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TABLE OF CONTENTS

STUDIES

Jing LIU: The Collections of Miraculous Stories on the <i>Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra</i>	1
Minqian LIAO: The Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa – On the identity of the bronze drum in the Mogao Grottoes Murals.....	21
Tatiana FRANK: The Four-Class System (<i>sideng renzhi</i> 四等人制) of Administration During the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) in China	45
Ferenc RUZSA: Unfaithful Words: Tolerance.....	77
Richárd Gábor GOTTNER: The Self-Defence Scroll of Kyokushinkai Karate: Analysing the <i>Mokuroku</i> Ōyama Masutatsu Received from Daitō-ryū <i>Aikijūjutsu</i> Master Yoshida Kōtarō.....	99
Zsófia KELLER: Ainu Representation in the World of Japanese Comics: <i>Shumari</i> and <i>Golden Kamuy</i> Take on the Ruling Narratives of Hokkaidō History.....	149

REVIEWS

Szandra ÉSIK: Important achievements in Chinese studies of Hungary Huba BARTOS–Imre HAMAR 2017. <i>Kínai–magyar szótár</i> [Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary]. 包甫博–郝清新: 汉匈词典. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, ELTE Konfuciusz Intézet. 2097 pp. Huba BARTOS–Imre HAMAR–Melinda PAP 2024. <i>Magyar–kínai szótár</i> [Hungarian–Chinese Dictionary]. 包甫博–郝清新–梅林达: 匈汉词典. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, ELTE Konfuciusz Intézet. 2155 pp.	179
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JING LIU

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The Collections of Miraculous Stories on the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*

Abstract

This paper examines the three primary Chinese translations of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*—an extensive Mahāyāna text foundational to the Huayan School during the Sui and Tang Dynasties. This study provides a comprehensive introduction to each translation, tracing its dissemination across China, and further investigates the contributions and legacy of the five patriarchs of the Huayan School.

As Buddhism became increasingly secular and accessible, there was a significant rise in literary creativity, notably in the form of miraculous story collections that aided in the propagation of Buddhist beliefs among the general populace. These narratives, often embellished with supernatural elements, were crafted to demonstrate the efficacy of Buddhist practice, with the aim of fostering faith and devotion. Known as ‘stimulus-response’ stories (*ganying* 感應), these accounts illustrate the power of Buddhist practice through the depiction of miraculous events.

This paper reviews nine key collections associated with the *Huayan jing*, including: *Record of the Transmission of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayanjing Zhuanji* 華嚴經傳記), *Account of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayanjing ganying zhuan* 大方廣佛華嚴經感應傳), *Account of the Search for the Profundities of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayanjing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記), *Commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayanjing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏), *Sub-commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayan sui shu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義抄), *Account of Chengguan’s Commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan xuantan huixuan ji* 華嚴懸談會玄記), *Short Record of Accounts of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayanjing ganying lueji* 大方廣佛華嚴經感應略記), and *Causes of Stimuli and Response Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayanjing ganying yuanqi zhuan* 華嚴經感應緣起傳), as well as the *Chronological Account of the Efficacies of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Lichao huayanjing chiyan ji* 歷朝華嚴經持驗紀). Through this analysis, the paper aims to deepen understanding of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, its miraculous stories, and the collections that preserved these narratives, enriching appreciation for its impact on Chinese Buddhism.

Key words: Chinese Buddhism, *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, three primary Chinese translations, Huayan School, five patriarchs, miraculous stories, eight key collections

The *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* and the Huayan School

The *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* is an extensive collection of Mahāyāna sūtras, which has exerted a profound influence on the development of Buddhism in China, Japan, and Korea. During the Sui (581–619) and Tang (618–907) dynasties, this text became foundational to the Huayan School, which later expanded into Japan and Korea.¹ Most contemporary scholars posit that the compiled version of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* was likely assembled in Khotan (Yutian, 于闐) after previously independent sūtras, produced across different periods and regions, were systematically collected, organised, and revised. Imre Hamar has provided a comprehensive introduction to the origins of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* comparing the Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan versions, noting that the Tibetan translation and the Sanskrit text exhibit considerable similarity.²

There are three Chinese translations of this sūtra. The first was produced by Buddhahadra (359–429) in the 14th year of the Yixi 義熙 period of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (418 CE), resulting in a 50-volume translation of the *Huayan Sūtra*, titled *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經. The second translation was undertaken by Śikṣānanda (Shichanantuo, 實叉難陀, 652–710) during the Tang Dynasty, beginning in the first year of the Zhengsheng 證聖 period (695 CE) and completed within five years. This version became known as the ‘Newly translated Huayan’ or the ‘Eighty-fascicle Huayan’.

The third translation was completed by Tripiṭaka Prajña 般若三藏 in the 11th year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 period (795 CE) of the Tang Dynasty. Tripiṭaka Prajña translated the final chapter of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, which focuses on *Entering the Realm of Inconceivable Liberation* and the *Conduct and Vows of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra* (*Dafangguang fo ru bukesiyi jietuo jingjie Puxian xingyuan pin* 大方廣佛入不可思議解脫境界普賢行願品). This work was also titled *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 and is commonly abbreviated as the *Chapter on the Conduct and Vows of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra* (*Puxian xingyuan pin* 普賢行願品). It corresponds to the *Chapter on Entering the Dharma Realm* (*Ru fajie pin* 入法界品) of the *Eighty-fascicle Huayan* and is also referred to as the *Forty-fascicle Huayan*.

From the time of the first translation of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* by Buddhahadra until the Liang Dynasty (502–557), there was limited scholarly engagement with the *Huayan Sūtra* in the southern regions of China, and Huayan scholars in the north were even rarer. A turning point in Huayan studies in the north occurred with the translation of the *Commentary on the Ten Stages* (*Shidi jinglun* 十地經論) by Bodhiruci and others during the late Northern Wei

¹ For an introduction to the history of the Huayan School, see Hamar 2014.

² For the history of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, see Hamar 2015.

Dynasty (386–534). This commentary, which explicates the *Chapter of Ten Stages* (*Shidi pin* 十地品) in the *Huayan Sūtra*, led to the establishment of the Dilun School, the first Buddhist school in China to promote the teachings of Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha philosophy.³ Together with the Shelun School, another Yogācāra school, the Dilun School laid the foundation for Huayan thought.⁴

Traditionally, Dushun 杜順 (557–640), renowned for his miraculous deeds, is recognised as the first patriarch of the Huayan School.⁵ The second patriarch, Zhiyan 智嚴 (602–668), who became a monk at Zhixiang Monastery on Mount Zhongnan, made significant contributions to Huayan thought. He authored a commentary on the 60-fascicle *Huayan Sūtra* titled *The Mahāvaiṣṭhavya Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra: A System for Plumbing Its Mysteries and a Model for Its Thorough Understanding* (*Da fangguang fo huayan jing souxuan fenqi tongzhi fanggui* 大方廣佛華嚴經搜玄分齊通智方軌, T. 1732). Ūisang 義湘 (625–702) from the Silla Kingdom (modern-day Korea) studied Huayan Buddhism under Zhiyan. Upon completing his studies, he returned to Korea, where he became the first patriarch of Huayan in Korea. Scholar Wei Daoru suggested that Zhiyan was responsible for establishing the overall theoretical framework of the Huayan School.⁶

Zhiyan's disciple, Fazang 法藏 (643–712), is often regarded as the actual founder of the Huayan School and is recognised as the third patriarch. Under the patronage of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705), Fazang elevated Huayan to the status of a major Buddhist school and formulated its classical doctrines.⁷ He also wrote a commentary on the 60-fascicle *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*, titled *Exploring the Mysteries of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan jing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T. 1733).

Although Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839) was not a direct disciple of Fazang, he is recognised as the fourth patriarch of the Huayan school.⁸ Chengguan authored a commentary on the 80-fascicle *Huayan Sūtra*, titled *A Commentary on the*

³ Wei 2001: 65. For the development of Huayan exegesis in China, see, Hamar 2022.

⁴ For the scriptural basis of the Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha teachings, see Paul 1984, Hamar 1994. For the Yogācāra influence on Huayan Buddhism, see Hamar 2010. For the Huayan application of Tathāgatagarbha teachings as nature-origination, see Hamar 2007.

⁵ For the biography of Dushun and his importance in Huayan Buddhism, see Gimello 1976: 57–133.

⁶ Wei 2009: 56. For the biography of Zhiyan and his importance in Huayan Buddhism, see Gimello 1976: 134–446.

⁷ Hua 2005:11. For Fazang's close association with Empress Wu and his service at the court, see Chen 2007.

⁸ For Chengguan's biography and his understanding of *Huayan jing* as perfect teaching, see Hamar 1998, 2019.

Mahāvaiṣṇava Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra (*Da fangguang fo huayan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, T. 1735), and a sub-commentary, *A Record of the Explanation on the Meaning of the Commentary on the Mahāvaiṣṇava Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Da fangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T. 1736). Chengguan frequently referenced Chinese classics in his commentaries to clarify the meaning of the sūtra, though he emphasised that he borrowed only the words, not the meanings, from these texts.

Chengguan's disciple, Zongmi 宗密 (780–841), became the fifth patriarch. Notably, Zongmi was also a patriarch of the Chan school, fostering a close relationship between Huayan and Chan teachings.

Four years after Zongmi's death, the Huayan sect, along with other Buddhist schools, suffered devastation during the Huichang Suppression of Buddhism. It was not until the early Song Dynasty that the Huayan tradition experienced a revival. Following the turmoil and religious persecution of the late Tang Dynasty and the Five Dynasties period, much of the Huayan literature from the Tang era was lost by the time of the Northern Song Dynasty. However, during the Northern Song period, monks devoted to the study and practice of Huayan teachings spread throughout both northern and southern China.

The Huayan School sustained significant intellectual and religious vitality within the Buddhist circles of the Song Dynasty. This endurance can be attributed not only to a dedicated group of monks specialising in the *Huayan Sūtra*, but also to the strong influence and engagement of Chan (Zen) monks, who held the Huayan teachings in high regard.⁹ Although the Huayan School ceased to exist as an independent sect after the Song Dynasty, its doctrines and practices were gradually absorbed into other schools of Chinese Buddhism, thus continuing to exert a profound influence on the broader landscape of Chinese religious thought.

Miraculous Stories in Chinese Buddhism

Following the Eastern Jin Dynasty, Buddhism flourished, and concepts such as karma and rebirth gained widespread acceptance, becoming integral elements of the literary landscape of the period. These ideas also served as effective tools for promoting Buddhism. The Tang Dynasty, often regarded as the golden age of Chinese Buddhism, was a pivotal era for the Sinicisation, popularisation, and secularisation of the faith. During this time, various Buddhist sects thrived, and the translation of Buddhist scriptures reached unprecedented levels. Buddhism

⁹ Wei 2001: 246.

became increasingly secular and accessible to the general populace, with significant creative output in the form of miraculous story collections, which proved instrumental in propagating Buddhist beliefs.

Such stories, often embellished with supernatural elements, were employed to demonstrate the efficacy of Buddhism, with the aim of inspiring faith and devotion. These narratives, which describe miraculous events brought about by Buddhist practice, are commonly referred to as ‘stimulus-response’ stories (*ganying* 感應). As Campany wrote, ‘*ganying*, or “stimulus-response,” in basic terms, it can be understood as the idea that elements of the unseen world respond—often strikingly, visibly, miraculously—to the stimulus of human devotional activity and karmic merit or lack thereof’ (italics added).¹⁰ Liu Yading 劉亞丁, in his *Study on the Buddhist Miraculous Collections (Fojiao lingyanji yanjiu 佛教靈驗記研究)*, traces the etymology of the term ‘miraculous’ (*lingyan* 靈驗) and clarifies that the word expresses the notion of ‘magical efficacy’ and reflects a ‘religious psychological phenomenon’. Accordingly, the term ‘miraculous’ frequently appears in both Buddhist and Taoist texts. Based on this understanding, ‘miraculous’ can be defined as ‘a phenomenon of efficacy resulting from faith in deities, a manifestation of supernatural achievements.’¹¹ Similarly, Zheng Acai 鄭阿財, in his article ‘A Comprehensive Review of the Buddhist Miraculous Stories in Dunhuang’, explains that works such as books of merit, books of miraculous stories, and records of miraculous retribution recount magical experiences resulting from praying, repenting to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, chanting the Buddha’s name, reciting scriptures, writing sutras, and creating Buddhist statues.¹²

Synthesising the above analyses, this article defines the core concept of ‘miraculous story’ as follows: a miraculous story is a written account of various miracles, spiritual auspices, and other extraordinary phenomena that occur in the course of spreading Buddhism. Such stories may exist as individual narratives or as part of a larger collection. The ‘miraculous record’ emphasises the description of supernatural events, while the ‘miraculous story’ focuses on the plot and narrative content. In the context of Huayan Buddhism, Huayan miraculous stories refer specifically to accounts of miraculous occurrences and spiritual phenomena that took place during the dissemination of the *Huayan jing*.

In the following section, we will survey the works that contain miraculous stories related to the *Huayan jing*.

¹⁰ Campany 2012: 49.

¹¹ Liu 2006: 1–2.

¹² Zheng 2010: 3.

Record of the Transmission of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Huayanjing zhuanji 華嚴經傳記)

In an effort to encourage veneration of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, Fazang compiled the *Record of the Transmission of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (Huayanjing zhuanji 華嚴經傳記; hereafter: ZHJ), which provides a comprehensive account of the origins, development, interpretation, and commentaries related to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* in China, as well as the spiritual benefits associated with it. This collection offers detailed descriptions of the texts and prominent masters connected to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, including numerous miraculous tales concerning its recitation and transcription. Fazang's clear intention was to inspire Buddhist devotees to engage with the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* through practices of recitation and copying, much like the widespread reverence for other key Buddhist scriptures such as the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Diamond Sūtra*.¹³ The ZHJ remains an invaluable source for understanding the historical transmission of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* in China.

The exact date of the ZHJ's compilation is not definitively known, although some scholars have made significant efforts to determine its timeframe. Yoshizu Yoshihide suggests that the work was initiated between 689 and 690 and that Fazang continued revising the text until his death in 712.¹⁴ Chen Shiqiang narrows this timeframe, positing that the ZHJ was written around 712.¹⁵ Chen notes that in the *Biography of Śikṣānanda*, found in the first volume of the ZHJ, it is recorded that Śikṣānanda passed away at Dajianfu Monastery (Dajianfu si 大薦福寺) on 12 October in the first year of the Jingyun 景雲 period (710) of the Tang Dynasty. Since Fazang himself died in November of the first year of the Xiantian 先天 period (712), it is reasonable to assume that the ZHJ was completed in the same year, making it likely the final work of Fazang's life.¹⁶ Wang Song has further contributed to this research, emphasising that the ZHJ was not solely the product of Fazang's individual effort but likely reflects the collective viewpoints of Fazang and his disciples. As such, its composition spanned an extended period, beginning in the 680s and continuing through subsequent additions made after Fazang's death.¹⁷

According to the *Chinese Buddhist History Dictionary* (*Zhongguo fojiaoshi cidian* 中國佛教史辭典), 'it is believed that the initial composition of this work

¹³ Hamar 2011: 190.

¹⁴ Yoshizu 1978: 163–164.

¹⁵ Chen 1988: 15.

¹⁶ Chen 1988: 15.

¹⁷ Wang 2019: 80.

began around 690 when Fazang was 48 years old, and that he continued to expand and refine it until his death in 712'.¹⁸

In the first volume of *Tanxuan ji* 探玄記, Fazang notes that numerous miraculous events are described in detail in the five-volume *Huayan zhuan* 華嚴傳.¹⁹ Based on the inscription in the *Tanxuan ji*, it is known that this text was composed at Weiguoxi Monastery (Weiguoxi si 魏國西寺).²⁰ This could be substantiated by another historical collection, *The History of Chang'an* (*Chang'an zhi* 長安志).²¹ There is only a slight difference between these two works. According to *The History of Chang'an*, Taiyuan monastery was set up in the first year of Xianheng 鹹亨 period (670), whereas in the *Institutional History of the Tang Dynasty* (*Tang huiyao* 唐會要) we read that Taiyuan Monastery (*taiyuansi* 太原寺) was set up in the second year of Xianheng period (671).²² This suggests that Fazang began writing the *Tanxuan ji* between 687 and 689 at Weiguoxi Monastery. By extension, it is plausible that Fazang also commenced work on the ZHJ during this period, potentially continuing the project even after the monastery was renamed Chongfu Monastery. Based on this evidence, it is reasonable to assume that the ZHJ's compilation began during the years 687 to 689, with additional material incorporated after Fazang's passing.

The ZHJ is organised into 10 chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of the transmission and veneration of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*: 'Versions' (*bulei* 部類), 'Hidden and Manifested' (*yinxian* 隱顯), 'Translation' (*chuanyi* 傳譯), 'Partial Translations' (*zhiliu* 支流), Commentaries (*lunshi* 論釋), 'Preaching' (*jiangjie* 講解), 'Reciting' (*fengsong* 諷誦), 'Chanting' (*zhuandu* 轉讀), 'Copying' (*shuxie* 書寫), and 'Miscellaneous' (*zhuanishu* 轉述).²³ Of particular interest are the seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters, which document miraculous events associated with specific devotional practices. The seventh chapter, 'Reciting', recounts the miraculous deeds of 11 monks and lay practitioners who consistently recited the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. The eighth chapter, 'Chanting', details the supernatural experiences of nine monks and laypeople who excelled in chanting the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. The ninth chapter, 'Copying', highlights the miraculous acts of six individuals who devoted themselves to transcribing the text.

¹⁸ 《中国佛教史辞典》(027. 374-380) 鎌田茂雄编. 中国仏教史辞典. 东京堂出版, 1981.9.

¹⁹ T35n1733 p0123a25-26.

²⁰ B17n0092_p0605a05.

²¹ 《長安志》卷十又曰“東北隅崇福寺,本侍中觀國公楊恭仁宅。咸亨元年,以武皇后外氏故宅立為太原寺。垂拱三年,改為魏園寺。載初元年,又改為崇福寺。寺額武太后飛白書。”

²² Yuan 2013: 67.

²³ Hamar 2011:184-185. The translation of the 10 chapters is cited from Hamar.

The ZHJ holds considerable importance for the study of both the propagation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* and the history of the Huayan School. While it is debated whether or not ZHJ should be classified strictly as a collection of miraculous stories, it is undeniable that the miraculous tales contained within it provided substantial inspiration and material for Fazang's disciples in compiling the *Huayan ganying zhuan* 華嚴感應傳, a two-volume collection of miraculous responses to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. Consequently, ZHJ may be viewed as the foundational work for the tradition of Huayan miraculous tales.²⁴

Account of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Dafang-guang fo huayanjing ganying zhuan 大方廣佛華嚴經感應轉)

The *Account of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayanjing ganying zhuan* 大方廣佛華嚴經感應轉; hereafter: GYZH) was edited by the layman Hu Youzhen in 783.²⁵ In the introduction to this collection, Hu explains his motivation for revising earlier versions:

此傳本花嚴疏主藏公門徒僧惠英，集為上下兩卷。今予鄙其事外浮詞蕪於祥感，乃筆削以為一卷。俾有見聞于茲秘乘，生難遭想，各勉受持。²⁶

This collection was originally authored by Fazang's disciple Huiying in two fascicles. However, in my view, the wording of the stories was impractical and disordered. Therefore, I have condensed it into a single fascicle so that those who encounter it will recognise how rare it is to come across this supreme secret sūtra and will then endeavour to uphold it.

This statement clearly indicates that GYZH is based on Huiying's earlier two-volume version. There has been considerable scholarly discussion regarding the origins of GYZH and related collections. Chengguan noted that the *Collection of Avataṃsaka-sūtra-related Numinous Tales* (*Zuanling ji* 纂靈記; hereafter: ZLJ) was initially written by Fazang but later embellished by others.²⁷ Although Chengguan identifies Fazang as the original author of ZLJ, he does not explicitly clarify the relationship between ZHJ and ZLJ. However, the scholar Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn (崔致遠, 857–?) suggests that Fazang compiled a five-volume ZHJ based on two earlier biographies and other collections. According to Ch'oe, ZHJ was also referred to as ZLJ, and while it remained incomplete at Fazang's death, his

²⁴ Zhang Xu 2018: 233.

²⁵ T51n2074 p 0177c24–25. 幽貞以有唐建中癸亥紀。敬發此願。為此歸命文。

²⁶ T51n2074 p0173b06–09.

²⁷ T36n1736 p0110a13. 纂靈記說：然此記本是藏和尚製，後經修飾。

disciples (i.e., Huiying, Huiyuan, and others) continued its compilation, adding comments and eulogies but making minimal alterations to the original content.²⁸ Thus, Ch'oe argues that ZHJ and ZLJ are essentially the same collection.

Ŭich'ŏn (義天, 1055–1101),²⁹ a Korean monk, further elaborates on this relationship in his *Xinbian zhuzong jiaocang zonglu* 新編諸宗教藏總錄, stating that the five-volume ZHJ was authored by Fazang, while the five-volume ZLJ was compiled by Huiyuan, and the one-volume GYZH was edited by Hu Youzhen.³⁰ However, Ŭich'ŏn does not reference the two-volume version of GYZH authored by Huiying. Purui 普瑞 (1254–1329) offers a similar explanation, stating that ZHJ was initially edited by Fazang and later slightly modified by his disciples. According to Purui, Huiyuan, a disciple of Fazang from Jingfa Monastery (*jingfa si* 靜法寺), revised ZHJ into the five-fascicle *Zuanling ji*, while Huiying, another disciple from Jingxing Monastery (*jingxing si* 經行寺), edited the text into the two-fascicle *Huayan ganying zhuan*. Finally, Hu Youzhen from Siming Mountain (*siming shan* 四明山) condensed this work into a single fascicle.³¹ This can be substantiated by another collection, YQZH, which cited Purui's statements mentioned above.³² Purui clearly points out the relationship between these four collections: ZHJ, ZLJ, the two-fascicle GYZH, and the one-fascicle GYZH. *Huayanjing zhuanji* was written by Fazang. Later on, his disciple Huiyuan edited it into ZLJ and another of his disciples, Huiying, edited it into the two-fascicle GYZH. Hu Youzhen reedited it into the one-fascicle GYZH based on the two-fascicle GYZH.

Hamar has also explored the relationship between GYZH and other related collections, concluding that GYZH must have been based on ZHJ.³³ Similarly, Chinese scholar Zhang Xu identifies three distinct categories of Huayan collections of miraculous tales: Fazang's ZHJ as the origin of Huayan miraculous stories, Huiyuan's ZLJ as the five-volume systematic collection, and Huiying's *Huayan ganying zhuan* alongside Hu Youzhen's GYZH as the two- and one-volume versions, respectively.³⁴

Based on this evidence, it is evident that GYZH was derived from ZHJ, which focused exclusively on miraculous stories connected to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. The ZHJ can thus be regarded as the first compilation of such tales, which Huiyuan subsequently expanded into the five-volume *Zuanling ji*, Huiying con-

²⁸ T50n2054 p0283a06–08. 由是簡二傳而聚異聞。考百祥而騰近說。緝華嚴傳五卷。或名纂靈記(此記未畢而逝。門人慧苑慧英等續之別加論贊。文極省約所益無幾。

²⁹ T55n2184 p1173a03–11.

³⁰ T55n2184 p1167c12–14.

³¹ X08n0236 p0379b15–21.

³² X77n1533 p0646b05–10.

³³ Hamar 2011: 184.

³⁴ Zhang Xu 2018: 233.

densed into the two-volume *Huayan ganying zhuan*, and Hu Youzhen further reduced to a single volume.

The GYZH itself contains 24 miraculous tales arranged in chronological order, with the editor providing dates and identifying the protagonists of each story. Unlike Fazang's ZHJ, GYZH focuses solely on miraculous stories directly related to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, a practice later mirrored in other collections such as Zhuhong's *ganying lu yanyi ji* 感應錄演義集 from the Ming Dynasty, Hongbi's *Yuqie zhi* 玉契志, and Zhou Kefu's *chonghua yanyi ji* 崇華演義集 from the Qing Dynasty.

Of the 24 stories included in GYZH, 15 occurred during the reign of Tang Gaozong (628–683) and Empress Wu Zetian in China. Six of these tales involve foreign monks, and all were either narrated or took place during the periods of Tang Gaozong and Empress Wu Zetian. The prominence of stories from this period suggests that both Tang Gaozong and Empress Wu Zetian placed great importance on the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* and contributed significantly to its dissemination. Moreover, their reign encouraged cultural exchanges with the Western Regions (Xiyu 西域), further facilitating the spread of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.

Account of the Search for the Profundities of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Huayan-jing tanxuan ji 華嚴經探玄記)

The *Account of the Search for the Profundities of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayanjing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記; hereafter TXJ), authored by Fazang, comprises 20 volumes. It serves as a detailed commentary on the 60-volume *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* translated by Buddhābhaddra during the Eastern Jin Dynasty. The first volume provides a general outline, presenting the core doctrines of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* and the theoretical foundation of the Huayan School, focusing on 10 key aspects of its philosophy. Notably, nine of these 10 aspects are discussed in the initial volume. The remaining volumes, from the second to the 20th, offer an in-depth exegesis of the entire 60-volume *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.

This commentary is widely regarded as a seminal work within the Huayan School, providing a comprehensive interpretation of Buddhābhaddra's translation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. Jueshen 覺深 remarks on its significance, stating,

Master Zhiyan wrote the 'Record of the Search for the Profundities of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*' (*Huayanjing souxuan ji* 華嚴經搜玄記), offering a commentary on the 60-volume Huayan. However, his work was somewhat concise. Fazang, the third patriarch of Huayan, later expanded on Zhiyan's commentary

and provided a more detailed explanation of the tenets of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, thereby formulating a complete doctrinal system for Huayan Buddhism.³⁵

In addition to its doctrinal significance, TXJ records six miraculous tales in its first chapter, all of which are associated with the recitation or copying of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.

第十感應者，宋主請西來三藏令講此經，其人恨以方音未通，恐說不盡旨，乃入道場祈請。纔盈七日，遂夢以漢首易己梵頭，因即洞解宋言，講授無滯。又九隴山尼敬重此經，專精轉讀二十餘載，遂感目覩毛端剎海。又五臺山尼常誦此經，從曉至曉一部斯畢，口中光輝遍耀山谷。又北齊炬法師崇重此經，關於師受，專讀祈解十五餘年，遂夢善財授聰明藥，因即開悟造疏十卷，講五十餘遍。又定州中山修德禪師，翹誠護淨鈔寫此經，後開函放光照一百二十里。又闍人劉謙之，因於五臺山專讀此經，遂復丈夫形。諸如此例事極繁廣，具如五卷《華嚴傳》中說。³⁶

The 10th section is the miraculous accounts. The king of Song invited a Tripiṭaka master from the west to preach this sūtra. The master, anxious about his unfamiliarity with the Chinese language and his ability to fully explain the sūtra's meaning, prayed for assistance. After seven days, he dreamt that his Indian head had been replaced with a Chinese one, and upon awakening, he was able to speak Chinese fluently and deliver the teachings without difficulty. There was also a nun on Mount Jiulong (*jiulong shan* 九隴山) who revered this sūtra and spent over twenty years diligently reciting it, eventually gaining the ability to see the entire land and sea with her eyes. Another nun on Mount Wutai (*wutai shan* 五臺山) frequently recited the entire sūtra, completing it each night by morning. A brilliant light would radiate from her mouth, illuminating the entire valley. Similarly, during the Northern Qi period, Master Ju deeply respected this sūtra but lamented the lack of a teacher. He prayed for over 15 years, eventually dreaming of Sudhana giving him a medicine that enhanced his wisdom. This dream enabled him to comprehend the teachings of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, and he subsequently authored over 10 fascicles of commentaries and gave over 50 lectures on the text. In Dingzhou, Chan Master Xiude, with utmost sincerity and purity, copied the sūtra, and when he opened his incense box, it emitted a golden light that illuminated an area of 120 miles. Additionally, the eunuch Liu Qianzhi, who devoted himself to reciting the sūtra on Mount Wutai, experienced the miraculous restoration of his male form. Such accounts, along with many others, are recorded in the five volumes of the *Transmission of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.

³⁵ Jue 2016: 56

³⁶ T35n1733 p0123a13–a26.

This passage demonstrates that many stories in TXJ are either referenced from or directly linked to those in ZHJ, confirming that the compilation of ZHJ preceded that of TXJ.

Commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (*Dafangguang fo huayanjing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏) and *Sub-commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayan sui shu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義抄)

The *Commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayanjing shu*; hereafter JSH) and the *Sub-commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Dafangguang fo huayan sui shu yanyi chao*; hereafter YYCH) were both composed by Chengguan during the Tang Dynasty.³⁷ The JSH consists of 60 volumes and was initiated in the first year of the Xingyuan 興元 period (784) and completed in December of the third year of the Zhengyuan 貞元 period (787), as documented in the ‘Biography of Chengguan’ in the *Biographies of Masters from Song* (*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳).³⁸ Chengguan embarked on this work after observing that earlier commentaries on the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* were too lengthy and complicated. The JSH seeks to introduce the primary content of the 80-volume *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* and explicate the religious doctrines of the Huayan School in a more concise and accessible manner.

The third volume of JSH includes 23 accounts, which Chengguan categorises into six thematic groups: translation (*fanyi* 翻譯), commentary composition (*luncheng* 論成), sūtra copying (*shuxie* 書寫), recitation (*dusong* 讀誦), meditation (*guanxing* 觀行), and exegesis (*jiangshuo* 講說).³⁹ Two additional accounts, classified as miraculous, detail the extraordinary powers and effects attributed to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. Hamar observes that Chengguan conflated two distinct forms of recitation—*fengsong* 諷誦 and *zhuandu* 轉讀—into a single category, *dusong* 讀誦.⁴⁰ Hamar also notes that Chengguan introduced the new category of ‘meditation’ (*guanxing*), likely due to his study under several Chan masters, reflecting the influence of Chan Buddhism on his teachings.⁴¹

The 90-volume YYCH serves as a comprehensive supplement to JSH, offering further elucidation of Chengguan’s commentary. In the fifth volume, Chengguan provides detailed explanations of the aforementioned 23 miraculous

³⁷ For a partial Hungarian translation of Chengguan’s commentary and subcommentary on the chapter ‘Manifestation of the Tathāgata of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*’, see Hamar 2002.

³⁸ T50n2061 p0737b01–b12.

³⁹ The English translation of the categories is cited from Hamar.

⁴⁰ Hamar 2011: 187.

⁴¹ Hamar 2011: 190.

accounts. The YYCH is considered one of Chengguan's most significant contributions, and it stands as the most celebrated exposition of his doctrinal insights.

Account of Chengguan's Commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Huayan xuantan huixuan ji 華嚴懸談會玄記)

During the Yuan Dynasty, Huayan scholars primarily focused on interpreting and disseminating the works of Chengguan and Zongmi from the Tang Dynasty. Although the Yuan Dynasty produced few original theoretical contributions, it played an important role in propagating Huayan Buddhism through the activities of monks engaged in the preaching, chanting, and practical application of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.⁴² Huayan monks were dispersed across various regions, with significant communities on Mount Wutai, in Yuandadu (modern-day Beijing), and throughout southern China.

One noteworthy figure of this period was Shi Purui 釋普瑞, who was affiliated with the Zaiguang Monastery (Zaiguang si 再光寺) in Cangshan 蒼山. Purui played a pivotal role in the spread of Huayan Buddhism in Yunnan following the fall of the Dali Kingdom and the establishment of Yunnan Province, which facilitated increased interaction between the local Buddhist community and the broader Chinese Buddhist tradition.

Xueting Purui 雪庭普瑞, also known as the 'Huayan School Master', is recognised for his contribution to Huayan Buddhism during the Yuan Dynasty.⁴³ Zhang Xilu estimates that Purui was born around 1289.⁴⁴ Purui's most renowned work is the *Account of Chengguan's Enigmatic Discussions on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Huayan xuantan 華嚴懸談)*, which further elaborates on Chengguan's commentary and sub-commentary. Chapter 38 of Purui's work contains miraculous stories related to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, providing additional interpretations and insights into Chengguan's original teachings.

Short Record of Accounts of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Dafangguang fo huayanjing ganying lueji 大方廣佛華嚴經感應略記)

The *Short Record of Accounts of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Dafangguang fo huayanjing ganying lueji 大方廣佛華嚴經感應略記)*, authored by Master Lianchi 蓮池 (1535–1615) during the Ming

⁴² Yang 2017: 298.

⁴³ Zhang Xilu 2018: 59.

⁴⁴ Zhang Xilu 2018: 60.

Dynasty, is an important text within both the Pure Land and Huayan schools. Master Lianchi's original name was Shi Zhuhong 释祿宏, and his secular surname was Shen 沈. Lianchi was one of the four eminent masters of the Ming Dynasty, alongside Zibai Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543–1603), Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623), and Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655).

Xiao Yu's research on Lianchi's name traces its origin to Dao'an (312–385), who advocated for Buddhist monks to adopt the surname 'Shi' 釋 in honor of Śākyamuni Buddha, as outlined in the *Ekôttarikâgama* (*Zengyi ahanjing* 增壹阿含經).⁴⁵ Following this tradition, Lianchi abandoned his secular surname Shen and adopted the Buddhist surname Shi. The name 'Lianchi' 蓮池, meaning 'Lotus Pond', was chosen to reflect his veneration of Master Huiyuan's 慧遠 (334–416) Lotus Society (*lianshe* 蓮社) and his aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land (*jingtu* 淨土). Due to his extended residence in Yunxi Monastery (*yunxi si* 雲棲寺), he was also known as Master Yunxi 雲棲.⁴⁶

Lianchi was the eighth patriarch of the Pure Land School, but he also held an esteemed position within the Huayan tradition, venerated by both schools. His early education in Confucianism, followed by a profound conversion to Buddhism, allowed him to develop a syncretic worldview that reconciled the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism. He famously espoused the view that Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism share a common origin. In addition to his role in promoting Buddhism, Lianchi was a prolific writer, producing over 30 collections, including *Collection on Rebirth* (*Wangsheng ji* 往生集) and *Essays by the Bamboo Window* (*Zhuchuang suibi* 竹窗隨筆). After his death, his disciples, including Daxian 大賢, compiled his works into a 34-volume collection entitled *The Dharma Gathering in Yunxi* (*Yunxi Fahui* 雲棲法匯), one volume of which is the *Short Record of Accounts of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.⁴⁷

This work records 28 accounts of miraculous events, each with its own title, most of which align with the titles given by Chengguan. Of the 28 tales, 22 are abridged versions of stories from Chengguan's commentary, while six are new accounts unique to Lianchi's text.

⁴⁵ Xiao 2002: 35.

⁴⁶ Xiao 1999: 26.

⁴⁷ Xiao 1999: 27.

Causes of Stimuli and Response Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Huayanjing ganying yuanqi zhuan 華嚴經感應緣起傳)

The *Causes of Stimuli and Response Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (Huayanjing ganying yuanqi zhuan 華嚴經感應緣起傳) was authored by Hongbi 弘璧 (1599–1670),⁴⁸ a Chan monk residing at Sheng'en Monastery (*shengensi* 聖恩寺) in Wu prefecture.⁴⁹ His biography is found in the fourth volume of *The Annals of Dengwei Sheng'en Monastery* (*Dengwei Sheng'en si zhi* 鄧尉聖恩寺志) and also in the 69th volume of *The Complete Collection of Five Chan Books* (*Wudeng quanshu* 五燈全書).⁵⁰ Born in Wuxi, Jiangsu, Hongbi became a monk at the age of 17 and devoted five years to the practice of Huayan. By the age of 22, he had studied under the renowned master Sanfeng Fazang 三峰法藏 and led an exceptionally austere life. He passed away at the age of 72.

The *Causes of Stimuli and Response Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* is structured into 10 sections. The first section, 'Nine Assemblies Preaching' (*Jiuhui shuo jing* 九會說經), describes the nine assemblies held in seven locations by the Buddha and various Bodhisattvas. The second section, 'Compiling on Mount Wei' (*Weishan jieji* 圍山結集), focuses on the compilation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* on Mount Wei, noting that there are 10 versions of the text. The shortest versions were translated into Chinese as the 80-volume *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* and the 60-volume *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. The third section, 'Nāgās' Preservation' (*Tianlong hu zang* 天龍護藏), recounts how the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* was safeguarded in the Nāgās' palace. It is said that the King of the Nāgās (*longwang* 龍王) brought Nāgārjuna to his palace and transmitted the teachings to him. The fourth section, 'Nāgārjuna Transmits the Sūtra to the Human World' (*Longshu songchu* 龍樹誦出), narrates Nāgārjuna's transmission of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* to the human realm, citing various sources to validate this account.

The fifth section, 'Spreading to the Western Regions' (*Liuchuan xiyu* 流傳西域), describes the spread of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* and other scriptures, each comprising 100,000 ślokas, to Zhejupan 遮拘盤, where they were held in high esteem. The sixth section, 'Zhi Faling Receives the Sūtra and Returns It to China' (*Faling qinggui* 法領請歸), discusses how Zhi Faling brought 36,000 ślokas of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* back to China. The seventh section, 'Buddhabhadra's Early Translation' (*Juexian chu yi* 覺賢初譯), presents a biography of Buddhabhadra, emphasising his lifetime achievements and his role in translating the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* into Chinese. The eighth section, 'Śikṣānanda Retr translates'

⁴⁸ 'Hongbi 弘璧.' In: *Person Authority Database*.

⁴⁹ Wujun is Suzhou. 'Monument of Poushi Monk in Mount Deng (Dengshan Poushi Daheshang Daohengbei 鄧山剖石大和尚道行碑).' In: *Archive of Buddhist Temple Gazetteers*.

⁵⁰ X82n1571_069.

(*Xi xue chong fan* 喜學重翻), explains how Empress Wu dispatched envoys to Khotan, who retrieved an additional 9,000 ślokas of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. These, along with 45,000 ślokas, were retranslated into what is now the 80-volume version of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. The ninth section, ‘Manifestation of the Miraculous Tales’ (*Zhengzhang ganying* 正彰感應), lists 23 miraculous accounts, all of which are drawn from Chengguan’s sub-commentary. The 10th section enumerates an additional 15 tales drawn from various sources: one from *The Origin and Traces of the Commentaries on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Shuchao yuanqi xingji* 疏鈔緣起行跡), one from *Zhangzhe’s Deeds on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Zhangzhe huayanlun shiji* 長者華嚴論事蹟), four from *The Short Record of Accounts of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, four from Huiying’s *Miraculous stories on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Ganying zhuan* 感應傳), one from *The Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳), one from *The Five Lamps of Transmission* (*Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元), and three from *Account of Chengguan’s Commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan xuantan huixuan ji* 華嚴懸談會玄記). Among these is a repeated story attributed to Deyuan 德圓, a figure from the 6th century.

Additionally, the collection introduces three verses from the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. The section titled ‘Miscellanies Collection’ (*Zalu* 雜錄) includes one story from the *Miscellanies Collection of Xitang* (*Xitang zalu* 溪堂雜錄). It is worth noting that three of the cited collections have been lost: *The Origin and Traces of the Commentaries on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Shuchao yuanqi xingji* 疏鈔緣起行跡), Huiying’s *Miraculous stories on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Ganying zhuan* 感應傳), and *Miscellanies Collection of Xitang*. Portions of these lost texts, however, are preserved in Hongbi’s work.

Chronological Account of the Efficacies of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra (*Lichao huayanjing chiyan ji* 歷朝華嚴經持驗紀)

The *Chronological Account of the Efficacies of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Lichao huayanjing chiyan ji* 歷朝華嚴經持驗紀) was authored by Zhou Kefu, who also compiled several other collections of miraculous tales associated with various scriptures, including the *Account of the Efficacies of the Jin’gang Sūtra* (*Jin’gangjing chiyan ji* 金剛經持驗紀), the *Account of the Efficacies of the Fahua Sūtra* (*Fahuajing chiyan ji* 法華經持驗紀), and the *Account of the Efficacies of the Avalokiteśvara Sūtra* (*Guanyinjing chiyan ji* 觀音經持驗紀). According to *The Morning Bell of the Pure Land* (*Jingtu chengzhong* 淨土晨鐘), Zhou Kefu wrote the *Chronological Account of the Efficacies of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* in the year of Shunzhi Yihai (1659), indicating that he lived

during the Shunzhi era (1643–1661).⁵¹ The *Chronological Account* notes that it was written during the Wushu year (1658), after which it circulated widely and garnered popularity.⁵² As a result, Zhou later compiled additional collections of miraculous tales. This strongly suggests that the *Chronological Account* was completed around 1658.

Zhou Kefu hailed from Yangxian 陽羨 during the early Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and was a disciple of Jingye 淨業.⁵³ While his work bears similarities to earlier collections of miraculous stories, it also presents distinct features. In terms of structure and selection of material, Zhou followed the traditional method of his predecessors, often drawing from the classical hagiographies of earlier masters. However, his work diverges in its purpose, focusing more explicitly on encouraging virtuous practices and promoting the Pure Land path. Zhou's intention in re-editing the miraculous stories was to inspire others to follow the Pure Land teachings. He writes:

況淨土法門，超出生死輪迴，永不退轉，直至成佛而後已。是勸一人修淨土，乃成就一眾生作佛也。凡作佛者，必度無量眾生。彼所度之眾生，皆由我而始。其福報信不可窮盡。故欲勸一切見者聞者，廣大其心，以佛之心為心，使人人知之而盡生淨土。⁵⁴

The gate of the Pure Land Dharma leads beyond the cycle of birth and death, never regressing until Buddhahood is attained. If I persuade one person to cultivate the Pure Land, I am helping one sentient being become a Buddha. Every person who attains Buddhahood will, in turn, save countless sentient beings. Those saved beings have me to thank as the origin of their salvation. The merit of this virtuous cycle is boundless. Therefore, I wish to urge all who see and hear this to expand their hearts and align them with the Buddha's heart, so that all may come to know and ultimately reside in the Pure Land.

From this, it is evident that Zhou Kefu believed that the highest form of Pure Land practice is not merely the individual recitation of the Buddha's name to attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land, but the aspiration for universal salvation, ensuring that 'all living beings become Buddhas'. The miraculous stories collected by Zhou serve as evidence for practitioners, demonstrating the efficacy of virtuous practices and motivating them to continue on the path to enlightenment.

The *Chronological Account of the Efficacies of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* comprises 49 stories, arranged chronologically across various dynasties, beginning

⁵¹ X62n1172 p0033b19.

⁵² X77n1534 p0648b16.

⁵³ Yangxian 陽羨 (now Yixing 宜興, Jiangsu)

⁵⁴ X77n1534 p0648b08–12

with the 2nd–3rd centuries CE and extending to the Ming Dynasty. In many cases, Zhou provides references to his sources, which offer valuable insight into the content of other collections and assist in reconstructing their narratives.

Among the sources cited, two stories are drawn from the *Biography of the Western Regions* (*Xiyu ji* 西域記), two from *Go to the Western Paradise* (*Yunxi wangsheng ji* 雲棲往生集), one from *The Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳), three from *Account of Chengguan's Commentary on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan xuantan huixuan ji* 華嚴懸談會玄記), two from *Compilation of Spiritual Records* (*Zuanling ji* 纂靈記), four from *The Short Record of Accounts of Stimuli and Responses Related to the Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, three from Huiying's *Miraculous stories on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Ganying zhuan* 感應傳), one from *The Origin and Traces of the Commentaries on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Shuchao yuanqi xingji* 疏鈔緣起行跡), one from *Zhangzhe's Deeds on the Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Zhangzhe huayanlun shiji* 長者華嚴論事蹟), one from *The Five Lamps of Transmission* (*Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元), and one from *Biography of The Ministry* (*Gongbu ziyou zhuanji* 工部自有傳紀). The remaining tales do not provide explicit references to earlier collections.

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The Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa – On the Identity of the Bronze Drum in the Dunhuang Murals*

Abstract

The story of Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa (*Laoducha shengdou bian* 勞度叉聖鬥變) involves Minister Sudatta's encounter with the Buddha while seeking a bride for his son. Sudatta's conversion leads to the construction of a monastery, sparking a contest between Buddhist monks and six sectarian teachers, with Śāriputra's victory over Raudrākṣa showcasing Buddhist supremacy. The Dunhuang murals, based on the *Xiangmo bianwen* 降魔變文 (The Demon Conquering Story), are derived from the Buddhist *Xian yu jing* 賢愚經 (Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish) and reflect a complex relationship between scripture, *bianwen* 變文, and the murals. This article explores how these forms differ while maintaining a connection, focusing on the dharma combat scenes and the symbolic use of dharma instruments. The cross-patterned *jin* drum (*jin gu* 金鼓) in the contest between Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa is a fascinating element embedded in the broader context of Dunhuang murals, manuscripts, and the religious and cultural symbolism of late Tang dynasty art. The article inquiry into the interpretation of the *jin* drum, its identity, and the significance of the cross pattern involves a detailed examination of archaeological, artistic, and textual evidence.

The analysis of the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa contest in Dunhuang murals and manuscripts, such as P.Tib.1293, reveals that the cross pattern on the *jin* drum holds deeper symbolic meaning beyond a ruptured drum skin. Traditionally, the cross pattern was thought to symbolise a 'broken drum skin' or 'wind-broken drum', representing the defeat of Raudrākṣa's followers. However, this interpretation is challenged, suggesting that the pattern may have connections to the cultural and religious significance of bronze drums used by southern ethnic minorities in China. The cross-patterned drum is identified as a bronze drum, similar to the Chongyang 崇陽 bronze drum, and linked to the metal classification of ancient Chinese musical instruments. These drums were sacred objects used in rituals to communicate with deities, particularly among southern Chinese ethnic groups. The drum's depiction in the contest scene reflects the clash between Buddhism and indigenous religious practices, symbolising the transition from animism and shamanism to Buddhist dominance. The broader cultural significance of this transformation highlights how Buddhism absorbed and transformed the religious symbols of local traditions, with the bronze drum serving as a metaphor for this shift. Ultimately, the *jin* drum in these murals represents not a rupture, but a deeper connection to the shamanistic traditions of the southern ethnic minorities and their gradual integration into Buddhist culture during the Tang dynasty.

Keywords: bronze drum, Yulin Cave 16, Dunhuang Caves, cross pattern, heterodox beliefs, Tianzhu

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Introduction

The *Laoducha shengdou bian* 勞度叉聖鬥變 (Contest of Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa) story tells of Minister Sudatta's (Xudaduo zhangzhe 須達多長者) encounter with the Buddha while seeking a bride for his son in the kingdom of Śrāvastī. Sudatta's conversion to Buddhism prompts him to build a monastery, overcoming opposition from the six sectarian teachers. A contest ensues between Buddhist monks and the teachers, with Śāriputra emerging victorious over Raudrākṣa, showcasing Buddhist supremacy with supernatural aid.

The Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa depictions in Dunhuang murals are based on the manuscript known as *Xiangmo bianwen* 降魔變文 (The Demon Conquering Story¹), which in turn originates from the *Xuda qi jingshe yuanpin* 須達起精舍緣品 (The Chapter on the Cause of Sudatta's Building a Monastery) from the Buddhist text *Xian yu jing* 賢愚經 (Damamūka-nidāna-sūtra Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish), a sūtra transmitted from ancient India and recorded by Chinese monks at the Vimalakirti Assembly in Khotan.²

¹ *Xiangmo bianwen* 降魔變文 (The Demon Conquering Bianwen, also known as The Demon Conquering Story) is a Dunhuang *bianwen* 變文 text with an unknown author. It primarily tells a Buddhist story and is preserved in various Dunhuang manuscripts, including those catalogued under Stein numbers 5511 and 4398, Pelliot numbers 4524 and 4615, as well as in the Dunhuang Fragments collection. *Bianwen*, often translated as 'transformation texts', are a form of popular narrative literature that emerged during the Tang dynasty (618–907) in China. These texts were originally oral performances and later written down, combining prose and verse to tell various stories, often with religious or didactic themes. They played a significant role in the transmission of Buddhist teachings and folklore. The term *bian* refers to *jingbian* 經變. The term *jingbian* is typically translated as 'transformation of scriptures' or 'scriptural transformations', influenced by the Buddhist monks' practice of chanting and guiding. *Bianwen* evolved by inheriting the literary traditions of the Han (202 BCE–220 CE) and Wei (220–265 CE) dynasties, *zhiguai* 志怪 tales, and miscellaneous *fu* 賦 (prose-poetry) from the Six Dynasties period (220–589 CE). Over time, it developed into a mature literary genre (Wang 1957: 05).

² The Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa story describes the process by which the ancient Indian Buddhist devotee Sudatta (known as Anāthapiṇḍada, meaning 'the giver to the destitute') built a monastery, reflecting the spread of Buddhist teachings and the power of faith. The story is summarised as follows: in the ancient Indian city of Śrāvastī, the chancellor Sudatta (Anāthapiṇḍada), a devout admirer of the Buddha Śākyamuni, wished to invite the Buddha to Śrāvastī to give teachings. The Buddha agreed but mentioned that Sudatta needed to build a monastery for him and his disciples. With the help of Śāriputra, Sudatta chose a garden belonging to Prince Jeta (Jetakumāra). To acquire the garden, Sudatta famously covered the entire land with gold coins. Impressed by Sudatta's sincerity, Prince Jeta agreed to contribute to the construction. Once completed, the monastery was named 'Jetavana Anāthapiṇḍada Ārāma' (Jeta's Grove, the Monastery of Anāthapiṇḍada) by the Buddha, in honour of both Prince Jeta and Anāthapiṇḍada's joint merit. Based on *Xian yu jing* (1st century BCE–1st century CE), I summarised the story (*Xian yu jing* 2004: 117).

The relationship between the murals and the *bianwen* is bidirectional, characterised by connection, distinction, inheritance, and innovation, and the murals and the *bianwen* do not strictly adhere to the original narrative constraints of the Buddhist scriptures. In the discussion about this topic,³ Li and Cai discuss the relationship between three narrative media forms (i.e., scriptures, *bianwen*, and murals) and posit that *Xiangmo bianwen* is derived from the Buddhist scripture *Xuda qi jingshe yuanpin*. The Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa in Dunhuang murals, particularly from the late Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) onward, is based on *Xiangmo bianwen*. If we use a metaphor of ‘source and flow’ to describe their relationship, the Buddhist scriptures are the source, while the *bianwen* and Buddhist murals are the flow. However, this is merely a simple and rough sequence of creation. When delving into the specific details of the *bianwen* and mural contents, the relationship becomes more complex. *Bianwen* and Buddhist murals, as two distinct forms of literary and artistic expression, do not rigidly adhere to the original narrative constraints of the Buddhist scriptures to which they are related. The story of Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa is deeply imbued with religious proselytising intent and primarily serves to propagate the dharma.

