



PROPHETS REBORN

A GABE TURPIN NOVEL



GARY GABELHOUSE



At stake: the faith of billions. A bitter technology magnate's attack on the foundations of three major religions thrusts anthropologist Gabe Turpin into a technological jihad on the faiths of the world. Gabe must convince a priest, a monk and a mullah to put aside their legacy of conflict for the greater good. Merging ancient secrets and advanced science, Gabe's battle plan will either preserve the beliefs of billions, or cost him his soul.

Prophets Reborn

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/6534.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

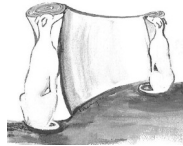
Your Free excerpt appears below. Enjoy!

PROPHETS REBORN

PROPHETS REBORN

A Gabe Turpin Novel

GARY GABELHOUSE



GREYHOUND BOOKS
Knoxville, Tennessee

Copyright © 2007-2012 Gary Gabelhouse

ISBN 978-1-62141-871-9

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed to Greyhound Books, Attn: Rights and Permissions Department, 2000 Stock Creek Road, Knoxville, Tennessee 37920.

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper.

Text designed by Kirsten Livingston.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in Publication Data is available on file.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2012



This work is dedicated to my mother and father.
Somehow they conspired to make it so that I never
lost my belief in . . . *magic*. As always, I also
dedicate this work to Cindy and Malindi, who shared
me with the wild places of this earth.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I'd like to give special thanks to the real UDT frogman and spook named within this novel as "Jimmy McCann." The *real* Jimmy contributed so much more to this effort than information on the CIA's weapons programs. He gave me his friendship and inspired me with his legacy of serving his country under extremely difficult circumstances.

Special thanks are due to my editor, George Donahue. His contributions greatly enhanced my story. Thanks also to my publisher, Cyn Mobley, who has taught me so much about writing and story telling.

I'd also like to acknowledge the contribution of Sara Aoyama for her skillful editing of my tedious *gaijin* Japanese and its lumbering *romaji*. *Dōmo arigatō, Sara-san.*

This book would not have been possible without the knowledge passed along to me by my teachers in the martial way, John Roseberry—an old-school Marine and American Karate pioneer—and my Sensei in Daitoryū Aikijujutsu and the head of my Japanese family, Kenkichi Ohgami. Both share the one thing that most defines a true warrior—a compassionate heart.

I'd like to acknowledge the contributions of Arakawa Tenshin-Shifu—a most gentle man of Budō who has helped and encouraged me to peek behind the curtain of monastic Buddhism—into its teachings and precepts. He is truly a man on the Path.

Finally, I'd like to thank Bill Erickson, who has always been there for me and made sure I was producing a *story worth reading*. Bill is a true friend—a best friend.

Gary Gabelhouse—2007

PROPHETS REBORN

PROLOGUE

KŌYASAN, JAPAN: 1607

Turpin sat cross-legged outside the open-walled shrine, staring in wonder at the spiritual drama playing out not ten feet away. A raptor floated above the mountain then swooped down to keep him company as he listened to the Shingon Buddhist monks chanting. The guttural drone filled the still air and shadows of Kongōbuji, the temple where he sat observing the ceremony.

The impossibly-old and frail abbot of the monastery—a wizened, bushy-eyebrowed gnome of a man—sat on his haunches in *seiza*, his brown and yellow robes pooling around him, planted in his pit of the shrine. Thick clouds of incense, clinging like gauze sheets from the dark wooden beams of the temple, hung over a spiritual cacophony of Buddhist idolatry.

The prayer chants intensified. The abbot, with ceremonial hand movements and words of power, began performing the esoteric Buddhist practice of *mikkyō*, or “the secret teachings,” a spiritual alchemy in pursuit of enlightenment within one’s lifetime. He grasped a sacramental instrument from the *shinji*, or shrine. With the golden *dorje*, the thunderbolt tool used by the Shingon, in one hand, he uttered the power words and rang, with a thunderbolt handle, the *vajra* bell. Gongs pealed through the thick air, punctuating the ever-increasing chant.

