>76</sup> This sense of fulfillment by will embodies her “Own Power” (*jiriki*). These factors display her undeniably modern psyche that overrides the possibility of “Other Power” (*tariki*), a passive form of salvation that could be granted by the transcendental power of Amitābha Buddha. Ultimately, Iratsume’s “Own Power” replaces also the notion of *jiriki* in Pure Land Buddhism, the tradition based on the disciplinary (and yet passively repeated) practice of reciting the sutras, with a more proactive labor that leads to her personal sense of achievement.

In this mode of reading, the absence of allegory problematizes the presence of Amitābha Buddha in *The Book of the Dead*. Throughout the novel, the deity is not physically present but is sensed by Iratsume through the nobleman’s half-illusory image. Yet the text includes five visual images of Amitābha Buddha, four of which portray the scene of the *raigō* (the buddha’s advent to welcome the dead).<sup>77</sup> All four portraits display a patterned design that attests to the widespread faith in the deity during the medieval centuries. Employed as part of the text, these images concretize the nobleman whom Iratsume perceives over the mountain peaks and provide the historical reference to the reception of Amitābha Buddha as a postmortem savior in Japan.<sup>78</sup> However, the novel sets aside the soteriological role of the deity from the story. In turn, these images testify to the history of acculturation through which Buddhism, as the foreign system of thought, had gained access to the indigenous socio-cultural environment. Ultimately, those visual images commemorate ancient people’s awe and fascination felt for the foreign deity, being part and parcel of Buddhism that is unique to ancient Japan.<sup>79</sup>

Whereas Orikuchi emphasizes indigenous realities in Tagima, *The Book of the Dead* eschews a simplistic, nativist gaze upon the rural space as the exotic. Rendered through the modernist perspective, the novel departs from an outright dualism between the urban progressivism and the rural backwardness but, by the heroine as a mediator, sets forth a subtle dialogue between them. Her initial interest in the sutra was developed out

of her urban privilege of having access to the translation. Even after leaving the capital, she continues to rely on the urban material culture and so she brings the weaving machine and paints from Heijōkyō to Tagima to complete the robe. To the same extent, the novel is a sort of patchwork built on the past and the present – the story about the past being filtered through the modernist notion of the present that digest historical episodes, legends, and socio-cultural realities. The amalgamation of these is best exemplified by the nobleman/Amitābha Buddha, whose body disavows a single provenance but endorses a syncretic unity of multiple attributes. According to Tullio Lobetti, syncretism in religion occurs when a central precept or a value system subordinates other autonomic counterparts.<sup>80</sup> An intimate fusion of multiple ethnic or cultural characteristics does not build a syncretic unity but rather a synthetic, and more precisely, a polysemic condition.<sup>81</sup> In *The Book of the Dead*, through the nobleman's corporeality, early Pure Land Buddhism takes a form of cultural symbiosis that encompasses indigenous tradition, local history, and diachronic cultural memory.

All in all, the discursive elements within ancient Buddhism in *The Book of the Dead* undermine possibilities of tracing clear cultural origins. Side by side with Buddhism in the process of becoming, what Orikuchi unpacks is the feebleness of Yamato as the state form in the rural people's consciousness. For this point, it is necessary to recall the cohesive structure of the allegory in *Kokon chomonjū*, which implicitly annexes Princess Chūjō's piety to the national politics monopolized by the Fujiwara clan. *The Book of the Dead* veers away from the pre-destined harmony the allegorical legend calls forth, and gradually marks a line between the political center of Heijōkyō and Tagima as the social margin. Through Iratsume's visionary experience, the rural space reveals its own modus operandi incommensurate to the logic of urban politics. In the realm of religion, Heijōkyō is presented undeniably as the state capital holding Tōdaiji and other *gokokuji* (i.e., Buddhist temples expected to protect the state). Unlike the rationally structured capital, the village of Tagima embodies what Orikuchi holistically calls "the ancient life," a space to which the bureaucracy of the capital has still remained foreign. This space thus serves Buddhism not as a politically subordinated periphery but culturally autonomous counterpoints to the capital. From the viewpoint of Buddhist cosmology, the rural space exists as a cognitive portal to the Pure Land, a dazzling utopia that is expected to fulfill soteriological wishes of individuals in the postmortem phase.<sup>82</sup>

