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[Saiping An](#)*

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Article

The Reception and Transformation of Ippen(1234–1289)'s Religious Tenets and Practices by Enju Kato (1919–2021) and Shōjōkō-Ji

Saiping An

anssp@cjl.u.edu.cn

Abstract: This article illuminates the reception and transformation of Ippen 一遍(1234-1289)'s religious tenets and practices by Enju Kato 加藤円住 (1919-2021) and his temple Shōjōkō-ji 清浄光寺. While Enju Kato asserts that his life has been dedicated to adhering and enacting Ippen's concept of "renunciation," he has reinterpreted this concept based on his personal experiences and comprehension. Second, Enju Kato and Shōjōkō-ji have inherited some of Ippen's religious practices yet adapted these to align with contemporary settings. This article presents a case study discussing the acceptance and transformation of doctrines and practices of jishū 時宗 in contemporary era, which has been overlooked by academia thus far.

Keywords: Ippen; Jishu; Pure Land Buddhism; nembutsu

1. Introduction

The Japanese Buddhist sect known as the Ji-sect (jishū 時宗), traces its roots to the itinerant mendicant holy man Ippen Chishin 一遍智真 (1239–1289). This sect is deemed a branch of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. Due to the patronage of the warrior class, Jishu rapidly expanded and ascended in prominence from the 14th century onward. In light of the collapse of the Ashikaga Shogunate in 1573, the fortunes of the Jishu declined, subsequent to its reestablishment as a minor Buddhist denomination in the 17th century. (Foard 2013, p. 657) The doctrines and practices of premodern Jishu figures and groups, along with the evolution of their entire sects, have received significant academic attention. Nonetheless, to date, there has been minimal research conducted on the historical evolution of Jishu in modern times. The scant research literature primarily focuses on changes within Jishu religious organizations and institutions; (Koga 2000; Koga 2002; Sakai 2016) negligible attention is paid to the evolution and transformation of its doctrines and practices.

Presently, Jishu maintains a considerable influence within Japanese society. Currently, there exist over 400 temples affiliated with this sect. Shōjōkō-ji 清浄光寺, a temple situated in Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture, serves as the headquarter of Jishu. The prior abbot of this temple, Enju Kato 加藤円住 (1919-2021), bearing the Dharma name of Ta-a Shinen 他阿真円, was revered as the 74th hereditary successor to Jishu. Kato is renowned among Buddhist devotees as a spiritual leader of a temple, and he has also amassed influence in Japanese society through active involvement in social and political affairs. Notably, his exceptional longevity adds to his fame. (Kanagawa Shimbunsha 2018) He passed away in 2021 at the highly commendable age of 102 years.

In his works, Kato frequently references that he has consistently adhered to the teachings of Ippen throughout his extensive lifetime and personally implemented these principles. The following discourse will delve into Kato's reinterpretation of Ippen's religious philosophy, grounded on his life experiences and comprehension. Furthermore, it will explore how both he and his temple Shōjōkō-ji have assimilated and transformed Ippen's religious practices to align with prevailing societal trends during the era.

2. Ippen 一遍's Religious Tenets and Practices

Prior to delving into the current acceptance of Ippen's religious doctrines and practices, a succinct elucidation of his primary tenets and practices is indispensable. Ippen was born in 1239 into the Iyo 伊予 Province (modern Ehime 愛媛 Prefecture) on the island of Shikoku 四国. At age ten, Ippen committed himself to the monastic life, studying under the tutelage of Buddhist monks Kedai 華台 and Shōtsu 聖達 of Seizan 西山 sect within Jodo School at Dazaifu 太宰府. Upon the demise of his father, the 25-year-old Ippen reverted back to a mundane life and embarked on matrimony, yielding an offspring. Nearly a decade later, he was reinitiated into the monkhood and embarked on an extensive path of spiritual cultivation and religious propagation across various locales. (Imai 2000, p. 9-10) According to legendary narratives composed by adherents of Ippen's sect, during an expedition to the Kumano 熊野 Shrines, a deity residing therein, representing the manifestation of Amitabha, divulged to Ippen that salvation is predestined by Amitābha and that Ippen ought to wholly dedicate himself to advocating for the religious practice of chanting Amitābha's name, termed "nembutsu 念仏". Subsequently, Ippen and his cadre of disciples traversed through the nation propagating their doctrines and rituals, acquiring substantial popularity amongst the general populace. (Sakurai 2017, pp.199-131)