Cicadas shrilled in the moist summer evening. A sigh of wind whispered through the umbrella pines and cryptomeria, as if reluctant to disturb the monks of the Kōyasan monastery as they pursued Buddhahood in this lifetime.

Samuel Turpin was a privateer with British papers of mark. Some five years before, Turpin had encountered a drunken *samurai*, who had

demanded his obedience. Turpin refused to yield. He barely avoided the lightning-fast strike of the samurai's *katana*, or long sword, as he dove into a low street fighter's tackle. The quick reaction knocked the wind out of the samurai and the sword out of his hand. Turpin promptly snapped the samurai's neck.

For his deficient etiquette, Turpin had spent six hellish months in a pit before the Jesuits recognized him as a possible asset to their business with the Japanese. He was freed to the mission and now lived in a small cottage outside the Jesuit compound at Osaka.

Finding a sort of cultural equilibrium among the Japanese *bugeisha*, or warrior class, and the *daimyō*, or samurai overlords the *bugeisha* protected and served, Turpin prospered. He had found gainful employment with the Roman Catholic Church—serving the Jesuits' needs for secular intervention and problem-solving. Samuel Turpin was among the first mercenaries employed by the Vatican in Asia.

Turpin heard rather than saw at least two dozen monks assemble around the worship area of the altar. Unseen, a shadow floated from the observatory area of the rectory toward the center of the shrine.

Turpin heard a sharp cry of pain as the abbot lunged for an ancient box wrapped in silver filigree and adorned with jasper and turquoise—more Tibetan than Chinese or Japanese in design. Blood burst from the abbot's mouth, as the shadow swept past the altar. The box was spirited away. The monks' chanting broke and lost focus. The abbot—eyes staring, fixed in death—lay across the *shinji*. Crimson pearls seeped from the corners of his eyes, nose, and mouth and cascaded down his face to spatter onto the shrine. From Turpin's perspective, the shadow had barely touched the abbot. Yet, the priest was mortally injured—clearly hemorrhaging from all his body cavities.

Turpin unconsciously searched the silk *obi*, or sash, of his robe for his Japanese flintlocks. They weren't there. He lunged into the center of the worship area—trying fruitlessly to sweep up and control this dark assailant with his arms. Turpin found a large dorje on the shrine and grasped it to reinforce his fist. He crab-walked across the worship area, in search of the killer shadow. Turpin felt a blow to his liver—devastatingly heavy and intense. The shadow skirted past his eyes. Turpin felt himself fall, as his energy drained away.

Breathing laboriously, Turpin lay on the *tatami*, woven straw mats,

of the temple floor. The abbot lay unmoving, his dead eyes—two orbs in a bloody sunset—staring at the ceiling.

Turpin slowly rose to his knees and then stood, wavering among the clouds of incense. The shadow slipped over Turpin again. The pain was excruciating. He fell to one knee and tried to breathe.

The specter was at the opening of the side rectory. Like black smoke, it floated out of the entryway and into the inky shadows of the night. Turpin struggled to his feet and took two unsteady steps forward. Before him, the apparition bobbed and weaved as a shadow's shadow. Turpin gathered himself for the chase.

They ran across the rock garden. Turpin stumbled on the boulders beside a gravel sea. Springing up, with the palms of his hands peppered with fine gravel from the *suiseki* garden, Turpin ran on. His long legs pumped like pistons and he gained ground on the shadow man. Not fifteen feet separated them as they exited the *torii* gate and ran down the symbolic 108 stone steps, each representing a defilement to be overcome. Turpin was just behind the shadow when they reached the final gate, with its foot-square beam thrown as a deadbolt.

The thief then ran up the wall, like a squirrel, as Turpin fished his *tantō*, a small dagger, from his kimono sleeve. The shadow man had gained purchase on the top of the huge wooden gate and was nearly free as Turpin leaped forward and plunged the *tantō* into the thief's hamstring. A horrendous scream, like a demonic typhoon wind, issued from the top of the gate. Turpin was thunderstruck. He found himself lying flat on his back, looking up as the bejeweled box fell onto his chest. The shadow melted away over the gate.

