Notes on the Authorship and Dating of the 13th Century Henmyōin Daishi Myōjin Go Takusen Ki (attributed to Dōhan)

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1) A long-running dispute between the monks affiliated with Kongōbuji and those with Daidenbōin at Mount Kōya (高野山) culminated in an arson attack by some Kongōbuji monks in Ninji 3 (1242). The resulted in the 1243 exile of around 26 Kongōbuji monks including the high-ranking monk Dōhan (道範) (1178-1252). The accounts of this incident most commonly consulted appear in the Edo period sources Kōya Shunjū, Kii Zoku Fudoki and Hyakurenshō. Two historically significant, but heretofore largely overlooked, mentions of the disturbance which can be dated most contemporaneously to its occurrence are found in Henmyōin Daishi Myōjin Go Takusen Ki (遍明院大師明神御託宣記) (hereafter TK) (1251?), attributed to Dōhan, and some comments by Kōya monk Yūkai (育快) (1345-1416) in Ategawa Yakuṣō Chū Ki (阿仏川薬草中記) (c.1413).²

Dōhan gives a brief account of the 1242 incident in his exile diary, Nankai Rurōki (南海流浪記) but a more detailed account is found in TK, a record of an oracle apparently witnessed and recorded by Dōhan after his return from exile. The account of the arson/exile occupies the first 1-13 articles. This is followed by the oracle which occupies the main part of the text. Yūkai’s is the next mention closest in date to the incident. He comments on the dating, authorship, and production of TK. It should be emphasized that the account found in TK is an esoteric exegetical account characteristic of Kōya’s scholarly texts of the time, whereas Yūkai’s remarks are skeptical and historicizing. However, while a comparison of these two approaches is of interest, my objective here is to use the texts to raise problems regarding the production of TK.

2) The conventional dating of 1251 is largely based on two statements of the date in copies of the text itself.³ However the first refers only to the oracle, and the second dates the oath (kishōmon) certifying the veracity of the content. Regarding authorship, it is certainly a Kongōbuji-affiliated work. It is attributed to Dōhan, or Dōhan and fellow exile
Hōshō. Dōhan’s name appears within the text, at the end of a list of five signatories of the oath.

However, neither figure stands up to scrutiny as recorder. Hōshō’s name appears nowhere in the 7K. Furthermore, had he died during exile, as Dōhan records in his diary, Hōshō would not have been alive in 1251 to participate. It is possible that Hōshō’s name came to be linked with Dōhan’s by virtue of their simultaneous exiles, or alternatively, that the oracle had occurred before the exiles, which Yūkai suggests. He speculates that the exile occurred soon after the oracle, hence that the record was made between 1242-1243:

Although Tanpōdokei was linked to Dōhan’s location, he suggests no definitive link. The account itself provides no evidence for the location of Dōhan’s exile, other than the fact that he was exiled.

However, the exile account prefaces the oracle record. Thus, I suggest that the exile account was written not by Dōhan or Hōshō, but by a monk at Kōya after the exiles, and that the oracle record (regardless of when it occurred and its record made) and the account of the incident were later joined. If so, the account can be said to be reflective of the atmosphere on the mountain directly following the violence and not after the conflict had (to an extent) been resolved and the two parties reconciled (which provides the context for the conventional explanation of the production of the text).

3) I will focus on the arson/exile account. First, the writer suggests why Dōhan’s exile location was Zentsūji:

Dōhan would have been unlikely to speculate about this himself, especially after returning to Kōya. Second, there is a reference to the presence of bushi which seems to have been written by someone at Kōya during the exiles:

Finally, the authority of Kongōbuji permeates the account. Although Kongōbuji monks had been exiled, the writer expresses himself with the consciousness of the victorious. Most
significantly, there is no sense whatsoever that any reconciliation had taken place. Yet it is thought that in 1248, a condition for the return of the Kongōbuji exiles was the granting of permission to Daidenbōin to reconstruct their buildings.¹ Nor is there any recognition that the exiles had returned as would be expected had Dōhan, the returned exile, written the account himself. Here, for example, the writer condemns the Daidenbōin monks to suicide:

一，院僧，於當山者，雖有彼此，各別妄執於他所者，號高野法師。仍，一偏不可惡之，施恩恕之上，致禍心者自害敗

It may be suggested that the account and perhaps the oracle record itself were written down by a certain Kakuson (覚尊), about whom, unfortunately, very little is known. There are many references to Kakuson within the oracle record.² His name is first on the list of kishōmon names. He was probably resident at Henmyōin, where the oracle had occurred. Evidence to support this is a mention in the Edo period record Kongōbuji Shoinke Sekifu Shū 金剛峰寺諸院家析負輯 that he was head priest (from 1275-78). Too, the text was the property of Henmyōin as stated in the kishōmon. Here it is ruled that monks could view it there but not take it away. Dōhan (referred to here as “Shōchiin”) was permitted to take it away to peruse, but only for a single day:

一，此記，令清書，入印信箱，不可出當院遍明院。加判五人之内，不審之事者，來當院，可一見。但，正智院計八，取寄加一見給テ，後日之内ニ早々可送當院給。

It seems unlikely that, were Dōhan the writer, he would impose such a restriction on himself. Finally, the oracle itself seems to have been related in some sense to a previous head priest (sendoku) of Henmyōin. The opening line of TK mentions the sendoku, while the Kongōbuji Shoinke Sekifu Shū refers to the oracle in its section on priest Kyōmitsu, stating that the medium, while possessed, had proclaimed his name as being “Kyōmitsu, the sendoku”. Moreover, the Eijin 3 (1323) copy calls the record that of the sendoku Kyōmitsu. Other accounts of the oracle state that it was delivered in order to pass on teachings vital for confirming the legitimacy of the then head priest, Kakuson’s predecessor, also listed as a witness in the colophon. Presumably, the oracle took place at Henmyōin, for the Henmyōin priestly lineage.

4) Such evidence moves identification of the writer away from Dōhan, but regardless of whether or not Kakuson was the recorder of the oracle and of the arson/exile section, it seems reasonable to suggest that the latter was written by someone other than Dōhan, who
was at Kōya during the exiles' absence. Based on this alternative theory of production, I suggest that one aspect of the text's significance is in its attempt to provide a religious interpretation of human violence within a community in order to consolidate it in the aftermath of destruction and unrest.

1) I use the text reconstructed from copies by Abe Yasūro 阿部泰郎 Chūsei Kōyasan engi no kenkyū 中世高野山縁起の研究, (Gangōji Bunkazai Kenkyūsho, 1983), pp. 104-112.
2) I use the text in Misshū Gakuhō 密宗学報 25, 1915, pp. 111-128. The mentions regarding Taku−
men Ki are found on page 122.
3) A number of copies give Kenji 3 (1277), suggested by Abe as being a copyist’s error.
4) Kōyasan monjo 高野山文書 documents no. 1809 and 1810. Tokyo, Tokyo Teikoku Daigaku, 1904-1907, p. 164-165. See also Kushida Ryōko 橋田良洪 Shingon Mikkyō seiritsu katei no ken-
5) Abe also raises doubt as to Dōhan’s authorship (1983, pp. 50-51).

(Key words) Daidenbōin 大伝法院, takusen 託宣, Dōhan 道範, Yūkai 由快, Kakuson 覚尊
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