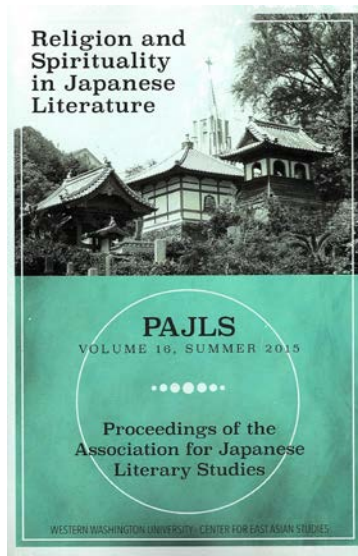


“Monks as Advocates of Filial Piety: The History of Buddhist Kōshiden in the Early Edo Period”

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***Monks as Advocates of Filial Piety:
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Introduction

“Filial piety” (*kō* 孝, in Chinese *xiao*), respect and obedience of child for parent, has historically been a cornerstone of morality in East Asia, deeply intertwined with Confucian ethics. In early modern Japan, during the Edo period (1603-1868), biographies of filial people (*kōshiden* 孝子伝) began to be written in large numbers. The modern scholar Inoue Toshiyuki – one of the founders of early modern *kōshiden* studies – suggests that in Japan the genre developed in three stages.¹ First, medieval monks at the *Gozan* 五山 Zen temples and early modern Confucian scholars read Chinese *kōshiden* such as *Nijūshi kō* 二十四孝 (The Four-and-twenty Paragons of Filial Piety; in Chinese, *Ershisi xiao*), written during the Yuan period (1271-1368). Second, the spread of printing in the 16th and 17th centuries allowed books to be more widely available. This made it easier to refer to classical texts, and people now started to search for and write about Japanese filial figures from preceding historical periods. *Yamato nijūshi kō* 大倭二十四孝 (The Four-and-twenty Paragons of Filial Piety in Japan; 1665) by the Buddhist monk Ryōi 了意 was a representative work. Finally, authors turned to filial people in the present. In 1685, a Confucian scholar named Fujii Ransai 藤井懶齋 published *Honchō kōshiden* 本朝孝子伝 (The Paragons of Filial Piety in Japan). One of the chapters, named “Kinsei-bu 今世部” (“The World Today”), displayed 20 contemporary filial people. Inoue sees this as the first attempt in Japan to focus on filial piety among contemporaries.

Although Inoue’s outline is reasonable, there is still room for improvement. The most significant weakness is that works by Buddhists are not given sufficient consideration. By way of example, below is a chronological table of *kōshiden* containing biographies of filial Japanese (see Table 1). The

¹ Inoue Toshiyuki 井上敏幸. “Kinsei Teki Setsuwa Bungaku no Tanjō 近世の說話文学の誕生.” *Setsuwa bungaku no sekai*. Sekai Shisō Sha, 1987, pp.155-184.

asterisks mark the biographies written by Buddhist monks. “P/M” designates printed book or manuscript.

Table 1. List of *kōshiden* containing biographies of Japanese filial people.

	Year	Title	Author	P/M
1	1642-53	<i>Jū kōshi</i> 十孝子 (Ten Filial People)	Hayashi Razan 林羅山	M
*2	1655	<i>Shakushi nijūshi kō</i> 釈氏二十四孝 (The biographies of twenty-four filial monks)	Gensei 元政	P ²
*3	1655	<i>Kankō ki</i> 勸孝記 (An Account to Encourage Filial Piety)	Sōtoku 宗徳	P ³
4	1661	<i>Honchō genkō roku</i> 本朝言行録 (The record of Good Words and Deeds in Japanese History)	Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峯	M
*5	1665	<i>Yamato nijūshi kō</i> 大倭二十四孝 (The Four-and-twenty Paragons of Filial Piety in Japan)	Ryōi 了意	P ⁴
*6	1666	<i>Shakumon kōden</i> 釈門孝伝 (The Biographies of Filial Monks)	Kōsen 高泉	P ⁵
7	1674	<i>Zoku honchō jinkan</i> 続本朝人鑑 (Paragons in Japan, Second Series)	Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峯	M
8	1685	<i>Honchō kōshiden</i> 本朝孝子伝 (The Paragons of Filial Piety in Japan)	Fujii Ransai 藤井懶斎	P ⁶

² Published by Yamaya Jiemon 山屋治右衛門, Kyoto.

