POLICIZED AESTHETICS: 
RECLUSION LITERATURE IN THE LATE HEIAN AND 
EARLY KAMAKURA ERAS OF PRE-MODERN JAPAN 

by 

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Abstract

Title of Thesis  Politicized Aesthetics: Reclusion Literature in the Late Heian and Early Kamakura Eras of Pre-Modern Japan

This thesis presents a study of the political aesthetics arising from the ideological systems that motivated Yoshishige no Yasutane and Kamo no Chōmei to write the “Chiteiki” (“Record of a Pond Pavilion,” 982) and “Hōjōki” (“Account of My Hut,” 1212) respectively.

In order to arrive at a point where I can investigate political aesthetics, I begin by examining the recluse tradition: first in China: focusing on Confucian and Buddhist thought systems, and Taoist regard for nature; and then in Japan, where the Chinese recluse tradition was syncretized and changed within Japan’s own indigenous ideologies. I then examine the T’ang dynasty’s Po Chü-i (772–846) as a Chinese model of reclusion for Japanese writers such as Yasutane and Chōmei.

The second and third steps of my research investigate the dominant political and religious ideologies of the Late Heian (897–1185) and Early Kamakura (1185–1249) periods. Such an examination entails a comparative look at the various intertextual sources that fed the “Chiteiki” and “Hōjōki” : Po Chü-i’s “Ts’ao-t’ang Chi” (“Record of the Thatched Abode,” 817) and “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” (“Around My Pond,” 829), and Minamoto no Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki” (960).

The last section of this thesis takes a somewhat experimental approach, by setting up the problem of genre. Each of the authors I investigate wrote about his garden or surroundings, and I set out to explore the landscape traditions that contributed to these authors’ undertakings. In so doing, I examine the idea of the landscape as microcosm, and the literary devices that Yasutane and Chōmei utilize in order to move us through their literary spaces.
In conclusion, I reach an impasse, with a conflict of historicization versus de-historicization, and new questions about the consciousness of the recluse and his free will in choice. These findings require future research.
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Introduction

In an article entitled “A Study of Yoshishige no Yasutane’s Chiteiki and Kamo no Chōmei’s Höjoki” (Faulkes 1992; hereinafter, “A Study”), I argued that Yasutane and Chōmei were not politically motivated in creating the aforementioned works. Upon further reflection and research, however, I have changed my view regarding political influence.

A literary text may be conceived of as consisting of at least two languages: metaphoric and political. Too often, we readers tend to approach a text with an aesthetic reading, decontextualizing the work, and rendering it ahistorical and apolitical. Michele Marra examines the depoliticizing act in The Aesthetics of Discontent (1991). He proposes that it is our task as readers of pre-modern Japanese literature to analyze the ideological discourse in a text, and unveil the relationship between the political and the aesthetic (Marra 1991, 7).

The aesthetic approach treats literature as an autonomous discipline with its own rules. As Marra points out, New Critical Theory is guilty of aestheticizing literature and marginalizing any work that does not meet its particular aesthetic criteria as “Other”:

In introducing the Japanese classics to the West, Western scholars have inevitably been guided by the aesthetic assumptions of Kant’s philosophy that, to a certain degree, were reinforced by contemporaneous developments of

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1 Yoshishige no Yasutane (931/8–1002), “Chiteiki” (“Record of a Pond Pavilion,” 982). Most scholars situate Yasutane’s birth year between 931 and 938, based on documented evidence that Yasutane was born in the Shōhei era (931–948) during Emperor Suzaku’s reign (r. 930–946). However, if Yasutane entered university in 950 or 951, he would likely have been 15 or 16 years old, and this would set his birth year at about 934–936.

Norinaga’s nativist theories. They took the “aesthetic dimension” to represent the difference between a literary text and other kinds of writing, granting it a privileged position outside history from where they could analyze their aesthetic object and, at the same time, give a historical account of the background of literary works based on the idealized visions of authors of literature. This tendency has promoted the notion of a literature disengaged from any purpose aside from the text’s ability to provide pleasure and appeal to the tastes of its consumers (Marra 1991, 3).

In view of pre-modern Japanese literature, Western scholars tend to emphasize such elements as “good taste,” rules of art, and personal conduct over a text’s political and ideological dimension. Marra urges us to change our approach from privileging an aesthetic system to one in which we recontextualize a text to its history — a repoliticizing act.

Pre-modern Japanese literature is often regarded, by scholars inside and outside of Japan alike, as something devoid of political content. Much of the corpus of literature from the Heian (794—1185) and Kamakura (1185—1333) periods was actually created by people whom Marra deems as “political outsiders,” particularly court ladies, monks, and recluses. Although Japanese literature of these periods was greatly influenced by Chinese sources, the main difference between Japanese and Chinese literary tradition, Marra writes, was the “total neglect of political issues on the part of Japanese authors” (1991, 2). In fact, he notes, a Japanese author who wrote works of a political nature was labeled by his contemporaries and later nativist scholars as a “Chinese kind of writer” (Marra 1991, 2). We too easily overlook the fact that writers are unavoidably immersed in their

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2 Immanuel Kant (1724—1804) proposed the “pure aesthetic experience consists of ‘disinterested’ contemplation of an aesthetic object without reference to its reality, or to the ‘external’ ends of its utility or morality” (A Glossary of Literary Terms, 2).

Motoori Norinaga (1730—1801) attempted to replace Japan’s foreign philosophies (such as Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism) with indigenous Japanese systems of thought.
specific intellectual systems and, as William LaFleur reminds us in *The Karma of Words*, “[W]riters are also people with concerns other than writing and ... those concerns will inevitably find a place in what they write” (10). In order for us to discern political content, then, we must examine the dominant ideologies specific to the authors we investigate.

Ideology and discourse are related. As a general definition, (Anglo-American) discourse is “a connected series of utterances; a text” (*CODCE* 333), and various modes of discourse analysis treat the syntactic or semantic structures of texts in their linguistic and sociocultural settings. Michel Foucault emphasizes the articulation of knowledge and power in “discourse,” wherein one implies the other. Marie-Christine Leps elaborates:

> Power-knowledge matrices are established in discourse, that is, in the vast network of conflicting and inter-validating discursive practices constituting reality. Discursive practices (comprising institutional bases, qualified members and normalized production procedures) assign subject positions for their practitioners and determine their objects of knowledge. Power-knowledge matrices are thus both intentional and non-subjective: pursued by individuals for specific purposes, relations of power remain non-subjective, as the subjects and objects of knowledge, the modes of argumentation, and rules of validation are imposed by discursive practices (*Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory*, 536).

Foucault’s view of discourse as a knowledge and power structure can be connected to Terry Eagleton’s definition of ideology as “the articulation of discourse and power” (Eagleton, “Ideology and Scholarship,” 114), in which discourse reflects ideology if it is “relevant to the maintenance or interrogation of power structures central to a whole form of social and historical life” (*ibid.*, 116). In order to examine how an author articulates his discourse, we need to relate the components of his work to issues of ideology and power. A significant discourse I wish to respond to in this paper is the production and transmission of political discontent. The act of expressing political dissatisfaction has a long
history in Japan and the Asian continent, and this component will figure prominently in the following investigation.

Taken on its own account, the dominant aesthetic approach governing literary production of the Heian and Kamakura periods has significant political implications. Marra writes, "The Japanese discourse on aesthetics is shown as the result of political discontent whose formulation, forbidden in the political arena, could only be voiced at the cultural level" (1991, 7). Marra contends that in order to discern the modes of expressing political discontent, we need to examine a text as an alternative space far from the restrictive rules of central power — a space of reclusion. Authors within such a space, he adds, are deprived of their political roles and freed to propose counter-ideologies to the center's discourse of power (Marra 1991, 8). A loss of political power often prompts an individual to search for new authority, and this is often expressed via the arts. The result is a veiled (or not so veiled) attack on the oppressive center, a reaction Marra describes, as reflected by his book's title — as an aesthetic prompted by discontent.

As I omitted an examination of the political issues informing the "Chiteiki" and "Hōjōki" in "A Study," I now wish to draw upon my continued exploration of Yasutane and Chōmei and re-read their two works, taking care to examine these authors' alternative spaces of reclusion and their acts of expressing a political aesthetic. But before capsulizing my previous readings of the "Chiteiki" and "Hōjōki," I will first define the terms used in this paper.

The recluse tradition has a long presence in Japanese and Chinese histories, and the nomenclature associated with reclusion is plentiful. I will exclusively use the terms 'recluse' ("a person given to or living in seclusion or isolation, esp. as a religious discipline" [CODCE 1002]) and 'reclusion'. I avoid using the term 'hermit' in this paper: although the term connotes "any person living in solitude," it also carries the association of "an early Christian recluse." For the same reason, I also avoid using the term 'eremite' ("a hermit or recluse [esp. Christian]"[CODCE 397]) and 'eremiticism'. I also
have preferences with Japanese terminology. The first term, ‘tonsei’, is of Buddhist origin. As a verb, tonsei suru denotes “to flee the everyday world” (KDJ, s.v. Tonseisha). A person who does such is called a tonseisha, and he leaves his personal affairs behind to train alone in Buddhist discipline (ibid.). Herbert Plutschow describes the act of tonsei as a “[r]ejection of society and monastic priesthood. Hermit existence as Buddhist penitence. ... Tonsei priests also traveled” (1973, 570). Plutschow adds that tonseisha were “of the middle ages [and] could hardly be identified with priesthood as such” (1973, 89). He notes the existence of two types of vows, tonsei or insei (to live in reclusion), and that a person who took either vow lived his life in solitude away from all society, in either sōan (“grass huts”) or as travellers. The sōan tradition, notes Plutschow, is closely linked to travelling and “oneness” with nature, and he points to the “Hōjōki” as an exemplary piece of sōan literature. In the Late Heian period (897–1185), the sōan became a place for Buddhist penitence — a dwelling in which to await rebirth in the Western Paradise (Seihō Jōdo) and perform nenbutsu (“intoning the name of the Buddha Amida”) (see Plutschow 1973, 91).

In contrast to tonsei suru, ‘shukke suru’ (“to leave home”) is a verb designating the act of leaving home and entering formal Buddhist (that is, monastic) priesthood (KDJ, s.v. Shukke). Although taking the tonsure — the ritualistic shaving of the head — is associated more with the practitioner of shukke, the tonseisha could also undertake this act. In short, a tonseisha was a recluse who fled the world, but did not enter formal, monastic priesthood. A person who undertook shukke left his family, and entered monastic priesthood. Since the distinctions between tonsei, tonseisha, sōan, and shukke risk being lost in English, I will use these Japanese terms.

Since the religious, political, and aesthetic motivations behind Japanese reclusion of the eighth to thirteenth centuries focused mainly upon a court-based male aristocracy and rarely upon the politically inactive female aristocracy, I limit recluse gender to the masculine in this paper.
In “A Study” I examined Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” as an influence upon Chômei’s “Hôjôki.” I began by highlighting the potential for conflict between two systems of belief as a motivating force in the production of the “Chiteiki”: that is, Confucian ritual and behavioral prescription, and Buddhist asceticism. As a system of beliefs, Confucianism brought to Japan the idea that relations were governed by reciprocity: correct actions brought forth rewards and propitious omens, and ensured the smooth running of the universe; conversely, incorrect actions elicited punishment with warnings and penalties, and created disorder and chaos.

The moral crux of Confucian behavior held by Yasutane and his contemporaries was the expectation that a man acted in accordance with his official duties. To this end, as D.C. Lau notes, “To give these [moral] qualities their fullest realization the gentleman must take part in government” (31). It was the official’s responsibility to facilitate correct action, to set himself up as a model to his fellow citizens, and to advise his peers and the emperor in the interest of the state.

Buddhism is rooted in an Indian philosophy. Unlike Confucianism, Buddhism was not a theoretical prescription for good society, but a vehicle for personal salvation. Exploring Buddhist asceticism and Confucian ethics in “A Study,” I attempted to expose possible conflicts between these two belief systems as a motivating force behind the production of the “Chiteiki.” In “A Study,” I treated the differences between the two systems of beliefs by especially demarcating the opposing views regarding filial piety, familial obligation, and their relationship to the act of (or nod toward) reclusion. I examined Yasutane and the “Chiteiki” against the context of tonsei, and compared Yasutane’s act of seclusion within his elaborate Heiankyô (modern-day Kyoto) estate to the bodhisattva-layman hero of the Vimalakîrti Nirdeśa Sûtra.3 Accepting and elaborating on William

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3 Hereinafter VNS. For the sake of cross-reference, I include these terms: VNS (J: Yuima(kitsu)gyô, C: Wei-mo-chieh ching); the layman Vimalakîrti (J: Yuima, Yuimakitsu, or Jômyô); the bodhisattva [“one who seeks enlightenment in order to enlighten others; a Buddhist saint; a Buddha elect”] Mañjuśrî (J: bosatsu Monjû); the Buddhas Amitâbha (J: Amida), Šâkyamuni (J: Shaka), Maitreya (J:
LaFleur’s argument, I explored Yasutane’s reclusion as an act of Buddhist faith with notable precedents in fourth to fifth century AD China in general, and in the VNS in particular. I concluded that the Confucian-Buddhist conflicts in practice could be resolved, as demonstrated by Yasutane in his “Chiteiki”: by becoming a recluse in the mind only, while involved in daily governmental activities. As a “very convenient mode of being Buddhist for those who [did] not wish to cease being Confucian” (LaFleur 111), this metaphorical act of shukke appealed to Yasutane and his peers.

In “A Study,” I next examined Yasutane’s Monjōshō (Heiankyō university system) education in Chinese learning and Buddhist texts, and his court career as a shōnaiki (“Junior Inner Secretary”). I related Yasutane’s education and career to his participation in the Kangaku-e (“Society for Advancement of Learning”), a group he founded with the primary intention of promoting studies in Buddhism and religious writings. I argued that Yasutane did not participate in the Kangaku-e meetings strictly to atone for his “negative” secular activities. In this vein, I cited the Chinese poet Po Chü-i’s remarks regarding “wild words and fancy language” (J: kyōgen kigo), a phrase long held by those conscious of their production of secular studies and writings as a paradigm for religious atonement — a secular-religious conflict familiar to Yasutane and his Kangaku-e contemporaries. I pointed out that the aspect of atonement for negative activities held by scholars such as Edward Kamens and Mezaki Tokue were over-emphasized (Faulkes 76–77), and that the importance of the positive, rather than the negative, actions of the Kangaku-e members has not been properly addressed. I stated,

Miroku), and Bhaisajya (J: Yakushi); Šākyamuni’s disciples Śuddhipanthaka (J: Shurihandoku), Śāriputra (J: Sharihotsu), and Avatamsaka (J: Kegon).

The VNS was first translated into Chinese during the early Six Dynasties period (265–589 AD), and made its way into Japan sometime between the sixth to seventh centuries.

Two excellent translations of the VNS are The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti (Thurman) and The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra (Luk).

Neither Yasutane nor the other Kangaku-e members felt that they had to atone for the 'bad karma' of thoughts that were not always geared solely toward enlightenment. Rather than being a conflict-oriented group, the Kangaku-e was a pattern-model society of people who were interested in the production of merit earning for the benefit of the group as a whole (76).

I concluded that Po Chü-i and his "wild words and fancy language" statement influenced Yasutane and the Kangaku-e, not as a model to ameliorate their negative actions, but rather, as a model of the ideal person who took his bureaucratic skills and applied them to Buddhist ends. Thus, I once again skirted the political matters inherent in the motivations influencing Yasutane, and focused instead on the religious issues. Upon reflection, it now seems clearer and imperative to me that I require a political template for understanding Yasutane.

When I examined the concept of Yasutane as a frustrated bureaucrat in "A Study," I spent my energy disagreeing with Marra's opinions in his Aesthetics of Discontent, in which he presents Heiankyō as a "totalitarian" Fujiwara state, and Yasutane as a person forced out of power by the political situation of his time. In "A Study" I wholeheartedly disagreed with Marra, but now I must reverse my opinion and in fact accept and develop his argument. Although I feel that Marra makes a few omissions and erroneous statements in his argument, overall, I now believe he was on the correct track but short of the complete picture. I will elicit these points and respond more fully to Marra later in this paper as I examine Yasutane's political environment.

In "A Study," I undertook a close reading as my final step in examining Yasutane's "Chiteiki." There is much I overlooked, and I wish to compensate for my lack of political commentary in this present paper. In "A Study," I concluded:

Yasutane's "Chiteiki" is a proselytizing work, didactic and instructive to its readers, and Yasutane provides his own example — showing readers
that it *is* possible to combine Confucian and Buddhist ethics. Yasutane is indeed the Vimalakīrti of household seclusion — happy householder, virtuous Confucian gentleman, and devout Buddhist (83).

While I still contend that the preceding conclusion is a fair summary of the “Chiteiki,” it is too general and lacks a political aspect that was clearly entailed.

In Part Two of “A Study,” I examined a work that followed Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” by 230 years, Kamo no Chōmei’s “Hōjōki.” Comparing the “Hōjōki” to the “Chiteiki,” I sought to elicit similarities marking the latter as a model for the former. I began by discussing Chōmei’s loss of hereditary superintendency of the Kamo Shrine, his background in poetry circles and writing, and his participation in Ex-Emperor Go-Toba’s (r. 1183–1198) Wakadokoro (“Bureau of Japanese Poetry”). Chōmei lost the Kamo superintendency to a contender with political connections on the winning side of a factional rift. Although backed by the Go-Toba camp, Chōmei was passed over yet again for another posting to the Tadasu Shrine, and he refused a later offer of a posting created by Go-Toba, to the subsidiary Ura Shrine. Subsequently, he took the tonsure and went into seclusion. As in Yasutane’s case, I again shied away from accepting the role of political influence, and focused instead on Chōmei’s Buddhist beliefs as the motivation behind his *tonsei* and the production of his “Hōjōki.”

My main interest in “A Study” was in identifying the literary and artistic influences of the “Chiteiki” upon the “Hōjōki,” and to this end, I spent my time countering or agreeing with readings by such scholars as Thomas Blenman Hare, William LaFleur, and Marra, rather than digging into what I felt couldn’t possibly be shared across the Heian and Kamakura ages, that is, politics. The structure, narrative order, and imagery of the two works do indeed closely parallel each other. The authors both discuss life in society in the first half of each work, and contrast this to life in reclusion in the second halves. The first half of each work draws attention to the negative aspects of life in the capital city of Heiankyō, and the second halves highlight each author’s acquisition of a dwelling, his
choice of site, and the pleasures his dwelling brings upon him as he ages. Yasutane’s and Chômei’s conclusions reflect the two centuries separating them, as the strongly Confucian-oriented Yasutane focuses upon ethical and virtuous conduct, and the Buddhist-oriented Chômei responds to the principles of mujô (“impermanence”) and mappô (“Final Age” [in the current Buddhist cycle, in which correct understanding and practice of Buddhism is almost nonexistent]).5 Lacking in my “Study” comparison and conclusion with regard to Chômei is politics — nowhere did I examine Chômei’s politically-inspired reasons for leaving Heiankyô, nor did I compare or contrast the idea of the frustrated bureaucrat between Chômei and his predecessor, Yasutane.

5 Simply stated, mappô theory held that the Buddhist doctrine was subject to continuous decline, and humans beings could not escape this law. Michele Marra describes mappô in terms of several theories, which vary in length of time allotted to each age. The most popular theories were 1) “Three Ages” with (a) the True Dharma period (shôbô) lasting 500–1000 years, (b) the Imitative Dharma period (zôbô) lasting 500–1000 years, and (c) the Last Dharma period (mappô) lasting 10,000 years (the True Dharma and Imitative Dharma periods usually total 1500 years); and 2) “Five Periods” of 500 years each: (i) Strong Enlightenment (gedatsu), (ii) Strong Meditation (zenjô), which coincides with the beginning of zôbô, (iii) Strong Listening (tamôn), coinciding with zôbô’s end, (iv) Temple and Pagoda Building (zôji), which is when mappô begins, and (v) Strong Conflicts (tôbô), occurring when mappô ends. The two versions of the same concept held points in common — most importantly, that each began its count forward from the year chosen to mark the Buddha Śākyamuni’s death — either 552 or 1052 AD. An example of this discrepancy is the Mappô Tomyûki (Record of the Lamp During the Final Age), attributed to Saichô (767–822), which promotes the year 1052, and Shôtoku Taishi’s (572–621) Sangyoishô, which advocates the year 552 (see Marra 1984, 1985, 1988a, and 1988b). Mappô theories, per se, first appeared in Mahâyâna texts, in the context of the basic Buddhist teaching that everything is destined to change. For instance, Marra tells us that: “The author’s goal [in the Daijikkyô(Great Collection Sutra), chapter 12 of the gachizôbun roll] was to show that the decline of the Buddhist doctrine was only due to the increase in the breaking of the precepts and to the absence of virtue in people’s behavior” (1988a, 28). Marra notes that prior to Mahâyâna ideology, “... the germs of mappô thought were already there in the Pali and Sanskrit scriptures, [but] they still lacked a coherent systemization” (1988a, 29). The mappô concept was predominant in Chinese thought during the Sui (581–618) and T’ang dynasties, when persecution against Buddhists was wide-spread and practitioners sought a doctrine that would address their needs.
As in the case with Yasutane in “A Study,” I speak volumes through omissions in my close reading of Chōmei’s “Hōjoki,” and these I need to address. What follows in this paper is an amendment to my apolitical readings. In other words, I propose that in addition to religious motivation, the role of the political environment and conventions of reclusion specific to Yasutane and Chōmei stimulated their reasons for writing the “Chiteiki” and “Hōjoki.” My tasks in eliciting political motivation are three. I will first of all include in this exposition a look at three types of reclusion in China, and then Japan: political as practiced in China before Buddhism, political as practiced in China and Japan in a Buddhist context, and Buddhist as practiced in Japan during the Heian and Kamakura periods. Second, I will examine mechanisms inherent in the context of the Japanese court, with its summons or expulsion of courtiers, and the courtier’s conscious choice to stay away — which is, in effect, a form of reclusion. Third, I will add works by Po Chü-i and Prince Kaneakira (911–983) as important influences upon Yasutane’s “Chiteiki,” and subsequently Chōmei’s “Hōjoki,” and expand upon my analyses of Yasutane, Chōmei, and these two works. I will analyze each work in light of its political influence in the tradition of bureaucratic discontent and reclusion, hoping to elicit the similarities and differences between the four authors and the forms of reclusion they underwent. As an end-note, I will also discuss aesthetic trends in the literature of reclusion as manifested by both Yasutane and Chōmei. Finally, I will look at politics and aesthetics in combination — the thread left dangling by Marra — and reinterpret the two writers’ authorial motivations.
Tradition of Reclusion

The roots of Japanese reclusion lie to the west in Chinese literary tradition. In a paper entitled “The Poem as a Painting: Landscape Poetry in Late Heian Japan,” Ivo Smits discusses the role of landscape poetry as a new eleventh century Japanese genre, and the function of nature imagery. Smits tells us that nature imagery evolved in China from a fifth century symbolic mode of expressing human emotion, to a sixth century “palace style” describing life’s luxuries and palace ladies. By the eighth century T’ang period, nature imagery was simpler and couched in direct diction — no longer regarded frivolous as the palace style was now deemed. Representative of this T’ang style were Li Po (701–762), Tu Fu (712–770), and Po Chü-i, all poets whose works were known in the Late Heian and Kamakura periods in Japan. Two developments are evidenced from the T’ang influence in Japan: first, as Smits notes, “[i]n contrast to socially concerned poetry, nature poetry, as a mode to reflect a detachment from worldly affairs, was a genre practiced in Late Heian Japan” (64), and secondly, Buddhist connotations and poetic description of landscape were being incorporated into one medium (Smits 65). Natural phenomena came to represent manifestations of the Buddhist Law (Dharma), and nature equated both the object of meditation and the focus for a quietism in which calmness characterized enlightenment. Human presence was for the most part absent from the landscape descriptions.

The poetry of the Chinese recluses made a distinction between two types of reclusion: t’ien-yüen “field and garden”, wherein a recluse retired from official service and lived in a rural setting such as a farm, with the expression of the harmony between the recluse and his surroundings paramount; and shan-shui “mountain and water”, in which a
recluse hid himself in the depths of nature in such dwellings as a hut or a cell (Smits 67). The two modes of reclusion are similar. "[N]ature," writes Smits, "is both a symbol for the inner state of the [writer] as well as an actual scenery. A similar double-function of nature imagery is to be seen in Japanese poetry" (67). Thus, in the two modes of reclusion, nature came to represent both a source of imagery, and a setting for contemplation.

Late Heian aristocrats sometimes fled the city and celebrated the beauty of the countryside. Such a writer might leave society for a mere one or two nights only, seeking shelter in a cell or hut, and creating a poem describing his surroundings and inner state (Smits 69). Smits contends that Japanese recluse poetry and prose likely developed out of these beginnings. He notes, "Never before had court poets tried to advocate the ideal of reclusive quietism on such a scale. ... Until [the Late Heian period] ... courtiers would not have considered living in a small hut ..." (Smits 75). The landscape and related inner-self descriptions soon fused with travel writing, in which the tonseisha contemplated life's impermanence. The two intertwined themes of reclusion and travel, which afforded the writer an opportunity to contemplate self and "the whims of fate," became a common part of Late Heian literature (75–76).

Buddhism and nature imagery developed along different lines in Japan than in China. While the Chinese writers linked the two elements on a descriptive level, the Japanese writers focused mostly on the Buddhist content, and less so on the descriptive aspects. But in both the Chinese and Japanese Buddhist nature writings, notes Smits, observing natural phenomena taught the true nature of the Buddhist Law, and landscape acted as a manual to reach enlightenment (78).

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1 Smits points out that the T’ang Chinese and Late Heian Japanese writers made no such two-level distinction (67).
Since Chinese reclusion and its literature greatly influenced Japan, we will briefly examine trends in China’s recluse tradition. The earliest Chinese recluse undertook seclusion as a gesture of noncomformity and defiance, choosing the wilderness as a morally correct alternative to serving a usurpious ruler. In the early advent of Confucian thought (Confucius lived 550–479 BC, and in a way, was also a recluse), reclusion became more sophisticated (Li 237). Where the act was once borne out of personal regard for right and wrong, it evolved into something self-conscious and less idealistic, and what was once spontaneous was now carefully rationalized and typified. Even more radical a change was the nature of social interaction: where the earlier recluse hid himself away in the wilderness and usually succumbed to starvation or the elements, the recluse influenced by early Confucian thought did not want to be kept apart from worldly affairs — he wanted to make himself heard. The early Confucian regarded reclusion as a form of political protest, “to be carried out,” as Burton Watson notes, “when one felt that conditions in government were so unsavory that there was no longer any hope of reform and conscience forbade one to hold public office or remain longer in the everyday world” (73). Thus, we have the intellectual reasoning his need to go into reclusion, usually as a response to an unpleasant future under a particular, and probably new, rule.

The concept of the recluse and his actions enjoyed positive recognition and popularity in the early stages of Confucian teaching, but with the rise of Taoist thought, pro-reclusion opinion altered significantly by the Ch’in dynasty (221–207 BC). Taoism gained in popularity over Confucianism during the Ch’in era, but a work traditionally regarded as the first of the Confucian Classics, the I Ching (Book of Changes, early to mid Chou dynasty [ca. 1027–ca. 256 BC]), was widely read anew during the Ch’in and Former Han (206 BC–8 AD) years. One of the topics in the I Ching is reclusion: “those situations in

life which call for withdrawal and praises highly the man who can rise above worldly desires to spurn positions of power" (Li 239). This meant that it had become fashionable to praise and emulate the recluse.

A recluse being summoned to court was a convention practiced since the Warring States period (403–221 BC). Since an incoming regime usually sought the talents of the newly-retired official, the act of reclusion often furthered the recluse’s political aspirations. Those men who were called from reclusion were often accorded superior status over other court officials, and this led to a trend where men, lacking sincerity, went into sham reclusion in the hopes of receiving a summons and preferential treatment. With the advent of this form of reclusion, where not a few heads rolled upon discovery of insincere motives, we see the act of reclusion changing from one of moral necessity to one of deliberate choice. The copy-cat recluse and his motives became the object of derision and ridicule, an example of which we can find in the widely-read Shih-shuo hsin-yü (A New Account of Tales of the World).³

³ The Shih-shuo hsin-yü was a Six Dynasties (265–589) Sung period (though the period most thoroughly covered by the book is the Chin dynasty [265–420]) compilation of tales from China familiar to Heian and Kamakura period aristocracy, and it provides us with numerous examples of how the tales could have acted as precedent and example to the Japanese tenjūōtei (“senior courtiers”). Although tales of office and action are scattered throughout the text, two chapters are solely devoted to these topics: “Living in Retirement” and “Dismissal from Office.” Examples of tales of summons are found in chapters II: 22 and XXV: 26, tales of reclusion versus office in chapters VII: 18 and XVII: 9, and a tale of avoiding office in chapter XXIV: 13 — just to name a few. Mather translates one anecdote as follows:

Hsieh An originally had the determination to live in the Eastern Mountains. But later stringent orders from the court kept coming, and, unable any longer to protect himself, he finally went to take up his post as Huan Wen’s sergeant-at-arms (in 360). At the time someone made Huan a present of some medicinal herbs, among which was some yīlan-chih (‘far-reaching determination’). Huan took some and asked Hsieh, “This medicine is also called hsiao-tsao (‘small grass’). How is it that the same thing has two names?”
Chuang Tzu (ca. ?369–ca. ?286 BC) also affected the changing Chinese ideas about reclusion. Attributed with the authorship of the *Chuang Tzu* (*J: Sōji*), Chuang Tzu was a major figure in Taoism and a contemporary of Mencius (ca. 372–ca. 289 BC). He criticized the recluse as an arrogant person, and praised the person who could lose himself among people. The *Chuang Tzu* championed the man who cultivated indifference to the world and its values. Burton Watson has the following to say about those people who were inclined toward this manner of thought:

For the Taoist, the hermit is a man who has retired from society for purely selfish motives, that is, to remove himself from the corrupting influence of civilization and further his own chances for safety and survival. But, in the *Chuang Tzu* at least, it is made clear that there are numerous ways to withdraw from society, and that the man who is too infatuated with the recluse ideal and too fastidious in guarding his own purity may be as much the slave of convention as the crassest worldling. The real recluse, Chuang Tzu implies, is the man who “buries himself among the people” (sec. 25), who creates his own wilderness wherever he may be through the loftiness and detachment of his mind (73–74).

Thus, the *Chuang Tzu* advocated a form of reclusion in which the practitioner remained in society.

