CHAPTER FOUR

Childbirth, Violence and the Mother's Body

Part One: Death in Childbirth and the Blood Pool

In the last chapter we saw that the salvation of mothers was a central theme in the popular hagiography of medieval Japan. Now, I'd like to explore the conditions surrounding that salvation and the gendered meaning of the damnation which made the drama of redemption necessary. This is a chapter about the religious ideology surrounding the processes of pregnancy and childbirth. While we do have a rich body of information on the rituals of childbirth collected by folklorists from various regions in Japan, we cannot extend their findings back into the medieval period with confidence. Here, therefore, I will rely on two literary descriptions of pregnancy and childbirth from the otogizøshi corpus with reference to late medieval diaries and votive texts. Finally, I will use data from the kinesi and modern periods as tentative explanatory tools for the events described in the medieval texts. I will argue that these fifteenth or sixteenth century stories reveal a tendency read death in childbirth or pregnancy as a sinful. At the end of the medieval period, there was an increasing insistence that the fetus is a separate entity from the woman who carries it. Eventually, this idea that mother and child are independent beings was expressed in a ritual that sought to resolve the problem of death in pregnancy, where one corpse represented two "bodies."

Two distinct but related topics are at the heart of this chapter. They are: 1) the belief in a hell reserved especially for women, the chi no ike jigoku or "blood pool hell," which gained ascendancy in the late medieval period; and, 2) the legendary accounts of the ghosts of women who die in childbirth or late pregnancy. An exploration of these two issues will afford us with a greater understanding of medieval Japanese religious views of the mother's body and its relationship to the fetus or newborn child. Sawayama Mikako has traced the changes in attitude

towards childbirth and women's bodies that took place over the course of the kinesi period. She suggests that during this time a different view of the fetus in relationship to the mother's body arose, a view that deeply problematized traditional modes of population control such as induced abortion or infanticide (mabiki.) This shift was closely tied to the changing place of women in families, where wives became ever increasingly identified with the interests of their husband's families and their birthing bodies became a corporate resource.[1] Similarly, Wakita Haruko has suggested that during the late medieval period the Japanese conception of motherhood shifted from one that held that the child, even after birth, was a replication of the mother, a part of her body, to one that saw the fetus and child as a independent entity from the mother. This separation of mother and child is captured, Wakita notes, in the phrase popular during the kinesi period, "The belly's just borrowed goods; hara wa karimono."[2] This can be seen as the culmination of a trend toward an emphasis on paternal ownership over the child. Ironically, as women became more and more narrowly defined as mothers they also lost their claim to the status of genetrix and were reduced to mere vessels for male reproduction.

Carol Delaney has written extensively on the effects of folk theories of procreation in monotheistic religious systems. In her books, The Seed and the Soil and Abraham on Trial, Delaney demonstrates the cultural influence of the idea that the father supplies all of the genetic material for a new life in the form of his "seed." This agricultural metaphor of human reproduction reduces the role of the mother to that of a growth medium, the "soil."[3] This ideology, Delaney argues, is an important underlying force behind a patriarchal system in which the needs and opinions of mothers are secondary at best. She illustrates this by tracing the histories of interpretation of the biblical story of the binding of Issac on Mt. Moriah, in which Sarah is never consulted concerning the sacrifice of her only son, the son of her old age; Issac whose name means "laughter." The commentarial literature in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity does not problematize the fact that Sarah is kept completely in the dark, her irrelevance to Abraham's relationship to God and his complete ownership of his son is taken for granted.

The slogan, “The belly’s just borrowed goods,” carries a similar message. But, as Wakita argues, this view of procreation did not become widespread in Japan until the 16th or 17th century. The shift was a slow one, however. It marked the increasing sinification or Confucianization of Japanese society at the close of the medieval period. This is one of the final chapters in a process that began with the transformation of noble and warrior class women from daughters to wives, as documented in the first chapter of this dissertation.

The blood pool hell: “chi no ike jigoku”

The Ketsubonkyø, or the Blood-bowl Sutra, is a sutra composed in China around the end of the 12th century or the beginning of the 13th.[4] It describes how Mokuren (Mu-lien, Maudgalyåyana), disciple of the Buddha famous for his supernatural or magical powers, descended to hell to save his mother. This narrative differs from the classic Mokuren story, as told in the Yü-lan p’en ching (Urabonkyø), which we explored in Chapter Three. In that story as it appears in the Buddhist cannon, Mokuren saves his mother from the realm of hungry ghosts. Here, however, we find her sunk in hell submerged in an enormous pond, or lake, of menstrual and birth blood. She is in the company of a multitude of women there who suffer abuse at the hands of the hell wardens and are forced to drink the blood. They are punished like this, the sutra explains, because the blood produced by their bodies spills on the ground and offends the earth gods, or ends up in rivers from which the water to make tea for holy men is drawn. This hell, called chi no ike jigoku (blood pool hell) in Japanese, threatens damnation for the sin of female biology. (It is worth noting that late medieval Japanese visual representations illustrate another hell for women who are unable to bear children, the umazume jigoku).

There are several different extant versions of the Ketsubonkyø. Some of these identify the offending effluvium as birth blood alone, while others include the blood of menstruation. It seems that the prime candidates for the hell were women who had died in childbirth. Some scholars have suggested that in Japan, the earlier sutras inveighed against the polluting nature of birth blood and the

category was later expanded to include menstrual blood, but this theory has been disproved.[5] Recent scholarship has made it clear that both types of text were in circulation form the earliest periods. In either case, though, the message is a straightforward one. Women, as defined by their biology, are sinful, polluted and in need of salvation. Ironically, the salvation offered women within the Chinese/Buddhist cult of ancestors is salvation as mothers. That is, salvation by dint of the very biological potential that spelled their doom in the first place.

As others have shown, the sexual politics of the Ketsubonkyø are clearly based in a Chinese view of family, one which sees the birth of sons as the only hope for the redemption of women.[6] This idea of family is, as we have seen, closely tied to the cult of the dead and to ancestor worship. As anthropologists of modern Chinese religion have insisted, it is a familial hermeneuitic of suspicion, one that defines women and affines as outsiders. The true family is the deep well-spring of descent from father to son, not the shallow quagmire of what Margery Wolf has termed "the uterine family," always just one generation deep.[7] Daughters only become part of a line of ancestors as the mothers of sons, mothers of the next link in the chain of ancestral succession.

The date of the introduction of the sutra and cult of the blood pool hell to Japan is unclear. As noted above, the earliest Chinese examples date to the twelfth century. Some scholars believe that Japanese knew of the Ketsubonkyø as early as the mid-thirteenth century, but most insist that it cannot be found until the middle of the Muromachi period.[8] While there are some questions surrounding the antiquity of the cult in Japan, there is no doubt that belief in a special blood pool hell for women was widespread by the sixteenth century. It is mentioned in several late medieval otogizøshi, as we shall see. Hitomi Tonomura, following Tokieda Tsutomu, has suggested that belief in the sutra and the hell it describes spread among the commoners in the fourteenth century and that it had been common knowledge among aristocrats from an even earlier period.[9] There is no evidence, however, to support Tokieda's assertion. He wishes to link the spread of the sutra's cult to the ascendancy of patriarchy and women's loss of status around the Nambokuchø period, which is a correct instinct, but he offers

no basis in fact for this early dating.[10]

Tokieda's article centers on a set of kokera kyø, sutra fragments copied onto narrow strips of wood, discovered in sulfur deposits along the shores of a lake called Yugama at Shiraneyama in Kusatsu in the 1950's. Each five-inch strip has written on one side about 15 characters from the sutra; it seems that these sticks were thrown into the volcanic lake with prayers for women's salvation. Tokieda's hypothesis that they were deposited there by shugendø priests on behalf of women and their families has much to recommend it, even if all of his corroborating material points to a later date than the one he suggests.[11]

These kokera kyø are a fascinating find and are very important for understanding the ritual context of the cult of the Ketsubonkyø, but are unfortunately not useful for dating the practice or the establishment and spread of the cult. They were originally reported, based on analyses of the calligraphy, level of volcanic ash content, and amount of peat growth, to date from the twelfth or early thirteenth century. However, Tokieda points out that because they were buried in sulfur on the shores of a highly acidic body of water, the reliability of the scientific data becomes questionable. He suggests that they probably come from the early or mid-fifteenth century, but his only categorical statement with regard to their age is that they must have pre-dated an 1882 eruption of Shiraneyama. If they are, in fact, as old as he believes, then they are among the earliest sources for the Ketsubonkyø in Japan, and that they come from eastern Japan is most intriguing. Tokieda connects the site to Tendai shugendø practices and the Ømine-Haguro mountain circuit for yamabushi.[12] Below we will have occasion to further explore possible links between eastern Japan, shugendø, and the blood pool cult.

Most scholars place the terminus ante quem for evidence of the Ketsubonkyø in Japan at 1429, when the diary of the Tendai priest Chøben from the Kantø region noted that it was offered for a certain man's mother's thirty-third memorial service.[13] Katsuura Noriko's research indicates that even in the fifteenth century the Ketsubonkyø was not widely used in funerals or memorial services for women. She finds two examples of its use by Kyoto aristocrats in ceremonies held in 1482

and 1487 and linked to priests of the Rinzai school. After that, the high ranking courtier Kanroji Chikanaga copied it for his mother's thirty-third year memorial service in 1491, the year before he became Gondainagon. In 1496 at the twenty-fifth annual memorial service of Chikanaga's elder sister (who was the mother of famous poet and diarist Sanjønishi Sanetaka) Chikanaga's son Motonaga copied the Ketsubonkyø and offered five red candles for his aunt's sake.

