

SHAKING DANCE IN THE STORMY VALLEY:  
TENDAI DISCOURSE ON KAMI-BUDDHA RELATIONS IN FOURTEENTH CENTURY  
MOUNT HIEI

BY

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DISSERTATION

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## Abstract

This dissertation explores medieval Japanese discourse on the amalgamation of kami and buddhas, particularly as represented in *Keiran shūyōshū*, a fourteenth century encyclopedic Japanese Tendai text, which presents the highest knowledge of medieval Taimitsu scholasticism on Mt. Hiei. Focusing on the inner logic of the “origin-trace” structure central to the Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse, this study investigates the rationale of nonduality between buddhas and kami or the origin and manifested traces. Examining representations of kami as manifestations of buddhas and the complex web of their relationships in *Keiran*, this study elucidates that the origin-trace scheme is indispensable from medieval Taimitsu teachings—in particular, the esoteric idea of copenetration and mutual identity, as well as the doctrine of original enlightenment and its associated rituals and practices. Examination of these interrelated issues culminates by centering on *Keiran*’s discussion of kami’s manifestation in the form of the snake and its association with the sixth consciousness, through which the main discussions of this study—kami as manifestations, kami’s manifestations, and nonduality of the origin and trace, are integrated into the problem of our mind cultivation toward enlightenment. Throughout this study, I pay attention to several allegories associated with the notion of nonduality in *Keiran*, which include the allegory of the shaking dance mentioned in the title of this dissertation, as well as various analogies connected to the form of the snake. At the end of this study, the main features of this symbolic complex of nonduality are analyzed as being correlated in their subtle yet ultimate signification of our innate capacity to attain enlightenment, which should be sought after and sustained with our persistently dedicated practices.

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## Abbreviations and Conventions

The following abbreviations are used in this dissertation:

alt.	alternative
Ch.	Chinese
J.	Japanese
Skt.	Sanskrit
T.	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i>

I have followed the guidelines of *The Chicago Manual of Style* in the main. Chinese names and terms have been romanized according to the Pinyin system, and revised Hepburn has been used for Japanese. For technical terms used in a Chinese context, I have marked them in Chinese, and terms referring to Japanese pronunciation have been used in a Japanese context. For authors' dates, texts, and pronunciation of their names, I have primarily relied on the following reference works: Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*; Oda Tokunō, *Bukkyō Daijiten*; Kaiwahara Yūsen, *Nihon bukkyō jinmei jiten*; Kamata Shigeo, *Daizōkyō zenkaisetsu daijiten*; and Sawa Ryūken, *Mikkyō jiten*. Specific passages from the *Taishō* canon are cited by *Taishō* volume number, page number, column (a or b or c), and, when appropriate, line numbers (e.g., for *Keiran shūyōshū*, T.76. 2410:760a11). The main text used in this dissertation, *Keiran shūyōshū*, is written in classical Chinese characters. Consequently, terms and expressions directly from discussions in *Keiran shūyōshū* are noted with classical characters instead of modern Japanese. However, for discussions of general Buddhist or Japanese terms, are all marked with modern Japanese characters. Whenever specific passages in the *Keiran* corpus are cited in English translation, I have included the original text immediately after the English translations for readers' own interpretations. All English translations are my own work; thus, I bear the responsibility for any misinterpretations.

## Introduction

For the study of what might be called “religious syncretism,” medieval Japan can be an ideal locus because it provides intriguing dynamics spawned by an asymmetrical power relationship between two or multiple religious traditions. This relationship also involved the asymmetry between Buddhism, a so-called high religion, and a wide array of non-Buddhist beliefs and practices that were not equipped with systematic doctrinal scriptures, teachings, or scholiasts who might explicated the meanings of various rituals and symbols.

In textual terms, it was medieval Japanese Buddhist writings, such as tales, commentaries and preaching texts, which featured syncretic discourse in which *kami* (alt. *shin* or *jin*), an umbrella term for non-Buddhist folk deities, were merged into the Buddhist pantheon. This medieval Japanese syncretic discourse was typically seen by scholars of the past several decades as an expression of a larger development called “Kami-Buddha amalgamation” (*shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合) or a combination thereof. This development has often additionally been described as the culmination of a process of syncretization of two identifiable religions, i.e., Shintō and Buddhism.

However, scholars have more recently begun to evaluate “Shintō” in terms of its broader historical context. The most prominent among these was Kuroda Toshio (1926-1993), who argued that *kami* worship had its origins in Daoism and that it became inextricably related to Buddhist belief and practice from an early period. Kuroda’s analysis undercut early assumptions that Shintō originally possessed a religious system distinct from Buddhism. Kuroda’s exploration of the historical position of *kami* worship within the greater process of combinatory Kami-Buddha practice provided a crucial impetus since the 1990s for other scholars to conduct further



studies.<sup>1</sup> These studies<sup>2</sup> have attempted to re-examine the historical context and character of *shinbutsu shūgō* by means of semiotic discourse analysis and other theoretical approaches.

In doing so, many scholars of Japanese religions have come to consider *shinbutsu shūgō* not as a syncretism of two distinct religions but as a changing and extremely prominent set of combinatory discourses that presented buddhas and kami variously as intimately related and, often, ultimately identifiable with each other. Study of these discourses, including the related development of Buddhist practices and lineages, has enabled scholars of religion to re-envision kami worship and local practices as part of a dynamic and combinatory system. This system is now understood as featuring Buddhas/bodhisattvas and kami that reciprocally influenced each other while assimilating a broad array of popular religious practices.

Nonetheless, what we need to pay attention in this combinatory system of Kami and Buddha is the very logic that combines kami and buddhas, which contributes to the asymmetry of this syncretic combination as mentioned in the beginning. Kami-Buddha combinatory discourses are featured throughout a variety of medieval writings—predominantly Buddhist discourses in which kami merged into the Buddhist pantheonic structure, typically as the

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<sup>1</sup> See Kuroda Toshio, “Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion,” in James C. Dobbins and Suzanne Gay trans., *Journal of Japanese Studies* Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter, 1981): 1-21. Also, “Historical Consciousness and *Hon-jaku* Philosophy in the Medieval Period on Mount Hiei,” in George and Willa Tanabe, eds., *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1989), pp.143-158.

<sup>2</sup> Noteworthy studies of the *shinbutsu shūgō* and *honji suijaku* system have been conducted by Mark Teeuwen, *Watarai Shinto: An Intellectual History of the Outer Shrine in Ise* (Leiden: Leiden University, 1996), “Introduction: Combinatory Religion and the *Honji Suijaku* Paradigm in Pre-modern Japan,” and “The Creation of a *honji suijaku* Deity: Amaterasu as the Judge of the Dead,” in Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli eds., *Buddhas and Kami in Japan-Honji Suijaku as a combinatory paradigm* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp.115-144, Fabio Rambelli, “*Honji suijaku* at Work: Religion, Economics, and Ideology in Pre-modern Japan,” in Teeuwen and Rambelli eds. *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, pp. 252-86, Allan Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), “The Source of Oracular Speech: Absence? Presence? or Plain Treachery? The Case of *Hachiman Usa-gū takusenshū*,” in Teeuwen and Rambelli eds. *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, pp. 77-94, Satō Hiroo, “Wrathful Deities and Saving Deities,” in Teeuwen and Rambelli eds. *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, pp. 95-114 and *Kami, Hotoke, ōken no chūsei*. (Hōzōkan, 1998), and Itō Satoshi, “The Medieval Period: The Kami Merge With Buddhism,” in Inoue Nobutaka, ed., Mark Teeuwen and John Breen, tras., *Shinto—A Short History* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

"traces," that is, the local manifestations of various buddhas, which are construed to be the "original ground." The structure of the original ground-trace (*honji suijaku* 本地垂迹), or, the origin-trace (*hon-jaku*), operates as the basic paradigm for Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse, based on many Buddhist writings, such as Buddhist tales, commentaries and preaching texts that emphasize the inextricably interrelated, yet asymmetrical and even hierarchical associations between kami and Buddhas.

Leading scholars of the study of such combinatory relations, such as Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, consider the origin-trace paradigm as constituting a fundamental feature of pre-modern Japanese religious culture.<sup>3</sup> Thus, there have been more than a fair amount of studies that have examined the devotional usages of the origin-trace as the central religious vocabulary in medieval Japan, as well as its domineering influences over all corners of medieval Japanese society as a "paradigm" to define and characterize the format and contents of medieval Japanese religiosity.<sup>4</sup>

While previous studies have examined *shinbutsu shūgō*, research on Kami-Buddha amalgamation has largely been confined to analyses of various documents and rituals to see which Buddhas and kami are specifically associated with one another and how they are represented in terms of the origin-trace structure, or with regard to the discussion of the institutional or intellectual influence of the *hon-jaku* discourse in medieval Japan. There have been scholarly endeavors aimed at overcoming the limitation of the *honji suijaku* framework, as

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<sup>3</sup> Teeuwen and Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, p.6.

<sup>4</sup> Studies included in Teeuwen and Rambelli's book, footnoted above, represent the most crucial examples for these examinations.

there are certain features and structures found in medieval Japanese religion that are not sufficiently explained by the structure of Buddha as the origin and kami as the manifested trace.<sup>5</sup>

However, few studies have investigated the inner logic of the origin-trace scheme, and in particular, the rationale for its association with the Kami-Buddha relationship. As discussed in previous scholarship, the concept of the origin and trace came from Buddhist hermeneutic and exegetical traditions among East Asian Buddhist scholiasts, and was developed in particular by medieval Tendai thinkers as a dominant rhetoric and discursive structure for Kami-Buddha syncretism.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, there have rarely been in-depth examinations of the rationale of *honji suijaku* relations and the doctrinal meaning of the structure itself from Buddhist perspectives. This deficiency is by no means a slight matter of imbalance, particularly when we consider that first, various Kami-Buddha combinatory rituals were formulated and developed in the traditions of Japanese esoteric Buddhism (Mikkyō 密教), based on the *hon-jaku* relations between kami and buddhas,<sup>7</sup> and second, the close theoretical relationship between the *honji suijaku* scheme and Tendai's doctrine of original enlightenment (*hongaku* 本覺).

As duly noted by major scholarly discussions<sup>8</sup> of medieval Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse, Tendai's original enlightenment thought was deeply connected not only to the

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<sup>5</sup> Satō Hiroo's studies of the medieval textual genre of "oaths" (*kishōmon* 起請文) has challenged *honji suijaku* as the all-inclusive paradigm that defines Kami-Buddha relations. See discussions in Chapter One.

<sup>6</sup> Details of this matter will also be discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>7</sup> The notion of "amalgamation" (*shūgō* 習合) and the expression itself seem to be deeply connected to a Mikkyō perspective, as that word evokes an expression such as "*myōgō* 冥合." As discussions of *Keiran* in this study will suggest, the concept of *shūgō* is in essence in the same vein as the esoteric meaning of the "neither one nor two" non-dual relationship between two or more items.

<sup>8</sup> William Deal and Brian Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism* (West Sussex, Malden, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), pp. 151-153, Yoshida Kazuhiko, "Honjaku shisō no juyō to tenkai: honji suijaku setsuno seiritsu katei," in Hayami Tasuku ed., *Nihon shakai ni okeru hotoke to kami*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2006, Teeuwen and

formation and development of the origin-trace discourse, but also to the later “reversal” of the origin and trace (*han honji suijaku* 反本地垂迹) concerning the relationship between buddhas and kami. Details of this process will be discussed in Chapter One. Thus, examining Tendai’s inner discourse on the meaning of the origin and traces is a compelling task as it can clarify many important, previously unexplained religious features of medieval Japan. The lack of doctrinal approaches to Kami-Buddha relations is mainly due to the insufficiency of Buddhist materials that enable such approaches.

However, there is at least one Tendai text that provides elements of doctrinal argument by means of elaborate narrative and recorded oral transmission: *Keiran shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 (ca. 1318-1348)<sup>9</sup>, which in translation means “Collection of Leaves Gathered in a Stormy Valley,” is an encyclopedic commentarial text by the Japanese Tendai monk Kōshū 光宗 (1276-1350) of Mt. Hiei 比叡山. Through its use of an esoteric language<sup>10</sup> filled with metaphors and symbolism, this Buddhist work explains the characteristics of the syncretic associations and their source in both Japanese and continental textual and ritual traditions. Representing “high medieval” Tendai esotericism and scholasticism, situated on Mount Hiei, *Keiran shūyōshū* reveals cultic life and scholasticism centered on the Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse, so fully developed as to herald the emergence of later independent Shintōist thought.

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Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, pp.35-36, Jacqueline Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> Included in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* No. 2410, Vol. 76.

<sup>10</sup> *Keiran shūyōshū* discusses various doctrinal teachings, practices, rituals, and so forth in an all-encompassing manner, and thus addresses “exoteric teachings (*kenkyō* 顯教). Nonetheless, as the comprehensive record of the Taimitsu 台密 teachings of Mt. Hiei, *Keiran shūyōshū* is focuses on esoteric teachings and secret transmissions. More on the characteristics of the text will be discussed in the main body of this dissertation.

Neither Western nor Japanese scholarship has fully examined *Keiran shūyōshū* in terms of its demonstration of Tendai views on the origin-trace scheme,<sup>11</sup> despite their awareness of its pivotal importance in the study of the origin-trace logic in the syncretism. This is mainly due to the text's voluminous size (currently one hundred and thirteen fascicles), its all-comprehensive discussions, and its "poetic" language interspersed with metaphors and allegories.<sup>12</sup> However, as this study will show, *Keiran shūyōshū* and the Tendai scholastic discourse represented therein offer the most comprehensively elucidated rationale of the syncretism between kami and buddhas.

This dissertation consists of four chapters: Chapter One begins with delineating the history of the Kami-Buddha amalgamation (*shinbutsu shūgō*) and the development of the *honji suijaku* structure as the combinatory framework for Kami-Buddha relations. This historical sketch will reveal the crucial influence of medieval Tendai teachings in the formation and development of Kami-Buddha discourse based on the origin-trace scheme. In order to illuminate the influence of the Tendai doctrine in Kami-Buddha discourse, we will examine main teachings and practices of the original Tiantai School, and see the essential nature and tendency of the Tiantai doctrine toward eclecticism and all-inclusivity. These features of Tiantai become more prominent in Japanese Tendai; thus, this chapter will outline the historical development of Tendai, and in particular Tendai's merge with esoteric teachings (Mikkyō 密教) and its repercussions, such as the evolution of factions and lineages, and the culture of secret oral

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<sup>11</sup> Tanaka Takako's study (*Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, Nagoya: Nagoya University Press, 2003) is an exception, but her literary approach to the text makes the study mainly focused on Kōshū's collection of tales and legends.

<sup>12</sup> This type of language was normative within medieval literary and esoteric Buddhist writings, and was particularly associated with the themes of Kami-Buddha combinatory relations. See Susan Blakeley Klein, "Wild words and syncretic deities: *kyōgen kigo* and *honji suijaku* in medieval literary allegories," in Teeuwen and Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan.*, pp. 177-203. Also, her book, *Allegories of Desire: Esoteric Literary Commentaries of Medieval Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002).

transmissions (*kuden* 口伝), both of which were deeply related to the emergence of the lineage of “chroniclers” (*kike* 記家). Specifically, vital contributions of the chroniclers in developing and disseminating discourses on Kami-Buddha relationships will be discussed. And *Keiran shūyōshū* (*Keiran*) is introduced as the pinnacle of high medieval Tendai scholasticism, as well as being the most comprehensive work by a Tendai chronicler, Kōshū. After tracing Kōshū’s lineages and interests, Chapter One ends with a discussion of the general atmosphere of the time, particularly the Latter Age of Dharma (*mappō*) and the notion of Japan as a “divine country” (*shinkoku* 神国), which might have motivated those chroniclers’ enthusiasm for kami and the exposition of the nonduality between kami and buddhas.

Chapter Two proceeds to examine the Kami section (*shinmeibu* 神明部) in *Keiran*, where *Keiran*’s discussions of kami is concentrated. It delineates nondual *hon-jaku* relationships among kami and buddhas, in particular, centering around Dainichi Nyorai, Śākyamuni, Amaterasu, and Sannō, who are the main protagonists of the *shinmeibu*. Through close examinations of *Keiran*’s treatment of Amaterasu and Sannō, and related mythology and religious symbols, this chapter will view how *Keiran* reinterprets Japan’s religious culture from the Taimitsu perspective. Most of all, exploring *Keiran*’s highly elaborate discussion of multilayered significations of Sannō from the perspectives of both exoteric and esoteric teachings, we will realize that Sannō is definitely more than a simple manifestation of Buddha—Śākyamuni. As we learn that manifestation in *Keiran* is a complex concept correlated with various notions central to esoteric teachings, at the end of this chapter we will set the main queries for subsequent chapters—to pursue the meaning of manifestation and investigate those ideas correlated with the concept of manifestation, their deeper meanings and their rationale for the nonduality of the origin and trace.

As an important clue that illuminates the above queries, Chapter Three pays attention to our main text's discussion of kami's manifestation as the form of the snake, which in the past has drawn attention from some scholars.<sup>13</sup> Moving beyond their passing discussions of Tendai's esoteric understanding of kami concerning the passage in *Keiran*, in this chapter we proceed to explore how the symbolism of the snake in *Keiran* is at the core of the main queries of this study. The snake offers an important clue for understanding the meaning of the manifestation, and in particular, nonduality between the origin and trace. Furthermore, the symbolism of the snake suggests how all these problems could be a matter of the mind—that is, how to achieve enlightenment, and in particular, medieval Tendai's doctrine of original enlightenment. These inextricable interconnections among the origin-trace relationship, nonduality between the origin and trace, and original enlightenment will be strengthened through further examinations of the snake symbol and associated various serpent deities.

In particular, this study observes that *Keiran's* discussion of the snake symbolism is grounded in Taimitsu theories of mind and consciousness informed by Yogācāra teachings. Thus, in Chapter Four, discussion moves on to illuminate *Keiran's* esoteric adaptation of the Consciousness-Only doctrine as a pivotal interpretive tool for understanding the rationale of nonduality between the origin and trace. Specifically, by focusing on *Keiran's* association of the snake form with the sixth consciousness, we will identify the nonduality of the ninth and sixth consciousnesses as representing that of the *hon-jaku* structure. To test this hypothesis and to clarify the identified problem of the nonduality of the origin and trace, we will further unravel the nondual relationship of the two consciousnesses by focusing on various esoteric ideas,

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<sup>13</sup> For example, Itō Satoshi, *Chūsei tenshōdaijin shinkō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hozōkan, 2011), and Mark Teeuwen, “The kami in esoteric Buddhist thought and practice,” in John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, eds., *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), pp.95-116.

symbols, and allegories associated with the manifold consciousness found in *Keiran*'s discussions of the mind, consciousness, and enlightenment. This study's endeavors to probe the esoteric scholastic discourse on the origin-trace scheme of medieval Tendai draw attention to their connection with the concept of original enlightenment, which was undoubtedly transmitted in part in esoteric initiations within Mt. Hiei master-disciple lineages.

Even though *Keiran* is a collection of records that were already written and circulated within Tendai scholarly circles on Mt. Hiei, throughout my discussion of passages from *Keiran* I address the content in these passages in a unifying manner as "*Keiran*'s discussion." This is for the sake of convenience and to avoid complications that may hinder the flow of discussion. Moreover, those passages were, as a set, collected, organized and edited by *Keiran*'s author Kōshū, sometimes noted with accounts from his own experience;<sup>14</sup> thus, discussions in *Keiran* are indeed "*Keiran*'s discussions."

Finally, the first part of the title of this dissertation, "Shaking Dance in the Stormy Valley," is a multi-layered reference to the *Keiran* text itself and its discussions, as well as its crucial symbolism that underscores the relationship between origin and trace, as will be detailed in the final chapter. The "stormy valley" is evidently an interpretive translation of the word "*keiran*" 溪嵐; "shaking dance" is, first, a direct reference to a passage in *Keiran* as follows:

Three thousand [realms] are the place for the shaking/trembling dance (*shinbu* 振舞) of the essence of all realities itself.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, pp.173-179.

<sup>15</sup> T.76.2410.514a12. This passage is discussing Sannō from the perspective of the "three thousand realms in one thought (*ichinen sanzen* 一念三千)." For details, see Chapter Two.



The metaphor of the shaking dance will be seen as deeply related to the meaning of manifestation and the nonduality of origin and trace. It is a unique allegory for that which inconceivably creates a mysterious nondual unity between seemingly disparate and even opposing realities—origin and trace, objects (*kyō* 境) and wisdom (*chi* 智), fire and water, and cause and effect. It will offer insight into deciphering apparent tension or quandary as to Tendai idea of original enlightenment. As our discussion progresses toward the conclusion of this study, we will see how our discussions in this study can be contemplated upon the multi-layered symbolism of the title. Specifically, this refers to the Tendai chroniclers' foremost task of recordkeeping and their special mission of disseminating supreme truth preserved by Tendai scholar-monks on Mt. Hiei for the benefit of others, and specifically, *Keiran's* compiler's life and study, the Hiei/Tendai culture of secret transmissions, *Keiran's* discussion of kami centering on the Sannō deity, and last but not least, attaining enlightenment by realizing nondual, mutually interpenetrated, all-integrated truth.

## Chapter I. Medieval Japanese Kami-Buddha Relations and Tendai Development of the Kami-Buddha Discourse

### *History of Co-habitation of Kami and Buddha*

After a long and complicated process of introduction, Buddhism came to be incorporated into court rituals (*jingi* 神祇) in Japan by the seventh century. At first, Buddha or Buddhist divinities were worshipped as the new, foreign kami, which had different origins and names from existing Japanese kami, but were equivalent in their numinous and awe-inspiring power and sacredness. This was not at all a rarity: there had already been veneration of various deities (*jin, shin* or *kami* 神) from areas beyond the Japanese isles, including regions of continental East Asia.<sup>16</sup>

It was in the eighth century that environs besetting kami and Buddhas began to change, and as generally agreed among scholars of Japanese religion, there were combinatory relations between Kami and Buddhist divinities (*shinbutsu shūgō*) from this period onward. The amalgamation process can be largely divided into three stages: the first stage was when the “downgrade” of kami occurred, during which kami were portrayed in Buddhist writings as ordinary sentient beings, in the same way as humans who carried evil karma and thus must be saved (*kyūsai* 救済) and tamed by means of the Buddha and Buddhist teachings.

This first phase was undoubtedly intimately related to the subsequent development of the status of Kami. As deluded beings, Kami were guided by Buddhist teachings and thus reformed

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<sup>16</sup> Those deities distinguished from Japan’s own kami in provenance and ritual practice were generally regarded as *banshin* (or *adashikuni no kami*) 蕃神, which refers to various foreign deities from other countries, and yet whose veneration had been settled in the Japanese isles. Buddhist divinities were also initially worshipped as *banshin*. (Itō Satoshi, *Shintō towa nanika: kami to hotoke no nihonshi* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2012), pp. 27-28.

and converted into becoming the “protector” of Buddha’s teachings and Buddhist deities (Skt. *dharmapāla*; J. *gohō zenshin* 護法善神) similar to the case of formerly antagonistic Indian deities like Śakra had been converted into protectors in continental Buddhist narratives. This was the second stage in the history of Kami-Buddha amalgamation. The paramount example for Kami as the protector of Dharma was Hachiman 八幡, the tutelary deity of the Usa Hachiman shrine, who came to be deemed as the Great bodhisattva of state-protecting, miraculous, majestic, divine power.”<sup>17</sup> This way, Kami were gradually integrated into the Buddhist pantheon.

The Hachiman cult was also significant due to the development of the Kami-Buddha amalgamation, as it completed the “physical” co-habitation of Kami shrines and Buddhist temples. After many Hachiman shrines were erected at famous temples such as Tōdaiji 東大寺, Tōji 東寺 and Daianji 大安寺 in the early ninth century, the so-called temple-shrine complexes (*shaji* 社寺 or *jisha* 寺社) began to develop and flourish over the course of the Heian era.<sup>18</sup> It was at this stage that the Tendai-Hie 日吉 temple-shrine complex on Mount Hiei was developed, and the tradition of the Hie tutelary deity Sannō began to form. We will go into further details about the Mt. Hiei complex and its tradition later.

The third stage was when the concept of the *honji suijaku*, or original ground and traces, was formulated and developed by Buddhist scholar-monks. According to Yoshida Kazuhiko, the notion of *honji suijaku* was not simultaneously formulated at once: rather, the idea of *suijaku* 垂迹, that is, Buddhist—Tendai, in particular—interpretation of Kami as the manifestation of

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<sup>17</sup> Teeuwen and Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, p.13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14 and Itō, *Shintō towa nanika*, pp. 53-55. Of course, from the mid seventh century former shrines were turned into shrine-temple multiplexes; however, as Teeuwen and Rambelli point out, in earlier cases, temples had been built at shrines, but after Hachiman shrines, kami shrines were built at temples too.

Buddha was discussed and disseminated for the first time around the ninth century. Then, in the course of time, the notion of *honji* 本地 in the midst of continental Buddhist commentarial discourses was illuminated, combined with the then existing view of Kami as *suijaku*, and together began to be formulated as the dominant framework that defines the combinatory relationship between Kami and Buddha.<sup>19</sup>

As noted in previous studies of *honji suijaku* and its related issues, the phrase *honji suijaku* is grounded upon the distinction between the “origin (J. *hon* 本)” and the “trace (J. *ato* 迹 or 跡),” which was ramified from purely exegetical efforts to comprehend what the Buddha truly was. At the cost of a redundancy to existing scholarly discussions, I would like to underscore the fundamental points concerning the formation of the notion of *honji suijaku*, as it is critically germane to the purpose of this study.

Despite the absence of the exact words of *honji* or *suijaku* therein, scholars have paid attention to the Lotus Sūtra (Skt. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*; J. *myōhōrengekyō* 妙法蓮華經, or, commonly, *hokekyō* 法華經), one of the most important Buddhist scriptures in Mahāyāna teachings, because of its enormous inspiration for the formation of the notion of “origin” and “trace.”

Scholarly attention has been drawn to the discussion of Śākyamuni in Chapter Sixteen of Lotus Sūtra, “The Lifespan of the Tathāgata.” The key point of the chapter is this: although Śākyamuni seemed to have been “extinct” by entering into *nirvāṇa*, the “historical” Śākyamuni was an “expedient device (Skt. *upāya*; J. *hōben* 方便).”<sup>20</sup> The truth is that Śākyamuni is the

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<sup>19</sup> Yoshida Kazuhiko, “Honjaku shisō no juyō to tenkai: honji suijaku setsuno seiritsu katei,” in Hayami Tasuku ed., *Nihon shakai ni okeru hotoke to kami* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2006), p. 199.

<sup>20</sup> This is also translated as “skillful means, “which is presented as a prominent theme and concept of the Lotus Sūtra. Its various meanings comprise a device that the compassionate Buddha uses to lead sentient beings to

Buddha with a limitless lifespan, the permanent and absolute truth; yet, he only appears in this world for the sake of sentient beings' salvation.<sup>21</sup>

Here, the notion of “appearance” in a certain worldly, transient form—for instance, Gautama Buddha of India—is noteworthy and generally understood as the possible provenance of the concept of the trace or manifestation.<sup>22</sup> The magnitude of philosophical influences of the Lotus Sūtra on East Asian Buddhist scholastic circles were well known, and it was the disciple of the translator (Kumārajīva) of the Lotus Sūtra, Sengzhao 僧肇 (384 [alt. 374]-414), who used the terms “origin” and “trace” and the notion of “[the origin] casts (*chui* 垂) [its] traces (*ji* 跡)”<sup>23</sup> in his commentary on the Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra (J. *yuimakyō* 維摩經).

Sengzhao's discussion of origin and trace had a great influence on Buddhist scholar-monks of later generations, and one of them was the founder of Tiantai School, Zhiyi 智顛 (538-598). He employed the two terms, “origin” and “trace”, in his twofold interpretation of the Lotus Sūtra: the origin of teaching (J. *honmon* 本門) and trace teaching (J. *shakumon* 迹門). The distinction between the two teachings is grounded upon the previous ideas of expedient device and the manifestation of absolute truth.

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awakening according to people's capacities and interests (J. *kikon* 機根). For an in-depth study of *upāya*, see John Schroeder, *Skillful Means: The Heart of Buddhist Compassion* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> T.9, 262:42c8-24.

<sup>22</sup> Yoshida, “Honjaku shisō no juyō to tenkai,” pp. 200-201. Although Yoshida, on the grounds of the lack of the term *honji* or *suijaku* itself in the Lotus Sūtra, shows a degree of skepticism about the general scholarly agreement that views this chapter in the Lotus Sūtra as the origin of the notion of *honji suijaku*, the conceptual affinity between *honji suijaku* and the Lotus Sūtra's discussion of Buddha's expedient appearance seems undeniable, and it is more so considering the ground position of the expedient device both in the notion of *honji suijaku* and in the Lotus Sūtra. Note, also, that the idea of the expedient appearance is inseparable with Mahāyāna notion of the Three Bodies of Buddha (*trikāya*). This will be covered in the following discussions.

<sup>23</sup> T. 38, 1775:327b3-5. See Yoshida, “Honjaku shisō no juyō to tenkai,” pp. 201-202 for a detailed discussion.

Thus the trace teaching in the Lotus Sūtra is what Śākyamuni taught as a “historical” person who achieved enlightenment in this fleeting world and lifetime. And the origin of teaching is viewed as the truth told by the absolute, permanent Buddha from the limitlessly remote past.<sup>24</sup> And this notion of the origin teaching and trace teaching came to be further developed by Japanese Tendai scholar-monks,<sup>25</sup> to the extent that the notion of the origin and trace(s) became a broader pantheonic structure that defines the relationships among Buddhist and non-Buddhist deities alike.

Moreover, as we will see later in this study, the concept of the origin-trace in medieval Japanese Tendai scholarly discourse became an incredibly vital hermeneutic framework for understanding truth, specifically the relationship between the absolute principle of truth (*J. ri* 理) and its various manifestations in the world (*J. ji* 事). This main subject will be examined in due course; and let us return to the *honji suijaku* as a combinatory paradigm for Kami-Buddha relations.

By the late Heian period, the concept of *honji suijaku* (the notion of kami as manifested traces of Buddhas—Buddha and Buddhist divinities) and Buddhas as the original ground of kami became a religious idiom and was increasingly prominent in many medieval Buddhist doctrinal writings as well as non-Buddhist, general literature.<sup>26</sup> This concept was gradually disseminated into the general populace through the process of proselytization of Buddhist teachings.<sup>27</sup> The

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<sup>24</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 170.

<sup>25</sup> There had been controversies inside Tiantai/Tendai traditions regarding which sections in the Lotus Sūtra are the origin teaching and which are the trace teaching, but I will spare the reader the details, as this subject is not the focus of this study. See *Ibid.* for details.

<sup>26</sup> Yoshida, “Honjaku shisō no juyō to tenkai,” pp. 203-220 and Itō, *Shintō towa nanika*, pp. 55-58.

<sup>27</sup> Satō Hiroo has pointed out the narrowness of viewing *honji suijaku* as limited to the relationship between kami and buddhas. Examining the medieval textual genre of “oaths” (*kishōmon* 起請文), he uncovered more complex structures besetting relationships among various kami and Buddhas, such as categories of “Buddhas of the other

success of this process was contributed in particular by various types of mobile, or “networking” monks and ascetic practitioners<sup>28</sup> who are closely associated with the major Buddhist institutions such as Tendai’s main temple, Enryakuji 延暦寺 on Mt. Hiei. This can be attributed to their dedication to learning high Buddhist teachings and practices, and the transmission of that knowledge to diverse Buddhist circles and the general populace in the Japanese isles.<sup>29</sup>

Along with the formation and popularization of the *honji suijaku* structure, we can observe a few variations on these terms through medieval writings. Thus, *ato* 迹, *suijaku* 垂迹, *ōgen* 応現, *kegen* 化現, *gongen* 権現<sup>30</sup> are all terms associated with the “trace.” Moreover, particularly the entire phrase, *honji suijaku*, namely, “the original ground—something essential and the ground for everything—casts [its] traces” was interchangeably used in medieval writings with the age-old phrase of “dimming light and appearing as dust (*wakō dōjin* 和光同塵)” from Laozi’s *Daodejing* 道德經. This adoption was influenced by Tiantai founder Zhiyi’s treatise, *Mohe Zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, in which he discusses the essential, absolute Buddha’s manifestation

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world” and “deities of this world,” which are not always compatible with the *honji suijaku* distinction. Moreover, another structure from his study, “saving Buddhas” and “wrathful deities” between celestial Buddhas and more “localized” Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and kami suggests more careful consideration of *honji suijaku* as the all-inclusive defining framework for understanding Kami-Buddha combinatory relations. See Satō Hiroo, “Shinbutsu shūgō to jingi fuhai,” in *Nihonshi kenkyū* Vol. 511 (2005): 22-40. Also, Satō, “Wrathful Deities and Saving Deities,” in Teeuwen and Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, pp. 95-114. One of the main purposes of this study is also to question the general tendency of making an automatic correspondence between *honji suijaku* and Buddha-Kami relations. By an in-depth examination of the logic of essence/origin and manifestation in this study, we may obtain a clearer perspective on *honji suijaku*—in particular, on what it truly could be about.

<sup>28</sup> These ascetics include itinerant ascetics *hijiri* (holy ones), practitioners of mountain asceticism (*shugenja* 修験者), and upholders of the Lotus Sūtra (*jikyōsha* 持経者).

<sup>29</sup> For more on the important roles of networking monks in the development of Buddhism in medieval Japan, see Brian Ruppert, “Nihon chūsei no nettowaku sō to shōdō shōgyō no denpa,” in *Higashi Ajia no shūkyō bunka: ekkyō to henyō* (Tokyo: Iwata Shoin, 2014), pp. 369-393. See also, Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, pp. 153-160.

<sup>30</sup> Evidently, *gongen* was attached to certain kami deities that were regarded as the manifestation of Buddha(s)—for example, Sannō *gongen* 山王権現—and became a specific term on its own.

in the world in his “manifested body (Skt. *nirṃaṇakāya*; J. *ōjin* 応身 or *keshin* 化身).”<sup>31</sup> This expression became particularly associated with kami in medieval Japan; thus *wakō dōjin* was interpreted as kami’s special virtue or capacity of manifestation. This will be fully examined later in the discussion of kami and its manifestation in *Keiran shūyōshū*.

Therefore, in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, *honji suijaku* became standardized as a main perspective for understanding the relationships between kami and buddhas, and furthermore as the paradigm by which kami was incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon. One might argue that it was through the *honji suijaku* paradigm that Buddhist scholars’ understanding of kami had been enhanced and deepened, and consequently, generated a more theorized and ritualized worshiping of kami. In particular, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the efforts to appropriate Tendai hermeneutics to the Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse was primarily made by Tendai’s unique scholar-monks group, called “chroniclers” (*kike* 記家).

Characteristics of medieval kami worship are well represented through the so-called “medieval *Nihongi* (*chūsei nihongi* 中世日本紀),”<sup>32</sup> which became the main driving force behind the rapid development and expansion of kami thought during this period, such as Ryōbu Shintō 兩部神道 developed in Shingon 真言 School, Sannō Shintō 山王神道 in Tendai, and various kami theories in the Ise Shrines 伊勢神宮.

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<sup>31</sup> Itō, *Shintō towa nanika*, pp.128-130.

<sup>32</sup> This term refers to a large body of theories and stories that arose from complex references to *Nihon shoki* among medieval writings such as *waka* poetry commentaries that date to the late eleventh century, in which renewed literary, religious, and political interests in *Nihon shoki* were observed. See Itō, “The Medieval Period: The Kami Merge with Buddhism,” in Teeuwen and Breen, *Shinto—A Short History*, pp.63-107.



However, we can see a significant change to the *honji suijaku* paradigm from the mid fourteenth century. The so-called inverted *honji suijaku* theory (*han honji suijaku setsu* 反本地垂迹説), which gave prime importance to kami, began to be developed by Tendai monks. Scholars have suggested that the reversal of *honji suijaku* was formulated by lower ranking members of Tendai monks (*shasō* 社僧) who were in charge of the shrine parts of temple-shrine complexes. This was also related to their interests in enhancing their prestige and, possibly, to “exclude Buddhist divinities from the center of the religious discourse.”<sup>33</sup>

Although scholarly opinions are divided on the rationale for such a reversal of *honji suijaku*, there are two important points to which we need to pay attention to concerning the inverted *honji suijaku* theory. First, as it was the case with the development of the origin-trace scheme, its inversion was formulated and disseminated in Tendai monastic circles, especially so-called scholar-monks (*gakuryō*). It is said to have originated in a passage from a medieval Tendai monk Sonshun 尊舜 (1451-1514)’s commentary on the Lotus Sūtra. In this commentary Sonshun claims that Buddhas should be regarded as traces (*suijaku*) because they achieve the way 道 by acquired enlightenment (J. *shikaku* 始覚). However, kami should be called original ground (*honji*) because they convert and teach by virtue of original enlightenment (J. *hongaku* 本覚).<sup>34</sup>

The second point is that Tendai’s theoretical formulation and development of the origin-trace discourse was closely connected to the doctrine of original enlightenment and its esoteric transmission in monastic lineages. Indeed, one cannot attempt to fully comprehend the theoretical ground of and rationale for the origin-trace relationship without understanding the

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<sup>33</sup> Teeuwen and Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, p. 36.

<sup>34</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 42.

basic Tendai doctrine and its dissemination throughout medieval Tendai lineages. Since one of the primary focuses of this study is to illuminate the origin-trace scheme from the standpoint of medieval Japanese Tendai thought and its transmission, let us begin a closer investigation after finishing the history of *honji suijaku* in the following paragraph.

These changes in the late medieval period—increasing interests in kami worship and the inverted *honji suijaku*—triggered the independent establishment and development of the “Shintō.” In the late fifteenth century, Yoshida Kanetomo founded Yoshida Shintō 吉田神道 (or Yuiitsu Shintō 唯一神道), which defined Shintō as non-Buddhist.<sup>35</sup> *Yuiitsu shintō myōbō yōshū* 唯一神道名法要集, the main text of Yoshida Shintō, demonstrated its unique “tree theory,” in which the inverted *honji suijaku* theory reached its high point: it claimed Shintō as the trunk of the tree of all beliefs, Confucianism as its branches, and Buddhism as its flowers.<sup>36</sup>

With the development of Yoshida Shintō, and later *Sannō Ichijitsu Shintō* 山王一実神道 on Mt. Hiei, Shintō became the designation not only of a non-Buddhist ritual tradition, but also of a national institution of kami ritual under the control of the imperial court. Moreover, Shintō, for the first time, was equipped with its typical modern structure of a tradition that straddles both imperial and popular kami worship.

Thus, even though the close interdependent relationships between shrines and temples and ritualistic combinations between Buddhism and kami worship were still maintained until the

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<sup>35</sup> However, it was not the case that Yoshida Shintō was completely divorced from Buddhism, and its theory incorporated elements from Esoteric Buddhism, along with various earlier Kami-Buddha combinatory practices.

<sup>36</sup> Bernhard Scheid, “Reading the Yuiitsu Shinto myōbō yōshū: A modern exegesis of an esoteric Shinto text,” in John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, eds., *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), pp.117-143.

first years of the Meiji era, the ever-intimate pantheonic amalgamation between Buddhas and Kami began to undergo vital transformation and be ready to fade into history.

*The “Beautiful” Pair of Theory and Practice*

The above discussion illustrated the development of the *honji suijaku* structure, which was the predominant framework that defined Kami-Buddha relations throughout the medieval period in Japan. As seen in the discussion, the *honji suijaku* structure was derived from Japanese Buddhist hermeneutic discourses and was thus developed by Buddhists, particularly Tendai scholar-monks in medieval Japan. Tendai in medieval Japan had evolved into a direction that can be characterized as “integrating” and has since in inception incorporated various doctrinal concepts, practices. So in many respects Tendai’s active involvement in the amalgamation of buddhas and kami seems to be in harmony with their tendency. Nevertheless, from their origin, i.e., Chinese Tiantai, Tiantai/Tendai Schools were established and developed grounded upon such an integrating, all-inclusive doctrinal philosophy. A delineation of basics in Tendai teachings and practices, followed by a discussion of Tendai development in Japan, would be necessary to elucidate the points above.

As is known in general, the influx of Kumārajīva’s (Ca. 344-413 CE) massive translations of Buddhist sūtras and treatises contributed to the flourish of various Buddhist schools in China. The Tiantai doctrines were developed by Zhiyi 智顛, who were deeply influenced by Kumārajīva’s translations of the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-śāstra* (*Da zhi du lun* 大智度論) in particular. Zhiyi (538-597) entered the Buddhist priesthood at age eighteen and studied the *Lotus Sūtra* under Huisi, also known as Master Nanyue 南岳 (515-577).

After later moving to Mt. Tiantai, Zhiyi formulated and systematized major Tiantai doctrines by holding the teachings of the *Lotus* as the supreme truth and educating his disciples.<sup>37</sup> Tiantai's fundamental view on truth, which was developed by Zhiyi, can be explained with the threefold structure of truth (Ch. *sandi*; J. *sandai* 三諦). Threefold truths was formulated as a solution for the tension in Nagarjuna's twofold truth (or two truths)—between the ultimate truth (Skt. *paramārtha-satya*; J. *shindai* 真諦) and the provisional truth (Skt. *saṃvṛti-satya*; J. *zokutai* 俗諦).<sup>38</sup>

Two truths were also developed in order to correctly understand ultimate reality as emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*; J. *kū* 空); the fundamental Buddhist view on truth, had long been misrepresented, abused, or denied even within Buddhist circles. Yet, sensing that the relationship between the two truths seemed unclear and had generated confusion, Zhiyi might have felt the necessity to clarify the nondual relationship between the two truths; thus he interpreted reality as a threefold truth, i.e., emptiness (Ch. *kong*; J. *kū* 空), the provisionals (Ch. *jia*; J. *ke* 假), and the Middle (Ch. *zhong*; J. *chū* 中). As in the case of the two truths, these three truths are in fact one unified reality, particularly the role of the Middle, which mediates the two aspects of truth. However, the mediation of the Middle is not so simple; it is “a simultaneous affirmation of both emptiness and conventional existence as aspects of a single integrated reality.”<sup>39</sup> All in all, the three truths mutually correspond (*sōsoku* 相即) to one another and are nondual with one another.

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<sup>37</sup> This made Zhiyi known as Master Tiantai (*Tiantai dashi* 天台大師).

<sup>38</sup> Paul Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism* (California: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), p.2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6. Also see chapters one and eight in particular in Swanson's book for a detailed discussion of the mechanism of the threefold truth.

By means of an inconceivable mutual correspondence and nonduality, emptiness is not nihilistic void, but rather a subtle being (*zhen kong miao yu* 真空妙有).<sup>40</sup>

The way that one can realize the threefold truth is called the “threefold contemplation in a single mind” (Ch. *yixin sanguan*; J. *isshin sangan* 一心三觀). This indicates Buddhist meditation, referred to as cessation (Skt. *śamatha*; Ch. *zhi* 止) and contemplation (Skt. *vipaśyanā*; Ch. *guan* 觀). Cessation means calming our mind by stopping every thought that arises and dwelling on true reality. And this unmoving, calm mind allows one to observe all things just as they are. This is contemplation. Zhiyi further analyzed the processes of cessation and contemplation and formulated the threefold contemplation, which contains three types of cessation.<sup>41</sup> Thus one can observe three truths by the three phased cessations, but this is a sequentially progressed contemplation; the most ideal contemplation according to Zhiyi’s *Mo he zhi guan* (J. *Maka shikan* 摩訶止觀) is “perfect and immediate cessation and contemplation” (Ch. *yuan dun zhi guan*; J. *endon shikan* 圓頓止觀), also known as the “threefold contemplation in a single mind.”<sup>42</sup> Through this contemplation, all three cessations and three truths are simultaneously and immediately perceived as being “integrated, nondual and synonymous.”<sup>43</sup> As mentioned before, the notion of integration is central to Tiantai/Tendai teachings, and although truth and mental recognition of them are threefold, they are all included in and integrated into—innately and permanently—one mind (*isshin* 一心). One mind is not simply a noetic concept but,

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<sup>40</sup> Tamura Yoshiro and Umehara Takeshi, *Zettai no shinri—Tendai* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Bunko, 1970), p. 147.

<sup>41</sup> See Swanson, *Foundations of T’ien-T’ai Philosophy*, p.117; Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri.*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>42</sup> Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri*, p.92; Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp.177-178.

<sup>43</sup> Swanson, *Foundations of T’ien-T’ai Philosophy*, p.121.

as will be detailed more fully throughout this study, is in and of itself identical to all thoughts and all things in the Dharma realm (Ch. *fajie zongti*; J. *hokkai sōtai* 法界総体).

The Tiantai threefold contemplation in one mind is also based on and correlates with Tiantai's overall worldview, termed “three thousand realms in a single thought” (Ch. *yinian sanqian*; J. *ichinen sanzen* 一念三千). It means that three thousand dharma realms<sup>44</sup> are contained even in the instantaneous, briefest possible moment in our thoughts that arise from one moment to the next.<sup>45</sup> As Tamura Yoshiro puts it, *ichinen sanzen* represents Tiantai's view of the nonduality, or, mutual correspondence between microcosmos, i.e., the single thought-moment (*ichinen*) and macrocosmos, i.e., three thousand realms (*sanzen*). Thus the single thought of our mind is the whole dharmas, and the whole dharmas are our mind.<sup>46</sup>

As the fundamental core of Tiantai teachings, the threefold truth and threefold contemplation represent the principal character of Tiantai, that is, the equally strong emphasis on theory and practice, often commented on in the expression, “the beauty of the mutuality between teachings and contemplation” (Ch. *jiaoguan suangmei*; J. *kyōkan sōbi* 教觀雙美).<sup>47</sup> Here, ‘teachings’ refers to doctrinal teachings (*kyōmon* 教門) and observing as contemplation or meditation (*kanmon* 觀門), the two methods of entry into truth. Zhiyi warned against prioritizing

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<sup>44</sup> The number three thousand for realities is in fact a result of a calculation based on Tiantai's concept about the state of beings in the cosmos (the “Ten Suchlike Characteristics”). However, as affirmed by Tamura himself and other scholars, three thousand realms indicates the entire phenomenal reality. See Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri Tendai*, p.145 for details of the calculation, and Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosoph*, pp.130-131 for the Ten Suchlike Characteristics (Ch. *shi rushi*; J. *jūnyoze* 十如是).

<sup>45</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p.177.

<sup>46</sup> Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri Tendai*, p.147; Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p.161.