Buddhist murals, designed to capture attention through visual imagery, necessarily focus on compositions that can firmly seize viewers’ attention and evoke strong emotions. Consequently, scenes of dharma combat are prominently depicted in the centre of the mural compositions to achieve maximum visual impact. This article focuses on the visual representation of the dharma combat scenes, particularly examining the dharma instruments held by each side: Śāriputra, represented by a *jin* bell (*jin zhong* 金鐘), and Raudrākṣa, represented by the *jin* drum (*jin gu* 金鼓).

In all visual depictions of the Śāriputra Raudrākṣa contest, without exception, there is a portrayal of the fierce struggle between Buddhism and heterodox traditions. In these representations, the *jin* bell symbolises Śāriputra, embodying the majesty and power of Buddhism, while the *jin* drum signifies Raudrākṣa, representing the challenge and opposition of heterodox beliefs.⁴ As mentioned by Wu Hong⁵, extant murals in the Dunhuang region, despite their vast scale and numerous figures, all contain five basic images: Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa (positioned on either side), a *jin* bell, a *jin* drum, and the central figure of King Kūṭadanta (as the arbiter of the magical contest). These five images also form the spatial framework for each combat scene in the *Xiangmo* text scroll (which is catalogued as P4524 and is a well-known artwork from the Dunhuang Cave of the Buddhist Scriptures). The outcome of this contest is the defeat of the

³ Li – Cai 2000: 134–150.

⁴ Zhuang 2002: 1.

⁵ Wu 2023: 25–48.

heterodox traditions and their subsequent conversion to Buddhism. This symbolises that in the contest of faiths, the Buddhist ritual implements triumph, highlighting the powerful influence of the Buddha's teachings. The defeat of the heterodox traditions becomes an opportunity for the victory of the dharma and the universal salvation of beings.

It is noteworthy that from the outset of the story's narration, the *jin* bell is equated with Buddhist symbolism, while the *jin* drum is associated with heterodox symbolism. Akiyama Terukazu ⁶ compares the narrative elements of the murals with the positions of the *jin* drum and *jin* bell in Mogao Cave 196, known as the Demon Conquering Cave (Xiang mo ku 降魔窟), within the Mogao Grottoes complex. He suggests that the murals depicting the contest between Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa may be based on a story found in the *Xian yu jing*, particularly in the section titled *Xuda qi jingshe yuanpin*. The extant manuscripts and mural data related to this story are as follows:

1. *Xiangmo bianwen* from the Dunhuang Cave of the Buddhist Scriptures has been fragmented into several pieces. Some fragments are currently housed in the UK and France (S.5511, 4398, P.4615, 4524).
 - Dunhuang murals: There are currently 19 murals depicting the contest between Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa in the Dunhuang caves. These murals are located in the following Mogao Caves: 6, 9, 25, 53, 55, 72, 85, 98, 108, 146, 196, 335, 342, and 454, as well as in Yulin Caves 16, 19, and 32; Western Thousand Buddha Caves 12; and Five Temples Caves 3.
 - Additionally, a white line drawing draft of the contest between Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa was discovered in the Dunhuang Library Cave, catalogued as P.Tib.1293.

Among the aforementioned visual materials, the white line drawing draft, with its clear lines, precise details, ease of reproduction, pure artistic form, and practicality in academic research, has become an important tool for interpreting and studying artistic works.

Regarding the interpretation of the *jin* drum held by the heretical side in the contest between Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa, the researcher Zhu Xiaofeng 朱晓峰⁷ analyses and explains the drum stand, the drum's structure, and the patterns on the drumhead. However, since the colour of the drum body and drumhead in the white line drawing drafts cannot be determined, the conclusion that the pat-

⁶ Akiyama 1960: 23.

⁷ Zhu 2017: 85–101. Zhu from the Dunhuang Academy provides a detailed analysis of the scene in the initial white line drawing draft P.Tib.1293 (catalogued as P.Tib.1293 at the French National Library), where the heretics are depicted striking the drum.

terns on the drumhead represent ‘cracks’ is somewhat lacking in evidence. This paper combines the images of the *jin* drum in the contest between Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa with archaeological data to attempt to uncover the true identity of the *jin* drum and reanalyse the symbolic meaning of the patterns on the drumhead.

The interpretation of the cross-patterned *jin* drum

The well-preserved manuscript of the white line drawing draft of the contest between Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa, consists of three glued-together drafts. The second and third drafts clearly depict the cross-patterned *jin* drum, as shown below.⁸

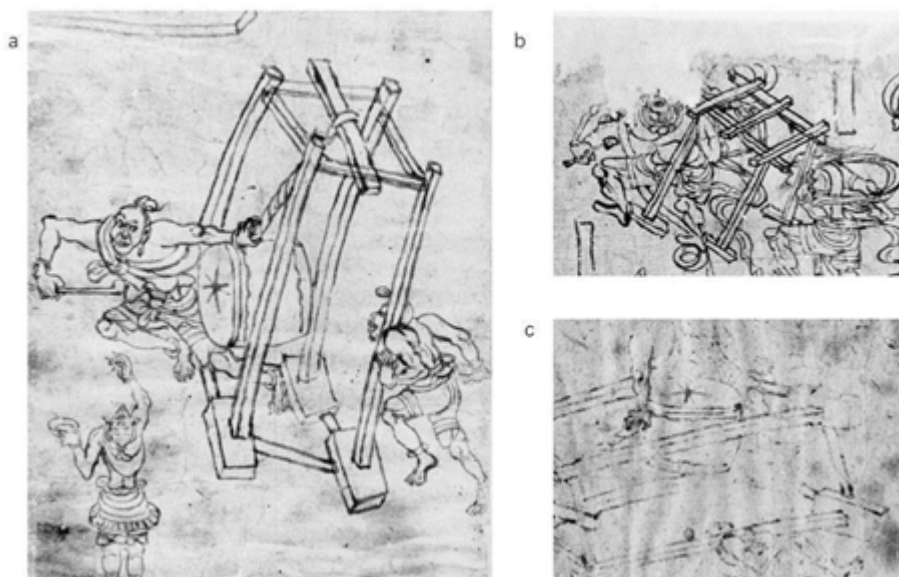


Figure 1.1: Three instances of the cross-patterned *jin* drum in the second draft of P.Tib.1293

This cross-patterned *jin* drum has clear symbolic significance, becoming a striking visual element in the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa contest illustrations. Sha Wutian 沙武田⁹ states that P.Tib.1293 originated as an early draft for cave murals during the late Tang dynasty, and he believes that, once utilised in cave murals, it exerted a decisive influence on the paintings of the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa contest for over a century. This is the true reason for the stylised development

⁸ See material 1.1 in Appendix 1.

⁹ Sha 2007: 117.

of the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa contest murals that we see in caves today. The earliest appearance of this theme in Dunhuang murals dates to the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534/535), with only one such depiction from the early Tang. The late Tang and Five Dynasties periods saw a peak in the depiction of this theme, with 10 existing murals, seven of which feature the cross-patterned *jin* drum. These are found in Mogao caves 85, 9, 72, 98, 146, 55, and 454.

The ‘wind-broken drum skin’ interpretation of the cross-patterned *jin* drum

For example, in *Xuda qi jingshe yuanpin*,¹⁰ six contest scenes are described: ‘the battle of wind and trees’ (*feng shu dou* 風樹鬥), ‘the competition at the elephant pool’ (*chixiang zhi zheng* 池象之爭), ‘the vajra striking the precious mountain’ (*jinggang ji baoshan* 金剛擊寶山), ‘the golden-winged bird fighting the poisonous dragon’ (*jinchiniao zhan dulong* 金翅鳥戰毒龍), ‘the lion devouring the cow’ (*shizi dan niu* 獅子啖牛), and ‘the subjugation of the Yellow-Haired Demon by the Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa’ (*Pishamen xiangfu huangtougui* 毗沙門天王降服黃頭鬼). These descriptions are largely reflected in the murals of the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa contest. The drum is mentioned in the titles of various Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa contest murals,¹¹ with titles such as ‘wind-broken drum skin’ (*feng chui pi po* 風吹皮破) relating to the ‘battle of wind and trees’ scene.

The captions seem to suggest that the drumhead pattern signifies a ruptured drum surface (for example, Mogao Cave 454 contains the following caption: ‘The staff or mallet engraved with the character ‘上’ has not yet reached the surface of the drum. *Shangzi zhangzhui wei zhi mian* 上字杖槌未至面. The cross crack cannot produce sound.]; ‘*Shizi lie bu neng fasheng shi* 十字裂不能發聲時).’ This leads Zhu Xiaofeng to interpret the symbolic meaning of the drumhead pattern directly: the drum’s sound ceases, symbolising the defeat of Raudrākṣa’s followers, with the cross-patterned drumhead indicating a ruptured drum skin in visual art.¹²

¹⁰ *Xian yu jing* 2004:117.

¹¹ See Appendix 1 for details.

¹² Zhu 2017: 87.

The case of the ‘wind-broken drum skin’

To refute the view that the cross-patterned drum skin represents a wind-broken drum, I use the original scroll P.4524¹³ of the *Xiangmobianwen* as an example, along with collected images of various Raudrākṣa contest murals from different caves.

Even the ‘wind-tree contest’ is missing in the existing manuscript. However, the cross-patterned *jin* drum representing Raudrākṣa’s side is meticulously depicted four times within.¹⁴

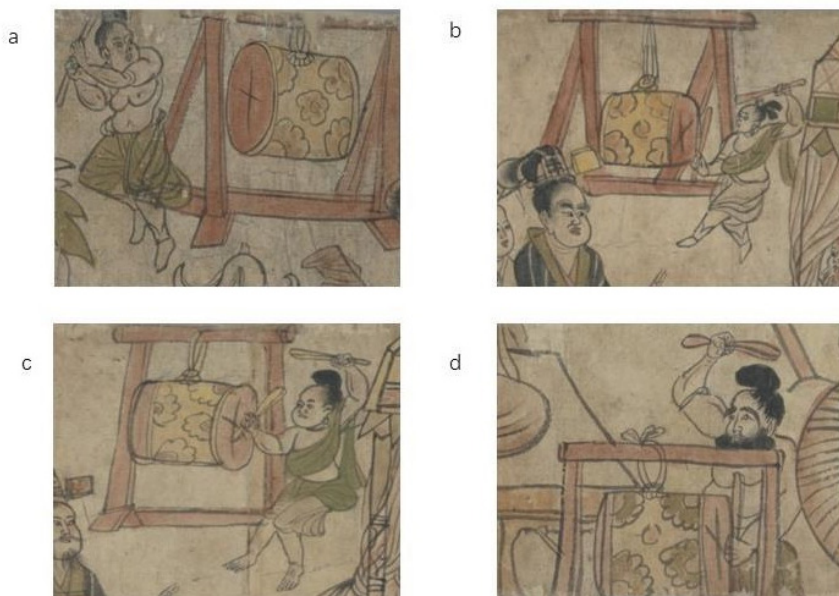


Figure 1.2: The *jin* drum depicted in scroll P.4524¹⁵

Even without the ‘wind-tree contest’ scene, the cross pattern on the drum-head is still clearly visible.

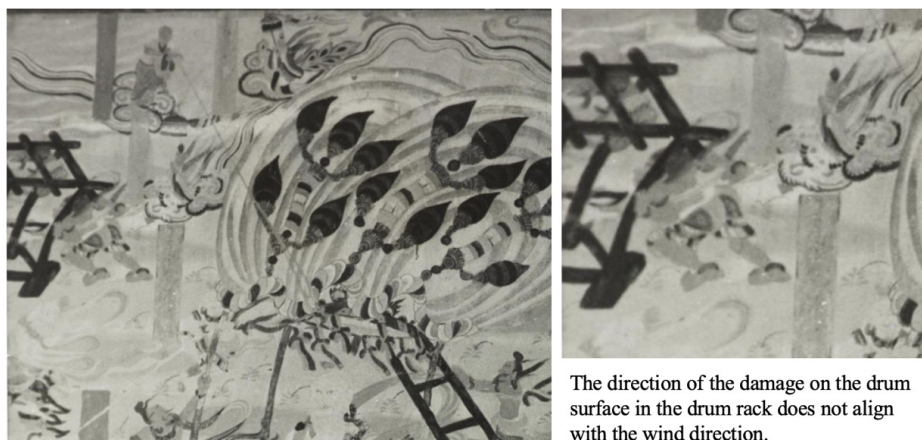
In the Raudrākṣa contest mural of Mogao Cave 146, the cross-patterned *jin* drum is clearly depicted, as shown in the picture.¹⁶

¹³ Currently held in the Bibliothèque National de France: Pelliot Chinois 4524. The extant P.4524 is composed of 12 sheets of paper joined together. The scroll is 27.5 cm in height and has a total length of 571.3 cm. Due to damage at the beginning and end sections, the length of 571.3 cm does not represent the original length of the scroll.

¹⁴ The extant P.4524 is composed of 12 sheets of paper joined together. The scroll is 27.5 cm in height and has a total length of 571.3 cm. Due to damage at the beginning and end sections, the length of 571.3 cm does not represent the original length of the scroll.

¹⁵ See material 1.2 in Appendix 1.

¹⁶ See material 1.3 in Appendix 1.



The direction of the wind.

Figure 1.3: Detail from Mogao Cave 146 mural

The material 1.3 appears distorted, but it is actually an artistic interpretation by the painter depicting a battle scene amidst strong winds. From the layout of the Raudrākṣa contest in Mogao Cave 146, with Śāriputra on the left and Raudrākṣa on the right, the direction in which the drum stand is blown aligns with the depicted wind direction. However, the direction of the cross pattern on the drumhead is opposite to the direction the drum stand falls. If the cross pattern was meant to show a ‘wind-broken drum skin,’ it should match the orientation of the *jīn* drum depicted in the Raudrākṣa contest mural of Mogao Cave 9.¹⁷

Based on this, however, the captions of several Raudrākṣa contest murals mention ‘broken drum skin’ or ‘wind-broken drum skin’, leading Zhu Xiaofeng to conclude that the cross pattern indicates a ruptured drum skin.¹⁸ I believe this interpretation is incorrect. The symbolic meaning of the cross-patterned *jīn* drum may have other possibilities, necessitating a reanalysis of the drumhead pattern.

Therefore, we can explain the caption concerning the external side striking the drum in the Raudrākṣa contest mural of Mogao Cave 454, which states: ‘The cross pattern cannot make a sound’. This does not mean that the drum was rendered silent by the rupture of the drumhead during the contest. Instead, it means that the cross pattern, already present on the *jīn* drum, prevented it from producing sound. However, it is unlikely that Raudrākṣa’s followers would use a perpetually broken drum for such a critical contest involving a fight for survival. Hence, we must explore the real identity of the cross-patterned drum, a question that scholars have not previously focused on.

¹⁷ See material 1.4 in Appendix 1.

¹⁸ Zhu 2017: 87.

Analysis of the identity of the *jin* drum, using Yulin Cave 16 as an example

This section primarily investigates the Raudrākṣa contest mural in Yulin Cave 16, combining archaeological data to analyse and confirm the real identity of the drum, and based on this conclusion, to reanalyse the drumhead pattern.

The styles of illustrations vary significantly across different dynasties due to differences in artistic skills and aesthetic trends. Among the images from the Tang to the Western Xia (1038–1227) periods, the depictions of the *jin* bell and *jin* drum in Yulin Cave 16 are the clearest and most distinctive.¹⁹

Here, we need to discuss the ancient Chinese eight-tone classification system (*bayin fenlei fa* 八音分類法). The eight tones refer to the ancient Chinese classification of musical instruments. According to the *Zhouli* 周禮 (Rites of Zhou) section *Chun guan* 春官 (Spring Officials), musical instruments were categorised into eight types: metal, stone, clay, leather, silk, wood, gourd, and bamboo, known as the eight tones, one of the earliest musical instrument classification systems.

以八音：金、石、土、革、絲、木、匏、竹。²⁰

The material of instruments in the eight-tones are: metal, stone, earth, leather, silk, wood, gourd, and bamboo.

As for the metal category instruments, the *Tongdian* 通典, compiled in the 17th year of Emperor Dezong's reign in the Tang dynasty (801), records:

金一，钟、柷、钟、鐃、鐃、鐃、鐃、方响、铜、铜鼓。

Metal instruments include bell stands, bells, cymbals, gongs, clappers, bells, square chime, bronze cymbals, and bronze drums.²¹

Here is one example of an ancient Chinese 'metal' drum instruments, the Chongyang bronze drum Shangdai Chongyang Tonggu 商代崇陽銅鼓。²²

¹⁹ See material 2.1 and 2.2 in Appendix 1.

²⁰ *Zhouli* 2022:479.

²¹ *Tongdian* 2016: 3622.

²² The Shang dynasty (1600–1046 BCE) bronze drum unearthed in Chongyang is the only surviving bronze drum with beast face patterns from the Shang dynasty in China. It has been referred to in related reports as the 'Shang dynasty Chongyang bronze drum'. The bronze drum consists of three parts: the drum crown, drum body, and drum base, and it mimics the form of a wooden drum with a leather surface. The bronze drum has an overall height of 75.5 cm and weighs 42.5 kg. It is one of the earliest bronze drums discovered in China, dating back to the late Shang dynasty, about three thousand years ago.



Chongyang Bronze Drum



i. Partial View of Chongyang Bronze Drum



ii. Partial View of the *jin* drum in Cave of Yulin Caves

Figure 2.1: Comparison of patterns between the Chongyang bronze drum and the *jin* drum²³

The figure shows the Chongyang bronze drum and its drum body pattern compared to the drum body pattern depicted in the Raudrākṣa contest mural of Yulin Cave 16. It is evident that the bronze drum's body has concentric circle patterns, one of the most common patterns on bronze drums. This pattern is fully reproduced on the drum body of the Raudrākṣa contest drum in Yulin Cave 16. Combining the textual references to 'metal' instruments (i.e., bronze drums) and visual materials, we can conclude that the *jin* drum in the story is identified as a bronze drum.

²³ See material 2.1 in Appendix 1.

Reanalysis of the ‘cross pattern’ on the *jin* drum head

From the P.Tib.1293, the *jin* drum head shows two main patterns: one is a cross pattern composed of a central point and seven lines, and the other is the cross pattern.

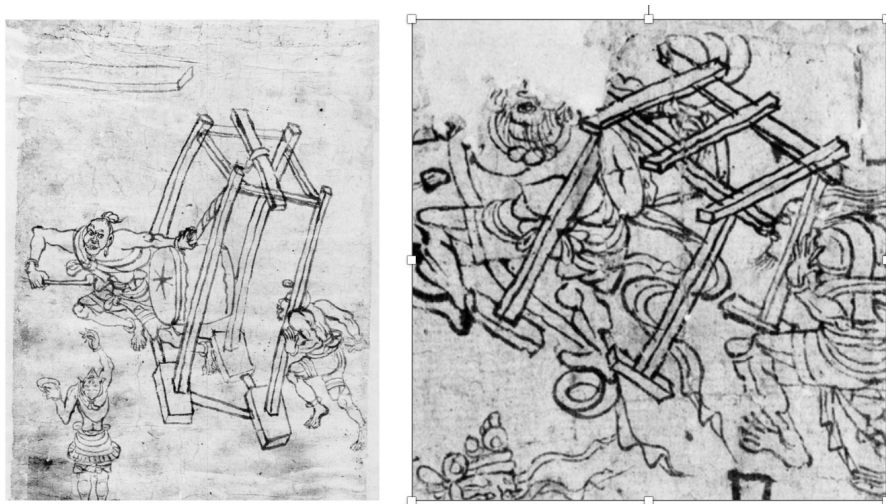


Figure 2.2: White sketch draft P.tib.1293²⁴

The preservation of this pattern does not prove the presence of a ‘broken drum skin,’ but rather it has a deeper meaning. To accurately interpret the symbolic significance of the drumhead pattern on the *jin* drum, it is necessary to delve into the representation of the drumhead pattern in the manuscript. This process will help reveal the unique symbolic meaning of the *jin* drum in late Tang culture, providing deeper insights into the religious art and thought of that period.

Based on the drumhead pattern in the line drawing manuscript shown above and the earlier conclusion that the *jin* drum is a bronze drum, the only plausible explanation for the drumhead pattern is the cross pattern. The cross pattern is one of the earliest and most fundamental patterns on bronze drums, and it serves as a hallmark for identifying the types of decorative patterns on bronze drums.²⁵ In the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Paintings²⁶ in Guangxi, China, a prominent fea-

²⁴ See material 2.2 in Appendix 1.

²⁵ Li 2010: 35.

²⁶ Lu 2016: 71. The Zuojiang Huashan Rock Paintings Huashan yan hua hua shan yan 花山岩畫 are located in Yaoda Village, Tuolong Township, Ningming County, Chongzuo City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on the east bank of the Ming River. The paintings are 44 m high and 170 m wide. Ancient people mixed red hematite powder with animal fat, and using grass or bird feathers, they directly painted these marvellous murals on the natural cliff face.

ture is the numerous bronze drum images, predominantly using abstract patterns to depict the central cross pattern on the drumhead (as shown in Figure 2.3).

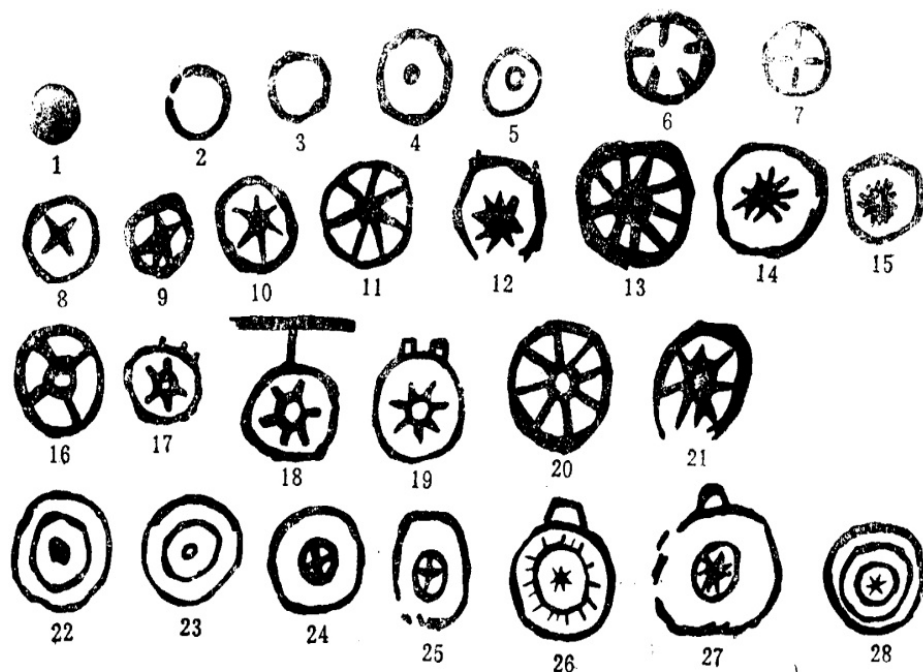


Figure 2.3: Bronze drum images in the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Landscape, Guangxi, China²⁷

As shown in Figure 2.3, despite being creations of ancient southern minority ethnic groups from the Warring States period (475 BC–221 BC) to the Eastern Han dynasty (475 BC–220 CE), the rock paintings of Zuojiang bear both temporal and spatial disparities with Dunhuang patterns. However, there is a correlation between the two. The abstract sketches and line drawings by early artists from the Zuojiang region in Guangxi Province bear striking resemblance to the drum head patterns depicted in manuscript P.Tib.1293.

The Huashan rock paintings include over 1,800 images, mainly depicting humans, animals, and artefacts, with humans being the primary subject. Human figures show only the head, neck, torso, and limbs, without facial features or other details. Animal images primarily depict dogs, all shown in profile in a forward-running stance. The artefacts mainly include knives, swords, bronze drums, and ox-horn bells. A typical composition features a tall, robust central figure armed with a knife and sword, with a dog at his feet, a bronze drum by his side, and surrounded by many smaller side-view human figures. These scenes likely record solemn yet joyful ritual ceremonies, remnants of shamanistic culture.

²⁷ See material 2.3 in Appendix 1.

What is a bronze drum?

Given our detailed exploration of the *jin* drum element depicted in the flourishing murals of the mid-to-late Tang dynasty, it is essential to investigate the contemporary understanding of bronze drums, specifically how people of the medieval period (rather than modern scholars) perceived the structure, nature, and use of bronze drums.

For example, the *Tongdian* records:

銅鼓鑄銅為之，虛其一面，覆而擊其上。南夷、扶南、天竺類皆如此。

Bronze drums are made of cast bronze, hollow on one side, struck from above.

Such are those used by the southern barbarians, Funan, and Tianzhu [India], as well.²⁸

By the Song dynasty (960–1279), Chen Yang's 陳暘 (1040–1110) *Yue shu* 樂書 (Book of Music) states:

銅鼓，唐樂圖所傳，天竺部用之。

Bronze drums, as depicted in Tang musical illustrations, are used in the region of Tianzhu [India].²⁹

According to the *Yinyue zhi* 音樂志 (Music Records), the *Sui shu* 隋書 (Book of Sui) indicates that the section on Tianzhu 天竺 (India) was incorporated into the festive music (*yan yue* 宴樂) categories in the Sui and Tang dynasties. The passage describes an event that took place during the Sixteen Kingdoms period when Zhang Chonghua 張重華 (327–353 CE), ruler of the Former Liang state, governed Liangzhou. It recounts envoys from India (referred to as Tianzhu) visiting his court to offer male performers as tribute.³⁰

樂器有鳳首箏篴、琵琶、五弦、笛、銅鼓、毛員鼓、都曇鼓、銅拔、貝等九種。³¹

The musical instruments include the phoenix-headed *konghou*, *pipa*, five-string lute, flute, bronze drum, *mao yuan* drum, *dutan* drum, bronze cymbals, shells, and nine other types.

²⁸ *Tongdian* 2016: 3622.

²⁹ Chen Yang 陳暘 (1040–1110), *Yue shu* 樂書 (*Book of Music*), Volume 130. Guangxu Second Year Edition, Volume 16, p. 25. *Yue Shu* was edited by Chen Yang (courtesy name Jinzhi 晉之), a famous musician and scholar of the Northern Song dynasty. The book was completed around the year 1100. Content structure: *Yue shu* consists of 150 volumes, systematically recording ancient Chinese music theory, instruments, musical notation, music education, and ritual music systems. It details the methods of making various instruments and performance techniques, and it includes numerous musical scores and examples.

³⁰ *Sui shu* 2018: 379.

³¹ *Sui shu* 2018: 379.

From the above, we know that bronze drums were already in use in Indian music during the Sui and Tang periods (581–907). The story of the Raudrākṣa contest originates from the *Xian yu jing*. Many researchers³² believe that its content and customs reflect Indian traditions. Thus, it can be concluded that during the Sui and Tang periods, bronze drums were recognised as Indian musical instruments.

Cultural significance of the bronze drum as the jin drum

Tianzhu is an ancient Chinese term referring to India and, in a broader sense, the entire South Asian subcontinent. The religious conflicts in late-Tang China were particularly complex, necessitating a focus on the primitive religions of the southern ethnic minorities. It is important to clarify that what Western scholars refer to as ‘animism’ is commonly called ‘shamanism’ by Chinese scholars. The bronze drum with cross patterns symbolises the ‘shamanism’ of these southern minorities, prevalent in East and South Asia. It is a circular, waist-curved, four-eared, hollow instrument with a central cross pattern on its drumhead, often adorned with decorations of frogs, cattle, horses, and other motifs. This bronze drum has a history of over 2,000 years since its inception.



Figure 3.1: Bronze drum from the south of China³³

³² Li – Cai 2000: 7–9.

³³ See material 3.1 in Appendix 1.

As the most representative artefact of the southern Chinese minorities, the bronze drum was widely used in southern China and Southeast Asia during its peak. Numerous ethnic groups utilised bronze drums, indicating its extensive cultural significance. Although I previously mentioned the Chongyang bronze drum from Hubei Province, it was merely to illustrate that all *jin* category drums in the eight tones classification system are collectively known as bronze drums. The Chongyang bronze drum, lacking cross patterns and similar in form to a *jian* drum (*jian gu* 建鼓)³⁴ found in central China, is a representative of Shang dynasty bronze ritual music, not a cultural product of the southern minorities of the South Asian subcontinent. Thus, it is not relevant to the discussion of the cultural significance of the bronze drum from Tianzhu.

The bronze drum has historically been a significant ceremonial, ritual, and sacred instrument for the southern ethnic minorities. Around the mid-Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BCE), a southern ethnic group in the primitive clan era was inspired by the sound produced by practical objects and cast the first bronze drum.³⁵ Since its creation, the bronze drum has played a crucial role in sacrificial ceremonies. Although no written records survive from that time period, archaeological artefacts vividly reconstruct the grand sacrificial ceremonies involving bronze drums.

The well-known sacrificial drum treasure vessel was unearthed from Tomb No. 20 at Shizhaishan, Jinning, Yunnan Province, in 1956. This artifact remains an important physical evidence for the study of ancient Chinese sacrificial culture. Although scholars have various interpretations of the religious significance of the sculpted contents on the vessel lid, it is undeniable that bronze drums have always been regarded as sacred instruments for communicating with deities and were used in various significant sacrificial activities of the southern ethnic minorities.

In the mural of Yulin Cave 16, the *jin* bell and *jin* drum form a striking contrast, with a notable deliberate omission of the *jin* drum, symbolising an emphasis on Buddhist themes while intentionally avoiding elements related to external religions. Same as the Buddhist-themed paintings found in southern China, specifically in the minority areas of Yunnan Province, the appearance of the bronze drum represents the subjugation of external religions to Buddhism. An example is the scene from the *Nanzhao tu zhuan* 南詔圖傳 (Restoration

³⁴ The *jian* drum (*jian gu* 建鼓) was popular in vast areas inhabited by the Han Chinese and was used in court throughout various dynasties. The drum body is long and round, with a slightly thicker middle and narrower ends, covered with skins on both ends. It is struck on one end with two sticks, producing a loud sound that carries far. Many large drums found today originated from the *jian* drum.

³⁵ CABDRA 1988: 05.

of Nanzhao in the Second Year Scroll),³⁶ painted during the second year of the reign of Nanzhao King Shun Huazhen (899 AD), depicting the transformation of a bronze drum into a Buddha statue.³⁷

The Nanzhao Kingdom (738–902 AD) was an ancient minority regime in southern China, in present-day Yunnan Province, where the earliest known bronze drums were discovered. The caption in the picture reads ‘transforming a drum’, but it is evident that it is actually a bronze drum, symbolising the process of primitive religions gradually declining with the spread of Buddhism.

Additionally, the ancient Yunnan region has another painting from the Dali Kingdom period (937–1253), the *Fansen guanshiyin tu* 梵僧觀世音圖 (The Painting of Brahmin Monk Avalokiteśvara).³⁸ In this painting, a bronze drum is placed at the feet of the Brahmin Monk Avalokiteśvara (as shown in Figure 3.2). Structurally, the Brahmin Monk Avalokiteśvara occupies the central area of the entire painting, serving as the main subject.

In the above image, the bronze drum has become a tribute and is placed sideways, signifying a lack of respect. Southern ethnic minorities typically placed the bronze drum upright to show reverence. However, in this painting, the bronze drum is merely an offering placed sideways in the tribute area to the Buddha, symbolising the subjugation of the original religious bronze drum to Buddhism, reflecting a logical relationship in religious rituals.

In exploring ‘external religions’, Yin Guangming³⁹ studied the process of the Sinicisation of the ‘Raudrākṣa’s contest’ theme from India to China, noting that this theme evolved from the Indian ‘Sudatta Building a Monastery Illustration’ to the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa theme. Its emergence and development were related to the historical Buddhist–Daoist conflicts in China. In this article, the

³⁶ The *Nanzhao tu zhuan* 南詔圖傳, also known as the *Restoration of Nanzhao in the Second Year Scroll* and the *National History Scroll of Nanzhao’s Restoration*, measures 5.73 m in length and 0.3 m in width. It was organised and painted by Nanzhao officials Ren Shuang 任爽, Zhang Shunhe 張順和, and Wang Fengzong 王風宗 in the second year of the Nanzhao Restoration (899 CE). Originally housed in the Nanzhao royal court, the scroll was later kept in the Qing imperial palace. In 1900, during the occupation of Beijing by the Eight-Nation Alliance, it was taken abroad and is now held in the Yurinkan Museum in Kyoto, Japan. It consists of painting scrolls and textual scrolls, with the text scrolls containing over 2,500 characters explaining and supplementing the paintings. The title states that the theme is based on Buddhist stories in *The Origin of Weishan* (Wei Shan Zhi Yuan 維山之源), *The Iron Pillar* (Tie Zhu 鐵柱), *Records of Xi’er River* (Xi Er He Zhi 西爾河志), and *The Zhang Family’s History of the State* (Zhang Jia Guo Zhi 張家國志).

³⁷ See material 3.2 in Appendix 1.

³⁸ Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan. Painted by Zhang Shengwen 張聖文, a court artist of the Dali Kingdom, in the fifth year of Shengde (1180 AD). The scroll is on paper, 1635.5 cm long and 30.4 cm wide, and features 134 individual and composite images.

³⁹ Yin 2001: 4–13, 185.



Figure 3.2: *Fansen guangshiyin tu* 梵僧觀世音圖 (The Painting of Brahmin Monk Avalokiteśvara)⁴⁰

identification of the *jin* drum as a bronze drum reveals not a Buddhist–Daoist conflict but a conflict between Buddhism and the indigenous, shamanistic religion of India (Tianzhu), deeply exploring the confrontation and competition between the two faiths.

⁴⁰ See material 3.3 in Appendix 1.

Conclusions

Returning to the ancient Indian sūtra *Xian yu jing*'s chapter titled *Xuda qi jing-she yuanpin*, the source of the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa story, the presence of the drum element carries a strong cultural implication that has often been overlooked by past scholars. Through an in-depth study of the drum's musical imagery, I have identified the *jin* drum as a bronze drum. This judgment provides a more reasonable explanation for the previously misunderstood cross pattern and reveals that the faith represented by Raudrākṣa is essentially not Daoism but shamanism. This new discovery not only broadens our understanding of the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa theme but also offers new directions and possibilities for related research.

The identification of the bronze drum enables us to re-examine the symbolic meaning of the cross pattern in the painting. The cross pattern is no longer a mere decoration or misunderstood symbol but holds deep religious and cultural significance. This discovery prompts us to reconsider Raudrākṣa and his belief system, separating it from the Daoist category and placing it within shamanistic belief system. This classification holds significant academic importance and provides a new perspective on understanding the diversity of ancient Chinese religious beliefs.

The religious clash between Buddhism and external religions in the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa theme is not only a cultural phenomenon but also a historical record. The identification of the *jin* drum offers a new angle to understand this historical and cultural phenomenon and provides rich material and new directions for future research.

In summary, by confirming the identity of the *jin* drum as a bronze drum, we can more reasonably interpret the meaning of the cross pattern and clearly understand the faith culture represented by Raudrākṣa. This identification also provides new possibilities for studying the thematic significance of the Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa. The depiction and symbolic meaning of the *jin* bell and *jin* drum in the paintings illustrate the collision, conflict, and eventual submission of two religious beliefs—Buddhism and external religions—enriching our understanding of religious history and culture.

Appendix 1

Sources of Materials and Illustrations

Material No.	Description	Source
1.1	Three instances of the cross-patterned <i>jin</i> drum in the second draft of P.Tib.1293	Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). <i>Pelliot tibétain 1293</i> . Accessed November 21, 2024. https://archivesetmanuscripts.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc125169h Published with permission.
1.2	The <i>jin</i> drum depicted in Scroll P.4524	International Dunhuang Project. <i>La Bibliothèque nationale de France: Pelliot chinois 4524</i> . Accessed November 17, 2024. http://idp.nlc.cn/database/institute.a4d?id=23 . In the public domain, published based on permission.
1.3	Detail from Mogao Cave 146 mural	International Dunhuang Project. Photograph of a wall painting in Dunhuang Mogao Cave 146 taken by Raghu Vira in 1955. Accessed November 21, 2024. https://idp.bl.uk/collection/22A87518005248A1972DDE5E2F547AC9/?return=%2Fcollection%2F%3Fterm_any%255B%255D%3Dmc%253AMogao%252BCave%252B146 Published with permission.
1.4	Mogao Cave 9's <i>jin</i> drum depiction	Gao Dexiang 高德祥 – Chen Xuejing 陈雪静 2022. <i>Dunhuang Yuewu Dadian 敦煌樂舞大典</i> Dunhuang Music and Dance Anthology, Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2022(09): 353.

2.1	Comparison of patterns between the Chongyang bronze drum and the Yulin <i>jin</i> Drum	This figure was created by the author. The image of the Chongyang Bronze Drum is sourced from the Hubei Museum ('Photo of Chongyang Tonggu,' accessed November 21, 2024, https://www.hbkgy.com/zgzb/p/6916.html). Additionally, the image of Yulin Cave 16 is sourced from the Dunhuang Academy ('Photograph of a Wall Painting, Yulin Cave 16,' accessed November 21, 2024, https://www.dha.ac.cn/info/1426/3670.htm). Both images are included in the <i>Music and Dance Anthology</i> (see 2.1 and 2.2). Published with permission.
2.2	White sketch draft P.tib.1293.	Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). <i>Pelliot tibétain 1293</i> . Accessed November 21, 2024. https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc125169h Published with permission.
2.3	Bronze drum images in the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Landscape, Guangxi, China	CABDRA Chinese Ancient Bronze Drum Research Association (eds.) 中国古代銅鼓協會1988. <i>Zhongguo Gudai Tonggu</i> 中国古代銅鼓 [<i>Ancient Chinese bronze drums</i>]. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 129. Published with permission.
3.1	Bronze drum from the south of China	Photo courtesy of Guangxi Museum of Nationalities 'Cold Water Rushing Riding Water Bird Decoration Deformed Feather Man Pattern bronze drum'. Published with permission.
3.2	<i>Nanzhao tu zhuan</i> , with the caption 'transforming a drum into a holy image' (<i>Yu da jingu huazuo yi laoren cheng yunjie zhu shengxiang</i> 于打金鼓化作一老人稱云解铸聖像)	Wang Ling 王玲 2017. 'The Symbolism and Reference Value of Musical Imagery in the Nanzhao Tuzhuan.' Beijing: <i>Renmin yinyue</i> 人民音樂 2017.06: 59.

3.3 (Fig. 3.2)	<i>Fansen guangshiyin tu</i> 梵 僧觀世音圖 (The painting of Brahmin Monk Avalokiteśvara)	National Palace Museum, Taipei. <i>Open Data Area: K2A001003N000000000PAJ</i> . Accessed November 17, 2024. https://theme.npm.edu.tw/opendata/DigitImageSets.aspx?sNo=04027961 . Public domain, published with permission.
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Appendix 2

The following table is compiled based on the inscriptions related to wind and drums found in the murals of various caves depicting Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa.⁴¹

Cave	Inscription
Mogao Cave 85	地神湧出助□吹外道時 (Earth deity emerges to assist □ when blowing against the heretic)
Mogao Cave 72	外道欲擊論皴風吹皮破時 (Heretic about to strike the drum; wind blows; drum skin breaks)
Mogao Cave 98	地神湧出助風吹外道時 (Earth deity emerges to assist when wind blows against the heretic)
Mogao Cave 146	外道欲擊論鼓皮破風吹倒時 (Heretic about to strike the drum; drum skin breaks; wind blows; topples)
Mogao Cave 55	外道欲擊□□風吹倒時 (Heretic about to strike □□; wind blows; topples)
Mogao Cave 454	外道得勝聲金鼓而點上字杖槌未至面十字裂不能發聲時 (Heretic wins, strikes <i>jin</i> drum; inscribed the “上”characters, but before the staff strikes, the cross is split and no sound is produced)

⁴¹ Compiled by the author based on data from the database of the Dunhuang Academy of China.
□ stands for undiscernible characters.

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The Four-Class System (*sideng renzhi* 四等人制) of Administration During the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) in China

Abstract

Mongol rule in China stands as a remarkable example of the amalgamation of two distinct cultures—one sedentary and one agricultural. The progression of the Mongol conquest in both northern and southern China warrants special attention. Initially, the Mongol campaigns in northern China (1211–1234) were marked by excessive cruelty, city destruction, the conversion of lands into pastures, and the displacement of the conquered population. However, this strategy proved to be unproductive, yielding minimal benefits for the Mongols. The strategic proposal presented by Yelü Chucai 耶律楚材 (1189–1243), an adviser to Genghis Khan (Mong. Činggis qayan, Temüjin 1162–1227) and Ögedei Khan (Mong. Ögedei qayan, 1186–1241), compelled the conquerors to reassess their subsequent plans. During the reign of the Mongols in China, the population was divided into four groups: the Mongols, the *semu* 色目, the northern Chinese, and the southern Chinese. The ethnic hierarchy during the Yuan Dynasty was a structured system that categorised the population into distinct classes, primarily to facilitate governance and maintain social order within the diverse and vast empire. This hierarchy had significant implications for the social, political, and economic life of the people under the Mongol rule. Moreover, the Mongols created their own centralised administrative system, which mostly excluded the Chinese from key government positions. The Chinese were often assigned to minor positions or given fewer opportunities for promotion. This study delves into the traits of the four-class system and the Mongol administrative system in China. The ethnic policy implemented by the Mongols against the conquered people during the Yuan dynasty had a significant impact on social relations, economic activity, and political stability in China, which partially contributed to the dynasty's later downfall.

Keywords: Yuan dynasty, *Yuanshi*, four-class system (*sideng renzhi* 四等人制), *semu*, *hanren*, *nanren*

Introduction

The era of the Mongol conquests, in particular, the large-scale activities of Genghis Khan's grandson, Kublai Khan (Mong. Qubilai qaγan, 1215–1294, r. 1271–1294), deserves special attention. Not only did Kublai Khan unite all parts of China, but he also laid a foundation for the functioning of the administrative apparatus, social sphere, and interactions between many different nations. For almost a century, the Mongols retained dominance over numerous peoples, distinguished by cultural aspects, linguistic characteristics, and forms of social organisation.

During the writing of the present article, a wide assortment of primary and secondary sources was used. These materials helped to restore the historical picture of that time. Below is a list of the most influential sources pivotal for analysing the chosen topic.

The *Yuanshi* 元史 (History of the Yuan dynasty)¹ helps researchers to plunge into various events that took place during the Mongol rule in China; it serves as an encyclopaedia of the life of the Chinese and provides a lot of unique information regarding the Mongol administration and treatment of the conquered people.

Works by Igor de Rachewiltz² and Christopher Atwood³ reveal a lot of interesting facts about influential political figures throughout the Mongol conquests, for instance the role of Yelü Chucai 耶律楚材 (1189–1243) at the Mongol court, Li Tan's rebellion in 1262 through the prism of the division of society into four classes,⁴ the preference for accepting the *semu* 色目 for government positions, and so on.

¹ Song Lian 1976: 1–4670. *Yuanshi* is a Chinese official chronicle compiled in 1368–1369. The chronicle covers the entire period of the Yuan dynasty's rule; it presents events in chronological order without detailed descriptions of the internal connections between them. The chronicle also includes chronological and genealogical tables; descriptions of rituals and customs; the state of administration, trade, science, and art; and biographies of all prominent figures of the time. The structure of *Yuanshi* includes four sections: 'Main Records', 'Treatises', 'Tables', and 'Biographies'. There are 210 *juan* 卷 (chapters) in the *Yuanshi*.

² Rachewiltz 1983: 281–312. Rachewiltz 1993: 136–175, 500–519, 539–583.

³ Atwood 2004: 1–678.

⁴ During the reign of the Mongols in China, society was divided into four groups: the Mongols were at the pinnacle of the power, the *semu* 色目 belonged to the second group, northern Chinese (*hanren* 漢人) were in the third category, and southern Chinese (*nanren* 南人) were in the fourth. Elizabeth Endicott gives the following statistics regarding the number of the ethnic groups after the final subjugation of China: Mongolian and *semu* households (around 400,000) comprised 3% of the whole population, the northern Chinese (*hanren*) households approximately 2 million (15%), and the southern Chinese (*nanren*) households 11 million (82%). Endicott-West 1989: 86. The *semu* referred to a special social class composed of people from Central and Western Asia as well as other non-Mongol and non-Chinese ethnicities. Central Asians included Uighurs, Turks, Kipchaks, and many others who were brought into the Mongol administration for their expertise in various fields, such as finance, administration, and trade. Western Asians and Middle Easterners comprised Persians, Arabs, and other

Works by Michael Brose served as crucial materials to analyse the influence of one of the most pivotal *semu* groups (the Uyghurs) at the Mongol court. He points out the main contribution of the Uyghurs in the development of the state apparatus, for example in the upbringing of the Mongol heirs as well as their cultural heritage.⁵ These materials help researchers to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of the ethnic policy established by the Mongols in China.

Monographs and articles by John Dardess, Morris Rossabi, Frederick Mote, and Thomas Allsen⁶ are of paramount importance, because the authors describe the administration system during the Yuan dynasty, the anti-Chinese policies conducted by the chancellor Bayan of the Merkid (?–1340),⁷ and the main reasons of the decline of the Mongol influence in China in the second half of the 14th century.

The main aims of the article are: 1) to delve into the intricacies of China's four-class system; 2) to outline its nuanced characteristics; and 3) to thoroughly analyse the primary sources.

A list of the Yuan emperors is as follows: Kublai Khan 元世祖 (Mong. Qubilai qayan, r. 1260–1294), Öljeyitü Khan 元成宗 (Mong. Öljeyitü qayan, r. 1294–1307), Külüg Khan 元武宗 (Mong. Qayisang Külüg qayan, r. 1308–1311), Buyantu Khan 元仁宗 (Mong. Ayuurlabads Buyan-tu qayan, r. 1311–1320), Shidibala or Gegeen Khan 元英宗 (Mong. Sidibala Gegeen qayan, r. 1321–1323), Yesün Temür 元泰定帝 (Mong. Yisün temür qayan, r. 1323–1328), Ragibagh Khan 元天順帝 (Mong. Rajibay qayan, r. 1328), Jayaatu Khan 元文宗 (Mong. Jayayatu qayan, r. 1328–1329 and 1329–1332), Khutughtu Khan 元明宗 (Mong. Qutuy-tu qayan, r. 1329), Rinčinbal Khan 元寧宗 (Mong. Rinčinbala qayan, r. 1332), and Toghon Temür 元順帝 (Mong. Toyon temür qayan, r. 1333–1370).⁸ The capital of the Yuan Dynasty was Dadu 大都, also known as Khanbaliq (present-day Beijing).

people from the Islamic world. They brought with them advanced knowledge in various fields, such as astronomy, medicine, and engineering, and they were often employed in these capacities within the Yuan administration. Tibetans were another important group within the *semu*, especially influential in religious and administrative roles. The Mongols' interest in Tibetan Buddhism elevated the status of Tibetans in the Yuan court. Atwood 2004: 494.

⁵ Brose 2002: 267–289. Brose 2005: 396–435.

⁶ Dardess 1973: 1–245; Dardess 1994: 561–586; Rossabi 1994: 414–489; Mote 1994: 616–664; Allsen 1983: 243–280; Allsen 1994: 321–413.

⁷ The Merkids were one of many tribes that in the mid-12th century resided along the lower Selenge River, spanning the area between its confluence with the Orkhon River and the Khilok River. Like other nomadic tribes, they had a pastoral lifestyle, herding livestock and living in portable dwellings known as yurts. The Merkids were often involved in conflicts and alliances with other nomadic groups, such as the Mongols and the Keraites. They were eventually defeated and absorbed by the Mongol Empire under Genghis Khan in the early 13th century. Atwood 2004: 347.

⁸ *Shishanfu baishice* 2000: 142–143.

Kublai Khan and his political orientation at the beginning of his rule in China

The conquest of China was one of the most important components of the expansion of the Mongol Empire's territories. This aim was set during the lifetime of the first Mongol Khans Genghis Khan (Mong. Činggis qayan, Temüjin 1162–1227) and Ögedei Khan (Mong. Ögedei qayan, 1186–1241),⁹ but they were not able to achieve the complete conquest of *Tianxia* 天下¹⁰ due to various reasons (for instance, climate, terrain, lack of military techniques, and inexperience in sea warfare, as well as tensions among the princes of blood).¹¹ Only in 1279 did the grandson of Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, finally accomplish the goal of his ancestors—the whole of China was subdued and unified by the Mongols.¹² In the framework of this article, we focus our attention on the political and administrative policies of the founder of the Yuan dynasty that altered the course of Chinese history, such as *sideng renzhi* 四等人制 (the four-class system).

Kublai Khan was not only the founder of the Yuan dynasty; he also made a huge contribution to the unification of southern and northern China¹³ under Mongol rule. It is worth mentioning that from childhood Kublai was tolerant of the Chinese—it was mainly the merit of his mother Sorghaghtani Beki (Mong. Sorqaqtani Beki, 1190–1252), who played a key role in his upbringing.¹⁴ She always pointed out that maintaining good relations with the Chinese, as well as being respectful to the various religions, would help Kublai to win the trust of the conquered people, as well as to establish a powerful and stable empire in the world.¹⁵ Following his mother's advice, Kublai relied on Chinese advisers, the most influential of whom were Yao Shu 姚樞 (1203–1280), Hai Yun

⁹ The first Mongol Khans, including Genghis Khan and Ögedei Khan, lived in the central Mongolian steppes. The heartland of the early Mongol Khans was in the region around the Onon and Kherlen rivers, which are located in present-day north-eastern Mongolia. The establishment of the capital city of Karakorum (Mong. Qaraqorum) by Genghis Khan's successor, Ögedei Khan, further solidified the significance of this region in the history of the Mongol Empire.

¹⁰ Literally meaning '(all) under Heaven', *Tianxia* is a Chinese term for a historical Chinese cultural concept that denoted either the entire geographical world or the metaphysical realm of mortals, and it later became associated with political sovereignty.