While the capital city of Heijōkyō interlocks religion and politics, the

rural area problematizes the modern notion of “Buddhism,” which is understood as *a religion* in a totalized nomenclature. Laden with esoteric ambience, the rural setting vocalizes the realities of, as Harootunian observes in native ethnologists of the interwar period, the old community built around “the most archaic practices and religious beliefs of the Japanese folk.”<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, it is also important to note that the peripheral realities for Orikuchi here are not meant to provoke, in Jean Luc Nancy’s term, “ecstatic identification” with a location or a particular leader for solidifying the sense of communal unity.<sup>84</sup> All the narrative elements (characters, religions, cultural practices) are instead ambiguously consumed within the heroine’s consciousness. Consequently, the narrative keeps on deterring the reader’s expectation to learn objective realities about Pure Land Buddhism in the given historical moment. In this regard, Tagima is nothing but a locus of impasse, the site of unfathomable openness to things foreign where innumerable realities commingle with each other with no clear sense of origin. In ancient Yamato, according to Orikuchi, the presence of the Pure Land was not a philosophically grasped locus but was imagined through contemplation on the Tagima area as the portal to the Buddhist utopia.<sup>85</sup> Such cognitive substitution was necessary when Buddhism was transmitted to Japan in ancient times – to compensate the unimaginable degree of distance between this world and the Pure Land; people internalized the paradise by meditating on their own local landscape, such as sea and mountain.<sup>86</sup> This suggests that Buddhism in the novel is a case of cultural simulation, and it implicitly inquires the authenticity of the religious form in the country. Such a keen cultural awareness may be likened to what Homi K. Bhabha calls cultural mimicry, “an *ironic* compromise” in search of “a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.*”<sup>87</sup>

On this ground, the rural contact zone of Tagima is an imaginary space created out of Orikuchi’s diachronic narrative design where multiple traditions and beliefs encounter each other. A notable case includes the tradition of worshipping the sun, as represented by Iratsume who follows after the nobleman’s image between the ridges of Mt. Futakami.<sup>88</sup> Then, while the man’s provenance remains unknown, his golden hair functions as a metonymy of Amitābha Buddha, whose shining existence emanates through the light of the setting sun.<sup>89</sup> The Amitayurdhyana Sutra (*Kanmuryōjūkyō* in Japanese; the Meditation Sutra.), a foundational text of Pure Land Buddhism, mentions that “[s]eeing [the] light [of the sun] consoles all living beings and removes afflictions; after the blissful end, all can be emancipated from this world.”<sup>90</sup> The philosophy of *nissōkan*

based on the sutra's teaching is implicitly practiced by Iratsume, and the tradition identifies the light of the celestial body with Amitābha Buddha. This juxtaposition suggests the case of acculturation where the Buddhist system of belief meets the pre-Buddhist tradition of *himatsuri* (sun worshipping) in the space of Tagima. In the local tradition, the practice involved four processes: “welcoming the sun, sending the sun off, walking together with the shade, and resting [in] the shade.”<sup>91</sup> In the novel, other ascetic rituals practiced typically by ancient women, such as *yamagomori* (retreat in the mountain) and *noasobi* (jaunt in the field), are also associated with the heliocentric tradition of the locality.<sup>92</sup> These rituals are, once again, implicitly incorporated in the heroine's mobility within the Yamato plain, en route from Heijōkyō to Tagima.