<sup>47</sup> Yongja Lee, *Beophwa-Cheontae sasang yeongoo (The Study of the Dharma Flower and Tiantai)* (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 2002), p.197. Also, Kandatsu Jijun, “kyōkan sōbi ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu” in *Bukkyōgaku* 53 (2011):1-17.

either side of the two entries and disdained monks who were devoted only to meditation or doctrinal teachings.<sup>48</sup>

Thus both in theory and practice, Tiantai put a great emphasis on the all-inclusivity of truth in which dharmas of all realms are naturally integrated in one unity. This all-inclusive characteristic of Chinese Tiantai and its main teachings discussed above were passed down to Korea and Japan, and prospered with long-term success in Japan in particular.

#### *Further Integration—Esotericization of Tendai*

Tendai in Japan was very much eclectic or “integrating” from the beginning; Saichō (767-822; also known as Dengyō Daishi 伝教大師), the founder of Japanese Tendai, were immersed in the study of Huayan 華嚴 (J. Kegon) and the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (Ch. *Dacheng qixinlun*; J. *Daigyō kishinron* 大乘起信論) before he studied the *Lotus Sūtra* and Tiantai teachings. Thus several major Mahāyāna philosophies and practices—such as Huayan, Chan/Zen 禪, and Tantric (Esoteric) teachings—were absorbed into Saichō’s doctrine in varying degrees.<sup>49</sup> Tiantai’s all-inclusive tendency was further strengthened in Japanese Tendai. In particular, Saichō attempted to unify Tiantai and Huayan—the competing teachings that were contradictory yet complementary—by what he perceived as the true meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

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<sup>48</sup> He used disparaging terms for them: persons devoted only to meditation were referred to as the “master of meditation with the dark realization” (*anzheng chanshi* 暗證禪師), and ones devoted only to theoretical doctrines as the “Dharma master of letters” (*wenzi fashi* 文字法師). Yongja Lee, *Beophwa·Cheontae sasang yeongoo*, pp.133-134. These terms were also found in Japanese Buddhist writings, including *Keiran shūyōshū* (T.76, 2410: 503a26-27).

<sup>49</sup> Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri Tendai*, pp.50-53.

Thus he established the concept of the Fundamental One Vehicle (*konpon ichijō* 根本一乘) and emphasized the teachings of the *Lotus* as superior teachings that embrace all others.<sup>50</sup>

Saichō's successful study in Tang China benefitted him with more authority in addition to the establishment of the Tendai School on Mt. Hiei, centered at the Enryakuji 延暦寺 temple. Moreover, the move of the capital to Heian-kyō was fortunate for Tendai on Mt. Hiei, as it was now not only close to the capital and but also located in the geomantically important direction towards the capital. This elevated Mt. Hiei, which was already venerated as one of the sacred mountains, to becoming the guardian mountain for the state.<sup>51</sup> Consequently the Enryakuji became the leading center for the performance of nation-protecting rituals.<sup>52</sup> Patronage from Emperor Kanmu and leading nobles, and his strenuous effort toward developing a systemic educational program for his monks contributed to growth of Tendai's influence.

Despite initial discord besetting the leadership following Saichō's death, Tendai teachings further matured to merge with Tantric or esoteric Buddhism (*Mikkyō* 密教), and within one hundred and fifty years, Tendai emerged as one of the major monastic institutions in Japan.<sup>53</sup> By efforts of monks such as Ryōgen 良源, the Tendai education program became successful and produced scholars of great echelons, many of whom contributed either to the further development of Tendai or to the foundation of new schools that brought radical changes

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter two for details.

<sup>52</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p.97.

<sup>53</sup> Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), p.2.



to Japanese Buddhism in varying degrees, from the Kamakura period onward.<sup>54</sup> The medieval Tendai institutions were indeed the center of Buddhist education as well as the matrix for advanced intellectual and cultural trends.

Tendai's adoption of esoteric Buddhism was mentioned above in passing, but in effect was essential to the rise of Tendai and its growing influences, not only on religious aspects but also on political levels, as esoteric rituals were becoming increasingly popular among Heian aristocrats. At first, esoteric rites and practices of Kūkai 空海 and his Shingon esoteric lineage monopolized the attention of and patronage from aristocrats. But overcoming the inner struggles surrounding balancing traditional Tendai doctrine (exoteric) and Mikkyō teachings (esoteric), Saichō's successors put great effort into establishing their own authentic Mikkyō tradition, which was independent of Kūkai's Shingon school.<sup>55</sup> Thus, by the time of Ennin 円仁 (794-864), Enchin 円珍 (814-891), and Annen (841-?), Tendai's main synthesis with esoteric teachings was largely complete. Thus Japanese Tendai have developed independently from Chinese Tiantai as esoteric Tendai (Taimitsu 台密) since then. This innovative esotericization of Japanese Tendai has been interpreted by scholars as, in part, having to do with the discontinuation of Japan's contact with China around the ninth century, which was a chaotic time for mainland China.<sup>56</sup> Later, monks such as Kōkei 皇慶 (977-1049) further developed the Taimitsu ritual system and have been known for establishing the Tendai tradition of secret oral transmission (*kuden* 口伝).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> I am not saying that these new schools changed the religious scene of Japan as soon as the Kamakura period began; I am in agreement with scholars who have reconsidered the old simplistic view on the New Kamakura Buddhism and have reassessed the still strong influence of the "old" Buddhist schools such as Tendai and Shingon throughout the Kamakura period.

<sup>55</sup> Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*, p.21.

<sup>56</sup> Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, p.75.

<sup>57</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p.109-110.

Therefore, along with Shingon, Tendai had become firmly settled in the “exo-esoteric or *kenmitsu* 顯密” system in medieval Japan. The *kenmitsu* system, coined by the Japanese historian Kuroda Toshio, refers to Buddhist institutions as one of the power blocs (*kenmon* 權門) that dominated medieval Japan politically, economically, and culturally.<sup>58</sup> The reason for using exotericism (*ken*) and esotericism (*mitsu*) to represent Buddhist institutions is more relevant here, because exoteric and esoteric teachings indicate the normative doctrinal and practical set of programs taught at the major temple complexes of the medieval era. Thus both traditional Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings (exoteric teachings or *kengyō* 顯教) and Tantric Buddhist teachings (esoteric teachings or *mikkyō* 密教) were taught and upheld at temple complexes.<sup>59</sup> Also, *kenmitsu*, as the term representing medieval Japanese Buddhist institutions, specifically indicates six Nara schools, which were categorized as exoteric schools, and Shingon and Tendai, as the two esoteric schools. These schools are often lumped together as the so-called “old” Buddhist schools as opposed to the so-called the new Kamakura Buddhism, such as Pure Land, Zen, and Nichiren. In his critique of the long-held view of the Kamakura period, during which these new schools radically changed the religious environment of Japan, Kuroda referred to the old schools as *kenmitsu* Buddhist institutions, which at that time had still wielded strong power and influence over many levels of Kamakura society.<sup>60</sup>

Kuroda’s study suggests a clear distinction between exoteric and esoteric teachings taught and transmitted in major temple complexes. He claimed that exo-esotericism developed

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<sup>58</sup> See Kuroda Toshio, *Jisha seiryoku: mō hitotsu no chūsei shakai*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, p.115.

<sup>60</sup> Kuroda Toshio, Trans. James C. Dobbins, “The Development of the *Ken-mitsu* System as Japan’s Medieval Orthodoxy,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, No.3/4, (1996): 233-269.

within a framework based on a belief about the absolute superiority of the esoteric teachings.<sup>61</sup> However, in reality, exotericism and esotericism are often overlapped and complementary both in practice and doctrine.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the crucial role of the mastery of exoteric Buddhism is found through the rise of famous esoteric monks such as Ryōgen of Tendai.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, esoteric practices—the main focus of esoteric Buddhism—could only be mastered by direct and exclusively private learning from one’s masters,<sup>64</sup> and written records of them were abstruse and extremely dense. Thus it was exoteric teachings that provided an explanation and rationale for the secretly transmitted esoteric practices.<sup>65</sup> In particular, Tendai placed a great emphasis on the unity of exoteric and exoteric teachings (*kenmitsu itchi* 顯密一致 or *enmitsu itchi* 円密一致), and in practice Tendai promoted unity through various discourses that brought together the two teachings, particularly centering on the discourse that validated the identity between Śākyamuni Buddha and Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来.<sup>66</sup>

In this way, Tendai’s adoption of esoteric teachings progressed under the *kenmitsu* system. This adoption was executed by esotericizing—interpreting from the esoteric Buddhist point of a view—traditional Tiantai exoteric doctrine and practice. And its inception and core was the re-reading of the *Lotus Sūtra* as an esoteric scripture. The esotericization of the *Lotus Sūtra* by medieval Tendai monks was also their proud reaffirmation of the superiority of the

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.251.

<sup>62</sup> Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, p.71.

<sup>63</sup> For details, see Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*.

<sup>64</sup> It characterizes premodern Japanese culture that involved transmitting knowledge and techniques, which scholars have termed as the “culture of secret transmission.”

<sup>65</sup> Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, p.71.

<sup>66</sup> Hazama Jikō, *Tendaishūshi gaisetsu* (Daizō Shuppan, 1969), pp. 89-90.

*Lotus*, provoked by the rival Shingon's underestimation of the perfect teachings of Tendai's best *sūtra*.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, in particular by Annen's extensive efforts to regarding the esotericization of Tendai, the *Lotus Sūtra* was reviewed as an esoteric scripture along with the Mahāvairocana Tantra (often known as *Dainichikyō* 大日經)<sup>68</sup> and Vajrasekhara Sutra (*Kongōchōkyō* 金剛頂經).<sup>69</sup> The aforementioned Tendai's discourses, which identify Śākyamuni and Dainichi, were generated within this environment. As will be detailed below, it was also an esotericization of the *Lotus*' view of Śākyamuni, which became the foundation not only for Taimitsu doctrine but also for the medieval *honji suijaku* discourse on Mt. Hiei.

The *Lotus Sūtra* is known for offering a crucial ground for many important points in Mahāyāna doctrines, and its offering the ground for the exaltation of Śākyamuni would provide one good example of great importance. Up until the tenth chapter of the *Lotus*, Śākyamuni appears to be no more than the historical buddha who attained enlightenment under the bodhi tree in India sometime between the sixth and fourth centuries BCE. The eleventh chapter—"The Treasure Stupa"—however, begins to reveal that Śākyamuni is more than that: in Śākyamuni's explanation of the identity of the buddha (the Abundant Treasures Buddha) inside the stupa, it is known that there are countless emanations of Śākyamuni in the worlds of the ten directions. Moreover, the image of his sitting inside the stupa, side by side with the Abundant Treasures,

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<sup>67</sup> Kūkai established Shingon's own doctrinal classification of Japanese Buddhist teachings (*kyōsō hanjaku* 教相判析, or in short, *kyōhan* 教判) in his *Jūjūshinron* 十住心論 (Treatise on the ten stages of the development of mind), which established ten stages of the development of Buddhist teachings. While ranking Mikkyō the highest, i.e., stage ten, he placed the Tendai-*Lotus* teachings at stage eight. Even aside from the self-prioritizing element, Kūkai's underestimation of Tendai was based on the non-esoteric quality of its principal scripture, the *Lotus Sūtra*. This woke up Tendai monks to the necessity of reclaiming the *Lotus Sūtra* as an esoteric scripture. See Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp.21-24.

<sup>68</sup> T.18, 848.

<sup>69</sup> T.18, 865. Nevertheless, Tendai monks—Ennin in particular—distinguished the *Lotus* from the other two scriptures. For details, see Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp.22-23.

Buddha (*Tahō Nyorai* 多宝如来), who is from the remotest past, suggests a close homological relationship between the two buddhas.

Then, in chapter fifteen,<sup>70</sup> many bodhisattvas who will transmit the Dharma after Śākyamuni's entering nirvana appear, and it is revealed that they were all disciples of Buddha in previous lives. Consequently, crowds that gathered to listen to Śākyamuni's preaching raised questions about the mysterious relationship between those bodhisattvas and Śākyamuni. It is in the sixteenth chapter that the mystery becomes resolved and the true identity of Śākyamuni is finally disclosed: he attained enlightenment myriads of kalpas ago, but has been constantly in this world to preach the Dharma in various forms of emanation for the sake of sentient beings.<sup>71</sup> Śākyamuni as non-abiding, primordial, and omnipresent Buddha constitutes the core tenet of the *Lotus Sūtra* and enormously influenced Mahāyāna teachings in general. Although Chinese Tiantai designated Śākyamuni as the manifested body (*nirmaṇakāya*) of Vairocana, they stressed the inseparability of the three bodies.<sup>72</sup>

In Japanese Tendai, the inseparable relationship between Śākyamuni and Vairocana was much strengthened: they equated Śākyamuni—the primordial, non-abiding Buddha from the *Lotus Sūtra*—with the cosmic Buddha of esoteric teaching, i.e., Vairocana, or, Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来. Moreover, the unification between the *trikāya* structure and the Mikkyō notion of the three mysteries (*sanmitsu* 三密), which was a result of Taimitsu's merger of the exoteric

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<sup>70</sup> As seen earlier, chapter fifteen of the *Lotus Sūtra* divides the *sūtra* into the two parts: trace teaching (*shakumon*)—the first fourteen chapters where Śākyamuni appears as the historical Buddha—and origin teaching (*honmon*), the latter fourteen chapters after Śākyamuni's omnipresence is revealed.

<sup>71</sup> The *Lotus Sūtra*: chapter 11— T.9, 262:332b16-34b22; chapter15—c18-42a28; chapter 16—42a29-44a4.

<sup>72</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 26. According to Tiantai's *trikāya* scheme established by Zhiyi, Vairocana 毘盧遮那 (Vairocana) is the absolute body (*dharmakāya*); Rocana 盧遮那 as the bliss body; and Śākyamuni the manifested body.

Tiantai/Tendai doctrine and the esoteric teachings—strengthened the oneness among the three bodies. In other words, the equality between the three mysteries, i.e., the mystery of body (*shinmitsu* 身密), speech (*kumitsu* 口密), and mind (*imitsu* 意密),<sup>73</sup> came to be incorporated with Tendai and strengthened the Mahāyāna notion of the “mutual correspondence” among the three bodies of Buddha (*sanjin sōsoku* 三身相即)—thus further stressing the notions of equality (*byōdō* 平等) or nonduality (*funi* 不二) among the three bodies of Buddha. This is commonly expressed in medieval Tendai writings—*Keiran shūyōshū*, for example—through an expression such as “the one body is the three bodies, and the three bodies are the one body” (*isshin soku sanjin, sanjin soku isshin* 一身即三身、三身即一身).<sup>74</sup>

### *Lineages and Secrecy*

Although Ryōgen (912-985), the eighteenth abbot of Enryakuji temple on Mt. Hiei, put their focus back on the “exoteric” Tiantai-*Lotus* teachings and promoted doctrinal study, Taimitsu’s esoteric tradition continued to ripen further, grounded upon the newly illuminated teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra*, a truly integrating scripture of the wonderful Dharma that embraces all teachings into its one vehicle.<sup>75</sup> However, the increasing influence of esoteric Buddhism in

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<sup>73</sup> The three mysteries, or three mystic things, refer to the three qualities of Tathāgata (body, speech, and mind), the function of which are mysterious as they are universal and omnipresent. Esoteric Buddhism developed sophisticated ritualistic symbols in order to seek the three qualities; the mystery of body can be realized through Buddha’s hand gestures (Skt. *mudrā*; J. *insō* 印相), the mystery of speech through *mantra*, and the mystery of mind through *mandala*.

<sup>74</sup> In *Keiran* the meaning of the mutually corresponding relationship among the three bodies is understood as esoteric. A short passage that discusses the *sanjin sōsoku* reads, “That the one body is the three bodies is called “profound” (*hi* 秘), and that the three bodies are the one body is called “secret” (*mitsu* 密).

<sup>75</sup> Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri Tendai*, p.252.

medieval Tendai contributed to the development of factionalism. Tendai's split into various lineages, schools, and subschools is known to have started at the time of Ennin and Enchin, the two Tendai monks who embraced esoteric Buddhism and established the Taimitsu tradition. The way in which the esotericization of Tendai is related to the generation of factions is through what is referred to by scholars as the “culture of secret transmission,” which characterizes medieval Tendai’s scholastic-monastic environment.

As mentioned earlier, esoteric practices could only be mastered by direct and private learning—passed down by oral transmission, or *kuden* 口伝—from one’s masters. Thus the sponsorship of a qualified master of the tradition was crucial for becoming proficient in esoteric Buddhism, as one had to prove his access to particular esoteric teachings and rituals transmitted through his lineage in order to become proficient in esoteric Buddhism.<sup>76</sup> Such a system could easily stir up conflicts and competition among disciples of a master, and eventually generate numerous factions and subfactions. As a result of the dispute over the post-Saichō leadership between Ennin and Enchin, Tendai was initially split into the Sanmon branch (Ennin faction) and the Jimon Branch (Enchin faction). The Enchin faction left Mt. Hiei and was centered at the base of the mountain at Onjōji 園城寺 (Miidera 三井寺). On the other hand, the Ennin faction remained at the Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei, and grew as the center of the high intellectual culture in medieval Japan. Scholar-monks of various lineages that stemmed from the Sanmon Branch developed important Tendai/Taimitsu doctrinal discourses such as the discourse on original

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<sup>76</sup> Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*, p.33.

enlightenment, and further progressed to incorporate non-Buddhist divinities and practices, all of which were reflected in crucial medieval Tendai texts, including *Keiran shūyōshū*.<sup>77</sup>

The Sanmon Branch further split into subsidiary groups, the most important of which were the Eshin 恵心 and Danna 檀那 lineages, which emerged around the early twelfth century. The origin of these two lineages was generally attributed to the two disciples of Ryōgen, Genshin 源信 (942-1017), also known as Eshin Sōzu 恵心僧都 and Kakuun 覚運 (953-1007), called Danna Sōzu 檀那僧都. But whether the Eshin and Danna schools were in effect originated from them requires more decisive documentary evidence. In any case, the rivalry between the two schools made them claim the superiority of one's own school over that of the other, particularly using the idea of the origin teaching (*honmon*) and trace teaching (*shakumon*). Nevertheless, contrary to what they claimed as the differences between the two, their differences are attributable to lineages and ritual details rather than to doctrinal content.<sup>78</sup> For example, both schools transmitted the doctrine of original enlightenment, which was the central content of medieval Taimitsu's secret transmissions. Also, rather than focusing on strict textual exegesis they stressed meditative insight, which was developed as Taimitsu's unique *kanjin* (mind contemplation) style of reading such texts.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> For more on the schism between the *Sanmon* and *Jimon* factions, see Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hie* and Neil McMullin, "The Sanmon-Jimon Schism in the Tendai School of Buddhism: A Preliminary Analysis," in *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 7, No.1 (1984). And for a discussion of the *Jimon* branch, see Hazama Jikō, *Chūko Nihon Tendai no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1948, Reprint 1974).

<sup>78</sup> That said, *Keiran* makes a brief comment on the difference between the two: "The Eshin lineage is the bliss body (*sambhogakāya*) and the Danna lineage is the manifested body that reflects the mutual identity of the three bodies." Given this, it is assumed that there were certain differences, at least in their doctrinal emphases.

<sup>79</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 104-105.



Most of all, the Eshin and Danna schools established the base for the development of Tendai's *kuden* lineages (*kuden hōmon* 口伝法門),<sup>80</sup> members of which implemented the recording of oral transmissions and thus contributed to the systematization of the Taimitsu doctrine in the mid-Kamakura period. Albeit written down,<sup>81</sup> those secret transmissions were still regarded as “oral transmissions (*kuden*),” which underlined the very private nature of the teaching and learning between the master and his chosen disciple. Such conventions of secret transmission on Mt. Hiei became the normative mode of transmitting knowledge in premodern Japan, thereby influencing even secular culture by the dissemination of knowledge—for example, the field of art, such as the tea ceremony, floral arrangement, and so on.<sup>82</sup> As illustrated in Stone's study, the content of Eshin and Danna transmissions was not limited to Buddhist teachings and practices, but covered broad subject areas representing the geography, history and culture of Mt. Hiei. Thus discussions concerning the worship of Sannō, the indigenous deity of Mt. Hiei, were passed down through the written secret transmissions.

As examined above, factions and the unique tradition of Tendai's secret oral transmissions are interconnected and characterized the Tendai scholastic-monastic culture on Mt. Hiei. And the interconnection had another significant outcome, that is, the tradition of the chroniclers (*kike* 記家), whose contribution among many included the systemic development and dissemination of the Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse centering on the religious beliefs and practices on Sannō.

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<sup>80</sup> There are many more lineages and sublineages that stemmed from the Eshin and Danna; however, discussions of all those lineages and sublineages are not addressed here in the interest of limiting this study to what is manageable. For details of the lineages on Mt. Hiei, see Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, Chapter Three.

<sup>81</sup> These *kuden* secret transmissions were recorded on lean cut papers (*kirikami* 切紙), which was a typical method of retaining transmissions in medieval Japanese culture. See Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri Tendai.*, p.253.

<sup>82</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p.109.

## *A Chronicler's Mission*

Tendai chroniclers (*kike*) were scholar-monks (J. *gakusō* 学僧) who collected various types of records, such as oral transmission (*kuden*) and secret texts (*hisho* 秘書), studied them thoroughly, added new interpretations, and transmitted those records.<sup>83</sup> This tradition of chroniclers was significantly related to medieval Tendai's peculiar tradition of oral transmission. As mentioned before, Tendai's secret oral transmissions were typically written down in lean and small cut papers called *kirikami*; hence, the content written on them was naturally compact and not reader-friendly. Thus organization and editing by chroniclers must have been very useful. However, the usefulness of chroniclers' works was not limited to organizing cluttered documents.

The increasing numbers and types of lineages on Mt. Hiei brought overflows of disparate teachings and theories, and each secret teaching formed an individual scholarly school. However, diverging from these divisions, Tendai scholar-monks endeavored to learn about other schools' perspectives and compare them with their own. The chroniclers' tradition was formed in order to record those diverse secret transmissions for Tendai's own academic purposes.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, as mentioned before, chroniclers were the main contributors for the formulation and development of the Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse by re-illuminating mythic narratives, symbolism, rituals, and architecture related to kami—Sannō in particular.

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<sup>83</sup> Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p.24.

Residing on Mount Hiei, where the great Hie shrines—the center of the worship of Sannō deity—were located as part of the Hiei shrine-temple complex, the chroniclers were naturally interested in learning about the Sannō cult and understanding the relationship between Sannō and buddhas by the *honjaku*, or origin-trace discourse, which was already a main doctrinal interpretive tool in medieval Japanese Tendai teachings and practices.<sup>85</sup> The main material of this study, *Keiran shūyōshū*, is presumably the largest collection of *kuden* transmissions edited by chroniclers. It documents not only Tendai/Taimitsu teachings and practices but also a great variety of subjects regarding Mt. Hiei, including the religious traditions of the mountain.<sup>86</sup> All in all, these chroniclers' records, such as *Keiran*, represents the all-inclusive, innermost discussions of medieval Tendai scholar-monk study and esotericism on Mt. Hiei.

Clearly, to be able to record those abstruse, secret transmissions on all kinds of doctrinal teachings and practices, as well as achieve an esoteric amalgamation with kami worship rituals and practices, the *kike* must have been knowledgeable about such matters. Indeed, Tendai chroniclers of the medieval period were erudite scholar-monks associated with the Danna 檀那 school.<sup>87</sup> They aimed to be the recorders of secret oral transmissions.<sup>88</sup> *Kike* transmissions are considered to have been systematized by Gigen 義源 (c.1289-1351), who compiled *Sanke yōryakuki* 山家要略記—an instrumental collection of transmissions regarding Sannō worship—

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<sup>85</sup> Kuroda Toshio, “Historical Consciousness and *Hon-jaku* Philosophy in the Medieval Period on Mount Hiei.” In George and Willa Tanabe, eds., *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), pp. 143-158.

<sup>86</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 124.

<sup>87</sup> For a detailed discussion of Tendai's inner factions or schools, see *Ibid.*, pp. 102-107.

<sup>88</sup> Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, p. 24.

and *Keiran*'s compiler, Kōshū 光宗(1276-1350). These men's activities represent the finest achievements among the *kike*'s many works.<sup>89</sup>

Kōshū appears to have gone to Mt. Hiei to become a monk at age nineteen at the latest, but there has been no record about his life before he became a scholar-monk on Mt. Hiei.<sup>90</sup> This omission was because he never appeared in the major leadership at Tendai complex on Mt. Hiei, instead solely concentrating on his scholarly pursuits, while remaining mostly withdrawn in secluded places. Kōshū moved to many different small temples inside the Hiei temple complex, apparently for the purpose of writing the monumental *Keiran*. Places he stayed were secluded and quiet hermitages were referred to as *bessho* 別所, literally “detached places,” which functioned mainly as quiet spaces available to practitioners.<sup>91</sup> Jinzōji 神蔵寺 and Seiryūji 青龍寺 in Kurodani 黒谷 were well-known *bessho* among the places known for being where he stayed. Moving around the secluded temples and hermitages, Kōshū, who had a voracious appetite for knowledge, learned various transmissions of different lineages. In addition to studying major Mahāyāna teachings such as Kegon 華嚴, Hossō 法相, Sanron 三論, Zen 禪, Jōdo 淨土, and so forth, Kōshū was known to have been versed in poetry, mathematics, medicine, divination, and military strategy.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, he was initiated into kami initiation

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<sup>89</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 126.

<sup>90</sup> Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, p. 8.

<sup>91</sup> *Bessho* were affiliated with the main temple complex but separated from it both geographically and administratively. Semi-independent clerics were referred to by various loose titles—*shōnin* 聖人 (or 上人), *hijiri* 聖, *jikyōsha* 持經者—were typically staying at *bessho* withdrawn from the official temple organization in order to practice in reclusion (Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 98).

<sup>92</sup> Sueki Fumihiko, “Sannō wo megurushintōsetsu,” *Chūsei no kami to hotoke*, (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 2010), p. 47.

rituals (*shinmei kanjō* 神明灌頂)<sup>93</sup> from Gigen and *kai kanjō* 戒灌頂 from Kōen 興円 (1262-1317) of the precept lineage (*kaike* 戒家) while Kōshū was staying at Jinjōji in Kurodani.<sup>94</sup> It seems that Kōshū launched the writing of *Keiran* during his stay at Jinjōji. Never having engaged in any other activities—such as maneuvering for political advancement—Kōshū was solely dedicated to the compilation of *Keiran* from 1311 to 1348, largely without rest once he had begun the journey.<sup>95</sup>

Kōshū's identity in terms of Tendai lineage is not clearcut: although he has been best known as a *kike*, he was affiliated with a variety of lineages. This was because basically *kike*'s work required knowledge of transmissions from other lineages, and as illustrated above, Kōshū was never reserved in terms of learning. Thus his name is found in the genealogies of various lineages, including the *kike* lineage in which he appears as the aforementioned disciple of Gigen. It is known that Kōshū received transmissions on Sannō worship from Gigen.<sup>96</sup>

That being said, it seems that the most important lineage with which Kōshū was closely affiliated must have been the Kurodani-based *kaike* lineage. In *Keiran*, Kōshū records the date of

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<sup>93</sup> From the mid-thirteenth century onward, esoteric Buddhist discussions on kami began to form initiation rituals through which each practitioner found a bond with a specific kami. These kami rituals were referred to by a variety of names, including *shintō kanjō*, *shinmei kanjō*, *jingi kanjō*, *Ise kanjō*, *Nihongi kanjō*, and so forth. See Mark Teeuwen, “The Kami in Esoteric Buddhist Thought and Practice,” in Breen and Teeuwen, *Shinto in History*.

<sup>94</sup> The Enryakuji complex on Mt. Hiei was divided into three precincts: the Eastern Pagoda (*tōtō* 東塔), the Western Pagoda (*saitō* 西塔), and Yokawa. Each precinct encompassed valleys, five each in the Eastern and Western pagodas and six in Yokawa. Each of the sixteen valleys had its own temple and monastery, which established distinctive lineages. Kurodani at the northern valley of the Western Pagoda had been functioning as the *bessho* since Hōnen 法然 in the late Heian period. The *kaike* precept lineage was based at Kurodani and transmitted the “perfect and sudden precepts” (*endon kai* 円頓戒), while forming the Kurodani School. Along with the *kike* lineage, they were affiliated with the Danna School as one of the *kuden hōmon*. Kōshū passed down the *kaike* transmissions that he received from Kōen to his own disciple, Unkai 運海. See Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, Chapter 1, Yamamoto Hiroko, *Ijin: Chūsei nihon no hikyōteki sekai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1998), pp.404-406, and Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 126-129.

<sup>95</sup> Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-13.

writing and the author's name for each subsection<sup>97</sup>; in most cases he identifies himself as a “Tendai monk” (*tendai shamon* 天台沙門),<sup>98</sup> but also in a number of cases the authorship appears as Kōshū of “Tendai Kurodani” or of “Sanmon Kurodani 山門黒谷.” This clearly shows his conscious self-identification as a scholar-monk of the Kurodani school (*kurodani ryū* 黒谷流).

Although the so-called new Kamakura Buddhist schools might have not wielded much power, Tendai power and authority was at stake, facing challenges and criticism—for having been elitist, corrupt, endorsing evil acts—from those revolutionary schools following the late Heian period. Feeling a sense of crisis, reformational movements arose inside the “old” Buddhist schools, including Tendai. The Kurodani-ryū spearheaded one of those self-critical reformations: ashamed of lax precept-keeping in that time, they endeavored to revive the tradition of the perfect precepts (*enkai* 円戒), as established by Saichō. The primary focus of the revived precepts was one of Saichō's key provisions that demanded Tendai monks to remain sequestered on Mt. Hiei for twelve years (*jūninen rōzan gyō* 十二年籠山行) during their special training.<sup>99</sup> The revival of this practice was especially activated by Kōen, and one of his two disciples was Kōshū. Among his self-identifications in *Keiran*, the references to himself as the monk of “Tendai Perfect Precepts” (*tendai enkai shamon* 天台円戒沙門), and as the monk of “Tendai Rōzan” are noticeable.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, Kōshū's deep knowledge of the *kaike* transmissions is

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<sup>97</sup> When he includes records by other people, he also identifies their names at the end or beginning of the records.

<sup>98</sup> A couple of times he refers to himself as Tendai *ajari* 阿闍梨, that is, a senior monk, the one who educates other monks.

<sup>99</sup> Terai Ryōsen, *Tendai endonkai shisō no seiritsu to tenkai* (Ōtsu: Miyakawa Insatsu Kabushiki Kaisha, 2012), pp. 1-2.

<sup>100</sup> T.76, 2410: 848a11 and 839:b7.

shown through his discussion of the *kaike* transmissions in *Keiran*.<sup>101</sup> Following his master Kōen, Kōshū practiced a twelve-year-long seclusion in Mt. Hiei beginning around 1308.<sup>102</sup> Seen in this light, Kōshū's seclusion in various hermitages was not only for the writing of his masterpiece *Keiran*, but was also an important practice in and of itself.

The impressive scale of *Keiran*—the thirty-seven year's work by one chronicler, encompassing a broad range of subjects and all-inclusive discussion—deserves to be defined as “encyclopedic” text, as is the common scholarly custom. And *Keiran*'s encyclopedic quality was also the product of the built-up collections of transmissions from previous periods. Tanaka divides medieval Tendai's intellectual history into four periods: first was during the Heian period when most of the Tendai teachings were transmitted either verbally or on cut papers (*kirikami*). During the second period, i.e., from the late Heian to Kamakura periods, previous oral transmissions and cut papers were collected and recorded by chroniclers. From the mid-Kamakura period, otherwise known as the third period, organizing works over the collected materials proceeded. Tendai's other large medieval work, *Asabasho* 阿娑縛抄 (ca. 1251), which shows an esoteric Buddhist interpretation of oral transmissions on Kami-Buddha relations, was the product of this period. *Keiran* was compiled in addition to these previous achievements. It was compiled by synthesizing organized transmissions and adding exegetical comments.<sup>103</sup>

*Keiran* is a massive volume: according to other records, it used to be composed of more than three hundred volumes.<sup>104</sup> Even what is remaining today is as numerous as one hundred and

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<sup>101</sup> Terai Ryōsen, *Tendai endonkai*, p.6.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

thirteen volumes. *Keiran*'s structure typically includes four divisions: the section of exoteric teachings (*kenbu* 顯部), esoteric teachings (*mitsubu* 密部), precepts (*kaibu* 戒部), and records (*kirokubu* 記録部). This was a typical curricular category of the medieval Hiei education system.<sup>105</sup> The *kenbu* section contains discussions on kami<sup>106</sup> and the comparative discussions of exoteric meditation (*zen* 禪) and doctrines (*kyō* 教). The *mitsubu* covers a large array of Mikkyō teachings and rituals regarding buddhas, for example, Yakushi, Amida, Dainichi, buddha relic, as well as bodhisattvas, and devas, mandalas, esoteric scriptures, initiation rituals, mind contemplation (*kanjin*) practices, and so on. The *kaibu* section records transmissions of the *kaike* precept lineage. Finally, the *kirokubu* seems to be composed of various transmissions, particularly concerning the Mt. Hiei tradition. Thus, temple architecture at the mountain and deities worshipped within the mountain, i.e., Sannō, are common denominators regarding the subject material. Also, many previous discussions are repeated almost verbatim, often seen as the records by other people. Thus, it is assumed that the *kirokubu* is a collection of *kuden* records circulated within the Tendai complex on Mt. Hiei. However, it seems that the *kirokubu* must have had a special meaning to Kōshū beyond a mere collection of documents.

From *Keiran*'s table of contents it is noticeable that each of the four sections is attached with its own initiation rituals (*kanjō* 灌頂), followed by Kōshū's comments on each ritual. Thus, the ritual for the exoteric teachings is the secret of the “mysterious awakening from arising-wisdom” (*shochi myōgo* 生智妙悟), the ritual for exoteric teachings is the ritual of all dharmas (*shohō kanjō* 諸法灌頂), and the ritual for precepts is the transmission of precepts for protection

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<sup>105</sup> Sueki, “Sannō wo meguru shintōsetsu,” p.37.

<sup>106</sup> The rationale for categorizing kami discussions into the exoteric part is not clear; only, kami in the exoteric part are rather “revealed,” relatively well-known deities, as opposed to hybrid deities—typically *devas*—in the esoteric pantheon.



(*chingo jukai* 鎮護授戒). Finally, Kōshū interprets the esoteric initiation ritual attached to the “records section” (*kirokubu*) as the following:

“It is the initiation ritual of benefiting the land by dimming light and appearing as dust (*wakō dōjin riyaku kokuto kanjō*)”<sup>107</sup>

(第四記録部者。和光同塵利益國土灌頂也)

This shows the author’s special internalized understanding of the notion of manifestation, or more specifically, “dimming light and appearing as dust”<sup>108</sup> (*wakō dōjin*.)” What deserves close attention is his equation of records with Buddha’s manifestation in the world for sentient beings. For medieval Tendai chroniclers, faithful engagement in “recording”<sup>109</sup> must have been in and of itself a bodhisattva practice<sup>110</sup> that benefits people by manifesting and transmitting Dharma. Another *kike* work, *Kuin bukkaku shō* 九院仏閣抄, completed a little later than *Keiran*, extended the spirit of recording and the mission of *kike* to the general mission of the Enryakuji by using the same expression, *wakō dōjin*.<sup>111</sup> Without a doubt, this spirit of recording is epitomized by Kōshū’s devoted lifetime engagement in compiling the miniature of medieval Tendai’s all-encompassing hermeneutic efforts, *Keiran shūyōshū*.

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<sup>107</sup> T.76, 2410:503b23.

<sup>108</sup> In the Buddhist context, dust (*jin* 塵) is often a metaphor for this world (Skt. *sahā*; J. *shaba* 娑婆).

<sup>109</sup> Sueki Fumihiko adequately understands the term *kiroku* (record or recording) in *Keiran* with two closely interconnected usages—with a narrow and broad meaning. Thus the word *kiroku* as in the *kirokubu*, i.e., the record section, is used in a narrow sense, meaning a collection of records, and yet at the same time, it can be viewed to convey the “spirit” of recording. Thus it seems that Kōshū’s comments on the initiation ritual for the *kirokubu* represents his (or chroniclers’) view on the act of recording. See Sueki, “Sannō wo meguru shintōsetsu.”

<sup>110</sup> Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, p.7. Also, Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 124.

<sup>111</sup> See Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 124 for details.

What did the phrase *wakō dōjin* in the above refer to, exactly? Although it is a primary expression associated with kami, that is, an allegorical expression for their appearances in this world, it seems to be used here as a more general reference to the act of subtle revelation or manifestation. As will be discussed in the next chapter, *wakō dōjin* is closely associated with the idea of nonduality (*funi* 不二), the middle way (*chūdō* 中道), and mysterious unity (*myōgō* 冥合), or perfect unity (*enyū* 円融), all of which are key words representing the focal point of the Hiei ideal and tradition. Then, what type of unity does *Keiran* attempt to convey in order to benefit people? The unity between buddhas and kami—Sannō in particular—would be one concept to consider, given the chroniclers’ interests in kami worship centered on Mt. Hiei. Yet, the unity idealized in *Keiran* is much broader than that.

As seen before, Kōshū divides *Keiran*’s content by the four categories of the exoteric, esoteric, precepts, and records section. Following the table of contents, Kōshū explains his reason for compiling *Keiran* under the title of the “origin of *Keiran shūyōshū*” (*keiran shūyōshū engi* 溪嵐拾葉集緣起), in which he comments on the four categories in a concise manner. Kōshū begins with a brief illustration of the four teachings. First, he refers to the precept teachings (*kaihō* 戒法)—a very brief mention of the precept keepers’ tradition of the Nara schools, Saichō’s foundation of the precepts tradition on Mt. Hiei, and the weakening of its tradition and regeneration. By using the first person in the discussion of the precepts, Kōshū reveals his attachment to the *kaike* lineage.

On the other hand, Kōshū criticizes teachings of the exotericism and esotericism for forgetting the original meaning of their teachings as well as being one-sided regarding learning and training. In particular, people who only pursue the exoteric teachings, namely, the Tendai perfect teachings, are criticized for living in oblivion, preoccupied with the *kanjin* contemplation

practice. And people who only pursue the esoteric teachings, i.e., Shingon, are only immersed in concrete reality (*jisō* 事相) and immediately manifested activities (*gengyō* 現行). In contrast, people of “my (our)” school (*gahōryū* 我法流) endeavor to realize the truth of Vairocana in our mind.<sup>112</sup>

Given the afore-examined self-identification principle of Kōshū and his attitude toward the precept teachings, it seems likely that “our school” referred to above indicates the Kurodani school. Nevertheless, Kōshū’s *Keiran* is fundamentally representing the scholastic tradition of Tendai Sanmon on Mt. Hiei by recording transmissions that pertain to various lineages and schools.<sup>113</sup> This is shown through Kōshū’s numerous references to Mt. Hiei as “our mountain” (*gazan* 我山) and prideful comments on the tradition of “our mountain” in *Keiran*.<sup>114</sup> And, that tradition is, as reflected in Hiei’s academic categorization as well as *Keiran*’s structure, to learn all three teachings, i.e., *ken* 顯, *mitsu* 密, *kai* 戒. In that way, one can attain exoteric Tendai’s wondrous dharma that leads one to immediate enlightenment, the precept teachings that pursue the attainment of Buddhahood through the levels of six identities (*rokusoku* 六即),<sup>115</sup> and esoteric teachings that aim at the immediate realization of Buddhahood in the present state (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛).<sup>116</sup> And at the end of the day, Kōshū says, all these three are

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<sup>112</sup> T.76, 2410: 504c22-505a2.

<sup>113</sup> Sueki, “Sannō wo meguru shintōsetsu,” p.36-37.

<sup>114</sup> Among many, the reference to Mt. Hiei as a spiritual mountain is repeated, plus the comment that refers to Mt. Hiei as the final destination of the *Lotus* teachings. (T.76, 2410: 517a29-b1).

<sup>115</sup> It refers to a Tiantai/Tendai classification of the six stages of enlightenment; yet these stages are mutually interpenetrating. See Swanson, *Foundations of T’ien-T’ai Philosophy*, p. 294 for details of the six stages.

<sup>116</sup> T.76, 2410: 505a18-21.

recorded, edited, and evaluated by *kiroku* 記録, the fourth category.<sup>117</sup> In Kōshū’s comment as such, scholars read the chronicler’s pride and belief in the work of recording as the most profound training in the Tendai tradition and as a bodhisattva practice for the benefit of others.<sup>118</sup>

As the ultimate evaluator of the great Buddhist tradition on Mt. Hiei, Kōshū’s mission was to illuminate<sup>119</sup> the greatness of and thereby justify his tradition, which he represents as pursuing the one truth encompassing all teachings, all practices, and all divinities. The one truth could be referred to as many different names, particularly in the Hiei tradition, in which they are one mind—the *Lotus*, Śākyamuni, and Sannō. Although Sannō was already the supreme deity of Mt. Hiei, identified with Śākyamuni and integrated into Taimitsu’s all-inclusive pantheonic structure, Sannō was viewed as the origin of all kami and identified with one mind that embraces all realities in the Tendai scholastic culture of secret transmissions. And such glorification of Sannō was grounded upon Taimitsu’s veneration of Śākyamuni following the esoteric teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

As seen in the previous discussion of Tendai’s merge with esoteric Buddhism, Tendai scholar-monks re-interpreted the *Lotus Sūtra* as esoteric scripture, and in doing so they identified Śākyamuni with the cosmic Buddha, Dainichi. Naturally, as the representation of medieval Tendai’s intellectual and religious tradition, *Keiran* stresses the identity between Dainichi and Śākyamuni:

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<sup>117</sup> T.76, 2410: b3.

<sup>118</sup> Sueki, “Sannō wo meguru shintōsetsu,” p.37.

<sup>119</sup> Kōshū uses the expression of “all illuminating”(henjō 遍照) instead of “recording” (*ki* 記) after the date and his name at the end of his introduction. Thus it reads “Kōshū illuminates” or “illuminated by Kōshū,” instead of the typical format, “Kōshū writes” or “written by Kōshū.”

[...] there is no Dainichi other than Śākyamuni The inner witness/realization (*naisho* 内證) of *Shaka* 釋迦 is Dainichi; the external manifestation of Dainichi is *Shaka*. And the inner realization and [its] external manifestation is non-dual (*funi* 不二) and equal (*byōdō* 平等)...<sup>120</sup>  
(釋迦外ニ大日無故也。釋迦ノ内證ハ大日也。大日外用ハ釋迦也。又内證外用不二平等也。)

[...] *Shaka* is (*soku* 即)<sup>121</sup> Dainichi<sup>122</sup>; ...Dainichi Nyorai is (*soku*) *Shaka*.<sup>123</sup>  
(釋迦即大日也ト云事ヲ成也; 大日如來即釋迦尊也)

*Shaka* is Dainichi Nyorai. Referring to Śākyamuni (J. *shakamuni* 釋迦牟尼) as Vairocana is because of that reason.<sup>124</sup>  
(釋迦者。大日如來也。釋迦牟尼名ヲ毘盧遮那ト云ハ此意也)

[...] *Shaka* is [how we] refer to all three bodies of Buddha. [*Shaka*] is another name (*imyō* 異名) of Dainichi.<sup>125</sup>  
(釋迦ハ三身ノ通號。大日ノ異名也)

Upon close examination, it is clear that *Keiran*'s discussion on Dainichi and Śākyamuni is not claiming a monistic or absolute identity between the two buddhas. The quote infers that there is a *hon-jaku* relationship that designates Śākyamuni as the manifestation of Dainichi. As is in any *hon-jaku* relationship, the identity between Dainichi and Śākyamuni is grounded upon Taimitsu's development of the theory that emphasizes the "oneness" of the three bodies of Buddha (*trikāya*). Thus in *Keiran*, along with numerous references to the oneness of the three bodies, we find a subsection in the volume of esoteric teachings (*mitsubu* 密部), one that is

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<sup>120</sup> T.76, 2410:592.b29-c2.

<sup>121</sup> Although this word is normally used to express an identical relationship between two nouns, it implicates a subtle difference between the two identified items.

<sup>122</sup> T.76, 2410:598c11-12.

<sup>123</sup> T.76, 2410:690b13.

<sup>124</sup> T.76, 2410:675a25-26.

<sup>125</sup> T.76, 2410: 676c2-3.

solely devoted to discussing the mutual correspondence (*sōsōku* 相即) among the three bodies of Buddha.

“One Body is three bodies, and this is referred to as a secret (*hi* 秘). Three bodies are One Body, and this is referred to as esoterica (*mitsu* 密)...”<sup>126</sup>  
(一身即チ三身ナルヲ名テ爲祕ト。三身即チ一身ナルヲ名テ爲密ト)

“...Three bodies are the (divided) incarnation (*bunshin* 分身) of one essence (*tai* 體).”<sup>127</sup>  
(此三身ハ一體ノ分身也)

Consequently, although Mahāvairocana, or Dainichi Nyorai is the Dharma body (*Dharmakāya*) according to both Tiantai/Tendai and Esoteric teachings,<sup>128</sup> as the manifested body of Buddha, Śākyamuni becomes one with Dainichi. Tendai’s prioritization of Śākyamuni is clearly noted again in a comment in *Keiran* that all sentient beings (*issai shujō* 一切衆生) are incarnations of Śākyamuni.<sup>129</sup>

It is remarkable that the origin-trace (*hon-jaku*) structure is also central to the discussion of buddhas in *Keiran*. The *hon-jaku* structure forms the backbone of *Keiran*’s discussions of kami and buddhas and generates a complex web of mutually identified deities by the *hon-jaku* scheme. Thus the identity of Śākyamuni and Sannō as they appeared in *Keiran* was also

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<sup>126</sup> T.76, 2410:548a27-28.

<sup>127</sup> T.76, 2410:548c26. Here the word “*tai* 體” can also be translated as “body,” but considering the meaning of the oneness of the three bodies of Buddha, it should denote something essential and ultimate.

<sup>128</sup> Also found in Huayan teachings.

<sup>129</sup> T.76, 2410:589c20. The rationale for us being Śākyamuni’s manifestation is a doubly structured notion of the three bodies scheme discussed in *Keiran*: each “body” of Buddha has its own three bodies, and thus nine bodies (*kushin* 九身) in all. All sentient beings are the manifested body among the three bodies of the “manifested body,” i.e., Śākyamuni. See T.76. 2410. 589c17-20.

grounded upon the *hon-jaku* relationship between the two, namely, Sannō as a manifestation of Śākyamuni. This will be detailed in the next chapter.

### *Buddhist Monks In the Land of Kami*

After examining the overall nature of Tendai's doctrine, practice, history and culture, it is not surprising that the most concrete and fully grown discourse on the kami-buddha relationship was developed by Tendai scholar-monks—chroniclers in particular. Especially, it was the foremost mission for chroniclers to transmit regarding Sannō as the supreme deity of Mt. Hiei.<sup>130</sup> One can naturally take Tendai's proximity to the Hie Shrine into account for the motivation of their fascination about Sannō and kami in general. At the same time, it would be worthwhile to illuminate Tendai's development of Kami-Buddha discourses as a product of the zeitgeist of the time.