Although Ippen significantly drew upon Pure Land doctrines such as Jodoshu and Jodo Shinshu prevalent during the Kumakura era, he formulated a unique Pure Land movement that was disparate from these pre-existing ones. (Foard 2020, p.483) The defining features of Ippen's Pure Land sect, in stark contrast to its predecessors in Kamakura, are manifest in the following four dimensions: 1. advocating for an ascetic lifestyle aiming to renounce everything; 2. dancing while reciting Amitabha's name (odori nenbutsu 踊念仏); 3. distribution of paper charms that propagate the chanting of Amitabha's name (fusan 賦算); 4. Journeying through various locales (yugyō 遊行) for propagating religious doctrines.

Firstly, Ippen advocated to abandon all else and concentrate solely on the practice of chanting Amitābha's name. It is perceived that seeking salvation from Amitabha via recitation of Amitābha's name could propel individuals towards reincarnation within the pure land and is regarded as a cardinal affair in life. Therefore, all factors hindering this practice should be relinquished, including family members, the pursuit of food, clothing, and shelter, alongside all worldly desires. (Imai 1999, p. 3) He went so far as to argue that both classics and literature served only to be distractions in chanting Amitābha's name, thus he burned all his writings prior to death. (Sakurai 2017, p. 132) Owing to his ascetic lifestyle, characterized by renunciation of worldly possessions and desires, he was respectfully referred to as "Holy Man of Renunciation(Sute hijiri 捨聖)". (Imai 1999, p. 2)

Secondly, in accordance with Ippen's perception, if an individual were to relinquish all worldly possessions and desires, and solely engage in relentless chanting of Amitābha's name, the body would gradually heighten in arousal, commencing with a palpable display of rhythmic movements. This is referred to as "odori nenbutsu". (Imai 1999, p. 3)

Thirdly, Ippen constantly distributed paper slips imprinted with the phrase "Namu Amida Butsu 南無阿弥陀佛" on the top half and "Sixty million people are determined to be reborn in the pure land(Rokujūmannin ketsuōjō 六十万人決定往生)" at the bottom among all individuals he encountered, a practice known as "fusan 賦算". The term "fu 賦" signifies offering this kind of paper slip, whereas the term "san 算" signifies counting the number of recipients of this slip, which expresses Ippen's desire for 600,000 individuals as indicated by this slip to accept it and eventually attain rebirth in the pure land. (Kanai 2000, p. 42) It's believed that this sheet of paper for fusan possesses sacred power, ensuring salvation to anyone who receives them regardless of religious belief or spiritual purity. (Kanai 2000, p. 44-45)

Fourthly, in order to persuade a broader spectrum of individuals across numerous regions to embrace Pure Land doctrine and attain rebirth in the pure land, Ippen introduced the practice of missionary journeys throughout Japan. (Ōhashi 1991, pp. 21-22) He traversed approximately fifteen hundred miles throughout each significant region with a sizeable Japanese populace, landing at nearly all the preeminent devotional sites within his era. His journey culminated with the establishment of a mendicant institution, remarkably characterized by its distinct attire, wandering

lifestyle, incorporation of performing arts, among other factors. (Foard 2020, p. 505) It is due to his earnest advocacy of a devout wayfaring religious lifestyle that he and his sectarian leaders are often referred to as "Wayfaring Holy Man (Yūgyō shōnin 遊行上人)" and presently, Shōjōkō-ji 清浄光寺, one of the primary temples of Jishu Sect in Japan is also known as Yūgyō-ji 遊行寺.

3. The Reception and New Interpretation of Ippen 's Religious Tenets by Enju Kato

As the 74th successor of Jishu, Enju Kato has inherited certain religious tenets and practices of Ippen. However, the modern and contemporary period in which he resides is separated by six to seven centuries from the era of Ippen. Under a vastly distinguished era backdrop from Ippen, he has formulated new interpretations and implemented certain modifications to the religious doctrines and practices of Ippen.

