

# GPJ

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON JAPAN

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## Scope

“Global Perspectives on Japan” focuses on developing a global perspective on the study of Japan and Asia. The journal promotes innovative, interdisciplinary, inter-regional and transnational approaches to Japanese Studies.

The journal aims to be a venue for scholarship in E.M.E.A. region with a special focus on Turkey and neighboring regions. It especially encourages scholars from the Middle East, Balkans, Central Asia and the Mediterranean but also welcomes scholars from other parts of the world.

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# Japanese Sōtō Zen Monastery as a Worldly Institution\*

Merve Susuz Aygöl

(Amasya University)

## Introduction

Buddhist tradition defines the monastery as an institution apart from the secular world. Ideally, the Buddhist monastery is seen as a kind of transcendent and sacred place consisting of monks who adopt an entirely new way of life, leaving all worldly desires and pursuits outside the monastery gate. In practice, however, since its establishment, the Buddhist monastery has not been a purely religious institution that has withdrawn from all kinds of worldly pursuits. Contrary, in addition to their religious function, Buddhist monasteries have always had economic, political, artistic, and social functions too in society. The power and charisma of the monastery as a religious authority gave it a place and effectiveness in the state, art, economy, and society. This situation has created an extremely delicate balance between the monastery and secular authorities. While benefiting from secular authorities for its own existence, the monastery has been open to being used as a propaganda tool by them. Thus, the monastery incorporated worldly pursuits into its structure and established relationships with secular authorities that would transform its transcendent identity. The history of Buddhism contains many examples that worldly pursuits and relationships with the secular world corrupted the monastery's transcendent religious identity.

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\* This article is based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation titled: "Monasticism and Lay Religiosity in Medieval Sōtō Zen Buddhism".

Taking into consideration the multifaceted position of the monastic institution, monks who live in that monasteries as well should not be thought of as people who are completely apart from worldly life and meditate from morning to evening. First of all, the different functions that the monastery plays in society make the monks fulfill these functions. And this caused the monks to exist in the secular world as figures who were involved with politics, economy, art, and society as well as religious duties. In addition, monks could not completely be free from worldly life because of their individual wishes and desires. One of the most obvious examples of this is the monks who break the monastic rules and secretly marry and have children. Therefore, whatever the ideal, in practice monks are not superhuman figures who abandoned the worldly life completely behind and gave all their strength and energies to religious life. On the contrary, monks returned to the secular world which they had to leave in various ways because of institutional requirements and individual desires. Just as the monastery does not remain a purely religious institution but took its place in secular life with various functions.

The monastery takes place in a secular world with certain functions and the monks return to the worldly life they left in various ways as possible with new readings and interpretations. The monastery legitimized functions such as having and managing economic properties, performing rituals on behalf of the state and the emperor, and hosting artistic activities, by including them in the domain of its religious identity with new readings and interpretations. Likewise, the monks who managed the properties of the monastery were involved in the arts and performed rituals on behalf of the emperor, and the state accepted these duties as religious duties and performed them on the basis of this legitimisation. Secular activities were included in the domain of the monastery by taking on a religious guise with new interpretations and readings. The actions and desires of the secular world were ritualized with detailed procedure rules and took their place in the monastic routine.

The medieval Sōtō Zen school is one of the many examples of such transformations that worldly pursuits caused in the monastic institution and monk profile. Founded by Dōgen on an ascetic monastic life, the school began to spread to large masses with Keizan, the second important name of the

Sōtō tradition.<sup>1</sup> The policy of public propagation adopted by Keizan made worldly pursuits a part of the monastic routine, and as a result, the monks began to have a presence in worldly areas as well. Sōtō monasteries, where Keizan Shingi, the text of the monastic rules written by Keizan, was practiced, were institutions where economic, political, social, and artistic activities were performed in addition to religious rituals. The monks who were residents of these institutions also took on new identities in addition to their religious identity or expanded their religious identity to include worldly interests and occupations.

### **1. Economic Aspect of the Monastery**

In its early periods, the Buddhist monastery entirely depended on the financial and material support of those outside the monastery, i.e. laity. Everything from the construction of the monastery to the daily meals of the monks was offered to the monks by the laity as a donation. As Buddhism spread to other countries, this situation changed. In China and Japan, the monastery has been an economically autonomous entity with its own property. Monasteries, which accumulated a certain amount of wealth with individual donations or donations made by the state, became able to meet their own needs thanks to this wealth. Under the influence of Confucianist criticisms, Ch'an (Zen in Japan) monasteries have also had to ensure economic self-sufficiency since their establishment.<sup>2</sup> Ch'an monasteries owned large lands and economic wealth and this wealth was managed by monks. Chanyuan, the text of the monastic rules which was widely practised in Chinese Ch'an monasteries, states that the monastery has assets such as agricultural land, mills, various agricultural tools, and officials such as mill masters, gardeners, and agricultural field masters are appointed among the monks to manage these assets. In the monastic order designed by Chanyuan, monks also collect money walking from street to street, and money is distributed to monks in

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1 Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History Japan* (Indiana: World Wisdom, 2005), pp. 138-142, Kenji Matsuo, *A History of Japan* (UK: Global Oriental, 2007), p. 197.

2 Tso Sze-Bong, *The Transformation of Buddhist Vinaya in China*, Australian National University, 1982 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis), pp. 200-205.

various ceremonies.<sup>3</sup> All these show that Ch'an monasteries had an economic aspect and the monks were also involved in economic activities.

Japanese Zen tradition has had similar practices in terms of the economic aspect of the monastery. Medieval Zen monasteries are known for their large possessions and wealth. The main source of the Zen monastic economy and wealth was their own land, as in the Ch'an monasteries. In addition, the income from festivals and ceremonies, and donations made by the emperor, nobles, and warrior class for the construction and restoration of monasteries, have supported the economy of the monastery. Also, in the fifteenth century, it has become to be visible the monks were active in trade.<sup>4</sup>

Gozan monasteries of Rinzai Zen schools established in the cities had rich wealth, large lands and, tax income correlatively to their fame, prestige, and power. These monasteries have acquired patrons from the imperial family, shogunate, and noble families and have lived in prosperity on the generous donations of their patrons.<sup>5</sup> Sōtō monasteries, on the other hand, could not get patrons from the imperial family and shogunate so they could not hold on in the cities and prospered in the countryside from the very beginning. Farmers and local military rulers were the most important patrons of the Sōtō monasteries established in the countryside. In addition, the villagers also supported the Sōtō monasteries with their donations.<sup>6</sup>

In Dōgen, the monastic institution appears as an economically self-sustaining structure. The monastic economy is the responsibility of monastic officials; these officials manage the monastery's resources to meet the monks' needs. For example, monastic officials provide the necessary materials to prepare the meals to the head chef and he prepares the meals carefully and without wasting any of them. It is also mentioned that the money required to prepare the food is given to the head chef and that he buys the necessary tools and equipment.<sup>7</sup>

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3 Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of Chanyuan Qinggui* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), pp. 126, 155, 164, 194, 196, 206.

4 Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains; The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 254-255.

5 Collcutt, *Five Mountains; The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan*, pp. 253-254.

6 Martin Collcutt, "Zen and the Gozan", *The Cambridge History of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), vol. III, pp. 631-632.

7 Dōgen, *Dōgen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community A Translation of Eihei Shingi* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 34-37, 46.

