

**TŌKEIJI'S BUSINESS:
THE AGENCY OF NUNS IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD**

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the agency of nuns at elite convents by focusing on how they successfully acted within the constraints of social regulations during the early modern period. I use agency as a tool to examine issues of representation and authority of the nuns in response to arguments that stress nuns are marginalized in the broader study of Japanese Buddhism. This thesis explores that the study of nuns is not about uncovering marginalized representations, but evaluating the agency and authority of nuns as relative to their contemporaries, such as other monks and public authorities. I primarily focus on Tōkeiji, the famous divorce temple (*enkiridera* 縁切寺), supplemented by examples from imperial convents (*bikuni gosho* 比丘尼御所) of the early modern period. Chapter 1 focuses on divorce as a pivotal issue to discuss agency, representation, and authority of the wife who requested divorce and of the abbess who guaranteed the divorce by temple code law. Chapter 2 reexamines the theoretical and actual the power relations within the personnel structure especially in regard to the temple hierarchy. Chapter 3 reviews the significant connection between financial management and influential familial patrons. Chapter 4 explores the multifaceted nature of the temple. I reach the conclusion that a different perspective on approaching the study of nuns at elite convents enables us to move away from the repetitive debate on whether nuns are considered independent. Instead, the approach to assess how the nuns used their resources in their network as ritual specialists, politicians, and businesspeople presents a comprehensive examination of an Edo period nun.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, N. Lee.

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Notes to the Reader

Japanese names will be given as last name first followed by first name. Priority will be given to English terms as much as possible. In the case of special terms given in Japanese, I will provide a close English translation followed by the romanized Japanese pronunciation in italics and the Chinese characters enclosed in parenthesis. For example, “divorce temple” (*enkiridera* 縁切寺). However, for well-known Japanese words that appear in English-language dictionaries, like shogun, samurai, daimyo and bakufu, I will not provide a translation since these are English renderings without the use of macrons and keep it in the Japanese. For key terms related to the topic of this thesis, I intentionally use Japanese throughout because many cannot be fully rendered into English. These terms are explained and defined below.

Ama gozan 尼五山 is composed of two words. *Ama* 尼 generally means “nun” in English. The term *ama* has a tendency to be used for a broad range of meanings. It can refer to a lay nun or a fully ordained nun. In most cases, *bikuni* 比丘尼 is the term used for a fully ordained nun since the word derives from the language used in Buddhist texts, and implies that she has received a certain number of precepts. *Gozan* 五山 literally means “Five Mountains,” and it was a temple system established within the Rinzaï Zen sect in the Muromachi period (1337-1573) to designate the five highest ranking temples for monasteries (*gozan*) and for convents (*ama gozan*).

Bikuni gosho 比丘尼御所 is also composed of two words. As mentioned above, *bikuni* 比丘尼 refers to a more specific type of nun than the general term *ama*. *Gosho* 御所 consists of two parts in which *go* 御 is an honorific marker, and *sho* 所 refers to place or location. Together *gosho* refers to an imperial palace. Thus, *bikuni gosho* refers to an imperial convent. However, there were other types of imperial convents that were not designated with the *bikuni gosho* appellation. Consequently, translating *bikuni gosho* as an imperial convent conceals those other types, and narrows the scope of the definition of an imperial convent. The *bikuni gosho* represented a specific category of imperial convents. This term was used for temples in the premodern period. From the Meiji period (1868-1912), which marks the modern period of Japan, the term for these special imperial convents was changed to *ama monzeki* 尼門跡. The breakdown of this term is *ama* and *monzeki*. Again, *ama* 尼 is a general term for nun. *Monzeki* 門跡 means the trace of the gateway to the Dharma or to the residence of an imperial temple.¹ Thus, *ama monzeki* is used to refer to the *bikuni gosho* from the modern period to contemporary use.

The Tokugawa period 徳川時代 (1603-1868) and Edo period 江戸時代 (1603-1868) refer to the same period, but have nuanced differences in meaning. Tokugawa period takes the last name of the shogunal family who reigned during this period beginning with the first shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616). The Tokugawa period is used when discussing political and financial matters, whereas the Edo period is often used when noting cultural issues.

All translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

¹ Patricia Fister, *Art by Buddhist Nuns: Treasures from the Imperial Convents of Japan* (New York: Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies, 2003), 17.

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Introduction

In this thesis, I explore issues of agency, representation, and authority in the case of seventeenth to nineteenth century elite nuns, with particular focus on the nuns of the divorce temple (*enkiridera* 縁切寺) Tōkeiji 東慶寺, supplemented by examples from imperial convents (*bikuni gosho* 比丘尼御所) of the early modern period. My research on reexamining the temple services and personnel structure attempts to locate the nun's agency to shed light on how she acted on behalf of her aspirations within the constraints of power structures and limited access to finances. I build on existing scholarly works by providing a more nuanced representation of the nun.

One of the major arguments for the study on women and Japanese Buddhism is to insist on their presence. This argument insists that nuns were critical to proselytizing and developing Japanese Buddhism from its inception. Barbara Ruch's anthology *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan* (2002) concerns itself with this argument using examples of powerful role models from predominantly the premodern period. Another collaborative effort by the Institute of Medieval Japanese Studies² produced an exhibition catalog to showcase the imperial convents as examples of a culturally rich institution.³ The catalog's objective adds a layer to the argument by showing that the nuns were capable of operating and maintaining the affairs of the temple. The convents were not merely residences for princesses, but a place to exercise their leadership in the religious community. The catalog introduces the early modern

² This research organization is affiliated with Columbia University in New York, and is based at the convent Daikankiji in Kyoto.

³ Tokyo University of the Arts, Medieval Japanese Studies Institute, and The Sankei Shimbun, eds., *A Hidden Heritage: Treasures of the Japanese Imperial Convents* (Tokyo: Medieval Japanese Studies Institute, 2009).

period imperial convents to also underline that the convents were a part of a tight network with the imperial family, its primary financial patron.

Other scholars like Dutton (2002) and Wright (2002) who are looking at the early modern period convents have also argued for a high degree of bureaucracy at the temple. These two specifically focus on divorce temples Tōkeiji and Mantokuji, and have shown that they are responding to the idealized image of reclusive nuns only committed to religious training. The issue of temple bureaucracy is discussed through the focus on divorce as an institutional practice. Takagi Tadashi 高木侃 (1997, 2011) closely inspects the legal divorce documents, such as the letter of severance (*rienjō* 離縁状), to enrich the discussion on a highly institutionalized process.

A third and major argument produced from works like those aforementioned is the emphasis on the nuns as pioneers, who were capable of fulfilling a wide variety of tasks, ranging from memorial services to managing the temple administration. For instance, Inoue Zenjō 井上禅定 (1980, 1995), who extensively researched and accessed temple records as the former abbot of Tōkeiji, demonstrated the initiative of the abbesses especially in regard to how the temple flourished under their leadership. Sachiko Morrell and Robert Morrell (2006) cites Inoue to reiterate and strengthen his arguments about the abbess's leadership by emphasizing that the founding abbess was the one who enforced the temple service of guaranteeing divorce via temple code.

The direction and development of the work described above has opened up new areas of inquiry. The early modern divorce convents, for example, are still largely untouched in English. Even in Japanese, there is no consensus on the nature of the relation between convents and bakufu or the court. Moreover, more attention to the way that scholars apply modern, ideological criteria—such as “independence” or “agency”—is required. The criteria are often used in a

feminist framework to underline issues of gender discrimination and female empowerment.

Related key terms such as strong, active, engaged, and independent are used to explicitly respond to the predominant argument that nuns are marginalized.

For instance, Ōishi Masaaki's (2004) model for independence (*jiritsu* 自立) regarding the elite convents is that they are not considered independent because they depend on the bakufu and secular family members for financial support. However, he does not attribute negative or positive connotations, and presents this statement as a description. In contrast, Oka Yoshiko (2000, 2002, 2007, 2009) positively considers the elite convents as independent because the nuns founded and resided at their own temples, not at branch or minor temples of monasteries. The nuns essentially created and maintained their business without the constant supervision of another perceived higher authority. Between these two models of analyzing independence, I propose a third model in which convents are both independent and dependent in order to have access to the most resources in their network. They are dependent on their network of family members and the public authorities in order to survive. Their survival then allows them to exist as an independent temple providing their own services, which can be exchanged for financial and political profit.

I believe his ongoing debate and the aforementioned arguments in the literature review point to another direction in the research on women and Japanese Buddhism. It is not about uncovering alternative or marginalized representations, but that these representations of an engaged nun or female leader are normative for their time as members of the elite class. The question is not how to seem them as alternative, but how to evaluate their strength and leadership positions as relative to other contemporary monasteries and monks.

Consequently, I believe the issue of women's agency needs to be addressed, not only to redefine normative understandings of Japanese Buddhist nuns, but also to enrich the history of

nuns within the broader history of Japanese Buddhism. The question to ask regarding nun's agency is not whether they had it or not, but which model of agency best describes how the nuns served their aspirations within the limitations of social roles, conventions, and imposed rules from the public authorities. Within this thesis, I define agency as "successful action." Agency is frequently thought to exist when a historical actor's action successfully reaches its objective. I look specifically at how nuns successfully acted within the constraints of social regulations, and how others in society recognized the action, thereby legitimating it.

My thesis approaches the Japanese Buddhist nun by examining agency in her performance of religious and secular services. Agency marks the degree of a nun's interdependent relationships with her secular patrons, such as the shogun and imperial family. These interdependent relationships are essential in managing temple finances and in strengthening the temple's authority. I use a social historical approach by regarding agency as a characteristic that individuals inherently possess in varying degrees to make transactions with each other.

I will specifically focus on divorce as a pivotal issue of agency, voice, and representation. My primary case study in this thesis is the famous "divorce temple" Tōkeiji. I examine the way that agency and voice are linked in one of the divorce narratives. The nature of legal documents used by the convent demonstrates how, even if a nun's voice is not explicitly present, the implications of the nun's religious authority as the representative of the temple expresses her voice and agency in more subtle avenues. I aim to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on actual and imagined representations of the Japanese Buddhist nun and convent in the early modern period.

In Chapter 1, I examine Tōkeiji's divorce function and briefly discuss the early modern context of the divorce practice. Tōkeiji was one of two Tokugawa bakufu sanctioned divorce temples (*enkiridera*).⁴ The nuns were associated with the divorce practice through the founding abbess of Tōkeiji. This abbess requested that the temple provide asylum to wives who wanted a divorce. However, the secular male temple officials conducted the actual divorce procedures. From a superficial view, the nuns were not regarded to have agency over the divorce function since the temple officials supervised this practice. However, I analyze a specific case example of a divorce proceeding to show that a laywoman appealing for divorce, and the nuns held some degree of agency even though they did not have active voices in the legal documents. The issues of agency, voice, and representation of the women are discussed in the divorce case example.

Chapters 2 and 3 explore issues related to temple management. Chapter 2 highlights the personnel structure of the elite temple. I begin with an examination of Tōkeiji's temple hierarchy, and describe each group within the institution, and their interactions and communications among each other. Their social interaction depicts the power structure of which group was considered to hold a stronger position of authority. In addition, I introduce and provide a comparison of the temple personnel structure with examples such as medieval period Hokkeji 法華寺, and early modern period Enshōji 円照寺 and Sōjiin 惣持院. I discuss Hokkeji during the medieval period given the availability of sources. Many of Hokkeji's temple documents have not yet been released to the public, and so its early modern context is unclear. Despite the period difference, I believe Hokkeji provides a useful example of a personnel structure entirely composed of religious practitioners. This type of hierarchy provides comparison to Tōkeiji's mixed hierarchy

⁴ The other temple is Mantokuji 蔓徳寺 located in Ojimamachi in Gunma prefecture. Although Tōkeiji has been more studied than Mantokuji, I choose to focus on Tōkeiji, because both the bakufu and the imperial court politically and financially supported the temple. The affiliations with the two public authorities make it difficult to neatly categorize Tōkeiji, which is a topic of discussion I will explore in chapter 4.

of religious and secular members. Enshōji and Sōjiin were Tōkeiji's contemporaries as other types of elite convents.⁵ Though the three temples provided different services, their personnel structure was remarkably similar. I examine these similar but different personnel structures to gain a better understanding of the agency of the resident nuns and of the abbess, the highest-ranking nun.

Chapter 3 delves into the financial management of the temple. Using Tōkeiji as an example, I explore the ways the nuns had agency in an administrative capacity where they did not have the highest executive authority. Rather, the financial management was one of the main responsibilities of the secular male temple officials. Although the temple officials managed the expenses, one of the major sources of income was through donations made by the patrons. The donations were made possible due to the personal relationships between the nuns and the patrons. Consequently, the donation practice at Tōkeiji and other elite convents was further evidence of the nun's agency to reach out to their secular families.

Chapter 4 explores Tōkeiji's multifaceted identity as a divorce temple, an asylum, as the second rank out of the five high status Zen convents, and a shogunate affiliated and imperial affiliated temple. I describe these attributes and position Tōkeiji in the larger network of other elite and similarly hybrid convents. This is an important concept in understanding the multifaceted elite nun and convent, and is necessary to understand Tōkeiji. In addition to Tōkeiji, I will also introduce and focus on Keiaiji 景愛寺, which was originally an *ama gozan* 尼五山 that may have posthumously gained the appellation of the *bikuni gosho*.⁶ Both categories were affiliated personally and professionally with a major financial patron, such as the bakufu or the imperial court. Though there are many similarities between the two convent categories, the

⁵ I choose Enshōji and Sōjiin largely due to the access and availability of materials.