In the background of medieval Japanese emphasis on kami as manifested traces of Buddha, there was the Latter Age of Dharma (*mappō* 末法). Japanese people believed that the age of *mappō* had begun in the year 1052, and collective apocalyptic fear—aggravated through the course of a real semi-apocalyptic time since the late Heian—brought about new religious movements such as Pure Land (Jōdo 浄土) Buddhism, a sūtra burying ritual, and more broadly, the generation of soteriological discourses in varying forms and degrees.

A major initial effort to devise such soteriological discourse within the temple-shrine complex on Mt. Hiei was attempted by a group of shrine priests (*hafuribe* 祝部) of the Hie Shrine. In their compilation work, *Yōtenki* 耀天記 (1223), they appropriated the main theme of

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<sup>130</sup> Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, p. 28.

the *Compassionate Flower Sūtra* (Skt. *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka-sūtram*, J. *Hikekyō* 悲華經), which emphasizes Śākyamuni’s appearance in this world for saving all sentient beings. In particular, *Yōtenki*’s section on Sannō quotes Śākyamuni’s alleged pronouncement from the *Compassionate Flower Sūtra*—that he will appear as the deity of the great shrine of the Hie during the age of *mappō*.<sup>131</sup> Considering the fact that actually there is no such comment in that sūtra, it was most likely an appropriation on the Hie side for soteriological purposes, in addition to the underlying intention to exalt in their tradition of Sannō worship.

The religious significance of kami was far more exalted, and was eventually extended to become regarded as Japan’s own proud assets that protect the Japanese people. This was largely an aftereffect of two attempted invasions by Mongols in the late thirteenth century. As is generally known, Japan’s fortunate triumph over the invasions contributed to strengthening its belief in the numinous power of kami as the protector of Japan. This national crisis generated not only a strong self-conscious understanding of Japan’s place in Asia,<sup>132</sup> but also a reversal of its earlier inferiority complex by which Japan was viewed as a petty marginal kingdom in the eastern seas.<sup>133</sup> As a result, we see the transfiguration of Japan as becoming a “divine country (*shinkoku* 神国).” Recent scholarship has interpreted this term as a Buddha-land empowered and protected by its deities—both kami and buddhas.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, the large degree of “elevation” of the status of kami through this new concept is unmistakable.

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<sup>131</sup> Sueki, “Sannō wo meguru shintōsetsu,” p. 32-34.

<sup>132</sup> Lucia Dolce, “Mapping the “Divine Country””: Sacred Geography and International Concerns in Medieval Japan,” in Remco Breuker, ed., *Korea in the Middle: Korean Studies and Area Studies: Essays in Honour of Boudewijn Walraven* (Amsterdam University Press, 2007), pp. 288-312. Dolce refers to this phenomenon as the “emergence of a proto-national consciousness.”

<sup>133</sup> Kuroda Toshio, “*Kenmitsu* bukyō ni okeru rekishi ishiki: chūsei Hieizan no kike ni tsuite,” in *Kenmitsu bukyō to jisha seiryoku* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1995), pp. 39-57.

<sup>134</sup> Dolce, “Mapping the “Divine Country,”” p. 288.



The notion of “divine country” had spread out to medieval Japanese society and become a dominant literary, religious, and ideological trope, as represented in diverse literature including courtier’s diaries, historiographies, and religious texts. Buddhist writings were not the exception, and the trope was often deployed to distinguish Japan from other countries—India and China, in particular. An exemplary passage for this is well presented in *Keiran* under the subsection where it discusses the rationale for Japanese isles being called “the country of kami (*shinkoku*).”

India is the country where Buddha was born. China is the country of Amida.<sup>135</sup> Japan is the country of kami. Therefore, this country is where kami guide people to enlightenment.<sup>136</sup>

(天竺ハ佛生國也。震旦ハ彌佛國也。日本神國也)

Thus, as seen in the above passage in *Keiran*, kami plays a special role in guiding people to Buddhist teachings. *Keiran*’s elevation of kami does not stop there.

Our country is the country of kami. Therefore, [in our country] Shintō (神道) becomes the origin. Among [deities] the deity that manifests Śākyamuni Buddha is Sannō. Therefore, the great deity [of the Hie shrines] extends himself to [lead] people.<sup>137</sup>

(我國ハ神國ナルカ故ニ以テ神道ヲ爲本ト。其中釋尊示現ノ神明ハ山王也。故ニ現大明神廣度衆生)

An important point to note in the above passage is the way *Keiran* describes Shintō, which appears as the foundation of Japan’s religious tradition. Here, one might be tempted to

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<sup>135</sup> *Keiran* only marks it as *mibutsu* 彌佛. There is another possibility for its translation as Maitreya (J. *Miroku* 彌勒). This is difficult to judge since the term only appears in *Keiran* once. I followed Lucia Dolce’s translation of it as Amida Buddha. See *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>136</sup> T.76, 2410:511b25-26.

<sup>137</sup> T.76, 2410:557a22-24.

pinpoint a type of incipient notion of the inverted *honji suijaku* from this passage. However, as Lucia Dolce has outlined in regard to recent scholarship on *shinkoku*, i.e., the “land of kami,” we cannot ignore the Buddhist presupposition behind the concept of *shinkoku*<sup>138</sup>; thus, even though the term is translated as the land/country of kami (to be loyal to its literal sense), and even though one witnesses that the term is highlighted with greatly elevated value, as long as it is discussed in premodern Buddhist writings, one should be mindful of the fact that it is Buddhists saying and “valorizing” native divinities—oftentimes deities associated with their temple-shrine complex. *Keiran* itself, as a Tendai commentarial text, verifies the “Buddhist presupposition,” which indicates prioritization of Buddhist teachings and its pantheon on the author’s side. Most of all, kami in *Keiran* are still defined as the manifested traces of Buddha.<sup>139</sup> However, as seen in the previous discussion, the manifested traces of Buddha could carry profound symbolic and religious power, especially for such a time as this, when Dharma was declining and the world was never peaceful.

### *Conclusion*

In order to illuminate medieval Buddhist discourse on kami and buddhas, this chapter began with sketching a brief history of the amalgamation between kami and buddhas (*shinbutsu shūgō*), as well as the development of the combinatory discourse based on the *honji suijaku*

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>139</sup> Also, *Keiran*’s discussion of “three ranks of kami (*shinmei sani* 神明三位)” clearly shows that for the author and the Tendai scholarly circles that he represents, the absolute superiority of Buddhism was self-evident, even though the text showed great interest in the learning about and transmitting of legends and practices centering on kami worship. The highest rank is for those who reside in the World of Lotus (J. *rengezō sekai* 蓮華藏世界 or 華藏世界: Buddhist paradise where Mahāvairocana resides), the second rank are those in the world of *Bonten* 梵天 (Skt. Brahmā), and the third rank are those in shrines (*jingū* 神宮).

structure. It was next noted that the combinatory discourse was mostly developed by medieval Tendai scholar-monks, in particular chroniclers, or *kike*, who were in charge of recording secret oral transmissions among many schools and lineages of Tendai on Mt. Hiei. Large or small, medieval compilations by those *kike* are known to faithfully convey the doctrine and practice upheld in the Tendai temple complex on Mt. Hiei—the gist of which was explored in this chapter as well—and the traditions of the mountain, including the kami worship tradition centered on Sannō. *Keiran shūyōshū* by a *kike*, Kōshū, was illuminated as the most elaborate and, arguably, most influential among such works by medieval *kike*.

Throughout later discussions of Tiantai/Tendai main teachings and their development in Japan, what is noteworthy is Tendai's tendency to be all inclusive. This tendency is attested to by the Tendai doctrine itself, as it idealizes the integration of all realities while recording the historical development of the Tendai school, which had been accomplished through its endeavors to unite exoteric (*ken*) and esoteric (*mitsu*) teachings and practices. Then, it must have been natural for Tendai scholars to integrate with the preceding indigenous representation of the supreme sacredness of Mt. Hiei and, further, to intellectualize that combination. In a time of fear—both in religious and actual senses—the combinatory scheme between buddhas and kami could have worked as a soteriological device.

The core of the combinatory scheme basically centered on the origin and traces, or the *honji suijaku* relational structure, but this relationship is not so simple. As seen through *Keiran*'s discussion of the relationship among Dainichi, Śākyamuni, and Sannō, the *hon-jaku* relationship is closely connected with the notion of mutual identity (*sōsoku*), or, in other words, nonduality. In order to precisely understand *hon-jaku* logic it is necessary to grasp Tendai's basic viewpoint

on kami and the relationships among them. These will be illuminated in the next chapter, which explores Tendai's secret transmissions on kami as recorded in *Keiran*.

## Chapter II. Kami in *Keiran*—Medieval Tendai Interpretation of Japanese Culture and Religion

### *Highly Classified Matters*

*Keiran*'s first part of the exoteric teachings (*kenbu* 顯部) is divided into four subsections: first, the subsection titled “contemplating (observing) the way and operating mind (*kandō yōshin* 觀道用心),” is where the basic “exoteric” yet fundamental doctrinal concepts of Tendai School are briefly stated.<sup>140</sup> Second is the six chapter Kami section (*Shinmeibu* 神明部), while the third and fourth sections illustrate the differences and similarities between the schools of Zen (*zenshū* 禪宗) and the schools that emphasize doctrinal teachings (*kyōke* 教家), as well as general discussions on the meditation practice (*zen* 禪) and doctrines (*kyō* 教).<sup>141</sup>

The rationale for the *Shinmeibu*'s inclusion in the exoteric part is not very clear. It is true that most of *Keiran*'s discussions on kami are concentrated in the exoteric part; but it is not that kami are never discussed again in the esoteric part, although the kami-related contents in the esoteric part is mostly composed of fragmentary repetitions from the *Shinmeibu*, which are for the most part repeated in order to emphasize nondual identities with various deities—buddhas, bodhisattvas, and devas (*ten* 天)—discussed in the esoteric section. Moreover, there is a subsection containing discussion of Sannō in the *Shinmeibu*, under the subsection title, “The (august) matter of Sannō” (*Sannō on-koto* 山王御事). However, it appears that this subsection

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<sup>140</sup> Such as the Threefold Truth (*sandai* 三諦), the “three thousand realms in one thought (*ichinen sanzen* 一念三千),” and the “threefold contemplation in a single mind (*issin sangan* 一心三觀).” One thing to note here is that the latter is associated with the Sannō deity as the principle that represents “neither three nor one” and the “three in one” truth. See Allan Grapard, “Linguistic Cubism: A Singularity of Pluralism in the Sannō Cult,” in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 14/2-3 (1987): 211-234. Also, Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 126.

<sup>141</sup> T.76, 2410:507b4-8. The actual section is between 530:c20 and 543b22.

belongs to the records portion (*Kirokubu*).<sup>142</sup> Given that the records section has no conspicuous characteristic to distinguish it from other sections as regards topics, the author's categorization seems to be more or less fluid. It is possible to assume that he might have organized several subsections according to topics—such as the Sannō subsection.

Another point to consider in terms of the *Shinmeibu* categorization is found in a brief comment added—in smaller letters—before the title of the first subsection in the *Shinmeibu*. It reads, “kami and related matters are extremely secret” (*shinmei tōji hi hi goku goku* 神明等事 祕祕極極)<sup>143</sup> This comment makes us wonder about the criteria for distinguishing the exoteric part in particular; however, as previously discussed, in *Keiran* esotericism indicates Mikkyō teachings that were adopted by scholar monks such as Ennin, Enchin, and Annen. Thus it might have been a customary taxonomy in the medieval Tendai “curriculum,” in which anything that did not specifically fall into the category of the Mikkyō teachings and practices was possibly classified as the “exoteric” part.

All in all, the *Shinmeibu* in *Keiran* discusses generally well-known topics concerning kami and the worship of kami—for example, mythology and legends about certain deities and shrines, such as Amaterasu and the Ise shrine or the religious meanings of kami-related symbols, icons, and sacred sites, and so forth. Certainly, this characteristic of the *Shinmeibu* draws a distinct contrast to the kami-related discussions in the esoteric part in which kami matters are intermittently treated only in relation to discussions of specific buddhas and devas, or to relevant rituals.

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<sup>142</sup> T.76, 2410: 514c16.

<sup>143</sup> T.76, 2410: 511a2. The words “secret” (*hi* 祕) and “extreme” (*kyoku* 極) are repeated twice, and this type of repetitive wording—in order to put a great emphasis on secrecy in particular—is quite common throughout *Keiran*.

The examination of *Keiran*'s understanding and treatment of kami will be considered in further detail in chapter three, but based on *Keiran*'s section categorization, at least a partial picture can be drawn here: *Keiran* differentiates more or less indigenous Japanese deities, which had long been venerated through traditional shrine worship practices, from the so-called “hybrid” deities such as devas—deities of complex origins who were merged with various Buddhist divinities throughout different historical times and spaces. Consequently, although kami, devas, and buddhas are all amalgamated with one another according to their own characteristics and roles, in precise Tendai taxonomy traditional kami belong to the “exoteric” category, and devas and buddhas to the “esoteric” category.

Therefore, *Shinmeibu* in *Keiran* amounts in effect to a discussion of kami and related symbols based on traditional legends and mythology, in light of comprehending the esoteric Buddhist truth of those exoteric religious realities. In particular, two kami figures stand out as absolutely dominant divinities in the kami discussion in *Shinmeibu*: Sannō and Amaterasu. The overwhelming presence of Sannō in *Keiran* is undoubtedly reasonable as it represents the principal deity worshipped in the Hie shrine at Mt. Hiei.

On the other hand, the predominance of the discussion of Amaterasu and the Ise shrine in *Keiran*—both in weight and frequency—is clearly related to its association with the imperial authority, but it goes further than that. Amaterasu and the associated symbols appear to be treated in *Keiran* as primary representatives of Japan (Nihon 日本) as divine realm (*shinkoku*) as examined in the previous chapter.

The above points will be clarified in this chapter's discussion of Amaterasu and Sannō, pivoting on the *Shinmeibu*'s discussion of their respective characters and the relationship between the two. Before examining these matters, the basic structure of the *hon-jaku*

relationships among Amaterasu, Sannō, and Buddha in *Keiran* needs to be illustrated first for a better understanding of detailed discussions of each divinity.

Even without a conscious effort to focus on the *honji suijaku* scheme, it is perceivable from reading the *shinmeibu* section that it is one of *Keiran*'s typical patterns to discuss various kami and Buddhist divinities according to the relationship between the original ground (*honji* 本地) and its manifestation(s).<sup>144</sup> As discussed in Chapter One, nonduality, the middle way, unity of duality, and similar topics constitute the overarching theme of *Keiran*. The nondual relationships of seemingly bipolar realities are found in *Keiran* through the *honjaku* relationships among divinities.

First of all, there is a general rule stated in *Keiran*: Kami are manifestations of all buddhas.<sup>145</sup> Closer reading throughout *Keiran* reveals specific correspondences and associations among various kami and buddhas. However, the main kami-buddhas relationships that more directly serve our purpose—the investigation of the essence-trace logic—can be summarized as follows:

- a. Amaterasu at the Ise Shrine is the manifestation of Dainichi Nyorai.<sup>146</sup>  
(凡天照太神者。大日如來ノ應應)
- b. Sannō at the Hie Shrine is the manifestation of Śākyamuni.<sup>147</sup>  
(日吉社者爲釋迦應現ノ明神)

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<sup>144</sup> Now, as will be detailed later (see footnote 166), for the term meaning manifestation, *Keiran* uses variegated expressions such as *ōjaku* 應迹, *ōgen* 應現, *kegen* 化現, *ōyū* 應用 and so on, besides *suijaku* or *shaku* 迹. See, for example, T.76, 2410: 511b15, 514c21, 515a17, c19, 516b9, 517c22, 520a29, 664b11, 672b25, 681c2, 726c17, 840a17, 857a18, among many.

<sup>145</sup> T.76, 2410:512b1-2. Here the term for manifestation is *ōrai* 應來.

<sup>146</sup> T.76, 2410:511b15.

<sup>147</sup> T.76, 2410:514c21.



- c. Śākyamuni is the manifested body of Dainichi.<sup>148</sup>  
(大日ノ應述釋迦)
- d. Amaterasu and Sannō are united into one (*ittai shūgō*).<sup>149</sup>  
(天照太神ト與日吉權現一體ニ習合スル者也)
- e. Dainichi and Śākyamuni are non-dual (*funi* 不二).<sup>150</sup>  
(大日即爲釋迦 / 釋迦即大日也)

The above relationships among Amaterasu, Sannō, Śākyamuni, and Dainichi may seem more or less contradictory; however, the seemingly contradictory statement about the oneness of the manifestation and its essence, or original ground (*honji*) is resolved by the non-dual (*funi*) nature of the *honjaku* relationship. Examining Amaterasu and Sannō, the two most prominent kami in *Keiran*'s kami section, will help us to understand the rationale of the non-duality between the origin and manifestation; moreover, it can offer some insight into the significance and role of the kami discussion in the overall paradigm and objectives of *Keiran*'s discourse.

### *A Tendai Version of Japanese Mythology*

*Keiran* opens its six-chapter discussion on kami in *Shinmeibu* with a discussion in a subsection titled, “The matter of naming our country as the Great Country of Japan (*Dainihonkoku* 大日本國).” The discussion begins with a brief introduction of the origin of Japan (*Nihon* or *Nippon* 日本).

Notes on Secret Talks of the monk Chūkai said that a person said: Dainichi Nyorai achieved enlightenment on the top of the Form realm (*shikikai* 色界; Skt. *Rūpadhātu*).

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<sup>148</sup> T.76, 2410:515c17-18.

<sup>149</sup> T.76, 2410:514.c23 and 528c26.

<sup>150</sup> T.76, 2410:528c27 and 598c11-12.

[Dainichi Nyorai] thrust the heavenly spear into the southern sea. It created bubbles and became a land. This is the very country of Japan.<sup>151</sup>

(密談云 忠快 或人物語云。大日如來色界ノ頂ニ成道。南浮提ノ之海中へ天ノ逆鉾ヲ投下給。入海之時泡沫凝テ成州ト。所謂日本國是也)

As interesting as this passage is, this narrative may be read as a Tendai Buddhist version of the national mytho-histories in which the well-known story of the creation of Japan as narrated (*Kojiki* 古事記 and *Nihon shoki* 日本書記, together known as *Kiki*).<sup>152</sup> The Buddhist parallel story above is the same as in *Kiki*, only differed by Dainichi Nyorai's replacement of the first deity couple, Izanagi-no-mikoto and Izanami-no-mikoto.

The Buddhist version of Japanese mythology in *Keiran* continues to narrate that there was a province<sup>153</sup> where *rākṣasa* (J. *rasetsu* 羅刹 or 羅刹婆), the terrifying demons (or men-devouring demonic women), were living. *Keiran* claims that this *rākṣasa* demon is the Great Ise Shrine,<sup>154</sup> and the Ise Shrine is the trace (J. *suijaku* 垂迹) of the Dainichi.<sup>155</sup> *Keiran* identifies the Inner and Outer Shrines of Ise with the Mandala of the Twin Realms (J. *ryōbu mandara* 兩部曼荼羅).

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<sup>151</sup> T.76, 2410:511a5-7.

<sup>152</sup> Philippi, Donald L. trans. *Kojiki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), p. 49, and Aston, W. G. trans. *Nihongi* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1998), pp. 10-16.

<sup>153</sup> The province's name is *Cāmara* (J. *Shamatsura* 遮末羅 or 遮摩羅), one of the central parts of the southern continent, Jambudvīpa. (D. Max Moerman, "Demonology and Eroticism: Islands of Women in the Japanese Buddhist Imagination." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 36/2 (2009): 351-380.). It is interesting to see that medieval Japanese Tendai appropriates an Indian location associated with Śākyamuni's previous existence as The Great-Light Ming-wang (J. *Daikōmyōō* 大光明王). More studies on that issue are expected.

<sup>154</sup> Here this indicates Tenshō Daijin/Amaterasu (天照大神). *Keiran* frequently mingles names of shrines and deities' enshrined therein; for instance, the Ise shrine for Amaterasu and the Hie shrine for the Sannō deity.

<sup>155</sup> T.76, 2410:511a4-10.

Glorifying Japanese religious traditions in *Keiran* culminates in its divulgence of the “top secret (J. *gokuhi* 極秘)” transmission since Dengyō Daishi 伝教大師: The Great Country of Japan (*Dainihonkoku* 大日本國) is the original country of Dainichi (J. *Dainichi no honkoku* 大日ノ本國).<sup>156</sup> Recalling the title of this first subsection of the *Shinmeibu*, now it becomes clear as the rationale for Dainichi Nyorai’s creation of Japan. The ground for the notion of the “divine country” lies in the very special relationship between the realm of Japan and Dainichi. Japan is not the land of a historical Buddha or a Bliss-body Buddha—whether it is the historical Buddha or Amida; it is the land of the transcendental, cosmic Buddha Dainichi Nyorai. All historical or Pure Land buddhas, devas, and kami are the manifested traces of Dainichi Nyorai. Therefore, as the original country of Dainichi, Japan’s land itself is a miniature of the esoteric cosmos under Dainichi’s reign<sup>157</sup>; and Japan’s religious and cultural treasures are incarnations of the cosmic order and qualities of Dainichi.

In that light, *Keiran*’s depiction of the Three Sacred Treasures or Imperial Regalia of Japan (J. *sanshu no jingi* 三種の神器; in *Keiran*, *sanshu reihō* 三種靈寶) is certainly remarkable. In *Keiran* the three regalia refers to the Divine Seal (J. *shinji* 神璽), which represents the topography of Japan, the Treasure Sword (J. *hōken* 寶劍), and the Mirror in the *naishidokoro* 内侍所. These three are identified with the Susiddhi (J. *soshiji* 蘇悉地),<sup>158</sup> the

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<sup>156</sup> T.76, 2410:511a11-14.

<sup>157</sup> Japan’s traditional administrative districts, “five provinces and seven circuits” (*gokishichidō* 五畿七道) are likened in *Keiran* to the womb mandala; in particular, the five provinces are identified with the five natures of the womb realm (five wisdoms) and the seven circuits with the seven layers of the consciousness, which signifies the nonduality of consciousnesses. In addition, castles in those provinces are built nine-layered, which symbolizes the Nine Assemblies mandala (*kue mandara* 九会曼荼羅) of the Diamond Realm. See T.76, 2410: 511a23-26.

<sup>158</sup> These three realms constitute the Taimitsu view of three cosmological domains; thus the Womb realm represents the natural principle (*ri* 理), the Diamond realm wisdom (*chi* 智) that realizes the union with principle, and the Susiddhi the dharma form (*hōtai* 法体) of the union between principle and wisdom.

Diamond Realm (J. *kongōkai* 金剛界), and the Womb Realm (J. *taizōkai* 胎藏界) respectively, and again, they are construed as the Three Bodies of Buddha (Skt. *trikāya*; J. *sanshin* 三身).

Consequently, the Divine Seal is associated with the Manifested Body of Buddha (Skt. *nirmanakāya*; J. *ōjin* 應身), the Sword with the Bliss Body (Skt. *sambhogakāya*; J. *hōjin* 報身), and the Mirror with the Absolute, Dharma Body (Skt. *dharmakāya*; J. *hosshin* 法身).

Undoubtedly, these three bodies represent triadic qualities of Dainichi, which, according to the fundamental nature of Dainichi as the always abiding, all-illuminating light, are also represented by the astral trinity of the sun, the moon, and the stars. These are the esoteric three parts (*sambu* 三部) of Dainichi. In that sense, all kami are also astral manifestations of the universal light, Dainichi, and Amaterasu is no exception to that principle.

### *The Great Heavenly Illuminations*

Considering the tight mythological association between Amaterasu and the Mirror,<sup>159</sup> we see again a type of prioritization of the Ise Shrine and its supreme deity Tenjō daijin / Amaterasu-ō-mi-kami 天照大神. This becomes more overt when *Keiran* repeatedly states that the shrine of Amaterasu is the trace-manifestation deity (*suijaku shinmei* 垂迹神明) of Dainichi and that the Great Shrine of Hie 日吉大社 on Mt. Hiei, i.e. Sannō, is the manifestation deity of

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<sup>159</sup> As seen in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, Amaterasu tells her descendants that they should venerate the Mirror as if it is Amaterasu herself (Philippi, Donald L., *op. cit.*, pp.139-140, Aston, W. G., *op. cit.*, p.83). *Keiran* too associates the divine body (J. *shintai* 神體) of Amaterasu with the perfect roundness of the images reflected on the Mirror (T.76, 2410: a14-15).

Śākyamuni.<sup>160</sup> Śākyamuni is, not only in *Keiran* and Tendai, but in most of the Mahāyāna teachings, the transformed body (*nirmanakāya*) of Buddha.<sup>161</sup>

Presumably, for the most part the prioritization of the Ise should be related to political power and symbolism of the Ise, and its association with the imperial house. Furthermore, the author of *Keiran* addresses Amaterasu as the “ancestor deity of our country” (*wagakuni no soshin* 我國ノ祖神).<sup>162</sup> That being said, when we only take *Keiran*’s discussion into account, the special or superior status of the Ise or Amaterasu seems to be primarily related to its mythological and religious status of the Heavenly Deities (*tenjin* or *amatsukami* 天神).<sup>163</sup>

The way *Keiran* distinguishes the Heavenly Deities and the Earthly Spirits (*chigi* 地祇), and discusses “earthly” matters that the Sannō deity at the Hie Shrine means to take care of— veneration of ancestral deities, deities of the earth and grains (*sōbyōshashoku* 宗廟社稷)<sup>164</sup>— does evoke a general impression on the meaning of the “manifestation” or “trace(s),” which is typically associated with the more visible, concrete, and specific forms of matter. Nevertheless,

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<sup>160</sup> Among numerous similar entries, T.76, 2410:514c19-21.

<sup>161</sup> The term “Buddha” in Mahāyānist works often refers to the Enlightened One at the level of ultimate truth as opposed as to phenomenal truth—whether we call it Dharma, the Suchness (*tathata*), and so on, not the historical Buddha.

<sup>162</sup> T.76, 2410: 521b2.

<sup>163</sup> *Keiran* distinguishes the Heavenly Deities and the Earthly Spirit (J. *chigi* 地祇) combining them with an enigmatic word play: since the Heavenly Deities (*tenjin* 天神) do not have “*uji/shi* 氏,” they become divinities by “showing /proving (*shi* 示)” that they are “bestowing (*shin* 申)” [upon the world]. Conversely, the Earthly Spirits have “*uji* 氏,” and thus they become divinities by showing /proving (*shi* 示) [on] the earth (*chi* 地 or *tsuchi* 土). T.76, 2410:515a5-6, 518b12-13, and 864c10-11.

<sup>164</sup> T.76. 2410. 514.c25-515a11. However, similar comments are repeated throughout *Keiran*. *Keiran* defines *shashin* 社神 as the earth deity who produces everything; and *shokushin* 稷神 as the deity of five grains (T.76, 2410:526c28-527a6).

the most potent prerogative of Amaterasu seems to come from her<sup>165</sup> special association with Dainichi Nyorai, as Dainichi's "trace,"<sup>166</sup> and yet forming nondual identity with the great lord of esoteric truth. One might view this association as quite natural considering the traditional symbolism of Amaterasu as the divinity of the Sun: the same applies to Dainichi's case. However, the nature of Dainichi is not as merely as simple as the Sun's light, and the same applies to Amaterasu.

As mentioned briefly, *Keiran* emphasizes that Dainichi is simultaneously identical with the Sun, moon, and stars; understanding the triune truth is the essential core of the Mikkyō teachings. The astral nature of the triad of Dainichi has importance, as it suggests a central aspect in esoteric teachings and practices observed in the medieval Tendai temple complex on Mt. Hiei. Throughout the entire text, *Keiran* reveals great frequencies and depth of discussions about celestial bodies and their roles, not just in a religious context, but also in the actual affairs of the human world. Undoubtedly, it is not new to observe that this kind of astrological belief system is tightly associated with religious practices in any culture. Despite some conflicts and controversies throughout history, Abrahamic religions had long deployed astrology as one of the principal *techne*, until it was completely secularized and marginalized at the dawn of the age of Enlightenment.

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<sup>165</sup> Although the gender of Amaterasu is debatable and went through historical transformations, I choose to use feminine pronouns to refer to Amaterasu simply based on a customary characterization of her as a female deity.

<sup>166</sup> There are several variations of the term that indicate manifestation of certain Buddhist deities in *Keiran*: among them are *suijaku* 垂迹, the most representative expression, *ōjaku* 應迹, *ōgen* 應現, *kegen* 化現, *ōyū* 應用 and so on. Most cases are directly connected to the meaning of the "manifested body of Buddha (Skt. *nirmanakāya*; J. *ōjin* 応身 or *keshin* 化身)" in the Three Bodies of Buddha (Skt. *trikāya*; J. *sanshin* 三身) structure. Detailed investigations of the meaning of the "manifestation" of Buddha will be executed in the following chapters. For an in-depth study of the relationship between Amaterasu and Dainichi Nyorai, see Itō Satoshi, *Chūsei tenjōdaijin shinkō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hozōkan, 2011).

And Buddhism, particularly Esoteric Buddhism, employed astrology as a primary tool for practice aiming at immediate awakening in one's present form. This was without doubt grounded upon the esoteric Buddhist interest in observing concrete manifestations of the principle, and astrology is a perfect way to examine the processes and logic behind them. Esoteric Buddhists did believe that celestial bodies affect human life; and in the words of *Keiran*, stars control human destiny as the origin of fate (*honmyō* 本命). And, as some Christian astrologers claimed similarly with respect to their God,<sup>167</sup> *Keiran* states that stars are Buddha's eye.<sup>168</sup> Thus, for those Tendai monks, to know how luminaries and stars move—and hence are manifested in concrete matters—is to know Buddha's law.

Astrological knowledge is only one of the principles that ties together doctrinal parts and associated rituals in the Taimitsu practices, through which one can confirm the mutual correspondence between the principle (*ri*) and wisdom (*chi*). However, it is certainly crucial knowledge to understand the complex operation of realities. All in all, according to *Keiran*, Śākyamuni manifests as stars after his nirvana.<sup>169</sup> Consequently, all buddhas and devas, as well as their manifested kami, are also homologized with astral deities such as Nyoirin Kannon, through a complicated web of identifications. *Gyōrinsho* 行林抄,<sup>170</sup> a record of medieval Tendai secret transmissions, Taimitsu rituals, and principles behind them, reveals in great detail the

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<sup>167</sup> William Lily (1602-1681), perhaps the most preeminent astrologer in Europe before the modern times, likened astrological principles to God's blessings, the Divine will, and providence in his *Christian Astrology* (published in 1647).

<sup>168</sup> Among several examples, T.76, 2410: 555a.

<sup>169</sup> T.76, 2410: 556b25-28.

<sup>170</sup> *Gyōrinsho* 行林抄 (1154) was compiled by Jōnen 静然 (late Heian), which records direct dialogues (*menju kuketsu* 面授口決) from his master, Sōjitsu (1088-1165). Most of the content is centered on private records by Kōkei 皇慶 (977-1049). (Kamata Shigeo *et al.*, *Daizōkyō zenkaisetsu daijiten* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1998).

depth of their knowledge about the celestial order, movement, and characteristics.<sup>171</sup> Although there are plenty of topics to discuss with regard to this particular subject, this study will limit astrological discussions to an essential minimum that is most relevant to the main topics of this chapter, i.e., Amaterasu and Sannō.

In short, the bare essentials for understanding the esoteric astrology represented in *Keiran* include the following: according to the principle of nonduality, what is happening in heaven resonates with earthly matters and, more importantly, what may happen in our mind. For true enlightenment occurs according to the absolute principle that applies to either macrocosm or microcosm; thus our achievement of Buddhahood represents the perfect correspondence—nonduality—of the macro and micro worlds. The moment of enlightenment is when the two worlds mutually interpenetrate in our mind. More detail about the discussion of the mutual interpenetration or correspondence will follow.

And the principle of nondual, mutually corresponding relationships is also operating internally, within either the macrocosm or microcosm. Within the macrocosm, Dainichi is the core, and how the principle of mutual correspondence works for Dainichi was already mentioned: the Sun, the Moon and the Stars are the nondual trinity of Dainichi. What is noteworthy is that, as is the case with the manifestation of Dainichi, Amaterasu seems to be viewed as Dainichi's parallel, that is, the universal light, with threefold manifestations.

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<sup>171</sup> Japanese astrology mainly followed traditional Chinese astrology, based on twenty-eight constellations; they also knew Western astrology—traced back to the Babylonian period, but mainly developed by the Greek—as shown through descriptions of Western style zodiacal and horoscopic information. Bernard Faure's study of hybrid deities of medieval Japan shows details by employing useful picture materials. See Faure, *The Fluid Pantheon: Gods of Medieval Japan* and *Gods of Medieval Japan: Protectors and Predators*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015).



First, *Keiran* identifies Amaterasu with Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪觀音 (Skt. Cintāmaṇicakra)<sup>172</sup> and by this association Amaterasu also comes to be merged in the triad of Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva (Jp. *kokūzō bosatsu* 虛空藏菩薩), Nyoirin Kannon, and *Myōjō tenshi* 明星天子.<sup>173</sup> Although the chain of association besetting Amaterasu does not stop here, the above triad is remarkable due to its celestial representations. In particular, Nyoirin is associated with the seven stars, i.e., the Northern Dipper, and in a larger scale, with nine luminaries—the sun, the moon, five planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn), and Indian deities representing north and south nodes of the moon, i.e., Rahu and Ketu.<sup>174</sup> The seven stars carry considerable importance in East Asian cosmological philosophies—as the guiding light in heaven, and they are closely associated with Sannō, which will soon be discussed.

If Nyoirin represents general yet primarily important celestial bodies,<sup>175</sup> its manifested body, *Myōjō tenshi* refers to Venus, particularly as its appearance as the Morning Star.<sup>176</sup> As well

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<sup>172</sup> Among many, the first comment is found in T.76, 2410:511c7-8 (“*tensho daijin mono soku nyoirin kannon* 天照太神者即如意輪觀音也). This identity has also probed by Sarah Freemerman, “Divine Impersonations: Nyoirin Kannon in Medieval Japan,” Ph.D. Dissertation, (Stanford University, 2008), pp.155-168 and Bernard Faure, *The Fluid Pantheon: Gods of Medieval Japan; Gods of Medieval Japan: Protectors and Predators*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015), pp. 300-302.

<sup>173</sup> Kokūzō Bosatsu is the Bliss Body (*hōjin*) and Nyoirin Kannon is the Manifested Body (*ōjin*); and *Myōjō tenshi* is the manifestations of Nyoirin Kannon. This is according to the logic explained in *Keiran* that each “body” of the three bodies of Buddha has its own three bodies. See T.76, 2410:572a27-b4, 623c16-20.

<sup>174</sup> In Western astrology these two are referred to as the dragon’s head and dragon’s tail. Rahu/Ketu and the dragon’s head/tail are not actual planets or stars, but two virtual points—one is the dragon’s head and the other, across the ecliptic, is the tail—on the ecliptic space where the Moon’s orbit around the Earth intersects with the course of the Sun. But they play very important roles in the theory of Indian astrology (not as much in Western astrology, except during the Hellenistic period) and consequently in esoteric Buddhist astrology, too.

<sup>175</sup> As *Keiran* explains, seven stars (*shichi shō* 七星) are the manifestation of the essential spirit (*shōryō* 精靈) of seven luminaries (*shichi yō* 七曜); seven luminaries indicate five planets (*gōshō* 五星) and the Sun and the Moon. And as there are seven stars for each of the four directions, altogether they form twenty-eight constellations (*shuku* 宿).

<sup>176</sup> Venus appears as either the Morning Star, which rises before the sunrise, or the Evening Star, which rises after sunset, according to its own cycle. People have known this dual character of Venus since the Babylonian Age, except for during the early Greek periods (but later the Greek astronomers realized this truth); and in East Asia

illustrated by the famous story of Śākyamuni’s enlightenment upon seeing the Morning Star, Venus’s rising in the eastern sky just before sunrise bears special symbolic meaning in Buddhism in general,<sup>177</sup> and it is particularly important in esoteric practices. Not only is the veneration ritual of the Morning Star one of the primary rituals in the Shingon tradition, but also the veneration of the Morning Star is equally important in Tendai practices and other schools influenced by the Tendai, such as the Nichiren School.<sup>178</sup> The trinity of the Sun, the Moon, and the Morning Star forms the deity of the “Three Lights” (*sankō tenshi* 三光天子), which corresponds to the trinity of Dainichi Nyorai. It is noted here that Morning Star is the representative of all stars and constellations, a notion that is deeply related to the most essential meaning of the stars—nonduality. According to *Keiran*, stars are the embodiment of the nondual principle of Dainichi, and nondual symbolism of *Myōjō tenshi* is emphasized to a great degree in *Keiran*.

In a subsection under the section on the meditation practice venerating Kokūzō Bosatsu (*gumonjihō* 求聞持法), *Keiran* discusses the Morning Star as the main topic.<sup>179</sup> According to this discussion, the Sun and the Moon, as two parts of Dainichi, signify the principle of Dainichi’s all-illuminating nature. Stars and constellations embody the principle of nondual,

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Venus as the Morning Star had been called *Mingxing* 明星 or *Qiminxing* 啓明星, and Venus as the Evening Star *Taibaixing* 太白星. That East Asians also knew the two stars are in fact one and the same is proven through ancient Chinese documents such as the well-known historiography, *The Records of Grand Historian* (*shiji* 史記) in its astronomy/astrology section (*tianguanshu* 天官書; in particular volume 27 for Venus), as well as the Chinese Buddhist dictionary, *Yiqiejing yinyi* 一切經音義 (807 CE, T.54, 2129).

<sup>177</sup> Interestingly, in Christianity too—there are numerous comments about the Morning Star as the symbol of the Messiah in the Bible, and thus Morning Star is associated with the birth of Jesus.

<sup>178</sup> Nichiren puts a great emphasis on the worship of Morning Star, as he likened that particular star to the meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*. See Ishikawa Shūdō, “Nichiren shōnin “Rikkyō kaishū” ni okeru myōkenzon to kokūzō bosatsu no kankei,” *Gendai shūkyō kenkyū* 32.

<sup>179</sup> T.76, 2410: 572a26-c6.

mysterious achievement (*myō jōju* 妙成就), and the Morning Star is the epitome of the nondual principle. *Keiran's* reasoning for this is as follows: the Morning Star begins to rise at the end of the time of Ox (*ushi* 丑) and makes its brilliant appearance at the time of Tiger (*tora* 寅). The time of Ox is the darkest time, when the *yin* energy peaks at its extreme, so it represents the time of ignorance (*mumyō* 無明) at its peak. And the time of Tiger is the beginning of the *yang* energy and indicates the manifestation of the nature of realities. Therefore, the Morning Star is the representation of the nondualistic conversion of ignorance to awakening,<sup>180</sup> which applies to all stars as their nondual symbolism.<sup>181</sup>

Amaterasu is identified with the Morning Star through her association with Kokūzō Bosatsu and Nyoirin Kannon. However, this association is not random; there is a crucial symbolic resonance between Amaterasu and the Morning Star or all the other stars. As seen above, the Morning Star signifies the mysterious nonduality of ignorance—truth unseen—and truth revealed, as does Amaterasu. The following discussion therefore from *Keiran* merits attention:

Question: How is it possible to learn the meaning of the iron stupa through [learning about] kami?

Answer: When the honorable Susano-o conducted evildoings, the Tenshō daijin (Amaterasu) became furious, and hid herself in the heavenly rock cave and closed it. Thus the world came to be filled with darkness. Then, the eight myriads of deities

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<sup>180</sup> T.76, 2410: 572b. Also, in the traditional Japanese system of cosmology and divination (Ōmyōdō 陰陽道), the time or direction between Ox and Tiger is considered ominous, yet is associated with mysterious and spiritual transformations.

<sup>181</sup> Clearly, the above reasoning in *Keiran* could not be the only reason for deeming the Morning Star or other stars as the symbol of nonduality, because the Sun also rises, moving past the darkest time of the day. But in the esoteric view, the Sun and the Moon are understood as the ever-present, all-illuminating light during the day and night respectively; on the other hand, according to my integration from a reading of *Keiran*, stars are characterized by “coming and going,” i.e., recurring appearances and disappearances in the sky. The reason why the Morning Star is important as the representative of all stars is—aside from the fact that Venus is the brightest of all planets—presumably because of the unique cycle of Venus, which repeats appearance and disappearance through its eight phases. But this needs further research to confirm.

gathered together and danced to lure her out. So Amaterasu came out of the cave [...]. The closure of the heavenly cave indicates the meaning of the unseen Dharma nature, which [means] ignorance that contains Dharma nature within itself. Opening the iron tower means Dharma nature that contains ignorance within itself. Enclosing [herself] in the cave and closing them stands for the ignorance of the sentient beings. Opening of the gate of the cave means to open and reveal true Dharma nature by opening the gate of the Dharma realm.<sup>182</sup>

(尋云。付神明習鐵塔方如何 答。素盞男尊依惡事。天照太神成嗔リヲ天ノ岩戸ニ閉籠リ給フ時。容闇黒成リ畢。其ノ時八萬ノ神達集聚テ舞カナテ給フ。其時キ天津小屋根尊與手カラ男尊 天ノ岩戸ノ左右ニ立給。八萬神達燒庭火ヲ神樂給フ時。天照太神諸ノ神達神樂ヲ納受シ給フ。[.....]  
鐵塔ト者法界ノ塔婆也。天岩戸閉籠ルト者。無明法性法ル義也。開塔ト者。法性無明法義也。一。付神明鐵塔習事スサノヲノ尊依惡。中天照大神成嗔。天岩戸閉籠玉フ時暗黒成畢。其時八萬神達舞カナテテ。其時天津小夜子尊與手力男ノ尊。天ノ岩戸ノ左右ニ立玉フ。八萬ノ神達燒庭火神樂玉フ時。天照大神諸神達神樂ヲ納受玉フ。[.....] 鐵塔ト者。法界塔婆也。天岩戸閉籠ト者。無明法性ヲノトル義也。[...] 閉籠ト者。一切衆生暗指也。戸ヲ開ト者。法界戸ホソヲ開義也)

The iron stupa in the above discussion in *Keiran* refers to a closed stupa in southern India that comes from an esoteric Buddhist legend. This stupa was opened by Nāgārjuna eight hundred years after the Buddha's death. Nāgārjuna recited the mantra of Mahāvairocana for seven days and finally succeeded in opening the gates of the stupa. Inside the stupa Nāgārjuna received the teachings of the esoteric sūtras from the bodhisattva Vajrasattva (J. Kongōsatta 金剛薩埵), who had reserved Mahāvairocana's teachings. Nāgārjuna emerged from the stupa after receiving the transmissions and began to transmit the teachings of esoteric sūtras in the world.<sup>183</sup> Returning to the above discussion in *Keiran* on Amaterasu, we now can see how *Keiran* esotericizes Japanese

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<sup>182</sup> The above discussion is repeated many times with little divergence throughout *Keiran*; often the discussion is mentioned in a fragmentary manner. I organized the passage above mainly out of a discussion in the *Shinmeibu* (T.76, 2410: 516c) and one in the *Kirokubu* later (T.76, 2410: 865b-c). The skipped part above is about *Keiran*'s explanation of the origin of the Japanese expression, “*omoshiroi*,” which relates how the faces of eight million deities were brightly lit by Amaterasu's appearance from the cave.

<sup>183</sup> John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, “The History of a Myth: The Sun-Goddess and the Rock-Cave,” in *A New History of Shinto* (West Sussex, Malden, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 129-167.

mythology in *Kiki*—the rock cave is reinterpreted as the metaphor for the mind of sentient beings, which can open up and throw the light of enlightenment on us, just as Nāgārjuna did by disseminating the profound teachings of esoteric Buddhism. The above discussion might be appreciated from various angles, particularly by focusing on the mind and enlightenment. But such analyses have been done by other scholars,<sup>184</sup> and more importantly, there is another remarkable esoteric dimension to this narrative that would merit close examination.

Amaterasu appears from the darkest of the dark and the realm of ignorance, then allows the world to see true realities by bestowing her brilliant light. This narrative certainly parallels *Keiran*'s discussion of the Morning Star, as previously seen. Amaterasu is not simply the Sun goddess: as a manifestation of Dainichi, Amaterasu is not only the all-illuminating sunlight but also the stars, as well as the embodiment of nonduality of ignorance and awakening, twinkling between darkness and light—being concealed and revealed.

The esoteric view of Amaterasu's versatile celestial manifestation is illustrated effectively through *Keiran*'s continued discussion of Amaterasu's hiding in the heavenly cave. In a typical catechismal dialogue in *Keiran*, a hypothetical interlocutor asks a question about the appearance of Amaterasu while hiding in the cave. The answer is that she appears as the astral fox (*shinko* 辰狐), a manifestation of Nyoirin Kannon, in the darkness of the cave because the astral fox emits light on its own. That is why the astral fox, i.e., Dakiniten 荼枳尼天 is also called the king of Cintāmaṇi (*nyoihōju* 如意寶珠). This enigmatic discussion has been commented on by several scholars,<sup>185</sup> but most of them have focused on the association among

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<sup>184</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> Mark Teeuwen, "The Kami in Esoteric Buddhist Thought and Practice," Yamamoto Hiroko, *Ijin*, Sarah Fremerman, "Divine Impersonations," and Bernard Faure, *Protectors and Predators*.

Amaterasu, Dakiniten, and the wish-fulfilling jewel, and yet have overlooked the concept that the astral fox might also carry more concrete signification—an actual star. Attention should be paid to *Keiran*'s comment about the character of the astral fox, which emits light by itself.<sup>186</sup> Given the very celestial characteristics attached to the mythic narrative of Amaterasu, the celestial light that radiates by itself should mean a fixed star. Unlike the Moon and planets such as Venus and Mars, which shine in effect by reflecting the sunlight. However a star—precisely, planets are not stars even if called so customarily—produces its own light by thermonuclear reaction, as in the case of the Sun. Even if Amaterasu does not work as the Sun, she is a self-radiating star, possibly the brightest star of all, Sirius.<sup>187</sup>

In essence, even in the esoteric sense, Amaterasu is the supreme deity of light, that is, the king of all celestial objects—the brightest luminary, the brightest planet of all planets, and the brightest star of all stars. She represents the all-pervasive, all-illuminating nature of Dainichi, who also manifests as countless stars of nonduality. As illustrated before, it is no surprise to see in *Keiran* a rather hierarchical relationship between Amaterasu and the deity Sannō—the latter as a trace of Amaterasu. Nevertheless, Sannō is by no means viewed in less regard than Amaterasu in *Keiran*. The tutelary deity of Mt. Hiei holds a profound significance of its own.

