Transcending Locality, Creating Identity:

Shinra Myōjin, a Korean Deity in Japan

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is about Shinra Myōjin, a god of Silla that was worshipped in medieval Japanese Buddhism. It analyzes the various networks with which the deity was involved, namely, networks of Silla immigrants, Silla shrines and temples, and a variety of gods. Through examining the worship of Shinra Myōjin from several different angles, each chapter has different, and yet related arguments.

In the first chapter, I argue that the emergence of Shinra Myōjin's cult can be fully understood when viewed within the context of the "East Asian Mediterranean" trade network, in which Silla merchants, immigrants, and Buddhist monks played a prominent role. In the second chapter, while focusing on a pivotal moment of the Shinra Myōjin cult—a process of *sedentarisation* in which he changed from a sea deity into a mountain deity, I argue that Shinra Myōjin was the central deity of Onjōji, as well as the entire Jimon tradition. The third chapter explains how the Japanese *imaginaire* of Silla was evolved, encoded and had effects in medieval Japan, and how Shinra Myōjin functioned as a god of pestilence. Another pivotal point of Shinra Myōjin's career was his mythological transformation from 'a god of Silla' to 'a god who conquered Silla.' In the last chapter, I analyze the visual representation of Shinra Myōjin within this larger religious context, and argue that Shinra Myōjin is best understood when we consider the deity in this network of other Silla-related deities, represented as an old man.

The examination of Shinra Myōjin's cult from an interdisciplinary angle serves as a gateway for exploring other understudied associations between medieval Japanese religiosity and

those religious ideas and practices that were either continental in origin or were at least perceived to be so by medieval Japanese. My findings from interdisciplinary research contribute to elucidating those connections existing across the boundaries of religion, history, mythology, literature, and visual culture, all of which describes broader dynamics of East Asian religion as a whole.

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Introduction

This dissertation focuses on the deity Shinra Myōjin 新羅明神, who is a major object of devotion in the Tendai 天台 esoteric Buddhist pantheon in medieval Japan. My overarching question throughout this dissertation is the following: how did a deity whose name clearly refers to the kingdom of Silla 新羅 (57 BCE–935 CE) come to be deified as a protective deity of a Japanese Buddhist sect and why? Also, what is the significance of studying this deity in the larger intuitional, historical, and cultural context?

While many scholars have drawn our attention to Chinese cultural influence on all things Japanese, Korean influence remains largely unrecognized. In addition, previous studies on religious connections between Korea and Japan have focused largely on the ancient period (approximately fourth to eighth centuries), whereas the medieval connections between the archipelago and peninsula remain more or less ignored. While the medieval period (approximately the late tenth to late fifteenth centuries) may have witnessed a certain decrease in cultural transmission from Korea to Japan, Korean influence did not disappear but rather became more visible and was appropriated in what I would call a more creative way, e.g., through myths. This is particularly true of Shinra Myōjin.

Shinra Myōjin is a deity who appeared in medieval Japan.[1] Although I partially agree with it, my approach departs from the so-called Chūsei Shinwa 中世神話 or Medieval

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[1] I use the term "medieval" to refer to a conceptual framework rather than a historical period, although there is overlap between the two. As a conceptual framework, the medieval period is the period during which the indigenous Yamato religious system was not only transformed by the infusion of continental civilization but also was internalized within the evolution of local religious ideas and practices.

Mythology.[2] This work aims to challenge the Japan-centric tendency of the new medievalism in Japanese scholarship.[3] This approach appears most evidently in the nascent fields of the Chūsei Nihongi 中世日本紀 (medieval reinterpretations of classical Japanese mythology) and, more broadly, the Chūsei Shinwa.[4] I intend to use medieval devotion of this deity, seemingly named after the Korean kingdom of Silla, as a lens through which to explore two dimensions of medieval religiosity: first, the way in which Japanese actors imagined and incorporated Korean religious elements into their medieval religious context and, second, the role of an individual deity in the representation of a particular religious history that is interwoven with a system of mythic logic.

In order to explain how this foreign deity was inscribed into the Japanese religious landscape, I will go beyond a narrow focus on the deity itself and examine the socio-cultural and mythological networks within which Shinra Myōjin worship was important. I will also examine the religious symbolism and narratives associated with this deity. I will argue that Shinra Myōjin was not simply the tutelary god of Onjōji 園城寺 in Tendai but actually a composite god whose character was determined largely by the way in which Onjōji monks imagined Silla. Their image

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[2] Yamamoto 1998a; 1998b.

[3] This observation is indebted to the work of Bernard Faure 2014 (forthcoming); 2015 (forthcoming).