⁶ Italicized terms such as *ama gozan* and *bikuni gosho* are explained and translated in the previous "Notes to the Reader" section.

nuanced differences pinpoint that many of the elite convents cannot be easily categorized. In fact, elite convents often belonged to multiple categories, and would often be labeled differently depending on the period. It is not a question of mislabeling the convent, but rather that understanding the convent is complicated by how it was referred to during its contemporaneous time, and later in history.

I conclude my thesis with a new perspective on how to approach issues of agency and representation, agency and authority, and agency and independence. Nuns and temples alike are multifaceted by nature, and so approaching the temples as a mixture of different categories enables agency to be a flexible model. In addition, I will examine the limitations of my thesis and suggest resolutions for future studies. The four primary areas I observed involve the economic dimension (chapter 3), the significance of the aristocratic families' roles, research connections between the *ama gozan* and the *bikuni gosho*, and, lastly, how to approach religious women in premodern Japan using categories like “agency” and “gender.”

Chapter 1. Till Divorce Do Us Part

Recognizing the agency of laywomen and nuns is complicated because of the different understandings and reception of divorce practices in the Tokugawa period. There is a well-known painting of a woman running away from husband, who has thrown her shoe through the temple gate.⁷ This painting augmented the popular belief that a woman could simply throw her personal item, such as a shoe or comb, onto temple grounds to obtain a divorce. This paradigm underscored that the laywoman alone took initiative to change her life. She knew she had the potential to get a divorce by simply running away to the temple. However, it was unclear who specifically processed the divorce. The story of attaining a divorce ends with the woman who sought asylum at the temple.

On the contrary, an actual divorce was only achieved through the cooperation among the woman's parents, husband and his family, the temple innkeepers, and the Tōkeiji temple officials (*teryakunin* 寺役人). This cooperation involved exchanges of business letters to pressure the husband to write a letter of severance (*rienjō* 離縁状) in the prescribed three and a half line (*mikudarihan* 三行半) format. In his letter, the husband had to convey his intent to divorce, his lack of ill will toward his wife in order to give her permission to remarry. This specific type of letter was required to legitimate the divorce. Thus, contrary to popular belief, Morrell and Morrell describes how

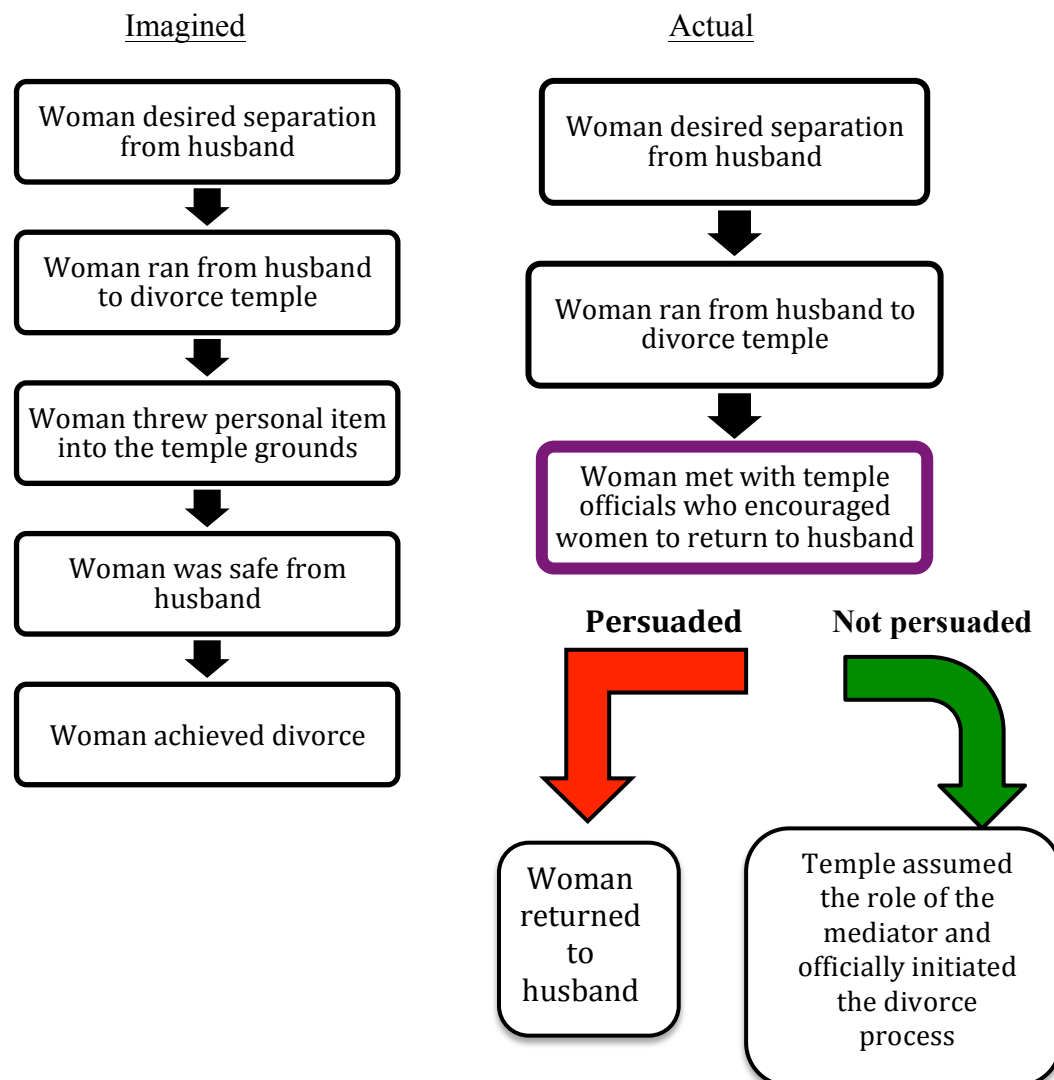
The bureaucratic reality of official forms and carefully-defined social commitments is far removed from the popular romantic vision of the desperate wife being granted sanctuary merely by throwing one of her sandals over the convent wall.⁸

⁷ Diana E. Wright, "Mantokuji: More Than a 'Divorce Temple'," in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2002), 251.

⁸ Sachiko Kaneko Morrell and Robert E. Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes: Japan's Tōkeiji Convent Since 1285* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 89.

The reality of this highly bureaucratic divorce process overshadowed the idea that the woman had any degree of agency in achieving a divorce by her own hand. Instead, it seemed that the woman had limited control, and the outcome of her divorce request was dependent on other people's decisions. Figure 1 shows the differences between the imagined and actual understanding of divorce. It is apparent that the actual procedure had the potential to result in other scenarios besides the desired goal of divorce. The imagined vision of divorce procedures was linear beginning with the unfortunate situation and ending with the desired outcome.

Figure 1. Imagined and actual divorce procedures



In either scenario, the woman who wanted the divorce was regarded to have complete control of her life (imagined), or limited control and was dependent on others to reach her objective (actual). The nuns, in either case, seemed to have no participation in the divorce practice; instead, the temple officials had power to accept or reject the appeals for divorce.

However, a reexamination of the actual divorce procedures shows that the wife and nuns had agency in subtle ways. The wife took initiative and began the divorce process. The nuns, more specifically the abbess, personally ensured that the temple provided divorce services.

Figure 2. Founder Kakuzan-ni. © Shokozan Tōkeiji. Reproduced with permission from their website, <http://www.tokeiji.com/history/kakusan-ni>



The founding abbess of Tōkeiji, Kakuzan Shidō (1252-1306), enforced that the temple mediate divorces for troubled women. She incorporated the divorce function into the temple law, and made the divorce management one of the core characteristics of the temple. According to a 1745 document written by the secular temple official (*terayakunin*), Ōmura Yosozaemon, Kakuzan

established Tōkeiji's temple code (*jireisho* 寺令書).⁹ She appealed to her son Hōjō Sadatoki (1271-1311) to allow women in troubled marriages to “reside in this convent for three years, [and] the marital relationship will be severed (*enkiri*).” Consequently, Sadatoki petitioned the emperor on her behalf, and the emperor approved the code. The twentieth abbess, Tenshū (d. 1645), inquired and received confirmation from Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) that Kakuzan's temple code—especially concerning the divorce procedure—would be “continued forever without interruption.”¹⁰

The Tokugawa bakufu sanctioned only two convents as divorce temples (*enkiridera*)—Tōkeiji in Kamakura and Mantokuji in present day Ojimamachi in Gunma prefecture—and designated Tōkeiji as a refuge temple (*kakekomidera*).¹¹ Kakuzan Shidō (1252-1306) founded the convent Tōkeiji in 1285. She was the daughter of shogunal vassal Adachi Yoshikage (1210-53), wife of Hōjō Tokimune (1251-84),¹² and mother of Hōjō Sadatoki (1271-1311), who was the convent's first financial patron.¹³ It is said that Kakuzan Shidō founded Tōkeiji across from Engakuji 円覚寺, where her husband's ashes was buried. From Tōkeiji's founding in 1285 to the mid-Edo period, the temple was regarded as an “independent institution run by and for nuns.”¹⁴

Somehow it seems that Kakuzan's wish for the temple to provide refuge for troubled wives merged with the popular romantic vision of how divorces occurred giving the impression that all a woman had to do in order to get a legitimate divorce was to run to the temple. In truth, the temple did not process all divorce requests. A clearer picture of the strict divorce application

⁹ Morrell and Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes*, 87.

¹⁰ Ibid., 71.

¹¹ Inoue Zenjō, *Tōkeiji to Kakekomionna* (Yokohama-shi: Yūrindō, 1995), 23.

¹² Hōjō Tokimune was the regent to the shogun, which was considered the most powerful position in the bakufu (Dutton 2002, 232).

¹³ Anne Dutton, “Temple Divorce in Tokugawa Japan: A Survey of Documentation on Tōkeiji and Mantokuji,” in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2002), 232.

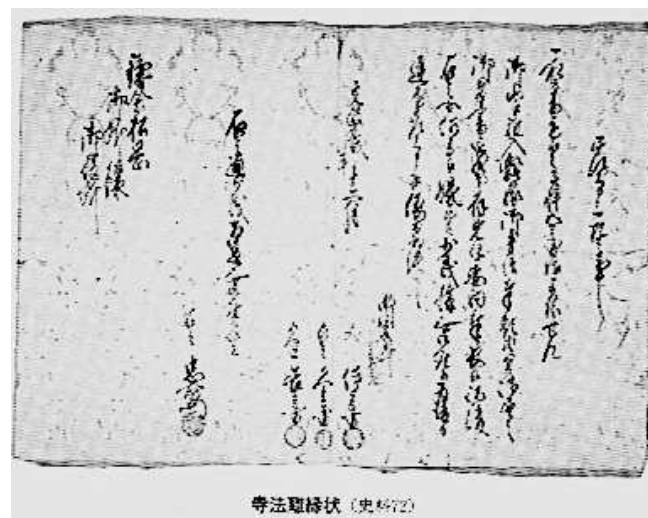
¹⁴ Morrell and Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes*, 96.

process is evident in an 1866 temple record from the *Matsugaoka Diary* (*Matsugaoka nikki* 松岡日記).¹⁵ This record indicated that of a total of thirty-four applications, only twenty-five divorces were granted, one was rejected, and the remaining eight were withdrawn due to various reasons. Thus, not all applications were accepted and processed; the temple selectively assigned asylum. The following table shows the breakdown of the temple's decisions.¹⁶

Table 1. Breakdown of divorce applications in the 1866 record

Reason	Number of cases	Total
Voluntarily withdrawn	4	
Involuntarily withdrawn	1	
Reconciled with husbands	3	
Divorces granted	25	
Application rejected	1	
Admitted for temple service	2	
Returned home	1	
		34

Figure 3. Letter of severance by temple law (record 72) (*Jihō rienjō* [*shiryō* 72]). © Shokozan Tōkeiji. Reproduced with permission.



¹⁵ This document was written by various temple officials and abbesses at Tōkeiji, and contained the daily record of the temple's activities including processing divorces (Morrell and Morrell 2006).

¹⁶ Morrell and Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes*, 85.

Access to Tōkeiji's divorce services was exclusive, and a screening process was conducted. The temple officials listened to her pleas, but first encouraged her to return to her husband. However, if she was not persuaded, temple officials reported her request to her husband and the local officials. From this point, there were three possibilities. One, if the woman had violated the law, the husband was obliged to present evidence. Tōkeiji stringently rejected women who violated public rules or the temple code.¹⁷ Second, if the couple had no dispute, then the husband was pressured to write a letter of severance (*rienjō*) as per the regulations of the governmental division, Magistrate of Temples and Shrines (*jishabugyō* 寺社奉行). The letter served as legal evidence against any claim the husband may have made. Third, if the woman had negotiated a "private divorce settlement" (*naisai rien* 内債離縁),¹⁸ the woman served at the temple for up to two years instead of the requisite three year service that was required of the women who successfully achieved a divorce enforced by the temple.

In addition to divorces achieved through the temple code, there were other kinds of divorces. Prior to the Tokugawa period, a woman could simply cut her hair, work at a temple for three years, and society would recognize her as an unmarried woman.¹⁹ Then, prior to and during the Tokugawa period, there was "divorce by eviction" (*oidashi rikon* 追い出し離婚) where a husband simply gave his wife a letter of severance, and essentially kicked her out. There was also "divorce by running away" (*tobidashi rikon*), where a woman returned to her natal home.²⁰ When these options for divorce were unavailable, a woman's last resort was divorce via temple code. The temple's divorce procedure enabled the temple to act on behalf of the women. The temple mediated divorces by employing temple law in a way that pressured the husband to grant

¹⁷ Morrell and Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes*, 88.

¹⁸ The private divorce settlement did not use the temple's divorce services.

¹⁹ Dutton, "Temple Divorce in Tokugawa Japan," 209-210.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 212.

a divorce. However, the divorce achieved via temple code was a long arduous exchange of letters before the husband wrote a letter of severance (*rienjō*). The following table presents seventeen letters from the *Matsugaoka Documents* (*Matsugaoka monjo*) in which a few or all of the letters have been potentially used in a divorce.