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Hsieh did not have time to answer before Ho Lung, who was present at the time, answered in a flash, “That’s easy to explain; when you’re living as a recluse it’s ‘far-reaching determination,’ and when you’re out in public life it’s ‘small grass.’”

Hsieh An appeared extremely embarrassed at this. But Huan Wen, glancing at him, laughed and said, “This statement by Aide-de-camp Ho isn’t bad at that, and, you’ll have to admit, it’s extremely apt” (Mather 1976, 413).

The herb, in other words, increased the ambitions of the man in retirement, and amounted to nothing when one was employed in official duties. Ho was implying that Hsieh was an ambitious person who, under the guise of a sincere recluse, had held out in retirement until he could get an elevated position.
By the end of the Han period (206 BC–220 AD) social conditions had undergone drastic change. War and natural calamities reduced the population by one-tenth, and many men fled to the safety of the mountains. Li Chi writes that "the impulse to become a recluse had changed from a show of defiance to a search for refuge" (239). Buddhism had been present in China for several centuries prior to the third century AD, but it was not until this time that it began gaining courtly acceptance. Stimulated by Buddhist doctrine, withdrawal from life and reclusion in secluded mountains or valleys became a more acceptable and sought-after alternative to living in society. But from the earliest Han years on, this very inclination toward reclusion created a conflict in philosophies: How could the upright Confucian official possibly abandon his dutiful place in society and go into reclusion? Aside from entering a monastic order, it seemed that there were only two alternatives open to the intellectual — civil service or retirement — and each contradicted the basic precepts of the other. The resulting dilemma, notes Li, resulted in a person having to

... reconcile himself to his official life, and from such compromises came the host of terms denoting different types of yin or concealment. The type favored by Tung-fang So⁴ was ch’ao-yin (retirement at work). There was also a term shih-yin for retirement in the city ... (243).

As we can see above, then, the Confucian intellectual who was attracted to the Buddhist ideals of reclusion found himself in a vacillating position, a characteristic notable long past the Han dynasty. One such person was Po Chü-i.

Po Chü-i, one of the T’ang period’s most famous and best remembered poets, lived through periods of military woes and political upheavals.⁵ He produced his first poem of a

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⁴ A Han dynasty Neo-Taoist advocate for preservation of life and body.

⁵ Much of my biographical information on Po Chü-i is based upon Arthur Waley, The Life and Times of Po Chü-i: 772–846 A.D.; Howard S. Levy, Translations From Po Chü-i’s Collected Works, Vol. 2
political nature in 797 — the harbinger of many to come in the following decades. As a
government official, Po Chü-i’s successes were rapid after 801, despite political scandals
and increasingly powerful eunuchs.6

It was in the period from 808 to 810 that Po Chü-i became especially immersed in
political activities, public duties, and poetry. His concerns were social and political, and he
continually stuck his neck out to criticize the powerful eunuchs. In 815 Po offended higher
officials, was charged with a crime, and exiled for five years to Chiang-chou — a small
town close to the Lu Shan range and numerous Buddhist monasteries.

Having a lot of free time at his disposal, Po Chü-i idled away his days on excursions
or in his arbor. Po visited Tung-lin (“Eastern Forest” Monastery), founded in 386 by
Hui-yüan (334–416), master of Mahāyāna thought and founder of the Pai-lien she
(“White Lotus Society”), which was “... a confraternity of monks and laymen pledged to
devote themselves to the worship of the Buddha Amitābha and seeking re-birth in his
Western Paradise” (Waley 116). In 817 Po Chü-i built himself a simple hermitage on a
Lu Shan peak, a dwelling which he aspired to live in permanently once his term as
Marshal was over. It was during his stay at Chiang-chou that Po wrote his “Ts’ao-t’ang
Chi” (“Record of the Thatched Abode” [see Appendix for translation]), an account
Chōmei seems to echo in his “Hōjōki.”

and 3, and Henry Wells’ commentary in Vol. 3; and Burton Watson, Chinese Lyricism: Shih Poetry
from the Second to Twelfth Century.

6 Eunuchs were men who underwent castration in order to enter a class of imperial servants. Originally
protectors of Buddhism, high ranking eunuchs often came to hold military or political positions. The
class became rife with corruption, notably thievery and usurpation of power. It was not uncommon
for particularly powerful eunuchs to control members of the imperial family. As advisors to the
emperor, these eunuchs could sway decisions made regarding appointments, edicts, and other courtly
matters.
In the “Ts’ao-t’ang Chi,” Po first describes his affinity for the scenery of his hut’s location, and his hope to live there forever. Completed in 818, Po’s hut was small, simple, and contained meager furnishings: “four wooden couches, two plain-colored screens, a lacquered lute, and two volumes each of the three teachings, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.” Master of his own time, relaxed and healthy, Po asks himself why his dwelling can instill in him such tranquillity and feelings of well-being. In answer, he carefully describes the immediate surroundings to the south, east, west, and north of his hut, which consists of the following list of attributes: a terrace, a pond, bamboo, white lotus and fish, a stony brook and a tree-lined path, canopy-like trees, and creeping shrubbery. Po gives a nod toward the cycles of the four seasons, and adds to his list tea plants and a running spring. He next mentions a waterfall and a water-conduit, comparing the water to silk, jade, and lutes. The northerly side of the hut abuts a cliff, and Po completes his environmental picture with a description of bamboo water-catchers and another poetic reference to water. Po describes the distant scenery as viewed from his dwelling: valley flowers, clouds, the moon, and mountain peaks. The scenery of his peak on Lu Shan, he concludes, is superior to any other part of the range.

In the “Ts’ao-t’ang Chi” Po compares his particular form of seclusion with that of famous recluses of the past. He notes that, “[a]lthough they lived a thousand years before my time, I can understand their acts of reclusion because of their satisfaction (in body and spirit).” Po turns his thoughts inward, and reflects upon his inclination toward transforming earth and water into pavilions and ponds. “When I encounter unlucky times,” he muses, “what else could I desire? Yet, I am restrained as a sinecure official, and my remaining burden of time has not been exhausted.” The pull of nature and the lure of retirement is offset by duty and circumstance — his official positions prevent Po from

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7 Po was, as Howard Levy notes, “preoccupied with a desire to withdraw from politics almost from the first time he passed the examinations” (Levy 1971, 44).
realizing his dream of seclusion. Come one day, he adds, "I can spend the rest of my life in this place, and fulfill my lifelong ambition."

Po concludes the "Ts’ao-t’ang Chi" with a description of the home-warming he had to celebrate his newly-built dwelling. Friends and monks are invited, and with the latter in mind, fruits and tea are served to the guests. And so ends the "Record of a Thatched Abode."

It is very likely that the "Ts’ao-t’ang Chi" served as a model of aspiration for reclusion to bureaucrats who were Confucian-oriented in office, Buddhist-inclined otherwise, and who may have felt trapped into their official roles. In light of such a paradigm, it is not impossible that Japanese writers held the "Ts’ao-t’ang Chi" up as a precedent to their own situations, and perhaps wrote their own works with Po's sentiments in mind. This will become clearer when we look at Po Chü-i as a model bureaucrat caught between Confucian and Buddhist expectations.

In a swing of political power, Po Chü-i's career fortunes favorably changed. In 819, the newly accorded Fourth Rank-Po left behind his Lu Shan hut. "... still toying with the idea of retiring altogether from official life ..." (Waley 131). In 820, Po was raised to Second Rank and a post in Ch’ang-an. At this time, Buddhism was increasingly well-received, and Confucianism lagged in popularity. As a result, notes Waley, "... a large section of the official classes, though they remained Confucian in their official outlook, made Buddhist philosophy their private solace and support ..." (142). Amongst Po Chü-i’s next official appointments was a choice sinecure (considering his inclination toward leisure) in Lo-yang — a time of pleasurable idleness, good health, and prolific writing.

After receiving an 829 sinecure in Lo-yang, Po Chü-i returned to his pond-side dwelling, where, due to a leisurely lifestyle with limited work demands, he wrote copiously. Among his writings at this time was the *fu* ("rhyme rhapsody"), "Ch’ih-shang p’ien" ("Around My Pond" [see Appendix for translation]). Po begins by describing the location and immediate landscape of his home and neighborhood, and the size of his
estate: "The land is about seventeen mou square.\textsuperscript{8} The buildings are on one-third of the area, the pond takes up one-fifth, and the bamboo covers one-ninth of the land. The islands, trees, bridges, and road are thus intertwined." He next describes his reason for placing a granary to the east, a library by the pond, and a music hall to the west. Po lists the aesthetic procurements that give him pride and pleasure: a rock of interesting formation from a Hang-chou mountain peak famous for its recluses; cranes from Hua-t'ing; a stone from Su-chou's T'ai-hu Lake; a trailing water chestnut, white lotuses, and a boat from Su-chou as well; and three blue-green rocks from Hung-nung for seats. Each element of Po's space of reclusion is thus carefully selected and placed into his constructed model of idealized nature. Po then lists sources of entertainment for his leisure-time: books, servants, dancers and musicians, wine, and a lute. He is surrounded by disciples, friends, and landscape — all conducive to idyllic pleasure and poetry composition.

In the next half of the "Ch'ih-shang p'ien," Po discusses his leisure-time. Natural elements — the pond, the moon, the lotuses and the cranes — all play backdrop to the human pastimes of drinking and lute playing. Po sends his musicians to an arbor on an island in his lake, and has them perform "Ni Ch'ang Yu I" ("Rainbow Robes"). Tipsy, Po contemplates the mist and bamboo groves, and inspired, he recites his own rhymed sentences. Po notes,

\begin{verbatim}
Knowing my place and knowing my limits,
I do not search beyond these.
\end{verbatim}

He compares himself to humble animals:

\begin{verbatim}
I am like a bird who picks a branch,
Briefly seeking the comfort of a nest.
I am like a turtle in a well,
Who knows nothing of the breadth of the ocean.
\end{verbatim}

Once again listing his sources of pleasure, Po exclaims,

\begin{verbatim}
All of these things I am fond of, and all of them are before me,
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{8} One mou is approximately 100 square meters.
and he ends with the words,

  How marvelous! How exceptional! —
  I will live like this until the end of my old age.

The "Ch’ih-shang p’ien," as we shall see, leaves its tell-tale mark on the Japanese writers I investigate.

During Po Chü-i’s lifetime, his faith in Buddhism grew progressively stronger, and this particular facet of his secular position underlies a note of repentance we will see affecting Japanese writers. Po’s life was peppered with relationships with female entertainers, the subject of numerous poems and letters. Jin’ichi Konishi tells us that the famous poet’s

  ... governing principle was to lead his public life as Po Chü-i, according to orthodox Confucianism, and as the private citizen Lo-t’ien, to live according to the rules of feng-liu [“elegance”]. ... Lo-t’ien had two singing-girls ... as mistresses. During his tenure as governor of Hang-chow (822–24) ... he formed a liaison with the most famous singing-girl in the region ... . The themes of drinking and singing-girls appear most often in shih [“poetry”] describing Po’s stay in Hangchow (1984, 133–134).

Konishi writes that Po regarded his “Friends” to be the zither, poetry, wine, and women (1984, 217). Pointing out that Po’s private-life behavior would have been frowned upon by orthodox Confucians, Konishi remarks upon the impact of Po’s four “Friends” in his secular poetry:

  By Confucian standards, such private poetry belonged to a lower dimension ... . Buddhism also took a dim view of such poetry, dismissing it as “frivolous language.” It was, to use Po’s own expression, no more than “wild words and fancy language” (1984, 217).

Po’s life style of less than exemplary behavior and poetry suggests that he did indeed have a lot to atone for. It is undoubtedly with this need for atonement in mind that in 834, Po donated his collected works to Chiang-chou’s Eastern Forest Monastery. In 839, Po
sent his collected works to a new Su-chou Buddhist reference library, with the added prayer Konishi refers to:

May the worldly writings of my present life, with all their excessive words and ornate phrases [J: kyōgen kigo], serve in future ages as the inspiration of hymns of praise extolling the Buddha's teachings, and turn the Wheel of Law forever (Plutschow 1978, 208).

We can see, then, Po's concern regarding his secular behavior and worldly writings as being a detriment to Buddhist salvation.

In 839, Po Chü-i suffered a crippling stroke. Waley tells us that Po turned to sutras as solace, especially the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, to which he compared his situation and health to that of Vimalakīrti. As well, notes Waley, Po commissioned two paintings: one of the Western Paradise of Amitābha, in an aim at rebirth, and one of the Paradise of Maitreya, the future Buddha. Once again, in 840 Po Chü-i sent his collected works and prayer to a monastery — this time to Hsiang-shan's new library. The following years, from 842 to 845 especially, China was rocked by strong anti-Buddhist restrictive measures. We do not know Po's reaction to this, as most of his work from these years was lost.

The preceding historization of Chinese reclusion traditions concentrates mainly upon the natures of a politically-inspired and a Buddhist-inspired act as practiced from about 1100 BC to 300 AD, and includes the example of Po Chü-i as a model of reclusion influential to the Japanese writers I focus upon in this paper. In the next section, I will examine the nature of political reclusion as practiced in Japan — the recipient and syncretizer of Chinese culture and traditions.
II

Politically Motivated Reclusion

While one can readily ascribe chronological stages to reclusion in Japanese literature, it is not so easy to categorize the motives behind the recluse’s actions — political, religious, aesthetic, or other. In order to understand the political motivation behind reclusion in pre-modern Japan, a brief political overview of the Nara (645–794), Heian, and Kamakura periods will be helpful.

Japan’s social and political organizations developed in leaps and bounds once it came into contact with the continental influences of Korea and China in the mid-sixth century. Japan received new technology and institutions, Confucian and Buddhist thought, and the concept of a centralized monarchy.\(^1\) In the early 600s, Japan avidly borrowed and adapted political, administrative, and governmental ideas, practices, and institutions from China. Japan now had an “emperor” and a new concept in rule, and the emperor-figure was infused first with Confucian-inspired notions: the ruler was a link between Heaven and the natural world, and his example of virtuous conduct could spell the difference between a smoothly running or a disastrous rule; and second, with Buddhist ideas: the emperor was the protector of the Buddhist faith, and his reverence toward and his propagation of this faith would positively affect his rule. The emperor now had philosophical clout behind his hereditary justification for authority.

The *ritsuryō* (“Penal and Civil Codes”) were promulgated in 701, laws which supported the monarchy and became the basis of bureaucracy. Modeled upon the T’ang central ministry, the *ritsuryō* established the origin of offices under the emperor’s jurisdiction.

\(^1\) The concept of a centralized monarchy in Japan being modeled upon Chinese traditions is a debatable point. I follow a line of argument exemplified by Peter Duus, who contends that the pre-Nara period Yamato court was fashioned upon the Chinese centralized monarchy (20–21).
Primogeniture was no longer officially recognized in court positions, and all appointments, excepting insei ("Office of the Retired Emperor"), were bestowed by the court. Nevertheless, in reality it was more the norm to appoint nobles according to their factional leanings and patronages, and officials could be summoned to or expelled from court at any time. The Princeton Companion succinctly describes the atmosphere of the court appointment system as one in which power and wealth animated its players, and notes that these men "were compulsively concerned with rank and status" (447). As a result, while men coveted appointments and rode on the coat-tails of connections, they were also affected by divisiveness and the nerve-wracking shifting balance of power. Position could be lost or gained overnight with the abdication of an emperor, and backing the wrong contender could ruin a man's career aspirations. The uncertainty of stability in one's court position inevitably created an aspect of the "frustrated bureaucrat," a figure who is prominent in the corpus of Japanese (and Chinese) recluse literature. Heijō (modern-day Nara), the capital city and home of the emperor, was modeled upon the T'ang capital Ch'ang-an, with the centrally and northerly located palace situated close to the governmental offices and ministries. The rest of the country was divided into provinces and further subdivided into districts, and each province was assigned a governor.

Monarchial Japan and its public officials, ruling from the newly established capital at Heijō, ran smoothly until the eighth century. However, for various reasons, the ritsuryō system suffered under the lingering effects of the older established norms of favoritism in bestowing rank and office, and allocating land. Problems arose, and the most insidious was the distribution of wealth between the capital and the provinces. The following Heian period was a time when politics and religion both supported and challenged each other.

The Heian period began with the 794 move of the capital from Heijō to Heiankyō under Emperor Kammu's leadership (r. 781–806). Kammu began a period of governmental revitalization and supported the new Tendai and Shingon Buddhist schools. John Hall notes that by the end of the first millennium, "[w]hile the prestige of the Heian court remained unchallenged for yet another three centuries [post ca. 840], the nature of Japanese
government and the style of aristocratic life underwent profound changes ..." (63). With the gradual eighth to eleventh century transition from the legal and administrative Taihō Code land allocation (based on a Chinese model and promulgated in 702) to the shōen ("estate") system with its private proprietorship and exemption from taxation and governmental administrative interference, the emperor's power and influence waned, and powerful families fought for supremacy. One such family was a branch of the Fujiwara clan, who steadily gained power in court affairs as statesmen and ministers. In marrying their daughters into the imperial family, the Fujiwara placed themselves into controlling positions as sesshō ("regents" [to child emperors]) and kanpaku ("regents" [to adult emperors]). Mototsune (836–891) was the first Fujiwara to become kanpaku, providing him with control behind the throne. By the late 940s, Mototsune's son Tadahira (880–949) and grandsons Saneyori (900–970) and Morosuke (908–960) held all three great ministries (Left, Right, and Central) between them. Among his other children, Morosuke fathered Koretada (924–972), Kanemichi (925–977), and Kaneie (929–999), and all four of these men were politically active figures during Yasutane's lifetime. The Fujiwara hegemony approached its peak under the auspices of Kanemichi and Kaneie, but it reached its apogee under Kaneie's fifth son, Michinaga (966–1027), and began its decline thereafter. Thus, with the changing power base, government became increasingly decentralized and patriarchal (Hall 66). By the mid-eleventh century, direct rule by the emperor was in reality only an ideal (Duus 27).

Prominent Fujiwara figures often patronized particular religious institutions, and promoted religious leaders of their own choosing. The institutions and their leaders reciprocated by supporting the Fujiwara — a powerful backing. We can see such institutional backing evidenced in Morosuke's maneuverings at Yokawa, the monastic community close by the head monastery of the Tendai school, Enryakuji. Morosuke attended popular

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2 Yokawa, developed in 831 by Priest Ennin (794–864), was in close proximity to Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei. It grew as a community under Priest Ryōgen (912–985) in the tenth century, and became an independent institution with its own priest's registrar in 972 (McMullin 139 n. 17 and 27).
debates between leading Buddhist schools, in which the up-and-coming Priest Ryōgen (912–985) was making a name for himself as a keen Tendai intellectual. Morosuke hoped for a healthy grandson who would become the next crown prince, and solicited Ryōgen’s services in prayer rituals. Ryōgen’s efforts were deemed successful. In 946, Morosuke contributed donations for the construction at Yokawa of a Hokke-zanmai-dō (“Hall for Recitation of the Lotus Sutra”). In 954, Morosuke and his oldest son Koretada participated in the dedication rituals for the Hokke-zanmai-dō, making a pact with Ryōgen as patron-ritualist. This pact was sealed in 957 when Morosuke’s son, known by his monastic name, Jinzen, entered the priesthood at Enryakuji. Jinzen succeeded Ryōgen as the head Tendai abbot at Enryakuji in 985. It was to this Yokawa section that Yasutane moved in 986 — a Tendai community whose members were closely linked, both religiously and politically, to the Fujiwara (McMullin 126–128).

Rivalry for access to the throne was not limited to the Fujiwara, and imperial lines such as the Minamoto, Taira, and Tachibana constantly challenged Fujiwara supremacy. In 1086, the insei system was established, and the Fujiwara faced tough competition with abdicating emperors who posed the threat of controlling imperial affairs from behind the throne. The Fujiwara maintained their supremacy by ridding the scene of the competition. Their methods were often devious and smacking of dirty politics, and the results amongst the victims was most often discontent.3 For example, a method preventing outsiders from court appointments was to exercise exclusivity in the Monjōshō, Heiankyo’s university system. The Fujiwara, as well as the Ōe and Sugawara clans, acted as university administrators and officials who monopolized positions in the four programs offered, and they limited the writing of exams to candidates of their choice. There was little chance for an outsider to advance in the university without the emperor’s intervention. Yasutane was a

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3 Examples of political discontent can be found in numerous sources. See, for instance, Michele Marra’s Aesthetics of Discontent; and Peter Wetzler’s Yoshishige no Yasutane: Lineage, Office, Learning, and Amida’s Pure Land.
victim of such restrictions in the training of bureaucrats.\(^4\) Success or failure in entering *Monjôshô* courses hinged upon family origins. Since all persons of Sixth Rank and below had to pass a university entrance exam, Wetzler surmises that because Yasutane’s father, Kamo no Tadayuki, was not elevated to the Fifth Rank until 952, Yasutane most likely had to secure the recommendation of a more highly placed official than his father in order to gain admission to the university (18–19). Yasutane’s rank assured his position in society as a noble, but excluded him from positions open only to the highest-ranked court *kugyô*.\(^5\) Besides that, he was limited in his choice of courses because of familial affiliations at the university. For example, the *Sandô* ("Accounting Course") was the domain of the Ôtsuki and Ôkura clans, and the *Myôbôdô* ("Law Course") was likewise restricted to the Koremune clan (Wetzler 23–25). One way out of such an exclusivity barrier was for a student to spend seven years as an advanced student in the *Myôkyôdô* ("Chinese Classics Course") and write an associated examination. Passing qualified the candidate for Sixth Rank and a related position, and the new official could subsequently be promoted to Fifth Rank. The Chinese Classics Course, however, came to be monopolized by the Nakahara clan. The *Monjôdô* ("Chinese Literature and History Course"), into which Yasutane gained entrance, was an offshoot of the Chinese Classics Course. The *Monjôdô* represented a means by which lower-ranking people could gain office and a higher rank. One usually did so as an "Official Student." Wetzler notes,

An Official Student [in the Chinese Literature and History Course] might have aspired to one of the following positions: Middle or Minor Controller

\(^4\) For a detailed discussion of Yasutane's university years, see Wetzler (16–44).

\(^5\) The splits in rank are characterized as follows: *kugyô* ("high nobility") of the first to third ranks, with the first being at the top and rarely assigned and the third coveted; *tenjôbîto* ("attendant nobility") of the fourth and fifth ranks; and *jige* ("lesser nobility") of the sixth to eighth ranks. The *kugyô* seldom numbered more than thirty, and they attended to the emperor. The *tenjôbîto*, however, acted as courtiers, and they usually numbered upwards of one hundred. The *jige* were the bureaucrats, the men who ran the government in Heiankyô and the Japanese provinces, and numbered in the hundreds. See *PC* (443–478).
[chūben], Senior Outer Secretary [daigeki], or Senior Historian [daishi].
These were extremely good offices for someone who did not come from one of
the uppermost families (e.g., the Fujiwara or Minamoto). The first two con-
ferred a Senior Fifth Rank, Upper and Lower Grades respectively, and the
latter two a Senior Sixth Rank Upper Grade. Other positions ... included ...
Junior Inner Secretary [which Yasutane attained] ... (34–35).
The Chinese Literature and History Course, however, also became restricted to the the
Ōe and the Sugawara clans. Wetzler comments, “Just as the Fujiwaras attempted to
monopolize certain high political offices, the Ōes and Sugawaras sought to insure their
positions in the Literature and History Academy” (36). Yasutane entered the university
at a time when only stipended students could take exams enabling them to become
advanced students — and stipended students were selected only by nomination, and
were limited to members of the Ōe and Sugawara clans. Only an imperial order — usually
passing through the hands of a Fujiwara before being presented to the emperor — could
qualify a person from outside of these restricting barriers. Such was the case for Yasutane
(Wetzler 40–41). I include one final comment by Wetzler:

[O]n at least one occasion [Yasutane] and several others, though of
acknowledged ability, were not allowed to become candidates for a post
because of their family backgrounds. At the university, scholarly and literary
achievement afforded recognition and advancement, but, as in the rest of
society, family origins were very important to an aspiring scholar-bureaucrat
too (42).
Yasutane was the victim of favoritism within the Heiankyō university system. Regarded
as brilliant by his instructors, he would nevertheless be prevented from advancing simply
because of his birth.

Since Yasutane was repeatedly frustrated in his aspirations to use his knowledge in
different official positions, it is possible for us to regard his turning to outlets such as his
Kangaku-e and writing of such tracts as the “Chiteiki” and Nihon Ōjo Gokuraku Ki
(Japanese Biographies of Those Reborn in Amida's Pure Land, ca. 984) as means by which to exercise his thwarted abilities. The "Chiteiki," as we will see, disguises a strong voice of discontent behind a philosophical and religious cloak. In 986 — four years after he wrote the "Chiteiki" and upon the heels of a failed political restoration — Yasutane rejected commitment to public life and became a recluse in totality, leaving society behind as a priest (shukke) and moving to Yokawa. Having taken the tonsure, Yasutane began the studies and practices of a novice priest in all aspects.

An instance of Fujiwara manipulation affected Minamoto no Kaneakira directly, and indirectly, Yasutane. As important a link as he is in the chain of transmission to Kamo no Chōmei's "Hōjiki," surprisingly few written records exist to tell us about Kaneakira. However, by exploring the lives and works of certain historical figures whom we do know affected him, we can piece together a rough sketch of his life.

Kaneakira's father, Daigo, (r. 897–930), ascended the throne at thirteen years of age. Daigo promoted the arts during his reign, and literature, as exemplified by Ki no Tsurayuki (ca. 872–945), enjoyed a period of flowering and prominence. Although the Engi Era (901–923) of Daigo's reign is regarded as a time of prosperity and courtly splendor, it was also a time of factionalism and rival contention to the throne (Hall 64–66). It was in such a social climate that nineteen year old Kaneakira's father died. Subsequently,
Kaneakira not only lost his father’s backing, he was also divested of his princely title and provided with the Minamoto surname and an income.8

Following the reign of Daigo were the emperors Suzaku (r. 930–946), Murakami (r. 946–967), Reizei (r. 967–969), and En-yū (r. 969–984). Reizei’s reign is memorable for its Anna no hen (“Anna Incident”) of 969, resulting in a Fujiwara hegemony controlling the court and throne. At this time, the next in line for succession was Prince Tamehira, son-in-law to Kaneakira’s older brother, Takaakira. The Fujiwara feared that they would lose the offices at the center of power, and that their rivals, the Minamoto, would gain the upper hand. The Fujiwara connived to have Tamehira’s younger half-brother, who was related to the Fujiwara through marriage, supercede Takaakira’s son-in-law. Their plan succeeded, and their machinations wreaked havoc — exiling key and potential opponents and creating dissent among the Minamoto. The plotting resulted in uncontested Fujiwara power, who installed their chosen Crown Prince designate on the throne as Emperor En-yū, and controlled the regency and chancellery positions (Wetzler 121).

Now that he had eliminated all potential opposition, Fujiwara Kanemichi controlled the court and emperor. However, problems arose when Kanemichi and his older brother Kaneie disputed the next regency. The younger Kanemichi held higher rank, but Kaneie proved to be a rather ruthless opponent. Many innocent bystanders suffered under this protracted battle for regency. Kanemichi struck Kaneie a blow by elevating Fujiwara Yoritada (924–989) to the position of sadaijin (“Minister of the Left”) — a post held at that time by Kaneakira — and the result was Kaneakira’s forced resignation and the

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8 A common practice when the son of an emperor was not in direct line for the throne. Kaneakira and his older brother Takaakira were both sons of Emperor Daigo. As they were not contenders for the throne, they were given the surname Minamoto and assigned court positions as officials. The powerless Kaneakira is thus best remembered today by his ceremonial title, the Former Princely Minister of Central Affairs. The particulars of this incident can be found in Wetzler (119–123).
resumption of his meaningless royal titles. The Fujiwara had exiled Takaakira and Kaneakira, both of whom were rather impotent in the power hierarchy, but nevertheless regarded as threats by birth. Thus, both disenfranchised men had reason to be discontent.

Yasutane regarded Kaneakira as his patron and mentor. As friends of long standing prior to and after Kaneakira’s banishment from court, Yasutane would also feel the repercussions of Kaneakira’s and Takaakira’s exiles. Yasutane ascribed Kaneakira with the authorship of five to six biographies in his Nihon Ōjō Gokuraku Ki, and Kaneakira also advised his friend on the overall work’s content. Yasutane appended Kaneakira’s recommended addition of Gyōgi’s biography with the following note:

When I, the Buddha’s disciple Jakushin, was in secular life I drafted this record and its preface, and made it into a scroll. Since becoming a monk I have been so occupied with the nenbutsu I have had time for little else, and I have ceased dipping my brush into ink. Recently I obtained information about five or six persons who achieved ōjō [“rebirth”], and entrusted the Prince of the Ministry of Central Affairs [= Kaneakira] to add them to the record, dealing with them in polished literary fashion. The Prince did not refuse, and set his brush to paper. The Prince had a dream that I should add Shōtoku Taishi and Gyōgi Bosatsu to this record. In the meantime, the Prince suddenly became ill, and was not able to complete recording them. Moved by his dream, I,

9 The jealous and angry Kaneie never lived on good terms with Kanemichi thereafter. When Kanemichi died in 977, Kaneie became udaijin, his daughter married Emperor En-yō, and in 987 he became sesshō to his grandson, Emperor Ichijō. When Yoritada died in 988, Kaneie became dajōdaijin (“Prime Minister”), and subsequently became kanpaku in 989 (Papinot, s.v. Fujiwara Kaneie).

10 Gyōgi (670–749) was a Korean-born priest who emigrated to Japan. He is remembered for spreading the Dharma (“Buddhist Law”) throughout the provinces, and his impetus behind building such things as dikes and bridges in rural areas. He greatly influenced Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749), who bestowed upon Gyōgi the title bosatsu.

11 Jakushin is the second name Yasutane adopted after taking the tonsure. He originally took the name Shinkaku.
Jakushin, investigated the histories and biographies by myself, and extracted accounts of the achievements of the two bodhisattvas (Kotas 76).

Scholars have as yet not been able to identify the “five or six” biographies Yasutane ascribes to Kaneakira, but for our purposes, the fact that Kaneakira and Yasutane were acquainted goes far toward explaining the close relationship between certain works produced by the two authors. Let us take a brief look at Yasutane and his “Chiteiki,” and then examine the relationship between the two men and their identically-titled works.