¹¹ Allsen 1994: 388. Rossabi 1994: 430.

¹² Rachewiltz 1983: 288.

¹³ Northern China under the reign of the Mongols included the following territories: Beijing, Hebei Province, Shanxi Province, Shaanxi Province, parts of Shandong and Henan Provinces, Inner Mongolia, and Xinjiang.

¹⁴ Rachewiltz 1983: 287.

¹⁵ Rossabi 1994: 415.

海雲 (1205–1257), Liu Bingzhong 劉秉忠¹⁶ (1216–1274), Xu Heng 許衡 (1209–1281), Wang E 王鶚 (1190–1273), and Dou Mo 竇默 (1196–1280). They contributed a lot to Kublai Khan's worldview and political orientation; he also spent a considerable amount of time learning the most important Chinese books, mostly the *Wujing* 五經 (The Five Classics).¹⁷

To win the trust of the conquered population, Kublai insisted on the translation of Chinese works, such as *Xiaojing* 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety) and *Shujing* 書經, into Mongolian. Moreover, the future founder of the Yuan dynasty attached great importance to the upbringing of his second son, Zhenjin 真金 (1243–1285), designated as heir apparent. His education was based on Chinese values and canons.¹⁸ In my opinion, Kublai Khan's strategy was wise. By taking such measures, he probably wanted to strengthen his political dominance in China and demonstrate to the population that the Mongol rule in China would not bring any harm. Another interesting point is the origin of the name of the future successor on the throne. Haiyun, a close associate of Kublai Khan, played a key role in choosing the name of the heir—the second son of Kublai Khan was named Zhenjin, which means 'pure gold'.¹⁹ Drogön Chogyal Phagpa (1235–1280)²⁰ was a pivotal figure in the education of the Mongol khans' descendants. He provided them with a comprehensive education that included Buddhist philosophy, history, and administrative skills. Under his guidance, the young princes were groomed for leadership roles within the empire, ensuring the continuation of Mongol rule and the stability of the Yuan Dynasty.

It is worth pointing out that Kublai Khan's governance strategy was different from the actions of Mongol Khans during the invasion of the Tangut Empire (1038–1227) and the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). As it was mentioned above, the first conquerors acted with extreme violence—massacres and the policy of ter-

¹⁶ Liu Bingzhong recommended Kublai Khan to choose the name of the empire based on a phrase written in the *Book of Changes*: 'dazai qianyuan 大哉乾元'. Hung Hing Ming 2016: 13. The meaning of *dazai qianyuan* is '(How) great is the originating (power) indicated by *Qian*!'

¹⁷ The *Wujing* consists of the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry), *Shujing* 書經 (Book of Documents), *Lijing* 禮經 (Book of Rites), *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes), and *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals).

¹⁸ Rossabi 1994: 458.

¹⁹ Bokschanin-Kadyrbaev 2016: 142.

²⁰ Drogön Chogyal Phagpa served as the imperial preceptor to Kublai Khan. This position made him one of the highest religious authorities in the Mongol Empire. He played a crucial role in promoting Tibetan Buddhism within the Mongol court and securing its patronage. Moreover, he was recognised for his spiritual leadership, his role in consolidating Tibet under Mongol governance, and his cultural achievements, notably the development of the 'Phags-pa script'. Rossabi 1994: 461.

ror prevailed widely in their actions.²¹ To get more benefits from the conquered and make the Mongol rule more stable and long-lasting, the following order was issued by Kublai Khan on 24 May 1261:

命宣撫司官勸農桑，抑遊惰，禮高年，問民疾苦，舉文學才識可以從政及茂才異等，列名上聞，以聽擢用；其職官污濫及民不孝悌者，量輕重議罰。²²

[Kublai Khan] gave the order to the officials of the Pacification Office to encourage farming and sericulture, to restrict lazing about [without doing anything productive], to show respect to the elderly, to inquire about the ordinary people's suffering and hardships, to promote those with literary talent, knowledge, and those with exceptional abilities who are capable [suitable] for government service, and to make lists of honoured workers and provide them to the imperial court, [thereby] promoting [such people] to [higher] positions. As for officials who are corrupt or abusive, and ordinary people who are unfilial and lacking in brotherly respect, the severity of their actions should be assessed, and [appropriate] punishments should be imposed.

Such an order shows that Kublai Khan, instead of showing cruelty towards the conquered, decided to choose a different strategy, which was to attract qualified specialists to the government apparatus, as well as to pay attention to agriculture in the country.²³ In my opinion, it was the merit of Yelü Chucai who contributed greatly to the transformation of the Mongol Khans' worldview—the usage of human resources and fertile lands for their own interests could provide more income to the conquerors than the policy of destruction. According to the *Yuanshi*,

世祖即位之初，首詔天下，國以民為本，民以衣食為本，衣食以農桑為本。²⁴

At his ascension to the throne, Shizu [Kublai Khan] first gave an imperial edict to *Tianxia* that said: 'The country is based on the people, the people rely on food and clothing as their foundation, food and clothing depend on farming and sericulture as their foundation'.

Kublai Khan was an opponent of the annihilation of the conquered population:

²¹ *Mengda beilu* 1975: 67. Allsen 1994: 362. Mote 1994: 617. Borovkova 1971: 5.

²² Song Lian 1976: 69–70.

²³ Zhang Xianchuan 1984: 54.

²⁴ Song Lian 1976: 2354.

昔我國家出征，所獲城邑，即委而去之，未嘗置兵戍守，以此連年征伐不息。夫爭國家者，取其土地人民而已，雖得其地而無民，其誰與居？今欲保守新附城壁，使百姓安業力農，蒙古人未之知也。爾熟知其事，宜加勉旃。湖南州郡皆汝舊部曲，未歸附者何以招懷，生民何以安業，聽汝為之。²⁵

In the past, when our country went on military campaigns, the cities and towns that were captured were promptly abandoned without establishing garrisons [for defense]. As a result, the military campaigns continued unceasingly for many consecutive years. Indeed, those who fight for control of a country merely seek to take its land and people. If we acquire the land without its people, with whom would one live there? Now, the intention is to protect and maintain the newly acquired cities and fortifications, ensuring that the ordinary people can have stable livelihoods and work hard in farming. The Mongols are not yet aware of it. As you are well-versed in these matters, please exert every effort. The subprefectures and counties of Hunan are all under your former command. How can we attract those who have not yet submitted [surrendered], and how can we ensure their stable livelihoods? I entrust this task to you.

It is important to emphasise that Kublai Khan paid great attention to the living conditions of people who suffered from various natural disasters. To lighten the heavy burden of the conquered, Kublai Khan ordered the cancellation of some taxes for certain periods for the ordinary people and some financial and food aid. There are many examples in the *Yuanshi*, several of which are given below:

庚戌，發粟三十萬石賑濟南饑民。²⁶

In the year of *gengxu* [10 November 1262], 300,000 *shi* of grain were distributed to relieve the starving people in Jinan [Shandong province].

彰德路及洺、磁二州旱，免彰德今歲田租之半，洺、磁十之六。²⁷

In the year of *renzi* [8 September 1263], there was a drought along the Zhangde route [Henan Province], as well as in two subprefectures of Mingzhou [Hebei Province] and Cizhou [Hebei Province], [Kublai Khan] exempted the Zhangde route from half of the land tax of this year, and Mingzhou and Cizhou from 60 per cent.

²⁵ Song Lian 1976: 166.

²⁶ Song Lian 1976: 87.

²⁷ Song Lian 1976: 94.

乙未，遼東饑，發粟萬石、鈔百錠賑之。²⁸

In the year of *yiwei* [13 April 1265], there was a famine in Liaodong. [Kublai] gave 10,000 *shi* of grain and 100 *ding* of paper money to provide relief for the [people].

秋七月辛酉，益都大蝗饑，命減價糶官粟以賑。²⁹

In the year of *xinyou*, in the 7th month in autumn [6 September 1265], there was a severe locust infestation and famine in Yidu [Shandong Province]. It was ordered to reduce the price of government grain for relief [purposes].

己丑，益都路饑，以米三十一萬八千石賑之。³⁰

In the year of *jichou* [17 November 1268], there was a famine along the Yidu route. [Kublai] ordered 318,000 *shi* of rice to be provided as aid.

癸卯，東昌路饑，賑米二萬七千五百九十石。³¹

In the year of *guimao* [29 July 1269], there was a famine along the Dongchang route [Jilin province], 27,590 *shi* of rice were given as aid.

壬戌，豐州、雲內、東勝旱，免其租賦。³²

In the year of *renxu* [16 October 1269], when there was drought in Fengzhou [its location near the modern-day city of Hohhot], Yunnei [near the modern-day city of Hohhot], and Dongsheng [in the area near present-day Ordos City in Inner Mongolia] [Kublai] freed them from land tax.

戊戌，以去歲東平及西京等州縣旱蝗水潦，免其租賦。³³

In the year of *wuxu* [3 October 1272], due to last year's drought, locust infestation, and flooding in Dongping [Shandong province], Xijing [the area around present-day Xi'an], and other subprefectures and counties, [Kublai] exempted them from land tax.

庚寅，河南水，發粟賑民饑，仍免今年田租。³⁴

In the year of *gengyin* [24 August 1273], due to flooding in Henan, grain was distributed to provide relief to the starving people, and [they were exempted from] this year's land tax.

²⁸ Song Lian 1976: 106.

²⁹ Song Lian 1976: 108.

³⁰ Song Lian 1976: 119.

³¹ Song Lian 1976: 122.

³² Song Lian 1976: 123.

³³ Song Lian 1976: 140.

³⁴ Song Lian 1976: 150.

This evidence taken from the *Yuanshi* illustrates that Kublai Khan provided great assistance to ordinary people from different parts of China who suffered from natural disasters. In my opinion, by implementing such measures, he likely aimed to win the trust of the conquered people, prevent large-scale discontent, and address issues arising from the Mongolian nomadic mindset. Drought and harsh winter weather in Mongolia often caused significant livestock losses, leading to similar problems for the people.

Having analysed these policies, we can draw the following conclusions. Firstly, from a Chinese perspective, Kublai Khan's main achievement was unifying various regions of the vast territories of China into one state. From a Mongolian perspective, he was the leader who conquered China, administered the Mongol Empire, and introduced Tibetan Buddhism to the Mongolian elite. Another crucial point is his religious tolerance. Kublai Khan endorsed a variety of faiths, such as Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and traditional Mongol shamanism. This acceptance facilitated the integration of the empire's diverse populations and fostered social cohesion. Moreover, under Kublai Khan's rule, the Silk Road flourished, facilitating trade and cultural exchange between the East and the West, contributing to global cultural and economic interactions. Secondly, he supported Yelü Chucai's political strategy, which emphasised cooperation with the conquered peoples, maximising the benefits of the subjugated territories. As stated, at the beginning of his reign, Kublai Khan was benevolent towards the Chinese literati, actively involving them in various state affairs, and they were even responsible for the education of his future heir. This, however, changed. What contributed to the change in attitude towards the Chinese? Why, after the 1260s, did Kublai Khan mostly rely on the *semu* in the civil service? From my point of view, the main reason was a rebellion organised by Li Tan in 1262. Below is presented a historical overview of the above-mentioned historical figure and his influence on the subsequent politics of Kublai Khan in China.

Rebellion of Li Tan and its consequences

To begin with, Li Tan 李壇 (?–1262)³⁵ was a close associate of the Mongol Khans. He helped Möngke Khan (Mong. Möngke qayan 1209–1259, r. 1251–1259) and later Kublai Khan in their attempts to conquer the Southern Song dynasty.³⁶ Besides that, he participated in a considerable number of punitive campaigns that were successful for the Mongol Khans. For such devotion and

³⁵ Li Tan was born in Weifang 潍坊, a prefecture-level city in Shandong Province.

³⁶ Rossabi 1994: 424.

meritorious service, Li Tan was appointed the chief of the Regional Secretariat for a district under the reigning periods of Möngke Khan and Kublai Khan.

On 22 February 1262, Li Tan unexpectedly started a rebellion against the reign of the Mongols, betraying Kublai Khan.³⁷ Li Tan's rebellion, which took place in 1262 in Shandong province, involved an army primarily composed of local Chinese forces. What was the main reason for it? As mentioned above, Li Tan was highly esteemed by Möngke Khan and Kublai Khan due to his assistance in the punitive campaigns aimed at overthrowing the Southern Song dynasty. Having enjoyed the favourable attitude from the Mongol Khans, he was bestowed the rank of High Military Administrator of the Jianghuai region 江淮.³⁸ Based on these historical facts, I assume that Li Tan did not have any enmity to the people who treated him with respect. From my point of view, Li Tan started the rebellion because of his desire to become an independent warlord—he thought that the conditions for accomplishing his goal were quite favourable at the beginning of the 1260s.

According to the Chinese primary sources, being a witness of a serious conflict between Kublai Khan and Ariq Böke (Mong. Ariq böke/Arigböke 1219–1266),³⁹ Li Tan decided to seize the opportunity to become the ruler of Shandong. Furthermore, Li Tan counted on the help of his close associate Wang Wentong 王文統 (?–1262), the head of the Central Secretariat, who actively supported Li Tan's plans regarding the expulsion of the Mongols from China. It can be assumed that Li Tan also relied on the assistance of the Southern Song dynasty, to which the future Mongol conquest could bring great harm with a subsequent overthrow of the dynasty. However, circumstances were not in favour of Li Tan—he was caught and executed by Mongol troops. Thus, the rebellion lasted almost five months. According to the *Yuanshi*,

甲戌，李亶窮蹙，入大明湖，投水中不即死，獲之，併蒙古軍囊家伏誅，體解以徇。⁴⁰

³⁷ Song Lian 1976: 4595.

³⁸ Rachewiltz 1993: 507. Jianghuai 江淮 was the plain between the Yangtze and Huai Rivers. Nowadays it is in the provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu.

³⁹ The Toluid Civil War was a serious conflict within the Mongol Empire that occurred from 1260 to 1264. It was a power struggle between Kublai Khan and his younger brother Ariq Böke over the succession to the throne of the Mongol Empire after the death of their brother Möngke Khan. Kublai Khan, based in China, sought to consolidate his power and claim the title of Great Khan, while Ariq Böke, supported by traditionalist factions, contested Kublai's claim from his base in Central Asia. The conflict escalated into a full-scale civil war, with both sides gathering allies and engaging in military campaigns across the empire. Kublai Khan emerged victorious, defeating Ariq Böke's forces and consolidating his control over the Mongol Empire. Atwood 2004: 21–22.

⁴⁰ Song Lian 1976: 86.

In the year of *jiaxu* [6 August 1262], Li Tan, being desperate, entered Lake Daming [Shandong Province] and jumped into the water [to drown], but he did not die immediately. He was captured and executed along with a Mongol soldier named Nangjia;⁴¹ their bodies were dismembered, and [their parts] were put on display [as a warning].

Why was the rebellion unsuccessful for Li Tan? The first thing that should be pointed out is that Kublai Khan had won a victory over Ariq Böke. Secondly, the military commanders did not betray Kublai Khan. From my perspective, they thought that Li Tan would not be able to win and wanted to preserve their future privileges under the Mongols. Thirdly, the ruling elite of the Southern Song dynasty refused to give any support to Li Tan, as his victory over the Mongols was quite questionable. Fourthly, Wang Wentong was sentenced to death as a close associate after the outbreak of the uprising.⁴²

However, the consequences of Li Tan's rebellion were wide ranging. Firstly, Kublai Khan made significant changes to the organisation of the civil and military administrations. After the outbreak of the rebellion, he organised an extensive investigation to detect disloyalties of Chinese advisors, as well as of government officials. Some Chinese advisors were dismissed from offices, and some were sent into retirement. It meant that after this, the way to high government positions was mostly closed to the Chinese. Secondly, Kublai Khan became more dependent on the *semu*. They were appointed to high positions in the Mongol court and were the main parts of the government apparatus. The *semu* were valuable for the Mongol Khans for several reasons, such as their familiarity with financial matters and government affairs, as well as with their sedentary lifestyle. For instance, Ahmad Fanakati 阿合馬 (1242–1282) and Sangha (Sangge) 桑哥 (12??–1291) were influential officials during the reign of Kublai Khan. Both were responsible for fiscal administration at the Mongol court. They significantly increased the revenue of the founder of the Yuan dynasty; however, both were involved in unprecedented levels of corruption, and their inappropriate conduct was widely condemned by the ordinary people.⁴³

The rebellion of Li Tan was a turning point in Kublai Khan's rule. It became clear that reliance mostly on the Chinese could bring a lot of instability and harm to the established system. To prevent the dominance of Chinese advisors in the government apparatus, it was decided to implement a special ethnic sys-

⁴¹ Nanjia 囊家, a Mongol warrior, defected to Li Tan and thereby was executed along with the leader of the uprising. Such a brutal execution was demonstrative; Kublai Khan wanted to show to his subordinates the consequences of treason and defecting to the enemy's side.

⁴² Song Lian 1976: 82.

⁴³ Frank 2024: 39–44.

tem, based on the distinction between the Mongols and the conquered. The main characteristics of this system are described below.

The four-class system in China

The numerical superiority of the Chinese over the Mongols was one of the most important problems of that time for the new rulers. How could they manage the vast territories of China without an effective administrative system? Since very few of the Mongol's estimated population of 700,000 were literate and familiar with the sedentary life, hiring knowledgeable men was a crucial step to profit from the abundant natural resources of China.⁴⁴ In my opinion, a unique trait of the Mongol reign in China was the four-class system, which served as a core element of the Mongol administration in China.

As mentioned above, after Li Tan's rebellion in 1262, Kublai Khan became increasingly suspicious towards the Chinese advisors. He recognised that over-reliance on the Chinese could potentially have a detrimental effect on his rule. Therefore, to bolster military dominance, establish a stable government apparatus, and ensure the continued profits from the conquered lands and population, a decision was made to stratify society into four distinct groups. This system influenced all matters of people's lives, including taxation, hiring conditions, and unequal treatment in adjudicating civil and criminal cases. Now, we focus our attention on the classification of the four-class system with its subsequent detailed analysis.

The Mongols were placed at the pinnacle of the four-class system,⁴⁵ the *semu* belonged to the second group, the northern Chinese (*hanren*) were put into the third category, and the southern Chinese (*nanren*) into the fourth.⁴⁶ In 1290, the population of the Mongols in the Yuan dynasty was around 1 million people, and the *semu* population was about the same; the northern Chinese comprised a population of 10 million, and the southern Chinese constituted approximately

⁴⁴ Allsen 1983: 245.

⁴⁵ Throughout the reign of the Yuan dynasty, the Mongol khans lived across various parts of China, with major concentrations in Dadu and Shangdu (the summer capital in present-day Inner Mongolia, used by the Yuan emperors as a retreat). The education of Mongol princes was a mix of Mongolian and Chinese traditions. They learned Mongolian customs, language, and horse-riding skills, while also being familiar to Chinese literature, philosophy, and Confucian principles. Tengrism is the original belief of the Mongols. Then, they merged it with shamanism. They are tolerant with other (foreign) religious. Buddhism, Islam, Christianity (both Nestorian Christianity and Catholicism), Daoism, and Confucianism were widespread among the vast territories of the Mongol Empire.

⁴⁶ Hansen 2000: 352. Smith 1998: 5. Wilkinson 2013: 777.

60 million.⁴⁷ These figures illustrate that the Mongols and *semu* were significantly inferior in number to the other two strata of society at that time.

As mentioned above, the most privileged class was the Mongols.⁴⁸ The highest positions, such as the command of troops and leadership of almost all administrative departments, were bestowed upon them.⁴⁹ They controlled the life of the conquered population, always emphasising their lower position in the established hierarchical ladder. Being unfamiliar with the intricacies of managing sedentary civilisations, the Mongols relied more on the help and advice of *semu*, which had a huge influence in establishing effective political machinery in the country.

Semu

The second class was that of the *semu*. The Mongols, before the overthrow of the Jin dynasty in 1234, conquered Khorezm and other states of Central Asia. The inhabitants of those countries were called *semuren*, and they were used to control the northern Chinese but were later subjugated. Why were they called as such? Sometimes the definition of *semuren* is misunderstood. Many scholars interpret this term as ‘people with coloured eyes’, but in fact, it is incorrect. This word means people of various nations (categories). Many scholars share this interpretation, including Frederick Mote, Endymion Porter Wilkinson, Stephen G. Haw, Michael Brose,⁵⁰ and many others. Igor de Rachewiltz gives the follow-

⁴⁷ Barfield 1989: 220. Langlois 1981: 15.

⁴⁸ The Mongolian strategy of conquests and government apparatus was similar to the strategies of many nomadic empires in Asia, such as the Xiongnu (3rd century BC–1st century CE), Xianbei (3rd century BC–3rd century CE), and Manchu (1644–1912). Firstly, their expertise in horseback riding enabled swift travel over large areas, allowing for rapid raids and long-distance movements for both combat and commerce. Secondly, their displays of brutality and strategic cunning often intimidated enemies into surrendering without much resistance. Thirdly, all of them had a governing elite and conquered nations. Another crucial point is a presence of a charismatic leader in nomadic empires, for example, Modu Chanyu (r. ca. 209–174 BC), Tanshihuai (r. ca. 156–181), Genghis Khan, Nurhaci (r. 1616–1626), and many others. In addition to possessing significant personal charisma, a pretender must have been familiar with politics and warfare. He should be an exceptional leader capable of reasserting control over the tribes and chiefdoms of pastoralists that had been loyal to his predecessor. He must compel their absolute submission in battle and demonstrate generosity and magnanimity when distributing spoils and gifts. Fourthly, the introduction and propagation of a unified religious and cultural ideology also played a pivotal role in strengthening imperial unity. For instance, the Mongols actively utilised Buddhism and Islam in their empire. Tibetan Buddhism became the state religion during the Qing Dynasty. Kradin 2008: 98–124.

⁴⁹ Bokschanin-Kadyrbaev 2016: 149.

⁵⁰ Hansen 2000: 352. Haw 2013: 40. Mote 1994: 630. Wilkinson 2013: 777. Brose 2002: 273.

ing statistics regarding the *semu* in the service of the Mongol Khans (the figures in parentheses refer to the amount of people who held positions of *darughachi* [Mong. *Daruyachi*]).⁵¹

Semu in Service of Mongols

	Ca. 1200–1259	1260– 1294	? (1280– 1330	1295– 1368	In total	No data	In total
Uyghurs	37(12)	73 (21)	32 (9)	169 (47)	311 (89)	158	469
Karluks	7 (1)	10 (3)	5 (1)	19(3)	41 (8)	20	61
Kanglys	7	12 (3)	11 (2)	36 (8)	66 (13)	26	92
Kipchaks	4 (1)	12 (3)	13 (4)	15 (8)	44 (16)	16	60
Onguds	12	30 (6)	3 (2)	43 (6)	88 (14)	42	130
Keraites	13 (2)	14 (2)	3 (2)	22 (3)	52 (9)	11	63
Naimans	5 (1)	12 (5)	2	25 (8)	44 (14)	26	70
In total	85 (17)	163 (43)	69 (20)	329 (83)	646 (163)	299	945

The Mongol Khans understood that military power alone could not be an effective tool to maintain a long-term domination over multi-ethnic areas. Therefore, employing experienced advisors was useful to them. *Semu* performed various tasks in the administration, government apparatus, and military system, and were also advisors to the Mongol Khans. It is worth mentioning that the *semu* were a revered elite of the society and enjoyed a favourable attitude from the conquerors. For the Mongols, who were unfamiliar with sedentary, urban customs, and the local administration, *semu* served as important tools of stable government and further prosperity of China. In the following sections, I present a historical overview of the two most respected elite groups among the *semu*.

⁵¹ Rachewiltz 1983: 285. It is worth pointing out two important positions, *darughachi* and *bas-kaks*, in the Mongol Empire. They were distributed across different regions of the Mongol Empire based on their roles and the administrative needs of the empire. *Darughachi* were prominently placed in northern China, in Central Asia (for instance, Samarkand and Bukhara), and in the Ilkhanate (regions including modern-day Iran and Iraq). Their main duties were to oversee administration and governance, to manage local affairs and, to ensure the integration of these regions into the Mongol administrative framework. *Bas-kaks* were mostly present in the territories of the Russian principalities, including areas such as Vladimir-Suzdal, Novgorod, and Kiev, and in the territories of Eastern Europe. Their role was crucial in tax collection and maintaining Mongol control through military presence and monitoring the activities of the local rulers. Maslova 2014: 23–36.

The Uyghurs

The most respected people among the *semu* were the Uyghurs. Why were these people highly esteemed by the Mongols?

To begin with, ruler of the Kara-Khoja⁵² Barchuq Art Tegin (Idikut Baurchuk) exchanged embassies with Genghis Khan's court, which led to the establishment of good relations between these nations.⁵³ The Uyghur leaders gained the favour of the Mongols in 1209 by voluntarily declaring themselves vassals, even before Genghis Khan imposed any form of coercion upon them.⁵⁴ As a result of this alliance, the Uyghurs took dominant positions under the Mongols.

Why were the Uyghurs of paramount importance to the Mongols? The Uyghurs created one of the most prosperous nomadic states in the 8th and 9th centuries, but in 840 it was destroyed by the Kyrgyzs.⁵⁵ In the middle of the 9th century, they were driven west into Turkestan (present-day Xinjiang),⁵⁶ while trying to find a refuge and adapt to new living conditions. Most of them became sedentary people, and farming and trade were their main occupations. A significant number of the Uyghurs possessed expertise in Chinese administrative procedures, owing to their prior service in the Kara Khitai (Qara Khitai, Western

⁵² The Uyghur Khaganate was a Turkic state that thrived from 744 to 840 in Central Asia. It emerged following the fall of the Second Turkic Khaganate and was centered in what is today Mongolia. The Uyghurs were renowned for their exceptional horsemanship and their pivotal role in facilitating Silk Road trade. Under the rule of Kutlug I Bilge Boyla Khagan (r. 744–747), the Uyghur Khaganate reached its zenith, controlling an extensive territory and maintaining diplomatic and commercial ties with Tang China. The Uyghurs embraced Manichaeism and later Buddhism as state religions, significantly shaping their cultural and artistic practices. The empire eventually waned due to internal conflicts, economic challenges, and external threats from the Kyrgyz and other nomadic groups. In 840, the Kyrgyz defeated the Uyghurs, leading to the collapse of the Khaganate and the dispersion of the considerable number of the Uyghurs to various regions, including present-day Xinjiang. Soucek 2000: 81. The Kara-Khoja was a Uyghur state that existed from the 9th to the 14th centuries in the region around the city of Turpan in present-day Xinjiang. Following the collapse of the Uyghur Khaganate in 840, a considerable number of the Uyghurs moved to this region and founded the kingdom. Kara-Khoja was considered as a vital cultural and commercial centre along the Silk Road. The Uyghurs in Kara-Khoja embraced Buddhism, turning the kingdom into a hub for Buddhist scholarship and art. Despite maintaining significant autonomy, the kingdom paid tribute to the Tang dynasty (618–907), the Kara-Khanid Khanate (840–1212), and the Mongol Empire. Owing to its strategic position on the Silk Road, the Kara-Khoja was instrumental in facilitating cultural exchange between the East and West. The kingdom endured until the Mongol Empire absorbed it in the 13th century, after which it came under the rule of the Chagatai Khanate. Soucek 2000: 77–82.

⁵³ Allsen 1994: 350.

⁵⁴ Mote 1994: 630.

⁵⁵ Brose 2005: 403.

⁵⁶ Atwood 2021: 27.

Liao, 1124–1218) as specialists in finance, trade, and civil governance. Such an experience was crucial to the Mongols, as they were interested in employing people who knew Chinese society and who could significantly contribute to the success of future conquests through effective administration.

As the first sedentary nation to willingly submit to Genghis Khan, the Uyghurs not only played a pivotal role in shaping the state apparatus but also exerted significant influence on the worldview of the Mongols. Moreover, the Uyghurs served as interpreters and translators due to their fluency in foreign languages. This dependence on the qualified Uyghurs played a substantial role in bolstering Mongol authority and influence across the vast regions of China.

What kind of contribution did the Uyghurs make to the prosperity of Mongol rule? The first thing to mention is that the Mongols did not have their own writing system. Before the introduction of ‘Phags-pa script’,⁵⁷ the Mongols used the Uyghur alphabet.⁵⁸ The Uyghur Tata-tonga 塔塔統阿 (12th–13th centuries) contributed a lot to its adaptation to write the Mongolian language.⁵⁹ Its introduction into the emerging Mongol administrative system was a natural process in terms of the establishment of a powerful empire with a strong government apparatus, as well as the elimination of linguistic barriers to understanding the decrees of the Mongol Khans. Moreover, Genghis Khan’s descendants were obliged to learn the Uyghur script to be able to use the national language for issuing their regulations and orders. Such an effective reform led to the spread of literacy among the Mongolian elite. The use of the Uyghur alphabet had a huge impact on the development of cultural life as well as on the evolution

⁵⁷ Kara 1972: 27–32. Daniels-Bright 1996: 437. ‘Phags-pa script’, developed by Drogön Chögyal Phagpa in the 13th century, was commissioned by Kublai Khan to function as a standardized writing system for the various languages within the Mongol Empire. Originating from the Tibetan script, it was modified to accommodate the linguistic needs of Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan and Uyghur. This script exemplified the Mongol Empire’s initiative to unify the different cultures under its dominion through a common writing system. While the ‘Phags-pa script’ did not see long-term widespread use, it remains historically significant as one of the early efforts to establish a universal script for a multi-ethnic empire. Herbert Franke points out that the only parts written in this script (a Buddhist text) were found in Turpan. Franke 1994: 32–35.

⁵⁸ Daniels-Bright 1996: 545. Brose 2005: 397. The Uyghur alphabet is a unique writing system used historically by the Turkic-speaking Uyghur people and other Central Asian ethnic groups from around the 9th century onward. It originated as an adaptation of the Sogdian script, an Iranian script itself derived from the Aramaic alphabet, part of the Semitic script family. The Sogdian cursive script was modified for the Turkic language of the Uyghur Empire during the 8th to 9th centuries. Some Uyghur communities in Gansu, in north-western China, continued using it until the 17th century. The Uyghur script is characterised by its vertical writing direction, cursive nature, alphabetic system, and adaptability to different languages. Daniels-Bright 1996: 539. Kara 1972: 18.

⁵⁹ Allsen 1994: 345. Bokschanin-Kadyrbaev 2016: 42, 280.

of the Mongolian nomadic society—the predominance of written language played a significant role in the interaction between the conquerors and the conquered. The new written language served as the main tool for all diplomatic and imperial correspondence in the empire. *Tata-tonga* was also well-known for the introduction of the seal to the Mongols and its importance in governance affairs.⁶⁰ Such inventions (the seal and written language) were core elements in the establishment of an efficient bureaucracy and empire that would help to maintain the rule of the Mongols over the great sedentary civilisations that they had conquered and in foreign affairs, for instance, with Popes.⁶¹

Why did Genghis Khan give preference to the Uyghur alphabet as the official imperial script? Michael Brose points out that such a decision was made due to strategic calculations to strengthen the power of the Mongols—the foreign merchants were familiar with it, and this essential aspect would be useful during communication.⁶² The importance of learning the Uyghur alphabet was due to the influence of the Uyghur advisors at the Mongol court. Such officials were in high demand by the Mongols, so that is why the adoption of the above-mentioned script was a crucial step for the conquerors. Moreover, a considerable amount of the Uyghurs were interpreters and translators,⁶³ serving as mediators between the conquerors and the conquered.

According to the statistics, by the end of the Yuan dynasty, the number of influential Uyghur advisors significantly increased and comprised around 170 people. Many of them were appointed *darughachi*, including Bayan Toghril (Mong. Bayan Toyuril; in Shicheng County, located in the south-eastern part of Jiangxi Province), Bullat Temür (Mong. Bolod Temür; in Xiangyang city, Hubei Province), and Ilchey (Mong. Ilči), who held the position of the head of the personal guard of Buyantu Khan (1285–1320).⁶⁴ Another prominent repre-

⁶⁰ Song Lian 1976: 3048. Atwood 2004: 530. Kychanov 1995: 139–140.

⁶¹ As a shining example, the inscription of Güyük Khan's seal is famous worldwide: 'God in Heaven and Güyük Khan over the Earth, the Power of God, the Seal of the Emperor of all Men'. It was used in the letter from Güyük Khan (Mong. Güyüg qayan, 1206–1248) to Pope Innocent IV. Carpine 1996: 85–86. As the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Innocent IV sought to restore the Church's authority through a robust international policy, aiming to achieve mutual understanding with the Mongols by converting them to Christianity. To accomplish this goal and to gather some information about the Mongols, the papal throne dispatched missions to the Mongols, the most crucial of which was led by Giovanni da Pian del Carpine. Carpine 1996: 15–19.

⁶² Brose 2005: 424.

⁶³ Endicott-West 1994: 611.

⁶⁴ Bokschanin-Kadyrbaev 2016: 182. Buyantu Khan (1285–1320, r. 1311–1320) was the seventh emperor of the Yuan dynasty in China. His education was based on the Confucian classics, which influenced his governance style. During his reign, he initiated several reforms to reduce corruption and improve the efficiency of the government. He restored the examination system for recruiting officials, which had been abolished under previous rulers. Hansen 2000: 357.

sentative of *semu* was Saiyid Ajall Shams al-Din 賽典赤瞻思丁, from Bukhara, who managed to take the position of governor of the south-western province of Yunnan.⁶⁵ Hala Yihachi Beilu 哈剌亦哈赤北魯⁶⁶ and Toluochu took active parts in the education of the Mongol princes.⁶⁷ Alihaiya 阿里海牙 was famous for his help in the military campaigns of the Mongols, and he was appointed as a general.⁶⁸

Taking into consideration all these factors, we can conclude that the Uyghurs became an integral part of the Mongol administrative apparatus due to their excellent abilities, such as their knowledge of the Uyghur script, intelligence, and experience in the administrative apparatus of sedentary civilisations. It is worth mentioning that the Uyghur Khaganate's capital was in Karabalghasun (near Karakorum, Mong. Qara balygasun).

The Kipchaks

The Kipchaks were also representatives of the *semu* group. They took an active part in many punitive campaigns that had been successful for the Mongol Khans, such as the overthrow of the Tangut Empire (1038–1227), the Jin dynasty (1115–1234), and the Southern Song (1127–1279). Many of the Kipchaks held high positions in the Mongolian court, such as *darughachi*, imperial guards, and so on. For example, Hasan was famous for his help in the suppression of Ariq Böke's uprising (1260–1264) and later showed himself as a courageous warrior in the conquest of the Southern Song.⁶⁹ He was highly esteemed by Kublai Khan. Another prominent Kipchak was Tutuha 土土哈 (1237–1297). He had participated in many military campaigns that were aimed at strengthening Kublai Khan's power (such as in the suppression of the Ariq Böke uprising and the Nayan rebellion⁷⁰ against Kaidu⁷¹). Tutuha was promoted to commander of

⁶⁵ Song Lian 1976: 3063–3070.

⁶⁶ Song Lian 1976: 3046–3048.

⁶⁷ Rachewiltz 1983: 284, 286.

⁶⁸ Song Lian 1976: 3124–3128.

⁶⁹ Pylypchuk 2014: 224.

⁷⁰ Nayan's rebellion (1287) was against Kublai Khan and his Sinicisation policy. The Mongolian Nayan highly supported the policy of preservation of Mongolian values and traditions and criticised Kublai Khan and his governing methods. It was suppressed by the emperor in 1287. Nayan was executed in the same year. Bayan of the Merkid, El Temür, and many other prominent generals participated in it on the side of Kublai Khan. Atwood 2004: 401.

⁷¹ Kaidu (Mong. Qaidu, ca.1230–1301) was a grandson of Ögedei Khan (1186–1241). He actively advocated for Mongolian traditional values and a Mongolian way of life and actively condemned the Sinicisation of the Mongol Khans.

the imperial guard for such a meritorious service.⁷² Being ordered to establish the Kipchak guard, Tutuha purchased a considerable amount of the captured slaves (of Kipchak descent), emancipated them from slavery, and formed them into the guard that had previously consisted of free individuals.⁷³

El Temür 燕鐵木兒 (11??–1333), of Kipchak origin, took a leading position at the Mongol court. Being a grandson of Tutuha, El Temür also received recognition from the Mongols. He played a crucial role in the successful ascension to the throne of Külüg Khan (r. 1307–1311), and for such assistance, he was bestowed high-ranking posts in the government and the army.⁷⁴ When Külüg Khan passed away in 1311, his brother Buyantu Khan (r. 1312–1320) became emperor, followed by Buyantu Khan's son Shidebala (Gegeen Khan, r. 1321–1323) in 1321, and Shidebala's cousin Yesün Temür (r. 1324–1328) in 1324. When Yesün Temür died in 1328, rivalry between the lines of Buyantu Khan and Külüg Khan broke out with a renewed fierceness. El Temür assisted greatly in the ascension to the throne of Külüg Khan's descendants. Jayaatu Khan (r. 1328–1329), the son of Külüg Khan, arrived in Dadu well ahead of his elder brother Kuśala. Jayaatu Khan temporarily assumed the throne with the intention of abdicating as soon as his elder brother Kuśala reached Dadu from the Mongolian steppes.⁷⁵ However, Kuśala's reign (Khutughtu Khan) was too short—he passed away in 1329, the same year that he had become emperor. His death was not natural—some sources mention that it was caused by violence⁷⁶ and another that he was poisoned.⁷⁷ After Kuśala's death, his brother became emperor of the Yuan dynasty. Having received favourable treatment from Jayaatu Khan, by 1330 El Temür was given the position of the sole chancellor, who was considered as the second most influential person after the emperor.⁷⁸ To strengthen his power, in 1333 El Temür's daughter Boyawu 伯牙吾 (Danashiri 答納失裡 1320–1335) became a wife of Toghon Temür and assumed the title of empress.⁷⁹

To sum up, the Kipchaks occupied leading positions in the Mongolian army, as well as at court, due to their military victories and merits. Military power was a significant source of long-term rule for the Mongols in China. Therefore, the assistance of the Kipchaks was crucial to the conquerors. It is worth emphasizing that Kublai Khan made a deliberate effort to seek dependable allies from the *semu* group. This decision was influenced by the fact that a significant number

⁷² Song Lian 1976: 3131–3138.

⁷³ Biran 2021: 96.

⁷⁴ Dardess 1973: 10–11.

⁷⁵ Dardess 1973: 39.

⁷⁶ Song Lian 1976: 701.

⁷⁷ Dardess 1973: 27.

⁷⁸ Rachewiltz 1983: 291.

⁷⁹ Song Lian 1976: 817.

of the Mongols opposed Kublai Khan's political orientation and cooperation with the Chinese. Many of these Mongols rallied behind figures like Ariq Böke and Kaidu.

Merchants of Muslim descent also occupied influential positions within the Yuan state administration. Their contribution was particularly notable during the military campaigns aimed at subduing the Jin dynasty. They played a pivotal role by acting as informants for the Mongol army, providing valuable intelligence. For instance, Zha Ba'er Huozhe (Jafar Hozha) 札八兒火者, acting as an ambassador to the Jin emperor, conducted a thorough investigation of the Jin fortifications and subsequently relayed crucial information to Genghis Khan. According to the *Yuanshi*,

汪罕既滅，西域諸部次第亦平。乃遣札八兒使金，金不為禮而歸。金人恃居庸之塞，冶鐵鑄關門，布鐵蒺藜百餘里，守以精銳。札八兒既還報，太祖遂進師，距關百里不能前，召札八兒問計。對曰：「從此而北，黑樹林中有間道，騎行可一人，臣向嘗過之。若勒兵銜枚以出，終夕可至。」太祖乃令札八兒輕騎前導。日暮入谷，黎明，諸軍已在平地，疾趨南口，金鼓之聲若自天下，金人猶睡未知也。比驚起，已莫能支吾，鋒鏑所及，流血被野。關既破，中都大震。已而金人遷汴。⁸⁰

After Wang Khan⁸¹ was defeated, the various tribes in the Western Regions were also subdued one after another, and after this [Genghis Khan] sent Zha Ba'er as envoy to the Jin. The Jin [ruler] did not show proper courtesy and [Zha Ba'er] returned. The Jin people relied on the pass of Juyong,⁸² [they used] smelted iron to fortify the gate, [they] spread iron caltrops over more than a hundred *li*, and defended the area with the most capable forces. Zha Ba'er reported [about these matters] immediately after his return. Taizu [Genghis Khan] then moved the troops forward, [but they were] stopped a hundred *li* from the pass, unable to advance. [Genghis Khan] called Zha Ba'er and asked about the plan [of further action]. [Zha Ba'er] replied: 'If you go north from here, there is an untrodden road in the black forest. A single person can ride [the army will be able to pass one by one]. I, your servant, have previously passed through it. If the troops were to march silently, with their mouthpieces clenched [to avoid noise], then they could arrive by evening.' Taizu ordered Zha Ba'er with light cavalry to lead the way. By sunset, they entered the valley, and at dawn, the entire army was already on the flat terrain and was rapidly moved towards Nankou.⁸³ The sounds of gongs and drums seemed to come from all over the Celestial Empire, and the

⁸⁰ Song Lian 1976: 2960.

⁸¹ Wang Khan or Toghrul (Mong. Toyuril, 11??–1203) was a Khan of the Keraites.

⁸² Juyong was a mountain in Changping County, Beijing.

⁸³ Nankou was in the west of Changping County, Beijing.

Jin people were still sleeping and did not know about [such an attack]. When [the Jin people] were startled awake, they could no longer resist, spearhead and arrowhead overtook [the Jin people], and the fields were flooded with blood. The pass was already broken, and the middle capital [at that time it was Beijing] was greatly shaken.

This intelligence proved to be a key factor in the ultimate victory of the Mongols over the Jin dynasty. Zha Ba'er Huozhe (Jafar Hozha) was appointed a high position—he became *darughachi* in northern China.⁸⁴ That makes it clear that the *semu* played a multifaceted role, serving as valuable partners in trade, assuming key positions within the government, and acting as both diplomatic envoys and covert spies.

To sum up, several key aspects determine the significance of *semu*. Firstly, they maintained a notable distinction from the local Chinese population. Secondly, they proved to be highly efficient members of the apparatus for carrying out a wide range of orders issued by the Mongols. Thirdly, the *semu* possessed a good understanding of the settled way of life, combined with proficiency in military matters, effective governance, financial affairs, and various other spheres. Fourthly, their proficiency in foreign languages held great importance to the Mongol rulers, who entrusted them with crucial responsibilities, such as preparing future heirs and providing translations of essential documents from Mongolian into various required languages. In their pursuit of global conquest and the governance of newly acquired territories, the Khans recognised that relying solely on the human and intellectual resources within their Mongol ranks was insufficient. Consequently, it was no coincidence that their courts, armies, and the administration of conquered lands included a substantial number of *semu*. Furthermore, the *semu* actively introduced their experience of Tibet, India, and Muslim and Christian countries into the management practices in China.

Another pivotal factor contributing to the profound respect shown to the *semu* was as follows. As previously mentioned, the *semu* occupied influential positions in the Mongol court. This was greatly facilitated by their crucial role in supporting the Yuan emperors in their efforts to counter the separatist ambitions of the Mongolian appanage nobility, who disputed their legitimacy on the throne. The confrontation between Kublai Khan and Ariq Böke played a significant role in it. An important point of contention in the political stances of the two brothers lay in the clash of two entirely contrasting approaches to governing the conquered territories. Ariq Böke and numerous Mongol nobles openly voiced their criticism of Kublai Khan, who, in their view, had drifted

⁸⁴ Song Lian 1976: 2961.

away from the steppe's traditions and had undergone a process of Sinicisation. Another reason was the *kurultai* (Mong. *qurultai*),⁸⁵ which was considered by many Mongols as a means of illegitimate seizure of power by Kublai.

Now we turn our attention to the third and fourth classes in the social ladder established by the Mongols.

Northern Chinese (*hanren*) and southern Chinese (*nanren*)

The citizens of the former Jin dynasty (1115–1234) founded by the Jurchens were named the northern Chinese or *hanren* 漢人, which included the Chinese, Koreans, and probably Khitans and Jurchens.⁸⁶ A considerable number of northern Chinese officials acted as the assistants of the Mongols in the administration; in many cases, they were appointed to secondary positions in the central institutions. This meant that these officials were closely associated with the Mongol rulers. The question is: why did the Mongols give privileges to the northern Chinese? In my view, this can be attributed to the circumstances surrounding the conquest of northern China. The Mongols confiscated the lands of local *dizhu* 地主 (landowners),⁸⁷ granting possession solely to those who embraced the Mongol rule as legitimate. Many Chinese landowners who held strong patriotic sentiments chose to flee to the southern regions of China, relinquishing their properties. However, some Chinese decided to remain in northern China and actively assist the Mongols in their efforts to subdue the southern part of the country. Through their unwavering dedication and valuable service, these Chinese individuals earned the trust of their new rulers, thus securing more privileged positions within the established hierarchical structure.

As mentioned above, translators and interpreters were of paramount importance to the Mongols. After the conquest of the whole of China, it was not forbidden for the conquered to learn Mongolian.⁸⁸ Mongolian language schools (in various *lu* 路)⁸⁹ and in *Menggu guozijian* 蒙古國子監 (Mongolian National Academy) in Dadu were established in 1269 and 1271 respectively.⁹⁰ Naturally, knowledge of Mongolian could open many opportunities for the northern Chi-

⁸⁵ A *kurultai* is a grand assembly in the history of Mongol and Turkic peoples, during which the ruling class would come together to make important decisions, discuss policies, and choose leaders or Khans. Atwood 2004: 462.

⁸⁶ Atwood 2004: 507. Brose 2002: 273. Smith 1998: 5.

⁸⁷ *Dizhu* throughout the reign of the Mongols in China came from diverse backgrounds, including Mongol aristocracy, *semu*, Chinese elite, Buddhist monasteries, and local chieftains.

⁸⁸ Endicott-West 1989: 84.

⁸⁹ *Lu* 路 was primarily a territorial and administrative division below the level of the province.

⁹⁰ Endicott-West 1989: 84.

nese to be appointed an official in the government office. Mostly Mongols, *semu*, the northern Chinese, and members of the imperial guard were given priority in being enrolled in these educational organisations. The advantage of studying Mongolian in language schools was given to literate sons, grandchildren, nephews of *darughachi*, and general administrators. After successfully fulfilling the requirements, the graduates were appointed as interpreters, translators, and clerks in the government apparatus—such positions were crucial in terms of being to the higher offices. Mongolian language schools played an important role in the promotion of Mongolian script. Such schools served as a social ladder for obtaining ranks. For example, if a preceptor performed his duties for one term in the schools of the *fu* 府 (prefectures) or the *zhou* 州 (subprefectures), he could have been given the secondary eighth in rank.⁹¹ After working one more term as a preceptor in the *lu*, he could have obtained the position of a principal eighth in rank. The only obstacle was the lineage. These privileges were given to the relatives of the Mongolian nobility, *semu*, and northern Chinese.

The citizens of the previous southern Song territories were placed at the bottom of the four-class hierarchical ladder, and they were called *nanren* (southern Chinese). The conquest of the Southern Song dynasty turned out to be not an easy task for the Mongols, lasting for almost 45 years (1235–1279). Climate, natural conditions, and the struggle of the Mongol princes for the throne were the main obstacles in terms of the conquest of the Southern Song dynasty. Why were these territories so crucial to the Mongols? The southern part of China possessed abundant lands, rich natural resources, fertile soils, and a prosperous economy, and these made it a place of paramount importance for the Mongols. The ethnic Mongol general Bayan of the Baarin (Mong. Bayan Bayarin, 1236–1295) was of great help in the conquest of the Southern Song dynasty, and under his leadership and wise military strategy, the Southern Song dynasty was subdued by the Mongols.⁹²

Another interesting fact that should be pointed out is that, according to statistics, during the entire period of the Mongol rule in China, only one Chinese, Shi Tianjie 史天澤, became the *youchengxiang* 右丞相 (Right Chancellor) in 1261, before the foundation of the Yuan dynasty; only one Chinese was bestowed the head of the Censorate (*yushitai* 御史台) position; and of representatives of the *semu*, only five were appointed *youchengxiang* and eight were appointed head of the Censorate.⁹³ Ye Ziqi, an eyewitness of that historical time, mentioned:

⁹¹ Lam 2008: 344.

⁹² Cleaves 1956: 258.

⁹³ Meng Siming 2006: 48.

天下治平之時，台省要官皆北人為之，漢人南人萬中無一二，其得為者不過州縣卑秩。⁹⁴

When *Tianxia* was in stability and peace [pacified], all the important officials in central government offices [or administrative departments] [were occupied by] the northern people [the Mongols]. Among the *hanren* and *nanren*, you could hardly find one or two among tens of thousands. Those who managed to be appointed were no more than low-ranking officials in subprefectures and counties.

The next important factor that should be mentioned is the hostility on the part of the Mongols towards the Chinese. Open disdain towards the Chinese by the Mongols was a common phenomenon. A good illustration of that is the activities of Bayan of the Merkid 伯顏 (?–1340),⁹⁵ who was a pivotal political figure during the reign of Toghon Temür (r. 1333–1368), the last emperor of the Yuan dynasty. Toghon Temür ascended the throne at age 12. Therefore, until his coming of age, power had been mostly concentrated in the hands of Mongol officials, with the most influential of them being Bayan.

Bayan became well known due to his assistance to Khayisan (Qayisang later Külüg Khan) against Kaidu in 1299.⁹⁶ During that period, the ethnic Mongol (Merkid) Bayan showed himself as a reliable and brave ally. When Külüg Khan ascended the throne in 1307, he did not forget about Bayan's help. During his rule, Bayan was appointed president of the Board of Civil Office, vice-censor-in-chief, and *darughachi* of the newly organised right Asud (Alan) Guards.⁹⁷ The next turning point of Bayan's life was in 1333, when he supported Toghon Temür's ascension to the throne. In 1335, he was appointed *chengxiang* 丞相 (grand chancellor). Bayan's objectives were twofold: firstly, to consolidate the Mongols' position in China, and secondly, to reinstate the fundamental principles of governance from Kublai Khan's era. During this period, ethnic representation held paramount importance within the state structures, and methods of Chinese governance, rooted in Confucian teachings, were subject to rigorous oversight by the Mongol rulers. Bayan was against the Sinicisation of the Mongol emperors and officials, and he did not support the interest of Toghon Temür towards Chinese culture and way of thinking, considering that it could eliminate

⁹⁴ Ye Ziqi: *Caomuzi juan* 3/73.