Table 2. Seventeen example letters from the *Matsugaoka Documents*²¹

	Type of Letter	Description
1	Summons (<i>yobidashijō</i> 呼出状)	Sent by the temple to the woman's parents to request they come for a hearing
2	Notice of Official Visit (<i>deyaku no tasshigaki</i> 出役の達書き)	Sent to the village head requesting the husband's attendance at the hearing
3	Second Summons (<i>yobidashi ohikiyaku</i> 呼出お引き役, or <i>shōkan tokusokujō</i> 召還督促状)	Sent to the woman's parents if they did not respond to the first Summons
4	Acknowledgement of Summons and Request for Time Extension (<i>yobidashi seisho narabi ni hinobe negai</i> 呼出聖書並に日延願い)	Sent by the woman's parents to the temple
5	Application for a Period of Retreat (<i>azukari onna azukari gansho</i> 預女預願書)	Sent by woman's parents if they wanted to temporarily lodge at the temple
6	Request for the Woman's Release after Private Divorce Settlement (<i>naisai rien hikitorijō</i> 内債離縁引取状)	Submitted to Tōkeiji promising that the temple would not be involved in the case anymore
7	Letter Acknowledging Release of a Woman under the Temple's Care (<i>azukari onna hikitorijō</i> 預女引取状)	Sent by woman's parents who are in retreat at the temple

²¹ Morrell and Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes*, 88-9.

	Type of Letter	Description
8	Letter calling for the Woman's Release from the Temple (<i>sage hikitorijō</i> 下引取状)	Sent by woman's family to temple with her consent to leave
9	Letter Requiring the Woman's Release from the Temple (<i>negai sage hikitorijō</i> 願下引取状)	a. Sent by woman's parents and husband but the woman did not consent to leaving b. Temple might try to persuade the woman to leave or just release her depending on her case
10	Request to a Local Inn that a Woman be permitted to Remain there in Seclusion (<i>yado azukari onna azukari negai shōmon</i> 宿預女預願証文)	Submitted by woman's parents who take full responsibility of their daughter
11	Letter Acknowledging a Woman's Return Home and Her Reconciliation (<i>kien hikitorijō</i> 機縁引取状)	Sent by woman's family expressing gratitude for restoring the relationship between husband and wife
12	Notice that a Woman has Taken Refuge at the Temple (<i>akeoki gohōsho/jihōsho</i> 駆置御法書／寺法書)	a. Sent by Tōkeiji to woman's family and husband b. Expected to notify bakufu if woman committed any crimes
13	Request for Release after an Extension of the Required Time (<i>terairi nengengo taizai gezan negai</i> 寺入年限後滞在下山願)	After the woman's required three-year stay, her parents might ask the temple if she can remain there longer
14	Separation Agreement in Accordance with the [Tōkeiji] Temple Code (<i>jihō rienjō</i> 寺法離縁状)	Sent by husband to Tōkeiji stating that he agreed to all conditions
15	Notice of Separation (<i>rienjō</i> 離縁状)	Sent by husband to wife
16	Letter of Guarantee for a Woman Entering the Temple (<i>nyūji shōmon</i> 入寺証文)	Sent by woman's parents stating their daughter will obey all rules

	Type of Letter	Description
17	Letter of Release from the Temple after the Woman has Fulfilled the Requirements (<i>jihō hikitorijō</i> 寺法引取状)	a. Sent by woman's parents stating that she has received a divorce after fulfilling the temple's requirements b. Expresses gratitude to the temple

Though the wife was consistently the subject of the letters, she did not write and send the letters. Instead, her parents, more specifically her father, always wrote on her behalf. It seems difficult to evaluate the wife's agency in her divorce when she has an inactive voice in the documents. Yet, by closely reading the documents of one particular case, I focus on Toyo's divorce to underscore the implicit agency of the wife (Toyo) and of the two abbesses (Kakuzan and Tenshū) who established and enforced the temple divorce code.

1.1 Running Out of Options: Toyo's Documents

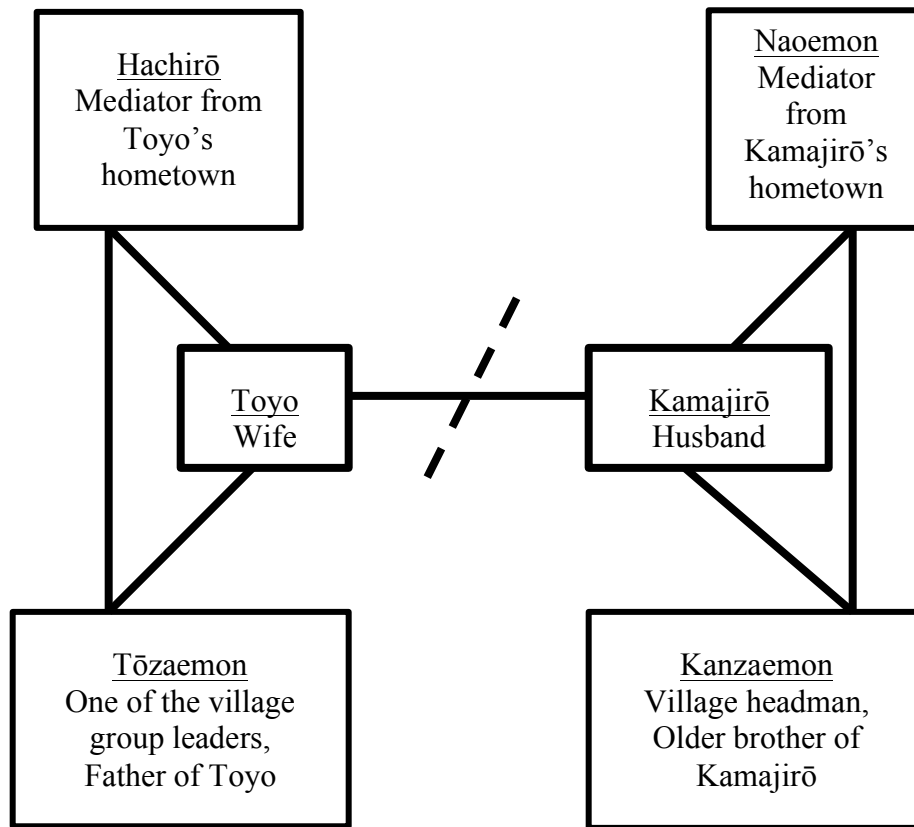
In 1855, Toyo sought asylum at Tōkeiji to receive a divorce from her husband Kamajirō. Kamajirō had a mistress for many years, and was also physically violent to Toyo. The scholar Takagi Tadashi edited and compiled a collection of temple documents entitled *Tōkeiji Documents* (*Tōkeiji monjo* 東慶寺文書), and produced it as *Materials of Divorce Temple Tōkeiji* (*Enkiridera Tōkeiji shiryō* 縁切寺東慶寺史料 1997). Specific to Toyo's story, Takagi has summarized and commented on the nine letters involved in the divorce from the moment Toyo sought refuge at Tōkeiji (*kakekomi* 駆け込) to the last official letter reflecting the result of divorce. He infers that Toyo abandoned her husband because of the violence. Before seeking Tōkeiji's help, she requested a divorce from the village officials, but they rejected her. Therefore, as she was running out of options, Toyo took refuge at Tōkeiji out of necessity.

Figure 4. Entrance gate at Tōkeiji. © Shokozan Tōkeiji. Reproduced with permission from their website, <http://www.tokeiji.com/map/sanmon>



In her story, there are six actors involved in the divorce. Toyo was the wife that initiated divorce by taking refuge at Tōkeiji. Kamajirō, Toyo's husband, had become a part of Toyo's family as the adopted son-in-law three years prior to Toyo taking refuge. Kamajirō was the younger brother of the village headman (*nanushi* 名主) Kanzaemon of Kogutsuwa village in Nagara county in Kazusa province. Toyo's father, Tōzaemon, was one of the village group leaders (*kumigashira* 組頭) in his community. There were also two mediators (*nakoudo* 媒人), Hachirō and Naoemon. Village headman Hachirō of Seki village in Nagara county in Kazusa province was from Toyo's village, and Naoemon of Kogutsuwa village was from Kamajirō's village. The following chart summarizes the relationships among these actors:

Figure 5. Relationships among actors in Toyo's divorce



Although Toyo initiated the divorce process when she abandoned her husband and physically removed herself from his jurisdiction, she has no say in the actual divorce process or settlement. The men taking care of the divorce process are making decisions on behalf of Toyo's welfare. These men are: Tōzaemon, Toyo's father, Kamajirō, Toyo's husband, the innkeepers hosting the respective families, village headmen from the respective families, and the male secular temple officials at Tōkeiji. They all play important roles in determining Toyo's life. Yet, there does not seem to be an opportunity for Toyo to dictate her life during the bureaucratic process. However, this divorce would not have happened without Toyo's initiative. It was Toyo who decided to abandon her husband. When the negotiation to privately settle the divorce issue was not settled, Toyo entrusted her desire to the temple Tōkeiji.

The story of Toyo's divorce began when she abandoned her husband and fled to a relative's home. Although her flight initiated an informal divorce process, the official process began when the temple sent a summons to Toyo's parents informing them of Toyo's decision to seek the assistance of the temple. The format of the letters involved in this divorce exchange was written in fixed phrases and conventions. A subject heading indicating the content of the letter was followed by the body, and concluded with the date and author of the letter at the bottom. The recipient of the letter was written last at the top.

Takagi selects and summarizes nine letters from Toyo's divorce. The first letter (#319) was the "Request to Summon Mediators," written in the third month of 1855. It was signed by Toyo's father Tōzaemon, Toyo's relative Chōbe'emon, and the innkeeper Genbe'e, where Toyo's family were staying. This document was Tōzaemon's request to summon the two village headmen from Toyo's and Kamajirō's respective villages via the temple. The first part of the letter consisted of Tōzaemon introducing himself and explaining the current situation. Tōzaemon explained that Toyo and Kamajirō have already left their homes by the time he writes. He noted that the divorce had been entrusted to various mediators, but it had not yet been resolved. Thus, he respectfully requested for divorce achieved via the temple's divorce code, and referenced his daughter's reason for divorce, which is again explained in a later letter (#321).²²

The receipt of this summon (letter #319) was seen in the next letter (#320), which was written by Toyo's natal village headman Hachirō in the third month of 1855. This letter was straightforward in its content noting that Hachirō has formally recognized that the temple imposed the order for Hachirō to mediate the divorce. However, the divorce process became delayed due to summoning Hachirō. Six months had passed, complicating the negotiation

²² Takagi Tadashi, "Enkiridera Tōkeiji no jihō rien: Kazusa kuni yamabe gun sekinoge mura "Toyo" kakekomi ikken," *Ryūkoku hōgaku (Ryūkoku law department)* 42 (2011): 6.

settlement, and therefore private settlement (*naisai rien*) was not possible.²³ Consequently, Tōzaemon, on behalf of Toyo, made a request to the temple official.

The next letter (#321) was written by Tōzaemon and signed by the innkeeper Genbe'e. This letter described the wife's explanation and request for the temple divorce law. It is similar to letter #319, which was Tōzaemon's request to summon mediators; however, this letter (#321) differed in that it offered a more in-depth explanation, and ended with the conventional phrase "Therefore, I write like this [as evidence]" (*yotte kudan no gotoshi* 仍て如件),²⁴ which underlined that this letter is presented to the temple to justify Toyo's claim for divorce. As already noted, Toyo took refuge at Tōkeiji to escape Kamajirō's violent behavior. She explained her reason by stating in the letter, "My meaning for requesting [divorce] is that this has gone beyond the point of violence," (*ware i ni tsunori, chōchaku itasu sōrō yori koto okori sōrō* 我意ニ募り、致打擲候より事起り候²⁵), which pinpointed violence as the watershed for Toyo.

Letter #322 was a formal request for divorce, and was written in the next (fourth) month. This letter differed from the previous letter in that it did not reiterate the wife's reason for divorce, and instead formally presented the facts. It stated that Toyo sought refuge at the temple, and attempted to reach a private divorce settlement with the mediators. However, since the private settlement did not occur, Tōzaemon, on behalf of Toyo, wrote this particular formal request as evidence for requesting a divorce to the temple.

The next letter (#323) was a request for an extension in the divorce process in order to receive both the wife and husband's signatures for the negotiation. Tōzaemon, on behalf of Toyo, and Kamajirō signed this letter addressed to the temple in the fourth month. Kamajirō's signature

²³ Takagi, "Enkiridera Tōkeiji no jihō rien," 6.

²⁴ Takagi Tadashi, comp. *Enkiridera Tōkeiji shiryō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1997), 304.

²⁵ Takagi, "Enkiridera Tōkeiji no jihō rien," 4-5.

was proof that he turned himself in to Tōkeiji.²⁶ However, even achieving the extension does not guarantee a divorce, and as a result, it increasingly became the work of the temple official. Consequently, the temple official distributed the temple divorce letter (#324) to the husband. At once, Kamajirō, one of his village group leaders, and his older brother signed the receipt of the temple divorce letter, and submitted it to Tōkeiji.

After this receipt, Kamajirō requested the temple official to persuade his wife to settle for reconciliation.²⁷ In this letter (#325), Kamajirō was the sole author of this letter, which contrasted with the conventions of the previous letters that included at least one other witness. Kamajirō wrote that he was extremely frustrated by her request for divorce because the marriage represented the contract in which Toyo agreed to bear children.²⁸

Nevertheless, two months later, Kamajirō submitted the “Separation Agreement in Accordance with the [Tōkeiji] Temple Code” (letter #326) with his older brother, and mediator Naoemon as witnesses. This letter was evidence of Kamajirō accepting the temple’s decision to grant divorce to his wife. When he submitted this letter, Toyo was serving two years of temple service.²⁹

The last document for Toyo’s divorce was the letter of release in accordance with the temple law (letter #327). Tōzaemon wrote this letter two years later in 1857 to express gratitude to Tōkeiji and to acknowledge that Toyo received a divorce after fulfilling the temple’s requirements. In other words, Tōzaemon clarifies that as soon as she leaves the temple, he will take full responsibility for her.