Although Sanetaka records the sutras he offered at various occasions, the Ketsubonkyø is not among them in this instance nor in others. It was a matter of personal choice, and by no means a standard practice. Sanetaka did pay a nun to light candles at Seiganji on his mother's behalf for a two month period. Sanetaka's sons and daughters copied various scriptures, but not the Ketsubonkyø. Katsuura traces the use of the Ketsubonkyø by Chikanaga's family to the influence of certain charismatic preachers, or dangisø, who may have advocated the necessity of special ceremonies for the salvation of women. These men had links to the Tendai school. Chikanaga himself seems to have offered the Ketsubonkyø for his mother's thirty-third year service, but not for her memorials before of after this one. Motonaga, when his aunt's thirty-third year service came around, did not copy the Ketsubonkyø, as he had for her twenty-fifth, but rather the "Devadatta Chapter" of the Lotus Sutra, famous for its story of the sex transformation of the daughter of the Dragon King. Use of the Ketsubonkyø must have seemed quite novel. Such ceremonies had long tended to focus on the Lotus Sutra, a text closely associated in Japan with the salvation of women, although the Urabonkyø and other versions of the Mokuren scripture were also copied during this period.[14]

An essential question to ask in this context is why women in general and mothers in particular should be in need of special dispensation in order to avoid birth in hell. Although the history of the Ketsubonkyø in Japan may only reach as far back as the fifteenth century, there seems to be some precedent for the idea that women who die in childbirth are punished in hell. An oft-cited early example is the story of the mother of the gods, Izanami, in the Nihonshoki. When she gives birth to the fire god, Kagutsuchi-no-mikoto, she is burned to death and is later found by her husband in the dark and gloomy land of Yomi, where, like

Euradyice, she must not be gazed upon by the husband who has come to rescue her. When he does steal a forbidden glance at her, he sees a putrefying mass of flesh, riddled through with insects and writhing with worms. It is not at all clear in this case, however, that it was Izanami's death in childbirth that resulted in her fate. This is more likely an expression of the horror of death and the pollution of the corpse well-attested in indigenous Japanese religion. The emphasis here is on the husband's transgression of the taboo against the gaze. The sin was Izanagi's for looking at his dead wife, not Izanami's for the manner of her death.[15]

More explicit intimations that death in childbirth was viewed as sinful can be found within a Buddhist framework in such works as the Tale of Genji and the ninth-century Nihon ryøiki. In the Nihon ryøiki tale, Fujiwara no Hirotari travels to the underworld where he is incriminated by his wife upon his arrival at the court of King Emma, the chief justice of the tribunal of hell.[16] Since she is undergoing unspeakable suffering for the sin of death in childbirth, she insists that he, as her husband and the father of her child, should bear equal responsibility and suffer for the next three years as she has suffered the past three. The man escapes this fate by promising to copy the Lotus Sutra on her behalf and pray for her quick release from purgation. Just before he goes, he asks the identity of the imposing judge and is told that Emma is known as the bodhisattva Jizø in the human realm. In the Ichi hyaku j¥go kajø mondø, in response to the question, "What about the case of the sin of a woman who has died bearing a child?"; thirteenth-century Hønen replies, "With the chanting of the nembutsu, she will achieve birth in the Pure Land."[17] The questioner here clearly is assuming that women who die in childbirth are a special category of dead and are particularly difficult to save. There are numerous other examples that indicate that in Japan the link between death in childbirth and suffering in hell was in place by the beginning of the medieval period.

While these examples lack the systematic character of the Ketsubonkyø and its cult as developed in the late medieval period, they do form a sort of pre-history to the idea that, once pregnant, it is a mortal sin to die before being delivered of the child. This is a religious idea that recoils at the admixing of life

and death; it is familiar from other traditions.[18] As we shall see, by the fifteenth century or so, this earlier somewhat vague association between punishment in hell and death in childbirth or late pregnancy had developed into a well articulated system of mythology and ritual practice. In the process of this development, the responsibility or blame for the "sin" of death in childbirth came to rest firmly with women themselves. Katsuura Noriko notes the contrast between the ninth century Ryøiki, where the husband Hirotari is portrayed as a partner in his wife's fate and is expected to share in her suffering, and the late medieval Sankoku in'en Jizø bosatsu reigenki where a wife's death in childbirth is attributed to evil deeds in past lives. At the beginning of the medieval period, death in childbirth was a family tragedy; by the end of the medieval period it had become evidence of the sinful karma of the dead woman.[19] As we shall see, that woman's salvation also became a community concern.

To understand this focus on death in childbirth and its conversion into a karmic sin of the dead woman herself, we must recall the very real danger associated with childbirth in premodern societies. While today in developed countries midwife assisted homebirths are statistically safer than overly medicalized hospital births, let us not forget that before the advent of modern diagnostic techniques and the advancement of emergency medicine, childbirth was the most common cause for female death before menopause. There are a great number of references in ancient and medieval texts to deaths due to difficult labors.[20] While the men of the medieval period were dying on the field of battle and under the burden of corvee labor, women of all classes were suffering violent deaths in childbirth or failed pregnancies. With this reality of the gravely dangerous nature of pregnancy and childbirth in mind, perhaps we are in a better position to understand the violent and horrific imagery of the blood pool hell.

The acceptance and spread of this Chinese Buddhist text and its cult was also coeval with the extension of the sweeping social transformation described in Chapter One to larger segments of the population. As an agnatic view of family became the norm, and women ceased to be lifelong daughters, becoming increasingly narrowly defined as mothers, childbirth in general and death in

childbirth in particular was seen as sinful. To die in childbirth could almost be seen, within this new way of looking at family, as stealing a child from the lineage. As mentioned in Chapter One, Maurice Bloch and Jonathon Parry have associated the fear of the blood of menstruation and childbirth with a mistrust of the affinal influence of women entering the family from the outside to become wives and mothers. The understanding of death in childbirth as a result of karmic sin is also related to this suspicion of women as perennial outsiders within the family as it developed in the medieval Japanese kinship system.

There was a progression in the ritual use of the Ketsubonkyø; from a memorial function, to a preemptive or prophylactic (gyakush¥) function, to a talismanic function. In other words, in Japan copying, reading, and offering up the sutra was at first something done by relatives to save women in the next world, then became an activity women undertook as insurance against their own damnation, and finally was transformed into a practice of benefits in this world (gense riyaku), enabling women to move about freely during their menstrual periods without fear of violating taboos against blood pollution. The first scenario, memorialization of dead women by their surviving relatives, especially their children, is clearly the use imagined by the authors of the sutra and is in line with its ideological thrust. We have seen an example of this sort of activity in the above example of the Kanroji family.

The second use is by women who aim to save themselves from postmortem punishment. Women would copy the sutra with prayers to be spared the fate it describes. Also women would ask to be protected from death in childbirth, always recognized as the primary cause of birth in the blood pool hell. Any sort of underworld torture aside, it is obviously also a terrible, painful way to die. As we have seen, it was also extremely common. The principal deities of the Ketsubonkyø cult, Jizø and Nyoirin Kannon, became the guarantors of safe childbirth (anzan) from the late medieval period forward. It is this prophylactic use of the sutra by women that accounts for its sharp rise in popularity in the kinesi period. Women's reliance on the sutra as an amulet to stave off the dangers of pregnancy and childbirth (and by extension against the attendant fate of torture

in the chi no ike) was supported by a network of travelling nuns who brought this cult into the homes of women across Japan.

The Kumano bikuni of the kinesi period, and related groups at Tateyama, Zenkøji, and elsewhere, advocated this talismanic use of the sutra. The activities of the Kumano bikuni, their history, the texts and paintings they carried, have received considerable attention form scholars over the past twenty years, but many questions still remain.[21] We know even less about the various kinds of travelling nuns known variously as kanjin bikuni, aruki miko, uta bikuni, and hongan ama. While the first two are often assumed to be synonyms for Kumano bikuni, it is clear that there were many other groups of wandering nuns, not directly affiliated with Kumano, Nachi, or Myøshinji, home base of the Kumano bikuni. What we do know about this type of late medieval nun is that she preached to women, told them stories and showed them pictures. These tales and images often concerned childbirth and pregnancy, which were subjects of primary concern to their female audience. As Kodate Naomi and Makino Kazuo have argued, there were strong affiliations, both institutional and doctrinal, between the nuns at Zenkøji and the Kumano bikuni, as well as links to groups associated with Tateyama and various Tendai shugendø sites. It is at the close of the medieval period that women begin to take over the propagation of the Ketsubonkyø cult and make it their own. These nuns carried paintings that revealed in lurid detail the world of the blood poll hell and also offered the promise of salvation.[22]

Nuns who walked the main arteries and tributaries of the Tokaidø, as well as country back roads, seem to have been at the vanguard of the phenomenon of hongansho or permanent fund-raising missions emanating from temples and shrines. These institutions, which appear beginning in the late fifteenth century were originally run and staffed by women. One of the earliest hongansho, that of Zenkøji, still exists today as the Jødo sect convent called the Daihongan, headed by a nun known as the Honganni of Zenkøji. Since the fifteenth century, the nun incumbent in this position was responsible for large-scale alms campaigns. Monks only joined this trend later, establishing many hongansho and fund-raising

networks.[23] There are many examples of hongansho associated with nuns. The most famous, whose female heads were known as the "three great saints" (tenka no san shønin) are the Kannokura Myøshinji, home of the Kumano bikuni, Seiganji in Owari, and Ise taisha's Keikøin. These women and the wandering nuns who operated under their auspices, were all closely associated with Tendai shugendø institutions and lineages.

In the following legend of an ancient nun from the Hokuriku region, we have an excellent example of the activities of such women from the middle of the fifteenth century. This legend spread throughout the country as the tale of the eight-hundred year-old nun, Yao (often read as Happyaku) bikuni. In the early twentieth century, this story of a nun who ate a forbidden food and lived for nearly a millennium was well known in every locale throughout Japan. Unlike many such famous legends, however, it has close ties to an incident that was mentioned in several fifteenth-century diaries as an actual event, giving this mysterious nun a flesh-and-blood existence.

The story appears widely in kinesi period gazetteers. The basic elements of this tale are that a little girl from Obama in Wakasa discovers and eats a certain kind of dried meat, human or mermaid, which curses her with immortality. Her father had received this meat during a visit to a magical land and had hidden it away, but the curious daughter finds it and cannot not resist tasting it. After this she wanders from province to province and is present at many important historical events. She is constantly on the move and carries a branch of white camellia. In the end she returns to Obama and settles at a temple called K¥inji and takes her own life. Since she is over eight hundred years old, she is known as the Yao or Happyaku bikuni, the "eight-hundred nun." She is also known as the Shiro bikuni or Shira bikuni, the "white nun." This is variously said to refer to her snow white hair, or the fairness of her complexion (in spite of her advanced age), or to the white camellia she carries. As Tokuda Kazuo has suggested, it more likely derives from a connection to the mediumistic cult of the shugendø site Shirayama (Hakusan) in Hokuriku and is related to religious performance by the travelling women known as shiraday¥, shirabyøshi, and shirakamime. Finally,

this name reveals a link to the oshirasama puppets used by female shamans in Tøhoku until modern times. Orikuchi Shinobu and Nakayama Tarø each suggested in 1930 that this cult of northeastern Japan had been brought there by the Kumano bikuni, and Hagiwara Tatsuo demonstrates the close ties between the Kumano bikuni and the Yao bikuni legend.[24]

The Yao bikuni legend is particularly important to our story because of its early date. While there is no firm evidence of the Kumano bikuni before the seventeenth century, we have several fifteenth-century references to the activities of this weird "white nun." Among these is a comic otogizøshi from 1480 entitled The Brushmaker's Tale (Hitsuketsu no monogatari). The main character is a tanuki ("racoon dog") masquerading as a human. On a mission to the capital, the hero and his companions find a large number of people gathered at the Nishi døin temple where a nun from Wakasa has been preaching. She is currently staying in a Jizø hall at Ømine. The tanuki and his two friends are then flagged down by the strange (fushigi) nun who engages them in a religious dialogue (mondø) and then regales them with stories, explaining the origins of various professions, arts, and technologies. She also tells them her own history. Although she appears to be in her eighties or nineties, she is in fact nine hundred years old. She informs them that, although recently people have taken to calling her the "eight-hundred nun," she was originally known as the "white nun of Wakasa" and that she became a disciple of Hottø kokushi when she visited his temple, Yura no tera, on pilgrimage to Kumano.[25] This reference marks her as an ancestor of the traveling religious who became known as the Kumano bikuni, for whom an identification with Yura no tera and Hottø kokushi, Muhon Kakushin, was an essential foundational story.[26] As we have seen, legend has it that Kakushin's mother was Myøchi, founder of the Kumano bikuni order.

