

Predicate Morphology and Narrative Structure in Early Heian Japanese Buddhist Texts: A Case Study of the Saidaiji *Golden Light Sutra**

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Abstract

The onset of the Heian period (794–1185 C.E.) saw a proliferation of vernacular glossing (*kunten*) on Buddhist texts written in Chinese indicating how they were rendered into Japanese. Many of these sutras and commentaries have been fragmented or lost, but an extant *Golden Light Sutra* glossed at Saidaiji ca. 830 C.E. provides a clear example of how the shifting narrative perspectives of the sutra were presented in Japanese. This paper examines the transitivity, lexical aspect, and narrative function of every finite predicate outside of quotations governed by the Early Middle Japanese tense, aspect, and modality auxiliaries *-ki*, *-keri*, *-nu*, *-tsu*, *-ari*, and *-tari* throughout the sutra. By utilizing quantitative data and qualitative analyses, it presents conclusive evidence on the relationship between predicate morphology and narrative structure in one of the earliest Buddhist *kundokubun* narratives.

Key words

Early Middle Japanese, *kundokubun*, morphology, narrative

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1. Introduction

The Early Middle Japanese auxiliaries central to this study are *-ki*, *-keri*, *-nu*, *-tsu*, *-ari*, and *-tari*.¹ All govern the participle (*renyōkei* 連用形), and are the primary tools used to grammatically add tense, aspect, and modality (TAM) to narrative passages. Thus, most research on the grammatical expression of time in Classical Japanese focuses on these six auxiliary verbs (e.g. Ogawa 1983, Sandness 1999, Suzuki 2009).

The purpose of this study is to determine the narrative functions of these TAM auxiliaries in early Heian period (794–1185 C.E.) *kundokubun* (訓読文), the linguistic style of Japanese adapted for reading texts written in Sinitic script aloud as Japanese, generally by adding morpho-syntactic glosses, or quoting Sinitic texts in Japanese.² In order to do so, I investigate a *kundokubun* rendition of the *Golden Light Sutra* (金光明最勝王經 *Konkōmyō saishō ō kyō*), which was translated into Japanese from Chinese via gloss at Saidaiji Temple ca. 830 C.E. (Okimori 2001), and hereon referred to as the *GLS*. Although a translation from Buddhist Hybrid Chinese,³ this text represents the oldest and longest example of Heian-period Japanese narrative, predating by half a century and having approximately 100 more lines of overarching narration than the 326 lines found in *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* (竹取物語 *Taketori monogatari*).⁴ There are 425 finite predicates outside of quotations in the sutra’s overarching narrative, which make up less 13% of the over 3500 lines throughout the text.⁵ Although outside of the scope of this study, there are numerous embedded narratives, generally in the form of parables, throughout the text. For the duration of this paper, all references to the “narrative” of the *GLS* specifically refer to the overarching one rather than any embedded ones.

This paper proceeds as follows. In section 2, I discuss relevant research on the semantics and narrative functions of the TAM auxiliaries in Early Middle Japanese. Next, in section 3, I describe the methodology of this study. Section 4 contains both quantitative data regarding TAM morpheme use and qualitative semantic and pragmatic analyses before concluding with section 5.

2. The TAM Auxiliaries

The literature on these auxiliaries is vast, and this review will necessarily be selective due to space restrictions. Both Suzuki (2009) and Oda (2015) describe *-ki* as the grammatical marker of past

¹ In this paper I adopt modern Japanese transcription conventions traditionally used in literary studies of classical texts due to my focus on the functionality of these auxiliaries in constructing narrative discourse. See Frellesvig (2010) for a more accurate phonological reconstruction. In traditional Classical Japanese grammars, the auxiliary *-ari* is taken to govern the realis form, rather than the participle, due to opacity in its form. When the participle *kiki* ‘hear’ is governed by *-ari* it is realized as *kikeri* due to crasis, or sandhi. Subsequently it has been reanalyzed as *kike-ri*.

² See Alberizzi (2014) for an introduction to this glossing practice and Yoshida et al. (2001) for an overview of the field. I follow Steininger (2017) in using the term “Sinitic script” to refer to writing using only sinographs, or Chinese characters. “Sinitic texts” refer to texts written in Sinitic script, regardless of their origin.