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<sup>186</sup> T.76, 2410: 520c20-27.

<sup>187</sup> The fixed star Sirius, the Dog Star, is known in East Asia as the Star of the Heavenly Wolf (J. *tenrōsei* 天狼星); however, in many cultures, it is also called the star of fox in an exchangeable manner. Sirius has been associated with violent character both in the East and the West, foretelling disasters or significant events, such as the birth of a king. The violent symbolic nature and the royal representation of Sirius resonate with the symbolism of the scary savage deity Dakini and the fact that the esoteric ritual of the astral fox, or, *shinkohō* 辰狐法, is a secret rite for the imperial enthronement performed at the Ise shrine (Yamamoto Hiroko, “Shinkō no ikonogurafii,” *Henjōfu: Chūsei shinbutsu shūgō no sekai* (Shunshūsha, 2003). The association between Amaterasu and the star Sirius and a more intensive examination of the relationship between astrology and the structure of the Mikkyō pantheon deserves further research in the future in order to better understand enigmatic symbolism of deities in Japan.

## *The Lord of the Mountain*

In general Buddhist traditions, the term Sannō 山王 usually refers to Mount Meru (or, Sumeru; J. *shumisan* 須弥山), the *axis mundi* of the Buddhist universe, often expressed in the term, the Lord of Mt. Sumeru (*xumishan wang* 須弥山王) as it appeared in most Buddhist scriptures translated into Chinese.<sup>188</sup> Nevertheless, when it comes to Chinese Buddhism and particularly in the Tiantai tradition, Sannō indicated the mountain deity (Ch. *Tongbai zhen ba wangzi* 桐柏真八王子) of Mt. Tiantai 天台山, an awe-inspiring, spiritual mountain in traditional Chinese belief.<sup>189</sup>

Saichō 最澄, the founder of the Japanese Tendai School, had studied in Tang China, in particular at the Tiantai head temple of Guoqing 國清寺, in which even Buddhist monks there venerated the Lord of Mt. Tiantai as the guardian deity for their own version of the center of Buddhist universe. Therefore, when Saichō launched the Tendai School on Mt. Hiei, which was as equally spiritual as Mt. Tiantai in the minds of many Japanese including Saichō himself, he christened the deity of Mt. Hiei as Sannō, presumably aiming at establishing a Buddhist tradition as great as the Tiantai in China, as well as paying homage to Mt. Tiantai.<sup>190</sup> Nevertheless, the role

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<sup>188</sup> Among many, *Dīrgha Āgama* (J. *Jōagonkyō* 長阿含經), T.1, 1: 114b27, c12, c18. In a broader sense, Sannō 山王 could indicate all nine mountains in Buddhist cosmology, which consist of “nine mountains and eight seas” (*kusen hakkai* 九山八海).

<sup>189</sup> Also, this deity of Mt. Tiantai appears as “Tiantai shanwang 天台山王” in the *Guoqing bai lu* 國清百錄, written by Zhangan (561-632), a disciple of Zhiyi. (Mizukami Fumiyoshi, “Sannō shintō no keisei—sono mondaiten to ryūiten,” in Ito Satoshi ed., *Chūsei shinwa to jingi • shintō sekai*, (Tokyo: Chikurinsha, 2011), p. 245.

<sup>190</sup> See Breen and Teeuwen, “The History of a Shrine Hie,” in *A New History of Shinto*, pp. 66-128; Mizukami, “Sannō shintō no keisei—sono mondaiten to ryūiten.”

and significance of the Lord of the Mountain evolved far beyond a mere protector deity of Buddhist temples and monasteries in the case of Japan.

From very early periods in Japan, even before Saichō instituted the Enryakuji temple, Mt. Hiei 比叡山 had long been venerated as a sacred mountain. In particular, since the capital had moved to Heian-kyō 平安京 in the late eighth century, Mt. Hiei's location came to be in the northeastern direction of the capital city—the malefic direction of spirits, demons, and devils (*kimon* 鬼門) according to traditional Japanese traditional cosmology, Ōnmyōdō 陰陽道. Thus located at that direction, Mt. Hiei was regarded as the sacred mountain that protected the capital and the imperial court therein from evil. Mt. Hiei's symbolic role as the protector of the state (*chingo kokka* 鎮護国家) came to be further strengthened as the Tendai temples had evolved; their influence had become immensely powerful in the medieval period. Mt. Hiei's spiritual significance was also shown through *Keiran*'s records of Mt. Hiei, which constitute the main portion of the Record Section (*Kirokubu*) in *Keiran*. And as previously mentioned, the Record Section has a subsection with an epithetical title, the Chapter of the Protection of the State (*chingo kokka shō* 鎮護国家章). As previously seen, the author of *Keiran* view recording as the work that benefitted people; now it is not difficult to see that his view must have also been based on the belief about Mt. Hiei's symbolic power, as well as his own conviction in the exegetical merits of transmitting Dharma by recording.<sup>191</sup>

Sannō of Mt. Hiei is not a single deity, but a collective divinity often dubbed “The Three Sacred [Deities] of Sannō” (*sannō sanshō* 山王三聖). The three deities are Ōnamuchi 大己貴神,

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<sup>191</sup> Sueki Fumihiko divides *Keiran*'s notion of “record(ing)” into two types—a broader meaning, which refers to writing and recording about (Buddhist) truth itself as an exegetical practice for enlightenment, and a narrower meaning, which indicates recording about Mt. Hiei—its history, geography, legends, and so on. He views that the Record Section (*Kirokubu*) in *Keiran* is basically the records on Mt. Hiei, and thus the subsection of the State Protection discusses the religious protective power of Mt. Hiei. See Sueki, “Sannō wo megurushintōsetsu.”



or, Ōkuninushi 大国主神, which is enshrined in the Grand Shrine, or, Ōmiya 大宮; Ōyamakui 大山咋神, enshrined in the Second Shrine, or, Ninomiya 二宮; and Shōshinshi 聖真子; they are all worshipped as the guardian deities of the Enryakuji 延暦寺 on Mt. Hiei. However, this Sannō trinity had been established in such structure after a long and complicated history besetting the pantheon of the Hie Shrine.

*Kojiki* 古事記, Japan's oldest extant chronicle, singles out Ōyamakui 大山咋神 as the main deity enshrined on Mt. Hiei. In a customary view, the deity of Mt. Hiei was only original Ōyamakui, but later it evolved into a dyadic structure—Ōmiya 大宮 and Ninomiya 二宮, or, Ōbie 大比叡 and Kobie 小比叡—by the ninth century<sup>192</sup> by enshrining the deity Ōnamuchi from Mt. Miwa 三輪山.<sup>193</sup> Then later still, Shōshinshi 聖真子 from the Usa Hachiman shrine was added on top of the two existing deities. Scholars have commonly viewed the Sannō trinity as established by mid-Heian Japan, but there is still a room for controversy in this regard.<sup>194</sup>

Regardless of the exact timeline, the pantheon at the Hie shrine further expanded over time; in addition to the trinity, four more divinities were added, so the Seven Shrines of Sannō (*sannō shichisha* 山王七社) came to be established.<sup>195</sup> Centering around these seven shrines as

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<sup>192</sup> Typically it has assumed the time around when Saichō established the Tendai School on Mt. Hiei, but it is open to debate. See Mizukami, “Sannō shintō no keisei—sono mondaiten to ryūiten.”

<sup>193</sup> Thus it was reorganized that the existing Ōyamakui became Kobie (Ninomiya) and the newly enshrined Ōnamuchi came to be worshipped as Ōbie (Ōmiya).

<sup>194</sup> Mizukami, “Sannō shintō no keisei—sono mondaiten to ryūiten.”

<sup>195</sup> Those four additions are Hachiōji 八王子, Jūzenji 十禪師, Marōdo 客人, and San no miya 三宮. The representation of Sannō as the deity of Earthly Spirits (*chigi*), which manages matters such as veneration of ancestral deities and the growth of soils and grains (*sōbyōshashoku* 宗廟社稷), was illustrated earlier in this chapter. *Keiran* further dissects the roles of the seven shrines of Sannō, thus identifying Ōmiya, Shōshinshi, and Jūzenji as the deities of *sōbyō* 宗廟, in charge of the rites for ancestral deities, and Ninomiya as the deity of soils and grains. Considering the history of the establishment of the Hie shrines—in particular Ninomiya (Ōyamakui) used to be the original kami of Mt. Hiei—the very earthly characteristics of the original Hie divinity become clearer. It may be presumed that with the rise of Mt. Hiei's political and religious power, efforts to “furnish” the Hie pantheon more

the “upper shrine” (*kamisha* 上社), there came the middle seven shrines (*naka shichisha* 中七社) and the lower seven shrines (*shimo shichisha* 下七社). Thus, altogether there were formed the twenty one shrines of Sannō (*sannō nijūichisha* 山王二十一社) during the Kamakura period. Furthermore, they eventually expanded to a total of one hundred and eight shrines by additions of branch shrines.

All the main Sannō deities have their own associated Buddhist divinities as their “original grounds” (*honji*),<sup>196</sup> and the discourse about the combinatory relationship between them formulated in medieval Mt. Hiei, particularly after the Mongol Invasion.<sup>197</sup> And this combinatory discourse was further systematized into a Shintō theory centered on the Sannō deity of the Hie shrine (*Sannō shintō* 山王神道) later in the early Edo period. Along with the Ise-based Ryōbu Shintō 兩部神道, they represented the two most influential Shintō thought, which was grounded upon the Kami-Buddha amalgamation in late medieval Japan. But again, the fundamental theological ground of the Sannō Shintō was provided by the Tendai chroniclers’ works<sup>198</sup> over the course of the Kamakura period—works such as *Keiran shūyōshū*.

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completely were made, and consequently the kami of Mt. Miwa was invited, established as the Great Shrine (Ōmiya), and, conversely, the original Hie kami, Ōyamakui was demoted to the status of the Second Shrine.

<sup>196</sup> The following illustrates the *hon-jaku* relationships in the Sannō pantheon—*honji* are in parentheses: Ōmiya (Śākyamuni), Ninomiya (Yakushi Nyorai 藥師如来), Shōshinshi (Amida 阿弥陀), Hachioji (Senju Kannon 千手觀音), Marōdo (Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音), and Jūzenji (Jizō Bosatsu 地藏菩薩). Śākyamuni, Yakushi, and Amida are the principal buddhas venerated at the Western pagoda, the Eastern Pagoda, and Yokawa, respectively.

<sup>197</sup> Mizukami, “Sannō shintō no keisei—sono mondaiten to ryūiten,” p. 258. According to Mizukami the amalgamation between the Sannō deities and buddhas was conducted first by the Hie Shrine and then, after the Mongol Invasion, the shrine and temples on Mt. Hiei cooperated to develop the proto- and later fully grown Sannō Shintō discourse.

<sup>198</sup> Such as Yōtenki 耀天記 (1223) and Sanke yōryakuki 山家要略記 (1298).

As previously illustrated, Sannō of the Hie Shrine is specifically the manifestation of Śākyamuni and Amaterasu of the Ise is the manifestation of Dainichi. However, *Keiran* also stresses the oneness of Amaterasu and Sannō, and after the prior discussion of the nonduality between Dainichi and Śākyamuni, this rationale becomes comprehensible. What calls for attention is *Keiran*'s great emphasis on Sannō, as seen in the similar emphasis on Śākyamuni:

Śākyamuni is the best among all buddhas; and Sannō is the best among all Kami. All buddhas of ten directions and of the past, present, and future are incarnations (*bunshin* 分身) of Śākyamuni. All buddhas manifest Śākyamuni of one Buddha; and this is the learning of the golden wheel the [represents] the oneness of the three bodies. Currently, Sannō is also an incarnation of Śākyamuni. [...] Sannō manifests the whole [essence] of non-fallacious all buddhas. [Thus] all kinds of kami of one country of Japan (*nihon isshū* 日本一州) are all incarnations of Sannō.... Therefore, all kami of three realms (*sangon* 三權) return to Sannō of one vehicle (*ichijō* 一乘).<sup>199</sup>

(諸佛ノ中ニハ釋迦第一也。諸神ノ中ニハ山王第一也。謂ク意者十方三世諸佛ト者釋尊一佛分身也。諸佛皆釋尊一佛ト顯ルヲ三身即一ノ金輪ト習也。今ノ山王又釋迦ノ分身ノ顯ハレ山王ト。出世本懷タル妙法ヲ守護シ給現。大明神ノ金言。不謬諸佛ノ總體ノ山王ト顯レ給ヘリ。日本一州ノ諸神ト者皆是レ山王ノ分身也。仍テ山王ノ開會ヲ習事也。開三權ノ諸神ヲ歸スト一乘ノ山王ニ云ヘリ。深可思之)

There is a prior passage that shares similar content with the one above with a slight variation:

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<sup>199</sup> T.76, 2410:557a10-18.

[...] Therefore, all kami of three realms (*sangon*) return to one true Sannō (Sannō of one truth; *ichijitsu sannō* 一實山王).<sup>200</sup> This is a secret. Thus, all kami of one country of Japan are bound back to the original ground, Sannō.<sup>201</sup>

(故ニ日本一州ノ神明者皆山王應迹ノ前方便也。故ニ山王祕決云。會三權ノ諸神歸スト一實山王也 矣 此則神明開會ト云祕事也。然則日本一州ノ諸神ハ皆歸本地山王也)

Along with the previous discussion, by reading the above *Keiran* passages we can confirm an unmistakable parallel between Śākyamuni and Sannō. Śākyamuni is the manifested body of Dainichi, i.e., Mahāvairocana, and yet is one with it by being in a non-dual relationship with Dainichi. However, all buddhas are a manifestation—traces of Śākyamuni. In the same fashion, Sannō is the manifestation of Śākyamuni, yet the original ground<sup>202</sup> of all kami. Both Śākyamuni and Sannō are, based on *Keiran*'s discussion, understood as the primordial, original “ground,” “rationale,” or “source” that binds all kami and buddhas.

*Keiran*'s discussion of Sannō goes further, to claim that Sannō is where all dharmas are bound back and constitute the original source of all buddhas.<sup>203</sup> Moreover, *Keiran* identifies

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<sup>200</sup> In the context of Tendai's doctrinal classification, *sangon* 三權 refers to the three lower or provisional teachings, i.e., Tripitaka Teaching (J. Zōkyō 藏教), Shared Teaching (J. Tsūkyō 通教), and Distinctive Teaching (J. Bekkyō 別教). On the other hand, *ichijitsu* 一實 indicates Complete Teaching (J. Enkyō 圓教), namely, Tendai teaching. (Oda Tokunō, *et al.* eds. *Bukkyō Daijiten* (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1954), p.72. This was based on Tendai's systematization of “expedient device” (Skt. *upāya*; J. *hōben* 方便) and refers to all *upāya* as “provisional” or “tentative” (*gon* 權) in contrast to the teaching that is true or real (*jitsu* 実, or *ichijitsu* 一実, the “one real”). Given this, it is noticeable that *Keiran* elevates Sannō as the true, perfect deity and contrast it with other kami, which are perceived as provisional. (Sugawara Shinkai, “The Distinctive Features of Sannō Ichijitsu Shinto.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23/1-2 (1996):61-84).

<sup>201</sup> T.76, 2410:515a20-23.

<sup>202</sup> The afore-mentioned *Keiran* passage that discusses all kamis returning to Sannō is part of the discussion of the sevenfold Sannō, and in particular the third truth about Sannō—Sannō as the “original ground (*honji* 本地).” It is clear from the discussion that Sannō is construed as the essential, original ground for all kami in *Keiran*.

<sup>203</sup> T.76, 2410:515b3-4.

“three sacred divinities of Sannō”(sannō sanshō) with the three bodies of Buddha.<sup>204</sup> Thus, we see how significant Sannō is appreciated in *Keiran*; it is just another name for an expository tool to understand Buddha, Dharma, the truth, or whatever you name it.

Tendai’s emphasis on Śākyamuni and Sannō, or “manifestation”—including its variegated terms and expressions—is, as Jacqueline Stone has pointed out on a similar subject, related to Tendai’s “valorization” of the concrete, visible world of phenomena (*ji* 事) rather than abstract, unchanging principle (*ri* 理).<sup>205</sup> One can view that the Tiantai/Tendai doctrine is generally inclined to the phenomenal world, taking into account a concept like the constant abiding, or eternity of conventional worldly truth (*zokutai jōjū* 俗諦常住).

Nevertheless, Mikkyō’s influence on Tendai teachings strengthened the tendency to a greater extent. Concretization or hypostatization of absolute reality and inner awakening is arguably the utmost compelling interest of Esoteric teachings and practices. *Keiran* discusses this interest of Esoteric teachings by making a comparison with Exoteric teachings (*kenkyō* 顯教).

Exoteric teachings do not establish [concrete] forms and objects (*keishiki* 形色) onto the essence of suchness. [According to] the six great elements (*rokudai* 六大) of Esoteric teachings, the reality has forms and objects...<sup>206</sup>

(顯眞如即體二不立形色。密六大法性二法界形色有事)

The enigmatic elaborations of rituals with magical elements and the inconceivable symbolism attached to various objects and worldly matters characterize Esoteric Buddhism in general, as well as Japanese Mikkyō. One interesting fact to note here is that these characteristics

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<sup>204</sup> T.76, 2410:524b7 and 553c3.

<sup>205</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>206</sup> T.76, 2410:746c25-26.

of Mikkyō seem quite compatible with the religious meanings and symbolic roles attached to the Earthly Spirits (J. *chigi* 地祇). Perhaps for medieval Tendai scholar-monks on Mt. Hiei, “manifesting” realities or the ways in which the absolute truth is manifested in the phenomenal world would have been their natural interest that provoked examination using diverse interpretive frameworks.

By looking into various objects and phenomena, Tendai monks attempted to contemplate how each and every type of matter contains the reality of myriads things and beings. Thus *Keiran* is, in a sense, a collection of the countless manifested traces in the world of medieval Japan, or putting it more precisely, the collection of Tendai’s discussions of (what they “said” about) the numerous traces. Although it is premature to conclude what *Keiran* is about at this point, it is noteworthy that the Japanese expression of “words,” *kotoba* 言葉, evokes some attention to the title of *Keiran shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集, at least a part of it.<sup>207</sup> But there is more than that.

### *Doctrinal Learning of Sannō*

As the supreme deity enshrined in the Hie Shrine on Mount Hiei, Sannō is naturally the subject of fascination and in-depth examination for Tendai scholar-monks on Mt. Hiei, and that certainly shows throughout *Keiran*. Detailed records of Tendai’s discussion of and transmission about Sannō occupies more than two-thirds of the *Shinmeibu*.<sup>208</sup> However, brief discussions of

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<sup>207</sup> This is also pointed out by Tanaka Takako in her discussion of the title (Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, pp. 33-37). This will be discussed at the end of this study.

<sup>208</sup> *Keiran*’s Sannō discussion in the subsection of “The (august) matter of Sannō” (*Sannō[no] on-koto* 山王御事) alone amounts to about twenty pages (T.76, 2410:514c18-530c19), although Sannō is discussed in other sections too. Also, this Sannō subsection discusses other deities as well, but mostly in relation to Sannō.

Sannō are amply found in other sections as well, although all the principal points of the discussions of Sannō are concentrated in the *shinmeibu*, and most of the comments on Sannō in other sections are mainly repetitions of the discussions in the *shinmeibu*.

One of the most conspicuous characteristics of the Sannō discourse in *Keiran* is its incorporation of elements of doctrine into discussions of esoteric Buddhist ritual practice. Such doctrinal features appear even before the Kami Section begins—where *Keiran* initially discusses the so-called main purport (*kanyō* 肝要) of exoteric Tendai teachings in the first pages of *Keiran*'s main body. As seen in the previous chapter, *Keiran* examines the principal Tendai teachings via the two perspectives of the doctrine (*kyōmon* 教門) and the contemplative practice (*kanmon* 觀門); and the main Tendai practices, i.e., the “threefold contemplation in a single mind” (*isshin sangan*) and the “three thousand realms in one thought-moment” (*ichinen sanzen*) were illustrated in a condensed fashion. Here, *Keiran*'s explanation of the threefold contemplation in a single mind (from now on referred to as the threefold contemplation) is worthy of attention.

*Keiran* associates the threefold contemplation teaching with Sannō. Its rationale is a combination of transmission and the logic of *honji suijaku*.

The threefold contemplation in a single mind is the Dharma under the influence of Sannō. The reason is that the always abiding Śākyamuni transmitted it to Master Huisi (514-577) in the treasure tower [depicted in the *Lotus Sūtra*]. From Master Huisi master-disciple genealogy in China had formed. Huisi taught Master Tiantai (Zhiyi); Master Tiantai taught Zhangan (561-632). [The Tendai teaching] deepened and was transmitted to Dengyō Daishi. Dengyō Daishi was a reborn Master Tiantai. Thus [similarly] the monk Daosui (737?-806?) [also] is said to have said the great scholar-monk Enchō (771-836) in Japan was a reborn Master Tiantai. Śākyamuni's manifestation from the treasure tower reached the foot of Mount Hiei and became the Sannō gongen. The words of the great abbot Keimyō [965-1038] says: what I refer to as Sannō is [that] the threefold contemplation in a single mind becomes words. The word mountain is [formed by] one horizontal stroke standing three [vertical] strokes; the word king is [formed by] standing

one vertical stroke among three horizontal strokes. This signifies the meaning of the threefold contemplation in a single mind, which is neither vertical nor horizontal, and neither one nor three.<sup>209</sup>

(一心三觀ト者山王影向ノ法門也。故ニ久遠實成大牟尼尊。多寶塔中ノ授於南岳天台。南岳天台受生ヲ於震旦成師弟ト。南岳授天台。天台授章安。乃至道邃和尚授傳教大師。傳教ハ天台大師ノ御再誕也。依之道邃和尚ノ云ク。日本國圓澄三藏者天台ノ再誕也云云 彼多寶塔中ノ釋迦牟尼垂迹シ於叡山麓ニ成山王權現ト。語座主慶命大僧正ニ曰。我カ名ヲ號スル山王ト者。以一心三觀爲名字也。山ノ字ハ者以テ横ノ一點ヲ消豎ノ三點ヲ。王ノ字ハ者以豎ノ一點ヲ消横ノ三點ヲ。是則不縱不横非一非三ノ一心三觀之義也)

As seen above, in a fundamental sense Sannō's entitlement to the threefold contemplation is derived from the relationship between Sannō and Śākyamuni, i.e., Sannō as the manifestation (*suijaku*) of Śākyamuni. But what is noteworthy is Śākyamuni's identity as the eternal (*kuonjitsujō* 久遠實成) cosmic Buddha. As shown through the comment on the treasure tower in the above passage, this exaltation of Śākyamuni in *Keiran* is grounded upon the *Lotus Sūtra*, the story of The Treasure Tower in Chapter Eleven and Chapter Sixteen, in particular.<sup>210</sup>

Śākyamuni's identity as the historical, human Buddha is overcome and redefined as the everlasting and absolute cosmic Buddha by the *Lotus Sūtra* itself, and was strengthened by medieval Japanese exegeses—particularly through efforts to esotericize the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>211</sup> Through the treasure tower episode in the *Lotus Sūtra*, Śākyamuni is identified with the Abundant Treasures Buddha (Skt. Prabhūtaratna, Jp. *Tahō nyorai* 多宝如来) inside the jeweled

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<sup>209</sup> T.76, 2410: 510b2-13. Master Huisi, or Nanyue Huisi 南嶽慧思 is venerated as the third patriarch of the Tiantai school and was the teacher of Zhiyi. Zhangan Guanding 章安灌頂 was Zhiyi's disciple. Daosui 道邃 was a disciple of Zhanran 湛然, who revived Tiantai's prominence in the eighth century after a period of decline, and was the teacher of Saichō.

<sup>210</sup> Chapter Eleven, Emergence of the Treasure Tower and Chapter Sixteen, The Lifespan of the Thus Come One.

<sup>211</sup> See Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 21-27.



tower—the Buddha from remote kalpas. Moreover, it is revealed through a dialogue between Śākyamuni and a bodhisattva<sup>212</sup> that Buddha has numerous manifested buddhas in the ten directions. Śākyamuni is one of those manifestations and yet at the same time, is identical with the Abundant Treasures Buddha of the remote past<sup>213</sup>; and the ultimate identity with the everlasting, absolute Buddha is revealed in the sixteenth chapter.

Thus Śākyamuni who transmitted teachings to Master Huisi, and who is Sannō’s original ground, is the eternal cosmic Buddha. Therefore, Buddha’s teachings—above all Tiantai/Tendai teachings, which, in *Keiran*’s view, contain the most superior and ultimate truth—are under the influence of Sannō, a manifestation of Śākyamuni. In particular, the way *Keiran* connects Sannō with the threefold contemplation is quite remarkable; and scholars have paid attention to the association focusing on a somewhat “play-like” characteristic with a certain number of vertical or horizontal strokes of graphs.<sup>214</sup> However, as scholars have all pointed out, even if briefly, it is not a mere random play; it is a unique way to describe the nature of a single mind and thought in Tendai teachings, which is neither horizontal nor vertical—the inconceivable truth that no word can express it and no mind can conceive it.<sup>215</sup>

*Keiran*’s discussion of Sannō in association with the Tendai doctrine further proceeds into the Sannō section, and is best illustrated by the doctrinalized interpretation of Sannō.

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<sup>212</sup> The Mahasattva, Great Joy of Preaching (大樂說).

<sup>213</sup> In the Treasure Tower chapter Śākyamuni enters the opened tower and sits side by side with the Abundant Treasures Buddha. This co-sitting of the two buddhas (*nibutsu byōza* 二仏並座) signifies the nondual relationship between the absolute body (*dharmakāya*) and the Bliss body (*sambhogakāya*) of Buddha, as well as the nonduality of meditation (*jō* 定 or *zenjō* 禪定) and wisdom (*e* 慧 or *chie* 智慧). The nondual signification of the co-sitting of the two buddhas is frequently discussed and emphasized throughout *Keiran*.

<sup>214</sup> Sueki, “Sannō wo meguru shintōsetsu”; Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, Grapard, “Linguistic Cubism: A Singularity of Pluralism in the Sannō Cult.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* (1987:14/2-3).

<sup>215</sup> According to the *Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhiguan*; Jp. *Maka shikan* 摩訶止觀) by Zhiyi (531-597).

According to a transmission mentioned in a hypothetical dialogue in *Keiran*, Sannō can be illuminated from the following viewpoints<sup>216</sup>:

- a. Sannō of the manifestation (*suijaku no sannō* 垂迹ノ山王): Sannō is the mental ground of the complete, perfect combination of the threefold truth; and the original ground of the three sacred deities of Sannō is profound and mysterious. As manifested spirits illuminate all Dharma realm, revealing the three spirit deities is the Dharma realm following the right and beneficial. The meaning of Sannō as the manifestation is the perfect wholeness of the Dharma realm.
- b. Sannō of unconditioned three bodies (*musa sanjin no sannō* 無作三身ノ山王): this is realization of the perfect enlightenment achieved by the Buddha in remote kalpas. Thus Sannō of unconditioned three bodies signifies the mystery inside the treasure tower, as well as the profound mystery of buddhas of the three times. All things are complete and whole; this is represented by [Sannō] spirits of unconditioned Dharma realm. Thus Sannō of the unconditioned corresponds to trichiliocosm (three thousand realms).
- c. Sannō of nonduality (*funi sannō* 不二山王): this indicates the identity of cultivation and natural capacity (*shushō ichinyō* 修性一如). Where things and phenomena in the Dharma realm arise dependent upon one another, all dharmas are nondual and innately permanent. Thus the Sannō deity of nonduality protects the innateness, so three thousand realms in ten dominions are complete and whole on their own. Therefore [witnessing] nonduality is the mysterious function of the three thousand realms in one thought-moment.
- d. Sannō of the Absolute Body (*hosshin sannō* 法身山王): the Absolute Body is revealed by the complete wholeness of the Dharma realm. As Sannō's mind is subtle and wonderful, all dharmas are just calm. This means that heavenly truth just shines alone (*tenshin dokurō* 天真獨朗) and three thousand realms are perfect and whole.
- e. Sannō of the Bliss Body (*hōjin no sannō* 報身ノ山王): Sannō of the Bliss Body indicates the essence of wisdom in the Dharma realm. As three thousand realms of ten dominions are always neither vertical nor horizontal. This is the innate perfect wholeness of the Dharma realm, and is the meaning of Sannō of the Bliss Body.
- f. Sannō of the original essence (*tōtai sannō* 當體山王): objects and wisdom have the consummate essence; ten dominions are mutually endowed, and the Dharma realm is innately perfect and whole. The mysterious unity of objects and wisdom reveals Sannō of the original essence. Furthermore, that reveals spirits of the seven shrines.

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<sup>216</sup> For a focused discussion, only the main points for each perspective will be summarized in the following translated passages in *Keiran*.

[Sannō of the original essence] is revealed as the seven stars in heaven; is revealed as deities of the seven shrines; and in the human realm becomes the seven medicine buddhas and heals the illness of all beings in the Dharma realm.

- g. Sannō of the title of [the *Lotus Sūtra*] (*shudai sannō* 首題山王): the original nature of the *Lotus Sūtra* is the head of the three sacred spirits. Therefore, the ground of our mind is always innately abiding, and consummate following the right. Thus when we discuss Sannō of the title...wondrous dharmas of three thousand realms reveal Sannō, and that benefits all worlds—four seas under the heaven.
- h. Sannō of the three thousand realms in one thought-moment (*ichinen sanzen sannō* 一念三千山王): three thousand [realms] are the place for trembling dance (*shinbu* 振舞) of the form of all dharmas. One thought is the whole realities. Taking entire thoughts and entire realities of the Dharma realm, view them as the Sannō myōjin. Thus three thousand realms are always abiding, and perfect and whole alone in the Dharma realm. This is the innate eternity that is neither vertical nor horizontal, and thus we view it as Sannō of the three thousand realms in one thought-moment.
- i. Sannō of the mind contemplation (*kanjin sannō* 觀心山王): Sannō spirits maintain the Dharma realm perfect and whole, and are the thought of the Dharma realm where all things of the three thousand realms act wondrously.<sup>217</sup>
  - a. (尋云。垂迹ノ山王内證如何 口傳云。山王ト者即三諦圓融ノ心地也。此山王靈神法界ニ獨朗也。只天真獨朗ニ法界歴歴。此三聖者本地甚深妙門也。此時垂迹靈神即法界遍照セリ。是圓融無礙ノ處ニ山王鎮ニ圓滿セリ。故顯靈神以圓宗爲我命。故ニ三世諸佛ノ根本法花ノ妙行也。故顯三聖靈神法界依正己己ト利益也。是即法界本有ト圓滿セリ)
  - b. 尋云。無作三身ノ山王内證如何 口傳云。指法界心地也。是ハ久遠實成ノ内證即法界ニ圓滿セリ。故無作三身ノ山王ト云也。是多寶塔中ノ本有妙行三世諸佛ノ本地甚深ノ妙行也。此本地久成ノ處ニハ山王圓滿ノ本有常住ト事事物物圓滿セリ。是即無作法界ノ靈神是也。此無作ノ山王即三千ト口傳スル也
  - c. 尋云。不二山王内證如何 口傳云。指修性一如ヲ也。此ノ不二ノ山王者。法界事事縁起ノ處ニ萬法不二ニ本來常住也。故萬法不可得ニ而法界歴歴。タリ。此不二ノ山王明神鎮ニ本有ト十界三千ニ己己ト圓滿セリ。是ヲ云不二山王ノ靈神。此不二ノ内證ハ一念三千ノ妙行ニ。只向法界可暮日心地也
  - d. 尋云。法身山王内證如何 口傳云。法身ノ内證法界圓滿セリ。故ニ云山王ト只心境微妙ニ萬法寂然タリ。此心境者本地甚深ノ妙行周遍法界ニ事事物物ノ義也。即天真獨朗ト三千鎮テ圓滿セリ。是云法身ノ山王ト也

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<sup>217</sup> T.76, 2410:513b25-514a23.

- e. 尋云。報身ノ山王心地如何 口傳云。此報身山王指法界智體ヲ也。其ノ故十界三千鎮ニ不縱不横ノ三千也。是法界本有ト圓滿セリ。是ヲ報身ノ山王ト習也 尋云。
- f. 當體山王心地如何 口傳云。境智圓體二十界互具法界本有圓滿セリ。此當體即法界ニ遍照セリ。故ニ山王ハ法界ノ依正ニサテハツル處ノ御立行也。此時境智冥合顯當體山王ト也。又ハ顯七社靈神故ニ。在ハ天ニ顯七星。在 地現七社明神。在テハ人成七佛藥師治シ玉フ法界ノ衆病ヲ也。此當體ノ山王鎮ニ法界ニ遍圓三千ノ已成ニ事事物物本有ノ已成也
- g. 尋云。首題山王心地如何 口傳云。妙法蓮華經當體三聖靈神首也。故ニ我等カ心地鎮ニ本有常住ト依正鎮ニ圓滿セリ。故ニ云首題山王靈神。此時ハ口三千ニ妙法ノ當體自顯山王ト利益ス一天四海ヲ也。妙法ノ顯道場三千一念ニ法界ト悉ク圓滿サテ居處也
- h. 尋云。一念三千山王心地如何 口傳云。三千ト者法界ノ法體ノ己己ト振舞處也。一念ハ是レ法界ノ總體也。只法界ノ總念總體ヲ取テ山王明神ト習也。故ニ三千常住ニ三千獨リ法界ニ圓滿セリ。只顯三千靈神ト此當體自三千ノ妙行也。故ニ不縱不横ノ本來常住也。故ニ云一念三千山王ト也。是以 1 只是一切法一切法是心ハ此意也
- i. 尋云。觀心山王心地如何 口傳云。三徳祕藏ノ妙行ニ法界圓滿セリ。此時ハ向月見花當體即チ法界ノ心地也。只安住法界ノ觀ニ朝朝暮暮ニ可日ヲ晚ス也。此前ニハ山王靈神法界ヲ圓滿三千事事ノ妙行サテハツル處ノ法界ノ念相也)

Although the explanations above are not immediately clear and are not very organized,<sup>218</sup> they are clearly seen the way in which Sannō is interpreted in a doctrinalized view. Throughout the nine approaches to Sannō as discussed above, Sannō seems to be mostly associated with the perfect wholeness of the Dharma realm, which is the innate true nature of realities. That is, as *Keiran* emphasizes repeatedly, all attributable to the neither vertical nor horizontal three virtues

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<sup>218</sup> As *Keiran* consists of collected transmissions written in cut papers in a very succinct manner, the opaque and nonlinear quality of discussions, along with the enigmatic symbolism and allegories, constitute the distinctive style of *Keiran*.

(*santoku* 三徳) of Sannō.<sup>219</sup> Nevertheless, a rather broadly doctrinalized interpretation of Sannō as mentioned above appears more concise and more historically specific—addressed in context of Japan’s religious environment—in *Keiran*’s later discussions of Sannō.

First, Sannō of the manifestation (*suijaku no sannō* 垂迹ノ山王): since Dengyō Daishi opened the Sanmon 山門, the Consummate Teachings (Tendai) have become the protective law and exerted influences; this [influence] is the Sannō of the manifestation.

Second, Sannō of the original ground (*honji sannō* 本地山王): our country is the divine country because of numerous kami of manifestations. As Sannō gongen is the only trace of Śākyamuni, all kami of three provisionals (*sangon* 三権) return to Sannō of one and true (*ichijisu sanno* 一實山王); and all kami of Japan are bound to Sannō of the original ground.

Third, Sannō of the mind contemplation (*kanjin no sannō* 觀心ノ山王): this means learning of Sannō’s honorable essence by the perfect and sudden meditation (*endon shikan* 圓頓止觀).

Fourth, Sannō of the unconditioned (*musa no sannō* 無作ノ山王): this reveals the way that there is neither beginning nor end, that is neither close nor remote, and true cultivation and true realization. All dharmas of ten dominions and three thousand realms are all the unconditioned, innate Sannō.

Fifth, Sannō of the three mysteries (*sanmitsu no sannō* 三密ノ山王): this indicates that five letters of the title of the *Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Dharma* constitute the essence of Sannō. This is the very three bodies of Tathāgata.

Sixth, Sannō of unknown origin (*gensho fuchi no sannō* 元初不知ノ山王): Sannō is the original source of all buddhas and the place where all dharmas go back. Thus it has no form encountering either *yang* or *yin*. Since we cannot determine whether it is *yin* or *yang*, we call it unknown origin.

Seventh, Sannō as light<sup>220</sup> (*nyo ei zui ei sannō* 如影隨影山王): Sannō is called the seven stars when it is heaven; called deities of the seven shrines when it is on earth. This is

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<sup>219</sup> T.76, 2410: 675a24. The esoteric meaning of “neither vertical nor horizontal,” particularly in relation to the problem of the origin and traces, will be examined in subsequent chapters.

<sup>220</sup> The character *ei* 影 has several different meanings, but considering the above discussion of Sannō as the seven stars in the sky, I choose to translate it as “light.” But in a broader sense, the meaning of *ei* in *Keiran* has a parallel with *sui* 垂, which connects to the meaning of “manifest” or “incarnate,” particularly when *ei* pairs with *gen* 現. The term *eigen* 影現 is used quite often as having a meaning similar to *suijaku* 垂迹; but *eigen* seems different from

equivalent to the seven characteristics of enlightenment (*shichi kaku bun* 七覺分)<sup>221</sup> for practitioners. Its origin is this: seven medicine buddhas of the east beautifully rise in the sky and become light, they are called the seven stars. The spirit and energy of the seven stars descend and give life to all sentient beings. Thus the seven stars are called the star of the original destiny (*honmyōshō* 本命星). Sannō of today is the very spirit of the seven stars. This is the secret matter of the Sannō of the original essence (*tōtai sannō* 當體山王)...

Now the above is the secret transmission on sevenfold Sannō (*sannō shichijū* 山王七重).<sup>222</sup>

(一。山王ニ七重習有之其ノ相如何 第一垂迹ノ山王也。所謂天智天皇ノ御宇ニ。傳教大師山門開闢ノ時。圓宗ノ教法ヲ爲守護影向シ給。以之垂迹山王トスル也。

第二ニ本地山王者。我國爲神國故ニ。應迹ノ神明多之。然レ而今日一代教主釋尊ノ應迹ノ神ハ日吉大宮權現許リ也。自餘ノ神明ハ以垂迹ヲ爲本ト故ニ。本地ノ沙汰無之。山王權現獨リ爲應迹神明ト。本迹雖殊不思議一ノ山王也。故ニ日本一州ノ神明者皆山王應迹ノ前方便也。故ニ山王祕決云。會三權ノ諸神歸スト一實山王也 矣 此則神明開會ト云祕事也。然則日本一州ノ諸神ハ皆歸本地山王也 云云

第三觀心ノ山王ト者。以圓頓止觀習山王ノ御體ト也。祕決別ニ有之。更ニ可問之。

第四ニ無作ノ山王ト者。無始無終非近非遠實修實證ノ成道ヲ顯ス。十界三千ノ諸法皆無作本有ノ山王也ト云ヘリ。口傳別ニ有之。

第五三密ノ山王ト者。以妙法蓮華經ノ首題五字爲山王ノ御體ト。此レ則如來ノ三身也。又是行者ノ三密也 云云

第六ニ元初不知ノ山王ト者。記録ニ云。一陰一陽ノ山王三德祕藏ノ妙理ヨリ出テ不知其ノ元初 云云 凡山王ト者。萬法ノ所歸諸佛本源也。故ニ陽ニモ無形陰ニモ

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*suijaku* in that a more or less hierarchical structure loaded into the concept of *honji suijaku* is very thin or absent in the relationship between *eigen* and what manifests/incarnates (*eigen*). Also, the term *eigen* in *Keiran* is mostly associated with the manifestation as light, i.e., luminaries, planets, and stars.

<sup>221</sup> They are seven factors in practice leading to enlightenment (Skt. *sapta bodhyāṅga*): mindfulness (Skt. *sati-sambojjhaṅga*; J. *nen kaku shi* 念覺支), investigation (Skt. *dhamma-vicaya-sambojjhaṅga*; J. *chakuhō kaku shi* 抉法覺支), effort (Skt. *virīya-sambojjhaṅga*; J. *shōjin kaku shi* 精進覺支), rapture (Skt. *pīti-sambojjhaṅga*; J. *ki kaku shi* 喜覺支), relaxation (Skt. *passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga*; J. *kyōan kaku shi* 輕安覺支), concentration (Skt. *samādhi-sambojjhaṅga*; J. *jō kaku shi* 定覺支), detachment (Skt. *upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga*; J. *sha kaku shi* 捨覺支).

<sup>222</sup> T.76, 2410:515a12-b14. Also see Grapard, “Keiranshūyōshū: A Different Perspective on Mt. Hiei in the Medieval Period,” in Richard K. Payne, ed., *Re-visioning “Kamakura” Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998), pp. 55-69.

無形。陰陽不測ノ故ニ名元初不知ト也。

第七ニ如影隨影山王ト者。在ハ天ニ名七星ト。在ハ地ニ號七社明神ト。此則行者ノ七覺分是也。尋其本源ヲ。東方七佛藥師閻浮ニ移影名之云七星。七星ノ精氣降テ令生一切衆生ヲ。故以七星ヲ名本命星ト也。今ノ山王則七星ノ精神ナル故。行者ノ色體則チ山王ノ全體也。故ニ如影隨形ノ致守護給也。仍如此名也 云云 祕決云。七星ト者面上ノ七穴也 云云 此則當體山王ノ祕事也。口傳 云云 已上山王七重ノ祕決如斯)

One might view the above as seven different angles to define what Sannō is. There are parallels between the sevenfold view of Sannō and the afore-examined nine approaches to Sannō, and many are in effect overlapping.<sup>223</sup> Integrating all meanings of Sannō into the above discussions, it seems that Sannō in essence represents the embodiment of Tendai teachings.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, a closer look at either the sevenfold or ninefold discussions of Sannō informs us that in those discussions the word Sannō could easily be replaced with the word Buddha or Śākyamuni.<sup>225</sup> All in all, throughout these doctrinalized views of Sannō, the concept of Sannō plays the role of a type of heuristic device to demand our comprehension of divinities and ultimate truth, in addition to provoking our own enlightenment.

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<sup>223</sup> Except for Sannō of nonduality, the trichilocosm in a single thought, and the Bliss Body, each point of view in the sevenfold Sannō corresponds—based on the similarities in rationales—to each item in the nine approaches to Sannō, as follows: Sannō of the manifestation, of the original ground, of the mind contemplation, of the unconditioned (three bodies) corresponds to their respective counterparts under the same names among the nine approaches; Sannō of three mysteries to Sannō of the title of the *Lotus Sūtra*; Sannō of the unknown origin to Sannō of the Absolute Body; Sannō as light to Sannō of the original essence.

<sup>224</sup> This can be considered in the context of the changes that occurred between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in which the status of Sannō was elevated by Tendai chroniclers' discursive works on Kami-Buddha syncretic combinations. Teeuwen, "The History of a Shrine: Hie," p. 86.

<sup>225</sup> As seen in the *honjaku* relationship between Sannō and Śākyamuni, Sannō is the manifestation of Śākyamuni, and the virtual identity between them is also presented through the discussion of Sannō of the manifestation.

There is another crucial point that deserves a close examination in the nine- and seven-fold discussions of Sannō: Sannō's representation as the seven stars. As seen in the discussion of Sannō as light—a particularly long discussion—the seven stars are the original essence (*tōtai*) of Sannō, in particular representation of Sannō in heaven. As discussed in the previous examination of Amaterasu, here Taimitsu's deep interest in astrology is once again confirmed. Stars and constellations are part of tripartite Dainichi Nyorai and specifically signify a nondual reality in comparison with the all-illuminating Sun and Moon—the dyad of Dainichi.<sup>226</sup>

The seven stars, i.e., Sannō's representations, indicate the Northern Dipper (*hokuto shichisei* 北斗七星). Having the Pole Star (or, the North Star) as the guiding point of its constellations, the Northern Dipper has been revered as the most important constellation in East Asia based on a belief that it rules over the lifespan and fates of human beings, as repeatedly emphasized in *Keiran*. Early China developed an elaborate divination technology (*za wei dou shu* 紫微斗数), which was devised to foretell individuals' destinies, based on the Daoist cult of the seven stars of the Northern Dipper and six stars of the Southern Dipper (*nanto rokusei* 南斗六星). The *za wei dou shu* influenced Korea and Japan, and has been settled and developed as one of the major divination technics in East Asian cultures. In Japan, the cult of the Northern Dipper became popular during the Heian period with the development of the Mikkyō.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> T.76, 2410: 572b6-8.

<sup>227</sup> Faure, *The Fluid Pantheon*, p.67. Also see pp.66-69 for various pictorial sources that portray the seven stars and related constellations.



*Keiran*'s emphasis on the seven stars is also shown through the following illustration: the Sun represents the fatherly principle as it illuminates the *yang* (day), the Moon the motherly principle as it illuminates the *yin* (night) and the children the five elements (as they are the production of the Sun and Moon). Because the seven stars consist of five elements and the Sun and Moon, the seven stars generate all dharmas; thus they are called the *honmōshō*, or, the star of original fate.<sup>228</sup>

Also noteworthy in *Keiran*'s discussion of Sannō as the seven stars is the homological correlation between the macrocosm and microcosm, that is, between heaven and earth. The heaven-earth correlation of physical nature extends to the psychological realm of human beings in *Keiran*, and these correlations are deployed to signify the meaning of original enlightenment, which will be fully examined in later chapters. That being said, the afore-discussed identification of Sannō either as mind contemplation or as the *ichinen sanzen* also shows the multidimensional, all-inclusive correlation between physical realities (*shiki* 色) and the mind dharma (*shin* 心).

Identification of Sannō with stars or constellations is found also from an inscription that is assumed to have been written by Saichō. The inscription on a pagoda called the *sōrintō* 相輪櫓 built in the Western Pagoda area (*saitō* 西塔) designates Sannō with the name “the constellation of Dharma” (*hōshuku* 法宿), which, according to the inscription, opens the manifestation of Vairocana.<sup>229</sup> The term *hōshuku* is also found in later literature on Sannō, mainly addressed to Ōmiya (Ōbie), and is distinguished from Ninomiya (Kobie), which is referred to as the radiant star or flower pedestal (*kedai* 華台).

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<sup>228</sup> T.76, 2410:549a13-17.

<sup>229</sup> The inscription reads, “Sannō deities are like Anathapindika (Sudatta: as a lay disciple of Gautama Buddha, he built and dedicated Jetavana (Jp. Gion Shōja 祇園精舎) to Buddha), thus *hōshuku* becomes their name, and they open [the meaning of] Vairocana.” (Mizukami, “Sannō shintō no keisei—sono mondaiten to ryūiten,” p. 244).

