

Satoshi Itō¹

Assimilation of Buddhas and Deities (*kami*): The Formation of the *honji-suijaku* Theory

Translator's introduction:

Many visitors to Japan find themselves puzzled when they encounter expressions of religion and belief that, to their way of thinking, closely link worlds of an entirely different nature, i.e., the world of buddhas and the world of deities (*kami* 神). How can an organized foreign religion (Buddhism) be combined with a quite flexible cluster of indigenous beliefs in deities (Shinto) in such a way that they do not seem to exclude one another? What does it mean, when the Head Temple of an important faction of Shingon Buddhism, in this case the Hase Temple (*Hase-dera* 長谷寺) of the Buzan Faction (*Buzan-ha* 豊山派), publishes a pamphlet for its followers in which it announces on the cover that “all deities are buddhas”? Do ordinary Japanese believers make no distinction between buddhas and Japanese deities? Under certain circumstances they do make a distinction; that is why, in older houses the Buddhist altar for the ancestral spirits is usually neatly separated from the shelf where deities are installed. How can it then be said that deities are buddhas?

Itō Satoshi, the author of the text translated below, proposes an answer to this question in his book *What is Shinto? A History of Deities and Buddhas in Japan*.² The first chapter is an outline of the beginnings and the first steps in the historical development of the encounter between indigenous deities and the foreign buddhas. The transmission of Buddhism initially was not so much a matter of religion but more one of a means to adapt the cultural achievements and the political structure of China to Japan. In the course of these events the question of how to interpret the relationship of the foreign buddhas with Japan's deities increasingly gained in

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1. Professor of Japanese Thought in the Department of Literature at Ibaraki University, Mito City.
 2. Itō Satoshi 伊藤聡. 'Formation of the *honji-suijaku* theory,' in *What is Shinto? A History of Deities and Buddhas in Japan*. (Honji Suijaku-setsu no keisei 本地垂迹の形成. *Shinto to wa nanika. Kami to hotoke no Nihon-shi* 神道とは何か。神と仏の日本史). Tokyo: Chuō Kōron Shinsha 2012, 49-72.

importance until the theory of *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹 was consolidated around the Kamakura Period. According to this theory, buddhas were conceived as the source and origin (*honji* 本地) of divine power, of which the deities were the manifested traces (*suijaku* 垂迹).

The translated section is only a small part of the book's first chapter, but in this section the author outlines the basic ideas of the *honji-suijaku* theory and their initial historical development. It is hoped that the text will provide a clear and easily understandable introduction to an important feature of Japanese religion and be of some help to solving the puzzle mentioned at the beginning. However, it should be kept in mind that the author discusses a feature of Japanese religion that predates the Meiji Period and the kind of Shinto promoted by the Meiji Government.

(Peter Knecht)

The text:

Deities (kami 神) as Bosatsu 菩薩 [Bodhisattva]³

As a result of a long historical process that gradually shortened the distance between buddhas and deities (*kami* 神), a phenomenon surfaced in which certain *kami* were given the title 'bosatsu' 菩薩 [bodhisattva]. The deity Hachiman was the first to initiate this development. It bore the title 'Hachiman Daibosatsu' 八幡大菩薩 for a long time (up to the Meiji Restoration). The title's first trustworthy mention appears in an order of the seventeenth year of Enryaku 延暦 (798), addressed by the Daijō-kan 太政官 [the Grand Council of State] to the Administrative Headquarters at Dazai 太宰府 [in Kyushu] under the date of the twenty-first day of the twelfth month (the document is listed in the *Shin Shōkyaku Chokufu-shō* 『新抄格 勅符抄』). In this document the title 'Hachiman Daibosatsu' can be noticed. Then, in the third year of Daidō 大同 (808), in another order from the Daijō-kan (included in the *Ruishū Sandaikyaku* 『類聚三代格』) we find the title used again, and so we know that the title 'Hachiman Daibosatsu' was officially acknowledged by the time of the early Heian Period [by the end of the 8th century].

About the origin of the title the *Kiyomaro-gejō* 清麻呂解状 contains the following rough note:

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3. Important Japanese terms are given in translation with the original term in italics accompanied by *kanji*, sometimes in round brackets. Example: Deities (*kami* 神). As a rule, for terms for which there exists an established form, that form is used, yet with some exceptions. Example: *bosatsu* [bodhisattva]. Translator's additions in the main text are put in square brackets. Example: [in Kyushu]. All footnotes are by the translator.

At the beginning of the Ten-ō 天応 years [around 781], when the deity Hachiman, because of his divine virtue, had been granted the honorary title ‘Gokoku Iriki-Jinzū Daibosatsu’ 護国威力神通大菩薩 [Great Bodhisattva of Eminent Power Protecting the State], he gave the following oracle on the fourth day of the fifth month in the second year of Enryaku [783]. “In long years of immeasurable merit and reborn in the three realms (the three realms of desire, of form, and of non-form in the world of sentient beings) I have saved sentient beings. That is why my name is Daijizai-ō Bosatsu 自在王菩薩 [Great Freedom King Bodhisattva]. Therefore, I wish that the two titles be combined into one as Gokoku Iriki-Jinzū Daijizai-ō Bosatsu 護国威力神通自在王菩薩.”⁴

In this document two important facts come to light. First, in response to the honorary title ‘Gokoku Iriki-Jinzū Daibosatsu’ bestowed upon him by the Court, the deity Hachiman reveals in an oracle the name Daijizai-ō Bosatsu as the one by which he calls himself. The question is, then, what kind of *bosatsu* [bodhisattva] he is. It is most likely that the title ‘*bosatsu*’ was first given to him by people on the side of the deity Hachiman (or of the Usa Jingū 宇佐神宮 [in the north of Ōita Prefecture]).

Second, reflecting on the name Daijizai-ō Bosatsu, one can guess that those on the side of the deity Hachiman assimilate the deity to Daijizai-ten 自在天, namely a heavenly being of the realm of form Makeishura-ten 摩醯修羅天 (equivalent to the god Shiva in Hinduism). Makeishura-ten (Daijizai-ten) is fused with Takejizai-ten 他化自在天, the ruler of the world of desire, so that it is also considered to be the ruler of the earthly world. By adding the title ‘*bosatsu*’ [bodhisattva] to a name that already suggests a link to *ten* 天 [heavenly realm], the character of the deity Hachiman as a heavenly being, i.e., a *kami*, and as a bodhisattva as well, surfaces.

Later, after Hachiman, other deities also appeared who bore the title ‘bodhisattva.’ This means that a deity (*kami*) is not simply a sentient being but became acknowledged as a being positioned somewhere between buddhas and humans (of course, this does not mean that all deities were conceived of in this way). One example is the deity that descended at Ōarai Isomisaki 大洗磯前 in the Kashima 鹿嶋 District of Hitachi 常陸 Province [in today’s Ibaraki Prefecture]. In the entry for the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month in the third year of Saikō

4. Martin Repp mentions a similar title as having appeared in the *Jowa engi* 承和縁起 in 783. The title is *Gokoku reigen iriki jinzū daijizai-ō bosatsu* 護国靈驗威力神通自在王菩薩. Repp translates it as “great sovereign Bodhisattva king who protects the country with miraculous, extraordinary and divine powers” (Repp 2002: 176). The title quoted by Itô does not contain the term *reigen* 靈驗. Incidentally, Repp focuses his discussion on the political aspect of Hachiman, but his article traces the fate of Hachiman up to the Meiji Period and so it is useful as parallel reading to the present article.

