

The Reception and Reworking of *Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations*: Chinese Works in Japan as Mediated through Printed Buddhist Texts

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Introduction

The early modern period in Japan (approximately the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century) was an era during which a lively publishing culture flourished, and books produced then enjoyed an avid readership. Texts introduced from China and Korea also came to be re-printed in Japan, first in old moveable-type editions (*kokatsuji-ban* 古活字版) and later in woodblock-printed editions (*seiban* 整版) with glosses added.

A notable standout among all this mass of publications is the morality book *Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzensho* 大明仁孝皇后勸善書 (The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations, hereafter called *Book of Exhortations*), which was originally published in China in 1407, during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). This twenty-volume Chinese work opens with a collection of edifying passages (*kagen* 嘉言) selected from Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist scriptures; these are then followed by a number of illustrative stories featuring various characters, adventures, and experiences.

Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫¹ was the first scholar to write about the appreciation of *Book of Exhortations* in Japan. Since then, Hwang Soyeon 黃昭淵 and Hanada Fujio 花田富二夫 have also published comprehensive discussions relating to *Book of Exhortations*. Hwang pointed out that the original Chinese version of *Book of Exhortations* influenced the development of ghost stories in Japan, as can be seen in *Otogi-bōko* 伽婢子 (1666). However, he states that it is doubtful whether the Japanese reproductions of *Book of Exhortations* had such a direct impact themselves:

¹ Sakai, *Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū*, p. 19.

From what Sakai has demonstrated regarding those locations where copies of it were held, it seems that the Chinese original was indeed available to a limited circle of people; nonetheless it is difficult to accurately judge whether the reception of *Book of Exhortations* was based on Japanese reproductions, on the Chinese original itself, or on some other text(s).²

For his part, Hanada states that he believes *Book of Exhortations* had only a tangential influence on early modern Japanese Buddhist stories about fate and karma.³

It should be stressed that both Hanada and Hwang, as commentators, consider *Book of Exhortations* to have been disseminated in Japan mostly through Chinese-language versions of the book, but nonetheless believe that its reception was also positively affected by other Chinese texts on morality. Furthermore, it should be noted that Hanada, Sakai, and Hwang all make mention of the fact that a domestic woodblock-printed re-production of *Book of Exhortations* was published in 1663 (Kanbun 寛文 3). As Sakai says, “A Kanbun 3 [1663] woodblock-print reproduction of *Excerpts from the Book of Exhortations* was being circulated among the public.”⁴ He seems to overlook, however, the fact that this text had been preceded by an earlier moveable-type edition of the Kan’ei 寛永 era (1624–1645).

The 1663 work discussed by Hanada, Sakai, and Hwang is not an edition of the original *Empress Renxiao’s Book of Exhortations*, but rather a domestic reproduction, with glossing points (*kunten* 訓点), of excerpts from that original in five volumes. Titled *Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzen sho bassui* 大明仁孝皇后勸善書拔萃 (Excerpts from the Ming Empress Renxiao’s Book of Exhortations, hereafter referred to as *Excerpts*), this shorter work was published in Japan during the Kan’ei era as a woodblock-printed edition. One copy of *Excerpts* can be found in Waseda University Library.⁵ The edition represented by this Waseda copy, which was printed with the name of its publisher, reveals that the text was first published in 1663 by Nishida Shōbee 西田勝兵衛 in Kyoto. Another copy—of an edition without the publisher’s name—is found in Ryukoku University Library’s Shajidai Bunko 写字台文庫 collection.⁶ A further copy still is owned by Taisho University Library,⁷ though the full details of its publication remain unknown because the final fifth volume is missing.

The Kan’ei-era moveable-type edition of *Excerpts* is referenced only in Kawase Kazuma’s 川瀬一馬 evaluation below:

² 漢籍は酒井氏が所蔵されている所を示しているように限定された範囲の人達が受容したようであるが、『勸善書』の受容が和刻本、漢籍、またはその他の書物によるものか正確に判断するのは容易なことではない。Hwang, “Chūgoku zensho no juyō to kaidan,” pp. 188–190.

³ Hanada, “Kinsei shoki sangyō shisō no ichi-shiryō,” p. 123.

⁴ 巷間には寛文三年の翻刻本『勸善書抜萃』が流布している。Sakai, *Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū*, p. 19.

⁵ Call number: 口09 03328 1-5.

⁶ Call number: 354-33-W-5.

⁷ Call number: 109/210/1-4.

Though the [underlying] work itself is one compiled in that land (=China), because this [text] represents a collection of extracts selected from that work—and then annotated—by one of our own countrymen, I include it here. The text in question is an (excerpted) *Book of Exhortations*. It was probably printed in Kan'ei 1 [1624], seeing that it makes use of the same moveable typeset used to print *Denpō shōshūki*, *Hon'yaku myōgishū*, and other works published in Kan'ei 7 [1630]. . . . According to its afterword, dated to the fall of Eiroku 永禄 1 [1558], [the text] was put together by Master Yōgyō 要行 (Ichū Nittō 一卯日統), a monk of Kenjitsu-ji 顕実寺 Temple at Hōjō-shō Matsuzaki 北条庄松崎 in Shimōsa 下総 Province, during a period of temporary residence in Izumi 和泉 Province at Chōgen-ji 頂源寺 Temple in Sakai 堺, and using selections from *Book of Exhortations* upon which he had given lectures.⁸

From Kawase's research, the following two points become clear. First, the moveable-type edition of *Excerpts* has long been overlooked. Second, this edition contains a postscript written by the text's editor, Nittō, which is not to be found in any of the woodblock-printed editions.

In this article, I discuss the following points regarding the reception and reworking of *Book of Exhortations* in Japan. First, I begin by pointing out the strong likelihood that the moveable-type edition of *Excerpts* was created as a result of significant interventions by the Nichiren 日蓮 sect. Second, I show why *Excerpts* did not influence the reception of *Book of Exhortations* in Japan, and also why in contrast the later compilation *Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzenshō kinrinshō* 大明仁孝皇后勸善書錦鱗鈔 (The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales, Kyōhō 享保 15 (1730)) is an example of a text that may indeed have had such an impact. With these points in mind, I reconsider *Book of Exhortations*' reception by introducing a new aspect of its Japanese publication history.