³ See Zhu (2017) for a description of Buddhist Hybrid Chinese.

⁴ Finite predicates that occur outside of both direct and indirect quotations are most commonly marked by quotative *to* and considered lines of narrative.

⁵ In Early Middle Japanese, conclusive forms (*shūshikei* 終止形), adnominal forms (*rentaikei* 連体形), and realis forms (*izenkei* 已然形) can form finite predicates. However, in the narrative of the *GLS*, all finite predicates are in their conclusive forms.

tense in Classical Japanese, whereas *-keri* marks “reported past,” “narrative past,” and “mirativity” (Oda 2015: 153). Quinn (1987) demonstrates a modal contrast between the two with *-ki* marking established facts and *-keri* externally established facts whose factuality needs grammatically marked epistemic bolstering. In the vernacular style (*wabun* 和文), these serve as framing devices for personal and externally sourced narration, respectively. Although Oda (2015) finds *-nu* to be primarily inceptive, he, Quinn (1987), and Suzuki (2009) all define both *-nu* and *-tsu* as perfectives. Quinn (1987) describes *-nu* as an endoactive perfective and *-tsu* as an exoactive perfective, falling on different ends of Hopper and Thompson’s transitivity spectrum (1980: 252). Ijima (2011) focuses on the textual function of *-tsu* and describes it as signifying a sense of presence for events occurring in succession and both he and Fujii (2013) argue the textual function of *-nu* as that of marking scene changes and scene conclusions, respectively. Both *-ari* and *-tari* have been described as perfects (Suzuki 2009) and statives along with other semantically related effects (Frellesvig 2010). Regarding their narrative function, Ijima (2011), defining them as resultatives, argues they are utilized for scene descriptions and, similarly, Watase (2013), who, like Frellesvig (2010), considers them statives, finds them most often used for concrete, visual depictions of scenes.

3. Methodology

Data were gathered from the first volume (本文篇 *honbun-hen*) of Kasuga (1942), in which Kasuga rearranges the originally Sinitic text into Japanese word order and adds the Early Middle Japanese morphemes indicated by the reading glosses Buddhist practitioners added to the *GLS*.

I primarily follow the methodology of Nara (2011). Nara codes every sentence of Natsume Sōseki’s (1906) novel *Botchan* for its location in the text, lexical aspect of the sentence, transitivity, tense, location within the episodic structure, and discourse function. For the purposes of this study, I focus on the transitivity, lexical aspect, and discourse function of finite predicates that utilize TAM auxiliaries, in all narrated parts of the *GLS*, to determine their narrative functions.⁶

3.1 Transitivity

Nara gives each finite predicate a transitivity score of 0 to 3 based on Hopper and Thompson’s ten transitivity parameters (1980: 252), with 0 being in quotations, 1 having low, 2 having medium, and 3 having high transitivity. As direct quotations are beyond the scope of this study, for this parameter, I score intransitive predicates 1, transitive predicates that do not result in change in their direct object 2, and both ditransitive predicates (causatives) and transitive predicates that result in a change in their direct object 3. For example, *nari-nu* (なりぬ ‘become-NU’) is scored 1, *mi-tsu* (見つ ‘see-TSU’) is scored 2, and *e-shime-tsu* (得令めつ ‘receive-CAUS-TSU’) and *yabure-tari* (破れたり ‘break-TARI’) are scored 3.

⁶ Due to space restrictions, this paper does not include analyses of or comparison with predicates unmarked by TAM auxiliaries.

3.2 Lexical Aspect

Lexical aspect is determined by the predicate’s stativity (whether it is static or dynamic), durativity (whether it occurs or obtains over an interval or not), and telicity (whether there is an endpoint or not). I determine whether the finite predicate is (1) a state (static, durative, atelic), (2) an activity (dynamic, durative, atelic), (3) an accomplishment (dynamic, durative, telic), (4) an achievement (dynamic, instantaneous, telic), or (5) a semelfactive (dynamic, instantaneous, atelic). Nara includes a score of 0 for quotations and does not include semelfactives as they are not included in the original Kenny-Vendler system (Kenny 1963, Vendler 1967). Examples would be *ariki* (ありき ‘be/have-KI’), state; *kango.shiki* (歡娛しき ‘delight-do-KI’), activity; *iki* (言ひき ‘say-KI’), accomplishment; *narinu* (成りぬ ‘become-NU’), achievement; and *kasanete sei.shiki* (重ねて請しき ‘repeat-GER request-do-KI’), semelfactive.