The following table is a summary of the nine letters involved in the divorce.

²⁶ Takagi, “*Enkiridera Tōkeiji no jihō rien*,” 7.

²⁷ Takagi, *Tōkeiji shiryō*,” 306.

²⁸ Takagi, “*Enkiridera Tōkeiji no jihō rien*,” 9. “*Nisei no keiyaku*” 二世之契約 literally means “contract of the second generation” in which the “second generation” refers to bearing children.

²⁹ Takagi, “*Enkiridera Tōkeiji no jihō rien*,” 10.

Table 3. Nine letters from Toyo's case³⁰

Letter No.	Date	Title
319	Third Month, 1855	Request to summon mediators
320	Third Month, 1855	Receipt of request to summon mediators
321	Third Month, 1855	Wife's explanation and request for temple divorce law
322	Fourth Month, 1855	Request to summon the husband for divorce
323	Fourth Month, 1855	Request for extension to acquire signatures for negotiation
324	Fourth Month, 1855	Receipt of temple divorce letter
325	Fourth Month, 1855	Summoned husband's request for reconciliation
326	Sixth Month, 1855	Matter of confirmation (of the temple's decision)
327	Second Month, 1857	Letter of taking back (my daughter)

1.2 Three Japanese Letters and English Translations

Among the nine letters, I will closely examine the latter part of the divorce process by translating and analyzing the last three letters, #325 “Summoned husband’s request for reconciliation,” #326 “Temple enforced divorce letter,” and #327 “Letter of release in accordance with the temple law.” These three letters described when divorce is finally reached via temple code. I choose these letters to show where the wife and the nuns have agency when the decision seems to be made by the other actors. For convenience, I will first present the letter in Japanese and then provide my English translation before delving into my analysis.

³⁰ Takagi, *Tōkeiji shiryō*,” 303-7.

Figure 6. Letter #325

文書 325

乍恐以書付奉申上候

今般私女房とよ儀、如何之心底ニ（御座候哉）^{かな・や}、御当山
 へ駆入、離縁 御寺法願出候ニ付、此の度御出役被
 為在御座、離縁状可差出趣段々御利解被仰聞候得共、
 右女房（とよ）儀は兼て二世之契約も致置候間、離縁之
 儀は甚当惑仕、於私は当人本心ニ立返り、帰縁ニ相
 成候様偏ニ奉願上候、然ル上ハ外ニ御頼可奉申上節
 聊無御座候、仍て此段奉申上候、以上

渡辺藤右衛門知行所
 上総国長柄郡本心小轡村
 鎌次郎（爪印）

安政二卯年四月十五日

Please allow me to make a request by letter.

This time, on the matter of my wife Toyo, I do not know what is in her deep mind. She took refuge at your mountain and submitted a request for divorce to the temple law.

At this time, I have been summoned [by you], and have been ordered to write the letter of severance (*rienjō*). Even though I have been told to understand this matter [by the temple], from before, she has promised to have children with me.

I am extremely frustrated by her request for divorce. As far as I am concerned, I just want Toyo to return to her original mind. I want with my whole heart for us to return to being a couple. In addition, I have nothing but this one request to Toyo.

Therefore, I say this. That is all.

Fief of Watanabe Tōzaemon
 Honkotsuga village, Nagara county, Kazusa province
 Kamajirō (signed), Fifteenth Day, Fourth Month in 1885 (Ansei 2)

Figure 7. Letter #326

文書 326

差上申証文之事

（一私妻と）よ儀、
（御山）え駆入、離縁御寺法奉願上候二付、御出役
（被成下候）処、離別難致趣奉申し上候二付、其段被
（仰立ニ）相成奉恐入候、今般古来より御寺法之儀
（相弁）離縁仕、以後右女何方え嫁候共、少も構
（無御座候）、為後日村役人加判離縁状、仍て如件

上総国長柄郡本小轡村
名主勘左衛門弟
鎌次郎（爪印）

安政二卯年
六月五日

松ヶ岡
組頭 直右衛門 印
差添 勘左衛門 印
右

Matter of confirmation (of the temple's decision)

(Article one) On the matter of my wife Toyo taking refuge in the temple and requesting divorce by temple law, I have been asked by the temple to come to the temple. I came to the temple and said that divorce by temple law was difficult to accept.

I humbly confirm that my request³¹ was rejected.

From now, I understand the ancient temple divorce law, and thus I will agree to divorce.

No matter whom my wife marries later, I will not trouble her.

For the future, the village officials included their signatures as witnesses on this letter of severance. Therefore, I write like this [as evidence].

Written by:
Honkotsuga village, Nagara county, Kazusa province
Younger brother of Village Head Kanzaemon

³¹ Refer to the husband's previous request in letter #325.

Kamajirō (signed), Fifth day of the sixth month in intercalary 1855 (Ansei 2)

Witness, Village group leader, Naoemon (signed)

Mentioned on the right, Kanzaemon (signed)

Addressed to:

Matsugaoka

Goshosama (Honorific title for the place)

Goyakusho (Honorific title for its administrative offices)

Figure 8. Letter #327

文書 327

奉差上候引取一札之事

一私娘と代、去安政貳年卯二月 御山内え驅入、離
縁 御寺法奉願上候処、以御慈悲縁被成下置、
永々蒙 御厚恩候段、偏ニ難有仕合うニ奉存候、年限
通り無滞相勤候ニ付、此節下山被 仰付、是又一同
難有仕合ニ奉存候、則私召連罷帰候上は、右女子ニ
付、途中其外如何様之六ヶ敷儀出来仕候共、何方迄
も私罷出急度埒明、奉対 御山え聊御苦勞相掛申
間鋪候、為後日奉差上候引取一札、依つて如件

安政四年巳二月 東上総国山辺郡関ノ下村
名主 藤右衛門 印
御用宿 源兵衛 印

松ヶ岡
御所様
御役所

Letter of taking back (my daughter)

My daughter Toyo, in the second month of 1855, took refuge at Tōkeiji seeking divorce. With compassion, the temple granted the divorce to Toyo. We have eternally received your great favor, and are wholeheartedly thankful. In the period of her temple service, she has worked without negligence.

We are also very thankful that she will be released from the temple. I will take her back home. On the way home, no matter what kinds of troubles befall her, I will go wherever and manage the situation. I will not trouble the temple.

For the future, I submit this one letter. Therefore, I write like this [as evidence].

Written in the Second Month of the Fourth Year (Snake Year) of Ansei

Sekinoge village of Yamabe county of East Kazusa province
Tōzaemon (signed), Village Headman
Genb'e (signed), Innkeeper

Addressed to:

Matsugaoka

Goshosama (Honorific title for the place)

Goyakusho (Honorific title for its administrative offices)

1.3 It's Not Her, It's the Inheritance

Letter #325 “Summoned husband’s request for reconciliation” highlights Kamajirō’s agency in requesting the temple to persuade his wife to reconcile with him. It also underscores the temple’s authority in this divorce process. This letter chronologically appeared after he had already submitted his receipt of receiving the temple divorce letter. In other words, he had already formally submitted his acknowledgement of receiving the orders to proceed with the divorce as enforced by the temple. Although part of this letter was damaged and the recipient was unclear, it was probably intended for the temple.³² This letter differed from the other letters in that Kamajirō is the sole author. In other words, the other letters have at least one witness that can vouch for the primary author and corroborate the legitimacy of the letter. In letter #325, Kamajirō signed this letter by not aligning himself with his natal village, but included himself as a part of his father-in-law’s property. In the other letters, he identified and signed himself as the younger brother of the village headman of his natal home. Yet, in this letter, he aligned himself with Tōzaemon. He insisted that until the divorce is finalized, he still has a relationship with Toyo.

Letter #326 “Matter of confirmation (of the temple’s decision)” was written by Kamajirō and signed by two witnesses, his older brother Kanzaemon and the village group leader Naoemon. It is submitted about two months after he and his wife requested negotiations and extensions (letter #323). The two-month difference highlights the relatively quick speed of the temple in processing the divorce. This letter is straightforward in its content, and does not include Kamajirō’s personal feelings because this is a letter in which Kamajirō acknowledges that he accepts the temple’s decision for divorce by temple law. The signature style of this letter

³² Takagi, *Tōkeiji shiryō*,” 306.

contrasts with the previous letter of Kamajirō's personal request for reconciliation. In this letter, Kamajirō aligned himself with his natal village supporting his resignation to the divorce. This type of letter was a staple in

The last letter (#327) is the "Letter of taking back (my daughter)," written by Tōzaemon to the temple. He expressed gratitude, and acknowledged that his daughter received a divorce because she fulfilled the temple's requirements. This letter served to confirm that the responsibility of taking care of Toyo has been transferred from the temple, during the past two years, back to the father. As much as this is a letter recording Toyo's release from the temple, it is more so a letter recording who is now responsible for Toyo's welfare.

From the letters and the three selected translations, it is apparent that Toyo's voice is absent. However, this divorce occurred due to Toyo's initiative. One interpretation of Kamajirō's request for reconciliation (letter #325) is that he genuinely desired to be reunited with Toyo, because he wanted children. This reason was inferred from the contract of being married. However, another interpretation is that Kamajirō wanted to maintain the marriage so that he would remain as Tōzaemon's adopted son-in-law. As his son-in-law, Kamajirō would inherit his father-in-law's property. This financial motive is evident by Kamajirō signing as a part of Tōzaemon's family as if to remind the temple that Kamajirō was a member of Tōzaemon's family. Kamajirō wrote that the promise for bearing children was what keeps him in the marriage, but this reason can easily be regarded as an excuse. In other words, Kamajirō used the cover of having children to indicate his personal interest. When, in fact, his personal interest was the concern of his father-in-law's inheritance.

This financial motive adds another layer to Toyo's divorce in that it pulls the focus away from Toyo, and instead highlights that the divorce was describing the closing of a business. The

exchange of letters about Toyo is essentially a way for Kamajirō to sound genuinely concerned when he actually wanted to keep his inheritance. Consequently, if this was Kamajirō's true intention, then does Toyo have options to act on her behalf in the divorce where she was not the primary focus? That is, if the divorce was not about her, does Toyo matter in the divorce? I argue that even if the financial motive was the true intention of the exchange of letters between Kamajirō and Tōzaemon, Toyo has agency because she did initiate the divorce process. Toyo's decision had a ripple effect since it affected Kamajirō's social and financial state. Her request for divorce could not be ignored. Her husband and father were not able to openly discuss the issue of inheritance, and used Toyo's request for divorce as a way to express their interests. The father and the temple also discuss Toyo's welfare in letter #327. The letter emphasized that if anything should have happened to Toyo upon leaving the temple, the temple is not responsible. Her parents also paid Toyo's two-year stay at the temple. Thus, since the payment had been made and the required time was completed, the father acknowledged that he was financially responsible for his daughter.

Toyo herself did not seem to be aware of or concerned with the financial motive. Yet, because of her inactive role in the divorce documents, it is hard to evaluate how she used the financial motive to her advantage. In any case, her father supported her request for divorce underlining that, at least, her father opportunely used Toyo's initiative for divorce to express that he did not want his son-in-law to have his inheritance.

As it is clear in the selected letters #325, #326, and #327, the wife did not actively participate, and instead her father wrote on her behalf. However, the husband was able to speak for himself and sign as the primary author. In addition, the letters to the temple would be addressed to Matsugaoka and to the temple officials, but not the abbess. The convention of

addressing the letters shows who was responsible for conducting divorce. Yet, it was also the convention that men sign the legal documents, and so it was commonly understood that the temple officials may sign documents, but they were speaking for the abbess. Though the divorce letters recorded only male actors, the process involved more than the people who signed the documents, and more than what was being discussed.

1.4 Working Behind the Scenes: The Nun's Role in the Divorce

Though the temple officials processed divorces, the founding abbess Kakuzan established the temple divorce code, the theoretical foundation that decreed that the temple provide divorce services. Kakuzan initiated this law, and around three hundred years later, the abbess Tenshū guaranteed the legitimacy of the temple divorce code from the shogun. In essence, the abbesses laid the theoretical groundwork for the temple to provide divorce services, and the temple officials carried out the practical practices. Thus, both the abbesses and the temple officials have agency in conducting divorce, but they exercise their authority and control in implicit and direct ways.

In other words, neither the nuns nor the temple officials hold a monopoly over divorce. They both have agency over certain parts of the divorce institution. In some ways, it could be seen that they work together to make the divorce institution efficient. Yet, it seems that they do not explicitly work together, but have implicitly adopted responsibilities that cater to their roles in the temple institution. These roles will be further explained in the next chapter on the personnel issues at Tōkeiji.

Chapter 2. Running the Temple Machine, Some Assembly Required

At Tōkeiji, the abbess and nuns clearly outranked the temple officials, and theoretically held more authority and power over the temple officials. However, having a high position of authority did not necessarily indicate a high degree of agency. Dutton notes that within the convent, the abbess

theoretically [had] the highest authority among the residents of the temple complex. She had the ultimate responsibility for upholding the temple customs and regulations, overseeing the training of the nuns and sanctuary women, performing religious ceremonies, representing the convent at official functions at the shogun's castle in Edo, and overseeing the finances of the convent.³³

Since the abbess had the highest position of authority, it would make sense that she, too, had the greatest degree of agency compared to the other members of the temple. Yet, the temple officials managed the temple affairs, such as the divorce institution, and, more importantly, supervised the financial matters. Their control over the finances certainly allowed greater potential to have more control over the temple. Though the temple officials held a lower rank, it did not mean they were lacking agency and authority. On the contrary, the structure of the temple hierarchy assigned each group its own distinct responsibilities, such that when all groups are doing their part, as a whole, the temple institution ran efficiently. A common analogy is the cog in the machine. Each rank is like a cog in the temple machine. Having a lower rank did infer an inferior position; the lower-ranking members were just as essential as the abbess.