[4] Starting from literature in the 1970s and on, the new approach of Japanese medieval studies, Chūsei Nihongi has been developed by Japanese scholars such as Abe Yasurō, Itō Satoshi, Yamamoto Hiroko, and Tanaka Takako. As part of the Chūsei Nihongi movement, Yamamoto has started to use the term Chūsei Shinwa, focusing in particular on myths, although she did not coin the term (its connotation is little different, but the term Chūsei Shinwa itself was first used by Fukuda Akira in his book; see Fukuda 1997). It is worth noting here that Chūsei Shinwa refers to two different yet related notions: 1) the specific corpus of medieval religious literatures written based on mythological ideas, and 2) a methodological concern for studying those medieval religious literatures. (Yamamoto 1998b: 4.) After Yamamoto, the term Chūsei Shinwa was established as a methodology emphasizing the unique medieval culture among Japanese scholarship. Although scholars such as Yamamoto and Abe Yasurō use the methodology for the study of Japan's medieval period, some scholars like Saitō Hideki expand its usage and applies it to not only the medieval period but all time periods from ancient to modern. For instance, Saitō Hideki uses the Chūsei Shinwa methodology when looking at the transformation of an individual god such as Susanoo. On this, see Saitō 2012. Also for the general review of the concept and reception of the term, see Itō 2011 and Saitō 2011.

of Silla is, in turn, best understood in relation to the network of Silla gods and Korean religious elements in Japan.

Shinra Myōjin first appears in the eleventh-century *Onjōji ryūge-e engi* 園城寺龍華会縁起, the earliest temple chronicle of Onjōji (aka Miidera 三井寺). Established by the Tendai monk Enchin 円珍 (814–891), Onjōji was the head temple of the Jimon 寺門, which was one of two main branches of Japanese Tendai. According to the *engi* story, the deity revealed himself to Enchin during the latter's return from China. Appearing in the midst of a violent storm at sea and taking the guise of an old man, he introduced himself as a deity from Silla and promised Enchin his protection. When Enchin arrived safely in Japan, the deity reappeared and guided him to the future Onjōji site.

After Shinra Myōjin received an official rank in response to a petition by the Tendai monk Yokei 余慶 (919–991), he not only became a protective deity of Onjōji but also served as the symbolic identity of Onjōji throughout the medieval period. This was around the same time that a similar Tendai deity called Sekizan Myōjin 赤山明神 was worshipped at Enryakuji 延暦寺, supposedly by the Tendai monk Ennin 円仁 (794–864). Most previous scholarship on Shinra Myōjin is in agreement that the emergence of these two deities was related to the intense rivalry between the Sanmon 山門 (Enryakuji) and Jimon (Onjōji) branches of Japanese Tendai. While this view has its merits, seeing Shinra Myōjin solely in this sectarian context is misleading, given that it fails to take into account the religious networks involved in this deity's worship.

Looking at Onjōji's history is also critical. Focusing on Jimon's Shinra Myōjin cult is significant in that it allows us to explore a counter view vis-à-vis the official history of Tendai on Mt. Hiei. In other words, shifting our attention from Mt. Hiei's institutional account, which was

mainly shaped in the Edo period (1603–1868),[5] the study on Shinra Myōjin not only gives another view on the narrative of the institutional history of Tendai Buddhism in Japan but also helps us understand the institutional narrative in the larger religious and cultural context.

It is my contention that rather than being first and foremost a product of Tendai internecine strife, Shinra Myōjin emerged as part of a larger network of Silla-related deities in connection with the maritime network of Silla immigrants. He was ultimately able to find a home in Tendai by taking on a new meaning within the mythological reinterpretations of deities that were characteristic of the medieval esoteric world. As we see in his earliest *engi* story, Shinra Myōjin began his career as a sea deity. Indeed, the emergence of the cult of Shinra Myōjin is best observed in the trade network around the "East Asian Mediterranean" in connection with Silla merchants. Once transformed into a local deity by the Onjōji clergy, he ceased to perform in his original function and underwent a process of *sedentarisation,* in which he changed from a sea deity into a mountain deity. As such, he transformed into a local god with a trans-local résumé.[6]

As his name signifies, Shinra Myōjin is a deity with an obvious connection to Silla. This might lead one to think that this deity was in fact worshipped in Silla and was at some point transmitted to the Japanese archipelago. This linear model, however, does not seem to fit in the case of Shinra Myōjin, whose cult in fact seems to have been started in Japan by immigrant groups originally from the Korean peninsula. The key point here is the fact that Ōmi 近江 province, where Onjōji was established, had been a stronghold of Korean immigrant groups.

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[5] Breen and Teeuwen 2010.

