

## Yōkan and the Middle Ages

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Yōkan studied the doctrine of the Hossō sect at Tōdaiji, went to Yamashiro-nokuni Kōmyōzan and was the restorer of Zenrinji, at Kyoto Higashiyama. As an advocater of *senjunembutsu* (“invocation of Amida’s name”) he is also noted as the forerunner of the Jōdo sect in the history of religion. This paper considers the fact that Yōkan became *bettō* (“non-regular officer”) of Tōdaiji, and examines the relevant period (the early three years of the 12th century). Moreover, the paper covers problems concerning Yōkan’s temple management, clarifying Yōkan’s historical significance.

First, the oldest Rinji and Inzen that are known as original documents of Tōdaiji are claimed to be related to Yōkan. From the analysis of this significance, the secret of his accomplishment in Tōdaiji temple management achieved in such a short period is gained. Next, the situation of Yōkan’s management of Tōdaiji is presented and through this the conversion from an ancient temple to a medieval temple that took place in Tōdaiji is examined. After studying Yōkan’s significance in a period between ancient times and the Middle Ages that was a turning point in history, legends related to Yōkan in the Kamakura period are studied, revealing the similarity between the image of Yōkan and other priests. Eison, Ninshō who were priests of the Ritsu sect, Chōgen and Banna who were priests who advocated *nembutsu*, are compared with Yōkan. A conclusion drawn is that Yōkan could be placed in one of the main streams of medieval buddhism. Finally, the symbolic meaning of Yōkan in medieval times is examined from the Akagesa case that occurred when Yōkan was working as a *bettō*.