Yoshishige no Yasutane’s life reflects Heian society: on the one hand, in his family lineage, Confucian learning, and bureaucratic office, and on the other hand, in his Buddhist piety. A career man espousing proper conduct and correct government, Yasutane’s education and career seem to have created within him an ideological quandary culminating in his expressing political discontent and frustration, a reaction Marian Ury describes as “endemic among the literati of the middle and later Heian period” (1993, 368). If we are to understand the motivating forces behind Yasutane’s “Chiteiki,” we must first examine the impeti of his position in society, education, career, and religious beliefs.

Yasutane was one of four sons born to Kamo no Tadayuki. His lineage prior to Tadayuki is obscure — his mother’s identity is not known, and extant records only provide details about one brother, the older Kamo no Yasunori (917–977). Peter Wetzler suggests that Tadayuki may be a descendant of Kibi no Maro, once an udaijin (“Minister of the Right”) (18). Yasunori kept the family surname Kamo, but for some unknown reason, Yasutane and his younger brothers Yasuakira and Yasutō changed their surname to Yoshishige. Yasutane married and had children, but again, little information is available.12

12 Genealogical Table

| Kamo no Tadayuki — Mother’s name unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yasunori | Yasutane | Yasuakira | Yasutō |

(a.k.a. Mitsuyoshi or Mitsuhara)
Yasutane’s father was, as Wetzler so laconically puts it, insignificant. A scholar of *yin-yang* and divination, Tadayuki had his moment of glory with a prophecy that temporarily endeared him to the emperor, but he never merited notice beyond that occurrence. Tadayuki was raised to Fifth Rank, Lower Grade in 952, but only so that his son Yasutane could be raised to the same rank.\(^{13}\) Despite Tadayuki’s *yin-yang* studies, this scholarship was not to be the family tradition — none of his sons followed in his footsteps. Yasutane’s elder brother Yasunori was successful as a scholar and minor bureaucrat in another field, *wakan no gaku* (the study of literary Japanese using ornate Chinese words), and of his younger brothers, nothing is known. Yasutane and his brothers were most likely raised in Heiankyō.\(^{14}\)

Since Yasunori was the family heir, Yasutane had to select a career for himself. Among the options open to him as suitable careers within the Heian aristocratic system were *yin-yang* studies, Buddhist priesthood, or clerking as a minor provincial secretary. He ultimately chose to go to university and pursue a bureaucratic posting. Yasutane entered the *Monjōdo* course of the *Monjōshō* in 950 or 951. At the time, Murakami occupied the throne, and Fujiwara Morosuke — the father of Kaneakira’s nemeses Kanemichi and Kaneie — was Murakami’s father-in-law and head of the Fujiwara clan. It is likely that Yasutane had to write a university entrance exam, a requisite of candidates of the Sixth Rank or lower.\(^{15}\) Education was a mark of status and rank, and it also led to specific bureaucratic positions. Because of the Fujiwara-Sugawara-Ōe administrative monopolies in the *Monjōshō*, and also due to the Fujiwara influencing the outcome of the imperial edicts which could influence a candidate’s university entrance, family connections and birthright did more to further one’s education than ability. By the time Yasutane entered

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\(^{13}\) It was not considered proper for a son to supercede his father in rank while the father was alive.

\(^{14}\) Data in this paragraph derives from Wetzler (8–11).

\(^{15}\) As I pointed out earlier, Yasutane’s father was not elevated to Fifth Rank until 952, so Yasutane would have been of the Sixth Rank when he entered university. Candidates of Sixth Rank and below were not granted automatic entrance.
the Monjōshō, each course was the hereditary grounds of a particular clan, making entrance and exams exclusionist and territorial.

The Monjō course alone offered its students the highest possible rank and office. Four Confucian texts served as the foundation of the Monjō, providing students with idealized models of private and public behavior. The texts functioned as source material for copy and use within one's own written endeavors. Yasutane and his classmates also studied Buddhist texts, a minor diversion amongst the weightier Confucian learning, but one which was to profoundly affect Yasutane's future career and reclusion.

Sugawara no Fumitoki (899–981) was Yasutane's Monjō teacher, and the two men enjoyed a mentor-disciple relationship. Fumitoki regarded Yasutane as his best student and "one of the two great talents of the Tentoku and Ōwa Eras" (Wetzler 74). Yasutane excelled in the Monjō, passing all of his exams and climbing up the career ranks: uchi no goshodokoro ("Interior Palace Writing Office") ca. 961, kuni no jō ("Provincial Secretary") to Ōmi province in the early 970s, tutor of Prince Tomohira in 976, and shōnaiki ("Junior Inner Secretary") in 978. Socially active in courtly leisure-pursuits, Yasutane attended and even led poetry meetings. However, had he wanted to do so, he would have been frustrated in any desire to raise above his Fifth Rank, Lower Grade status. If a man in the position of Yasutane's rank and status aspired to greater political activity and academic pursuits, he could only despair at his inability to circumvent the Fujiwara-Sugawara-Ōe monopoly of the mid-tenth century's oligarchy.

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17 Sugawara no Fumitoki was a Doctor of Literature and History at the Monjōshō. For a detailed discussion of Fumitoki and his relationship to Yasutane and the court, see Wetzler (67–75).

The idea of the frustrated bureaucrat was a conventional literary theme that Japan inherited from China. Michele Marra takes this concept of the dissatisfied official and suggests a political-literary reading applicable to Yasutane. Marra contends that Yasutane should be included among the tenth century Heian nobility who were any one or combination of the following: forced out of power by the Fujiwara, disapproving of the state of affairs they saw around themselves, or critical of the political situation since the Anna Era (968–969) under the reign of Emperor Reizei. Marra goes so far as to say:

Following the traditions of those statesmen who, like Sugawara Michizane (845–903) believed in the value of a Confucian education, Yasutane attacked the unprincipled politics of the Fujiwara ... In Yasutane's Confucian framework of thought, the unwise politics of the Fujiwara led heaven to take revenge ... [and] for Yasutane, the process of historical development was less the product of inevitable necessity than the result of political miscalculations on the part of a single, powerful family (1991, 88–89).

Let us unpack this statement step-by-step. While Yasutane studied at the Monjōshō, Fujiwara Morosuke, udaijin in 947, reached his zenith. Morosuke controlled the government until 960, and then Fujiwara Saneyori held the reigns of power until 970. Saneyori filled, at various times, all of the positions of udaijin, saidaijin, dajōdaijin ("Prime Minister"), kanpaku, and sesshō by the time Emperor En-yū ascended the throne in 969. Under the ruling constraints of his two keepers, the prior emperor, Murakami, was confined to a life of artistic refinement and had little say in the political sphere. Morosuke's realm of influence extended far beyond Heiankyō — as far as the Buddhist Tendai school's stronghold of Mt. Hiei, and to the Kantō region in the east. Morosuke's grandson Reizei ascended the throne in 967. A contest ensued between three Fujiwara — Morosuke, Motokata (ca. 900–970), and Saneyori — to be the first to have a grandson through a union between a daughter and Reizei. Morosuke's grandson Norihira was not

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19 That is, when the Fujiwara instituted regency and chancellery and began their hegemony of power and control over the court and emperor.
the first-born, but because Morosuke was higher in rank and status than his brothers, his
grandson, Norihira, was named Crown Prince in 950. Morosuke, his daughter, and the
first-born grandson all died shortly thereafter. Yasutane’s mentor, Fumitoki, wrote at this
time, “‘When the old rules of propriety (li) are treated as though they are useless, and
are abandoned, surely there will be confusion and calamity’” (Wetzler 70). Fumitoki, and
his disciple Yasutane too, must have felt alarm at the Fujiwara brothers’ disregard for
tradition: ignoring the first born rights of Morosuke, and in naming the second-born
Norihira as crown prince. In a Confucian frame of thought, such political corruption invited
disaster.

Emperor En-yū was succeeded in 984 by seventeen year old Kazan (r. 985–986). Kazan’s ascension coincided with a marked political weakness brought about by squabbling between the Fujiwara brothers, Morosuke and Morotaka. The weakened imperial rule was now represented by the young Kazan, who was inexperienced and lax when it came to taking the initiative and using the Fujiwara tiff to his advantage. The opportunity for reform was ripe — especially, as Wetzler notes, if you were Confucian and had connections. Frederic Kotas describes the situation:

[T]he young emperor ... surrounded himself with scholar-bureaucrats who sought to reform the decadent politics of the day and reestablish the authority of the ritsuryō state. Yasutane was among those who took part in the short-lived and ill-fated reform movement (59).

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20 Genealogical Table: Upper case indicates emperors, number indicates imperial lineage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>62. MURAKAMI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hirohira</td>
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<tr>
<td>63. REIZEI</td>
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<td>Tamehira</td>
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<td>64. EN-YŪ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tomohira</td>
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<tr>
<td>65. KAZAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>67. SANJŌ</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

21 For a detailed discussion of the reform attempt during Kazan’s reign, see Wetzler (138–145).
Yasutane had no connections, but his friend and fellow Kangaku-e member Fujiwara Koreshige did. Officially ushōben ("Minor Controller of the Right") and kurōdo ("Imperial Secretary"), Fifth Rank, Koreshige hailed from a long line of Confucian scholars. Like Yasutane, he too had been employed as an imperial tutor. Koreshige was the instigator and leader of the reform attempt. Although the extent of Yasutane's participation is unclear, his involvement is undisputed. Koreshige, Emperor Kazan, and Fujiwara Yoshichika\(^{22}\) constituted the membership of what Wetzler deems "the kitchen cabinet" (143). The group drafted four edicts, each imbued with Confucian ideals. The Fujiwara reacted immediately and effectively rendered the edicts worthless: they repeatedly requested rewrites, boycotted the court (that is, effected reclusion), and did not respond to imperial summons. Wetzler writes, "Politically, Yoshichika, Koreshige and their supporters, even Emperor Kazan were 'frozen out,' eventually causing them to retire from lay life" (145). Two years into his reign and at nineteen years of age, Kazan abdicated and took religious vows. Fujiwara political machinations impelled Koreshige and Yoshichika to take tonsure as well — one day after Kazan. Yasutane had preceded his companions by two months, renouncing the world in the Fourth Month of 986 and retiring to Mt. Hiei's Yokawa precinct, first taking the name Shinkaku, and then changing it to Jakushin.\(^{23}\) The Kangaku-e temporarily disbanded at this time.

Yasutane was deeply involved in Jōdo ("Pure Land") Buddhist devotionalism.\(^{24}\) A mood of fear and uncertainty nurtured a rapid acceptance of Jōdo ideology — by Yasutane's time the Fujiwara power struggles, claims on the throne, sōhei ("warring

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\(^{22}\) As Kazan's uncle, Yoshichika was the emperor's closest maternal relative and advisor. Yoshichika was Fujiwara Koretada's son, and Koretada once hired Koreshiga as Yoshichika's tutor.

\(^{23}\) Koreshige and Yoshichika first took the names Goshin and Gonyō (with the character for "Go" the same as satori ["enlightenment"]), and then changed them to Jakushin and Jakukō (with the character for "Jaku" the same as the "Jaku" in Yasutane's name, Jakushin).

\(^{24}\) For a detailed description of prominent Heian and Kamakura Buddhist schools of thought, see Chapter Three, "Religiously Motivated Reclusion."
monks”), and general social anarchy were causing an atmosphere which was to escalate into chaos during the Kamakura period. Yasutane endured his social environment, but by no means remained unscathed. He rapidly accepted and adapted to Jōdo salvationism. Kotas describes Yasutane as “a guiding force behind a movement of Pure Land devotionalism among members of the Confucian-inspired bureaucracy of the government …” (54). Not only does this early mixing of Confucian and Buddhist studies surface in Yasutane’s writings and become pronounced as a conflict in his philosophical pursuits, it also figures in his founding of and participation in the Kangaku-e, a move which may be regarded as a result of his need to resolve and syncretize the two systems of thought.

The last years of Yasutane’s life were uneventful.25 He became involved in a religious organization similar to (and possibly modeled upon) the Kangaku-e known as the Nijago-zanmai-e (“Meditation Society of Twenty-five”). The Nijago-zanmai-e was most likely begun by Priest Genshin (942–1017), who was acquainted with Yasutane through Kangaku-e meetings. In 988 Genshin, Yasutane, and Yasutane’s only known disciple, Jakushō,26 travelled to Mt. Shosha in Harima province to visit the Amidist priest Shōkū. Yasutane then traveled through several provinces, a customary practice for new priests.27 Yasutane returned to Heiankyō in 991, but soon left again for Harima province, where he opened a small branch of Shōkū’s temple, and studied under the priest for several years. During this time, the powerful Fujiwara Michinaga reached his apogee, becoming sadaijin in 995. Yasutane returned to Heiankyō in 1002, and died shortly thereafter. Michinaga, also a lay-priest at the time, delivered a eulogy prepared by Ōe no Masahira. Wetzler points out that “[t]o be eulogized by [Michinaga] would have been a great honor” (Wetzler 168). Scholar, bureaucrat, and priest, Yasutane left behind a legacy.

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25 The following information derives from Wetzler (166–168).
26 He was Ōe no Sadamoto, an Imperial Secretary during Kazan’s reign.
27 This practice is known as angya (“pilgrimage,” “walking tour”).
Yasutane was a product of Jōdo Buddhist thought, and thus was more and more rejecting of worldly involvement. With Yasutane having a foot in each half of a dichotomy—this-worldly and other-worldly—our hardest judgment call is in gauging the depth of Yasutane's religious beliefs, Kangaku-e involvement, and his motives to become a priest. This measure of Yasutane's sincerity is important when we consider his motivations in writing the "Chiteiki." Was this essay a reflection of the Heian age's wavering spirit? Of indecision? Or was it perhaps a “compromise between eternal and temporal concerns?” (Kotas 62). Politics are undeniably one of the greatest factors behind Yasutane’s “Chiteiki.” Wetzler laconically summarizes in a few points that which I wholeheartedly agree with as Yasutane’s motivation in life: “[There are] three possible responses open to one filling the role of a Confucian scholar: protest, reform, and retirement. Yasutane tried them all” (136). Let us now examine Yasutane’s “Chiteiki,” and give this, his best remembered work, a close reading under the rubrics of political discontent and Confucian-Buddhist thought.

Many scholars claim that Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” is based solely on Po Chü-i’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” (“Around My Pond”), and could also possibly be modeled after Po’s “Ts’ao-t’ang Chi” (“Record of the Thatched Abode”).28 Po Chü-i was already well on his way to quasi-hero status in Japan, where he was known as Haku Kyoï or Haku Rakuten. His work is thought to have reached Japan as early as 838 (Wetzler 212), and in 845, the Priest Ennin29 returned home to Japan with a copy of Po’s collected works. Po’s work was immensely popular in Heian Japan. The attraction, writes Henry Wells, was the “impeccable form,... [the] integrity of the relation between form and content, and the singular warmth of Po’s imagery from nature” (Wells xxxi). Nature, in fact, was often contrasted to work by Po, in that nature was something he delighted in and work

28 Espousing this belief are, among others, Kaneko Hikijirō (1942 and 1943 [= 1977]), and also Konishi Jin’ichi (1986, 184–185).

29 Ennin (794–864, a.k.a. Jikaku Daishi). Ennin, who was Saichō’s (767–822, a.k.a. Dengyō Daishi) disciple, introduced esotericism into the Tendai Buddhist school.
something he despairs of, but his economic needs necessitated his bureaucratic positions. Elements of nature served as indicators of seasons and omens, and were symbolic first by analogy, and then by contrast, to the speaker's condition (Watson 123). Burton Watson notes that certain images of nature were conventional, and in T'ang China as in Heian Japan, the writer was "usually using the phenomena of nature for purposes of contrast with his own impermanent existence" (134). Japan's aristocracy of the Heian period was also enthralled by Po Chü-i's themes of social consciousness and moral instruction. Especially admired of Po Chü-i, who wrote both secular and religious works, was his "combination of Buddhist detachment and Confucian scorn for fame and material possessions ... mak[ing] much of the joys of idleness and simple living" (Watson 187). Po appealed to the Japanese aristocracy in general, and undoubtedly to Yasutane in particular, as someone who never wavered in his resolve to "withdraw once and for all from the world around him and to achieve salvation through a philosophic awareness of and resignation to the life-death process" (Levy 1976, xviii). Po Chü-i's aestheticization of the desire to go into reclusion thus had a great impact on Heian aristocracy.

Inspired by Po's collected works, Po-shih Ch'ang-ch'ing chi (E: The Collected Works of Po Chü-i During the Reign Period of Ch'iang-Ch'ing, compiled and edited by his friend, Yüan Chen, in 824-825), the Heian aristocracy first imitated, and then adapted Po's poetic style in creating works of their own. Heian poetry and prose, too, reflected his enormous influence in an abundance of allusions. The Po-shih Ch'ang-ch'ing chi not only contained Po's poetry, it also celebrated his life and inclinations, as articulated by Yüan. Notwithstanding the reasons outlined above, the fact that Po "strove for clarity and simplicity of language and beauty and harmony in rhythm" (Neinhauser 664), his immense popularity in Japan culminated in "[c]opies of his poems ... [being] sold in marketplaces and housed in the Imperial Secretariat of Japan" (Nienhauser 665). Po Chü-i's works would affect Japan's prose and poetry writers down through the ages, including Kaneakira and Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) (PC, s.v. Matsuo Bashō). However, our interest lies in his influence on Yasutane.
We can regard the “Chiteiki” primarily as Yasutane’s protest against the political atmosphere of the late 900s, but we should by no means restrict the “Chiteiki” to discontent alone. Along with its being a critique of social and political conditions, the work is also Yasutane’s blueprint for an ideal way of life. Let us examine his influences. Po Chü-i gave Yasutane a binary framework: on the one hand an orthodox and bureaucratic Confucian, and on the other hand, a worldly poet and recluse who chose to tonsei within society. Po’s model also accentuated a devout Buddhist who sought to ameliorate his sins — his “wild words and fancy language.” Although Yasutane, too, may have sought in some measure to atone for his secular actions, it is more likely that he saw in Po a paradigm of a person who took his bureaucratic skills and applied them to Buddhist ends.

Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” is both descriptive narration and socio-political criticism, “thinly veiled by literary allusions” (Levy 1976, xviii). The same could be said for Po’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” description of his Lo-yang home, his testament of dissatisfaction with political events in his life. Although each author had his own lifestyle and motivations for writing, Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” indeed resembles the framework of Po’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien.” The following parallels are the evident: Po and Yasutane each describe the location of their retirement homes, size specifications, details of their grounds and/or construction plans, a list of things that give them happiness, a description of their daily activities, and identical summations. Po declares, “[I] do what I want — I know of no other way,” and Yasutane says, “[I] love my home and know nothing else.” In their praise for seclusion, both men accept their positions in life and seem at peace with themselves. In his poem, Po muses,

\begin{quote}
Knowing my place and knowing my limits, 
I do not search beyond these. 
I am like a bird who picks a branch, 
Briefly seeking the comfort of a nest. 
I am like a turtle in a well, 
Who knows nothing of the breadth of the ocean.
\end{quote}

Yasutane is also reflective:
The snail is at ease in its shell, lice are happy in a garment’s seam. Quail nest in small branches with no desire for the great forests, and frogs dwell in wells without knowing the vastness of the broad ocean …. Office and rank I leave to fate ….30

Despite the obvious similarities, there are numerous differences between the two essays. For instance, each man extolls his way of life for different reasons: Po enjoys a complete stipended retirement after his sinecure as an imperial tutor, and Yasutane continues to work after buying his home, albeit at a very cheap price, as Wetzler suggests, from his former tutorial pupil, Prince Tomohira (Wetzler 186 n. 10). Po boasts of the beauty of his home and its location, but Yasutane laments his ostentatious pretensions and attacks the unprincipled people of eastern and northern Heiankyō. Po focuses on leisure and entertainment, but Yasutane devotes himself to Amida and study of the Classics. Thus, although we can safely say that Po Chü-i’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” undoubtedly inspired Yasutane’s “Chiteiki,” it seems clear that Yasutane used Po’s work simply as a framework, and fleshed it out with his own agenda.

Prince Kaneakira may also have contributed to the structure of Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” framework. Kaneakira’s Chinese compositions are included in the Honchō Monzui (Selected Literature of the Realm, comp. 1058–1064), a private collection compiled by Fujiwara Akihira31 which was based upon the Sung dynasty (960–1279) compilation, the T’ang Wen-ts’ui (Selected Literature of the T’ang Dynasty). The contents of the T’ang Wen-ts’ui include “thirty-eight categories ranging from poetry and biographies to sealed documents containing political opinions and suggestions and documents issued by the Great Council of State” (Abe 45–46). Abe Akio describes Kaneakira’s Chinese work as “indirectly critical of the government and society, but on the whole it is imitative and reveals little more than the prestige of writing in Chinese” (45). We can form our own

30 Translations of Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” are mine.

31 Akihira (989–1066) was a scholar and a poet of Chinese style compositions.

Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki,” like Yasutane’s, is a record of an event in his life. Men of the Heian period who wrote such records most often used *kanbun*, and these records usually described travels and stop-overs. In Kaneakira’s case, it is a bureaucrat’s description of his home. As with Yasutane’s “Chiteiki,” we can postulate that Kaneakira’s version was also based to a great extent on Po Chü-i’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien.” The most obvious similarity is that of location and landscape description. Po Chü-i begins his “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” by describing the neighborhood of his residence and the buildings on his grounds, which are located within a densely populated city. The estate Po describes is an idealized vision of a place accommodating both solitude and companionship. Kaneakira describes his home, pavilion, and entertainments, which were, it seems, modeled directly upon Po Chü-i’s — or described as such for their artistic effect. Kaneakira also includes directions, describing an arbor to the north of a curving pond, which is situated to the west of a small hill. As regards entertainment, Kaneakira writes, “I have a dozen or so musical instruments to be used for merrymaking.” Po and Kaneakira both listen to music amidst bamboo and mist by a moonlit and breeze-rippled pond. There are numerous examples of descriptive similarity between the “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” and Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki,” but the point is not exact reproduction. Rather, I wish to emphasize that Po Chü-i’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” served as a model of *idealized retirement* to Kaneakira. It is the theme of escape from society *within society* that Yasutane picks up and expands upon.

While Po Chü-i, Kaneakira, and Yasutane held in common the desire to build a place of reclusion within the city, posts as government officials, and high regard for literary pursuits, sincerity and literary convention colour each individual’s work. Po’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” is a testimony to his contentedness and delight in residing in his Lo-yang dwelling.

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32 Translations of Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki” are mine.
No longer in exile, he is capably employed in a nonworking, yet worthy and high position. He is free to pursue his poetry and his landscape artistry, and he has nothing to complain about with regard to his present situation and standing in government. Though Po may have cast a wary eye toward Ch’ang-an and its political see-saw, for the moment all was fine and right at his place by the pond. Kaneakira, on the other hand, was not so content. Although Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki” is not directly critical of the Fujiwara, it nevertheless contains a note of discontent with the “new” nobility. Kaneakira’s first lines color his entire “Chiteiki” in presenting both a problem and a solution:

Nobility and high government officials are preoccupied with their aspirations to rise [in rank]. Those who pursue fame and fortune do not have any sentiment [for anything other than what they are doing]. Those who are living in seclusion and do as they please can be free from worldly fame and can immerse themselves in natural beauty.

Kaneakira carefully veils his discontent in the “Chiteiki.” Abe Akio commented that Kaneakira’s kanbun works are “indirectly critical of the government and society, but on the whole ... imitative and reveal[ing] little more than the prestige of writing in Chinese” (45). As far as Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki” goes, I agree with Abe, in that the work is highly stylized and imitative of Po Chü-i’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien.”

Kaneakira was content in both his bureaucratic position and his home within Heiankyō, and did not seek to escape society. Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki” is his espousal of a particular form of reclusion: a home located within society. Yasutane echoes and amplifies Kaneakira’s ideation.

There is yet another aspect of reclusion required to complement our Japanese protagonists — that of Buddhist motivation. Let us now explore this topic, which I once held to be the sole inspiration behind Yasutane’s responses to the conflicts and compromises engendered by overlapping doctrines.
III

Religiously Motivated Reclusion

Overview of Pre-Modern Japanese Buddhism

As we will be exploring the religiously motivated reclusion that inspired, in part, Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” and Chōmei’s “Hōjōki,” let us first briefly examine the predominant schools and doctrinal changes of Buddhism in Japan during the eighth to thirteenth centuries. Especially important is the difference between what is known as jiriki ("dependence on oneself") and tariki ("dependence on another") practices, and the confusion that arises when an individual observes practices from more than one school of Buddhist thought.

Japan inherited Buddhism from the continent, a faith that had moved out of its originating country of India and across China before its introduction into Japan. The form of Buddhism that developed in eighth century Japan was an offshoot of T’ang dynasty practices, and it was out of this system of thought that the “Six Sects” of Nara Buddhism arose. Each of the Six Sects differed in its philosophical base, but held in common a belief in the doctrine of change — that everything is transient, and nothing remains the same. This idea of transience constitutes an antithesis to the rigid Han Confucian world-view, that is, “Heaven was not considered as the unvarying model for life on earth, but as an outward manifestation of universal evolution” (SJT v.1, 94).

The two most important schools of thought during the Heian period were Tendai (C: T’ien-t’ai) and Shingon. Seven years prior to the official move of the Japanese capital from Heijō to Heiankyō, Priest Saichō established a Mt. Hiei monastery in 788 as a Yakushi-
based institution. This monastic enclave, however, adopted Tendai as its doctrinal base upon Saichō's 805 return from a one year stay in China (where he had studied T'ien-t'ài doctrines), and the school flourished under Emperor Kammu's patronage (see SJT v.1, 112–113). Saichō's ideal was that the Tendai students at Mt. Hiei "should combine the religious dedication of the bodhisattva with the Confucian virtues of service to the State and society." Saichō based his Tendai philosophy on the Lotus Sutra, a text emphasizing "Oneness" and preaching enlightenment for all as innate ability — a contrast to a Nara school such as Hossō, which was highly hierarchical and exclusionary (SJT v.1, 113). The Lotus Sutra is important for its exposition of hōben, a concept of great interest as we see it expressed in Vimalakirti's paradigm of teaching sentient beings the Dharma, and in Chōmei's exemplary "Hōjiki." Tendai, then, began as an exoteric school intended for the public.

Kūkai (774–835) was another priest active just after the transition from the Nara to Heian periods. Kūkai traveled to China on the same 804 expedition as did Saichō, though on a different boat, and returned to Japan in 806 with Shingon teachings. His early training was in Confucian scholarship, and whereas Saichō is best remembered as an organizer, Kūkai is famous for his writings. The emperor granted Kūkai permission to build a monastery on Mt. Koya in 816, an institution which would become the center of the Shingon school (SJT v.1, 135). Whereas Tendai exotericism constituted the public

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1 Yakushi, the Buddha of Medicine, was noted for his healing powers.
2 SJT v.1, 127, from Dengyō Daishi (= Saichō) zenshō 1: 5–10.
3 Hōben (S: upāya): "Expedients, accommodations. A term expressing the pervasive Mahāyāna doctrine that the buddha devises innumerable means to adapt his teachings to different sentient beings ... . The parables in the Lotus Sutra ... encouraged the use of fiction as hōben, providing a Buddhist justification for literature against straitlaced moralists" (PC, s.v. Hōben). "The idea is that the various vehicles, even when they have resulted in sectarian developments, are compatible and fundamentally united on a deeper level. The different modes are the consequences of a genius for adaptability that translates the dharma into a variety of forms for a variety of people" (LaFleur 85).
teachings of Śākyamuni, Shingon epitomized esotericism, or secret teachings.\(^4\) Through
the meaning of ‘Shingon’, ("True Words"), we can see the importance the school
attributed to speech. Kōkai systematized Shingon teaching in Japan, in which the master-
disciple relationship was paramount for the transmission of teachings (see *SJT* v. 1, 135–
136).

Esotericism, not exclusive to the Shingon school, became very powerful in Japanese
Buddhism, reigning supreme on Mt. Kōya, and incorporating with Tendai’s “One Way”
principles. Saichō’s disciple Ennin (794–864) founded Tendai Esoterism (*Taimitsu*).
Ennin traveled to China in 838, and returned nine years later after studying with several
Tendai masters. When he returned to Mt. Hiei, Ennin promoted esoteric learnings and
introduced the practice of *nenbutsu*, the invocation of the Buddha Amida’s name, as a
means of gaining salvation (*SJT* v.1, 154).

Tendai and Shingon thought held that all people had the potential for Buddhahood.
Shingon stressed hierarchical stages, and although Tendai emphasized “Oneness,” in
practice rank and status were dominant in the aristocrats’ thoughts. Thus, we have in
these two schools a sense of exclusivity. We also have an emphasis on the *methods* for
attaining enlightenment: esoteric doctrines stressed that the individual’s participation,
*jiriki* ("self-effort"), spelled one’s salvation.

The concept of Amida’s Western Paradise derives from Northern Indian and Central
Asian Mahāyāna thought. Popular for centuries in China, Amida worship (“Amidism”)
underwent profound changes upon Japanese soil: whereas continental Amidism stressed
attainment of Buddhahood, Amidism representative of Japan’s twelfth and early thirteenth
centuries aimed at rebirth in the Pure Land.

\(^4\) Esoteric Buddhism is for the initiated, exoteric is for the public. Śākyamuni exemplifies esotericism in
that he preached “with the limitations of his audience in mind” (*SJT* v.1, 135), and esotericism when
the “teachings were voiced for his own enjoyment by Vairochana, the cosmic Buddha” (*ibid.*).
Amidism proved to be a light at the end of the tunnel for people despairing of the periods’ turbulence and the esoteric schools’ hierarchical tendencies. Amidism became a mass movement among Japan’s populace, with its attractions of salvation for all, and the means of salvation was nenbutsu — having also changed, from a meditative practice to one of repetitive oral recitation. Now, saying nenbutsu was enough to atone for your sins and gain entrance to Amida’s Pure Land.

The most important promulgator of Amidism was Genshin (942–1017), the harbinger of Jōdo Amida devotionalism. A Mt. Hiei monk, Genshin was certain that salvation was open to all, and he espoused complete trust in Amida’s saving powers (SJT v.1, 189). As a Tendai monk, Genshin believed that there were ten stages (jikkai) to rebirth, from hell to Buddhahood, and the essence of his religious motivation was, on one hand, a view of Hell in which people were sentenced with punishments suited to the crimes they committed, and on the other hand, a view of the Pure Land and Amida’s benevolent love. To this end, Genshin wrote the Ōjōyōsha (Essentials of Salvation, ca. 984), in which he graphically describes hell’s horrors and eloquently promotes the Pure Land. The Ōjōyōsha was widely-known in Japan during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Michele Marra notes,

With the tenth century, an entirely new spiritual awareness was highlighted in the ... Ōjōyōsha ... an anthology ... compiled in order to elucidate the practice of nenbutsu during the final reigns of defilement. In a vivid description of the Buddhist hells, Genshin showed the consequences of ignoring the two main tenets of Buddhism, the laws of impermanence (mujō) and of suffering (1991, 74). An offshoot of the Ōjōyōsha and similar later works was a new form of religious art depicting scenes ranging from the black side of hell, to raigō-zu, in which Amida and his welcoming retinue come to greet the spirit of the newly deceased to the Pure Land.