³ Published by Nishimura Matazaemon 西村又左衛門, Kyoto.

⁴ Published by Matsunaga Iemon 松永伊右衛門, Kyoto.

⁵ Published by Tahara Shi Kyōbō 田原氏経房, Kyoto.

⁶ Published by Nishimura Magoemon 西村孫右衛門, Kyoto.

During the first 85 years of the Edo period, Confucian scholars were not eager to focus on filial people in Japanese history. For example, [1] *Jū Kōshi* (1642-53) was one of the few texts by a Confucian scholar in this period to feature such figures, and moreover, it was written not as a didactic text, but for a literary purpose. As Miyazaki Shūta has noted, from 1642 to 1653, Confucians in the Rin School (*Rinke*林家) frequently composed Sinitic poems on a set theme (*daiei*題詠).⁷ A member of this school, Hayashi Razan created thematic compilations of historical figures and scenic spots to be utilized in such compositions of poetry. *Jū kōshi*, which means “ten filial people,” was one of them.⁸ [4] *Honchō genkō roku* (1661) and [7] *Zoku honchō jinkan* (1674) were private works compiled for specific *daimyō* 大名: the former for Matsudaira Tadaakira 松平忠明 of Himeji Domain 姫路藩, and the latter for Asano Tsunaakira 淺野綱晟 of Hiroshima Domain 広島藩.⁹ [8] *Honchō kōshi den* (1685) was the first published Japanese *kōshiden* by a Confucian scholar.

As we can see in the table above, during the early Edo period, most writers of published *kōshiden* were monks. Apparently, monks were more active than Confucians, despite the close connection that originally existed between Confucianism and filial piety. The primary goal of this paper is to fill the blank in existing research and examine what kinds of *kōshiden* monks wrote. In addition, I will attempt to shed light on the broader historical context in which they were written.

***Shakushi nijūshi kō*: The Influence of Ming Chinese Buddhism**

[2] *Shakushi nijūshi kō* (The biographies of twenty-four filial monks) (1655) was the first published book to showcase Japanese filial people.¹⁰ Out of the

⁷ Miyazaki Shūta 宮崎修多, “Kobunji Ryūkō Mae ni Okeru Koji Daiei ni Tsuite 古文辞流行前における故事題詠について.” *Kinsei Bungei* 近世文藝, vol. 61 (1995), pp.1-18.

⁸ Katsumata Motoi 勝又基, “Kōkōmono Nihon Daihyō no Senshutsu: Razan ‘Jū Kōshi’ wo Megutte 孝行者日本代表の選出—羅山「十孝子」をめぐって”. *Mou hitotsu no koten-chi: Zen kindai nihon no chi no kanōsei* もう一つの古典知—前近代日本の知の可能性. 2012, Bensei Shuppan 勉誠出版, pp.149-153.

⁹ Katsumata Motoi. “‘Honchō kōshiden’ no koten shōdan 『本朝孝子伝』の古典章段.” *Gazoku* 雅俗, vol. 12 (2013), pp. 48-61.

¹⁰ *Kokon chomon jū* 古今著聞集, a narrative literature of the medieval period, compiled filial people in the chapter of “Kōkō on’ ai dai ju 孝行恩愛第十.” However it was published later than *Shakushi nijūshi kō*.

twenty-four filial monks described here, seventeen were Chinese, the remaining seven Japanese. Biographical information on all seven of these filial Japanese monks was quoted from *Genkō Shakusho* 元亨釈書 (The history of Buddhists in the Genkō era [1331-1334]), the earliest comprehensive history of Buddhism in Japan. That is why all of the Japanese monks mentioned in *Shakushi nijūshi kō* are from before the 14th century. The author Gensei 元政 (1623-1668), a Nichiren monk, was famous not only as a poet, but also as a filial son. Even after he became a monk, he lived close by his parents. In 1659, he took his old mother to travel all the way from Kyoto to Mount Minobu 身延山, the headquarters of the Nichiren sect, which lay just west of Mount Fuji. The record of the travel was written in an elegant Japanese style prose (*wabun* 和文), and published under the title of *Minobu michi no ki* 身延道の記 (A Record of the Road to Minobu).