### ***The Book of the Dead as Antithesis to Totalitarian Impulse of Modernity***

As discussed thus far, the polysemic structure of *The Book of the Dead* refutes the grand narrative of the Yamato state. For this interpretation, it is necessary to note the extra-textual contexts Japanese Buddhism faced in the post-restoration period. In the 1893 International Religious Conference in Chicago, Japanese scholars and practitioners of Mahāyāna Buddhism assumed the mission of articulating the role of Buddhism in Meiji Japan. To meet the international demand, the Japanese participants needed to demonstrate that the religion fit within the categorical frame of “Eastern Buddhism” based on humanistic values congruous with Western counterparts.<sup>93</sup> Within the domestic context, on the other hand, they explained that Buddhism was philosophically rationalized to align the ideology of the austere Meiji government.<sup>94</sup> Further, they noted that Buddhism played an integral role in the centralized modern nation. In this context, the system of religious thought needed to be redefined by separating its function from what used to be shared with Shintō. In the process of differentiation, suddenly Buddhism was considered a foreign system of thought after a thousand years of syncretic coexistence.<sup>95</sup> The dilemma was that Japan, the young nation wrestling with the discriminatory treaties back then, needed to rely on Buddhism as an intellectual and spiritual basis of Japanese civilization.<sup>96</sup> In this geopolitical environment, Eastern Buddhism, unlike Christianity, was driven to present itself as a moral system that “assisted the evolutionary development of mankind toward philosophic ideals.”<sup>97</sup>

In the context of the interwar 1930s, *The Book of the Dead* goes against this reduced, daunting rationalization of Buddhism as the

philosophical core of national origin. Instead, the novel highlights the religio-cultural realities prevalent in the locality shaded by post-Meiji Japan and its political advocacy of pragmatism that accelerated institutionalization of religions. At this juncture, the narrative does not treat Buddhism in light of religiosity but contextualizes it as an imported tradition that went through multiple stages of acculturation. Therefore, the epilogue does not even present the heroine's labor in the form of a mandala – an artifact that systematically interweaves religious precepts and history in visual form. Ultimately, the narrative tacitly withdraws from the framework of religion altogether. It is not an overstatement that Buddhism provides the novel only with a pretext that mobilizes the heroine and her affective labor. All in all, the discursively laid-out cultural landscape stages the drama of *the* Buddhism in transit. To say the least, *The Book of the Dead* visualizes innumerable encounters through which a tradition called Pure Land Buddhism was locally germinated. Finally, it is Orikuchi's nuanced narrative that gracefully acknowledges the impossibility of transmitting the foreign knowledge intact to Japan, the country located at the periphery of the empire of Buddhism.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 331.

<sup>2</sup> Harry Harootunian, "Figuring the Folk: History, Poetics, and Representation," *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998), 144.

<sup>3</sup> At this juncture, Andō Reiji notes that Orikuchi intended to restructure the episteme of indigeneity by virtue of humanistic arts and sciences in order to refute the modern European system of political knowledge. See Andō Reiji, *Hikari no mandara* [The Mandala of Light] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2008), 321–331. It is important to note that Orikuchi's attempt, insofar as his literary rendition is concerned, is not aligned with the imperialist nationalism of the time that subsumed the colonial subjects such as Taiwanese and Korean people in the name of *kōminka seisaku* (the policy of integration of minorities into the nation), as described in Naoki Sakai's "Two Negations: Fear of Being Excluded and the Logic of Self-Esteem," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 37.3 (2004): 234–235. In contrast with the imperialist policy, which essentially undermines identities and uniqueness of colonial subjects, Orikuchi's *The Book of the Dead* incorporates heterogeneous social and cultural factors as viable realities, without totalizing



them under the umbrella of Imperialist Japan in the guise of the eighth century Yamato State.

<sup>4</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 335, 357.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabetta Porcu, *Pure Land Buddhism in Modern Japanese Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 26.

<sup>6</sup> Allan G. Grapard, “Japan’s Ignored Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji (*shimbutsu bunri*) and a Case Study: Tōnomine,” *History of Religions* 23.2: 245.

<sup>7</sup> Winston Davis, “Buddhism and the Modernization of Japan,” *History of Religions* 28.4: 308–310.