Hōnen (1133–1212), the next and final important figure in Pure Land Amidism, radically popularized belief in Amida’s saving powers in the late 1100s. Until Hōnen,
Amidism had not been distinguished as a separate school of Buddhist thought. Hōnen championed nenbutsu as a superior means of religious practice, and the only practice — the devotee placed his or her complete trust in Amida’s powers of salvation. The *Princeton Companion* describes Hōnen’s belief system as follows:

For Hōnen, faith in Amida was the ‘sole practice’ (*senju*) appropriate to the Latter Days of the Law [= *mappō*] rather than being a mere adjunct to meditation. ... The devotee was to rely solely upon the Other Power (*tariki*) of Amida rather than on the ego-centered Self-Power (*jiriki*) of the non-nembutsu sects ... (374).

Hōnen’s Amidism thus advocated *tariki*, the flip side of Tendai’s *jiriki*, with the practitioner depending on Amida’s saving power rather than his own efforts. A person’s anxieties regarding his prospects for a favorable rebirth in the Pure Land created a willingness to utilize any method to escape the *rokudō* cycle of rebirth. Another development of escape from rebirth was the notion of the Western Paradise of Amida as a metaphysical seventh level beyond the lower six. LaFleur notes,

[The Western Paradise of Amida] was conceived of as the locus of *nirvāṇa*; all the original six were, by contrast, the world of *samsara*. Those reborn into the Pure Land need never again be reborn in any of the *rokudō*, having been pulled out of them through the divine power of the Amida Buddha (51).

Thus, two separate and distinct methods of Buddhist practice developed from the Tendai tradition and were promoted by Hōnen in his Pure Land Amidism. In *jiriki*, the earlier method, meditation was the focus of practice and devotion to Amida was emphasized as an aid to contemplation. *Jiriki* worked fine in an optimistic setting, where one could be at

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5 *Rokudō*: the “Six Paths,” or levels of rebirth include (from highest to lowest): gods, humans, *ashura* (“*asura*, titans, martial heroes”), animals, hungry ghosts, and creatures from hell.

6 *Samsara*: “The cycle of birth and death; that is, life as experienced by living, beings under the influence of ignorance, not any sort of objective world external to the persons experiencing it” (Thurman 144).
least partly assured of merit-gathering and salvation. But with the threat and reality of mappō’s doomed age, personal efforts were regarded with pessimism as futile exertions. Thus, we have the onset of the appeal of the idea of Western Paradise and Amida’s powers of salvation, emphasizing reliance-on-another, the Buddha Amida, where the devotee merely had to intone the name of Amida for rescue during the mappō age. Following Hōnen’s teachings, then, Jōdo followers depended entirely on Amida’s benevolence, and jiriki came to be considered a useless effort. A Pure Land practitioner could now hope for both entry into the Pure Land as an escape from the cycle of rebirth, and enlightenment. The Jōdo devotee saw karma as cancelable, not inexorable, and the means to transcend the law of karma was through nenbutsu (PC 368–376).

Hōnen, a prolific writer of religious treatises, sought to make Jōdo accessible to all walks of life. The Princeton Companion notes that, after suffering condemnation and exile for his beliefs, Hōnen’s views were not met with success until after his death:

Hōnen’s message was eagerly received by courtiers and warriors, farmers and prostitutes. People of all classes found in his teaching a clarity and hope amid the chaos of the day ... . The Pure Land movement by Hōnen was a major influence on Japanese religion, society, and literature for centuries to come (166).

Thus, in light of the dismal undercurrents accompanying the instability and calamity of the doom-laden mappō years, Jōdo offered a form of salvation open to all people through the chanting of the name of the Amida Buddha.

Buddhism in Japan was not merely successive stages of development or regular cyclical patterns of rise to decline. Doctrines shared points across schools, and many schools also co-existed with notable overlaps. It is out of this multiplicity of thought and practice that we see the making of personal belief structures, and representative of such are Yasutane and Chōmei. With the various co-existing Buddhist schools and doctrinal

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7 *Karma*: The sum of a person’s actions in a previous existence, which decides his or her future fate.
changes during the Heian and Kamakura periods, many devotees found themselves mixing ideologies and practices.

A Late Heian—Early Kamakura Buddhist devotee may have found himself attracted to practices in both the Tendai and Jōdo schools. But, oppositions existed in matters of *jiriki* self-reliance or *tariki* reliance-on-another, meditation versus *nenbutsu*. Whether conscious of a conflict or not, the pull between the two schools had the potential to confuse the practitioner, or leave him unsure about his devotional preferences. Numerous pre-modern Japanese literary works reflect such indecision, and again, foremost among them are Yasutane and Chōmei. Let us examine their vacillations.
Yoshishige no Yasutane and his Religious Beliefs

There are two noteworthy points for us to remember about Amidism in Yasutane’s lifetime. Amida’s Pure Land was a concept present in Japanese thought since the seventh century, yet

...[a]lthough Pure Land sutras were studied and prayers offered to Amida, especially on behalf of departed friends and relatives appealing for their rebirth in the Pure Land, there appears to have been little concern for the basic principles of the Pure Land faith (Wetzler 76).

In contrast to this, Gonkyō Jōdo, the Pure Land faith, was based on the realization that humans lived in a transient (mujō), polluted world, and adherents yearned for salvation through rebirth in Amida’s Pure Land. This Kamakura concept was missing during the Nara and Heian periods. When Tendai’s Ennin returned from China in 847, he brought fa-la (J: hōrō) style nenbutsu, which was the practice of 90-day unceasing meditation. This nenbutsu was not a means toward salvation, rather, it was a way of pacifying the heart and affirming the truth of the Dharma. It was this hōrō form of nenbutsu that was popular in Yasutane’s lifetime. Importantly, Yasutane preceded the practice of tariki. His Buddhist practices were based solely on jiriki — personal effort as a means to exonerate sin and gain entrance to Amida’s Pure Land.

The second point of importance with regard to the dominant religious thought in the late tenth century is the bifurcation in place of practice. On one hand, there was the formal temple setting, which had in the past been predominantly sponsored by the state or powerful political families for their own benefit. On the other hand, a private or household form of worship was popular. In contrast to temple Buddhism, which tended toward exclusionistic practices within the upper aristocracy, the home environment represented the setting for devotion among the lower ranks. Yasutane exemplifies this split in his “Chiteiki”: “When I go out I wear grass-green robes. When I am at home, I wear a white
hemp robe ... 8 First I wash my hands and rinse my mouth, and then I go to the Western Hall, where I call the name of Amida Buddha and recite the *Lotus Sutra.* Excluded from upper aristocracy, and as a man inclined toward reclusion at home, the home environment as a setting for devotion was a place befitting the Sixth Rank Yasutane.

In the mid-tenth century, Pure Land Amidism spread in society as a response to the growing opposition to Mt. Hiei’s aristocratic exclusivism. Mt. Hiei’s monks split into factions — the Mt. Hiei group favored catering to the aristocratic population, and the dissidents who disassociated themselves from Mt. Hiei favored the spread of Amidism in society. Where did Yasutane fit into all of these divisions? Somewhere in between. Yasutane was highly conscious of his rank and status, and as a bureaucrat frustrated by Fujiwara political control, he could only dream of aspiring to greater heights in his career. Not alone in his disallusionment, Yasutane and nineteen other like-minded and status-conscious graduates of the *Monjōshō* joined together in 964 to form the *Kangaku-e* group, meeting bi-annually with Enryakuji Tendai priests. These men discussed and wrote poems based on the *Lotus Sutra*, and practiced *hōrō*-style *nenbutsu*. Wetzler views the *Kangaku-e* members’ regard for *nenbutsu* as being close to the late 800s concept of it as having magical powers. The *Kangaku-e* had numerous precedents in China, including the *Pai-lien she* (“White Lotus Society”), *Chiang-kuan [she]* (“Lectures and Contemplation [Society]”), and Po Chü-i’s *Hsiang-huo she* (“Incense and Torch-light Society”) (Wetzler 94–95). *Kangaku-e* members shared in common discontent and strong convictions. As Wetzler notes, “The system that nourished a scholar-bureaucrat also frustrated him and stifled positive compensatory action. It was at this point that Pure Land Buddhism came to have meaning in the lives of these aristocrats” (102). Highly aware of their temporal existence, Yasutane and the other *Kangaku-e* members turned toward the promise of salvation through rebirth in Amida’s Pure Land — personal efforts undertaken as a bureaucrat in society, rather than the later Amidist idea of *tariki* salvation.

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8 Men of the Sixth Rank wore robes with green sleeves. The white hemp robe signifies a priest.
Inspired by his faith in the Western Paradise, Yasutane wrote the *Nihon Ōjō Gokuraku Ki* (hereinafter, *Ōjō*). In discussing the *Ōjō*, Wetzler is of the opinion that the biographies are about the intellectual and spiritual boundaries imposed upon Heian aristocrats by birth and education (162–163). Wetzler astutely points out the way in which each story reflects its hero in society, thus showing Yasutane’s “conception of the importance of status in the cosmos” (163). Indeed, Yasutane does relate his social environment and historic legacy to a reality based on rebirth in the Pure Land, and he deems *karma* to be the basis for an individual’s status in society.

To recapitulate, Yasutane, it seems, was trying to find a way to overcome the restrictions imposed upon an individual’s quest for salvation by the hierarchical tendencies of the Tendai sect. In Amidism, Yasutane found support that convinced him of the possibility of rebirth in the Western Paradise. As well, Amidism allowed Yasutane to seek rebirth without foresaking his career and social ties. With respect to Yasutane’s religious ideology, we must next ask ourselves how Yasutane created and expressed a personal belief structure reflecting his Confucian and Buddhist philosophies. I see Yasutane’s 982 “Chiteiki” as his personal vehicle for expressing such philosophical, religious, and social ideas or queries.

In this paper’s “Introduction,” I described my arguments in “A Study” and provided background information on the potential for conflict between Confucian ritual with its behavioral prescriptives, and Buddhism with its asceticism. Indeed, Confucianism and Buddhism existed side-by-side during the Heian and Kamakura periods, but there was a definite axis: Confucianism predominated at court, and Buddhism prevailed at home. Kaneakira’s and Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” each demonstrate that sometimes these ethics of court and home overlapped. Yet it is not necessarily the case that the aristocratic class of the Heian or Kamakura periods recognized the potential philosophical conflicts as a dichotomy, or as problematic. We can say, though, that the contradictions and conflicts often created confusion and ambiguity — conscious or not — and that these emotions were often expressed in a literary venue. We will focus on a crucial aspect of this
Confucian-Buddhist "conflict": How, as a responsible Confucian, could one resolve the conflict between being an accountable member of society, and as a devout Buddhist, withdrawing from society as a vehicle for personal salvation?

In answer, let us turn back to the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*. Richard Mather itemizes the VNS's points of interest, and subsequently shows us how this sutra contributed to the resolution of several areas of Confucian-Buddhist philosophical disagreement (1968). Mather's first point is based upon the possible contradictions between the Confucian ideal of committing oneself to duty and public life, and the Buddhist ideal of taking the tonsure and leaving society. Mather contends that the layman Vimalakīrti resolved the public servant-recluse conflict by setting his own example: remaining in society while practicing reclusion in his mind. In the VNS story, when Śākyamuni requests of his disciples that one of them visit the ailing Vimalakīrti, they each defer with an explanation based on their having been outwitted by Vimalakīrti's superior skills.9 Examples of Vimalakīrti's oral prowess promote the practice of meditation, and the disciples are advised to reject the quest of Hinayāna personal liberation in order to become a bodhisattva through Mahāyāna practice. More specifically, the VNS teaches those who practice Hinayāna how to reach nirvāṇa by developing a Mahāyāna mind. As Mather notes, the "bodhisattva ideal which the Vimalakīrti championed so eloquently could be followed ... each in his own way, without any necessity of opposing one another" (73).

Just as the disciple is advised how to reconcile the conflict between staying at home and leaving home for religious purposes, Vimalakīrti provides a model for Confucians who wish to practice Buddhism how to resolve the dichotomy: by metaphorically becoming a

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9 This is not just a matter of wit and debating ability. Mather emphasizes the role of Vimalakīrti's promotion of the "superior" Mahāyāna doctrine over the disciples' "inferior" Hinayānist views. Mather declares this to be an "attack on [the] Hinayānist ideal of personal salvation," and that the Hinayānist view is expressed in the VNS through Śākyamuni's disciple Śāriputra — a counterpoint to Vimalakīrti. See Mather (62).
hermit in the mind only, while living in society and involved in daily activities — a mixing of Confucian and Buddhist ideals.

The idea of leaving home in the mind is not a concept unique to the VNS or to the resolution of Confucian-Buddhist ideals. The Chuang Tzu was critical of the recluse and praised the man who could lose himself among people, the man "who creates his own wilderness wherever he may be through the loftiness and detachment of his mind" (Watson 74). We find such an ideal in Tsung Ping (375–443) and his treatise on visual art and the theory of landscape painting. Tsung's "Hua shan-shui hsü" ("Introduction to Painting Landscape," ca. 440) exemplifies a Taoist approach to landscape painting (see Bush). Tsung was a noted recluse, mountaineer, and devout Buddhist layman who studied under Hui-yüan (344–416/7), a Mount Lu abbot of the Eastern Forest Monastery. A member of the Pai-lien she before the great vow to Amida was taken, Tsung consistently refused prominent official positions, content to practice his religion and art. When he became too old to traverse his beloved mountains, Tsung exhibited detachment and purification in stasis. Bush describes his act, in which natural landscape functions of an object of meditation:

When [he could no longer travel] because of his infirmities, Tsung traveled in his mind through painted scenery, meditating in front of his own landscapes.

The experience of nature promoted a detachment from worldly concerns and reinforced the purification of the karmic spirit or immortal soul (133).

Sources of Chinese Tradition describes Taoism as inspirational in the Chinese artistic ideal, in which the guiding principles arose during the Chin dynasty (265–420), a period of ... renewed interest in the world of nature and the spirit. The prevailing intellectual mood was thus especially congenial to the individualism, naturalism, and mysticism of Taoism, which, complemented in certain respects by Buddhism, in turn stimulated creative efforts in the realm of art (252).

It was from these circumstances that main branches of Chinese painting, including landscape, developed (SCT v.1, 252). Taoism grew in popularity, and in concert, "the Taoist
glorification of nature opened a new vista to artists and imbued them with a new sense of freedom. ... The harmony of the human spirit and the spirit of nature became the ultimate goal of Chinese art” (ibid.). Landscape as an aid to contemplation grew out of an appreciative viewing of scenery “as a kind of religious contemplation of Reality” (Watson 82). Tsung exemplifies the function of painting as a “handmaid” of religion, wherein the aesthetic-experience is used toward Buddhist ends (Bush 133). In Tsung we find the notion that “painting must represent not only the outward form of nature, but must capture and embody an inner spirit which binds man to the world of hills and streams in mystical harmony ....” (SCT v.1, 253). Tsung frequently quoted from Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist works in his writings, notes Bush, and with regard to his Taoist influence, Bush quotes Nakamura Shigeo in describing landscape-meditation as “‘Buddhist thought dressed in Neo-Taoist garb and supported by references to the Confucian Analects’” (134). Bush comments that “the Shadow or reflection of the Buddha’s transitory body was an effective representation of his Reality, the dharmakāya. For Tsung, the painted landscape may have stood in a similar relation to nature and ultimately to the Tao” (Bush 143). In effect, Tsung’s metaphorical travelling in the mind while ensconced in the home was a concept which advocated making use of a natural setting as an aid toward the attainment of enlightenment. Tsung, who metaphorically travelled in bed and “considered painted scenery to be as effective an aid to meditation as the natural landscape” (Bush 137), exemplifies the notion of visualizing the Tao as a means of purifying the mind.

Bush connects aspects of Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist concepts. *Li* is “truth,” that which gives validity to an image, a lived absolute as opposed to an abstract concept. Bush describes its justification and highest achievement as the mystical experience (142). *Lei* is the correspondence between real things and created images. *Ling* is spiritual intelligence or will, which leads to reincarnation. Without *ling* things die or disintegrate. *Ling* is sometimes referred to as the soul, the numinous, or the ethereal. Bush describes *li, lei* and *ling* as concepts of importance to Tsung, which informed his treatise and supported his mind-travelling through painted scenery. Tsung’s essay would have been
accessible to Yasutane and Chômei, and the idea of landscape as a suitable object of meditation would also have been known to them. In fact, the tradition of “mind-traveling” was not uncommon during the Heian period, and is indeed a component of Yasutane’s “Chiteiki.” This syncretic philosophical idea will also make itself evident when we examine Chômei’s “Hôjöki” in more detail.

In Mather’s elucidation of the Vimalakîrti Nirdeśa Sûtra’s points of interest to Confucian-Buddhists, he enlarges upon the Confucian principles of filial piety and familial obligation and the Buddhist practices of tonsei or shukke. In the VNS, Vimalakîrti advises the son of Šâkyamuni to obtain parental consent before leaving home to take his religious vows. The Chinese Buddhists took interest in Confucian concepts of filial piety: after all, in light of Confucian ideals, the act of leaving home to become a Buddhist priest would be considered extremely unfilial.10 The VNS offered a model of resolution to Confucians who wished to take the tonsure, with Vimalakîrti becoming a monk while remaining a householder. The Chinese Buddhists interpreted Vimalakîrti’s act in the following way: there was no need to physically leave home when the world could be renounced and enlightenment could be attained at home.

Mather also points out the VNS’s contributions toward the Chinese gentry Buddhist’s syncretism of philosophies. In Mather’s account, he notes that the portions of text most often quoted from the VNS indicate that the universality and flexibility of the sutra’s outlook appealed to Chinese intellectuals, and that “there was no imposition of conformity to an alien mode of thought” (66). The Chinese considered the “One Voice” of the VNS to symbolize a reconciliation of differences between Buddhism and other religious ideas in China. The VNS thus reinforced religious syncretism.

10 Šâkyamuni’s path to enlightenment could be regarded as unfilial in Confucian thought: Šâkyamuni deserted his wife and infant son at home when he went into seclusion in the woods. But upon attaining enlightenment, Šâkyamuni, as did Vimalakîrti, elected to remain in society in order to use expedient means (hôben) to hasten enlightenment for other sentient beings.
The VNS was widely known in Japan and touched many lives in as many aspects. Commentaries were written, and Vimalakīrti was both emulated in literary works and made the subject of innumerable ink paintings. One important product of the VNS in Japan was a Buddhist ritual. Fujiwara Kamatari (614–669) began the “Vimalakīrti Service” in 656, after having the VNS read to him when he had been ill. Although the “Vimalakīrti Service,” a complex doctrinal debate, was fundamentally a personal Fujiwara-Kōfukuji ritual, it became an integral annual Buddhist service for the general temple population well into the 1400s save for a few periods during national unrest. Emperor Reizei and his children Kazan and Sonshi were Kamatari’s descendants, and it is likely that their contemporary, Yasutane, was familiar with the “Vimalakīrti Service.” The VNS was also promoted in Japan by the Yuimagyo Gisho (Commentary on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra, ca. 605), one of three sutra discussions traditionally accredited to Shōtoku Taishi (574–622).

Although Wetzler and Kotas, both of whom have excellent dissertations on the life and writings of Yasutane, omit any mention of the VNS and the important role it played toward Yasutane’s resolution of potential Confucian-Buddhist conflicts, I regard the VNS as a vital influence behind Yasutane’s reclusion and writing of the “Chiteiki.” The polarity between Confucianism as a theoretical prescription for good society, and Buddhism as a vehicle for personal salvation, was predominant in mid to late tenth century Japan, affecting men such as Kaneakira and Yasutane. As well, these two men and many others

11 The Kōfukuji was the Fujiwara ujidera, that is, the traditional clan monastery, until the late ninth century when Fujiwara sub-branches adopted separate ujidera. See McMullin for a detailed description (128).
12 For a detailed description of the “Vimalakīrti Service” and its historical circumstances, see Tyler (79–80).
13 Reizei (950–1011, r. 967–969), Kazan (968–1008, r. 984–986), Sonshi (966–985).
14 The Sangyō Gisho (Commentaries on Three Sūtras) consist of the Yuimagyo Gisho, the Shōmangyō Gisho (Commentary on the Queen Srīmāla Sūtra), and the Hokkekyō Gisho (Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra).
were influenced by the conflicts arising between both social duty and reclusion, and filiality versus taking the tonsure. The dual recognition and practice of Confucian and Buddhist philosophies can evoke a conflict in ethics. The combined effects of Confucian tradition and Heian convention steered and fueled Yasutane’s religious beliefs and act of reclusion, and indeed, it is such a clash that informs a large part of Yasutane’s philosophical struggle in the “Chiteiki.”

The VNS provided a Confucian-Buddhist such as Yasutane with an example of syncretizing the public servant-reclusion duality — the filial Confucian could attain enlightenment at home. As for Yasutane, his concern was less with dichotomy and more with the degree of conflict between reclusion and being a responsible member of society. Considering Yasutane’s Yokawa association with the Fujiwara-backed court, the “Vimalakīrti Service,” the Yuimagyo Gisho, and the availability of translations of the VNS itself, it is fairly safe for us to postulate that Yasutane used the VNS to order his life and beliefs in much the same manner as the gentry Buddhists of China — Po Chü-i included. Yasutane’s philosophical syncretism becomes apparent in his harmonious mixing of Confucian ethics and Buddhist beliefs in the “Chiteiki.”

Yasutane begins the “Chiteiki” with a twenty year retrospective of life within society, and ends it with a contrasting description of his later life of home-seclusion. Yasutane first describes the degeneration of the western side of Heiankyō: the vast emigration of people to the east without a reciprocal movement of people to the west. Heiankyō was modeled upon the layout of the T’ang dynasty capital, Ch’ang-an, with the imperial palace situated north and center, heading a wide avenue that ran north to south and symmetrically divided the city into western and eastern sections. In an ideal Confucian city under the benevolent rule of the monarch and good government, the two halves of the city would be expected to grow evenly and in unison. However, as we see in the “Chiteiki,” Heiankyō’s western section was unpopular, resulting in an urban sprawl to the east and north. Heiankyō’s growth was out of balance, and in Confucian thought, this would not happen if the Emperor was in tune with Heaven. Yasutane cites evidence
of decay in the west, with houses going to ruin and not being replaced. In his explanation for the decay, he notes, "It is in this manner that Heaven is destroying the western section of the capital. Clearly it is not the fault of man." The asymmetrical growth of Heiankyō and the city's confusion and disorder would normally be interpreted by Confucians as catastrophes or omens representing the warnings of Heaven to an errant emperor. As Kenneth Ch'en notes, "Confucianists believed that abnormal events in the human world caused heaven to manifest abnormal phenomena in the natural world" (22). In Confucian thought, then, the manifestation of disorder in the city would be interpreted as a heavenly warning to the erring humans on earth.

Yasutane continues to describe the conditions in the eastern half of the capital, and in so doing, he begins changing to a more Confucian-oriented interpretation of cause, seeing the manifestation of disorder as a heavenly warning against misconduct. After all, Heaven is never wrong — but Heaven is sending a message to the people who are wrong.

The popular east elicits the status-conscious Yasutane's comments on the irregular mixing of different social status within the same living space:

In the eastern section of the capital northeast and northwest of Shijō Avenue, there are great crowds of people, regardless of wealth or poverty. Towering mansions are aligned by gates and connected by halls, and smaller houses are separated by walls, their eaves overlapping.

Yasutane continues by depicting the individual sufferings of the people who inhabit this coveted eastern sector, and the dangers and fears in their lives. Perhaps we are seeing Yasutane's view of himself when he cites the afflictions of circumstance and social position, and the resulting emotional turmoil. Yasutane could be seen as one of the poorer people he describes, who are anxious in sharing their living space with the rich: they dare not repair their dwellings nor voice their emotions; they live in fear, and their "hearts and minds are never at ease. They are just like sparrows in the vicinity of hawks or falcons." Some people choose to live along the Kamo River, where they lose their homes to floods,
and other people move north to the fields where they die of drought. Yasutane laments the inanities of these people, who are determined to move to the eastern section despite the risks to themselves and the problems of flooding and drought they create for others, and asks, "Are there not any empty lands within the two sections of the capital? Why are people so stubborn?" Thus, while Yasutane condemns the actions of people who do not know their place, he teaches himself contentment with his own station in life.

Yasutane describes the movement of people to the east and north of the Kamo River, and the flooding that their activities give rise to. He bemoans the inability of the officials to prevent damage ("Why is it that the officials don't stop and prohibit this?") when laws already exist that state willful destruction of the Kamo area is illegal — a matter close to the heart of a Confucian. It was the official's duty to respect his monarch and set himself up as a model of virtuous conduct, and it was the duty of the masses to respect the official's authority. When rule was not harmonious, Heavenly Mandate (J: tennrei, C: t'ien-ming) became a factor. Yasutane focuses on the degeneration of the disorderly Heiankyō society — not the governing body or emperor — and wonders, "Is this the will of Heaven, or is it the madness of men themselves?" It is the people who are causing the problems: government laws exist and officials attempt to enforce them, but the stubborn people ignore the authorities. With the Confucian ideal that man's actions flow between heaven and earth and cause reciprocal manifestations, Yasutane's "madness of men" refers to his view of the inanity of people who, having been warned by Heaven with floods and droughts to stop, persist in their evil and doom all to ruin.

In the latter half of the "Chiteiki," Yasutane describes his acquisition of a home and his choice of location, basing his site selection on divination, and alluding to models in the Chinese statesmen Hsiao Ho and Chung Ch'ang-t'ung.15 In the manner of an ideal

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15 Divination was based on the Chinese practice of geomancy, in which auspicious directions, locations, and positions were decided, usually by specialists. Note that Yasutane's father had been a scholar of yin-yang and divination.
Confucian official, Yasutane provides the masses (of stubborn and erring people) with an example of “correct behavior,” choosing his property in a deserted western section of Heiankyō, and building an orderly home in which he pays particular attention to space and nature. Confucian orderliness places every component of his estate in its particular place, Taoist sensibilities of “ecstatic enjoyment of nature, typical of the gentry culture,” adds the stimulus of purity and tranquillity — a place worthy to stimulate the mind, and the Buddhist stress of “the inexorable Way of Nature” promotes Yasutane’s faith (Zürcher 208, and 73). Yasutane provides himself with a “small hall to house the Amida Buddha,” yet although Yasutane “[goes] to the Western Hall, where [he] call[s] the name of the Amida Buddha and recite[s] the Lotus Sutra,” he criticizes the actions of the recluse as a man who, “like a phoenix, rises on the wind,” or who, “like a leopard, hides in the mists.” Yasutane creates his own form of reclusion, escaping society within the landscape of his home — a combination of Buddhist and Confucian ideals. Though Yasutane is concerned with his public duties and practice of Buddhist devotion, he is also a man who takes exception to the Buddhist practice of leaving home as a recluse. He does, however, find a way to resolve the question reclusion poses within his syncretic philosophies. We can understand Yasutane’s comment when he says, “Although as

Hsiao Ho (2nd C. BC) rejected grandeur for simplicity, and conversely, Chung Ch’ang-t’ung (2nd C. AD) preferred grandeur to simplicity.

16 Landscape became a means to an end — the end being enlightenment — during the Southern Dynasties period (420–589) in China. Thus, making use of natural settings was advocated as an aid toward enlightenment.

17 I am indebted to Donald Dong and Peter Wetzler for their efforts in researching these allusions. The phoenix as detailed in “Hsiao-yao yu” chapter of the Chuang Tzu is a mythical bird which “can fly to the height of ninety thousand li [one li is about one mile] and flies continuously for six months before coming to rest” (Dong 451 n. 39). Wetzler comments that the phoenix denotes men with worldly ambitions (186–7 n. 15). The “rain leopard” is an allusion from “Hsien Ming Ch’uan” chapter in the Lieh-nü chuan, and is used to refer to a man who is “so secluded from society as to refuse even food” (Dong 451 n. 40). As Dong notes, the two references are dictums against extremes.
master of the house I hold office at the foot of the pillar,\(^{18}\) in my heart it is as though I dwell in the mountains.” He managed to find a way in which he could continue being a virtuous and dutiful Confucian, while, as a devout Buddhist, secluding himself in the mountains — albeit, in his mind.

In the next passages of the “Chiteiki,” Yasutane describes heading for his library after finishing his dinner, and he comments, “[I] open my books, and meet with the ancient sages. There is Emperor Wen of the Han dynasty ..., Po Chü-i of the T’ang dynasty ..., [and] the Seven Sages of the Ch’in dynasty:”\(^{19}\) the first being a benevolent Confucian, the second the poet who became a devout Buddhist, and the third, Taoist court appointees who desired diversion and “had no use for the company of emperors and aristocrats, seeking their consolation ... in a naturalistic environment. Even those who had made temporary sorties into political life did not give up their basic philosophy.”\(^{20}\) Yasutane claims that in his three “encounters,” his life has the three proper enjoyments.\(^{21}\) If he feels the need for something more, Yasutane immerses himself in the natural environment of his estate. Indeed, he voices his complete satisfaction in claiming, “I love my home and know of nothing else.” The first half of the “Chiteiki” is strictly Confucian in tone, emphasizing Yasutane’s ideals of exemplary behavior. Casting an eye back over the beginning of the second half of the “Chiteiki,” the picture of Yasutane as virtuous Confucian and pious Buddhist emerges, a harmonious merging of thought systems without any sign of conflict between officialdom and solitude.

The final passages of the “Chiteiki” chronicle Yasutane’s perception of the way one could find peace and tranquillity while living in chaotic Heiankyö. He sees fortunes spent

\(^{18}\) That is, as an Inner Secretary in the Ministry of Central Affairs.

\(^{19}\) Emperor Wen r. 179–157 BC.

\(^{20}\) Dong 452; quoting Chen Shou-yi, 164.