The cicadas had lost not a beat as they sang in the humid night. Out of breath, Turpin rose to his feet and brushed the dust off his kimono. He bent, picked up the box, and studied it in the poor light of the moon. He heard many men coming his way. Turpin tucked the box securely under his left armpit, inside his kimono. He collected himself and breathed in and out slowly. A knot of monks descended the steps and encircled him.

A particularly-large monk asked Turpin, "Did the assassin escape with the Gift of the Stupa?"

Turpin studied the monk and calmly replied, as he pressed the box close, "He didn't leave anything behind. I think I hurt him, but he made it over the gate."

OSAKA–NISHINOMIYA, JAPAN: 2007

Gabe Turpin had been overserved. The long flight from Chicago to Osaka's Kansai International Airport was now ending too quickly. Gabe had made the most of the free booze, and his head was throbbing. He shuffled to the lavatory with his toothbrush and ibuprofen and then went to the curtained attendant quarters for two bottles of water. He slowly downed the cold liquid as the captain called for everyone to buckle up for landing in Japan.

At nearly six-and-a-half feet and two hundred fifty pounds, he'd jackknifed himself into a coach seat for sixteen hours. The big guy was ready to walk around.

Turpin was a professor of cultural anthropology at the University of Nebraska. He chased the darker sides of human culture, specializing in the paranormal elements of the world's religions and ceremonies. His colleagues referred to him as *Dr. X-Files*. Turpin was now over half a century old. His once-curly dark locks had thinned considerably and were shot with strands of gray. Despite constant exposure to the elements on field expeditions, his face was unwrinkled and wore an easy smile.

Although Gabe traveled solo on most journeys, he was a family man at heart. On his treks to the wild and unknown, he carried pictures of his wife and daughter to remind him that he was never truly without them. Gabe's wife, Cindy, was a wonderful creature, petite, with an Irish temper and a Native American's wisdom. Her great-grandfather, CW Morris, had abandoned County Cork in Ireland and taken the first trip with Jack Chisholm up to Wyoming. There, he married a Lakota woman and set to ranching in the shadows of the Big Horns. Gabe and Cindy's daughter, Malindi, was the perfect example of hybrid vigor. Named after

a town on the Kenyan coast, Malindi had her father's tastes for wildness and unfettered adventure. She had an indomitable spirit and was completely independent. Her ferocity was balanced by boundless compassion.

The young custom's agent spied Gabe's *dōgi* (martial arts uniform) and the worn black belt packed at the bottom of his bag. "*Karateka, desu ka?*" The agent questioned Gabe, with mild interest, about being a student of karate.

"*Hai,*" replied Gabe, in the affirmative, "*Gōjū Ryū,*" Gabe qualified his study of the hard-soft style of karate and added, "*to Daitoryū Aikijujutsu.*"

Considerably more impressed, the agent sucked in wind between his teeth and said, "*Aaah, koryū, desu ka?*" confirming that Gabe meant he studied Daitoryū—an ancient samurai art.

Gabe said, simply, "*Hai.*"

The Custom's agent immediately waved him through without further examination or comment.

Towing his bag and shouldering his carry-on, Gabe trudged out of the baggage claim and Customs area. He immediately saw Ohgami-sensei, accompanied by two of Gabe's *senpai*, or senior students, Shigetani and Murakami, in the waiting crowd.

Gabe had first met Ohgami-sensei after the Kobe earthquake. They had instantly got on with one another. At seventy years old, Ohgami-sensei was a man with incredible vitality. He had trained and taught Daitoryū Aikijujutsu for nearly fifty years. Ohgami-sensei was more than a foot shorter than Gabe and weighed about as much as one of Gabe's legs. Ohgami-sensei strutted like a latter-day samurai and spoke always with great force—something out of an old samurai movie.