Dōgen also mentions that the monasteries have various economic assets. Fields, gardens, mills, workshops, shops, horse carts, animal stables, and boats are some of them. The monks are appointed to manage all the property belonging to the monastery. One of the most important monastic officials, the *shissui* in charge of maintenance and repair is often outside the monastery to oversee and manage these monastic assets. He visits the monastery's assets and controls whether the workers under him are fulfilling their duties correctly. Planting seeds in the fields and cutting wood for the monastery is also done under the supervision of the *shissui*. In addition to these, any repair work in the monastery is also the responsibility of the *shissui*. And protecting the monastery from thieves is also the responsibility of this official.<sup>8</sup> Another monk appointed as one of the monastic officials is responsible for arranging and overseeing the monastery's annual budget. He lends and borrows money when necessary, maintains the monastery's stock of money and grain, and arranges food and supplies for annual ceremonies. There are also assistant monks working under these officials.<sup>9</sup>

Dōgen advises monks and monastic officials not to pursue worldly interests. He also defines the donations of people and the patronage of kings and nobles as worldly interests.<sup>10</sup> But, there are also descriptions of donations made by the people from outside the monastery in Dōgen. It is mentioned that people outside of the monastery donate to the monastery for the construction of buildings. The donor must have genuine faith. The head administrator, in consultation with the head monk, investigates whether the donor has genuine faith and the right perspective, if he is convinced that he has, he accepts the donation, otherwise, he must reject it.<sup>11</sup> In addition, various donations are made to the monastery as foods, money for foods or money to be distributed to monks.<sup>12</sup> These donations made by the laity should be carefully preserved and distributed or spent in accordance with the relevant procedure. For example, coins left in front of the Manjushri statue in the monks' hall should be used to purchase incense, lanterns, and supplies

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8 Dōgen, *Eihei Shingi*, pp. 34, 167, 179-181.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153, 155.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 159.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 161.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 88-89.

for offerings. And the food donations should be divided equally among all the monks in the monastery.<sup>13</sup>

In the monastic system described in Keizan Shingi as well, the monastery has an economic aspect and in connection with this economic aspect, the monks are also engaged in economic pursuits. Based on the text, it can be said that the main economic resources of the monasteries where these monastic rules are practiced are their lands and donations made by the laity. At the end of the year, sutras are read and prayers are recited on behalf of the insects in the agricultural fields and rice fields of the monastery. In addition, religious people who donate rice fields to the monastery are also one of the subjects of prayers. This shows that the monastery had its own rice fields and agricultural fields.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the laity and the patrons of the monastery support the monastery by making donations of various kinds from the construction of buildings to food. The most common type of donation is a donation made by a layman or laywoman to a monastery to hold a ritual on his/her behalf. There are also types of donations, such as donating breakfast and lunch, sponsoring festive meals during the summer retreat, sponsoring the construction of buildings, gifting money to monks, donating lunch to monks at a family memorial service, and giving alms. In addition, the fact that the laity who donate to monasteries are the subject of almost all prayers made after each ritual in the monastic routine indicates that donations made by laity have an important place in the monastic economy.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the practice of a special funeral procedure for distinguished donors supports this situation.<sup>16</sup>

Another point that sheds light on the economic aspect of the monastery is the monks who are involved in economic pursuits. First of all, it should be mentioned that the monks who were appointed to positions such as chief administrator, chief cook, and *shissui* who are responsible for maintenance and repair works, also managed the affairs related to the monastic economy in addition to other duties. These official monks manage the economy of the monastery and ensure that all the inhabitants of the monastery benefit equally

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13 Ibid., p. 168,171.

14 Keizan, *Zen Master Keizan's Monastic Regulations* (USA: North American Institute of Zen and Buddhist Studies, 1994), pp. 195, 200, 351-352.

15 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 72, 74-75,81, 87-88, 195, 299, 89-90, 134, 178, 250, 283, 286, 317, 359, 362.

16 Ibid., p. 92.

from all donations made to the monastery.<sup>17</sup> Giving such duties to the monks for a certain period of time and appointing a new one after the monk who has completed his duty shows that many monks living in the monastery are busy with this kind of work even for a certain period of time.<sup>18</sup> In addition, for all monks living in the monastery, it is obligatory to participate to collective works such as cleaning and construction, which are called *fushin* 普.<sup>19</sup> Keizan states that many monks helped in the construction of the Yōkōji monastery.<sup>20</sup> Also, due to the warming weather, from the first of June, two or four novice monks are assigned to cool the monks' hall by using fans.<sup>21</sup>

Regarding the economic aspect of the monastery and the economic activities of the monks, finally, it should be mentioned that according to Keizan Shingi, it is possible for the monks to have assets with material value. While Buddhist tradition prohibits Buddhist monks from even touching money, the monks of Keizan Shingi are encouraged to spend their money on behalf of certain activities. On the day of Nirvana, in rituals commemorating the day in which Buddha attained enlightenment, and on the day of remembrance of Bodhidharma they contribute money in proportion to their ability to prepare offerings. At the end of the year, donations are collected from the monks.<sup>22</sup> In addition, after the deceased monks, their tangible assets are sold to other monks by auction method within the framework of the ritual procedure. At the beginning and at the end of this ritual, the names of the Buddha are chanted, and the merits earned from chanting and selling are sent to the dead.<sup>23</sup> Finally, it should be noted that after the ritual of chanting Buddha's names at the beginning and end of the summer retreat, after the festival of hungry ghosts, after sutra readings and prayers for all beings at the end of the year, and at the last evening of the year, silver coins are burned in thanksgiving in the name of Naga and Deva, the patron deities of the dharma.<sup>24</sup>

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17 Ibid., pp. 87-88, 205.

18 Ibid., pp. 321-323.

19 Ibid., pp. 297, 299, 329; Griffith Foulk, "普請", *Dijital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%99%AE%E8%AB%8B> (01.12.2020).

20 Keizan, "Tōkokuki", *Religions of Japan in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 504.

21 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, p. 300.

22 Ibid., pp. 205, 338, 346, 353.

23 Ibid., pp. 111-113, 119-120.

24 Ibid., pp. 261, 304, 314-315, 356, 361.



## 2. Political Aspect of the Monastery

The monastery, which is depicted in the earliest Buddhist monastic rules *Vinaya*, is an independent institution free from secular authorities. But in reality, the situation has not developed in that way; throughout the history of Buddhism, the monastery and the state have established relationships in various ways. In many countries where Buddhism exists, Buddhist monasteries were controlled by kings and emperors. The support of the kings and emperors, who were the head of the country, on the one hand, paved the way for the state to intervene in the interior affairs of the monastery and to take control of the monastery; on the other hand, for the monastery to intervene in state affairs. The state took the support of the monastery, claiming that it carried out many activities, including war, in the name of Buddhism, and the monastery turned a blind eye to this situation in order to gain both financial and political power. In the history of Sri Lanka, Japanese and Tibetan Buddhism, wars in which monasteries and monks supported the state in the name of Buddhism are examples of this situation.<sup>25</sup>

One of the main problems Buddhism faced when it came to China was the relationship between the monastery and the political authority. In Buddhism, it is argued that because the Buddhist monk renounced worldly life and preoccupations, he should not pay homage to the emperor who is the secular authority. But Confucianists opposed the desire of the Buddhist monastery to be independent of the political authorities, stating that everyone living on its territory was the subject of the emperor. This situation caused tension between the Buddhist monastery and the Confucianist state that came to light from time to time.<sup>26</sup> This tension between the monastery and the state resulted in the monastery's recognition of state authority as a result of the severe criticisms of Confucianism and the aim of Buddhism to adapt to Chinese society. The Buddhist monk, like other citizens, became a subject of the emperor, and the monastery lost its independence and turned into a Chinese religious institution within the jurisdiction of the empire.<sup>27</sup>

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25 Rubert Gethin, *The Foundation of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 100-101.