The innovative interpretation of Enju Kato for the teachings of Ippen prominently resides in his elucidation of the concept "renunciation" propounded by Ippen. Before delving into the discussion of Kato's reinterpretation of Ippen's doctrines, it is imperative to elucidate Kato's concept of "renunciation". Kato maintains that his past existence was fraught with tribulations, solely relying on the ideology of "renunciation" instilled by Ippen to surmount them:

Life encompasses immense suffering and sorrow, but regardless of how agonizingly painful or strenuously arduous the time may be, the path will invariably open for you. Renounce immediate desires and self-centered fixation, possess the resolve of "letting go without giving up", and you shall witness an astonishing efficacy of supernatural other power (tariki 他力) assisting you. Renounce opening paths, renounce steering life. After undertaking this, suffering will metamorphose into joy. I have assimilated this from the teachings of Reverend Ippen, the patriarch of Jishu School, and scriptures of Buddhism, and have executed it firsthand. I have been able to survive a life filled with the apparent torment of the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm, and even the animal realm, acquiring the spontaneous delight of existence today, all attributed to this. (Kato 2013, pp. 5-6)

It appears that, according to Kato's perspective, the renunciation of personal desires and attachments to selfhood can evoke the "other power" to liberate individuals and enable them to transcend suffering and attain bliss. In Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, this "other power" refers specifically to Amitabha's transcendent force, contrasting with the individual path to salvation via personal cultivation known as "self power (jiriki 自力)". In addition, Kato pointed out:

When confronted with arduous trials and tribulations, it is crucial to "let go" and accept the present state of affairs. Manage the situation to the best of one's abilities, then entrust subsequent matters to Amitabha with "no giving up". This will facilitate a heartfelt, grateful journey through life. This is precisely "letting go without giving up". (Kato 2013, p. 141)

It is evident here that "renunciation" also suggests coping with adversity without complaint or anxiety, refrain from negative emotions and instead approach it with resilience. The subsequent phrase "without giving up" implies entrusting everything to Amitabha for resolution.

In his treatise, Kato incessantly underlines this point and asserts that he has successfully escaped some life-threatening circumstances precisely because of the practical implementation of the ethos of "letting go without giving up".

I have endured numerous torments akin to the sufferings of the hell, ghost, and animal realms, but each encounter was salvaged due to the conviction of "letting go without giving up." (Kato 2013, pp. 141-142)

Master Ippen propounds, "the only solution lies in renunciation," "abandoning the multitude of practices and clinging to the singular nembutsu". This signifies that by excluding any distractions, complete devotion to Amitabha alone can secure salvation. By doing what is necessary, it is recommended not to worry about anything else beyond that point, entrusting all remaining obligations to Amitabha. It is indeed certain there will be inconceivable assistance from other power. Credit this belief, irrespective of the adversities, maintaining tranquility of mind is achievable. (Kato 2013, p.156)

In the face of adversity, instead of indulging in worry, it's imperative to relinquish all tensions and aspire towards a state of nothingness (mu 無). Through the process of discarding all distracting thoughts and devoting oneself fully to chanting Amitabha's name, delivering everything into the hands of Amitabha, one is certain to receive divine assistance. This concept encapsulates the Jishu teachings of Master Ippen. (Kato 2013, p. 187)

Kato asserts that his personal experiences corroborate this assertion. According to his recollection, he had served in the military during World War II in Southeast Asia. Once in Indonesia, his army was engaged in a particularly hazardous reconnaissance mission, no prior voyagers have returned. Upon being assigned this duty, he recalled the concept of "renunciation" propounded by Ippen, relinquished his attachment to self, cast off fear and mental strain, and entrusted everything to Amitabha. As a result, he returned unharmed and intact. He firmly believed that the salvation from Amitabha was attributable to his "self-renunciation", which allowed him to preserve his life and safely return. (Kato 2013, pp. 62-69) Another instance that he recollects is when he was critically ill due to bleeding, close to death. "At the time, if I conceded mentally, 'with such profuse bleeding, it could no longer be treated,' and I would not have the opportunity for rebirth. When forgetting the ailment, relinquishing all, discarding impurities within the body, as well as emotional stress, one can achieve a state of non-thought and non-thinking, thereby opening the path." He eventually recuperated, staunchly convinced, this was attributable to salvation by Amitabha achieved through denial of fear and mental strain. (Kato 2013, pp.111-112)