<sup>8</sup> Pure Land Buddhism in Japan saw a significant development, at least by the name of the Jōdo School (Jōdoshū) by Hōnen (1133–1212), a monk of the Tendai School. He radically held that reciting the name of Amitābha alone is sufficient for salvation because, in the ghastly era in which he lived, only Other Power--the power of Amitābha’s infinite compassion--was believed to save human beings. Devotion to Amitābha Buddha had been present in Japan since at least the middle of the seventh century. In earlier Japanese Buddhism, visualization meditation was integrated with recitation following Chinese Pure Land practice. See Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations, Second Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 254–255. During the time, however, the school existed rather in the form of “a new sectarian identity [that] is present and not likely to soon disappear,” thanks to “the relentless expansion of the lineages formed under the leadership of Honen’s disciples.” For details, see Mark L. Blum, *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism* (Oxford, U. K.: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>9</sup> In the postscript to his third volume of *Kodai kenkyū*, Orikuchi expresses his advocacy of new nativism: “We need a new nativism. We need to see the original form of ancient beliefs that have been rationalized and modernized. The legacy of [old] learning hangs in the air like a dust cloud that I cannot disperse. Now I have realized that what wipes off [the ambiguity] is neither philosophy nor religion. It occurs to me that new nativism has to start from the study of human society that are based on ancient beliefs.” See Kamata Tōji, “Disfiguring of Nativism: Hirata Atsutane and Orikuchi Shinobu,” in *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, eds. John Breen, Mark Teeuwen. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 295–317. The quoted passage of Orikuchi is translated by Kamata, 303.

<sup>10</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 355.

<sup>11</sup> Andō, “Yurisīzu no kikan: Orikuchi Shinobu ‘Shisha no sho’ saikō” [“The Return of Ulysses: Rethinking Orikuchi Shinobu’s *The Book of the Dead*”]. *Daikōkai* 56 (2005): 59–73, 61–62. As Andō explains, Orikuchi, in his

formative years, explored the cultures and languages of Korea, Mongolia, and Ainu, and the training in comparative area studies became a basis of his scholarly work. His areas of expertise went far beyond the limits of classical Japanese literature and culture and took an interdisciplinary direction that utilized his interests in ethnology, physiology, religions, and the performing arts.

- <sup>12</sup> The term *iratsume* refers to a young woman but not a proper name of individuals. The translator Jeffrey Angles uses the generic term “maiden,” but since the term was also used to refer to married women from notable family in the antiquity (e.g., Tojiko no Iratsume, the spouse of Prince Shōtoku; Iga no Yakako no Iratsume, the spouse of Emperor Tenji, etc.), the author chooses not to translate the term but keeps it intact in lieu of a proper noun.
- <sup>13</sup> Unlike *Amidakyō* translated by Kumarajiva, *Shōsanjōdo Busshōjūkyō* (Sutra in Praise of the Pure Land) translated by Genjō is not one of the Three Pure Land Sutras in the Jōdoshū and Jōdo Shinshū traditions. On the other hand, Orikuchi’s family was the devoted followers of Jōdo Shinshū (the School of True Pure Land Buddhism or known as Shin Buddhism). Also, through his allegedly homosexual relationship with Fuji Muzen, who was a monk of Jōdo Shinshū, Orikuchi was knowledgeable of its tradition and kept his penname “Shaku Chōkū” as his postmortem Buddhist name (in Jōdo Shinshū all Buddhist names begin with the word “Shaku”). See Andō Reiji, *Orikuchi Shinobu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2014), 63, 65. Therefore, it can be surmised that, while illustrating the early time of the tradition, Orikuchi intended to employ the sutra as a central motif of the novella.
- <sup>14</sup> Orikuchi Shinobu, *The Book of the Dead*, trans. Jeffrey Angles (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 76–77.
- <sup>15</sup> Orikuchi Shinobu, “Yamagoshi no Amidazō no gain” [The Motif of Amitābha Buddha over mountains], *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* 32 (Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1997), 22.
- <sup>16</sup> *Kanmuryōjūkyō* is one of the three Mahayana sutras on which the Pure Land Buddhist tradition is built.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.
- <sup>18</sup> Andō Reiji, “Yurisīzu no kikan,” 68.
- <sup>19</sup> Ishiuchi Tōru, “Ejiputo no ‘Shisha no sho’ to ‘Shisha no sho’” [*The Egyptian Book of the Dead* and *The Book of the Dead*]. *Orikuchi Shinobu kenkyūkaihō* 23 (1993): 1–6, 2–3. *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* known to English-speaking world is available as follows: E. A. Wallis Budge, trans. *The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani in the British Museum*. (New York: Dover, 1967). The Japanese translation is available by Tanaka Itaru. See *Shisha no sho* [The Book