26 Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China the Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 256.

27 Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 234.

It is seen that the state in China has followed various policies to keep the monastic institution under control. Some of these policies were the obligation to register with the state and obtain a certificate for those who want to become monks, prohibiting monks from traveling without obtaining permission from the state, administering the election of the chief monk, rewarding the monks, appointing officials from among the monks to ensure communication between the state and the monastery, and being subject to the secular law in addition to the monastic law for monastics.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the monastery has always engaged in activities and rituals aimed at the longevity of the state and the emperor. *Chanyuan* states praying for the long life of the emperor is among the duties of the chief monk,<sup>29</sup> and prayers are made for the emperor in the days of chanting.<sup>30</sup> Eisai counts the activities like reciting various sutras and praying for the emperor's longevity every day for a month up to the emperor's birthday; the emperor's birthday celebrations; sermons and prayers are held on the first day of each month for the emperor on the throne, on the fifteenth day for the previous one, and the commemoration of the previous emperor is counted among the activities performed in Ch'an monasteries.<sup>31</sup>

Similar to its status in China, from the very beginning Buddhism and monasteries have been under the control of the political authority in Japan. The twenty-eight-article *Sōniryō* law enacted by the state to control the strengthening monastic institution and the increasing number of monks and nuns during the Nara period is just one of the clearest examples of this.<sup>32</sup> However, unlike in China, Buddhism in Japan has been the state religion from the beginning.<sup>33</sup> In this context, strong state-affiliated monastic chains covering all states were created,<sup>34</sup> state-affiliated monk appointment platforms

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28 Yifa, *Chanyuan Qinggui*, pp. 74-75; Bong, pp. 280-281; Yifa, *Chanyuan Qinggui*, pp. 118, 153.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

31 Griffith Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism", *Religion and Society in Tang and Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), p. 178; Eisai, "A Treatise on Letting Zen Flourish", *Zen Texts* (USA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2005), pp. 172-173.

32 Bkz. Joan Piggott, *The Yōrō Ritsuryō Sōniryō*.

33 Joseph M. Kitagawa, "The Budist Transformation in Japan", *History of Religions*, vol. 4, no. 2, Winter 1965, p. 325.

34 Mikael S. Adolphson, "Institutional Diversity and Religious Integration: The Establishment of Temple Networks in the Heian Age", *Heian Japan, Center and Peripheries* (Honolulu: University of

were established, and monks appointed on these platforms were accepted as officials of the state.<sup>35</sup>

In the context of their close relations with the state, monasteries accepted performing rituals for the sake of the state and the emperor as their *raison d'être*.<sup>36</sup> The state also met the financial needs of the monasteries, sponsored the construction of monasteries, made various donations to monasteries and monks, especially agricultural areas, and exempted the lands belonging to the monasteries from taxation.<sup>37</sup> However, the relationship between the monastery and the state has not always stayed in this balance, and there were periods when peace broke down and violence broke out. The number of armed monks, who started to emerge in the eighth century, reached thousands in the Heian period, and armed monk gangs affiliated with the monasteries became an important force. Thousands of armed monks marched repeatedly to the capital city of Kyoto during the Heian period to get their wishes accepted by the state or to change the regulations they were not happy with. The monasteries used their armed power as a party in the internal conflicts of the state and in the discussions among themselves.<sup>38</sup>

The shogunates of the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, which were disturbed by the armed Buddhist schools of the previous periods, made the necessary arrangements so that the Zen school, which started to gain power, would not suffer a similar fate. In order to prevent situations such as political turmoil caused by the armed Buddhist schools and the separation of monasteries from their original goals, Zen monasteries were organized as a state-affiliated monastic system. In addition, to prevent the monks

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Hawaii Press, 2007), pp. 219-220, Akamatsu Toshihide and Philip Yampolsky, "Muromachi Zen and the Gozan System", *Japan in the Muromachi Age* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley, 1977), pp. 314-316.

35 Matsuo, pp. 59-60.

36 Sonada Kōyū, "Early Buda Worship", *The Cambridge History of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), vol. I, p. 397; Stanley Weinstein, "Aristocratic Buddhism", *The Cambridge History of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), vol. II, pp. 469-470; Allan G. Grapard, "Religious Practices", *The Cambridge History of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), vol. II, pp. 533-536, 538-539.

37 Weinstein, "Aristocratic Buddhism", pp. 449-450, 501, 505; G. Cameron Hurst, "Insei", *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. II, pp. 606, 612, 613; Ōyama Kyōhei, "Medieval Shōen", *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. III, p. 105.

38 Weinstein, "Aristocratic Buddhism", s. 494, 496; Takeuchi Rizō, "The Rise of the Warriors", *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. II, pp. 682-683, 697, 703, 706.

from arming, the monastic population from growing excessively, and the monasteries from living in luxury, and to ensure that the monastic rules are followed, an official selected from the shogunate checked the monasteries to see whether they comply with these prohibitions. The shogunate also tried to keep the Zen monasteries under control by placing the sons of warrior-class families in monasteries and rising in their ranks. Although there were exceptions, the Shogunate's measures worked, and Zen did not become an armed force like the previous schools.<sup>39</sup>

The repercussions of the political aspect of the monastery and the reflections of the relationship between the monastery and the state are clearly seen in the texts of the monastery rules. From the texts he wrote on the monastic rules, it is understood that Dōgen regarded the emperor as a respected supreme figure and a secular authority. Dōgen states that monastic food and food ingredients are as valuable as the food served to the emperor and deserve respect.<sup>40</sup> He considers the need for a monastery to be run by an abbot in line with the need for a country to be run by an emperor.<sup>41</sup>

In *Shobogenzo*, Dōgen mentions the tradition of reciting sutras for a month at the emperor's birthday celebrations.<sup>42</sup> He also sees some emperors, such as the Yellow Emperor, as excellent examples for the world, and states that some of the Chinese emperors wore monastic robes and followed bodhisattva precepts, supported and respected monks and Buddhism.<sup>43</sup> However, Dōgen accepts monks and Zen masters superior than the worldly authorities who have all kinds of power, and states that monks who have renounced the worldly life should not bow down to the emperor who is the secular authority.<sup>44</sup> But, the fact that Dōgen considers the responsibility of the rector of the monastery to inform the state officials when a monk dies and to deliver the official documents such as the appointment document of the deceased monk to the state officials within the determined official time

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39 Collcutt, "Zen and the Gozan", pp. 599-600, 606-608, 610.

40 Dōgen, *Eihei Shingi*, p. 34, 173.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

42 Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō The True Dharma-Eye Treasury* (USA: BDK America, 2007) vol. 1, p. 351.

43 *Ibid.* (USA: BDK America, 2008), vol. ii. pp. 174-175; Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. 1, pp. 175-176; Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō The True Dharma-Eye Treasury* (USA: BDK America, 2008), vol. iii, p. 31.