1. Background and Contents of the Moveable-Type Edition of *Book of Exhortations*

There are two known copies of the Kan'ei-era moveable-type edition of *Excerpts*, which has been overlooked in previous research. I have confirmed one copy in the Nagasawa 長澤 Bunko collection of Kansai University Library (hereafter referred to as the Kansai University copy)⁹ and another in the library of Taisho University.

The Kansai University copy is a complete text. It contains, moreover, a postscript by Nittō, the editor of the *Excerpts* collection, one which is not found in

⁸ なほこれは彼の地の編著をわが国人が抄出して注記を添へたものであるから、ここに附載する。それは「勸善書（抜書）」である。寛永七年刊伝法正宗記・翻訳名義集その他と同種活字印本で寛永初年の印行であらう。〔中略〕永禄元年仲秋の跋文に拠れば、下総国北条庄松崎顕実寺の住侶、要行律師（一卯日統）が泉州堺の頂源寺在住の際抜書きして講じたものを纏めたといふ。Kawase, *Zōho kokatsujī-ban no kenkyū*, pp. 834–835.

⁹ The Kansai University copy (call number: L23**C*3048–50) bears a slightly different title: *Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzenshō nukigaki* 大明仁孝皇后勸善書抜書.

the Kanbun 3 (1663) reproduction or other editions afterwards. The postscript reads:

余、和泉堺の頂源寺在津の砌、春より秋に至るまで、勸善書二十卷、時時管見を加へ、節節之を披閱す。漸次周覽し畢はり、全部書写せんとすれば、且つは広博にして為に遅筆に堪へ難く、且つは緩慢にして為に博覽に及び難し。愚意の思ふ所、短慮の及ぶ所、抜書する所の者五冊なり。近年、都鄙の間、学者翫ぶ所の章疏伝記数多有りと雖も、[1] 此の書未だ流布せず。尤も珍敷物語等、之有るか。覽く之を秘蔵し、[2] 聊かも他見に及ぶこと莫れ。仮令秘密深法と為すと雖も、漏れ散じて多く人口に有るは頗る無念なる者なり。秘する所は唯だ此に在るのみ。豈に永禄元年稔（戊午）仲秋中旬終なり。下総州北条庄松崎郷顯実寺住侶要行律師一卯日統誌す。

When I was staying at Chōgen-ji Temple in Sakai in Izumi Province, from spring to autumn, I would often pore over the twenty volumes of *Book of Exhortations*, occasionally adding my own observations [to the text]. Once I had finally finished my reading, I attempted to copy the whole thing, but it was an onerous task with my slow writing skills because of [the text's] sheer size, a difficult task with so much [text] to cover given my own slothful character. In the end, to the best of my limited understanding and bounded wisdom, I made a collection of excerpts in five volumes. Even though in recent years, both in the Capital and in the Provinces there are many commentaries and biographies indeed for scholars to amuse themselves with, [1] this text (= *Book of Exhortations*) has not yet been widely disseminated. Still, can there be any stories even more unusual [than the ones in this book]? For the time being, it is something to keep hidden, [2] and we should certainly not show it to anyone on the outside. However cryptic and esoteric it might well be, [this text] is still something it would be extremely regrettable to see leak out, and be bruited about by the masses at large. This (=the temple) is the only place where it can be kept secure.

As written by Master Yōgyō Ichū Nittō, a monk of Kenjitsu-ji Temple at Hōjō-shō Matsuzaki-gō 北条庄松崎郷, Shimōsa Province, at the end of mid-autumn in Eiroku 永禄 1 [1558].

From this postscript—especially the clauses “[I]his text has not yet been widely disseminated” and “We should certainly not show it to anyone on the outside”—it is clear that *Book of Exhortations* had indeed already been introduced to Japan by Eiroku 1 (1558), but had also not yet been widely disseminated, being kept in secret in the Nichiren-sect Chōgen-ji Temple. In other words, it is clear that the original text of which Nittō speaks here was not easily available to anyone outside of a restricted circle. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine that even potential readers at that time who enjoyed such access could have actually browsed the original text as needed and according to their interests, given that the text in this form was a large twenty-volume manuscript with a dauntingly vast amount of content. *Book of Exhortations* would probably therefore have been enjoyed through *Excerpts*, or through other morality books that it inspired.

Simply put, it should be presumed that the Japanese reproduction of *Excerpts*, being the most easily available version of the original work, played a central role

in that work's dissemination. In spite of this, as Hwang has pointed out, the influence of *Excerpts* on later generations seems to have long been underappreciated by scholars. This is no doubt owed to the fact that, while there are many examples of *Book of Exhortations* itself being used in publications of the early modern period, the same cannot be said in the case of *Excerpts*.

One reason for this lack of recognition afforded to *Excerpts* derives from the circumstances surrounding its compilation. In the postscript to *Excerpts*, we are told that its editor, Nittō, compiled it from a copy of *Book of Exhortations* that was held at Chōgen-ji Temple in Izumi Province (currently the city of Sakai, Osaka Prefecture). At the time, Nittō was a well-known Nichiren-sect priest, while Chōgen-ji Temple—where *Book of Exhortations* was held—had been constructed by the Nichiren priest Nisshū 日祝 (1427–1513) in 1533, and functioned also as a school for the sect. According to the *Nichirensbū jiten* 日蓮宗事典 (Nichiren-Sect Encyclopedia), Nittō, after studying at Mt. Hiei 比叡 during the Genki 元龜 (1570–1572) era, was assigned to Chōgen-ji Temple, where he edited the work *Nichiren shōnin ibun* 日蓮聖人遺文 (Documents on the Venerable Nichiren) together with monks Nichikō 日珙 (1532–1598) and Nichikō 日航 (dates unknown).¹⁰ It seems, in other words, that while in residence at that temple, Nittō was both working on compiling *Book of Exhortations* and editing *Nichiren shōnin ibun* at the same time.