An alternative translation of the *hōshuku* is viable as well: as Mizukami points out, it could be read as “Dharma stays (*hō ga yadoru* 法が宿る).”<sup>230</sup> It is difficult to decide which interpretation is correct. Considering Sannō’s representation as the manifestation of Vairocana as well as the seven stars, and associations with other deities with astral representations (e.g., Daikokuten 大黒天), the meaning of *hōshuku* seems be closer to the constellation of Dharma. *Keiran*’s interpretation of the *sannō sanshō* is remarkable in this light: discussing Sannō’s Buddhist appellation (*hōgō* 法號), *Hōshuku bosatsu* 法宿菩薩, *Keiran* defines the meaning of *hōshuku* as the Wonderful Dharma (*myōhō* 妙法), *kedai* 華台 as the lotus flower, and Shōshinshi 聖真子 as the *sūtra* (*kyō* 經). Hence, Buddhist names of the *sannō sanshō* signify the five letters of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*myōhō rengyō* 妙法蓮華經).<sup>231</sup> Perhaps the *hōshuku* can be interpreted as both the constellation of Dharma and Dharma’s stay, given that the Wonderful Dharma permeates everything.

Knowing the seven stars of the Northern Dipper as a constellation of central importance in Mikkyō astrological belief, it is not surprising to see *Keiran*’s identification of the three sacred divinities of Sannō as the manifestation (*suijaku*) of the Three Lights (*sankō tenshi* 三光天子).<sup>232</sup> What is more noteworthy than Sannō’s another astrological signification is Sannō’s representation of nondual truth. As seen in the previous discussion on the tri-unity of Dainichi, the fundamental esoteric meaning of stars and constellation is the nonduality of dharmas, in comparison with the all-pervasiveness of the Sun and Moon. It is no wonder, then, that *Keiran*

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<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> T.76, 2410: 530b12-15.

<sup>232</sup> T.76, 2410: 528c22.

defines Sannō as the kami of nonduality and the Middle Path (*funi no chūdō no shinmei* 不二ノ中道ノ神明).<sup>233</sup>

Sannō’s representation of nondual truth is also sophisticatedly illustrated through *Keiran*’s discussion of the meaning of each word, “mountain (*san*)” and “king (*ō*).” According to the discussion in *Keiran*, the mountain symbolizes the natural, wondrous unmovability (*fudō* 不動) of the status of Dharma. Thus the mountain could indicate somewhere even in our mind that is as deep, high, vast, and yet unmoving as the mountain. It is the locus where we observe our mind (mind contemplation). The mountain is the residence of the Dharma seeds of the three bodies of Buddha.

On the other hand, “king” means the ultimate truth that is pure (*shōjō* 清淨), free (*jizai* 自在), and with no obstacle (*muge* 無礙).<sup>234</sup> What deserves more attention is *Keiran*’s further explanation of the meaning of king by citing *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra of the Wonderful Dharma* (*miao-fa lian-hua-jing xuan-yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義) (593)—better known by the shortened title, *The Profound Meaning of the Dharma Flower* (Ch. *Fa-hua xuan-yi*; Jp. *Hokke gengi* 法華玄義), the Tiantai commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*, by Zhiyi.

*The Profound Meaning* (*gengi* 玄義) says, entitling the king: a mere rightful examination of emptiness and the provisional (*kūke* 空假) has yet attained the title of the king. Therefore, either the two vehicles (Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha) entering emptiness (*nyūkū* 入空) or bodhisattvas coming out of the provisional (*shukke* 出假) is not called the king. That which examines by the Middle Path attains the title of the king...<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> T.76, 2410: 519b2.

<sup>234</sup> T.76, 2410: 526c6-26.

<sup>235</sup> T.76, 2410:526c21-23.

(玄義云。稱王者空假調直未得名王。所以二乘入空菩薩ノ出假不名法王。中道調直故得稱王)

The above passage is a verbatim quotation from *The Profound Meaning of the Dharma Flower*.<sup>236</sup> The emphasis on the Middle Path is remarkable; just because one—such as the hearers and the lone buddhas—realizes emptiness does not necessarily qualify one to be entitled the king. Even in the case of bodhisattvas, if they abandon the provisional realities they cannot be called the king. *The Profound Meaning* warns—in a very Tiantai-like tendency—against leaning to either side of the two extremes, i.e., emptiness or the provisional, and stresses the middle way. Then, based on the examination of its two letters, Sannō comes to represent unmoving (*fudō*) nondual (*funi*) truth. Moreover, integrating with the afore-discussed doctrinalized examinations on Sannō in *Keiran*, ultimately Sannō stands for innate reality—the nature of which is unmoving and yet free, nondual, as well as the mental ground for observing mind.

The above discussion only comments on Sannō's representation as nonduality and the Middle Path between emptiness and the provisional, but the scope is more extensive. One of *Keiran*'s dedicated discussions of Sannō portrays Sannō as manifesting the two virtues of calming (meditation) and wisdom, i.e., *jōe* 定慧 (Skt. *samādhi* and *prajñā*).<sup>237</sup> The notion of meditation and wisdom, and in particular nonduality between the two, is central in Mahāyāna Buddhist practice. The notion is mutually connected with other crucial concepts in Mahāyāna doctrines and practices, the concepts often paired to convey the oneness and nonduality between

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<sup>236</sup> T.33, 1716: 724a13-15.

<sup>237</sup> T.76, 2410: 672b17. In this passage in *Keiran* *jōe* 定慧 is written as *jōe* 定惠, but this seems a common misspelling found in other Buddhist texts as well. Other discussions in *Keiran* spell *jōe* correctly.

the pairs, for example, concentration and contemplation (*shikan* 止觀), and the Absolute Body and Bliss Body of Buddha.

An interesting examination is found in *Keiran*'s discussion of Sannō as the representation of the oneness of calming and wisdom. While emphasizing Sannō as the foundation (*hon* 本) of all kami, *Keiran* breaks the character kami 神 into two components, i.e., *shi* 示 and *shin* 申; and identifies the former letter with calming (*jō*), which is represented by the mountain (*san* 山), and the latter with wisdom (*e*), represented by the king (*ō* 王).<sup>238</sup> More remarkable is that the letter *shin* 申 is identified with the monkey (*saru* 申),<sup>239</sup> and this identification provides a rationale for the monkey as the messenger (*shisha* 使者) of Sannō.<sup>240</sup>

The allegory of monkey carries importance in Buddhist teachings, and one of the most famous examples is the monkey king as one of Śākyamuni's numerous previous births, as related in the Jātaka tales—a body of tale literature that records Buddha's previous lives. Presumably on that account, *Keiran* rationalizes the monkey as the messenger of Sannō commenting that the monkey is identical to Śākyamuni, and as emphasized repeatedly throughout *Keiran*, Sannō is Śākyamuni's manifested trace.<sup>241</sup> Another rationalization for the monkey as the messenger comes from “tradition”; the Vulture Peak in India was protected by the monkey messenger, and temples on Mt. Tiantai in Tang China were also protected by the monkey messenger. Therefore,

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<sup>238</sup> Breaking letters, or, *haji* 破字, has played an important role in East Asian hermeneutic cultures—Confucian and Buddhist circles in particular; beyond the pursuit of the etymological origin, often it was conducted to inspire people into awakening by realizing hidden truth in each component of a letter.

<sup>239</sup> Characters 猿, 獼, 猴—all can be pronounced *saru*—all refer to the monkey and are used in *Keiran* in an interchangeable manner.

<sup>240</sup> T.76, 2410:667b3-18.

<sup>241</sup> T.76, 2410: 663a13-14.

Sannō in Japan also takes the monkey as his messenger.<sup>242</sup> As Tendai tradition in Japan attributes its origin to Śākyamuni, it is the Tiantai/tendai tradition that respects the monkey as the messenger of mountain divinities that protect Tiantai/Tendai temples.<sup>243</sup> Furthermore, in the Tendai tradition the monkey is at once the deity of the mountain (*sanjin* 山神), the mother of the mountain (*sanbo* 山母), and the king of the mountain (*sannō* 山王).<sup>244</sup>

In the esoteric Buddhist light, it appears that the monkey seems quite naturally to be the messenger of Sannō since the symbolism of the monkey fits in with the main significations of Sannō, which have thus far been discussed.

Because monkeys (申) have nothing to hinder or stop them, they are called *kami* 神. Monkeys are animal but have human forms; they can freely exist (*jizai* 自在) both in the sky and on earth.<sup>245</sup> There is nowhere that obstructs or stops them.<sup>246</sup>

(申ト者無所擁滯故ニ名テ云神ト云云 凡ソ猿ト者。其形貌人形ニ畜獸ヲ兼タリ。於天地得自在。故ニ擁滯スル無シト所云也  
神者申也。清虛之氣也。無所擁滯ル故ニ曰神ト云云 猴ハ畜獸ニ兼人體ヲ。人體ニ畜生也。地ニ居翹ニ虚空ニ。天地ハ定惠ノ二福智ノ二門也。山王ノ定惠ノ徳ヲ顯スカ爲ニ以彌ヲ爲使者也)

It is remarkable that the notion of no obstruction (*muge*) and free existence are central to the symbolism of the monkey as they are to the interpretation of Sannō. Equally noteworthy is that these notions are viewed as the nature of *kami*. Throughout repeated comments on the

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<sup>242</sup> T.76, 2410: 518b1-3.

<sup>243</sup> T.76, 2410: 518a23-b3.

<sup>244</sup> T.76, 2410:675a22-23.

<sup>245</sup> It means that monkeys reside on earth and yet fly (jump) to the air (T.76, 2410: 672b16).

<sup>246</sup> T.76, 2410: 518b14-16 as well as 672b14-16.

identity between *saru* and kami, *Keiran* emphasizes no obstruction as the essential meaning of the letters.<sup>247</sup> What does the notion of no obstruction mean, and why is that notion used to define the essential nature of kami? What is kami, after all?

### *Conclusion*

In pursuit of *Keiran*'s discourses on kami, the Kami-Buddha relationship, and the integration of these discourses into the Tendai teachings of enlightenment, this chapter has examined *Keiran*'s discussions of kami centering on the *shinmeibu*, the section in which most of the kami discussions are concentrated. Beginning from *Keiran*'s stance on the kami section and its characteristics, subsequent discussions concerned *Keiran*'s rewriting of Japanese mythology and religious culture from an esoteric Buddhist point of view. Examining the basic *honjaku* relationship structure in the *shinmeibu*, we confirmed Tendai's heavy emphasis on the esoteric oneness of divinities—not only between kami and buddha, but also between kami and kami, and buddha and buddha. The main Buddhist and kami divinities in the *honjaku* structure in *Keiran* are all mutually correlated with one another by the *honjaku* scheme, and claim to all being the united one.

Also found through the discussion of the *honjaku* relationship in the *shinmeibu* was that crucial kami divinities in *Keiran* come down to Amaterasu and Sannō. In-depth explorations of Amaterasu and Sannō have also revealed *Keiran*'s focus on the esotericized interpretations of the deities. Most of all, it is remarkable to see that the *honjaku* dynamics among Dainichi,

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<sup>247</sup> A good example is found in a brief discussion in T.76, 2410:529c24-25, under the title of the “matter of kami’s revealing *saru*” (*shinmei genshin ji* 神明現申事). The same discussion is repeated almost verbatim later in *Keiran* (T.76, 2410: 672b14-15).

Śākyamuni, Amaterasu, and Sannō are deeply associated with the Mikkyō principle of the triunity of Dainichi, which has a basically tripartite divine persona, yet can appear through immensely various manifestations.

As a rather direct manifestation of Dainichi, Amaterasu represents Dainichi's all-pervasive and all-illuminating nature, and its manifestation as the great light also has variational appearances as examined through *Keiran's* esoteric interpretations of mythic tales and symbolism centering on Amaterasu. On the other hand, as the manifestation of Śākyamuni, which is the manifestation of Dainichi, Sannō represents Dainichi's nondual, non-obstructed virtue.<sup>248</sup> This was confirmed through *Keiran's* further discussions of Sannō from exoteric and esoteric perspectives.

Nevertheless, nonduality and no obstruction are not the prerogative natures of Sannō, but seem to be applied to kami in general. According to *Keiran*, there is nothing and nowhere that obstructs kami. It is kami's special talent, yet at the same time it has not gifted solely to kami. What is called the supernatural power (*jinzūriki* 神通力) is the inconceivable (*fushigi* 不思議) omnipresent power that Tathāgata Buddha possesses.<sup>249</sup> Through many accounts on which *Keiran* discusses Buddha's inconceivable omnipresent power, it is revealed that this power is above all related to the mystery of mutual correspondence, nonduality, and all-pervasiveness.<sup>250</sup> By and through that power Buddha can appear in any form, and so can kami. In this light, it is

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<sup>248</sup> As repeatedly illustrated in *Keiran's* discussions of nonduality and its various embodiments, nonduality, the middle way, esoteric oneness, and mutual correspondences are all correlated concepts in close connection to the ideas of no obstruction, free existence (*jizai*), and interpenetration (*tsū* 通), the ideal states in the Mikkyō cosmology, which can lead one to the immediate achievement of Buddhahood in the present state (*sokushin jōbutsu*). See T.76, 2410:625a, 649a-b10, 706a28-29, 739a19-b3. As illustrated in these discussions, the nondual state with no obstruction indicates being—or being characterized free from any particular form or element; and mysterious nondual “co-habitation” of dual or multiple elements is the embodiment of the non-obstructed realities.

<sup>249</sup> So does the *Lotus Sūtra*. Also, *Keiran* states that the Buddha of great mutual penetration (*daizūbutsu* 大通佛) is Dainichi (T.76, 2410:865c17).

<sup>250</sup> T.76, 2410: 548 724



recognizable that the power of kami's free, unobstructed penetration (*jinzūriki*) is closely related to the idea of "manifestation," i.e., *suijaku*. Now that we have seen that this manifestation in *Keiran* is a complex concept correlated with various notions central to Esoteric teachings, subsequent chapters will investigate in more detail those correlated ideas, their deeper meanings and associations.

### Chapter III. The Serpentine Form of Kami, Buddha, and Truth—A Tiny Snake Inside Our Body and Mind

#### *Kami as Manifestation and Kami's Manifestation*

Under the *honji suijaku* scheme, kami are manifestations of buddhas. Also, in terms of the larger *Trikāya* (Three Bodies of Buddha; J. *sanjin* 三身) structure, kami are designated as the manifested body, the *nirmaṇakāya* (J. *ōjin* 応身) of Buddha. What, however, does it mean to speak of the “manifested body of Buddha?”

As examined in the previous chapter, kami and buddha possess the ability to manifest free of obstruction. Such capacity is based on the inconceivable miraculous power of Buddha, which pervades everywhere, co-habits with everything, and is the wondrous realization of nonduality and the Middle Path. However, kami are also capable of manifestation. *Keiran* further emphasizes manifestation as kami's special ability that allows all sentient beings to gain benefits.<sup>251</sup> Here, *Keiran* use a term “dimming light and manifesting” (*wakō suijaku* 和光垂迹) specifically to refer to the kami's manifestation. This term is a variation of “dimming the light and mingling with the dust” (*wakō dōjin* 和光同塵) as will be discussed shortly. Thus kami manifest by dimming their light and mingling with the dust, and this benefits sentient beings. Especially noteworthy is the fact that *Keiran* explains such manifestation with another allegory, the afore-mentioned “shaking dance” (*shinbu*), which was seen as a type of innate act of all dharmas in our examination of Sannō's representation as *ichinen sanzen*. Here the shaking dance is declared as that which enables kami's manifestation by dimming the light (*wakō suijaku*).<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> T.76, 2410:530a12-13, a18-19, and 520c8. More detailed discussion of this description will be followed shortly.

<sup>252</sup> T.76, 2410:511b3-4.

*Keiran* further likens the shaking dance to a sexual union of husband and wife. Given these enigmatic expressions, a question about the meaning of kami's manifestation invariably arises.

In the following catechismal passages in *Keiran*, we can find answers to the question raised above.

Question: Why must kami's manifestation always appear in the form of the snake?

Answer: Kami are the essence of [softening light and/or] sitting/positioning with the dust (or the sentient beings). Thus they become like ordinary beings. Ordinary beings are the form composed of the Three Poisons in their most powerful and perfected condition. The original, uncreated form of the Three Poisons—when they are most powerful—is the form of the snake. Thus, the discussion of the Ono school in *Shijū jōketsu* 四十帖決<sup>253</sup> says; it is known that all kinds of kami's transformation and manifestation (must) come back to the worm species. Transformation here indicates kami's responsive manifestation. The worm species refers to beings that have the body of the snake, and so on...<sup>254</sup>

(問。神明ノ垂迹必現蛇身方如何答。神明ト者。和光同座ノ體カ故ニ。似同凡夫給也。凡夫ト者。三毒等分極成體也。三毒極成無作本有形體ハ者必蛇體也。仍テ小野弘法四十帖ノ決ニ云。一切ノ神義迹化歸ト虫類ニ云ヘリ。迹化ト者指神明ノ應迹ヲ也。虫類ト者蛇身也)

In addition, a very similar passage is repeated in a later passage:

That Kami always manifest themselves in the body of the snake; the uncreated original form of all sentient beings has the shape of the snake, which indicates the original body of the Dharma that opens enlightenment (*kaku*). There is a tiny snake that is even smaller than 3 *sun* 寸, deep inside the entrails of all sentient beings...<sup>255</sup>

(一切衆生ノ理性ノ海中ニ不三寸蛇形有リ)

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<sup>253</sup> By Chōen 長宴(1016-1081).

<sup>254</sup> T.76, 2410:517c17-22.

<sup>255</sup> T.76, 2410:517c27-29.

Previously, the first passage was briefly examined by Mark Teeuwen.<sup>256</sup> As Teeuwen asserts, this passage deserves careful attention as it reveals a radical non-dualistic thought of worldly matters and enlightenment, which was developed under the original enlightenment (J. *hongaku* 本覺) scheme, construed by Tendai esoteric discourses. However, that passage contains far more than a discussion of the original enlightenment thought. Not only can we read how the *hongaku* scheme operates, but we can also tease out the *tathāgatagarbha* theory or Buddha-nature thought as the basis of the original enlightenment scheme, the rationale of the Kami-Buddha *hon-jaku* relationship, and what is meant by "true emptiness are all phenomena (J. *shinkūmyōu* 真空妙有)," a notion demonstrated not only through Tendai doctrines, but also overall Mahāyāna tradition ever since Nāgārjuna.

Moreover, as we read the related passages listed above, we can discuss the problem of mind and consciousness in the pursuit of enlightenment, the relationship between original enlightenment and acquired enlightenment (J. *shikaku* 始覺), the system of Mahāyānist *trikāya* thought, the relationships between truth and phenomena, and finally we can come to see how all of these concepts are interwoven. Thus, this passage reflects and resonates with most medieval Japanese Tendai doctrinal constructions, which featured developed syncretism in accordance with Mahāyāna philosophies.

All of these critical concepts and philosophical doctrines will be discussed here according to the degree of relevance to my main focus: the way *Keiran* constructs the logic of the Kami-Buddha relationship within the high medieval Buddhist philosophical framework developed in Mt. Hiei. Since these concepts and doctrines are by no means simple, I will take one step at a

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<sup>256</sup> Teeuwen, "The Kami in Esoteric Buddhist Thought and Practice," in *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, pp.95-116.

time by examining the passages above and begin with discussing more basic terminology and concepts that are more easily spotted.

### *The Snake Body, The Snake Mind*

The passages in *Keiran* outlined above discuss the reason why kami should always manifest in the form of the snake. Based on these, we were able to verify how the general view that all kami are in effect understood to manifest in the form of the snake by Japanese perception and imagery<sup>257</sup>; however, there are certainly many examples of kami and various deities appearing in the shape of the snake or closely associating with serpentine deities in *Keiran* as such cases are also quite customarily found in many other religious tales.<sup>258</sup>

The two passages show that Tendai scholastic discussions also problematize the association between kami and the snake form; furthermore, Tendai scholars think all kami "necessarily" appear in the form of the snake when they manifest in the world. Both passages use the age-old phrase of "softening [their] light and mingling with / becoming like the dust (J. *wakō dōjin* 和光同塵) or "sitting / positioning with (the sentient beings) (J. *wakō dōza* 和光同座) as the rationale for the claim. As the aforementioned passages continue to explain, ordinary sentient beings are made of the Three Poisons in their most powerful or perfected form. The original, unconditioned form of the Three Poisons when they are powerful is the form/body of the snake

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<sup>257</sup> As I previously stated, Kami are typically perceived as anthropomorphic deities with specific names although they are associated with many things including natural objects and natural phenomena. But before *Keiran*, there had been no particular discussion on Kami's manifestation form and its rationale. Further research is needed in the future to clarify whether the perception of the serpent as the Kami's manifestation form is a discursive tool that was solely invented by Tendai.

<sup>258</sup> The main deity of Mt. Miwa and Amaterasu's rampant brother Susano-o would be the most well-known examples for deities associated with serpentine forms.

because kami graciously position themselves as equal to ordinary sentient beings. Kami manifest in the form of the snake for the sake of sentient beings. Here, one thing is clear: kami's manifestation in the snake form is due to their capacity to respond (J. *ō* 応) to a certain form shared by all beings and the ability to manifest themselves as the common form. This capacity of kami matches with the Japanese term for the *nirmaṇakāya*, i.e., *ōjin* (応身), the "response" body. However, if kami manifest as snakes responding to ordinary beings, how can Kami also be understood as the manifestation of Buddhas?<sup>259</sup> To what qualities of Buddhas do Kami respond to and manifest? Does the form of the snake play a role in that respect too? More importantly, what does this snake form, which is the ultimate form of the Three Poisons, refer to in these passages?

The Three Poisons (J. *sandoku* 三毒) are the three defilements (Skt. *kleśā*) formulated in the early stages of Buddhist philosophy, and indicate greed, hatred, and ignorance, all of which are serious hindrances to attaining enlightenment. Associated with the second of the Four Noble Truths, i.e., *samudaya* (J. *jittai* 集諦), they are the very roots of suffering (Skt. *duḥkha*, the first of the Four Noble Truths, i.e. *kutai* 苦諦) within this worldly, samsaric existence. In a more typical sense, the Three Poisons are glossed as and interchanged with "ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*; J. *mumyō* 無明)."

What draws our attention is that the Three Poisons are embodied in the form of the snake; therefore, we must ask what the snake refers to here. Certainly, the whole negative nature of the Three Poisons reminds us of the stereotypical symbolism of the snake and convinces us of the homology. However, no real snake can dwell inside human internal organs: the above-mentioned

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<sup>259</sup> After all, the *nirmaṇakāya* also means the "transformed" body of Buddha.

*Keiran* passages assert that the snake form exists in all sentient beings' inner organs, i.e., lungs. A more careful reading of these passages requires deeper thinking concerning the homology between the Three Poisons and the form of the snake.

The discussion of the snake body in *Keiran* continues to state that manifestation of all kami eventually goes back to the worm species, and also explain that to be the worm species means to have the body of the snake. Thus, it is now possible to assume that the important thing is the "shape" of the snake body rather than the actual entire snake body. Specifically, the shape must be cylindrical, winding, and pliable, the attributes of which are all shared with other worm-like species. That the key emphasis is on the "shape," not on the snake per se, becomes all the more evident in the passages' reference to the length of the snake as the form of the Three Poisons: it is a tiny snake of shorter than 3 *sun* (3 寸: roughly 6 centimeters) that exists deep inside of our lungs.

By emphasizing the length of the snake<sup>260</sup> with the phrase "shorter than 3 *sun*,"<sup>261</sup> the passages in *Keiran* seem to convey the real meaning of the representation of the snake form: it is not an actual snake, and not even an actual worm, but is tiny and hidden, almost an embryo- or germ-like something that is similar to the shape of the snake.<sup>262</sup> Now we must address the significance of this tiny snake-/embryo-/germ-like form in the passages. To repeat, ordinary sentient beings are made of the Three Poisons in their most powerful or perfected form; and the "original, uncreated" form of the Three Poisons in its most powerful form is the form/body of the snake. Thus, the body of the snake represents the form of that which is original and uncreated (J.

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<sup>260</sup> The mention of the length of the serpent in our entrails is never missed in passages relating on the serpent and the dragon as the representation of our (un)enlightened mind.

<sup>261</sup> It actually connotes "not even yet" 3 *sun*.

<sup>262</sup> Here germ means any micro-organism as it is commonly used such.

*musa honnu* 無作本有) according to *Keiran*. Additionally, the expression *musa honnu*, the uncreated which originally exists, is often replaced with the term the "uncreated, original enlightenment (J. *musa hongaku* 無作本覺)" in other similar passages throughout *Keiran* and is often accompanied by the term "unmoving" (J. *fudō* 不動).<sup>263</sup>

The term *musa* here is, in Buddhist terminology, related to two Sanskrit terms of *asamskrta* (unconditioned/ primordial/ unchangeable) and *anutpada* (non-arising/ uncreated). Therefore, *musa* means the most fundamental, primordial, and the most "old," "aged" something. This may be defined as the very beginning of everything; however, Buddhist philosophy does not talk about "the beginning," nor does it believe in the beginning. The word *musa* can be understood more correctly and naturally when it is considered together with the term "natural" (J. *hōni* 法爾), which was coined within East Asian Buddhist traditions, or with another Sanskrit term indicating the nature of the truth, *tathātā* (suchness). Consequently, *musa* indicates a quality that is "unconditioned," just "such-of-itself" (J. *jinen* 自然), which is not at all bound by any conditions. In that sense, *musa* can sometimes be translated as "spontaneous."<sup>264</sup>

Therefore, the form that is unconditioned, spontaneous, and the most "natural" looks like the body of the snake in a very small size, which is cylindrical, winding, and an extremely tiny germ- or string-like shape. According to *Keiran*, this unconditioned, natural germ-like form mirroring the snake body is the "form" of the original enlightenment.<sup>265</sup> In fact, the term *musa* is most frequently used only in an idiomatic sense to refer to the Tendai's own superior

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<sup>263</sup> T.76, 2410:623c2.

<sup>264</sup> For example, Paul Swanson translated *musa* as "spontaneous" in his book, *Foundations of Tiantai Philosophy*.

<sup>265</sup> Original enlightenment indicates, as opposed to "acquired enlightenment," the innate awakening capacity that is endowed to all sentient beings. Although the concept of original enlightenment can be traced back to India and China, it was developed as a system of thought in Japanese Tendai Buddhism. I will discuss it further later in my discussion.



understanding of the Four Noble Truths in their classification of various Buddhist teachings (J. *kyōsō hanjaku* 教相判析). As is well known, one of the important characteristics of Sinicized East Asian Buddhism is the classification of the various Buddhist Schools' teachings. Some scholars criticize such classification as a significant mistake caused by ignorance of the historicity of Buddhist scriptures and commentaries.<sup>266</sup>

At the same time, however, diverse Buddhist scriptures were brought into China regardless of the historical order and variety of the authorship, thus it was inevitable for Buddhist scholars in China to classify numerous scriptures according to several doctrinal criteria, on the assumption that all scriptures were written or told only by the Buddha. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to resolve numerous tensions and contradictions among various scriptures.

The Chinese Tiantai School also greatly contributed to the development of the *kyōsō hanjaku*, also known as the *kyōhan*, and they classified all Buddhist teachings into four categories in order of superiority, and naturally, they placed the Tiantai teachings in the last (fourth) stage, which includes the most superior teaching. Also, Zhiyi the systematizer and founder of Tiantai philosophy, classified the fourfold way of interpreting the Four Noble Truths (J. *shishu shitai* 四種四諦) as follows: arising-and-perishing (J. *shōmetsu* 生滅), neither arising nor perishing (J. *hushō* 不生(滅)), immeasurable (J. *muryō* 無量), and finally, spontaneous (J. *musa* 無作).<sup>267</sup>

The fourth classification, in which the Four Noble Truths are classified as spontaneous (J. *musa shitai* 無作四諦), is the perfect method of interpreting the Four Noble Truths perceived by

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<sup>266</sup> Lee, *Buphwa* □ *Chontae ui Sasang Yeongu*, p. 126.

<sup>267</sup> Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy*, pp. 8-10.

perfect teaching (J. *engyō* 圓教) (i.e. Tiantai) and is the expression of ultimate reality beyond conceptualization and verbal distinction. Zhiyi also emphasized this as the meaning of the Middle Path.<sup>268</sup>

Here, the expression of the uncreated, spontaneous form in the passages attains more significance in Tendai philosophy; after all, it signifies the essence of the ultimate reality perceived in light of the Tendai teachings. According to Tamura Yoshirō, the term *musa* in Tendai writings typically refers to the fourth way of interpreting the Four Noble Truths; thus, it connotes the original enlightenment which is regarded as the essence of the inherent and ultimate truth.<sup>269</sup> Jacqueline Stone too indicated that in the medieval Japanese Tendai tradition, the term *musa* is a synonym for original enlightenment.<sup>270</sup> Throughout *Keiran*, the term *musa* is frequently paired with the term *hongaku*, thus we can understand *musa* itself, as the essential quality of the ultimate truth, signifies nothing but the original enlightenment in the context of the passages in *Keiran*.

Therefore, the body of the snake represents the Three Poisons of desire and ignorance, but at the same time, it is the form of the uncreated, spontaneous, original enlightenment. Unmistakably, this conveys a non-dualistic insight into the original enlightenment epistemology by demonstrating that desire and enlightenment are identical.

Before discussing issues pertinent to original enlightenment in detail, I would like to delve more deeply into the allegory of the body/form of the snake, as the representation of the snake in *Keiran* is, even aside from the *hongaku*-related significance, thought-provoking. Most

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<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>269</sup> Tamura Yoshirō, *Tendai hongakuron* (Tokyo: Iwanami Bunko, 1973), p. 54.

<sup>270</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p. 185.

importantly, ambivalent notions attached to the snake symbolism in *Keiran* call for special attention. As noted above, the form of the snake represents not only the ultimate form of the Three Poisons, but also the symbols of inherent original awakening. This seeming polarity of ignorance and enlightenment is remarkable, insofar as the two are presented as if they constitute two sides of one and the same coin. This polarity constitutes the basis for the non-dual thought of medieval and the Tendai esoteric and other medieval Buddhist traditions.

Nevertheless, a more subtle ambivalence of the symbolism of the snake is found where the *Keiran* passages mix two words of "form/body" and "mind" when they discuss the representation of the snake as the unconditioned original enlightenment. Thus far, I have focused on the passages claiming that the "form" of the snake represents the unconditioned state of inherent suchness; but other similar passages assert that the (winding) "mind" of the snake represents the absolute, *musa*.<sup>271</sup> Of course, both the form and mind of the snake can be regarded as symbols of the unconditioned, original enlightenment. However, when we closely read these passages, their context within the narrative as a whole, as well as its specific relationship to other adjacent passages, allows us to recognize that the representation of the snake is closely related to the "mind" or "consciousness."<sup>272</sup>

However, the spiritual characteristic of the snake symbol immediately conflicts with very corporeal, anatomical words, such as "lungs" or "entrails."<sup>273</sup> Most significantly, the unconditioned state of suchness takes the "form" of the snake; and what resides in our lungs is

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<sup>271</sup> T.76, 2410:864a9.

<sup>272</sup> I will discuss the problem of the mind and consciousness in detail in a later section.

<sup>273</sup> The word *haizō* (肺臟) as used in *Keiran* can be interpreted as either "lungs" or "lungs and entrails"; however, in most cases the compound consists of one specific body part, such as lungs and liver, or the word for "entrails" (J. *zō* 臟).

the worm-/germ-like "body" of the snake. The mind takes a form: the embryo-like, tiny snake which is shorter than 3 *sun*. The tension between body and mind, spiritual and physical, seems obvious at first glance. However, whether or not we illuminate this embryo-like snake as a "gene / DNA-like" basic structure of the human body in the modern sense, and even without any laborious comparisons relating to a modern phenomenological understanding of body and mind, body and mind are not presented as contradictory in the world of *Keiran*, which is filled with enigmatic esoteric language, metaphors, and the unique logic of association.

Medieval Buddhist thinkers may or may not have had anatomic knowledge about the human body; however, philosophically, they might have conceived an important truth about life and the world: body is the mind, and the mind is body. The ambivalent symbolism of the snake, or rather a co-habitation of two seemingly conflicting notions, in one symbol, is harmonized through the logic of homology in the non-dualistic Tendai philosophy. In particular, the co-habitation of the mind and body in the snake symbol resonates with the Taimitsu 台密 doctrinal expression of the non-duality of form and mind (J. *shikishin funi* 色心不二). Mahāyāna schools that center on the *Prajñāpāramitā* Sutra-related scriptures emphasize the non-duality of form and emptiness (J. *shikikū funi* 色空不二).

This emphasis is based on a Mahāyānist reformulation of the notion of emptiness, which denies the duality of the ontic reality / ultimate truth (Skt. *paramārtha-satya*; J. *shindai* 真諦) and phenomena / conventional truth (Skt. *saṃvṛti-satya*; J. *zokutai* 俗諦) based upon the understanding of emptiness as ultimate reality. In the Tendai concept of the non-duality of form

and mind, we can see the influence of the Yogācāra philosophy of mind and consciousness and their later development in the Huayan (J. Kegon) philosophy.<sup>274</sup>

*The Snake Mind: Buddha-Nature*

In the previous subsection, I illustrated *Keiran's* association of unconditioned original enlightenment with the form and mind of the snake. However, a question was raised: what is the relevance of the form of the snake to original enlightenment? Of course, the passages discussed previously demonstrate that the form of the snake represents suchness; hence, the form of the original enlightenment becomes apparent. At the same time, it remains unclear as to why the original enlightenment, which is supposedly a certain spiritual, mental quality or state, needs to be understood in terms of physical shape, i.e. the shape of worm- or germ-like tiny snake body. In order to make sense of this strange explanation of original enlightenment in *Keiran*, we need to briefly examine how original enlightenment thought had been developed in East Asian Mahāyāna traditions.

As I discussed in a previous section, the original enlightenment thought fully developed by the Tendai scholar-monks in medieval Japan had originated from the doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha*, which occupied a crucial position not only in East Asian, but already in Indian Mahāyāna thought. *Tathāgatagarbha*, the inherently pure enlightened mind latent in all sentient beings, signifies, both in a literal and a figurative sense, the "germ" of Buddhahood endowed in all sentient beings by the compassionate Buddha. This term is translated as *nyoraizō* 如来藏 or

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<sup>274</sup> See Chapter Four, where the problem of mind/consciousness and the notion of non-duality will be discussed in detail.

*bushō* 仏性 in East Asian Buddhist scriptures. The former is a rather direct translation of the *tathāgatagarbha*, which literally means "hidden/stored treasury of the Thus-Come-One [Buddha]," or "hidden/stored quality of Buddha," and the latter is typically glossed as "Buddha-nature." This somewhat slippery term requires a certain degree of examination involving Buddhist etymology.

The *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* (or *Uttaratantra*: abbreviated as RgV) is the first Buddhist treatise that expounds the *tathāgatagarbha* theory; thus, it is considered the most important Buddhist text in terms of the philosophy of Buddha-nature thought. As for the title of this text, the term *ratnagoṭra* requires special attention<sup>275</sup> as it is indispensably related to the word *tathāgatagarbha*. In his in-depth study of the RgV, Takasaki Jikido points out that the word *ratnagoṭra* is interpreted by the RgV commentator as "*goṭraṃ ratnatrayasya*," the Germ of the Three Jewels, and is explained as the sphere of those who have the highest perception from which the pure three jewels rise.<sup>276</sup> In the basic sense, *Ratna* means "jewel(s)" and is often interpreted as "light," or "luminous." It seems to connote the Three Jewels of Buddhism, but this is a less critical matter in the present discussion. What requires more special attention here is the word "*goṭra*." As Takasaki's study shows, *goṭra* is often translated into English as "element," "cause," "origin," "ground," "essence," "nature," and so forth, following the basic line of interpretation for the word among Buddhist literature<sup>277</sup>; however, according to Indian common usage, *goṭra* means "family," "clan," or "lineage," and analogically it is used in the sense of

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<sup>275</sup> In the title *Ratnagoṭra-vibhāga*, *vibhāga* roughly means "analysis," thus it is translated as "treatise."

<sup>276</sup> Takasaki Jikido, *A Study of the Ratnagoṭra (Uttaratantra): Being a Treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1966), p.21.

<sup>277</sup> It is translated as *shushō* in East Asian Buddhist texts.

"germ," "mine," or "matrix."<sup>278</sup> In this sense, *gotra* is closely linked to the word "*garbha* (embryo / matrix)," and together with *ratna(-traya)* which is analyzed as being synonymous with "*buddha*" or "*tathāgata*," the word *ratnagotra*, as it is used in the title, can be understood to indicate the *tathāgatagarbha*; hence, the text title *Ratnagotravibhāga* is in and of itself denoting a treatise regarding the *tathāgatagarbha* theory.<sup>279</sup>

In the RgV, the word *gotra* is conceptualized as the embryo, germ, or matrix in which the *Tathāgata* makes its appearance. Thus, this embryo of Buddha,<sup>280</sup> that is, Buddha in terms of possibility, is identified as the essence of the ultimate truth (Skt. *dharmadhātu*, *dharmakāya*, *tathatā*, and also *nirvāṇa*)<sup>281</sup> and can be understood as the Absolute in a Mahāyānist sense.<sup>282</sup> This is due to the "essential purity" of the germ of the Buddha, which is found in the "innate mind (Skt. *cittaprakṛti*)" of all living beings by the all-pervasiveness of the Wisdom of Buddha, i.e. the Body of the Absolute (Skt. *dharmakāya*; J. *hōssin* 法身).<sup>283</sup> This pure, innate mind is regarded as Buddhahood or the very essence / nature of the Buddha, and it is the unconditioned (Skt. *asamskrta*) enlightened mind that is to be "discovered" by sentient being only "temporarily"

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<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, p.22

<sup>280</sup> *Tathāgatagarbha* is originally a term designated not only for Buddha, as the word *buddha* itself was originally applicable to any person as an adjective (precisely, a past participle), but the RgV text formulates these terms to indicate qualities and characteristics of Buddha. For more details, see *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> These terms are all identified with one another as all of them indicate the ultimately empty (empty of independent self-nature) and all-encompassing truth. In particular, for Tendai's understanding of the mutual identity of these terms, see Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp.191-192.

<sup>282</sup> Certainly, in the broad array of words cognate with *gotra*, there is a word meaning "substance," "essence" or "the self," such as *svabhāva*. However, it is questionable whether we can construe this as the absolute being/substance in the same fashion as the Brahmanic concept of "*ātman*," or "*brahman*." See D. Seyfort Ruegg, *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective: On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (London: University of London, 1989).

<sup>283</sup> Takasaki, *A Study of the Ratnagotra*, p.22.

or "accidentally" impure. The *tathāgatagarbha* means, after all, as Takasaki puts it, that we are all sentient beings in possession of Buddha (-nature), or we are the embryo of the Buddha.<sup>284</sup> It might even be described as a kind of absolute "warranty," "promise," and "assurance" of the awakening and liberation of all sentient beings.<sup>285</sup>

This salvific germ / embryo of Buddhahood is the very original enlightenment, and the the notion of an initial "latency" or "potentiality" of the Buddha-nature intrinsic to all sentient beings was developed as "already being in operation," so to speak, through the historical development of medieval Japanese Tendai *hongaku* 本覺 discourse.

The inherent, unconditioned enlightened mind in the form of the snake: this is the germ of Buddhahood that is the innate, unconditioned, unchanging, enlightened mind explained in the *Keiran* language. The tiny worm- and germ-like body of the snake deep inside our lungs is meant to be the germ of the Buddhahood, i.e., Buddha-nature hidden or stored deep inside of all sentient beings' minds and consciousnesses. *Keiran* affirms that all sentient beings possess "the original Buddha-nature of the snake species."<sup>286</sup> Based on this reasoning, the *Keiran* passages on the kami's manifestation in the form of the snake can be read to illuminate how the snake form symbolizes original enlightenment and the germ of Buddha-nature latent in sentient beings. Therefore, an assumption can also be made that the meaning of the kami's manifestation in the form of the snake lies in the association between kami and original enlightenment possessed by all sentient beings. Through their ability to "soften their light and mingle with dust" (J. *wakō*

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<sup>284</sup> Thus it means not a fully-grown Buddha, not even an infant yet, so it connotes only a potentiality. See Takasaki Jikido, *Nyorai-zō shisō* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1988), pp.6-7.

<sup>285</sup> Thus, in that sense, it may be no exaggeration to say that we are all already intrinsically saved by the compassionate Buddha. Some scholars even discuss the concept of the *tathāgatagarbha* in comparison with the Christian notion of God's grace. See John Makransky, "Buddhist Analogues of Sin and Grace: A Dialogue with Augustine," in *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*, vol.15 (2005): 5-15.

<sup>286</sup> T.76, 2410:517c26.



*dōjin* 和光同塵), kami appear in the most familiar form to everyone for the sake of ordinary beings. This is the very meaning of Kami as the *nirmaṇakāya*, the manifestation body of Buddha in *Keiran*. Kami respond to both Buddha and sentient beings.

In that sense, kami, as the *nirmaṇakāya*, is the link between the world of Buddha and our secular world. Thus *nirmaṇakāya* is the manifestation of the Absolute Body of Buddha (Skt.

*dharmakāya*; J. *hosshin*).<sup>287</sup>

### *Snake and/or Dragon*

In the much discussed passages about kami's manifestation in the snake form in *Keiran*, the idioms such as the “body of the snake” (*jashin* 蛇身) and the “snake kind” (*jarui* 蛇類) deserve more attention. As mentioned briefly, the wording suggests fluidity and variability. Among the repeated or varied discussions of the snake form in *Keiran*, the following passages are found:

From the standpoint of those in the assembly at Vulture Peak, she was an eight-year-old dragon girl. From Buddha's eyes she had the form of a snake of sixteen *jō*<sup>288</sup>. That is because the uncreated original form of all sentient beings is the shape of the snake. This snake indicates the original body of the Dharma that opens enlightenment. There is a tiny snake that is not even as small as 3 *sun* 寸 deep inside the entrails of all sentient beings. This is the lord of the sixth consciousness of discerning thoughts,<sup>289</sup> the purport of the term “dragon,” according to the oral transmission.<sup>290</sup>

(靈山聽衆ノ見ニハ八歳ノ龍女也。釋尊見ニハ十六丈蛇形也。其ノ故ハ一切衆生ノ

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<sup>287</sup> Chapter four will discuss the non-dual relationship among the three bodies of Buddha and its core importance in understanding the non-dual relationship between Buddha and Kami.

<sup>288</sup> One *jō* is approximately ten feet.

<sup>289</sup> An intensive discussion on the consciousness will follow in the next section.

<sup>290</sup> T.76, 2410:517c24-29.

無作本有ノ形體ハ蛇形也。不改此ノ無作ノ體ヲ。開覺本有法身ト也。一切衆生ノ理性ノ海中ニ不三寸蛇形有リ。今第六識ノ是非思量ノ識主也。指之習龍也。口傳云云)

In our wheel of water... inside there is water of golden color; inside there is a tiny snake. This is the lord of the sixth consciousness. The snake mind indicates the original, the uncreated. It is [about] the winding snake mind.<sup>291</sup>

(我等カ水輪中ニ有肺藏。其中ニ有金色ノ水。其中有三寸蛇。我等カ第六ノ心王也。[.....] 所詮我等カ無作本有ノ體ハ蛇形也。蛇曲心也)

On the subject of the dragon palace: the dragon deity is the essence of the Three Poisons in their extreme form. The dragon palace is at the bottom of the great ocean, which signifies the submergence of our life and death. The essence of ignorance is the dragon deity. That is why the dragon palace is where all Buddhist teachings and doctrines should be stored before they perish and are exhausted. The dragon deity is the deity of water; thus, it resides in the bottom of the great ocean.<sup>292</sup>

(凡龍神ト者。三毒等分極成ノ體。煩惱黒菩提ノ本深也。愚癡黒暗ノ體ナルカ故ハ常ニ居龍宮ニ。表生死ノ沈没ヲ故ニ居ス大海ノ最底ニ。所詮無明ノ體ハ龍神也。故ニ諸ノ教法滅龍宮ニ收ル。法性反作無明ト意也又云。龍神ト者水神也。故ニ居大海ノ最底)

While looking at the above passages, we can recognize the same subject regarding the snake form and mind as the original enlightenment discussed in the beginning of this chapter. However, it is also discussed in relation to the representation of dragon-related symbols, such as the dragon deity, the dragon girl, and the dragon palace. Again, as seen above, the snake exists deep inside our entrails; analogously, the dragon deity resides in the dragon palace in the deepest part of the ocean, which is the original source of life and death.

And immediately following the sentence relating to the dragon deity's residence in the ocean, the text continues to discuss the tiny snake inside of our bodies. Just like the snake, the body of the dragon represents the form of the Three Poisons. Indeed, not only *Keiran*, but also

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<sup>291</sup> T.76, 2410:864a

<sup>292</sup> T.76, 2410:624a23-28.

many other Buddhist tales discussing the dragon symbol, note that the manifestation form of the dragon is the snake,<sup>293</sup> and in world mythology symbols of the serpent and the dragon are commonly interchangeable.

Thus, when viewed in the eye of the Buddha, the eight-year-old dragon girl is described as having the body of a long snake. In another passage in *Keiran*, there is a brief description of the three categories of the dragon, and one of them, the "snake-dragon (J. *shiryū* 蛇龍)," is said to be the dragon deity.<sup>294</sup>

What is more telling concerning the inseparable homology between the dragon and the snake is shown in the following way: after the enigmatic discussion of the tiny snake as the unconditioned original enlightenment that everyone possess, *Keiran* adds that this is what is referred to as the "purport of the [term] 'dragon'." We shall obtain a clearer understanding of this statement after examination of the snake form and its connection to the problem of attaining true enlightenment in the next chapter.

Therefore, the dragon body is the body of the snake and represents the Three Poisons, the fundamental ignorance that obstructs true enlightenment. However, at the same time, it is the form of the inherent, unconditioned original enlightenment. As the snake, i.e. the germ of Buddhahood, dwells inside the lungs, the dragon deity resides in the dragon palace in the deep ocean. Just as the embryo of Buddha-nature and the precious wish-fulfilling jewel (*cintāmaṇi*; J. *nyoihōshu* 如意宝珠), the tiny "snake" which represents the uncreated, innate pure mind is hidden inside the water as principle,<sup>295</sup> in this case, the water inside the human lungs.

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<sup>293</sup> T.76, 2410:624a22.

<sup>294</sup> T.76, 2410:624a22-24 and T.76, 2410:627b26-29.