44 Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō The True Dharma-Eye Treasury* (USA: BDK America, 2008), vol. iv, pp. 17, 271, 275.

points to the state's control over the monastery.<sup>45</sup> It is understood from this that the state keeps under control the people who enter the monastery and leave the monastery through official documents, and the monastery officials are assigned to act in accordance with the rules set by the state.

Keizan shingi, on the other hand, has more detailed explanations about the relationship between the state and the monastery. First of all, in Keizan Shingi, emperors and kings are not considered important only as a secular authorities. As rulers, kings and emperors also have a spiritual significance. It is believed that the spread of the power and virtue of the empire brings balance to the universe and affects the rain, the wind, and the fertile harvest of the lands. The empire also helps to shine Buddha's sun brighter.<sup>46</sup> The empire and the rulership are such important and respected positions that Buddha is mentioned as the enlightened ruler, the universal ruler of enlightenment,<sup>47</sup> it is talked about angels serving pious princes and prayed to these angels,<sup>48</sup> hymns are recited to King Surangama who is yearning for the goal of ultimate enlightenment,<sup>49</sup> it is mentioned in one parable that a poor old woman became queen as a reward for a small alms given to the arhats.<sup>50</sup> But not all kings are good; Keizan Shingi states that King Pusyamitra, who he calls the evil king, destroyed pagodas built by King Asoka, burned sutras, and killed monks and nuns.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, according to Keizan Shingi, rulers have an important position in terms of the survival of the Buddhist teaching as well as being a secular authority, and they are considered as good or bad depending on whether they support the Buddhist teaching or not. In parallel with the obligation of monasteries and monks to support the longevity of the state, the emperor and rulers must also support Buddhist teaching.

In connection with the importance it gives to the empire and the emperor, Keizan Shingi reserves an important place for the rituals for the longevity of the emperor and the state in its monastic routine. Moreover, according to Keizan Shingi, the most important activities performed in monasteries are

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45 Dōgen, *Eihei Shingi*, p. 169.

46 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 194, 200-201.

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 304, 311, 318.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 282.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 248.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 175.

51 *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

those performed for the sake of the longevity of the empire, the welfare of the state, and Buddhism. So, all the inhabitants of the monastery must participate fully in these rituals.<sup>52</sup> During the first three days of the new year, the head monk, monastery officials, and all monks gather in the Buddha hall to perform rituals, sutras are read and festivals are held, and prayers are offered for the emperor and the new year. At the beginning and end of the rituals performed for three days, incense is offered and prostration is performed. Prayers and good wishes are made for the long life of the emperor and for the empire to continue its existence forever by enduring all kinds of conditions. Then, the merits earned from the sutras recited for three days are dedicated to Amaterasu<sup>53</sup> who is believed to be the founding goddess of Japan, Tenshō Daijin 天照大 in the text, the seven generation gods of the sky and the five generations of the earth who are believed to rule the Japanese lands until the first human emperor, ninety-six human emperor in Japan's past, the emperor of the time, the patron deities who guard the imperial capital, the imperial administration in the provinces, and various divine and human beings from the guardian spirits protecting the monastery to the laity.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the activities at the beginning of the year, the rituals performed on behalf of the emperor and the empire also have an important place in the monthly routine of the monastery. On the first and fifteenth days of each month, sutra reading rituals are held for the sake of the emperor's perpetuity. These rituals, known as shukushin-fugin 祝聖諷經 in Japanese, are performed in the Buddha hall, where monks gather in after breakfast on specified days to pray and read sutras to the emperor of the time. The tablet on which the name of the current emperor is written is placed on the altar where the statues of Buddha and two other holy figures are found. After the abbot offers incense and prostrates, the monks read the sutras under the leadership of the rector. The texts read in these rituals are Daiemman-ju and Shōsai-ju, which are part of the esoteric sutras. Reading these sutras is believed to protect the person from all kinds of natural disasters and evil

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52 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, p. 202.

53 Sun Goddess Amaterasu that is the main goddess of Shinto tradition is believed to create Japan islands and is traced Japanese Emperor line to her. Amaterasu's grandchild Jimmu is accepted as first emperor of Japan. (Kenneth Henshall, *Historical Dictionary of Japan to 1945* (UK: Scarecrow Press, 2014), pp. 26-27.)

54 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 192-202.

spirits. While the sutras are recited, the abbot lights incense and decorates the altar to reflect the seriousness and importance of the event.<sup>55</sup> The merit earned after reading the sutra is dedicated to the health and longevity of the emperor.<sup>56</sup>

Besides the rituals performed for the emperor, after various rituals performed in the monastery such as upavasa and chanting the names of Buddha as well, prayers are said for the longevity of the emperor and the empire. In the Upavasa ritual, civil and military government officials and people from all layers of society also participated in the prayer, and all its subjects are asked to live in peace and prosperity under the virtuous reign of the emperor.<sup>57</sup> It is also worth mentioning the opening ceremony of the Dharma hall of the Yōkōji monastery, is related to the respect and veneration towards the emperor in Keizan. At the beginning of this ceremony, Keizan dedicated an incense to the emperor and prayed for the emperor's reign and longevity.<sup>58</sup> Another practice related to state officials points to the monastery's respect for the empire. Unlike ordinary donors, when senior government officials donate to the monastery, subjecting to the same procedure as monks, they are seated on high platforms in the hall reserved for the chief monk and senior monks.<sup>59</sup>

Another point that sheds light on the relationship of the monastery with the state in Keizan Shingi is the official documents requested from the monks who applied to the monastery for residence. The person who wants to become a monk in China and Japan first gets permission from the state religious affairs office, and then he is appointed as a monk in accordance with the necessary procedure in one of the state-related monk ordination platforms. The permission document from the state (*dochou* 度牒) and the document showing that he was appointed as a monk (*kaichou* 戒牒) are accepted as official documents showing that the person in question is a monk and therefore exempts from taxation and military service.<sup>60</sup> Keizan Shingi

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55 Ibid., pp. 33-36, 63.

56 Ibid., pp. 69-70.

57 Ibid., pp. 76, 87, 133.

58 Keizan, "Tōkokuki", pp. 504-510.

59 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 87-89.

60 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, p. 212; Charles Müller, "度牒", *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?5e.xml+id\(%27b5ea6-7252%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?5e.xml+id(%27b5ea6-7252%27));"戒牒" [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?5e.xml+id\(%27b5ea6-7252%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?5e.xml+id(%27b5ea6-7252%27))



states that the monks who want to reside in the monastery must have these documents obtained from the religious affairs office and only those who have them can be granted a residence permit in the monastery.<sup>61</sup> This situation enabled the establishment of a direct relationship between the monastery and the state and gave the state the opportunity to control the monastery population. More importantly, the necessity of obtaining permission from the secular authority for the person who wants to renounce the secular life and live a monastic life brings the monastic institution formed by the monks who renounced the worldly life under the umbrella of the secular authority. As a result, it can be said that by the reason of Keizan's respect and reverence for the empire and the emperor, the position he reserved for the emperor in the monastery's ritual routine, and the obligation of its inhabitants to obtain approval from the state, the monastery depicted in Keizan Shingi is a state-affiliated institution, and the inhabitants of this institution, monks, are state-approved officials.