⁹⁵ Song Lian 1976: 3335.

⁹⁶ Dardess 1973: 10.

⁹⁷ The Asud Guards were primarily composed of Alans, an Iranian-speaking group originally from the North Caucasus region. The Asud Guards served as an elite guard unit for the Mongol rulers. Their primary role was to protect the emperor and other high-ranking officials of the Yuan Dynasty. In addition to their duties as guards, the Asud also participated in military campaigns, leveraging their skills in battle. Dardess 1973: 17.

Mongol values and traditions. Thus, to shield the Mongol court from ‘foreign influence’, in 1335 and 1339 Bayan cancelled the examination procedure, which caused discontent among the population.⁹⁸

One of the most striking features of the Mongol rule in China was the implementation of unfair regulations towards the conquered. Bayan was an active supporter of laws that had been issued during the reign of Kublai Khan. Some of them are presented below:

詔：「諸路置局造軍器，私造者處死；民間所有，不輸官者，與私造同。」⁹⁹

Imperial order [24 March 1263]: Offices are established in various routes to manufacture military equipment, and those who produce [military equipment] privately are put to death. If among the ordinary people, there are ones who do not inform the government [about such production], [they should be] treated the same as those who privately manufacture.

三月丙寅，禁民間兵器，犯者驗多寡定罪。¹⁰⁰

On the third moon of the year *bingyin* [28 April 1268], [Kublai Khan] prohibited the possession of weapons for the ordinary people. As for those who violate [this law], the punishment will be based on the quantity of weapons found.

二月己亥，敕中外，凡漢民持鐵尺、手撾及杖之藏刃者，悉輸于官。¹⁰¹

On the second moon of the year *jihai* [26 February 1286], an imperial order [was issued] inside and outside [both the internal and external areas or regions under the jurisdiction]. All those *han* ordinary people who possess iron sticks, or hand-held bludgeons, as well as those who conceal blades within canes, must deliver them all to the officials [authorities].

Based on these passages from the *Yuanshi*, in my opinion, Kublai Khan was suspicious towards the conquered, and that is why possession of weapons was strictly forbidden for them. Presumably, purchasing and selling bamboo was also prohibited for the Chinese, because this valuable material could have been used to produce bows and arrows.¹⁰² Furthermore, the Mongols monopolised bamboo production to prevent resistance from the conquered.

⁹⁸ Dardess 1973: 60

⁹⁹ Song Lian 1976: 91.

¹⁰⁰ Song Lian 1976: 118.

¹⁰¹ Song Lian 1976: 286.

¹⁰² Rossabi 1994: 453.

The imperial edicts concerning penalties for acts of violence, intentional harm, or murder vividly illustrate the unjust nature of the sentencing process. According to the *Yuanshi*,

午庚，禁漢人聚眾與蒙古人鬥毆。¹⁰³

In the year of *wugeng* [10 June 1272], [Kublai Khan] forbade the *Han* people to gather in crowds for fight and hit [brawl with] the Mongols.

In the *Tongzhi tiaoge* 通製條格 (Legislative Articles from the Comprehensive Regulations), it is said:

如蒙古人毆打漢兒人，不得還報，指立証見，於所在官司陳訴。如有違犯之人，嚴行斷罪。¹⁰⁴

For example, if the Mongols beat the *Han* people, they are not allowed to hit back. Witnesses should be identified [to testify the fact of beating] and such a case [should be] reported to the government office. Anyone who violates [this law] will be severely punished.

Another important point is the punishment for murder. If a Chinese killed a Mongol, he was sentenced to death. If the situation was the opposite, a Mongol had to pay a fine for the funeral, and then he was usually sent to a punitive expedition with the army.¹⁰⁵ In addition, Chinese faces were tattooed for theft and robbery, while the Mongols and *semu* were exempt from such a punishment.¹⁰⁶

As we can see, for the committing of the same crimes, the Chinese were subjected to more severe punishments, while the Mongols could escape retribution, or the retribution was much lighter. Undoubtedly, this gave rise to a huge wave of indignation in the ranks of the conquered people. However, resistance was actively suppressed by the Mongol army. For instance, in 1282 there were more than 200 uprisings against the Mongols in Jiangnan 江南.¹⁰⁷

Bayan highly supported the above-mentioned regulations against the conquered, such as the prohibition of the Chinese from having weapons, crowd gatherings, and resisting attacks of the Mongols. It is worth mentioning that Bayan valued the policy of ethnic separatism. Therefore, a favourable attitude towards the Chinese could play a negative role in one's career and personal

¹⁰³ Song Lian 1976: 141.

¹⁰⁴ *Tongzhi tiaoge*: juan 28/75.

¹⁰⁵ Shang Yue 1959: 366.

¹⁰⁶ Haw 2013: 44. Shang Yue 1959: 366.

¹⁰⁷ Shang Yue 1959: 378. The region of Jiangnan in modern day includes the city of Shanghai, the southern part of Jiangsu Province, the south-eastern part of Anhui Province, the northern part of Jiangxi Province, and the northern part of Zhejiang Province.

relationships. For instance, A Rong 阿榮 (d. ca. 1335), of Mongol descent, was a civil and military administrator. He was interested in Chinese history and cultural values, and he maintained good relations with Chinese literati.¹⁰⁸ Bayan was suspicious of A Rong—he did not share his attitude towards the conquered and pointed out that Sinicisation would have a devastating effect on the Mongol reign in China.¹⁰⁹ In May 1337 Bayan issued a decree:

省、院、臺、部、宣慰司、廉訪司及部府幕官之長，並用蒙古、色目人。禁漢人、南人不得習學蒙古、色目文字。¹¹⁰

Positions such as the heads of provinces, courts, supervisory offices, ministries, the Pacification Commission, the Surveillance Commission, and the government offices must all be filled [held] by Mongols and *semu*. *Hanren* and *Nanren* are prohibited from learning Mongolian and *semu* scripts.

Another decree was as follows:

癸酉，禁漢人、南人、高麗人不得執持軍器，凡有馬者拘入官。¹¹¹

In the year of *guiyou* [3 May 1337], *hanren*, *nanren*, *gaoliren* [Koreans] are prohibited from holding weapons, and if anyone [from *hanren*, *nanren*, *gaoliren*] possesses a horse, they are obliged to hand over it to the officials [authorities].

According to the *Xu zizhi tongjian* 續資治通鑑 (The Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government):

己酉，申漢人、南人、高麗人不得執軍器、弓矢之禁。¹¹²

In the year of *jiyou* [29 May 1339], it is stated that *hanren*, *nanren*, and *gaoliren* [Koreans] are prohibited from carrying weapons, bows, and arrows.

Due to these regulations of bureaucratic control, only the Mongols and *semu* could maintain their dominant positions in court. Another event that made Bayan hostile toward the Chinese was the takeover of Henan's provincial capital by a clerk Fan Meng 範孟. Nine of the chief Mongol and *semu* provincial officials were killed by the conspirators. Having heard of such a betrayal, Bayan and his supporters took drastic measures towards the rebels. Bayan tried to accuse as many Chinese as it was possible—unfortunately, it is not known how many peo-

¹⁰⁸ Song Lian 1976: 3420–3421.

¹⁰⁹ Dardess 1994: 569.

¹¹⁰ Song Lian 1976: 839.

¹¹¹ Song Lian 1976: 839.

¹¹² *Xu Zizhi tongjian*: juan 208/8.

ple were punished. The data about the condemned are different; some sources provide the amount of 30 men, while other sources mention hundreds or thousands.¹¹³ Bayan's further actions, in my opinion, aimed to use the momentum for the removal of all Chinese from their posts in the provincial *jianchasi* 監察司 (Surveillance Offices). The attempt to seize the power by Fan Meng served only as a pretext for tightening measures for the conquered. Moreover, to intimidate the Chinese, Bayan suggested taking the following measures:

伯顏請殺張、王、劉、李、趙五姓漢人，帝不從。¹¹⁴

Boyan asked to kill the *Han* people with five [most common] surnames, [such as] Zhang, Wang, Liu, Li, and Zhao, but the emperor [Toghon Temür] did not follow [Boyan's suggestion].

This suggestion undoubtedly casts a negative light on Bayan's political activities while highlighting the emperor's decision-making abilities.

Having seen Bayan's obsession with power, Emperor Toghon Temür and Bayan's nephew Toqto'a (Dayong, Tuotuo, 1314–1356) decided to dismiss him—the chancellor was sent into exile in 1340.¹¹⁵ From my perspective, the loss of Bayan's influence in court was caused by several factors: 1) a series of differential decrees and regulations towards the four ethnic groups; 2) a desire to dominate the politics of the state on his own; 3) the abolition of the examination procedure scheduled in 1335 and 1339; and 4) an enmity towards the Confucian values as well as a lack of loyal supporters. From my perspective, the enmity towards the Confucian values was the main mistake of Bayan—in the middle of the 14th century, most of the Mongolian nobility as well as Emperor Toghon Temür were Sinicised to some extent, so nomadic values were not in high demand at that time.

Conclusion

Within the framework of this article, an attempt was made to provide a detailed analysis of the policy of the Mongol Khans towards the conquered people during the reign of the Yuan dynasty. It was found that at the beginning of his reign, Kublai Khan relied largely on the advice of and strategy proposed by the Chinese advisers, actively involving them in raising the future heir. However, the uprising that broke out in 1262 by one of Kublai's close associates, Li Tan, forced the future founder of the Yuan dynasty to radically reconsider his attitude

¹¹³ Dardess 1973: 72.

¹¹⁴ Song Lian 1976: 843.

¹¹⁵ Atwood 2004: 37.

towards the Chinese. Kublai Khan realised that for an effective government it was necessary to rely on neutral officials, namely representatives of the *semu*, who would provide great assistance in governance. It should be noted that Kublai Khan was also wary of the Mongols and questioned their loyalty, since the political course he had chosen was harshly criticised by many representatives of the Mongol nobility.

The division of society into four groups was one of the striking characteristics of Mongol rule in China. Such a system served as a regulator of social life, and it was a constant reminder of the dominant position of the conquerors to the Chinese.

The Mongols, as conquerors, had more rights. The *semu* was a respected class throughout the reign of the Mongols in China. *Semu* officials played a key role in the development of the state apparatus due to their erudition and experience, and many of them were given wide-ranging authority in state matters. Moreover, they were familiar with the customs and traditions of sedentary civilisations, which was essential to the Mongols for securing the prosperity of the Mongol Empire and acquiring the spoils of the conquered. As it was mentioned above, the *semu* were considered pivotal personnel for the Mongols, because they were fluent in various foreign languages and served as translators for the Mongol rulers, as well as tutors to the Mongol heirs. From my perspective, the *semu* served as mediators between the Chinese and the ruling elite—they made a huge contribution to the interaction between two different civilisations.

The position of the Chinese was unstable during the Mongol rule. The political attitudes of some Mongol high-ranking officials were manifested in the introduction of various laws and regulations towards the conquered. This situation greatly aggravated social contradictions, causing an outbreak of local uprisings in the country. In my opinion, social inequality laid the main foundation for the Red Turban Rebellion (1351–1368), which brought an end to the Yuan dynasty.

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Unfaithful Words: Tolerance¹

Abstract

Anyone translating religious or philosophical texts of far-away cultures is painfully aware of the impossibility of the enterprise, essentially on account of the lack of terms with near-identical meaning. However, the words are only the surface: the real problem is with the different concepts they express.

The same problem reappears when we try to describe and understand these cultures. Words like religion, creed, faith, belief, prayer, worship, church, heresy, conversion, and idol are far from the neutral scholarly terms they appear to be: they all are heavily laden with features and associations that derive from the context in which these concepts evolved. These are essentially Christian concepts, and their use about other cultures is ‘Orientalism’ in Said’s sense.

‘Tolerance’ is a pertinent example. For example, Buddhism is generally considered to be an extremely tolerant religion. While this insight reflects a real feature of Buddhism, still it is not true. Buddhism is as tolerant as a deer is vegetarian. The deer does not refrain from eating flesh: it has absolutely no wish to eat, touch, or even smell meat. Buddhism simply does not have the idea that everybody should be Buddhist. The Buddha himself unambiguously expressed his opinion that it is best for people to keep their traditional rites and beliefs. Further, it seems that Buddhism is not a very special case; rather it appears that the idea that other religions should be suppressed is an innovation of the Abrahamic religions only.

There is an important lesson to be learned from this for interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Tolerance is miserably inadequate as a ground for such contacts. You ‘tolerate’ what you do not like, what you would like to annihilate, just out of some practical wisdom you restrain yourself. We do not want to be merely ‘tolerated’; we want to be accepted, esteemed, and possibly even loved—and the same holds for our partners in the dialogue.

This is anything but a light demand on most participants of the dialogue. However, unless they wholeheartedly accept that there are innumerable valid and valuable paths, their ‘interreligious dialogue’ will remain little more than an uncomfortable ceasefire between hostile powers.

Keywords: tolerance, Buddhism, linguistic relativity, inclusivism.

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1. The impossibility of translation

Understanding is the first step towards understanding. That is, in order to understand people, to sympathise with them and accept their behaviour, I have first to understand *what* they are doing and *why*. When I see a group of strong adults holding tight a miserable boy and one of them is approaching the youngling's penis with a knife, I may feel horror and a strong impulse to interfere. If I have a gun, perhaps I will even shoot at the man with the knife. However, if I know that what they are doing is circumcision, that it is a traditional ritual for them, and that its aim is to turn the boy into a grown-up, without which he cannot hunt, marry etc., my perception changes radically. I notice now that the men are not aggressive at all. They care about the boy, and some of them may recall their own initiation. I may appreciate their discipline and determination as they perform this emotionally difficult task.

To make that first step, to understand what they do, what they think, and what they believe in, we have to listen to what they say—and when it is a different culture with a different language, that presupposes translation. Anyone translating religious or philosophical texts of far-away cultures is painfully aware of the impossibility of the enterprise, *prima facie* on account of the lack of terms with near-identical meaning. However, the words are only the surface: the real problem is with the different concepts they express.

On the level of words, the two most apparent cases are when we do not know what they mean and when they refer to a thing unknown in our culture. The first is unpleasantly frequent in ancient texts: there are many *hapax legomena*, words occurring only once in the texts we have. When their etymology is unclear and the context is not too specific, we simply cannot have any idea of their meaning. The second case can be a local plant or animal, but most frequently it is a man-made object, such as a piece of clothing like *dhoti* or a weapon like *shuriken*, to quote not-so-unknown examples.

Although these cause us a lot of headache, from a theoretical perspective they are not too interesting. Sometimes, however, the meaning is clear and well known in both cultures, but the limits of the relevant concepts differ. The opposition boat–ship can be found in many languages, but their ranges differ; in Hungarian even a small sailboat for two people is called a *vitórlás hajó*, ‘ship with sails’, while in English a quite sizeable passenger vehicle on a river or lake is called a boat. Moreover, of course, most other languages will not call a nuclear-powered submarine a ‘boat’.

Another, and again quite frequent version of the problem, is where one language does not normally express a difference while in the other it is unavoidable: for example, *nau* in Sanskrit means both ‘boat’ and ‘ship’. A conspicuous

and particularly annoying case is where one language always expresses gender and the other does not. ‘A customer came in and I told her to wait’. This sentence is untranslatable into Hungarian, since the language has no gender-marked pronouns, and in everyday speech there is no general term for female (*lány* is a girl or young woman, *asszony* a presumably married middle-aged woman etc.). Here the resulting translation will only be awkward, but in the reverse case the task is almost unsolvable—you cannot keep on writing (s)he, her/him etc.

When we turn to religious and philosophical terminology, the difficulties are much more serious. Words in this sphere do not refer to more or less clearly identifiable things and phenomena of the external world but to fictitious entities and intangible internal experiences. Such concepts are normally quite vague even for the best-informed native speakers. Does a fairy have wings? Are dwarfs always male? What language do devils speak among themselves? Can the spirits of the departed fall in love? When we pick any translation, we lose many aspects of the original idea and we add, whether we like or not, many associations of our traditions.

The real danger is that we may be unaware of the differences of the relevant concepts. If we render the Sanskrit word *puruṣa* into English as ‘soul’, this is quite defensible, since in the Sāṃkhya philosophy *puruṣa* is the immaterial, eternal substance of a person. However, it is not the source of emotions, it cannot make decisions, and it does not think—all these are done by subtle material entities, mostly the *buddhi*, ‘intellect’. We may also translate the Sanskrit *ātman* as ‘soul’, again correctly, but then the well-known characterisation of the materialists that they hold that the body is the *ātman* will sound absurd. Again, the Buddhists categorically deny that there is an *ātman*; still, they believe in transmigration.

Such problems occur in any translation but to differing degrees. When translating Greek into English or Swedish into Italian, they are manageable, but when translating from Chinese or Indonesian, they are overwhelming. This has got nothing to do with language families: Sanskrit is an Indo-European language, still the difficulties are great, while with Hungarian, a Finno-Ugric language, there is no special problem. This is because European languages share a common cultural history. All these nations have translated the Greek philosophers and the Bible into their own language, and they wrote their legal codes originally in Latin. Moreover, the people started to use their own words with meanings according to these international standards. Therefore, it is quite sensible to speak of a Standard Average European (SAE) language:² although the phonemes, words, and surface syntax of the individual European languages

² Whorf 1956a: 138.

differ completely, still they are almost isomorphic. Practically the same things can be expressed in all of them. Moreover, this is emphatically true of their religious and philosophical terminology, since these have been eminently international enterprises for more than two millennia, mostly sustained by the Christian church and the universities.

1.1 Radical translation

There is a much stronger thesis in analytic philosophy, variously called the inscrutability of reference or the indeterminacy of translation. Our arguments so far pointed out some more or less interesting difficulties in understanding and translating *certain* words. This theory, however, states that we can never get at the true meaning of *any* expression, including such everyday words as ‘boy’, ‘sit’ or ‘red’.

The thesis was developed in 1960 by Willard Van Orman Quine in ‘Translation and meaning’, the second chapter of his probably most famous book, *Word and Object*. He illustrated the problem with the thought experiment of ‘radical translation’ (i.e., trying to understand a completely unknown language without any external help—no dictionary, grammar book, or interpreter). Somewhat simplified, the story goes like this: when the hypothetical linguist hears the native say ‘*gavagai*’ on noticing a rabbit, he will guess that the word does mean ‘rabbit’. After repeated checking he will be quite sure of it, but he may be mistaken—

For, consider ‘*gavagai*’. Who knows but what the objects to which this term applies are not rabbits after all, but mere stages, or brief temporal segments, of rabbits? In either event the stimulus situations that prompt assent to ‘*Gavagai*’ would be the same as for ‘Rabbit’. Or perhaps the objects to which ‘*gavagai*’ applies are all and sundry undetached parts of rabbits; again the stimulus meaning would register no difference. When from the sameness of stimulus meanings of ‘*Gavagai*’ and ‘Rabbit’ the linguist leaps to the conclusion that a *gavagai* is a whole enduring rabbit, he is just taking for granted that the native is enough like us to have a brief general term for rabbits and no brief general term for rabbit stages or parts.³ [*italics added*]

³ Quine 2013: 46.

This is clearly not the place to assess the merit or otherwise of Quine's position, but it can be safely said that the thought experiment fails to convince. Let us get hold of a rabbit somehow, then lift its ear and ask the native: 'Gavagai?' If 'gavagai' means 'undetached rabbit part', he will agree, but if it means 'rabbit', he will probably laugh, disagree, or say something like 'Kunu! Gavagai-kunu'. Then we will add another item to our tentative vocabulary: 'kunu = ear?'

More interestingly, Quine's second alternative translation, 'rabbit stage' is less hypothetical than it seems. For in many Buddhist traditions, momentariness is a fundamental fact of the world: there are no continuous existents; everything lasts a single moment. What appears as a single enduring entity is in fact but a series of momentary phenomena, causally related. So these people, at least when philosophising, do mean 'rabbit-moment' (as it is frequently expressed) when they say 'rabbit'. What this fact shows is not only that such peculiar language is really possible, but also that we can know of it: it is unusual, but there is no inscrutability of meaning here. Accidentally it also suggests that this sort of problem is not too closely related to language—for Buddhists speak many different languages, including English, Chinese, and Sanskrit. Furthermore, many speakers of these languages are not Buddhists, and for them 'rabbit' means plainly rabbit, not a rabbit-moment.

It is of course true that given only limited information, we cannot be sure of the meaning, but this is nothing new. It is essentially the problem of the *hapax legomenon* type. Scholars of distant languages and cultures routinely address such problems, and many publications aim at more clearly delineating the meaning of some previously not fully understood term. They clearly demonstrate that there are reliable ways to approach such questions and often even to give a convincing answer to them.

1.2 Linguistic relativity

So far, we have investigated the lexical level only, which is the most conspicuous and therefore somewhat easier to handle. Of course, words do not exist in isolation; again, most clearly, their meanings are interrelated. This was already suggested by some of the examples above, including ship–boat and soul–intellect (*puruṣa–buddhi*).

There is, however, a much deeper and more obscure difference among the languages. This notion is frequently, although somewhat misleadingly, called the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis. It was, indeed, hinted at by Edward Sapir in a presentation to the Linguistic Society of America in 1928:

Human beings... are very much at the mercy of the particular language... The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.⁴

The idea was elaborated and given real significance in the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf, who called it the linguistic relativity principle.⁵ In 'Languages and logic', he described how our seemingly instinctive logic and metaphysics are dependent to a surprising degree on our mother tongues.

The effortlessness of speech and the subconscious way we picked up that activity in early childhood lead us to regard talking and thinking as wholly straightforward and transparent. We naturally feel that they embody self-evident laws of thought, the same for all men.⁶

Unreflectively we are even tempted to feel that these laws are necessary. Any intelligent being would think similarly, because they reflect the laws of the world or even any possible world. In philosophy, at least since Kant, it is customary to doubt this. An attractive modern formulation was given by Putnam: 'the mind and the world jointly make up the mind and the world'.⁷ Whorf's position is more complex—he introduces a third factor into the matrix, our particular language.

Segmentation of nature is an aspect of grammar – one as yet little studied by grammarians. We cut up and organize the spread and flow of events as we do, largely because, through our mother tongue, we are parties to an agreement to do so, not because nature itself is segmented in exactly that way for all to see. Languages differ not only in how they build their sentences but also in how they break down nature to secure the elements to put in those sentences.⁸

Whorf gave a detailed description of the phenomenon in his best-known paper, 'The relation of habitual thought and behavior to language'. This quite involved article is full of information on the contrasts of Hopi and SAE (with English as an example) grammar and even overloaded with intriguing insights about their effects on our world-views. They have inspired many volumes of scholarly work. Some of those insights that are relatively easily grasped may be quoted here:

⁴ Sapir 1985: 162.

⁵ Whorf 1956b: 214.

⁶ Whorf 1956c: 238.

⁷ Putnam 1981: xi.

⁸ Whorf 1956c: 240.

Newtonian space, time, and matter are no intuitions. They are receipts from culture and language. That is where Newton got them.

Our image of time as an evenly scaled limitless tape measure persuades us to behave as if monotony were more true of events than it really is.

Our objectified view of time is, however, favorable to historicity and to everything connected with the keeping of records.⁹

This last remark may seem especially pertinent for students of those cultures that, like ancient India, seem to have no historical sense. A vast amount of research was spent on the largely unsolvable problems of Indian chronology, since we are unable to cope with the lack of a clear timeline.

If I read him correctly, Whorf even suggested that our basic paradigm of mind-body dualism is partly rooted in linguistic usage, especially our extensive use of spatial metaphors. ‘The Hopi thought-world has no imaginary space’, so when he thinks of his cornfield, he is not dealing with an idea but the real thing, and he believes that his thinking may influence it.¹⁰

Most important for the understanding of the history of philosophy is the language-dependence of the basic categories of substance, matter, and form.

The SAE microcosm has analyzed reality largely in terms of what it calls ‘things’ (bodies and quasibodies) plus modes of extensional but formless existence that it calls ‘substances’ or ‘matter’. It tends to see existence through a binomial formula that expresses any existent as a spatial form plus a spatial formless continuum related to the form, as contents is related to the outlines of its container. Nonspatial existents are imaginatively spatialized and charged with similar implications of form and continuum.¹¹

One aspect of this phenomenon is that a speaker of SAE can only view the world as made up of substances (in the Aristotelian sense [i.e., things and living beings]), and only these substances can have qualities and only they can move. The reason for this is that SAE has three distinct categories: noun, adjective, and verb (on the sentence level: subject, qualifier, and predicate). We cannot speak and therefore cannot think without specifying the ‘thing’ that is such or does an action. Even when it is plainly contrary to experience, we tend to specify a distinct subject: ‘The weather is cold’ or ‘The wind is blowing’. In many SAE

⁹ Whorf 1956a: 153–154.

¹⁰ Whorf 1956a: 149–150.

¹¹ Whorf 1956a: 147. Note that Whorf uses the word ‘substance’ in the everyday sense of ‘matter’ (in philosophical terminology: substratum), not in the Aristotelian way of primary and secondary substances (individuals and universals), for which Whorf uses ‘things’.

languages, even in the most impersonal form, at least a formal, dummy subject has to be given: ‘It’s cold’ or ‘It is raining’. Therefore for us it is extremely difficult to grasp the idea of insubstantiality, and we feel it very strange how this unnatural idea could become so widespread in Buddhism. The explanation can easily be that many of the languages involved (Dravidian in India, also Tibetan and Chinese) do not have these three basic grammatical categories. The opposition noun–verb exists in these languages (although it behaves quite differently from SAE), but they lack a distinct category for adjectives.¹² These people do understand our concept of substance, but they do not need it for speaking or thinking. For them the question is meaningful and clear: are substances real in a fundamental, metaphysical sense, or are they merely one convenient way of segmenting experience?

The Buddha himself may not have known Dravidian (he taught in Māgadhī, an Indo-Aryan language), but it is irrelevant here, for three reasons. Substance reductionism was not his invention, although he probably agreed with it; it was developed earlier in the Sāṃkhya tradition.¹³ The greatest Buddhist exponent of insubstantiality, Nāgārjuna, lived in South India, so his mother tongue must have been Dravidian. Lastly, the question was not how someone could suggest this theory—great thinkers can come up with difficult ideas. Our question was why it was widely accepted.

2. Describing the other

We have seen that perfect translation is impossible, even when the translator knows everything about the language that can be known. Still, a good enough translation is a realistic ideal. Many of the problems mentioned above can be circumvented with notes and other explanatory material.

With this, we have arrived at the second step of trying to understand a culture different from our own: analysis and interpretation. Of course this is a second step only logically—in reality, both translation and description presuppose each

¹² About Dravidian: ‘Proto-Dravidian has just two parts of speech, noun and verb... While some scholars have projected the category of adjective to Proto-Dravidian, many of the candidates for adjectival status appear to be defective nouns or verbs.’ Steever 2020: 17.

About Tibetan: ‘As in other Tibeto-Burman languages, adjectives are formally nouns’. DeLancey 2017: 373.

About Chinese: ‘The lack of inflectional morphology in modern Chinese makes it very difficult to define grammatical categories in terms of morphological features’. ‘The so-called adjectives are but stative verbs (Vstat), erroneously identified as equivalents to adjectives in familiar Indo-European languages’. Yue 2017: 114, 121.

¹³ Ruzsa 2017: 168–170.

other. There is mutual feedback here. A new translation leads to better analysis, and a fresh interpretation necessitates retranslation. Advances in these two areas of scholarship go hand in hand.

Interestingly, at the level of generalisation and description the very same problems reappear. Here, the inadequacy of our concepts is far less apparent, but it is actually more important. We are trying to use objective, culture-neutral, precise terms, but in fact, we do not have them. Consider such natural and seemingly innocent descriptive terms as country, king, law, book, family, or beggar. They are all part of our everyday vocabulary and therefore have associations that can be quite misleading, and they are connected to value judgements that may be inappropriate. That is why everybody translates the Sanskrit *bhikṣu* (beggar) as (Buddhist) ‘monk’, but it is again misleading, just in another way.

Closer to our special topic here, words like religion, creed, faith, belief, prayer, worship, church, temple, idol, heresy, and conversion are far from the neutral scholarly terms they appear to be. They are all heavily laden with features and associations that derive from the context in which these concepts evolved. These are essentially Christian concepts and their use about other cultures is ‘Orientalism’ in Said’s sense.¹⁴ In his much debated book, Said suggested that already the term ‘oriental’ (i.e., ‘in the East’) is strongly suggestive of an Eurocentrism and at the same time insensitivity to the essential differences of ‘the other’, lumping together, for example, Islamic, Indian, and Chinese cultures, seeing in them only variants of the exotic. He also emphasised that oriental studies, irrespective of the personal wishes of the individual scholars, essentially served the interests of colonisation and exploitation and not disinterested mutual understanding.

It seems that Orientalism is but a new name for, or at most, a particular form of ethnocentrism—another less-than-lucky term for the phenomenon, coined by Sumner more than a century ago. It expresses the natural human tendency, well recognised already in antiquity, to consider our own society and norms as natural and good and see all others as inferior and deviant. When describing another culture in terms of our own, we imperceptibly yield to ethnocentrism. Such a perfectly factual statement that ‘they lack a clear concept of a creator god’ does in fact suggest primitivity. It is like storks describing our species, quite accurately, as ‘wingless and lacking a proper beak’.

The dangers of ethnocentrism are well recognised; efforts at a ‘politically correct’ use of language clearly reflect this. The related difficulties are most often emphasised in the proper field of study describing other cultures: anthropology. The suggested antidote to this innate proclivity is cultural relativism, although many opponents see in this idea an attempt at undermining the fundamental ethical values of civilisation, religion, or humanity itself.

¹⁴ Said 2003.

2.1 Cultural relativism

Although largely an autodidact, Whorf also studied under Sapir, whose mentor was Franz Boas, the father of American anthropology. Boas seems to stand at the root of many of the ideas outlined above; although the term is not his, he is generally considered to be the source of cultural relativism. This idea, or rather approach, seems nowadays so evident when expressed that it is difficult to realise its importance. 'To achieve the fullest understanding of any culture, we should not begin by applying to it the patterns and values of another culture'.¹⁵

This seems to be quite similar in spirit to the old adage, *Duo quum faciunt idem, non est idem*.¹⁶ If somebody has another person killed, he may be committing a crime (if he is a mafioso), or he may be dealing out justice (if he is a king). Cultures are not persons, yet their customs and traditions should not be understood and evaluated based on our culture's norms—a feature in a culture might have an utterly different significance from something apparently quite similar in another culture. Also, a person's behaviour has to be understood in terms of their own culture.

The obvious requirement is to give up our prejudices and forget our value judgements—not only 'cruel', 'immoral', and 'disgusting' but also 'silly', 'funny', 'ineffective', 'childish', and 'irrational' are quite out of place. The more difficult task is to notice the inadequacy of value-free concepts. When we try to analyse the economy of a hunter tribe, we may be artificially isolating a part of their activities, because in our culture economic activity is clearly a distinct segment of life.

Cultural relativism does not imply moral relativism. It is a mistake to think that cultural relativism can be used to justify any immoral behaviour, saying that there are no objective norms. First, it does not teach that what is appropriate in one culture should be accepted in another: the exact opposite is true. Second, it does not say that what people do according to their own traditions is proper: it refrains from saying if it is good or bad. When studying cannibalism, the anthropologist is not supposed to actually like the idea, but they have to investigate why, when, and how it is done, who the victims are etc. Third, and most interesting is that cultural relativism can be actually used as a research programme for universal values. This is because 'true comparison deals impartially with likenesses and divergences as analysis reveals them', and when a likeness is

¹⁵ Kroeber – Kluckhohn 1952: 176, fn. 39.

¹⁶ 'When two do the same thing, it is not the same thing.' Although not a direct quote, it is taken from Terence's drama *Adelphoe* (Brothers), 823–825: *duo quom idem faciunt, saepe ut possis dicere / 'hoc licet inpune facere huic, illi non licet', / non quo dissimilis res sit, sed quo is qui facit.*

found everywhere, we may say that it is essential for humanity, not because it is in the Bible or for some *a priori* reason, but because it is universal.

True universals or near universals are apparently few in number. But they seem to be as deep-going as they are rare. Relativity exists only within a universal framework. Anthropology's facts attest that the phrase 'a common humanity' is in no sense meaningless.¹⁷

Cultural relativism does not stand for the incomparability of cultures that can be studied only in isolation. It essentially supports comparison, not, however, based on preconceived external criteria (obviously taken from the anthropologist's own culture) but rather on the features and categories of the studied cultures themselves. Only this way can true, organic parallelisms and eventually even historical connections be demonstrated. Therefore, the aim is not to show up some unbridgeable gap between different cultures but to get closer to real understanding. As John Carroll wrote about linguistic relativity:

It would have been farthest from Whorf's wishes to condone any easy appeal to linguistic relativity as a rationalization for a failure of communication between cultures or between nations. Rather, he would hope that a full awareness of linguistic relativity might lead to humbler attitudes about the supposed superiority of Standard Average European languages and to a greater disposition to accept a 'brotherhood of thought' among men.¹⁸

Through a proper understanding of another culture, its words, concepts, values, and logic, we will also see ourselves in a new light. Noticing our preconceptions, we might be able to overcome some of them and in the end understand our own culture better.

3. Tolerance

In intercultural and interreligious dialogue, tolerance is often put forward as the right approach to our partners. In this sense it is a normative concept: that is how we should behave or at least try to behave. However, it is also a descriptive concept. Some traditions, political parties, and religions are said to be more tolerant than others.

¹⁷ Kroeber – Kluckhohn 1952: 177, fn. 41 and 178.

¹⁸ Carroll 1956: 27.

Several Eastern religions are famed to be quite tolerant, especially Buddhism, and not without reason. Investigating this question will be an object lesson in cultural relativism, demonstrating how inappropriate this European-Christian concept is in characterising other religions. At the same time, more importantly, it may motivate a modification in our normative approach—perhaps, after all, it is not tolerance that we need in approaching, for example, other religions.

3.1 A tolerant religion?

Buddhism is generally considered to be an extremely tolerant religion. This insight reflects a real feature of Buddhism. Buddhism is emphatically non-aggressive, and although it is a missionary religion, it does not try to suppress other creeds. In addition, the widely different branches or sects of Buddhism can peacefully co-exist and cooperate and even build common organisations. In many monasteries monks of several sects live together, and practically all branches of Tibetan Buddhism accept the leadership of the Dalai Lama.

Yet to characterise Buddhism as tolerant is false and misleading. A true Buddhist is no more tolerant than a deer is vegetarian. The deer does not refrain from eating flesh: it has absolutely no wish to eat, touch, or even smell meat.¹⁹ Similarly, the Buddhist does not want to convert a Muslim or a Hindu—they think that it is the natural order of things that different people have different religions. Buddhism simply does not have the idea that everybody should or could be Buddhist.²⁰ The Buddha himself unambiguously expressed his opinion that it is best for people to keep their traditional rites and beliefs.

— What have you heard, Ānanda: do the Vajjīs show respect, honour, esteem, and veneration towards their shrines, both those within the city and those outside it, and do not deprive them of the due offerings as given and made to them formerly?

— I have heard, Lord, that they do venerate their shrines, and that they do not deprive them of their offerings.

— So long, Ānanda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjīs is to be expected, not their decline. ...

Once... I dwelt at Vesālī, at the Sārāṇḍada shrine, and there it was that I taught the Vajjīs these seven conditions leading to (a nation's) welfare.²¹

¹⁹ This is, of course, a parable, not an accurate description of the animal's behaviour.

²⁰ The famous Mahāyāna bodhisattva vow 'to liberate all sentient beings' should not be taken literally. Rather, it is an expression of universal goodwill and altruistic ethos.

²¹ *Dīgha-Nikāya* 16, 1.4 and 5, quoted from Sister Vajirā – Story (tr.) 1998/2007: 5–6.

The Buddha also suggested that when someone lives in a foreign religious environment, he should not reject that religion or its gods:

Wherever he may dwell, the prudent man...
Should give an offering to the local deities.

And so revered, they honour him in turn,
Are gracious to him even as a mother
Is towards her own, her only son;
And he who thus enjoys the deities' grace,
And is by them beloved, good fortune sees.²²

One could think that this is but one side of the coin, for the Buddha kept on talking about all kinds of heresies. However, if we look up the original, we will find that the word translated as 'heretic' is in Pāli *añña-titthiya* (in Sanskrit, *anya-tīrthika* or *anya-tīrthya*), meaning '[crossing the river of suffering] by another ford'. Thus, the word implies no negativity but just refers to followers of another path. When his last disciple questioned him about other masters, the Buddha refused to evaluate them in any way:

Enough, Subhadda! Let it be as it may, whether all of them have attained realization, as each of them would have it believed, or whether none of them has, or whether some have attained realization and others not.²³

This generally supportive attitude towards other religions remained the same from the Buddha to the present Dalai Lama. Obviously, in a religion with half a billion followers and 2,500 years of history, exceptions might be found, but the general picture is clear. Sanderson, surveying the early mediaeval evidence in India, concluded: 'Only accounts of religious persecution or killing of non-Buddhists by Buddhists are lacking in the Indian sources known to me'.²⁴

There are several explanations for this feature of Buddhism; some of them are mentioned here. (a) Historically, the Buddha was not trying to start a new religion. He only found and taught a new way for those few that seek liberation from the suffering characteristic of human existence, and he said that this goal can be achieved in this life. His path was for monks (i.e., wandering hermits);

²² *Dīgha-Nikāya* 16, 1.31, based on Sister Vajirā – Story (tr.), 1998/2007: 17. I have changed in their translation 'devas' to 'deities' (for Pali *devatā*) and 'He shares his merits with' to 'Should give an offering to' (for Pali *tāsaṃ dakkhiṇam ādise*).

²³ *Dīgha-Nikāya* 16, 5.26, quoted from Sister Vajirā – Story (tr.) 1998/2007: 72.

²⁴ Sanderson 2015: 213.

he had no particular teaching for the laity,²⁵ and therefore his teaching was not competing with the religions of the time.²⁶ (b) The declared aim for every Buddhist monk was to reach *nirvāṇa*, not to change the world or other people. Of course, a pious Buddhist would try to show the way to those interested, but his focus was on self-perfection (i.e., exploring and re-building his own psyche), mostly through meditation. (c) The eightfold path of Buddhism²⁷ starts with right view (i.e., an intellectual understanding of the Buddha's analysis of the existential situation [not *belief* in Buddhism]), and the second step is the right decision to follow the Buddha's path. Both of them are free, individual mental actions that cannot be forced or urged, only helped. (d) Since the root of suffering is desire and passion, the monk tries to get rid of these. Therefore, the first two commandments of Buddhism are non-aggression and non-possession: an orthodox monk (*bhikṣu*, 'beggar') may not even touch money; he begs for food only.²⁸

However, since Jainism prohibits harming any living creature even more strictly, and fans of Hinduism assert that it is an essentially peaceful religion, it may seem that the secret is in the culture of South Asia. We will look at this now.

3.2 Inclusivism and gradualism

Our image of India as non-violent and tolerant is to a large extent due to the influence of Gandhi. Yet we must also remember that Gandhi was killed by a Hindu nationalist Brahmin exactly because he tried to oppose violence against Muslims, in an age when communal violence in South Asia claimed many hundreds of thousands of lives. *Ahimsā* (nonviolence) is a central concept of Hinduism; yet Gandhi's favourite scripture, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, is about the highest god Kṛṣṇa convincing Arjuna to go and fight in the bloodiest war of ancient India, the great war of the *Mahā-Bhārata*.

²⁵ When speaking to laymen, he only urged them to be good citizens conforming to the social norms of the age. In the canonical text considered most important in this regard, the *Sigālaka Sutta* (*Dīgha-Nikāya* 31), the only advice concerning religion is that people should respect and support all kinds of religious specialists, *samaṇas* (non-Hindu holy men), and *brāhmaṇas* (Brahmins, members of the Hindu priestly class).

²⁶ Of course, this changed when Buddhism gradually developed into a religion. Already with the establishment of monasteries (not more than a century after the founder's death), the need for wealthy support must have engendered some competition with other religions.

²⁷ The *āryāṣṭaṅgika-mārga*, usually translated as the Noble Eightfold Path.

²⁸ For a somewhat more detailed account of Buddhism's relation to other religions, see Ruzsa 2018: 347–358.

In spite of these contradictions, there are some grounds to the impression that India is the home of religious tolerance. For thousands of years, different religions lived together in peace and harmony, at least most of the time. The main ideological reason for this is the belief in karma, shared by Buddhists, Jains, and Hindus. According to this belief, a person is reborn according to their merit as a god, animal, or human, and their duty varies according to their birth. Therefore, if they are born as a Christian, their proper duty is to be a good Christian. There is no general law (*dharma*) for everyone—a tiger and a deer naturally follow different rules.

In Hinduism, the logical consequence is drawn: you can be a Hindu only by birth (i.e., you cannot convert to Hinduism). Therefore, it is essentially a non-missionary religion, in spite of some recent phenomena. So it could peacefully coexist since antiquity with Christians, Jews, and later also Muslims in South India—until Islam came as a conqueror and a religious oppressor.

Actually, the most interesting cases of both interreligious conflict and tolerance can be found within the fold of Hinduism. For Hinduism is not a single religion. ‘Hindu’ is a blanket term used by Muslims in India to refer to the followers of any other religion in the subcontinent, and it appears in non-Islamic sources only from the 15th century.²⁹ Some important Hindu religions are the very conservative polytheistic Brahmanic or Vedic orthopraxy and the main monotheistic religions worshipping Śiva, Viṣṇu, or the Goddess. There was ideological and power rivalry between them, and it is often reflected in mythology, usually in the form of peaceful competition, but not always. A famous myth tells how an ancient god, Dakṣa, did not invite his son-in-law, Śiva, to a grandiose Vedic sacrifice, because he was unclean, wearing a skull. Śiva in his anger destroyed the sacrifice, killing many participating sages and even gods.

Violent conflict between these religions in real life seems to have been infrequent but not entirely absent. From the examples collected by Sanderson,³⁰ it appears that the followers of Śiva were most inclined to aggressive methods, both against persons and holy places; there are many cases of turning a previous Viṣṇu temple into a shrine of Śiva.

However, the typical picture is astonishingly peaceful. Rulers normally emphasised their religious affiliation, but they not only tolerated but also actively supported other creeds, also financially, excluding only the antinomian religions that practiced, for example, cannibalism or orgiastic rites. We find many temple complexes with temples of the high gods of the different religions side by side, and pious Hindus are normally happy to worship in temples of the other religions.

²⁹ Sanderson 2015: 156, fn. 2.

³⁰ Sanderson 2015: 208–214.

There are several reasons for this, to us, surprising behaviour. First of all, Hinduism is extremely syncretistic. A follower of Śiva never thinks that Viṣṇu is non-existent or evil: Śiva is God, the Lord (*Īśvara*), while Viṣṇu is a perfectly real and important deity (*deva*), comparable to an archangel for a Catholic, but more independent. Practically all gods, divinities, fairies, spirits, etc. known anywhere in India are accepted as members of a vague and vast mythological space, although many of the old and important gods are reinterpreted as forms or manifestations of one of the greatest gods.

It is clear that this attitude is connected to tolerance, yet it is not the same. This is because it does not relate to the other religion as ‘other’ but rather as a part of the true (my) religion, somewhat misunderstood and overestimated by its followers. In the 1950s, Paul Hacker started to call this particularly Indian phenomenon inclusivism and thought that it is a strange mixture of tolerance and intolerance. ‘In our cultural sphere (*Kulturkreis*) we have no exact equivalent to this inclusivism, and for this very reason we misunderstood it as tolerance’.³¹ Hacker, who was also an ecumenical Christian theologian, thought that tolerance is a more advanced concept that classical Hinduism had not reached.

Halbfass, although generally in agreement with Hacker, is on the right track when he suggests that the two concepts do not differ merely in degree. Rather, they belong to somewhat different spheres and therefore do not exclude (but of course also do not imply) one another.

‘Inclusivism’ is not ‘tolerance’. But there can certainly be tolerant behavior and ‘lived tolerance’ on the basis of, or in connection with, ‘inclusivistic’ thought. On the other hand, inclusivistic thought does not by itself exclude intolerant actions. ... Tolerance in this context is certainly a tolerance *sui generis*, but it may still be tolerance. ‘Hierarchical’ or ‘inclusivistic tolerance’ is not a contradiction in terms.³²

Halbfass duly emphasises that there were genuine cases of tolerance in historical India, for example the rule of Emperor Aśoka (who was, however, a Buddhist) and the ideas of the great 9th century orthodox Hindu philosopher and poet Jayanta Bhaṭṭa. Still he seems to suggest that inclusivism is somehow less valuable than tolerance.

Divergent and foreign forms of religious behavior and orientation, and religious plurality in general, are recognized and tolerated not as legitimate expressions of

³¹ Hacker 1983: 14 (my translation).

³² Halbfass 1988: 410–411.

personal choice and human autonomy, but as manifestations of different levels of soteriological development.³³

‘Different levels of development’ actually seems to refer specifically to gradualism, not inclusivism in general, of which it is the mature, classical form. The two are closely related, yet Hacker, with his typical analytic acumen, distinguished between them. Gradualism is the idea

that there are objective levels of reality and subjective levels of approaching the final reality. ... From about the 14th century it became usual in Vedāntism to present all religions and philosophical systems as approximations of truth; but truth itself is represented by Vedāntism. On the lowest level of the scale stands materialism, followed by the different systems of Buddhism, then Jainism. Then the different systems of Hinduism are ordered gradually according to their value.³⁴

Actually, the idea is more than a millennium older, going back to early Mahayana Buddhism. First there is the *duplex veritas* that there is a final, highest truth, but below that, the consensual truth is still true in a way. Then the doctrine of skilful means stated that the Buddha taught fairly different doctrines, according to the level of understanding and receptivity of his audiences. Finally, in the *Lotus Sutra* we find clear gradualism with reference to the different Buddhist traditions. In the famous parable of the burning house,³⁵ a father tries to lure out his children from their house, which is on fire. He promises each the kind of cart he desires (small, middling, or great), although in the end everyone receives the same luxurious ox-cart. (The best and real cart, of course, symbolises the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*.)

Clearly, inclusivism and gradualism are different from tolerance: they are (formally) descriptive attitudes, stating that another system is a limited part of the true (i.e., our own) view, while tolerance is a normative concept: do not persecute the other. Of course, intolerance is possible also within a tradition (e.g., when some Christians burned others at the stake for their beliefs). Still it is usually directed against the ‘other’, so inclusivism that turns the ‘other’ into an (inferior) part of ‘us’ naturally favours tolerance.

³³ Halbfass 1988: 411.

³⁴ Hacker 1985: 132 and 134 (my translation).

³⁵ In chapter 3 of the *Lotus Sutra*. For a translation of the Sanskrit text, see Kern 1884: 72–82.

3.3 Non-Indian religions

Buddhism may be unique in its perfectly friendly relation to other convictions, but it seems that most religions in the world's history have been closer to it than to Christianity in terms of tolerance. They did not need tolerance, for they were free from the disease to which tolerance is the cure. They never developed the idea that another person or group should be forced to follow their religion.

In a traditional tribal or ethnic religion (Judaism also belongs here), religious identity is determined by birth in the people, and the idea that beliefs or rites could be exported is basically meaningless.

When multi-ethnic political units arose, the possibility for religious rivalry appeared but seldom materialised. Ambitious high priests from time to time tried to influence rulers to support their creeds, not (most of the time) to suppress other beliefs. In most great empires from Persia to China, several great and important religions flourished with only marginal conflict. When a religion was actively persecuted, it was mostly for clear political reasons, as when Christians in 18th century Japan were considered agents of European colonisation.

It appears that the idea that other religions should be suppressed is an innovation of the Abrahamic religions only. Probably it arose in Judaism as a response to national catastrophes, especially the Babylonian captivity—it was understood as the punishment of God for disobedience and idolatry. Consequently, religious freedom for the Jews became impossible, for their punitive God would punish the whole nation for the heresy of some. So in this first version followers of other religions were not generally persecuted, only if they belonged to the chosen people.

The compulsoriness of the true religion was inherited by Christianity and Islam, without, however, the ethnic limitation: the Creator of the world is Lord of every human being. Everybody on Earth must be made to worship Him. This singular meme is very virulent when it joins forces with aggressive imperialism. It makes rulers more willing to conquer heathen people and soldiers more determined to fight, and the converted population of the conquered lands will be more loyal to the empire, the protector of faith. And indeed, with the exception of South and East Asia, it has conquered the whole world.

This strong tendency to exclusivity led to intrareligious violence as well. Many more Christians were killed for their faith by other Christians than by all others together, and in the end, this resulted in the invention of tolerance: the ruling elite decided to stop actively persecuting some locally minor Christian communities. The question is: is this the proper mindset to approach other religions in the age of globalisation?

4. Conclusion: beyond tolerance

*Hostilities in this world are
never stilled by hostility,
For they are stilled by peacefulness:
this is a true, eternal law.³⁶*

Having surveyed several cases of the peaceful coexistence of religions, we saw that ‘tolerance’ was mostly inadequate to describe the phenomenon. As preliminarily suggested, the reason for this is that the concept is firmly rooted in the history of Christian religion—more particularly, in the thousand-years-old practice of ruthless and bloody suppression of even slightly different versions of the faith.

We could define tolerance as refraining from suppressing the other.³⁷ This seemingly harmless definition, however, suggests two things: first, that we are unequal in strength, for I could suppress you, and second, that I have some motivation to suppress you, but for some reason (perhaps magnanimity) I stop myself. So tolerance, this seemingly positive attitude, in fact implies inequality and hostility.

Reflecting on this, we may realise that tolerance is miserably inadequate as a ground for interreligious and intercultural dialogue. You ‘tolerate’ what you do not like, what you would like to annihilate, just out of some practical wisdom you restrain yourself. We, however, do not want to be merely ‘tolerated’: we want to be accepted, esteemed, possibly even loved, and the same holds for our partners in the dialogue.

Of course, tolerance is a huge step forward from persecution, suppression, and interreligious conflict. Moreover, it is a very nice personal trait, an aspect of wisdom: it is the ability to subdue the xenophobic animal instinct that tends to interpret any unusual behaviour as dangerous and therefore provoking aggression. However, in intercultural and interreligious dialogue our aim must be set much higher: we should strive for true mutual acceptance, both intellectually and emotionally.