\(^{21}\) Categorized by Confucius, the three proper enjoyments are ceremony, music, and virtuous friends. The three injurious enjoyments are extravagance, idle amusements, and feasting.
all around him on dwellings that are excessive in size, ornamentation, and costs; dwellings from which the builders move out of within two or three years. Yasutane originally thought his home small, but in view of the criticism Confucius held for excessiveness, he notes, “Getting long in tooth, I have built a small home. When I consider my status, my home is truly extravagant.” He fears the anger of heaven, and feels shamed before mankind. Perhaps he sees himself as a contributing member of those people who, in offending Heaven, cause the disorder within the capital. He concludes the “Chiteiki” with his Confucian prescription of ideal conduct and morality.

In the beginning of the “Chiteiki,” Yasutane outlined the improper actions of his fellow Heiankyō inhabitants. In his closing statements, Yasutane looks back over the past, and notes that the people are still extravagant builders and temporary inhabitants of their dwellings. He seems to realize a solution to the city’s problems by living in it: continuing with his official duties, he surrounds himself with nature and lives his life in accordance with virtuous Confucian conduct.

Yasutane’s description of the ideal house transcends the physical, mirroring the Confucian principles of concern for family — the structural units of the house based on proper conduct — which become metaphors for propriety. Such a dwelling would be impenetrable to natural calamity and misfortune, affording its master with a long life and lineage.

On the one hand, it is easy to regard Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” as a proselytizing work, didactic and instructive to its readers, with Yasutane using himself as an example by showing that it is possible to combine Confucian and Buddhist ethics. Yet, on the other hand, I am not so convinced of this particular reading. Rather, it seems to me that Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” is more reflective of a man who is trying to convince himself, or others, that he is content with his station in life.
Kamo no Chômei and his Religious Beliefs

Kamo no Chômei’s “Hôjôki” of 1212 is a work with roots in Yasutane’s tenth century “Chiteiki” and the various intertextual examples we have examined. Chômei begins the “Hôjôki” by detailing a long list of natural disasters that wreak havoc upon the residents of Heiankyô, and the disasters created by the people themselves — including the move from the capital in 1180 to a new location 400 years after its establishment in Heiankyô, and the subsequent return to the old site on the heels of a civil disturbance.22 Chômei sums up the disasters and shifts in customs with the following words: “It is said that such changes portend civil disturbance. That is exactly what occurred. Day by day, the world grew increasingly unsettled. People lost their composure and felt more apprehensive.”23 Chômei continues his litany of destruction and announces, “The reason I have endured witness to such horrid spectacles is because I was born in the Final Age.” He refers to the concept of mappô (“Final Age of the Dharma,” a.k.a. sue no yo). In light of the political discord of the times, calamitous natural phenomena, and pessimism rooted in mappô belief, many men desired escape, and reclusion became an alternative lifestyle to the court-centered Heiankyô aristocrat. The conflicting choice of motivation behind reclusion, political discontent and escape from mappô, will lead us to a variety of interpretations based on readings of reclusion literature.

It is conceivable that to Chômei, mappô forecast a world of wars, epidemics, and famines; warning him that monks, lured by lust and wealth, would become social parasites; and predicting that Buddhism would fail, with the subsequent incorrect following of the Dharma. And 1052, the year predicted as the date for entering the final phase of mappô, provided plenty of stimuli to convince people such as Chômei of mappô’s

22 Helen McCullough notes, “The move took place soon after the suppression of a preliminary attempt to overthrow the Taira. The new capital was at Fukuhara (now a part of Köbe), where Taira no Kiyomori had established his principle residence some years earlier” (382 n. 1).

23 Translations of Chômei’s “Hôjôki” are mine.
inevitability: Heiankyō’s Hase temple was destroyed by fire, *bushi* ("warriors") were on their rise to power, and monk-warriors of various temples were fighting. Chaos ruled Heiankyō, and the prophecies of *mappō* became raw reality. Thus, it seems we can safely postulate that Chōmei’s "Hōjōki" reverberates with his obversations of degeneration during the Age of Lawlessness.

A second major concept relating to religious reclusion in Japan is mujō, the Buddhist principle of impermanence. William LaFleur, who has written extensively on mujō, describes it as "all the phenomena and relationships we experience in our daily lives [which] are bound to disappear with time. Nothing is permanent, all things succumb willy-nilly to the law of impermanence" (5). Mujō was a topic common to philosophical discussions during the era of heightened *mappō*-awareness during the Late Heian and Early Kamakura periods. LaFleur describes mujō as it manifested itself in Early Heian literature as rounds of seasons and changing love relationships in human affairs, which taken together, "reiterate[d] and reinforce[d] the themes of evanescence" (61). He adds,

By the end of the Heian period, however — that is, by the twelfth century — a particular emphasis on the mujō of dwellings and habitations became manifest in the literature. This suggests that, from this point on, mujō was conceived of not only as *impermanence* — that is, as a temporal category — but also as *instability*, a spatial one. This spatial connotation, the matrix out of which the literary topoi of the inn and hermitage arose, is also an extension of mujō’s sway (LaFleur 61).

This use of the hut as a symbol of Buddhist mujō informs much of the literature created by *sōan* ("grass-hut") recluses.

Impermanence functioned as a central tenet in the Buddhism of the Heian-Kamakura periods. Mujō was prevalent in Buddhist doctrinal writings, and as such, it brought to the fore the thought that "things are not what they seem to be" (Luk 17). An example of this can be seen in the theory of *rokudō*, the six levels of suffering in Buddhist rebirth. The concept of *rokudō* was predominant in early Buddhist thought. Later Tendai and other
schools viewed rebirth as having different numbers of levels, as, for instance, the Tendai and Shin Jōdo schools' *jikkai* ("ten levels"). However, most important to our study of Heian and Kamakura literature are the early schools' doctrines and *rokudō*. Transmigration was not limited to one level at a time, and one could travel in either direction. We can see how *mujō* and *rokudō* may have affected Chōmei's notion of the hut and reclusion in a fascinating thesis by LaFleur, who takes this notion of *rokudō* and writes at length on his theory of the hermitage as its corollary. LaFleur contends that "Changing one's habitation with ease in the empirical world is analogous to moving with facility through a series of incarnations toward the goal of [cessation of rebirth]" (65). Both the hut as habitation and one's life are transient, and we could deem frequent moves from dwelling to dwelling as analogous to repetitive *nenbutsu* — both will hasten one toward the goal of rebirth in the Pure Land, an escape from the cycle of rebirth. LaFleur suggests that this metaphorical act of moving the hut with ease equates the ideal of moving with efficiency through *rokudō*. Coupled with the hut as a symbol of *mujō*, the hermitage as a *rokudō* corollary becomes an extremely important theme when examining sōan bungaku "grass-hut literature."

*Mujō*, of course, does not begin or end with the Heian and Kamakura periods, and we will find the roots of *mujō* infiltrating early Japanese reclusion. The best example of *mujō*'s role in reclusion is a demonstration of similarities between the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* and the famous first words of Chōmei's "Hōjōki."

**VNS**  
[T]he human body is impermanent, it is neither strong nor durable; it will decay .... [T]his body ... is like a mass of foam, which is intangible. It is like a bubble and does not last for a long time (Trans. Luk, 17–18).

"Hōjōki"  
The currents of the flowing stream are ceaselessly moving, but the waters are never the same. The bubbles that float upon the pools
disappear and form again, in no instance lasting for very long. People and their dwellings in the world are just like this. 24

The appeal of the VNS underwent a transition over the 230 year period between Yasutane’s "Chiteiki" and Chōmei’s "Hōjoki." The change reflects a shift in focus from the potential conflicts inherent in syncretizing Confucianism with Buddhism, to the growing problems in overlapping Buddhist schools of thought. Chōmei’s interest lay in Vimalakīrti’s relationship with mujō and his function as a teacher of the meaning of impermanence. We can extend this to include Vimalakīrti’s exemplary display of hōben ("expedience") in teaching about mujō, when Vimalakīrti manifests illness within his body in order to teach his visitors about the nature of impermanence. This Buddhist emphases of mujō expressed throughout the VNS, the image Vimalakīrti presents as a recluse, and the deconstruction of dualistic logic must have all caught Chōmei’s attention. Thus, we have a second side to the VNS as a model for reclusion. For Yasutane and generations of Chinese and Japanese people, the sutra presented Vimalakīrti as a recluse

24 While the VNS resembles in part, and plays an important role in the production of the "Hōjoki," it is, of course, similar to parts of, and a motivating force in numerous works. The "bubbles on the water" image is but one amongst many stock phrases in the mujō literary tradition. Chōmei’s "Hōjoki" preface is rich in Chinese and Japanese intertexts as well. For example, we have from the Analects: "The Master standing by a stream, said, 'It [that is, life] passes on just like this, not ceasing day or night!’" (Legge 115–116). D.C. Lau translates the same passage: "While standing by a river, the Master said, 'What passes away is, perhaps, like this. Day and night it never lets up’" (98). Another example is found in a poem found in the Man'yōshū (v.7 #1269) and Shōshō (Collection of Gleanings, comp. ca. 1006):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Makimoku no} & \quad \text{Like the bubbles on the water} \\
\text{Yamabebikite} & \quad \text{That runs echoing by the hill of Makimoku,} \\
\text{Yuku mizu no} & \quad \text{Frail human thing, am I} \quad \text{(Man'yōshū, 53).} \\
\text{Suieinogoloku} & \\
\text{Yo oba waga miru} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

ensconced within his home in society. For Chômei and others, Vimalakîrti served as an exemplary model of hōben. Let us examine the “Hōjôki” in detail, and see various Buddhist notions as they manifest themselves.

The “Hōjôki” begins with Chômei describing decay and the impermanence of human life and physical structures in Heiankyô: the constant cycles of death and birth, and building and rebuilding. Chômei explains the cause of decay as mujô, and pondering the wisdom of people’s actions in light of such impermanence, he comments,

... we do not know for what reason they trouble their hearts to please their eyes with temporary dwellings. The master and his dwelling are rivals in impermanence, no different than the dew upon the morning glory. In some cases, although the flower remains as the dew disappears, it withers in the morning sun. In other cases, although the flower wilts before the dew disappears, the dew does not last the evening.

Both will eventually perish or vanish, and Chômei provides this concept of mujô as his explanation for the decay in the capital.

Chômei originally resided in Heiankyô, a city consisting of thousands of wooden buildings. Life in the capital was often cut short by man-made intervention and natural disasters. Heiankyô was the site of a continuous cycle of building, repairing, and moving. One historian notes, “Between the eighth and thirteenth century, the emperor’s quarters had to be rebuilt seventeen times, including one disastrous stretch of 122 years in which they burned down fourteen times” (Mosher 35). Without a doubt, there was a pervading atmosphere of uncertainty and impermanence among the capital’s residents. It is not surprising that people such as Chômei might wonder why these disasters were being wrought upon them, and seek their answers within the nature of evanescence. Mujô did not discriminate between poverty and wealth, weakness and power, nor animate beings and inanimate objects. Nothing, after all, could escape the law of change and impermanence.
Chômei’s reading of the *VNS* has little in common with Yasutane’s. *Mujô* as a reason for decay contrasts completely with Yasutane’s rationalism: after enumerating evidence of decay in the capital, Yasutane conclusively blames the degeneration on erring humans who ignore Heaven’s warnings. Yasutane’s explanation was Confucian in principle: after all, if people behaved correctly and harmoniously, government would run smoothly, the city would not be in imbalance or in a state of decay, nor would the people be in moral decline. Chômei’s enumeration of disaster and decay ends with a resigned Buddhist surmisal of impermanence: “Thus are the difficulties of our lives in this world,” he says, “and such is the transience of men and their dwellings.” As two separate literary endeavors each partly rooted in the foundation of the *VNS*, Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” and Chômei’s “Hôjôki” clearly contrast with each other despite their obvious parallels in describing decay.

Impermanence in the “Hôjôki” also manifests itself in the notion of the mobile hut. Chômei lived in an inherited home in Heiankyô between 1173 and 1186. “Not long after I turned thirty,” he remarks, “I chose to move into a simple new dwelling. It was one-tenth the size of my old home.” While living in this smaller home, Chômei participated in Go-Toba’s Poetry Bureau, but with declining fortunes and a lack of beneficial social connections, and losing with finality any chance to carry on in his father’s footsteps as superintendent at the Kamo Shrine, Chômei moved to the Tendai Buddhist community of Ōhara, where he took the tonsure and embarked upon a life seeking spirituality as a recluse. Yasutane, you will recall, went into “reclusion” but continued to participate in his official duties as a court scribe — while living in a permanent residence on his ten se plot in northwest Heiankyô. Chômei differed, in that he sought to leave public intercourse.

After spending five years at Ōhara, Chômei moved a second time to Toyama in the remote foothills of the Hino Mountains. Chômei describes his new dwelling as “odd in its appearance. It is less than ten feet square and seven in feet in height.” Chômei notes of his site selection that the
... location was of little matter to me — I did not divine for the site. I constructed a foundation and a simple roof. I attached hinges to the joints in order to be able to move with ease should I ever be dissatisfied. Rebuilding would not be a problem — the dwelling would not even fill two carts, and the porter's fee would be the one expense.

This mobile hermitage is in striking contrast to the permanent and immobile residence of Yasutane. Having first moved northeast of Heiankyō to Ōhara, Chōmei had now situated his dwelling directly southeast of Ōhara in the Hino range. The new site was much closer to the capital than Ōhara. And where Ōhara had been relatively close to the Kamo Shrine, Chomei’s new location was very near to the still more southerly situated Hōkkai Temple (see map, p. 100). His mobile hermitage is in striking contrast to the permanent and immobile residence of Yasutane. Chōmei’s ideal site is in the isolated foothills, Yasutane’s, as was Po Chü-i’s, is within the busy capital. Chōmei avoids the Chinese notion of geomancy, preferring instead the mobility of the hut. Yasutane purposely divines for his site selection, and models his home upon the grandeur of two Chinese statesmen. The issue is the contrast between impermanence and permanence.

LaFleur’s analogy of the mobile hut as a corollary to moving through the stages of rokudō helps us by illuminating an implied contrast Chōmei sets up in the “Hōjōki”: the immobile buildings of Heiankyō are constructions functioning as fortresses against mujō, but the hut is a dwelling existing in harmony with mujō. Chōmei wants his audience to regard the immobile buildings as illusion and self-deception — something producing suffering, fear, anguish and grief — all arising from ignorance. Chōmei would have us believe that the hut is in transition, a mobile construction resulting in a tranquillity arising from the knowledge gained once a person harmonizes with rokudō.25

25 For a complete picture of LaFleur’s theories regarding rokudō and hermitages, see “In and Out of Rokudō Kyōkai and the Formation of Medieval Japan” (26–59); and “Inns and Hermitages: The Structure of Impermanence” (60–79).
Hōben, as I mentioned earlier, is another issue at work in the “Hōjōki.” Let’s take a look at this “expedience” in teaching the Dharma, by contrasting Yasutane’s and Chōmei’s choice of homes. Both men, at about the age of sixty, settle happily into their respective dwellings: Yasutane in his large residence in western Heiankyō, and Chōmei in his Toyama hut. Each man is aware of the approaching final years of his life. In the concluding section of the “Chiteiki,” Yasutane reflects upon the twenty years passed since the Ōwa era to the time in which he writes the “Chiteiki.” He dwells upon the excessiveness of people in building size, ornamentation and cost, and worries about his own home in light of Confucius’ adverse stance against extravagance. Yasutane resolves his quandary by transcending the physical ideal of the home with one that conforms with the Confucian principles of concern for family and proper conduct. Yasutane’s conclusion: “... I am like a traveller who builds an inn, an old silkworm who makes its own cocoon.” Yasutane is comfortable with himself in his “cocoon,” and awaits his final years.

Half a decade has passed since Chōmei moved into his temporary dwelling, and his hermitage has taken on the aspects of a permanent home. Like Yasutane, Chōmei built to suit his ideals. Modeling his dwelling upon Vimalakīrti’s efforts, who purposely rid his home of everything but a sick bed, Chōmei declares himself free of attachments to family, friends, and servants. Chōmei claims that he relies on nothing and no one, but when he reflects upon the affection he feels for his hut and way of life (“It is my tiny dwelling, my present isolated hut that I feel affection for. ... I feel pity for those who pursue worldly things ...”), he sees the illusion of his attachments to them. Chōmei realizes his ideal of life, but he begins to recognize his hut and lifestyle are hindrances to enlightenment. His delight in reclusion is a useless pleasure.

Vimalakīrti served Yasutane as a paradigm for reclusion in society and a means to merge Confucian and Buddhist principles. Chōmei sought to emulate the pious layman Vimalakīrti, but saw himself as a failure. Chōmei concludes, “My dwelling resembles that of Vimalakīrti, but I am worse than Suddhipanthaka when it comes to adhering to the
Commandments.” On the one hand, Chômei recognizes that the attachment he has for his dwelling and its way of life is the antithesis to Vimalakîrti’s nonattachments and enlightened state. Yet it cannot be said that there were vast differences between Vimalakîrti and Chômei in their spiritual orientation. Vimalakîrti manifests enlightenment as a wealthy householder, and Chômei models the “Hôjôki” upon the precepts of leaving society. Yet both Vimalakîrti and Chômei exemplify the bodhisattva vow of helping to speed the attainment of enlightenment for sentient beings, that is, hôben. Vimalakîrti manifests physical illness in order to bring people to him so that he might instruct them in the meaning of mujô. Chômei uses the “Hôjôki” as a literary foundation to teach evanescence. The key to revealing the hôben in the “Hôjôki” lies partly in why Chômei would feel the need to use literature as a means to teach about mujô. To understand this, it will help to contrast aspects of Po Chû-i and Yasutane with Chômei.

The Buddhist Po Chû-i was interested in dispelling sins accumulated for dallying in secular writings, and donated his collected works to temples at least twice in his lifetime (see page 22–23). Two hundred and thirty years prior to Chômei, Yasutane formed the Kangaku-e so that he could apply his secular skills to the production of Chinese language poetry and prose with Buddhist themes. In 1212, Chômei was using his literary skills to create poetry and prose with both Buddhist and secular themes. During the two centuries separating Chômei from Yasutane, there were changes in the notion that literature conflicted with religion. Plutschow tells us,

Yoshishige no Yasutane ... was influenced by the kyôgen kigyô [sic] statement of Po Chû-i when he wrote ... “Unable to escape feelings of guilt for having written such lies, how can I escape the sins committed through the excess of such ornate language?” (1978, 209).

By the end of the Heian period, awareness of the “sinfulness” of secular literature had increased, and the new question asked what kind of writing was acceptable to Buddhism.

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26 Siddhipanthaka was regarded as the most stupid disciple of Sākyamuni.
Hōnen, remarks Plutschow, “believed in the possible sinfulness of poetry, but at the same time pointed out its potential for good” (1978, 209). Secular literature which had once been rejected outright by Buddhists in the earlier Heian years, was, by the Late Heian period, either acceptable or modified to suit Buddhist tastes. It is my belief that if Chōmei did indeed use the “Hōjōki” as an expedient means by which to spread the Dharma and teach mujō, then he was successful in his attempt to emulate Vimalakīrti.

So far we have covered the Buddhist emphases of mujō and hōben, expressed throughout the VNS and in the image Vimalakīrti presented to Chōmei as a recluse. Now let us turn to Chōmei’s religious ambiguity and the deconstruction of dualistic logic. The problem of interpretation begins with personal opinion: there are as many different readings of the “Hōjōki” as there are scholars discussing the work. For example, William LaFleur and Anthony Kerrigan see Chōmei as someone who readily assumes different roles (that is, employed hōben) — a protean figure, a latter-day Vimalakīrti of sorts.27 Thomas Hare examines a variety of interpretations of the “Hōjōki,” and contributes a lengthy examination of his own reading. He discusses several authors who variously label Chōmei as an empiricist, a troubled and distracted man, an eccentric, and a romantic. As Hare notes, Karaki Junzō even goes so far as to compare Chōmei to Don Quixote. Both Hare and Marion Ury read the “Hōjōki” through the Hosshinshū (A Collection of Religious Awakenings),28 a work believed to have originated ca. 1215, but nevertheless unreliable as a basis for a reading of the “Hōjōki” because of its unproven authorship.

27 See LaFleur (114–115); and Anthony Kerrigan, “Preface.”

28 The authorship of the Hosshinshū is hotly debated. While Chōmei may have been the original author, extant versions most likely exist as copyists’ renderings with changes, additions, and deletions. Generally speaking, scholars feel that Chōmei wrote all but the last few sections. Marian Ury translates a great deal of the collection in “Recluses and Eccentric Monks: Tales from the Hosshinshū by Kamo no Chōmei” (1972: 149–173). Also, see Rajyashree Pandey’s interesting reading of the Hosshinshū and translated excerpts in “Suki and Religious Awakening: Kamo no Chōmei’s Hosshinshū” (299–321).
Hare and Ury do, however, make a significant point related to Chōmei and a conflict between his *jiriki* “self-reliance” and *tariki* “reliance-on-another” practices. The conflict is based upon Chōmei-the-recluse writing as an ascetic practice, and writing in a secular vein. Ascetic efforts amounted to distrust (or doubt) of *tariki* in light of the doomed age of *mappō*. Michele Marra elucidates the inherent opposition:

[A] tension is felt when the ["Hōjōki"] is analyzed in light of the developing Amidist faith, which forced Chōmei to face the inevitable contradictions between the kind of reclusion based upon personal effort — the *jiriki* style of reclusion undertaken by adherents of the Tendai school of the older Jōdo practices — and a model of spiritually secluded life shaped by a total entrusting of the self to Amida’s benevolence, a *tariki* style of reclusion developed by the new trends in Jōdo thought (1991, 91).

Marra examines the validity of Chōmei’s blend of *jiriki-tariki* practices, and offers the following hypothesis:

... nothing, not even a secluded existence free of worldly attachments, could escape the law of change and impermanence (*mujō*). The two ideologies clash in the pages of the “Hōjōki,” generating a dialogue between ... the refined man educated in courtly values, eager to enjoy his artistic skills in the peace of reclusion ... [and] the enlightened recluse who realizes that artistic pursuits, although performed with the purpose of praising the Buddhist Law, are still efforts of self-reliance [*jiriki*] implying distrust towards Amida’s saving power [*tariki*], and therefore, hindrances on the path to enlightenment (1991, 91).

Chōmei uses the act of writing, in both a secular and religious sense — as an aesthetic expression of his life and as a self-reliance effort to attain merit — despite the possibility that such a *jiriki* act might be hopeless in the Final Age. It is this conflict of self-reliance versus reliance-on-another that Hare and Ury address, and they do so by relating *mappō* with reclusion. The premise for argumentation that Hare and Ury use is Chōmei’s
ambiguous approach to religion. Both authors posit that since Chômei combines *jiriki* and *tariki* efforts, his attitude toward his religious beliefs is half-hearted. In other words, he should espouse one or the other of the methods of attaining salvation, but not both.

Hare voices concern that such indeterminacy in religious attitude affects our reading of Chômei, and that “one can see him as an easy going, down-to-earth man of simple tastes, with some religion, but not enough to make him uncomfortable” (193). Using elaborate detail, Hare goes to great lengths to point out an interpretative controversy over “fushō” within the context of “fushō no Amidabutsu ryōsanben moshite yaminu” (198). The variables of pronunciation, interpretation, and parsing create a range of meanings. Depending on how the reader chooses to translate this sentence, polarized readings of Chômei can vary from regarding him as a religious skeptic, to the other extreme of seeing him as a sincerely devout believer. Hare also discusses the problem of authorial/narrative distance, and even contends that in Chômei’s “Hōjōki,” “the last passage of the essay [is] a rhetorical play for artistic effect” (202). On this basis, Hare deems Chômei a failure in his attempt to model himself upon Vimalakîrti, describing Chômei as someone who tried to leave court society, ultimately couldn’t, wrote the “Hōjōki” with reclusive airs, and had no idea of how or where to proceed in his spiritual quest (205). Hare raises the question of whether the speaker in the “Hōjōki” is Chômei, or a distant narrative voice employed by Chômei in order to reflect upon himself. Hare agrees with Sakura Yoshirō and Miki Sumito, who both believe that the first section of the “Hōjōki” is Chômei directly voicing his observances, and the “skeptical and reflective” second section reflects the voice of “Chômei-the-failure” (205). Chômei’s ambiguity is thus evident in both his religious attitude and in his narrative role. But we can also link his religious ambiguity to a political role.

Marra makes some interesting observations which allows us to relate *mappō* to Hare’s and Ury’s reading of Chômei’s ambiguity. Marra states of Chômei’s religious stance that “[i]he Hōjōki is a manifesto of reclusion. It stresses the benefits and the drawbacks of a contemplative life” (1991, 191). Again, we are reminded of the tension in
the “Hōjōki” between Chōmei’s *jiriki-tariki* practices, and how *tariki* made all ascetic practices superfluous. I believe that Chōmei’s act of reclusion and his uncertain religious attitude are based on a symbiotic relationship between the political assumptions of *mappō*, and the epistemological assumptions of *mujō*.

The pivotal question about Chōmei’s religious commitment lies in his comment, “*Moshi, nenbutsu mono uku, dokkyo mamenaranu toki wa, mizukara yasumi, mizukara okotaru. Samataguru hito mo naku, mata, hazubeki hito mo nashi*” ("When tired of chanting the name of the Amida Buddha, or half-heartedly intoning a sutra, I may rest as I please and fall idle when I so desire. There is no one here to stop me, no one before whom I need feel ashamed"). Hare’s interpretation of this comment renders Chomei’s religious observances half-hearted at best, and slovenly at worst. But Hare makes an important point in declaring Chōmei’s repeated references to life’s impermanence as “sugar-coated by the long aesthetic tradition which regards evanescence as beauty” (192). Here, the Buddhist law of impermanence, *mujō*, is swept into a category of literary tradition. Harking back to Plutschow’s discussion from “Is Poetry a Sin?,“ we can momentarily back up from a wholly religious or political template in examining the “Hōjōki,” and consider it in a literary vein. This, in turn, will lead us to the next indeterminate point in the “Hōjōki,” Chōmei’s purpose for writing. If we do accept Hare’s contention that Chōmei was a religious failure, then not only are Chōmei’s “religious” efforts painless, his realizations are indeed impersonal and rhetorical.

The indeterminacies in Chōmei’s text are multiplying, but first and foremost is his irresolution between self-reliance and its meditative practice, and reliance-on-another with faith in Amida’s saving powers. We could envision Chōmei glibly saying something like, “In this age of *mappō*, writing won’t get me merit, but I may as well try it — just in case.” Chōmei both intones *nenbutsu* and reads the *Lotus Sutra*, but he also leans toward the Western Paradise and Amida’s salvation. Hare elucidates part of the indeterminacy of the “Hōjōki” by questioning the interpretation of a line in the text where Chōmei muses about the land to the west and its facilitation of meditative practices: “*Kannen no
tayori naki ni shimo arazu” (“It is not unsuitable for meditation”) (192). Hare suggests that Chômei’s use of a double negative (naki, arazu; lit. tr.: “it is not that there is not”) indicates a less-than-serious commitment to meditation. And, notes Hare, “This impression is only strengthened by [Chômei’s] admission than when he tires of religious offices, there is no reason that he cannot simply break them off and go for a walk” (192). Our doubts are indeed raised about Chômei’s religious commitment.

This lack of religious sincerity is a central issue to reading the “Hôjôki,” and it is another point of divergence between the “Hôjôki” and the “Chiteiki.” It is confusing, as we have seen above, to try to determine Chômei’s purpose in writing the “Hôjôki” — whether he wrote it in order to air his religious ambiguity, or perhaps as an example of hõben. It is also difficult to pinpoint Chômei’s religious position: Is he an unquestioning adherent of Amida’s saving powers, or is he a person desiring rebirth in the Pure Land? Hare quotes Fujimoto Akira to back up his argument that Chômei is not religiously committed: “Fujimoto’s interpretation ... is unsettling to those who would see Chômei as unwaveringly faithful to Pure Land doctrine, to wit: ‘Surely this ... faith in unending bliss and eternal mansions of the Pure Land ... must be in vain’” (Hare 198; quoting Fujimoto, 204). Such a reading as Hare’s raises numerous questions about Chômei’s religious attitude, the reason for his Ôhara and Toyama reclusions, his motivation to write the “Hôjôki,” and even his spiritual well-being (Hare 198). The basis of Chômei’s epistemological assumptions of reclusion must be analyzed in order to discover whether he was like the enlightened figure of the protean Vimalakîrti (as LaFleur suggests and I echo), or a failure in his attempt to model himself after the enlightened bodhisattva-layman (as Hare suggests).

Earlier, we saw Yasutane likening himself to an old silkworm, comfortable in his “cocoon” and waiting out his final years. Yasutane transcends the physical ideal of a

29 Kannen: “[C]oncentration on one of sixteen phenomena which, by metaphorical application to Amida’s powers of salvation, eradicate delusions and allow rebirth in the western paradise” (Hare 192).
home by presenting a dwelling that conforms with Confucian principles. With words closely corresponding to Yasutane's, Chômei notes, "I am now sixty, and with the dew near to disappearing, I built a new dwelling for the last leaves of the trees — just like a traveller might create a one-night's resting place, or an aged silkworm spin a cocoon." But Chômei makes this comment long before he recognizes his hut and lifestyle as hindrances to enlightenment. Hare makes the following astute observation:

The rhetorical self-consciousness of that ... passage about the leafy haven and the aged silkworm betrays literary aims which make the seemingly self-resigned eremite uncomfortable; the vaunted self-sufficiency of the hut is undermined by [Chômei's] need to describe it (192).

The very self-sufficiency that Chômei describes is put to the test as he discovers that he is not without worldly attachments.

In my earlier analysis of the "Hôjôki," I discussed how Chômei recognized his very attachment to hermitage and reclusion as the antithesis to Vimalakîrti's non-attachments and enlightened state. In that sense, Vimalakîrti and Chômei are vastly different. But I also pointed out my belief that Chômei successfully modeled himself upon Vimalakîrti (that is, the bodhisattva-layman who brought people to him in order to teach mujô, thereby fulfilling his vows to help speed the attainment of enlightenment for others on earth) by using the "Hôjôki" as a means to teach mujô. I am convinced that Chômei's "admission" of failure in the "Hôjôki" is a demonstration of the deconstruction of logic, a dualism based on the VNS: that is, Chômei, as did Vimalakîrti when asked his opinion about the meaning of non-duality, responds with silence. After Chômei reflects upon his failure to imitate Vimalakîrti, he asks himself, "Could it be because I allow myself to be affected by my karma-ordained poverty, or have I gone mad?" Chômei notes, "The question is still unanswered." Hare contends that this silence could be interpreted as Chômei's lack of insight into his own motivation for reclusion; but I am inclined to think that the silence reflects Chômei's profound thought on the ultimate — using the deconstruction of duality in the VNS as his model, Chômei uses the "Hôjôki" to deconstruct the
duality of his life and religious conflicts. Just as the deconstruction of logic in the question of duality led to Vimalakirti’s silence, Chômei’s deconstruction of the conflicts of his life led to the answerable silence of his text.