### **3. The Social Aspect of the Monastery**

Buddhist monastery has had a social function in the society it is in, as well as their economic and political aspects. What is meant by the social aspect of the monastery is the relations of the monks living in the monastery with the outside world and the repercussion of these relations in the monastic order. From this point of view, in the context of the political and economic aspects of the monastery, the monks' involvement with economic occupations and politics and the rituals they performed for the emperor can also be discussed under the heading of the social aspect of the monastery. However, the main subject of this title is the relationship of the monastery with society from a more specific perspective. When it comes to the monastery, it is seen that the relationship that the monks establish with the society is mainly through their families and the laity who donate to the monastery. The relationship of the monks with the lay community is based on responding to their religious needs and requests, and it takes place mostly on the basis of the religious

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[www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?62.xml+id\(%27b6212-7252%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?62.xml+id(%27b6212-7252%27)) (09.12.2020)

61 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 212-213.



function of the monastery. Therefore, in this title, the family ties of the monks and their responsibilities towards their families will be discussed within the scope of the social aspect of the monastery.

In early Buddhism, the most important duty and responsibility of the monastery and the monks towards the society is to live without violating the monastic rules and thus to be worthy of the alms of the laity as a pure and sublime community, and as a “fruitful field of merit” to make possible to gain merits to those who donate to the monastery.<sup>62</sup> Another duty of monks towards society is to preach dharma to people when they demand it. Even during the rainy season when travel is prohibited, monks must heed the laity’s invitation to listen to the dharma.<sup>63</sup> In early Buddhism, it cannot be said that there was a certain practice in terms of the responsibilities of monks to their families. According to the traditional Buddhist narrative, after the Buddha left family life and attained enlightenment, he returned to his hometown to visit his family and relatives and accepted his son Rahula and his cousins as monks.<sup>64</sup> Vinaya informs that anyone wishing to join the monastery as a monk or nun must obtain the consent of their parents.<sup>65</sup> The Buddha states that the monk summoned by his sick mother should go to visit his mother for no more than seven days.<sup>66</sup> It is also known that those who lived a monastic life in the first period of Buddhism performed rituals on behalf of their families from time to time to donate the merits they earned.<sup>67</sup> Despite all this, Vinaya, who accepts leaving family life as a necessity, sees remembering family life and family members as a weakness,<sup>68</sup> and there is no basic ritual performed due to responsibilities towards the family in the early monastic routine.

When Buddhism came to China, it met a social structure that considers

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62 *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya Pitaka)* (London: Luzac & Company Ltd, 2004), vol. ii, pp. 44-45, 132-136, 194, 323, 348; *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya Pitaka)* (London: Luzac & Company Ltd, 1949), vol. 1, p. 266, 319; *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya Pitaka)* (London: Luzac & Company Ltd, 2004), vol. iii, p. 218; Gethin, pp. 102-103.

63 *Vinaya Pitaka*, vol. iv, pp. 186-189.

64 Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism from Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna* (USA: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), p. 33.

65 *Vinaya Pitaka*, vol. i, pp. 23-26.

66 *Vinaya Pitaka*, vol. iv, pp. 194-195.

67 Gregory Schopen, “Mahayana”, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (USA: Macmillan Reference, 2004), vol. ii, p. 36.

68 *Vinaya Pitaka*, vol. i, pp. 44-46.

the duties towards family as one of the most basic duties of a person and had to adopt the monastic institution formed by those who left their families to this social structure. For this reason, one of the fundamental transformations of Buddhism went through in Chinese society has been on the subject of the responsibilities of monks to their families. Confucianist doctrine, which emphasizes the responsibilities of individuals to the state, society, their families, and each other, has criticized the Buddhist monastic institution for undermining these relations. The Buddhist monks, who were forbidden to marry and have children as a requirement of monastic life, were accused of not fulfilling their duties and violating the principle of filial piety, as they could not ensure the continuation of their family lineage.<sup>69</sup> In response to these criticisms, a unique understanding of filial piety has developed in Chinese Buddhism, and it has been accepted that monks and nuns can earn merits on behalf of their families and even enable their families to be saved. In the same direction, a sutra ascribed to Buddha in Chinese Buddhism, which deals with filial piety, has emerged, and it states in this sutra that in return for the great sacrifices made by their families, especially their mothers, children should fulfill their duties towards their families by sending the merits they have earned by performing sutra copying and ullambana rituals.<sup>70</sup>

In Japanese Buddhism, the transformations of Chinese Buddhism were accepted as the norm; the monastery's relations with the society and the monks' relations with their families were also shaped mainly around the practices in Chinese Buddhism. Even though they left the family life and lived a monastic life, the monks pursued the purpose of fulfilling their filial duties in various ways as a requirement of the cult of filial piety. It is known that the practice of the sutra copying ritual has become widespread in the early periods of Buddhism in Japan in order for the family members who died to be born to a good position in their next life.<sup>71</sup> During the Heian period, many children from aristocratic families such as Jinzen became high-ranking monks

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69 Daniel K. Gardner, *Confucianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 16; Mario Poceski, "China", *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (USA: Macmillan Reference, 2004), vol. i, p. 140.

70 Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, p. 234; "The Sutra on the Profundity of Filial Love", *Apocryphal Scriptures* (USA: BDK America, 2005), pp. 123-124.

71 William E. Deal and Brian Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism* (UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), p. 59.

in Buddhist monasteries and considered it their primary duty to conduct rituals on behalf of their families and descendants.<sup>72</sup> In addition, it should be noted that the ōbon festival, which also existed in Chinese Buddhism, was a common practice in Japanese Buddhism, performed on behalf of all dead souls, especially the souls of families.<sup>73</sup>

It was also common in Japanese Buddhism that monasteries were built by nobles on behalf of their families, and noble families performed rituals for deceased family members in those monasteries. There was a common tradition among aristocratic families during the Nara period to invite monks to perform rituals for the welfare and protection of the family by converting part of their houses into monasteries or by building monasteries adjacent to their houses.<sup>74</sup> It is also known that Buddhist temples were built to perform rituals on behalf of deceased emperors and nobles.<sup>75</sup> Kenchoji monastery, one of the Zen monasteries of the Kamakura period, was built for the longevity of the emperor as well as for the souls of the deceased members of the Minamoto family.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, another Zen monastery, Sōkokuji, was built by Shogun Yoshimutsu in memory of his family.<sup>77</sup> The patrons of the Sōtō school also built temples on behalf of their families and sponsored various rituals in these temples for the welfare of their families and for the souls of the deceased ones.<sup>78</sup>

Dōgen, the founder of the Soto school, accepts the sangha as the Buddha's family and states that the monks in the Buddha's family, namely in the monastery, are closer to each other than their blood-related brothers. The family, brother, relative, teacher, and best friend of a person living monastic life are also those living in the monastery. For this reason, everyone should treat each other with mutual love and sympathy and pay attention to each other.<sup>79</sup> In other words, the real family of monks is not those outside the

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72 Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), pp. 192-194.

73 Charles Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 384.

74 Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, p. 56.

75 Eliot, p. 266.

76 Matsuo, pp. 90-91.

77 Eliot, p. 294.

78 Bodiford, "The Growth of the Sōtō Zen Tradition in Medieval Japan", Yale University, 1989 (Ph.D. thesis), pp. 135, 147-148, 174, 246.