This implies that all parties involved have to give up any sense of superiority. We must not think that our culture is more developed, successful, civilised, natural, or logical, and we must not think that our religion is *the* true one. This is anything but a light demand on the Christian and Muslim participants of the dia-

³⁶ *Dhammapada* 5 (my translation).

³⁷ Of course, words can and do change their meanings, even in spite of their etymology. Surely many people use ‘tolerance’ in a much more positive sense; still, I feel that in such sensitive matters proper terminology is important. In any case, I am not debating a word but an attitude.

logue. Still, unless we wholeheartedly accept that there are innumerable valid and valuable paths, there will be no real dialogue but only negotiations between diplomats of hostile powers.

This strong kind of religious pluralism may seem a logical impossibility for the exclusivist religions: if Allah is the only god, Kṛṣṇa cannot be another. Now can anybody seriously maintain that the eternal Being has a *real* name, a particular form of air vibration, according to the phonemes of a transitory human tongue, be it Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, or Sanskrit? Pluralism is not a question of logic but of goodwill. The history of religions consists of *both* keeping alive the old faith *and* reinterpreting it. When Jesus said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her',³⁸ he did not revoke the Mosaic Law but rather suggested a (radically) new meaning for it.

So along with the dialogue, we first of all have to work on ourselves. It should be a moral duty for theologians and other interpreters of holy traditions to show that according to their respective religion all creeds (including atheism) can be equally valid and good. It is a general duty to humanity, but more particularly to their own religion—for I think those religions that cannot make this crucial step, insisting on their exclusivity, will become marginalised in the next century or so.

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³⁸ John 8:7, in *The Jerusalem Bible* 1968.

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The Self-Defence Scroll of Kyokushinkai Karate: Analysing the *Mokuroku* Ōyama Masutatsu Received from Daitō-ryū *Aikijūjutsu* Master Yoshida Kōtarō

Abstract

This paper aims to examine the self-defence techniques of the Kyokushinkai *karate* style, with a primary focus on one of its popular legends. According to the myth, the founder Ōyama Masutatsu had extensive training in the art of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* (the ancestor art of modern *aikidō*) under a master called Yoshida Kōtarō and received the ‘license of full transmission’ (*menkyo kaiden*) scroll of the Daitō-ryū school.

The basis of this research is a high-resolution photocopy of the document (unfortunately due of copyright concerns, the picture of the scroll could not be featured in this paper; however a complete transcription and translation are included in the appendices). The paper dwells into the historical connections between the arts of Kyokushinkai, Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*, and *aikidō* supported by circumstantial evidence and gives a brief technical comparison of the self-defence techniques of Kyokushinkai and the curricula of Daitō-ryū and *aikidō*. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the scroll itself, examining its structure and terminology and some techniques included in the scroll that are possibly featured in the Kyokushinkai curriculum, with special attention to stick and parasol techniques.

The research gives a full analysis of Kyokushinkai self-defence techniques, which can be found in the original and revised editions of *What is Karate?*, *This is Karate*, *Advanced Karate*, and *Mas Oyama's Essential Karate*, written by the founder of Ōyama Masutatsu himself, as well as *Kyokushin Karate Self-Defense Techniques* by high-ranking Kyokushinkai practitioner Bobby Lowe. The self-defence techniques found in the aforementioned texts show many similarities to the techniques published in various *jūdō*, *aikidō*, and *aikijūjutsu* books. Considering the historical facts (based on circumstantial evidence) that Ōyama Masutatsu trained in *jūdō* in the gym of Sone Kōzō, was a direct student of Daitō-ryū instructor Yoshida Kōtarō, and personally knew (allegedly even trained under) *aikidō* master Shioda Gōzō (founder of the Yōshinkan style of *aikidō*), it is highly likely that the parallels between the various self-defence techniques of Kyokushinkai *karate*, Kōdōkan *jūdō*, Yōshinkan *aikidō*, and Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* are not merely coincidence.

However, a thorough examination of the supposed Daitō-ryū scroll that Ōyama received from Yoshida Kōtarō revealed that the document itself is not a *menkyo kaiden* (license of full transmission) certificate. Furthermore, compared to the extant official scrolls of the Daitō-ryū tradition (*Hidden mokuroku*, *Hidden okugi no koto*), while the structure is similar, the scroll of Ōyama is cer-

tainly not a conventional transmission document of the Daitō-ryū school. The scroll that Yoshida granted to Ōyama is titled *Yoshida-shiki sutekki-parasoru goshinjutsu mokuroku* (Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence scroll), which (at the time of this research) appears to be a ‘one-of-a-kind’ transmission document on its own, officially signed by ‘The founder of Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence, Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* representative instructor, Yoshida Kōtarō’. The techniques listed in the scroll are unique in their terminology, and since there is no further information about the execution of these techniques, there is only a limited, assumption-based possibility to compare these techniques to those of the Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* curriculum. For the same reason, it is also nearly impossible to certainly conclude whether the techniques from the scroll are featured as self-defence techniques in Ōyama’s *karate* books. Certain techniques found in the books could be matched with some technical names from the scroll; however, these connections cannot be stated with complete certainty.

The research concluded in this paper answers the questions of whether Ōyama Masutatsu received a ‘license of full transmission’ in the Daitō-ryū school and whether there is in fact a possible connection between the Kyokushinkai self-defence techniques and the Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* curriculum. While there are certainly Daitō-ryū techniques (among others) similar to those of the Kyokushinkai self-defence curriculum, and Ōyama without a doubt was a student of a Daitō-ryū representative instructor, he never received an official transmission license in the art of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*.

Keywords: Oyama Masutatsu, Yoshida Kotaro, Kyokushinkai, Daito-ryu, *karate*, *aikijujutsu*, *aikido*, *menkyo kaiden*, self-defence, scroll

Introduction

Alongside the *karate* 空手 schools of Shōtōkan 松濤館, Gōjū-ryū 剛柔流, Shitō-ryū 糸東流, and Wadō-ryū 和道流—also known as ‘the major four schools’ (*daiyon ryūha* 大四流派)—the Kyokushinkai 極真会 is one of the most popular and influential style of Japanese *karate*. Founded by Ōyama Masutatsu 大山倍達—often referred by his title ‘president’ (*sōsai* 総裁) as the head of the organisation—the style is famous for its full-contact combat and self-defence-oriented approach. With such popularity, however, many myths and legends appear as well, some even hardly distinguishable from real facts.

This paper aims to once and for all clarify at least one of these myths, particularly about the self-defence curriculum of Kyokushinkai, which (at least according to the legend) is originated from the Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* 大東流合気柔術 school, the main basis of modern-day *aikidō* 合気道. While the founder Ōyama Masutatsu himself was well-versed in various combat forms (whether it be striking or grappling), and his published books are filled with photographs and explanations of various self-defence techniques similar to Japanese grappling arts, such as *jūdō* 柔道, *jūjutsu* 柔術, and *aikidō*, according to the popular legend, he received the license of full transmission (*menkyo kaiden* 免許皆伝) in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* as well. The basis of this myth is a scroll that Ōyama

Masutatsu indeed received from a licensed Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* instructor, a certain Yoshida Kōtarō 吉田幸太郎. However, whether or not this scroll was a license of full transmission, making Ōyama a Daitō-ryū master is highly debatable, as if the claim that the self-defence curriculum of Kyokushinkai is influenced by Daitō-ryū techniques.

This paper accumulates years of research, starting with a simple black and white photograph about the alleged scroll. An in-depth analysis follows, not only of the said scroll itself but also of Kyokushinkai's primary sources (focusing on its self-defence techniques) and the Daitō-ryū curriculum. Moreover, circumstantial evidence is also examined in order to piece together the bigger picture about the self-defence techniques of Kyokushinkai and the Daitō-ryū scroll of Ōyama Masutatsu, deviating the facts from the fiction. As the author, I intend disprove some myths and answer some questions, to all who are interested about a lesser-known chapter in the history of modern *karate*.

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The founder of Kyokushinkai *karate*: Ōyama Masutatsu *sōsai*

Conflicting sources

As Ōyama Masutatsu is one of the most famous masters of *karate*, there is an abundance of reliable information available about his life and training history. Most of these sources come from anecdotes and biographies written by former students, as well as articles, interviews scattered around in different publications (e.g., *Black Belt Magazine*), and websites, which is both the reason and the result of the lack of proper research on the subject. Two significant biographies are available in English, written by two of Ōyama's *uchi deshi*:¹ Cameron Quinn and Howard Collins. Both Quinn's 1987,² and Collins' 1995 book,³ contain a brief summary of Ōyama's life, with the mention of notable episodes in Kyokushinkai *karate* 極真会空手 history.

¹ *Uchi deshi* 内弟子, which literally means 'inner student', is a general term used for 'live-in students', who were living in or near the training hall (*dōjō* 道場) and spent most of their time training and or maintaining the *dōjō* for either a short (from a few months to a year) or longer period. Usually, *uchi deshi* were the most intimate, closest students to the master and received the most intensive instruction.

² *The Budo Karate of Mas Oyama: Philosophical Foundations of Japan's Strongest Fighting Art* (Quinn 1987: 33–57).

³ *The Absolute Karate* (Collins 1995: 31–49).

In Japanese, Yamaguchi Noboru 山口昇 published his book in 1995 titled *Ōyama Masutatsu to wa nani ka?* 大山倍達とは何か? (What is MAS OYAMA?) which is a compilation of various interviews conducted with Ōyama Masutatsu himself, as well as his students, relatives, and friends.⁴ Also, a comprehensive biography was written in 2006 under the title *Ōyama Masutatsu seiden* 大山倍達正伝 (The True Story of Ōyama Masutatsu) by journalists Kojima Kazushi 小島一志 and Tsukamoto Yoshiko 塚本佳子. This work challenges many aspects of the so called ‘Ōyama Masutatsu legend’, which were presented as facts for most students—even if further investigations into the topic raises many questions about the veracity of these popular anecdotes.

While this paper might be the first attempt to give scientific research about certain aspects of the life of Ōyama Masutatsu and the history of Kyokushinkai, here only a cursory biography is referenced based on the biographies found in *The Budo Karate of Mas Oyama* and *The Absolute Karate*, supplemented with the contents of *Ōyama Masutatsu to wa nani ka?* and *Ōyama Masutatsu seiden*, using them primarily as reference points of the events related to the subject rather than as comprehensive research about the life of Ōyama Masutatsu.⁵ As for online sources, the published biography found on the official website dedicated to Ōyama Masutatsu⁶ was used, complemented with various independent articles and interviews, which provide circumstantial evidence.⁷

Controversial early years

Ōyama Masutatsu was born on the 4 June 1921⁸ as Ch’oe Yŏngŭi 최영의 in Waryong-ri 와룡리 village,⁹ close to the city of Gimje-si 김제시 in the south-

⁴ Yamaguchi 1995.

⁵ See note: 7.

⁶ See: IKO Kyokushinkaikan 2009: *History of Mas Oyama*.

⁷ Due to limitations in space and content, this paper focuses solely on Ōyama Masutatsu’s training history, omitting other episodes from his life, such as his fights with bulls, isolated training periods in the mountains, and various encounters in street fights. Only those are mentioned that are directly connected to the subject of this research.

⁸ There are several debates about Ōyama’s real date of birth. According to Tsukamoto Yoshiko, 27 July 1923 is recorded on his family certificate, which was made upon relocating to Japan. His original, Korean certificate indicates that he was born on 4 June 1922. However, Ōyama’s relatives in Korea confirmed that the Korean register is also wrong, because while the day and month are correct, the year of birth was in fact 1921 (Kojima –Tsukamoto 2006: 21–27).

⁹ The name of the village Waryong-ri 와룡리 with Chinese characters (called *hanja* 한자 in Korean) is written as 臥龍里, which should be read as Garyū-ri in Japanese. Interestingly, the only form (*kata* 型) in Kyokushinkai karate known to be created by Ōyama Masutatsu himself, is called Garyū 臥龍.

ern part of Korea.¹⁰ Actually, the early martial arts training of Ōyama is rather vague—it is even debatable when he received his *shodan* 初段 (first degree black belt) rank.

In 1938, Ch'oe Yōngŭi emigrated to Japan and entered the Yamanashi Youth Aviation Institute (Yamanashi kōkū gijutsu gakkō 山梨航空技術学校). He found accommodation in the outskirts of Tōkyō, with a family (also originated from Korea) that went by the Japanese name Ōyama 大山. Thus he later changed his name to Ōyama Masutatsu 大山倍達.¹¹ In the same year, Ōyama started to train in Shōtōkan *karate* 松濤館空手,¹² and at the age of 15, he reached *shodan*.¹³ According to his autobiography, at the age of 18, Ōyama had already reached *nidan* 二段 (second degree black belt) in *karate*.¹⁴ If his year of birth is 1923 as speculated (i.e., as it appears on his Japanese birth certificate), it is supposed to be around 1938 when he received *shodan*, and 1941 when he received *nidan*.¹⁵ However, in the book *Ōyama Masutatsu to wa nani ka?* there is an interview with Ōyama and the famous Korean wrestler Rikidōzan 力道山, in which Ōyama states the following.

I started my karate training while I was enrolling to the Takudai (Takushoku University) in the 17th year of Shōwa (1942). [...] I was taught self-defence by Funakoshi Gikō sensei who is the son of the still living Funakoshi Gijin sensei. [...] Then either in 18th (1943) or the 19th (1944) year of Shōwa, I received my first *dan*.¹⁶

This is another example of the many controversies surrounding the history of Ōyama Masutatsu. Ōyama allegedly enrolled to Takushoku University 拓殖大学,¹⁷ where he picked up boxing again (which he earlier trained in in Korea). He

¹⁰ Collins 1995: 31; Quinn 1987: 33.

¹¹ Collins 1995: 33–34.

¹² This was supposedly a branch *dōjō* of the Shōtōkan style, not the famous school led by Funakoshi himself, since Ōyama only started to train with Funakoshi after he entered into Takushoku University a few years later.

¹³ Oyama 1987: 9–10.

¹⁴ Oyama 1987: 10.

¹⁵ In Quinn's biography, Ōyama started to learn Shōtōkan *karate* at Takushoku University under Funakoshi Gichin in 1938, he received *nidan* at the age of 17, and he was already *yondan* 四段 (fourth degree black belt) by the age of 20 (Quinn 1987: 34).

¹⁶ 昭和十七年に、拓大（拓殖大学）に入ってから、自分で唐手というものをやり始めたわけです。[...] それは、今生きてる船越義人先生の息子さんの義行先生から手ほどきを受けました。[...] そうして昭和十八年か九年に、私は初段をもらいました。（Yamaguchi 1995: 230.）

¹⁷ Despite being 'common knowledge' among Kyokushinkai practitioners and being testified by famous Takushoku students and martial artists, including Kimura Masahiko and Shioda Gōzō

also started to train in Kōdōkan *jūdō* 講道館柔道 and befriended the legendary *jūdō* champion Kimura Masahiko 木村政彦.¹⁸ Kimura Masahiko attended Takushoku University where he was classmates with Yōshinkan *aikidō* 養神館合気道 founder Shioda Gōzō 塩田剛三.¹⁹ At Takushoku University, Ōyama continued his training in *karate* and joined the Shōtōkan *dōjō*, in Zōshigaya 雑司ヶ谷, Toshima ward 豊島区 of Tōkyō,²⁰ led by the legendary founder Funakoshi Gichin 船越義珍 and his third son Funakoshi Gigō 船越義豪, where Ōyama trained for two years.²¹ Either during or after his two years of training at the Shōtōkan, around 1941–1942, Ōyama Masutatsu became affiliated with Korean master Sō Neichū 曹寧柱 (Cho Yōngchu 조영주 in Korean), who taught him Gōjū-ryū *karate* 剛柔流空手.²²

After the war

During and after the Second World War, the second half of the 1940s were turbulent years for Ōyama.²³ He continued his formal training in the beginning of the 1950s. Around this time, alongside training with Sō Neichū, Ōyama also started to learn from Sō's teacher, famous Gōjū-ryū master and founder of the Gōjūkai 剛柔会, Yamaguchi Gōgen 山口剛玄 in the Asakusa 浅草 district of Tōkyō, eventually reaching *rokudan* 六段 (sixth degree black belt) under Yamaguchi.²⁴ In 1951, Ōyama started training in Kōdōkan *jūdō* again at the *dōjō* of Sone

(Li 2014b), in *Ōyama Masutatsu seiden*, Tsukamoto states that after extensive research, they were unable to find Ōyama Masutatsu's name (nor any of his possible aliases) in the student and alumni records of Takushoku University. This indicates that, while Ōyama may have trained at the various martial arts clubs and met with Kimura and Shioda at Takushoku University, he likely never was formally a student at the university (Kojima –Tsukamoto 2006: 115–116). Note that in Quinn's biography the author only states that Ōyama trained in Funakoshi Gichin's *dōjō* at Takushoku University, but he never mentioned that Ōyama enrolled at Takushoku as a student (Quinn 1987: 34).

¹⁸ Collins 1995: 34.

¹⁹ Li 2014b: *Aikido and Judo – Interview with Gozo Shioda and Masahiko Kimura*

²⁰ Likely, this was the famous *dōjō* Funakoshi Gichin, first opened in 1935, after which the Shōtōkan style was eventually named (Funakoshi 1975: 83–85.)

²¹ Collins 1995: 34.

²² There is a possibility that Kimura Masahiko introduced Ōyama, since Sō Neichū was Kimura's teacher in Gōjū-ryū (Collins 1995: 34–35).

²³ Including getting into constant street fights with the occupational forces, which ended in an arrest and six months of custody in jail, entering Waseda University to study in its Physical Education Department, killing an armed assailant in self-defence, and two isolated training periods in the mountains, first at Mt Minobu 身延山 and then at Mt Kiyosumi 清澄山 (Collins 1995: 36–41; Quinn 1987: 35–45; IKO Kyokushinkaikan 2009).

²⁴ Noble 2008: *An Interview with Goshi Yamaguchi*.

Kōzō 曾根幸蔵 in Tōkyō.²⁵ Supposedly, he trained under Sone for four years, eventually reaching *yondan* 四段 (fourth degree black belt) in Kōdōkan *jūdō*.²⁶ In 1952, Ōyama went on a teaching trip to the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and he only returned to Japan after 10 months. In 1954, he opened his own school, the Ōyama *dōjō* 大山道場, first outdoors in a park of the Mejrō 目白 district of Tōkyō, then in 1956 in the Ikeburuo 池袋 district. Around this time, Ōyama also toured East and Southeast Asia to learn martial arts, especially in Okinawa 沖縄 the birthplace of *karate*, Hong Kong, and Thailand.²⁷ In 1958, Ōyama published his first book under the title *What is Karate?* with collaboration of his friends, including Richard Kim,²⁸ who also appeared in some of the pictures in the book.²⁹

In 1964, the new headquarters (*honbu dōjō* 本部道場) was opened in Ikebukuro, where the International Karate Federation (IKO) was also formed. This can be seen as the official birth of the Kyokushinkai *karate* style.³⁰ In 1965, Ōyama's second book (followed by many) was published under the title *This is Karate*, which showed a more advanced material of the Kyokushinkai syllabus.³¹ Also, this is the book in which Yoshida Kōtarō was mentioned by Ōyama himself. From the 1960s, Ōyama Masutatsu focused on teaching both in Japan and abroad and wrote more books about Kyokushinkai *karate*. He was the leader of his school, never stopped training and teaching until his death on 26 April 1994.³²

²⁵ IKO Kyokushinkaikan 2009.

²⁶ Collins 1995: 41; Quinn 1987: 35.

²⁷ Collins 1995: 42–44; Quinn 1987: 46–51; IKO Kyokushinkaikan 2009

²⁸ Richard Kim, another famous (and also controversial) master of martial arts, was born in Hawaii in 1919, where he first started to learn boxing, *jūdō*, and *karate* in his youth. He moved to Japan in 1939, where he continued his study in martial arts. Between 1945 and 1952, he studied Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* under Yoshida Kōtarō. Around the same time, he also started to train with Yamaguchi Gōgen and Ōyama Masutatsu (it is likely that Richard Kim introduced Ōyama to Yoshida Kōtarō). In 1959, Richard Kim relocated to San Francisco and remained there until his death in 2001 (Collins 1995: 46; Gold 2011: *Aikido Journal Encyclopedia – Richard Kim*).

²⁹ See note: 141 (Oyama 1959: 74–75).

³⁰ Collins 1995: 46–47, Quinn 1987: 54.

³¹ Collins 1995: 47–48.

³² Collins 1995: 47–49.

An outline on Daitō-ryū aikijūjutsu

Short history

The art of Daitō-ryū aikijūjutsu 大東流合気柔術 is one of the most popular traditional jūjutsu 柔術 schools still practiced in Japan and worldwide, mainly because of its historical connection to the modern art of aikidō 合気道.

Takeda Sōkaku 武田惣角—who is likely the founder of the school—was born in Aizu 会津 domain in 1859.³³ His father, Takeda Sōkichi 武田惣吉, was a country samurai (gōshi 郷士) with a small plot of land to cultivate. Sōkichi founded a public school for children (terakoya 寺子屋) at the local temple,³⁴ and he also was a master in bōjutsu 棒術 (staff), kenjutsu 剣術 (swordsmanship), and sumō 相撲 wrestling.³⁵ Sōkaku's maternal grandfather was allegedly

³³ The lineage of the Daitō-ryū aikijūjutsu school traces back its own roots to the Heian-period 平安時代 (794–1185), appointing Shinra Saburō Minamoto no Yoshimitsu 新羅三郎源義光 (1045–1127) as the founder (Pranin 1996: 42). According to the official Daitō-ryū history, the descendants of Minamoto no Yoshimitsu, the Takeda-clan 武田氏 (which also includes famous warlord Takeda Shingen 武田信玄), eventually settled in Aizu domain 会津藩 (today's Fukushima prefecture 福島県) and transmitted the secret techniques of Daitō-ryū through generations (Pranin 1996: 10–20, 42–43). Apparently, the earliest documentation of Daitō-ryū started with famous martial artist Takeda Sōkaku (1859–1943). In the Daitō-ryū lineage, Takeda Sōkaku is officially called the 'reviver of the school' (*chūkō no so* 中興の祖) instead of the 'founder' (*ryūso* 流祖). However, since contemporary research has thus far failed to find evidence on the existence of Daitō-ryū prior to Takeda Sōkaku, it is logical to conclude that Takeda himself is most likely the actual founder of Daitō-ryū (Pranin 1996: 9–11, 22–23). Therefore, this paper refers to Takeda Sōkaku as the founder of Daitō-ryū.

³⁴ Sōkichi tried to give his son a formal education in the school. However, the young Sōkaku, due to constantly misbehaving, was expelled and never taught formally how to write—therefore Sōkaku was considered to be illiterate for most of his life (Pranin 1996: 12–13). According to Kondō Katsuyuki, however, Sōkaku could actually read and even write some characters himself (Pranin 1996: 154). In his book *Hidden In Plain Sight*, the author Ellis Amdur raises the theory that Takeda Sōkaku may have been left-handed (Amdur 2018: 218), which makes learning calligraphy difficult, as it traditionally must be done with the right hand. Amdur's theory is further supported by the accounts of Sagawa Yukiyoshi (direct student of Sōkaku), who stated that Sōkaku excelled in one-handed sword strikes, even being able to switch hands with ease (Kimura 2017: 47) between cuts. According to this, Takeda Sōkaku was either born or trained to be ambidextrous.

³⁵ Takeda Sōkichi held the rank *ōzeki* 大関, which was the highest rank in *sumō* at the time (today it is only second to the rank *yokozuna* 横綱). The young Sōkaku was a talented wrestler, and in his teenage years he would often participate in local tournaments. The influence of *sumō* on Daitō-ryū can be seen clearly, since certain Daitō-ryū techniques are identical to, or at least have strong resemblance to *sumō* techniques (cf. Kondo 2000: 89–93, 127–130, 213–223; Ishibashi 2015: 166, 196, 226, 234, 294, 307–308, 324–325; Kimura 2005: 31–32, 41–42; Newton-Toff 2000: 89–96).

a certain Kurokouchi Dengorō 黒河内伝五郎, a master of *kenjutsu*, *sōjutsu* 槍術 (spearsmanship), *jūjutsu*, and other martial arts.³⁶

Takeda Sōkaku in his youth learnt spear techniques of the Takada-ha Hōzōin-ryū *sōjutsu* 高田派宝蔵院流槍術 school and *sumō* (likely also *jūjutsu*) from his father and grandfather. He also became the student of Ono-ha Ittō-ryū *kenjutsu* 小野派一刀流劍術 under Shibuya Tōma 渋谷東馬 in Aizu.³⁷ In his teens, he was sent to Tōkyō to learn Kashima Shinden Jikishinkage-ryū *kenjutsu* 鹿島神傳直心影流劍術 from Sakakibara Kenkichi 榊原健吉,³⁸ and later he also became the student of Momoi Shunzō 桃井春蔵, master of the Kyōshin Meichi-ryū *kenjutsu* 鏡新明知流劍術 school.³⁹ There is little information known about Takeda by the end of the century, but it is certain that Takeda taught Daitō-ryū publicly already in 1898. From that point, Takeda's teaching history is well documented in his enrolment books (*eimeiroku* 英名録), where he appears under the title of Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu honbuchō* 本部長 (director of the headquarters).⁴⁰ From 1910, Takeda mainly resided in Hokkaidō 北海道 for the next 20 years. The majority of his most influential students were taught here in the 1910s, including Sagawa Yuki Yoshi 佐川幸義, Horikawa Kōdō 堀川幸道, Matsuda Toshimi 松田敏美, and Yoshida Kōtarō. In 1915, Takeda Sōkaku held a seminar in the town of Engaru 遠軽 in Hokkaidō, where Yoshida Kōtarō brought Ueshiba Morihei 植芝盛平 to participate and introduced him to Takeda.⁴¹ Ueshiba later became Takeda's most famous student, as the founder of *aikidō*.

Between 1921 and 1922, Takeda travelled to the Tōhoku and Kyōto areas 京都府, and he spent approximately half a year in Ayabe 綾部 at Ueshiba Morihei's residence, located at the headquarters of the Ōmoto-kyō 大本教 *shintō* 神道 sect. During this time, Takeda taught the Ōmoto-believers and also gave private instruction to Ueshiba. In 1922, before he left, Takeda granted an instructor license to Ueshiba, making him officially a representative instructor (*kyōju dairi* 教授代理) of Daitō-ryū. It is important to note that 1922 was also the starting point, when Takeda began to call his art *aikijūjutsu* 合気柔術 instead of *jūjutsu* 柔術.⁴² From the beginning of the 1930s, Takeda made frequent visits to Ueshiba

³⁶ Pranin 1996: 12–13; Ishibashi 2015: 36–37.

³⁷ Pranin 1996: 14–15; Ishibashi 2015: 36.

³⁸ Pranin 1996: 15; Ishibashi 2015: 36.

³⁹ Pranin 1996: 17; Ishibashi 2015: 37.

⁴⁰ Note that at that time, Daitō-ryū was still simply called *jūjutsu*, not *aikijūjutsu* as it is known today. Also, despite named as the leader of the headquarters, Takeda Sōkaku himself never established one: he was constantly travelling around, conducting 10-day seminars, mainly in the Tōhoku 東北 area of Japan until 1910 (Pranin 1996: 23; Kimura 2017: 135).

⁴¹ Pranin 1996: 24; Kondo 2000: 23–25.

⁴² The term *aiki* 合気 itself evidently had already been used by Takeda for over a decade at that point: in the notes to Sagawa Yuki Yoshi's father Sagawa Nenokichi 佐川子之吉, Takeda gave

Morihei in Tōkyō.⁴³ Therefore many of Ueshiba's early students (Shioda Gōzō, Mochizuki Minoru 望月稔, Yonekawa Shigemi 米川成美, etc.) had personally met Takeda Sōkaku.⁴⁴

In 1933, Ueshiba started to teach a group at the *Asahi Shinbun* 朝日新聞 newspaper headquarters in Ōsaka, led by former *sumō* wrestler Hisa Takuma 久琢磨, who was the director of General Affairs at the time. In 1936, Takeda appeared at the Asahi headquarters⁴⁵ and took over the teaching of the group from Ueshiba.⁴⁶ Takeda taught at the Asahi headquarters until 1939, when he gave the license of full transmission (*menkyo kaiden*) to Hisa Takuma—this was the only occasion when Takeda Sōkaku himself provided *menkyo kaiden* certification to anyone.⁴⁷ Takeda Sōkaku died in 1943, during one of his teaching trips in Aomori 青森.⁴⁸ His Daitō-ryū school lived on in the form of different branches founded by his students.

Lineages and their legacy

There are many larger and smaller branches formulated based on the teachings of Takeda Sōkaku. Hereby, only a brief outline will be given about the most

instructions such as 'apply *aiki*' (*aiki o kake* 合気をかけ) as early as 1913. The term 'apply *aiki*' also indicates that the term *aiki* 合気 itself was referred to as a concrete skill or technique by Takeda Sōkaku that one can 'apply', rather than any sort of mysterious, esoteric phenomena (Pranin 1996: 24–28, 81–82; Pranin 2010: 331; Kondo 2000: 24–25; Kimura 2017: 81–83; Kimura 1995: 59–60).

⁴³ Pranin 1996: 27; Kondo 2000: 27–28.

⁴⁴ See: Pranin 2010.

⁴⁵ There are conflicting sources on whether Takeda appeared on his own or was invited by the newspaper (Pranin 1996: 118). It is interesting to note that a reporter, Osaka Yoichi 尾坂與市 from the Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun, had travelled to Hokkaidō and conducted an interview with Takeda Sōkaku in his home a few years earlier. The article was published in 1930 under the title 'Ima Bokuden' 今ト伝, referring to famous swordsman Tsukahara Bokuden 塚原ト伝 (translated into English by Stanley Pranin, as 'Modern-day Bokuden'; Pranin 1996: 35–39). Therefore, the Asahi newspaper had been aware of the existence of Takeda Sōkaku long before they started to employ Takeda's student, Ueshiba Morihei, to teach martial arts.

⁴⁶ Upon hearing about the arrival of his teacher, Ueshiba suddenly left Ōsaka without meeting Takeda, and the relationship between the two ended permanently. Ueshiba then independently started to work on his own style, which eventually became the art of *aikidō*.

⁴⁷ There are many individuals who claim to hold *menkyo kaiden* in Daitō-ryū. However, most students of Takeda Sōkaku were given 'representative instructor' (*kyōju dairi* 教授代理) certificates, which were far from the full transmission of the system. Such a certificate did not qualify them to give away such titles. Therefore, any *menkyo kaiden* certificate that was not issued by Takeda Sōkaku or his successors should be considered with certain doubts (for further information see: Dobróka 2022).

⁴⁸ Pranin 1996: 27; Kondo 2000: 27–28.

prominent traditions, to put the current position of the Daitō-ryū transmission into proper context, upon which its relationship with Ōyama Masutatsu and Kyokushinkai history could be evaluated.

Takeda Tokimune 武田時宗 (1916–1993) was the third son of Takeda Sōkaku—more precisely, the first son from Sōkaku’s second wife—and started training with his father as a child in 1925, in order to be his designated successor. After Sōkaku’s death, he became the head (*sōke* 宗家) of the Takeda family and continued to develop Daitō-ryū as the head of the school as well. After the war, he moved to Abashiri 網走 in Hokkaidō and opened his own *dōjō*, the Daitōkan 大東館, in 1953.⁴⁹ Tokimune organised the basic techniques into a standardised set of 118 forms (*kata* 形) under the name of *Hiden mokuroku* 秘伝目録 (Scroll of secret transmission),⁵⁰ and created the curriculum’s nomenclature.⁵¹ After the death Takeda Tokimune, his successor became Kondō Katsuyuki 近藤勝之, who received the *menkyo kaiden* certificate and the representative of the headmaster (*sōke dairi* 宗家代理) title from Tokimune.⁵² Because of his inheritance and after the name of his *dōjō*, the line of Tokimune Takeda is also called the ‘mainline’ or the ‘Daitōkan-line’, which is also one of the biggest, most influential Daitō-ryū branches to this day.⁵³

Hisa Takuma (1895–1980), after receiving *menkyo kaiden* in Daitō-ryū, kept teaching the art in the Kansai 関西 area, but in his last years he moved to Tōkyō. His students left in Ōsaka established the Takumakai 琢磨会 branch in 1975, to pass on the teachings of Hisa Takuma.⁵⁴ When Ueshiba Morihei (then later Takeda Sōkaku) taught at the Asahi headquarters, after the classes (when the teachers left), the students took pictures of the techniques that they had learnt as a memory aid. These pictures (along with technical notes) were organised into 11 volumes called the *Sōden* 総伝.⁵⁵ The *Sōden*, as a technical manual, was the basis of the curriculum taught at the Takumakai—parts of the *Sōden* were

⁴⁹ Kondo 2000: 27–31.

⁵⁰ Originally, in the *Hiden mokuroku* (Scroll of secret transmission), was the name of the first scroll given by Takeda Sōkaku. However, the original scroll did not contain names, only the number of articles and short descriptions of the techniques. Also, it is important to note that the *Hiden mokuroku* originally counted articles and not techniques themselves. Therefore, while the scroll is said to contain 118 articles, this does not mean the actual number of techniques. While Tokimune Takeda called his basic set *Hiden mokuroku* as well, its contents are different from the original, starting with the number of actual techniques and their names within the scroll (see the chapter: ‘What is a traditional Daitō-ryū scroll?’).

⁵¹ Ishibashi 2015: 46.

⁵² Pranin 1996: 31; Kondo 2000: 27–39.

⁵³ The current head of the ‘mainline’ is Kondō Katsuyuki’s younger brother, Kondō Masayuki 近藤昌之, who was appointed as the headmaster in 2020.

⁵⁴ Pranin 1996: 121.

⁵⁵ Pranin 1996: 108–110, 120.

published by Hisa Takuma in 1940 under the title *Kannagara no Budō* 惟神の武道 (The Heavenly Way of Martial Arts).⁵⁶ The Takumakai, however, stayed on good terms with Takeda Tokimune and recognised him as the headmaster of Daitō-ryū. Therefore, many of its students went to train under Tokimune at the Daitōkan—the Takumakai even adopted the *Hiden mokuroku* curriculum of the Daitōkan as the basics of their teaching.⁵⁷

Sagawa Yuki Yoshi (1902–1998) was regarded as one of the most skilled students of Takeda Sōkaku.⁵⁸ Sagawa opened a small *dōjō* in Tōkyō and organised the Daitō-ryū curriculum into 10 different levels (*gen* 元) with about 200 techniques each.⁵⁹ After the death of Sagawa Yuki Yoshi, the successor of the Sagawa-line (Sagawa-ha 佐川派) became Kimura Tatsuo 木村達雄, a mathematics professor of Tsukuba University 筑波大学,⁶⁰ who published multiple books about the life and teachings of Sagawa.⁶¹

Kōdō Horikawa 幸道堀川 (1894–1980) founded his own organisation, the Kōdōkai 幸道会, in 1950. It was the first Daitō-ryū school that had set established branch schools abroad, mainly in the United States, Canada, and Europe. After the death of Horikawa Kōdō, his successor became Inoue Yūsuke 井上祐助. However, multiple branches were born as the students became independent. One of the most notable of these is the Roppōkai 六方会 organisation, founded by Okamoto Seigō 岡本正剛 (1925–2015), who was a direct student of Kōdō.⁶² It is important to note that *nanadan* 七段 (seventh degree black belt) Kyokushinkai master Nishida Yukio 西田幸夫, a direct student of Ōyama Masutatsu, also learnt Daitō-ryū under Okamoto Seigō and became *godan* 五段 (fifth degree black belt) in the Roppōkai organisation.⁶³

⁵⁶ See: Hisa 1940.

⁵⁷ Pranin 1996: 31–32, 122–123.

⁵⁸ In fact, when Takeda Tokimune was called into military service during the Second World War, he left all of his belongings to Sagawa, in case he would not come back from the war. Later, in 1956, Takeda Munekiyo 武田宗清 (first son of Sōkaku) and Takeda Tokimune appointed Sagawa as the ‘head instructor’ (*sōhan* 宗範) of Daitō-ryū (Kondo 2000: 31; Kimura 2017: 40).

⁵⁹ Pranin 1996: 33; Kimura 2017: 141–142.

⁶⁰ Kondo 2000: 39–40.

⁶¹ See: Kimura 1995; Kimura 2005; Kimura 2017.

⁶² Pranin 1996: 32–33; Kondo 2000: 38–39.

⁶³ Nishida founded his own independent organisation called Kyokushin Karate Seibukai 極真空手清武会 in 1999, incorporating the elements of Kyokushinkai and Gōjū-ryū *karate*, Chinese martial arts, and Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* (Nishida 2019: 211).

Technical influences

It is widely believed that Daitō-ryū (and by that extension *aikidō* as well) is a traditional *jūjutsu* style, whose movements are based on Japanese sword fighting (*kenjutsu* 剣術), and many techniques are actually derived from grappling with short swords (*kogusoku* 小具足) on the battlefield.⁶⁴ While to some extent this might be true, there are other disciplines that had a great influence on the techniques of Daitō-ryū. One of these is apparently *sumō*, since Takeda Sōkichi was a professional *sumō* wrestler, and his son Sōkaku also received *sumō* training.⁶⁵ Takeda Tokimune also claimed that the roots of Daitō-ryū lie in an ancient martial art called *tegoi* 手乞, which is the ancestor of *sumō*.⁶⁶

It is not surprising that there are a lot of Daitō-ryū techniques that are similar to, or sometimes even identical to *sumō* moves. In the curriculum organised by Takeda Tokimune,⁶⁷ some of the terminology is based on *sumō* as well. Techniques like *kirikaeshi* 切返, *izori* 居反, *suso dori* 裾捕, *suso barai* 裾拂, *tsuki daoshi* 突倒, and *shumoku* 撞木 are identical (or at least similar) to *sumō* in both name and execution.⁶⁸ There are also many that may bear a different name but have a strong resemblance to *sumō* techniques, such as *hijigaeshi* 肘返 (Daitō-ryū) and *amiuchi* 網打 (*sumō*),⁶⁹ *iri chigai* 入違 (Daitō-ryū), and *tottari* (*sumō*).⁷⁰ The technique *ura otoshi* 裏落 is similar to the *soto musō* 外無双 technique of *sumō*,⁷¹ and in the Sagawa-line of Daitō-ryū, this technique is in fact called as *soto musō*,⁷² directly taken from *sumō*.⁷³ Therefore, *sumō* terms and techniques are quite common between the different Daitō-ryū lineages and an integral part of the technical legacy of the tradition.⁷⁴

⁶⁴ Pranin 1996: 48–49, 52–53.

⁶⁵ See note: 35.

⁶⁶ Pranin 1996: 41–42.

⁶⁷ See notes: 50, 51.

⁶⁸ cf. Kondo 2000: 89–93, 213–223; Ishibashi 2015: 166, 181, 196–197, 226, 234, 242, 307, 324–325; Newton–Toff 2000: 89–94.

⁶⁹ Cf. Kondo 2000: 127–130; Ishibashi 2015: 166; Newton–Toff 2000: 94–95.

⁷⁰ Cf. Ishibashi 2015: 305; Newton–Toff 2000: 92–93).

⁷¹ Cf. Kondo 2000: 77–81, 213–216; Ishibashi 2015: 180, 192–193, 308–309; Newton–Toff 2000: 94–95.

⁷² Cf. Kimura 2005: 31–32, 41–42; Newton–Toff 2000: 95.

⁷³ However, what Tokimune identifies as *shumoku* 撞木, Sagawa Yuki Yoshi refers to it as *katsugi waza* 担技 (Kimura 2017: 137). This further demonstrates the lack of unified terminology between the different Daitō-ryū lineages.

⁷⁴ The influence of *sumō* wrestling is not unique to the Daitō-ryū school and not uncommon in classic *jūjutsu* either. In ancient Japan, before the emergence of close-combat, which can be identified today as *jūjutsu* (Szabó 2015: 199–204), the samurai practiced *sumō* as the basis of their wrestling training (Shinohara 2004: 13). This is apparent in Kamakura period 鎌倉時代 (1185–1333) war-chronicles (*gunki monogatari* 軍記物語). In *The Tale of the Soga Brothers*

The forgotten Daitō-ryū master: Yoshida Kōtarō

Yoshida Kōtarō 吉田幸太郎 (1886–1966) is a lesser known, albeit important individual in the history of contemporary *budō*. Information on him is scattered in various sources,⁷⁵ including the research of the late Stanley Pranin (1945–2017), the biography of Sagawa Yuki Yoshi compiled by Kimura Tatsuo in the book *Transparent Power* (*Tōmei no chikara* 透明の力), and a three-part interview with former student of Yoshida, Hidemine Jibiki 地曳秀峰, published by Christopher Li on the *Aikidō Sangenkai* website.⁷⁶ Yoshida graduated from Waseda University 早稲田大学 and had a long career in journalism. At a time he was the editor of the Hokkaidō newspaper (*Hokkaidō shinbun* 北海道新聞). Apart from martial arts, he was famous for being a right-wing activist, as a member of such organisations as the Dark Ocean Society (Gen'yōsha 玄洋社) and the Black Dragon Society (Kokuryūkai 黒龍会).⁷⁷ He may also have attended an American university and was fluent in English.⁷⁸

Yoshida started training in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* in the early 1910s under the founder Takeda Sōkaku in Hokkaidō, and eventually he was awarded the *kyōju dairi* (representative instructor) title by Takeda,⁷⁹ which licenced him to officially teach Daitō-ryū.⁸⁰ As Takeda's student, Yoshida often accompanied him on his journeys to teach across Hokkaidō as an assistant among other famous practitioners, such as Sagawa Yuki Yoshi (founder of the Sagawa-ha Daitō-ryū line) or Matsuda Toshimi (instructor of Okuyama Ryūhō 奥山龍峰, who later

(*Soga monogatari* 曽我物語), there are descriptions of *sumō* matches between the warrior nobility (Cogan 1987: 26–34, 336). Therefore, there are scholars who theorise that *sumō* might be the ancestor of most *jūjutsu* schools (Yamamoto 1994: 67; Yamamoto–Shinohara 2001: 19–20; Shinohara 2004: 13; Shinohara 2005: 36).

⁷⁵ There is an individual chapter about Yoshida Kōtarō in Christopher M. Clarke's book titled *Budo Meijin* (see: Clarke 2015), which primarily uses the same sources cited here. However, though Clarke did a fine job doing his research on three lesser known martial artists (Yoshida Kōtarō 吉田幸太郎, Konishi Yasuhiro 小西康裕, and Mochizuki Minoru 望月稔) in his book, on many occasions his sources are far from reliable (for example, using posts from internet forums as citations, without further backup or circumstantial evidence). Therefore, while it certainly has great value as a starting point for those interested, it should be only considered as an informative work, rather than a proper source based on scientific research.

⁷⁶ See: Pranin: 1991, Pranin: 1996; Kimura 2017; Li 2014a: *Hidemine Jibiki – Hakko-ryu, Daito-ryu Aiki-Budo, and 'The Road to Softness', Part 2*.

⁷⁷ Pranin 1991: 142.

⁷⁸ Pranin 1991: 142, Li 2014a.

⁷⁹ Note that the founder of *aikidō* Ueshiba Morihei was awarded the same certification by Takeda in 1922 (Pranin 1991: 69, 142).

⁸⁰ The *kyōju dairi* was the highest license in Daitō-ryū, until in 1939 when Hisa Takuma received *menkyo kaiden* (license of full transmission) from Takeda Sōkaku himself at the Asahi News headquarters in Ōsaka (Pranin 1991: 73, Pranin 1996: 70–71, 117, 158).

founded Hakkō-ryū jūjutsu 八光流柔術).⁸¹ In his memoirs written in *Transparent Power*,⁸² Sagawa Yuki Yoshi gives some further insight into Yoshida's relationship with Takeda Sōkaku:

Kotaro Yoshida took special care of Takeda Sensei, and did things like giving his child piggy back rides, so Sensei gave him special attention and advice. But Takeda Sensei's normal teaching style was difficult or impossible to understand. He would never offer advice or correct mistakes.⁸³ [...] Takeda Sensei never indicated to his students whether or not they were doing well. He might give you some pointers if you did him favors like Yoshida Kotaro, but otherwise, he kept quiet.⁸⁴

Also, according to Sagawa, during Takeda's travels, Yoshida Kōtarō was truly successful in recruiting participants for the seminars, and therefore he was entrusted with the task.⁸⁵ Because of his abilities in networking, Yoshida is mainly known for the fact that he also introduced Ueshiba Morihei to Takeda Sōkaku in 1915 at the Hisada Inn of Engaru in Hokkaidō.⁸⁶ From that point, Ueshiba started to train diligently under Takeda and became an official Daitō-ryū instructor, until he founded the modern martial art *aikidō*. Since he introduced the two legendary martial artists to each other, it is fair to state that Yoshida Kōtarō had a crucial yet unrecognised role in the creation of *aikidō*.

However, this is not Yoshida Kōtarō's only important achievement in relation to Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*. Yoshida reportedly had an instrumental role in the name of the tradition itself: according to a story told by Takeda Tokimune, up until the end of the Meiji era, Takeda Sōkaku (who was considered to be illiterate)⁸⁷ called his school 'Yamatō-ryū' and taught it in the Tōhoku-area under that name. In 1915, when Yoshida Kōtarō (the editor of a newspaper, thus an educated man himself) started to learn the art, he pointed out to Takeda that the

⁸¹ In the book *Transparent Power*, Sagawa Yuki Yoshi recalls an entertaining story about how one time (in 1940 or 1941) Yoshida approached him, asking for help to 'teach a lesson' to a certain Okuyama Ryūhō, who was teaching Daitō-ryū under the name of Hakkō-ryū. Later, a fellow Daitō-ryū instructor Matsuda Toshimi showed up, clarifying that Okuyama was in fact his own student and not some kind of fraud as Yoshida had initially thought him to be (Kimura 2017: 54–57).

⁸² Interestingly, in the biography of Sagawa Yuki Yoshi, when Yoshida Kōtarō is first mentioned, it is also stated that he 'taught Daitō-ryū to the founder of Kyokushin Karate, Masutatsu Oyama' (Kimura 2017: 45).

⁸³ Kimura 2017: 125.

⁸⁴ Kimura 2017: 135.

⁸⁵ Kimura 2017: 57.

⁸⁶ Kimura 2017: 45; Pranin 1991: 142.

⁸⁷ See note: 34.

Chinese characters of the school's name (大東流) should be read as 'Daitō-ryū' instead of 'Yamatō-ryū'—therefore Takeda Sōkaku thereafter started to refer to his school as 'Daitō-ryū'.⁸⁸

In an interview conducted by Stanley Pranin, the founder of Takamura-ha Shindō Yōshin-ryū 高村派新道楊心流,⁸⁹ Takamura Yuki Yoshi 高村雪義 recalls the connection of his grandfather, Obata Shigeta 小幡茂太 (who had been *menkyo kaiden* in Shindō Yōshin-ryū and also learnt from Takeda Sōkaku),⁹⁰ with Yoshida Kōtarō. This can give further insight into Yoshida's education, teaching, and character:

My grandfather worked for a Tokyo newspaper as a reporter and traveled often. He had many friends in government and politics. He met Kotaro Yoshida while traveling. Yoshida Sensei and my grandfather discovered they had much in common so he introduced my grandfather to Takeda Sensei. I know my grandfather met Takeda Sensei several times but I am not sure when or where. [...] I know my grandfather was very impressed with Yoshida Sensei's technique and regarded him as a martial artist of phenomenal ability. Yoshida Sensei was instrumental in Morihei Ueshiba being introduced to Sokaku Takeda. He is also well known for instructing Mas Oyama, the founder of Kyokushinkai karate, and Richard Kim. My grandfather adopted several concepts and techniques from Yoshida Sensei and taught them in the dojo. We still do these forms as part of the Takamura school.

I know Yoshida Sensei and my grandfather still traveled together sometimes after 1930. Yoshida Sensei visited my father's house with my grandfather on several occasions when I was a small boy. I remember being scared of Yoshida Sensei. He dressed funny and occasionally played mean tricks on me.⁹¹

Besides introducing Ueshiba and Takeda to each other, Yoshida Kōtarō perhaps is mostly known for the fact that he taught Ōyama Masutatsu, the founder of

⁸⁸ This statement should be treated with some suspicion, however, as it is more likely that this story was a later addition to the lore of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* (Ishibashi 2015: 13).

⁸⁹ Shindō Yōshin-ryū 新道楊心流 (alternatively Shintō Yōshin-ryū 神道楊心流) is a 19th century *jūjutsu* school originated from the Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū 天神真楊流 and Yōshin Koryū 楊心古流 (also known as Totsuka-ha Yōshin-ryū 戸塚派楊心流) *jūjutsu* schools. The most famous master of the school is Ōtsuka Hironori 大塚博紀, who (after mastering *jūjutsu*) became a direct student of Shōtōkan founder Funakoshi Gichin. Ōtsuka later combined the teachings of Shindō Yōshin-ryū *jūjutsu* and Shōtōkan *karate*, thus creating his unique Japanese style of *karate* called Wadō-ryū 和道流 (Mol 2001: 214–215).

⁹⁰ Threadgill – Ohbata 2019: 106–107; Amdur 2018: 181–182.

⁹¹ Pranin – Ruiz – Maynard 1999: 25–26.

the Kyokushinkai *karate* style. Apart from the legends,⁹² there is a crucial testimony supporting the relationship between Yoshida and Ōyama given by Kondō Katsuyuki,⁹³ who also learnt under Yoshida around 1963.⁹⁴ In an interview conducted by Stanley Pranin, Kondō stated the following.

There were many names written in Yoshida Sensei's enrollment books. For example, the name of Masutatsu Oyama Sensei of Kyokushin karate appears. However, it is not certain whether Oyama Sensei actually studied with him, or just talked to him. Yoshida Sensei had been awarded another scroll that was not from the Daitō-ryū school. Among his personal techniques were the *tessenjutsu* (iron-fan techniques). Daitō-ryū also includes *tessenjutsu* in the *emonodori* techniques, but they are not separate techniques. I believe the fact that Yoshida Sensei had his own *tessenjutsu* scroll was proof that he conducted thorough research into the use of this weapon after having studied with Sokaku Sensei.⁹⁵

Here, Kondō raises his doubts not only about whether Ōyama actually got instruction from Yoshida but also about the statement that Yoshida taught Daitō-ryū to him, by inserting that Yoshida possessed teaching materials independent from the school of Takeda Sōkaku. With the transmission scroll becoming available (perhaps later than the interview was conducted), it verifies Ōyama as a student of Yoshida, but it is indeed debatable whether or not this instruction consisted of Daitō-ryū techniques.