<sup>295</sup> Numerous Buddhist canons and treatises frequently use metaphors regarding "water" or the "ocean" to explain the Buddhist tenet of dependent origination and, in particular, the reciprocal relationship between principle (*ri*) and

Indeed, as many other religious traditions and mythographers, Buddhists seem to have a liking for the snake as a metaphor for awakening or, at least, as a major symbol for a rather easy explanation of the awakened mind. Even in the *Sutta Nipata*, one of the earliest Buddhist sutras, the snake is used as the symbol of liberation or the very basis of enlightenment.<sup>296</sup> The relevance of the snake symbol for the enlightened mind can also be more clearly understood when we consider the inseparable association between the symbols of the snake and the dragon not only in mythology in general, but also in Buddhist context. As examined in the previous chapter on medieval Japanese *setsuwa*, although the dragon appears to be subjugated by Buddhist teachings at first, it soon transforms itself into the protector of Buddha Dharma and the guardian that leads pious monks to true enlightenment.

*Keiran* emphasizes the significance of the dragon palace as the repository of wisdom and original enlightenment; as seen in the above passages, the dragon palace is where all Buddhist teachings and doctrines should be stored before they perish and are exhausted. There is also a wish-fulfilling jewel in which the essence of the dragon deity is incarnated. Moreover, *Keiran* associates the wish-fulfilling jewel with the *samaya* realized form of enlightened mind.<sup>297</sup>

The dragon deity is the representation of both ignorance (J. *mumyō* 無明) and original enlightenment. The seemingly ambivalent notion attached to the dragon symbol is also found in many other earlier medieval Buddhist writings, such as the medieval Buddhist *setsuwa* tale

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phenomena (*ji*). Moreover, in texts following the Yogācāra line of mind- and consciousness-oriented thought, water or the ocean often symbolize the "mind" as the ultimate principle or reality.

<sup>296</sup> *The Sutta Nipata* begins with the chapter of the "snake" (*Uraga*), and in the chapter the snake's ecdysis is repeatedly emphasized as the symbol of the liberation from and extinction of attachment. Interestingly, the earlier chapters proceed from the chapter of the snake (*Uraga Vagga*), to the chapter of the "small (*Culla Vagga*)," and ultimately to the chapter of the "big /great" (*Maha Vagga*): this suggests a staged process toward enlightenment. Seen in this light, the snake can be regarded as symbolizing a sort of prototypical type of wisdom or the beginning of enlightenment.

<sup>297</sup> T.76, 2410:624b1-11.

collection<sup>298</sup>, where dragon characters are represented as sacred figures, on one hand, and on the other hand, are shown as beings inferior to Buddha and needing to be domesticated by Buddha or the divine power of the *Lotus Sūtra* (J. *Hokekyō* 法華經).

Moreover, since most of the allegories treating the dragon palace and wish-fulfilling jewel as high knowledge, wisdom, and magical power is also found in these tale collections, we can see that *Keiran* re-works the existing symbolic meanings and functions of the dragon-snake by illuminating them in a more philosophical light, which is all the more strengthened by reinterpretation through original enlightenment thought.

What calls for more attention in *Keiran's* discussion of the representation of the snake and the dragon is that the germ or embryo of ultimate wisdom is preserved inside "water." The dragon deity and wish-fulfilling jewel are deep inside the ocean, and the tiny snake is inside of the lungs in golden water. As the above passages show, the inside of the lungs is understood to represent water energy in the expression of the "wheel of water" (*suirin* 水輪), and the golden water is in the wheel of water. Likewise, the ocean, where the dragon deity and wish-fulfilling jewel reside, is obviously water and is conceptualized as "great water element" (*suidai* 水大).<sup>299</sup>

This kind of explanation is grounded upon Japanese Mikkyō cosmological principle, and in particular, the concept of the "Six Great Elements" (*rokudai* 六大) formulated by Kūkai 空海, which classifies six cosmic fundamental elements, i.e., earth (*chi* 地), water (*sui* 水), fire (*ka* 火), air (*fū* 風), space (*kū* 空), and mind/consciousness (*shiki* 識). Although the discussion of this esoteric principle is beyond the scope of this study, an important point to note here is that the

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<sup>298</sup> *Konjaku monogatari shū* is a paramount example, which records many Buddhist didactic tales about violent and evil dragon characters that are "tamed" and elevated into the protector of Buddhist Law and the guardian of pious Buddhist monks.

<sup>299</sup> T.76, 2410:708b22.

discourse on the six elements carries undeniable weight in *Keiran*. As much as all discussions in *Keiran*—from the subject of Japanese geography to Buddhist icons—are “doctrinalized,” a number of subjects either from the exoteric or esoteric section in *Keiran* are interpreted through the Mikkyō language and cosmological schemes such as the six elements theory, mandala, and siddham seed syllables. The Tendai doctrine and Mikkyō cosmology are indeed the main currency for both exoteric and esoteric discourses in *Keiran*, which reflects the eclectic quality of medieval Taimitsu teachings and practices on Mt. Hiei.

There is an unmistakable parallel between the esoteric six element scheme—as well as its original Indian cosmic element theory—and traditional Chinese scheme of the Five Elements or Phases (Ch. *wu xing*; J. *gogyō* 五行). In particular, it is noticeable that in the both scheme of cosmic elements, each element is in organic relationships with one another and thus forms certain flows or patterns in the whole scheme, which can also be hypostatized by means of body, speech, and mind, i.e., *mudrā*, *mantra*, *mandala*. One good example relevant to the current discussion is that the air element in the six elements is produced by the water element in Mikkyō element theory.<sup>300</sup> This mechanism between the air and water elements is particularly employed in *Keiran* in order to explain the esoteric symbolism of the serpent deity such as Benzaiten, which will be discussed shortly.

Numerous Buddhist sūtras and treatises frequently use metaphors regarding water or the ocean to explain the Buddhist tenet of dependent origination and, in particular, the reciprocal relationship between principle (*ri* 理) and phenomena (*ji* 事). Additionally, in texts following the Yogācāra line of mind- and consciousness-oriented thought, water or the ocean often symbolize

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<sup>300</sup> Precisely, the air element is generated as the result of the water element’s operation (*yung* 用). It will be detailed later.

the mind as the ultimate principle or reality, just as the waves of the ocean symbolize the manifold consciousness of the mind.<sup>301</sup> Also, in *Keiran*, water is used as a metaphor to indicate the ultimate principle and the nature of all sentient beings.<sup>302</sup>

Thus, to put it exactly according to *Keiran*, the tiny snake inside us resides inside the sea of suchness (*rishō* 理性), the water of golden light that exists for every sentient being. And its location is, as seen above, in the lungs of our body, which belongs to the wheel of water. Just like an embryo inside the amniotic fluid in a mother's womb, the golden embryo / germ in the water part of our body or deep in the ocean represents the root of life and death.<sup>303</sup>

In this light, in *Keiran* water—as in the sea of suchness of all sentient beings and the residence of the snake/dragon deity—carries the ambivalent symbolism of life and death. The pairing of life and death merits attention because not only are the two apparently contrary to each other, but also, as a pair they form a Buddhologically contrasting pole to the concept of nirvāna (*nehan* 涅槃). But then, according to the Tendai doctrine as well as all Mahāyāna teachings, life and death are not the opposite of each other, they are one and the same (*shōji ichinyo* 生死一如).<sup>304</sup> Likewise, the samsaric cycle of life and death is not the opposite of nirvana, the liberation

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<sup>301</sup> The analogy between water or the ocean and mind in the Yogācāra teachings will be discussed in the next section.

<sup>302</sup> T.76, 2410:517c28-518a1 and T.76, 2410:866b5.

<sup>303</sup> To be precise, I should refer to it as the embryo in "golden water," but considering its association with *tathāgatagarbha* and *tathātā*, which are often referred to as "golden light," a reference to the golden embryo would not be so far-fetched. In this light, *Keiran's* discussion of the golden embryo / snake as the primordial uncreated strikingly resembles the ancient Vedantic notion of "*Ka*," the golden embryo (*hiranyagarbha*) or the seed of fire, which is praised as the god of creation in the *Rig Veda*. The analogy between the two may be understood as a reflection of the close relationship between Vedantic and Buddhist philosophy; but the most important point here is that the Buddhist notion of *tathāgatagarbha* is the antithesis of the Vedantic or Brahmaic "*ātman*" attached to the notion of the absolute self and its unchanging substance.

<sup>304</sup> Among a number of such expressions, one can find that an independent subsection in *Keiran* discusses the very issue of the oneness of life and death. See T.76, 2410:781a.

from life and death. The ambivalent symbolic qualities tied to the snake/dragon and its associations are all integrated into nondual (*funi*) truth. As the subsequent discussion will show, various serpentine deities and symbols associated with sinuous qualities are the paramount representation of the nondual principle of Tendai/Taimitsu teachings. In this fashion, by exploring discussions of kami and the logic of *honji suijaku* in *Keiran*, this study will examine the significance of serpentine symbols further in order to understand their connection to the main inquiries of this study.

### *Dragon-girl's Setting an Example for Us*

As seen in the prior discussion, dragon-girl (*ryūjo* 龍女) is the serpentine figure having actual form as the snake. *Keiran* associates the dragon-girl with more religiously and ritualistically specific deities such as Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva (J. *kokūzō bosatsu* 虚空藏菩薩), Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪觀音 (Skt. Cintāmaṇicakra), and Bezaiten 辨財天, according to the Three Bodies structure of Tendai/Taimitsu applied theory.<sup>305</sup> Nevertheless, throughout many entries concerning the dragon-girl in *Keiran*, it is not difficult to detect the primary significance of this figure for the author: that is, everything about and associated with the dragon-girl signifies the nonduality of realities and all-encompassing, nondual Dharma, which represents the spirit of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

With a marked degree of frequency and depth, *Keiran* mentions and discusses the dragon-girl's achieving enlightenment—a well-known account in Chapter Twelve Devadatta in the *Lotus Sūtra*. Her story is in effect reported by Mañjuśrī (*monju bosatsu* 文殊菩薩) when he

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<sup>305</sup> Discussion of these divine figures will follow in the subsequent section.



tells Tathāgata about his preaching the *Lotus Sūtra* in the ocean for Dragon Kings. And this portion of the story is noted as well in *Keiran* in its discussions of the dragon-girl and the all-inclusive nature of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

Given that, from *Keiran*'s perspective, the main points of the dragon-girl's story appear to lie in the following: the eight-year-old dragon-girl (the Dragon King Sagala's daughter) "quickly" accomplishes (*tonjō* 頓成) ultimate, perfect enlightenment (*shōgaku* 正覺 or *myōkaku* 妙覺 or *mujōgaku* 無上覺; Skt. *samyak-sambodhi*) a) by chanting a prayer (*dhāraṇī*) toward the southern direction of undefiled truth,<sup>306</sup> b) by dedicating the precious wish-fulfilling jewel to Buddha,<sup>307</sup> and c) by virtue of the Three Mysteries (*sanmitsu*).<sup>308</sup> The categorization above, however, is for the sake of convenience of the present discussion, and these virtues, which enable the dragon-girl's enlightenment, are found to be mutually connected and integrated when looking closely at *Keiran*'s discussions closely. And the keyword for this mutual connection and integration is nonduality, because nonduality allows one to identify everything with everything.

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<sup>306</sup> T.76, 2410: 517c, 519c6-7, 555c27-28, 572a15-20, 575b21-15, 589c23-24, 590a11, 608a9-16, 612b23-25, 856b25-27, 866a16-22. In one of the sections discussing the Lotus Dharma (*hokkehō* 法華法), at one point *Keiran* comments on the esoteric twofold understanding of the dragon-girl's enlightenment. It says that Mikkyō divides her enlightenment into two layers: her enlightenment in the ocean as the first awakening and her subsequent attainment of the perfect enlightenment (*myōkaku*) at the realm of the undefiled southern direction. See T.76, 2410: 600b for details.

<sup>307</sup> T.76, 2410: 540c10-11, 544b27-29, 579a5-6, 590a11-13, 773a21-22, 856b25-27.

<sup>308</sup> T.76, 2410: 575b25, 590a16.

Based on the esoteric five-fold scheme for cosmology and devotional practice (*gosōjōjin* 五相成身),<sup>309</sup> the southern direction, where the dragon-girl achieves enlightenment,<sup>310</sup> indicates the realm of the undefiled (*muku* 無垢), and represents the nondual equality (*funi byōdō* 不二平等) of all realities.<sup>311</sup> Thus the dragon-girl’s attainment of enlightenment is emphasized as representing the Dharma of the nondual, one-vehicle (*funi ichijō* 不二一乘),<sup>312</sup> as well as manifesting the all-equal and all-integrating (*byōdō taie* 平等大會) *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>313</sup> *Keiran* often addresses the dragon-girl’s account with the “one-vehicle of the ocean” (*kaichū ichijō* 海中一乘).

It should be noted that *Keiran*’s discussions of the dragon-girl carries a laudatory overtone, and as the author is commending in many cases, it is due to the dragon-girl’s overcoming her many defects. The dragon-girl is a marginal figure in the traditional Buddhist sense, in terms of her species, i.e., an animal-born, of her age—she is a mere child at the age of eight, and of her sex, i.e., female.

As much as *Keiran* recognizes these “shortcomings” of the dragon-girl, in many accounts she is praised for her ability to transform those defects into the appropriate ones for attaining

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<sup>309</sup> Its basic view is that five appearances (*sō* 相) in reality become five buddhas, who represent their own five virtues, or, five wisdoms (*chi* 智). Each of the five buddhas and his respective wisdom is associated with many other qualities manifested in the world. The whole cosmological structure, according to the five qualities, can be visualized through mandalas, which form an important mind contemplation practice for enlightenment in esoteric meditation and devotional practices. The five wisdom buddhas and the mandalic structure will be examined in Chapter Four.

<sup>310</sup> Mostly, it is commented on as the “dragon-girl’s (attaining) ultimate enlightenment” (*ryūjo shōgaku*) in *Keiran*, but the expression of “dragon-girl’s achieving the Way” (*ryūjo jōdō*) is also often used.

<sup>311</sup> T.76, 2410: 519c10, 555c24, 572a20, 622b, 704a27,708a15, 756c11.

<sup>312</sup> T.76, 2410: 623b25-29.

<sup>313</sup> T.76, 2410: 517c

enlightenment. Although there is no particular comment in *Keiran* on the controversial issue of the dragon-girl's sex transformation, it seems that to the author and scholastic circle on Mt. Hiei what is more important is that women's attaining buddhahood is endorsed in the *Lotus Sūtra* through the dragon-girl's story.<sup>314</sup> The core of her achievement lies in the fact that she transforms her formerly tainted mind into undefiled and pure enlightenment. And this transformation is related to her possessing a serpentine form; it is also deeply connected to the previous discussion of the snake mind—of the unconditioned, original enlightenment.

The dragon-girl has strong potential because first, she herself embodies the unconditioned form of original enlightenment, as emphasized in *Keiran* in several accounts. Furthermore, her being a child strengthens her potential as, according to *Keiran*, the essence of childish ignorance (*chi* 癡) represents the unmoving, unconditioned, original enlightenment.<sup>315</sup> Besides, being a child, the dragon-girl has not yet fully developed afflictions (*bonnō* 煩惱)—probably concerning sexual desire by implication; therefore, transforming her ignorance without afflictions into enlightened mind would be easier and quicker.<sup>316</sup>

Moreover, it is understood in *Keiran* that the dragon-girl's achievement of enlightenment connotes her overcoming the dragon kind's own afflictions and deluded mind (*meishin* 迷心).<sup>317</sup> These afflictions are the very Three Poisons (*sandoku*)<sup>318</sup> that are manifested as the form of the

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<sup>314</sup> For example, in a discussion of the dragon-girl's enlightenment, *Keiran* comments that the Devadatta chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* is about women's attainment of buddhahood. T.76, 2410: 600b22-23.

<sup>315</sup> T.76, 2410: 623c4.

<sup>316</sup> T.76, 2410: 623b26-c8. In the same discussion, *Keiran* takes an example of Acala (*fudō myōō* 不動明王) and its iconic appearance of a young (fifteen-year-old) boy (*dōji* 童子); by the same logic with the dragon-girl's case, the appearance of a boy indicates the form of the unconditioned original enlightenment before the development of afflictions.

<sup>317</sup> T.76, 2410: 623c1

<sup>318</sup> Sometimes it is replaced or juxtaposed with the term, the Three Evil Paths (*sanakudō* 三惡道).

snake. Thus *Keiran* interprets that the dragon-girl's enlightenment reveals the inconceivable nonduality of worldly afflictions and liberation.<sup>319</sup>

However, converting her poisoned mind to an awakened one seems by no means automatic. As discussed so far, the dragon-girl's enlightenment is achieved at the southern direction of the undefiled. Her liberation in the purest realm is presumably because she is such a defiled being on many levels. As *Keiran* mentions in numerous accounts, what should also be noted about the southern direction is that, again on the five-fold esoteric cosmic map, it is the direction of practice (*shugyō* 修行).<sup>320</sup> As commented on in both the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Keiran*, the dragon-girl achieves enlightenment due to her learning—from Mañjuśrī who came down to the ocean—of the Dharma of the *sūtra* and *dhāraṇī*, and to her practice in the form of chanting the *dhāraṇī* in the southern realm. This is the very ground for *Keiran*'s comment about the dragon-girl's achieving enlightenment through the expedient means of the Three Mysteries.<sup>321</sup> Given that such an idiomatic concept as the transformation of delusions to awakening (*tenmei kaigo* 轉迷開悟) is emphasized as a key practice in attaining enlightenment in *Keiran*, it should not be surprising to see *Keiran*'s commendatory remark that the dragon-girl's quick acquisition of enlightenment is the example for all sentient beings' attaining buddhahood.<sup>322</sup>

On the other hand, as noted above, the dragon-girl's enlightenment is a fast and sudden one, which is, as both the original account in the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Keiran* recount, mainly owing

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<sup>319</sup> T.76, 2410: 523c24.

<sup>320</sup> It is connected to the nature of the seventh level of the consciousness, which is associated with the southern direction. The subsequent chapter will discuss this dimension of association in detail.

<sup>321</sup> T.76, 2410: 590a16. The grounds for the dragon-girl's enlightenment all fit into the categories of the three mysteries: her embodiments of the snake form to the mystery of body, her chanting of *dhāraṇī* to the mystery of speech, and finally, the dedication of her wish-fulfilling jewel to the mystery of mind. The wish-fulfilling jewel is the *samaya* symbol of the one mind (*isshin*), and the discussion of the jewel will follow later in this section.

<sup>322</sup> T.76, 2410: 623a2.

to the magical power (*shinriki* 神力) of her wish-fulfilling jewel. Her possession or production of the wish-fulfilling jewel (*nyoihōju* 如意寶珠; Skt. *cintāmaṇi*),<sup>323</sup> her veneration of it, and dedication to Buddha are understood as the excellent proof of her accomplishing buddhahood. The identity and representation of the wish-fulfilling jewel in *Keiran* merits an in-depth examination.

### *The Liver of the Dragon, the Blood of Buddha*

There are several Buddhist divinities whose iconographic images in the Japanese Buddhist pantheon are associated with the wish-fulfilling jewel. Most of them—Kṣitigarbha (*jizō bosatsu* 地藏菩薩), Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva, and Nyoirin Kannon—are linked or homologized with the snake/dragon deity, particularly in the world of *Keiran*. As will soon be examined, these deities are all identified with Benzaiten, which is also a snake deity and associated with the dragon-girl.

Dragon, or Dragon King's wish-fulfilling jewel, is a well-known idiom in either Buddhist or secular mythological domains; this notion is confirmed and strengthened in *Keiran*. The wish-fulfilling jewel is, most of all, in the possession of the dragon deity, who resides in the deepest part of the ocean.<sup>324</sup> The jewel is a precious treasure that the dragon protects fiercely because the jewel is, as the name suggests, that which can become anything as one thinks or wishes it to be.

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<sup>323</sup> It is not entirely clear either in the *Lotus Sūtra* or *Keiran*. Nevertheless, many accounts in *Keiran* narrating the jewel producing abilities of Buddhist figures and illustrious monks such as Kūkai; moreover, considering that the wish-fulfilling jewel had long been identified with Buddha relics, *śarīra*, the jewel discussed in *Keiran* can be deemed also as something that could be created by the dragon-girl herself.

<sup>324</sup> *Keiran* refers to this sea as the nine layered water on several occasions. This expression is related to the esoteric mandala of the Diamond Realm, also known as, “The Nine Assemblies Mandala” (*kue mandara* 九会曼荼羅), and its associated nine layers of the consciousness paradigm. This will be examined in Chapter Four.

It is unmolded potential. *Keiran* defines the jewel as something that generates all dharmas, increases benefits, and opens one to enlightenment.<sup>325</sup> It is no wonder that the jewel is identified with the unconditioned original enlightenment in the snake form.<sup>326</sup> It is interesting to see *Keiran*'s identification of the wish-fulfilling jewel as the liver of the dragon.<sup>327</sup> Whether or not applying the exact analysis of the synecdochical relationship, the wish-fulfilling jewel is clearly what belongs with the dragon and serpent symbols, which leaves an unmistakable implication that what is truly important in attaining original enlightenment is associated with a type of inner mechanism surrounding the snake symbol.

The association found in *Keiran* between the dragon's precious gem and the essence of unconditioned original enlightenment, which was examined previously as the germ of Buddha, resonates with the customary Buddhist identification of wish-fulfilling jewels with Buddha relics, *śarīra* in particular. Brian Ruppert's extensive study on the veneration rituals centering on Buddha relics in medieval Japan shows that wish-fulfilling jewels were, both in rituals and the doctrinal sense, identified with Buddha relics, particularly through Kūkai's systematic efforts that were underway in the tenth century.<sup>328</sup> Just as Buddha relics were venerated as the embodiment of buddhahood, the wish-fulfilling jewel of Dragon kings also came to be deemed as the manifestation of the Tathāgata, and the Buddha relics on the Buddhist altar were to be visualized as being a wish-fulfilling jewel. It was also believed to have led worshippers to enlightenment. The identification of the jewel with Buddha relics is also profusely found in

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<sup>325</sup> T.76, 2410: 778c.

<sup>326</sup> T.76, 2410: 792a19, 866b8-12.

<sup>327</sup> T.76, 2410:

<sup>328</sup> Brian Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan*. See Chapter Four in particular.

*Keiran*, for example, through an explanation that the Tathāgata entered into the sea and became the wish-fulfilling jewel.<sup>329</sup>

The increasing worship of the jewel in medieval Japan and the emphasis on its magical power—in particular, regenerating, protective, and wealth-bestowing power—also resulted in its identification with the jewel of the imperial regalia by the mid-thirteenth century in Japan,<sup>330</sup> as seen in Chapter Two. *Keiran* also describes the wish-fulfilling jewel as having the power to make all crops grow and raise people by growing itself in the space (*kokū* 虚空).<sup>331</sup> Nevertheless, the signification of omnipotence attached to the wish-fulfilling jewel seems, ironically, to have something to do with the ambivalence of the qualities associated with the jewel.

As seen earlier, certain ambivalent values and qualities are associated with the serpentine symbols in *Keiran*'s discussions centering on kami. The tiny snake in the sea of our mind and the dragon deity simultaneously signify the Three Poisons and original enlightenment; they also symbolize, along with the dragon palace in the deep sea, the source of life and death. Again, the rationale that binds the bipolar qualities together in the same symbol is the Tendai—as well as broader Mahāyāna—doctrine of nonduality.

As mentioned before, the Mikkyō six elements theory, mandala, and siddham seed syllables, are an essential currency in *Keiran*'s discourses. Thus, explanations of each deity, Buddhist concept, and religious symbol by corresponding it to certain siddham seed syllables are commonly found in the text. Among them, seed syllables associated with the wish-fulfilling jewel call for attention. To be natural for such an all-mighty symbol, the wish-fulfilling jewel is

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<sup>329</sup> T.76, 2410: 612b.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>331</sup> T.76, 2410: 772c.

associated with several seed syllables, and *Keiran* discusses the three syllables, *ra*, *raṃ*, and *vaṃ*. Nonetheless, the siddham syllable *ra* represents the very unconditioned, undefiled basis of the jewel,<sup>332</sup> and this association is less discussed in *Keiran* than the other two syllables. The seed syllable *vaṃ* is not only associated with the jewel, but also with the wheel of water being the seed syllable for the great sea. Thus *vaṃ* indicates the water element and is explained in *Keiran* as the essence of life.<sup>333</sup> On the contrary, the syllable *raṃ* is the seed of death and extinction (*metsu* 滅), indicating the fire element.<sup>334</sup> *Keiran* clearly comments that water and fire represent the virtues of life and death.<sup>335</sup>

Then, it means that the wish-fulfilling jewel represents both life and death. It is simultaneously water and fire. *Keiran* explains the ontologically identical nature of water and fire in its broader discussion of the oneness of life and death.<sup>336</sup> Also, a dialogue between hypothetical interlocutors on the six great elements in *Keiran* reads:

Question: Water and fire seem to be opposite and mutually obstructive with each other. How can there be no obstruction between them?

Answer: If you understand that matter, you are grasping the meaning of the realization of Buddhahood in this very present form. (...) For example, let's see the way in which fire and water forms no obstruction. Blood is the fire enclosed by water. It also indicates [the nature] inside the womb. There is no breach or space between the two elements; nor either of the two lose its element. This inconceivable mystery is called no obstruction. Know that there is no boundary between fire and water...<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> T.76, 2410: 555c28-29

<sup>333</sup> T.76, 2410: 624a3-5.

<sup>334</sup> T.76, 2410: 781a2-3.

<sup>335</sup> T.76, 2410: 781a2.

<sup>336</sup> T.76, 2410: 781a starts a sectioned discussion of this issue.

<sup>337</sup> T.76, 2410: 739a25-b2.



(尋云。是ハ水與火礙スルニ全成障礙ヲ。何云無礙乎 答。得意其故ハ此文ノ外題ニ即身成佛義ト云ヘリ。知ヌ於外色非可論無礙。於一身可得意也。假令火與水無礙ナル様ハ。血ハ水煙ハ火也。此義訖胎内ニ以來。全暫時モ無隔不失。此不思議ヲ無礙ト云也。知ヌ火ノ境水ノ境ト無別)

This is how the wish-fulfilling jewel can be both water and fire. To be more precise, recalling the previous discussion of the tiny snake, the jewel should be understood as the fire shining in a golden color inside the water of suchness. The well-known iconic image of the wish-fulfilling jewel in flames resonates with such symbolism. What is more crucial here is that this jewel on fire is enclosed with water. Interestingly, this representation mirrors a trigram in the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) called "fire inside water (水中之火)." It is considered the essence of life and pertains to engendering a spirit (*shin* 神). In any case, the *Book of Change* represents the mutual interdependence between water and fire as the most important elements in understanding the mystery surrounding the source of life, in addition to being something divine. Similar to this divine trigram, being the nondual embodiment of water and fire, the wish-fulfilling jewel holds the omnipotent power that either generates or destroys things. In the wish-fulfilling jewel, life and death, water and fire, and, suchness and deluded mind mutually respond (*kan-ō*) and are interpenetrated (*tsū*) and merged (*shūgō*).

Therefore, the wish-fulfilling jewel of the dragon is the esoteric manifestation form (*sanmayagyō* 三昧耶形)<sup>338</sup> of the one mind,<sup>339</sup> which is the very ground of all dharmas—one that integrates all realities. Another culminating expression for the nondual signification of the

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<sup>338</sup> *Sanmayagyō* is the general term for symbolic forms of all Buddhist deities and divinities. The logic of the symbolic form is that external appearance (*gaisō* 外相) is the manifestation of inner realization (*naisho* 内証) as it is (*Mikkyō jiten*, Hōzōkan, 1997, p.276).

<sup>339</sup> T.76, 2410: 624b.

jewel in *Keiran* is that the jewel is the essence of the mysterious unity of objects and wisdom (*kyōchi myōgō* 境智冥合)<sup>340</sup>; as well as the representation of nonduality between the principle (*ri*) and wisdom (*chi*).<sup>341</sup> This ultimate nondual symbolism becomes more concrete through the prominent serpentine figure, Benzaiten.

### *The Good Serpent Lady*

Among a vast number of deities in the polytheistic Japanese pantheon, Benzaiten 弁財天 (or 弁才天) has particularly fascinated scholars of Japanese religion due to, among many, its complex origins, multifaceted characteristics and iconic image, and various rituals. Studies on Benzaiten, along with “strange gods” (*ijin* 異神) by Yamamoto Hiroko and, more recently, Bernard Faure, present full, in-depth examinations of the symbolism of this deity.<sup>342</sup> Thus the scope of the discussion concerning Benzaiten in this section will be limited to what is crucial to understanding the deity and the related rituals with regard to the main topics of the current chapter.

Scholars have commonly ascribed the origin of the Japanese deity Benzaiten to the Indian goddess Sarasvatī, who is revered as the deity of wisdom, eloquence, and music. There certainly are shared characteristics between the Indian goddess and Japanese Benzaiten. Most immediately noticeable among the commonalities would be that both Sarasvatī and Benzaiten are female and represent wisdom, eloquent speech, and music or sound; but also, both deities are associated with

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<sup>340</sup> T.76, 2410: 622b17-18.

<sup>341</sup> T.76, 2410: 77210-11. As the principle and objects (phenomenon) mirror each other, these two expressions mean, after all, the ultimate truth that all three aspects of reality are one (nondual), and that the jewel manifests that truth.

<sup>342</sup> Yamamoto Hiroko, *Ijin: Chūsei nihon no hikyōteki sekai*, (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1998); Faure, *The Fluid Pantheon*.

water, which is, particularly in Benzaiten's case, again connected to the snake/dragon image and the symbolism of nondual truth.

The Japanese deity Benzaiten can be divided into two types: Myōon Benzaiten 妙音弁財天 and Uga Benzaiten 宇賀弁財天. The two are more or less easily distinguished by their iconographic images through the total number of their arms—Myōon Benzaiten two-armed and Uga Benzaiten eight-armed. The former is holding a sword and a biwa, the Japanese lute, in her two arms. But as the deity's name, the “mysterious sound” (*myōon*), expresses, her main symbolism is associated with the biwa and the sounds she makes. *Keiran* identifies the biwa as the *samaya* form of Myōon Benzaiten, emphasizing that sound becomes her natural essence.<sup>343</sup> At one point, the *Keiran* corpus connects the symbolism of sound with speech, or more precisely, preaching (*seppo* 説法), asserting that observing sound (*kannon* 觀音) and (making) mysterious sound become the manifestation of the preaching that transmits the Dharma.<sup>344</sup> Thus Benzaiten's representation of eloquent speech seems to naturally fit in with her other representations, according to *Keiran*.

The signification of sound and speech as the main religious function of Benzaiten<sup>345</sup> is interesting in light of the esoteric cosmic paradigm composed of the six great elements discussed earlier in this chapter. According to *Keiran*, speech and doctrinal teachings are the manifestation of the great air element (*fūdai* 風大), and the air element is the functional manifestation of the

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<sup>343</sup> T.76, 2410: 620c10.

<sup>344</sup> T.76, 2410: 620c11-12.

<sup>345</sup> As Myōon Benzaiten is the deity of wisdom (*chi* 智) and, being associated with sound, speech and preaching, seem to agree more with her character, but both Myōon and Uga Benzaiten are venerated as deities of eloquent speech and transmission of Buddhist teachings.

great water element (*suidai* 水大).<sup>346</sup> *Keiran* continues to say that these manifestations all go back to the source, i.e., the great water element, and that is why Buddha's teachings after its perishing should go back to and be preserved in the dragon palace.<sup>347</sup> Thus if Benzaiten is the water goddess—as is Sarasvatī—that would neatly fit in with the esoteric element scheme, while her function of the transmission of Dharma through sound is rationalized by the scheme.

The above-mentioned discussion in *Keiran* of water and the dragon palace reminds us of the deep symbolic connection between the snake/dragon and water. After all, the snake-bodied dragon deity, regardless of the kind—the Dragon king or the dragon-girl, is the water deity (*suijin* 水神)<sup>348</sup>; and so is Benzaiten,<sup>349</sup> as her identity is also as a dragon deity, manifesting the form and symbolism of the snake. A particular case in point is Uga Benzaiten—the other type of Japanese Benzaiten—and she is the perfect embodiment of the serpentine symbolism that has so far been explored and will be viewed further below.

As a goddess who bestows wealth and good fortune, Uga Benzaiten is portrayed as having eight arms, which represents the eight-petaled lotus flower, carrying eight objects<sup>350</sup> in her arms. Typically, on the top of her head there is a coiled snake with the face of a human—an old man<sup>351</sup> in particular. There is speculation that this human-headed snake was the iconic

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<sup>346</sup> T.76, 2410: 624a28-29.

<sup>347</sup> T.76, 2410: 624a29-b2.

<sup>348</sup> T.76, 2410: 624a28.

<sup>349</sup> T.76, 2410: 772b16.

<sup>350</sup> They are arrow, bow, spear, sword, axe, vajra, chakram (a throwing weapon), and *kensaku* 縹索, a religious object composed of intertwined threads of five colors (blue, yellow, red, white, and black—the five colors associated with the esoteric fivefold mandala).

<sup>351</sup> A face with a long beard, which resembles the mask of an old man character (*okina* 翁), which in the Noh 能 theater distinguishes it as an old man.

representation of an independent local deity called Ugajin and came to merge with Benzaiten due to some shared religious symbolism, but its provenance is unclear.<sup>352</sup> The word “uga” means the white snake, the snake on Benzaiten’s head, which seems to be related to the Sanskrit word for serpent, “*uraga*,” literally meaning “breast-going.”<sup>353</sup>

According to *Keiran*, the white color of Uga Benzaiten’s snake signifies the good (*zen* 善). While the snake body itself amounts to the most powerful state of the Three Poisons, and thus pervades the Three Evil Ways (*sanakudō* 三惡道),<sup>354</sup> the white snake represents the Three Good Ways (*sanzendō* 三善道).<sup>355</sup> This is because Benzaiten is the good dragon (*zenryū* 善龍) of the two types of dragon, i.e., the evil dragon and the good dragon.<sup>356</sup>

Despite the afore-examined nondual meaning of the snake symbol, that is, ignorance and original enlightenment, the above allegories of the good and evil dragon allude to an important point about the nonduality of ignorance and enlightenment: the conversion of a deluded mind to awakening indeed cannot be accomplished without effort. Thus Benzaiten’s white snake symbolizes the successfully converted snake mind of original enlightenment, just as the dragon-girl overcame her deluded mind and attained ultimate enlightenment by all the right moves that were previously examined.

It is no wonder then, that Benzaiten is also identified with the dragon-girl. The dragon-girl is in homology with Benzaiten through complexly intertwined associations among various

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<sup>352</sup> Yamamoto, *Ijin.*, pp. 326-327.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, p.327.

<sup>354</sup> The Three Evil Ways refers to three types of the lower course of rebirth that evildoers will undergo after death. They are purgatory, preta (hungry ghost), and animal-birth.

<sup>355</sup> T.76, 2410: 620b18-21.

<sup>356</sup> T.76, 2410: 625a.

kami and Buddhist deities. Nonetheless, the dragon-girl seems to be the central symbolic figure that reveals the essential religious meaning of Benzaiten; thus *Keiran* inserts a title such as “Learning Benzaiten through the Dragon-girl” (*i ryūjo shū benzaiten* 以龍女習辨財天)<sup>357</sup> into a subsection of the Benzaiten chapter named “Secret Transmission on Benzaiten” (*Benzaiten hiketsu* 辨財天秘決).<sup>358</sup> In the dragon-girl subsection of the Benzaiten chapter, as well as in many places in *Keiran*, the discussion of the dragon-girl’s achieving enlightenment and examinations of all the accompanying allegories—the snake mind of the unmoving, unconditioned original enlightenment, the dragon palace, and the wish-fulfilling jewel—form a grand recurring theme that are emphasized repeatedly.

As well-reflected in *Keiran*, the discursive development of Benzaiten worship and the pertinent theorization were mostly conducted by medieval Tendai/Taimitsu scholar-monks on Mt. Hiei. In particular, the precept lineage (*kaike* 戒家) based at Kurodani contributed to the formulation of sophisticated esoteric rituals on Benzaiten and the related symbols.<sup>359</sup> The *kaike* lineage was deeply interested in the actual observance of the precepts based on scriptural and doctrinal teachings; consequently, the Kurodani precept lineage formulated its own extremely secret type of ritual termed the precepts formula (*kai-kanjō* 戒灌頂 Sk. *śīla-abhiṣheka*) and passed it down via the *kaike* circle.<sup>360</sup> *Keiran*’s author, Kōshū, himself received the transmission

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<sup>357</sup> T.76, 2410: 622b11-623a12. Although a subsection with such a title is only limited to this case, a number of discussions and comments on Benzaiten in close reference to the dragon-girl are interspersed, not only in the Benzaiten chapter but also throughout the entire text.

<sup>358</sup> T.76, 2410: 619c2-628c7.

<sup>359</sup> Yamamoto, *Ijin*, p. 404.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 404-405.

of the precept lineage in 1308 during his stay at Kurodani; thus, the precepts section in *Keiran* represents his intimate knowledge of the various precept *kanjō* formulae.

Benzaiten worship practice on Mt. Hiei was developed through the *kaike* formulae on Benzaiten and records of the secret transmission of those rites—and particularly by Kōshū and his disciples such as Unkai 運海.<sup>361</sup> The *kaike* formulas on Benzaiten revolve around various symbols associated with Benzaiten; taking a few examples, contemplation on the seed syllables representing Benzaiten's diverse forms<sup>362</sup> and the visualization of her *samaya* forms such as the biwa lute and the wish-fulfilling jewel. Various types of *mudrā* (*shuin* 手印) were also one of the main esoteric formulae epitomizing religious meanings of Benzaiten.

Regardless of the type—whether it is seed syllable contemplation or a *mudrā*—esoteric Benzaiten formulae in writings by the medieval Tendai precepts lineage are all explained as manifestation of nondual truth and the middle path (*chūdō* 中道). In other words, those formulaic symbols represent the middle path because apparent dual realities become nondual (*funi*) and mysteriously merge together (*myōgō*) in and through the signification of the symbols. According to *Keiran*, the *kanjō* ritual per se manifests nondual truth.<sup>363</sup>

Combined duality in Benzaiten's symbolism is also noticeable outside of the Buddhist perspective: as Bernard Faure points out, Benzaiten presents polarity as the goddess of music/art

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<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 406.

<sup>362</sup> The diversity of Siddham syllables associated with Benzaiten are due to different focuses and dimensions for each Benzaiten formula; for example, a formula on her live form (*shōjin* 生身), i.e., the snake, and the one contemplating the identity of Benzaiten and the jewel focus on different syllables. For details, see the discussion of Benzaiten in the above-cited book by Yamamoto.

<sup>363</sup> T.76, 2410: 622c8-9.

and the warrior deity.<sup>364</sup> Yamamoto’s examination of Benzaiten’s another persona as *kōjin* 荒神, a wrathful deity<sup>365</sup> also agrees with the symbolism of violence and military might attached to Benzaiten. Still, it seems not absolutely justifiable to define Benzaiten’s more violent dimension as the “warrior” character.<sup>366</sup> Rather, militaristic symbolism regarding Benzaiten, including her weapons, is more related to the signification of her destructive power, as opposed to her productive power associated in particular with the wish-fulfilling jewel. As *Keiran* states, Benzaiten’s sword in her right hand can destroy all dharmas, which represents the view based on emptiness (*kūkan* 空觀); and in her left hand she is holding a wish-fulfilling jewel that can generate all dharmas (*manpō nōshō* 萬法能生), which indicates the provisional reality.<sup>367</sup> Thus, just as the dragon and wish-fulfilling jewel, Benzaiten signifies life and death, two aspects of nature intertwined in this good serpent lady.

In this light, Benzaiten, in medieval Tendai transmissions on Mt. Hiei, is venerated as the manifestation of nonduality between the two representative realms of reality, that is, objects and wisdom, principle and wisdom (*ri-chi* 理智), and emptiness and the provisional. *Keiran* connects

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<sup>364</sup> Faure, *Protectors and Predators*, pp.171-177. It will be helpful to recall the mostly weapon-like objects that Benzaiten is holding in her arms.

<sup>365</sup> As the deity who has the power to destroy all things, she is also identified with Acala (*fudō myōō*) in flames.

<sup>366</sup> For instance, Faure takes an example of the warrior quality of Benzaiten as the worship of Benzaiten by the Taira clan as a protector deity, as it appeared in the Tale of the Heike. But reasons for worshipping Benzaiten as a tutelary deity of warriors may vary: it is possible to worship her due to her all-destroying power; and, possessing or signifying destructive power itself does not prove Benzaiten’s identity as a “warrior” deity. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that there are somewhat dissonant qualities between music/feminine beauty and armory. It is noteworthy that Benzaiten’s polarity forms a parallel with the mythical account of Amaterasu in *Nihon shoki*, in particular when this beautiful goddess of light changes to a man’s attire and becomes armed with weapons, preparing to confront her evildoer brother. Indeed, Amaterasu and Benzaiten are linked with each other by being associated with Nyoirin Kannon. As astral manifestation of Nyoirin is *Myōjō tenshi* 明星天子, the polarity in symbolism of Benzaiten and Amaterasu seems also a reflection of the dual characteristics attached to *Myōjō*, i.e., the planet Venus. This will be discussed shortly.

<sup>367</sup> T.76, 2410: 662b21-23. It draws attention in the same passage that *Keiran* equates the view of emptiness with the realm of *nijō* 二乘 of Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekayāna, and the provisional with the realm of bodhisattva. Medieval Taimitsu’s prioritization of the provisionality is observed here again.



these pairs of Buddhist concepts to traditional East Asian cosmological pairings such as heaven (*ten* 天) and earth (*chi* 地), and *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽. This is one of those places at which *Keiran* presents that key currencies in Tendai/Taimitsu discourses and praxis that are also exchangeable with other currencies within the world of shared Asian hermeneutic culture.

Therefore, Benzaiten is portrayed in *Keiran* as the kami that embodies the principle of mutual interpenetration, or, literally, “interweaving” between heaven and earth (*tenchi keii* 天地經緯); this is because, *Keiran* continues, the nonduality of heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang*, and principle and wisdom become the essence of Ugajin 宇賀神.<sup>368</sup> The rationale for this definition is closely related to *Keiran*’s correlative cosmology as discussed in an earlier chapter; Benzaiten is called Kokūzō bosatsu 虛空藏菩薩 when she is in heaven, and Jizō bosatsu 地藏菩薩 when she is on earth.<sup>369</sup> And the merger between heaven and earth, and *yin* and *yang* in Benzaiten forms a correspondence with its very earthly manifestation, i.e., the sexual union between man and woman. Thus, a secret transmission was passed down from masters traced back to Saichō Kōshū’s lineage with regard to the formula that venerates Benzaiten’s raw, living form, i.e., the snake. Further, the meaning of its formulaic hand seals, that is, the inconceivable nondual merge between principle and wisdom, is likened to a lewd “shaking/trembling dance” (*shinbu* 振舞) between man and woman.<sup>370</sup> It is noteworthy that this mutual interpenetration, which creates a nondual relationship between two or more aspects, is again explained in

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<sup>368</sup> T.76, 2410: 620a26-28. A very similar passage exists in the earlier Tendai *kike* literature, the *Sankeyōryakuki* 山家要略記, one of the texts on which Kōshū based for his writing of *Keiran*. See Yamamoto, *Ijin*, and Breen and Teeuwen, “The History of a Shrine Hie,” in *A New History of Shinto* for details.

<sup>369</sup> T.76, 2410: 620a25-26.

<sup>370</sup> Yamamoto, *Ijin*, pp.413-414. To be precise, this benzaiten kanjō formula is explained through her homology with Aizen Myōō 愛染明王. But this part was skipped above in order to avoid confusion due to the use of too many homologies. See Yamamoto for details.

medieval Tendai esoteric language by using the analogy of the shaking dance. Continued attention will be paid to this analogy throughout this study whenever it is relevant.

*Nonduality: Three to Tango*

Returning to the bi-spatial representation of Benzaiten, by being incarnated as Kokūzō bosatsu in heaven and as Jizō Bosatsu on earth, heaven and earth are mutually interwoven in Benzaiten. *Keiran* continues to say that this is due to the virtue of Uga Benzaiten, as Ugajin embodies the three virtues (*sansai* 三才) of heaven (*ten* 天), earth (*chi* 地), and person (*nin/jin* 人). The three letters of *u* 宇, *ga* 賀, and *jin* 神 correspond to heaven as the signification of the father, earth the mother, and person the child. Again, these three represent the Diamond Realm (*kongōkai* 金剛界), the Womb Realm (*taizōkai* 胎藏界), and the Susiddhi (*soshitsuji* 蘇悉地). What encompasses all three natures of heaven, earth, and person is called the King Ugajin (*ugajin-ō* 宇賀神王).<sup>371</sup>

Particularly noteworthy in the same discussion is that the pair of spirit or kami 神 and person 人 is explained as having nonduality as its essence. In other words, this third quality is what reveals and manifests the nondual union of the two great principles. Indeed, this analogy in *Keiran* confirms medieval Tendai's endeavor to integrate exoteric Tendai doctrine revolving around the Threefold Truth<sup>372</sup> and esoteric, Shingon teachings of nonduality of the Two Realms (*ryōbu* 兩部). That said, what is crucial here is that nonduality should be understood from a

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<sup>371</sup> T.76, 2410: 620a28-b2.

<sup>372</sup> There is a direct remark on the "amalgamation" with Tendai threefold truth and contemplation in the middle of the discussion of the threefold meaning of Benzaiten in *Keiran*. T.76, 2410: 620c.

tripartite perspective<sup>373</sup>; and that it is the mediator who realizes the unity between two aspects of reality, which can connect (*tsu* 通), or respond (*ō* 應) to either of the two aspects.

As emphasized in earlier chapters, the tripartite examination of realities forms an overarching discursive framework in *Keiran*. Anything can, nay, should be comprehended threefold; *one* means three, and *many* means three in the world of *Keiran*. Certainly, this does confirm the medieval Tendai's scholastic tendency—as represented in *Keiran*—to integrate all objects in their religious discourse according to Tendai doctrine. However, the tripartition in *Keiran* also shows the considerable weight of Mikkyō principles prevalent in the Hiei scholastic circle—principles that prioritize comprehending the equality of the Three Mysteries in order to realize one mind (*isshin*), which is prioritized by exoteric teachings.<sup>374</sup> In other words, what was as important as seeing the oneness of all dharmas for those scholiasts on Mt. Hiei in medieval Japan was to examine how one has three dimensions, and exactly how each of the three dimensions encompasses and interacts with the other two and becomes one itself.