齊衡 (856) in the *Nihon Montoku Tennō Jitsuroku* 日本文德天皇実録 [Records of the Japanese Montoku Tennō] it is said that two strange stones appeared by the seaside at Ōarai. After that a deity possessed a person and declared: “This is [I am] the deity Ōnamuchi-Sukunahikona no mikoto 大奈母知・少比古奈命. When I had finished creating this country, I left and went to the eastern sea. Now, in order to redeem this people, I have come back again.” Ōnamuchi (whose name may also be written as 大己貴神 is the deity Ōkuninushi no mikoto 大国主命 mentioned in the *Kojiki* 古事記) is the deity who was the master of the earthly deities (*kunitsu kami* 国津神), but after the descent of Ninigi no mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊 [the heavenly grandchild of Amaterasu Ōmikami] from heaven he is said to have departed and hidden himself at a faraway place (according to the *Nihon Shoki Jindai-ge* 日本書紀 神代下 [Chronicles of Japan, Age of the Gods Part II]). Here he says now that he has returned.

When tens of years after this event the *Engishiki* 延喜式 (a text completed in 927) was compiled, the name of this kami was written into its list of names of deities. Yet it is noteworthy that there it is given the name ‘Ōarai Isomisaki Yakushi Bosatsu Myōshin-sha’ 大洗磯前薬師菩薩明神社 (its shrine is located in Hitachi Province, Kashima District). We may ask why the name ‘Yakushi’ has been added to the deity’s name. The reason could well be because of the fact that this *kami* has descended (or returned) from the east. The Pure Land of Yakushi Nyorai 薬師如来 is the world Rurikō 瑠璃光 [the world of azure-blue lapis-lazuli rays] located in the east and Yakushi is the buddha associated with the east (so he forms a pair with Amida Nyorai 阿弥陀如来, who is associated with the west). However, one more point needs to be noticed: the text does not speak of Yakushi ‘Butsu’ 仏 but of Yakushi ‘Bosatsu’ 菩薩. Apparently, the acknowledgment of the deity as a *bosatsu* [bodhisattva] was already widely accepted at this time, and so using ‘Yakushi Bosatsu’ as the particular title of a deity would raise no eyebrows.

Now we may ask whether deities who wished to become separated from their divine bodies (*shinshin* 神身)⁵, as mentioned before, are essentially different from those deities who carry the title ‘*bosatsu*’ [bodhisattva]. The fact is that the two kinds of beings seemed to be surprisingly close to one another. A story in the *Tadojingū-ji Garan Engi Narabi ni Shizai-chō* 多度神宮時伽藍縁起并資財帳 (a text completed in the seventh year of Enryaku (788) about the Tado deity (enshrined at Kuwana City 桑名市, Mie Prefecture 三重県) suggests this. There it says that in the seventh year of Tempyō Hōji 天平宝字 (763) the monk Mangan 満願 (万卷) had built a retreat (*dōjō* 道場) in the east of Tado Jinja 多度神社, where he enshrined a statue of Amida. At that time the Tado deity descended upon [possessed] a person,

5. By ‘*shinshin*’ the form of existence particular to a deity as deity is intended. In order to be relieved from it, a *kami* needs the help of humans (Itō 2012: 40).

pleading that it wanted to become separated from its “divine body” and convert instead to the Three Treasures (i.e., to Buddhism)⁶. In response, Mangan built a small hall in the precincts of the temple, enshrined a statue of the deity there, and, in addition, bestowed on it the title ‘Tado Daibosatsu’ 多度大菩薩. In this case, it does not mean that the one given the title ‘*bosatsu*’ [bodhisattva] is a being far superior to any human being; instead it means that the being’s heart has been awakened to follow Buddha’s ways and has started to walk on the *bosatsu* path. If that is the case, then a deity who wishes to be freed from its divine body and converts to the Law of Buddha, can immediately be worshiped as a *bosatsu* [bodhisattva]. It can, therefore, be said that one of the factors promoting the fast spread of the assimilation of deities and buddhas (*shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合) is the fact that such a mechanism for change into a bodhisattva already existed.

Miyadera 宮寺 [“kami temples”]⁷

From the above, we see that the unification of deities and buddhas was progressing further, with the deity Hachiman at its center. The emblematic expression of this phenomenon is the construction of the Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū 石清水八幡宮. In the first year of Jōgan 貞観 (859) the monk Gyōkyō 行教 of the temple Daian-ji 大安寺, on a pilgrimage to the Great Shrine Usa Hachiman 宇佐八幡宮, received an oracle from Hachiman Daibosatsu, and in the following year he established a Hachiman-gū on the mountain Otokoyama 男山.⁸ The latter is the Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū. The story of the shrine’s origin is told in the *Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū Gokoku-ji Ryakugi* 石清水八幡宮護国寺略記, a text credited to Gyōkyō himself. Although some believe that the book may be spurious, we nevertheless use it to follow the circumstances of this temple’s foundation.

Gyōkyō, who was a monk of Daian-ji, had for a long time harbored a strong desire to worship Hachiman Daibosatsu. Finally, on the fifteenth day of the fourth month in the second year of Jōgan he accomplished a visit to the Shrine of Usa Hachiman. For a summer (from the fourth to the sixth month) he performed short readings (*tendoku* 転読)⁹ of the *Daijō-kyō* 大乘經 before the deity during the day, and at night he recited *Shingon dharani* 真言陀羅尼 in favor of the deity. At the end of the intended period, in the night of the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the Daibosatsu manifested itself and announced the following: “I am deeply impressed

6. The ‘Three Treasures’ stand for Buddhism and are: Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha.

7. The term “kami temple” is borrowed from Teeuwen and Rambelli, eds. 2003: 26.

8. A low mountain (142.5m) in present-day Yawata City, south of Kyoto.

9. For *tendoku* only short sections from a sutra’s beginning, the middle part and the end are chosen and recited together with its title.

by your meritorious conduct (*shuzen* 修善 [meritorious works]). Because this is unforgettable to me, I think of going with you to the vicinity of the capital and of protecting the State. Continue your prayers further.” Gyōkyō was deeply moved and extended his performance of invocations for another five days. On the twentieth day of the seventh month he accepted the deity’s body [representation] (*shintai* 身体)¹⁰ and went to the capital. On the twenty-third day of the following month he reached the south of the capital, in the area of the Yamazaki Detached Palace. When he [Gyōkyō] asked for a manifestation [of the deity] on the twenty-fifth day, at night, he [the deity] said he wished to be transferred and installed somewhere near the capital for the benefit of the royal capital’s peace and protection. When further asked where the deity’s body should be installed, [the deity] announced: “On Iwashimizu Otokoyama 石清水男山. There I will now truly manifest myself.” Surprised, Gyōkyō worshiped Daibosatsu in a southern direction about a hundred times, when a light shone on the top of Otokoyama just as if the moon and the stars had gathered there. All the hair on Gyōkyō’s head stood on end and he prostrated himself on the ground (It is possible to read this as a dream-like event, as a hallucination, or as the description of a mystic experience).