Tōkeiji included a variety of people within its temple complex. The temple did not simply provide residence for religious women or asylum for women seeking divorce, but also provided a residence and workplace for secular male temple officials and guards, and their

³³ Dutton, "Temple Divorce in Tokugawa Japan," 217.

families. The makeup of the temple was truly made up of different people, who contributed to the temple's maintenance and services.

First, the abbess, or head nun of the temple, held the most authority at the temple. She supervised the resident nuns, lodgers, and the secular members of the institution. The abbess is distinguished from the resident nuns by the number of precepts she undertook as well as being selected for that position. As the abbess, she was an embodiment of the temple and its reputation. Interestingly, a majority of the abbesses were related to each other. Kakuzan Shidō and the next three abbesses were from the Hōjō shogunal vassal family. Princess Yōdō, the daughter of Emperor Go-Daigō (1288-1339), was the fifth abbess. When she became abbess, Tōkeiji also gained an imperial affiliation, and images of the chrysanthemum in the temple reflect that royal connection.³⁴ The sixth through sixteenth abbesses were from the Ashikaga shogunal family.³⁵ The next critical abbess was the twentieth abbess, Tenshū Hōtai (1608-45). Tenshū was the daughter of Toyotomi Hideyori (1593-1615)³⁶ and his mistress. Senhime (1597-1666) was Toyotomi Hideyori's primary wife and the granddaughter of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616). In 1615, Ieyasu burned Osaka Castle to eliminate Hideyori, who became a political threat, and Senhime formally adopted Tenshū to prevent Ieyasu from killing the child.³⁷ Then, Senhime sent Tenshū to Tōkeiji so she would not appear as a political threat. From that point on, Senhime continued to support Tōkeiji financially and politically even after Tenshū died.

³⁴ Inoue, *Tōkeiji to Kakekomionna*, 11. Thus, when compared with the other bakufu-sanctioned divorce temple Mantokuji, Tōkeiji is often referred to as the imperial affiliated temple and Mantokuji as the shogunal affiliated temple. Yet, this categorization is not as relevant because both temples had strong imperial and shogunal connections.

³⁵ Dutton, "Temple Divorce in Tokugawa Japan," 233.

³⁶ Toyotomi Hideyori was the son of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), who unified Japan in 1590. He was considered the second unifier after Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), and was defeated and followed by the third Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616).

³⁷ Dutton, "Temple Divorce in Tokugawa Japan," 233-234.

Besides the abbess, there were also resident nuns at the temple. There were a number of reasons for their choice to be at the temple. Some were ill and wanted to be separated from their husbands. Others fled to and resided at Tōkeiji because their husbands would not give them a divorce. Or, it was their vocational choice to become nuns.³⁸

There were also four types of temporary lodgers. One type would temporarily stay at various temples along their travels including Tōkeiji. This was a common practice from the medieval period among pilgrims. A second type of lodger was the young woman entrusted to the temple's care for an apprenticeship on etiquette.³⁹ A third type would temporarily stay at the temple after privately negotiating a divorce settlement. Consequently, that is why Inoue Zenjō preferred to call Tōkeiji a refuge temple (*kakekomidera*) instead of a divorce temple (*enkiridera*), because divorce and sojourn at the temple were two separate matters even if there was some overlap. The last type of temporary lodger was the woman who conducted her divorce proceedings via the temple code, and was required to stay at the temple for two to three years.⁴⁰

In addition to the nuns and temporary lodgers, the secular male temple officials were indispensable to the institution because they fulfilled all administrative tasks, essentially managing most of the temple's affairs. They had four main responsibilities at Tōkeiji. They supervised (1) the women who sought refuge and divorce, (2) managing temple estates, (3) the moneylending enterprise, and (4) managing the annual religious events for the nuns. Concerning their first responsibility, the temple officials directly handled the divorce proceedings from the moment the woman applied for divorce until a decision was reached. The last letter (#327) from the case example of Toyo underscores how the temple dutifully took responsibility for the woman, and then required reassurance that responsibility for her welfare would be transferred to

³⁸ Inoue Zenjō, *Kakekomidera Tōkeiji shi* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1980), 242.

³⁹ Ibid., 244.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 246-247.

someone else after she finished her labor service. The key point is that the nuns did not have any direct contact with the women.

The temple officials held the highest administrative position within the hierarchy, because they supervised the logistics and affairs. In regard to the estates, temple officials were responsible for collecting income from the land via the annual land tax (*nengu* 年貢), and resolving matters involving the land, such as mediating rice paddy conflicts. They also supervised the moneylending enterprise.⁴¹ Lastly, they acted like a personal assistant to the abbess, and confirmed her appointments at various seasonal festivals.⁴²

In addition to the secular male temple officials, the temple also employed couriers who were needed to quickly dispatch letters to the wife's family, husband's family, mediators, and the village headmen in order to process divorces.⁴³ Tōkeiji employed gatekeepers to protect the temple residents and the women who came for refuge.

2.1 Four Main Levels at Enshōji

I will now turn to imperial convent Enshōji 円照寺 for reference and comparison of the temple hierarchy at another imperial temple. The founding abbess of Enshōji was called Bunchi. Emperor Go-Mizunoo's (1596-1680), first imperial daughter, Ume no Miya (1619-97), or her Buddhist name Bunchi, married in 1631 when she was thirteen years old. However, for some reason, three years later, she divorced and in 1640, at twenty-two years old, she took the tonsure

⁴¹ More information about the financial operations will be examined in the next chapter.

⁴² Inoue, *Kakekomidera Tōkeiji shi*, 213.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 225.

and received the precepts from Rinzai Zen master Isshi Bunshu (1608-46).⁴⁴ She studied and trained at the convent Enshōji in Kyoto for sixteen years. In 1656 at thirty-eight years old, she moved Enshōji away from the capital south to Nara in order to enhance Buddhist training where there would be fewer distractions from the world. She opened and established the first bodhisattva (*bosatsu* 菩薩) ordination platform at Enshōji in 1689.⁴⁵ She moved the temple for a second time in 1669 to a remote location in the mountain village, and continued to be Enshōji's abbess until her death in 1697 at seventy-nine years old.

The organizational structure at Enshōji was composed of four main groups. They were in hierarchical order, the abbess (*jūshoku* 住職), nuns (*nishū* 尼衆), kitchen staff (*kuri no shū* 庫裡之衆), and manservants (*saburai shū* 侍衆).⁴⁶ The group of nuns performed various assisting roles to the abbess as attendants, retainers, or a proxy. They also fulfilled roles as administrators and intermediaries. According to the *Historical Records of the Lower-Ranking Vassals at Enshōji* (*Enshōji gokajin no ki* 円照寺御家人之記), which recorded the background of the members of the temple, including but not limited to details like the class status of their families. This record indicated that most of the nuns came from families that resided in the capital and thus were from imperial, noble, or samurai families.⁴⁷

The third group was the kitchen staff (*kuri no shū*), which consisted of lower-ranking nuns. These nuns were responsible for preparing meals, harvesting and storing food, procuring

⁴⁴ Gina Cogan, "Enshōji to Bunchi: jū nana seiki no amadera to kairitsu o megutte," in *Amadera monjo chōsa no seika wo kiban toshita Nihon no josei to bukyō no sōgō kenkyū: heisei 14 nendo ~ 17 nendo ryōgaku kenkyūhi hojokin (kiban kenkyū (B)) kenkyū seika hōkokusho* (Nishinomiya: Otemae University, 2006), 21.

⁴⁵ Oka Yoshiko, "Kinsei bikuni gosho no soshiki" (paper presented at the international symposium, Beyond Buddhology: New Directions in the Study of Japanese Buddhism, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, November 2-3, 2007), 70.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 72.

oil and ingredients, and caring for the welfare of the members of the temple.⁴⁸ They also acted as intermediaries between the higher-ranking nuns and the lower-ranking manservants. The kitchen nuns were predominantly daughters of merchants (*chōnin* 町人) or farmers (*hyakushō* 百姓).⁴⁹

The last group was the manservants (*saburai shu*), who worked miscellaneous jobs such as guarding the gate and residence, procuring oil and estates, trimming and cleaning the gardens, preserving the temple, managing the use of fire, and guarding against thieves. They also supervised the nuns' interaction with strangers and neighborhood monks. These men were from families who served nobles (*keishi* 家司), or served as retainers and vassals (*kerai* 家来), or whose fathers were considered “outside” daimyo (*tozama no saburai* 外様之侍), or the hereditary vassals of the Tokugawa shogunate.⁵⁰ The status of these men was equivalent to that of a rich farmer. Although the nuns and the manservants came from similar secular backgrounds, their social rank changed within the temple hierarchy.

2.2 Career Development Workshop at Hokkeji

In the case of Hokkeji 法華寺, Empress Kōmyō (701-60), a consort of Emperor Shōmu (701-56), founded the convent in 741 in present-day Nara. During that period, the emperor decreed that a pair of monastery and convent be placed in each province. Tōdaiji 東大寺 was the head provincial temple for monasteries and Hokkeji, its sister institution, was the head temple for convents. However, when the capital moved from Nara to Kyoto, the southern capital, and Hokkeji by extension, declined. During the Heian period (794-1185), Hokkeji, like many other convents, was seriously dilapidated. In order maintain the convent, the nuns at Hokkeji spread

⁴⁸ Oka, “Kinsei bikuni gosho no soshiki,” 72.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 72.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 72-73.

stories about its founder, Empress Kōmyō, and it became a popular pilgrimage site attracting many visitors. Then, during the thirteenth century, Jizen, a former lady-in-waiting, was one of the first women to become fully ordained by Saidaiji 西大寺 priest Eison and with his help restored Hokkeji.⁵¹ Then, in the mid-fourteenth century, when the daughter of Emperor Kōmyō became the abbess, Hokkeji was recognized as an imperial convent (*bikuni gosho*), and soon the temple was exclusive to only women of the aristocratic class.⁵² Because many of Hokkeji's temple buildings and structures were destroyed by fire, wars, and disasters in the premodern period, Yodogimi, a consort of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, initiated major reconstruction at Hokkeji. From 1602-3, such structures like the main hall, bell tower, bathhouse, and south gate were repaired, and are designated as cultural properties today.⁵³

During the thirteenth century, “Hokkeji’s revival provide[d] evidence of nuns who acted as religious professionals: as administrators, teachers, fund-raisers, and performers of ritual.”⁵⁴ They had agency in their lives as Hokkeji nuns with the potential to succeed in different vocational capacities. The breakdown of the Hokkeji nuns during this period can be divided into four basic categories as seen below.

⁵¹ Tokyo University of the Arts, et al. eds., *A Hidden Heritage*, 356.

⁵² Ibid., 356.

⁵³ Doi Minoru, “Hokkeji no rekishi to shinkō,” in *Kodera Junrei Nara: Hokkeji* by Sugimoto Sonoko and Koga Kōshō (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1979), 94.

⁵⁴ Lori Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010b), 158.

Table 4. Hierarchy of female religious practitioners at Hokkeji during the 13th century⁵⁵

	Rank	Description
1	<i>bikuni-shū</i> 比丘尼衆	<u>Full-fledged nun</u> Received ten major bodhisattva precepts, novice precepts, six laws, and <i>bikuni gusokukai</i> , took tonsure, and lived on temple grounds
2	<i>shikishamana-shū</i> , <i>shikishamini</i> 式叉摩那衆、 式叉摩尼	<u>Probationary nun</u> Received ten major bodhisattva precepts, novice precepts, and six laws, took tonsure, lived on temple grounds
3	a) <i>hōdō shamini</i> 法同沙弥尼 b) <i>gyōdō shamini</i> 形同沙弥尼	a) <u>Full novice</u> Received ten major bodhisattva precepts and novice precepts, took tonsure, lived on temple grounds b) <u>“Female novice in outward form”</u> Received ten major bodhisattva precepts, took tonsure, and lived on temple grounds
4	a) <i>gonjū</i> 近住 b) <i>gonshi</i> or <i>gonji</i> 近士、近事	a) <u>Lay followers</u> Received eight pure precepts and ten major bodhisattva precepts, and lived on the temple grounds b) <u>Lay followers</u> Received five lay precepts and ten major bodhisattva precepts, but did not live on temple grounds

The full novice nun, probationary nun, and full-fledged nun received Buddhist names. Nuns of lower rank than the full novice nun did not. The probationary nun had to wait two years before advancing to a full-fledged nun because the waiting period was a precautionary measure to screen for pregnancy. When Hokkeji was founded, most women were on the track to become full-fledged nun, but by 1265, more than half were “female novice in outward form,” and they were mostly young women.⁵⁶ Since they took the tonsure, they were regarded as world-renouncers, but Saidaiji priest Eison regarded them more as lay followers because of the amount

⁵⁵ Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan*, 163-5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 172.

of precepts they received.⁵⁷ However, this trend toward becoming lay followers was not limited to Hokeji, but also with male practitioners in the same Ritsu sect. Meeks proposes that the increase in “female novice in outward form” is due to the rise in non-elite women, or provincial women, participating in religious life. The “female novice in outward form” often came from elite backgrounds compared to the lay follower, who often came from nearby villages.