Hitsuketsu no monogatari is a precious source, especially since the name and identity of its author are known, a true rarity within the otogizøshi corpus. This fifteenth-century text's vivid account of the Yao bikuni is made all the more compelling because the putative existence of the heroine in the real world is corroborated by three roughly contemporary courtly diaries. All three diaries tell

a similar story. It was early in the summer of 1449 when she came to the capital. The nun known as Yao or Shira bikuni had set up shop at the Great Jizø hall at Nishi døin (one diary puts her at the second avenue Higashi døin Jizø hall on one day and at the Jizø hall of first avenue's Nishi døin the next) to give lectures on the Lotus Sutra (Hokke dangi). She caused quite a stir as people battled to catch a glimpse of her. Travelling with an entourage of some twenty nuns, she charged admission on a sliding scale with rates of one hundred sen for the rich; ten for the poor. Katsuura has demonstrated that by the fifteenth century, preaching on the Lotus Sutra and the associated rituals of kechimyaku (transmission of religious "blood lineage") were closely linked to the idea of the salvation of women from hell. There is little doubt that the sermons of this outlandish nun focused on the special significance of the Lotus Sutra to women, with their special proclivity for damnation.[27]

The strange case of the Yao bikuni is interesting for several reasons. Foremost among these is that she preached her sermons in a Jizø hall. The connection between women and the Jizø cult we noted in Chapter Two became stronger and stronger over the course of the medieval period. Miracle stories linking Jizø to women increased in number and a link was forged between the Ketsubon cult and Jizø by the Kumano bikuni and others.[28] Matsuoka Hideaki has suggested that belief in the chi no ike was in fact spread in large part through the medium of the female Jizø co-fraternities, or rather co-sororities, known as Jizø-kø.[29] Here is the place to search for the medieval origins of the modern mizuko Jizø cult dedicated to the appeasement of the unborn. Jizø also occupied a central position, literally, in the iconography of the Kanjin jukkai mandara carried across the country by the Kumano bikuni. Here he presides over several scenes in hell, where the blood pool hell is heavily featured. Another important aspect of the Yao bikuni story is her association with the major shugendø site, Ømine. Shugendø practitioners at Ømine, Kumano, Tateyama, and elsewhere were essential to the propagation of this dark Buddhist vision of female biology.

An excellent source for learning about how this ideology was received and disseminated is the otogizøshi corpus. The blood pool hell or chi no ike jigoku is

mentioned in a number of these Muromachi period narrative works, for instance in Tengu no dairi (early sixteenth century), Chøbøji yomigaeri no søshi (1514), and Isozaki (probably late sixteenth century).[30] In these texts, we are offered vivid descriptions of the hells. A woman submerged in Tengu no dairi's blood pool cries out, "in a voice as thin as the silken thread of a spider," reminding us of Mokuren's mother in Mokuren no søshi, whose voice resembled the whine of a mosquito. As Sawai Taizø has noted, the description of the blood pool hell offered in Tengu no dairi has the all the enthralling cadences and exclamations expected of a vocally performed text. The rhythms of the narration here are those of the incantational prayer, the saimon, as we can imagine it performed by the kanjin bikuni of Kumano or Tateyama, Ise or Shirayama. Kodate has referred to this practice as, "the telling (katari) of the blood pool hell."[31]

It is through such performances that women learned the doctrine and the topography of the blood pool hell.[32] Often, as is the case in Tengu no dairi, the hell as illustrated has little to do with the rather thinly described place featured in the sutra. The blood pool hell only becomes a real place, captures the imagination, when collectively recreated through public story telling. The nuns who preach these texts act as guides to the next world and reveal the danger waiting there, outlining the precautions taken to avoid the terrible fate of chi no ike, the blood pool. In this sixteenth-century text, there is no doubt that it is incumbent upon women to copy and keep the Ketsubonkyø; they cannot rely upon the kindness or compassion of relatives to save them. As the nuns reworked and elaborated the iconography and narration of the blood pool hell and other women's hells, they also enlisted other underworld figures into their story. For example in Tengu no dairi, Datsueba, a cruel hag who strips away the clothes of the dead as they cross the Sanzu no kawa after death, becomes a guarantor of safe childbirth. She presides over births and lends the newborn an item called the "placenta cloth," enakin. Each person must return this to her when they meet again on the other side. Perhaps this is the enagi, a jacket worn by babies on their first ceremonial shrine visit; it is worn over their birth clothes, or ubugi. Besides Datsueba, also known as Sanzu no baba (first mentioned in the Jizø j¥ø kyø / Ti-tsang shih wang

ching), the Buddhist deities Kishimojin (HaritΔ) and the ten rasetsu (rakΩasa) women of the Lotus Sutra came to be employed in rituals of pregnancy and childbirth.[33]

In this stage of the development of the cult, women are responsible for their own salvation and must take steps in this life to avoid punishment in the next. It is here that we see the ways in which women, from at least the sixteenth century, were called upon to take an active part in the Ketsubonkyø faith -- copying texts, viewing images, preaching -- involved as both consumers and producers. Later, beginning in the eighteenth century, they would be convinced of the benefits of the sutra not only for their postmortem salvation, but also of its effectiveness as a talisman against menstrual pollution. The latter was accomplished through a symbolic and temporary transformation of the female body to male. Thus the Ketsubonkyø became in later periods a way for women to side step the restrictions created by the rhetoric of the pollution of the female body, here in this world, now in this life. There is no evidence, however, of such prophylactic use of the sutra extending back into the medieval period.[34]

Different textual lineages of the sutra have been transmitted in Japan, stipulating various causes for birth in the blood pool hell -- the blood of childbirth, menstrual blood, or both. But it was death in childbirth that remained the most famous and indisputable cause. Those who died in childbirth, it was believed, were invariably bound for the blood pool hell, and special steps were required of the survivors to insure the dead woman could be saved ("become Buddhas," jøbutsu suru, or "float," ukabareru). The ceremony for women who had died during late pregnancy, in childbirth, or immediately thereafter was called the nagare kanjø.[35]

This ritual, also known as mizu segaki, kawa segaki, nagare kanja, arai sarashi, chi no ike, hyakunichi sarashi, and so on, was aimed at saving women from the blood pool hell. There is a ritual called nagare kanjø mentioned in sixteenth century sources, but it seems to have been associated with saving the souls of fish and crustaceans, and also those of fishermen who died at sea. There is also a male ritual specialist called an itaka shown performing something called

nagare kanjø in the late medieval illustrated book Nanaj¥ichiban shokunin uta awase, but it is unclear who the intended beneficiaries of such a ceremony might have been. The historical depth of the association of the practice with deaths in or around childbirth is unknown, but the custom of offering the ceremony in these cases was distributed over a wide geographical area by the beginning of the twentieth century.

There is solid evidence that it reaches back at least as far as the early eighteenth century.[36] This ritual took different forms such as floating banners out to sea or down a river, standing short wooden slat-stupas in the flow of a river (as can still be seen at Mt. Køya today), or hanging a rope from the side of a bridge, but the most common seems to have been the suspension of a cloth from two or four poles above a river, or along a roadside. This cloth was dyed red (in some cases it was an actual piece of blood stained clothing or bedding from the birth itself) and a portion of a sutra or, most usually, the legend "namu Amida butsu" was written upon it. Passersby would splash water on this cloth, with prayers for the dead woman's welfare, until the red color faded to white or, in some locales, for a set number of days -- forty-nine, one hundred or one thousand. In the case of a rope hanging from a bridge, those crossing would yank on the rope and say a prayer.

Thus the community would, at some level, make the appeasement of the unhappy soul of the woman, who had died bringing a life into the world, a shared project. The danger presented by death in childbirth reached beyond the woman in question and her immediate family; it was a public problem. The nagare kanjø rite was very common throughout Japan until the early twentieth century and marks the fullest development of belief in postmortem punishment in the blood pool hell. Let us now move back in time to examine two stories from the period when the Ketsubonkyø cult was just beginning to gather momentum.

Part Two: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Violence in Two “Otogizøshi”

The violence of death in childbirth was echoed in otogizøshi in the form of violence against pregnant women. This violence, most significantly, was invariably the result of the jealousy of co-wives, of senior wives against younger women, over the successful pregnancy of the rival. The jealousy of each of these women was mixed with anger and anxiety over the power of the younger woman's potential motherhood to displace her. The curse of the jealous rival placed on the object of her lover's affection is an extremely common theme in Japanese literature. Often, even in the absence of direct evidence of foul play, the death of a pregnant women was blamed on the ill will of a rival.[37] One particularly interesting story in this regard is the late sixteenth-century Isozaki where, in a tale about the murder of a young woman by her lover's wife, there is direct reference both to the title and to the content of the Ketsubonkyø, as well as to the blood pool hell.[38] Another, the 1466 hagiography of Shøtoku taishi called Taishi den explicitly sites jealousy as a cause for birth in the blood pool hell.[39] Again, this issue of women's jealousy is closely linked to kinship organization and social structure. Its association with the religious condemnation of female biology is telling.

Two other works, Køya monogatari and Kumano no honji, each describe the murder of a young pregnant woman, a primipara, a potential mother who is robbed of the chance to bear the son who would nurture her into ancestorhood. I will consider these two Muromachi period tales in the terms of the identity or difference of the bodies of mother and child. How did Japanese people during the medieval period conceive of the relationship between the mother and her fetus or infant? The stories also afford us an oblique view of the kinds of ritual requirements that fell to the surviving family after a death in childbirth.

"Make of my body a one hundred sixty gallon breast:" the Maternal Body in "Kumano no honji"

Kumano no honji was staggeringly popular in the late medieval and kinesi periods. This fact is attested by the numerous copies of the text surviving today in libraries and private collections.[40] There are smaller and greater variations in language and plot among the editions, but they all tell the same basic story.