In retrospect, Chômei’s concepts of reclusion and his religious stance were in a constant state of transition. When Chômei ends the “Hōjōki” with the lines revolving around the “fushô” controversy (“I can only intone the Buddha Amida’s name three or four times, and fall silent”), Chômei is confirming the deconstructive power of nonduality.
IV

Toward an Experimental Conclusion

Aesthetics and Politics: Stances Without Words

We have examined two aspects of reclusion during the Late Heian to Early Kamakura eras, the politically and the religiously inspired. A third influence upon literature during this period, aesthetic conventions, adds to our understanding of the recluse tradition in classical Japanese literature. Definitions of a few terms specific to this topic follow.

An important concept relating to reclusion in the Japanese literary tradition is that of *waka no michi*. *Michi* signifies “way” (as in *Tao, “the Way”*) or “road, way” (as in thoroughfare), but it took on an additional meaning referring to vocation or expertise. *Michi* came to represent an area of specialization in which a person was trained — usually in the arts.1 By the Late Heian and Early Kamakura periods, the arts and their creators were receiving positive recognition and higher respect — even men of low rank could gain social acceptance as people solely involved in literary production. Recognizing *waka no michi*, or “the way of Japanese poetry,” as an arts-related profession leads us to the idea of the aesthete-recluse as practitioner, and the concept of “*suki.*”

*Suki* is a concept imbued with political implications rooted in the Heian court. Mezaki Tokue writes extensively of *suki* and related concepts in “Aesthete-Recluses During the Transition from Ancient to Medieval Japan.”2 *Suki* is a nominal derivative of the verb *suku*, and it “originally meant ‘irogonomi’, which can mean a man … desirous of


2 See Principles of Classical Japanese Literature.
relations with women. The word betokens deep desire for something. By extension, it came to embrace a deep love for literature and the arts” (Mezaki 153). Mezaki also notes that the fifteenth century dictionary Kagakushū (Collection of Mundane Matters, 1444) defines suki as “hekiai” (“deep attachment”), an intense passion that has veered from its proper course (Mezaki 153).

Suki is a central theme in the Hosshinshū (A Collection of Religious Awakenings), tales which explore the conditions that promote hosshin (“awakening” [of the bodhi-mind]) for rebirth in the Pure Land, and provide examples of meritorious tonseisha. Attributing Chōmei with the authorship of the Hosshinshū, Rajyashree Pandey feels that the work is worth noting for its aesthetic sensibilities, in that “Chōmei devotes several stories to demonstrate that refinement and depth of feeling are integrally linked with spiritual purity and religious awakening ...” (Pandey 303). The Hosshinshū thus has an important place in understanding Early Kamakura period aesthetic motivations. As far as the link between suki and the court is concerned within the Hosshinshū, Pandey notes: “It is striking that while Hosshinshū dates from his ‘Buddhism’ period, so to speak, Chōmei nonetheless chooses to include several stories that hark back to a world of elegance and grace, that is the world of the court” (299). The life of the courtier and his music and poetry are accorded a special place in the Hosshinshū, and suki is the concept that the author champions (299). The Hosshinshū’s author defines suki as follows:

[A]estheticism [suki] means taking no pleasure in social intercourse, refusing to grieve over misfortune, feeling touched by the bloom and fall of flowers, and longing for the rise and set of the moon. In this way we constantly keep our hearts clear of blemish and, before we realize it, we come to understand how it is that things appear and vanish, and we cease to have attachment to fame and profit. This is to enter the path of deliverance, of freedom from illusion (Mezaki 154, trans. Matthew Mizenko).

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3 All but the last few chapters of the Hosshinshū are generally attributed to Chōmei. See p. 76 n. 28.
In this passage we can see the author’s attempt to connect in suki the qualities of refinement and emotion with hosshin. Pandey notes that this notion of suki, as made explicit by the author, was an “attempt to integrate [a] deep attachment to artistic pursuits with [a] commitment to the way of the Buddha” (300). Pandey adds that...

... [s]uki was an important aesthetic ideal in the Heian period, signifying a passion for and commitment to amorous dalliance. In the context of the court culture within which this ideal was situated, a keen interest in matters to do with love was inextricably tied with the ability to express this interest through elegant verse and through cultivation of other refined pursuits (300).

Suki is also dealt with in a text that dates approximately twenty years later than the Hosshinsū, in the Early Kamakura period’s Myōe Shōnin Ikun (Posthumous Teachings of the Priest Myōe, ca. 1235–38 [Myōe lived 1173–1232]). Myōe’s recorded words are as follows:

From times long past, there has been no one noteworthy in Buddhism who does not have suki as an intention and who has failed to give devotion to matters of the heart ... . Then and now there have appeared praiseworthy Buddhists who are devoted to the spirit of suki. Although the creation of poems of praise [shōshi] and devotion to poetry [waka] and linked verse [renga] is not necessarily a matter of Buddhism, those who demonstrate in these pursuits a heart of suki will, in due course, turn to Buddhism. They acquire wisdom, and their gentle hearts are noble (Mezaki 155, trans. Matthew Mizenko).

Mezaki interprets this passage as Myōe’s understanding of suki: suki and Buddhism held in common opposition to “spiritual degradation” (155). Priest Saigyō (1118–1190), who taught Myōe at one time, noted of one of Myōe’s poetic efforts: “This lyric is essentially the true form of the Buddha. Indeed, composing a poem involves the same way of thinking as carving a holy statue. Constantly keeping a verse in mind is the same as chanting the secret true word [shingon]. By means of this poem I can attain the Holy Dharma”
As an aside, the above notions of *suki* correspond very nicely with the concepts entailed by *kyōgen kigo* and the question of secular writing as sin — literary efforts, in the spirit of *suki*, are accorded a positive use. And finally, as Mezaki notes of the *Hosshinshū* author's and Myōe’s ideas of *suki*,

Both passages share the recognition that *suki* is a way of life in which one cuts oneself off from the secular world and comes closer to nature, and that the alternative life constitutes a gateway to religion. Full realization of the recognition assumes the characteristic medieval concept of the oneness of religion and literature (156).

*Suki*, then, was first associated with the Heian court and amorous dalliance, and later linked to a second meaning involving devotion to artistic pursuit. As Pandey writes, by the beginning of the Kamakura period, *suki*’s meaning resided specifically in the realm of art, retaining only a hint of its amorous past (300). *Suki* thus came to be used to signify a devotion to artistic pursuit. The importance of the theme Mezaki touches upon, nature, is of great interest to us and will be discussed in full in the second half of this chapter.

"*Sukimoto*" or "*sukibito*" are names attributed to a person who cultivated his artistic endeavors with singleminded purpose, dedication, and even passion. The *sukimoto* was a person who devoted his entire life to a pastime such as the creation of poetry. First situated *in* the court with its world of poetry competitions and poetic exchange in romantic courtship, the *sukimoto* later existed in a setting *outside* of the court. These were the recluses — often homeless, jobless, and without status — and using nature and the ephemerality of things (*mujō*) as spiritual guides. Pandey tells us the author of the *Hosshinshū* suggests that this notion of nature and *mujō* is in harmony with the Buddhist teachings: that is, the person who is detached from worldly concerns such as wealth and fame is spiritually prepared for enlightenment (300).

Joshua Mostow introduces an interesting angle to our discussion of *suki* and *sukimoto* in pointing out that "the [Heian] concept of *sukimoto* is clearly tied to that of
miyabi, or ‘courtliness’” (Mostow 1993a, 60). As a touchstone in meaning, we can regard miyabi as

... [the] aesthetic ideal of art and life during the court period, exemplified by the hero of the Genji Monogatari. It entails fundamental good taste, sound language and responses, and avoidance of the low or ugly. A more Japanese version of fāryū (C: feng-liu; “stylishness,” “elegance,” admirable and artistic conduct] (PC, s.v. Miyabi).

Chômei incorporated the spirit of miyabi into a pre-Hino (and pre-“Hôjôki”) reclusion work, the Mumyôshô (Nameless Treatise, ca. 1209–10), in which he discusses his views on the practice of poetry, and includes poetic lore. The Mumyôshô is a testament to the Heian ideal of the suki-mono as a person within the court system who is devoted to poetic arts. The Mumyôshô’s ideal of suki differs from the aforementioned Hosshinshô — the latter reflects a suki more representative of the chaotic Kamakura period, when the suki-mono was a recluse living outside of court society.

Katagiri Yôichi and Mostow look at miyabi in its broadest sense, examining different interpretations based on pre-modern dictionaries and its Chinese character rendition. The following discussion by Katagiri is pertinent, and will help us to better understand Japan’s recluse tradition during the Heian period:

It is certain that the word miyabi includes such notions as “metropolitan” (miyabi-fû) and “urbane” (tokai-teki) in contrast to “provincial” (hinabi) and “rural” (satobi). However, on the other hand, it is also very important that such Heian period Chinese dictionaries as Myôgishô read the characters kan and ga as miyabi. Kan originally meant “to lock the gate.” To refuse any contact with worldly affairs and live leisurely was kan. Likewise, ga too in the Six Dynasties was said of standing aloof from all things political and economic and, like the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove, to be caught up in nothing.

4 More correctly, kan originally meant a piece of wood to block the gate — a wooden lock.
throwing away everything and amusing oneself freely ... when we think of the way the word *miyabi* was used in the Heian period and the examples of the Chinese characters used for *miyabi*, it must be seen that it was said of a "mental freedom" that did not cease pursuing beautiful things for their sole sake as beautiful, passing one's time freely, and standing aloof from worldly affairs, that is, the life of the court's bureaucracy.\(^5\)

I quote Katagiri so extensively to show, in part, how *miyabi*, and by extension, *suki* and *sukimono*, can connote such a range of meanings — from an intense passion for the arts, to a political concept in which one stood aloof from court affairs. We will have to discern Chōmei's position in these categories, which, as we will see, are not mutually exclusive.

Mostow notes that the Chinese characters read as *miyabi* were not limited to *kan* and *ga*. "In fact," writes Mostow, "as Konishi Jin’ichi has demonstrated at some length, the most frequently used characters for *miyabi* were *feng-liu* (MJ. *färyû")" (1993a, 27). The Princeton Companion defines *färyû* as follows:

> Stylishness; style or conduct of an admired, artistic kind. A native version of Chinese *feng-liu*, during the Heian period the term meant something like *miyabi*, with overtones of *kokoro aru* ["sensibility"] and *imamekashi* (up-to-date). Later the term came to represent either artistic endeavor in general, or the stylish in particular, as with *iki* ["stylish, smart, elegant"] and *sui* ["outstanding, superior, excellent"] (s.v. *Färyû*).

Though deeply rooted in Chinese literature and thought, *feng-liu* is a concept with time-specific meanings. Richard Mather defines *feng-liu* as "'mannered flow,' cultivated style, urbanity; a favored life style of the upper middle classes during the Six Dynasties [265–589]" (Mather 1976, 625). As Mostow notes, the Six Dynasties' *Shih-shuo hsin-yü* (A New Account of Tales of the World) uses the term *feng-liu* to refer to "a general unconventionality of behavior, characterized by a rejection of public service, and the adoption of

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\(^5\) Mostow 1993a, 25–26; translating Katagiri.
a recluse life style that centered around conversation, drink, and only secondarily the pleasures of a wife” (Mather 1976, xvii). By the T’ang period, however, *feng-liu* had yet another connotation, relating to amorousness (cf. Konishi Jin’ichi’s note on *feng-liu*, p. 22). Let us take a look at an example of *feng-liu* in a T’ang work we are already somewhat familiar with, Po Chü-i’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien.”

The music component highlights the “Ch’ih-shang p’ien.” “Even though I have visitors,” says Po, “without music or wine, I will be unable to entertain them.” He thus builds a music pavilion and stocks it with wine. Friends give him liquor, a lute, and a musical score, and he brings to his residence one hundred servants who can play stringed instruments and sing. When enjoying his leisure time, Po tells us that

... the Ch’en wine is brought out, the Ts’ui lute is played, and Chiang’s music is performed. Drunk I do what I want — I know of no other way. If the music stops in the height of a wine party, I give orders to the musicians, climb up the Middle Island Pavilion, and make them play “Rainbow Robes.”

Po remarks upon the quality of the music, and describes the mood-enhancing scenery in which he resides. Drunk, he sleeps; awake, he creates a song, and in his song he reiterates the pleasures of music and drink.

Po represents the literary component of the “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” as well. He notes that, “[a]lthough I have students here, without books, I will be unable to teach them.” He thus constructs a library. When moving into his new residence, he brings a “cart full of books.” He awakens from an inebriated state and begins singing “... a tune with neither poetry nor rhythm. Someone took a brush ... [and] recorded my song. After observing that it roughly makes up “rhymed sentences,” I called them ‘Around My Pond.’” Po reiterates the theme of books and learning in the poem following his preface.

Singing-girls — the company of women — are not specifically mentioned in “Ch’ih-shang p’ien,” but we can probably assume that the “hundred servants” included such entertainers. Po alludes to the company of women in his reference to “Rainbow Robes,” from the famous ballet with its description of swirling skirts and dancers. Po Chü-i was no
stranger to singing-girls and drinking (cf. p. 22). We can thus see in the example of Po Chü-i’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” how the T’ang concept of feng-liu is associated with Konishi’s four components of idealized worldly pleasures.

The “pleasurable” principle of T’ang-defined feng-liu was, according to Konishi, familiar to Japanese aristocratic society as early as the eighth century. In the later Heian court setting, the zither, Chinese poetry, liquor, and female entertainments were routine. As for the appearance of the normally sequestered female Heian aristocracy, Konishi suggests that “a kind of work mentality seems to have sanctioned the unusual act of ladies attending palace banquets” (Konishi 1986, 132). Mostow notes that “palace urbanity” is present in the eighth century, and adds a poem illustrating “how distance from the court, and isolation in the hills, rather than bringing the poet closer to the life of the Taoist Immortals, simply renders [the poet] gauche in courtly society” (1993a, 31).6

In retrospect, we can regard fūryū as having three meanings: (1) the traditional (“moral character of an individual”); (2) that associated with the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove — men who disassociated themselves from the court and politics for seclusion, wine, and poetry (“self-indulgent freedom”); and (3) amorous courtliness (“charm tinged with a sensual decadence”) (Kojima 372–373).

Michele Marra’s interpretation of miyabi as “aesthetic reclusion” and the case he builds for the politically-impotent is of great interest to us with regard to Chōmei’s “Hōjōki.” Although Marra refers specifically to men stripped of power by the Fujiwara, let us generalize somewhat and attribute his argument to the Late Heian-Early Kamakura periods’ politically discontent. In discussing miyabi and politics, Marra writes:

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6 The poem is quoted by Konishi (1984, 223). The poem is by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue, and is addressed to Emperor Shōmu:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ashi-hiki no</th>
<th>I live in the mountains,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yama ni shi oreba</td>
<td>With their sprawling foothills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miyabi nami</td>
<td>And so my ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waga suru waza wo</td>
<td>Have no miyabi!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>togome-tamafu na</td>
<td>May you graciously forgive me!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“To be an undisputed political center implied the ability to create an aesthetic version of politics in which matters of taste and refinement could hide the painful reality of the social and political environment” (1991, 36). The subject is Fujiwara power, but we could, if you will, put the shoe on the other foot and attribute to Chōmei the ability to create an aesthetic version of politics — in the form of the “Hōjōki” in the remote Hino foothills — where he uses taste and refinement to hide the reality of the social and political environment he left behind in Heiankyō. I will expand upon this.

In the short space of this reclusion-aesthetics discussion, we examined numerous conceptions of suki, miyabi, and fāryū (feng-liu). Ranging from slight nuances to polar opposites, the definitions change with the times, reflect their native roots or adaptations, and are not always mutually exclusive. Trying to precisely assign to the “Hōjōki” subjective labels of aesthetic value is something akin to being blindfolded and pinning the tail on the donkey. Yet I believe that Chōmei’s “Hōjōki” is what I will call “aestheticized politics” — politically-inspired reclusion elevated to an aesthetic ideal.

The “Hōjōki” is not only a religiously-inspired work, but also a politically-motivated essay of reclusion. It seems that Chōmei reflects the “self-indulgent freedom” category of fāryū, in which he champions the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove ideal: eschewing the court and living aloof of politics and worldly affairs, enjoying a life of leisure and mental freedom, and pursuing beauty for the sake of beauty.

Chōmei lost his hereditary place as superintendent of the Kamo Shrine due to a lack of political connections. Losing his rightful means of livelihood, Chōmei turns to poetry and music — appropriate manifestations of the Early Heian sukimono and miyabi, that is, a person within court society — and makes something of a name for himself. Nevertheless, Chōmei was the bottom man on the totem pole: he was the last member named to Go-Toba’s Bureau of Poetry; he was locked into a Fifth Rank position; he was offered the superintendency to a minor Kamo subsidiary, the Ura Shrine; he was beset by decades of calamitous events; and he lived in an era rife with mujō theory and mappō pessimism. True, the “Hōjōki” does reflect, to an extent, Chōmei’s view of nature and mujō as
something harmonizing with Buddhist teachings. But the combining of art with Buddhism, which is typified by Chômei’s Mumyôshô, is an idealized aesthetic rooted in the Early Heian notion of miyabi. The “Hôjôki” only reflects the Buddhist art aesthetic on its surface. Dig a little deeper, and we find Chômei the sukimono, fully representing himself as someone looking back into the court society he left behind. Chômei elevates music and literature in a time-honored nod toward his predecessors. He attempts to pass himself off as a tonseisha of refinement, depth of feeling, sensitivity, and spiritual purity, eloquently comparing himself to a failed-Vimalakîrti, while exhibiting a grasp of nonduality. Chômei’s “aestheticized politics” lies in his silence, his very refusal to discuss the politics and reasons that led him to the Hino foothills in the first place.

Political elements (of any whole) are cultural constructs, having their own languages, categories, practices, and rhetoric. As such, the political elements of the Heian and Kamakura periods belong to a context very different from our own. In attempting to explain the past, the teleological trap is ever present. Thomas Keirstead proposes a means to avoid this pitfall. He suggests that we privilege other categories over temporality, substituting, for example, ideology, discourse, common sense, or cultural codes. Taking one of these categories as a means to explain the past, as we will with “ideology,” we can “expose those critical silences in texts, narratives, and intellectual landscapes of the past ….” It is the critical silence in Chômei’s “Hôjôki” that speaks the loudest political language.

In my “Introduction,” I linked discourse (a knowledge and power structure) with ideology (the articulation of discourse and power), wherein both structures function to maintain or question power that is central to social and historical life. The structural Marxist, Louis Althusser, deals with ideology and a term he coined, the “problematic,” in

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7 See “Gardens and Estates: Medievality and Space.”

8 Keirstead 290; quoting Soja 1989, 73.
First, let us look at the meaning of “problematic.” In a summary of Althusser’s work, editors Adams and Searle describe his conception of this term:

The problematic of a text is the unconscious infrastructure, the forms that determine how the text will behave and can be allowed to be thought [that is, discourse]. The problematic lies beneath the text, as the base to the superstructure, but it is unspoken. Further, the problematic is not thought by the individual subject (there is no such subject); instead it thinks through what in the past we have habitually called the subject: “We must go further than the unmentioned presence of the thoughts of a living author to the presence of his potential thoughts, to his problematic, that is, to the constitutive unity of the effective thoughts that make up the domain of the existing ideological field with which a particular author must settle accounts in his own thought.” There is no “constitutive subject” but instead a structure of ideas and relations among them (CT 238).

In Althusser’s view, “ideology” is an imaginary assemblage without history which is “external, exactly like the unconscious” (240). Of ideology, Althusser posits three theses. The first is that “[i]deology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (241). He notes, “… that what is reflected in the imaginary representation of the world found in an ideology is the conditions of existence of men, i.e. their real world” (241). Furthermore, “… it is not their real conditions, their real world, that ‘men’ ‘represent to themselves’ in ideology, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there” (242). And finally, “What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which

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govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the
real relations in which they live” (242).

In his second thesis Althusser states, “[i]deology has a material existence” (242). To elaborate, he writes that “an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material” (242). In other words, for a person like Chōmei, his beliefs derive from his ideas, or consciousness. Thus, it follows that Chōmei behaves in a particular fashion, adopts particular practical attitudes, and follows certain practices in keeping with the ideological apparatus on which he depends. In Chōmei’s case, we might inscribe in Buddhism the ideology behind his religious observances, and in *miyabi*, his attitude toward the court.

Althusser’s third and central thesis is that “[i]deology interpellates individuals as subjects” (244). Althusser distinguishes between concrete individuals and concrete subjects, and notes that “[t]here are no subjects except by and for their subjection” (249). Thus, the individual as subject presupposes an “Other Subject,” and they each need the other. These three theses will all become clearer as we continue our reading of Chōmei’s “Hōjōki.”

In Marra’s political *miyabi*, we saw that in “an aesthetic version of politics ... matters of taste and refinement could hide the painful reality of the social and political environment” (Marra 1991, 36). While creating the appearance of a man seemingly aloof of politics and worldly affairs, Chōmei goes about filling the first half of the “Hōjōki” with these very topics. In the second half, Chōmei contrives the pleasures of his hut, the leisurely aspects of his reclusion, and his *mujō*-filled natural surroundings as vehicles of “taste and refinement,” while at the same time, artfully “reconciling” his artistic pursuits and religious vision. In essence, Chōmei elevates artistic and religious sensibilities to aestheticized ideals, and in so doing, aestheticizes politics by his silence.

The unconscious infrastructure of the “Hōjōki” — the “problematic” — is Chōmei’s unspoken bitterness and discontent with the Late Heian-Early Kamakura political situation. Following Althusser’s conception of problematic, it is not necessarily the case that
Chômei consciously thought of his situation as one of "bitterness" or "discontent," nor of the events in Heiankyô as being directly responsible for his movement away from the capital. But these are indeed his "potential thoughts," the domain of "the existing ideological field" in which Chômei "must settle accounts in his own thoughts" (CT 238). The ideology of politics very much represents, to paraphrase Althusser's first thesis, the imaginary relationship of Chômei to his real conditions of existence. Furthermore, Chômei reflects Althusser's second thesis in that the ideology of Late Heian-Early Kamakura politics exists in the practices within the apparatus of Chômei's Heiankyô and reclusion. Chômei's decision to tonsei, and his attitudes toward religious observance and literary undertakings, follow certain practices — that is, the tradition of reclusion — in keeping with the political ideology on which he depends. Finally, Chômei represents Althusser's third thesis, "[i]deology interpellates individuals as subjects" (244), in that his political ideology interpellates Chômei, the individual, as Chômei, the (political) subject. Thus, while discourse on politics may be completely absent as a subject in the "Hôjôki," the ideology of politics is very much present in Chômei-as-subject and his very subjection by the political ideology over which he maintained silence. Chômei, as individual and subject, presupposes politics as the "Other Subject," and they each need the other.

Chômei is a victim of political machinations and historic circumstance, a person capable of refining silence into a shout of aesthetic virtue. I thus believe the "Hôjôki" to be a politically and aesthetically motivated product, a link in a long chain of bureaucrats who went into reclusion and wrote about their circumstances.
In this final chapter of my exploration of politicized aesthetics, I will try to dispense with the linear classifications imposed by chronology, and examine Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” and Chōmei’s “Hōjōki” through the aspect of described landscape. By comparing elements of Po Chü-i’s “Ch'ih-shang p’ien” and “Ts'ao-t'ang Chi,” Kaneakira’s and Yasutane’s respective “Chiteiki,” and Chōmei’s “Hōjōki,” I will examine “landscape as ideology.” That is, I will look at what the landscape form, or tradition, makes its subjects speak. First, let us take a brief look at aspects of Late Heian-Early Kamakura landscape art.

Developments in landscape painting between the twelfth to thirteenth centuries reflect both religious and secular style changes. Following Sherman Lee’s breakdown of stylistic developments in *A History of Far Eastern Art*, the changes can be described as follows:

12th C.: Landscape is “an adjunct to the representation of deity or aristocratic narrative” (Lee 341).

13th C.: “[I]nterest in portraiture and character was not confined to the individual, but extended to the topography of shrine or temple areas” (Lee 341), and these landscapes were carefully observed and rendered.

Thirteenth century landscape paintings often depicted more than one shrine or temple, permitting the viewer to metaphorically “visit” each through visual pilgrimages. In late twelfth to thirteenth century religious representations, we find “the portraiture of the Japanese landscape — gently rolling hills, flowering trees, all the ‘loveliness’ of nature — is especially developed ...” (Lee 341), all rich in colour and vigorous in detail. The same periods’ narratives reflect “pure” landscape as adornment, developed into careful and subtle spaciousness.

Leaving the plastic arts, let us now look at the idea of pilgrimage and the genre of *kikōbun* (“travel literature”) in the realm of landscape. Yanagita Kunio defines *kikōbun*
as “two distinct types of work: the first ... a string of poems and lyrical essays; the second ... description, narrated by a traveller who is simply a discreet presence hidden in the shadows of the actual scene”1 (Citing Karatani, 52). In an essay entitled “Self and Landscape in Kagerō Nikki,” Joshua Mostow demonstrates a pre-modern Japanese tendency to see nature through paintings. As evidence, Mostow provides visual and literary examples in which description, as common landscape motifs, is used as visual overlays on “real” landscapes. Mostow further elaborates this theme in a later paper entitled “The Ovular Journey: Women and Travel in Pre-Modern Japanese Literature” (hereinafter OJ). In this paper, Mostow points out, amongst other themes, the role of meisho (places known for their scenic beauty or historical significance) in kikōbun. He describes travel as being mediated by meisho, with “Japanese travellers [seeing] themselves [as] moving not through undifferentiated landscape, but rather from one specific point to another specific point” (5). These points were geographic localities that “had names” (literally,  

1 Kikōbun is a literary genre detailing travel. Herbert Plutschow notes, “[K]ikōbun may be generally characterized as short accounts in prose and poetry about journeys usually starting from the capital (Kyoto)” (1982, 2). He looks at style as poetry versus prose (and their overlaps) in order to categorize kikōbun: kanbun (Chinese writing) kikōbun tends to use prose, and wabun (Japanese) kikōbun predominantly uses poetry (4). He also cites purpose as a method of categorization. Zuikō is a type of “accompaniment” travel diary, and constitutes “official accounts of imperial, shogunal, or military journeys,” and the author usually wrote under orders (4). The zuikō included poems of praise or votive poems. “Official” or “quasi-official” kikōbun were written by order or invitation from a military or political leader, and the resultant record was most often poetic (4–5). Finally, Plutschow suggests the private or religiously motivated kibōbun (5), and he notes, “… in such cases, there may be a discrepancy between a religious motive for travelling and a secular one for diary writing” (5). This last category generally consisted of prose. Whether in Heian or Early Kamakura paintings or literature, the human figure indeed functioned as “a discreet presence hidden in the shadows of the actual scene.” Joshua Mostow notes (in the context of the human figure in imagery) that “there was precious little of what might be called ‘pure landscape’ in Heian painting — the extant screens include human figures” (1993a, 15). In other words, while a literary work or painting may present landscape as its theme, the human figure is present as a part of that landscape, and not the central image.
yi7mei) (OJ 5). “As such,” notes Mostow, “they were also uta-makura, or ‘poem-pillows,’ that is, codified toponyms, on the basis of which a poem could ‘rest’” (5–6).

Meisho can be linked to the notion of the superimposition of painted landscape as overlays for real scenes. According to Mostow, “the superimposition of landscape painting over actual vistas renders the natural world itself into a painting” (OJ 14), and these visual guides structured the traveller’s passage through the landscape (ibid.). The same can be said of literary landscapes.

I would like to suggest that the meisho ChÔmei lists in his “Hôjôki”² constitute a startling metaphoric and somewhat unorthodox parallel to what is known as a “kunimi,” a term specifically applied to an emperor’s symbolic ritual of possession in surveying his surroundings. Kunimi have their roots in ancient, recited songs and poetry. Traditionally, as Konishi Jin’ichi notes, “[t]he ceremony of beholding the country consisted of surveying a certain area from a high place and, through the utterance of auspicious language, anticipating the advent of good fortune” (1984, 237). Kunimi were also composed by courtiers, but only when their sovereign commanded them to present such poems. Konishi notes, “The request was not for personal, lyrical poetry, but rather for recitations of splendid verses in praise of the location ...” (1984, 238). It is believed that the oldest extant example of a kunimi poem, recorded in the Man’yôshû (1:2), was recited by Emperor Jomei (r. 629–642) as he stood on Kagu Hill and surveyed his lands. Kunimi were not restricted to the Man’yôshû era. In fact, contemporaneous with and familiar to Chômei, Emperor Go-Toha, in preparation for rebellion, once sponsored a set of meisho-e (“pictures of famous places”) inscribed by the poet Teika (a.k.a. Fujiwara Sadaie, 1162–1241, regarded as one of Japan’s four greatest poets [PC 153]) for a temple.³ Konishi describes the class of utterances that include kunimi as ‘panegyrics’ (“laudatory

² The “Hôjôki” meisho appear almost entirely in the second half, with Chômei in his final Toyama hut.
³ See Edward Kamens (1989, 26).
discourse; a eulogy" [CODCE]). These include songs that praise place, things, and people (Konishi 1984, 269). When I suggest that Chômei’s “Hôjôki” can be read as an allegorical kunimi, I want to emphasize that this is a purely metaphorical undertaking and is by no means literal. As the metaphoric correlation is an interesting reading, let us examine the parallels.

The “Hôjôki” meets Konishi’s essential criterion for kunimi in its abundant use of words of praise. Chômei vividly describes his surroundings. He begins by describing himself as center, and his gaze extends further and further afield with each passage. Beginning with his dwelling’s surroundings, he describes Toyama and praises the immediate landscape, noting, “Everywhere are aids to meditation” — which reinforces the value of landscape as a symbolic aid to religion. Next, Chômei discusses the flora and fauna, adds a meisho, Mount Shide, traditionally viewed as the threshold to the afterlife, and thus alludes to death as a motivator towards religion. He describes his austerities and again in praise of the area, notes that his “surroundings are not such that they would induce transgression.” He adds, in approval, “Since nobody owns this view, there is nobody to prevent me from enjoying it.” Maybe nobody owned the view, but this is Chômei’s private kingdom. The utterance of kunimi involved the use of auspicious language, and in Chômei’s case, he fills the pages of the “Hôjôki” with meisho. Having moved from the distant Ōhara to Hino, which was closer to Heiankyô, Chômei, using himself as center, begins listing the meisho around him an an expanding concentric ring — building his mandala-like microcosm, as it were: Mount Kohata, Fushimi, Toba, Hazukashi, Mount Sumi, Kasatori, Iwama, Mount Ishi, the Awazu Plain, the Tanakami River, and Maki no Shima (see map, following page).