However, it can be certainly stated that Yoshida was the teacher of Ōyama Masutatsu at one point, since it is mentioned not only by fellow Daitō-ryū practitioners but also by Ōyama himself, in his book titled *This is Karate*, first published in 1965.⁹⁶ In the introduction of the 12th chapter titled 'Special Drills', Ōyama writes the following.

⁹² See the chapter: 'Fantastic Claims and Where to Disprove Them'.

⁹³ See the chapter: 'Lineages and their legacy'.

⁹⁴ Pranin 1996: 161–163.

⁹⁵ 吉田先生の英名録には相当な方のお名前が書かれていました。例えば空手の極真会館の大山倍達先生など..でも英名録に載っているからといって大山先生が習われたのか、大東流の噂を聞いて吉田先生とお話ただけなのか、定かではありません。それから大東流の巻物としては伝承されていない巻物も吉田先生はもっていました。その代表的なものに鉄扇術というのがあります。大東流には獲物取りの中で鉄扇術というのがありますが、鉄扇術という独立したものはないのです。鉄扇術としての巻物を持っているという事は、恐らく先生が惣角先生に習われて、また独自に相当に研究されて一つ分野を切開いていったのだと思います。(Pranin 1988: 9–10; Pranin 1996: 162.)

⁹⁶ Oyama 1973: 209–210.

At this point, I should like to say a few words about my teacher, Kotaro Yoshida, who mastered unbelievable techniques through special drills. Despite the fact that he is the finest teacher of martial arts in the Takeda school, and is, in addition, the greatest authority on those arts, all of his life has been sad. He was unrivalled in the fields of Japanese *aikido*, sword fighting, judo and knife throwing. On the other hand, he's completely eccentric. He always wears a kimono and carries an iron-rib fan. [...] Today, as he approaches ninety years of age, even though he has many followers and though many of his pupils are now the teachers of other schools, he continues to lead a pitiable life of exposure to the elements.

When Yoshida was young, he never lost a match for reverse-hand techniques, sword fighting or judo. [...] As an example of just how really excellent this man's technique is, I will cite his ability to catch a fly in flight with a pair of chopsticks.⁹⁷

Here, Yoshida is described as the teacher of Ōyama and as a master of 'the Takeda school', which without a doubt is a reference to Daitō-ryū, founded by Takeda Sōkaku.

Kyokushinkai and the *aiki* arts: facts and fictions

Fantastic Claims and Where to Disprove Them

Like many things, Ōyama Masutatsu's training and proficiency in Daitō-ryū are also intertwined with various claims, myths, half-baked truths, and misconceptions. In order to unfold the facts, it may be worthwhile to first explore and disprove the fiction. Throughout the various *karate* websites writing about the history of Kyokushinkai and achievements of Ōyama *sōsai*, the most common version (if it is mentioned at all) about his training in Daitō-ryū is usually cited as the following:

⁹⁷ It may be interesting to note that Yoshida's feat of catching 'a fly in flight with a pair of chopsticks' was recreated in a scene in the famous 1984 Hollywood movie *The Karate Kid* (starring Noriyuki 'Pat' Morita as the character Mr Miyagi, based on the founder of the Gō-jū-ryū school, Miyagi Chōjun 宮城長順). Interestingly, in the movie, the protagonist Daniel LaRusso (played by Ralph Macchio) can be seen trying to learn *karate* on his own, using one of Ōyama's books *What is Karate?* or *Mastering Karate* (which is a reprinted edition of *What is Karate?*), as certain pages from the book (Oyama 1966: 58–59; Oyama 1981: 58–59) can be seen in one of the scenes. If the creators of the movie were familiar with the Kyokushinkai literature, it is possible that the 'fly catching' scene was directly inspired by Ōyama's testament in the book *This is Karate*.

Oyama also trained under Yoshida Kotaro, a famous Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu/ Yanagi-ryu Aiki-jujutsu master, from whom he received his *menkyo kaiden* – an older form of grade, a scroll signifying mastery. This scroll is still on display at the honbu (headquarters) dojo in Tokyo.⁹⁸

This paragraph seems to be the foundation of most claims about Ōyama's connection with Daitō-ryū. Yoshida Kōtarō, however, was a representative instructor (*kyōju dairi*). Therefore he did not possess a *menkyo kaiden*, nor was he in the position give one to anyone.⁹⁹ While the scroll itself was indeed displayed at the Kyokushinkai *honbu dōjō*,¹⁰⁰ a closer examination of its contents quickly reveals that it is clearly not a *menkyo kaiden* certificate.¹⁰¹

A much more detailed (and correspondingly more controversial) history of Ōyama's Daitō-ryū training is written in the book of Edward 'Bobby' Lowe, titled *Kyokushin Karate Self-Defense Techniques*.¹⁰² In his book Lowe states that:

Of special mention and who was of great consequence and influence to Sosai Oyama was Kotaro Yoshida of Daito-Ryu-Aiki-Jitsu. It is from this martial art discipline that a majority of Sosai Oyama's self-defense movements and techniques were derived and developed from. [...] From 1943 to 1945 Sosai Oyama served in the Imperial Japanese Military. Given that he was a yondan in both *Kodokan Judo* and *Shotokan Karate*, he was assigned to the Dai-Nippon-Butoku-Kai Kiho-kai section, for training of military service in Manchukuo (Manchuria, northwest China) at the Daito-Kan. [...] It was young Masutatsu Oyama who was assigned to Tokimune Takeda, the Soke and chief instructor of the Daito-Kan. [...] Mas Oyama's direct instructor was Kotaro Yoshida, a student of Sokaku Takeda, and an accomplished martial artist in his own right. In the Daito-kan 'eimeiroku' (registry of students), Takeda conferred 'kyoju dairi' (instructor certification) status on Yoshida to teach *daito-ryu*, and Yoshida was said to be Takeda's secretary for book-keeping and correspondence,

⁹⁸ Siliguri Kyokushin Karate Academy 2013

⁹⁹ See note: 47.

¹⁰⁰ Budo videos website 2022

¹⁰¹ Further see the chapter: 'Did Ōyama receive a Daitō-ryū transmission scroll?'

¹⁰² Edward 'Bobby' Lowe (1929–2011), a Hawaiian-born martial artist, started his Kyokushinkai in 1952 when Ōyama Masutatsu gave a public demonstration in Hawaii, and eventually he became the first foreign *uchi deshi* (see note: 1) of the Kyokushinkai *honbu* in Tōkyō. Later, in 1957, in Hawaii he opened the first branch *dōjō* outside of Japan. Throughout his life, Bobby Lowe gave annual seminars focused on the self-defence techniques of Kyokushinkai. In 1994, he produced a training video titled *Kyokushin Karate Self-Defense Techniques* and published a book in 1999 under the same title (see: Lowe 1999).

as Takeda was proud of the fact that he was illiterate. [...] Sensei Yoshida was in his 70's when Sosai Oyama was his student. At the time Yoshida was famous for his abilities, a martial artist of formidable prowess, and was known as an eccentric ascetic. [...] It is a fact that Masutatsu Oyama and Kotaro Yoshida were associated during the years of 1943 thorough 1945, yet there is speculation that they also had a post-war relationship. After WWII, Yoshida moved to Tokyo and opened a daito-ryu dojo in Toshima-ku, near to where the present IKO Honbu stands today. It is considered that Sosai Oyama trained there immediately after the war for a period of time, as his name is found in Sensei Yoshida's student registry of the time.¹⁰³

There are many inaccuracies and much controversial information packed into the text. First of all, while Ōyama possibly served in the Japanese Imperial Army, the research of this paper failed to find any further evidence for the existence of the so-called 'Kiho-kai' organisation that was claimed to be a 'division of Korean nationals being trained in espionage, hand-to-hand warfare, and guerilla tactics for wartime use',¹⁰⁴ especially within the Dai Nippon Butokukai 大日本武徳會 organisation.

The other main controversy is the connection portrayed between Ōyama and Takeda Tokimune. While Bobby Lowe states that Ōyama was learning under Tokimune at the Daitōkan in Manchuria, the Daitōkan *dōjō* was established by Tokimune not in Manchuria but in Abashiri, Hokkaidō, after the war in 1953. Therefore, it is impossible for Ōyama to have been a student of Daitōkan during the war.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, while it is certain that Ōyama at some point was affiliated with Yoshida Kōtarō, apart from Lowe's claim, there is no confirmed connection between Ōyama and Takeda Tokimune at all. While Ōyama refers to Yoshida as his master in his book *This is Karate*, there is no mention of Tokimune. It is only logical that if Ōyama indeed was the student of the headmaster of 'martial arts in the Takeda school', Takeda Tokimune himself, he would not have forgotten to mention that, especially if it had occurred before his studies with 'the finest teacher' Yoshida Kōtarō.¹⁰⁶ Circumstantial evidence also fails to support that, especially since Kondō Katsuyuki, a direct student of both Yoshida Kōtarō and Takeda Tokimune, certainly would have known about this—yet he never mentioned anything close (despite confirming Ōyama's connection with Yoshida).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Lowe 1999: 4–6.

¹⁰⁴ Lowe 1999: 5.

¹⁰⁵ See the chapter: 'Lineages and their legacy'.

¹⁰⁶ Oyama 1973: 209.

¹⁰⁷ See the chapter: 'The forgotten Daitō-ryū master: Yoshida Kōtarō'.

Finally, Lowe states major contradictions within the same few pages on Yoshida. First, he states as a ‘fact that Ōyama and Yoshida were associated during the years of 1943 thorough 1945’.¹⁰⁸ However just a page earlier Lowe claims that Ōyama from 1943 to 1945 was assigned under Takeda Tokimune.¹⁰⁹ Also, while Lowe treats Yoshida’s association with Ōyama between 1943 and 1945 as ‘a fact’, he considers it as mere ‘speculation that they also had a post-war relationship’. Then, the next paragraph admits that Ōyama was affiliated with Yoshida after the war ‘as his name is found in Sensei Yoshida’s student registry of the time’.¹¹⁰ This latter information is in fact backed up with the statement of Kondō Katsuyuki.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, there is no evidence of the connection between Ōyama and Tokimune, nor Yoshida during the war—and in the absence of circumstantial evidence, most likely it never occurred.

Are there Daitō-ryū techniques in Kyokushinkai?

Taking a deeper insight into the self-defence techniques published in the books of Ōyama,¹¹² there are numerous techniques which are similar (if not identical) to the techniques of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*.¹¹³ Basic techniques such as *ippon dori* 一本捕 and *gyaku udedori* 逆腕捕¹¹⁴; *shuto zume* 手刀詰 and *kote zume* 小手詰¹¹⁵; *waki zume* 脇詰; *maki zume* 巻詰; and *tsuri otoshi* 釣落¹¹⁶ are all present,¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁸ Lowe 1999: 6.

¹⁰⁹ Lowe 1999: 5.

¹¹⁰ Lowe 1999: 6.

¹¹¹ Pranin 1996: 162.

¹¹² See: Oyama 1959, 1966, 1973, 1977, 1978. It is important to note, however, that that some of the techniques listed below do not exclusively belong to the self-defence chapters of the books: many of them can be found in the chapters on ‘one-step practice fighting’, known as *ippon kumite* 一本組手 (see: Oyama 1973: 168–179; Oyama 1978: 146–147); ‘free-style practice fighting’, known as *jiyū kumite* 自由組手 (see: Oyama 1977: 47–133); and applications of *karate*-forms known as *kata bunkai* 型分解 (see: Oyama 1977: 146–190).

¹¹³ In this paper, the techniques use the terminology of the 118 *Hiden mokuroku* curriculum of Takeda Tokimune (see notes: 50, 51). For the detailed curriculum see: Kondo 2000; Ishibashi 2015.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Oyama 1966: 154–155, 160; Oyama 1973: 168; Oyama 1977: 47, 57, 107, 110, 128; Oyama 1978: 173; Kondo 2000: 47–51, 59–64; Ishibashi 2015: 184–185, 188–189.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Oyama 1966: 154–155, 156; Oyama 1973: 176–177, 258; Oyama 1978: 176–177; Ishibashi 2015: 214, 218, 236.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Oyama 1966: 150–151; Oyama 1973: 262–263, 295; Oyama 1977: 116–117, 129; Ishibashi 2015: 274–275, 277–278.

¹¹⁷ These techniques are also known in *aikidō* as *ikkyō* (or *ikkajō*), *nikyō* (or *nikkajō*), and *sankyō* (or *sankajō*); see note: 155.

as well as *kote gaeshi* 小手返 and *kobushi gaeshi* 拳返¹¹⁸; *ippon katsugi* 一本担¹¹⁹; *gyaku gote* 逆小手¹²⁰; and *hiji gaeshi* 肘返.¹²¹ There are also techniques in Ōyama's books that may be slightly altered in form but in principle are also recognisable in the Daitō-ryū curriculum as *suso dori* 裾捕,¹²² *tsuki daoshi* 突倒,¹²³ *ura otoshi* 裏落,¹²⁴ *kubiwa* 首輪,¹²⁵ or *kubi nage* 首投.¹²⁶ Some techniques in the books, while they could be recognised as Daitō-ryū techniques, can be also found in the curriculum in Kōdōkan *jūdō*, such as *izori* 居反,¹²⁷ *kata guruma* 肩車,¹²⁸ *koshi guruma* 腰車,¹²⁹ *kuruma daoshi* 車倒,¹³⁰ and *seoi nage* 背負投,¹³¹ as well as joint-locking techniques such as *waki gatame* 脇固,¹³² *ude gatame* 腕固,¹³³ and *ude garami* 腕絡,¹³⁴ which cannot be explicitly stated if Ōyama learnt it during his Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* or Kōdōkan *jūdō* studies. It should be noted, however, that many techniques in Ōyama's books are likely Kōdōkan *jūdō* tech-

¹¹⁸ Cf. Oyama 1966: 148–149; Oyama 1973: 176, 299; Oyama 1977: 108, 132–133; Oyama 1978: 183; Kondo 2000: 95–102; Ishibashi 2015: 198–199, 220, 237, 256.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Oyama 1966: 142–143, 146–147, 162; Oyama 1973: 262; Oyama 1978: 181, 185; Ishibashi 2015: 285.

¹²⁰ Cf. Oyama 1973: 264; Oyama 1978: 167, 182; Ishibashi 2015: 223, 246.

¹²¹ Cf. Oyama 1973: 299; Kondo 2000: 127–130; Ishibashi 2015: 166.

¹²² Cf. Oyama 1973: 179; Oyama 1977: 81, 83, 113; Oyama 1978: 147; Ishibashi 2015: 226.

¹²³ Cf. Oyama 1973: 258; Ishibashi 2015: 242–243.

¹²⁴ Cf. Oyama 1966: 161; Oyama 1978: 188; Kondo 2000: 77–81, 213–216; Ishibashi 2015: 180, 192–193, 308.

¹²⁵ Cf. Oyama 1959: 100–101, Oyama 1966: 148–149; Ishibashi 2015: 282.

¹²⁶ Cf. Oyama 1977: 189–190; Ishibashi 2015: 247.

¹²⁷ While *izori* is a Daitō-ryū technique originated from *sumō* (see the chapter: 'Technical influences'), in his book *Kodokan Judo: Throwing techniques*, the author Daigo Toshirō 醍醐敏郎 presents *izori* as a variation of the *kata guruma* throw (cf. Oyama 1977: 124–125; Kondo 2000: 219–222; Ishibashi 2015: 181, 307; Daigo 2005: 35–36).

¹²⁸ Cf. Oyama 1959: 77, Oyama 1977: 146–147; Ishibashi 2015: 238; Daigo 2005: 32–37.

¹²⁹ Cf. Oyama 1977: 120; Kondo 2000: 65–69; Ishibashi 2015: 190; Daigo 2005: 111–114.

¹³⁰ Identified as *ō-soto gari* 大外刈 or *ō-soto otoshi* 大外落 in Kōdōkan *jūdō* (cf. Oyama 1973: 177; Oyama 1977: 106–107; Kondo 2000: 53–57; Ishibashi 2015: 186–187; Daigo 2005: 163–171).

¹³¹ Also identified as *kata otoshi* 肩落 in Daitō-ryū and *ippon seoi nage* 一本背負投 or *seoi otoshi* 背負落 in Kōdōkan *jūdō* (cf. Oyama 1959: 108; Oyama 1966: 163; Oyama 1977: 74–75, 127, 180–181; Oyama 1978: 187; Kondo 2000: 201–205; Ishibashi 2015: 212, 235; Daigo 2005: 12–26).

¹³² Identified as *waki kujiki* 脇挫 in Daitō-ryū (cf. Oyama 1966: 142–143; Oyama 1978: 187–188; Ishibashi 2015: 272; Kano 2013: 127, 174, 179, 183, 188–189, 199).

¹³³ Identified as *hiji kujiki* 肘挫 or *kakae kujiki* 抱挫 in Daitō-ryū (cf. Oyama 1966: 144; Oyama 1977: 60–61, 111, 118, 127, 132–133; Ishibashi 2015: 226–227, 258, 269; Kano 2013: 129, 170, 195).

¹³⁴ Identified as *uchi ude gaeshi* 内腕返 and *kiriha* 切羽 in Daitō-ryū (cf. Oyama 1973: 169, 296; Oyama 1977: 109; Oyama 1978: 146; Ishibashi 2015: 262–265, 283, 293; Kano 2013: 125, 169.).

niques, recognised as *kuchiki taoshi* 朽木倒,¹³⁵ *teguruma* 手車,¹³⁶ and *morote gari* 双手刈.¹³⁷ Not surprisingly, Ōyama amalgamated every combat technique he had ever learnt into his ‘ultimate’ fighting form, Kyokushinkai *karate*.

When could Ōyama learn Daitō-ryū?

Since most biographies written about the *sōsai* completely omit his studies in Daitō-ryū under Yoshida, it is only possible to approximately guess the period (given on circumstantial evidence) when such training could have happened. While Lowe suggests a relationship during the Second World War, only a post-war relationship can be surely verified. Interestingly, Lowe himself (although unintentionally) supports the latter: Lowe states that ‘Yoshida was in his 70’s when *sōsai* Ōyama was his student’.¹³⁸ Given that Yoshida Kōtarō was born in 1886, he was in his 70s between the years 1956 and 1965, which is actually the most likely period when Ōyama might have learnt from him.¹³⁹

Ōyama himself mentions his training under Yoshida in his second book, *This is Karate*, which was first published in 1965.¹⁴⁰ The name of Yoshida Kōtarō cannot be found prior, not even in the revised edition of his first book *What is Karate?* published in 1966.¹⁴¹ Kondō Katsuyuki claims that he had seen the name of Ōyama Masutatsu in Yoshida’s enrolment book while studying under him in 1963. Furthermore, another interview with Kondō Katsuyuki, conducted by Kent Moyer for *Black Belt Magazine* further clarifies the exact dates and ages concerning Yoshida, Kondō, and Ōyama:

Yoshida lived in Namekawa in Hitachi city in Ibaraki prefecture. A trip to Yoshida’s dojo was two and a half hours to three hours by train. Yoshida lived there with his wife. He was 82. I was 18. [...] When I signed the new-student

¹³⁵ Cf. Oyama 1977: 65; Daigo 2005: 59–64.

¹³⁶ Cf. Oyama 1973: 174; Oyama 1977: 68–39, 112, 130–131; Mifune 1958: 220–221.

¹³⁷ Cf. Oyama 1959: 78–79, Oyama 1977: 74, 130–131; Oyama 1978: 170; Daigo 2005: 55–59.

¹³⁸ Lowe 1999: 6.

¹³⁹ Interestingly, in his book *This is Karate*, Ōyama claims that Yoshida ‘approaches ninety years of age’ (Oyama 1973: 209). However, this must be a mistake: Yoshida was born in 1886 and passed away in 1966. Therefore, he did not live into his 90s. In fact, he was approaching his 80s when Ōyama published his writing about him.

¹⁴⁰ See the chapter: ‘The forgotten Daitō-ryū master: Yoshida Kōtarō’ (Oyama 1973: 209–210).

¹⁴¹ In the first edition of *What is karate?*, there are pictures showing Ōyama Masutatsu training together with Richard Kim (Oyama 1959: 74–75). Interestingly, the revised edition of *What is Karate?* (which reshot all the pictures, as well as included new techniques and removed some, only to be later re-introduced in the book *Mas Oyama’s Essential karate*) omitted all pictures featuring Richard Kim.

ledger, the name above me was karate master Mas Oyama. I never met Oyama or knew how long he trained under Yoshida. Oyama signed his name about five or six years before I did. I trained under Yoshida for three years.¹⁴²

The probability is high that Richard Kim introduced Ōyama to Yoshida, as Kim himself allegedly was a long-time student of the latter.¹⁴³ Kim contributed to the first version of *What is Karate?*, published in 1958,¹⁴⁴ and also appeared in some of the pictures showing grappling techniques, assisting Ōyama.¹⁴⁵ Since *What is Karate?* already contained self-defence techniques,¹⁴⁶ it is not impossible that Ōyama may have learnt the basic techniques from Richard Kim in the 1950s, and later, as he gained some proficiency in the art, Kim introduced him to his own master, Yoshida Kōtarō, for more advanced training, around 1958.¹⁴⁷

Finally, more information could be extracted by looking at the scroll Ōyama received from Yoshida. Albeit the hand-written calligraphy makes it hard to read the exact date, it is likely that the date itself is the 37th year of Shōwa 昭和第三十七年,¹⁴⁸ which is equal to 1962. The period Shōwa 昭和 (1926–1989) and the year 7 七年 are clearly seen on the scroll; there could be speculation about the decade, however, depending on which character stands before 七 on the scroll. While it would be not impossible that the scroll dates the 27th year of Shōwa 昭和二十七年, which is 1952, during this time Ōyama had been on a teaching tour abroad (especially in the United States) starting from April¹⁴⁹ for 10 months,¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Moyer 2006: 85.

¹⁴³ Gold 2011.

¹⁴⁴ Collins 1995: 46.

¹⁴⁵ Oyama 1959: 74–75.

¹⁴⁶ Although it should be noted that some of these techniques show (both in execution and terminology) the influence of Funakoshi Gichin's (Ōyama's former teacher) legendary book *Karate-dō kyōhan* 空手道教範 (The Master Text), some techniques, such as *udewa* 腕環, *yaridama* 槍玉, and *kubiwa* 首輪 might have directly been taken from Funakoshi's book (cf. Oyama 1959: 78–79, 100–101, 109; Funakoshi 1935: 224, 227–229, 254).

¹⁴⁷ It is important to note, however, that according to Kondō Katsuyuki, when he trained under Yoshida Kōtarō in 1963, Yoshida was already paralysed on his left side and could mostly only give oral instruction. Therefore, Kondō brought a fellow student to train with him under the guidance of Yoshida (Pranin 1996: 161). While it is unclear when Yoshida became paralysed, it is possible that Ōyama faced the same problem during his training. If that is the case, then it is reasonable to think that he probably practiced together with Richard Kim (who may have already introduced him to the basic techniques), based on the oral instructions received from Yoshida—this is just mere speculation though.

¹⁴⁸ Note that the irregular character 卅 is a classical variation of 三十 indicating the number 30.

¹⁴⁹ On the scroll, the 'fifth month' 五月 is written, which was May both in the Gregorian and Chinese lunar calendars in 1952. At that time, Ōyama was on a teaching tour in the United States.

¹⁵⁰ Collins 1995: 42; Quinn 1987: 46.

which would have made it difficult to learn under Yoshida extensively. Also, in 1951, Ōyama started to learn *jūdō* at the Sone *dōjō* for four years.¹⁵¹ Based on the claims made by Lowe, the 17th year of Shōwa (1942) could be possible. However, there is no variation of the character for number 10 (十, 什, or 拾) that resembles the character written on the scroll. Finally, the 47th year of Shōwa (1972) or any higher number is impossible, since Yoshida Kōtarō passed away in 1966. The circumstantial evidence (supported by both Kondō's testimony and Ōyama's own book) indicates that the affiliation between Ōyama and Yoshida occurred in the early 1960s (or possibly late 1950s). Therefore, it is most likely that the date written on the scroll is indeed 1962, and Ōyama trained under Yoshida up until that point, perhaps starting from around 1958.¹⁵²

Did Ōyama train in *aikidō*?

While some Kyokushinkai self-defence techniques are undoubtedly similar to the basic techniques of Daitō-ryū, there are others that could be recognised as *aikidō* techniques, such as *kaiten nage* 回転投¹⁵³ or *sokumen irimi nage* 側面入身投,¹⁵⁴ with the latter being a sample technique of the Yōshinkan 養神館 style of *aikidō*, founded by Shioda Gōzō. While it is true that the majority of *aikidō* techniques come from Daitō-ryū,¹⁵⁵ considering the possibility that maybe Ōyama was only taught a few specified techniques from Yoshida (and maybe

¹⁵¹ Collins 1995: 41; Quinn 1987: 35.

¹⁵² What also supports this theory is that certain techniques that could potentially have originated from the teaching of Yoshida Kōtarō already could be found in Ōyama's first book *What is Karate?*, which was first published in 1958 (see the chapter: 'Use of the parasol in Daitō-ryū and in Kyokushinkai').

¹⁵³ Cf. Oyama 1977: 109; Shioda 1996: 184–185; Ueshiba 2005: 74–77, 130–131.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Oyama 1977: 112, 126; Shioda 1996: 135–143.

¹⁵⁵ The technical overlaps are obvious, especially at the basic level: the first *ippon dori* technique of Daitō-ryū is known as *ikkjō* (Aikikai) or *ikkajō* (Yōshinkan) in *aikidō*; Daitō-ryū's *kote zume* and *shutō zume* are both recognised as *nikkyō* (Aikikai) or *nikkajō* (Yōshinkan); Daitō-ryū's *tsuri otoshi*, *maki zume*, and *waki zume* techniques are similar to *aikidō*'s *sankyō* (Aikikai) or *sankajō* (Yōshinkan); and Daitō-ryū's *ura gote* is identical to the *yonkyō* (Aikikai) or *yonkajō* (Yōshinkan) of *aikidō* (cf. Kondo 2000: 47–51; Ishibashi 2015: 184–185, 214, 218, 274–275, 278–279, 296–297; Ueshiba 2005: 78–113; Shioda 1996: 82–123). Techniques such as *kote gaeshi* or *shihō nage* are identical in both styles, while some higher Daitō-ryū techniques are classified in *aikidō* under the umbrella term *kokyū nage* and other sample *aikidō* techniques (Pranin 1996: 52). For a detailed study about the correlation of basic Daitō-ryū and *aikidō* techniques see: Driscoll 2017: *Reflections on the Origin of Ueshiba Morihei's Koshinage & The Relationship of Daito-ryu and Aikido Waza*, as well as Dobróka 2023c: *A Thorough Look Into the Secret Scrolls of Daito-ryu Part 3: The Evolution of Basic Daito-ryu and Aikido Curriculum*.

practiced the basic techniques with Richard Kim),¹⁵⁶ it is not impossible to think that Ōyama may have also learnt Daitō-ryū techniques through its successor, *aikidō*. In the book *Ōyama Masutatsu seiden* (The True Story of Ōyama Masutatsu), author Kojima Kazushi recalls a certain claim of both Yōshinkan *aikidō* founder Shioda Gōzō and Ōyama himself about the latter's experience in *aikidō*:

At that time,¹⁵⁷ Ōyama was trained in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* by the famed Yoshida Kōtarō, who according to the famous anecdote, also awarded him a scroll. [...] After learning Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*, Ōyama also received personal instruction from Shioda at the Yōshinkan. In 1989 I met with Shioda, as I gathered materials for the *Gekkan budō karate* journal. After that, I have often visited Shioda. Despite what I have written about this previously already, Shioda was honestly a genuine martial artist. His technique reached the most inner secrets of *aikidō*, polishing it to an artistic level. During my research, Shioda told me the following about Ōyama on one occasion: 'Ōyama-kun was my junior at the Takudai [Takushoku University] and I knew his name as a *karateka*.¹⁵⁸ My first thought of him was just what kind of a man goes around and slaying bulls? But he was a truly sincere man. Later I frequently taught Ōyama-kun to *aikidō*, however... at that time he relied on his strength, and it was quite difficult for him, but he was a man of keen perception'.

On the other hand, in his later years Ōyama told me the following about Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* and *aikidō*: 'Learning *aikidō* from Shioda *sensei* was a great thing. However, these are martial arts (*bujutsu*) but not combat techniques (*kakutōgi*)... This is just my personal conclusion regarding Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* and *aikidō*'.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ See note: 147.

¹⁵⁷ The book here refers to the second half of the 1950s (一九五〇年代後半).

¹⁵⁸ Note the suffix *-kun* ~君 after Ōyama's name. This is a formal name suffix indicating that the person called by it is either equal or a junior to the speaker (often used for referring to younger males). In this context, Shioda may have implied a master–pupil relationship between himself and Ōyama, or he could have just simply claimed his seniority, as Ōyama was allegedly (see note: 17) his junior at Takushoku University.

¹⁵⁹ 大山が当時達人と謳われた吉田幸太郎のもとで大東流合気柔術を修行し目録を許されたことは有名な逸話である。[...] 大山は大東流合気柔術を学んだ後、養神館でも塩田から直接指導を受けている。一九八九年、私は『月刊武道空手』の取材で塩田に会った。以後、私は塩田のもとを幾度も訪ねることになる。過去の私の著書のなかでも度々書いているが、塩田は真正正銘の武道家だった。彼の技術は合気道の奥義をきわめ、芸術的なレベルまで洗練されていた。塩田は取材の折に大山について語った。「大山君は拓大の後輩で、名の知れた空手家ですが、牛を殺したなんていうのでどんな男かと思ったら実に誠実な人物でした。それから、度々私は大山君に合気道を指導しましたが.....、彼は力に頼ってしまうところがありまして、なかなか苦労したものです。でも、勘が鋭い男でした。」一方、晩年の大山は大東流合気柔術と合気道について次のように私に話した。「塩

Since the current research had been unable to find other sources of these claims, inquiries were made both to the Yōshinkan *honbu* and to the Shioda International Aikido Federation (SIAF), the latter being led by the descendants of Shioda Gōzō, his son Shioda Yasuhisa 塩田泰久 and his grandson Shioda Masahiro 塩田将大. The question of the inquiry was whether the Yōshinkan *honbu* or the Shioda family had any materials (photographs, enrolment documents, personal letters, etc.) that could support Kojima's quotes about Ōyama's training in *aikidō*.

The Yōshinkan *honbu* stated: 'Unfortunately we are not in possession of such material proof as photo or documents you request, if they ever existed. Their relationship was private, and we assume such was the training too'.¹⁶⁰

Multiple e-mail exchanges with the SIAF provided the following information:

Shioda Masahiro asked Saegusa Ryūsei 三枝龍生 *sensei* [former *uchideshi* of Shioda Gōzō] about Ōyama Masutatsu. According to Saegusa *sensei*, Ōyama *sensei* came to the Yōshinkan *dōjō*. It was a courtesy visit to greet Shioda Gōzō *sensei* and he didn't learn any techniques of *aikidō* during that time.¹⁶¹

The training itself may not have taken place, but at least it was confirmed that Shioda Gōzō and Ōyama Masutatsu had personally known each other.

Interestingly, there are other claims that indicate that Ōyama personally knew not only Shioda Gōzō but also the founder of *aikidō*, Ueshiba Morihei, as well. In an interview with *aikidō* master Kuroiwa Yoshio 黒岩洋志雄, conducted by the *Gekkan Hiden* 月刊秘伝 martial arts magazine in 2006, Kuroiwa recalls that in the 1950s, Ōyama Masutatsu, together with Sawai Ken'ichi 澤井健一 (founder of the martial art Taiki shisei *kenpō* 太氣至誠拳法 or Taikiken 太気拳 for short), often visited *aikidō* demonstrations.¹⁶² In this interview Kuroiwa also stated:

I often spoke to those two.¹⁶³ I also went to visit their dojos in Meiji Jingu and Ikebukuro. [...] The two of them sometimes also came to the Aikikai dojo.

田先生の合気道は学ぶところが大にあった。ただ、あれは武術ではあるが格闘技ではない。これが大東流合気柔術と合気道に対する私の結論だよ」(Kojima – Tsukamoto 2006: 496–497).

¹⁶⁰ Personal e-mail communication with Ikegami Midori 池上みどり of Yōshinkan Foreign Affairs (18–20. 05.2022).

¹⁶¹ Personal e-mail communication with Shioda Masahiro and Dobróka Mihály (05–30.09.2022).

¹⁶² Translated to English by Christopher Li, published on the Aikidō Sangenkai website (Li 2015: *Interview with Aikido Shihan Yoshio Kuroiwa – Part 2*).

¹⁶³ Here, Kuroiwa refers to Ōyama Masutatsu and Sawai Ken'ichi.

Especially to visit O-Sensei. [...] I heard that Oyama Sensei said ‘Aikido will disappear when O-Sensei dies’. I think that’s so.¹⁶⁴

If the testament of Kuroiwa can be trusted, it is another interesting aspect of the untold story about the connection between Kyokushinkai *karate* and *aikidō*.

Rotating palms or harmonising energy?

While Ōyama in the book *This is Karate* mentions Yoshida as his master, in the same book, however, he attempts (despite the obvious technical similarities)¹⁶⁵ to emphasise that the self-defence moves of Kyokushinkai in fact originate from *karate* itself,¹⁶⁶ especially the formal exercise (*kata* 型) called Tenshō:

The methods of covering and seizing the opponent’s hand are based on *judo* and *aikido* techniques. Readers who have already read the chapter on Formal Exercises will know that the covering and seizing techniques evolved from the *tensho*. [...] This means in turn, that you must master the *tensho* from which these techniques grew.¹⁶⁷ [...]

It is commonly believed that karate techniques are built exclusively about striking and kicking, and that such methods as the parrying of hand holds are the property of judo or *aikido*. This, however, is a mistake. [...] Techniques for turning a hand hold to advantage belong to the original *taijutsu* and are, therefore, the common property of not only judo and *aikido*, but of karate as well. [...] The techniques introduced below are karate techniques, rather than judo or *aikido* techniques. They are intimately related to the *tensho* techniques, which are described in Chapter Eight.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Li 2015.

¹⁶⁵ See the chapter: ‘Are there Daitō-ryū techniques in Kyokushinkai?’

¹⁶⁶ It is not unique, however, that certain schools try to interpret their history as being a genuinely original discipline, rather than an amalgamation of the various schools that the founder of the style had previously trained in. For example, according to Stanley Pranin, during a lecture in 1985, Ueshiba Kisshōmaru 植芝吉祥丸 (son and heir of *aikidō* founder Ueshiba Morihei) claimed that ‘The Founder [Ueshiba Morihei] only studied Daito-ryu for three weeks or so.’ This statement is obviously false, trying to disown the Daitō-ryū school’s undisputable role in the creation of modern *aikidō* (Li 2017: *Ueshiba-ha Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu*).

¹⁶⁷ Oyama 1973: 204.

¹⁶⁸ Oyama 1973: 257.

Tenshō 転掌 (which literally means ‘rotating palms’) is a unique *kata* of the Gōjū-ryū style of *karate*,¹⁶⁹ which was created by the founder of the school, Miyagi Chōjun 宮城長順. It is believed that the form was based on the ‘Six Hand Techniques’ (*Rokkishu* 六氣手 or 六機手)¹⁷⁰ chapter of the classical Chinese martial art manual titled *Bubishi* 武備志.¹⁷¹ Miyagi revived the movements based on the illustrations and descriptions of the hand postures and combined them with the basic stance of the Sanchin 三戦 *kata* (using it as a blueprint), thus reviving the techniques handed down in the *Bubishi* in an organised form.¹⁷² Given the origin, it is also widely thought that while the *kata* Sanchin represents the ‘hard’ (*yang* 陽) principles of Gōjū-ryū, the *kata* Tenshō, as its counterpart, represents the ‘soft’ (*yin* 陰) aspect of the same practice.¹⁷³

Despite Ōyama’s attempt to differentiate the movements of Tenshō from the techniques of *jūdō* and *aikidō*, masters like Nishida Yukio¹⁷⁴ or Izumikawa Katsuya 泉川勝也,¹⁷⁵ who trained both in Gojū-ryū *karate* and Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*, remark that the circular movements (*en’undō* 円運動) of Tenshō *kata* have much in common with the circular hand movements used in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Which Ōyama learnt from Sō Neichū and Yamaguchi Gōgen (see the chapter: ‘After the war’).

¹⁷⁰ Mabuni 1934: 84–91.

¹⁷¹ The *Bubishi* is a compilation of various articles about the Fujian White Crane-fist (Fujian Baihe-*quan* 福建白鶴拳) and the Monk Fist (Luohan-*quan* 羅漢拳) schools of southern style *gong fu* 功夫 that were written during the Qing dynasty 清朝 (1644–1912). The exact date of creation and the original author are both unknown, still the book has been treasured and widely cited among all the pioneers of modern *karate*, including Funakoshi Gichin, Miyagi Chōjun, and Mabuni Kenwa. In fact, Miyagi Chōjun named his school Gōjū-ryū based on the maxim ‘The way of inhaling and exhaling is hardness and softness’ (*Hō gōjū donto* 法剛柔吞吐) from the ‘The eight precepts of the fist’ (*Ken no daiyō hakku* 拳之大要八句) chapter of the *Bubishi* (Gottner 2022: 91–93).

¹⁷² Mabuni – Nakasone 1938: 74; Izumikawa 2018: 88; Nishida 2019: 80–82; Bishop 1999: 27.

¹⁷³ Lowe 1999: 9; Izumikawa 2018: 88; Nishida 2019: 82.

¹⁷⁴ See note: 63.

¹⁷⁵ Izumikawa Katsuya is the third-generation headmaster of the Senbukai 線武会 Gōjū-ryū organisation (not to be confused with Nishida Yukio’s Seibukai 清武会 Kyokushin organisation). Izumikawa learnt Okinawan Gōjū-ryū from his father and later became the disciple of Yoshimaru Keisetsu 吉丸慶雪 (direct student of Sagawa Yukiyoishi) in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* (Izumikawa 2018: 24–32).

¹⁷⁶ Izumikawa 2018: 88–102, 112–121; Nishida 2019: 90–106.

The *mokuroku* of Ōyama Masutatsu

What is a traditional Daitō-ryū scroll?

Undoubtedly, the most controversial aspect of the myth about Ōyama Masutatsu's training in Daitō-ryū is his *menkyo kaiden* certificate. It is even questionable whether the scroll Ōyama received from Yoshida was an official document of the Daitō-ryū tradition or something else. A comparison of Ōyama's scroll with the conventional Daitō-ryū scrolls could easily answer this question.

While the curriculum and transmission scrolls are in fact confidential materials within the Daitō-ryū school (as with most traditional Japanese martial arts), there are still some fragments of the content of these scrolls that have been published, which could reveal the cardinal characteristics of the Daitō-ryū transmission documents. A picture of the beginning of the *Hiden mokuroku* 秘傳目録 (Scroll of secret transmission), the first transmission scroll of the Daitō-ryū school,¹⁷⁷ can be found in Stanley Pranin's book *The Aiki News Encyclopedia of Aikido*.¹⁷⁸ Also, Ueshiba Kisshōmaru transcribed and published the contents of the *Hiden okugi no koto* 秘伝奥儀之事 (Secret transmission of the innermost mysteries) transmission scroll¹⁷⁹ of Daitō-ryū,¹⁸⁰ which Ueshiba Morihei received from Takeda Sōkaku.¹⁸¹ Also, there are photocopies available online of certain parts of these scrolls in various articles.¹⁸²

The contents of both *Hiden mokuroku* and *Hiden okugi no koto* have a structure that lists contents into two lines: an upper and a lower one. Both lines are organised into columns, which are counted as articles (*kajō* ケ条). Usually, the columns on the top line have the same number as those on the bottom, indicating that the two lines are connected in each column. The articles contain short descriptions. In most cases the upper article describes the way of attack, and the

¹⁷⁷ For a basic analysis on the structure and key contents of a *Hiden mokuroku* scroll see: Trudel 2021: *Analysis: Meiji-era Hiden mokuroku*, and Dobróka 2023a: *A Thorough Look At the Secret Scrolls of Daito-ryu Part 1: Technical Contents*.

¹⁷⁸ Pranin 1991: 39

¹⁷⁹ Note that there is a *Hiden okugi no koto densho* 伝書 (transmission scroll) that contains techniques in the same manner as *Hiden mokuroku* (further see: Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 549–555; Dobróka 2023d: *A Thorough Look Into the Secret Scrolls of Daito-ryu Part 4: Hiden Okugi No Koto*), and there is a *Hiden okugi no koto menjō* 免状 (license) that is essentially a certificate, listing the curricula that the student learnt up until that point in Daitō-ryū (Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 557). In this paper, the name *Hiden okugi no koto* refers to the technical *densho*.

¹⁸⁰ For a comparative study of the various scrolls and certificates in the Daitō-ryū tradition see: Dobróka 2022: *Menkyo Kaiden and The Evolution of Daito-ryu Certificates*.

¹⁸¹ Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 549–555.

¹⁸² See: Li 2017; Dobróka 2022; Dobróka 2023 a–d.

lower, same-numbered article describes the technique as the defence against the attack written above.¹⁸³

Two key elements should be noted about the contents of the scrolls. The first one is the fact that the scrolls do not contain the names of the techniques; only the numbers of the articles and the short descriptions are given for the techniques. Terms such as *shihō nage*, *kote gaeshi*, *aiki nage*, etc., while they might have been used during training,¹⁸⁴ are usually not written in the scrolls. The second important thing to note is that the scrolls actually count the articles and not the techniques themselves. This is apparent in the *Hidden okugi no koto* list, where the columns are counted up until ‘article no. 18’ (*dai jūhakkajō* 第十八条), but at the end of the scroll the contents are listed as ‘36 articles altogether’ (*kei sanjūrokkajō* 計三拾六ヶ条). This concludes that the columns (as articles on the top and the bottom) are counted separately, counting 18 articles both in the upper and the lower columns, which adds up to 36 articles.¹⁸⁵ This means that while the scrolls list a certain number of articles, they do not correspond to the number of techniques actually listed in the scrolls. This is further supported by Sagawa Yuki Yoshi, who noted:

Takeda Sensei’s scrolls had names like ‘*Hyaku-juhakkajo*’ (‘118 pinning techniques’), or ‘84 techniques’, or ‘36 techniques’ because he believed that 118, 84, and 36 were lucky numbers. I don’t think the names corresponded with the actual number of techniques.¹⁸⁶

At the end of both scrolls the same general afterword text is written:

大東流柔術熱心不淺稽古無懈怠勝利之働依有之、今般本目錄相伝候。不疑心切磋琢磨之上必勝之術可被相叶候。依如件。¹⁸⁷

Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* must be practiced eagerly, never frivolously. Never be lazy; success depends on hard work. Hereby I grant you this scroll. Without a doubt, through diligent polishing of oneself, can the techniques of certain victory be obtained, thus as stated.

¹⁸³ It should be noted, however, that there are instances in which not the same but consecutive article numbers follow each other above and below within one column, only describing defence techniques, without specifying the attack (Pranin 1991: 39; Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 549–555; Li 2017; Trudel 2021; Dobróka 2023a).

¹⁸⁴ Pranin 1996: 52.

¹⁸⁵ Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 554; Dobróka 2023d.

¹⁸⁶ Kimura 2017: 136.

¹⁸⁷ Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 555; Li 2017; Trudel 2021; Dobróka 2023d.

This is followed by the lineage of the Takeda-clan, ending with Takeda Sōkaku Minamoto no Masayoshi 武田惣角源正義, the date of issue, and the name of the recipient.¹⁸⁸

Did Ōyama receive a Daitō-ryū transmission scroll?

After getting familiar with the sample Daitō-ryū scrolls, it is time for a detailed analysis of the structure and content of the scroll Ōyama received from Daitō-ryū master Yoshida Kōtarō¹⁸⁹ and a comparison of it with the former.

The first significant difference is in the title of the scroll itself: while the aforementioned Daitō-ryū scrolls were titled as *Daitō-ryū jūjutsu Hiden mokuroku* 大東流柔術秘傳目録 and *Hiden okugi no koto* 秘傳奥儀之事, the scroll of Ōyama Masutatu bears the title *Yoshida-shiki sutekki-parasoru goshinjutsu mokuroku* 吉田式ステッキ・パラソル護身術目録, which can be translated as ‘Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence scroll’. While Yoshida-shiki is an obvious reference to the name of Yoshida Kōtarō, it should be noted that the title of the scroll does not show any resemblance to the conventional Daitō-ryū scroll titles, nor does the title of the scroll itself contain the name Daitō-ryū. It is interesting to note that instead of the Japanese words for ‘stick’ (*jō* 杖) and ‘parasol’ (*kasa* 傘, which is also used to refer to an ‘umbrella’), the terms *sutekki* ステッキ and *parasoru* パラソル are present, as loan-words (*gairaigō* 外来語) written in the *katakana* 片仮名 syllabic writing system, representing the pronunciation of the original English words ‘stick’ and ‘parasol’. It is debatable whether this was written as an attempt to appeal to an international fashion or rather to intentionally detach the practice from the classical Japanese martial disciplines.

The core content itself is a list of techniques, which is the main characteristic of the *mokuroku* 目録 type of scrolls.¹⁹⁰ The scroll lists 22 items from ‘article no. 1’ (*dai ikkajō* 第一条) to ‘article no. 22’ (*dai nijūnikajō* 第二十二條), organised into three columns, with the upper part indicating the number of the article, the middle part the attack, and the lower part the defence, which resembles the basic structure of the Daitō-ryū scrolls discussed above. However, while in Daitō-ryū both the attack in the upper part and the defence in the lower part are counted as separate articles, in the Yoshida-style scroll, one article contains

¹⁸⁸ Oimatsu-Ueshiba 1982: 555; Pranin 1996: 20; Trudel 2021; Dobróka 2023b: *A Thorough Look At the Secret Scrolls of Daito-ryu Part 2: Lineage and Daito-ryu Mythology*; Trudel 2022: *From the North: Hiroasaki, Matsumae, Ezo, and the road to Hokkaido*.

¹⁸⁹ For the transcription and translation of the full scroll see: Appendices 1 and 2.

¹⁹⁰ Szabó 2013: 104.

both the attack and the defence within the same three-part column. In other words, each separate 22 column contains the number of the given article and the attacking and defending techniques in the same single column. Therefore, the number of articles (unlike in Daitō-ryū scrolls) corresponds to the actual number of techniques within the scroll.

Another key difference between the listing of the Yoshida-style scroll and that of the conventional Daitō-ryū scrolls is that the Yoshida-style scroll contains unique names for both the attacking and defending techniques, however without any written description of their execution. Therefore, while the exact names of the techniques on the scroll are given, there are no descriptions about how the techniques should be executed. Given that an exact nomenclature (at least recorded in the scrolls) is non-existent in the Daitō-ryū curriculum, it is highly likely that Yoshida Kōtarō created these technical names himself.

After listing the 22 *kajō* with both the names of attacks and defences, the scroll ends with an afterword text written about the granting of the scroll: ‘The articles [techniques] listed above were successfully learnt. Therefore, I grant you this scroll, thus as stated.’¹⁹¹

While certain uses of words in the text are similar, the mention of Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* is completely omitted. Moreover, the text itself is a significantly shorter, simplified version of the general afterword written in conventional Daitō-ryū documents.¹⁹² The afterword is followed by the date,¹⁹³ which is most likely the 37th year of Emperor Shōwa (Shōwa *dai sanjū-shichinen* 昭和第三十七年),¹⁹⁴ which is equivalent to the year 1962, the fifth month (*gogatsu* 五月), and likely the ninth day (*kokonoka* 九日).

On a structural level, the dating also differs from that of the conventional Daitō-ryū transmission documents, where the date usually comes after the genealogy of the Takeda-family—normally, Yoshida’s name should appear at the end of the lineage, as the student of Takeda Sōkaku, issuing the document as ‘representative instructor’ (*kyōju dairi* 教授代理)—which comes between the afterword and the date. However, the Yoshida-style scroll omits the genealogy entirely, offering something quite interesting instead.

The title of the issuer is written as *Yoshida-shiki sutekki-parasoru goshin-jutsu sōshisha* 吉田式ステッキ・パラソル護身術創始者, which translates to ‘The founder of Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence’. Since currently there are no other known copies of this type of Yoshida-style self-defence scroll, it

¹⁹¹ 右條々習得勝利可有之目錄授與依如件

¹⁹² cf. notes 187 and 191.

¹⁹³ For a detailed explanation of the possible date on the scroll, see the chapter: ‘When could Ōyama learn Daitō-ryū?’

¹⁹⁴ For the character 卅 see note: 148.

is questionable whether this was Yoshida Kōtarō's attempt to establish his own lineage, or whether it was done in order to alienate the teachings that Ōyama received from the official Daitō-ryū transmission documents.¹⁹⁵ The second column describing the issuer refers to the title Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu dairi kyōju* 大東流柔術代理教授, which is identical to Yoshida's official title as *kyōju dairi* 教授代理, meaning 'representative instructor of the Daitō-ryū tradition'.¹⁹⁶ Interestingly enough, this is the only instance in which Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* is mentioned in the scroll. After the titles, the name of the issuer, Yoshida Kōtarō 吉田幸太郎, appears,¹⁹⁷ followed by the name of the recipient as Ōyama Masutatsu-*dono* 大山倍達殿.¹⁹⁸

While some elements in a limited amount, such as the basic structure and the usage of articles (*kajō* ケ条) for the listing of techniques, indeed show some resemblance to a conventional Daitō-ryū scroll, all the main differences listed above (i.e., title of the scroll, inner structure of the articles, names of techniques instead of short descriptions, different afterword, place of the date, omitted lineage, and the issuer's title as founder) indicate that the scroll that Ōyama Masutatsu received from Yoshida Kōtarō was certainly not a traditional Daitō-ryū scroll, certificate, or anything akin to a *menkyo kaiden* title. Rather, it was a transmission scroll unique on its own. This should disprove any claims of Ōyama Masutatsu's *menkyo kaiden* in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* once and for all.