Within his work, Kato elucidates the rationale behind "renunciation" as a catalyst for invoking Amitabha's supernatural deliverance:

When one relinquishes all and reaches the state of "nothingness (mu 無)", an unfathomable power will erupt. (Kato 2013, p. 66)

In the past, when I found myself in desperate circumstances of imminent peril, I spontaneously relinquished all attachments, yet an incredible force surged within my heart. I believe this is the state of "true voidness and sublime existence (shinkū myōu 真空妙有)". (Kato 2013, p. 184)

Thus, it is evident that in Kato's perception, transcending into a state of "nothingness" or "voidness" is the crucial prerequisite for invoking transformative mystical powers for salvation. However, "voidness" or "emptiness" does not signify absence of anything but rather possesses a certain functionality within it, denoted as "true voidness and sublime existence (shinkū myōu 真空妙有)". Kato provides no further elucidation on the correlation between his soteriology and "true voidness and sublime existence". This can potentially be interpreted in line with Mahayana Buddhist ontology or the doctrine of "Tathagata-garbha". According to this doctrine, every individual inherently possesses the Tathagata-garbha or Buddha-nature, making each individual essentially equivalent to a Buddha. It is only due to delusion and attachment that the Tathagata-garbha remains concealed. (King 1991, pp. 1-2) The tathagata-garbha in essence is void, yet it possesses an infinite capacity for function, representing the stage of "true voidness and sublime existence". (Wu 2005, p. 145) Kato may posit that the human attachment and delusion obscure the inherent "voidness" of Tathagata, while eliminating illusion and attachment can unveil the voidness intrinsic to Tathagata-garbha, consequently also allowing its utility to be activated, and thereby alleviating human suffering. Furthermore, the inherent nature of man is Buddha - indistinguishable from Amitabha. Hence from Kato's perspective, the power of Amitabha may indeed be equated with the function of the Tathagata-garbha manifested through renunciation of one's own illusory thoughts and attachments. Kato has noted that the salvation gained through relinquishment is an embodiment of "the oneness of self and other (Jitaichinyo 自他一如)", (Kato 2013, p. 191) which supports this assertion.

It is noteworthy that although Kato professes that his idea of "renouncement" is derived from Ippen, and even asserts that his personal life journey validates this philosophy, his notion of "renouncement" diverges from that of Ippen. Initially, Ippen asserts that certain obstacles to faith in Amitabha and the practice of reciting his name should be relinquished. Relinquishing these elements can bolster one's confidence in Amitabha's deliverance and enhance focus on the practice of recitation of Amitabha's name. For instance, Ippen postulates that the obsessive adherence to attire can lead to spiritual degradation and direct individuals towards the animal realm. Similarly, an excessive

fixation on food could induce one into the realm of hungry ghosts; while excessive attachment to residence could thrust individuals into the realm of hell. Consequently, to concentrate on spiritual practice and attain salvation, these secular matters necessitate relinquishment. ((Tachibana & Umetani 2012, p. 194) Moreover, Ippen also advocates relinquishing some doctrines and concepts, along with even spiritual practices from other sects, as these supposedly impede individuals' faith in Amitabha's benevolence and salvation. (Sakurai 2017, p. 204-205)

Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that Ippen never professes renouncement as a prerequisite or essential factor for invoking Amitabha Buddha's "other power" salvation, as Kato suggests. The principle emphasized by Ippen is that the abandonment of certain elements enables one to concentrate more intently on the path of reciting Amitabha's name, thereby fostering a greater likelihood of achieving salvation. Ippen has identified three categories of individuals among those engaged in Amitabha's name recitation practice, with respect to "superior level (jōkon 上根)" individuals, even if they do not abandon their wives or families, they can still attain salvation by rebirth in the pure land. For "medium level (chūkon 中根)" individuals, they only have to relinquish their wives and not give up clothing, food, residence, they can also gain salvation; concerning "lower level (gekō 下根)" individuals, they are required to relinquish all worldly pursuits to attain redemption. (Tachibana & Umetani 2012, p. 154) It is evident that Ippen did not articulate that renouncement is a prerequisite for salvation for each practitioner, particularly for those categorized as "superior level" and "medium level" individuals.