Shigetani was the head of the Japanese Defense Force's hand-to-hand combat program. He was large for a Japanese. Shigetani was called the "Iron Bull" in the dojo. Murakami was less than five feet tall and was crippled by a birth defect. He was a Buddhist monk. With close-cropped hair and a bachelor's demeanor, Murakami smiled with his whole body. Despite his physical limitations, Murakami was quite effective in the dojo and the small man easily controlled Gabe.

The three students wrestled for control of the baggage. Japanese etiquette and the warrior way of *Budō* were being tested and observed by all parties. Ohgami-sensei carried nothing.

They stopped for green tea at an airport stand. They were glad to see each other again. They sipped their refreshing tea and marshaled their conversation. The coming month would bring the opportunity to catch up with each other's lives. Most important, however, would be the training in the dojo.

After a series of buses and trains, including a train coined "The Namba Cat," the four arrived at the train station on the outskirts of Nishinomiya. Since they could not all fit into the taxi, Ohgami-sensei instructed Shigetani to run ahead. Gabe, sweating profusely, was afforded an air-conditioned taxi ride to the home and dojo of Ohgami-sensei.

Gabe had adopted this group as his Japanese family. They had reciprocated. Gabe exited the taxi and was ushered into the modest home. Ohgami-sensei was beaming.

"My wife says her neck has been long for you, as she waited for your visit," said Ohgami-sensei, in fluent English.

Gabe remembered the public bath experiences outside of Kobe, where a woman's breasts were safe ground, but to look at her naked neck was considered lecherous. Gabe had succeeded in avoiding lechery. Now, he figured Mrs. Ohgami had missed her big *gaijin*, or foreigner.

All of Gabe's Japanese family was there with the exception of Okada and Yokoyama. A new personality seemed to have taken their places—Emi-san, an elf of a young woman, petite and childlike in features. Gabe knew enough to not ask about the absence of his two *senpai*, Okada and Yokoyama. In the strict, marshaled culture of Japan, there was a reason they were not there.

A snack was magically prepared and presented in Ohgami-sensei's front room—a library and dining room, with a long, low table surrounded by cushions. Gabe was starting to feel nauseated and had a deep ache behind his eyes—the price of five Canadians and Coke on top of a desperately-long flight. Gabe pushed past his fatigue and nausea and joined in the banter. Eating *edamame*, soybeans shelled from the green pods, and drinking glasses of Kirin beer, Ohgami would listen to the party and translate their questions and comments for Gabe. Emi-san also spoke fluent English. Gabe reflected on the depth of meaning this group of people had in his life.

Ohgami-sensei contended that Gabe had been a samurai in another life, hence his comfort with Japanese culture, which most Westerners found difficult to understand and accept. That comfort with

things Nippon was remarkable even to Gabe, as he found himself smiling at the subtleties of etiquette and protocol being played out around the dinner table half a world away from his other home.

Gabe had come to Japan not only to train in the martial arts, but to visit the Kongōbuji monastery in Kōyasan. He had first visited the holy town many years before, when he was visiting his friend Troy, an English teacher. Troy had introduced Gabe to that very special place. Gabe had reveled in the uncut spirituality of Kōyasan. He had sat for hours in meditation, within the courtyard of the monastery, and had wandered the spiritual backwaters of the holy city for hours at a time, too.

He contemplated the founder of Shingon, Kūkai, known posthumously as Kōbō Daishi, who in the ninth century had imported esoteric Buddhism from China, where it had recently been introduced from India, into Japan. Gabe had grown interested in Shingon Buddhism and began to study the religion. He found that the Shingon adepts practiced what was called mikkyō. Gabe had learned that this practice was quickly adopted by feudal samurai, who faced violent death continually, as it included arcane hand symbols, or *mudra*, words of power, *mantra*, and a sort of psychodrama visualization that served to put the practitioner into a proper angle of spiritual flight. All resulted in a *separateness*—a detachment of the self that produced a form of fearlessness.