[6] I borrow this term, *sedentarisation*, from Bouchy's work. See Bouchy 1993: 255-98. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term refers to: "The settlement of a nomadic people in a permanent homeland or place of habitation." I use the term here to mean exactly that, except in reference to a deity (albeit one who has shown some nomadic tendencies) rather than to a group of nomadic people.

From the eleventh century onward, Shinra Myōjin came to be connected with a powerful warrior family known as the Seiwa Genji 清和源氏, which was the most successful of the many branch families of the Minamoto 源 clan. The link between Minamoto and Shinra Myōjin seems to have been instrumental to the spread of Shinra shrines.[7]

Shinra Myōjin's diverse transformation can be seen in medieval mythology and the esoteric Buddhist pantheon as well. Through mythological, theoretical, and symbolic permutations, Shinra Myōjin came to be identified with deities that are at first glance extremely different. On closer inspection, though, we see that they are actually in many ways similar to him. For example, Shinra Myōjin is connected to Sekizan Myōjin and Matarajin 摩多羅神, the guardian of the Jōgyōzanmai-dō 常行三昧堂 at Enryakuji through a shared motif within their *engi* stories: each of these deities appears as old men in their respective origin legends.[8] This image of the old man, or *okina* 翁, is a recurring theme in the origin stories of Silla-related deities.[9]

Another important god who came to be associated with Shinra Myōjin is the paradigmatic "Shintō" god Susanoo スサノオ. This association seems to have begun around the thirteenth century. The identification with Susanoo may have begun as a toponymic fusion, considering that in Japanese mythology, Susanoo is the god who traveled to Silla and declared

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[7] From the eleventh century, Shinra Myōjin came to be tied with the Minamoto as Minamoto no Yoriyoshi's 源頼義 (988−1075) third son, Minomoto no Yoshimitsu 源義光 (1045−1127). He celebrated his coming of age rites at the Shinra Myōjin shrine and changed his name into Shinra Saburō 新羅三郎, claiming that he was a descendant of Shinra Myōjin.

[8] According to the *Keiran shūyōshū*, Matarajin appears to Ennin and threatens him, saying that if he is not worshipped properly, he will prevent practitioners from being reborn into the Pure Land.

[9] Kim, Hyǒn-uk 2008.

himself to be ruler of the sea. Shinra Myōjin's identification as Susanoo led to the appropriation of another deity identified as Susanoo: Gozu Tennō 牛頭天王, a pestilence deity.[10] Shinra Myōjin's demonic aspect as a god of pestilence was confirmed when Emperor Go-Sanjō (r. 1068–73) purportedly died due to his curse, and Emperor Nijō (r. 1158–65) is also said to have been possessed on his deathbed by Shinra Myōjin's acolytes.

Literature Review

In spite of the religious and cultural significance of Shinra Myōjin in medieval Japan, the study of this deity has been neglected largely due to previous scholarship's exclusive emphasis on Tendai doctrine and institutions. While there exist about twenty articles and a few book chapters dedicated to this deity, no one has yet undertaken a book-length study of Shinra Myōjin. The studies undertaken to date can be loosely divided into three categories: (1) studies which look at the historical significance of Shinra Myōjin within a Tendai institutional context, (2) studies which approach the deity from an art historical standpoint, and (3) studies which attempt to clarify the complexity of the deity within a religious and mythological context.

Tsuji Zennousuke's (1931) and Miyaji Naokazu's (1931) articles provide two pioneering studies published in the same year. Based on Onjōji sources, the two articles present detailed descriptions of the deity and the institutional history of Onjōji. However, the way they present Shinra Myōjin is problematic because they utilize the Onjōji records without any textual criticism. Since these two articles strongly influenced the general direction of later studies, I shall treat them both to some detail here.

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[10] The earliest textual association between Susanoo and Gozu Tennō comes from the thirteenth-century text *Shaku Nihongi* 釈日本紀,complied by Urabe Kanekata 卜部兼方 (d.u.). See Saitō 2012.

Tsuji, the first scholar who studied *shinbutsIu shūgō* 神仏習合 (syncretism of kami and buddhas), criticized the historical accuracy of Onjōji's sources. He concluded that Shinra Myōjin was a later construction created in response to Enryakuji's Sekizan Myōjin. Tsuji argued that the creation of Shinra Myōjin was undertaken by Onjōji monks around the tenth century. Accordingly, Tsuji would have us believe that not only the deity Shinra Myōjin but also all the related *engi* stories were complete ideological fabrications born of the aforementioned sectarian milieu. Tsuji's argument is compelling in part because it seems to explain the coincidence of the sudden rise of the cult of Shinra Myōjin worship at Onjōji alongside that temple's political struggle with Enryakuji. What is problematic about his argument is that he dismisses the historical accuracy of Onjōji's records while granting absolute credibility to the records of Enryakuji.

