

The order (kudashibumi) of Chôgen, Chief of Fund-raising and Reconstruction at the Agency to Rebuild Tôdaiji

1192/9/27

From Jôdoji monjo

Ordered to [officials of] Tôdaiji's holding in Harima province, Ôbe estate [by Chôgen] Chief of Fund-raising and Reconstruction at the Agency to Rebuild Tôdaiji

That the wilderness (1) of Shikanohara be donated immediately [for support of] the Namu Amida Butsu detached temple [Jôdoji]; that this land then be opened for cultivation under temple authority; and that rents [from these fields] be used to provide

sacred lamp oil for Jôdodô and Yakushidô, and to support monks' recitation of the continuous nenbutsu [there].¹

To wit: Within this estate there are a number of old temples in a condition of ruin. Although it would be best to restore them all, I do not have time <the ability (power)> to take care of such matters while Tôdaiji's construction is still underway. Since I know that [the old temples] have not been repaired, I fear that it will be hard for me to escape retribution for failing to do so! Therefore, we have divined [a location for a temple] at the northeastern corner of Shikanohara, gathered the deteriorated [images and] accessories [from the ruined temples], and constructed a hall in which to install a number of [the rescued] Buddhist images. The detached temple shall be called Namuamidabutsuji, and its [first] chapel is Yakushidô. We are also constructing a new Jôdodô, in which to install a standing gilded Amida triad, colossal in size. We have recruited 30 monks to chant the unceasing nenbutsu in sonorous voices,² in order to to pray for the peace of our sacred realm, the fulfillment of [Shômu's original] vow [to construct Tôdaiji], [the benefit of] the entire cosmos,³ and the extinction of sin and fostering of virtue for the sake of salvation for all. {Alternate interpretation of underlined section: . . . and the extinction of sin and fostering of virtue in the entire cosmos for the benefit of all.} (2)

*Koya -
unrefined
land*

¹ 及び indicates that the lamp oil & nenbutsu services are 2 separate items, though I'm positive that the services take place at Jôdoji.

² Joan—I'm not sure where you get "humbly" out of this; and though 相語 may literally mean "talk with" I think its real meaning here is "recruit".

³ 自他法界: 自他を撰する宇宙全体. (Nakamura Hajime Bukkyôgo daijiten, 1:556). "For the benefit of" must be added to preserve parallel construction in English.

Then let us allot one portion of Shikanohara to provide sacred offerings of lamp oil and food and clothing for chanters of the nenbutsu, and donate this land as chapel property in perpetuity. {Here I think he's referring to Jôdodô, not to Jôdoji as a whole or to Tôdaiji. Nakamura thinks so too.}. For many years, these lands have been wilderness without cultivators, and have gone to waste as the unproductive haunts of boar and deer. But now, the donation of land for our purpose opens them to cultivation for the first time.⁴ If there is no dearth of rents [from the estate], then how can there be a shortfall in support for the chapel?⁵ Thus yearly taxes and other levies have all been cancelled. Even though many years may pass, we must not allow the proceeds from the fields to fall short, and we must make [this land] entirely the possession of the chapel.⁶ (3)

Now in the future, if the monastic leaders and resident monks [of Tôdaiji? Jôdoji?] are lacking in virtue, and take this property and commend it to some powerful family or another religious institution as a branch temple, let the residents of the estate petition the

⁴ {I don't think they have already been donated; see the document title. Best to fudge the tense.

⁵ 相節 しょうせち: According to Shogakukan, this specifically refers to income from an estate allotted for Buddhist functions.

⁶ Joan: This varies from your version in several ways. First of all, I think that nengu refers to dues paid to the proprietor rather than taxes to the government. Secondly, shôyaku refers to dues paid by cultivators to the proprietor, not to public taxes. In both cases I'm following the Shôgakukan definition. There are 2 possibilities that I see here. One is that Chôgen is speaking rather generally, arguing that if the estate does not pay taxes to the government then all of its proceeds can go to temple projects. The other is more specific—Chôgen is trying to mark off a portion of estate proceeds specifically for Jôdoji (even, in fact, for Jôdodô). I think what Chôgen is trying to do here is to earmark one portion of Ôbe for support of Jôdoji—sometimes specifically for Jôdodô and its nenbutsu ceremonies. So the real issue may not have been tax exemptions, which have already been obtained, but rather the division of income between Tôdaiji & Jôdoji. Perhaps this is why the document is addressed to Ôbe officials, who might have been able to misdirect revenues to institutions & projects under Tôdaiji's purview.

main temple [Tôdaiji] to stop such an outrage. Moreover, if estate managers appropriate the rights of [Jôdoji/Jôdodô] to estate income {lit: if [Jôdoji's/Jôdodô's] rights to estate income are revoked <on behalf of> estate management} and this income gets mixed up with other revenues [due the proprietor?], let everyone from the monastic director to the resident monks [of Jôdoji] report the details to the main temple [Tôdaiji], thus bringing such violations to an end. (4) As a rule, temple monks recite prayers for the sake of the estate officials, and the estate officials support the temple monks. They should think kindly of one another, just as if this were a family temple.