3.3 Discourse Function

In Labov’s (1972) six “elements of narrative structure,” quotations cited by the narrator are analyzed as evaluations. Nara gives quotations their own category, leading to seven “discourse function types” that he uses in his analysis of narrative in Japanese. Following Nara’s categorization, I score 1 for Abstract, 2 for Orientation, 3 for Quotation and Semi-direct quotation, 4 for Complication, 5 for Evaluation, 6 for Result, and 7 for Coda. The Abstract outlines the story; the Orientation establishes the characters and setting; Quotations are when a character, rather than the narrator, is speaking and semi-direct quotations are predicates outside of direct quotations governed by quotative particle *to*; Complications, or Complicating Actions, are events that moves the story forward; evaluations to describe a scene or make an evaluative comment regarding its development (and thus pause the plot); Results bring closure to the scene; and the Coda shifts the focus from the story to the present time of presenting the narrative. Regarding results, any clause directly preceding what can be considered to be a new paragraph in the narrative of the *GLS*, which begins with *sono toki ni* (尓時に ‘at that time’), gain this classification.

4. Data and Analysis

First, Table 1 below gives the total times the TAM auxiliaries are used throughout the narration of the *GLS*, how many of those are sentence-final, and their sentence-final usage percentage, rounded to the nearest percent.

Table 1. TAM Marking Totals

| TAM | Narrative Total | Sentence-Final Total | Sentence-Final % |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>-ki</i> | 23 | 18 | 78% |
| <i>-keri</i> | 2 | 0 | 0% |
| <i>-nu</i> | 54 | 49 | 91% |
| <i>-tsu</i> | 22 | 20 | 91% |
| <i>-ari</i> | 40 | 23 | 58% |
| <i>-tari</i> | 19 | 9 | 47% |

As we can see, *-ki*, *-nu*, *-tsu* are primarily used sentence-finally, finitely, and thus strongly interact with the discourse, as its “leading edge”. *-ari* and *-tari* are both used adnominally and sentence-finally to a relatively even degree. On the other hand, as it is only used sentence-internally in the narrative, *-keri* has no direct interaction with the discourse. The following example of *-keri* is representative.

- (1) 身心踊悦して、 未曾有にいましケリと歎したてまつる。(Kasuga 1942: 19)
Shinshin yōetsu.shite, misou ni imashikeri to tan.shi-tatematsuru.
 ‘His body and soul dancing with joy, he declares that he **realizes this is** unprecedented.’

Here *-keri* is clearly a grammatical marker of mirativity, serving one of its primary functions in early *kundokubun* (Kasuga 1942, Ōtsubo 1977). As *-keri* is only used by the narrator in direct and indirect quotations, it is not included in the subsequent analyses.

There are some cases of two TAM auxiliaries governing the same predicate. The following is the only example of both *-nu* and *-tari*, *-ni-tari*, in the narrative of the *GLS*.

- (2) 二乗の所行の境界を逾 (え) にたり。(Kasuga 1942: 9)⁷
nijō no shogyō no gyōkai o koenitari.
 ‘They **have overcome** the sphere of cognition practiced by the two-vehicle adherents⁸.’

This use matches Suzuki’s (2009: 370) definition of *-ni-tari*—a perfect with first-hand evidential qualities that most commonly governs verbs of motion.

While focusing on the textual functions of *-ki* and *-keri* in Early Middle Japanese *wabun*, Fujii (2016: 254) notes *-nu* followed by *-ki*, *-ni-ki*, only governs complications and results in *kundokubun* and is an expression used to create narrative frames. The following example demonstrates how this pattern is used in the *GLS*.

- (3) 妙幢菩薩は佛の足を礼したてまつり已 (り) て、 (從) 座ヨリして (而) 起 (ち) て、
 其の本處に還 (り) にキ。(Kasuga 1942: 19)
Myōdō bosatsu wa hotoke no ashi o rei.shi-tatematsuri-owarite, za yori.shite tachite,
sono honsho ni kaeriniki.
 ‘Kṣitigarbha⁹ finished paying obeisance to the Buddha’s feet, stood up from his seat, and **returned** to his original place.’