The next morning he climbed to the mountaintop to worship. After that, in accordance with what he had been told, he built a grass hut within three days, installed the deity’s [material] body, and, while reciting sutras and dharanī, furnished it with decorations (in this way making it known that the place was sacred). Furthermore, when he informed the Court about this, an Imperial Envoy arrived on the nineteenth day of the ninth month and an inspection was held. Soon after, the construction of three buildings each for the main hall and the worship hall was begun. He installed the deity’s body in the completed treasure hall, after which wondrous events continued to happen without end. In the eleventh month, summoned by an order, Gyōkyō visited the Minister of the Left (perhaps Minamoto no Makoto 源信). The Minister of the Left let him know the reason why the Court, in accordance with the report from Gyōkyō, had promptly built a hall for the Daibosatsu. What had happened, even before Gyōkyō had presented his report, was that the Emperor had a dream in which he saw a purple cloud rising from Otokoyama, covering all of the Heian capital and filling the whole world. The Empress as well as the Minister himself had a similar dream and were thinking that it certainly must mean something fortunate for the world, when Gyōkyō’s report reached them. Surprised and full of joy, they built the hall.

On hearing this, Gyōkyō dedicated himself diligently to his duties, when he received an order from the Court to visit Usa Jingū as an official and make offerings such as the *Daihannya-kyō* 大般若經 (Mahā-prajñāpāramitā). So he took a hundred

10. *Shintai*, a deity’s body, is a material, visible representation or symbol of a *kami*. It functions as a support in which the presence of a *kami* may be perceived. As such it is different from *shinshin* mentioned in note 3, which is invisible and immaterial.

monks with him to Usa, stayed in the sanctuary, and read there as an offering two copies of the *Daihannya-kyō*, 11,660 volumes of the *Kongō Hannya-kyō* 金剛般若經 (Vajrachedikā prajñāpāramitā), 146 volumes of the *Rishu Hannya-kyō* 理趣般若經, and 75,000 formulas of the *Kōmyō dharani* 光明陀羅尼. In addition to this he stationed there thirty-three monks per year. Furthermore, he also assigned fifteen monks in a similar manner to the shrine on Otokoyama (Iwashimizu) and had these monks take care of the prayers.

The above are the events related to Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū as they are written up in the *Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū Gokoku-ji Ryakugi*. From its very beginning there were no [Shinto] priests (*kan'nushi* 神主) appointed to this shrine (it was more than ten years after its foundation that priests were appointed to the shrine); instead, its administration was centered on monks, so that it became a unique existence in that it merged shrine [*jinja* 神社] and temple [*jiin* 寺院]. This kind of a sanctuary is called a '*miyadera*' 宮寺 [a '*kami* temple']. Up until the Meiji Restoration the official name of Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū remained as it appears in the title of the text quoted above, namely Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū Gokoku-ji, or sometimes Iwashimizu Hachiman-gūji 石清水八幡宮寺.

The position of *bettō* 別当 (later the position of supervisor [*kengyō* 檢校] was created above it), which was the center of the shrine's (and temple's) office, was hereditary among the kinsmen of the Ki clan (*ki uji* 紀氏), the clan from which Gyōkyō himself had originated. The *bettō* had the appearance of a monk but he was married. This position was later inherited in the family lines that had become separate as the Tanaka 田中 line and the Zenpō-ji 善法寺 line. In this way, the *bettō* and his family line themselves became a mixed existence, and as such a symbol of assimilation. It may perhaps also be said that the tradition of tolerance for married monks in Japan began at this time.

At the end of the *Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū Gokoku-ji Ryakugi* it says that the reason why monks had been assigned to the shrine for the purpose of prayers was "for the promotion of the Daibosatsu towards perfection [*satori* 悟り] as well as for the peace and protection of the State." In other words, it means that the deity, who is still at the rank of a bodhisattva, is to be helped in order to reach full buddhahood as soon as possible. For a *kami* to reach this perfect state, human power is indispensable. This is another instance where, after a deity's separation from its body as a deity (*shinshin*), a reversal can be noticed in the relationship between humans and deities when it comes to Buddha's Law.

The honji-suijaku Theory

With the appearance of *miyadera* the assimilation of deities and buddhas made further progress, until the establishment of the *honji-suijaku* theory 本地垂迹説 around the tenth century can be noticed. "*Honji suijaku*" is a theory that says that a

being whose true nature is that of a buddha or a bodhisattva temporarily borrows the shape of a deity (*kami*) in order to redeem sentient beings. *Suijaku* 垂迹 means “to lower (or “to manifest”) a trace.” The locus classicus for this theory is in the Lotus Sutra (*Hokke-kyō* 法華經), where it says in the section *Nyorai juryō-bon* 如來壽量品:

In all the worlds the heavenly and human beings and asuras all believe that the present Shakyamuni Buddha, after leaving the palace of the Shakyas, seated himself in the place of practice not far from the city of Gaya and there attained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi [supreme perfect enlightenment (Watson 1993: 326)]. But good men, it has been immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas of kalpas since I in fact attained Buddhahood. (Translation by Burton Watson, 1993: 225)

On the basis of this text the Tendai School distinguished in Shaka the True Buddha (*honmon* 本門) of an immensely remote past (*kuon* 久遠) from the one that attained buddhahood at Gaya, seeing the latter as the former’s trace *ōjaku* 応迹 (or *shakumon* 迹門). The distinction between these two forms, called *honjaku nimon* 本迹二門 [origin and trace, two forms], one as the true one and the other one as its trace, was then applied to the relationship between deities and buddhas, where buddhas represent the true nature and deities their manifested trace. The theory that explains the relation of buddhas with deities in this manner is the *honji-suijaku* theory.

However, this line of thought did not originate solely in Tendai doctrine. It also was influenced by esoteric Buddhism’s theory of ‘true body’ (*honji-shin* 本地身) and ‘manifest body’ (*kaji-shin* 加持身). In a still broader sense it can be said that it appeared as one line of thought in the general Buddhist thinking on bodily appearance (Yamaori 1991: 89-99).

Buddhism originated in India, but in the process of expanding it transformed deities and historically important personalities of many areas into buddhas and bodhisattvas. In this way it took roots in these areas. For example, in the explanations of the spurious sutras *Shōjō Hōgyō-kyō* 清淨法行經 and *Shumi Shiiki-kyō* 須弥四域經 written in the period of the Six Dynasties in China, Confucius, Yan Hui 顏回, Laozi or Nüwa 女媧, and Fu Hsi 伏羲 were declared to be transformations of bodhisattvas, the monk Hōshi 宝誌 was [explained as an embodiment of] the Eleven-Faced Kannon and Hotei 布袋 as the Bodhisattva Miroku. In Japan, too, there existed already a theory that explained Prince Shōtoku 聖德太子 as Guze Kannon 救世觀音 and Gyōki 行基 as the Bodhisattva Monju 文殊菩薩 even before the *honji-suijaku* theory had been established. This means that thinking along *honji-suijaku* lines was not a prerogative of Japan, and that it was not solely applied to deities (*kami*).