of the Dead]. *Sekai seiten zenshū* vols. 10–11. Trans. Tanaka Itaru (Tokyo: Tōkyō sekai bunko kankōkai), 1924–25.

<sup>20</sup> Ishiuchi, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Prince Ōtsu also had a sister, Princess Ōku, who is known for her poems in *Man'yōshū* that long for her executed brother.

<sup>22</sup> *Nihon shoki* (The Chronicles of Japan) is the second oldest book of Japanese history. It was completed in 720 under the editorial supervision by Prince Toneri and his assistant Ōno Yasumaro.

<sup>23</sup> Orikuchi, “Shisha no sho,” *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* 27 (Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1997), 146.

<sup>24</sup> Ishiuchi, 5.

<sup>25</sup> *Bokutenshiden* [The legend of King Mu, son of heaven] was excavated in Dakang, China, in 281 CE. The work is the allegedly the oldest historical novel in China, but the publication year and the author are unknown. It is speculated that the work was written some time during the age of the Wei Dynasty (220–265 CE).

<sup>26</sup> When Orikuchi serialized *The Book of the Dead* in *Nihon hyōron* in 1939, he included a passage from the volume six of *Bokutenshiden* as an epitaph. Later in the book edition, the author erased the passage for unknown reasons (Andō, “The Return of Ulysses,” 68). However, to examine his multicultural frame of *The Book of the Dead*, the reference to the ancient Chinese legend cannot be dismissed.

<sup>27</sup> Andō, “Yurisiizu no kikan,” 68.

<sup>28</sup> Orikuchi, “Yamagaoshi,” 19. For this citation, Orikuchi subsumes “the Egyptian” under “the West,” perhaps unwittingly. For the contemporary reader, the category of “the Orient” as employed by Edward Said would fit better here.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>30</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 211.

<sup>31</sup> *Taimadera engi emaki* (The Visual History of Taima Temple) (1531) is currently preserved in the Nara National Museum as the registered national treasure (*kokuhō*).

<sup>32</sup> Katsuragi-City page. <http://www.city.katsuragi.nara.jp/index.cfm/13,2280,31,130,html>. Accessed July 16, 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Gorai Shigeru. “Taimaji engi to Chūjōhime setsuwa” [The history of Taimadera and the folktale of Princess Chūjō], *Bungaku* 12.45 (1977): 46–59, 47–49.