The samurai even distilled mikkyō into a form of spiritual shorthand and developed the *kuji no in*—which afforded an almost instant passage into a mystical state of mind they maintained on the battlefield. Drawing the nine planes of the *kuji no in* on the palm and reciting the nine accompanying *myō*, or words of power, the warrior was quickly beyond things living—and thus beyond the fear of death.

As Gabe listened to the banter of his Japanese family, he reflected on the *real* purpose of his trip to Japan. Gabe thought of the fateful day he received the package from the lawyer in Texas. Gabe's Uncle Bill had passed away the previous spring. Gabe had received nothing from his uncle's estate, at least as delineated within the sheaf of legal documents he had received as the eldest member of the Turpin family.

Gabe remembered the annual pilgrimages with his father, brother, nephew, and uncle to their family cabins in Minnesota. It was there around the campfire that his uncle had told him to spread his ashes in his favorite fishing hole on Stalker Lake.

The funeral home sent the urn holding his uncle's ashes, as Gabe had requested. In July of the past summer, Gabe had done his uncle's bidding and spread the ashes in the fishing hole, just off from the clump of birch trees by the clearing.

Then, the package had arrived via express mail. It was from the *Law Offices of Henry Cantu* and contained only a box and a letter. The letter was short and to the point.

Dear Mr. Gabe Turpin,

Your uncle, Bill Turpin, has, through and due to his statement to me, left you with this package, an apparent family heirloom passed down to males within the Turpin family. You are to keep such business private and within the Turpin family.

Respectfully, Henry Cantu, P.C.

Gabe had carefully opened the package and smiled. Inside the layers of bubble-wrap was the Turpin treasure. The relic glowed with the same magic light it had in his great-grandfather's front room decades ago. To Gabe, it was like welcoming back an old friend—in fact, it went beyond that. The Turpin treasure had, during his formative years, differentiated Gabe from everyone else. As it had for his great-grandfather, the treasure became a part of his life—a vital thing that made the Turpins . . . *different*.

Gabe inspected the box. He now confirmed the treasure as a reliquary—a depository of holy remains—most likely from northern India or Tibet. Taking a pencil and paper he worked diligently to translate the engraved figures on the copper container. The Sanskrit revealed that “the Gift of the Stupa,” was to be found within the cask.

Gabe felt a cool breeze across his neck, as he remembered the words of his great-grandfather, spoken so many years before: *We will not be opening the box, Gabe*. The room seemed to be holding its breath, and Gabe paused. He remembered that strange look of fear on his great-grandfather's face when they talked of opening the relic.

Gabe carefully opened the box and peered into the container. A plate of old bone first appeared from the darkness.

As Gabe studied the skull, gooseflesh claimed him. The old skull—a deep mahogany color—peered at Gabe through empty eyes. As verified

by the reliquary, this was no ordinary *thing*. This was the Gift of the Stupa—and Gabe was its keeper.

Over the following months, Gabe had researched the container and the contents of his inheritance and, for the most part, had drawn a blank. Finally, after pouring through reams of Sanskrit scrolls, he found reference to the most holy of Buddhist objects, called simply *the Buddha's Last Life*. The account passed down through the centuries was that, after the death of the Buddha in the Sala Grove at Kushinagara, his body was cremated. His remains were divided and placed into eight *stupa*—ceremonial worship mounds—throughout northern India and what is now Tibet, Bhutan, and Nepal. In about A.D. 225, the remains of the Buddha were said to have been further divided and, as legend had it, the Buddha's Last Life—the skull—was placed in a sacred stupa in China—safeguarded by warrior monks of the adjacent monastery.

The last-known location of this holiest of Buddhist objects—the skull of Buddha—was in the possession of Kūkai, in A.D. 805. Kūkai was a Japanese monk who had come to China to study an esoteric form of Buddhism—which became known as Shingon in Japan. In A.D. 806, Kūkai gathered a group of his most loyal monks and set sail for Japan. After a time as abbot at a monastery in Kyōto, Kūkai moved on and founded the Shingon monastic settlement called, after its mountain home, Kōyasan—a place he felt was sanctified and offered the right angle of reflection for the spirit. Here, on the slope of Mount Kōya, Kūkai founded a monastery and built temples and shrines—each a mantric touchstone for release from the circle of life. Logically, the Buddha's Last Life would have been interred and kept safe in the main monastery of Kōyasan, the Kongōbuji.