Gensei's filial emotions and values have been admired as an expression of his chaste and noble personality. It is indeed not so difficult to regard *Shakushi nijūshi kō* as another expression of his filial mind. However, his attitude and works should be considered more holistically within the cultural context of the time.

As is well known, China has had a long history of debating whether Buddhists are filial or not.¹¹ Generally, Buddhists have insisted on two types of filial piety. One camp insisted that Buddhists are equals of Confucians in caring for their living parents. The other position argued that filial piety in Buddhism is in fact broader and deeper than that of Confucians. For example, *Kōron* 孝論 (Discussion on filial piety) in Volume 8 of *Fugyō hen* 輔教編 says that filial piety in Confucianism is just for one's own parents in the present world, whereas "In Buddhism, everyone who cares for you in each life is your parent," and

¹¹ Michibata Ryōshū 道端良秀. *Chūgoku bukkyō to jukyō rinri* 中国仏教と儒教倫理. Heirakuji 平楽寺, 1968; rpt. as *Chūgoku bukkyō shi zenshū* 中国仏教史全集, Vol. 9. Shoen 書苑, 1985; Kashiwahara Yūsen 栢原祐泉. "Kinsei no haibutsu shisō 近世の排仏思想." *Nihon shisō taikai (57) Kinsei bukkyō no shisō* 日本思想大系 57 近世仏教の思想. Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1973, pp. 517-532; Kashiwahara Yūsen. "Gohō shisō to shomin kyōka 護法思想と庶民教化." *Nihon shisō taikai (57) Kinsei bukkyō no shisō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1973, pp. 533-556; Araki Kengo 荒木見悟. *Bukkyō to yōmeigaku* 仏教と陽明学. Daisan Bumei Sha 第三文明社 1979; Kanno Kakumyō 菅野覚明. "Haibutsuron 排仏論." *Nihon bukkyō 34 no kagi* 日本仏教 34 の鍵, Shunjū Sha 春秋社, 2003, pp. 228-233.

“Filial piety in Buddhism applies to all seven lives.”¹²

Shakushi nijūshi kō showcased and insisted on direct filial piety. However, Gensei’s argument was not directed against Confucians. Instead, he blamed Buddhists who failed to take care of their own parents in the present world. The preface reads:¹³

Silly and unworthy kinds of Buddhists say, “When Buddhists leave home and become priests, it means they requite their parents’ kindness, so we do not have to take the trouble to take care of our parents.” They do not know the true meaning of “Requiting parents’ kindness by doing nothing.”

庸魂不肖の類は、則ち謂く、「出家の人、恩を棄てて道に入る。即ち是れ恩を報ず。曷んぞ定省に勞せん」と。是れ又僅かに無為報恩の言を聞て、其の恩を棄てて恩を報ずる所以を解せざるなり。

We can see a similar argument in writings by Chinese monks in the Ming period (1368-1643), a time when Buddhism was flourishing on the continent. Additionally, Buddhism began to fuse with Confucianism and Taoism, through a process known as *Sangyō Icchi* 三教一致, or the integration of three religions. In their discussions, we can see many insist that Buddhism and Confucianism are not conflicting. And some Buddhists insisted that monks must actively care for their parents in the present life. The Chinese Zen monk Zhuhong (*Shukō* 株宏, 1535-1615) in his *Zimen chongxing lu* (*Shimon sūkō roku* 緇門崇行録) says:¹⁴

It is the monks’ fault that some still detest monks like the plague. It is regrettable. Some monks commit three crimes. First, some receive donations without remembering his parents. Second, some take a high seat of a car or a boat and make his parent lead them like a servant. Third, some sever ties, leave home, and treat other people as if they were their parents. Please do not blame all monks just because of the three types of imprudent monks.