*Keiran*'s analogy of heaven, earth, and person encapsulates the gist of the operation of this triune reality, as well as the implied essential point in *Keiran*'s discourse of kami. It is the human between heaven and earth who realizes—sees, embodies, unites—the nondual nature of heaven and earth. The principles of these two natures manifest through human acts. In the language of astrology, as previously discussed, a human receives energy from luminaries and stars, which activates events in the womb of the earth, while provided with the earth's resources. Without a human and his consciousness, heaven is simply heaven, and earth simply earth. There

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<sup>373</sup> This perspective is summed up well in *Keiran*'s explanation of the oneness of the Three Bodies of Buddha: the three bodies become one body of nonduality through the harmonious union between the Dharmakāya (*hosshin* 法身) and the Sambhogakāya (*hōjin* 報身). T.76, 2410: 620c29-621a1.

<sup>374</sup> T.76, 2410: 746c20-747a5. But again, exoteric and esoteric teachings are nondual and mutually correspondent as numerous stressed in *Keiran*.

is no way to see the connection and the ontological cohabitation between the two without existence, particularly, the “operation” of the manifestation that represents the unity of two principles. That operation is what makes dual qualities nondual and interpenetrates with one each other; this could be what *Keiran* likens to the “shaking dance” (*shinbu* 振舞) that is inherently endowed to everything and to every sentient being.<sup>375</sup>

In that sense, nonduality is, after all, a noetic principle that can be realized as an ontological truth only when we “see” it. It is not surprising that the wish-fulfilling jewel, dragon deities, and the tiny snake—the ultimate symbols that signify nondual truth—are all associated in *Keiran* with our thought (*nen* 念) and mind (*shin* 心 or *shiki* 識). Seeing the mutual identity among all dharmas is the very contemplation practice of “observing mind” (*kanjin* 觀心), the most central exegetical activity to the majority of medieval Tendai lineages on Mt. Hiei, as it was held as representing the ultimate truth of Buddhism.<sup>376</sup> The importance of mind contemplation for the understanding of nonduality is also found through *Keiran*’s discussion of the three kinds of wish-fulfilling jewel.

The esoteric section (*mitsubu*) in *Keiran* begins with a chapter on Buddha relics (*shari*), and a subsection discusses the wish-fulfilling jewel because, as seen previously, jewels are identified with Buddha relics. The discussion mentions three kinds of jewels, namely, the jewel of the origin of teaching (*honmon*), the jewel of the trace teaching (*shakumon*), and the jewel of the dragon-girl. And, in the very next line, these three jewels are reworded as the three types of

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<sup>375</sup> T.76, 2410: 760b2 and 762c16-17.

<sup>376</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p.126-127. As Stone discusses, mind contemplation or “calming and contemplation” (*shikan* 止觀) was treated with the utmost importance by major Hiei lineages such as Eshin 惠心 and Danna 檀那, but not by the *kaike* precept lineage, which held “perfect and sudden precepts” (*endonkai* 円頓戒) as the supreme truth.

jewel: origin, trace, and mind contemplation.<sup>377</sup> Considering the symbolism of the dragon-girl and her wish-fulfilling jewel as nondual truth and quick enlightenment, the above identification of the dragon-girls' jewel as the symbol of mind contemplation seems reasonable. Also, given that the dragon-girl and the jewel are identified with the snake form inside our body, all of these serpentine symbols signify the ground upon which original enlightenment can be realized. This enlightenment comes with and through seeing true, nondual nature of realities. A question remains as to how an understanding of nonduality—between mind and form, heaven and earth, origin and trace, awakening and ignorance, Buddha and kami, and so on—is exactly connected to the realization of the unmoving, unconditioned, original enlightenment.

### *Conclusion*

*Keiran* represents a strenuous effort among medieval Tendai scholastic lineages to integrate medieval Japanese religious cultures under the ideology of amalgamation and mutual identity. Thus kami, the existence that could never have been ignored by anyone at the time in Japan and particularly on Mt. Hiei, are also incorporated into the Tendai/Taimitsu pantheon and understood as forming nondual identities with buddhas and bodhisattvas. But what is remarkable in discussions of this chapter is that kami are deeply related to the nondual principle itself. By dimming light and becoming like dust (*wakō dōjin*), by responding to the form of original enlightenment, kami manifest nonduality between defiled mind and Buddha nature, as well as ordinary sentient beings and Buddha. In this sense, kami represent that which makes nondual relationships among all constituents of reality; they constitute an indescribable, mysterious spirit

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<sup>377</sup> T.76, 2410: 544b15-17.

(*shin* 神) that freely interpenetrates apparently different domains. Again, they are capable of interpenetration and mutual response by their excellence in the *wakō dōjin*, or, using *Keiran*'s sensuous analogy, the shaking dance that is endowed to everyone—but which perhaps may be some kind of potential talent that one needs to discover and develop. The shaking dance is good; ritualistic enactment of it even saves the poor.<sup>378</sup>

The snake symbol is at the core of all these allegorical discussions of important esoteric truth in *Keiran*. The snake symbol functions as if it is a meta sign for every other symbol that manifests nonduality—the paramount theme and rationale for all-inclusive discourse in *Keiran*. This is due to Mikkyō teachings, which gave a form (*shiki* 色) to all dharma. *Keiran* says that the reason for kami's manifestation in the snake form is because all sentient beings, having the tiny snake inside them, are responsive to the snake form. If this is true, then how is this snake symbol associated with the shaking dance?

Equally noteworthy is that through the discussion of kami's manifestation, *Keiran* connects the realm of phenomenon—although it is a religious one—to the realm of mind. If the snake symbol and all the related serpentine symbols and deities are the representations of the “Form Dharma” (*shikihō* 色法), then there should be a corresponding counterpart that represents the “Mind Dharma” (*shinbō* 心法). Given that the snake symbol is the ground for original enlightenment, would this symbol again play a key role in approaching the nondual realities from the perspective of mind contemplation? In the next chapter we will explore these inquiries, focusing on examining the meaning of nonduality between origin and trace and its importance in understanding medieval Tendai's thought about original enlightenment.

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<sup>378</sup> Benzaiten's formulae, such as the afore-mentioned *mudrā* symbolizing a sexual union, and in particular, a *mudrā* that forms a coiled snake with two hands and vibrate them, is believed to have a strong power to even make the poor become rich. See Yamamoto, *Ijin*, pp. 339-340.

## Chapter IV. Nonduality of the Origin and Trace On Our Mind—The Ninth and Sixth Consciousnesses

### *In Search of the Hidden Dimension of the Mind*

We have examined *Keiran's* representation of the snake as the inherent original enlightenment from various angles along with other related symbols and divinities. However, there is more to explore in depth: what is said to be identical with the form of the snake in *Keiran* is not the inherent original enlightenment per se, but the "form" or "essence"<sup>379</sup> of original enlightenment. This usage could simply mean original enlightenment "itself," but the following expression, "[this form of the snake] opens enlightenment,"<sup>380</sup> seems to run counter to the initial interpretation. In that case it would be better to read the meaning of the snake form as the ground on which enlightenment occurs. It is Mikkyō practice to assign a "form" (*rupa*; J. *shiki* 色) to enlightenment (*kaku* 覺), as previously discussed. That also means there are subtle, nondual differences between the ground of enlightenment and actual enlightenment. In this light, *Keiran's* saying, that the "form" of the original enlightenment is the form of the snake, should be illuminated this way: the form of the snake should not be understood as the immediate, direct representation of enlightenment. The following sentences from *Keiran's* discussions about the form of the snake shed more light on the issue of the non-immediate representation of enlightenment:

We have the wheel of water inside our lungs. Inside there is water of golden color; inside

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<sup>379</sup> The word "*tai* 體" can also be translated and understood as "essence" in light of the essence-function discourse (Ch. *ti-yung*; J. *tai-yō* 體(体)-用).

<sup>380</sup> T.76, 2410, 517c26-27.

there is a tiny snake as small as 3 *sun*. This is the lord of the sixth consciousness of discerning thoughts. Lungs are where the wisdom of the investigative awareness (Skt. *pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāna*) of the west is located. This wisdom of the investigative awareness is the sixth consciousness of discriminating evil and good. This is the ground of our awareness that discerns the right and the wrong.<sup>381</sup>

(我等カ水輪ノ中ニ有肺ノ藏。其中ニ有金色ノ水。其中ニ三寸ノ蛇在之。我等カ第六ノ心王也。肺ノ藏ハ西方ノ妙觀察智ノ所在也。妙觀察智ハ第六識邪正分別識也。即是我等是非思量ノ覺體也)

So far, the "snake form" has been identified with the manifested form of kami and the dragon deity, the form of the Three Poisons, the germ of Buddha-nature, the form of original enlightenment, and serpentine deities that symbolize the nonduality of dharmas and original enlightenment. As previously seen, in many respects the representation of the snake in *Keiran* is closely linked to the concept of mind or consciousness. In the above passage, the tiny snake of less than three *sun* is identified with the lord or king of the sixth consciousness of the discerning intellect. To explore what this means, Buddhist theory of mind and consciousness needs to be briefly outlined.

Despite a great variety of schools and major discrepancies and doctrinal tensions between Early Buddhist teachings and later Mahāyāna teachings, the ultimate Buddhist tenet functioning as a common denominator across diverse schools is that all things are empty of "self-nature" (Skt. *svabhāva*; J. *jishō* 自性), i.e., the notion of emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*; J. *kū* 空 or *kūshō* 空性) and all phenomena arises in dependence upon other phenomena, i.e., dependent origination (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*; J. *engi* 縁起); and these two notions are tightly interwoven. Because all things contain no self-nature, they are not "real," and it is sheer illusion to consider that things really exist and have their own fixed natures. What makes us feel and think everything is real and

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<sup>381</sup> T.76, 2410, 623b4-8.



cling to the illusory self is what Buddhists call the "five aggregates" (Skt. *skandha*; J. *goun* 五蘊): form or matter (Skt. *rūpa*; J. *shiki-un* 色蘊), sensation (Skt. *vedanā*; J. *ju-un* 受蘊), perception (Skt. *samjñā*; J. *sō-un* 想蘊), volition (Skt. *saṃskāra*; J. *gyō-un* 行蘊), and consciousness (Skt. *viññāna*; J. *shiki-un* 識蘊).

Early Buddhist schools subdivide consciousness into six categories: visual (Skt. *caḥsur-viññāna*; J. *ganshiki* 眼識), auditory (Skt. *śrotra-viññāna*; J. *nishiki* 耳識), olfactory (Skt. *ghrāṇa-viññāna*; J. *bishiki* 鼻識), gustatory (Skt. *jihvā-viññāna*; J. *zetshiki* 舌識), tactile (Skt. *kāya-viññāna*; J. *shinshiki* 身識), and discriminative (Skt. *mano-viññāna*; J. *ishiki* 意識). However, according to Early Buddhist philosophy these five aggregates and categories of consciousness are also not real.<sup>382</sup> They are impermanent, and each arises in relation to others and lasts for only a single moment.<sup>383</sup>

Although the scheme of the five aggregates and six consciousnesses fits well into the Buddhist notion of emptiness and dependent origination, they presented early Buddhist scholars with a logical dilemma when integrated with another significant Buddhist concept called karma. The dilemma was that karma is created through the five aggregates and consciousnesses, and therefore imprints a significant influence on one's life, in addition to determining the conditions of rebirth in the next life. However, if those five aggregates and consciousnesses are impermanent and empty, how can they create karma that operates so significantly through a continuous cycle of eons?

Therefore, by the fourth century C.E. the Yogācāra scholar-monks had reformulated the

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<sup>382</sup> Here, that something is "real" means that it has an unchanging quality (J. *jishō* 自性) and enduring substance.

<sup>383</sup> Stanley Weinstein, "Alaya-viññāna," in *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 177-178.

early six consciousnesses by adding two more consciousnesses, i.e., the seventh "thought" consciousness (Skt. *manas-* /*mano-vijñāna*) and the eighth consciousness *ālaya-vijñāna*, which is often translated as the "storehouse consciousness." Unlike the previous six consciousnesses that are inconsistent and impermanent,<sup>384</sup> these two additional flow continuously regardless of one's awareness of them. The eighth consciousness, the *ālaya-vijñāna* functions as the "receptacle," or the "storehouse"<sup>385</sup> for one's energies, referred to as "seeds" (Skt. *bījas*; J. *shūji* 種子), which are generated by one's good or bad actions.<sup>386</sup> Thus all of one's past thoughts, words, and deeds are "stored" in the *ālaya-vijñāna* (J. *araya-shiki* 阿賴耶識 or Skt. *sarva-bījaka-vijñāna*; J. *issaisyūjiki* 一切種子識), the eighth consciousness.

The *ālaya-vijñāna* is the foundation of the samsaric and karmic influences since the seeds stored in the eighth consciousness affect the conditions of one's next life, and it is fully recognizable only to buddhas. Ordinary unenlightened beings are unaware of this subconscious level of mind.<sup>387</sup> The eighth consciousness is also glossed as "mind" (Skt. *citta*; J. *shin* / *kokoro* 心) in the Yogācāra discourse on consciousnesses. Mind is pure and often associated with the

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<sup>384</sup> The *Cheng Weishi Lun* (J. *Jōyūishikiron* 成唯識論), a seminal Yogācāra treatise on the Vasubandhu's *Thirty Verses on Consciousness-only* (*Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā*) explains the inconsistency of six consciousnesses by using examples of dreaming and fainting: six consciousnesses halt or arise inconsistently when one is dreaming or fainting.

<sup>385</sup> The Sanskrit word *ālaya* can mean abode, dwelling, and house.

<sup>386</sup> Weinstein, "Alaya-vijñāna," p.177.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.* For an easy explanation, the mechanism of the *ālaya-vijñāna* can be roughly comparable to the computer system of storing documents and files: if people are not familiar with the computer mechanism they would not know that the computer is storing into "somewhere" all the documents and files that they created and used. However, those who have full knowledge about the computer know where all documents are stored and even use some operations (deleting, transforming, and so on) to access them. Though the eighth consciousness is conceptualized as the fundamental basis in one's mind by the Yogācāra School, that the more enlightened one can do something on the eighth in my parabolic explanation carries a crucial measure of importance later in discussing the reconfiguration of the Yogācāra consciousness theory as carried out by the Huayan (J. Kegon 華嚴) and Chen-yen (J. Shingon 真言) schools.

innate Buddha-nature, the *tathāgatagarbha*. The seventh consciousness (Skt. *manas-* / *mano-vijñāna*) is the consciousness from which cognitive intellect arises. Interestingly, the sixth and seventh consciousnesses are both termed *mano-vijñāna* (J. *ishiki* 意識), and their basic function as intellect or thought is similar to each other. However, the emphasis of the sixth consciousness is rather on *vijñāna* (J. *shiki* 識)<sup>388</sup> and always arises in dependence upon either the previous five sense-consciousnesses or the seventh and eighth consciousnesses. On the other hand, the seventh consciousness arises independently of the previous six categories of consciousness and only relies upon the eighth consciousness.

The Yogācārin commentators define the seventh consciousness also as just "i" (意; Skt. *manas*) based on the respect that it is independent from the six "consciousnesses."<sup>389</sup> However, the seventh consciousness does not represent a fully awakened level of mind. It perceives the *ālaya* consciousness as the "subject" and regards it as one's self or ego and thus causes ego attachment (Skt. *ātma-grāha*; J. *gashū* 我執). The Chinese Yogācāra *Faxiang* 法相 scholars, centering around fellow scholar Xuanzang 玄奘, defined the main function of the seventh consciousness as discriminative thought (Ch. *siliang*; J. *shiryō* 思量) and the sixth as discerning intellect (Ch. *le bie*; J. *ryōbetsu* 了別).

The three categories of "mind" (Skt. *citta*; J. *shin* / *kokoro* 心), "thought" (Skt. *manas*; J. *i* 意), and "consciousness" (Skt. *vijñāna*; J. *shiki* 識) are how Yogācāra philosophy understands

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<sup>388</sup> It means that the sixth consciousness is dependent upon "thought (J. *i* 意)" just as visual consciousness arises based upon the visual root (J. *genkon* 眼根).

<sup>389</sup> According to the Yogācāra interpretation of consciousnesses in the *Cheng Weishi Lun*, the seventh is the true *manas-vijñāna*; the reason why they term it as simply 'manas' is to distinguish it from the sixth consciousness. Traditional Indian linguistics argued that the sixth consciousness is one that relies upon thought (J. *i* 意) (T.31,1585, 20a23-c7).

not only the mind per se,<sup>390</sup> but also the way in which all phenomena arise and are perceived as real by ordinary sentient beings. Only the mind<sup>391</sup> can be understood to exist (J. *yū* 有), whereas phenomena cannot.<sup>392</sup> Although the notion of the existence of the mind is established as expedient means (Skt. *upāya*, J. *hōben* 方便),<sup>393</sup> and mind is also, either in the end, not real existence (Skt. *yathā-bhūta*; J. *jitsuyū* 実有), these eight levels of the consciousness are considered by most Mahāyānists to play a crucial role in the processes of attainment of enlightenment.

The Yogācāra theory of the eight consciousnesses had a great influence on East Asian Buddhism in general. In particular, the eighth *ālaya* consciousness took a position of special importance as it, being closely associated with the *tathāgatagarbha*, played a pivotal role in explaining the concept and mechanism of the ultimate truth (Skt. *tathātā*; J. *shinnyo* 真如).

The history of Buddhist philosophy can also be regarded as the history of hermeneutic reformulation of prior philosophical and doctrinal concepts in attempts to resolve logical tensions and conflicts within a concept or in relation to other concepts. Within the concept of the *ālaya* consciousness, as well as in its relation to the principle of ultimate truth and enlightenment, the Huayan 華嚴 and Tiantai scholar-monks identified a logical tension. If the *ālaya* consciousness is where all of one's good and bad karma are deposited, how can it be identified with the inherently "pure" mind of Buddha or the *Tathāgata*? This logical tension could have, in the first

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<sup>390</sup> Here, the word 'mind' is used in a more general, inclusive sense.

<sup>391</sup> Hence the name, "Only Mind" (J. *yuishin* 唯心) or "Only Consciousness" (J. *yuishiki* 唯識).

<sup>392</sup> The Yogācāra theory of consciousness in the *Cheng Weishi Lun* explains that all phenomena are created by transformation (Skt. *pariṇāma*; J. *tenpen* 轉變) of consciousnesses; thus, phenomena are called the "provisional" (Skt. *prajñapti*; J. *ke / ka* 假). (T.31,1585, 1-60).

<sup>393</sup> T.31,1585, 35b14-17.

place, been serious enough to call into question and doubt the very possibility of true liberation and enlightenment.

Even though the *ālaya* consciousness had been understood as having a dualistic nature, i.e., impure and pure by some Buddhist schools,<sup>394</sup> Huayan and Tiantai scholars<sup>395</sup> separated the pure quality of the eighth consciousness and established it as the ninth consciousness, called the *amala-vijñāna* (J. *amara-shiki* 阿摩羅識). *Amala* literally means "spotless," "stainless," "pure," and "shining."<sup>396</sup> The *amala* consciousness is called many different names in East Asian Buddhist writings, such as the "true consciousness" (J. *shin-shiki* 真識), "dharma (-nature) consciousness" (J. *hosshō-shiki* 法性識), "pure self-nature consciousness" (J. *jishōshōjō-shiki* 自性清淨識), "*tathātā* (suchness) consciousness" (J. *shinnyo-shiki* 真如識), and so on. In this deepest level of one's consciousness, one can be free from any karmic influences and achieve true liberation by realizing the true suchness of the Tathāgata.<sup>397</sup>

As the *amala* consciousness is construed in Tendai teachings as the purest stage of consciousness that connects to the ultimate truth, it may be viewed as being associated with original enlightenment. It is imaginable that just as one can develop one's manifold chakra points and vortices, one may reach the ninth stream of consciousness, which may lead to original enlightenment. However, two serious problems are spotted in this presumption: first, as previously seen, the eighth *ālaya* consciousness and the ninth *amala* consciousness are fully

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<sup>394</sup> The *ālaya* consciousness as containing both impure quality (染分) and pure quality (淨分)—there were serious debates on this issue between the Ti-lun (地論) School and the She-lun (攝論) School. See Diana Y. Paul, *Philosophy of Mind in Sixth Century China: Paramārtha's Evolution of Consciousness* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984) for details.

<sup>395</sup> So did Chen-yen (J. Shingon 真言) School.

<sup>396</sup> Monier-Williams Online Sanskrit-English Dictionary.

<sup>397</sup> Tamura, *Tendai hongakuron*, p. 442.

recognizable only to buddhas, and ordinary unenlightened beings are unaware of these levels of mind. This could be rather a question of how, and despite its severe level or difficulty, it is not impossible to overcome, if one commits himself to a strenuously devoted practice.

A more fundamental problem with the association between the ninth consciousness and original enlightenment is in the well-known Mahāyāna doctrine that original enlightenment, being nothing but a different name to refer to the *tathāgatagarbha* or the Buddha-nature, is, in principle, a "gift" from the compassionate Buddha, bequeathed to every sentient being. Here problems arise: if the ninth *amala* consciousness is that difficult to discover, the possibility of ordinary sentient beings attaining the original enlightenment is extremely dismal. This is problematic because all sentient beings are said, according to universal Mahāyāna doctrine, to already be endowed with original enlightenment. Therefore, one cannot help but question the significance of the role of the ninth *amala* consciousness both in doctrine and in practice. To understand this perplexing problem, the afore-examined *Keiran*'s discussion about the snake form and original enlightenment should be revisited. According to that discussion, the snake form, i.e., the essence (*tai*) of original enlightenment, represents the lord of the sixth consciousness in all sentient beings' minds. Surprisingly, it is the "sixth" consciousness that is associated with the snake symbol and original enlightenment.

Unlike the sense-based five consciousnesses, the sixth consciousness is indeed "intellect," which discerns what is right and wrong.<sup>398</sup> Thus the snake form seems to be more closely related to purely mental faculties; nevertheless, compared to the three subsequent, deeper layers of consciousness, the sixth is still a transient, illusory, and conditioned state of mind that seems to be far from true awakening. Now, the sixth consciousness would merit further examination.

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<sup>398</sup> T.76, 2410, 517c29.

*Nonduality of the Origin and Trace On Our Mind: The Sixth and Ninth Consciousness*

As briefly outlined in the previous introduction of the Yogācāra consciousness theory, the main characteristic of the sixth consciousness is the intellectual ability to "discriminate (*ryōbetsu* 了別)." The *Keiran* text also defines the sixth consciousness as the consciousness which evaluates rights and wrongs.<sup>399</sup> As previously noted, the Yogācāra consciousness theory understands the mechanism of our mind according to the three categories of "mind" (*citta* 心), "thought" (*manas* 意), and "consciousness" (*viññāna* 識), and these three categories correspond to the three layers of consciousness, the eighth *ālaya*, the seventh, and the sixth consciousnesses, respectively. Each of the three has its unique meaning and function: the *citta* means accumulating and storing; the *manas*, thinking or estimating; and finally, the *viññāna* discerning and discriminating. Thus, as the representative of "consciousness (Skt. *viññāna*; J. *shiki* 識)" the sixth consciousness is considered to be superior to other consciousnesses as far as the function of discriminating about or distinguishing things is concerned.

The *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論 (J. *Jōyuishikiron*, Skt. *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-śāstra*), a comprehensive discourse on the central Yogācāra teachings, is Xuanzang's commentarial treatise on Vasubandhu's crucial Yogācāra work, *Thirty Verses on Consciousness-Only* (*Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā*), a large portion of which discusses the Yogācāra perspective on mind and consciousness. In general, the *Cheng weishi lun* concentrates on clarifying the absolute inevitability of the existence of the eighth *ālaya* consciousness and its superior qualities, and

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<sup>399</sup> T.76, 2410, 517c29.

relatively understates the seventh and sixth, let alone the five sense-based consciousnesses, as imperfect consciousness inferior to *ālaya* consciousness. Yet at the same time, the text also praises several good qualities of the sixth consciousness: cognitive operation of the sixth consciousness is keen and powerful and it can operate on every possible point and layer of our mind and consciousness with the least degree of restriction.<sup>400</sup> It can "think" by virtue of its own power without relying upon many conditions (J. *en* 縁) and other functions, mostly without any interruption.<sup>401</sup>

*Keiran* also pays attention to those good qualities of the sixth consciousness and emphasizes the outstanding capacity of the sixth consciousness to discern, in particular, good and evil.<sup>402</sup> *Keiran* specifically attributes the possibility of raising the "bodhi mind" (J. *hosshin* 発心) in the sixth stream of consciousness<sup>403</sup> to its superior ability to discern good and evil. Thus, in its role to vigilantly distinguish good and evil, the sixth consciousness is considered the foundational stepping-stone for, or the "door" to, true enlightenment. As seen in the *Keiran* passages previously discussed, the snake form is said to be the original dharma body (J. *honnu hosshin* 本有法身) that opens to enlightenment.<sup>404</sup> What is meant by the term "original dharma body" is a virtue derived from one's original nature (J. *honnu shōtoku* 本有性徳), which is the virtue that one has inherited (J. *honrai gutoku* 本来具徳).<sup>405</sup> As it is clear from the fact that

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<sup>400</sup> T.31,1585,17a11-14.

<sup>401</sup> Tamura, *Tendai hongakuron*, p. 442

<sup>402</sup> T.76, 2410, 803c19-24.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>404</sup> T.76, 2410, 517a15-16.

<sup>405</sup> T.76, 2410, 518a4.



*Keiran* also glosses these phrases as "original Tathāgata" (J. *honrai nyorai* 本来如来)<sup>406</sup>, these somewhat varying terms referring to the original virtue of the sixth consciousness indicate nothing but *hongaku* (本覺), that is, original enlightenment, which has so far been associated with the snake form and mind.

The tiny germ-like snake inside our lungs is the mind-lord of the sixth consciousness according to *Keiran*, so it may be natural to associate the sixth consciousness and the original enlightenment. Although the sixth consciousness is an impermanent, conditioned layer of mind that can be recognized by any ordinary being, that very ordinariness might be able to play a crucial role in bringing out the salvific seed of awakening in all sentient beings. Following *Keiran*, it seems that ultimate true enlightenment can be realized on the most common level of intellect of our mind, i.e., the sixth consciousness (Skt. *mano-vijñāna*). The paradoxical association between the sixth consciousness and original enlightenment can be understood by looking into *Keiran*'s further comments on the sixth consciousness.

“The west is the sixth consciousness. This consciousness is the essence / ground for the arising of suchness (*shinnyo zuien* 眞如隨緣).”<sup>407</sup>

(西方第六識也。此識隨緣眞如體也)

As seen in the above passage, while discussing the logic behind Japanese Tendai's allocation of the “Buddha of the Immeasurable Life (J. *muryōshū-butsu* 無量壽仏) as the “Buddha of the West (J. *shihōbutsu* 西方仏),” *Keiran* defines the sixth consciousness, associated with the direction and virtue of the west,<sup>408</sup> as the essence of the Arising Suchness (*zuien shinnyo*

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<sup>406</sup> T.76, 2410, 807b28.

<sup>407</sup> T. 76, 2410, 823c13-14.

<sup>408</sup> The correlation between four directions and the consciousnesses will be fully discussed in the next section.

隨緣真如). *Zuien shinnyo* is a term originated from the Chinese Huayan monk, Fazang 法藏 (643-712) in his commentary on *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論,<sup>409</sup> or the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*; the term is used to explain dual aspects of suchness (*shinnyo* 真如), the true nature of reality. *Zuien shinnyo* and *fuhen shinnyo* 不變真如, or the Unchanging Suchness are the two qualities of suchness,<sup>410</sup> which correspond to the broader Mahāyāna idea of the two truths (J. *nitai* 二諦).

Early Buddhists' ideal enlightenment meant the detachment from ego-clinging and worldly matters. To them, the ultimate truth, i.e., nirvāṇa, indicated the perfect extinction of clinging and the final and eternal liberation from the samsaric cycle. Those who achieved this final stage of the enlightenment, such as Gautama Śākyamuni, were thought by early Buddhists to never return to this world. In this sense, the Buddha was the "*tathā-gata*" (one who has thus "gone"). Thus in Early Buddhist traditions, nirvāṇa and saṃsāra are polar opposites and therefore never would be able to co-exist.

However, with the rise of Mahāyāna, the dualistic pre-Mahāyāna formulation of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra was eradicated. In the Mahāyānist view, nirvāṇa is other-worldly and, yet, at the same time, this-worldly. Thus it is called "non-abiding nirvāṇa" (Skt. *apratiṣṭhita nirvāṇa*), because it is bound "neither to the causal chain of conditioned existence, nor to the isolation of a quiescent final nirvāṇa" as in pre-Mahāyānist fashion.<sup>411</sup> This became the essential foundation of Mahāyānist soteriology. Thus the truth is permanent (*fuhen* 不變) and ever-/omni-present (*jōjū*

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<sup>409</sup> *Dasheng qixin lun yi ji* 大乘起信論義記 (T. 44, 1846); the very terms about two qualities of suchness appear and begins to be discussed at T. 44, 1846:255c20-21.

<sup>410</sup> T.44, 1846: 255c20-21.

<sup>411</sup> John Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet* (New York: SUNY Press, 1997), pp.11-12.

常住). These qualities of truth are often disputably associated with the Mahāyānistic Monism (or Absolutism) by some scholars.<sup>412</sup> While it may seem to make a stark contrast to or even an ultimate subversion of the earlier Buddhist notion of emptiness, according to Mahāyānist philosophers such as Nāgārjuna the concept of the permanent, pure, and ever-present truth is by no means in conflict with the Buddhist concept of emptiness. On the contrary, the reshaped concept of the ultimate truth represents "true emptiness" (J. *shinkū* 真空) because by no means does the true notion of emptiness indicate "nothingness" as understood by the Early Buddhist scholarly tradition,<sup>413</sup> but it does indicate "subtle something-ness" (J. *myōu* 妙有).

The two aspects of the truth, or the two qualities of nirvāṇa, are also the two qualities of Buddha(s)—freedom from the deluded world and compassionate participation within it.<sup>414</sup> Mahāyāna doctrine declares that Buddhas are completely free from the suffering nature of our world, yet limitlessly active within it to the end of time, helping others to attain the same freedom.<sup>415</sup> Therefore, the Buddhas who have attained nirvāṇa are transcendent from this world, but at the same time they appear for us out of compassion and remain in this world to save us. In this sense, the Buddha is *tathā-āgata* (one who has thus "come").<sup>416</sup>

Seen in that light, the truth is both sacred and profane; and these dual aspects of the truth in Mahāyāna philosophy have been conceptualized by the notion of "two truths," i.e., the ultimate, absolute truth (Skt. *paramārtha-satya*; J. *shindai* 真諦) and the provisional,

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<sup>412</sup> Takasaki, *A Study of the Ratnagotra*, p. 20.

<sup>413</sup> Dependent arising itself means emptiness. This will be discussed in detail later.

<sup>414</sup> Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied*, p.1.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>416</sup> The word *tathāgata*, which is one of the main epithets of the Buddha, can be interpreted both ways, etymologically.

conventional truth (Skt. *saṃvṛti-satya*; J. *zokutai* 俗諦). We can now see that the two truths are closely associated with the dual attributes of Buddha, as discussed above—Buddha as both *tathā-gata* and *tathā-āgata*.

Chinese Tiantai and Huayan schools endeavored to understand the problem of truth from the perspective of mind and consciousness because they were deeply influenced by Yogācāra thought. In particular, concerning the notion of the Two Truths, we can detect that both Tiantai and Huayan schools heavily rely upon the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Awakening of Faith* from now on) and its "one (single) mind (J. *isshin* 一心)" theory. The *Awakening of Faith* is one of the seminal Mahāyānist commentaries, one that deeply influenced most of the Mahāyāna schools. The text has drawn special scholarly attention—as early as when the major Mahāyāna schools in East Asia were established, particularly for the work's unique critical integration of the teachings of the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika. Grounded upon the two schools' fundamental doctrinal principles, the *Awakening of Faith* develops its unique philosophy of "Mind-Only" (J. *yuishin* 唯心). Many scholars, including Tamura Yoshiro and Jacqueline Stone, have pointed out that original enlightenment thought of Japanese Tendai was based on the Two Truths theory, which was further developed in the Mind-Only doctrine of the *Awakening of Faith*.<sup>417</sup>

The *Awakening of Faith* systematically explains how the two qualities of the truth can work without contradiction. The truth, the suchness (*tathātā*) in the *Awakening of Faith* is presented in the term "one mind," which is the very core of the text, and the one mind is construed to be twofold: it operates through the "door" of the mind of the *tathātā*, i.e., suchness (J. *shinshinnyomon* 心真如門) and through the door of the mind of arising and perishing (J.

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<sup>417</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, Chapter one in particular; Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri Tendai*.

*shinshōmetsumon* 心生滅門). Nevertheless, these two "doors" are not two opposite concepts. Rather, they are two aspects of one truth. The former is construed to indicate the fundamental aspect of the truth and the latter the more phenomenological aspect of the truth.<sup>418</sup> In other words, the door of the mind of Suchness corresponds with the absolute truth, and the door of arising and perishing with provisional, conventional truth. They work as if they are two different sides of a coin,<sup>419</sup> and the one coin here indicates the one single mind—the only truth.<sup>420</sup> In the *Awakening of Faith*, the two "doors" of the one mind are again spread out to the "Three Great" (J. *sandai* 三大).<sup>421</sup> The triad (Three Great; J. *sandai* 三大) of the "essence (J. *taidai* 体大)," the "attributes (J. *sōdai* 相大)," and the "function (J. *yūdai* 用大), are in fact one and mutually identical with one another. This triadic mechanism of one mind correlates with other Mahāyānist threefold schemes such as the three bodies of buddha (*trikāya*) and Tiantai/Tendai threefold truths, as well as Taimitsu's paradigm of the three realms of the Womb realm (*taizōkai* 胎藏界), the Diamond realm (*kongōkai* 金剛界), and the Susiddhi (*soshitsuji* 蘇悉地).<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Tamura, *Tendai hongakuron*, p. 78.

<sup>419</sup> I have been using the analogy of two sides of a coin so far for convenience; nevertheless, the non-dual relationship between the two truths is not identical with the relationship between the each side of a coin. The way that the non-dual relationship between the two truths works can be elucidated by *Keiran's* discussion of the non-dual relationship between the sixth and the ninth consciousnesses. This forms the crux of my main discussion in the next section.

<sup>420</sup> Some scholars, in particular scholars of "Critical Buddhism (J. *hihan bukkyo* 批判仏教)," have harshly criticized the Huayan and Tiantai's doctrine of one single mind based on the *Awakening of Faith*, as they viewed it as a Monist, Absolutist idea. However, the point of one single mind rather lies in its multiplicity; in this study I will discuss how *Keiran* reveals the true meaning of one single mind hinged upon the multiple qualities by and through the symbolism of the snake and dragon.

<sup>421</sup> Thus, the truth is explained with *isshin nimon sandai* 一心二門三大 in the *Awakening of Faith*. T. 32, 1666, 576.

<sup>422</sup> The Susiddhi is not a separate realm from the other two realms (*ryōbu* 兩部); it indicates the wondrous achievement (*myōjōju* 妙成就) of nonduality between the two realms. While Shingon emphasizes the nonduality of the two realms, they did not formulate the third realm that embodies the nonduality the two realms, as viewed by Taimitsu. This difference is explained also in *Keiran* (T.76, 2410: 554c, 593b17-c9, 662b20-c2). As appeared in *Keiran's* discussions of the three realms, these three realms are one and correlate with other triadic schemes that

The above is the theoretical philosophical background of *Keiran's* explanation of the two aspects of the one mind by the notion of two qualities of Suchness, i.e., *zuien shinnyo* and *fuhen shinnyo*. *Fuhen shinnyo*, or the Unchanging Suchness, represents the truth as viewed from its absolute, essential perspective; and *zuien shinnyo*, the Arising Suchness, indicates the conventional aspects of the truth, the dharmas that constantly arise and perish in accord with various complex conditions and causalities. In this sense, Suchness is both eternal and transient. It is essential, permanent, unchanging, transcendental, and yet, at the same time, it is constantly changing and thus always "present" in this world.

Returning to *Keiran's* comment that identifies the sixth consciousness with *zuien shinnyo*, the very fact that the sixth consciousness is viewed as identical to the Arising Suchness leads to a conclusion: the sixth consciousness, as the essence of the Arising Suchness, is omni-present. The Arising Suchness indicates nothing but Dependent Arising,<sup>423</sup> and in *Keiran* there are discussions of the omni-present nature of the Arising Suchness as the essence of Dependent Arising; two rather straightforward examples of such discussions read as follows:

"...Arising Suchness is the conventional truth (Skt. *samvṛtisatya*; J. *zokutai* 俗諦)<sup>424</sup> and is omni-present (J. *jōjū* 常住)..."<sup>425</sup>  
(隨緣真如俗諦常住也)

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ultimately represent one truth. For instance, the womb realm corresponds to the dharma body, the diamond realm by the bliss body, and the *susiddhi* by the manifested body (T.76, 2410: 511b6-8). As notable discussions so far, Tendai values the embodiment of the wondrous nonduality, which is expressed through their emphasis on the manifested traces and the phenomenal world represented by various qualities.

<sup>423</sup> T. 76, 2410, 720b26-28.

<sup>424</sup> Typically, *Keiran's* discussions that refer to the omni-present nature of the Arising Suchness are part of the conversation about the Tendai doctrine of the Three Natures of the truth (*trisvabhāva*). It seems that the omni-present nature of the truth plays a pivotal role in the Tendai notion of the Three Natures. This will be discussed in detail in the last section of this chapter.

<sup>425</sup> T. 76, 2410, 556c13.

“...the Arising Suchness is Dependent Arising and (thus) is omni-present...”<sup>426</sup>  
(隨緣真如緣起常住也)

The above discussions and examples confirm the mutual correlations among the sixth consciousness, the Arising Suchness, and Dependent Arising. They are only different ways to refer to the same one thing: the provisional, phenomenal aspect of the truth (Skt. *samvṛtisatya*). Through *Keiran's* discussion of the mind and consciousness, we confirm that in medieval Japanese Tendai teachings, the sixth consciousness represents the phenomenal side of the truth.

Even though *Keiran* is not making direct co-relations between the ninth *amala* consciousness and the Unchanging Suchness, it is not difficult to assume that the ninth consciousness is closely related to concepts such as the Unchanging Suchness, the ultimate truth (Skt. *paramārtha*), and *dharmadātu*. The co-relation is proven obvious even by several of the many epithets attached to the ninth *amala* consciousness: the "true consciousness" (J. *shin-shiki* 真識), "dharma (-nature) consciousness" (J. *hosshō-shiki* 法性識), the "pure self-nature consciousness" (J. *jishōshōjō-shiki* 自性清淨識), "*tathātā* consciousness" (J. *shinnyo-shiki* 真如識), and so on. As these epithets suggest, the ninth consciousness is closely associated with suchness (*tathātā*), as it is the deepest level of consciousness and is recognizable only by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Thus, when we contemplate the Mahāyānist notions on the twofold nature of the truth, theories such as the Two Truths or the "two doors" in the *Awakening of Faith*, it is quite reasonable to set forth a correspondence between the ninth *amala* and the Unchanging Suchness, which forms a decided contrast to the sixth consciousness as the representation of the Arising Suchness. Viewed from the consciousness of suchness (*amala*), the other lower levels of consciousness are all streams of consciousness that constantly arise, flow and flux, according to

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<sup>426</sup> T. 76, 2410, 826a4.

Dependent Arising.

Given the qualities of the ninth and sixth consciousnesses as well as various representations associated with them, these two layers of consciousness do seem to correspond to the origin and trace in the domain of the mind. These two consciousnesses also represent the opposing focus of teachings and practices of sub-schools or lineages in Tendai. As examined in Chapter One, the Eshin 恵心 and Danna 檀那 schools formed two large, overarching lineages for a variety of sublineages that perpetuated the Tendai *kuden* tradition. Both schools of the Eshin and the Danna endeavored to legitimize their own traditions by producing mythic narratives of their origins and emphasizing distinctions between the two schools. Among the presently-known distinctions occurred in Eshin texts, there was a propagandist claim that the Eshin school transmitted the doctrine of original enlightenment, practicing the meditation grounded upon the ninth consciousness; on the other hand, the Danna school transmitted the doctrine of acquired enlightenment, focusing on the meditation based on the sixth consciousness. Thus the Eshin transmitted the origin teaching (*honmon* 本門), and the Danna the trace teaching (*shakumon* 迹門).<sup>427</sup>

Regardless of the factuality of the claim in the Eshin text,<sup>428</sup> noteworthy in the above discussion is that the ninth and sixth consciousnesses are associated with the scheme of the origin and trace. Equally interesting is that their respective correlates with original enlightenment and acquired enlightenment. In particular, considering our discussion on the association between the sixth consciousness and original enlightenment based on *Keiran*, the above connection of the

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<sup>427</sup> The above discussion on the distinction between the Eshin and Danna is based on Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp.104-105.

<sup>428</sup> As pointed out by Stone, such claims on distinctions between the two schools, particularly the trope between the origin and trace teaching were seen reversed in the Danna texts (*Ibid.*).



sixth consciousness with acquired enlightenment seems to be opposed to *Keiran*'s discussions that have examined so far. However, the mechanism of original enlightenment and acquired enlightenment is complicated, entailing the relationships among layers of the consciousness. The key to this problem is the nondual relationship between the sixth and ninth consciousnesses; and in particular, the raised issue on the meaning of the “form,” or “essence” of the sixth consciousness plays an important role in the nonduality between the two consciousnesses and in elucidating medieval Tendai's transmissions on the true meaning of original enlightenment.

Illuminating the close relationship between the sixth and ninth consciousnesses, a discussion from the section of the Bodhi Mind (*Bodaishinron*) deserves additional examination. It comments on the sixth consciousness and the elevation of it to enlightened mind, and specifically compares these ideas to their counterparts in the doctrine of the Shingon 真言 School. In *Keiran*'s typical master-disciple dialogue, the hypothetical master throws disciples a challenge by asking if they can place the sixth consciousness “outside” of the ninth consciousness.<sup>429</sup>

Two points are noteworthy: first, the scheme of transformation or elevation of the deluded, common level of consciousness into true awakening is discussed exclusively based on the relationship between the sixth and ninth consciousnesses, without involving other levels of consciousness. Secondly, the close relationship between the ninth and sixth consciousnesses is explained as an inside-outside relationship by Tendai masters, as voiced in *Keiran*. The direction of the ninth consciousness was the “center” according to the mandalic structure of the

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<sup>429</sup> T76. 2410, 807b24. Throughout the pertinent discussion, *Keiran* repetitively emphasizes the sixth consciousness's being at the “border (*hen* 邊)” of the ninth consciousness.

consciousness, wisdom, and five buddhas, as will be detailed below. It seems that center is accessed through the outside door of the sixth consciousness.

Below we will look into *Keiran*'s discussions of the manifold consciousness and enlightenment. In doing so, we will examine how the origin-trace structure that explain the nature of Dharma, which was seen through the representation of deities, correlates the nature of our mind, and represented by the ninth and sixth consciousnesses.

### *Cosmology of the Mind*

Most of the *Keiran*'s discussion on consciousness is from the chapter, "Discussion of the Bodhi mind" (*Bodaishin ron* 菩提心論). This chapter consists of a total of seven sections and discusses how to achieve enlightenment by raising the Bodhi mind through practicing esoteric meditation grounded upon the works of our various consciousnesses. Consequently, large portions in the chapter deal with the meanings, roles, and relationships of the consciousness and mind. A typical passage from among such discussions from the *Bodaishin ron* in *Keiran* reads:

The direction of the east is [associated with] the eighth consciousness. And the direction of the north is the former-five consciousnesses (J. *zengoshiki* 前五識) [...] What is the relationship between the nine consciousnesses and the raising mind for enlightenment, practice, and [the attainment of] the enlightened mind?

[...] The southern direction is [the direction of] the Ratnasambhava (J. Hōshōzon 寶生尊 or Hōshō Nyorai 宝生如来); [thus] the seventh consciousness becomes the direction of practice. The seventh consciousness is called the *manas* consciousness in Sanskrit. [...] Therefore, *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論 says that [the seventh consciousness indicates self-attachment, self-love, and arrogance. [...] Thus [one should] practice on top of raising their mind for enlightenment. Practice signifies the nonduality of a living Buddha and practice.

Next, the sixth consciousness of the western direction. [...] This consciousness is capable of discerning the separateness of Dharma and defiled realities. The seventh consciousness only warrants Buddhist wisdom and practice; this is not the body (*tai* 體) of the ultimate enlightenment (J. *shōgaku* 正覺). [However,] the sixth consciousness correctly arises depending on the true natures of all dharmas; thus [one can] achieve Buddhahood [on this level of consciousness]. .....<sup>430</sup>

(抑必東方爲八識。北方前五識。定義門約時次第。此九識發心修行菩提。[...] 南方寶生尊。以七識爲修行方事。七識梵云摩那識。[...] 故唯識論云。我配我見·我愛我慢。與此究恒相應故。但緣藏識見分非餘云云故發心者。[...] 發菩提心上修行。[...] 修行者。生佛不二修行故也。次西方第六成菩提事。[...] 今第六識分別別法塵境故。七識約佛智修行。非正覺體。六識正緣諸法實相。故成佛也)

Although many important discussions can be teased out of this passage, I will limit my discussions to those that are essential to the main topic in this chapter. The above passages show *Keiran*'s faithful description of the consciousness according to the basic Yogācāra doctrine. As seen in the earlier section on the Yogācāra theory of the mind and consciousness, *Keiran* represents the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth consciousnesses as, respectively, the discerning awareness of right and wrong, the thought consciousness, the storehouse consciousness, and the pure *amala* consciousness. Of note is that various interpretive concepts and qualities are intertwined with those four levels of the consciousness in *Keiran*. One of the remarkable notions associated with consciousness that merit further examination is the directions. As *Keiran*'s discussion above shows, the five sense-consciousnesses correspond to the direction of the north, the sixth the west, the seventh the south, and the eighth the east. This could correspond to medieval Tendai's hermeneutics of the mind contemplation (*kanjin* 觀心), which entail a unique style of text interpretation that transcends rationality and orthodox scholasticism by typically

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<sup>430</sup> T76. 2410, 823c28-824a22.

employing word plays, in addition to correspondences and associations between two seemingly unrelated categories.<sup>431</sup>

Nevertheless, the association between the levels of consciousness and directions is already firmly grounded upon cosmological and ritualistic concepts of the Mikkyō teachings.<sup>432</sup> It is modeled upon the mandala of Five Buddhas, which represents the relationships among five buddhas and cosmic matters, which will be detailed soon. By associating layers of the consciousness and directions, *Keiran* is creating a mandalized map of our mind and consciousness. It suggests the oneness of microcosm, i.e., our mind and macrocosm, the cosmos, as is well reflected in the Tendai doctrine of the “three thousand realms in a single thought” (*ichinen sanzen*).