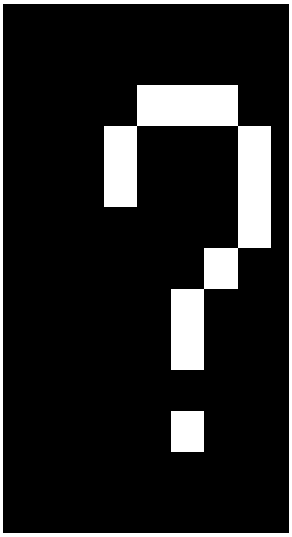
A concubine of the king of the ancient Indian state of Magadha, she is known as Gosuiden after the name of her residence, has fallen out of favor with the ruler and he has ceased to visit her. This king, although he has one thousand concubines, has been unable to produce an heir. In one of the pivotal scenes of the tale, repeated in almost every version, he gazes out into his garden where he sees a mother and father bird raising their young. The king is moved to tears as he contemplates his own childless state.[41] This is a fascinating reversal of the old motif seen in hosshin tan, examined in Chapter Three, where an orphan is shocked into an awareness of the absence of a parent through his or her observation of a family of birds.

Gosuiden, for her part, is distressed over the king's neglect of her and prays to the bodhisattva Kannon that she may find favor with the king and conceive a child. Her prayers are answered and this comes to pass. The king is overjoyed, as in Gosuiden. The other nine-hundred ninety-nine concubines, however, are seized with a jealous rage and plot to destroy Gosuiden and her child.

They coerce a seer into giving false prophecy of the child's future regicide/patricide, but the king is not concerned. He would be grateful to have any child, he says, even one that may murder him one day. Finally, the desperate women dress in red, disguising themselves as a horde of demons and descend upon the Gosuiden where the king and his favorite concubine, the future mother of his child, are sleeping. In many illustrations they wear the candelabra headdress of the ushi-no-toki mairi, the accoutrement of the jealous woman who would place a hex on her husband and (especially) his lover.[42] [see plate] Perhaps the most famous examples of the use of the iron crown with burning candles by a jealous woman are the Tale of Heike's "Tsurugi no maki" and the Noh play Kanawa.

In the confusion, the king is driven away and the nine-hundred ninety-nine jealous co-wives are able to seize Gosuiden. The evil concubines assign some warriors to take her to the mountains and execute her. In many versions, the executioners' swords break across the back of her neck when they attempt to decapitate her; she explains that as long as the child is still within her womb it will be impossible to kill her.

Begging of her executioners a moment's reprieve, Gosuiden chants the Kannongyø from the Lotus Sutra thirty-three times, then turns to the child in her womb, telling it to be born immediately. One version of the tale remarks that this is in spite of the fact that she has carried him for only seven lunar months -- that is, Gosuiden's baby is a barely viable twenty-eight week fetus.[43] The baby dutifully complies with his mother's request and is born; she washes him and swaddles him in her robe. Cutting off her long hair, she makes an offering of it and vows that even with the head gone, her body will become a one-hundred-sixty gallon breast (san koku roku to no chibusa) and remain behind for sake of the young prince.[44] With this, the henchmen cut off her head. Although her arms and legs become pale and cold and start to decompose, her breasts remain warm and golden to feed the baby for three years until he is found by a local holy man who raises him.[45]



Howard Eilberg-Schwartz points out that the decapitation of women in literature functions to separate a woman's intellect, her identity and subjecthood, from her body. In Eilberg-Schwartz's words, "objectification of woman as a sexual body necessarily requires coming to terms with the presence of her head. Decapitation is one way of solving the dilemma. Removing the female head relieves woman of both identity and voice and reduces her to a mere sexual and reproductive body."[46] Without a head then, a woman becomes perfectly and unproblematically objectified. When Gosuiden loses her head, she becomes a one-hundred-sixty gallon breast for the prince (see plate). Her body becomes his food. Her head and subjecthood now buried,

Gosuiden's warm corpse dumbly nourishes the baby, much as the placenta had sustained him in the womb. Thus, Kumano no honji is a very dramatic expression of the idea that even after birth, a child continues to be a part of its mother's body. In this case, though, the mother's body exists for the sole purpose of nourishing the child, and in some sense then the body of the mother is seen to be merely an extension of the child. This interpretation reverses Wakita's idea of the identity of mother and child, or boshi ittai, in which the child is a replication (bunshin) of the mother. Although in the denouement of the tale Gosuiden's head is miraculously restored and the little family reunited, the message of subordination of mother to son remains clear. As Wendy Doniger writes, "From ancient myth to contemporary culture, the metaphor of beheading has been used to express the dehumanization of women."[47] And yet, Gosuiden is not a mere victim, she is a victim-heroine.

The beheading of Gosuiden, famously characterized by Watsuji Tetsurø as the most gruesome scene in the history of Japanese literature, does not rob her of her voice. While she does become “reduced” to a “reproductive body,” she is also deified as the vulnerable and victimized deity so familiar throughout Japanese religious literature. In fact, Watsuji was among the first to point out this pattern of the underdog god and much of his theory is based on his analysis of Kumano no honji.[48] This is no surprise; Gosuiden is the consummate suffering saviour. By the force of her will and the depth of her faith, she is able to survive death in order to nurture her baby.

Gosuiden’s delivery of the young prince echoes the theme of “birth in the mountains,” found in many legends, folk tales, and biographical narratives. Komatsu Kazuhiko notes out that this kind of birth, taking place as it does outside of the borders of the civilized, stresses the wild and extraordinary nature of the offspring; Hamanaka Osamu reminds us that the theme of parturition in the mountain wilderness was often linked to the birth of the mountain god himself.[49] Gosuiden’s wild child is cared for by monkeys, lions, and wolves (økami, or in some versions, due to a copyist’s error, a giant turtle [økame] seen lumbering about in the illustrations). At the age of three he is found by a holy man, a

mountain ascetic, and is raised in a Buddhist cloister. As a result of his careful training in doctrine, ritual, and magic, he is later able to reunite his mother's head with her body and resurrect her. Here, as in the stories we examined in the previous chapter, a child who has entered the order becomes his mother's saviour. This text, then, like so many others, encourages women in the audience to make monks of their young sons and save themselves in the hereafter.

One remarkable feature of Kumano no honji is its description of pregnancy. As Matsumoto Ry¥shin has noted, it is this in particular that marks the text as one which was controlled by women. It reflects female concerns and female knowledge.[50] In an early scene in some versions of the story, before the horrific events described above, Gosuiden tells her nurse that she is afraid she may die. She has contracted some dread disease, she believes, since her monthly periods have stopped and her body feels heavy and uncomfortable no matter how she adjusts her position. Gosuiden's dire assessment of her own condition provokes peals of laughter from her ladies. Then one of them, in a section that breaks the flow of the narrative and probably circulated as an independent text, explains to the naive Gosuiden, as well as to the young women of the audience, the signs of pregnancy. This is accompanied by an explanation of the stages of pregnancy as follows. Gosuiden's wet nurse says:

> "Now don't be silly. You should be happy, let me see a nice smile." The consort retorted, "What's so amusing? Haven't I just told you I've been lying in bed suffering for these past few months? What in the world could you be on about?" To this, the nursemaid replied, "You are pregnant! This must be the prince that the king has been praying would be born. And well, they say when the five organs begin to take shape inside of you, the body is quite uncomfortable; this is what it feels like to be pregnant. (on kaishin no kokoro nari) First your periods stop, then the spirit of birth (ubu no kami) enters your body. When the head and shoulders are taking shape, you feel sleepy and lethargic. While the mouth is forming, sweet things taste bitter and the bitter tastes sweet. When the legs start to grow, your five humors (gotai) are all out of balance. As the days mount, you will feel more and more nauseous." Hearing this, the consort was a bit

more easy in her mind and felt happy.[51]

Another version continues, "The pain that the mother feels leading up to the birth is beyond compare. This is why our indebtedness to our mothers (oya no on) is truly great indeed."[52] This scene does not appear in the Shintøsh¥ version, the earliest known edition of the tale, nor in several other editions.

In a later sekkyø bushi version of the tale, Gosuiden herself is the one to explain the stages of pregnancy just before her decapitation. By now, though, it is a tantric Buddhist reading of the formation of the fetus not found in earlier texts. Gosuiden speaks to the warrior who is about to execute her and tells him to listen as she relates in brief how a human being comes into this world. What follows is an explanation of the ten months of pregnancy in terms of esoteric Buddhist embryology. For the first month, the embryo is in the "house" of Fudø myøø and is shaped like a one pointed vajra. Shaka nyorai oversees the second month, when the embryo, likened to a wishing jewel, has the form of a monk's staff. The third month is Monju bosatsu's month, and the fetus is a three-pronged vajra. The fourth month belongs to Fugen bosatsu, the fifth to Jizø bosatsu, and so on.[53]

This view of childbirth was also represented in pictures, both in mid-Tokugawa period illustrated versions of Kumano no honji and in the late seventeenth century manual for women's health, Onna ch¥høki (see plate). Sawayama Mikako holds that this kind of iconography, which filtered down from tantric Buddhist discourse into popular culture, significantly contributed to the development of the idea of the fetus as an independent entity. It is this kind of thinking that made the concept of "abortion" (datai) possible, since the baby was no longer a part of the woman's body, but had become a separate human being.[54] Watanabe Morikuni has made the point that the medieval otogizøshi versions of Kumano no honji emphasize a woman's experience of

pregnancy -- each stage of development is linked to a different sort of discomfort felt by the mother -- while the kinsei texts are very abstract and focus completely on the fetus. He links this to the fact that the former were controlled by women and the latter by men. It was the male preachers of the sekkyø bushi texts who presented a sanitized, conceptualized vision of pregnancy, divorced from women's experience.[55]

In a similar vein, Alice Adams has argued that the modern ultrasonic imaging of fetuses has contributed to the identification of the mother "as environment, nurturing and constant, but with no need or desires of her own."[56] The abstract "medicalized" male view of the fetus found in the later Gosuiden texts is based on doctrinal constructs, the earlier descriptions emphasize experience and the sensations of the maternal body. The focus in otogizøshi versions of Kumano no honji on the signs and stages of pregnancy, somewhat superfluous to the plot of the story, is gossip in the original sense of the word. It is the talk of women who would be attendants at the birth, the god-siblings (gossips) of the woman undergoing this life-changing event.[57] Later formulations in terms of Buddhist analogies for the nine months (ten lunar months) of pregnancy used in preaching become dryly doctrinal and lack this familiar, intimate, and 'gossipy' quality.