¹⁹⁵ Given that after Ōyama received his scroll, Kondō Katsuyuki was also formally instructed by Yoshida in Daitō-ryū (Pranin 1996: 161–163) and considering that Ōyama refrained from mentioning Daitō-ryū in his published book, the latter should be considered. Most likely it could have been a decision to avoid conflict within the Daitō-ryū tradition: since Ōyama likely did not receive instruction in the full curriculum of the school (rather just a compilation of techniques), it would be controversial to grant him an official Daitō-ryū document. Therefore, Yoshida could have given Ōyama this unique scroll establishing an individual curriculum that does not collide with the existing tradition.

¹⁹⁶ See the chapter: 'The forgotten Daitō-ryū master: Yoshida Kōtarō'.

¹⁹⁷ Considering the calligraphy style used here is starkly different from that of the rest of the scroll, it is likely that this was Yoshida's own handwritten signature. It is not uncommon in traditional martial arts that the recipient prepares the scroll, which the teacher only validates with the seal and occasionally with a signature (the quality of the available pictures do not make it visible; however, at high resolution the contour of two seals can be seen next to the handwritten name of Yoshida).

¹⁹⁸ The term *dono* 殿 is a classic honorific name suffix (similarly to *sama* 様) expressing courtesy. It is quite common in traditional certificates, as the title of the recipient.

The structure and contents of the scroll given by Yoshida

The inner structure of the techniques was organised around types of attacks: the first two *kajō* likely deal with fighting positions as suggested by terms such as ‘overhand’ (*junte* 順手) and ‘reverse-hand’ (*gyakute* 逆手) as well as ‘back-posture and front-posture’ (*ushiro kamae* 後構 and *mae gamae* 前構), followed in the next four *kajō*, which deal with ‘strikes’ (*dageki* 打撃) and ‘thrusters’ (*totsugeki* 突撃) as well as ‘defending’ (*bōgyo* 防御) against ‘strike’, both ‘downward’ (*uchioroshi* 打下) and ‘horizontal’ (*yokouchi* 横打).

From the seventh to the 14th *kajō*, various grabbing attacks are listed, which are categorised by grabbing the chest or lapel (*munedori* 胸取); the sleeve (*sodedori* 袖取); one hand (*katate* 片手) or both hands (*ryōte* 両手) with either one-handed (*katate* 片手) or two-handed (*ryōte* 両手) grabs; and both hands (*ryōte* 両手) grabbing either the left (*hidaridori* 左取) or the right (*migidori* 右取) hand or side.

From the 15th to the 20th *kajō*, seizing attacks can be found, such as ‘front bearhugs’ over and under the arm (*mae kami kakae* 前上抱 and *mae shita kakae* 前下抱), a ‘one-handed rear collar grab’ (*katate ushiro eridori* 片手後襟取), a ‘two-handed grab to the shoulders’ (*ryōte ryōkatadori* 両手両肩取), and ‘rear bearhugs’ again both over and under the arms (*ushiro kami kakae* 後上抱 and *ushiro shita kakae* 後下抱). The last two *kajō* also deal with bearhugs—both over and under the arms—but in the case when an ‘open parasol’ (*kaisan* 開傘) is carried.¹⁹⁹

Techniques from the scroll: speculations based on the nomenclature and other sources

Upon the examination of the techniques listed in the scroll, two main questions arise. The first concerns whether these techniques can be found in Ōyama’s books, and the second concerns whether they can be recognised as Daitō-ryū techniques specifically. The Yoshida-style scroll (contrary to conventional Daitō-ryū materials) only contains the names of the techniques without any further explanation. Therefore, there is no way to know for sure how these techniques were supposed to be executed. Since the scroll is titled ‘Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence’, it is not even certain whether these techniques used the stick and parasol against an armed or unarmed assailant or taught unarmed

¹⁹⁹ Further see the chapter: ‘Use of the parasol in Daitō-ryū and in Kyokushinkai’.

self-defence against said weapons (or a mixture of methods both armed and unarmed).²⁰⁰

Only speculation (or guesswork) could be done by matching the unique names of techniques listed in the scroll and the moves illustrated throughout the various books written by Ōyama. While it is true that correlation does not necessarily indicate causation, since Ōyama himself did not give the source nor the names of these techniques,²⁰¹ it is impossible to determine whether or not certain techniques are listed in the scroll. Speculating based on meticulous analysis is the closest one could get to any sort of conclusion.

In his book,²⁰² Christopher M. Clarke states that ‘Yoshida passed along to Oyama techniques for defending oneself with an umbrella or parasol. These techniques are featured in Oyama’s book, *This is Karate* (1966)’.²⁰³ It is likely, however, that some of these techniques were already included in Ōyama’s first book *What is Karate?*²⁰⁴ However, certain technical names indeed could refer to the walking-stick basic techniques demonstrated in *This is Karate*.²⁰⁵ The first techniques, such as ‘back- and front-posture’ (*ushiro kamae* 後前 and *mae gamae* 前構) against the ‘overhand and reverse-hand’ attacks,²⁰⁶ could refer to escaping techniques from a wrist grab (*te hodoki* 手解) or, alternatively, basic stances including the way of holding a stick either with a pronated (*junte* 順手) or a supinated (*gyakute* 逆手) grip, as these grip variations are shown in the book.²⁰⁷ The ‘up and down’ (*jōge* 上下) listed in the scroll at ‘strikes’ (*dageki* 打撃) and the ‘front and rear’ (*zengo* 前後) listed at ‘thrusts’ (*totsugeki* 突撃) could also indicate basic striking and thrusting movements with a stick.²⁰⁸

The techniques ‘horizontal’ (*suihei* 水平) ‘defending a downward strike’ (*uchioroshi bōgyō* 打下防御) and ‘vertical’ (*suichoku* 水直)²⁰⁹ ‘defending

²⁰⁰ Given the possible speculations described below, the author of this paper theorises the last one to be true of these options.

²⁰¹ Except for a few techniques, where Ōyama possibly borrowed the techniques and names from Funakoshi Gichin’s *Karate-dō kyōhan* (see note: 146), although he never cited their source.

²⁰² See note: 75.

²⁰³ Clarke 2015: 34.

²⁰⁴ See notes: 141, 147, 152. It is also important to note that despite Clarke’s statement, while walking stick techniques are indeed shown in *This is Karate*, it does not contain any of the parasol techniques. Instead, those are included in the original and revised editions of *What is Karate?* as well as in *Mas Oyama’s Essential Karate*.

²⁰⁵ Oyama 1973: 278–286.

²⁰⁶ See the chapter: ‘The structure and contents of the scroll given by Yoshida’.

²⁰⁷ Oyama 1973: 278.

²⁰⁸ Oyama 1973: 282.

²⁰⁹ Interestingly, there is an error that can be discovered in the scroll: while the standard Japanese term for ‘vertical’, (*suichoku*) is correctly written as 垂直, in the scroll the word *sui* is written with the character 水, which is the same character that can be found in the Japanese term for ‘horizontal’ (*suihei* 水平). Therefore, instead of *suihei* 水平 and *suichoku* 垂直, the scroll uses *sui* 水 for the writing of both words ‘horizontal’ 水平 and ‘vertical’ 水直.

a horizontal strike' (*yokouchi bōgyo* 横打防御) can also mean blocking with a stick, as they are shown in exactly this manner in *This is Karate*.²¹⁰ Other techniques listed in the scroll are not this obvious, however, as they could refer to techniques done with either a stick or a parasol, or in other cases, they could indicate unarmed self-defence techniques. The 'strike to the face and reverse sweep' (*menuchi gyakubarai* 面打逆拂) against a 'single-hand lapel hold' (*katate munedori* 片手胸取) can be done with a stick, as shown in *This is Karate*,²¹¹ or with a parasol, as is shown in *Mas Oyama's Essential Karate*,²¹² or it could refer to any other techniques as well, that utilise a strike to the face and possibly a leg-sweeping (*ashi barai* 足拂) technique. Similarly, there is no clear reference to what techniques 'two-handed strangle' (*ryōte jime* 両手締),²¹³ 'up and down thrust attack' (*jōge totsugeki* 上下突撃), 'kicking upward' (*keage* 蹴上),²¹⁴ and 'diving thrust' (*sentotsu* 潜突) could actually refer.

Some techniques with generic names could also have multiple interpretations: 'attacking the throat' (*inkō seme* 咽喉攻) could refer to the empty-handed technique known as *kubiwa* 首輪 both in Takeda Tokimune's *Daitō-ryū* curriculum and in Funakoshi Gichin's throwing techniques in the book *Karate-dō kyōhan* (The Master Text)²¹⁵; a front strike to the throat with a stick, as shown in *This is Karate*,²¹⁶ or a thrust to the throat with a parasol, as shown in the revised edition of *What is Karate?*²¹⁷ Such a generic term as 'thrust to the torso' (*dō tsuki* 胴突) could also mean any kind of punching technique aimed at the torso, as well as a thrust between the ribs using either a walking stick, as shown in *This is Karate*,²¹⁸ or using a parasol in the same manner, shown both in the original *What is Karate?* and *Mas Oyama's Essential Karate*.²¹⁹

In other cases, it is almost certain that the name indicates an unarmed technique, but it is not clear exactly which one. Also, these instances raise a second question of whether the techniques listed in the scroll could be identified as *Daitō-ryū* techniques. Since the original *Daitō-ryū* documents did not contain names for the techniques, it is likely that the names on the scroll were created

²¹⁰ Oyama 1973: 279–280.

²¹¹ Oyama 1973: 283.

²¹² Oyama 1978: 178.

²¹³ A possible example could be found in *What is Karate?* and *This is Karate* as unarmed techniques (cf. Oyama 1959: 113; Oyama 1973: 265).

²¹⁴ Could also indicate 'kick to the groin', in which case a possible example can be found in *This is Karate* (Oyama 1973: 263).

²¹⁵ cf. Ishibashi 2015: 282; Funakoshi 1935: 224; Oyama 1959: 100–101; Oyama 1966: 148–149.

²¹⁶ Oyama 1973: 285–286.

²¹⁷ Oyama 1966: 158.

²¹⁸ Oyama 1973: 285–286.

²¹⁹ cf. Oyama 1959: 115; Oyama 1978: 178.

by Yoshida himself,²²⁰ which could refer to actual Daitō-ryū techniques that he taught.²²¹ The technique called *katagoshi nage* 肩越投 literally means ‘throw over the shoulder’, which could refer to the *seoi nage* 背負投 or *kata guruma* 肩車 techniques of both *jūdō* and Daitō-ryū.²²² Alternatively, it could also refer to the Daitō-ryū technique *kata otoshi* 肩落 (which is also known as *seoi otoshi* 背負落 in *jūdō*)²²³ or *izori* 居反, which can be found both in Daitō-ryū and *sumō*.²²⁴ Since Daitō-ryū borrowed many techniques from *sumō*,²²⁵ it is not surprising that Yoshida may also have used *sumō*-related terms for some of the techniques on the scroll. One is *kata sukashi* 肩賺,²²⁶ which is really similar to the *kaiten nage* 回転投 technique²²⁷ of *aikidō*.²²⁸

Another technique is called as *ryo-teppō* 弩鐵砲, which in itself (based solely on the name) embodies a really interesting concept. The word *teppō* 鐵砲 in this context means ‘wooden pillar’,²²⁹ referring to a *sumō* training drill of the same name, where the wrestler thrusts or slaps a wooden pillar over and over again (sometimes even a thousand times in a day, in a fashion similar to punching the straw-wrapped striking-post called *makiwara* 巻藁 in *karate*) in order to improve strength, stamina, and thrusting technique.²³⁰ The term *ryo* 弩 written on the scroll, however, literally means ‘backbone’ or ‘spinal column’. While there are no references to the execution of this technique, the name itself could give an implication of treating the enemy’s spine as a wooden pillar used for

²²⁰ See the chapter: ‘Did Ōyama receive a Daitō-ryū transmission scroll?’.

²²¹ The techniques cited here (with a few exceptions) are based on the nomenclature created by Takeda Tokimune (see notes: 50, 51).

²²² cf. Daigo 2005: 12–22, 32–37; Ishibashi 2015: 235, 238; Oyama 1959: 77; Oyama 1977: 74–75, 127, 146–147, 180–181.

²²³ cf. Kondo 2000: 201–205; Ishibashi 2015: 212; Daigo 2005: 22–26; Oyama 1959: 108; Oyama 1966: 163; Oyama 1978: 187.

²²⁴ cf. Kondo 2000: 219–222; Ishibashi 2015: 181, 307; Newton–Toff 2000: 92; Oyama 1977: 124–125.

²²⁵ See the chapter: ‘Technical influences’.

²²⁶ It is important to note, however, that the *kata sukashi* technique of *sumō* is written with the characters 肩透 instead of 肩賺, as it can be found in Yoshida’s scroll. However, this could be again a simple mistake or intended alternation of the character, as it was seen earlier (see note: 209).

²²⁷ The technique *kaiten nage* also can be found in Daitō-ryū as one of the *aiki nage* 合気投 techniques (Driscoll 2017).

²²⁸ cf. Shioda 1996: 184–185; Ueshiba 2005: 74–77, 130–131; Newton–Toff 2000: 94–95; Oyama 1977: 109.

²²⁹ It should be noted that the term *teppō* 鐵砲 by itself literally means ‘iron pipe’, which traditionally refers to the 16th century Japanese muzzle-loading matchlock guns (also known as *hinawajū* 火縄銃) that first appeared on the island of Tanegashima 種子島. In the *sumō* context, however, usage of the same characters refers to a pole (usually made from wood) that is used for specific drilling and conditioning exercises called by the same name.

²³⁰ Newton–Toff 2000: 111, 136.

sumō training, which would certainly end with a devastating result of crippling or even killing an adversary.²³¹

Lastly, there is another unique technique listed in the scroll referred to as *senaka awase* 背中合, which means ‘back-to-back’ defending a two-handed grab with both hands (*ryōte ryōdori* 両手両取). In *This is Karate*, Ōyama demonstrates a technique implied by the name in the ‘walking stick’ techniques.²³² While this technique is not included in the 118 basic Daitō-ryū techniques compiled by Takeda Tokimune, a higher-level Daitō-ryū technique resembling ‘back-to-back’ was publicly demonstrated by the Takumakai group, as one of the *Sōden* techniques,²³³ as part of the *kakete* 掛手 moves,²³⁴ also referred to as *sodedori segatame* 袖捕背固.²³⁵

Obviously (as well as in all the other cases) it cannot be undeniably stated that the *senaka awase* technique on the scroll, the technique demonstrated by Ōyama, and the technique found in Daitō-ryū are certainly the same. It is interesting, however, to see the potential overlaps between these sources. It should be also noted that only a small portion of the potential Daitō-ryū and *aikidō* techniques found in the various books of Ōyama were possibly recorded in the scroll given by Yoshida Kōtarō. This could raise more questions of what Ōyama learnt (or did not learn) from Yoshida and from other masters, questions which likely will never be certainly answered.

Use of the parasol in Daitō-ryū and in Kyokushinkai

Parasol (or umbrella) techniques are one of the specialities of the Daitō-ryū curriculum, called *kasadori* 傘取, which could be translated as techniques ‘while holding (or grabbing) a parasol’.²³⁶ In the original *Hiden mokuroku* scroll,²³⁷ there is one parasol technique described:

²³¹ It should be noted that this interpretation is solely based on the personal understanding of the author of this paper. The technique *ryo-teppō* could refer to an entirely different technique or concept as well.

²³² Oyama 1973: 284.

²³³ See the chapter: ‘Lineages and their legacy’.

²³⁴ Hisa 1940: 86.

²³⁵ Mori 2018: 169.

²³⁶ Since the word *kasa* 傘 can both refer to ‘umbrella’ and ‘parasol’, for the sake of simplicity, in this paper the word is consequently translated as ‘parasol’ in the texts. Please note that other sources and traditions, however, may find the translation ‘umbrella’ more appropriate for the Japanese word *kasa* 傘 and refer to it as such.

²³⁷ See the chapter: ‘What is a traditional Daitō-ryū scroll?’ and note: 50.

傘取之叟

第一條

一、指シタル傘ヲ敵ニ攔マルトキ及指シタル手ノ上下ヲ攔マルトキ
一、傘ノ外ヨリ右手ニテ敵ノ手ヲ攔ミ及右手ナラバ左ノ足ヲ敵ノ左ニ入
レ頭上ヲ越シテ投ル²³⁸

Grab the parasol

Article no. 1

When the enemy grabs the parasol you are holding, as well as when the enemy grabs your hand from above and below.

From the outer side of the parasol, seize the hand of the enemy with your right hand, and if it is his right hand, enter to the enemy's left with your left leg, and throw him over the head.

There is also one parasol technique described in the *Hiden okugi no koto* scroll:

第十二条

一、敵ノ傘ヲ上ヨリ下ニ手ヲ掛ケ押ヘル
一、敵ノ右手首ヲ右手ニテ傘ノ手ノ外ヨリ内ノ方ヲ攔ミ、傘ノ両手ニテ上
ゲ、臂ヲ張りテ左ノ足ヲ敵ノ右ノ方ヨリ左ニ入、肩ノ上ヲ越シテ投ル²³⁹

Article no. 12

– Dealing with the hand of the enemy which pushes the parasol downwards from above.

– From the outside of the parasol holding hand, seize the right wrist of the enemy with your right hand towards the inside direction, raise the parasol with both hands, as you stretch out the elbows, with your left leg enter to the enemy's left from the right side, and throw him over the shoulder.

However, there are even more *kasadori* techniques practiced in the different Daitō-ryū groups: just in the Daitōkan alone, Takeda Tokimune included multiple variations for *kasadori* in the 118-technique *Hiden mokuroku* curriculum, and several different *kasadori* techniques are practiced among the different Daitō-ryū lineages.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Transcribed and translated from the source: Li 2017. Some theorise that in the *Hiden mokuroku* scroll, the instruction ‘throw him over the head’ 頭上ヲ越シテ投ル possibly refers to the *shihō nage* 四方投 technique (Dobróka 2023a).

²³⁹ Translated from Oimatsu-Ueshiba 1982: 550, 553. Some theorise that the instruction ‘throw him over the shoulder’ 肩ノ上ヲ越シテ投ル possibly refers to the *udekime nage* 腕極投 technique, also known as *tenbin nage* 天秤投 in certain *aikidō* lineages or *iri chigai* 入違 in the Daitōkan nomenclature (see note: 113) of Daitō-ryū (Dobróka 2023d).

²⁴⁰ See the chapter: ‘Lineages and their legacy’ (cf. Ishibashi 2015: 350–354; Okamoto 1985:

Self-defence techniques using a parasol first appeared in *What is Karate?*, the first book of Ōyama.²⁴¹ Therefore, they have been part of the Kyokushinkai self-defence curriculum since the very beginning, as early as 1958.²⁴² In the chapter ‘Self-defense with Parasol’ of *What is Karate?*, Ōyama explicitly states: ‘There are twenty-three ways of utilizing the parasol for self-defense. Shown here are five of them, easy and practical’.²⁴³ Interestingly, there are 22 techniques listed in the scroll Ōyama received from Yoshida, although only the last two articles specifically mention an ‘open parasol’ (*kaisan* 開傘).²⁴⁴ Out of the alleged 23, there are in fact seven different parasol self-defence techniques shown in Ōyama’s books.²⁴⁵

The scroll mentions two techniques containing the word ‘parasol’ (*kasa* 傘 in Japanese, which could also mean ‘umbrella’), used to describe the attacks as bearhugs over and under the arms while carrying an ‘open parasol’ (*kaisan kami kakae* 開傘上抱 and *kaisan shita kakae* 開傘下抱). Interestingly, against the first attack, ‘bearhug over the arm’ (*kaisan kami kakae* 開傘上抱), the defending technique in the scroll is called as *seoi nage* 背負投 (a common technique in *jūdō* also known as shoulder-throw), and in Ōyama’s books there is one technique that is demonstrated exactly as the name suggests in the scroll.²⁴⁶

172–173; Mori 2018: 傘取りを練習する著者 [illustration on the 6th unnumbered page of the book]).

²⁴¹ Oyama 1959: 114–115.

²⁴² Given that Ōyama received his scroll from Yoshida Kōtarō (where parasol techniques were specifically mentioned) in 1962, but techniques using the parasol were already shown in his 1958 book, really support the idea that Ōyama either started to train under Yoshida from the second half of the 1950s (see the chapter: *When could Ōyama learn Daitō-ryū?*) or that he was already familiar with the Daitō-ryū *kasadori* techniques (possibly by Richard Kim, see note: 147) before he started his formal training under Yoshida.

²⁴³ Oyama 1959: 114.

²⁴⁴ Although there are multiple parasol techniques practiced in Daitō-ryū, the exact number is not public. It is not known, therefore, what is the basis of Ōyama’s exact statement about the 23 techniques, whether he was told by either Yoshida Kōtarō or Richard Kim, and whether or not this refers to the number of *kasadori* techniques in the Daitō-ryū curriculum.

²⁴⁵ In the 1958 original *What is Karate?*, there are five parasol techniques published. In the 1966 revised new edition, two techniques can be found: one is identical to the 1958 edition (although with a reshot photo, cf. Oyama 1959: 114; Oyama 1966: 157), while the other one is a new addition (Oyama 1966: 158). Finally, in *Mas Oyama’s Essential Karate*, there are five techniques: four of them are in the original 1958 *What is Karate?* (with reshot photos, cf. Oyama 1959: 114–115; Oyama 1978: 178–180), and one technique is a new addition (Oyama 1978: 178). Therefore, in total seven parasol techniques can be found in Ōyama’s books, five in the 1958 original *What is Karate?*, one additional in the 1966 revised edition, and another in *Mas Oyama’s Essential Karate* (cf. Oyama 1959: 114–115; Oyama 1966: 157–158; Oyama 1978: 178–180). Note that the books *This is Karate* and *Advanced Karate* do not contain any self-defence techniques using a parasol.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Oyama 1959: 115; Oyama 1978: 180.

For the second attack, ‘bearhug under the arm’ (*kaisan shita kakae* 開傘下抱), the defending technique is simply called as *kote zuki* 小手突, meaning ‘forearm thrust’. While there is no such technique demonstrated in the books, there is a technique against a grab from the rear, thrusting the parasol to the throat of the enemy (which could also refer to the technique *inkō seme*)²⁴⁷ and another thrusting technique from a wrist grab aimed to the ribs (which could also refer to the technique *dō tsuki*).²⁴⁸ There are also a few wrist locking techniques done with the parasol that can be found in the books as well (although those are not thrusting and do not defend again a bearhug).²⁴⁹ Therefore, while the first ‘open parasol’ technique from the scroll likely can be found in Ōyama’s books, there is only speculation about what the second one could have been.

Conclusion

Ōyama Masutatsu *sōsai*, the founder of Kyokushinkai, is a legendary figure in the world of martial arts, and as such, his life is surrounded by various myths, controversies, misconceptions, and half-baked truths. This paper aimed to clarify one of them. The alleged self-defence curriculum of Kyokushinkai *karate* is believed to have its roots in the art of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*, claiming that Ōyama himself possessed a *menkyo kaiden* (‘license of full transmission’) scroll in the art, granted by Yoshida Kōtarō.

The research concluded that there are indeed technical overlaps between the self-defence techniques published by Ōyama in his books and the known techniques of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* as well as others that could be recognised as *aikidō* techniques. It is verified that Ōyama had personal connections with Yōshinkan *aikidō* founder Shioda Gōzō.²⁵⁰ There are also claims that Ōyama personally visited the founder of *aikidō*, Ueshiba Morihei multiple times.

It is a fact, supported by multiple sources and other evidence, that at some point (most likely from the second half of the 1950s up until the early 1960s) Ōyama was the student of a representative instructor (*kyōju dairi*) of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* Yoshida Kōtarō, who also granted Ōyama a unique transmission document titled ‘Yoshida-style stick–parasol self-defence scroll’, containing 22 different techniques, officially dated in 1962, on the ninth day of the fifth month.

²⁴⁷ See the chapter: ‘Techniques from the scroll: speculations based on the nomenclature and other sources’ (Oyama 1966: 158).

²⁴⁸ Cf. Oyama 1959: 115; Oyama 1978: 178.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Oyama 1959: 114; Oyama 1966: 157; Oyama 1978: 178–179.

²⁵⁰ However, at this point it cannot officially be stated that Ōyama learnt *aikidō* from Shioda.

This is, however, certainly not a conventional Daitō-ryū transmission scroll. Therefore (until contrary evidence is found), Ōyama Masutatsu should not be considered as an official disciple of the Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* tradition (albeit he was likely taught Daitō-ryū techniques), and the document he received from Yoshida was definitely not a Daitō-ryū *menkyo kaiden* certificate by any means. The exact technical content of the 22 techniques in the scroll given to Ōyama is not known (since the scroll only contains a list of techniques by name). However, the terminology shows some possible overlaps with the techniques demonstrated in the various books written by Ōyama. Therefore, it can be theorised that the contents of the scroll were at least partially published in these works.

The research concluded in this paper hopefully cleared up at least some of the misconceptions prevailed in the history of Kyokushinkai, bringing it closer to the factually based, ‘ultimate truth’.

Appendix 1.

The transcription of the scroll Yoshida Kōtarō gave to Ōyama Masutatsu:

大山倍達殿	大東流柔術代理教授	吉田式ステッキ・パラソル護身術創始者	昭和卅七年 五月 九日	右條々習得勝利可有之目錄授與依如件	第二十二條	開傘下抱	小手突	吉田式ステッキ・パラソル護身術目錄
					第二十一條	開傘上抱	背負投	第一條
					第二十條	後下抱	面突	第二條
					第十九條	後上抱	後突	第三條
					第十八條	兩手兩肩取	肩鐵砲	第四條
					第十七條	片手後襟取	咽喉攻	第五條
					第十六條	前下抱	釣鐘突	第六條
					第十五條	前上抱	肩越投	第七條
					第十四條	兩手右取	胴突	第八條
					第十三條	兩手左取	背中含	第九條
					第十二條	兩手兩取	潛突	第十條
					第十一條	片手片取	蹴上	第十一條
					第十條	兩手兩袖取	上下突	第十二條
					第九條	片手袖取	面打逆拂	第十三條
					第八條	兩手胸取	水直	第十四條
					第七條	片手胸取	水平	第十五條
					第六條	橫打防禦	前後	第十六條
					第五條	打下防禦	上下	第十七條
					第四條	突擊	前構	第十八條
					第三條	打擊	後構	第十九條
					第二條	逆手		第二十條
					第一條	順手		第二十一條

吉田幸太郎

Appendix 2.

The English translation of the scroll Yoshida Kōtarō gave to Ōyama Masutatsu:
Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence scroll

Item no.		Upper line (attacks)		Lower line (defences)	
Japanese	English	Japanese	English	Japanese	English
第一條	No. 1.	順手	Overhand	後構	Rear stance
第二條	No. 2.	逆手	Reverse hand	前構	Front Stance
第三條	No. 3.	打撃	Strike attack	上下	Up and down
第四條	No. 4.	突撃	Thrust attack	前後	Front and rear
第五條	No. 5.	打下防禦	Downward strike defence	水平	Horizontal
第六條	No. 6.	横打防禦	Side blow defence	水直	Vertical
第七條	No. 7.	片手胸取	Single-handed lapel hold	面打逆拂	Strike to the face and reverse sweep
第八條	No. 8.	両手胸取	Two-handed lapel hold	両手絞	Two-handed strangle
第九條	No. 9.	片手袖取	Single-handed sleeve grab	上下突撃	Up and down thrust attack
第十條	No. 10.	両手両袖取	Two-handed double-sleeve grab	蹴上	Kick upward
第十一條	No. 11.	片手片取	Single-handed one-hand grab	潜突	Diving thrust/punch
第十二條	No. 12.	両手両取	Two-handed double-hand grab	背中合	Back-to-back
第十三條	No. 13.	両手左取	Two-handed left-hand grab	胴突	Thrust/punch to the torso
第十四條	No. 14.	両手右取	Two-handed right-hand grab	肩越投	Over the shoulder throw
第十五條	No. 15.	前上抱	Front upper bear hug	釣鐘突	Testicle thrust/punch
第十六條	No. 16.	前下抱	Front lower bear hug	咽喉攻	Throat attack
第十七條	No. 17.	片手後襟取	Single-handed collar hold from behind	脊鐵砲	Backbone pole strike
第十八條	No. 18.	両手両肩取	Two-handed double-shoulder grab	肩賺	Under-shoulder swing down
第十九條	No. 19.	後上抱	Rear upper bear hug	後突	Rear thrust/punch
第二十條	No. 20.	後下抱	Rear lower bear hug	面突	Front thrust/punch
第二十一條	No. 21.	開傘上抱	Open umbrella upper bear hug	背負投	Shoulder throw
第二十二條	No. 22.	開傘下抱	Open umbrella lower bear hug	小手突	Forearm thrust/punch

The articles [techniques] listed above were successfully learnt. Therefore, I grant you this scroll, thus as stated.

The 37th year of Emperor Shōwa [1962], the 9th day of the 5th month.

The founder of Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence, Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* representative instructor: Yoshida Kōtarō

To: Ōyama Masutatsu-dono

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Ainu Representation in the World of Japanese Comics: *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* Take on the Ruling Narratives of Hokkaidō History

Abstract

Examining Japanese history through *manga* may initially seem unconventional, given the considerable distrust towards the medium in Western scholarship, where it is often viewed as a tool for distorting history. To avoid misinterpretation in the analysis of Japanese comics, it is essential to approach them with what Tessa Morris-Suzuki terms *historical truthfulness*, recognising them as gateways to a complex web of inherited ideas rather than direct representations of the historical periods that they depict. This approach is supported by Luc Pauwels' *integrated conceptual framework for visual sociology*, which cautions against conflating the depiction with the depicted in the analysis of pre-made visuals. This study employs this methodological framework to analyse and compare two *manga* series that explore Ainu history and culture: Tezuka Osamu's *Shumari* and Noda Satoru's *Golden Kamuy*. Both narratives are set in Meiji-era Hokkaidō, a time when *Wajin* newcomers sought to erase the Indigenous Ainu from the northern island's history. Consequently, Hokkaidō is often still perceived as a natural frontier developed by settlers for the benefit of the Japanese nation, while the Ainu continue to be stereotyped as a *dying race*. By critically engaging with these prevailing narratives, Tezuka and Noda elevate their work to what Pierre Nora calls *places of memory*. Nissim Otmazgin describes the way in which interacting with such seemingly unassuming places of memory creates, propagates, and reproduces a variety of memories about history among its readership as *banal memory*. Tezuka's *Shumari* challenges the narrative of Hokkaidō as empty land by portraying it as the colonised land of the Ainu, yet he struggles to escape the dying race stereotype in the depiction of his Ainu characters. Conversely, Noda's *Golden Kamuy* rejects this stereotype by vividly—and at times anachronistically—showcasing the beauty of Ainu culture. However, by sidelining historical injustices in his narrative, Noda offers readers a shallow understanding of Ainu history.

Keywords: Ainu, banal memory, dying race, historical truthfulness, Hokkaidō, *manga*, Meiji period, place of memory, Wajin

Introduction

Shumari シュマリ, a classic *manga* 漫画¹ by Tezuka Osamu 手塚治虫, and *Golden Kamuy* ゴールデンカムイ, Noda Satoru's 野田サトル contemporary *manga* sensation,² offer contrasting tones in their storytelling. While the former is sombre and tragic, the latter is exciting and fun. Despite these tonal differences, both plots unfold from a similar premise. During the Meiji period (1869–1912), a *Wajin* 和人³ warrior with exceptional combat skills travels to Hokkaidō 北海道 for a woman he loves. Once there, he meets a young Ainu girl who joins him on his adventures.

This study explores the representation of Ainu history and culture in historical *manga* by analysing these two works and comparing their content and sociopolitical context. It is argued that their critical stance on the master narrative of Hokkaidō's history—rooted in the Meiji period and still influential today—transforms these stories into what Pierre Nora calls *places of memory* (*lieux de mémoire*). To effectively substantiate this claim, the study adheres to the following structure. First, it establishes *manga* as a legitimate medium of

¹ Zoltan Kacsuk writes that nowadays this Japanese word has multiple meanings. In Japan, it is used to simply denote all comic books. However, the word gains additional layers of meaning when used outside of the Japanese context. It can then stand for either comics that are made in Japan (*manga* in a narrow sense) or an internationally utilised style of drawing comics that originated from Japan (*manga* in a broader sense). Based on Kacsuk's definition, both *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* can be considered *manga* in the narrow sense of the world, so the term 'Japanese comics'—sometimes shortened to just comics—is used in this study as a synonym of *manga* (Kacsuk 2018: 2).

² Both *manga* titles borrow a word from the Ainu language. *Shumari* means fox (Kokuritsu Ainu Minzoku Hakubutsukan n.d.: *Sumari*), and *kamuy* is a word of enormous cultural significance denoting the spirits or gods traditionally revered by the Ainu people (*ibid.*, *Kamuy*). An inquisitive glance at these official romanisations reveals that while the former follows the rules of the Hepburn romanisation system, the latter clearly does not adhere to it. It was probably transcribed according to another system specific to the Ainu language, which is also used in the *Akor Itak: Ainugo Tekisuto 1* アコロイタク: アイヌ語テキスト1, an Ainu language textbook made by the Ainu Association of Hokkaido (Hokkaidō Ainu Kyōkai 北海道アイヌ協会). For the sake of clarity and to highlight the separateness of the Ainu from the Japanese language, the *Akor Itak*-style of romanisation is exclusively employed in this study. For further information about this romanisation system, see Hokkaidō Utari Kyōkai (2002: 4–6).

³ An often-used word of this study, *Wajin* may be unfamiliar to most readers, except those who have a special interest in Hokkaidō history and/or Ainu studies. Even though the Ainu belong to a different ethnic group than most Japanese people, they are still citizens of the Japanese state. Therefore, it would be incorrect to only refer to the majority population as 'the Japanese'. Researchers of the above-mentioned fields usually conceptualise the Japanese majority as an ethnic group, but they cannot seem to agree on a universal ethnonym for them. Out of the many possible labels suggested in the literature, most contemporary researchers default to *Wajin*, a label with a written usage that can be traced back to 1799 (Howell 2014: 109).

inquiry into Japanese history. Second, it discusses how the reinterpretation of history in these works elevates them to places of memory. The study then introduces the concepts of Hokkaidō as empty land and the Ainu as a *dying race*, both central to the Meiji era's master narrative. Finally, it contrasts how Tezuka and Noda challenge these inherited stereotypes in their respective works.

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is essential to clarify the study's methodological framework. The research employs the *integrated conceptual framework for visual sociology* developed by Luc Pauwels, which offers a unified approach to investigating society and culture from a visual starting point.⁴ Although a detailed description of this methodology is unnecessary, one of Pauwels' key warnings regarding the study of pre-made visuals is particularly relevant to the analysis of *manga* created by *Wajin* artists that depict non-*Wajin* characters. He cautions that the depiction is not equivalent to the depicted, meaning that the analysis of a certain depiction is likely to reveal more about the creator's mindset than about the subject matter itself. In this context, while *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* provide insight into Ainu culture and history, a critical reading of these texts primarily illuminates the attitudes held by *Wajin* towards the Ainu. Furthermore, this study explores how these attitudes have evolved over time, as reflected in the differing perspectives between the two comics, published four decades apart.⁵

Manga and history

Considering the state of contemporary Western scholarship, it is a bit unorthodox to look at Japanese history through the lens of *manga*. Roman Rosenbaum writes that although *manga* studies and popular culture studies are currently enjoying unprecedented levels of global popularity, surprisingly few researchers feel inclined to examine the ways in which Japanese comics can shape their readers' perception of history. There is even some distrust towards the medium because of its tarnished reputation as a potential tool for the misrepresentation of history, which it owes to the controversies surrounding such works as Kobayashi Yoshinori's 小林よしのり *Sensō-ron* 戦争論 and Yamano Sharin's 山野車輪 *Manga Kenkanryū* マンガ嫌韓流.⁶

Yet, if one considers the emotionally charged relationship between today's consumers and their favoured popular culture products, treating *manga* as a possible venue for the re-exploration of history—and examining it accord-

⁴ Pauwels 2011: 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶ Rosenbaum 2013: 1.

ingly—becomes a timely and practical decision. Tessa Morris-Suzuki argues that nowadays popular culture plays a large part in forming people's historical consciousness, which makes it unwise to ignore the mass-marketed narratives found in historical novels, films, and *manga*.⁷ These popular culture products are influential, because they give the people consuming them an opportunity to identify with people from the past by appealing to their imagination and sense of empathy. This identification is likely to inspire emotionally invested consumers to rethink their opinions on past events. In this aspect, mass-marketed historical narratives are quite unlike the academic history found in journals and textbooks, which tends to shy away from emotion and instead aims to foster intellectual curiosity towards history.⁸

Interestingly, Morris-Suzuki also echoes Pauwels' warning against the notion of historical *manga* as unproblematic windows into the past. She argues for conceptualising them instead as an accessible gateway to accumulated historical knowledge that is coloured by the biases of previous generations. This interpretation is a byproduct of her way of making sense of the past, which she calls *historical truthfulness*. The point of historical truthfulness boils down to being conscious of the fact that historical information must go through a long chain of transformations—being filtered through the hearts and minds of consecutive generations—to reach people living in the present. Additionally, paying attention to this metamorphosis of historical knowledge is a prerequisite of reflecting on one's own place in the process of history: although today's people are not responsible for the sins of their ancestors, they live in a world that was built on this injustice, enjoying—often unconsciously—the benefits in which these actions resulted.⁹

Manga as a place of memory

When Japanese comics such as *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* transcend their role as mere transmitters of previously accumulated historical knowledge and instead actively challenge readers' preconceptions about the supposed facts of history, they are transformed into places of memory.

The term was coined by French historian Pierre Nora, and it refers to the last bastions of a nation's historical memory. Nora conceptualises historical memory as a constantly changing and evolving master narrative about a nation's history dictated by powerful actors, such as the state, the church, or the school system.

⁷ Morris-Suzuki 2005: 16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 22–23.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 25–28.

This canonised version of past events used to stay with people throughout their entire lives like a trusted companion, firmly keeping past occurrences and time-honoured traditions in the same eternal present they themselves inhabited. This ended when historical memory was banished by critical historiography to reside only in places of memory, while the people were left with history, the impersonal science of intellectually engaging with and recreating the past.¹⁰

An archive, a museum, a textbook, a treaty, a statue, a monument, a speech, a pilgrimage, an anniversary, or an event of some historical importance—these are all things that can be considered places of memory if they fulfil the following two requirements. First, they must be originally conceived of as an artefact to be remembered, such as pieces of art or legal documents. Second, they must simultaneously have three—a material, a symbolic and a functional—dimensions. Depending on the individual place, one of the three dimensions tends to be more prominent than the others. Nora mentions *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, an iconic textbook that chronicles the journey of two boys through the French provinces to illustrate the multifaceted aspect of these diverse places. As a textbook, it is a primarily functional phenomenon, which materialises in each printed copy of the text. It is made symbolic by the ritualistic way it used to be read in French schools, all over the country and like clockwork.¹¹

Manga can be conceptualised as places of memory in the same vein as Nora's textbook. Like the textbook, these Japanese comics are a primarily functional phenomenon. Although they have evolved beyond being mere children's entertainment to even become a subject of study at Japanese universities, the stereotypical function of *manga* remains to entertain readers.¹² They are made material in countless *manga* magazines and *tankōbon* 単行本 volumes, while they are lent symbolic weight by the devoted masses who read them regularly. Yet, what makes the *manga* analysed in this study—and other Japanese comics in general—a markedly different type of place of memory is the fact that the act of reading them is rarely assigned any significance. It is seen instead as an everyday activity that people unceremoniously undertake in their leisure time, which in turn makes it worthy of little notice. As a side effect of being unnoticed, Nissim Otmazgin theorises that *manga* subliminally alter the historical memory of Japan, a nation where these comics permeate society. He dubbed the way in which interacting with such unassuming places of memory creates, propagates, and reproduces a variety of memories about history among its readership as *banal memory*.¹³

¹⁰ Nora 2009: 13–15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27–28.

¹² To learn more about the evolution of the role that *manga* have played over the years, see Ito (2008: 26–47) and Bouissou (2010: 17–33).

¹³ Otmazgin 2016: 12.

According to Nora, the passive power to influence a nation's historical memory is insufficient for historiographical works to be considered places of memory: these works must also explicitly aim to reshape how their readers perceive history. Therefore, *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* cannot be classified as places of memory solely by virtue of being influential and multifaceted pieces of art with historical themes.¹⁴ While this criterion may initially appear unnecessary, given that Japanese comics are not typically regarded as historiographical works, Otmazgin offers a compelling argument to the contrary. The process of creating academic works on history and historical *manga* is strikingly similar. Both historians and manga artists (*mangaka* 漫画家) conduct research on the subjects they wish to depict, interpreting their findings through the lens of personal beliefs, prevailing convictions, and the zeitgeist of their time. The primary distinction between these recreations of history lies in the peer review process: unlike their scholarly counterparts, *mangaka* are afforded the artistic freedom to blend facts and fiction in their narratives. Combined with the medium's widespread popularity, this positions the genre of historical *manga* as a form of *pop historiography*, characterised by a negligible authority but achieving an extensive reach to which scholars of history can only aspire.¹⁵

Shumari and *Golden Kamuy* become places of memory because they actively challenge the validity of the old master narrative of Hokkaidō's history, a narrative that has remained influential since its formulation during the Meiji period. What specific elements of this narrative do the two *mangaka* critically address? While Tezuka rejects the entrenched perception of Hokkaidō as empty land, Noda dismantles the stereotypical portrayal of the Ainu as a dying race. As the following analysis demonstrates, however, the former's empathetic portrayal of the dispossessed Ainu casts these characters as helpless victims doomed to extinction. Similarly, the latter's tendency to obscure historical injustices behind the vivid portrayal of Ainu culture may leave his readers with a superficial understanding of Hokkaidō's history.

The erasure of the Ainu from the history of Hokkaidō

The notion of Hokkaidō as empty land is connected to the systematic erasure of the Ainu from the northern island's history. This is a topic that is excessively discussed by Michele Mason in her book, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan*.¹⁶

¹⁴ Nora 2009: 29–30.

¹⁵ Otmazgin 2016: 4.

¹⁶ In both Mason's book and this study, the geographical name 'Hokkaidō' stands for Japan's

The Meiji state—from the standpoint of the Indigenous Ainu a foreign power—successfully extended its influence to Hokkaidō, subjugating the Ainu population, exploiting the local natural resources, and repopulating the island with *Wajin* settlers in the process. According to Mason, this is the reason why Hokkaidō should be considered the Japanese Empire's first—and only successful—settler colony.¹⁷ Despite this sound reasoning, her statement may initially seem a bit drastic, because it breaks some of the conventions in Japanese historiography and early postcolonial discourse. The age of Japanese empire building is usually dated from 1895, when Taiwan came under Japanese rule. In this context, Hokkaidō—appropriated by the empire decades earlier—was seen as an informal colony. It was also seen by early postcolonial scholars as a classic case of *colonisation* (i.e., internal migration to underdeveloped parts of a country) instead of *colonialism* (i.e., the political and economic subjugation of people who live outside a country's borders). Additionally, a reoccurring term used in Japanese- and English-language scholarship to reference Hokkaidō is *internal colony* (*naikoku shokuminchi* 内国植民地), which only fuels the ambiguity around the northern island's colonial status.¹⁸

During this colonisation process, Hokkaidō was treated as if devoid of any human presence, while its Indigenous inhabitants were legally and symbolically erased from its history.¹⁹ It was retroactively naturalised as one of the four main islands of Japan by the sudden influx of *Wajin* settlers, and much of it was declared ownerless land to legally account for the dispossession of the Ainu.

current northernmost island. It is still important to note, however, that in the discussed historical period the administrative unit of Hokkaidō also included the Kurils (Chishima rettō 千島列島). The two southernmost islands, namely Kunashir (Kunashiri-tō 国後島) and Iturup (Etorofu-tō 択捉島), became one of the then 11 provinces of Hokkaidō under the name Chishima Province (Chishima-no kuni 千島国) when Japan's administration was extended to the north of Honshū 本州 in 1869 (Emori 2015: 381–382). After the ratification of the Treaty of Saint Petersburg (Karafuto-Chishima Kōkan Jōyaku 樺太・千島交換条約) in 1875, the remaining islands of the archipelago were also incorporated into the same administrative unit (*ibid.*, 414).

¹⁷ Mason 2012: 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16–18.

¹⁹ Today, Hokkaidō is the last corner of the Ainu's ancestral land that they still inhabit after the expansion of their *Wajin* and Russian neighbours had forced them out of the northern parts of Honshū, the Kuril Islands, and the southern parts of Sakhalin (Karafuto 樺太) by the middle of the 20th century (Fitzhugh 1999: 9–11). Despite the attempt to erase the ties between Hokkaidō and its Indigenous population from Japanese public perception, the northern island is still seen as the homeland of the Ainu. There exists an enduring misconception that an Ainu person stops being Ainu the second they leave their ancestral village in the Hokkaidō countryside and/or move south of the Tsugaru Strait (Tsugaru Kaikyō 津軽海峡), which leads to the further marginalisation of the Ainu who no longer live on the northern island. For further information on this topic, see Watson (2014: 69–85).

The laws and regulations of *Wajin* lawmakers not only robbed them of their lands but also nearly succeeded in completely depriving them of their language and culture. These tragic developments stemmed from the Japanese state's utter disregard for Ainu sovereignty, which first showed itself in the state's refusal to formalise its relationship with the Ainu by the ratification of a treaty.²⁰ At the same time, prominent *Wajin* intellectuals and literary fiction authors of the Meiji period²¹ were actively rewriting Hokkaidō's history to ignore the suffering that colonisation caused to the Ainu in favour of detailing the plight of *Wajin* settlers. In the name of Japanese modernisation, the colonisation of the Ainu and their homeland was rapidly buried under a legacy of development and progress.²²

A dying race

In the Meiji period, the Ainu came to be referred to as a dying race (*horobiyuku minzoku* 滅びゆく民族) by academics, authors, educators and journalists. During the debates in the Japanese Diet on proposals for a Protection Act, politicians seemed to prefer another epithet. They called the Ainu an *inferior race* (*rettō no jinshu* 劣等の人種) and reasoned that their apparent misery resulted from the law of the *survival of the fittest* (*yūshō reppai* 優勝劣敗). The vocabulary used in these contemporary discourses attests to the fact that Social Darwinism²³

²⁰ Mason 2012: 8–10.

²¹ This process is explored in the detail by Mason in a case study focusing on the works of Kunikida Doppo (1871–1908) 国木田独歩 (*ibid.*, 57–81). The absence of a native writing system (Tamura 1999: 57.) likely facilitated the erasure of the Ainu from their homeland and contributed to the delayed emergence of works written by Ainu authors. The first ever such publication about Ainu culture was published in 1918, six years into the Taishō period (1912–1926). It was a short pamphlet titled *Ainu Monogatari* アイヌ物語. Even though its author, a young teacher named Takekuma Tokusaburō 武隈徳三郎 (1896–1951), criticises the subpar education Ainu children were receiving at the time, it cannot be fully considered a counter-narrative, as he was in favour of Ainu assimilation (Emori 2015: 460–461). However, two of his fellow Ainu, Chiri Yukie 知里幸恵 (1903–1922) and Iboshi Hokuto 違星北斗 (1901–1929), were openly lamenting the losses of their people around the same time (*ibid.*, 464–472).

²² Mason 2012: 2.

²³ According to Mike Hawkins, the four main tenets of the Social Darwinist worldview are as follows. First, all organisms, including humans, are governed by the laws of biology. Second, population growth puts pressure on resources, which leads to organisms struggling to survive. Third, certain physical and mental traits are advantageous to have in this struggle and can be inherited by the offspring of their original possessors, becoming more common in the whole population as a result. Fourth, selection and inheritance are the dual causes behind the emergence and the extinction of species (Claeys 2000: 228). Interestingly, Gregory Claeys argues that Social Darwinism is somewhat of a misnomer, because most of these beliefs predate

and scientific racism²⁴ were enthusiastically adopted and embraced by many Japanese people living in the Meiji period.²⁵ However, the age-old prejudice expressed in these imported phrases was not originally racial in nature, as pointed out by Richard Siddle, who retraced the development of a negative Ainu stereotype throughout Japanese history.²⁶

Before the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) this stereotype was informed by the *ka-i chitsujo* 華夷秩序, a moralising worldview imported from China, which defined barbarians as hairy, flesh-eating, and cave-dwelling savages covered in animal skins. This role was filled in the new Japanese context by the *Emishi* 蝦夷. They were a group of people living in the Tōhoku region 東北地方 who resisted the rule of the civilised Yamato court 大和朝廷. Following the subjugation of the *Emishi*, in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) the same image was transferred to the *Ezo* 蝦夷, the ancestors of the modern-day Ainu. Like the *Emishi* before them, the *Ezo* were also seen as powerful adversaries by their southern neighbours, often depicted as terrifying demons in picture scrolls. This balance of power ensured that the Ainu and the *Wajin* living in southern Hokkaidō had a somewhat equitable relationship based on trade up until the mid-17th century, when the scales of power ultimately dipped in favour of the *Wajin*.²⁷

The Tokugawa period was a time when mutually beneficial trade between the two neighbouring groups gradually gave way to the exploitation of Ainu workers, who were now forced to toil in the fisheries operated by the contractors of the Matsumae fief 松前藩. These fishing stations were converted from the original trading posts after an Ainu chieftain named Shakushain シャクシャイン lost his war against the *Wajin* in 1669, putting an end to the independent

the publication of Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) *Origin of Species* in 1859. There already existed a worldview based on Malthusianism and political economy that exalted productive members of society—who were thought to have an advantage over others because of their respectability and character—as the only ones deserving of survival. Darwin's contribution to these preexisting ideas mainly came from redefining advantage and race. Advantage became the result of inherited characteristics, and race became a biological category closely connected to skin colour. Although Darwin originally designated fecundity as the most advantageous inheritable characteristic of the animal kingdom, he later came to define intelligence and morality as the superior qualities in humans. By the late 19th century, it was widely prophesied that the inferior (i.e., non-white) races, which were presumed to lack these qualities, would eventually lose in the existential struggle and die out (*ibid.*, 235–238).