79 Dōgen, *Eihei Shingi*, pp. 33, 109, 110.

monastery, but inside the monastery. One's biological parents only exist in this life for a short time between birth and death, whereas being a member of the Buddha's family is a privilege that will last forever.<sup>80</sup> According to Dōgen, leaving family life is the truth itself, and the person who leaves family life is the true son.<sup>81</sup> This point of view is also compatible with the basic principle of monastic life to abandon family life and worldly occupations. However, Dōgen as well mentions the tradition of donating money to Buddhist and Taoist monasteries in China to organize festivals on behalf of deceased family members.<sup>82</sup>

In *Denkoroku*, Keizan deals with the lives of the fifty-three patriarchs that make up the Sōtō Zen lineage in a semi-legendary way and states that all of the patriarchs renounce family life and live as monks.<sup>83</sup> To become a monk, it is necessary to get the approval of the parents,<sup>84</sup> but after one becomes a monk, he becomes the child of Buddha, so he must abandon worldly worries and occupations, and in this context, it is necessary to break his ties with his mother, father, and the state.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, it is believed that the determined pursuit of enlightenment by the monks and living a monastic life according to the rules would positively affect the salvation of their families. Keizan's account of the life of the thirty-eighth Zen patriarch Tōzan Ryōkai is one of the most striking examples of this understanding.

According to the narrative, the only hope of Tōzan's mother, whose husband and eldest son died and whose younger son was an unemployed vagabond, is his middle son, Tōzan. But Tōzan decides to live a monastic life, abandons his mother, and vows not to return to his village and family until he attains enlightenment. The mother, who lost her only hope, her son, starts begging to continue her life and searches everywhere for her son. When he finally learns of the monastery where his son is and comes to the monastery's door to see his son, Tōzan refuses to see his mother and locks himself in the abbot's room which his mother cannot enter. After his mother

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80 Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. i, p. 60.

81 Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. i, p. 274; Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. ii, p. 309.

82 Dōgen, *Eihei Shingi*, p. 160.

83 Keizan, *Denkōroku: The Record of the Transmission of the Light* (USA: Shasta Abbey, 2001), pp. 56, 61, 76, 87, 116, 122, 136, 153, 167, 181 cf.

84 Keizan, *Denkōroku*, pp. 92-93, 133.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

died in front of this door in regret and pain, Tozan, who went out, offers the rice that his mother collected by begging as breakfast to the monks to commemorate his mother and thus ensures that his mother goes to heaven. Due to this determined behavior on the path of enlightenment, Tōzan won a special reputation in tradition as well as ensuring that his mother went to heaven.<sup>86</sup> The narrative states that, like the Buddha, parents are one of the obstacles that must be “killed” on the path of enlightenment.<sup>87</sup>

Denkoroku’s narrative about the last patriarch Koun Ejō, a student of Dōgen, also sheds light on the ties of those who live a monastic life with their families. According to the narrative, the mother, who supports her son’s monastic career, wants to see her son for the last time as she lies on her deathbed. Ejō, who is forbidden to leave the monastery according to the monastic rules, does not go to visit his mother despite all the insistence of the residents of the monastery. He replies that the Buddha’s rules are superior than the community’s consensus, to the reasoning of his friends that this was his last chance to see his mother, and that the monks’ consensus allowed him to ignore the monastic rule and visit his mother. He states that acting according to his feelings and visiting his mother will result in violating the rules set by Buddha, which will result in disloyalty to his mother and result in a greater rule violation. He emphasizes that as someone who left family life and chose to become a monk, violating the monastic rules and visiting his mother would be a great evil against his mother and would cause her mother to be involved the wheel of rebirth again.<sup>88</sup> As it is understood, the fact that monks live a strict monastic life is a situation that affects their families positively. There is an assumption that if a monk loosens the monastic life and does not abide the rules, it will negatively affect the family. Even if the monastic rules instruct neglecting the family, this neglect positively affects the spiritual salvation of the family.

Along with the virtue of leaving family life and the narratives that monks should not compromise on monastic life for their families, it is seen that the monks maintain their family ties, even if at a minimum level, and perform rituals on behalf of their families in the monastic order organized by Keizan.

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86 *Ibid.*, p. 204, 205.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

88 *Ibid.*, pp. 292-297.

At this point, first of all, it is necessary to mention family relations of Keizan himself. Even though Keizan left his family at an early age and started a monastic life, it is difficult to say that Keizan left his family completely. His mother Ekan played an active role in Keizan's entire life. Keizan felt his mother's presence with him throughout his life and believed that he overcame many difficulties thanks to his mother's prayers and faith. She founded a nun monastery in memory of her mother and dedicated it to the salvation of all women. Another family member who has an important place in Keizan's life is his grandmother who raised him. Keizan continued his relationship with his grandmother while living a monastic life, as he did with his mother, and saw the female monk Sonin, one of his most important patrons and later one of his most important students, as the reincarnation of his grandmother. As a result, it is understood that Keizan never completely abandoned his family, and as a monk living a monastic life, he felt a strong devotion to his mother and grandmother.<sup>89</sup>

Monks who decided to live a monastic life in medieval Japan also developed similar relationships with their families. Although fathers were not usually mentioned, mothers occupied a central position in the lives of monks. Although maternal love is accepted as an obstacle that the monk must overcome on the way to enlightenment, the mother's salvation continued to exist in the minds and hearts of the monks as a strong desire.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, the presence of a document showing their family, place of birth and time among the documents requested from those who want to reside in the monastery is an indication that the monks did not completely break their relations with their families and hometowns.<sup>91</sup> In addition, the fact that in the greeting procedure performed at the beginning of the new year, there is a place for people from the same hometown to greet each other, the hometown of the monks who are allowed to reside in the monastery is also recorded, and the necessity of meeting and mingling with each other from the same place indicate that the monks maintain their hometown and townsman relations.<sup>92</sup>

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89 Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 34-39.

90 Faure, *Visions of Power*, pp. 35-37.

91 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, p. 212.

92 *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192, 213.

Keizan Shingi also gives place to the ritual of hungry ghosts, known as *obon*, associated with deceased family members in the annual ritual routine of the monastery. In the explanations about this ritual, it is mentioned that Buddha paid his debt to his mother by going to Tusita heaven and preaching dharma to her. It is stated that the Buddha's disciple, Maudgalyayana, heard the voice of his mother's suffering and performed the *ullambana* ritual, which is the origin of the hungry ghosts ritual, and saved her mother from the hungry ghost realm. However, since monks who live monastic life do not have spiritual powers like Maudgalyāyana, they cannot see what realm their families went to after they die, and they cannot be aware of whether they are suffering or not. For this reason, they donate the merits they have earned by reciting sutras and esoteric dharanis, chanting the names of Buddha, to all beings, especially to their families, with pain and sorrow for their families to whom they owe their present life. They believe that thanks to the sutras and chanting they read and the offerings they make, the beings in the lower realms get rid of their pain and become free.<sup>93</sup>

The inclusion of these narratives about the family and the rituals performed on behalf of the family in the monastic routine shows that the monks do not completely break their relations with their families, although they value and apply the principle of leaving the family life, which is the basis of monastic life. On the one hand, the monks accepted keeping a distance from their families within the framework of their devotion to monastic ideals as a great virtue that also benefited their families, on the other hand, they satisfied their human feelings by performing some rituals to pay off their debts to their parents.