Examples of an early use of the term '*suijaku*' in Japan are the *Eizan Daishi-den* 叡山大師伝 and the *Daijō Hossō Kenjin-shō* 大乘法相研神章, texts drawn up during the Tenchō 天長 years (824-834), but in them the term is not used for deities. The earliest example of an application of the term to a deity comes from the first year of Jōgan, the same year as that of the enshrinement of Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū, in a document filed by the monk Eryō 恵亮 of the Enryaku-ji 延暦寺 in which he applied for a yearly group of monks of the Tendai School [to be stationed at the shrine]. In that text we find him writing that the two deities Kamo 賀茂 and Kasuga 春日 are "the trace manifestations (*suijaku*) of the Daishi (大士) either as king or as kami." However, elsewhere in the same document he writes: "He wants to cut the root of the way of the *kami* and to rely only on the mercy of Chōgo 調御" (another title for Buddha). This expression presupposes a theory of separation from the body of a *kami*, yet it seems that a clear understanding of a buddha as true nature and of a *kami* as its trace manifestation is not yet established.

This point can clearly be ascertained in an order from the Administrative Headquarters of Dazai in the seventh year of Jōhei 承平 (937). This document was released by the Administrative Headquarters of Dazai when the monk Kenyū 兼祐 of the Hakozaki Senbu-ji 管崎千部寺 (a *jingū-ji* 神宮寺 [shrine temple] of Hakozaki Hachiman-gū) requested to build on the land of Hakozaki a pagoda (to store a thousand copies of the Lotus Sutra) that Dengyō Daishi 伝教大師 had vowed to build at Miroku-ji 弥勒寺, the *jingū-ji* of Usa Hachiman, but the plan had been abandoned after a fire. In this text it says: "That shrine [Usa] and this shrine [Hakozaki], although their location is different, they both are the trace manifestation (*suijaku*) of the 'Gongen Bosatsu' 権現菩薩, consequently they are the same." This means that although the locations of the shrine in Usa and that of the shrine in Hakozaki are different, as trace manifestations of the Gongen Bosatsu they are both the same, and so a pagoda may be built in Hakozaki.

The *bosatsu* [bodhisattva] mentioned in the above case refers to the deity Hachiman (Hachiman Daibosatsu), but to this the title '*gongen*' 権現 is further added. Now, '*gongen*' means 'a buddha or bodhisattva who for the benefit of sentient beings manifests itself temporarily (*kari ni* 権に) in a human or other body.' According to the dictionary *Mochizuki Bukkyō Daijiten* 望月仏教大辞典 (Article *gongen*) it is a term synonymous with '*ōgen*' 応現, '*kegen*' 化現, '*jigen*' 示現, and also with '*gonja*' 権者. If that is the case, then Hachiman is here not simply a bodhisattva deity; he is regarded as a buddha or a high-ranking bodhisattva (such as Kannon 観音 or Jizō 地藏, for example), and consequently as a being that temporarily manifested itself. From this time onwards, the title '*gongen*' came to designate exclusively a buddha in the shape of a *kami* as its trace manifestation (*suijaku*).

Note that all the examples mentioned above concern the deity Hachiman. It is not quite clear how other deities were regarded. That this concept was applied to

other deities as well can, however, definitely be confirmed from documents dated around the eleventh century. An early example is a request of the first year of Kankō 寛弘 (1004) written by Ōe no Masahira 大江匡衡 (text included in *Honchō Monzui* 本朝文粹), in which the title 'gongen' is used for the deity of Atsuta 熱田 [in present-day Nagoya].

Furthermore, a text of the third year of Kankō [1006], the *Seiji Yōryaku* 政事要略 (included in the *Meibun-shō* 明文抄), presents Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大神 as the 'transformation' (*goben* 御変) of Kannon. In this way, more and more examples gradually appeared in which buddhas were identified as the true nature (*honji*) of deities, so that later, by the Kamakura Period, the tendency had spread to the whole country, when prominent shrines (*jinja*) had decided on a buddha as their true nature. Other examples, besides the one of Amaterasu Ōmikami (Inner Shrine at Ise) already mentioned, of a deity being linked to a buddha, are Hachiman linked to Amida 阿弥陀, and Kasuga 春日 linked (as a rule) to Fukūenjaku Kannon 不空羼索觀音. The basis for selecting a particular true nature (*honji*) was either the principal image of the temple concerned (of the *bettō-ji* 別當時 or *jingū-ji* 神宮寺), or a similarity in character between the buddha and the deity, or even by still other considerations. There were also numerous cases in which several true-nature theories existed due to the preferences of the believers. For example, in the case of Amaterasu Ōmikami, besides the theory that her true nature is Kannon, a theory that the deity is Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来 was widespread; in the case of Hachiman, followers of the Tendai School 天台宗 or of the Nichiren School 日蓮宗 took the deity's true nature to be Shaka 釈迦, while in the case of Kasuga, Shaka was explicitly taken to be its true nature during the lifetime of the monk Jōkei 貞慶 (1155-1213), when belief in Shaka was particularly strong.

When the *honji-suijaku* theory expanded and also spread among the common population, an idea surfaced about how to express the relationship between deities and buddhas so that everybody could understand it. This was the idea of the *mishōtai* 御正体 ['the venerable true body'], of which there were two types. In one type of *mishōtai* a line image of the true-nature buddha/bodhisattva was engraved on the face of the mirror that represented the body of the deity; the other type was an image of the true-nature Buddha in relief on the back of a round or a fan-shaped mirror [or medallion] (made of such materials as steel or wood). This latter type of image was called *kake-botoke* 懸仏 ['attached buddha']. Either one of the types was a visual expression of the relationship between a true nature (*honji*) and its trace manifestation (*suijaku*). Such images were frequently produced from medieval up to pre-modern times. There were also iconographic forms [such as picture scrolls] of *honji-suijaku*, in which a shrine hall or the landscape of a shrine was drawn with the true-nature buddha or with the *mishōtai* (in this case it was a circle with the image of the buddha or with its root syllable) in it. This sort of image was called a *miya* mandala 宮曼荼羅 and was frequently made from the Kamakura Period on.

The Emergence of Images of a Deity

In the process discussed so far, that of the increasing assimilation of deities with buddhas and of the formulation of the true-nature trace-manifestation theory, the representations of 'sacred beings,' too, underwent great changes. As already mentioned, a deity (*kami*) is essentially an invisible being, yet its existence could be known by such means as a *himorogi* ヒモロギ¹¹ or an *iwakura* イワクラ¹² that served as a prop (*yorishiro* 依り代) for the deity where to manifest itself. However, the advent of images of Buddha, a foreign deity, and the development of the theory of assimilation of deities with buddhas that followed it, brought great changes in the manner of how to represent the *kami*.

The emergence of images of deities was the conspicuous sign of these changes. In written records the earliest mention was that of Mangan making an image of the Tado deity in the seventh year of Tempyō Hōji 天平宝字 (763), as recorded in the *Tadojingū-ji Garan-engi Narabi ni Shizai-chō* already mentioned. It is not clear whether this reflects a fact or not, but it shows at least that by the time the *Shizai-chō* was compiled in the seventh year of Enryaku 延暦 (788), an image of the deity had appeared.

