Is it a coincidence that kana writing and vernacular kana literature emerged within a generation after Japanese rulers first engaged with the Shingon tenet of sokushin jöbutsu (buddhahood in this very body)? Or was the momentum of the new esoteric Buddhist episteme, in fact, the immediate impetus for the creation around 900 of a distinctive kana narrativity? The present study examines the latter possibility in a series of integral analyses of texts dating from the tenth century.

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