今猶を、僧を嫉て蛇蝎の如くする者有るは、則ち僧の罪なり。即ち痛恨すべし。其の罪、三あり。安く十方の供を享て其の親を念はざる者、一なり。高く舟車に坐して、其の親をして牽ひ輓かして、工僕の如くする者、二なり。愛を割き、家を出て、別に他の男女を礼して、以て父母とする者、三なり。願はくば諸世人、此の三つの不才僧を以て一切を病ふることなかれ。

¹² “則ち其の生生、己を育む者は皆な其の父母なり”, “仏は七世の孝を以て宗と為すなり” (*Kanchū fūgyō hen* 冠注輔教編, p. 4).

¹³ Folio 1 verso-2 recto.

¹⁴ Printed in 1661 by Tahara Nizaemon 田原仁左衛門, Kyoto. “The general statement (*Sō ron* 総論)”, at the end of Chapter 4: Being Filial to Parents (*Kōshin no kō dai yon* 孝親之行第四), folio 20 verso-21 recto.

Zhuhong's point of argument is very similar to that restated in Japan by Gensei. Gensei's intense feelings of filial piety and showcasing of filial figures were not just an expression of his own personality, but were influenced and supported by the ideology of Ming monks.¹⁵ Actually, *Shakushi nijūshi kō* drew on *The biographies of filial monks in the Ming period (Dai Min kōsō den 大明高僧伝)* as one of its sources.¹⁶ Due to his deep familiarity with Ming Chinese texts, Gensei became the first early modern Japanese author to turn to examine filial piety in his own country.¹⁷

***Yamato nijūshi kō*: A Fiction to Avoid Duplication**

Ten years after [2]*Shakushi nijūshi kō*, a new work showcasing filial figures in Japanese history was published. It was [5]*Yamato nijūshi kō* 大倭二十四孝 (The Four-and-twenty Paragons of Filial Piety in Japan), written by Ryōi 了意, a monk of the True Pure Land School (Jōdo Shinshū). Though the book does not showcase any monks, many of the figures are Buddhist laymen. As the modern scholar Hongō Fusako 本郷房子 has pointed out, many of the featured personages were taken from literary texts like Noh or Mai. Additionally, each story was a mixture of various sources, and some of the figures were completely fictitious creations by the author.¹⁸

Yamato nijūshi kō is an example of early Edo novels known as *Kanazōshi* 仮名草子. In modern-day scholarship on *Yamato nijūshi kō*, what is most appreciated has been its creativity. Researchers have generally regarded differences between this work and its sources as literal improvements, while also trying to find phrases that display a critical stance toward existing social

¹⁵ It is well known that Gensei was the first Japanese poet to have adhered to the literary theory of the Ming poet Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, called *Seirei setsu* 性靈説 (spiritualism), which focused on clarity and sincerity.

¹⁶ Printed in 1654 by Nishimura Matazaemon 西村又左衛門, Kyoto. Vol. 3, folio 7 verso-10 verso.

¹⁷ Five months later, *Kankōki* by Sōtoku was published. This also recommended direct filial piety, but it simply emphasized the commonalities between Buddhism and Confucianism.

¹⁸ Hongō Fusako 本郷房子. "Kanazōshi 'Yamato nijūshi kō' ni tsuite 仮名草子「大倭二十四孝」について." *Bungaku ronsō* 16 (1960), pp.40-53; Hamada Keisuke 濱田啓介. *Kinsei shōsetsu, eii to yōshiki ni kansuru shiken* 近世小説當為と様式に関する私見, Chapter 2-1, *Kankō no tameno kyōkō no hassei: Yōkyoku wo daizai ni shita kanazōshi ni tsuite* 刊行のための虚構の発生—謡曲を題材にした仮名草子について. Kyōto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppan Kai 1993, pp. 29-50.

conditions. Such analyses are based on a teleological understanding of the history of the novel. It would be more historically accurate to read this work as a kind of Buddhist *kōshiden*. As a matter of fact, the preface says, “Even a flimsy book such as this might serve as a motivation for Buddhism.”¹⁹