In addition, Kato advocated the necessity for one to achieve a state of "nothingness" or "voidness" in the heart through relinquishing self-attachment and distractions, which is the prerequisite to invoking the redeeming force of Amitabha, whereas Ippen maintains that salvation completely depends on Amitabha's other power, independent of the personal mental status of practitioners. It is said that upon his journey to Kumano, Ippen gained a divine revelation: the salvation of all beings was predestined by Amitabha, irrespective of the purity of one's mind. This revelation serves as a crucial foundation for the establishment of Ippen's teachings. (Sakurai 2017, p. 119-121) However, Kato delineates a condition for Amitabha's redemption, which is the attainment of a state devoid of attachments and delusions in the mind. Although Kato maintains that ultimate redemption rests on Amitabha's other power, this is contingent upon individuals first subduing their hearts through "self power".

Furthermore, regarding the object of renunciation, Ippen advocates the relinquishing of spiritual desires, adherence to other sectarian doctrines and practices, and even physical entities such as family, nonessential foodstuffs and shelter, whereas Kato's relinquishment can be said to be exclusively spiritual in nature, meaning the relinquishing of some delusions and self-attachment. Kato has not advocated a lifestyle analogous to Ippen's asceticism. Though he has been a monk since childhood, he has never relinquished ties to his family members and even actively participates in various social and political roles. In addition to his role as the abbot of a monastery, he has also held various positions, including the chairperson of a social welfare corporation, the director of a childcare center, and a councilor of a city assembly, among twelve others. (Kato 2013, p.4)

The lifestyle adopted by Kato distinctly mirrors the contemporary evolution of Japanese Buddhism. In 1872, the Meiji 明治 government enunciated that monks were free to retain hair, marry, conceive offspring, partake in alcoholic beverages or meats without fear of punitive action. (Minowa 2015, p. 224) Upon the execution of this policy, although continuation of such radical ascetic practices remains a feature in modern and contemporary Japanese Buddhism, regardless of which school is followed, once a stipulated period of practice has concluded, monks who are married pursue mundane domestic life without any aversion to alcohol consumption or meat eating. (Machida 2011, p. 240) Moreover, during the modern era, a significant movement known as "Engaged Buddhism" has emerged on a global scale. These Buddhists and Buddhist collectives are not limited to religious activities such as proselytization, but also engage in social undertakings, political campaigns, environmental preservation, human rights advocacy, welfare services, and so forth. The modern and contemporary Japanese Buddhist community is not excluded in this context. (Mukhopadhyaya 2011, pp. 142-144) Undeniably, in contemporary Japan, there persists Buddhists akin to conventional

Buddhism who abide by the ascetic lifestyle of celibacy, stringent discipline, and isolation from mundane affairs. Nevertheless, Kato aligns himself with the prevailing trend in Japanese Buddhist development, leading a secular life within urban environments and actively participating in societal engagements. With Kato's adoption of such a religious lifestyle, Ippen's ascetic and reclusive perspective on "renunciation" appears no longer suitable for him. Consequently, he opted to champion the concept of renunciation solely from the spiritual standpoint.

4. The Reception and Transformation of Ippen 's Religious Practices by Enju Kato and Shōjōkō-ji

Kato and his temple Shōjōkō-ji which is the monastic headquarter of the Jishu sect, have naturally adopted certain religious practices of Ippen. For instance, he and his temple members also participate in the ritual of *fusan*. (Kato 2013, pp.130-131) Nonetheless, he and the temple also made alterations to certain religious practices of Ippen, conferring new significance upon them.