Even from the postscript alone, therefore, it becomes quite apparent that *Excerpts* is a text closely associated with the Nichiren sect. The text's relationship with the Nichiren sect can also be inferred by analyzing the details of its compilation. To begin with, *Excerpts* was not assembled from *Book of Exhortations* in any mechanical fashion. This is clear from the fact that there are significant differences in the number of stories that *Excerpts* selected from each volume of *Book of Exhortations* (table 1).

Since Nittō advises in *Excerpts*, “We should certainly not show it to anyone on the outside,” it is not likely that the stories were selected with the intention of making them widely available. The selection appears, instead, to have been determined by the degree to which Nittō found the stories of personal interest or of utility in promoting the values of his sect.

The editing process that produced *Excerpts* therefore reflected both Nittō's own interests and his Nichiren sectarian purposes. This is made clear by differences in the number of selections taken per volume from the *Book of Exhortations* source text.

The most eye-catching numbers here can be found in connection with the eighth and twelfth volumes. *Excerpts* selected thirty-six stories from the twelfth volume of *Book of Exhortations* but only one story from the eighth volume. Why did such an imbalance occur?

¹⁰ *Nichirensbū jiten*, p. 683.

Table 1. The Selection Policy of *Excerpts from the Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations*: Breakdown per Volume

<i>Excerpts</i> Volume	<i>Book of Exhortations</i> (original)	
	Source Volume	Number of Stories Selected
1	1	9
	2	25
	3	16
	4	19
2	5	24
	6	4
	7	10
	8	1
3	9	14
	10	5
	11	30
	12	36
4	13	11
	14	16
	15	16
	16	25
	17	7
5	18	13
	19	20
	20	8

When I reviewed volume 8 of *Book of Exhortations* to determine the reason for such a disparity, I found that 108 of the 130 stories there included were related to the *Diamond Sutra* (*Kongōkyō* 金剛經). Significantly, the only story from volume 8 that was selected for *Excerpts*—Episode 103—contains the words “In front of the Buddhist altars, [the monk] burned incense and read the whole *Lotus Sutra* as well as the whole of the *Diamond Sutra*.”¹¹ Clearly, in order to be chosen for inclusion in *Excerpts*, the selected story required, at the very least, some mention of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Indeed, the focus Nittō places on the *Lotus Sutra* overall is striking. For example, seven of the ten episodes chosen for *Excerpts* from volume 7 of *Book of Exhortations* have their ultimate source in the *Lotus Sutra*. Moreover, if we compare the number of selections made from volumes 7 and 8 of *Book of Exhortations*, Nittō's degree of preference for the *Lotus Sutra* is stark. This is in line with the predilections

¹¹ 就仏前焚香持誦蓮華經一部金剛經一七卷。Vol. 8, Episode 103. Though here the original has 一七卷 for the one-volume *Diamond Sutra*, I have translated above as if it read 一卷.

of the Nichiren sect—also known as the Hokke 法華 (or Lotus) sect—which favored the *Lotus Sutra* over all others. We can therefore conclude, quite correctly in my opinion, that Nittō was actively biased in his selections to the extent that he downgraded episodes taken from the *Diamond Sutra* out of his preference for those relating to the *Lotus Sutra*.

I believe it would also be fair to say that Nittō's selections from *Book of Exhortations* were motivated above all by his desire to reflect the interests of the Nichiren sect, to which he belonged, rather than reflecting any overwhelming desire on his own part to make *Excerpts* available to a wider public.

One reason for the confusion that has developed around this work can be traced back to the facts of its publication, which was undertaken without the permission of its editor. It remains unknown how the manuscript itself was spirited out of the temple and thereafter commercially printed; however, it can be presumed that this first edition—what is known as the moveable-type version—still had Nittō's postscript accompanying it, allowing its background to be inferred by anyone who might read it. This postscript, however, was omitted from the woodblock-version reprint of Kanbun 3. My presumption is that this happened because the new edition's publisher, Nishida Shōbee, hoped thereby to resolve the contradiction that would arise from his publication of *Excerpts* with a postscript that essentially said, "Do not show this to outsiders." And indeed, as a result of that postscript's deletion, most readers of *Excerpts*, even to this day, remain unaware of the work's deep connections to the Nichiren sect.

Previous studies have posed the question of why early-modern Japanese *ruisho* 類書—encyclopedia-style books in the Chinese tradition that classify and collate, by topic, information taken from a variety of sources—do not often use the moveable-type edition of *Excerpts* as a direct source. Per the results of my investigation, however, as noted previously, it would have been clear that this Japanese reproduction of the work, compiled by a Nichiren Buddhist monk, had certainly not been even-handed in its stance toward the "Three Religions" (*sangyō* 三教): Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. Consequently, it is unlikely that intellectuals at the time, who preferred to use Chinese books in their original form from the continent, would have enjoyed a text with such a skewed background. As a result, it is rare to find references to *Excerpts* in early-modern *ruisho*.

2. *Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales: The Translation*

In the previous section, it was made clear that *Book of Exhortations* had found favor in early modern Japan without having to rely on *Excerpts*. More important was the 1730 reworking of *Excerpts* into another domestically-produced edition—a translation—in seven volumes, entitled *The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales* (hereafter *Brocade Scales*).

By referencing the catalogue of the Kansai University Library Nakamura Yukihiro Bunko 中村幸彦 collection, I was able to confirm that the copy of *Brocade Scales*

they possess contains all seven of the work's volumes, but lacks the original title on the cover.¹² Conversely, the Bukkyo University Library copy, though indeed lacking volume 4, includes—according to the library's bibliographic information—the cover title *Kange innen kanzen kinrinsbō* 勸化因縁勸善錦鱗鈔 (Karmic Admonitions: Exhortations in Brocade Scales).¹³

The preface to *Brocade Scales* indicates its year, place of completion, and author: “In the middle of the ninth month of Kyōhō 15 [1730], by Hōzui at the Raigidō in Kyoto.”¹⁴ The beginning of the text also bears the attribution “Hōzui of Raigidō, Kyoto” 神洛 来儀堂 鳳瑞, so there can be no mistaking the authorship. The edition provides, moreover, the details of its publication: “Co-published by Namikawa Jinzaburō, Kuriyama Uhee, Arakawa Genbee, Yagi Hachirobee, and Hirai Goroemon on the fifth day of the ninth month, Kyōhō 15 [1730], in the Imperial City.”¹⁵