Among the images of deities that are believed to go back to the Early Heian Period the following ones can be listed:

- ① A group of three images of seated deities with Hachiman as monk (Tō-ji 東寺 [Kyoto], from sometime in the Kōnin 弘仁 Period (810-824)).
- ② A group of three images of seated deities with Hachiman as monk (Yakushi-ji 薬師寺 [Nara], of about the Kamyō 寛平 Period (889-898)).
- ③ Images of two seated deities represented as a lay man and a lay woman (Matsunoo Taisha 松尾大社, latter half of the ninth century).
- ④ Seated images of the Kumano 熊野 deities Hayatama-gami 速玉神 and Fusumi-gami 夫須美神, (Kumano Hayatama Taisha 熊野速玉大社, tenth century (according to another theory they might be of the eighth century)).

① and ② are groups of three images, the deity Hachiman and two female deities (Jingū Kōgō 神功皇后 and Nakatsu Hime no Mikoto 中津姫命). Hachiman is represented as a monk in a garb suitable for a monk in training. The female deities are dressed in the costume of aristocratic women of the time. In ③ a man and a woman are both represented in the style of members of the time's

11. *Himorogi* 神籬 is a sacred place, marked by a simple fence or sacred rope around it and with a tree growing in its center. It is a place where a deity is thought to arrive and dwell.

12. *Iwakura* 磐座 is a stone setting for the same purpose as a *himorogi*.

aristocracy. Unlike Buddhist images, there were no fixed rules (rules concerning representations) about what shape to give to the image of a deity, and so persons of the aristocracy were copied. The figures of male deities especially were represented with an angry expression shown by a contraction of their eyebrows. It may be that this was a means to express a deity's character as a bringer of misfortune.

Besides what has just been mentioned, there is another feature of great interest, and that is the tree used as raw material for some of the images mentioned, and the intentional preservation of that material's particular features (③,④). In some cases knots in the wood were left at conspicuous places. One can deduce, therefore, that a tree that was to be the raw material for the image of a deity was not selected because it was suited for sculpting, but because of some kind of a history related to that tree. Presumably the reason for selecting that particular tree was that it had served as the prop (*yorishiro* 依り代) of a deity. The belief in sacred trees as the dwelling places of a deity may, under the influence of Buddhist images, have given birth to using images as a new form of representing a deity (Inoue 1989: 70-82).

This way of linking Buddhism with the worship of sacred trees had also a great influence in regard to Buddhist images. To begin with, producing Buddhist images in gilt bronze or covering them with gold leaf was done in order to give the image a resemblance that brought it close to that of a living buddha or bodhisattva. The reason for this was the idea that a high-ranking being such as a buddha or a bodhisattva emanates rays of light from his body. That is why the aureole behind a Buddhist image is the visible form of an aura or of rays of light emanating from inside the body. And so a gilt bronze buddha statue is not necessarily a proud demonstration of the sponsor's wealth; it may be nothing but the sign of an attempt to convey a realistic image of a buddha's true being.

Still, in Japan Buddhist images made of wood were numerous from the beginning and among them there were some that preserved the original features of the tree used. The classic examples of this are the so-called standing-tree buddhas, such as the Thousand-Arm Kannon (*Senju Kannon* 千手観音) of Chūzen-ji 中禅寺 in Nikkō; the Eleven-Faced Kannon (*Jūichi-men Kannon* 十一面観音) of the Saikō-in 西光院 at Ishioka City 石岡市 in Ibaraki Prefecture 茨城県; or the Thousand-Arm Kannon (*Senju Kannon* 千手観音) of the Eryū-ji 惠隆寺 at Aizubange-machi 会津坂下町 in Fukushima Prefecture 福島県. For such an image the upper part of a tree still standing with its roots in the ground was cut and the image carved without digging the tree up, a hall was later built over it (of course, at present there are many cases in which the tree is dug up and the image installed in a new hall). Most probably these trees were originally worshiped as sacred trees. An example of a buddha image that stresses its original material is the image of Shōkannon 聖観音 at Tendai-ji 天台寺 (Ninohe City 二戸市, Iwate Prefecture 岩手県). Such examples are known as 'hatchet-carved' (*natabori* 鉋彫) images. These works are Buddhist images on which chisel traces were intentionally left.

Among images of deities there are also examples of standing-tree images and hatchet-carved images. An example of the former is the image of a female deity in the Hakusan Jinja 白山神社 of Yuzawa City 湯沢市, Akita Prefecture 秋田県; an example of the latter is the image of a male deity in the Futagami Imizu Jinja 二上射水神社 of Takaoka City 高岡市, Toyama Prefecture 富山県.

Manifestation and Appearance

When deities or buddhas reveal themselves, the event is called either a manifestation (*jigen* 示現) or an appearance (*yōgō* 影向). There is a certain difference of nuance in the meanings of the two terms. Manifestation (*jigen*) is used in the case of a deity appearing in such a way as in a dream, in an embodiment (*geshin* 化身) of some kind, or by way of an oracle. Appearance (*yōgō*), however, means that the deity shows its figure in some palpable form [embodiment].

The desire to make a deity visible created the problem of how it could be expressed. In paintings, especially, ways were explored of expressing in a picture the very moment when the manifestation or appearance of a *kami* occurred. The painters came up with various creative ideas of how to draw a picture of a deity. In what follows I shall present some well-known examples of visual expressions of deities from the Kamakura Period [1185-1333].

The text written in black ink under the picture in Figure 1 says that it is the representation of an appearance (*yōgō*) of the deity of Kasuga 春日, whom the Kampaku 関白 [Chief Councilor] Takatsukasa Fuyuhira 鷹司冬平 (1275-1327) saw in a dream in the first year of Shōwa 正和 (1312). The figure is that of an aristocrat dressed in formal clothes sitting in a cow cart from which the

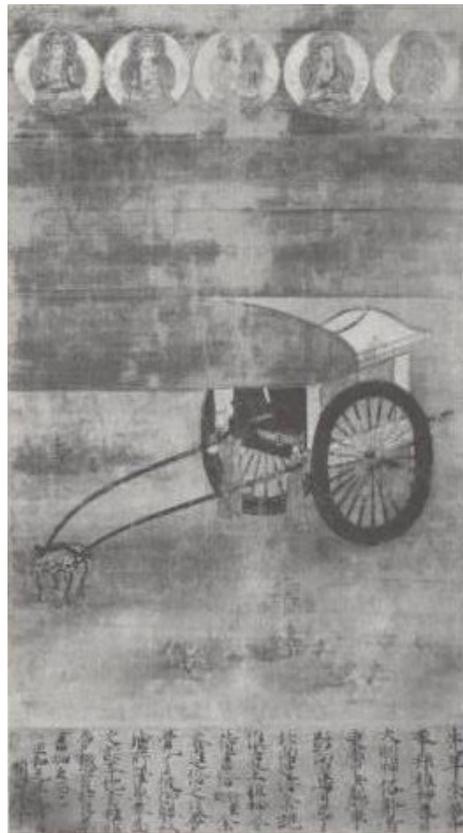


Figure 1.
Image of an Appearance (*yōgō* 影向) of the Deity of Kasuga, *Kasuga Myōjin* 春日明神 (Fujita Art Museum, Osaka). Courtesy Ito Satoshi 2012: 63.

cow has been removed. At first glance one is not quite sure where to look for the figure of the deity. A hint is given by the flash haze that hides part of the person's face. In order to distinguish the image of a deity who is often drawn as dressed in formal clothes from that of a human being, the technique used is that of hiding its face either by a flash haze or a hiding screen, or by drawing the figure as turning its back. These are devices developed in the later Kamakura Period. From that time on such a device was frequently used when depicting a deity or a *tennō* (Yamamoto 2006: 23-57). In the *Kasuga Gongen Kenki-e* 春日権現験記絵, a work of the middle Kamakura Period, this technique is often applied. It is possible that the work referred to above might have been produced under its direct influence.