²⁴ For a comprehensive overview on the development of Darwin's ideas into different forms of scientific racism, such as Karl Pearson's (1857–1936) biometrics, Vacher de Lapouge's (1854–1936) anthroposociology, and Harry H. Laughlin's (1880–1943) eugenics, see Jackson – Weidman (2005/2006: 66–79).

²⁵ Siddle 2011: 122–123.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 107–109.

political development of Ainu communities. This loss of independence translated to further dehumanisation: the once powerful demons morphed into pitiful slaves in the eyes of the local *Wajin*, who attributed canine origins to the Ainu and saw them as unworthy of being assimilated into human society. This was contrary to the official policy of the Bakufu 幕府 that was aimed at the assimilation of the Ainu and was driven first by a Confucian sense of duty to civilise the barbarians, and later by considerations of homeland security. However, this policy was resisted by the Ainu and the local *Wajin* population alike.²⁸

By the time of the Meiji Restoration, the Ainu were seen as a mix of savage demons and inferior weaklings. Social Darwinism and scientific racism added another layer to this native stereotype when they were imported to Meiji Japan with the popular works of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer.²⁹ The supposed inferiority of the Ainu was now attributed to race. The imagined urgency to gather as much information as possible about the dying race before it inevitably vanishes drove scholars of Ainu studies—including Tsuboi Shōgorō 坪井正五郎, Torii Ryūzō 鳥居龍藏, and Koganei Yoshikiyo 小金井良精—to resort to the use of such cruel and unethical methods as grave robbery and the impersonation of medical personnel. Unlike the native prejudice against the Ainu that developed because of their subjugation, Western-style racism was used to justify the Japanese Empire's dominion over Ainu lands: in an official history of Hokkaidō published in 1918, the colonisation of the island was labelled as the responsibility of the *Wajin*, the only *superior race* (*yūtō jinshu* 優等人種) in contact with the Ainu.³⁰ This is eerily similar to the views of Karl Pearson and Benjamin Kidd, both prominent English Social Darwinists of the early 20th century, who deemed the colonisation projects of the British Empire mutually beneficial for the coloniser and the colonised. They reasoned that while the former gained the resources needed to survive in the struggle for existence, the latter received the gift of civilisation in return.³¹

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 109–116.

²⁹ T. H. Huxley (1825–1895) was a vocal advocate of Darwin's ideas. He came up with the term *agnostic* to express that there was a lack of scientific evidence for God's existence (Claeys 2000: 225). Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) is the originator of the phrase *survival of the fittest*. He was also one of the first people to argue that Darwin's principles, whose focus was originally on the evolution of animal species, could be applied to human societies (Dennis 1995: 244). Interestingly enough, it was under the influence of such contemporaries that Darwin himself became a Social Darwinist (Claeys 2000: 237).

³⁰ Siddle 2011: 118–121.

³¹ Dennis 1995: 245.

Shumari

Tezuka clearly states in the epilogue of *Shumari*, which was originally serialised in the *manga* magazine *Big Comic* (*Biggu Komikku* ビッグコミック) between June 1974 and April 1976,³² that he wanted to retell the history of Hokkaidō's development from the perspective of the Indigenous Ainu. He credits a book titled *Hokkaidō kaitaku-shi* 北海道開拓誌 as his direct inspiration, where he had read about the tragic history of an Ainu settlement in the Kawakami region (Kawakami-chihō 川上地方), which inspired him to draw a story that highlights the dispossession of Ainu lands and the suffering that resulted from it. He even planned to have a main character of mixed Ainu and *Wajin* descent but changed his mind because of the feedback he received from concerned Ainu individuals and his own doubts about not being able to adequately portray such a sensitive topic as a member of the Japanese majority.³³

In his retelling of history, he repeatedly rejects Hokkaidō's portrayal as empty land by asserting that the northern island rightfully belongs to its original inhabitants. In addition to giving a fictional voice to the Ainu to claim ownership of their homeland,³⁴ this sentiment is echoed multiple times throughout the story by Shumari, the misleadingly named *Wajin* protagonist himself,³⁵ to effectively drive the point home to readers. The scene where he is asked by his new lover why he refuses to do agricultural work is a particularly poignant example of this, because Shumari not only reaffirms the Ainu's ownership of their homeland but also asserts that *Wajin* settlers can only ever be visitors to Hokkaidō who have no right to use any of its natural resources. To salve his conscience, Shumari tries to open a horse farm, which he sees as something less exploitative, a piece of land that he only temporarily borrows from its real owners.³⁶

Additionally, Tezuka also employs a less heavy-handed method to underscore the Ainu's claim to the northern island. He devotes many pages to the illustration of the trials and tribulations faced by ordinary *Wajin* settlers (for instance, he shows a farmer losing his life in a flash flood while trying to protect

³² Tezuka Osamu Official n.d.: *Shumari*.

³³ Tezuka 2015b: 491–492.

³⁴ Tezuka 2015a: 32.

³⁵ Shumari is a *Wajin* character who completely rejects his ethnic origins and instead finds identification with the Ainu. This is signified by him using an Ainu name, wearing pants adorned with Ainu motives on the hem, and dispensing Indigenous knowledge. Mason argues that Tezuka instrumentalises Ainuness as a tool of social criticism by positioning his idealised version of the Ainu (i.e., peaceful people who live in harmony with nature) as morally superior to modernising Japanese society. This gives Shumari—a character with an adopted ethnic identity—a kind of moral superiority over other *Wajin* characters (Mason 2012: 174–175).

³⁶ Tezuka 2015a: 295.

his meagre plot of land,³⁷ or the roof of Shumari's house caving in because of the thick layer of snow that has fallen on it³⁸), but his stereotypical portrayal of these struggles—evocative of the stories written by literary fiction authors in the Meiji period—gets recontextualised by a fleeting remark of Shumari. As he goes panning for gold while trying to fight off a swarm of hungry mosquitoes, he remarks that life on Hokkaidō is so harsh that no sane person would try to settle down on the island, and that the only people who could thrive among such conditions were the Ainu. This implies that the *Wajin* settlers' suffering is a result of their misguided attempts to build a life for themselves in a place where they do not belong.³⁹

Tezuka draws Hokkaidō as the stolen homeland of the Ainu, which has an unfortunate side effect: the portrayal of his Ainu characters remains firmly rooted in the dying race stereotype. This becomes particularly clear in a subplot where Shumari tries and partly fails to save a group of displaced Ainu who are sheltering in the woods of his horse ranch. When he tries to rally the men of the temporary Ainu village (*kotan* コタン), to defend against an incoming attack of *Wajin* bandits, his help gets rejected because of the men's passivity and pridefulness. While an elder declares that their hunting bows and arrows should not be used to harm other humans, a much younger Ainu man proudly states that they do not need Shumari's help to protect themselves. This man and the others who follow him into battle are later mercilessly slaughtered by the bandits, leaving only Shumari and his friends to protect the remaining Ainu—women, children, and the elderly—from further harm. Even though they succeed in protecting their charges, the survivors of the *kotan* also vanish from the story without further explanation.⁴⁰ The death of the younger Ainu men is not the only element of this subplot that reinforces the dying race stereotype. In her own insightful analyses of the *manga*, Mason argues that the unacknowledged disappearance of the surviving Ainu characters mirrors the way the real Ainu were expected to disappear from the modernising world in the Meiji period and beyond.⁴¹

If one considers when *Shumari* was originally written and published, it becomes less surprising that Tezuka does not break away from the portrayal of the Ainu as a dying race. In the 1970s, the Hokkaidō Kyūdojin Hogohō 北海道旧土人保護法—or the Hokkaidō Former Natives Protection Act—of 1889 was technically still in effect.⁴² The international prominence of Indigenous issues,

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 288.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴⁰ Tezuka 2015b: 129–199.

⁴¹ Mason 2012: 174.

⁴² The Protection Act was modelled after the American Dawes Act—also known as the General Allotment Act—of 1887. Most Ainu traditionally earned their livelihood by hunting and trad-

combined with the domestic emergence of social movements, only just started to inspire Japanese activists to emphasise the negative consequences of colonisation on Ainu communities and critically engage with the state's assimilation policy.⁴³ The assimilation policy was also supported by the first ever Ainu organisation, the Ainu Association of Hokkaido, which had close ties to the Hokkaidō government: it started out as an extension of the local administration in 1930, and most of its initial members were conservative Ainu farmers who willingly cooperated with the local government to secure help for their people. In 1974, this help took the form of the Hokkaidō Utari Welfare Measures (Hokkaidō Utari Fukushi Taisaku 北海道ウタリ福祉対策), which were enacted to improve the living conditions, employment rates, and educational levels of the Ainu of Hokkaidō. The image of a dying race put on life support by the government's intervention was alive and well.⁴⁴

Another unique dimension of Tezuka's portrayal of his Ainu characters is his penchant for describing them as inherently peaceful people who abhor any form of violence against humans, which insinuates that they are too kind and too purehearted to survive amongst the cruelties of a modernising world.⁴⁵ This sentiment is particularly apparent in a scene where Shumari prevents a group of *Wajin* soldiers from killing a fugitive samurai who was granted sanctuary in a *kotan*. One of these soldiers immediately tries to shoot the fugitive, but Shumari quickly intervenes to spare his 'peaceful' and 'compassionate' Ainu friends the sight of unnecessary bloodshed. After he orders the other *Wajin* to stand down, he gently scolds the Ainu elders, who were passively watching the situation unfold. He tells them that they are 'too kind' to aid such a scoundrel. It is implied that their ill-advised kindness would have had some dire consequences for them without Shumari's help.⁴⁶ Scenes like this one or the above-mentioned fight with the bandits clearly position Shumari as a benevolent guardian of the Ainu. However, if one consults records of Ainu-*Wajin* shared history or tales from Ainu

ing with their *Wajin* neighbours. This law was meant to change that by promoting their assimilation into Japanese society as farmers. It was announced on the 2 March 1899 and came into effect a month later, on the 1 April. It had two main features. The first was the allotment of five hectares of land for each interested Ainu family, and the second was the building of special primary schools with the aim to convert Indigenous children into dutiful Japanese citizens (Emori 2015: 440–442).

⁴³ To read more about why early Ainu activists were in support of assimilation, see Howell (2004: 5–29).

⁴⁴ Komai 2022: 150–151.

⁴⁵ His sentiment seems to parallel that of early Western observers who were prone to see the Ainu as an embodiment of the 'noble savage' archetype. This kind of thinking was most prevalent before the birth of a cultural anthropology based on empirical data (Ölschleger 2014: 25). This similarity should be studied later in depth.

⁴⁶ Tezuka 2015a: 102.

oral literature, it becomes clear that the Indigenous people of Hokkaidō were neither too peaceful nor too passive to fight for the things they wanted.

Richard Siddle points out that the relationship between the *Wajin* and their northern neighbours was characterised by fierce conflict for hundreds of years. After a *Wajin* blacksmith killed an Ainu customer in a fight over a dull knife in 1456, the friction between the two groups exploded into warfare. The following year, an Ainu leader named Koshamain コシヤマイン rallied his people against the invaders and nearly destroyed all *Wajin* settlements on Hokkaidō. This conflict served as an overture to 100 years of intermittent warfare that was characterised by faked peace negotiations. This tactic was employed by the *Wajin* side to lull Ainu leadership into a false sense of security to make it easier to eliminate them. Before being assassinated, Shakushain successfully led his men to destroy *Wajin* trading posts and vessels all over Hokkaidō, killing hundreds of *Wajin* in the process. In 1789, desperate Ainu attacked and killed 71 *Wajin* in eastern Hokkaidō as a final act of resistance against their exploitation in the fisheries.⁴⁷ Contrary to Tezuka's repeated assertions, the Ainu did try to protect themselves from the encroachment of their southern neighbours. Their bows and arrows simply proved too insufficient a protection against Japan's military might. If one is inclined to be a bit more charitable in the interpretation of Tezuka's work, the figure of the young Ainu man who refuses Shumari's help in the fight against the bandits could be interpreted as a symbol of the brave, yet ultimately futile resistance that was cursorily summarised in this paragraph.

However, it is true that the Ainu can be described as fairly peaceful if one considers their traditional methods of in-group conflict resolution. Their belief in the power of words influenced the way they used to solve conflicts between members of their own community. People who disagreed with each other—or their representatives—traditionally participated in a ritual of sorts called *caranke* チャランケ. It was a battle of words and endurance that could rage on for hours: the participants were given all the time they could possibly need to recount—in the form of a rhythmical chant—why they were in the right, and the opposing party had to listen to it in silence before getting the chance to do the same. Once one of the speakers became too exhausted to continue, the other was automatically declared the winner. A tie was resolved by resorting to a controlled form of violence that involved a carved, baseball-bat-like stick called *sutu* ストゥ. The participants took turns hitting each other on the bare back with this stick, and the person that could not take any more hits automatically lost the fight.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Siddle 1999: 68–71.

⁴⁸ Nakagawa 2019: 84–85.

In *The Basics of Ainu Culture* (*Ainu Bunka no Kisochishiki* アイン文化の基礎知識), an introductory book published under the editorial supervision of the now defunct Ainu Museum アイン民族博物館, it is suggested that one should consult the stories preserved in Ainu oral literature instead of defaulting to the written word of *Wajin* sources when studying Ainu history.⁴⁹ By following this advice,⁵⁰ one can learn about another—a much more brutal—method that Ainu people used to end their disagreements. It was called *topattumi* トパットウミ, and it can be defined as the exact opposite of *caranke*, a bloody battle fought in complete silence. According to the stories, if the inhabitants of an Ainu settlement grew jealous of the wealth of another *kotan*, they waited for nightfall to then kill every resident of that village in their sleep to get to the coveted riches. In many stories about *topattumi*, a baby becomes the sole survivor thanks to the quick thinking of their parents, and they eventually grow up to seek revenge on those who destroyed their village in the name of greed.⁵¹ If this information is considered, the portrayal of the *kotan* as a peaceful sanctuary where unnecessary bloodshed is a foreign concept becomes not only infantilising but also misleading.

Golden Kamuy

In comparison to Tezuka, Noda appears to be less altruistic in his motivations for creating a *manga* that prominently features Ainu characters. In a 2016 interview with the website *Kono Manga ga Sugoi! WEB* このマンガがすごい！WEB, Noda revealed that *Golden Kamuy* initially began as a generic *shuryō manga* 狩猟マンガ—a *manga* with a story focused on hunting—set on Hokkaidō. To add depth and a unique twist to his narrative, he decided to look to the Ainu for inspiration. Although the dark historical reality associated with his chosen subject matter prompted him to conduct thorough background research, Noda

⁴⁹ Kojima 2018: 32–33.

⁵⁰ Utilising Indigenous stories for educational and research purposes is at the centre of ‘Indigenous storywork’, a concept introduced by Jo-ann Archibald Q’um Q’um Xiam. Her approach is guided by seven core principles. The first four—respect, responsibility, reverence, and reciprocity—offer ethical guidance for engaging with Indigenous communities and their knowledge. The remaining three—holism, interrelatedness, and synergy—facilitate the interpretation of Indigenous narratives (Archibald – Lee-Morgan – De Santolo 2019: 1–2). Indigenous storywork is a form of ‘decolonising methodologies’, which seek to restore Indigenous agency in the research of their cultural practices by incorporating Indigenous epistemologies and adapting existing Western research methods. This approach not only promotes social justice for Indigenous people in academic settings but also places a heavy emphasis on the importance of connecting with and contributing to the community being studied (*ibid.*, 5–8).

⁵¹ Nakagawa 2019: 86–87.

refused to depict his Ainu characters as victims, aiming instead to portray them as compelling and strong individuals first, and Ainu second. This unconventional characterisation reportedly received positive feedback from many within the Ainu community. Moreover, his positive and engaging presentation of Indigenous cultural practices serves to keep his story marketable.⁵² In other words, Noda's challenge to established narratives of Hokkaidō history is significantly driven by his financial interests and career ambitions.

Although Noda does not explicitly state an intention to challenge Meiji-era stereotypes about the Ainu, his *manga* series facilitates a positive reinterpretation of Ainu people and their culture. Nakagawa Hiroshi 中川裕, who provided expertise for the production of *Golden Kamuy*, notes that many fans have come to treat the series as an illustrated textbook on Ainu culture, seeking not only entertainment but also education through their engagement with the *manga*.⁵³

Golden Kamuy's serialisation started in the *manga* magazine *Weekly Young Jump* (*Shūkan Yōng Janpu* 週刊ヤングジャンプ) in 2014, 40 years after Tezuka's *Shumari* made its first appearance on the pages of a similar publication.⁵⁴ As the below analysis of Noda's *manga* demonstrates, Ainu representation in Japanese comics has shifted from a poignant requiem for the noble ways of a dying race to a vibrant celebration of Ainu culture over these four decades. Drawing on Pauwels' insights regarding the relationship between depiction, creator, and subject matter, one might theorise that this significant shift reflects a broader change in Japanese societal attitudes. Notably, the promotion of Ainu culture has indeed become an item on the Japanese state's agenda since the late 1990s.

In 1984, the Ainu Association of Hokkaido proposed a relatively progressive law to replace the Protection Act, which would have guaranteed the Ainu rights related to political representation and participation, protections against socioeconomic discrimination, and the establishment of a national organisation to govern Ainu policy. It would have even included economic benefits as a form of reparations for their historical dispossession. However, after this proposal reached the National Diet, where it was reviewed by the Council of Experts on the Implementation of Countermeasures for the Ainu People (*Utari Taisaku no Arikata ni kansuru Yūshikisha Kondankai* ウタリ対策のあり方に関する有識者懇談会), it lost most of its progressive character. Based on the report of the Council, the Ainu Cultural Promotion Act (*Ainu Bunka no Shinkō narabini Ainu no Dentōtō ni kansuru Chishiki no Fukyū oyobi Keihatsu ni kansuru Hōritsu* アイヌ文化の振興並びにアイヌの伝統等に関する知識の普及及び啓発

⁵² Kono Manga ga Sugoi! WEB 2016: *Golden Kamuy Tanjōhiwa*.

⁵³ Nakagawa 2019: 244–245.

⁵⁴ Mangapedia n.d.: *Golden Kamuy*.

に関する法律) was passed in 1997. Its sole focus was on the promotion and dissemination of Ainu culture, which it narrowly defined in the apolitical terms of language, dance, music, and handicraft. For the implementation of this law, the Foundation for the Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture (Ainu Bunka Shinkō Kenkyū Suishin Kikō アイヌ文化振興・研究・推進機構)—the predecessor of the current Foundation for Ainu Culture (Ainu Minzoku Bunka Zaidan アイヌ民族文化財団)⁵⁵—was created. Eléonore Komai cynically describes this change as the replacement of the antiquated dying race rhetoric with the modernised discourse of a dying culture.⁵⁶ Viewed from this angle, the contrast between *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* seems a bit less stark.

In 2019, the Ainu Cultural Promotion Act was replaced by the Act on Promoting Measures to Realise a Society in which the Pride of the Ainu People is Respected (Ainu no Hitobito no Hokori ga Sonchō sareru Shakai wo Jitsugen suru tame no Shisaku no Suishin ni kansuru Hōritsu アイヌの人々の誇りが尊重される社会を実現するための施策の推進に関する法律). This was the result of 10 years of deliberation. After both houses of the Japanese Diet declared the Ainu as the Indigenous people of Japan in a 2008 joint resolution, the Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy (Ainu Seisaku no Arikata ni kansuru Yūshikisha Kondankai アイヌ政策のあり方に関する有識者懇談会) was established. It published its final report in 2009, which became the basis of the New Ainu Policy 10 years later. While the policy utilises Ainu culture as a tourist attraction to aid in the revitalisation of rural Hokkaidō, it mandates all prefectures to promote Ainu culture and traditions. Additionally, the government was also required to establish the first ever national Ainu organisation, the Ainu Policy Promotion Headquarters (Naikaku Kanbō Ainu Sōgō Seisakushitsu 内閣官房アイヌ総合政策室). Although Ainu cultural promotion was finally elevated to the national level, a resolution of related political issues is still considered a target for the future.⁵⁷

The shift from assimilation to the promotion of Ainu culture, coupled with the two *manga* artists' different approach to drawing Ainu characters, establishes a markedly different tone in the first chapter of *Golden Kamuy* compared to *Shumari*. Shumari, an ex-samurai, acts as the guardian of the helpless Ainu from the very beginning: his story starts when he reluctantly saves Imekano イメカノ, an Ainu damsel in distress, from a group of bandits. On the way back to her *kotan*, he charms her with his expert survival skills, but their relationship is tragically cut short by a wolf attack, leaving a heartbroken Shumari to return her

⁵⁵ Ainu Minzoku Bunka Zaidan n.d.: *Enkaku*.

⁵⁶ Komai 2022: 152–154.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 155–159.

body to her village community.⁵⁸ These roles are switched up in *Golden Kamuy*: Sugimoto Saichi 杉本佐一, a veteran of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), is on a mission to find the lost gold of the Ainu when he gets attacked by a bear. He is saved by Asirpa アシリパ, whose Indigenous knowledge and capabilities as a huntress impress him so much that he recruits her to be his equal partner in the treasure hunt.⁵⁹ Through the figure of Asirpa, the Ainu are quickly freed from the role of the helpless victim while their cultural practices are affirmed as having immense value for everyday life and survival on Hokkaidō.

From this point forward, Asirpa imparts her Indigenous knowledge to Sugimoto, and, by extension, to the readers of the *manga*. Her character effectively serves as a conduit for the *mangaka*, conveying crucial insight into Ainu cultural practices. These insights encompass various aspects of Ainu culture, including their traditional religious beliefs. Moreover, this cultural element is intricately woven into the structure of the plot, making it particularly suitable for a focused analysis within the limited scope of this study.

Nakagawa explains that the belief in *kamuy* is intrinsically linked to the personification of the environment, a central aspect of the traditional Ainu worldview. The Ainu traditionally understand the world by anthropomorphising it, attributing a soul to every entity—whether animal, plant, inanimate object, or natural phenomenon. An entity is revered as a *kamuy* if it displays abilities superior to humans or somehow benefits them with its existence. *Kamuy* usually reside in their own realm called *kamuy mosir* カムイモシリ, where they live and appear exactly like humans, and only visit the human world (*aynu mosir* アイヌモシリ), to interact with its inhabitants. These interactions are essential for both parties, as each requires goods that can only be obtained through trade with the other. For instance, a *kamuy*—in its original spirit form invisible to the human eye—might appear as a brown bear, presenting its hosts with the bear's meat and pelt. In turn, humans must reciprocate with praises and other offerings, such as alcohol or Japanese rice cakes. Failing to do so would put an end to the visits, leaving the ungrateful humans to starve.⁶⁰

The same information is conveyed in the *manga* through a few thought bubbles paired with detailed, realistic illustrations. One standout example showcases *manga*'s ability to effectively illustrate complex concepts: it depicts a spirit resembling a bearded Ainu man as he drapes the forms of various animals—a wolf, a fox, a deer, a brown bear, a rabbit, an owl, and a squirrel—over

⁵⁸ Tezuka 2015a: 11–31.

⁵⁹ Noda 2015a: loc 47–97.

⁶⁰ Nakagawa 2019: 18–24.

his shoulders like a cape. It is moments like this that give *Golden Kamuy* the appearance of an illustrated textbook.⁶¹

The most frequently depicted *kamuy* in Noda's *manga* is the brown bear (*kimunkamuy* キムンカムイ). The *manga* touches on the two primary rituals associated with this animal and provides a detailed explanation on the *wen-kamuy* ウエンカムイ, a concept that is often linked to reddish-coated brown bears. The exploration of the traditional Ainu worldview described above is prompted by Asirpa and Sugimoto's discovery of a orphaned bear cub and serves as a prelude to the description of one of these rituals, the *iyomante* イヨマンテ.⁶² Sugimoto initially believes that the little cub will be released into the mountains after it matures in a few years, but Asirpa quickly corrects him. Once it reaches adolescence, the cub will be ritualistically sacrificed to send its spirit back to *kamuy mosir*. To persuade Sugimoto—and *Wajin* readers—that the cub is not simply slaughtered out of cruelty, she highlights the Indigenous reasoning behind this practice. Her explanation is richly illustrated with realistic depictions of a *heperset* ヘペレセツ cage, a *nusasan* ヌササン altar decorated with bear skulls, people celebrating, an old man praying, and a younger man shooting a blunt ceremonial arrow (*heper'ay* ヘペレアイ).⁶³

These pictures are all important snapshots from the *iyomante* ritual, which technically begins years before the event when Ainu hunters discover a bear cub. This discovery is interpreted as the mother bear entrusting humans with the care of her child, leading them to bring the cub back to the *kotan* to be carefully raised for several years. Once the bear matures, the people of the *kotan*, along with guests from neighbouring villages, gather to return the adolescent *kamuy* to its parents in *kamuy mosir*. The *iyomante* ritual commences with an elder praying to the fire goddess, as depicted in the *manga*'s illustration. Joined by other men, the elder then releases the adolescent bear from the *heperset* cage, allowing it to play and roam briefly. Following this final playtime, the bear is ritualistically sacrificed by shooting it with *heper'ay* arrows and strangling it between two logs. The carcass is then skinned, and the bear's head is placed on the folded skin. The adolescent spirit is believed to inhabit this form during the ensuing festivities. It is invited inside the house through the god window (*kamuy puyar* カムイプヤウ), where it observes the villagers' merriment and

⁶¹ Noda 2015b: loc 86–87.

⁶² The *mangaka*'s decision to utilise *iyomante* as a plot device to introduce Ainu religious beliefs is a judicious choice. Spirit-sending ceremonies are central to traditional Ainu social identity, *iyomante* being the most significant among them. While Watanabe Hitoshi 渡辺仁 characterised this ritual as the essential core of Ainu identity, Utagawa Hiroshi 宇田川洋 views it as a mechanism for the survival of Ainu culture amidst economic and political oppression (Fitzhugh 1999: 21).

⁶³ Noda 2015b: loc 84–89.

receives gifts of sacred shaved sticks (*inaw* イナウ), dried salmon (*satcep* サツチェプ), and alcohol (*tonoto* トノト). The celebration continues the following evening with the recitation of heroic tales called *yukar* ユカラ,⁶⁴ which are deliberately left unfinished to entice the *kamuy* to return. The ritual concludes with the bear's head—adorned with sacred wood shavings (*inawkike* イナウキケ)—being placed on the *nusasan* altar, just outside the *kamuy puyar*. Finally, a final ceremonial arrow is shot to guide the spirit back to its home.⁶⁵

Additionally, the *mangaka* offers a logical explanation for this practice to further alleviate potential discomfort that readers may feel towards the sacrifice of the bear cub. Why do the Ainu invest years in raising the bear only to sacrifice it later? Logically, more fur and meat can be harvested from an adolescent bear than a very young cub.⁶⁶ After all, the practice of raising livestock for slaughter should not be unfamiliar to non-Indigenous people, including both Westerners and the *Wajin* majority of Japan.

Another ritual closely associated with brown bears is the *hopunire* ホプニレ. In Ainu culture, three types of sending ceremonies are traditionally practiced: those for animals, plants, and tools. Animal-sending ceremonies are further divided into two categories: *iyomante* and *hopunire*. In Sakhalin and Hokkaidō, the former typically refers to the ritualistic sacrifice of semi-domesticated bears but can also include ceremonies for the fish owl revered as the guardian spirit of the *kotan*. On the other hand, *hopunire* encompasses sending ceremonies for foxes, raccoon dogs, wolves, deer, whales, and fish owls, as well as for adult bears hunted in the mountains. In this latter case, the ceremony is known as *kamuy hopunire* カムイオプニレ⁶⁷ in the Kushiro region (Kushiro-chiiki 釧路地域).⁶⁸

The *hopunire* ritual begins when Ainu hunters kill an adult bear during a hunt in the mountains and process its carcass on-site for easier transportation back to the village. The act of hunting is interpreted as the *kamuy* guest (the

⁶⁴ *Yukar* are tales of epic poetry that typically recount the exploits of a young boy with superhuman abilities. The storyteller enhances the rhythmic chanting by tapping the beat on the rim of the fireplace with a special stick called *repni* レプニ. Listeners actively participate by tapping along and offering exclamations (*hetce* ヘツチェ). Some *yukar* are so lengthy that even three days and nights are insufficient to recount them from start to finish. A similar genre is called *kamuy yukar* カムイユカラ, where the hero is usually a *kamuy*. The storyteller assumes the role of the *kamuy*, chanting in the first person. The performance is enlivened by repeated phrases called *sakehe* サケヘ. Both *yukar* and *kamuy yukar* are sung in a polite version of the Ainu language known as *atomteitak* アトムテイタリ (Kojima 2018: 217–218).

⁶⁵ Akino 1999: 248–250.

⁶⁶ Noda 2015b: loc 90.

⁶⁷ In the Ainu dialects of Hokkaidō, the word *kamuy* is frequently used synonymously with *kimunkamuy* due to the elevated status of the brown bear (Nakagawa 2019: 28).

⁶⁸ Utagawa 1999: 256–257.

bear) accepting the invitation (the poisoned arrow) extended by its human hosts (the hunters) to join them for a celebration. The bear's pelt is peeled from the carcass and folded with the head still attached, which is likened to removing the coat from a human guest, as highlighted in the *manga*.⁶⁹ It is then transported back to the *kotan* either bound to an individual's back with rope or carried on the shoulders of two or more people, similar to a *mikoshi* 神輿 shrine. The latter method is illustrated in the *manga*.⁷⁰ The celebration held in the adult bear's honour is essentially identical to the previously described *iyomante* ritual: the *kamuy* is invited into the house through the *kamuy puyar*, where the villagers engage in dancing, singing, feasting, and storytelling while honouring their guest with gifts, which translate to heightened wealth and prestige for the recipient in *kamuy mosir*.⁷¹ During their visit to the Kushiro area, Asirpa and Sugimoto also participate in a *kamuy hopunire*, during which Asirpa highlights the difference between the two types of bear-sending ceremonies. Additionally, there is a beautifully detailed illustration of the *kamuy* seated in a place of honour during the festivities.⁷²

A being of Ainu folklore that plays a pivotal role in *Golden Kamuy*'s main storyline is the *wenkamuy*, or the bad *kamuy*. A *kamuy* is branded as bad if it is a threat to humans. Just as the *kamuy* are free to cease their visitation of ungrateful humans, the Ainu are also not expected to tolerate the abuse of these hostile spirits.⁷³ Interestingly, this aspect of Ainu culture is completely misinterpreted by Tezuka.⁷⁴ In the scene where Shumari presents the body of Imekano to her

⁶⁹ Noda 2017: loc 55.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, loc 57.

⁷¹ Nakagawa 2019: 30–31.

⁷² Noda 2017: loc 58–59.

⁷³ Nakagawa 2019: 40.

⁷⁴ This is not the only instance of misinformation affecting Tezuka's depiction of the Ainu people and their culture. For example, he emphasises their identity as hunter-gatherers, with Shumari noting that the Ainu seldom cultivate the land (Tezuka 2015a: 146). This portrayal is a bit problematic, as the characterisation of the Ainu as solely hunter-gatherers has historically been used by previous scholars of Ainu studies to assert their supposed primitiveness, thereby justifying agricultural colonisation. Furthermore, the history of Ainu farming continues to be overlooked by many scholars (Hudson 2014: 117–118). In reality, however, the primary subsistence activities of the Ainu—hunting, fishing, and gathering—were traditionally supplemented by small-scale agriculture (Keira–Keira 1999: 234). Women, children, and the elderly cultivated garden plots during the spring and summer months, harvesting grains, roots, and beans in the autumn (*ibid.*, 237). The relative unimportance of Ainu agriculture can also be partially attributed to the influence of the Matsumae fief, which prohibited the Ainu from cultivating their native crops and Japanese rice to increase their dependence on trade with the *Wajin*. Additionally, as Ainu women—the primary agricultural labour force—began to work in the fisheries, they had less time to dedicate to their garden plots (Walker 2001: 85–87). Another indication of the gaps in Tezuka's research is his incorrect use of the verb *kimun*

village community, one Ainu man sadly remarks that her death was the will of the *kamuy*, which leaves them without recourse.⁷⁵ To the contrary, the traditional Ainu method for seeking revenge on a *wenkamuy* is introduced in the second chapter of Noda's *manga*. In this scene, Asirpa refuses her share of a men-eating bear that she and Sugimoto killed together. She explains that the bear is considered a *wenkamuy* due to its crime of killing and eating a human being. Consequently, its body is to be left to decompose as a form of punishment, while its soul is condemned to the Ainu version of hell known as *teynepoknamosir* テイネボクナモシリ.⁷⁶

Leaving the body of a *kamuy* to decompose is considered an effective punishment, as these spirits are believed to be unable to leave their physical form without human assistance. By forgoing a sending ceremony, humans can imprison the offending *kamuy* within its own decaying flesh, preventing its return to *kamuy mosir*. As a further precaution, the carcass is sometimes cut up into small pieces and scattered, making the *wenkamuy*'s escape even more difficult. However, this method can prove ineffective against particularly powerful hostile spirits that possess the ability to reassemble their bodies at will. To prevent this, humans may invoke the power of the fire goddess by smearing the remains with ash or burning it together with garbage. Alternatively, they may offer the remains to a vengeful *kamuy* trapped in a fallen tree. After successfully imprisoning the *wenkamuy*, the Ainu pray to the other *kamuy*, imploring them to banish the guilty spirit to suffer eternally in *teynepoknamosir*.⁷⁷

Sugimoto and Asirpa fight many a bear throughout the 31-volume series, but one of their most dangerous encounters is with three brown bears that have reddish-brown coats.⁷⁸ The imminent danger of this encounter is foreshadowed by Asirpa's remark about red-coated bears being regarded as particularly ill-tempered in tales of Ainu oral literature.⁷⁹ This subplot mirrors the traditional Ainu belief that some bears are more likely to become *wenkamuy* than others. Whereas black-coated bears living on the mountaintop are regarded as high-ranking and peaceful *kamuy*, their reddish-coated brethren living at the foot of mountains are seen as inherently mean and therefore dangerous to humans. For this reason, they are also referred to as *nupurikesunpuriwenkur* スプリケスンプリウエンクル, literally meaning 'he who lives at the foot of the mountain and behaves badly'. According to Ainu oral literature, these red-coated *kimunkamuy*

キムン—which means 'being in' or 'going into the mountains' (Kokuritsu Ainu Minzoku Hakubutsukan n.d.: *Kimun*)—as an abbreviated form of *kimunkamuy* (Tezuka 2015a: 202).

⁷⁵ Tezuka 2015a: 31.

⁷⁶ Noda 2015a: *loc* 93.

⁷⁷ Nakagawa 2019: 42–45.

⁷⁸ Noda 2016a: *loc* 131.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

tend to repent in the face of eternal damnation, offering up their services as a guardian deity to their intended victims.⁸⁰

Golden Kamuy indirectly addresses the reformation of the *wenkamuy* by substituting the traditional men-eating bear for the titular *kamuy* of gold. The narrative suggests that the Ainu's lost gold functions as a malevolent force, bringing only suffering to its possessors. This interpretation is reinforced through repeated references throughout the text and culminates in Lieutenant Tsurumi's 鶴見中尉 unhinged monologue, which canonises the gold's *wenkamuy* status.⁸¹

While the Ainu did not venerate gold as a *kamuy*, there is an entity in their folklore that may have inspired Noda's portrayal of it as a bloodthirsty spirit: *Tumuncikamuy* トムンチカムイ. The word *tumunci* means war or massacre in the Ainu language, and *Tumuncikamuy* lives up to its name by compelling people to fight and kill one another to satiate its literal thirst for human blood. Nakagawa recounts a tale where a villager brings home a mysterious box containing the armour and sword of *Tumuncikamuy*.⁸² It is deliberately placed in the villager's way by the bloodthirsty spirit itself to be brought back to the *kotan* and used there as a conduit of the *kamuy*'s harmful influence. The presence of the box leads to a massacre that spares only two women.⁸³ This story parallels Noda's bloody treasure hunt, though his gilded version of *Tumuncikamuy* ultimately transforms into a penitent *wenkamuy*, as Asirpa uses the gold to fund the establishment of Hokkaidō's national parks.⁸⁴

As demonstrated above, reading *Golden Kamuy* can be an educational experience due to Noda's emphasis on showcasing the beauty and richness of Ainu culture. However, this approach obscures the challenges the Ainu had to face during the second half of the Meiji period. By following the journey of Asirpa and Sugimoto as they visit various small Ainu villages during their treasure hunt, readers are afforded the opportunity to immerse themselves in numerous aspects of traditional Ainu culture. In addition to religious beliefs, the *manga* explores Indigenous methods of hunting, fishing and gathering, native techniques of garment and tool production, Ainu cuisine, social etiquette, and oral literature across 31 volumes. Yet, the unfortunate reality is that by 1907, when the series is set,⁸⁵ this traditional and peacefully secluded way of life was no

⁸⁰ Nakagawa 2019: 29.

⁸¹ Noda 2021: *loc* 210.

⁸² The story referenced by Nakagawa is an Ainu folktale (*uwepeker* ウウエペケレ). Unlike *yukar* and *kamuy yukar*, the prose of these epic narratives closely resembles everyday Ainu conversations. While some *uwepeker* are quite brief, the longer ones can take over two hours to narrate in full (Kojima 2018: 219).

⁸³ Nakagawa 2024: 64–67.

⁸⁴ Noda 2022b: *loc* 252.

⁸⁵ Noda 2022a: *loc* 144.

longer a reality for most Ainu, as an increasing number of *Wajin* settlers had begun purchasing land and establishing farms.⁸⁶

This misleading portrayal of Ainu history is further compounded by the *mangaka*'s relegation of its problematic aspects into the background of his narrative. For instance, while the damage inflicted on the Ainu through forced relocations⁸⁷ and diseases introduced by *Wajin* settlers⁸⁸ are mentioned, these tragic events are situated in the past of *Golden Kamuy*'s main storyline, thereby remaining on the periphery of the readers' focus. Similarly, although it is noted that the Ainu are not permitted to hunt or fish freely,⁸⁹ the significance of these restrictive laws may be lost on readers not well-versed in Ainu history, as the main characters frequently disregard these oppressive regulations to hunt and fish at will. In reality, the laws that effectively banned the Ainu from hunting deer (1899) and catching salmon (1898) played a pivotal role in the destruction of their traditional way of life that Noda so lovingly portrays, as these meats were the most important components of the Ainu diet.⁹⁰ Noda's preference for emphasising the vibrancy of Ainu culture over the Indigenous suffering caused by colonisation certainly frees his Ainu characters from the stereotypical portrayal of powerless victims, but it also obscures the darker complexities of Ainu–Wajin relations.

An additional reason for not reading Noda's *manga* as an illustrated textbook on Ainu culture and history is his tendency to frequently exercise his creative freedom as *mangaka* by blending fact and fiction in his work. At times, the blending of reality and fantasy is explicitly acknowledged within the text, as seen in Asirpa's atypical gender presentation. Her refusal to engage in women's work and to undergo traditional tattooing is a source of frustration for her grandmother.⁹¹ Asirpa's portrayal as a huntress is considered atypical,⁹² because hunting—along with the preparation and execution of religious ceremonies, fishing, and tool production—was traditionally regarded as the men's responsibility, while gathering, gardening, clothing and utensil production, and childrearing were tasks typically assigned to women.⁹³ Additionally, tattoos were believed

⁸⁶ Emori 2015: 427.

⁸⁷ Noda 2018: *loc* 142–147.

⁸⁸ Noda 2016b: *loc* 106.

⁸⁹ Noda 2015a: *loc* 19.

⁹⁰ Nakagawa 2019: 69.

⁹¹ Noda 2015b: *loc* 80–81.

⁹² Interestingly, while atypical, such cases are not unprecedented. Similar instances to that of Asirpa can be found in historical records. Nakagawa references Kitahara Mokottunās 北原モコットウナシ, who has found mention of two Ainu huntresses. One of these women was trained to become a skilled hunter following the death of her brothers. The other, named Ci-yuhirika チユヒリカ, is recorded in Matsuura Takeshirō's 松浦武四郎 (1818–1888) *Kinsei Ezo Jinbutsu-shi* 近世蝦夷人物誌 (Nakagawa 2019: 198).

⁹³ Keira–Keira 1999: 234–235.

to enhance the beauty of Ainu women, making the reaction of Asirpa's grandmother quite realistic. Traditionally, Ainu women had tattoos around their lips, on their forearms, and on their hands. The process involved making small incisions with a knife on the desired area, rubbing soot into the wounds, and treating them with antiseptic plant juices. This practice usually began when girls were around six or seven years old and required multiple sessions to complete. By the time the tattoos were completed, the girls—typically in their late teens—were considered ready for marriage. However, the practice of tattooing was banned by the Tokugawa shogunate in 1799 and later by the Meiji government in 1871, leading to its gradual decline.⁹⁴

At other times, the fictional elements are so seamlessly integrated into the narrative that casual readers may not recognise them, rendering these instances particularly misleading. For example, there is a scene in which the *mangaka* slightly misrepresents a technique called *kuwaecarse* クワエチャラセ to compose a visually striking moment that highlights Asirpa's competence. In the *manga*, she uses her staff as a makeshift snowboard to slide down a snowy mountain.⁹⁵ However, in reality, the staff functioned as a ski pole, aiding Ainu hunters in their descent while they glided on the snow using their specially made boots.⁹⁶

Conclusion

Shumari and *Golden Kamuy* belong to a well-established genre of *manga*: the longstanding relationship between Japanese comics and historical narratives is highlighted by Morris-Suzuki, who traces their connection back to the 1960s and 1970s with the emergence of long-format historical comics in Japan. Notable examples of this era include Shirato Sanpei's 白土三平 (1932–2021) *Ninja Bugeichō* 忍者武芸帳 and Ishinomori Shōtarō's 石ノ森章太郎 (1938–1998) *Manga Nihon no Rekishi* マンガ日本の歴史. While the long format is well-suited to the exploration of complex historical themes, the visual creativity and widespread appeal of the *manga* medium have allowed these works to reach a broad audience, potentially having as profound an impact on popular perceptions of Japanese history as conventional textbooks.⁹⁷

A key characteristic of historical *manga*—and comic books in general, regardless of their country of origin—is their tendency to be more action driven, often prioritising conflict over the more peaceful aspects of history. *Shumari*

⁹⁴ Kodama 1999: 325–326.

⁹⁵ Noda 2015c: loc 106.

⁹⁶ Nakagawa 2019: 243–244.

⁹⁷ Morris-Suzuki 2015: 175–177.

and *Golden Kamuy* exemplify this tendency, centring on the violent exploits of a samurai-turned-settler and a veteran of the Russo-Japanese War against the backdrop of the broader conflict between the Indigenous Ainu and their *Wajin* colonisers. When depicting such conflicts, the *mangaka* possesses the ability to shape readers' sympathies by narrating the story from the perspective of certain characters. This effect is intensified by a quality of Japanese comics that is also shared by propaganda images and political cartoons: the stark lines and exaggerated features of *manga* imprint on the human mind, leaving a lasting impression that continues to influence readers' perception of history.⁹⁸

As places of memory, *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* are distinguished from other historical *manga* by the deliberate choice of Tezuka and Noda to engage *Wajin* readers in a narrative that elicits sympathy for the Ainu characters by contradicting their preconceived notions about the Indigenous people of the Japanese north. This approach encourages readers to reflect on their role in the shared history of the Ainu and *Wajin* and to reevaluate the incorporation of the northern island into the Japanese Empire in light of historical truthfulness. However, the *mangaka*'s commitment to being historically truthful does not render their works without flaws: Tezuka's empathetic portrayal of the dispossessed Ainu risks perpetuating the dying race stereotype, while Noda's tendency to hide unsightly history behind the beauty of Ainu culture may lead to a superficial understanding of the complex relationship between the Ainu and the *Wajin* among his readership.

Despite—or perhaps because of—these flaws, *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* remain compelling places of memory for analysis, functioning as written and drawn monuments to Ainu history. They gain their significance by symbolising a history that is largely devoid of traditional physical monuments, making them valuable subjects for further research. Their hybridity is particularly noteworthy: defying Nora's clear distinction between places of memory created by the victors and the vanquished, *Shumari* and *Golden Kamuy* are reassessments of colonised Ainu history, authored by the descendants of the very people who colonised them. This hybridity provides further evidence for the validity of Pauwels' warning about the nature of pre-made visuals, yet it raises important questions about the ownership and shaping of collective memory: who holds the right to dictate how we remember Ainu history?⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 181–184.

⁹⁹ Nora 2009: 32.

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¹⁰⁰ References to specific pages of *Golden Kamuy* are provided in the footnotes using their *location (loc)*, as the Kindle edition does not include traditional page numbers.

¹⁰¹ In accordance with her own preferences, ann-elise lewallen’s name is written consequently in lower case.

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SZANDRA ÉSIK

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Important achievements in Chinese studies of Hungary

Huba BARTOS–Imre HAMAR 2017. *Kínai–magyar szótár* [Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary]. 包甫博–郝清新: 匈汉词典. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, ELTE Konfuciusz Intézet. 2097 pp.

Huba BARTOS–Imre HAMAR–Melinda PAP 2024. *Magyar–kínai szótár* [Hungarian–Chinese Dictionary]. 包甫博–郝清新–梅林达: 匈汉词典. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, ELTE Konfuciusz Intézet. 2155 pp.

The year 2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Hungarian–Chinese diplomatic relations, while in the previous year, the Chinese Department of Eötvös Loránd University celebrated its 100th anniversary, marking a century of Chinese language and culture education in Hungary. These two milestones are closely connected: Hungarian Chinese speakers and experts play a vital role in fostering strong diplomatic relations, while robust diplomatic ties can, in turn, stimulate greater interest in Chinese language and culture. Over the years, the Chinese Department of Eötvös Loránd University has made significant contributions to the development of Chinese studies in Hungary—not only by training Chinese speakers and experts but also by publishing key teaching materials and producing important research across various fields of Chinese studies. Furthermore, the department, on many occasions, has served as a bridge between the two nations by organising international conferences and important academic meetings. One of the institution’s latest achievements came in 2024 with the publication of new Chinese–Hungarian and Hungarian–Chinese dictionaries. This publication is not only a departmental success but also a major advancement in Chinese studies in Hungary, as these dictionaries support language learners, translators, and anyone seeking to navigate and connect the two languages and cultures in their daily work and life.

The first Chinese–Hungarian and Hungarian–Chinese dictionaries to be published, were edited by Huba Bartos, PhD, and Imre Hamar, DSc. The first edition of the dictionaries was published in 1998, followed by a second edition in 2001 and a third edition in 2013. The editors-in-chief, Huba Bartos, PhD, and Imre Hamar, DSc, are prominent scholars in the field of Hungarian sinology.

Huba Bartos is the deputy director-general of the Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and an associate professor at the Department of Chinese Studies at Eötvös Loránd University. Imre Hamar is vice-rector for international affairs at Eötvös Loránd University, head of the Department of Chinese Studies and the Confucius Institute, and the director of the Institute of East Asian Studies.

The work on the new, two-volume *Kínai–magyar szótár* [Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary] was started in 2014 with the support of the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (Hanban) and the Hungarian State. Containing 6,090 first-level headwords and some 74,000 linked compound headwords, it is the largest Chinese–Hungarian dictionary ever published. The commemorative copies were handed over to Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (李克强) and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at a ceremony in November 2017 during the 16+1 Summit in Budapest. The dictionary is commercially available since the end of 2018.

In parallel with the *Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary* project, work began on its counterpart, the *Magyar–kínai szótár* [Hungarian–Chinese Dictionary], which contains 57,000 headwords. It was published 2024, with Melinda Pap, PhD, assistant professor at Eötvös Loránd University, joining the editors-in-chief. Her main research area is Chinese Buddhism, and she teaches both undergraduate and PhD courses at the Department of Chinese Studies, where she has been working since 2008. She recently joined the ELTE Roman World and the Far East Research Group. In addition to the editors-in-chief, one should not forget the many other sinologists who have contributed to the dictionaries with their excellent work.

By ‘Chinese’, the editors of the dictionary mean the modern Chinese vernacular, which is based on Mandarin dialects, mainly the Beijing dialect. In mainland China, it is referred to as *putonghua* 普通话, while in Taiwan the term used is *guoyu* 國語. As a modern Chinese dictionary, its content is largely based on the vocabulary of modern vernacular and literary language. However, the authors also considered *putonghua*’s historical antecedents (*guanhua* 官话), the classical written language (*wenyan* 文言 or *guwen* 古文), the literary language derived from the language of traditional drama and prose (*baihua* 白话), dialect-specific expressions, and set phrases that usually consist of four characters (*chengyu* 成语). The dictionaries mainly apply the simplified characters (*jiantizi* 简体字) used in the People’s Republic of China, but the *Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary* also includes characters’ traditional versions (*fantizi* 繁体字) in brackets, if the latter differs from the simplified form.

The vocabulary is not only diverse but also very up to date, with words of recent origin and culture-specific words. The *Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary* is based on the glossaries of the most standard monolingual and bilingual diction-

aries, such as *ABC Chinese-English Comprehensive Dictionary* (John Defrancis ed. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* (现代汉语词典 Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2013), *Pleco* (electronic dictionary, <https://www.pleco.com/>), and *A Modern Chinese-English Dictionary* (现代汉英词典 Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2014). The *Hungarian-Chinese Dictionary* is based on the *Hungarian-German Dictionary* (eds. Előd Halász-Csaba Földes-Pál Uzonyi) published in 2002 and the *Hungarian-Russian Dictionary* (eds. László Gáldi-Pál Uzonyi) published by Akadémiai Kiadó in 2013. For both language pairs, the carefully selected examples accompanying the articles are remarkable, as they help to give the words a more precise meaning in context for the user.

Due to the nature of the Chinese writing system, the ability to use a printed Chinese dictionary can almost be considered a special competence in itself that a language learner must acquire separately. However, the *Chinese-Hungarian Dictionary* also describes in detail the process of looking up characters. Printed Chinese dictionaries can be very helpful after one has a bit of practice, but for a new, Western user, the process of finding the characters can be difficult. Professional language users may still find themselves in jobs and situations where the use of a printed dictionary is indispensable but online dictionaries are often considered to be more user-friendly by Chinese learners. To meet the needs of the widest possible range of Chinese language users, an online version of the dictionaries is also available.¹

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