Furthermore, it should be noted that *Brocade Scales* was listed in a book catalog (*shojaku mokuroku* 書籍目録) published in Hōreki 宝暦 4 (1754), under the section containing texts relating to the Pure Land sect (Jōdoshū 浄土宗; **fig. 1**). In the modern *Kokusbō sōmokuroku* 国書総目録 (General Catalogue of Japanese Writings), it is also listed as a text of the True Pure Land (Jōdo shinshū 浄土真宗) sect, and likewise in the database built upon that catalogue text, the “Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books.”¹⁶

This wealth of data can be considered strong evidence of a heretofore unimagined aspect of *Brocade Scales*: namely that the work should, perhaps surprisingly, yet nevertheless unequivocally, be regarded as an example of a *kangebon* 勸化本 text—i.e., as belonging to that category of popular Buddhist books aimed at proselytization, which represented an important source of income for religious orders.

Ushiroshōji Kaoru 後小路薫 was the first scholar to identify *kangebon* as a distinct type of popular Buddhist text that appeared in the early modern period. Ushiroshōji went on to compile *Abbreviated Chronology of Kangebon Publications of the Early Modern Era* (rev. and exp. ed.) 増訂 近世勸化本刊行略年表.¹⁷ In the process of doing so, he concluded that the first *kangebon* was *Shūmon kōkaku* 宗門綱格 (1602), and that it was written by Nichiken 日乾 (1560–1635).

¹² Call number: ナ2-98-1.

¹³ Call number: 旧247.4 124. Details on the text can be viewed at: https://bukkyo.userservices.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=81BU_INST&rft_id=info:siid%2Fsummon&rft_dat=ie%3D21301624100006201,language%3Dja&svc_dat=CTO&u.ignore_date_coverage=true&vid=81BU_INST:Services&Force_direct=false.

¹⁴ 時に享保十五年九月中澣神洛来儀堂において鳳瑞自叙。

¹⁵ 皆享保十五庚戌辰九月五日／皇都書舗／并河甚三郎／栗山宇兵衛／荒川源兵衛／八木八郎兵衛／平井五郎右衛門／同刊。

¹⁶ Given there as *Kange kinrinsbō* 勸化錦鱗鈔. See: http://dbrec.nijl.ac.jp/KTG_W_4352072.

¹⁷ Ushiroshōji, *Kangebon no kenkyū*, p. 607.

一	五	一	六	一	三	五	一	五	三	七	一
專	文	大	勸	和	阿	說	願	勸	圓	勸	香
雜	覺	經	化	字	彌	法	文	化	光	化	月
甄	行	略	富	三	陀	語	纂	演	大	錦	五
陶	畧	箋	樓	心	和	園	註	能	師	鱗	系
篇	鈔	附	那	要	讚	鈔		鈔	祕	鈔	諸
		錄	辨	集	集				傳		遺
					註						事
文	南	是	圓	辨	諦	盤	一	不	隆	見	
雄	真	湛	應	阿	忍	潭	音	著	寬	阿	

Figure 1. Page from a 1754 (Hōreki 4) *shojaku mokuroku* 書籍目録 (book catalogue) listing Hōzui's 鳳瑞 compilation *The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales* (Dai-Min Jinkō kōgō kanzensho kinrinshō 太明仁孝皇后勸善書錦鱗鈔). Here the text appears in the second column from the right, where its title is given as *Kange kinrinsho* 勸化錦鱗鈔. National Diet Library (call number: 856-35). <https://doi.org/10.11501/2539882> (image 19).

However, the full count of *kangebon* as Ushiroshōji defines them gives, I believe, an inflated total. In reality, most writers of *kangebon* were Pure Land-sect or True Pure Land-sect priests. A representative example is Asai Ryōi 浅井了意 (d. 1691), who also worked on popular Buddhist commentary texts (*kusuimono* 鼓吹物) such as *Zen'aku inga kyō jikige* 善惡因果經直解, published in 1666. It is appropriate, therefore, to regard *kangebon*—in general—as a type of text closely connected with the Pure Land or True Pure Land sects. As I have discovered from my own research, as a general rule, *kangebon* usually actually include the word *kange* 勸化 in the title.

In the case of *Brocade Scales*, the Bukkyo University Library copy was titled *Kange innen kanzen kinrinshō* on its cover. It can therefore be regarded as a *kangebon* in the narrow sense, by which I mean literally having the term *kange* in its title. The preface states the book's purpose as follows (emphasis added; **fig. 2**):

然に永樂二年垂簾の余、三教の嘉言・勸懲の典故を輯略し、『勸善書』廿卷を撰で修身齊家の金鏡に備玉ふ。予、平日この編を閲毎に、一唱三嘆すといへども、黄口の児、其の理味を嘗めざるを憾み、平俗勸化の一助に充るの精要を撮り、五件の標題を立、聊か俚諺を備ひ、卷を七に分て『錦鱗鈔』と名け、一、二の童蒙に与んと筆を馳の刻み、書肆来て梓に登んと乞ふ。頻りに三辭すといへども、肯ぜず。敢て以て其の需に応ず。



Figure 2. Preface to *Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales*. Nakamura Yukihiro Bunko 中村幸彦文庫 Collection, Kansai University Library (call number: Na 2-98-1). <https://doi.org/10.20730/100060984> (images 3–4).

Thus it was that in the curtained leisure of Yongle 永樂 2 [1404], [Empress Renxiao] made her selection of edifying passages and stories to exhort and chastise from [the writings of] the Three Religions, compiling the twenty volumes of *Book of Exhortations* to fashion a “golden mirror of morals,” as an aid to man in preparing himself and his family for life. Whenever I read this book myself, at every recited passage I sigh three times, and have yet felt deep regret that the youth still green in experience remained unable to taste and savor its wonders. I undertook, then, to extract its essence, that it might serve **as teaching material to improve the religious beliefs of commoners**. I set up five broad topics, employing the vulgar parlance here and there, and divided the whole into seven volumes and named it *Brocade Scales*, intending to give it to one or two young men still wet behind the ears. Yet just as my pen was thus speeding along, a publisher came and asked me if he might publish the thing. Three times I declined again and again, but he would not give up. I ultimately had no choice but to acquiesce to the request.