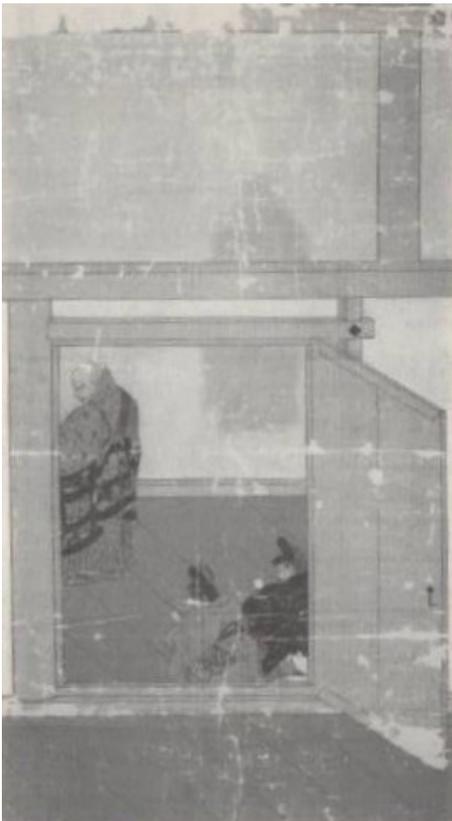


Figure 2.
Image of an Appearance of Hachiman 八幡 in the Guise of a Monk (Ninna-ji 仁和寺, Kyoto). Courtesy Itō Satoshi 2012: 64.

Figure 2 is also a work from the Kamakura Period. It is housed at Ninna-ji 仁和寺 [in Kyoto]. At a first glance it is a picture of two men in formal clothes attending a high-ranking monk, but the monk is an appearance of the deity Hachiman. The basis for taking this to be the figure of a deity is the device of drawing it much larger than the other two figures and of having it show only half of its face over the shoulder. The most unique point in this painting however, is that something like the shadow of the monk (deity) is drawn as appearing on the wall. The observer may at first be deceived into taking it to be a shadow, but [a closer look reveals that] it is separate and not connected with the body. Perhaps it is possible to see this as another way to depict an invisible being such as a deity.

Figure 3 depicts the Seiryū Gongen 清瀧権現 who in the first year of Genkyū 元久 (1204) appeared in a dream to the monk Jinken 深賢 (? – 1261) of the Daigo-ji 醍醐寺 ([it is a] painting from the Kamakura Period in possession of the Hatakeyama Kinenkan). The

door is open. The figure touches the pillar with its left hand while one of its legs moves slightly forward. This suggests that the figure is depicted exactly at the very moment of its appearance. It is probably a truthful reproduction of the phantom the monk had seen in his dream. To depict the figure so large as to make the *miko* 巫女 [a maiden serving at a shrine] at its side appear as a little girl is the same device as the one used in the 'Picture of the Appearance of the Deity Hachiman as Monk' [in Figure 2]. That the female deity has her eyebrows drawn together is the same feature as the one with the image of the male deity of the Matsunoo Taisha. [Here too,] this feature may be considered to be an expression of the deity's stern character (as well as of its frightfulness as a deity that may cause evil).

Figure 4 is a flyleaf illustration in a copy of the *Kongō Hannya-kyō* 金剛般若經 from the tenth year of Bun-ei 文永 (1273). This volume of the sutra was kept at the Daitōkyū Memorial Library, but originally it was contained in the body of a statue of Bodhisattva Monju 文殊菩薩 made by Kōen 康円 that was kept in storage at the Kangaku-in 勧学院 of Kōfuku-ji 興福寺 [in Nara] (the picture is now in the Tokyo National Museum). This picture has been drawn on the basis of a revelation received in a dream by Kyōgen 経玄, who asked to have the image of the bodhisattva made. The picture is of Kasuga Wakamiya 春日若宮 (whose



Figure 3.
Image of an Appearance of Seiryū Gongen 清瀧権現 (Hatakeyama Memorial Museum of Fine Art 畠山記念館, Tokyo).



Figure 4.
Image of an Appearance of the Deity Kasuga Wakamiya 春日若宮 (Now at Tokyo National Museum 東京国立博物館). Courtesy Itô Satoshi 2012: 66.

true nature is the Bodhisattva Monju 文殊菩薩) and depicts the circumstances of the deity's appearance at Kasugano 春日野. It is possible to know that the child in the center is the deity because, compared with the persons around it, a monk (Kyōgen) and some shrine priests, it far surpasses them in size.

Changes in the Character of the Institution of Heavenly and Earthly Deities

Around the tenth century the character of the *Ritsuryō Jingi Seido* 律令神祇制度¹³ [the Ritsuryō Institution of Heavenly and Earthly Deities] began to change. The Institution of Government Shrines, by which the Office of Divine Affairs (*Jingi-kan* 神祇官) distributed ritual offerings (*heihaku* 幣帛)¹⁴ on the occasion of the *torigoi matsuri* 新年祭¹⁵ and of the *tsukinami-sai* 月次祭 [seasonal] celebrations held twice a year, had already in the second half of the Nara Period [most of the 8th century] become difficult to maintain. In the seventeenth year of Enryaku 延暦 (798) the offering of *heihaku* at Local Government Shrines came to be done by the provincial administrators *kokushi* 国司 and from that time on [Government sponsored shrines] were divided [into two types]: *kan'pei-sha* 官幣社 [Government Shrines] and *kokuhei-sha* 国幣社 [Local Government Shrines]. In the ninth century leading shrines at the seat of government and in some outlying areas were selected as 'myōjin' 名神 and offered *heihaku*, but this too gradually became an institution only in name and not in reality. In its place emerged a much more realistic institution, a system whereby only shrines enjoying a close connection with the family of the Emperor or with such powerful clans as the Fujiwara clan 藤原氏 were given such offerings. This is called the 'Institution of Twenty-two Shrines.'

The formation of the Institution of Twenty-two Shrines came about as follows. From the fourth year of Tennyō 天慶 (941) it became a standard [Court] procedure to send offerings to sixteen shrines on the occasion of prayers for the harvest offered at the time of the New Year, of prayers for rain, and of prayers for making the rain stop. The set recipients of those offerings were the shrines of Ise 伊勢, Iwashimizu 石清水, Kamo 賀茂, Matsunoo 松尾, Hirano 平野, Inari 稻荷, Kasuga 春日, Ōharano 大原野, Ōmiwa 大神, Isonokami 石上, Ōyamato 大和, Sumiyoshi 住吉, Hirose 広瀬, Tatsuta 龍田, Nyūkawakami 丹生川上, and Kibune 貴船. In the second year of Shōryaku 正暦 (991) the shrines of Yoshida 吉田, Hirota 廣田, and Kitano 北野 were added, to make the number of shrines nineteen. Later, at the beginning of the eleventh century, by the time of Emperor Ichijō 一条天皇, Umenomiya 梅宮 and Gion 祇園 were added, followed in the twelfth century by the Hie Shrine 日吉社.