In the context of Buddhist *kōshiden* history, it would be reasonable to think of *Yamato nijūshi kō* as a rehash of *Shakushi nijūshi kō*. Its fictional approach can also be regarded as a way to avoid duplication. As I mentioned above, *Shakushi nijūshi kō* drew on *Genkō shakusho*. It must have been difficult for Ryōi to find other sources on filial monks. So in order to avoid duplication, Ryōi had to combine various sources and create new stories as if the filial figures were real people.²⁰

***Shakumon kōden*: Authored by a Chinese Monk in Japan**

[6]*Shakumon kōden* 釈門孝伝 (The Biographies of Filial Monks) was published in 1666. The title literally means biographies of filial monks, and it showcases fifty-three filial monks in China. The most prominent characteristic of this text is that it was written by a Chinese monk who settled in Japan. As is well-known, in the early Edo period, Nagasaki was the only official place of contact with China. In Nagasaki, there were three temples serving solely Chinese residents: Kōfukuji 興福寺, Fukusaiji 福濟寺, and Sōfukuji 崇福寺. However, Chinese residents were not satisfied with the ways in which the Buddhist culture at these temples was Japanized. In 1654, they invited the famous monk Ingen Ryūki 隱元隆琦 (Chinese: Yinyuan Longqi) from China. After that, many Chinese monks started to move to Japan. The author, Kōsen Shōton 高泉性澈 (Chinese: Gaoquan Xingdun), was one of them.²¹

Ingen and Kōsen belonged to the Ōbaku 黄檗 sect, a Zen Buddhist school. Different from existing Kamakura Zen sects, Ōbaku was a sect for the Chinese by the Chinese. It was not just a new religion, but a whole new cultural movement that spanned painting, calligraphy, architecture, and other fields.²²

¹⁹ The original text is “かかる草子も若は又仏道の縁ともなるべきと。”

²⁰ In 1660, six years before [5]*Yamato nijūshi kō*, Ryōi published another *kōshiden*, titled *Kōkō monogatari* 孝行物語 (Filial stories). It showcased 50 Chinese filial people from preceding historical periods. Ryōi also had to avoid duplication with it.

²¹ Tsuji Zenosuke 辻善之助. *Nihon bukkyōshi* 日本仏教史 (9), Chapter.12 “Ōbaku no Kairitsu 黄檗の開立.” Iwanami Shoten, 1954, pp. 285-416.

²² Kimura Tokugen 木村得玄. *Ōbakushū no rekishi, jinbutsu, bunka* 黄檗宗の歴史・人物・文化. Shunjū Sha, 2005, pp. 307-388; Kyūshū Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 九州国立博

Many rulers were enamored by it, and for example, the fourth shogun Tokugawa Ietsuna 徳川家綱 became a believer and built the temple Manpukuji 萬福寺 in Uji, Kyoto, for Ingen (Tsuji 1954).

Interest in contemporaries in Ming Zen Buddhism

The first edition of Kōsen's *Shakumon kōden* showcased forty-six filial people, all of whom were Chinese monks. Compared to Gensei's *Shakushi nijūshi kō*, the characteristic point was to display contemporary monks (see Table 2).

Table 2. List of contemporary Chinese monks in [6]Shakumon kōden

Monks who did not come to Japan	Monks who came to Japan
36: Jōki Kōen 常熙興燄 (1582-1660)	34: Ingen Ryūki 隱元隆琦 (1592-1673)
37: Mujū 無住 (dates unknown ²³)	35: Sokuhi Nyoitsu 即非如一 (1616-1671)
38: Ryōshō Shōkō 良照性杲 (1633-1661)	39: Uitsu Dōjitsu 惟一道実 (1620-1692)
	47: Dokutan Shōkei 獨湛性瑩 (1628-1706)

**Years of birth and death are from Ōtsuki, Katō, Hayashi (1988).²⁴*

Shakumon kōden included Chinese monks from the same period, including those who came to Japan as well as those who did not. As far as I am aware, it was the first attempt in Japanese *kōshiden* history to showcase filial contemporaries.