Per the underlined text, which states that the work is “teaching material to improve the religious beliefs of commoners,” the author, Hōzui, makes it clear that the book’s purpose is *kange*—that is, to proselytize—but also to provide funding for the sect itself. Because these details suggest that *Brocade Scales* can be considered a *kangebon*, i.e., a type of text associated with the Pure Land or True Pure Land sects, it has been widely thought that Hōzui too was closely connected to one of these sects himself.

3. The Contents and Publishers of *Brocade Scales*

Even if *Brocade Scales* is a *kangebon*, however, it should not be immediately regarded as a work associated exclusively with the Pure Land or True Pure Land sect. In fact, the original text and sources for this work, together with the details of its publication, suggest quite the opposite: to wit, that we should view it, in fact, as a text closely related to the Nichiren sect of Buddhism.

Let us consider, then, the sources for *Brocade Scales*.

First, I would like to describe the original text of *Brocade Scales*. Unlike *Excerpts*, on which it was based, *Brocade Scales* does not make use of selections from *Book of Exhortations* strictly in their order of appearance in that source text, beginning with volume 1. What is more, it makes an effort to ensure that its sources are clearly indicated, including references for each story. For example, the end of one volume notes, “See volume 4 of *Book of Exhortations*.”¹⁸ Additionally, as we can locate a full 106 of *Brocade Scales*’ total 110 episodes in *Excerpts*, there can be no doubt that the former owes the majority of its lifeblood to the latter.

The problem, and some of the confusion around *Brocade Scales*’ provenance, arose because of that very feature of source-indication, whose details are often incorrect. As is clear from **table 2**, which shows cases of erroneous attribution in listed sources, such mistakes can be found in eight different stories. Among these, only Episode 32 in the “Karma” section (hereafter *Brocade Scales* episodes are cited in the format “Karma 32,” etc.)—described as “A story about being gored by a cow because of a lodging fee not paid” and found in volume 2—was listed correctly as coming from volume 19 of *Book of Exhortations*. Since the errors delineated here involve not only *Book of Exhortations* but also *Excerpts*, it seems that the author of *Brocade Scales* did not actually see the originals of either text. We might speculate that he quite possibly received *Excerpts* in an incorrectly copied manuscript form. Furthermore, the notes putatively accompanying such a manuscript probably contained an account to the effect that the various stories were recorded only in *Book of Exhortations*; leading him to write his own manuscript in reference to that information.

I would like to emphasize that it has been said that the reception of *Book of Exhortations* in the early modern period did not depend on the availability of the Japanese reproduction in *Excerpts*. Moreover, it is also puzzling that *Brocade Scales* has been considered a *kangebon* connected only to the Pure Land or True Pure Land sect because, as I have already pointed out, *Excerpts* was a Nichiren-sect text.

Next, I take a closer look at the contents of *Brocade Scales*.

It should be noted that even the ten episodes mentioned as being supplied with incorrect references in **table 2** include at least three episodes relating to merit or beneficence in connection with the *Lotus Sutra*. Were it the case that

¹⁸ 勧善書卷之四ニ見タリ。Vol. 1, Episode 10.

Table 2. Attribution Errors in *The Ming Empress Renxiao's Book of Exhortations in Brocade Scales*

<i>Brocade Scales Episode</i> (volume, category: heading)	Source as Listed in <i>Brocade Scales</i>	Actual Source in <i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i>	Presence in <i>Excerpts</i>
Vol. 1, Karma 9: <i>A story about money saved by a wife that became a bug and flew away because of stinginess</i>	“ <i>Keishinroku</i> ” 稽神録	(not included, source unknown)	—
Vol. 1, Karma 10: <i>A story about a wife who became a large snake because she despised her husband</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 4	Vol. 15	—
Vol. 1, Karma 11: <i>A story about a family being eradicated because they cut down a sacred tree</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 4	Vol. 15	2–5
Vol. 2, Karma 31: <i>A story about a mother and child dying because they killed a sheep and cooked it on their birthday</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 19	Vol. 20	—
Vol. 2, Karma 32: <i>A story about being gored by a cow because of a lodging fee not paid</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 19	Vol. 19	—
Vol. 3, Miracles 9: <i>A story about a pheasant being reborn as a human being thanks to listening to the Lotus Sutra</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 12	Vol. 9	1–7
Vol. 3, Miracles 10: <i>A story about lotus flowers emerging from a skeleton after death, thanks to the Lotus Sutra having been read</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 12	Vol. 9	1–8
Vol. 3, Miracles 11: <i>A story about a woman who read the Lotus Sutra being saved from a boat accident</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 12	Vol. 9	1–9
Vol. 4, Miracles 21: <i>A story in which problems all over the country were mysteriously resolved thanks to a profound sense of compassion</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 12	Vol. 11	2–3
Vol. 4, Miracles 26: <i>A story about a poor woman who lived in a place without spring water being supplied with it through the Grace of Heaven</i>	<i>Book of</i> <i>Exhortations</i> , vol. 13	Vol. 12	3–23

Brocade Scales and its author, Hōzui, had a close relationship to either the Pure Land or the True Pure Land sect, this would be unusual, given that the *Lotus Sutra* is not associated with those sects. The basic Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect scriptures are rather the three major Pure Land sutras (*Jōdo sanbukyō* 浄土三部経): the *Larger Sukhāvātīyūba Sutra* (*Muryōjūkyō* 無量寿経), the *Shorter Sukhāvātīyūba Sutra* (*Amidaikyō* 阿弥陀経), and the *Amitayurdhyāna Sutra* (*Kanmuryōjūkyō* 観無量寿経). In both Pure Land and True Pure Land Buddhism, devotion to Amitabha (Amida 阿弥陀) is the first priority, and accordingly, in *kangebon* the main focus is

generally on the merits of Amitabha. However, none of the stories in *Brocade Scales* mentions Amitabha, providing yet further indication that its affinities with the Pure Land or True Pure Land sects are extremely slight. On the contrary, the content of *Brocade Scales* plainly indicates its deep affinities with the Nichiren sect. It is clear, therefore, that it cannot be regarded as a book connected with either the Pure Land or the True Pure Land sect.