- <sup>34</sup> The Fujiwara clan used to hold the family name of “Nakatomi,” which signifies a regent who bridges gods and emperors. As the name suggests, traditionally, the family represented indigenous Shintō rituals at the court. Reflecting the clan’s political function, *The Collection of Old and Contemporary Stories* notes that Nakatomi no Katsumi (?–587) did not accept the teaching of Buddhism disseminated by Soga no Umako (551–626). See *Kokon chomonjū shū jōkan* [The collection of old and contemporary stories, vol. 1], ed. Masamune Atsuo (Tokyo: Gendai shichōshinsha, 2008), 24. Therefore the legend of Princess Chūjō was seemingly intended to shore up the Fujiwara clan’s historical heresy against Buddhism.
- <sup>35</sup> William E. Deal and Brian Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism* (Chichester, N. J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 57–58.
- <sup>36</sup> Some scholars such as Yoshida Kazuhiko and Ōyama Seiichi question the actual existence of Senior Prince Shōtoku and consider him a fictional figure who was constructed for religious and political purposes. See Deal and Ruppert, 27–28. On the other hand, *Nihon shoki* describes that Shōtoku was an ardent Buddhist who could profoundly comprehend the Dharma and also a highly capable statesman of exceptional political ability (Deal and Ruppert, 26–27). In any case, the hagiographical images of Shōtoku recorded in *Nihon shoki* can be considered a reflection of the powerful ideology of Buddhism set forth by “the Soga and other likeminded extended families” (Deal and Ruppert, 28).
- <sup>37</sup> Tachibana no Narise, *Nihon koten zenshū: Kokon chomonjū jōkan* [The complete collection of Japanese classical literature: The collection of old and contemporary Stories vol. 1], ed. Masamune Atsuo (Tokyo: Gendai shichō, 2008), 24.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>43</sup> In creation of the image of the heroine, Nanke Fujiwara no Iratsume, Orikuchi discards the condition of Princess Chūjō being a foundling as described in *Taimadera engi emaki*. Nonetheless, it is possible to argue that her foundling status is metaphorically kept alive in Iratsume’s separation from the Fujiwara family, as she drifts away from the capital and arrives at the religiously liminal space of Tagima.
- <sup>44</sup> Pratt, Mary Louise, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* (1991): 34.

- <sup>45</sup> Situated at the border between today's Nara and Osaka prefectures, Mount Futakami (today's Nijōzan) holds two peaks. The higher peak is named *odake* (male peak, 515 meter) and the lower one *medake* (female peak, 470 meter). As the site where Prince Ōtsu was buried, along with its distinctive shape widely visible in the Yamato plain and eastern Osaka, the mountain has become a literary topos in *Man'yōshū* and the later poetry collections such as *Kin'yō wakashū* and *Goshūi wakashū*.
- <sup>46</sup> Kawamura Jirō, "Shisha no sho ni tsuite," *Mita bungaku* 51 (1961): 46.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.
- <sup>48</sup> Orikuchi, *The Book of the Dead*, trans. Jeffrey Angles, 156.
- <sup>49</sup> Orikuchi, *The Book of the Dead*, 167. I keep the onomatopoeia faithful to Orikuchi's original text rendered in *hiragana*. Angles' translation spells them out: "shhta shhta," 61.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 217, 229. Here again, I transcribe the onomatopoeia with respect to Orikuchi's original. Angles spells it out "Tssta tssuta," 125.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 206–208. Angles also transcribe the onomatopoeia with the same spelling, 115.
- <sup>52</sup> These onomatopoeic phrases concretize what Orikuchi calls "a possibility of intuitive language" (*chokkan-teki gengo no kanōsei*). According to him, "nebulous experience or indescribable sensation" entails an effort of translating it based on our experience, and with translation the rendition of new experiences becomes possible. In this light, Iratsume's encounter with the spirit of Ōtsu and the Lotus Sutra remain uncanny and indefinable but such ambiguities can be expressed by means of primitive but familiar phonetics of onomatopoeia. For his notion of intuitive language, see Orikuchi Shinobu, *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* 12 (Tokyo: Chūōkōron, 1996), 45–46. This extra-linguistic form of knowledge suggests the author's nuanced depiction of the historical past in the rural area and the reception of Buddhism there.
- <sup>53</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1981), 314.
- <sup>54</sup> Orikuchi, "Yamagoshi," 21.
- <sup>55</sup> Alan Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2009), 336. Tansman draws the view through his reading of Nakagami Kenji's *Kobayashi Hideo o koete* [Beyond Kobayashi Hideo], which challenges Orikuchi's search for the origin of tales from oral storytellers, arguing that he examines language only in its written form and thereby dismisses the phonetic dimension of voice.