Why did such a big shift take place? This change also came about under the influence of Ming Buddhist culture. According to Hasebe,²⁵ from the end of Ming to the beginning of Qing, Zen monks wrote many biographies of

物館. *Obaku: Kyōto Uji, Manpukuji no meihō to zen no shinpū* 黄檗—京都宇治萬福寺の名宝と禪の新風. Nishi Nihon Shinbunsha, 2011.

²³ According to the text, Mujū was the uncle of the author.

²⁴ Ōtsuki Mikio 大槻幹郎, Katō Shōshun 加藤正俊, Hayashi Yukimitsu 林雪光. *Ōbaku bunka jinmei jiten* 黄檗文化人名辞典. Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1988.

²⁵ Hasebe Yūkei 長谷部幽蹊. *Min Shin Bukkyō Kyōdانشi Kenkyū* 明清仏教教団史研究. Dōhōsha Shuppan 1993.

monks. These are known generically as *tōshi* 灯史. More than twenty titles were published during this period. Their primary purpose was to clarify religious lineages. They also started to supply or append ancient *tōshi* like *Gotō Egen* 五灯会元 (Chinese, *Wudeng huiyuan*),²⁶ in order to show who belonged to which religious lineage, or *hōkei* 法系. The custom of writing biographies was also brought to Japan by Ōbaku monks.²⁷ It would be reasonable to assume that the Chinese Ōbaku monk Kōsen was also influenced by this trend. In writing *Shakumon kōden*, he tried to show that monks were also filial into his own time, in the same way that the spirit of Zen was carried on.

Shift From Chinese to Japanese

This new trend naturally influenced Japanese Ōbaku monks. We can trace this in the revision of Kōsen's *Shakumon kōden*. As far as I know, the book was revised three times in a short period.²⁸ In the revised editions, two Japanese contemporary monks were added: Tetsugyū Dōki 鉄牛道機 (1628-1700) in the third edition, and Chōshū Nyokaku 超宗如格 (1638-1717) in the fourth edition. This was the first appearance of a contemporary Japanese person in Japanese *kōshiden* history. Apparently this must have been the response from Japanese Ōbaku monks. *Shakumon kōden* was written and published in Japan by the Chinese Monk Kōsen. Japanese Ōbaku monks must have read about contemporary filial Chinese monks in the book, and sent word to the author that there were also many filial monks in Japan.

As mentioned above, the first *kōshiden* that showcased a contemporary Japanese figure has heretofore been thought to be [8]*Honchō kōshiden*, written by the Confucian scholar Fujii Ransai. However, Buddhist *kōshiden* had achieved it earlier. *Honchō kōshiden* took a critical stance toward preceding Buddhist *kōshiden* like [2]*Shakushi nijūshi kō* and [6]*Shakumon kōden*, but it is true that it was, in fact, deeply inspired by Buddhist *kōshiden*.

²⁶ Written in China's Southern Song period.

²⁷ Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦. *Zen no rekishi* 禅の歴史. Hōzōkan, 2001, pp. 268-269.

²⁸ The first edition is possessed by Ōtani University, Komazawa University, Tsu city library, and Tōyō University; the second edition by Ryūkoku University, and Fukui City library; the third edition by Kyoto University and Ishikawa Takeyoshi memorial library; and the fourth edition by Komazawa University.

Conclusion

Until now, the history of Japanese *kōshiden* was thought to have progressed in the order of: 1) Chinese historical figures, 2) Japanese historical figures, and 3) contemporary Japanese figures. However, when we look at the works of early Edo Buddhists, the order must be modified as follows: 1) Chinese historical figures, 2) Japanese historical figures, 3) contemporary Chinese figures, and 4) contemporary Japanese figures. In particular, *kōshiden* featuring the latter three groups were first written by Buddhist monks. [2]*Shakushi nijūshi kō* was the first published *kōshiden* to showcase filial figures in Japanese history. [6]*Shakumon kōden* featured biographies of contemporary Chinese filial figures, and the revised editions included additional Japanese filial monks. These movements were under the influence of Ming Chinese culture.

It is generally believed that filial piety belongs to the realm of Confucians. Basically, this idea is correct. However, especially in the first 85 years of the Edo period, Buddhist monks, with their intimate knowledge of cutting-edge Ming culture, led various changes even with regards to filial piety.