Finally, I note the publishers of *Brocade Scales*. If we consider the character of *kangebon* in general, it seems natural to imagine that publishers who had already produced Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect *kangebon* in the past would have been engaged to work on *Brocade Scales* should it, too, have been a book associated with either of those sects. However, none of *Brocade Scales*' five publishers had worked on *kangebon* before. Nor is this all: Namikawa Jinzaburō, a publisher well known to be connected with the Nichiren sect, is described as the publisher¹⁹ of *Brocade Scales* in 1730, in publication records of the time in Edo (i.e., the *wari-inchō* 割印張). Not only, then, is the leading publisher of *Brocade Scales* positively identified, but so too, by association, is the work's connection to the Nichiren sect. A survey of Namikawa Jinzaburō's publications is shown in **table 3**.

Of Namikawa's eight publications, five of which were clearly published before *Brocade Scales*, all were written by Nichiren Buddhist monks. In addition, the 1699 publication *Hokke gisho*, which is considered to be the earliest of his publications, was actually a commentary by the Chinese monk Ji Zang 吉藏 (549–623), and one dedicated moreover to the Nichiren sect's fundamental scripture, the *Lotus Sutra*, as the title clearly indicates. Six of the remaining titles can also be regarded as related to the Nichiren sect. This alone makes the depth of Namikawa's relationship with the Nichiren sect unmistakable.

Another clue is to be found in the titles in the list attributed to Nichidatsu 日達 (1674–1747), who was a well-known scholar of the Nichiren sect at the time. He was appointed head of Honkoku-ji 本国寺 Temple in Kyoto in 1720, and even after retiring in 1728, he pursued vigorous disputes in print not merely against the Pure Land, True Pure Land, and Kegon 華嚴 sects but also in opposition to Shinto and Confucianism. As one of the printers who helped publish Nichidatsu's texts, Namikawa Jinzaburō's cooperation in these attacks means that his relationship with their author was hardly a superficial one.

In addition, of Namikawa's publications, three were co-published with Yagi Hachirobee 八木八郎兵衛, who also co-published *Brocade Scales*. It is moreover known that another of the work's printers, Kuriyama Uhee 栗山宇兵衛, was likewise himself a publisher for the Nichiren sect.

In summary, therefore, I believe that *Excerpts* was used as the foundation for *Brocade Scales*. This seems reasonable because *Brocade Scales* employs stories from *Excerpts* that focus on merit; these stories are themselves derived from the *Lotus*

¹⁹ Asakura and Yamato, *Kyōhō igo Edo shuppan shomoku shinteiban*, p. 18.

Table 3. Namikawa Jinzaburō's Publication History and Collaborators

Year	Title	Author	Co-publishers
1699	<i>Hokke gisho</i> 法華義疏	Ji Zang 吉藏	Yagi Hachirobee 八木八郎兵衛
1710	<i>Jippu nimon shiyōshō shukō</i> 十不二門指要鈔集考	Nichikan 日觀	Katsura Jinshirō 桂甚四郎 Yamato Shōjirō 山戸勝次郎 Yoshida Kichibee 吉田吉兵衛
1712	<i>Min'yu keshuroku</i> 愍諭繫珠錄	Nichidatsu 日達	
1716	<i>San'in zatsuroku</i> 山陰雜錄	Nichidatsu	Hasegawa Chōemon 長谷川長右衛門
1720	<i>Shogaku shinanshō</i> 初学指南鈔	Mōri Teisai 毛利貞斎	Yagi Hachirobee
1720	<i>Shinbutsu myōōron</i> 神仏冥応論	Nichidatsu	Yagi Hachirobee
1723	<i>Yobō guntan</i> 鷹峰群譚	Nichidatsu	Yagi Hachirobee
1729	<i>Zōshi</i> 象志		Kimura Ichirobee 木村市郎兵衛 Uemura Tōzaburō 植村藤三郎 Yasui Kahee 安井嘉兵衛
1730	<i>Kanzensho kinrinsbō</i> 勸善書錦鱗鈔	Hōzui 鳳瑞	Yagi Hachirobee Kuriyama Uhee 栗山宇兵衛 Hirai Goroemon 平井五郎右衛門 Arakawa Genbee 荒川源兵衛
1732	<i>Shugen koji binran</i> 修験故事便覽	Nichiei 日栄	
1733	<i>Ken'yō shōriron</i> 顯揚正理論	Nichidatsu	
1736	<i>Ketsumaku myōgenron</i> 決膜明眼論	Nichidatsu	
1738	<i>Ju fuju ketsugishō</i> 受不受決疑鈔	Nichidatsu	
1743	<i>Hokke bonjaku setsubō</i> 法華本迹雪謗	Nichidatsu	Hinoya Rokubee 日野屋六兵衛
1746	<i>Kashaku bōbōshō</i> 呵責謗法鈔	Nippō 日芳	Hinoya Rokubee
1750	<i>Goshaku shōbōshō</i> 護惜正法鈔	Nichiken 日顯	Yao Seibee 八尾清兵衛
1794	<i>Kōyōgi</i> 光揚義	Nichiken	

Sutra, which, conversely, does not mention Amitabha. There is also the fact that *Brocade Scales* was printed by publishers known to be deeply involved with the Nichiren sect. There can be no doubt, therefore, that *Brocade Scales* is a Nichiren-sect publication and thus cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect *kangebon*.

4. *Brocade Scales* as an Example of Buddhist Syncretism

Although *Brocade Scales* uses the term *kange* in its title and preface, there is an almost overwhelming body of evidence proving the work's strong Nichiren-sect character, both in its publication background and in the nature of its content.

I consider this book to be an example of what we might call a syncretism between different sects, which occurred as a result of early modern publications. But what is syncretism? As I pointed out in another article,²⁰ the second principal of the True Pure Land-sect Nishi Hongan-ji 西本願寺 School, Chikū 知空 (1634–1718), for example, wrote a manuscript titled *Jōdo wakumon kōin* 浄土或問 鉤隱 (1657), a commentary on an earlier work, *Jōdo wakumon* 浄土或問 (established in the fourteenth century), itself a commentary by the Ming-dynasty Chan priest Zhu Hong 祿宏 (1535–1615). However, *Jōdo wakumon kōin* was probably used and referenced, published, and propagated as a so-called headnote book (i.e., with annotations at the top of the text) without Chikū's permission.