Now this estate shall in the end be placed under [the Tôdaiji cloister] Tônan'in's authority. Should the cloister create some obstacle [such as] hindering the provision of lamp oil and other ritual needs for continuous nenbutsu services, let details of such violations be reported to the throne for mediation.

This foolish person serves the splendid court with humility, and offers unparalleled loyalty and devotion. Even if there are no complaints [such as those listed earlier?] in my lifetime, how can I not⁷ protect a grant from the throne? (5) Moreover, evil sorts who, claiming to act under temple orders or under official authority, would wickedly and willfully violate this order,⁸ certainly must not be allowed to manage temple affairs. Let

⁷ Joan—your interpretation seems to leave this negative out.

⁸ For this interpretation I ignored the kairiten in the original and used the Kojien definition for 無惡不造 muaku fuzô, a set phrase meaning to willfully do bad things.

such posts be passed on to only virtuous and compassionate⁹ individuals among the resident monks. And let there be no quarreling over lineage (師資) or seniority [lit: the number of years since one has taken the precepts]. (6) In the future, if anyone among temple directors, resident monks, or estate managers violates this directive, then he obstructs the Buddhist path just as did Mârâ, and is a sworn enemy of the temple. May the good guardian kami of both chapels [probably: Jôdodô & Yakushidô] have him punished in both this life and the next. In the present life may he suffer white and black leprosy, and in the next life may he fall to the bottom of endless hell without any escape! Let estate managers, cultivators, and resident monks know this order and adhere to it without fail. Thus it is proclaimed.

Kenkyû 3 (1192)/9/27

Daiwajô¹⁰ Namu Amida Butsu (hand sign)

General comments: I think what Chôgen is trying to do here is to earmark one portion of Ôbe for support of Jôdoji—sometimes specifically for Jôdodô and its nenbutsu ceremonies. So the real issue may not have been tax exemptions, which have already been obtained, but rather the division of income between Tôdaiji & Jôdoji. He seems concerned with internal squabbling over resources on the part of lay estate managers; and with the possibility that resident Jôdoji monks will form factional ties with higher-ups outside Chôgen's cohort.

⁹ 兼濟 kensai: to rescue all beings. Not a specifically Buddhist term—not in Nakamura Hajime; Shogakukan example comes from Shoku nihongi. To stretch a point—compassionate?

¹⁰ We need to come up with a good translation. Nothing in the database.

A couple of translation issues we should resolve among ourselves:

I'd like to add "fund-raising" to Chôgen's title, since that was his original function, and that's what kanjin means; and what about "detached temple" for bessho? I really don't like special place; it sounds like something you'd find at Disneyland.

General questions

- (1) 別所と末寺はどう違いますか？

Translation questions:

- (1) 荒野: 休閑地? 未だ耕した地?
 (2) 自他法界: How does this fit?
 (3) 然者. . . 一円堂領矣. ??

然ればこの年貢は不足しなければどうして寺の儀式のための収入を欠くことができますか？

- a. 年貢: 国に支払う税金? 庄園領主に支払う地代?
 b. 欠減: 欠乏し減少すること (小学館) dearth (seems to me that one would not use this terminology to refer to a reduction in taxes but rather to a reduction in estate income—so this would indicate that nengu=rents. Is this possible? Or can 欠減 mean exemption [from taxes]—then 年貢 would be taxes, not rent receipts.)
 c. 豈. . . 乎: introduces a rhetorical question (Crawcour)
 d. 相節: 庄園からの年貢を仏事費用として指定分配すうこと (小学館).
 e. 庄役: 庄園領主が作人に課した特定の所当 課役 (小学館).
 f. 落当?? Are these a combination, or does 落 go with the previous phrase, and 当= 將に. . . べき?
- (4) ここの問題は庄家が収入を自分のために取ることですか?
 (5) 縦雖. . . 勅許乎: だれが訴訟するか?
 (6) 兼又. . . 牟
 a. 兼斎: meaning in this context?
 b. 誰が誰に職を譲るか？