Gabe wondered whether the Buddha's Last Life and the Gift of the Stupa might be one and the same. Then again, the whole storyline could be nothing more than a myth—the remains of Buddha having long ago been lifted by the winds of India. If the story *was* true, the holy remains had quite likely been long lost to thieves who had often plundered the temples and shrines of the area.

Gabe had discreetly inquired within the Shingon community of the U.S.A. No one knew of anything referred to as the Buddha's Last Life, let alone the Gift of the Stupa. So, Gabe had traveled to Japan—the modern source of Shingon—to find the explanation for the mystery of his inheritance, the Gift of the Stupa.

Gabe fished another *sashimi* from the platter and savored the strong taste of tuna with sea-urchin roe. He drank a long pull of beer. Ohgami-sensei was laughing loudly as Mrs. Nozu, Mrs. Ohgami's best friend, screened her lips with her hand, in the proper manner of a Japanese lady, as she spoke. Perhaps Mrs. Nozu also was missing her big gaijin.

Quickly, the demeanor of the dinner table changed as Ohgami-sensei's visage grew stern.

"*Hai-dōzo. Daitoryū. Yoshi,*" proclaimed Ohgami-sensei as he issued the call to training. Gabe, exhausted as he was, dug through his luggage and found his bag and his *gi*, or practice uniform. He exited Ohgami-sensei's abode and entered the dojo through the rickety door adjacent to the Ohgami home.

The dojo was a tin structure built off from the house. The dirt floor was covered with a half-dozen large rugs—to lighten the pain of being thrown to the ground with a joint-rending Daitoryū technique. A port-hole of a window was cut into one of the tin walls of the dojo. The dojo was a veritable inferno—small, close, and hot as the Hinges of Hades—as were most Japanese dojo.

The heat and humidity of the dojo assaulted Gabe as if a hot, wet towel had been thrown over his head. Already some of Ohgami-sensei's disciples were training.

Shigetani, the "Iron Bull," waited in his *gi* with its *hakama*—the black pantaloons only *yudansha*, or black belts, were allowed to wear in Ohgami-sensei's dojo. In the Daitoryū dojo of Ohgami-sensei, pain was omnipresent—not injurious pain but pain on the ragged edge of what could be endured without incurring injury. The Iron Bull always smiled broadly as he applied a technique—apparently enjoying the delivery of pain. When the pain was approaching injurious, the *uke*, or partner, would pat his or her *gi* or the *gi* of the executioner—a signal to stop the arcane art of Daitoryū. The dojo was always full of a soft patting noise as hand met the canvas fabric of *gi*.

Ohgami-sensei entered the dojo from a small door from the house's kitchen. The doorway was of the same dimensions—low and narrow—of that of a ceremonial tea house, where one humbled oneself first, upon entry. Ohgami-sensei spoke first in Japanese and then, as a courtesy to Gabe, in English. Ohgami-sensei was a true Renaissance man—an artist, a master calligrapher, and fluent in seven languages. He detailed the evening's instruction.

The regimen of the dojo began and Gabe, sweating hard, followed suit with his Japanese *kohai* and *senpai*—his juniors and seniors. Pain was mixed with the incredible heat and humidity. Ohgami-sensei was perched over the floor of the dojo, watching. Nothing escaped his observation. He would move quickly onto the floor—adjusting a technique here and there—and smoothly regain his patriarchal position over the dojo floor. Focused now only on his technique, Gabe sweated on into the evening.