Similar to the temple officials at Tōkeiji, the lower ranked lay followers at Hokeji were tasked with important duties. They were often tasked with menial jobs, such as taking care of financial matters or dead bodies.⁵⁸

According to Hosokawa, the *saikai-shū* [or lay followers] was a group of menials who undertook various forms of undesirable work on behalf of Ritsu priests... He argues that the *saikai-shū* formed an underclass at Ritsu temples. While these men were granted a place in the temple community, they were not given the opportunity to advance through the priestly hierarchy. Instead, they were entrusted to perform the work that full *biku* [or monk] found defiling, namely, matters associated with money and with dead bodies.⁵⁹

Hosokawa views the lay followers as necessary to the institution out of necessity because there was no respect in their work, which involved contact with pollution in tasks such as managing corpses. Though this may have seemed like a condescending attitude toward the lay followers, there was evidence that the lay followers were often responsible for fundraising activities, and had some degree of financial authority within the institution. Meeks points out that the lay followers were critical to the hierarchy of nuns because they were responsible for temple finances. Moreover, since most lay followers were from the local area, they were instrumental in establishing connections in the local community.

The daily lives of nuns during the medieval period reflected a deep commitment to religious practices. Every morning, midday, afternoon, and evening they performed daily ritual

⁵⁷ Meeks, *Hokeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan*, 172.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 177-178.

tasks, which mostly consisted of Buddhist chants (*shōmyō* 唱名) and sutra recitation.⁶⁰ The Saidaiji monks have practiced these tasks for at least three hundred years before Hokkeji's founding. The Hokkeji nuns performed the same rituals as the Saidaiji monks', and their rituals were not simplified for women's sake.⁶¹ They used the same difficult texts that were written in Chinese, Sanskrit, Sino-Japanese, and Japanese.⁶² This meant that in order to read and perform the texts, the nuns had a high level of learning. In the evening, they concluded with seated meditation (*zazen* 座禪).⁶³ In addition to performing rituals, they ate simple meals, and cleaned the temple buildings and gardens.⁶⁴ In sum, the "ritual program in place at Hokkeji was a rigorous one: four separate services were to be performed each and every day without break."⁶⁵ Hokkeji nuns also performed chanted lectures (*kōshiki* 講式) to educate and entertain lay audiences, and performed many large-scale ceremonies (*hōe* 法会), which indicated the need for their services. Moreover, these ceremonies signaled stable finances since they were able to afford employing various musicians and dancers, and renting space for their elaborate rituals.⁶⁶

Hokkeji was the head convent of the monastery-convent pair system of the Nara period, and during the later medieval period, it was the head convent of the Saidaiji (Ritsu sect) network. Hokkeji was also a training center for nuns. After nuns completed their training at Hokkeji, they were sent out to "outlying [branch] convents [and] remained active both in Hokkeji rituals and in broad-based Ritsu fund-raising campaigns."⁶⁷ Hokkeji's affiliated convents were, to name a few, Chūgūji 中宮時 and Shōbōji 正法寺 in present-day Kyoto, Kōdaiji 高台寺 and Tōrinji 東林寺

⁶⁰ Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan*, 216-219.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 223.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁶⁴ Doi, "Hokkeji no rekishi to shinkō," 98. However, male laborers performed the more demanding manual labor.

⁶⁵ Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan*, 225.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 225-227.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 184.

in Nara, and Dōmyōji 道明寺 in Osaka.⁶⁸ The interregional network of Hokkeji and its affiliated convents shows the extent of Hokkeji's interconnectedness, and a highly institutionalized network. In addition to the geographical relationships, "Hokkeji nuns established pedagogical structures that allowed them to transmit ritual knowledge to subsequent generations."⁶⁹ Hokkeji was revived as a focal point for religious training for women, and used its connections with other temples to educate and develop their mission.

2.3 Don't Talk to Me: Restricted Access at Sōjiin

The communications among the members of the imperial convent Sōjiin's 惣持院 was restricted. Oka references an extant illustration of Sōjiin's floor plan in which the rooms and routes between rooms were defined for one floor.⁷⁰ She selects Sōjiin's floor plan because it is also thought to be similar to modern day floor plans at imperial convents Hōkyōji 宝鏡寺, Chūgūji, and Reikanji 霊鑑寺, and Sōjiin's materials are publicly available. Therefore, there is a possibility to take Sōjiin's floor plan as a starting point for physical interaction among the different people. Although I unfortunately am not able to reproduce the image here, I will try my best to describe the layout with an accompanying figure (see figure 9) summarizing the restricted movements of each group depending on one's rank within the temple.

Four groups are illustrated in the map. These are the abbess, the resident nuns (*nishū*), kitchen staff nuns (*kuri no shū*), and the manservants (*saburai shū*).⁷¹ One of the routes indicated in the map is the way the abbess and resident nuns would enter the Buddhist altar room (*butsuma* 仏間). The abbess would enter from the right; however, the resident nuns entered from the left.

⁶⁸ Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan*, 196.

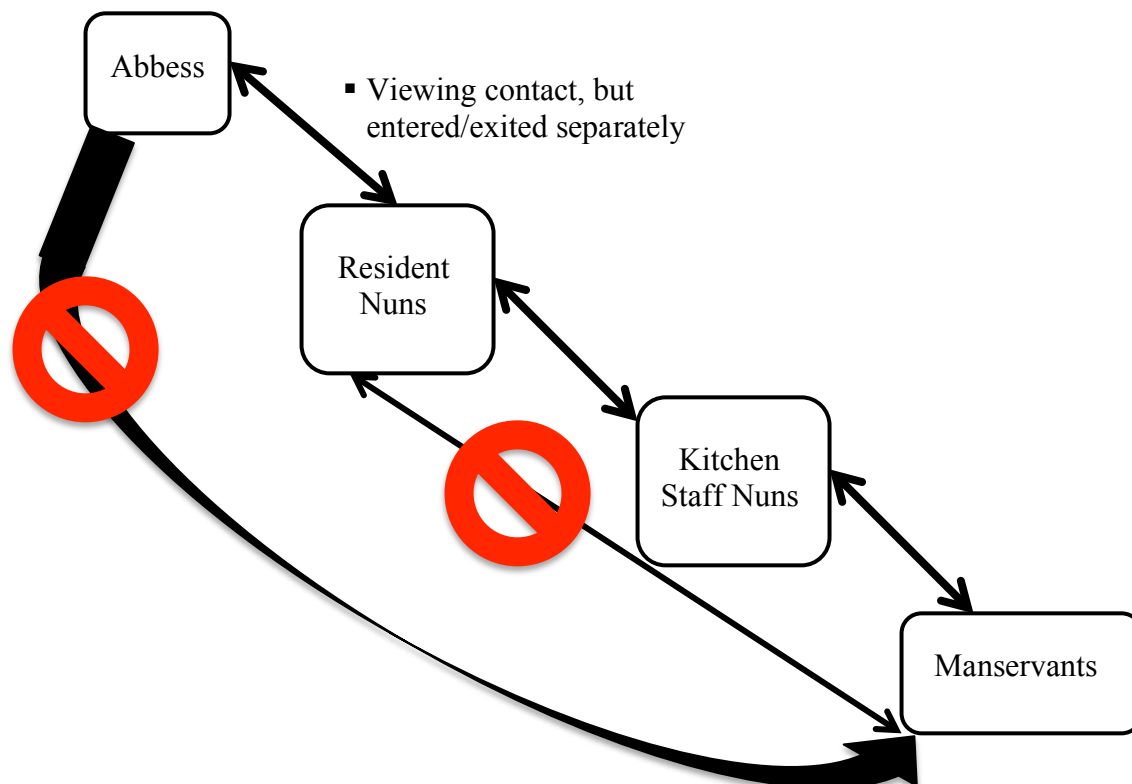
⁶⁹ Ibid., 244.

⁷⁰ Oka, "Kinsei bikuni gosho no soshiki," 71.

⁷¹ Incidentally, these are the same groups described at imperial convent Enshōji.

Both the abbess and resident nuns are of the same gender, but due to their different ranks, they enter rooms from separate entrances. Similarly, the resident nuns and manservants separately enter the kitchen area, which is composed of five rooms. The resident nuns and manservants not only enter separately, but also enter different rooms; therefore no contact is made between the two groups. Instead, the kitchen staff nuns act as an intermediary between the nuns and manservants. The manservant is the only group that has access to the entrance of the temple (*genkan* 玄関), and acted as the intermediary with the outside world. They also have no opportunity to ever cross paths with the abbess. From the figure I have presented below, it is clear that each of the groups only interacted with the group ranked immediately above or below. Otherwise, within the hierarchy, one of the groups acted as an intermediary to facilitate indirect communications with the other group members.

Figure 9. Contact restrictions among the groups at Sōjiin



The figure clearly shows the top-down structure regarding physical movements within the temple. The lowest ranking manservants were, by far, the most restricted in mobility, and were denied contact with the higher-ranking nuns. Yet, the manservants were intermediaries with the outside world, whereas the higher-ranking nuns were spatially located farthest from the temple entrance.

The organizational structure at Enshōji and Sōjiin displays the complexities of the inner workings of an imperial convent. The abbess and resident nuns are the most visible members, and the other two groups, the kitchen staff nuns and manservants are less visible and lower ranked in temple personnel composition. As I have mentioned before, many people who served as the lower ranking kitchen staff nun or manservant worked temporarily in order to advance in their careers.⁷² Consequently, there was an advantage to serve in the lower ranks of the temple hierarchy.

2.4 Now, You Listen to Me

Not only does communications within the temple highlight the social rankings and present how authority is perceived by the different members, but communications with the public authorities is just as telling of which institution has agency and authority to impose its influence over others.

The tensions and communication protocol between the nuns and the temple officials is a clear example of who is regarded to have the greatest degree of authority when interacting with the public authorities. In the decade after Tenshū passed away, Tōkeiji had no abbess. However, it was still deemed a convent because it had received the imperial convent title, and that title allowed the convent to be exempt from merging with other major temples even if it did not

⁷² Oka, “Kinsei bikuni gosho no soshiki,” 72.

happen to have an abbess. In the resident abbess's absence, the Kitsuregawa family had majority control of Tōkeiji as the primary temple official family, and persistently tried to appoint their daughter as the acting abbess in order to have full control of Tōkeiji.⁷³ The Kitsuregawa family placed family members in other related positions, such as nuns and temple officials at Tōkeiji and its sub-temple Inryōken 蔭涼軒. Furthermore, the temple officials repeatedly sent appeals to the Magistrate of Temples and Shrines to appoint an abbess from their family. By the time of their appeals, they had already filled the majority positions of temple officials and nuns with their family members. However, it was not until another fifteen years passed before a Kitsuregawa family member, Eizan (1639-1707), became the twenty-first acting abbess of Tōkeiji.⁷⁴

However, later, the nuns felt that the temple officials were overstepping their boundaries, especially after Eizan passed away. "Tōkeiji began to suffer the effects of mismanagement and greed" and "a petition was filed [in 1787] by the abbess of the Inryōken with Engakuji, complaining about the activities of the temple officials."⁷⁵ Clearly, the temple officials were encroaching in the organization of the institution to the point that the affiliated temples felt compelled to intervene. Again, this temple official family "had assumed control of the temple estates and all donations it received,"⁷⁶ and so the nuns appealed to neighboring Engakuji, who then appealed to the Magistrate of Temples and Shrines on behalf of the Tōkeiji nuns. In fact, the "nuns repeatedly turned to the abbot of Engakuji for help [in] controlling the activities of these [temple] officials."⁷⁷ Thus, the nuns petitioned the Magistrate to allow Tōkeiji to be formally affiliated with Engakuji. Regrettably, this decision backfired on the nuns. Later, the temple

⁷³ Dutton, "Temple Divorce in Tokugawa Japan," 234-235.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 234-235.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 236.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 236.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 236.

officials tried to appeal to the bakufu “complaining that the monks at Engakuji were overstepping their authority and behaving as if Tōkeiji were one of their branch temples (*matsuji* 末寺), [and] sued for the return of the documents [which were the vermilion seal letters from the various Tokugawa shoguns and were given to Engakuji for safekeeping by Abbess Tangen].”⁷⁸ However, the government sided with Engakuji and forced the temple officials to resign from their duties.⁷⁹ In this example, even though the temple officials were trying to work in the best interests for the temple, the government sided with the religious authority figure (Engakuji) over the administrators (temple officials). The power tensions between the temple officials and Tōkeiji nuns and Engakuji monks show that the religious practitioner is regarded to have official authority.

2.5 Rules? More Like Guidelines

Tōkeiji’s founding abbess Kakuzan established the temple as an “independent institution run by and for nuns.”⁸⁰ However, the neighboring *gozan* Engakuji treated Tōkeiji like its branch temple. Because of the close relationship between Engakuji and Tōkeiji, Morrell and Morrell speculate that the daily lives of the Tōkeiji nuns were similar to that of the Engakuji monks.⁸¹ Thus, they use Daisetz Suzuki’s observations on Engakuji monks as a basis for the life of the Tōkeiji nuns. Suzuki observed the Engakuji monks in 1934, and wrote *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*. Morrell and Morrell describe Suzuki’s observations in their book on pages ninety-six and ninety-seven. The monks assigned spaces in the Meditation Hall, and [would] sleep, sit, and meditate in their individual places. Before retiring to bed at 9 p.m., they recite the

⁷⁸ Dutton, “Temple Divorce in Tokugawa Japan,” 236-237.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 237.

⁸⁰ Morrell and Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes*, 96.

⁸¹ Ibid., 96.