I will consider Fujii’s analysis further in Section 5 below. In cases when there are multiple TAM auxiliaries governing the sentence-final predicate, such as in examples (2) and (3) above, both are included in the calculations.

⁷ See the introductory remarks (凡例 *hanrei*) in Kasuga 1942 for orthographical conventions. Emphasis added here and below.

⁸ This is a pejorative term in Mahāyāna Buddhism applied to followers of so-called Hīnayāna, or ‘lesser vehicle’, Buddhism (Buswell and Lopez 2014: 286).

⁹ Commonly known as Daruma in Japan today.

4.1 Transitivity

The table below depicts the relation between TAM marker and transitivity scores. There were no TAM-marked predicates of high transitivity in the narrative of the *GLS*.

Table 2. The Transitivity of TAM-marked Predicates

| TAM | low(%) | mid(%) |
|--------------|---------|---------|
| <i>-ki</i> | 17(94%) | 1(6%) |
| <i>-nu</i> | 36(73%) | 13(27%) |
| <i>-tsu</i> | 1(5%) | 19(95%) |
| <i>-ari</i> | 20(87%) | 3(13%) |
| <i>-tari</i> | 5(56%) | 4(44%) |

-ki, *-ari*, and, as expected by its endoactivity, *-nu*, display a clear proclivity to mark predicates of low transitivity, whereas *-tari* seems evenly split. On the other hand, *-tsu*, being exoactive, primarily governs predicates of mid transitivity, most commonly *u* (得 ‘gain’).¹⁰ The following is its only case of governing a low transitivity predicate.

- (4) 尓時釋迦牟尼如來、是（の）經を説（き）たまふ時に、（於）十方世界に有ラルゝ無量百千萬億の諸の菩薩衆い、各（從）本土ヨリ、鷲峯山に詣（り）つ。(Kasuga 1942: 200)
*Sono toki Shakamuninyorai, kono kyō o toki-tamō toki ni, jippō sekai ni araruru muryō hyakusen mannoku no moro no bosatsu i, onono hondo yori Juhōsan ni **makaritsu**.*
 ‘At that time when the Buddha Śākyamuni preached this sutra, all the infinite hundreds of thousands of millions of bodhisattvas of the worlds of the ten directions, they **came** to Vulture Peak from each of their homelands.’

One possible explanation for this use of *-tsu* is the notion of volition, which generally increases with transitivity. Bodhisattvas coming to Vulture Peak when the Buddha preaches the *GLS* would fall under the category of high volition.

4.2 Lexical Aspect

The following table displays the relationship between TAM morphemes and lexical aspect. There were no semelfactives in the overarching narration governed by a TAM morpheme.

¹⁰ It does, however, govern high-transitivity predicates in embedded quoted narration.

Table 3. The Lexical Aspect of TAM-marked Predicates

| TAM | stative(%) | activity(%) | accomplishment(%) | achievement(%) |
|-------|------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| -ki | 2(11%) | 10(56%) | 5(28%) | 1(6%) ¹¹ |
| -nu | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 16(33%) | 33(67%) |
| -tsu | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 3(15%) | 17(85%) |
| -ari | 24(100%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) |
| -tari | 9(100%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) |

-ki is the only TAM morpheme that interacts with the narrative discourse not restricted by lexical aspect, which is to be expected as it is most often defined by tense and modality. However, the majority of its uses occur with predicates that depict an activity, such as the following.

- (5) 爾時に無量無邊恒沙の大衆い佛の説を聞（きたま）へ已（り）て、
皆大に歡喜して信受し奉行しキ。(Kasuga 1942: 208)
Sonotoki ni muryōmuhen kōsha no daishū i hotoke no setsu o kiki-tamae-owarite,
*mina daini kanki.shite shinjushi **bugyō.shiki**.*
'At that time the infinite, boundless, innumerable masses, having finished hearing Buddha's doctrine and all being overjoyed, they accepted the truth and **dutifully carried it out.**'

-nu and -tsu only govern telic predicates, which reflects their perfectivity. Their preference toward achievements over accomplishments reflects fact that in Early Middle Japanese predicate morphology specific context is required to have a verb represent the latter. In other words, all accomplishments are verbs that, by themselves outside of context, index activities that gain an end point through context. Examples (6) and (7) below demonstrate this.