#### **4. Monastery and Art**

Another aspect of Japanese Buddhist monasteries that should not be ignored is the relation between monastery and art. The time course of transferring Buddhism from China to Japan is far-reaching and includes many religious and secular elements. Those who transferred Buddhism to Japanese lands not only brought religious doctrines, rituals, and sacred texts to the country

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93 *Ibid.*, pp. 301-303, 312-314.



but also brought art techniques along with political and social elements.<sup>94</sup> When it comes to the Heian period, it is seen that various branches of art were developed in Buddhist monasteries and dozens of works were produced in these branches of art. A large number of paintings, and sculptures were produced especially for use in the rituals performed within the leading schools of the period, Shingon and Tendai.<sup>95</sup> Kamakura and Muromachi period Buddhist monasteries witnessed the development of these existing branches of art with the support of powerful patrons on the one hand, and the development of arts such as tea art, renga, Nō theater, landscape paintings and garden art with the influence of the interaction with China in the formation process of new schools, especially Zen on the other hand.<sup>96</sup> During the Middle Ages, these developments paved the way for monasteries belonging to all Buddhist schools in general, Zen monasteries in particular to host advanced art branches, and for art to have an important place in a monastic institution.

One of the most important points to be emphasized in the context of the monastery and art relation is the need and tradition to visualize important figures and doctrines for basically ritualistic purposes. Within the framework of this visualization trend and need, art branches such as painting and sculpture have developed and many works have been produced in these fields. Since the statues were used both in monastery architecture and rituals, they had a very important place in the monastery. Sakyamuni Buddha is the leading figure sculpted for use in monastic architecture and rituals. Amida Buddha worshiped in Pure Land school; in the case of Shingon and Tendai school, the gods of the esoteric pantheon; bodhisattvas who postponed nirvana for the salvation of people even though they themselves had attained enlightenment; guardian kings; Vimalakirti who is the protagonist of the Vimalakirti sutra; and the lion figure that it is believed associated with the protective power of the Buddha are also among the figures sculpted.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>95</sup> Helen Craig McCullough, "Aristocratic Culture", *The Cambridge History of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 418-419.

<sup>96</sup> William R. LaFleur, *The Karma of Words Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 107, 116; H. Paul Varley, "Cultural Life in Medieval Japan", *The Cambridge History of Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 478-481, 485-489.

<sup>97</sup> Felice Fischer, "Japanese Buddhist Art", *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 87, no. 369 (Win-



In the Zen tradition also sculptures were frequently used in both monastic architecture and ritual routine and had an important position. Nearly every part of Zen monasteries, such as the entrance gate, the monks' hall, the Buddha hall, the shuryo hall, the kitchen, and the bathroom, has statues of important figures of the Buddhist tradition. In the Buddha hall, there are three statues of Sakyamuni Buddha and Buddhas of the past and the future, or two of the Buddha's disciples, with the Sakyamuni Buddha. In the monks' hall, there is a statue of the 'holy monk' known as the shōsō. This statue is the statue of the bodhisattva Manjusri, often known as Monju in Japanese, symbolizing wisdom, knowledge, and enlightenment, and is associated with meditation. At the monastery gate, there are statues of arhats with Buddha and at the bathroom of the monastery, there is a statue of Bhadrāpala bodhisattva who is believed to have attained enlightenment while meditating on the water during bathing.<sup>98</sup> In addition in the Shuryo hall, there is a statue of the bodhisattva Avolokitesvara.<sup>99</sup> These statues in monasteries are also used in rituals. Keizan Shingi considers it necessary to burn incense or at least bow down in front of the statue in the hall at the beginning and end of almost every ritual.<sup>100</sup> In Buddha's birthday celebrations, the baby Buddha statue is bathed as the main object of the ritual.<sup>101</sup> In Keizan Shingi, sutras are also read and prayers are said to all the holy statues in the monastery together with the guardian spirits of the monastery.<sup>102</sup> In addition, Keizan gave special importance to the statue of the eleven-headed bodhisattva Avolokitesvara, which he inherited from his mother, and placed this statue as the main object of worship in the monastery of the nun he founded.<sup>103</sup>

Another branch of art that has been developed by the tradition to visualize important figures and doctrines in the Buddhism tradition is painting. The art of painting has been used since the early stages of Japanese Buddhism both to explain the doctrine and to visualize important figures. The Heian

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ter, 1991), pp. 5-16.

98 Collcutt, *Five Mountains; The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan*, pp. 189, 191, 207.

99 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, p. 188, 191; Griffith Foulk, "衆寮", *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, [http://buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?88.xml+id\(%27b8846-5bee%27\)](http://buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?88.xml+id(%27b8846-5bee%27)) (15.12.2020).

100 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 5, 125, 190-191, 193, 272, 274-275, 325, etc.

101 *Ibid.*, pp. 233-237.

102 *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

103 Keizan, "Tōkokuki", p. 521.

period witnessed the tradition of depicting the gods, which are important in esoteric teaching, together and separately in accordance with certain measures. With the development of the Pure Land tradition, it is seen that the painting type raigō 來迎, which depicts the Amida Buddha and the sacred figures accompanying him, taking the dying person to the Pure Land, became widespread.<sup>104</sup> Another type of Japanese painting is kusōzu 九想圖 originated in the thirteenth century. These are paintings that depict the stages of decay and disintegration of the dead body in nine sections. The purpose of these paintings is to free Buddhist monks from sexual desires and attachments by meditating on the ugliness of the decaying body.<sup>105</sup>

A new type of painting from China also became widespread in medieval Japan. It is the art of painting landscapes with ink, known in Japanese as sumi-e 墨絵. These paintings, depicting nature scenes in China and Japan, make references to Zen narratives and asceticism. The most famous names of this art are the fifteenth-century Zen monks Josetsu, Shūbun, and Sesshū. This art of painting also influenced the art of gardening, known as karesansui 枯山水 in Japanese, which means 'dry landscape', which is another important art branch of the period. This art, the most beautiful examples of which can be found in the gardens of Zen monasteries, is performed by combining water, stone, and sand with abstract meanings on the basis of simplicity.<sup>106</sup>

The art of painting, which has been shaped around different themes according to the periods, has more or less allocated a place to the figures that are considered sacred in every period. The depicted figures are generally the same as the sculpted figures. However, some figures were popularized from time to time depending on the conditions. For example, in the fourteenth century, when the Mongol invasions put Japan in fear, the paintings of Virtuous Kings, who were believed to have protective power, became especially popular due to the failure of the invasions.<sup>107</sup> In addition to these, placing the tablet on the altar with the names of the emperors in order to be used in rituals in Keizan Shingi can be evaluated in the context of the

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104 McCullough, "Aristocratic Culture", pp. 421-423.

105 Fusae Kanda, "Behind the Sensationalism: Images of a Decaying Corpse in Japanese Buddhist Art", *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 87, no.1 (Mar, 2005), p. 24.