The problem of correct sect attribution thus lies in the publication history of *Jōdo wakumon*. At the time of its printing, the publisher had the Pure Land-sect priest Taizen 諦全 (dates unknown) write a supplement to this work. Since Chikū's name and his True Pure Land-sect connections and annotations are not specified as such, the book was—incorrectly—received as a commentary with a strong Pure Land-sect character. This can, therefore, be regarded as a case of syncretism between Pure Land- and True Pure Land-sect teachings that arose in the course of publication.

Publishing, which can be considered a major characteristic of modern culture, thus not only freed the original text and its attributes from being restricted to the sole domain of its traditional recipients, but also played a role in propagating the text to a completely different community. Books that had been viewed as documents unique to each denomination or sect up through the medieval period were no exception to this trend. Once such a property had been caught up in the tide of the wider world of mainstream publishing, books quickly became the property of other readers.

It is in this manner that formerly sectarian doctrines, for a while, realized a degree of syncretism. The fact that, for example, *Brocade Scales*, a Nichiren text authored by a Nichiren priest, was put on the market as an ostensibly Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect text—coupled with the appellation of *kange*—meant that it was

²⁰ Kimura, “Kinsei zenki no batten chūyaku,” pp. 74–79.

consequently broadly accepted by an audience that otherwise would have been hesitant to have been seen reading it. This can surely be considered a *prima facie* example of syncretism.

With this theme of syncretism in mind, I would like to follow, as far as possible, the actual path that the publication of *Brocade Scales* took.

It seems likely that the publication process was influenced by that of other *kangebon*. The earliest early modern example of *kangebon* in the narrow sense of the term—that is, publications with *kange* or *kangebon* in the title—is *Jōdo kange hyōmokusshō* 浄土勸化標目章, written by the Pure Land-sect monk Shinkai 真海 (dates unknown) in 1683. As I have pointed out in a separate article,²¹ it seems that Shinkai's work was originally published as *Jōdo kange kōin* 浄土勸化鉤引 during the Kanbun era (1661–1673). We thus have in this work an example of a Pure Land-sect publication with *kange* in its title from as early as the 1660s.

Following this publication, other *kangebon* appeared one after another in rapid profusion. In 1685, the True Pure Land-sect monk Gentei 玄貞 (dates unknown) produced *Jōdo shūyō bentaishō* 浄土宗要弁対鈔, having added the appellation *Seppō innen jōdo kange bentaishō* 説法因縁浄土勸化弁対抄 to the cover. The following year, *Jōdo kange shūjinsō* 浄土勸化衆人鈔 was published, although its author remains unknown. The year after that, the same Gentei wrote *Ōjō ronchū kange kōshaku* 往生論註勸化講釈. Thereafter, this work was serially published in 1689 as *Jōdo kange sangoku ōjoden* 浄土勸化三国往生伝, in 1691 as *Goden kangeshō* 御伝勸化鈔, then in 1692 as *Kange innen kannon kyō kusui* 勸化因縁観音経鼓吹, and again in 1693 as *Anrakushū kange kōshaku* 安樂集勸化講釈. After that, *kangebon* were published annually, to the point that notably in 1695 and 1700, three such books per year were published. The proliferation of *kangebon* in the twenty years from the end of the Tenna 天和 era (1681–1684) to the end of the Genroku 元禄 era (1688–1704) is tremendous, with even a cursory count revealing at least twenty-one such publications. By 1730, when *Brocade Scales* was published, at least thirty-eight texts of this category had made their appearance.

Thus, after appearing at the end of the seventeenth century, *kangebon* had become established as a major genre within the space of half a century. The reason that publishers actively solicited *kangebon* was because these books were anticipated to become best sellers. This is clear from the fact that all of the then newly-emerging publishers, who would have still been few in number, had begun publishing these religious texts. It is no wonder, then, that publishers from other denominations took notice. Indeed, publishers related to the Nichiren sect, such as Namikawa Jinzaburō, even became thriving participants within this expanding field.

Yet in the early days of this new venture, it would surely have been appropriate to anticipate risks. In the first place, this was because the main customers for Nichiren-sect publishers would mainly have been people associated with that

²¹ Kimura, “Genshin haha, kangen no waka,” p. 146.

sect. Moreover, since *kangebon* were originally connected with the Pure Land and True Pure Land sects, Nichiren monks did not initially view these works in a positive light. There would have been every reason to believe that, at first, even the term *kange* would lead to readers' rejection of a text. Even so, the trend toward *kangebon* was so strong that *Brocade Scales* was eventually successfully published.

It does seem, however, that publishers were thorough in their risk management. *Brocade Scales* was thus shouldered not by one printer alone but was co-produced by five publishers. Standard practice would rarely see as many as five different publishers jointly produce a *kangebon*. Co-publishing was not often used as a means of risk-management for such religious texts, which were expected, at the time, to sell quite reliably. Thus it seems that *Brocade Scales* was considered a possible money loser. And this riskiness was because it was a *kangebon* published by Nichiren-sect publishers.

Risk-mitigation also seems to have extended to its reputed author, Hōzui. I believe it can be reasonably assumed that he was connected with the Nichiren sect. We may assume so, first of all, because, as mentioned above, if Hōzui had been a Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect monk, it would have been uncharacteristic not to include references to Amitabha in the text. In addition to this, the circumstances surrounding *Brocade Scales*' publication offer another clue to its pedigree. Of course, it is well known that publishers of texts for one religious denomination often asked monks of another denomination to produce books for them.²² There was, therefore, no fundamental aversion to having texts written by Pure Land- or True Pure Land-sect monks being printed by Nichiren-sect publishers. At the same time, however, insofar as the preface makes clear, the Nichiren monk Hōzui seems to have drawn up plans to have the book published prior to any request from the publishers to produce it.