Indeed, Kato upholds the tradition of *yūgyō* initiated by Ippen, he also sought to go to pay homage to the shrines and temples Ippen had previously visited during his *yūgyō*. (Kato 2013, p. 130) However, he did not implement a mode of circular travel that discarded all nonessential aspects of life and bore features of asceticism akin to those employed by Ippen. As stated in Kato's published work,

"You take pride in traversing the country, but now traveling can be facilitated by driving and no longer necessitates exposure to harsh wilderness. How convenient..." I almost discerned the silent guidance of Master Ippen. (Kato 2013, p. 136)

It is evident that Kato perceives in contemporary era, the *yūgyō* process can leverage usage of expedient modes of transportation rather than enduring the trials and tribulations of walking on foot. He staunchly asserts that Ippen would concur with this viewpoint as well.

Enju Kato and Shōjōkō-ji perpetuate the practice of Ippen's dancing nembutsu. The "Spring Founder's Day (shunki kaisanki 春季開山忌)" celebration at Shōjōkō-ji encompasses a segment dedicated to dancing nembutsu. On this day, the devotees first engage in playing and singing hymns of adoration for Ippen before transitioning into the dance ritual. (Takahashi 2023) This paradigm is replicated in other Jishu temples as well. For instance, during the "Founder's Day (kaisanki 開山忌)" event at Muromachi City's Muryōkōji 無量光 Temple, this ritual is also observed. (Muryōkōji 2023) Nonetheless, the dance within this scenario primarily serves as a homage and applause to Ippen, Jishu's founding patriarch, rather than representing an elated sentiment of redemption as it was perceived by followers in Ippen's era. It is apparent that the dancers primarily dance in accordance with predetermined routines, rather than spontaneously expressing their joy of redemption through dance. In this context, dancing nembutsu appears superficial and ritualistic.

Shōjōkō-ji commences its annual "Susuki Nembutsu 薄念仏" in September. Yuishin Itō posits that the Susuki Nembutsu is a distinct variant of the prevalent dancing nembutsu ritual throughout Japan. (Itō 1995, p. 62) In volume five of the *Illustrated Life of Master Ippen* (ippen hijiri e 一遍聖絵), a diagram features Ippen and his disciples encircling the grave of Ippen's grandfather. The upper portion of the tomb illustrates two to three weeds that are recognized as "susuki". At this juncture, it is perceived they engaged in the ritual of dancing nembutsu, which is revered by Jishu members as "Susuki Nembutsu." (Jishū no bijutsu to bungei-ten jikkō iinkai 1995, p. 172) At Shōjōkō-ji, annually on September 15th, devotees place a vase in a hall of the temple. This vase is not exclusively filled with susuki, but also bamboo branches and pine branches. Bamboo branches are inscribed with the Dharma names of past patriarchs of the Jishu sect. Participants will perform dancing nembutsu around this vase. (Kato 2016, pp. 57-58) Significantly, it is evident that the ritual enacted at Shōjōkō-ji juxtaposes greatly with its depiction in the *Illustrated Life of Master Ippen*. This ceremonial enactment does not transpire around a grave site; indeed, various elements such as bamboo and pine are incorporated beyond *susuki*. The inclusion of the names of past sect patriarchs in this ritual indicates that one of its primary functions is to honor and commemorate past patriarchs within the Jishu lineage. Moreover, according to Kato, the *Illustrious Life of Master Ippen* depicted Ippen and his followers congregating around a grave to perform a ritual. Thus, he hypothesized that this ceremony

might also serve roles in veneration and pacifying the deceased. (Kato 2016, p. 57) In the year 2015, marking seventy years after World War II, Kato performed the "Susuki Nembutsu" ceremony at Shōjōkō-ji to liberate the souls of those who perished in battle. (Kato 2016, p. 59)

On the basis of Ippen's fusan ritual, Kato ingeniously established a practice known as "oceanic fusan (kaijō fusan 海上賦算)". As Kato recollects, following the 2012 East Japan Earthquake, he conducted this rite at a fishing harbor within Sukamai City, Fukushima Prefecture. He dispatched paper slips utilized in fusan into the sea aboard a fishing vessel, seeking to redeem spirits that had perished in the sea and escort them towards pure land. (Kato 2013, p.170) During his journey in 2015 across the Pacific Ocean, he spearheaded an "oceanic fusan" under his tutelage with the crew.