Throughout the entire discussion of the consciousness in the *Bodaishin ron*, the eighth, seventh, sixth consciousnesses are associated with the three critical processes of enlightenment in most Mahāyāna teachings: raising the bodhi mind (J. *hosshin* 發心), practice (J. *shugyō* 修行), and (attainment of) the bodhi, i.e., enlightenment (J. *bodai* 菩提). Although there are nine layers of consciousness, the four consciousnesses between the sixth and ninth are directly involved in the operation of mind toward enlightenment. The former five consciousnesses are merely senses despite the word consciousness (Skt. *vijñāna*; J. *shiki* 識) attached to them. In general they are viewed as not being able to affect the operation of consciousness and mind. They only interact with the sixth consciousness; and even that is only the case for human beings, who have

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<sup>431</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 153-189.

<sup>432</sup> At the same time, it is intersected with the traditional East Asian conceptual paradigm of Five Elements or Five Cycles (Ch. *wu xing*; J. *gogyō* 五行). These correspondences and associations can be extended and expanded almost infinitely according to the *kanjin* style worldview, a rather magical understanding of the world in which everything in the world is endlessly associated, intertwined, or reflected into one another; in particular, we see its most extreme expression in the emphasis on the oneness of microcosm, and macrocosm as seen in the correspondences between our consciousness and the cosmic world and buddhas.

complicated language and thought processing systems. The sixth consciousness is where the deeper consciousnesses “manifest” on our mind, so to speak.

The levels of consciousness that I have so far discussed and attempted to extensively focus on are the deeper levels of consciousness, i.e., the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth consciousnesses, as they are the ones directly related to the processes for attaining enlightenment. However, the levels of consciousness are neither the essential quality of reality nor the final goal, but they are only many different layers of the mind—and the mind is the very essence of reality and the ultimate truth. This is the premise shared by most Yogācāra-influenced Mahāyāna teachings.

Consciousness can be understood as *upāya* (J. *hōben* 方便), expedient means that is deployed and activated to eventually lead to enlightenment and the ultimate truth. The way in which the manifold consciousness is related with the mind is often explained by the allegory of the waves and the water in the ocean, an allegory that has often been employed by the Yogācāra line of Buddhist scriptures and commentaries.<sup>433</sup> As briefly mentioned before, in Yogācāra philosophy the mind is likened to water itself in the ocean, and the many layers of consciousness to the waves of the ocean. Waves cannot be formed independently from the ocean, and their state is only temporary; yet they are, in essence, water. In other words, the waves and water in the ocean are “one.”<sup>434</sup> Likewise, the manifold consciousness only comprises different layers of the one single mind, and they are merely temporary, or “expedient” stages of mind, or, the ultimate reality. Yet at the same time, it can also be stated that the consciousness and the mind are one.

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<sup>433</sup> T. 32.1666. 585b5-6 and T. 76. 2410. 527c3.

<sup>434</sup> Or, “neither one nor two / neither same nor different.” This will be clearer as the discussion in this chapter develops further.

Nevertheless, reaching deeper levels of consciousness by meditation does not automatically lead one to enlightenment. According to the Yogācāra theory of consciousness and mind, all levels of the consciousness—including the deeper levels of the consciousness—are not entirely pure as they are still contaminated by discriminating thought and cognition—that is, ignorance (Skt. *kleśa*; J. *mumyō* 無明).<sup>435</sup> Thus, consciousness is understood as representing “discriminating wisdom (Skt. *vikalpajñāna*, J. *bunbetsu-chi* 分別智).” In order to attain enlightenment, these discriminating forms of consciousnesses must be converted or transformed into “non-discriminating wisdom (Skt. *nirvikalpajñāna*, J. *mubunbetsu-chi* 無分別智).” This transformation, *tenjiki tokuchi* (J. 轉識得智), is one of the most important schematic concepts in the doctrine and practice of various Yogācāra-based schools.

It demands practitioners' active intent and practice to transform their consciousness (*vijñāna*) into primordial wisdom (*jñāna*). This practice requires practitioners first to raise their state of mind. And consequently, practitioners should transform the root of the mind on which they rely by converting the temporary, conditioned, or dependent nature of things into the perfect, absolute, and unconditioned nature of things. Transforming consciousness into wisdom is a highly complex process. In the ideal fashion it operates on all streams and all layers of consciousness. Thus, each of the five levels of consciousness<sup>436</sup> has a corresponding counterpart of the Five Wisdoms (*gochi* 五智) to which each level of consciousness can be possibly elevated. The former five consciousnesses (J. *zen goshiki* 前五識) can be transformed to the wisdom of

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<sup>435</sup> Ignorance is one element of *kleśa*, which is the “Three Poisons,” as I discussed in the previous chapter, but often it is used as a type of umbrella term for *kleśa*.

<sup>436</sup> Again, the first five levels of consciousness are all sense-based consciousnesses; thus, usually all five of the sense-consciousnesses are referred to as the “former five consciousnesses (*zengoshiki* 前五識) and treated as one unit among consciousnesses.

"accomplishing activities" (Skt. *kr̥ty-anuṣṭhāna-jñāna* J. *jōshosa-chi* 成所作智), the sixth consciousness to the wisdom of "investigative awareness" (Skt. *pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāna* J. *myōkanzatsu-chi* 妙觀察智), the seventh consciousness to the wisdom of the "awareness of sameness" (Skt. *samatā-jñāna* J. *byōdōshō-chi* 平等性智), the eight *ālaya* consciousness to the wisdom of "mirror-like awareness" (Skt. *ādarśa-jñāna* J. *daienkyō-chi* 大円鏡智), and finally, the ninth *amala* consciousness to the wisdom of "suchness" (Skt. *tathatā-jñāna* J. *hokkaitaishō-chi* 法界体性智).

Upon true awakening, all the layers of consciousness disappear as they are all converted to non-discriminating wisdom.<sup>437</sup> Consciousness is temporary and imperfect; even the deepest level of consciousness, the ninth *amala* consciousness, cannot represent ultimate reality by and of itself—only Buddha’s consciousnesses are pure. In the midst of the constant processes of transforming consciousness into wisdom, people may come closer to the truth—albeit asymptotically. As *Keiran* explains, consciousness can be understood as playing the role of the function—as in “essence (Ch. *ti*; J. *tai* 體) and function (Ch. *yung*; J. *yō* 用)—of wisdom.<sup>438</sup> In a way, manifold consciousnesses are the manifestation (*jaku* 迹) of the mind, which is the original ground (*hon* 本). Nevertheless, as for unenlightened, mundane ordinary beings, “observing” through consciousness is crucial for contemplation practice. After all, the deeper levels of consciousness could present the gateway toward true awakening for us. Attaining non-

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<sup>437</sup> However, this transformation process is not completed all at once, and on the whole the process is definitely non-linear. This will be clearer as my discussion develops in the course of this chapter.

<sup>438</sup> T76. 2410.805a10-12.

discriminating wisdom cannot be even considered separately from reaching and recognizing high levels of consciousness.<sup>439</sup>

As seen previously, the five layers of the consciousness correlate with specific directions.<sup>440</sup> These correlations are part of a big mandalaic cosmology, composed of mutually interrelated consciousnesses, the five directions, the five types of the non-discriminating wisdom, and the Five Wisdom Buddhas (*gochi nyorai* 五智如来). According to this mandalaic structure, there are five Buddhas, each of whom embodies a linked set of various specific qualities, such as the direction and wisdom.

Thus, centering on Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来 who embodies the wisdom of suchness (*hokkaiishō-chi*), there is the Buddha of the North, Amoghasiddhi (J. *Fukūjōju Nyorai* 不空成就如来), who embodies the wisdom of "accomplishing activities" (*jōshosa-chi*), the elevated wisdom of the former-five consciousnesses; the Buddha of the South, Ratnasambhava (J. *Hōshō Nyorai* 宝生如来), who embodies the wisdom of the "awareness of sameness" (*byōdōshō-chi*), the wisdom of the seventh consciousness; the Buddha of the East, Akṣobhya (J. *Ashuku Nyorai* 阿閼如来), who embodies the wisdom of "mirror-like awareness" (*daienkyō-chi*), the wisdom of the eighth consciousness; and the Buddha of the West, Amitābha (J. *Amida Nyorai* 阿弥陀如来),

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<sup>439</sup> In the end, to distinguish consciousness and non-discriminating wisdom (or one mind) also represents an expedient means. The consciousness and mind are not ontologically different; in particular, either the eighth *ālaya* or the ninth *amala* consciousness (depending on the tradition) is in effect equivalent to the one mind. All these distinctions, classifications, and dissections are only expedient. See Kim Hyunghyo, *Wonhyo ūi Daeseung chulhak* (Mahāyāna Philosophy of Wonhyo) (Seoul: Sonamu Press, 2006).

<sup>440</sup> Including the center, i.e., middle *direction* according to Esoteric Buddhist mandala. *Keiran* associates the high levels of consciousness with the five wisdoms, as well as with four directions. Although the ninth *amala* consciousness is not clearly designated to a specific direction in *Keiran*, it corresponds to the center according to the Five Wisdom mandala.



who embodies the wisdom of "investigative awareness" (*myōkanzatsu-chi*), the wisdom of the sixth consciousness.

The Five Wisdoms-Buddhas paradigm also confirms that the relationship between the ninth and sixth consciousnesses correlates with the *hon-jaku* scheme on a broader scale. As seen above, the ninth consciousness is associated with Dainichi, the cosmic Buddha who is the origin of all buddhas in the Tendai/Taimitsu doctrines. And the sixth consciousness is associated with the Amida, the manifested Buddha (*nirmanakāya*) also according to the Tendai/Taimitsu doctrines. Amida's representation of the manifested body of Buddha is also emphasized in *Keiran*.<sup>441</sup> As seen in earlier chapters through discussions on the origin-trace symbolism, the manifestation, as the nondual embodiment of the principle (*li*) and wisdom (*chi*) is what makes it possible to see the nonduality of realities. At the same time it forms nondual relationships with the other two truths by non-obstructive (*muge* 無礙), mutually responsive (*kan-ō* 感応), and interpenetrative nature or power<sup>442</sup> equipped in the manifestation. Upon the manifested truth, all three truths form mutual identities.

In this respect, *Keiran*'s other comment on the sixth consciousness in the discussion of Amida is noteworthy: the west is Amida's direction and also represents the sixth consciousness, that is, the unborn, non-obstructive mind.<sup>443</sup> The sixth consciousness is indeed the manifested body of our mind. How, then, would the sixth consciousness' manifestation of nonduality appear, and in particular, what is the exact meaning of the nondual, mutually responsive relationship between the sixth and ninth consciousnesses?

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<sup>441</sup> For example, T.76, 2410: 553a19-20. Also, in a discussion of the sixth consciousness, *Keiran* comments that it correlates with a stage of the manifested body of Buddha (T.76, 2410: b23-c2).

<sup>442</sup> It was explained with a term such as *tsū* 通 and supernatural power (*jintzūriki* 神通力) in Chapter Three.

<sup>443</sup> T.76, 2410: 553a7-8.

*Nonlinearity: Fruit or Seed*

In the preceding illustration of the sixth and ninth consciousnesses used for differences between the Danna and Eshin schools, the two consciousnesses were seen to be associated with the acquired and original enlightenment respectively. Does the sixth consciousness represent original or acquired enlightenment? This problem, along with the similar question whether it represents the trace or origin teaching, is in fact a quandary besetting the problem of the origin, which occurs due to the nonlinear nature of original enlightenment.

In the preliminary examination of manifold consciousness, we have seen a variety of characteristics, roles, and epithets of consciousnesses described in *Keiran*, as well as in the *Cheng weishi lun*. One of those epithets of the sixth consciousness that was mentioned briefly was the “fruit of Buddha (仏果).”<sup>444</sup> The signification of the fruit of Buddha is in line with the idea of the germ of Buddhahood, which is the achievement of Buddha and at the same time, his gift for us.

If the fruit is the final effect, i.e., enlightenment, or bodhi, as examined earlier, then the seed is the cause that leads one to enlightenment. The cause is practice, and even before that, the “raising of mind” (*hosshin* 発心) toward enlightenment. This happens at the opposite direction of the fruit of the west, i.e., the east, where lies the store house consciousness that preserves all “seeds” (*bīja*; J. *shūshi* 種子) of everything: our feelings, thoughts, habits, acts, events, etc. As

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<sup>444</sup> T.76. 2410. 804c28. It is also possible to translate the “fruit” into the “result” or “effect” of Buddha. However, whether it is translated into the fruit or the result, the meaning and logic is the same.

seen previously, the eighth consciousness of the east represents the raising of mind.<sup>445</sup> Thus, a seed is planted in the spring; it grows into a flower during the summer by means of heat and proper care; it becomes fully ripe as a fruit in the fall, and this is the final outcome that actually provides a benefit—e.g., feeding people.

The above process is an allegory for a linear path to enlightenment that moves from a cause to arrive at an effect (*jūinkōka* 從因向果),<sup>446</sup> which describes the typical way in which ordinary sentient beings attain enlightenment. It is the process by which we raise our mind, practice and cultivate our mind (*shugyō* 修行), and eventually attain the fruit of our practice in the end, i.e., enlightenment. This linear process is the very path for achieving “acquired enlightenment (*shikaku* 始覺). The Buddha’s path, however, is a nonlinear path, which is the reverse of the above process. As seen in the previous discussion of the Two Truths, Buddha had not merely gone to the other world but came back to this world in order to save the sentient beings. Thus he—after the ultimate realization—moves from effect to cause (*jūkākōin* 從果向因).”<sup>447</sup> What is important to be noted here is that this is how Buddha left us the gift, the *tathāgatagarbha*, the fruit of Buddha, in the hope that we sentient beings too raise our mind toward enlightenment grounded upon this fruit. This is the very perspective of original enlightenment, which is Tendai’s ideal path to enlightenment.

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<sup>445</sup> As seen before, raising mind can occur at any other deep layers of the consciousness except the seventh, but that is so in nonlinear practice for original enlightenment. In a linear process toward awakening, the eighth consciousness is the representation of the raising mind.

<sup>446</sup> Among many, T.76. 2410. 634c23-26.

<sup>447</sup> Among many, see T.76. 2410. 586 b25-28. *Keiran* states that *jūkākōin* 從果向因 is what Tendai pursues. This corresponds well to their original enlightenment thought.

The sixth consciousness, then, can be understood to have a dual dimension: as the effect of raising mind and practice (cause), it indicates acquired enlightenment. Yet at the same time, as the gift from Buddha, where we can raise the bodhi mind and start the journey toward enlightenment, the sixth consciousness represents original enlightenment. Thus, original enlightenment can be viewed as either the beginning or the end—either the origin or the manifestation. The origin-trace, or *hon-jaku* concept, is something can be flipped without an intentional reversal, as what occurred with the inverted *hon-jaku* scheme (*han honji suijaku*), which was discussed in Chapter One.

The mysterious duality of the sixth consciousness and the nonlinearity of original enlightenment are also in line with the analogy of the fruit, which, by definition, contains its own seed within itself. Moreover, seeds within a fruit may fall onto the ground accidentally or purposefully, becoming hidden under the ground during a harsh winter, and some of them will rise above the ground again the next spring to begin another life cycle. The fruit is where cause and effect manifest simultaneously; it is the nondual embodiment of cause and effect. And it symbolizes the reality with an unknown origin.

A more universal Buddhists' analogy for the nondual embodiment of cause and effect is the lotus; the lotus plant bears flower blossoms and its fruit simultaneously. In that sense, the lotus symbolizes the simultaneity of cause and effect.<sup>448</sup> Chinese commentators on the *Lotus Sūtra*, including Zhiyi, the founder of Tiantai, construed the coexistence of the flower and the fruit in the lotus as the “wondrous” (Ch. *Miao*; J. *myō* 妙) unity of cause and effect, which is the very “wondrous dharma” (Ch. *miaofa*; J. *myōhō* 妙法) of the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>449</sup> Tiantai's

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<sup>448</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp.186-187.

<sup>449</sup> Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri Tendai*, pp.77-78.

interpretation of the lotus as the embodiment of the inconceivably united cause and effect was elaborated and became a basis of original enlightenment thought, which emphasized the absolute simultaneity of cause and effect, and therefore, the nonlinear path to enlightenment<sup>450</sup>

Nonlinearity can be discussed either in a temporal or spatial sense; but in any case, it is a concept that is indispensably associated with the notion of process and direction. Tamura Yoshiro, in his explanation of original enlightenment from a temporal perspective, used the expression, “eternal now (*eien no ima* 永遠の今)” and “eternality as the absolute moment” (*zettai shunkan no eien* 絶対瞬間の永遠), which not only refers to a so-called dissolution of the three temporal modes, i.e., the past, present, and future, but more specifically to emphasize Japanese Tendai’s view of enlightenment as being attainable at any moment at present because from the outset it is innately endowed to anyone.<sup>451</sup> The meaning of Tamura’s words is this: the present is past and future, and vice versa. People do not achieve enlightenment as a culmination of their devoted practice; they are already enlightened now and would have attained enlightenment in the past, just as the Sākyamuni achieved enlightenment from the dawn of history, yet still appears in the present time as various buddhas, bodhisattvas, and divinities who are waiting to be awakened. This nonlinear notion of original enlightenment was a development of the Tiantai view that all things, all conditioned phenomena, and the ten dharma realms from hell to Buddhahood are naturally “endowed” in the one mind by nature (Ch. *hsing-chü*, J. *shōgu* 性具).<sup>452</sup> Thus, various worldly phenomena are not the “result” of the self-manifestation or self-

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<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

<sup>452</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p.9.

development of the one single mind, but they are all already *in* the mind. They are the Dharma from the very beginning.

This is a radical redefinition of time by Tendai, which interprets time from the Buddha's perspective. As seen in the discussion of the non-abiding Buddha formulated in the *Lotus Sūtra*, there is no Buddha of the past, of the present, or of the future. There is only one, absolute, timeless, and permanent Buddha. Whether he appears to achieve enlightenment at the fourth century BCE or now, he was already enlightened at a time of unknown, remote past. Thus, according to Buddha's time of the permanent now, we are all already saved. One does not attain enlightenment or liberation after a series of sequential practices as the final result. Rather, liberation is already present at now when one merely begins to seek for (the beginning stage of raising the mind toward enlightenment, i.e., *hosshin* 発心), whereas one's "attainment" of enlightenment is a reaffirmation of what he or she already possesses, as always.<sup>453</sup> And seen in that light, practice is only the expression of the already endowed Buddhahood.

A question arises here as to whether original enlightenment is indeed unconditionally fully operating for anyone without any effort. Is the sixth consciousness, in the form of the tiny snake, original enlightenment as it is? But then, that simple perception cannot resolve the issues that were raised in the beginning of this chapter: the distinction between the "form" of original enlightenment and the actual, accomplished original enlightenment, which is connected to the problem of origin and manifestation, and to the meaning of the sixth consciousness' "opening" to enlightenment.

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<sup>453</sup> The notion of the identity (to be more precise, nonduality) between the initial, unawakened state and the awakened mind is not only found in Tendai or Tiantai teachings, but also in the teachings of other major Mahāyāna schools such as Huayan (J. Kegon) and Ch'an (J. Zen). The common expression of the "initial raising mind becomes the perfect enlightenment as it is" is also found in several places in *Keiran* (T.76, 2410: 561a2, 564b14-15, 652b30, 745c2).

*The Winding Snake Mind and Shaking Dance of All Dharmas*

Medieval Tendai has been stigmatized by both contemporary Buddhists and modern scholars for its uncritical affirmation of the world and moral deterioration, and Tendai's abuse of original enlightenment thought has been viewed as offering a doctrinal ground for their endorsement of anything—even evil acts.<sup>454</sup> However, as attested by Jacqueline Stone's study, the true meaning of original enlightenment, which was only transmitted secretly within their lineages according to their *kuden* culture, never was about unconditional guarantee of enlightenment for everyone. Rather, the doctrine of original enlightenment that appeared in their secret transmission always emphasizes correct learning from masters and one's dedicated mind cultivation. In particular, one's cultivation and practice were crucial due to the nonlinear nature of original enlightenment. The nonlinear path also implies its irregular recursive characteristic; in other words, medieval Tendai scholars viewed enlightenment not as the final destination, but something one can achieve, then lose, and attain again. Thus “sustainability” was the key to their doctrine of original enlightenment, and what could sustain the precious fruit of Buddha was only practice.<sup>455</sup>

Therefore, the path to enlightenment is not always laid out in front of our eyes. It seems to be clearly shown at one moment, yet could disappear the next. The path might be seen again by one's strenuous practice, but no one knows how long it will take. If one can access the road directly without any hindrance (*ge 礙*), that capacity may deserve to be complemented as a

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<sup>454</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*

mysterious, supernatural power (*jinzūriki* 神通力). The road of original enlightenment in our mind journey is certainly not a linear, straight road.

In this light, *Keiran*'s further comments on the form of the tiny snake are noteworthy:

“...the essence of the (unmoving) unconditioned, original enlightenment is in the form of the snake. It is *the winding snake mind* (*jakyokushin* 蛇曲心) [emphasis mine].”<sup>456</sup>

(所詮我等カ 無作本有ノ體ハ蛇形也。 蛇曲心也)

And there is another very similar example:

“...all sentient beings' unconditioned essence of original, innate mind is the winding snake mind / the mind of winding snake. That is because sentient beings all respond to the the snake form”<sup>457</sup>

(一切衆生ツクロハザル本有ノ念體蛇曲ノ心也。 サレハ凡夫衆生悉蛇身ノ感得スル也)

As is evident throughout discussions so far, the snake is a symbol or allegory, not the actual one; thus in the above discussion on our mind and enlightenment, the expression “winding snake mind” should be interpreted as “the (our) mind that is winding like a snake.”<sup>458</sup> This allegory evokes the previous discussion on the nonlinear path to enlightenment. If the roads are nonlinear—winding, twisted, and curled up—traversing the roads should cause constant returns to the same point. If this point to which one constantly returns is our beginning point, that is, the

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<sup>456</sup> T76. 2410, 864a8-9.

<sup>457</sup> T76. 2410, 623b12-13.

<sup>458</sup> It is evident that Tendai monks and the compiler himself have interpreted it the same way by inserting a particle “no の” as an annotation mark (*kunten* 訓点) between the winding snake or the snake winding (*jakyoku* 蛇曲) and mind (*kokoro* / *shin* 心).



sixth consciousness of Buddha's fruit, would the recursive act be relevant to the nondual relationship between the sixth and ninth consciousnesses?

Nevertheless, what has been examined as a crucial aspect in nondual relationships in this study is the simultaneous, direct, non-obstructive mutual identity, which makes two or more realities mutually identical (*sōsoku*). We have discussed that point with such central Taimitsu concepts that appeared in *Keiran* as perfect unity (*enyū* 円融), non-obstruction (*muge* 無礙), mysterious unity (*myōgō* 冥合), mutual response (*kan-ō* 感応)<sup>459</sup>, and so forth. Moreover, as seen in the prior discussion about Tendai's view of nonlinear time, what is central to the doctrine of original enlightenment is the immediate—as well as the innate—nonduality between cause and effect, or the origin and trace. Given this, the nonlinear path to enlightenment should not be misunderstood simply as a convoluted road. That is rather a Hīnayānist view. As Tendai's supreme truth of the *Lotus Sūtra* emphasizes, the road to original enlightenment is the “great direct path” (*daijigidō* 大直道).<sup>460</sup> Of note is that “direct” here does not indicate linearity, given the central teaching of the immanent oneness in the sūtra. Rather, as exemplified by the dragon-girl's immediate enlightenment, the great direct way should be understood in the sense of immediate, mutual inclusiveness from the Taimitsu perspective. Then, the allegory of winding snake mind (*jakokushin* 蛇曲心) merits a more precise decipher.

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<sup>459</sup> The term *kan-ō*, or divine response is used by Zhiyi in his *Fa hua xan yi* 法華玄義 (T. 33, 1716), which refers to our capacity to attain Buddhahood (Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy*, p.137). Thus it does have a deep connection to enlightenment. The reason why I translate the term as “mutual” response is based on *Keiran*'s pinpointing “*kan-ō*” as the fundamental meaning of the *kaji* 加持 rituals (T.76, 2410:776c14-16), the premise of which entails the mutual communication between Buddha (respond to/bless sentient beings by his compassion) and all sentient beings (receive Buddha's blessing influence). (Sawa Ryūken ed., *Mkkkyō Jiten* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1975).

<sup>460</sup> Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, p15.

In particular, the word “*koku* 曲” needs to be reconsidered. The word *koku* mostly means “twist(ed),” “curve(d),” “warp(ed),” “winding,” but as a noun the word itself means “(a piece of) music” and “melody” as well. There is a cognate relationship between winding and music: music or melody consists of a well-organized collection of vibrating sounds. And there is certainly association between vibrating sounds and “winding” even from a cursory visual observation; the vibration of a sound in music is typically made with strings by plucking them or scraping one against another. The vibration of strings makes strings curvy-like waves—or, “winding.”<sup>461</sup>

The above analogy of vibration and the winding snake evokes our earlier discussion of Benzaiten’s symbolism and iconography. Both Myōon and Uga Benzaiten are deeply associated with sound, whether it is a subtle sound (*myōon*), music or speech. In particular, Myōon’s *samaya* form, the biwa, signifies the unity between the mind and body of all sentient beings and all dharmas.<sup>462</sup> Aside from the serpentine symbolism attached to Benzaiten, the *kanjō* rituals associated with both Myōon and Uga entail ritual images and acts of vibrating or shaking (*shin* 振). As seen in the Benzaiten discussion, these rituals and images are to reveal Benzaiten’s embodiment of nonduality between wisdom (*chi* 智) and objects (*kyō* 境), or heaven and earth. Thus vibration of coiled, serpentine icons or deities, whether created by Myōon’s biwa or Uga’s preaching, is the revelation of nonduality of realities. At the very least, the sound itself is the manifestation of mutual interpenetration between two or more waves in the air. If everything has its own waves, then all things in the world can mutually respond (*sō-ō* 相応 or *kan-ō* 感応) with one another. *Keiran* also emphasizes the inconceivable mutual response between sentient beings

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<sup>461</sup> All sounds are in principle vibration, and of course, a vibration is a physical mechanical “wave.” Sound is what this wave is delivered through—that is, a medium of air or water.

<sup>462</sup> Yamamoto, *Ijin*, p.401.

and the entirety of nature<sup>463</sup>; people may respond to each other by sound—speech, for example. But how can the mutual response and nondual unity occur between people and other realities in the dharma realm? *Keiran* says that is possible also by vibration, or “shaking dance” (*shinbu* 振舞), as allegorized in *Keiran*.

As introduced in the beginning of this study, *Keiran* says that all dharmas in the dharma realms have their own innate shaking, vibrating dance. It is how the macrocosm of the three thousand realms can be simultaneously contained in the microcosm of a single thought, as seen in the earlier discussion on the Sannō as the *ichinen sanzen* 一念三千.<sup>464</sup> Likewise, all sentient beings have their own innate vibrating dance according to *Keiran*.<sup>465</sup> And the significance of this possession is revealed in the same discussion:

The discussion on the difference between exoteric and esoteric teachings: the master said, exoteric teaching discriminate and dissects ten realms. It opens the dharma by eight teachings; and demands sentient beings to open and see their entering to awakening. Exoteric teaching enlightens sentient beings by preaching, but in esoteric teaching all sentient beings listen to preaching from their own *dharmakāya* by means of their innate shaking dance. This is the meaning for the [teachings] that all dharmas can achieve Buddhahood by themselves; thus minds of all sentient beings themselves are identical to the omniscience of Buddha (*itsai chi*).<sup>466</sup>

(顯密教相不同事 示云。師云。顯教辨へ機於十界二。開理於八教二。爲令衆生開示悟入故。說法教化給也。密教ハ不然。一切衆生本有振舞。カクテ自性法身説教ト談也。遍一切處自身成佛此意也。故各衆生自心即是一切智 云云)

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<sup>463</sup> T.76, 2410:819c27.

<sup>464</sup>T.76, 2410: 514a12-14.

<sup>465</sup> T.76, 2410: 760b12, 762c16-17.

<sup>466</sup> T.76, 2410: 762c14-19.

Many topics may be teased out of the above *Keiran* passage, but the important point for our discussion, i.e., the connection among the act of shaking, sound, and enlightenment, is identified here.<sup>467</sup> And this vibration is generated from the very form, or essence of innate enlightenment in us; *Keiran* states that the form of enlightenment of all sentient beings listens to the dharma sound (*hōon* 法音) of all buddha’s preaching while being inside the inherent suchness of dharmas.<sup>468</sup> As examined intensively, throughout *Keiran* this form of innate enlightenment of all sentient beings is symbolized as the tiny snake inside us, which is the ground of the sixth consciousness. Thus, according to *Keiran*, the tiny snake of the sixth consciousness “vibrates” and catches the wave of the dharma sound. The nondual relationship between the sixth and ninth consciousnesses, then, is possible due to our innate ability to wind the mind like a snake, i.e. vibrate. Now it is assumed that the true meaning of the inherent, original enlightenment must have been grounded upon the immediate, mutual response, that is, resonance between cause and effect.

This is also how all sentient beings can respond to kami in the snake form, which is the kami’s emanation of its own shaking dance.<sup>469</sup> Shaking dance is the secret for the mysterious unity (*myōgō*), or nonduality of the origin and trace; it is what makes deities manifest by our recognition as we respond to them by our own ability to vibrate. The shaking dance enables us directly interpenetrate (*tsu* 通) with all realities. But although it is our inherent ability and nature,

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<sup>467</sup> The profound meaning of vibration is also represented through a ritual, as every ritualistic act ultimately serves the salvific purpose; the act of ringing a bell (*shinrei* 振鈴) is for the sudden awakening, as the sound of the bell is preaching of Dainichi by his own delights (*jiju hōraku* 自受法樂). (T.76, 2410: 709a-b). It is also noteworthy that the word that means sound/music (*raku* 樂) is used in this term.

<sup>468</sup> T.76, 2410: 709a8-9.

<sup>469</sup> In the previous discussion of kami’s ability to manifest by “dimming light and becoming like the dust,” it was illuminating that *Keiran* compared it to the shaking dance of a couple’s sexual union.

not everyone can achieve the immediate connection; one should constantly cultivate the mind in order to vibrate correctly, catch the sound of ultimate truth, and sustain it.

### *Conclusion*

The symbolism of the tiny snake inside us has been crucial to explore the meaning of manifestation and the *hon-jaku* relationships among various kami and buddhas. As this symbolism entails the issue of original enlightenment as the representation of the sixth consciousness of our mind, this chapter has examined the manifold consciousness. In particular, the main discussions have focused on the relationship between sixth and ninth consciousnesses, as their relationship correlates with the origin-trace scheme in the world in the form dharma (*shikihō* 色法). In other words, the two consciousnesses represent the *hon-jaku* in the world of the mind dharma (*shinbō* 心法). As identified with the ground of original enlightenment in *Keiran*, an examination of the sixth consciousness has led us to see how central the Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment is to understanding the rationale of the nonduality of the origin and traces.

*Keiran*'s analogy of the "winding snake mind" provides a useful interpretive model for understanding the nonduality of origin and trace, which entails a nonlinear, simultaneous interaction between them, whether it is referred to as a non-obstructive mutual co-existence, a mysterious unity, or a mutual penetration. Facing the mystery of the symbolism of the winding snake, another allegory for our inherent mind in *Keiran*, namely, "shaking/trembling dance," was illuminated, as it is the very original nature of reality. Along with the shared representation of the original mind of all sentient beings, the image of tremulous action certainly evokes the

symbolism of the winding snake. More importantly, the analogy of the shaking dance is deeply related to the esoteric meaning of the *wakō dōjin*. As discussed in the previous chapter, kami's manifestation, which is glossed in *Keiran* as the act of “dimming its light and becoming like the dust,” can be interpreted as “responding to” or “resonating with” (*ō*) the snake form of the unconditioned, inherent enlightenment possessed by every sentient being.

From very early discussions of manifestation and *wakō dōjin*, *Keiran* associates them with the shaking dance, and replaces the word manifestation with terms such as response and resonance. Considering *Keiran*'s characterization of *wakō dōjin* as a type of bodhisattva practice for the sake of others, which is particularly emphasized by *Keiran*'s compiler Kōshū, the “shaking dance” of the mind—or, using the snake symbolism, the winding snake mind—must signify the core meaning of the cultivation of our mind, and, perhaps the practice of mind contemplation (*kanjin*). Indeed, *Keiran* corresponds the shaking dance with the secret of the union of the Three Mysteries (the Body, Speech, and Mind) as well as the esoteric meaning of the “three thousand realms in one thought (*ichinen sanzen*).” Through this practice we realize the mysterious identity between the mind and all dharmas, and that this realization comes upon us through contemplating various phenomenalities, or, rather, by making our mind “resonate with” various realities. And when our minds and realities of the all dharma realms mutually resonate, they become neither one nor two; these mysterious unions or nondual relationships realized by the resonance of the shaking dance are also explained in *Keiran* as the mysterious sexual union between a husband and wife. And resonance—the trembling, vibrating dance of our mind—occurs instantly and simultaneously. These examinations reveal the dynamic mechanism of original enlightenment, the content and meaning of which might have been secretly kept within the inner circles of Tendai scholar-monks on Mt. Hiei.

Through *Keiran*'s unique multidimensional use of the snake symbol, we have come to understand how inextricably interrelated the origin-trace structure and the problem of enlightenment are. Although the secret may never be disclosed, its traces throughout *Keiran* make it possible for us to adumbrate a vague sketch of the unfathomable secret. And according to our sketch, original enlightenment within Mt. Hiei scholastic circles never means simply the Buddhahood that everyone inherently possesses and that is already in operation *a priori*. It is always a possibility that can only be realized by one's dedication to the conversion of consciousness into high wisdom and to practice following the salvific Bodhisattva path.

## Conclusion

“Nonduality” would be a key word for characterizing the *hon-jaku* relationships in medieval Tendai discourse on kami and buddhas, as recorded in *Keiran shūyōshū*. The problem is that its exact meaning is not very clear. Various sets of terms and phrases associated with the idea of nonduality, such as “mutual identity” (*sōsoku*) or “neither one nor two,” emphasize inconceivable oneness (*shūgō* or *myōgō*), perfect harmony (*enyū*), and mutual penetration (*sō-ō*) of the origin and trace without obstruction (*muge*). At the same time, these concepts are all implying subtle difference(s) between the origin and trace, thus make the meaning of nonduality all the more nebulous. Moreover, complex chains of kami and buddhas associated by such *hon-jaku* schemes in the medieval Japanese pantheon increase the perplexity of nonduality, which leads us to question the meaning of “manifestation” and, after all, to wonder what kami meant to medieval Tendai scholar-monks who developed the *shinbutsu shūgō* discourse based on the *honji suijaku* paradigm.

Exploring *Keiran*’s discussions on kami and the web of *hon-jaku* relationships, it was gleaned that the Kami-Buddha discourse based on the *hon-jaku* scheme was indispensable from medieval Taimitsu teachings, in particular, the doctrine of original enlightenment and its associated contemplation practice. What we have observed is *Keiran*’s effort to unite all forms and objects in the phenomenal world and Tendai’s exoteric and esoteric teachings, which are well illustrated by the term, the “mysterious unity of objects and wisdom” (*kyōchi myōgō*), as frequently highlighted in *Keiran*. After all, all phenomena are all buddhas’ preaching of truth from the Taimitsu perspective. We have to listen to, or “resonate” with the preaching by utilizing our innate ability to do the shaking dance. Seen in this light, learning of the union—*shūgō* 習合



—between kami and buddhas, and between manifestations and the truth embodied in them is a crucial practice toward enlightenment by leading one to realize that they are united with one’s mind. All in all, Mikkyō teaching stresses the free, non-obstructive mutual penetration among the six elements as the supreme achievement for immediate Buddhahood; and given the sixth element of the consciousness, it is comprehended that the accomplishment of the mysterious union among the six elements of all dharmas occurs in one’s elevated consciousness by a devoted practice such as mind contemplation.

Whether it is of buddhas or of kami, the act of manifesting is the wondrous supernatural ability (*jinzūriki*) that freely permeates all elements of the dharma realm and respond to the “waves” from sentient beings’ essence of enlightenment. In that sense, buddhas and kami “manifest” in our mind, and it is only in our mind that their mutual identity is realized. The afore-examined simultaneous embodiment of dual aspects of truth offers insight here: manifestations, or traces are the effect of nondual unity among the principle (*ri*), wisdom (*chi*), and phenomena (*ji*); yet at the same time, manifestations are the cause for our realization of nondual truth. This is the fundamental rationale of the original enlightenment thought.

*Keiran*’s discussion of manifestation through the multi-layered symbolism of the snake brilliantly shows the truth of “truth as the mind.” Through its representation of the sixth consciousness, and in the form of various serpentine emanations, the snake symbolizes the form of inherent, original enlightenment, which is the innate “infra-structure” common to everyone. In this sense, anyone has the embryonic potential to attain Buddhahood. However, original enlightenment is grounded upon the sixth consciousness, yet it is not identical to the sixth consciousness; the sixth consciousness is the ground of original enlightenment, but is not in and of itself original enlightenment. As seen in our main arguments, enlightenment is entirely

dependent upon one's active practice, or, figuratively speaking, vibrating our strings of the mind. When the sixth consciousness is elevated, that is, makes the non-obstructive, mutual penetration of shaking dance with the ninth consciousness, it becomes the simultaneous, nondual embodiment of cause and effect. And what make this possible is the practice; thus we should open our sixth consciousness, which can be converted to the wisdom of subtle observation (*myōkanzatsu-chi*), to "observe" our seventh consciousness, which represents the direction of practice. This is a superficial portrayal of the basic of meditation, but as seen in *Keiran*, that is why the dragon-girl chanted facing a southern direction, i.e., the direction of practice, in order to achieve enlightenment.

Thus, the sixth and ninth consciousnesses are neither same nor different, and the logic of this relation also stands for the origin-trace scheme and kami-buddha relationship. Kami and buddhas are nondual, which means not completely identical; after all, kami are manifested traces of buddhas. Despite the implication of hierarchy or asymmetry, it seems by no means that claiming superiority of buddhas is the purpose of discourse on kami, either for *Keiran*'s compiler or for the Hiei Tendai scholar-monks of many lineages, whose inner discussions via the *kuden* transmissions appeared throughout *Keiran*. Again, what is demanded to know throughout *Keiran*'s kami discussions is the mutual identity between kami and buddhas, and the ultimate truth of the all-inclusive oneness of realities, as represented by the wondrous teachings of the *Lotus*.

Through our exegetical efforts to understand medieval Tendai's discourse of origin and trace in *Keiran*, we can at least state one conclusion: Tendai's *honji suijaku* discourse is neither about a type of bipolar structure in which kami and buddhas confront each other, nor some

discriminating, hierarchical scheme that was devised on the Buddhists' side.<sup>470</sup> For medieval Tendai scholar-monks on Mt. Hiei, the *honji suijaku* discourse was rather an important heuristic device that enabled them to see the nondual truth and the one mind that was pervasive throughout all realities—including numerous kami in Japan and Śākyamuni of India.

Since long before the advance of Buddhism to Japan, kami were what had already “manifested” onto the mind of the Japanese people. Not only did kami comprise the one mode of many plural possible manifestations, they consisted of shared roots and interests (J. *kikon* 機根) for medieval Japanese. The Tendai scholarly-monastic tradition on Mt. Hiei, which also is the sacred site of the Mountain King deity as well, emphasized the realization of one truth through many things.<sup>471</sup> For these Tendai scholar-monks, understanding and explaining kami in the language of Tendai esotericism, and in doing so confirming the mutual identity among all dharmas, must have been crucial practices both in the exegetical and eisegetical sense.<sup>472</sup>

In that light, the concept of the *honji suijaku* itself can be viewed as a skillful means (J. *hōben* 方便) of leading us to enlightenment. The lesson from *Keiran*'s discussion of origin and trace encourages us to contemplate the term as a whole—as a sentence. For truth cannot be obtained from distinguishing which is the *honji* (original ground) and which is the *suijaku*

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<sup>470</sup> This is not denying that such a hierarchical distinction between Buddhist deities and kami often occurred in the politically fraught context of medieval Japan, as similar phenomena are commonly found in any other religious syncretism. But such themes have been studied in previous scholarship, and herein my study is confined to the doctrinal meaning of the origin-trace structure.

<sup>471</sup> This refers to a doctrinal expression, “one is many, many is one” (*ichi soku ta, ta soku ichi* 一即多, 多即一), that captures Tendai's emphasis on phenomenal realities (J. *ji* 事). See Tamura and Umehara, *Zettai no shinri Tendai*, p.206.

<sup>472</sup> Given that Stone discusses medieval Taimitsu's *kanjin* 觀心 as a unique hermeneutic device that can be construed as deliberate “reading in” interpretation in contrast to the more typical “reading out” interpretation, my view is that the Tendai scholastic discourse of kami and buddhas also represents *kanjin* style interpretations by which one reads into or reconfigures various “texts”—including written texts, institutions, symbols, and so on—in order to reaffirm the Taimitsu doctrinal position and insight. See Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp.156-167.

(manifested traces). Truth can be sought when we begin to think about an aphoristic statement, “original ground casts its traces,” (*honjisuijaku; honji ga/wa ato wo tareru* 本地垂迹) and pursue the meaning of it. Of course, most of us begin with chasing the traces—the fruits of Buddha. In modern language, that may be what we call science and knowledge.

*Keiran*'s author, Kōshū must have been well aware of the significance of understanding traces and their science, and that they lead to the path for Buddhahood.<sup>473</sup> As discussed in the introduction of this study, Kōshū regarded recording collected documents, that is, manifesting truth, as the Bodhisattva path for the benefit of people. Moreover, his entitling of the masterpiece itself is a great heuristic tool that demands our own thought. In a very poetic and arcane way, Kōshū explains the reason for using the title, *Keiran shūyōshū*. Despite my limited ability to convey the nuance in his mystical expressions, it roughly reads:

Moving along silent stonewalks, [I] stepped forward in the middle of the secluded valley. There is nothing without order. The mysterious mountain wind in the valley blows upon the three realms and dries things up. There is no time that is not like autumn. Thus [I] sing the prose (writes) while picking up leaves. Thus [I] entitle this collection as *Keiran shūyōshū*.<sup>474</sup>

(就中孤溪之幽砌。無物ト而不令。與フルニ嵐嘯ク三界之枯藁。無時ト而不秋。拾葉吟ス。故名嵐溪拾葉集ト)

Here, the allegory of leaves for manifested realities is easier to recognize, considering Kōshū's thought about collecting information and recording phenomenal realities as a type of

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<sup>473</sup> It is noteworthy that he begins the main content of *Keiran* with a record of the discussion about achieving Buddhahood by skillful means. T.76.2410. 508c20. This in itself deserves future study.

<sup>474</sup> T.76.2410. 503b4-5.

bodhisattva practice for other people.<sup>475</sup> Then, what was the mountain wind in the valley that scattered leaves indicated? I suggest that this can be appreciated from several different angles that mutually interact.

On one level, it can be read that he was comparing his records to collecting leaves scattered in the Kurodani Valley (黒谷), which refers to both the place that he was staying at the time and his lineage from the Kurodani school. In that sense, *Keiran* is the collection of *kuden* transmissions dispersed in the Kurodani. On another, more esoteric level, the title can be interpreted as an allusion to the mysterious, nondual interaction—shaking dance—among all realities. Let us recall our discussion about the allegorical shaking dance: *Keiran* states that the three thousand realms are where all things and all thoughts of the dharma realm perform the shaking dance, which is deeply connected to the esoteric idea of manifestation. As seen in Chapter Two, this statement was from *Keiran*'s discussion of Sannō as the *ichinen sanzen*, or the three thousand realms in a single thought. The above-mentioned notions of all things and all thoughts of the dharma realm are identified with Sannō in this discussion. Then, given the dynamic image of the mountain wind, could the mountain wind in the valley also symbolize Sannō, or more precisely, Sannō's preaching?<sup>476</sup> If so, collecting leaves from the windy mountain valley could also be an allegory for *Keiran*'s records of all the truth about Sannō.

Also, a different layer of the symbolism of the “valley” is remarkable. In particular, what calls for our attention is the esoteric Buddhist association between principle (*ri*) and a woman—

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<sup>475</sup> Also, the expression of “*kotoba*” 言葉 strengthens this interpretation, as mentioned in Chapter One and discussed by Tanaka Takako (Tanaka, *Keiran shūyōshū no sekai*, pp. 33-37).

<sup>476</sup> Here, it is useful to recall a discussion in Chapter Two, in which we saw the association between preaching and the air (wind 風) element. The word “*ran* 嵐” does refer to the “wind” or “storm,” but it also contains the meaning of (mysterious) air of the mountain. Morohashi Tetsuji, comp., *Dai kanwa jiten*, (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1968), 8289 (4:291).

specifically, a woman's body,<sup>477</sup> which is often associated with "valley" (*tani* 谷). Kōshū himself writes about the valley of the Kurodani as the "shape of a woman's genitals,"<sup>478</sup> and more importantly, *Keiran* stresses that principle is identical to the form of a woman (*ri soku jogyō* 理即女形).<sup>479</sup> On the other hand, the Buddha-nature takes [the form] of a man (*busshō i danshi* 佛性爲男子).<sup>480</sup> *Keiran* adds that this signifies nonduality of principle and wisdom (*ri-chi funi*). Although these analogies will merit a full investigation, for now, the afore-examined *Keiran*'s allegory of the mysterious shaking dance (sexual union) of a couple for manifestation seems to make more sense. As seen so far, the manifestation or phenomenal realities in *Keiran* means the embodiment of nonduality between principle and wisdom.

Seen in that light, what generates the manifestations of truth—leaves—in the valley is the nondual unity between principle and the wisdom of those who seek the principle and aim to achieve enlightenment, namely, the Tendai scholar-monks of the Kurodani, including Kōshū himself. In that respect, *Keiran shūyōshū* is the manifestation of Kōshū and other monks' efforts to achieve Buddhahood by uniting with principle.

Perhaps not all these assumptions would have been the author's intention. Nevertheless, even from his frequent transcription of the word "*keiran*" in siddham letters, we can glimpse his intention to esotericize the meaning of the title of his masterwork. Furthermore, as it was his wish to benefit others toward enlightenment, our consideration of the possible multilayered

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<sup>477</sup> This is also related to the ground of the "womb mandala" in Esoteric Buddhism.

<sup>478</sup> T.76.2410:800b2.

<sup>479</sup> T.76.2410: 824c9.

<sup>480</sup> T.76.2410: 609c19.

significance of the title, *Keiran shūyōshū*, could become in and of itself a good mind  
contemplation practice that leads us to resonate with realities on Mt. Hiei from the distant past.

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