Heart Sutra and bow three times to Mañjuśrī.⁸² Then, they wake at 3:30 a.m., and put away their bedding and exit through the rear door of the Hall for washing. Breakfast is gruel and pickles, and dinner is leftovers. Prior to eating, they recite the *Heart Sutra* and invoke the names of various bodhisattvas and buddhas. No one speaks while eating. They take turns serving each other and cleaning up. In the early morning and afternoon, they recite common sutras like the *Heart Sutra*, the *Kannon Sutra*,⁸³ and the *Diamond Sutra*. Suzuki's observations on the lives of Engakuji monks certainly serve to show their principled characteristics and the ascetic extent of their religious commitment. In addition, Morrell and Morrell hypothesize that

the religious exercises Suzuki prescribes could be just as easily observed at the Tōkeiji convent as at the Engakuji temple. External social pressures might limit certain activities, such as the monthly begging exercise, but the essential practices of studying the discourses (*teisho*) and meditation (*zazen*) could be performed with equal ease—or difficulty—by women or men.⁸⁴

Although there is no conclusive record of the daily lives of Tōkeiji nuns, considering the two temples' close relationship, then it is highly probable that their practices were similar. In fact, their relationship was close to the degree that in 1749, Engakuji issued seventeen articles of regulations to be observed at Tōkeiji.⁸⁵ Then, in 1808, an additional set of regulations was sent to Tōkeiji as seen below.⁸⁶ In this letter, Engakuji addresses the regulations specifically to three of Tōkeiji's subtemples, Inryōken 蔭涼軒, Seishōin 清浄院, and Eifukuin 泳福院.

⁸² Mañjuśrī is one of the bodhisattvas representative of wisdom.

⁸³ Specifically, chapter 25 "Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds."

⁸⁴ Morrell and Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes*, 102.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

Notice to Matsugaoka [Tōkeiji] concerning the Regulations

- The temple codes must be observed as always, without deviation.
- Morning and evening services must be conducted without fail, and attention to private religious exercise is also imperative.
- Monks may not enter Tōkeiji, nor may nuns enter the Engakuji—except for attending religious services.
- At dinners for monks and/or nuns during celebrations or other social activities at Matsugaoka, no more than one kind of soup and three vegetable dishes should be served.
- *Sake* is prohibited under Buddhist regulations and it is most important that this rule be observed. Even to very special guests with close affiliations to the Tōkeiji *sake* may not be served. Even the special *sake* (*tosō*) for the New Year's celebrations must be avoided.

The additional regulations are not necessarily reprimanding the nuns' actions, but reminding them of the strict regulations issued in 1794. Thus, it is clear that the Tōkeiji nuns were, at least, expected to perform the similar, if not the same, morning and evening religious services as Engakuji monks.

The eighth shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436-90),⁸⁷ imposed four restrictions on the imperial convents.⁸⁸ According to an entry from 1456 in the *Daily Record of [Sub-temple]* *Inryōken* (*Inryōken nichi roku* 蔭涼軒日録), these four restrictions were:

1. It was required for the abbess to be employed for at least one full year.
2. Nuns could not wear dyed underclothing.
3. Nuns could not wear expensive scents or have relationships with a male.
4. Nuns could not have drinking or music parties.

These four decrees were meant to underscore that the high-ranking convents were subject to the powerful Muromachi bakufu. Evaluating these restrictions at face value, it seemed that the nuns were under close inspection, and were expected to conform to the secular authority. On the

⁸⁷ Ashikaga Yoshimasa was the eighth shogun, and reigned from 1449-73. His father was the sixth shogun Yoshinori, and his son was the ninth shogun Yoshihisa (1465-89). His wife was Hino Tomiko (1440-96), who had a strong connection with imperial convent Daijiiin 大慈院.

⁸⁸ Yunoue Takashi, "Ashikaga shi no jōsei tachi to bikuni gosho," in *Nihon chūsei no seiji kenryoku to bukkyō* (Shibunkaku, 2001), 105.

contrary, these prohibitions hardly had an effect on them.⁸⁹ However, because such restrictions were recorded, it meant that some nuns must have committed these transgressions. In fact, Tanaka hypothesizes that, perhaps, there were many nuns who could not completely discard these limitations.⁹⁰ Hanafusa demonstrates that for imperial convents, there were records of

the princesses [who] entered the convents with their nurses, attendants, and stewards, and appear to have continued to live there much in the style they had enjoyed in the palace... In that sense, taking the tonsure celebrated a ritual of the princess's independence from palace life, and recognition of her as head of her convent.⁹¹

Thus, a princess becoming a nun at the imperial convent was not a life-changing vow to discard her secular life. Considering such instances occurred, there were probably some nuns who relaxed on their religious commitment for various reasons.⁹² These restrictions emphasize that imperial nuns were not treated lightly or differently in regard to religious discipline, and were expected to commit to the Buddhist order and its teachings.

From these examples of communications with the public authorities, it is clear that the public authorities, and the monastery Engakuji in Tōkeiji's case, were regarded to have more authority than the convents. The public authorities commanded the ability to grant permissions, such as legitimating Tōkeiji's divorce code, or mediate a conflict between religious professionals such as the Engakuji monks and the secular administrators such as the temple officials.

Nonetheless, though the nuns endured external pressure to obey decrees, or tolerated political friction within the temple, or received orders in the guise of guidance, they did not blindly do whatever was asked of them. The princess nuns continued their lives at court at the convent, which potentially provoked the authorities to impose decrees in the first place. The Tōkeiji nuns

⁸⁹ Tanaka, Takako, "Himegimi tachi no otera," in *Ama ni natta onna-tachi* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 2005), 130.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 130.

⁹¹ Hanafusa Miki, "From Princess to Abbess: The Life Cycle of Imperial Nuns," in *A Hidden Heritage: Treasures of the Japanese Imperial Convents*, ed. Tokyo University of the Arts et al. (Tokyo: Medieval Japanese Studies Institute, 2009), 122.

⁹² Tanaka, "Himegimi tachi no otera," 130.

struggled with the influential temple official family, and sought the assistance from another religious authority. In each presented case, the nuns prioritized their interests, and acted accordingly. They had the support from those who imposed decrees on them. The imperial and shogunal families and neighboring temples were potential resources for the nuns. Therefore, the nuns had access to contact others in the community, which is a critical advantage for survival.

Chapter 3. Money, Money, Money: Must Be Nice to Have Family

The authority of the temple officials at Tōkeiji largely derived from their administrative position as the financial supervisor of the convent. Their position enabled them to have control over the flow of income coming into the temple, and allocate the resources. An example of this has been previously described in the case of the Kitsuregawa temple official family gradually gaining majority control of the temple by eventually appointing a daughter from their family to the vocation of the acting abbess of Tōkeiji. In addition, the conflict between the Kitsuregawa temple official family and the Tōkeiji nuns and Engakuji monks depicted a power struggle that highlighted the friction of administrative and religious authority.

Although the nuns are regarded as the higher authority figure within the temple, the discrepancy between the highest ranking nuns and the lower ranking temple officials shed light on the difference between theoretically possessing control and actually having the authority to impose orders. The nuns may socially have had a higher rank within the temple, but they had limited agency in regard to financial matters. By limited agency, I mean that they were not in control of collecting and distributing the financial assets. Therefore, the nuns did not have control over all major administrative aspects of the temple. Likewise, the temple officials did not have a monopoly either. When the Kitsuregawa temple official family attempted and successfully petitioned one of their daughters to become the acting abbess, it might appear that they held a higher authority within the temple through their familial connection to the acting abbess. However, aside from that example, the temple was well managed through the collaborative efforts of the temple officials supervising administrative and financial tasks, and the nuns performing religious services.

In the late nineteenth century at Tōkeiji, Tokugawa Ieyasu granted the temple officials to collect taxes in three areas of Kamakura, Nikaidō, Jūniso, and Gokurakuji.⁹³ In addition to collecting land taxes from these areas, the loan department was another important division at Tōkeiji. However, these two sources of income, the land tax and moneylending, were developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The earliest evidence of the loan business was in 1837, and it was mostly limited to residents in the nearby Musashi and Sagami provinces.⁹⁴ The major source of income at Tōkeiji was the “[i]ncome from offerings made by the families of women who came to Tōkeiji to seek divorce and from charges of room and board paid by these women.”⁹⁵ Consequently, divorce at Tōkeiji served multiple agendas including the wives who wanted divorces and the temple officials who wanted payment.

It is apparent that the nuns required the support of the other members of the temple institution, especially temple officials, in order to maintain the temple. The temple officials also relied on the nuns to provide religious service. In addition, the officially recognized authority of the temple was the abbess, not the temple official. Even though the temple official wrote and signed the official documents, and managed the income and various duties, the temple official was subordinate to the nuns. Consequently, the temple official’s capability to directly affect the state of the temple was not dependent on his rank within the temple hierarchy. His responsibility of finances was something he could use to negotiate his subordinate position against the nuns.

The nuanced differences between real and perceived authority was more indicative of dependence and independence. For instance, within Tōkeiji, the different members were dependent on each other to collaboratively maintain Tōkeiji as a space of religious practice, a space of asylum, and as a business for religious and secular services. Though there were signs

⁹³ Morrell and Morrell, *Zen Sanctuary of Purple Robes*, 105; citing the *Matsugaoka Diary*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

and conflicts of tensions between members of different ranks, such as the nuns and the temple officials, it would be false to claim that the nuns independently ran the temple, or the temple official alone controlled the temple because they control the finances. Certainly, each member's assigned duties and roles granted them exclusive authority over that specific action, which I argue gives them agency of performing that specific duty.

Ōishi claims that *ama gozan* were not independent temples.⁹⁶ He explains that their position was supported by the political activities of influential people such as the shogun, but also more concretely due to blood relations with such influential people. In his view, it is not a coincidence that the decline of the politically and socially independent, powerful families during the medieval period overlapped with the emergence of the early modern *bikuni gosho*. Perhaps, the families strategically placed their daughters at these special convents in order to preserve a stronghold of influence in the community as well as safeguard the continuance of their family from their ancestors to future descendants by having a religious connection. Ōishi stresses that the *ama gozan* were part of the shogunal family, and were constructed for financial reasons.⁹⁷ These convents had a close relationship with the Ashikaga family especially in regard to their land.⁹⁸ The establishment period of the *ama gozan* aligns opportunely with the flourishing of the Muromachi bakufu's power and influence.⁹⁹ Perhaps, it can be suggested that the bakufu was not just funding the convents' finances, but the convents themselves formed one part of the Muromachi bakufu finance.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the bakufu was entrusted with the collection of land

⁹⁶ Ōishi Masaaki, "Bikuni gosho to Muromachi bakufu: ama gozan Tsūgenji o chūshin ni shite," in *Nihon chūsei shakai to jiin* (Osaka: Seibundō, 2004), 315.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 317.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 298.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 301.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 302.

taxes. Consequently, the land entrusted to the *ama gozan* was administered and managed by the bakufu.

The temple itself was both independent of and dependent on its patrons and neighboring temples. This is true for Tōkeiji and the imperial convents. The temple was self-sufficient in the sense that it did not rely on a one-way relationship with its patrons. It did not simply receive income to maintain the temple in a kind of parasitic relationship. Rather, the temple received donations, and also exchanged income in return for performing religious services for relatives of the nuns. Ōishi describes how the Muromachi bakufu, in fact, regarded the convents that shogunal daughters entered as one part of the bakufu's assets, which added a professional relationship to the already existing personal one.

On the other hand, because there was an exchange of services, I believe the convents' relationships with the bakufu does not determine the temple's independent or dependent existence. The question is not whether this source of income indicates the convent to be dependent on the bakufu for its survival, or whether the convents could survive without the bakufu's finances. Rather it is how to interpret this financial relationship between the convents and the bakufu, and what it means to survive. In that case, both the temple and the patron are dependent on each other.

Chapter 4. Laundry List of Categories

4.1 Tōkeiji, the Hybrid Temple

Tōkeiji is a well-known convent famous for its role in the practice of divorce. It was also demarcated as the second rank out of the top five ranks in the *ama gozan* system at Kamakura during the Muromachi period. However, this prestige is often overshadowed by its reputation as a divorce temple. For instance, in 2012, when I arrived at the Kita-Kamakura train station to visit Tōkeiji, I encountered a list of the nearby temples. Of the five temples listed on the notice board, three of them are distinguished with a *gozan* rank as seen below in Figure 8 and translated in Table 5.

Figure 10. List of nearby temples at the Kita-Kamakura station. Photo by author.