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13. Beginning with the latter half of the seventh century heavenly deities (*tenshin* 天神) became distinguished from earthly deities (*chigi* 地祇) of lower rank (Itō 2012: 35-36)
 14. These were offerings of paper, silk or cloth.
 15. Rites performed for a good harvest and for the safety of Emperor and State.

This brought the number of shrines finally up to twenty-two, and it remained fixed at that number.

A breakdown of the twenty-two shrines reveals the following divisions: shrines for deities of the land (or locality) in the regions of Ōyamato 大和 and Yamashiro 山城 (Kamo, Ōmiwa, Ōyamato, Isonokami, Inari, Matsunoo); shrines of deities related to prayers for rain or for stopping rain (Nyūkawakami, Kibune); shrines for a river deity (Hirose) and for a wind deity (Tatsuta), for the ancestral deity of the imperial family (Ise, Iwashimizu, Hirota (the *aratama* 荒魂, ['unsettled spirit'] of the Inner Shrine at Ise), and for the clan deity of the Fujiwara clan (Kasuga, Ōharano, Yoshida). The Ōharano and Yoshida shrines were counted [as part of the group] from the time the Kasuga deity had been installed in the Heian capital. Furthermore, Hirano and Umenomiya were deities of clans on the mother's side of Emperor Kanmu 桓武天皇 and Emperor Montoku 文徳天皇, Hie is the guardian deity of Mount Hiei 比叡山, and Sumiyoshi is a deity of war against foreign countries (Hachiman of Iwashimizu is probably of the same character). The shrines of Kitano and Gion are shrines that were newly built against a background of beliefs about vengeful deities (*goryō* 御霊). This makes it clear that this cult institution [of twenty-two shrines] was established on the basis of [a sanctuary's or deity's] closeness to the Emperor or to Regents and Chief Councilors (*sekkon* 摂関). The shrine cult of the medieval Court was carried out with these twenty-two shrines at its center. However, with the decline of the Court, the Emperor, and the regents and councilors, the system came to function only sporadically, until it finally became extinct in the first year of Hōtoku 宝徳 (1449).

On the other hand, from about the eleventh and twelfth centuries the rise of the institution of *ichinomiya* 一宮 and *ninomiya* 二宮 as well as of the institution of general shrines (*sōja* 総社) can be noticed in the provinces. The institution of *ichinomiya* and *ninomiya* introduced a rank order among the shrines in all provinces. At the top were the *ichinomiya*, followed next by the *ninomiya*. In some cases *sannomiya* 三宮 or even lower-ranking shrines were installed. According to the usual explanation, when a newly appointed provincial administrator arrived in the province entrusted to him, he paid visits to the shrines in the order of *ichinomiya* and *ninomiya*. A general shrine *sōja* 総社 (or 惣社) brought all the deities worshiped in that province together to enshrine them in one place. For that reason such a shrine was established in the vicinity of the seat of the provincial government, the *koku-fu* 国府. And it was generally said that the deities were brought together in order to make it more convenient for the administrator to visit and worship them. However, on the basis of research in recent years it seems that from the eleventh and twelfth centuries provincial administrators did not necessarily go anymore to their appointed provinces, but instead a form of religious shrine ritual emerged that was carried out in place of the administrator by the resident official (the lord of the local fief) of the place that had become the center of government affairs (Mizutani

1983: 19-36). General shrines (*sōja*) and *ichinomiya* provided for the spiritual support of the class of local lords (local warriors *chihō bushi* 地方武士) concentrated in the provincial government office *kokuga* 国衙. There were cases in which the deities worshiped in these shrines became clan deities or guardian deities for their worshippers.

Finally, I wish to add a word about the relationship between shrine belief and the assimilation of deities (*kami*) and buddhas, *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合. Originally, shrine belief was normally carried out in practice by repeating traditionally established rituals that are performed by such units as clans or localities. Prayers asking for a response to private wishes did not exist. Prayers were performed only by such units as the State or the clan. However, with the advancement of the true-nature trace-manifestation theory, beings who were to fulfill personal wishes, no matter whether they were concerned with this world or with the next world, namely buddhas, bodhisattvas, and *kami*, came to be perceived as beings of an equal nature. As a result, a tendency arose to direct personal prayer to the shrines (*jinja*). The establishment of a household system after the Period of Regents and Chief Councilors *sekkan-ki* 摂関期 [mid-Heian Period, from the tenth to the end of the eleventh century] had as its consequence that the cult of the clan deity (*uji-gami* 氏神) of large clans was now transferred to much smaller units. It first changed into an *uji-gami* cult [on the community (village) level] that did not necessarily have to be linked to a particular descent line, and finally it changed into an *uji-gami* cult [on a household level] based on personal belief.

Onmyō-dō and Shugen-dō

In this final section I will discuss Onmyō-dō 陰陽道 and Shugen-dō 修験道, both of which developed during the Heian Period, by focusing on their connection with the belief in deities (*jingi* 神祇).

In the *Ritsuryō* 律令 system the Onmyō Bureau (*Onmyō-ryō* 陰陽寮) was installed as a department in the Ministry of Central Imperial Affairs (*Nakatsukasa-shō* 中務省) charged with the observation of the heavenly bodies (astronomy) and the supervision of the calendar, while [the department's] section that made use of onmyō as magic was charged with ritual divination (*shikisen* 式占). In order to perform ritual divination, two boards (*shikiban* 式盤), a round one and a square one, were put on top of each other. For this method of divination the twelve generals of the months, the twenty-eight stellar mansions, and the like were marked on these divining boards. The Onmyō Bureau as such was modeled on the Taiboku-sho 太卜署, a subsection of the Daijō-ji 太常寺 in the Tang government organization. However, because only tortoise-shell divination, the main method of magic used in the Taiboku-sho, was transmitted early to Japan, it came under the jurisdiction of the Office of Divine Affairs (*Jingi-kan* 神祇官). For that reason the responsibility

of the Onmyō Bureau was restricted to activities such as fortune-telling (*ekizei* 易筮) and ritual divination (*shikisen* 式占). [The Bureau, therefore, first had no religious function.] In the course of time the ritual elements grew increasingly more important and, furthermore, came under the influence of esoteric Buddhism. As a result, specific *Onmyō-dō* rituals were created and a system of rules of conduct was established that was based on ritual divination. The result of these developments was the establishment of *Onmyō-dō*. This means that *Onmyō-dō* is not identical with the theory of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements (*Onmyō Gogyō-setsu* 陰陽五行説). What is important to note is the fact that the functions of the *onmyō-dō* section in the Onmyō Bureau became religious functions and that this resulted in establishing a form of *Onmyō-dō* that was unique to Japan (Kosaka 1987: 147-163; Yamashita 2010: 16-17).