The laughter of the gossips in the otogizøshi texts is poignant, foreshadowing as it does the end of Gosuiden's life in the seventh lunar month of her pregnancy. While pregnancy is a cause for joy in spite of the bodily discomfort it is said to bring, it was for many women a death sentence. It might be more appropriate here to see Gosuiden's decapitation not as a dehumanization of women, but rather as an upward displacement of the extreme danger and violence of birth. For many women hearing the story, pregnancy, especially the first pregnancy of an untried womb, would prove fatal. Women were well aware of this fact. In later periods, their fears were framed in terms of the blood pool hell. Rural songs from around the country contain lyrics that plead, "If I should die in childbed, don't forget the nagare kanjø. Save me from the blood pool hell."[58]

A key issue here is the identity or separateness of the pregnant woman

and her child. In Kumano no honji Gosuiden's body is impervious to the swords of her executioners because of the baby in her womb. It is by her own command that the child who had rendered her body adamantine is born. After giving birth to him she becomes vulnerable and is then decapitated. Her headless corpse nurses him for three years. In the sutra that forms the basis for this legend, the Sendaokkokuøgyø, the king's consort is killed and buried with the baby still in utero. The prince is later born inside the grave and discovered by a holy man.[59] This is a very different turn of events and, as we shall see below, invokes a motif that captured the Japanese religious imagination. From the early modern period until modern times, the body of woman who had died in late pregnancy could not be buried before the fetus was cut from her womb. To bury two "bodies" in one corpse would be a sacrilege. While most people used a farming implement for this procedure, the Søtø Zen sect developed a ritual for a non-surgical "separation" of mother and child, as we shall see. Kumano no honji's narrative, though, differs from that of the sutra and transforms the motif of "birth in the grave" to that of "birth in the mountains." Matsumoto hypothesizes that the original story of the sutra may have circulated independently and formed the nucleus for a narrative and ritual complex I shall describe below.

On the "ubume"

The problem of death in childbirth, however, was never, from a religious point of view, a merely physical one. In fact, the physical aspects were at best secondary to the psychological or spiritual ramifications of such a death. A woman who lost her life trying to bear a child or in the final stages of pregnancy was in grave danger of forming a deep attachment to the world. Whether out of resentment for the living or loving concern for her child, the ghost of such a woman remains in the world, unable to attain salvation. In this sense she is like the mother of Mokuren in Mokuren no søshi or Sanukibø's mother in the Shasekish¥; she has a hunger created by her child that cannot be resolved without the intervention of Buddhist ritual. She is a voracious mother. However, the ghost of the woman who dies in childbirth, as depicted in late medieval and early

modern literature, is not a hungry ghost (J. gaki, S. preta). She is of this world. The contradiction created by the severing of a potential relationship between mother and child traps her in the earthly realm until a separation is imposed from the outside and her spirit is freed.

The ghost of a woman who has died in childbirth is best known as the ubume or "birthing woman." Stories about this kind of ghost who lurks on or around a bridge have been told in Japan since at least the twelfth century.[60] Typically, she asks a passerby to hold her child for just a moment and disappears when her "victim" takes the swaddled baby. The baby then becomes increasingly heavy until it impossible to hold. It is then revealed not to be a human child at all, but a boulder or a stone image of Jizø. Artists of the kinesi period produced many images of this ghost, and she became well known throughout Japan. Usually she is represented as naked from the waist up, wearing a red skirt and carrying a small baby. The most famous illustrations of the ubume are from Toriyama Sekien's late eighteenth-century encyclopedia of ghosts, goblins, and ghouls, Hyakki yagyø. The early seventeenth-century tale collection Konjaku hyaku monogatari hyøban says of the ubume: "When a woman loses her life in childbirth, her spiritual attachment (sh¥chaku) itself becomes this ghost. In form, it is soaked in blood from the waist down and wanders about crying, 'Be born! Be born!' (obareu, obareu)."[61] It is interesting to note that here it is not the woman herself that is transformed into a ghost, but rather her painful emotional and psychological state at the moment of death. A similar understanding is expressed in the sixteenth-century Kii zødan sh¥.[62]

The popularity of this legend is attested by many place names throughout Japan -- Ubumegawa, Ubumebashi, Ubumebayashi. She also became the object of cults of safe childbirth. There is a Søtø Zen temple in the district of Ubume in the city of Shizuoka, Shøshin-in known as Ubume Kannon, where women come to pray to conceive a child or to have a successful pregnancy and delivery. The temple's legend, set in the mid sixteenth century, concerns an ubume.[63] In Nagasaki City, a Jødo Shinsh¥ temple called Køgenji houses a kinesi statue of the ubume that is shown once a year in July. At this festival, candy that has been offered to

the image is distributed and women pray for safe delivery and for abundant milk. This statue, which is clothed in white robes, has only a head, torso, and arms; it has no lower half.

While the being known as an ubume was created as the result of death and childbirth, there was another type of ghost produced by the woman who died in late pregnancy. In the story examined below, we can find the prehistory of this legend and of the horrifying ritual procedures that accompanied it. It is here that we see that ghost stories were not merely weird tales shared to shock or titillate and pass the time. Ghosts were real and sometimes extreme measures had to be taken to prevent their appearance.

"Pull out the person who is in my belly": "Køya monogatari" and the Personhood of the Fetus

If Kumano no honji, reverses the logic of boshi ittai described by Wakita in subsuming the maternal body to that of the newborn, the second story I will discuss overturns it completely, insisting upon the independence of mother and fetus. The late medieval confessional tale Køya monogatari shows us another pregnant woman murdered in cold blood by a jealous rival.[64] As was the case in Kumano no honji, it is the male henchman of the bitter senior wife who does the deed, but here too there is a focus is on the ruthlessness of a woman scorned.

Køya monogatari takes the form of a series of vignettes in which monks of the Jish¥ cloistered at Mt. Køya's Karukaya-dø take turns revealing the circumstances which shocked them into a realization of impermanence and prompted them to retreat from the world. In the story told by a monk called Sei-Amidabu, the raconteur relates that before taking the tonsure in his late twenties he had been a warrior of some means named Toyora no Shirø. He had two wives whose mutual jealousy never gave him a moment's peace. The elder wife conspired to murder the younger and disposed of her body in an unmarked grave behind the Jizø hall of a nearby cemetery, while creating the appearance that the missing woman had eloped with a handsome young monk. This prompted the distraught Toyora to torture and kill any likely bonze who happened by, until soon there

were no monks living on his entire property. A young itinerant monk, knowing of Toyora's reputation, hesitated to ask for lodging and decided instead to spend the night in the abandoned Jizø hall, although he found it quite spooky. He sat down before the Jizø image to devote himself to meditation on Chao-chou's famous køan "mu," but was more and more distracted by strange noises. These sounds, as it turned out, were emanating from the ghost of the murdered junior wife who appeared to him and entreated him to take a message to Toyora.[65] She gave him a kosode robe and a poem that would prove to her husband that she had spoken to the monk. Putting aside his fear, the monk came before Toyora the next day and managed to tell his story without being killed. As he presented the kosode, the two men noticed that there was a message written in blood on the sleeve. This message related the tragic story in full, ending with the following entreaty:

> "To die pregnant is most sinful. Please hurry to dig up my body; pull out the person who is in my belly and pray most fervently for my salvation."[66]

Upon reading the ghost's message, coming to know the circumstances of his wife's death and also learning for the first time that she had been pregnant, Toyora saw the error of his ways and repented. Then he and the monk made their way to the grave site together and exhumed the body. The husband, heartbroken at the sight of his dead wife's breasts swollen with milk, then turned to his terrible duty. Taking out his short sword, he sliced open the belly of the corpse, revealing a dazzlingly beautiful baby boy (tama wo nobetaru gotoku naru nanshi). This horrific experience was the impetus for his entry into the order. The one thing we are not told, however, is whether or not the baby was alive. Obviously, we would assume that a fetus could not survive its mother's death and continue to grow and develop inside the grave. However there is much evidence to suggest that this is not an assumption shared by pre-modern Japanese. In fact, as we shall see, quite the opposite belief was held, that is, if a woman died pregnant and the fetus was not removed before burial, the baby would eventually be born inside the grave and the soul of the mother would be

unable to find rest because of a lingering attachment to her child.[67]

There exists quite a large body of legends in which a child is discovered living underground in its mother's grave.[68] Generally, the child is found because it can be heard crying out from within the tomb or because the daily trips of its mother's ghost to buy it candy or dango at local shops begin to arouse suspicions. One explanation as to why these women cannot reach the other shore of eternal rest is that every day they buy food for the child with money from their coffin, the rokudø sen, money buried with them to cover the necessary expenses of being ferried across the Styx-like Sanzu no kawa. The money replenishes itself, but they can't spend it and have it too. This type of ghost is known as a kosodate y¥rei, a child-rearing ghost.

The earliest known story of this type, found in the sixteenth-century Kii zødan sh¥, entails a famous priest, Kokua shønin. Kokua died at the close of the fourteenth century and was the founder of the Ryøzen-ha of the Jish¥. Like his confrere Sei-Amidabutsu, formerly Toyora, of the above Køya monogatari, he entered the order as an adult after finding a son in the grave of his dead wife.[69] Kokua's story, probably recorded about one hundred years after his death, is as follows.

In lay life Kokua's name was Hashizaki Kuniaki. Hashizaki was stationed in Ise when word came that his pregnant wife had died en route to the capital. Because of official duties, he was unable to return home for the funeral. Feeling that he must do something to ensure her salvation, he gave three coins to a local outcaste beggar (hinin) every day. When he went to visit her grave for the first time, he stopped into a nearby tea shop where the owner told him of ghostly woman who would come every day to buy three sen worth of mochi. Later, when Kokua approached the grave, he heard a baby crying inside and dug it out. His wife's body was badly decomposed, but the little boy appeared to be in good health. He gave the baby to the tea shop owner for adoption and retreated from the world.

In the cases of Kokua and Sei Amidabutsu, it is the husband of the dead woman who becomes a monk, but in most later stories it is the discovered child

who grows up to be a famous prelate. Legends of these ghosts became quite widespread during the kinesi, and usually the foundling becomes a renowned cleric. These stories were common to almost every sect, but were especially popular in the Søtø Zen school.[70]

This legend of the kosodate y¥rei was widespread in pre-modern Japan and is closely related to the belief that a pregnant woman who is buried with the fetus in her womb cannot attain salvation (jøbutsu dekinai). Thus, the practice of postmortem fetal extraction was also very common. This need to remove the fetus is usually expressed as putting the body in two (mi futatusu ni suru), or perhaps better, splitting the bodies into two. This is where Wakita's idea of the unity of mother and child (boshi ittai), is most dramatically undermined, as she indeed suggests it increasingly was from the late medieval period moving into the early modern. This is also where we see that what might have seemed to be an isolated incident included in a piece of didactic literature for shock value -- the story of Toyora who slit open his dead wife's belly -- is actually a reflection of standard funerary practice.