- <sup>56</sup> In Angles' translation of the text, the images of *raigō* included by Orikuchi are omitted but one of them appears in Andō Reiji's essay translated by Angles, "Unravelling the Mysteries of *Shisha no sho*" in *The Book of the Dead*. See the image on page 199 of that text.
- <sup>57</sup> Orikuchi, "Shisha no sho," *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* 27, 175.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 218. In standard Japanese pronunciation, the line should read *namu amida butsu*. It seems that Iratsume's pronunciation somewhat imitates the Chinese transliteration of Amitābha Buddha, *amituo fo*, which is attributed to Fazhao (Fa-chao; died ca. 820). The following translation is Angles', 126.
- <sup>59</sup> Orikuchi, "Shisha no sho," *Orikuchi Shibobu zenshū* 27, 157–162. Through the voice of an old female storyteller Tagima no Kataribe no omuna, Fujiwara Nanke no Iratsume learns the tragic past of Shigatsuhiko (Prince Ōtsu). His status as a quasi-crown prince in Emperor Tenmu's court and excellence in letters are commensurate with the record in *Nihon shoki* (720). The postmortem attachment to Mimimo no Toji, a younger sister of the minister Fujiwara no Fuhito, is Orikuchi's fictional episode.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.
- <sup>61</sup> Orikuchi, trans. Angles, 128.
- <sup>62</sup> Amitābha Buddha's promise of salvation for all sentient beings in Pure Land is preached in the *Three Pure Land Sūtras* that include the *Daimuryōju-kyō* (The Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha-sūtra*, Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life), the *Amida-kyō* (The Smaller *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha-sūtra*), and the *Kanmuryōju-kyō* (Sutra of the meditation on the Buddha of immeasurable life). See Porcu, 14.
- <sup>63</sup> Orikuchi, trans. Angles, 140.
- <sup>64</sup> Asada Takashi. "Orikuchi Shinobu 'Shisha no sho' nōto: 'konjiki no kami no yutaka ni tarekaku katahada' ni tsuite" ["A Note on Orikuchi Shinobu's *The Book of the Dead*: Regarding 'a shoulder covered by abundant golden hair'"], *Naradaigaku kiyō* 18 (1990): 30–31.
- <sup>65</sup> Orikuchi, trans. Angles, 128.
- <sup>66</sup> Hayakawa Yoshie. "Hyōryū-suru kami: Orikuchi Shinobu 'Shisha no sho' ni okeru 'marebito' zō [Drifting gods: The image of marebito in Orikuchi Shinobu's *Shisha no sho*], *Shōwa bungaku kenkyū* 56.3 (2003): 57.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

- <sup>70</sup> Orikuchi, “Shisha no sho,” *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* 27, 247.
- <sup>71</sup> *Kokon chomonjū shū jōkan*, 28.
- <sup>72</sup> Orikuchi, “Shisha no sho,” *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* 27, 254.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid. Here, I attempt to preserve the nuance of the original with my translation. On the other hand, Angles’ translation gives clarity that may be helpful for English-speaking readers: “The picture the maiden had painted upon the robe for the man in her vision had become a mandala. Even so, the only figure she had depicted in the center was the man who had appeared to her in her vision.”
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid. Here again, I venture to use my translation to retain Orikuchi’s original word *hakuchūmu* (daydream) more faithfully, while Angles’ translation reads: “There are times when multiple people experience the same vision at the same time; sometimes even during the middle of the day.” For this passage in the final paragraph, see Orikuchi, trans. Angles, 158.
- <sup>75</sup> The detached tone of the narrative does not mention her fate after completing the fabric. The third-person narrator entirely discards her arrival in the Pure Land, which was imagined by people as early as in the beginning of the Nara period as “dazzlingly beautiful ideal world.” Higo Kazuo, “Jōdo shisō juyō no rekishi-teki kibān” [Historical Foundations of the Reception of the Philosophy of the Pure Land], in *Nihon bunka to Jōdokyō ronkō*, ed. Inoue Sadanobu Hakase kiju kinenkai (Takaishi, Osaka: Inoue Sadanobu Hakase kiju kinenkai shuppanbu, 1974), 402. Without mentioning Iratsume’s fate being the same as the case of Princess Chūjō, Orikuchi’s “Shisha no sho” presents the heroine’s labor as a worldly achievement and so as to secularize her presence.
- <sup>76</sup> Orikuchi, “Shisha no sho,” *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* 27, 254. Angles’ translation does not render the euphemism of Iratsume’s tear: “There was a special brightness in her countenance, although there was no way for anyone to know exactly what it meant.” 158. Here, I rather retain the original words, *hosoku tsutau mono* (literally, “the thing thinly streaming down”), as a key to read her emotive outburst for the sense of accomplishment and affection for the nobleman.
- <sup>77</sup> The text of “Shisha no sho” employs the illustrations of *raigō* over mountain ridges preserved at Konkaikōmyōji in Kyoto (p. 145), the Kyoto National Museum (p. 177), Zenrinji in Kyoto (p. 219), and with the Kawasaki Family (p. 251). All of them are also included in Ōgushi Sumio’s *Raigō geijutsu*, the book with which Orikuchi was deeply fascinated. See Ōgushi Sumio. *Raigō geijutsu* [The art of the advent of Amitābha Buddha] (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1983).
- <sup>78</sup> According to Ōgushi, the pictorial pattern of *raigō* over mountains (*yamagoshi no amida-zō*) was established in relation to the philosophical invocation of Amitābha Buddha propagated by Priest Eshin (Genshin) (942–1017) of the