The relationship of *Onmyō-dō* with the belief in heavenly and earthly deities (*jingi shinkō* 神祇信仰) is indeed extremely complex. The cult of these deities itself had originally experienced the influence of the theory of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements from the continent. On top of this the change to religion within the Onmyō Bureau, namely the formation of *Onmyō-dō*, came to cut into functions that originally had belonged to the cult of the heavenly and earthly deities. For example, rituals that had been under the responsibility of the Office of Divine Affairs (*jingi-kan* 神祇官), such as the *michiae* ritual (*michiae no matsuri* 道饗祭)¹⁶ and the rituals that had contributed to its development—such Court rituals as the *shiiki shikyō-sai* 四域四境祭, the *shikaku shikyō-sai* 四角四境祭¹⁷, and the *jusho ekishin-sai* 十処疫神祭¹⁸—shifted to become, after the middle of the Heian Period, the [magico-religious] *Onmyō-dō* rituals *kiki-sai* 鬼気祭 and *shikaku shikyō-sai* 四角四境祭.

This phenomenon was especially conspicuous in purification rituals (*misogi harae* 禊祓). The central ritual at the Office of Divine Affairs (*jingi-kan* 神祇官) is the Great Purification (*Ōharae* 大祓), but a ritual different from this was established: the *Onmyōdō harae* 陰陽道祓, and, as happened in the case of the Ritual of the Eighty Islands (*yasoshima matsuri* 八十嶋祭), which had originally been under the charge of the Office of Divine Affairs, the ritual was taken over instead by the officers of the Onmyō Bureau (*Onmyō-ryō* 陰陽寮) (Kosaka 1976: 211-237).

While the *onmyō* diviners who functioned as officers in the Onmyō Bureau came, from the end of the Heian Period onward, to inherit the office, like for example members of the Abe 安部 and Kamo 賀茂 families, diviners of other

16. Rites performed by placing offerings on the streets at the four corners of Kyoto to ward off noxious deities.

17. Rites held at the four corners of a house or at the four borders of an area to keep deities of pestilence away.

18. Rites held as need arose to drive sickness-bearing deities away from the realm.

families who had been dismissed drifted into the general populace, where they disseminated their knowledge. There were also many Buddhist *onmyō* diviners (*hōshi onmyō-shi* 法師陰陽師) who had once been Buddhist monks. In this way new practices appeared that, as in the case of the *rokuji karin-hō* 六字河臨法,¹⁹ assimilated *Onmyō-dō* rituals with ascetic practices of esoteric Buddhism.

Shugen-dō, [for its part], had sprung up from ancient mountain beliefs (*sangaku shinkō* 山岳信仰). As already mentioned, these mountain beliefs have been linked up with esoteric Buddhism since the Nara Period, but in the villages they were also related to the assimilation of deities and buddhas (*shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合) so that Shugen-dō experienced a particular development of its own. Its bases in the Kinai 畿内 region are Yoshino 吉野 ([with the mountain] Kinpusen 金峰山) and Kumano 熊野. Kongō Zaō Gongen 金剛藏王権現 manifested itself on Mt. Kinpusen. It is said that En no Ozunu 役小角²⁰ had mystically encountered him on Mt. Kinpusen. Later on, the belief radiated out from that mountain to the whole country. In Kumano there was from ancient times a belief in the *gongen* of three places: Hongū 本宮, Shingū 新宮, and Nachi 那智. As a result, the whole area from Yoshino to Kumano became a focal area of Shugen-dō.

In the course of these events groups of *yamabushi* 山伏 [mountain ascetics] based at Kinpusen and Kumano became organized. From the time that Zōyo 增誉 (1032-1116), a monk of Onjō-ji 園城寺, became the supervisor (*kengyō* 檢校) of the three mountains [of Kumano], the Kumano *yamabushi* consider the Shōgo-in 聖護院 [in Kyoto], a subtemple of the Onjō-ji, as their headquarters. This group was later called the Head-Temple Faction (*Honzan-ha* 本山派). On the other hand, the *yamabushi* based at Kinpusen had been organized with Kōfuku-ji 興福寺 [in Nara] as their center, but after the middle of the Muromachi Period the group took the Sanpō-in 三宝院 of Daigo-ji 醍醐寺 as its headquarters. This group is called the Tōzan Faction (*Tōzan-ha* 当山派); it had been organized by taking the founder of Daigo-ji, the well-known mountain ascetic Shōbō 聖宝 (832-909), as its founding ancestor.

Towards the end of the medieval period control over *honzan-ha* and *tōzan-ha* was exercised by Tendai Shugen and Shingon Shugen, respectively, and Shugendō for all practical purposes became organized on a national level. However, violent confrontations between the two groups grew increasingly severe from the end of the medieval period to the early Edo Period. Because the roaming around the country

19. This is a major secret practice in Tendai esoteric Buddhism whereby veneration of the Thousand-Arm Kannon serves to subdue enemies and ward off magic.

20. The mountain ascetic En no Ozunu is probably better known by the name En no Gyōja 役行者. He had acquired strong magical power by his ascetic practices. He is often considered to be the first *yamabushi* and as such the founder of Shugen-dō.

by ascetics (*yugyō* 遊行) was forbidden in the Edo Period, the *yamabushi* settled down in many areas. On the one hand they practiced magic incantations as their profession, on the other hand they were organizers of religious confraternities (*kō* 講) and took it upon themselves to lead their followers to sacred places (*reijō* 霊場). On the level of doctrine, Akyūbō Sokuden 阿吸房即伝 (1509-1558) of Mount Hiko 彦山 [in modern Ōita Prefecture] systematized doctrine and ascetic practice [of the Hikosan Shugen-dō Faction 彦山修験道派] at the end of the medieval period. As a basis for his work he took the practices of *injin* 印信 (a secret text) and of *kirigami* 切紙²¹ as they were used in the Miwa (*Miwa-ryū* 三輪流) and Goryū (*Go-ryū* 御流) Schools of Shinto.²²

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21. *Injin* is a secret *in* 印 (*mudrā*) that a teacher gives to his disciple as a sign that secret rituals and teachings have been transmitted. The *kirigami* is a signed and specially cut and folded paper, on which the most basic teachings are noted. This, too, is in proof of the *in*'s transmission.
 22. Both of these are strands of Ryōbu Shinto. The center of the Miwa School is Mt. Miwa (in Nara Prefecture) together with the shrine at the foot of that mountain. Goryū Shinto is a form of Shinto practiced by retired emperors or imperial princes who had become Buddhist monks.

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About the author:

Born in Gifu Prefecture (1961). Ito Satoshi graduated with a doctor's degree from the Graduate School of Literature at Waseda University, Tokyo. He is presently teaching the history of Japanese thought in the Literature Department of Ibaraki University, Mito City.

Publications: 2011, *Chūsei Amaterasu Ōmikami shinkō* 中世天照大神信仰の研究 (*Medieval Belief in Amaterasu Ōmikami*). Kyoto: Hōzōkan (34th Kadokawa Genyoshi Prize). 2012, Co-author, *Ōsu Kannon—Ima hikareru kiseki no bunko* 大須観音—いま開かれる、奇跡の文庫 (*Ōsu Kannon—A miraculous collection now opening*). Nagoya: Osu Kannon Hōshōin.

About the translator:

Born in Zurich (1937). Knecht Peter graduated from the Graduate School of Cultural Anthropology at Tokyo University. He then taught Anthropology of Religion and edited the journal *Asian Folklore Studies* at Nanzan University, Nagoya, until retirement (2006).

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