Working in the late 1970's, the folklorist Katsurai Kazuo was told by elderly villagers in his home region of Køchi Prefecture on the island of Shikoku of a prohibition against using oak to make the handle of a hand scythe (kama).[71] There were no particular rules about what type of wood should be used, only a belief that oak must not be. Upon further investigation, he found that this taboo existed in many other communities throughout the island and also in other locales from Tøhoku to Ky¥sh¥. The reason given for never using oak was universally the same. Namely, an oak-handled kama was to be used for one purpose and for that purpose alone -- extracting the fetus from the body of a woman who had died in late pregnancy. This operation was to be performed by her husband, or some other close relative, or by the midwife, using an oak-handled kama held in the left hand. After the extraction, mother and child were often buried in separate coffins, or, if in the same coffin, back-to-back. Some regional variation exists in regard to this point. The informants explained to Katsurai that it was believed that a woman buried with a third-trimester fetus in her womb could not be saved

in the next life (jøbutsu dekinai, ukabarenai) and stood the risk of becoming a ghost, specifically, a kosodate y¥rei. This practice of postmortem fetal extraction gives ritual expression to the belief that once a fetus enters its final trimester of gestation, it is no longer a part of its mother's body.[72]

Conclusion

Here again, in the complex of beliefs and practices surrounding the kosodate y¥rei, or child rearing ghost, and her sister the ubume, the focus is on the salvation of women. Specifically, it is on the salvation of women as mothers, actual or potential. Women who die in childbirth or in late pregnancy are among the special and dangerous dead and need particular sorts of ritual to be saved. As we have seen, however, women in general were seen within medieval Japanese soteriology as already constituting a category of the special dead. This is made particularly clear in the cult surrounding the Ketsubonkyø.

The blood pool hell presents a real conundrum for women since it threatens damnation for the very potential motherhood that is a woman's passport to salvation. While the Ketsubonkyø cult describes the biology of female reproduction as polluted and sinful, it holds out salvation through a text where a son saves his mother. The ancestral cult, a central aspect of East Asian Buddhism and Buddhist death ritual, insists that women become mothers to be saved, so the ideology of the blood pool hell creates a double-bind. In contrast to the Chinese case, however, Japanese women in the late medieval period took their salvation into their own hands, transforming the Ketsubonkyø into an amulet insuring safe childbirth or a talisman to overcome the menstrual "taboo" and allow freedom of movement and association at all times. Thus, as Carol Delaney has written, "a particular cultural understanding of the body may generate the anxieties or dangers felt to be impinging on the society. In other words, notions of the body and coporeality are neither universal nor gender-neutral but change according to specific cultures. It is not enough to look only at specific pollutants, for one must understand them in relation to the entire cultural corpus of beliefs."[73] The transformation of the kinship system through the medium of Buddhist death ritual and the shift away

from the view of the fetus as a part of its mother's body are essential factors for a consideration of the Japanese development of the doctrinal, ritual, and literary complex surrounding the blood pool hell.

In Japan's late medieval period a literature that linked pregnancy and violence developed. Such stores have been the focus of this chapter. In these stories of jealousy, suffering, and redemption, there is a focus on the pregnant corpse, particularly on the life-giving breasts filled with milk, and on the blood of the dead woman. In this case it is not menstrual blood, but rather the blood shed by the cruelty of a steel blade. As I have suggested, however, murder or execution can be seen as substitutes for the violent and familiar occurrence of death in childbirth. This focus on the dangers of parturition can be seen most clearly in the stories of the ubume and the kosodate y¥rei. For a woman to die in late pregnancy, during childbirth, or soon thereafter was not simply to die a horrible and tragic death, it was also to face the danger of becoming a ghost in this world or to face sure punishment in the blood pool hell in the next. In the former case, more than blood and biology is in question, in the legends of the ubume and the kosodate y¥rei, we again encounter the theme of the deleterious effects of parental attachment to a child, the "darkness of the heart," or kokoro no yami described in the Introduction and in Chapter Three. As one early kinesi text puts it, "How poignant a mother's heart that even after death wanders astray with longing for her child."[74]

In her study of the modern literary genre she calls the "pregnancy novel" (ninshin shøsetsu), Saitø Minako identifies two types of novel, the "abortion type" and the "birth type." She points out that while the genre was established in the 1950's, its roots can be traced to the turn of the twentieth century, a time when abortion was outlawed by the Japanese government. I would suggest that the origins of this type of narrative can be traced even further back to these late medieval stories. As Saitø notes, the murder of the heroine is a common theme in pregnancy novels, a theme directly connected to abortion and thus to the problem of the identity or separateness of the mother's body and the fetus.[75] The particulars of the medieval tales are very different as is the context, but the continuities are

intriguing. The modern texts, like the medieval, are shot through with ambiguity. This is especially true with regard to the question of whether the mother and child are of one body or two.

I have argued above that at the end of the medieval period there was a significant shift in the way this relationship between the maternal body and the life growing within was conceptualized. While this implies a progression, I would like to emphasize that there was a deep ambivalence throughout. And still, within this unresolved ambivalence, a trend can be discerned. As Wakita Haruko has suggested, from the late medieval period moving into the kinesi, mother and child were no longer "of one body" (boshi ittai), but rather were two distinct beings.[76]

Increasingly, the fetus (and newborn child) came to be seen as an independent entity, and, perhaps more significantly, as the embodiment of a creative act by the father with the mother acting as a growth medium, as a nurturing vessel rather than genetrix. The child also comes to be seen as a being formed by the efforts of divine actors. In a 1686 play by master dramatist Chikamatsu Monzaemon, we can witness a scene of the preaching of the Kumano bikuni on the blood pool hell. Here the nuns, quite anachronistically, explain the illustrations of the blood pool hell represented in the Kanjin jukkaizu to the wife of Taira no Atsumori, Høsshø kaku, and the wife of Tadanori, Kiku no mae:

> "You know it takes a great deal of toil by the Buddhas of the three worlds to make one human being. So when one is aborted before the ten months are over, all the Buddhas cry out in lamentation and shed tears. These tears pour down like a torrent into the blood pool hell where they become flames that burn the bodies of the women there."[77]

While in the medieval period, the death of the mother is the focus of the blood pool hell belief, by the middle of the kinesi the death of the child becomes foregrounded.[78] It is here we can discern the roots of the modern practice of mizuko kuyø, the ceremonies performed for aborted fetuses. In the next chapter, we will examine the story of a daughter dedicated to the salvation of her mother.

This woman, Ch¥jøhime, refuses marriage and motherhood in order to repay her debt to her own dead mother.

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[1] Sawayama Mikako, Shussan to shintai no kinsei (Keisø shoin, 1998), esp. pp. 213-216.

[2] Wakita, "Bosei," p. 203.

[3] Carol Delaney, Abraham on Trial: The Social Legacy of Biblical Myth (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); and Carol Delaney, The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[4] Michel Soymie, "Ketsubonkyø no shiryø-teki kenky¥," in Michel Soymie and Iriya Yoshitaka, ed., Døkyø kenky¥ (Shøshinsha, 1965), pp. 109-165; Takemi Momoko (trans., W. Michael Kelsey) "'Menstruation Sutra' Belief in Japan," in Japanese Journal of Religious Studies, vol. 10, no. 2 and 3 (1983); and Cole, pp. 197-199.

[5] For a representative of the view that menstrual pollution was a feature of the more developed cult and texts, see Takemi, "Menstruation Sutra." For the opposing opinion see Matsuoka Hideaki, "Waga kuni ni okeru Ketsubonkyø shinkø ni tsuite no ichi køsatsu," in Søgø joseishi kenky¥ kai, eds., Josei to sh¥kyø [Nihon josei shi ronsh¥ 5] (Yoshikawa købunkan, 1998), pp. 257-280.

[6] There is a large body of anthropological literature on affinal / agnatic relations, ritual, and kinship in modern Taiwan and China. I have found the work of Emily Martin especially useful. See, for example, Emily Martin Ahern,"Affines and the Rituals of Kinship," in Arthur Wolf, ed., Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 279-307; Emily Martin, "Gender and Ideological Differences in the Representation of Life and Death," in James Watson and Evelyn Rawski, eds., Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 164-176; and Emily Martin Ahern, "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," in Arthur P. Wolf, ed. Studies in Chinese Society (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), pp. 269-29). Also see, Gary Seaman, "The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution."

[7] Margery Wolf, Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).

[8] Katsuura, Onna no shinjin, p. 222.

[9] Hitomi Tonomura, "Re-envisioning Women in the post-Kamakura Age," in Jeffrey Mass, ed., The Origins of Japan's Medieval World (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 164. Also see Tokieda Tsutomu, "Ch¥sei Tøgoku ni okeru Ketsubonkyø shinkø no yøsø: Kusatsu Shiraneyama o ch¥shin to shite," in Shinano 36, no. 8 (July 1984), p. 599.

[10] Tokieda, pp. 600-601.

[11] Tokieda, pp. 595-596. It is much more likely that these are roughly contemporaneous with, even if somewhat earlier than, similar practices at Tateyama during the kinsei period, which Tokieda refers to as a "restoration" of the earlier practice found at Shiraneyama. Tokieda himself calls the kokera kyø "late medieval," and it would seem quite unlikely that they predate the middle or late fifteenth century.

[12] For the question of dating and evidence see Tokieda, pp. 587, 591-593. For the shugendø connection, see Tokieda, pp. 595-599.

[13] See, e.g., Naomi, "Ketsubonkyø to nyonin ky¥sai: 'chi no ike no katari' o ch¥shin ni," in Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshø, 56/5 (1991), p. 124. This 1429 case is the first mention of the Ketsubonkyø in Japan. Also see Katsuura, Onna no shinjin, p. 223. This datum can be found in

Chøben shian shø, ZGR, vol. 28:8, p. 125.

[14] Katsuura, Onna no shinjin, pp. 226-232.

[15] See W. G. Aston, trans, Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697 (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle, 1972), pp. 22-25 [1:15-1:19]. Here, the outraged husband / brother Izanagi cuts the child into pieces with his sword, creating other new gods. Also see, pp. 28-29 [1:23-1:25]. This can be contrasted with later periods where it is the mother's body that is mutilated after death in childbirth. In the story of Hiko-hoho-demi and his wife Toyotama-hime, there is some indication of the use of parturition huts and a taboo against men witnessing childbirth, but we know that in later periods, at least among the aristocracy, men were present at births. (See Aston, Nihongi pp. 93-95 [2:34-2:35]).

[16] See Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition; the "Nihon ryøiki" of the monk Kyøkai (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 233-234. Nihon ryøiki, 3 / 9, NKBT vol. 20, pp. 338-345.