After training, exhausted and dehydrated, he drank some Pokari Sweat, a sports drink offered by Mrs. Ohgami, and shuffled off to his ryokan, with Ohgami-sensei—ever *genki*, or energetic—in tow. Beyond normal fatigue, Gabe barely listened to Ohgami-sensei and the manager haggle over the rate. He was shown to the community bathing facilities and was work-shopped in how to operate the air conditioner in his room. Ohgami-sensei offered his *oyasumi nasai*, “sleep well,” and Gabe retreated to his room.

The only furniture in the room was a low table upon which sat a pitcher of mugicha. In addition to the table were a television and a *futon* mat, rolled up and put into the corner. Gabe turned up the Beaver air conditioner as high as it would go, which was against house rules, and pledged to keep it on all night—again, against the house rules.

The louvers of the air conditioner flapped slowly up and down. Gabe rolled out the futon and lay amid the pain and fatigue. Dressed in his yukata, Gabe found an uneasy sleep.

In the middle of the night, he came wide awake and searched his duffle for the filigreed, gem-encrusted cask. He opened the reliquary, placed the skull on the low table, and studied the Gift of the Stupa. On TV, Sylvester Stallone was lip-synching a commercial for Kobe beef. Gabe switched off the TV with the remote and stared at the skull.

After drinking some of the mugicha, Gabe placed the skull back in its container. He wrapped the chest in a gi top and tried to fall back asleep. He tossed and turned, twisting his yukata about him, as he dreamed fitfully of a shadow man who inflicted great pain on all he touched and floated like a wraith in the night.

Somewhere between five and six in the morning, Gabe was wakened by his bladder. After relieving himself, he spent the next two hours listening to the inn come to life. He dressed casually in shorts and a T-shirt then walked down the narrow stairs to the ryokan’s front door. He

slipped into his flip-flops, which had been placed by the door the previous evening, and went to get a bottle of cold coffee and milk from a vending machine not fifty feet away. Standing in the shadow of the overhead NK railroad line, Gabe drank deeply and reflected on his upcoming trip to the holy mountain, Mount Kōya—the womb of Kōyasan. He closed his eyes as he swallowed the last of his coffee drink and listened to the trains clattering overhead. They had begun to distribute workers and salarymen throughout the Kansai, the heart of industrial Japan. As he walked down the narrow streets, passing an eclectic collection of noodle shops, banks, and electronics stores, Gabe thought about the Gift of the Stupa.

This relic, this treasure, carried a huge responsibility—a *giri*, or duty, to do the right thing. Clearly, if this treasure was a reliquary of Buddha, it must be returned to its proper place, rather than remain in possession of the Turpin family. If the Kongōbuji temple *was* that proper place, Gabe mused at the synchronicity of having been a regular visitor to the monastery over the years. Gabe was most certain this was well beyond the pale of a mild kismet.

His mind was muddled, as a jet-lag headache set up in the base of his skull. Later that morning, Japan came fully awake, and Gabe went to the ryokan and back to sleep.

The pale blond gaijin, a block away from the ryokan, sipped his coffee and stubbed out an unfiltered Camel cigarette as he stared at the doorway of the inn. The bite and pinch of his silenced Glock 9mm irritated him, as he began to sweat in the oriental morning.

He spoke into the hidden microphone—a bud of metal under his lapel, “Target down again.” The words, in the thick Swedish of Gottenburg, were interrupted by the clattering roar of the NK-line train overhead. The blond looked to the source of interruption.

The earpiece hissed a Swedish reply, “Follow. Shadow the target. Do not, I repeat, do not, intercede.”

“Understood,” said the blond. As the orange sun rose to the lure of the steel blue Kansai sky, another NK-line train thundered over—as if in warning.



At stake: the faith of billions. A bitter technology magnate's attack on the foundations of three major religions thrusts anthropologist Gabe Turpin into a technological jihad on the faiths of the world. Gabe must convince a priest, a monk and a mullah to put aside their legacy of conflict for the greater good. Merging ancient secrets and advanced science, Gabe's battle plan will either preserve the beliefs of billions, or cost him his soul.

Prophets Reborn

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/6534.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**