Furthermore, the text that was used as source material for *Brocade Scales* was Nittō's *Excerpts*. While this latter work may not have been widely available at the time, we can presume that its manuscript may have been in the possession of Nichiren-sect officials who were prepared to use it.

Another detail worth noting is that, in its preface, the term *kange* is explicitly used, such as in *heizoku kange no ichijo ni ateru* 平俗勸化の一助に充る ("as teaching material to improve the religious beliefs of commoners"). Even if I do find the preponderance of evidence to be such that we should assume Hōzui was a Nichiren Buddhist priest, we must nevertheless recognize that it would have been uncomfortable for a priest of that sect to use the term *kange* in the title, given its association with other sects. Therefore, I believe we would be correct in

²² For example, the famous *kana-zōshi* writer Asai Ryōi was a priest of the Ōtani 大谷 school of the True Pure Land sect, yet he wrote *Mitsugon shonin gyōjōki* 密嚴上人行狀記 (1672), a biography of Kakuban 覚鑊 (1095–1143), the founder of the Shingō 新義 school of the Shingon 真言 sect. He moreover went on to see this published by the Shingon-sect publisher Maekawa Moemon 前川茂右衛門. See Kimura, "Asai Ryōi."

considering the given author's name as appended to the title—Raigidō Hōzui—to be a pseudonym. Hōzui is not unusual as a name for a monk. However, the names Raigi and Hōzui in combination are reminiscent of the phrase *bō raigi* 鳳凰来儀 (“the advent of the phoenix,” i.e. of peace and stability), which is drawn from the *Classic of Documents* (*Shujing* 書經, Jp. *Shokyo*). It seems that the intention was to avoid risk for the actual author by making use of an ingenious pseudonym.

In combination, these facts make it apparent that the publisher was meticulous in his arrangements for the successful production of the very first Nichiren-sect *kangebon*: *Brocade Scales*. It was, at the time, an unprecedented publication for the sect, which was attended no doubt by a mixture of both apprehension and high hopes. At the same time, *Brocade Scales* is also, I believe, important as an example of the contemporary syncretism of Buddhist denominations, which came to be a frequent characteristic of early modern Buddhist books.

5. Identifying *Brocade Scales* in *Book of Exhortations*

Earlier in this article, I looked at how *Book of Exhortations* was reworked and how its views were disseminated through interactions with, and through the intervention of, the Nichiren sect.

The subsequent phase in the effort to expand the audience for morality texts came with the creation of *Excerpts*, which resulted from the editorial work of the Nichiren priest Nittō at Chōgen-ji Temple. *Brocade Scales* emerged next and reflected a syncretism of Pure Land, True Pure Land, and Nichiren preferences, with the exception that in the case of the Pure Land and True Pure Land sects, it was an unwitting collaboration. With *Brocade Scales*' publication and introduction to an audience wider than that of just its monkish adherents, *Book of Exhortations* took on a new, more influential dimension than it had ever been able to through *Excerpts*. Furthermore, the appreciation for *Brocade Scales* is also considered to have been accelerated by the dissemination and reception in Japan of *Book of Exhortations* itself.

In the *Brocade Scales* preface, Hōzui describes *Book of Exhortations* as encapsulating the “Three Religions” and states that the stories collected in *Brocade Scales* are a celebration of the essential values revered in *Book of Exhortations*: “edifying passages . . . from the Three Religions” (*sangyō no kagen* 三教の嘉言) and “stories to exhort and chastise” (*kanchō no tenko* 勧懲の典故). In light of this, Hōzui's full awareness of the existence of *Book of Exhortations* is no mere matter of conjecture. However, when Hōzui edited *Brocade Scales*, he divided the seven volumes into the five parts of: Karma, Miracles, Familial Unfaithfulness, Filial Duty, and Selflessness. In other words, he did not adopt the scheme used in *Book of Exhortations* (and *Excerpts*), which classified episodes according to the Three Religions. Thus, as a result of the publication of *Brocade Scales*, which presented the contents of *Book of Exhortations* in such an easier-to-understand format, the values contained within that original work become obfuscated.

In light of this, it becomes clear that *Brocade Scales*, which was a collection of extracts stemming from *Book of Exhortations*, was able to gain widespread acceptance, despite the ideological bias of the Nichiren sect, which oversaw its publication. It can be said that this acceptance was achieved also because *Brocade Scales* was intended to be a text for proselytization: as the preface clearly states, the work could be used as “teaching material to improve the religious beliefs of commoners.”

We now need to consider views on morality. *Brocade Scales* is an interesting example in that the reception history of texts on morality would come to take a very different course following its release. This is because prior to *Brocade Scales*, the Three Religions had been recognized as the basis for discussion of morality in early modern Japan. As Nakano Mitsutoshi 中野三敏 has noted, “[The Three Religions] were the sources for the precepts of the common people throughout the Edo era [1603–1867].”²³

In fact, the reception of a Chinese book in a Japanese reproduction that deviated from the original text was not limited to *Brocade Scales*. And indeed, in books of every Buddhist sect, when making proselytizing arguments, it was quite common to draw on Chinese texts for novel topics to illustrate their doctrines. Such books allowed for a direct appeal to the common people and had no need, therefore, for any interfering intellectual filter as had previously been the case.

Conclusion

In this article, I have discussed how *Book of Exhortations* was received, and reworked, by monks of the Nichiren sect. In this vein I have presented *Brocade Scales* as the premier example of how the original work was adapted in order to achieve its popularization. The resulting latter work can be seen not only as an outstanding example of syncretism within early modern Buddhism, but also as an example of the kind of text that served to encourage the reception of works from China. We need to fully understand the acceptance and reception of a wide variety of Chinese books in the early modern period in order to better appreciate the impact they had on society and on Japanese literature. Further elucidating this process, and achieving a deeper understanding of its workings, will be the tasks of future research.²⁴

²³ 江戸期を通じてその通俗教訓の主意となる所であった。Nakano, “Edo jugaku-shi saikō,” p. 55.

²⁴ This article is based on a presentation delivered at the 44th International Conference on Japanese Literature on May 8, 2021. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Iriguchi Atsushi and Dong Hang for their comments then. I would also like to thank the Kansai University Library for allowing me to view and use their books in preparing this article.

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