[17] Cited in Shinmura Taku, Shussan to seishokukan no rekishi (Høsei daigaku shuppan kyoku, 1996), pp. 149-150. On Hønen's attitude toward mothers and birth, see Imahori Daietsu "Hønen no nembutsu to josei: nyonin kyøge tan no seiritsu," in Nishiguchi Junko, ed. Hotoke to onna (Yoshikawa kobunkan 1997), pp. 67-107, especially see pp. 76-83.

[18] As Kunimoto Keikichi points out, death and childbirth were, in premodern times, two sides of the same coin. Hemorrhaging was often understood to be the result of possession by malign spirits. Kunimoto, San'iku shi: Osan to kosodate no rekishi (Morika, Iwate: Morioka Times, 1996), p. 147. For a related discussion of blood symbolism in ancient Judaism, see Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, The Savage in Judaism (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1990), pp. 177-194. Eilberg-Schwartz argues that in this system female genital blood, whether menstrual or birth blood, was associated with death, while the male genital blood of circumcision was symbolic of life and fertility.

[19] Katsuura, Onna no shinjin, pp. 211, 237. A counter example to the Ryøiki story can be found in Oe no Masafusa's Zoku honchø øjøden. In this tale a woman who died in childbirth in the first month of 1101 appears later to a friend in a vision confirming her birth in the Pure Land. Her face and body were as usual, but she looked like a bodhisattva and was dressed as a gagaku performer. See Nishiguchi Junko, "Shinsh¥shi no naka no josei," in Shinsh¥ bunka kenky¥ jo, eds., Nihonshi no naka no josei to bukkyø (Høzøkan, 1999), pp. 191-192. Also, in the Nihon øjø gokuraku ki by Yoshishige no Yasutane, a woman who dies one month after giving birth is welcomed into the Pure Land to the strains of music. See Peter Weltzer, Yoshishige no Yasutane: Lineage, Learning, and Amida's Pure Land (Doctoral dissertation, University of California Berkeley, 1977), p. 244.

[20] See Tabata Yasuko, Nihon ch¥sei no josei (Yoshikawa købun kan, 1987), pp. 52-55; Mizutø Shin, Ch¥sei no søsø bosei (Yoshikawa købunkan, 1991), pp. 98-106; Hashimoto Yoshihiko, Heian kizoku (Heibonsha, 1986), p. 34; Fukutø Sanae, Heian chø no haha to ko (Ch¥ø køron sha, 1991), pp. 110-112; Shinmura Taku, Nihon iryø shakaishi no kenky¥ (Høsei daigaku shuppan kyoku, 1985), pp. 155-156. For death in childbirth and during pregnancy in premodern Europe see, e.g., Jaques Gélis (Rosemary Morris, tr.), History of Childbirth (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), pp. 238-254.

[21] On the Kumano bikuni, see e.g., Hagiwara Tatsuo, Miko to bukkyøshi; Barbara Ruch, Mø hitotsu no ch¥seizø (Shibundø 1991), pp. 163-169. Hayashi Masahiko, "Kumano bikuni no etoki" in Nihon no etoki: shiryø to kenky¥ (Miyai shoten, 1984), pp. 126-146; and David Leo Moerman, Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage in Medieval Japan (Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1999), Chapter Five.

[22] Kodate Naomi and Makino Kazuo, "Ketsubonkyø no juyø to hatten," in Tsurumi Kazuko, ed.,

Onna to otoko no jik¥: Nihon joseishi saikø (Fujiwara shoten, 1996), pp. 103-105.

[23] Ushiyama Yoshiyuki, “Jiinshi no kaiko to hatsubø: ch¥sei amadera ni yosete,” in Nihon bukkyø kenky¥kai, eds., Nihon no bukkyø 3: bukkyø o minaosu (Høzøkan, 1994), p. 162

[24] Tokuda, "Igyø," pp. 111- 116; Hagiwara, pp. 272-278, 289-295.

[25] Tokuda, "Igyø," pp. 107-109.

[26] See Chapter Three above, also see Tokuda. "Igyø," p. 117.

[27] For descriptions of and quotations from these diary entries see Tokuda "Igyø," pp. 111-115 and Katsuura, Onna no shinjin, pp. 233-235. On women's salvation, hell, and sermons on the Lotus Sutra see Katsuura, pp. 209-240.

[28] The connection between women and Jizø was discussed in Chapter Two above. Hagiwara Tatsuo maintains that a strong association between Jizø and women is clearly attested from the fourteenth century, and that the association of a female form of Jizø with safe childbirth was also common during the medieval period. Hagiwara, pp. 278-295, esp. pp. 281-282, also see pp. 202-204. Based on the evidence presented in Chapter Two, we can push Hagiwara’s date back considerably, also see Katsuura, “Onna no shigo,” pp. 44-51.

[29] Matsuoka, p. 270. Also, it is worth noting that one possible source for the idea of the blood pool hell can be found in the "blood drinking hell" (onketsu jigoku) mentioned in the Jizø hongan kyø. See Kunimoto, p. 105.

[30] Isozaki appears in two versions in MJMT, v. 2, pp 251-264; three versions of Tengu no dairi can be found in MJMT, v. 9, pp. 551-660; Chøbøji yomigaeri no søshi, MJMT, v. 9, pp. 351-374.

[31] See Sawai Taizø, "Otogizøshi Isozaki kø: otogizøshi to sekkyø no sekai," in Kawaguchi Hisao, ed. Koten no hen'yo to shinsei (Meiji shoin, 1984), pp. 326-327. Sawai suggests that although the earliest surviving edition of Isozaki is from the late seventeenth century, there is strong evidence it existed in 1642 and was probably in circulation by the end of the sixteenth century. Also see Kodate Naomi, “Ketsubonkyø to nyonin ky¥sai,”p. 125.

[32] Katsuura,”Onna no shigo,” pp. 158-164.

[33] Tanaka, Sei’ai no Nihon ch¥sei, pp. 126-130.

[34] For photographs of kinsei Ketsubonkyø amulets and their printing blocks, see Toyamaken Tateyama hakubutsukan, ed., Tateyama shinkø: inori to negai (Tateyama-cho: Toyamaken Tateyama hakubutsukan, 1994), see esp. Kodate Naomi, “Tateyama no nyonin ky¥sai kankei gofu,” pp. 47-49. On the history of the idea of menstrual pollution in premodern Japan, see Kunimoto Keikichi, San'iku shi, pp. 59-123.

[35] On the nagare kanjø see: Kitashima Kuniko, "Nagare kanjø no kenky¥," in Tøyødaigaku tankidaigaku ronsh¥: Nihon bungaku hen 19 (1983), pp. 239-260; Kunimoto, pp. 339-341; Tanaka Takako, Sei'ai no Nihon ch¥sei, pp. 119; Shinmura, Shussan, pp. 149-150.

[36] Kitashima, p. 241. Also see Matsushita Keidø, "Nagare kanjø shiryø: toku ni kigen o mondai to shite," in Bukkyø to minzoku 4 (1959), 40-41.

[37] There is not space here to explore this rich topic, but it is one I intend to return to in future research. The theme is found in many places, from Genji, to historical chronicles, to Noh plays, to otogizøshi. For Heian period examples see e.g. Seidensticker, The Tale of Genji, pp. 165-173; Bowring,, Murasaki Shikibu, Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs, pp. 43-99; and McCullough, Flowering Fortunes,pp. 227-308, 349-360. A useful book for thinking about the role of female jealousy in death in childbirth in Heian Japan is Doris Bargen, A Woman's Weapon. A graphic kinsei version where the pregnant woman is caused to slit her own belly with a razor is "Nyobø onna no haramitaru hara o yaki yaburu koto," in Kii zødan sh¥, in Yoshida Køichi, ed., Kinsei kaii

shøsetsu (Kinsei bungei shiryø 3), pp. 184-195. For a European parallel, see Gélis, p. 143. In Ovid's Metamorphoses, Juno (Lucina) tried to obstruct the birth of Hercules by her rival Alcmena through magical means.

[38] See Sawai, pp. 317-328. See especially pp. 323ff.

[39] Kodate and Makino, pp. 85-86.

[40] See Matsumoto, pp. 35-62 for comparison and analysis of various versions of the tale. The story Itsukushima no honji, which also features a scene of the decapitation of a young mother in the mountains is probably related to Kumano no honji. Matsumoto, p. 64.

[41] For a discussion of this scene with quotations from different editions, see Matsumoto, pp. 67-69. The courts of most states in the U.S. currently put the limit for fetal viability, the point from which the baby can survive outside the mother's body, between 24 and 26 weeks after the last menstrual period. In premodern times, it would have been considerably later.

[42] These images can be seen in two beautifully produced books containing seventeenth century illustrated editions of the Gosuiden tale. Ky¥sh¥ daigaku kokugo kokubungaku kenky¥jo, eds., Shøtø bunko bon Kumano no honji (Benseisha, 1997), pp. 33-34; and Wakayama kenritsu hakubutsukan, eds, Kumano gongen engi emaki (Bensei shuppan, 1999), pp. 18-19. For a discussion of the different ways the co-wives are represented in this scene see Komatsu Kazuhiko, Hyørei shinkø ron: yøkai kenky¥ e no kokoromi (Arina shobø, 1984), pp. 236-238. On the theme of the murder of the rival see Komatsu, pp. 242-243; and, Sawai, "Otogizøshi Isozaki kø," p. 323. On the visual representation of female jealousy see Hayashi Susumu, “Shitto no katachi,” in Tokyo kokuritsu bunkashi kenky¥jo, eds., Hito no “katachi,” hito no “karada” (Heibonsha, 1994), pp. 203-218.

[43] Kumano no honji no monogatari, MJMT, vol. 4, p. 161.

[44] Kumano gohonji, MJMT, vol. 4, p. 203; Kumano no honji (Kumata Shrine collection), MJMT, vol. 4, p. 181; Kumano no honji (print version), MJMT, vol. 4, p. 236.

[45] This imagery comes from the text Kumano no honji no søshi in NKBT, v. 38 , p. 426. In one version, the legs decompose completely, and eventually only the breasts remain, see Kumano no honji (emaki from the Ida collection), p. 265. For paintings of this poignant scene, see Shøtø bunko bon Kumano no honji, p. 65; Kumano gongen engi emaki, p. 35.

[46] Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, "Introduction" in Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger, eds., "Off With Her Head": The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 1.

[47] Wendy Doniger, "'Put a Bag Over Her Head': Beheading Mythological Women" in Eilberg-Schwartz and Doniger, eds., p. 15.

[48] Watsuji Tetsurø, “Umoreta Nihon,” in Watsuji Tetsurø zensh¥, vol. 3 (Iwanami shoten, 1961). Cited in Hamanaka Osamu, "Kumano no honji kø: muryoku to higo," in Hamanaka, Muromachi jidai monogatari ronkø (Shintensha, 1996), pp. 208; and in Hagiwara, pp 40, 47.