Chômei’s literary allusions also conjure images of place and travel. He alludes poetically to the Xinyang River of Po Chü-i’s Lute Song, and literally to the Okanoya of
Chōmei's Sweeping Survey of Meisho in the Hōjōki
Mansei’s famous poem on transience. As well, Chômei mentions making pilgrimages to various spots, including the dwelling site of Semimaru and the grave site of Sarumaru. Whether real or imagined points of destination, Chômei’s allusions to geographic points reinforce travel, but also emphasize his desire to stay put in Toyama.

It is interesting to note that in almost all the poem examples cited in Katagiri’s *Utamakura Utakotoba* for the above meisho, autumn is the emphasized season. Seasonal classification was a common method of categorizing poetry collections. Each season alludes to the changes undergone in a life span: Spring-birth, Summer-growth, Autumn-aging, and Winter-death. Although Chômei’s “Hôjôki” mentions elements particular to each season, its overall tone reflects an autumnal image, with such elements as a sinking sun at the lip of a mountain, harvest’s end (collecting leftover rice and making sheaths), wind (“Song of Autumn Wind,” rustling pines), collecting berries and nuts, autumn leaves, and night imagery. The autumnal tone emphasizes Chômei’s approaching death.

Chômei’s sites of surveyance are all high, platforms from which to view the lands. He may have lost the Kamo Shrine and left the capital behind, but his surroundings bring him closer to the gods and Amida’s Pure Land. Notice how Chômei’s “humanized” surroundings include people as part of the landscape. Whether he is alone or with the warden’s son, landscape does not function as Chômei’s backdrop, rather Chômei is a part of the landscape. The meisho aspect of the “Hôjôki” hails from a toponym tradition that add, in their literary significance, sequentiality and temporality to a landscape description. Meisho, as we will soon see, also acted as narrative devices, imposing order in the “Hôjôki.”

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4 Chômei is alluding to a poem by Mansei, an eighth century poet. An oft-quoted poem on transience, it can be found in the *Shûshû (Collection of Gleanings*, ca. late tenth century):

- *Yo no naka o* Life in this world —
- *Nani ni tatoen* What can I compare it to?
- *Asaborake* The white wake
- *Kogiyuku fune no* Of a boat
- *Ato no shiranami* Rowing into the dawn.
We could also regard the _meisho_ as a metaphor: travelling through the landscape as travelling through life. The "Hōjōki" reads as both a narrative of Chōmei's surroundings and of Chōmei's history. In taking us from the capital, Heiankyō, through the dwellings of his life to the surroundings of his old age at Toyama, Chōmei presents us with a two-part map of his geography and life. In this sense, Chōmei metaphorically peoples his landscape, humanizing geography with a biographical story based on codified toponyms.

Chōmei's landscape description begins from himself as center, and extends outward. Let us now explore the reasons behind such an outward movement. Dispensing with chronological brackets, let's escape the trap of postulating, for instance, that "Chōmei of the Late Heian-Early Kamakura period must have thought such-and-such about his particular landscape." Rather, we should try to analyze each landscape-representation and the aesthetic-political associations they evoke. Rolf Stein, who examines miniaturized Asian landscapes and dwellings while emphasizing the religious associations of each, suggests that the landscape can be any of the following (or combination): an aesthetic, faddish, philosophical, (magico-)religious, or folkloric manifestation; or the object of promotion by a lettered class. I would add one more characteristic by which to recognize the manifesting-forces behind a landscape. Whereas Stein deals with the concrete landscape, we are looking at the landscape one level removed — as a literary description. It then stands to reason that the described-landscape will have ties to poetic and literary creation. We will examine each of our four author's works as textual landscape accompaniments, texts which may (or may not) reveal the author's descriptive purpose. Alone or in combination, Stein's and the additional literary criteria are characteristics to recognize in our authors' landscape works.

We will begin by examining the microcosmic worlds of Po Chü-i, Kaneakira, Yasutane, and Chōmei — that is, person, dwelling, and choice of living space — as the literary elements that constitute their universes. Each author represents the center of his
own cosmos, and his dwelling and surroundings function as concentric rings around his self.\textsuperscript{5} Thus, we will examine the author, his “rings,” and their interrelations.

The dwelling is a concrete representation of the author’s world, and as such, it also functions as a point of communication between his world and others, especially Heaven and earth.\textsuperscript{6} Essentially a utilitarian necessity, the dwelling also functions as both a religious and symbolic entity. In each case, parts such as windows, doors, eaves, or halls, for example, stand out due to their functions. Let us extend Stein’s ideas about the dwelling to the author’s surroundings. Just like the dwelling, the author’s environment, whether natural or constructed, functions as a link — in this case between author and dwelling, and between his microcosmic world and those belonging to others. Again, each part — whether lake, stones, a grouping of trees, or otherwise — is highlighted by its function. Thus, the concrete details of Po’s, Kaneakira’s, Yasutane’s, and Chōmei’s dwellings and environments become metaphors, images, and symbols of what I will argue to constitute aesthetic-political representations.

In both Chinese and Japanese traditional landscapes, the \textit{complete} entity comprises water, rock, and vegetation. Po, Kaneakira, and Yasutane each live surrounded by a constructed complete-nature, where the objects within the space were expected to be as natural as possible, but where human intervention and artificial arrangement were also

\textsuperscript{5} Stein notes that,

\begin{quote}
The world we occupy, our “living space,” is lived in with religious emotion — the body for each individual, the house for the family, the site inhabited by a bigger or smaller human group (clan, village). And this religious quality of the space in which we place ourselves, into which we retire or isolate ourselves — alone or with our family — is accompanied by imaginative activity of a mythological and symbolic nature (175-176).
\end{quote}

Stein describes each unit as a “concentric ring.” I would like to draw our attention to the central elements in each case, the body (self), dwelling, and social group. Each element constitutes a ring in an ever-expanding universe.

\textsuperscript{6} See Stein (vii). Phyllis (trans.) raises this point in a different context.
the norm. For that matter, we can envision each author’s dwelling and surroundings as enclosed spaces in which the world as a whole — that is, the microcosm — is represented by a ritually defined area from which he isolates objects. For example, we have Po Chü-i in “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” describing a long list of objects within his microcosm, and a description of the characteristics of each. He acquired an “India Stone” from Hua-t’ing, an object invested with symbolic significance by its place of origin — a mountain peak famous for its recluse. As well, notes Po, “Yang Chen-i of Hung-nung gave me three blue-green rocks which are square, long, and flat. I use them to sit and rest on,” and also, no doubt, other activities such as composing poems, reading, and perhaps listening to music. In Po’s tribute to life on Lu Shan in “Ts’ao-t’ang Chi,” he compares his mountain peak to others, isolates rocks as objects for his gaze (“I look upward to observe the mountains; ... and squint at the ... rocks”); points out stones as a means to direct the passage of a person through his space (“Below the shrubs are spread with white stones, forming paths for entrance and exit”); and details his rock walls and mounds as constructions to show off vegetation to their best advantage. Stein provides a “miniaturized” reading of a passage in “Ts’ao-t’ang Chi,” noting of Po that, “He made a terrace with a basketfull of earth and a mountain by assembling stones as big as a thumb; he surrounded it with a lake from a drinking vessel of water; he was so crazy about landscapes” (Stein 40). Kaneakira and Yasutane evoke the rock component by mentioning a constructed hill, conventionally situated by the landscape’s water component (Kaneakira: “The flowing

7 Scholarship on Chinese and Japanese landscape or on the relations of each is extensive. I limited the bulk of my fact-gathering for this discussion to Stein, who, although focusing on continental models, traces his search for origins backwards from “modern” times, and thus represents Japan. The other two sources I used extensively are Bush, Theories of the Arts in China, and Thomas Keirstead, “Gardens and Estates: Medievality and Space.” Perhaps some light can be shed on the concept of constructed landscapes in Asian cultures through the following quote:

Sometimes nature’s work is better than that of human beings. But conversely, human beings can, by use of art, improve upon a natural object (Stein xxiii).

Ideals in nature, then, were considered meetable through fabrication.
water borders the hill”; and Yasutane: “Where the land is high I created a small hill, and where the land is sunken I dug a small pond”). Chômei, living in the foothills of the Hino range, visually evokes mountains numerous times: Hinoyama, Shideyama, Kohatayama, Sumiyama, and Ishiyama. Thus, the “rock” is an integral part of our four authors’ micro-cosms. Rocks, and by extension, hills or mountains, are necessary components of a natural site. In fact, notes Stein, they are “… indispensable for the conventional furnishing of a retreat, of bringing the representation of the universe into the smallest world set aside for human activity …” (36-37). Yet for each author, rocks and landscape stand alone or in combination as elements in a language, each different, but universal between the four. Water and vegetation are also themes of this landscape-language, and again, Po, Kaneakira, Yasutane, and Chômei each incorporate these elements into their works.

This “landscape-language” also reflects a religious tone, as the following examples show. Yasutane, as we have seen, metaphorically visualized himself in the mountains while ensconced within his dwelling (“... in my heart, it as though I dwell in the mountains”). Buddhist and Taoist landscape-language is also evident in the comparison of Yasutane to Tsung Ping, who visited the mountains he once traversed through his painted landscapes. Similarly, Stein directs our attention to Taoists, who, in order to “achieve or regain immortality ... [would go into] hiding in the mountains. In order to do this, they [would] not have to leave their own home” (109). Instead, these Taoists would literally make themselves disappear into their landscapes. Metaphorically or magically, one could disappear into his surroundings while statically positioned in a particular, defined space. Why not disappear literally as well?

8 Stein finishes the quote with the words: “the room,” which he much later associates with “the emptiness of a person,” (and a cave as the emptiness of a mountain, and a void as the emptiness of Heaven). In our case, it is more appropriate to omit “the room” and substitute “the dwelling.”

9 “Hermits, although confined to the narrow world of their retreat, still had access to the entire universe in all its variety. Did they want to go off on a wandering trip? They only had to draw on the floor of the hut the site they wanted to visit. They could create it by drawing it, and they could make it disappear by using a spell” (Stein 51–52).
If the Dharma can be contained within a speck of dust, and if, as Stein argues, the entire cosmos can be contained in a landscape, then might we not also regard the literary elements of the landscape as representations of the universe too? Let us move from the universal center, the person, to the next concentric ring of the dwelling. In such a view, it will be easier to perceive Vimalakīrti’s room, Po’s and Chōmei’s huts, and Po’s, Kaneakira’s, and Yasutane’s landscaped homesites as separate and significantly individual universes. I will examine the dwellings of Yasutane and Chōmei, the last two authors on our comparative ladder, against the relevant classificatory characteristics as suggested by Stein: aesthetic, faddish, philosophical, religious, folkloric, and lettered class; and as added by myself, literary and political.

Chōmei’s hut impresses us foremost as a symbolic entity of religion. Firstly, not unlike Vimalakīrti’s dwelling, Chōmei’s hut is very small. Chōmei, we know, labels himself “a failed Vimalakīrti” at the end of the “Hōjōki,” so it is not unreasonable for us to surmise that Chōmei modeled his hut after his famous predecessor’s space. Sharing such a spatial ideal in an achronological context is not untoward. Stein addresses such a transcendence of time when he states that,

[C]oncepts about the organization of the space we live in represent the most universal of religions, a religion that has neither name nor organized church but is made up of the entire body of customs and religious ideas in a given society (Stein 122).

In such an ideology of space, Chōmei’s representations of his environment are based upon ideal concepts couched in terms of Jōdo thought, and an extension of the roots of religious beliefs expressed in Vimalakīrti’s Mahāyāna doctrine — the transcendental ideal of the land of enlightenment. As the following examples show us, other components of Chōmei’s religious ideology — the parts that stand out due to their function — are so explicit that

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10 We have, in fact, already noted in a round-about way William LaFleur’s reading of dwellings — specifically huts and inns — as corollaries to rokudō (see p. 79). LaFleur’s fascinating thesis treats the dwelling along the lines of Stein’s microcosm-macrocosm model. See LaFleur (26–59, and 60–79).
they colour the entire “Hōjōki.” Chōmei places pictures of Amida and Fugen (a fearsome deity) — visual elements of Late Heian-Early Kamakura plastic arts — in strategic places in his hut. He brings copies of the *Lotus Sutra* and Genshin’s Ōjōyōshū — his central doctrinal text and the vivid description of Buddhist hells and retribution. He tells us that there is “an open track of land to the west,” an indication of Amida’s Pure Land, the Western Paradise. “Everywhere are aids to meditation,” he adds. Chōmei mentions the Shide Mountains, which also connote the afterlife. The chirruping cicadas elicit transience as they “seem to grieve the fleeting nature of things in this world,” and the winter’s “gathering and melting snow invites one to compare it to the sins and hindrances to enlightenment.” We find another reminder of mujō in Chōmei’s allusion to a poem by Mansei, about the wake of the boats at Okanoya — which also constitutes a part of the landscape’s water component in the “Hōjōki.” As well, Chōmei refers to his nenbutsu practices, walking pilgrimages (to meisho), famous tonseisha, the Buddhist Commandments, the Three Evil Paths,11 and the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra* story. Chōmei’s “Hōjōki” thus shows, on one hand, features of his dwelling that retain the qualities of Vimalakirti’s famous room of enlightenment.

Yastutane’s dwelling also exhibits religious components. Yasutane is still very much involved in his public life, but in the significant west, he provides for his private life with “a small hall to house the Amida Buddha.” Yasutane tells us that in public he wears sleeves of green, a mark of a Sixth Rank official, but, he notes, “[when I am at home, I wear a white hemp robe, which is whiter than the spring, and purer than the snow ...,” the attire of a lay-Buddhist. Most of the religious elements of Yasutane’s home are covert, with piety expressed in a Buddhist-Confucian cloak (see the syncretic reading of Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” in “Religiously Motivated Reclusion”). Nevertheless, although religious elements figure substantially in the “Chiteiki,” the overall “feel” is more about

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11 The Three Evils Paths (*sanakudō*) constituted the three lowest, least desirable levels of *rokudō* creatures in hell, hungry ghosts, and animals.
an ideal emphasized by the lettered class — in particular, as noted earlier, that of Confucian thought.

Yasutane’s final words are his idealized recommendations for parts of his “cosmic” house, which most aptly describe his dwelling, and render it into a Confucian symbol of propriety:

Humanity and justice are the ridgepoles and beams, ritual and law are the pillars and foundation, truth and virtue are the gates and doors, and mercy and love are the walls and hedges. A fondness for frugality is the family business, and the accumulation of goodness is the family fortune. When a person lives in such a house, it cannot be burnt by fire or blown down by the wind. Misfortune cannot afflict it, and disaster cannot come its way. Even gods and spirits will not peer into it, nor will thieves attack it. This house will naturally grow wealthy, and the master will enjoy a long life.

Yasutane epitomizes perfectly Stein’s microcosm-macrocosm model of an individual and concentric encapsulation: house and family, the inhabited and organized site with its social grouping, and the natural (or fabricated) site. The Confucian-oriented home championed by Yasutane — a member of the aristocracy — is at once philosophical, religious, faddish, aesthetic, and, I would argue, political. After all, it is not merely religious or technical criteria that decide the inclusion or placement of an element. Whether a dwelling or a row boat, everything in Yasutane’s (and Chômei’s) microcosm holds political significance.

Yasutane and Chômei each inhabited a different kind of space. Or did they? Yasutane lived in an artificial physical construct, in which every element was carefully situated in space, imbued with meaning, and steeped in tradition. He tells us that Heiankyô’s eastern and western sections were respectively coveted and non-desirable. As such, the two halves of the capital were what Keirstead would describe as “potent metaphors for the medieval, loci that were invested with great political, economic, and social significance” (297). We must change our thinking from what Keirstead regards as
Western thought, in which societies and institutions are seen as inhabiting neutral spaces shaped to their needs (297), and place ourselves in a context of ancient Japanese thought, in which society was shaped by its space — that is, space which was inhabited by society or institutions, rather than by the individual. Therefore, we can look at Yasutane's divided Heiankyō as spaces that were fundamental to or enabling of, for example, social and economic — and particularly, for our interest — political institutions.

Moving from the concentric ring of society to the microcosm of dwelling, we note two significant aspects of Yasutane's landscaped home: he built on "uninhabited land north of Rokujō Avenue," which is in the undesirable west; and he uses literary conventions based on Prime Minister Hsiao, Chung Ch'ang-tung, Kaneakira, and Po Chü-i, by which to define his acquired space and the objects within it. Yasutane's property is a highly regimented pleasure-space ordered upon codes specific to the Mid-Heian period Heiankyō. A supporting foundation of Keirstead's thesis is that since private home-landscapes such as Yasutane's were extremely expensive to construct and maintain, they were at once exercises in landscape aesthetics, and also, examinations of political power. As such, Yasutane's dwelling, a product of the elite, becomes a device by which we can read not only his shaping and taming of nature, but also his power and authority in determining social and cultural order.

The landscape-artist, as noted previously, was enjoined to imitate nature following codes of artifice and intervention. What Yasutane's grounds may have looked like in actuality is something we can only speculate about, but it is likely that the landscape bore little resemblance to the grounds in his literary description. The descriptive process we are seeing starts to resemble a Möbius strip — that is, a chronological circuit preceding, incorporating, and following Yasutane as he extracts meaningful elements, forwards or backwards, always to return to the point(s) of origin. Yasutane's landscape and dwelling are meant to be read as more than nature or structure, and his "Chiteiki" is the tool by which we can make his habitation legible. It would seem that we are faced by a dilemma: if Yasutane's space is made into text, we must render it readable according to his cultural
conventions, and those conventions include the literary aestheticization of politics. Thus, we too are brought full circle back to my original contention, that Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” is mediated by elements rendering it into an aesthetic-political representation of late tenth century Heiankyō.

Dwelling or landscape, each element Yasutane describes in the “Chiteiki” forms a relationship that intertwines conventions of text and nature. In this sense, Yasutane positions both the visual aspects of his property and the reader—the reader of the “Chiteiki.” And what is more, both creator and viewer, it seems, delight in mastering what is really beyond our control. Yasutane imposes an order by which to read the landscape of the “Chiteiki.” By sequentializing his space, Yasutane invests himself with the authority to fix nature into his codified order, and to confirm that he has the ability to possess and order that space. In effect, Yasutane’s sequential and temporal text controls the nonsequential and atemporal spatial elements that constitute the imagery in the “Chiteiki.” Keirstead’s model of Japanese landscapes is one in which meaning derives from the framing and composition of space. Yasutane successfully delimits such a space and moves his reader through it via the “Chiteiki.”

Just as Yasutane moves us through his estate, Chōmei navigates his surroundings with carefully regulated motion through codified toponyms. He moves us through his immediate space: a thicket, a forest, and an open track of land. In this movement, we are exposed to the constituents of the “whole” traditional landscape—mountains, water, and vegetation (and the water, as we saw in Mansei’s poem, is allusion and reality combined). Through hikes and explorations, pilgrimages to real or imagined places, and concrete destinations in the form of meishō, Chōmei also regulates the flow of his textual travels. The “Hōjōki” contains a realm organized and identified by movement through space. In this way, though Yasutane’s was a physically constructed landscape and Chōmei’s was a space devised by literary conventions, Yasutane’s space was also

12 Cf. Keirstead 309.
literarily contrived, and Chômei’s physical landscape visually manipulated — rendering each author’s surroundings into a similar space through which he moves his readers.

The political-aesthetics of Yasutane and Chômei are essentially the same, reflecting an emerging period of literature based on movement — a harbinger of the still later Muromachi (1338–1573) and Edo (1603–1867) periods’ movement-defined space,13 and the growing tradition of pilgrimage based-tonsei. Each author occupied a dwelling and space that functioned as utilitarian, religious, and symbolic entities; and provided his readers with concrete details which acted as symbols of his ideal political and aesthetic representations. We readers derive the purpose driving each author from his text, and recreate the landscapes by decoding the aesthetic and literary conventions — in such texts as Po Chû-i’s “Ch’ih-shang p’ien” and “Ts’ao-t’ang Chi,” and Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki.” By examining the microcosms of each setting, dwelling, and human center, and the activities done in each space, we undertake both an exercise in landscape aesthetics, and a look at political power. Thus, Yasutane and Chômei, both of whom were on the fringes politically, possessed the power and authority to render their acquired or temporary spaces into places invested with social and cultural meaning, and the tool at their disposal was literature. The spaces in the “Chiteiki” and “Hôjôki” were invested with aesthetic and political significance. Each of Stein’s classifications of landscape constitute a whole in reading the “Chiteiki” and “Hôjôki.” Imbueing the consumption of nature with the justification of pleasure is at once aesthetic, faddish preoccupation, a trait propogated by the lettered class, philosophical, religious, political, and most significantly, a literary creation.

V

Afterword

I undertook in this thesis an investigation of the politicized aesthetics arising from the ideological systems motivating Yoshishige no Yasutane and Kamo no Chōmei to write the "Chiteiki" and "Hōjōki." Having examined the metaphorical language of these two authors in "A Study," I set out to explore their political, and by its relationship, aesthetic languages. By contextualizing, rather than decontextualizing as I did in "A Study," I hoped to treat both the political and aesthetic aspects as autonomous, albeit related, disciplines.

In order to arrive at a point where I could investigate politicized aesthetics, I began by examining the recluse tradition: first from its country of exportation, China, with regard to the aspects affecting it — chiefly Confucian and Buddhist thought systems, and partly in key Taoist points with regard to nature; and then in Japan, where it was syncretized and changed under the auspices of Japan's own indigenous ideologies. Examining the "changing face" of reclusion in China and Japan unearthed not so much characteristic "-isms" specific to time and place, but a composite entity who left society, and for various reasons, wrote of his experiences.

One of my aims in this paper was to analyze Po Chü-i's, Minamoto no Kaneakira's, Yasutane's, and Chōmei's works in light of its tradition of reclusion, with the hope of eliciting the similarities and differences between the authors and the forms of reclusion they each underwent. Broadly speaking, similarities exist between China's T'ang dynasty and Japan's Heian and Early Kamakura eras in the literary recluse tradition. Exile, reclusion, and political discontent are common features. As well, the image of the recluse we see reflected by Po Chü-i, Kaneakira, Yasutane, and Chōmei are fundamentally the same: they are all adherents of particular religious practices by which they organized their lives,
members of a court-based aristocracy who were discontent with their political environment, and men who were inclined toward immersing themselves in physically and/or literarily constructed landscapes.

The image of the recluse that these four authors project also differs greatly between their works, with each representing a different facet of the literary recluse tradition. An essential difference in the four reclusions is the reason why each man found himself writing about his home or surroundings. In Po Chü-i’s “Ts’aot’ang Chi,” he is an exile — dismissed from his bureaucratic post in Ch’ang-an and sent far to the south and an inferior government appointment — and builds himself a hut on Mount Lu with the hope of someday retiring to it. The “Ts’aot’ang Chi” describes an idealized setting for reclusion and it is written by a working, albeit exiled, bureaucrat. Po’s “Ch’ihsiang p’ien” represents the idealized reclusion of a society-bound bureaucrat. The estate Po describes is the site of leisurely pursuits and an idyllic life style. Kaneakira’s “Chiteiki” is the work of a bureaucrat employed in the capital, Heiankyō, and it also reflects an idealized reclusion within society. However, whereas Po Chü-i actively sought permanent reclusion without officialdom, Kaneakira was content with power and position in his idealized setting. Yasutane presents the image of another working bureaucrat within society. His “Chiteiki” exemplifies a metaphorical reclusion in the form of shukke, leaving home and entering monastic priesthood, a form of reclusion he will actually undertake in his later life. Chōmei, on the other hand, exemplifies the tonseisha in his reclusion, in leaving home and living in isolation without entering formal monastic priesthood. We thus have contrasts between the reclusions of the four men in the following ways: exile versus reclusion, reclusion within or without society, employment or nonemployment as a government official, and shukke versus tonsei acts.

The second and third steps of my research investigated the dominant political and religious ideologies of the Late Heian and Early Kamakura periods. Such an investigation entailed a comparative look at the various intertextual sources that fed the “Chiteiki” and
“Hōjōki”: Po Chü-i’s “Ts’ao-t’ang Chi” and “Ch’ih-shang p’ien,” and Kaneakira’s earlier version of the “Chiteiki.”

This paper was, in part, a response to my contention in “A Study” that Michele Marra erroneously presents Heiankyō as a “totalitarian” Fujiwara state, and Yasutane as a person forced out of power by the political situtation of his time. Having since reversed my opinion, I hoped to elaborate upon and further Marra’s argument. An examination of Yasutane’s political environment found a Heiankyō that was not only politically controlled by Fujiwara, but also intertwined in its politics and religion. Yasutane’s education and career were hindered both by his low Sixth and Fifth Ranks status, and Fujiwara meddling in the capital’s educational and political institutions. The Fujiwara were a catalyst behind Minamoto Takaakira’s and Kaneakira’s exiles, and both of these men played roles in either Yasutane’s “Chiteiki” or life. As well, Fujiwara political manipulations affected Yasutane’s role in a failed attempt at imperial reform, which resulted in his shukke to the Enryakuji enclave, Yokawa — the very institution at which Fujiwara Morosuke and Priest Ryōgen had entered into a patron-ritualist pact, and to which Morosuke’s son, Jinzen, joined the priesthood. Thus, I now readily concur with Marra and his views.

The first three chapters of this paper are explicitly historicized examinations of the recluse tradition, and the political and religious motivations of the recluses. As a whole, these three chapters constitute readings of works by Po, Kaneakira, Yasutane, and Chōmei that are based upon the historicity of politics. In order to discern each work’s political content, I examined the dominant ideologies specific to the authors. In this regard, I borrowed techniques proposed by a variety of scholars, and “tried them on for size.”

Chapter Four takes leave of the straightforward approach preceding it, and adopts a somewhat experimental procedure. In so doing, I reveal a conflict that entails a future, separate body of research. Thus, under the title “Toward an Experimental Conclusion,” I examined the “politicized aesthetics” of Yasutane and Chōmei. I engaged in this final
discourse by setting up the problem of genre — that is, the author who wrote about his
garden or landscape — and asked, what constructs it? In so doing, I borrowed the Marxist
Structuralist Louis Althusser’s view of “ideology” and “the problematic.” But while my
findings were functional, to an extent, I also set up a conflict of sorts.

One of the problems arises from the definition of “unconsciousness.” In its most
fundamental medical sense, the “conscious” is “capable of responding to sensory stimuli
and having subjective experiences,” and “consciousness” is “responsiveness of the
mind to impressions made by the senses” (Miller and Keane 226). But what is
“subjective”? On one hand, it is something perceived only by the individual involved,
views arising from personal idiosyncrasy or individuality, which is neither impartial nor
literal — in other words, the consciousness can be imaginary, partial, or distorted (Miller
and Keane 919, and CODCE 1214). A Dictionary of Philosophy defines “consciousness”
as a “relation existing among (a) an activity of knowing, (b) the content being known, and
(c) the awareness of them both” (Angeles 46). A conflict in examining politicized aes-
thetics arises from Althusser’s connotations of the unconsciousness, and its relation to
ideology.

In essence, Althusser contends that ideology equals the unconscious, and since he
also asserts that ideology has no history (see pp. 104–105), then we must assume that
by extension, the unconscious has no history either. Peter Angeles echoes Althusser in
this respect.

Consciousness ... is a primitive — something that cannot be analyzed or
traced further and [which] cannot be built up out of other more rudimentary
concepts or states. ... Consciousness is a brute fact — something that just
happens and cannot be reduced to anything else similar to it as its source
(46).

Althusser speaks about the un-conscious, that part of the mind inaccessible to the con-
scious mind, but which affects behavior and emotions (CODCE 1329). The unconscious
mind cannot receive sensory stimuli, have subjective experiences, or respond to sensory
experience. It is *not* knowing as activity or content, and it is unaware of knowing. But what happens when we negate Angeles’ “consciousness”? Can this even be done? It leaves a quandary — is it really the case that the un-conscious cannot be traced beyond its rudimentary concepts or states, and is it not possible to reduce an unconscious state to a source?

I do not regard the unconscious to be without history, and this constitutes a fundamental problem in Althusser’s syllogism. Since his argument is not absolutely logical (that is, since all of its premises are not necessarily or provably correct), we cannot accept his conclusion — it is not valid. Althusser’s premise regarding ideology as the unconscious is a major assumption of truth, and once we fill in the implied premise of the unconscious without history, his argument is tentative at best, and falls apart at worst. And if we further Althusser’s argument that an individual’s unconscious lacks history, then we would also have to assume that Althusser deems the collective’s unconscious in the same way — and this constitutes a problem to me in my politicized-aesthetics investigation of Yasutane and Chômei.

Althusser also contends that an ideological apparatus exists as an entity from which a person derives his personal attitudes, beliefs, and practices, and that the person within such an ideological mechanism freely chooses those beliefs and practices. By contending that a person freely chooses his beliefs from an ideological apparatus, Althusser is also dehistoricizing — which contradicts my approach in politicized readings in the first three chapters. It is my belief that politics, as ideology, cannot be dehistoricized. And it is such a conflict, historicization versus dehistoricization, that creates a dilemma when I examine the recluse and his aesthetics.

I again turn to Angeles, and to his definition of “choosing” as a voluntary act preceded by deliberation — a conscious selection, which is characterized by inclination to act, deliberation about the action, a decision to act, the perception of alternatives, evaluating the consequences, and action (38). Choice, then, is an act of volition. As regards “choice,” Angeles characterizes it as something that habituates one’s character toward
it, reveals the essential traits of a personality, and may be related to motives and principles of conduct (38). Language is an ideological apparatus from which a person derives his attitudes, beliefs, and practices — but a person does not choose his first language by his own free will. Just this one contradiction — I’m sure many others exist — serves to jeopardize Althusser’s contention of the individual as a product of his ideological apparatuses.