On the morning of May 8th, at 8:03 a.m., upon the captain's approval, I conducted an oceanic fusan procedure for interring spirits that perished in the Pacific Ocean depths. This was undertaken with heartfelt gratitude and respect for these departed souls. With ten repetitions of "Namu Amida Butsu" as my signal, all participants joined in an act of kowtowing, with me clutching paper pieces inscribed "Namu Amida Butsu" in my hand while staff members held ceremonial flowers of five colors, each of us intently casting them towards the azure expanse above the sea. Henceforth, these paper pieces and scattered flowers, akin to offerings appeasing various spirits, danced on the breeze until they succumbed to the deep sea. (Kato 2016, pp. 66-67)

The objective behind this ritual conducted by Kato is to pacify the spirits that lost their lives beneath the Pacific Ocean as a consequence of wars, earthquakes, typhoons, and tsunamis. (Kato 2016, p. 66) Significantly, Ippen's objective for conducting fusan is primarily to persuade and assist living individuals to secure Amitabha's redemption. In contrast, Kato's "oceanic fusan", explicitly possesses a function to liberate the souls of the deceased.

It is evident that Kato not only endows the ritual fusan with a significance of providing salvation for deceased individuals, but also employs the dancing nembutsu in the aforementioned ritual, "Susuki Nembutsu", to accomplish the same purpose. His profound emphasis on the mourning rite, coupled with his incorporation of the mourning function into two Jishu rituals, may, in part, be attributed to his personal experience. He personally experienced World War II battlefield conditions, witnessing numerous casualties firsthand and also participating in soldiers' burials. (Kato 2013, p.51) Moreover, Japan is a nation susceptible to frequent natural disasters, and Kato has likely suffered or witnessed tragic human fatalities amidst these calamities. Being a Buddhist monk, his empathy towards those who perished in wars and natural disasters may have shaped his prioritization of mourning functions of Jishu rituals. A further rationale for Kato integrating the function of escorting the deceased into the Jishu ritual may be attributed to the inherent association between contemporary Japanese Buddhist temples and monastics with funerals and the exhumation of the deceased. Provision of funeral and commemorative services constitutes the principal societal function of Buddhist clergy and temples within contemporary Japan. (Stone and Walter 2009, p.1) It is possible that Kato's strategy was also catered to the prevalent demand amongst the populace for the Buddhist rituals of transferring the deceased.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, in the contemporary era, Jishu's founder Ippen's religious doctrines and practices have undergone both inheritance and rectification. Ippen promoted renunciation of spiritual desires, commitment to other sectarian doctrines and rituals, and even material entities like family, nonessential food-stuffs and shelter. Conversely, Kato follows a trend since the Meiji Restoration that Buddhist monks have married and procreated amid secular life, neglecting to advocate for the asceticistic strain of "renunciation" exemplified by Ippen. His relinquishment is purely spiritual in essence, aspiring to achieve a spiritual state that detaches from illusions and self-attachment through "renunciation".

Kato and his temple Shōjōkō-ji, adaptively refurbished some of Ippen's religious practices to better align with contemporary times. For example, the practice of *yūgyō* has been "modernized", with Kato advocating for missionary travel throughout Japan via automobile. Given the contemporary Japanese populace's pervasive demand for Buddhist monks and temples to perform ritualistic

ceremonies for the deceased, Kato introduced significance of releasing souls from suffering in *fusan* and dancing nembutsu practices. However, in certain instances some Jishu rituals have been reduced to mere formalism. For instance, during the anniversary commemorating the construction of a Jishu temple, the ceremonial dancing nembutsu merely serves as a tribute to the Jishu patriarch. The devotees merely dance in accordance with a preset protocol, and its original religious connotation in the era of Ippen has been substantially diminished.

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