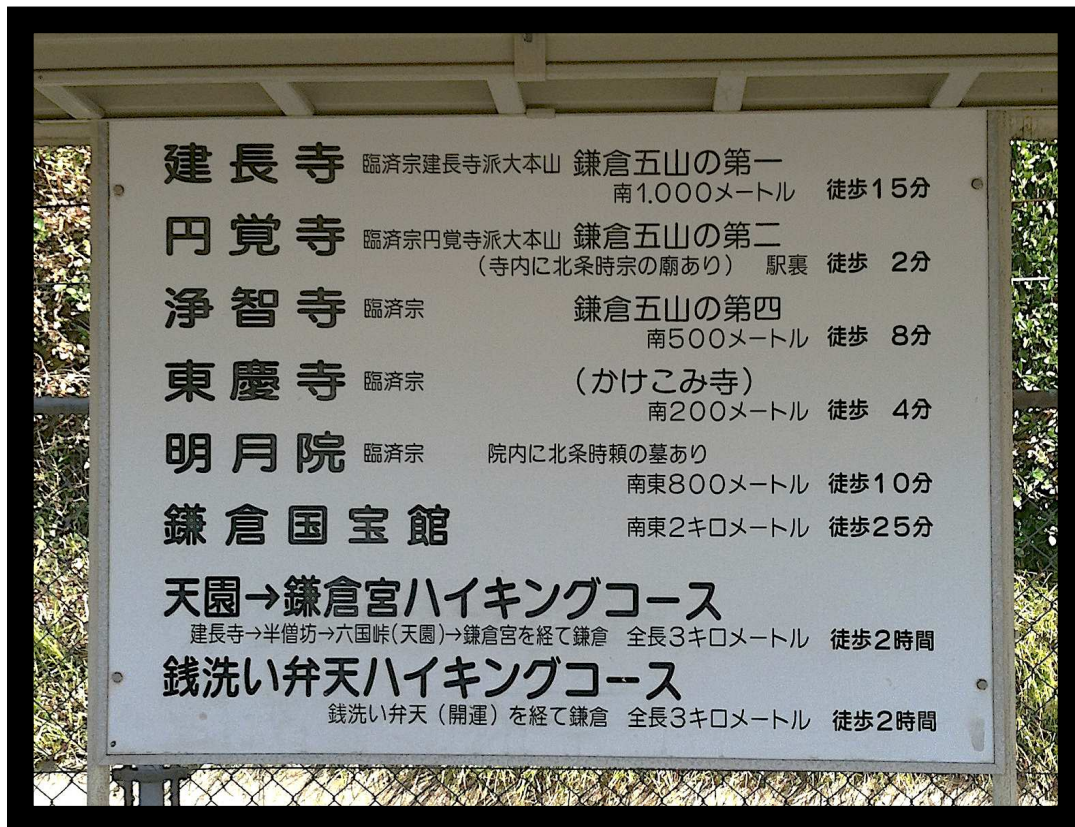


Table 5. Translated list of temples near Kita-Kamakura station

Name of temple	Distance/Time from station	Epithet
Kenchōji 建長寺	1,000 m / 15 min	First rank of the Kamakura gozan
Engakuji 円覚寺	50 m / 2 min	Second rank of the Kamakura gozan
Jōchiji 浄智寺	500 m / 8 min	Fourth rank of the Kamakura gozan
Tōkeiji 東慶寺	200 m / 4 min	Refuge temple (<i>kakekomidera</i>), divorce temple (<i>enkiridera</i>)
Meigetsuin 明月院	800 m / 10 min	“Hydrangea” temple (<i>ajisai ji</i>)

In the list, Tōkeiji is described as the refuge temple (*kakekomidera*) or divorce temple (*enkiridera*). The fact that it held the second rank in the Kamakura *ama gozan* is not mentioned at all.¹⁰¹ Consequently, categorizing Tōkeiji just as a divorce temple conceals the other identities that represent Tōkeiji.

The same difficulties are presented when describing the temple as either affiliated with only the shogun or the imperial court. The *ama gozan* temples are by definition associated with the Muromachi bakufu. Yet, Tōkeiji was also categorized as a *gosho*¹⁰² because one of its abbesses was a princess. However, Tōkeiji was not specifically characterized as a *bikuni gosho*.

Scholars like Oka, Ōishi and Tanaka who research these types of convents provide different definitions of *bikuni gosho* or *ama gozan*. For instance, the commonly used definition for *bikuni gosho* is a convent where only noble women entered.¹⁰³ Oka narrows the definition such that the following three conditions had to be met in order for the temple to be considered a *bikuni gosho*.

¹⁰¹ This characteristic certainly attracts more visitors since there were fewer bakufu sanctioned divorce temples than prestigious Zen temples.

¹⁰² Please refer to “Notes to the Reader” regarding the difference between *gosho* and *bikuni gosho*.

¹⁰³ Oka Yoshiko, “Kinsei no bikuni gosho: Hōkyōji o chūshin ni (ge),” *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 44 no. 2 (2002), 1.

- (1) The abbess must be a princess, or a noble woman from the imperial or court noble family.
- (2) The imperial person [abbess] is under the control of the bakufu.
- (3) Fiefs are distributed to those with the vermillion red seal.¹⁰⁴

In any case, the abbess of the *bikuni gosho* must have been a noble woman. Yet, by that definition alone, Tōkeiji would also have been called a *bikuni gosho*; however, that was not the case. Why is that? Oka comments it was difficult to see the *ama gozan* as a specialized type of *bikuni gosho* even if some of the *ama gozan* abbesses were of imperial descent.¹⁰⁵ Ōishi emphasizes that it is a mistake to confuse the *ama gozan* temples as *bikuni gosho*, because the daughters who entered the *ama gozan* were from different socioeconomic backgrounds.¹⁰⁶ In any case, classifying a convent as a *bikuni gosho* in order to distinguish it from other elite types of convents is problematic because depending on the definition the convent could occupy more than one category.

4.2 Keiaiiji, Alive in Spirit

The *ama gozan* convents can be traced back to the Nambokuchō period (1336-1392).¹⁰⁷ The *gozan* system was formed within the Rinzai Zen sect to designate the top five ranking temples.¹⁰⁸ There were two systems established in present day cities Kyoto and Kamakura respectively. The *ama gozan* located in Kyoto were Keiaiiji 景愛寺, Tsūgenji 痛玄寺, Danrinji 壇林寺, Erinji 恵林寺, and Gonenji 護念寺, and the Kamakura *ama gozan* were Taiheiji 大平寺, Tōkeiji 東慶寺, Kokuonji 国思寺, Gohōji 護法寺, and Zenmyōji 禅明寺.

¹⁰⁴ Oka, “Kinsei no bikuni gosho: Hōkyōji o chūshin ni (ge),” *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 44 no. 2 (2002): 18. The vermillion red seal (*shuinjō* 朱印状) was the shogun’s official stamp used to legitimate documents.

¹⁰⁵ Tanaka, “Himegimi tachi no otera,” 125.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 125.

¹⁰⁷ Yunoue, “Ashikaga shi no josei tachi to bikuni gosho,” 93.

¹⁰⁸ Tanaka, “Himegimi tachi no otera,” 117.

Keiaiiji was the highest-ranking convent in the Kyoto *ama gozan* system, and was founded in the thirteenth century by Mugai Nyōdai (1223-1298). Mugai Nyōdai is regarded as a pioneer of her time as a woman who struggled against the monks who told her she could not be a nun because she would be a tempting distraction to the men.¹⁰⁹ In response, she is well known for by burning her face to make a statement about her religious commitment.¹¹⁰ Therefore, scholars like Ruch and Oka speculate that based on the religious devotion that Mugai Nyōdai's displayed, Keiaiiji and the other *ama gozan* convents followed similarly strict practices that mirrored the monks' ascetic way of life.

Emperor Kōgon's (1313-1364)¹¹¹ daughter was the sixth generation abbess of Keiaiiji, and also founded Hōkyōji, one of Keiaiiji's subtemples. Hōkyōji regards Mugai Nyōdai as their founder¹¹² even though Hōkyōji was founded after her death. Furthermore, Keiaiiji was destroyed by fire in 1498.¹¹³ Yet, the connection that binds the two convents is the transmission of religious doctrines via the succession of abbesses.¹¹⁴ In some ways, the religious connection appears to extend certain privileges such that Keiaiiji is posthumously regarded as a *bikuni gosho* since Hōkyōji became a *bikuni gosho* in the early modern period. However, Keiaiiji did not survive into the early modern period nor did it have an imperial princess as its abbess.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Barbara Ruch, "Burning Iron Against the Cheek," in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2002).

¹¹⁰ Ibid., lxxv.

¹¹¹ Emperor Kōgon (1313-1364) was the first pretender during the Ashikaga period where he was involved in a political and family feud that left him under house arrest for the remainder of his life with no real claim to the throne. He was affiliated with the Northern Court, whereas the Ashikaga shogun appointed his younger brother as Emperor Kōmyō (1322-1380) of the Southern Court.

¹¹² Ruch, "Burning Iron Against the Cheek," lxxv.

¹¹³ It was not rebuilt, the reason for which remains unknown.

¹¹⁴ Tanaka, "Himegimi tachi no otera," 126.

¹¹⁵ Interestingly, Hōkyōji was never considered an *ama gozan*.

Hōkyōji and Daishōji were two of Keiai-ji's subtemples.¹¹⁶ According to Hōkyōji's chronicles, even after Keiai-ji was destroyed by fire, its appointed abbess continued to serve as Keiai-ji's abbess.¹¹⁷ This practice of the abbess holding two concurrent positions also applied to Daishōji. Therefore, the absence of the Keiai-ji convent was merely a destruction of the physical representation. Hōkyōji and Daishōji inherited Keiai-ji's family name into the early modern period.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Oka Yoshiko, "Kinsei no bikuni gosho: Hōkyōji o chūshin ni (jō)," *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 42, no. 2 (2000): 35.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

5.1 New Perspectives

In this thesis I have reached the conclusion that different approaches to the study of nuns at elite convents enable us to ask questions that diverge from the common debate of whether nuns are regarded as independent. Describing elite convents by categories such as *ama gozan*, *bikuni gosho*, divorce temple (*enkiridera*), and refuge temple (*kakekomidera*) are certainly useful, yet they are problematic because many of the temples could occupy more than one category. Classifying the temple within one category fails to account for the range of services the temple manages, and reduces our understanding of the temple's identity. For instance, calling Tōkeiji a divorce temple fails to take the agency of the nuns into account because the nuns were not actively involved with the divorce practice. Instead, recognizing the multiple categories that Tōkeiji occupies clarifies its personnel structure, and highlights the multifaceted nature of the temple and its people.

The socio-historical approach moves away from insisting that research on women in Japanese Buddhism is important. It moves away from insisting that religious women were actively engaged leaders in their communities. Rather, it examines what nuns did, and assesses how they used their resources to survive enabling us to see a more comprehensive look into the Edo period nun. These nuns were more than just religious women performing services; they were strategic politicians, businesspeople, administrators, and teachers. These roles in conjunction with their religious roles have not yet been discussed. Below, I discuss two major findings on the issues concerning agency, representation, and authority.

First, I find that using a socio-historical approach illuminates the relationship between agency and representation. In my thesis, I specifically focus on divorce to reexamine the issues

of agency and representation of the wife and of the nun (abbess). This reexamination dispels the appearance of the wife and nun lacking participation in the divorce considering that they initiated the practice. The agency of both is difficult to distinguish at first glance because men represent them on their behalf. The women do not directly represent themselves in the divorce documents, in which they appear as though they have no control in the divorce process. Appearances aside, the divorce practice is a response to the wife's request. She is present in the divorce process as the topic of the negotiations and exchanges focused on her social welfare and the husband's economic gain or loss.

Second, I find the relationship between agency and authority is not parallel, though it may seem that if one has a great degree of agency, then that extends to authority. The abbess theoretically held the most authority among the personnel. She supervised the temple officials who managed the divorce business. The founding abbess Kakuzan was also the one to establish and incorporate the divorce by temple law into Tōkeiji's temple code. Without her initiative, the temple divorce code would not exist. The abbess received the support from public authorities to guarantee the legitimacy of the code, but was not actively involved in the divorce practice, and therefore had little to no agency or authority of the everyday divorce practice.

The issue of authority and agency is also examined in the interaction between public authorities such as the bakufu and imperial court and the convents. The outside authorities were regarded to have higher authority than the elite convents, and used their position of power and influence to impose regulations on the lifestyle choices of the nuns. Yet, despite this power structure in which Tōkeiji is considered subordinate to the secular authorities, Tōkeiji was not limited to those external sources for resources; it also had the ability to provide their own services and use other connections in their network to survive.

5.2 Further Studies

My argument that the agency and authority of nuns depended on a number of factors in a particular context could be strengthened by further examining the economic development of the temple, the political and financial significance of the aristocratic families, and exploring the genealogy of the temple documents between the *ama gozan* and the *bikuni gosho*. I believe developing my socio-historical methodology to incorporate the politics, religion, economic, and cultural dimensions will allow me to engage in the loaded discussions on agency, gender, and the Japanese scholarship on religious women in premodern and early modern Japan.

First, chapters 1 and 3 in this thesis present a preview of the significance of the financial dimension in temple history. The interpretation of the divorce practice at Tōkeiji changed when noticing that the husband's discussion on wanting to reconcile with his wife was not necessarily powered by love, a romantic interpretation. By interpreting the reminder about bearing children as an excuse to remain a part of the family, the husband's greedy motives highlight how the divorce process could also be reduced to fighting over property rights, not about the wife who initiated the divorce process. I believe focusing on the financial dimension of the divorce process for the involved laypeople and temple officials will provide more data on how finances played a major role in influencing decisions.

Second, along with the bakufu and the imperial court, the aristocratic families were major patrons of the imperial convents. They sent many daughters to the imperial convents, such that the definition of what constitutes an imperial convent is confusing since many of the daughters were not necessarily born in the imperial family. There is already plenty of evidence for the familial connection between the *ama gozan* temples and the shogunal family.¹¹⁹ Likewise,

¹¹⁹ See Ōishi 2004, Tanaka 2005, Yunoue 2001.

imperial convents were founded and funded by imperial and aristocratic families. Thus, in my future studies, I will also incorporate research on genealogies because I find it is a useful approach to trace the donation records from the secular families to the elite convents, and to explore the nuns and their secular backgrounds.¹²⁰

Third, I believe following through on the research connections of the *ama gozan* and *bikuni gosho* through the genealogy of temple documents provides a different approach to tracing the history of temple relationships. The close relationship of Keiai-ji and Hōkyō-ji, for instance, is illuminated to scholars through the temple documents, which shows how the teachings and practices of Keiai-ji were transmitted to Hōkyō-ji through temple records.¹²¹

Last, my model of agency in this thesis still raises more questions than provide answers to how elite nuns can be evaluated regarding their limited representation in certain temple documents. Consequently, I intend to revise my models of agency to be applicable to the scholarship on religious women in premodern Japan. My future research on the economic power and influence of the elite nuns will require a thorough interpretation of how best to utilize and manipulate analytical tools, such as agency and gender, in regard to Japanese Buddhist nuns.

¹²⁰ For example, see Yunoue 2001 to see a detailed summary of the various secular Ashikaga women who donated to the elite convents to support a family member.

¹²¹ See Oka 2000, 2002.

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