[49] See Komatsu Kazuhiko, “Kaibutsu to irui kon’in: ‘otogizøshi’ no køzø bunseki,” in Nihon bungaku kenky¥ shiryø sosho, eds., Otogizøshi (Y¥seidø, 1985), pp. 144-149; and Hamanaka, "Kumano no honji kø,” pp. 203- 204.

[50] See Matsumoto, pp. 46-47.

[51] Kumano no gohonji no søshi in NKBT, v. 38, p. 415. Compare Kumano no honji (Kumata jinja copy) in MJMT, vol. 4, pp. 171-172, where she is also told that while the nose is forming everything will stink, and while the eyes grow her vision will be blurry. In this version her knees and lower back will ache as the fetus grow legs. Also see, Kumano no honji (woodblock version) in MJMT, vol. 4, pp. 219 and Kumano no honji (emaki) in MJMT, vol. 4, pp. 254-255. The identity

of ubu no kami is unclear. This term came to refer to the god of the locale of one's birth (ubusuna no kami), but also is close to the idea of the ubu tate, or "quickening," experienced in the fifth month of pregnancy.

[52] Kumano no honji (emaki) in MJMT, vol. 4, pp. 255.

[53] Kumano no gohonji in Yokoyama Shigeru, ed. Sekkyø seibon sh¥, vol. 1 (Kadokawa shoten, 1968), pp. 140-141, illustrations, p. 500 (Also see Gosuiden, pp. 153 and illus., p. 502). This imagery is clearly drawn from the influential Sangai isshin ki, attributed to the late sixteenth-century Zen monk, Dairy¥ of Daitokuji. This text is discussed in James Sanford, "Wind, Waters, Stupas, Mandalas: Fetal Buddhahood in Shingon," in Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 24/1-2 (1997), pp. 25-31. For the original see Morioka K¥, Dairy¥ Sangai isshinki in Matsushita Takahiro, ed., Tachikawa ry¥ seikyø ruisan kaidai (Rittaisha, 1969), pp. 31-35. In the version of the tale called Gosuiden, there is a slightly different list than in Kumano no gohonji. Also see Kunimoto, 216-226.

[54] Sawayama, pp. 265-270, also see Toda Ritsuko, et al., Birth in Japan: Past, Present, and Future (Birth International, 1991), pp. 72-72. See above note for illustrations of this in sekkyø bushi texts.

[55] Matsumoto, pp. 71-72. Matsumoto cites Watanabe Morikuni, "Honji monogatari kenky¥ yosetsu," in Øzuma joshi daigaku bungaku bu kiyø 1/2.

[56] Alice E. Adams, Reproducing the Womb: Images of Childbirth in Science, Feminist Theory, and Literature (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 245. For the development of this argument see, pp. 117-154.

[57] On gossips see Marta Weigle Creation and Procreation: Feminist Reflections on Mythologies of Cosmogony and Parturition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), pp. 160, 164-169.

[58] Kitashima, pp. 255-256. Kitashima records lyrics from 18 such songs in her article. These range from Niigata in the north to Wakayama in the south.

[59] Sendaokkokuøgyø (T. 518, Chan-t'o-yüeh kuo-wang ching). Translated in 464, the origins of this sutra are unclear. No Sanskrit original is known. While it clearly forms the basis for the version of the story as told in the Shintøsh¥, the Japanese retelling elaborates considerably on the core legend. It is interesting that this detail that was altered, the birth of the prince within the grave, became an important theme in the religious stories of late medieval Japan.

[60] Ishida Eiichirø, "Mother-Son Deities," in History of Religions 4/1 (1964), pp. 34-35. For Taira no Suetake's encounter with the ubume, see Konjaku monogatari sh¥ 27/43, NKBT, v. 25, pp. 539-541. Here the ghost is called sanseru omuna, written with the same characters used to write ubume. A best selling detective novel which takes the ubume legend as its central motif was published in 1998, creating something of an ubume "boom." This is Kyøgoku Natsuhiko, Ubume no natsu (Kødansha, 1998). Also see Orikuchi Shinobu, "Komochi no megami" in Orikuchi Shinobu zensh¥, vol. 7, pp. 281-283. Many have associated the ubume with the legend of the hito bashira where a sacrificial mother and child pair are buried under one of the supporting pillars of a new bridge. See Minakata Kumagusu, "Hito bashira no hanashi," in Shibuzawa Keizø, ed., Minakata Kumagusu zensh¥ (Kangensha, 1952), v. 4, pp. 12-35.

[61] "Ubume no koto," in Konjaku hyaku monogatari hyøban, in Edo kaidan sh¥ v. 2 (Iwanami bunkø, 1989). This source discusses the origins of the ubume legend and its relationship to birds, an aspect of the belief beyond the scope of this chapter. For Sekien's illustrations and text see Toriyama Sekien (Tanaka Hisao, ed.), Zuga Hyakki yagyø (Watanabe shoten, 1967), pp. 227-228.

[62] "Ubume no y¥rai no koto," in Kii zødan sh¥, pp. 85-87.

[63] See this temple's website at: <<http://www.people.or.jp/~ubume/>>. Especially note the

amulets section of the site: <<http://www.people.or.jp/~ubume/ofuda.htm>> and the origin legend: <<http://www.people.or.jp/~ubume/yurai-engi.htm>>.

[64] Køya monogatari, MJMT, v. 4 , pp. 547-567. Also see Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei, v. 54: Muromachi mongatarish¥, v. 1 (Iwanami shoten, 1989), pp. 327-350. Margaret Childs, Rethinking Sorrow, pp. 53-72. The text only survives in one extant manuscript, thought to date from the Muromachi period.

[65] The presentation of a kosode by the dead to the living as proof that contact was established is a common theme in medieval and kinsei ghost stories. See Tsutsumi Kunihiko, "Ano yo no shøkohin: kinsei setsuwa no naka no katasode reitan," in Setsuwa denshøgaku 7 (1999), pp. 131-146.

[66] haramite munashiku naritaru mono ha itodo tsumi fukaku sørøheba isogi hori okoshi hara no uchi naru hito wo tori idashi yoku yoku bodai wo tohite tahi sørøhe . From Køya monogatari, p. 557. Childs, p. 63, translates this as, "A child who dies in the womb is heavily burdened with obstacles to salvation. Hurry and dig up my body, remove the child from my womb, and give it a funeral." I believe, however, that the subject of the verb haramu here must be the woman and it follows that the person for whom services should be conducted is in fact the ghost herself, not her child.

[67] There are also European stories of the delivery of a child from the corpse. It is not unlikely that due to the bloating of the body after death, the baby would indeed be forced out of the mother's womb inside the grave. See Paul Barber,Vampires, Death, and Burial (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 138-139; Gélis, pp. 235-236. In the case of death in late pregnancy, French midwives would sometimes include needle and thread in the coffin so that the ghost could tie off the umbilical cord if needed. Doctors and churchmen thought that the fetus should be removed before burial.

[68] See Yanagita Kunio, "Akago tsuka no hanashi," in Kami o tasuketa hanashi (Teihon Yanagida Kunio sh¥, v. 12) (Chikuma shobø, 1969), pp. 214-229.

[69] This story, "Kokua shønin hosshin y¥rai no koto," is found in the Kii zødan sh¥, pp. 87-90. Here we are told that if Kokua had not offered the three sen every day, his wife would have become an ubume. Kanroji Chikanaga also refers to a Kokua hagiography in emaki format. See Chikanaga kyøki, in Shiryø taisei, v. 41. p. 8.

[70] See Tsutsumi Kunihiko "Kosodate y¥rei no genf¥kei: søsø girei o tegakari to shite," in Tsutsumi, Kinsei setsuwa to zensø (Izumi shoin, 1999), pp. 133-152. Also see Duncan Williams, Re-presentations of Zen: An Institutional and Social History of Søtø Zen Buddhism in Edo Japan (Doctoral dissertation, Harvard, 2000), Chapter Five.

[71] Katsurai Kazuo, "Kama no e ni kansuru kinki: taiji bunri no kosh¥ nøto," in Doi Takuji and Satø Yoneji, eds., Søsø bosei kenky¥ sh¥sei, v. 1, Søhø (Meichø shuppan, 1979), pp. 291-295; Minakata Kumagusu, "Haramifu no shigai yori taiji o hikihanasu koto," in Søsø bosei kenky¥ sh¥sei, v. 1, pp. 296-298. Also see Katsuda Itaru, "Sonraku no bosei to kazoku,"pp. 206-208.

[72] In a fascinating case from a little more than forty years ago, a woman died at full term and her family members and neighbors insisted that she could not be buried pregnant. A surgeon was hired to perform the extraction procedure. He removed twin girls from the woman's womb, the three were buried together in one coffin, and two certificates of stillbirth were submitted to the local registry. News of this incident reached the ears of local authorities who, concerned that laws against the desecration of corpses may have been violated, alerted the Ministry of Public Welfare. From there, the case went before the Ministry of Judicial Affairs which opened an official inquiry. The jurists decided that, while not to be encouraged, if dictated by local custom and performed by a doctor or midwife using a scalpel, postmortem fetal extraction does not constitute abuse. For the details of the case and the court's memorandum, see Yamaguchi

Yaichirø, "Shitai bunri maisø jiken: ninpu søsø girei," in Søsø bosei kenky¥ sh¥sei, v. 1, pp. 299-303.

[73] Carol Delaney, "Mortal Flow: Menstruation in Turkish Village Society," in Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottleib, eds., Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 93.

[74] shinite mo ko o omou michi ni mayou oyagokoro koso aware ni haberu. In the Kokon inu chomon sh¥, "Harami onna shinite ko o umu koto." Quoted in Tsutsumi, p. 133. Also see Kanazøshi sh¥sei, vol. 27-28 (Tøkyødø, 2000), pp. 78-79.

[75] See Saitø Minako, Ninshin shøsetsu (Chikuma shobø, 1994) pp. 8-10, 44-48. Saitø points out that the debut novels of both Oe Kenzaburo and Murakami Haruki were novels that took pregnancy as a central theme.

[76] Wakita, “Bosei,” 187-193, 203.

[77] See Kodate and Makino, p. 103; also see Hayashi Masahiko, Nihon no etoki and Hayashi Masahiko, "Kumano bikuni to etoki," in Hagiwara Tatsuo and Shinnø Toshikazu, eds., Bukkyø minzokugaku taikei 2: hijiri to minsh¥ (Meichø shuppan, 1986).

[78] This transformation lays the foundation of what would become in the late 20th century a major industry devoted to the pacification of aborted fetal spirits through prayers to Jizø, the practice known as mizuko kuyø. See Helen Hardacre, Marketing the Menacing Fetus in Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 30-45 for more on this pre-history of the mizuko boom.