The difference between the first three and last chapters constitutes an impasse. Althusser’s definitions of "ideology" and "the problematic" are arguably correct, and because of this, I am presented with a conflict of historicization versus dehistoricization, and new questions about the consciousness of the recluse and his free will in choice. This constitutes the basis of future research: How does one keep the historicity of politics within an aesthetic reading of a particular, pre-modern Japanese literary work, and when does the unconscious-without-history figure in studies of the Japanese recluse tradition? I must re-approach the works of the authors who wrote about their gardens and landscapes, and using historicity as a fundamental principle, and exploring the question of consciousness, re-examine this genre.
Appendix I

(Translations)
Lu Shan’s magnificent beauty is the best of all the mountains under Heaven. The peak to the north is known as the Hsiang-lu ("Fragrance Furnace"), and north of this peak there is a temple called I-ai ("Long-cherished Love"). Between the peak and the temple is an area with a glorious view — a view which surpasses that of Lu Shan’s. In the autumn of the eleventh year of the Yuan-ho era, I, Po Lo-t’ien of Tai-yüan, fell in love with this place upon seeing it. It is like a traveller from afar, who, upon passing by his hometown, is unable to leave because of his love of it. Hence, I built a thatched abode that faces the peak and the temple below it.

In the spring of the following year, 818, the thatched abode was completed. There are three rooms having two pillars in them, and two rooms that have four windows. Its width, length, and plentiful and economic use of space all satisfy my expectations. There is a door in the northern side of my dwelling into which cool winds blow, preventing the heat of (mid)summer. The southern side of the rafter is left exposed in order to take in the warmth of the sunny days, preventing the severe cold of winter. The timber is simply split and without red paint, and the walls are merely plastered, without white paint. The steps are made of stones, and the windows are made of paper. My choice of bamboo and ramie curtains can all be said to have been properly selected. In the middle of the hall are four wooden couches, two plain-colored screens, a lacquered lute, and two volumes each of the three teachings, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

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1 ("Ts’ai-o-t’ang Chi," 817.) Source: Po Chü-i Chi Chien-chiao. Collated and annotated by Chu Chin-cheng (Shang-hai Ku-chi, 1988). Tr. Wong Kwok-Yiu. Ed. B. Faulkes. I believe this is the first time that Po Chü-i’s "Ts’ai-o-t’ang Chi" has been translated into English.

2 Lu Shan, a.k.a. K’uang-lu, is located in modern Chiang-hsi province.

3 That is, 817, the eleventh year of the Yuan-ho era (806–820 AD). Po Lo-t’ien is another name used by Po Chü-i, and Tai-yüan is in modern Shan-hsi province.
Since I came here as the master, I look upward to observe the mountains; prostrate myself to listen to the sounds of the springs; and squint at the bamboo trees, the clouds in the sky, and the rocks. From daybreak to sunset\(^4\) my activities are too numerous for me to attend to. In a short while I feel relaxed and renewed. Outside, my body is content, and inside, all is in harmony. After staying here for one evening, my body becomes peaceful. After one more evening, my heart becomes tranquil. After staying for three evenings, I become relaxed and forgetful. I become this way without knowing the reason.

When I ask myself why, this is my answer:

My good feelings are all because of where I am staying. In front of the thatched abode, there is a piece of flat ground with a perimeter of one hundred feet. In the middle there is a terrace with an area half that of the flat ground. South of the terrace there is a rectangular pond. Its area is twice that of the terrace. Surrounding the pond are numerous bamboo trees and wild plants. In the pond, there are white lotus and white fish. The south side of the pond leads to a stony brook. The path along the brook is lined with ancient pines and old cedars, of which the biggest one can be encircled by ten people. It is not clear how many hundreds of feet it rises up into the sky. The long branches rise up and reach the clouds, and the lower branches touch the surface of the pond. These branches are like pennants, extending into canopies, like dragons and snakes moving. Beneath the pine trees are shrubs, and leaves of various creepers spread about. These crowd and knit together to form a screen so that neither sunlight nor moonlight can reach the ground. Thus, in the middle of the hot summer, the breezes and temperature resemble that of the eighth and ninth months. Below the shrubs are spread white stones, forming paths for entrance and exit. Five steps north of the abode are rocks piled up against a cliff. They are inlaid into the space to create small mounds or walls, and they are covered by various kinds of trees and unusual plants. There is luxuriant growth of green shade, and red fruits are scattered all over the place — but I am not familiar with their names. Throughout the

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\(^4\) Lit.: “... from the ch'en period in the morning to the yu period at night” (ch'en period = 7–9 am, yu period = 5–7 pm).
four seasons, the color of the trees and foliage remain unchanged. There is also a running
spring, and tea bushes are planted close by for their brewing use. When those who love
*feng-liu* see these, they can spend the whole day there.

To the east of the abode there is a waterfall three feet above the ground, which
pours down onto the edges of the steps and runs into a stone gutter. At dawn and at
dusk, the colour of the water is like that of white silk. In the middle of the night, the
waterfall’s sound is like that of jade pendants hitting each other, and like that of lutes.

The west side of the abode leans against the right foot of the northern cliff of Lu
Shan. Bamboo poles split into halves are raised up into the space to receive the spring
water that from atop the cliff. The path of the water is like a hanging thread from the
eaves, pouring onto the stone steps. It is like a string of pearls continuously falling down,
or fine misty rain. Dripping and trickling, blowing and splashing about, the water follows
the wind to travel afar.

As for the things that surround the abode — that which can be sensed by one’s ears
and eyes or are within walking distance — there are the flowers of the Chin-hsiu valley in
spring, the clouds of the Shih-men creek in the summer, the moon of Hu-ch’i in autumn,
and the snows of Lu Shan’s peak in the winter. The onset and cessation of rain and
sunshine, and daybreak and dusk have thousands of variations and myriad shapes. It is
impossible to mention all of them, and it is too complex to express in writing. This is why
the scenery here is said to be superior to other places in Lu Shan.

Ah! When a man makes his home luxuriant, with a decorated bed-mat from which to
rise from and rest in, it is usually unavoidable that he’ll become conceited. Now that I am
the master of this abode, when things come together and lead to understanding, and each
complies with its nature in accordance with its category, how can my body not be content,
and my inside not be harmonious? How can my whole body not be calm and my mind not

---

be tranquil? In the past, Hui-Jui, Hui-Yüan, Tsung Ping, and Lei T'zu-tsung\(^\text{6}\) — altogether eighteen of them — came to retire on this mountain and did not leave before they died. Although they lived a thousand years before my time, I can understand their acts of reclusion because of their satisfaction (in body and spirit).

This makes me think about myself. From youth to old age, wherever I stayed — whether in a simple house or a mansion — even if only for a day or two, I soon turned piles of soil into a pavilion, collected rocks as big as the fist to build small mounds, and encircled pools of water to form a pond. My special liking for mountains and water is like this.\(^\text{7}\) When I encounter unlucky times, what else could I desire? Yet, I am restrained as a sinecure official, and my remaining burden of time has not been exhausted. I may be sent to various places, and there is no spare time for me to live in peace. Until a future day when my younger brothers and sisters are all married and my serving period as an adjutant is over, at that point in time — whether I am going to take office or not — I can then decide my whereabouts according to my own inclinations. Then, I will definitely draw my wife close to me with my left arm, and embrace my lute and books with my right arm. I can spend the rest of my life in this place, and fulfill my lifelong ambition. The clear spring water and the white rocks surely hear these words of mine.

It was on the twenty-seventh day of the Third Month that I began residing in my newly-built abode. On the ninth day of the Fourth Month — together with Yüan Chi-hsü of Ho-nan, Chang Yün-chung of Fang Yang, Chang Shen-chih of Nan-yang,\(^\text{8}\) and elder monks of the two temples in Tung-lin and Hsi-lin — Ts'ou, Lang, Man, Hui, and Ch'ien

\(^\text{6}\) Famous recluses. Hui Yüan (334–416/7) was an abbot of the Tung-lin monastery of Mt. Lu. He was also a teacher to Tsung Ping (375–443), a noted author and painter (see p. 68).

\(^\text{7}\) Rolf Stein, in a work examining miniaturized gardens in Asia, provides the following translation of this passage, based on his "miniaturized" reading: "He made a terrace with a basketful of earth and a mountain by assembling stones as big as a thumb; he surrounded it with a lake from a drinking vessel of water; he was so crazy about landscapes" (Stein 40).

\(^\text{8}\) During Po Ch'i-i's term in office at Chiang-chou, these men were fellow government officials in exile.
— we served tea and fruit for the home-warming of my new abode. Thus, I composed this “Record of the Thatched Abode.”
The best climate, scenery, trees, and ponds in the capital are located in the edge of the southeastern region. The beautiful area in the southeast is the Li Tao hamlet, and the prettiest part of the hamlet is in the northwestern corner. The first house from the West Gate by the North Wall (of this neighborhood) is that of the oldest of the Po family, Lo-t’ien’s place of retirement. The land is about 17 mou square. The buildings are on one-third of the area, the pond takes up one-fifth, and the bamboo covers one-ninth of the land. The islands, trees, bridges, and road are thus intertwined. When I first became master of this house I rejoiced. Yet I commented, “Although I have a grand house, without millet, I am unable to maintain (the place). Therefore, construct a granary to the east of the pond.” I also said, “Although I have students here, without books, I will be unable to teach them. Therefore, construct a library to the north of the pond.” I said this too: “Even though I have visitors, without music or wine, I will be unable to entertain them. Thus, build a music pavilion to the west of the pond, and supply it with stone wine kegs.” When, Lo-t’ien, retired from my position as Governor of Hang-chou I acquired an India Stone and two cranes from Hua-t’ing, and brought these back. The first thing I built was the Western Peace Bridge, and I opened a road around the pond. When I retired as Governor of Su-chou, I acquired a stone from T’ai-hu, a white lotus, a trailing water chestnut, and a blue boat, and brought these back. As well, I constructed the Middle-high Bridge and the traversing Three-Islands Road. When I resigned as Vice-President of the

1 ("Ch’ih-shang p’ien," 829.) Sources: C: Po-shih Ch’ang-ch’ing Chi v. 69; J: NKB T v. 69. Tr. R. Faulkes.

2 One mou is about 100 square meters.

3 Peter Wetzler describes an “India Stone” as “[coming] from the peak of Mt. Ling-yin in Hang-chou where holy men lived in seclusion” (192 n. 3).
Board of Punishments, I selected one thousand *hu* of millet and a cart full of books. I also brought home one hundred servants who played stringed instruments and brought them back. Prior to this, Ch'en Hsiao-shan of Ying-ch'üan River gave me some special wine, which tastes very good. Ts'ui Hsu-shu of Po-ling gave me a lute, and its sound is extremely fine. Chiang Fa of Shu gave me “Autumn Lament,” a very light sounding song. Yang Chen-i of Hung-nung gave me three blue-green rocks which are square, long, and flat. I use them to sit and rest on. In the summer of T'ai-he (829) I began my position as Tutor to the Crown Prince. Thereupon, I resigned my office and went to Lo-yang, where I retired to my place by the pond. All the things I have acquired while I had three appointments, all the things I received from the four persons, and my own ungifted self are now transformed into things by the pond.

In every spring when the breeze blows on the pond, and in every autumn when the moon shines on the pond, I clean the Yang Stones and bring out the wine given to me by Ch'en, the Ts'ui lute is played, and Chiang's music is performed. Drunk, I do what I want — I know of no other way. If the music stops in the height of a wine party, I give orders to the musicians, climb up the Middle Island Pavilion, and make them play “Rainbow Robes.” The sound of the music floats and falls with the breezes, sometimes it is absorbing, other times it fades away. For a long time, I listen amongst the bamboo and mist, the moon and the rippling pond. Although the song is not yet over, I am drunk. Thus inebriated, I sleep on a rock. I wake up, and without thinking I begin singing — a tune with neither poetry nor rhythm. Someone took a brush, and amongst the stones, recorded my song. After observing that it roughly made up “rhymed sentences,” I called them “Around My Pond."

My home is ten mou, my garden is five.
I have a pond and a thousand bamboo.

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4 One *hu* is about 60 liters.
5 “Ni Ch'ang Yu I.” Po Chü-i was very fond of the ballet. He first mentions “Rainbow Robes and Feather Jackets” in his “Everlasting Remorse” in 806.
Do not say my land is narrow, or that it is in a rural place.  
There is room for me to put my legs under a table,  
Room to set down my load and rest.  
There is a hall, and a pontoon bridge.  
There are books, wine, songs, and a lute.  
This old man lives inside, white beard askew.  
Knowing my place, and knowing my limits,  
I do not search beyond these.  
I am like a bird who picks a branch,  
Briefly seeking the comfort of a nest.  
I am like a turtle in a well,  
Who knows nothing of the breadth of the ocean.  
Monstrous stones, wondrous cranes, purple chestnut, and white lotus —  
All of these things I am fond of, and all of them are before me.  
Sometimes I drink, and other times I sing songs.  
I relax and enjoy my wife and children,  
I run around with the chickens and dogs.  
How marvelous! How exceptional! —  
I will live like this until the end of my old age.
Appendix II
Reference Works

Reference Works and Works Cited from pre-modern times better known by their Sanskrit, Chinese, or Japanese titles will be listed as such.

Abbreviations

CODCE  The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English
KDJ  Kogo Dai Jiten
JJRS  Japanese Journal of Religious Studies
MN  Monumenta Nipponica
NKBT  Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei
NKBZ  Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū
PC  The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature
SCT  Sources of Chinese Tradition
SJT  Sources of Japanese Tradition
VNS  Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sūtra

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## Glossary

Abbreviations: E: English  J: Japanese  C: Chinese  S: Sanskrit

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<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
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</thead>
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<td>阿弥陀</td>
<td>阿弥陀</td>
<td>阿弥陀</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amitābha</td>
<td>E: Buddha of the Boundless Light  J: Amida</td>
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<tr>
<td>angya</td>
<td>行脚</td>
<td>安和の変</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna no hen</td>
<td>Anna Incident</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avatamsaka</td>
<td>E: Flower Wreath  J: Kegon</td>
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<tr>
<td>bakufu</td>
<td>幕府</td>
<td>(lit: &quot;tent&quot;) warrior government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhaisajya</td>
<td>E: Buddha of Medicine  J: Yakushi</td>
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<tr>
<td>bodhi</td>
<td>enlightenment</td>
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<tr>
<td>bodhisattva</td>
<td>E: one who seeks enlightenment in order to enlighten others; a Buddhist saint, a Buddha elect  J: bosatsu</td>
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<tr>
<td>bosatsu</td>
<td>哲學</td>
<td>E: one who seeks enlightenment in order to enlighten others; a Buddhist saint, a Buddha elect  S: bodhisattva</td>
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<tr>
<td>buddha</td>
<td>the enlightened one</td>
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<td>bushi</td>
<td>武士</td>
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<td>Ch’ang-an</td>
<td>長安</td>
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<td>Chih-i (Priest)</td>
<td>智顕</td>
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<td>“Ch’ih-shang p’ien”池上篇</td>
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<td>“Chiteiki”池亭記</td>
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<td>chokusensha</td>
<td>勘撰集</td>
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<td>莊子</td>
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<td>chubben</td>
<td>中弁</td>
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<td>Confucius</td>
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<td>daigeki</td>
<td>大外記</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Controller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Outer Secretary</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

Abbreviations: E: English  J: Japanese  C: Chinese  S: Sanskrit

Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来
E: “Cosmic” Buddha
S: Vairochana

Dharma
dō 道
E: The Way
C: Tao

Enchin (Priest) 圓珍
814–891

Ennin (Priest) 月仁
794–864

Enryakuji 延暦寺
a monastery

fa-la 法臘
E: unceasing meditation
J: hōrō

feng-liu 風流
E: rhyme-rhapsody
C: feng-liu

fu (J, C) 賦
E: elegance
C: feng-liu

Fujiwara Akihira 藤原明衡
989–1066

Fujiwara Kamatari 藤原鎌足
614–669

Fujiwara Kaneie 藤原兼家
929–999

Fujiwara Kanemichi 藤原兼道
925–977

Fujiwara Koreshige 藤原伊澄
924–972

Fujiwara Koretada 藤原伊尹
966–1027

Fujiwara Morosuke 藤原師輔
908–960

Fujiwara Morotaka 藤原師隆
ca. 900–970

Fujiwara Mototsune 藤原基經
836–891

Fujiwara Sadaie 藤原定家
1162–1241 (a.k.a. Teika)

Fujiwara Saneyori 藤原実賴
900–970

Fujiwara Tadahira 藤原忠平
880–949

Fujiwara Yoritada 藤原義信
924–989

Genji Monogatari 源氏物語
E: elegance
C: feng-liu

The Tale of Genji

Strong Enlightenment (period)
a clan branch (lit.: “origin”)
Glossary

Abbreviations: E: English  J: Japanese  C: Chinese  S: Sanskrit

Genshin (Priest) 源信
Gonkyō Jōdo 番行浄土
Gosensha 後撰集
Goshūshū 後拾遺集
Gyōgi (Priest) 行基
Haku Kyōi (or Rakuten) 白居易(楽天)

Han Shu 漢書

Heiankyō 平安京
Heijō 平城
hektai 俳愛
Hiei 比叡
hinabi 部比
Hinayana Hinayana
Hino 日野
dōben 方便

“Hōjōki” 方丈記
Hokkekyō 法華経

Hokke-zanmai-dō 法華三昧堂
Honchō Monzui 本朝文粹
Hōnen (Priest) 法然
hōbō 法臏

hosshin 發心
Hosshinshū 發心集
Hou Han Shu 後漢書

Hsiang-huo she 香火社
hsiao-ts‘ao 小草
hu 華

“Hua shan-shui hsü” 画山水序
Hui Jui 慧叡

942–1017
Pure Land faith
Later Collection of Japanese Poems
Later Collection of Gleanings
670–749 (a.k.a. Gyōgi Bosatsu)
773–846
C: Po Chü-i
E: History of the Han Dynasty
J: Kanjo
place name
place name
deep attachment
a monastic enclave
provincial
Lesser Vehicle of Buddhism
name of a mountain
name range
E: expedient means
S: upāya
“Account of My Hut”
E: Lotus Sutra
S: Saddharma-pundarta-sūtra
Hall for Recitation of the Lotus Sutra
E: Selected Literature of the Realm
1133–1212
E: unceasing meditation
C: fa-la
awakening (of the bodhi-mind)
A Collection of Religious Awakenings
E: History of the Latter Han Dynasty
J: Gokanjo
Incense and Torch-light Society
small grass
a measure, approximately 60 liters
“Introduction to Painting Landscape”
a recluse
<table>
<thead>
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<td>lei</td>
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### Glossary

**Abbreviations:** E: English  J: Japanese  C: Chinese  S: Sanskrit

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>li</td>
<td>propriety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>li</td>
<td>truth (lit.: “reason,” “principle”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>li</td>
<td>a measure of distance (approx. one mile)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Li Chi</td>
<td>E: <em>Book of Rites</em>  J: <em>Raiki</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Po</td>
<td>701–762 (J: Ri Haku)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ling</td>
<td>spiritual intelligence or will (soul, numinous, ethereal)</td>
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<td>Lo-t’ien</td>
<td>773–846 a.k.a. Po Chü-i  J: Haku Kyoi</td>
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<td>J: <em>Hokkekyō</em>  S: <em>Śaddharmapundarīkā-sūtra</em></td>
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<td>Lo-yang</td>
<td>place name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lu Shan</td>
<td>mountain name</td>
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<td>Mahāyāna</td>
<td>Greater Vehicle of Buddhism</td>
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<td>Maitreya</td>
<td>E: the next Buddha  J: Miroku</td>
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<td>Mañjuśrī</td>
<td>E: name of a particular bodhisattva  J: Monju</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mansei</td>
<td>ca. 8th C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>mantra</td>
<td>mystic phrases of secret formulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man’yōshū</td>
<td><em>Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mappō</td>
<td>Final Age (of the Buddhist Dharma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mappō Tomyōki</td>
<td><em>Record of the Lamp During the Final Age</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Matsuo Bashō</td>
<td>1644–1694</td>
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<tr>
<td>meisho</td>
<td>famous places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meisho-e</td>
<td>pictures of famous places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mencius</td>
<td>ca. 372–ca. 289 BC (J: Mōshi, C:Meng-tzu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miidera</td>
<td>a monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minamoto no Kaneakira</td>
<td>911–983 (a.k.a. Saki no Chūshō-Ō [Former Princely Minister of Central Affairs])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minamoto no Takaakira</td>
<td>1016–1097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minamoto no Tōru</td>
<td>1016–1097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minamoto Toshiyori</td>
<td>1016–1097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minamoto Tsunenobu</td>
<td>1016–1097</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

Abbreviations: E: English  J: Japanese  C: Chinese  S: Sanskrit

Miroku 弥勒

E: the next Buddha
S: Maitreya
courtliness; an aesthetic ideal
metropolitan

Miyabi 雅び

Monjō 文章道

Chinese Literature and History Course
university system of Heiankyō

Monjōshō 文章生

E: name of a particular bodhisattva
S: Mañjuśrī

mou 敵

hand formations and bodily postures
impermanence

Mudra 無常

Mumyōshō 無名抄

Myōbōdo 明法道

Myōe (Priest) 明恵

Myōe Shōnin Ikun 明恵上人道川

Myōkyōdo 明義道

Nakahara 中原

nenbutsu 念仏

Nihon Ōjō Gokuraku Ki 日本往生極楽記

Posthumous Teachings of the Priest Myōe
Chinese Classics Course

Nijūgo-zanmai-e 二十五三昧会

a clan name

Ōe no Masahira 大江春衡

a monastic community

Ōe no Sadamoto 大江貞元

rebirth

Ōhara 大原

Essentials of Deliverance

Ōjō 往生

a clan name

Ōjōshō 往生要集

a clan name

Ōkura 大蔵

White Lotus Society

Ōtsuki 大槻

773–846 a.k.a. Lo-t’ien

Pai-lien she 白蓮社

J: Haku Kyo

Po Chü-i 白居易

E: The Annotated Po Chü-i Collection
J: Haku Rakuten Shū Senkyō

Po-shikh Ch’ang-ch’ing chi 白氏長慶集

E: The Collected Works of Po Chü-i During the Reignal Period of Ch’iang-ch’ing
Glossary

Abbreviations: E: English  J: Japanese  C: Chinese  S: Sanskrit

raigo-zu 来迎図

Ren'in 蓮胤
titsuryo 律令
rokudō 六道
Ryōgen (Priest) 良源
sadaijin 左大臣
Saichō (Priest) 最澄
Saigyō (Priest) 西行
Śākyamuni

samsāra
san'akudō 三悪道
Sandō 算道
Sangha
Śāriputra

satobi 伽毘 "
se 銅
Seihō Jūdo 西方浄土
sen 銭
senju 専修
sesshō 摂政
Shaka

shan-shui 山水
Sharihotsu 舎利弗

shi 詩
shih 詩

Shih Chi 史記

paintings depicting Amida and his retinue coming down to greet the spirit of the newly deceased to the Pure Land

= Kamo no Chōmei

penal and civil codes

six paths (of rebirth)

912–985

Great Minister of the Left

767–822

1118–1190

E: Buddha of our era (d. ca. 552 BC)
J: Shaka

cycle of birth and death

Three Evil Paths

Accounting Course

monastic orders

E: name of a particular disciple of the Buddha
J: Sharihotsu

rural

a measure (approx. 100 sq. m.), C: mou

Western Paradise

Japanese monetary unit

sole-practice

regent (to a child emperor)

E: Buddha of our era (d. ca. 552 BC)
S: Śākyamuni

mountain and water (= landscape)

S: name of a particular disciple of the Buddha
E: Śāriputra

E: poetry
C: shih

E: poetry
J: shi

E: Historical Records
J: Shiki
Glossary

Abbreviations: E: English J: Japanese C: Chinese S: Sanskrit

Shih-shuo hsin-yü 世説新語 E: A New Account of Tales of the World
shih-yin 隠れ
Shingonshū 真言宗 J: Sesetsu Shingō
Shin Jōdoshū 真浄土宗

shinsei 新政
shōbō 正法
shōen 草園
shōnaiki 少内記
Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子
Shōshū 拾遺集
shukke suru 出家する
Shunrai 俊頼
Shurihandoku 朧梨華特

sōan 僧庵
sōan bungaku 僧庵文学
sōhei 僧兵
Su-chou 蘇州
Suddhipanthaka

sue no yo 末の世
Sugawara 菅原
Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真
suki 好き

sukibito 好き人
sukimono 好き者
Tachibana 橘
Taihō 太嘯
Taimitsu 塔密

572—621 Collection of Gleanings
to leave home
see Minamoto Toshiyori

E: name of a particular disciple of the Buddha
S: Šuddhipanthaka

grass-hut (connotes reclusion)
grass-hut (= reclusion) literature
warrior-monks
place name
E: name of a particular disciple of the Buddha
J: Shurihandoku

end of the world (= Final Age of the Dharma)
a clan name
845–903
associated with the Heian court and amorous dalliance; devotion to artistic pursuit
a person who cultivates artistic pursuit
a person who cultivates artistic pursuit
a clan name
Penal and Civil (Codes)
Tendai esotericism
Glossary

Abbreviations: E: English  J: Japanese  C: Chinese  S: Sanskrit

Taira  平
Taira no Kiyomori  平清盛
	tamon  多聞
T'ang Wen-t's'ui  唐文粹

Tao  道

tariki  他力
Teika  定家
Tendai  天台

tenjōbīto  殿上人

tenmei  天命

Three Evil Paths

t'ien-ming  天命

T'ien-t'ai  天台

t'ien-yüan  田園
tokai-teki  都会的
tonsei suru  通世する

tonsei shō  通世者

tōsō  通

Toyama  音羽山
“Ts’ao-t’ang Chi”草堂記
Tsung Ping  宗炳
Tu Fu  杜甫
Tung-lin  東林
uchī no goshodokoro  内御書所
udaijin  右大臣
ujidera  氏寺
upāya

ushōben  右少弁
Glossary

Abbreviations: E: English  J: Japanese  C: Chinese  S: Sanskrit

uta-makura 歌枕 poem pillows, codified toponyms
Vairochana E: “Cosmic” Buddha
Vimalakīrti J: Yuima, Yuimakitsu, Jōmyō
Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra J: Yuima(kitsu)gyō
Wakadokoro 和歌所 Bureau of Japanese Poetry
waka no michi 和歌の道 poetry as a means of livelihood
wakan no gaku 和漢の学 study of literary Japanese using ornate
Wei-mo-chieh ching 維摩詰經 Chinese words
Wen Hsüan 文送 J: Yuima(kitsu)gyō
Yakushi 藥師 S: Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra
yamato-e 大和絵 E: Literary Selections
yin 隱 J: Monzen
yin-yang 陰陽 E: Buddha of Medicine
Japanese pictures
conceal
two opposing principles in nature: yin is feminine and negative, yang is masculine
and positive
Yokawa 橋川 a monastic center
Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保明
yu 酒 time period (5–7 pm)
Yuan Chen 元稹 779–831
yüan-chih 遠志
Yuima(kitsu) 维摩(詰) far-reaching determination
Yuima(kitsu)gyō 维摩(詰)経 S: Vimalakīrti
zenjō 禅定
zōbō 像法
zuji 造寺
Strong Meditation
Imitative Dharma
Temple and Pagoda Building
Japanese Emperors

Ankō  (r. 453–456) 安康
Daigo  (r. 897–930) 醍醐
En-yū  (r. 969–984) 円融
Genmei  (r. 707–715) 元明
Go-Toba (r. 1183–1198) 後鳥羽
Jitō   (r. 690–697) 持統
Jomei  (r. 629–645) 舒明
Kammu  (r. 781–806) 桓武
Kazan  (r. 984–986) 花山
Murakami  (r. 946–967) 村上
Reizei  (r. 967–969) 冷泉
Saga   (r. 809–823) 嵯峨
Shirakawa (r. 1072–1086) 白河
Shōmu  (r. 724–749)
Suinin (29 BC–70 AD) 垂仁
Sutoku  (r. 1123–1141) 常徳
Suzaku  (r. 930–946) 朱雀
Temmu  (r. 673–686) 天武
Toba   (r. 1107–1123) 鳥羽

Japanese Empresses

Shōtoku  (r. 765–769) 稱徳
## Periodization

### China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hsia 夏</td>
<td>ca. 2100–ca. 1600 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shang 商</td>
<td>ca. 1600–ca. 1028 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chou 周</td>
<td>ca. 1027–ca. 256 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Chou 東周</td>
<td>ca. 1027–771 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Chou 西周</td>
<td>ca. 770–256 BC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring and Autumn 春秋</td>
<td>722–468 BC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warring States 戰國</td>
<td>403–221 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch‘in 秦</td>
<td>221–207 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han 漢</td>
<td>206 BC–220 AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Han 前漢</td>
<td>206 BC–8 AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latter Han 後漢</td>
<td>25 AD–220 AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Kingdoms 三國</td>
<td>220–265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Dynasties 六朝</td>
<td>265–589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Dynasties 南朝</td>
<td>420–589</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Dynasties 北朝</td>
<td>386–581</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sui 隋</td>
<td>581–618</td>
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<tr>
<td>T‘ang 唐</td>
<td>618–907</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sung dynasty 宋</td>
<td>960–1279</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Sung 北宋</td>
<td>960–1126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Sung 南宋</td>
<td>1127–1279</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuan (Mongol) 元</td>
<td>1260–1368</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ming 明</td>
<td>1368–1644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch‘ing 清</td>
<td>1644–1911</td>
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</table>
## Periodization

**Japan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Era</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yamato</td>
<td>300–710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asuka</td>
<td>ca. 500–710</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>1603–1867</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nara period</td>
<td>710–794</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heian period</td>
<td>794–1185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late Heian period</td>
<td>897–1185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kamakura period</td>
<td>1185–1333</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Kamakura period</td>
<td>1185–1249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muromachi</td>
<td>1134–1573</td>
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<tr>
<td>Azuchi-Momoyama</td>
<td>1574–1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokugawa</td>
<td>1600–1867</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meiji</td>
<td>1868–1912</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taishō</td>
<td>1912–1926</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shōwa</td>
<td>1926–1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wadō era</td>
<td>708–715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saikō era</td>
<td>854–857</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engi era</td>
<td>901–923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shōhei era</td>
<td>931–938</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tentoku era</td>
<td>957–961</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ōwa era</td>
<td>961–964</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna era</td>
<td>968–969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tengen era</td>
<td>978–983</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chōshō era</td>
<td>1132–1135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jishō era</td>
<td>1177–1180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yōwa era</td>
<td>1181–1182</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenryaku era</td>
<td>1211–1213</td>
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