- (6) 悉ク皆雲のゴトク集（り）ヌ。(Kasuga 1942: 4)
*Kotogotoku mina kumo no gotoku **atsumarinu**.*
'They all **gathered** like clouds.'
- (7) 尔時如意寶光耀天女、（於）大衆の中にあり、深法を説（き）たまふを聞（き）ツ。
(Kasuga 1942: 89)
*Sono toki Nyoi Hōkōyō Tennyō, daishū no naka ni ari, jinbō o toki-tamō o **kikitsu**.*
'Then Cintāmaṇi, being among the crowd, **heard** the Buddha's preaching of the profound law.'

Both *atsumaru* ('gather') and *kiku* ('hear') are atelic activities when lacking context, but in the above examples they are depicting narrative events, explicitly presented as complete by the two perfective auxiliaries.

¹¹ Percentages occasionally add up to 101 or 99 rather than 100 due to rounding.

-ari and *-tari*, both aspectually statives, naturally only govern stative predicates. They both present the state resulting from the change the base verb represents. Example (8) below and example (2) above demonstrate this.

- (8) 衆の寶の羅網をモチテ其の上を莊嚴せり。(Kasuga 1942: 187)
Shū no takara no ramō o mochite sono ue o shōgon.seri.
 ‘They **have adorned** his head with many jeweled nets.’

The English translations I have given in these two reflect the resultative nature of these two statives. Their difference is more morphological than semantic, in that *-ari* is generally limited to governing quadrigrade and s-irregular verbs whereas *-tari*, in the early Heian period, most commonly governs monograde and bigrade verbs.¹²

4.3 Narrative Function

The following table displays the relation between TAM morpheme and narrative functions.

Table 4. The Narrative Function of TAM-marked Predicates

| TAM | abstract(%) | orientation(%) | complication(%) | evaluation(%) | result(%) |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| <i>-ki</i> | 1(6%) | 2(11%) | 1(6%) | 0(0%) | 14(78%) |
| <i>-nu</i> | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 46(94%) | 0(0%) | 3(6%) |
| <i>-tsu</i> | 0(0%) | 0(0%) | 20(100%) | 0(0%) | 0(0%) |
| <i>-ari</i> | 0(0%) | 14(58%) | 0(0%) | 10(42%) | 0(0%) |
| <i>-tari</i> | 0(0%) | 6(67%) | 0(0%) | 3(33%) | 0(0%) |

The first few lines of the *GLS* are provided in example (9) below to begin our discussion.

- (9) 是(の)如キことを我レ聞きたまへキ。一時薄伽梵、王舍城鷲峰山の頂に、
 (於)最も清淨にして甚深なる法界の諸佛(の)(之)境たる、如來の所居に
在(し)キ。與には大苾芻の衆九万八千人ありキ。皆是レ阿羅漢なり。
 能ク善ク調伏せり。大象王の如し。諸の漏已に除し、復煩惱無し。
 心善(く)解脱し、恵善ク解脱せり。所作已に畢へたり。(Kasuga 1942: 1)
Kono gotoki koto o ware kiki-tamaeki. Ichiji Bagabon, Ōshajō Jubuzan no itadaki ni, mottomo shōjōni.shite jintannaru hokkai no shobutsu no sakaitaru, nyorai no shoi ni zai.shiki. Tomo ni wa daibisshu no shū kyūman hassen nin ariki. Mina kore arakan nari. Yoku yoku jōbuku.seri. Daizō’ō no gotoshi. Moromoro no rōi ni joshi, mata bonnō nashi. Kokoro yoku gedatsu.shi, e yoku gedatsu.seri. Shosa sude ni oetari.
 ‘Thus I **humbly heard**. One time the Tathāgata on the holy Vulture Peak of Rajgir **dwelled** in the sphere of religion in the profound Buddha-region. Alongside him **was** a gathering of 98,000 great monks. All of these are arhats. They **have** successfully properly **disciplined** themselves. They are like the Buddha. Removing all worldly desires, they also have no sinful passions. Their hearts properly enlightened, their minds **have been** properly **enlightened**. Actions **have** already **ceased**.’