Tendai School. Eshin's meditation relied on the esoteric school's technique and thereby imagined the moon as Amitābha Buddha (p. 79). In Ōgushi's analysis, the pictorial pattern is typical of Japan, which reflects "the aesthetic-religious life of the Fujiwara period" and "love for nature" (p. 83).

- <sup>79</sup> Orikuchi, "Yamagoshi," 16.
- <sup>80</sup> Lobetti, Tullio. "Two Becomes One: The Meaning and the Usage of 'Syncretism,' in Religious Studies." Trans. Ōuchi Fumi. *Rethinking "Syncretism" in Japanese Religion*, eds. Lucia Dolce and Mitsuhashi Tadashi (Tokyo: Bensei, 2013), 126.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 130–131.
- <sup>82</sup> Ōgushi, 9.
- <sup>83</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 293.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 293–294. Harootunian states that Orikuchi, together with Yanagita Kunio, identified the ancestors with national deities, and therein contributed to form a communitarian discourse. He reminds that during the interwar period, the native ethnological attempt of preserving the past life of the folk helped build social solidarity and promoted the communal body into an ideology of the collective subject. Orikuchi in particular contributed to this tendency by shedding light on the circularity of "the rituals of the archaic community beseeching the gods for good fortune would return the folk back to communal life." See the discussion on Orikuchi, 295.
- <sup>85</sup> Orikuchi, "Yamagoshi," 25–26. Regarding the point, Orikuchi states that the word "Taima" signifies an old mountain in the *shichigon risshi* (a poem of eight lines that consist of seven Chinese characters), which is added to the image of Amitābha Buddha owned by Konkaikōmyōji temple in Kyoto. The word then appraises the foot of Mt. Futakami as it used to be considered the local equivalence to the Pure Land.
- <sup>86</sup> Kamui Fumiaki, "Nissōkan ni okeru seimei shisō" [Thoughts on life in the philosophy of contemplating on the setting sun], in *Jōdogaku Bukkyō rongi* (Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 2004), 583.
- <sup>87</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 122. Italics are in the original text.
- <sup>88</sup> Orikuchi, "Shisha no sho," *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* 27, 177.
- <sup>89</sup> Isozaki Arata, a dialogue between Isozaki Arata and Fukuya Kazuya. "Taimadera to 'Shisha no sho,'" *Ronza* 2.81 (2002): 181.
- <sup>90</sup> Kamui, 580.



<sup>91</sup> Orikuchi's "Yamagoshi no Amidazō no gain" touches upon women's popular tradition of exploring fields while following the moving sun on days of vernal and autumn equinox, 23–24. It is called *hi no tomo*, which translates "the sun's company," 32. Some women used to follow the sun, traveling up the mountains and coasts and return home at night. This daytrip was considered women's ascetic practice of *gyō* as he explains in the essay, 23.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 23–24.

<sup>93</sup> Judith M. Snodgrass, *Presenting Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 115.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

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