106 Varley, "Cultural Life in Medieval Japan, pp. 485-488.

107 Fischer, "Japanese Buddhist Art", pp. 5-10.

visualization of important figures.<sup>108</sup>

The other branch of art that should be mentioned in the context of the relationship between Japanese Buddhist monasteries and art is music. In the Japanese Buddhist tradition, there are examples where music is performed as part of rituals and there are monks whose main task is to play music. The *shōmyō* 声明 vocal music, which emerged in the Heian period and continued its existence in the following periods, is one of the first examples of Buddhist music. This music consists of the recitation of scriptures and expressions of gratitude in the form of songs or hymns by monks. It is also known that in the Pure Land tradition, small music groups perform in certain situations, including the dying person. In the Middle Ages, the Buddhist tradition continued to be associated with music; Buddhist monasteries undertook the patronage of *sangaku* music, from which the origins of the *nō* theater were also based. The monasteries also hosted and supported traveling blind monks who developed an important part of medieval oral literature.<sup>109</sup> Keizan Shingi mentions the use of various musical instruments to mark the beginning of rituals or the procedure during the ritual. There are even monks or monk candidates who are assigned to play these musical instruments.<sup>110</sup> In addition, in many rituals, it is stated that sacred texts and chanting are read in the form of hymns. Reading Sanskrit texts according to a certain rhythm can also be included in this context.<sup>111</sup>

When it comes to the relationship of the monastery with art, the art of tea should also be mentioned. It is even possible to say that the art branch that a Zen monastery is most engaged in is the art of tea. Tea became widespread in Japan in the early Middle Ages as a beverage consumed by all classes of society. At the end of the fourteenth century, it became an important element of social associations, and with the fifteenth century, it gradually turned into a serious branch of art with rules. In the context of 茶湯 (*chanoyu*) tea ceremonies in which this art is practiced, tea prepared with tools reflecting a refined taste and understanding began to be served to the guests in

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108 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 33-36, 63.

109 McCullough, "Aristocratic Culture", pp. 429-431.

110 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 15, 16, 17, 25, 30, 51, 57, 61, 124, 206, 229, 257, 265, 274, 325.

111 *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 130, 137, 140, 160-163, 181, 259-260, 276.

accordance with detailed rules in the carefully arranged and decorated tea rooms. It is also claimed that the relationship between the development of tea art and ceremonies with the Zen school and monasteries is not as deep as is known and that the identification of Zen and tea art corresponds to as late as the sixteenth century.<sup>112</sup>

However, although the relationship between the Zen school and this developing tea culture is controversial, it is certain that tea ceremonies have an important place in Zen monasteries and are frequently performed in a monastic routine. Chanyuan counts tea utensils among the few possessions of a monk,<sup>113</sup> and states that tea ceremonies are held in many cases, such as the arrival of new monks at the monastery for residence, the abbot's tea ceremony, after the abbot's sermons, the beginning and end of summer retreats, and New Year's ceremonies.<sup>114</sup> Tea ceremonies are considered to be very important and serious ceremonies, and the guests must behave carefully and attentive in accordance with the specific rules.<sup>115</sup> Although not as detailed as Chanyuan, Dōgen also mentions in his texts on monastic rules that tea is offered in a few cases, such as when new monks come to the monastery.<sup>116</sup> As, for Keizan Shingi, it is seen that tea ceremonies take on a more ritualistic climate and are frequently repeated in the monastic routine. Similar to Chanyuan, the occasions when tea ceremonies are held are major celebrations such as the arrival of new monks at the monastery for residence, the beginning and end of summer retreats, and the new year.<sup>117</sup> Keizan Shingi's tea ceremonies contain very detailed rules; an invitation letter is written before the tea ceremony, the hall where the ceremony will be held is decorated appropriately, the guests sit in the hall according to the predetermined order. The hall is circumambulated, prostrations are made, incenses are burned after the tea is served and drunk, and the hall is left.<sup>118</sup> Keizan Shingi also mentions a ritual of offering tea to the spirits of the world.<sup>119</sup>

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112 Varley, "Cultural Life in Medieval Japan, pp. 488-489.

113 Yifa, *Chanyuan Qinggui*, pp. 116-117.

114 Ibid., pp. 119-121, 131, 141-144, 145.

115 Yifa, *Chanyuan Qinggui*, pp. 129-130.

116 Dōgen, *Eihei Shingi*, pp. 74, 99, 169.

117 Keizan, *Keizan's Monastic Regulations*, pp. 222, 242, 251-252, 254, 261-263, 288-291, 294.

118 Ibid., pp. 252-253, 288-291.

119 Ibid., p. 258.

Other branches of art associated with the Zen tradition are nō theatre, renga poetry, and flower arrangement art.<sup>120</sup> The fact that Zeami (1363-1443), who is considered one of the founders of the Nō theater, received training from Zen masters and used Buddhist themes in his plays, opened the door to establishing a relationship between Zen and this art.<sup>121</sup> Similarly, the fact that renga masters received Zen education and used Zen concepts and themes in their poems and supported Zen monasteries caused a connection between this art branch and Zen monasteries.<sup>122</sup> The art of flower arrangement, on the other hand, developed in connection with the widespread tea culture and began to be used in the decor of tea rooms.<sup>123</sup> Finally, it should be noted that special importance was attached to the art of calligraphy in monasteries. It is one of the best examples of the importance given to calligraphy that the name tablets of the parts of Keizan's Yōkōji monastery were written by a famous calligraphy master of the period and this situation was seen as a sacred sign for the monastery.<sup>124</sup>

## Conclusion

Considering the economic, political, and social aspects of the Zen monastery, it is understood that the monastery was not an institution outside or on the edge of secular life, on the contrary, it was at the very center of it. In addition, the monks living in the monastery were not completely isolated from worldly pursuits, on the contrary, they were engaged in both economic and political affairs under the roof of the monastery and at the same time taking care of their families. Monks with artistic and literary careers also formed a part of the monastery population.<sup>125</sup> That is to say, the monks who renounced their worldly life returned to the world they left and were involved in various forms of worldly occupations such as politics, economy, art, and family. This

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120 Ichirō Ishida and Delmer M. Brown, "Zen Buddhism and Muromachi Art", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 22, no.4 (Aug., 1963), p. 417.

121 LaFleur, *The Karma of Words*, pp. 116-123; Steven Heine, *From Chinese Chan to Japanese Zen: A Remarkable Century of Transmission and Transformation* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 217.

122 Collcutt, "Zen and the Gozan", pp. 616-617.

123 Ishida and Brown, "Zen Buddhism and Muromachi Art", pp. 425-426.

124 Keizan, "Tōkokuki", p. 511.

125 Varley, "Cultural Life in Medieval Japan", pp. 471-472.

has been possible by bringing these worldly occupations under the roof of their religious identity with a new interpretation and reading. The method used for this new reading was the ritualization of concerns and desires related to highly secular areas such as economy, politics, family, and art, and to make these worldly desires and needs the subject of rituals.

A worldly desire such as the longevity of the emperor became one of the main themes of monastic rituals, with a reading that emperors had an important position in the preservation and dissemination of Buddhist teaching. The monastery, which is an institution that needs to stay away from worldly occupations, had large lands and various assets as one of the most important economic powers, and appointed monks to manage these assets. Moreover, this property is somewhat legitimized through rituals; The monks, who were in charge of controlling and managing the assets of the monastery, accepted their duties not as a worldly occupation but as a religious obligation, agriculture became the subject of rituals, and donating money was included in the procedure of various rituals. The monks, who had to break their family ties as a necessity of monastic life, established a new bond with their families—it can be said that it is stronger in terms of spirituality—with a reading that the strict monastic life they lived would provide the salvation of their families, and also performed rituals in order to pay the debt to the family. Art, as an occupation that contains and conveys the elements of teaching, has acquired an unshakable position in the monastery complex and has been involved in the ritual routine of the monastery, both as ritual objects and as the ritual itself. In short, ritualization strategies seem to have been used to include monks' secular concerns and desires within the religious domain.

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