¹² See Takeuchi 1987 for a discussion on their semantic differences in Early Middle Japanese.

The first sentence is best categorized as the abstract, defining the entirety of the rest of the sutra as something heard by the narrator. The following two lines, presenting the location and those in attendance, both begin the orientation and contain the only two predicates governed by *-ki* in it. However, the orientation continues with stative predicates unmarked by *-ki*, including verbs governed by *-ari* and *-tari*. *-ki* is most often used to mark results, such as examples (3) and (5) above. Its one instance of a complication, *to notamaiki* (トノタマヒキ ‘honorifically said that’ (Kasuga 1942: 163)), comes after a multi-page quotation, and thus, perhaps, is pragmatically employed to reorient the listener and reframe the narrative scene.

Examples (6) and (7) above of *-nu* and *-tsu*, respectively, also display their use in complications. These two perfectives are used in *GLS* narration to present dynamic events that move the story forward.

5. Conclusions

This paper examined the transitivity, lexical aspect, and narrative function of finite predicates throughout the *GLS* governed by *-ki*, *-keri*, *-nu*, *-tsu*, *-ari*, and *-tari*. Although *-keri* does not occur sentence-finally in *kundokubun* narration, the other five morphemes have clearly delineated functions. Table 5 summarizes the above findings.

Table 5. Summary of Findings

| TAM | Transitivity | Lexical Aspect | Narrative Function |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|--|
| <i>-ki</i> | low (94%) | unrestricted | results(78%) |
| <i>-nu</i> | low (73%) | telic (100%) | complications (94%) |
| <i>-tsu</i> | mid (95%) | telic (100%) | complications (100%) |
| <i>-ari</i> | low (87%) | states (100%) | orientations (58%) and evaluations (42%) |
| <i>-tari</i> | unrestricted | states (100%) | orientations (67%) and evaluations (33%) |

The narration of the *GLS* shows a preponderance of low-transitivity predicates. *-nu*'s semantics generally limits it to these, whereas *-tsu* governs predicates at the other end of Hopper and Thompson's transitivity scale (1980: 252). However, both of these morphemes are limited to telic predicates, which are most commonly used in complications in *kundokubun* narration. Returning to Fujii's (2016) comment on the framing function of *-ni-ki* in *kundokubun* discourse (see the beginning of section 4), the data gathered here demonstrate *-nu* has no particular affinity with the onsets and conclusions of narratives. Its single use in a result is one also governed by *-ki*, as seen in example (3) above. This result at the end of that scene happens to involve the bodhisattva returning to his seat, but most results in *GLS* narration are depictions of those hearing the words of the Buddha being overjoyed, which are predicates classified aspectually as activities. *-nu*'s classification as a framing device is really due to its semantics as an endoactive perfective—many narrative passages end with someone leaving the scene in focus. Thus, contrasting with Fujii (2016), I find it to be the predicate's sentence-level semantics that leads to *-nu* marking in *-ni-ki* predicates rather than a particular framing function. In Buddhist early Heian *kundokubun* texts,

dynamic predicates that liven the narration are not limited to being governed by *-tsu*, as Ijima (2011) found in *wabun* texts, but are also often governed by *-nu*, should their transitivity be low.

The auxiliary *-ki*, on the other hand, clearly displays a narrative function in *kundokubun* discourse. Every case of its use in the *GLS* narrative is to frame the narrative, whether at the very beginning for the abstract and first two lines of the orientation, between scenes to reinforce the sutra's modality, or at the conclusion to bring the focus back to the time of speaking. Narrators in early Heian *kundokubun* texts use this auxiliary to mark the factuality of the sutra itself.

Auxiliaries *-ari* and *-tari*, being statives, are natural candidates for governing predicates that lay out and depict the scene in which the action will occur. These scenes are limited to orientations and evaluations, and those are, indeed, where we find every instance of *-ari* and *-tari* interacting with the discourse in *kundokubun* narration.

In conclusion, the Japanese translator who glossed the Saidaiji *Golden Light Sutra* used Early Middle Japanese *kundokubun* tense, aspect, and modality auxiliaries to move the narrative along, vividly display and update the scenes, and frame the religious discourse as an irrefutable truth.

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