Taking a different stand on the matter, Miyaji argued that Sekizan Myōjin was in fact modeled after Shinra Myōjin. In his view, Shinra Myōjin was the product of immigrant culture in the region and predated the Sanmon-Jimon conflict. [11] Focusing on the Heian period, Miyaji claims that Shinra Myōjin was a clan god worshipped at the clan temple of the Ōtomo 大友 family, which most likely immigrated from the kingdom of Silla in the early Nara period and settled down in Ōmi. According to Miyaji, the deity came to be the tutelary god of Onjōji only after Enchin rebuilt what had previously been the clan temple of the Ōtomo family. Miyaji further argues that the founding of Sekizanzen'in 赤山禅院 was a reaction to Shinra Myōjin of Onjōji and that Sekizan Myōjin was perhaps one of the Silla deities worshiped by the Silla

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[11] Tsuji and Miyaji's assertion has led a long dispute over which deity—Shinra Myōjin or Sekizan Myōjin —came first and which therefore is more authoritative. According to Tachi Ryūshi's recent work on the Onjōji monk, Kōin 公胤 (1145−1216), the scholarship in the history of Onjōji also has been mostly around the dispute between the Sanmon and the Jimon. Tachi 2011: 5.

groups. While Miyaji's research provides another possible explanation for why Shinra Myōjin was worshiped in this region, his results are compromised by the fact that he takes Onjōji's temple records at face value, treating them as objective historical accounts. In this regard, the dispute between Tsuji and Miyaji appears to be a modern revival of the premodern controversy between the Sanmon and the Jimon. In line with Miyaji's approach, Ōwa Iwao (1993) and Kwŏn Ugŭn (1988) emphasize the ethnic connection of the deity to immigrant groups from Silla. Analysis of the historical and archeological links between immigrant cultures and Ōmi are also found in Imatani Akira's (2007) work.

In addition to the aforementioned scholarship, a number of Korean scholars have searched for a connection between Shinra Myōjin and historical figures in premodern Korea. For example, Lee Byŏng-ro (2006), Kim Moon-kyŏng (1987), Kim Tae-do (2000), and Kwŏn Duk-young (2006) all argue that Shinra Myōjin (and/or Sekizan Myōjin) might be a deification of the Silla merchant Chang Pogo 張保皐 (788–841). This approach forces us to ponder multiple aspects of Silla immigrant societies in China and Japan and their possible contributions to the formation of Japanese cults centered on Silla deities. However, this line of argument needs to be supported by solid evidence and must not fall prey to nationalistic tendencies in asserting Korea's premodern cultural superiority vis-à-vis Japan. In Japanese scholarship, Dewa Hiroaki's work requires our attention because he tries to find a link between Korean immigrants and the Silla-related deities. Dewa Hiroaki (2004) focuses on shrines bearing the name "Shinra" (or Shiragi) all over Japan and briefly examines the relationship between Shinra Myōjin and Korean immigrant culture in Ōmi province. In his book, Dewa hypothesizes that there existed two types of Shinra shrines in Japan: one related to Korean immigrants and another associated with the Minamoto clan.

The second category of scholarship on Shinra Myōjin focuses on material representations of the deity. These art historical studies account for largest part of scholarship on this topic, which is probably due to the fact that Shinra Myōjin's iconography features both Shintō and Buddhist elements.[12] Kageyama Haruki's work (1973) on Shintō art is an important source in this regard.[13] Some scholars, including Matsumura Masao (1961), Kurata Bunsaku (1963), Oka Naomi (1966), Ikawa Kanzō (1975), Itō Shirō (1996), and Christine M.E. Guth (1999), have examined the artistic characteristics of Shinra Myōjin statues, whereas other scholars, such as Kōhei Shigeki (1968), Kameda Tsutomu (1973), Kuroda Satoshi (1998), and Miyake Hitoshi (2002), have focused their attention on paintings of Shinra Myōjin. In these studies, artistic details of Shinra Myōjin depictions and their similarities with other extant images have been discussed. None of these studies, however, has paid much attention to the ritual use of these representations or the ritual life of Shinra Myōjin more generally.

Among the art historical studies, two articles by Miyake and Guth do in fact move beyond descriptions of artistic detail. In the first non-Japanese study of this statue, Guth discusses Shinra Myōjin in a broader context by tracing the histories of other foreign *gohōjin* 護法神, including Sekizan Myōjin, Seiryū Gongen 清滝権現, and Daigenshuri Myōō 大元帥明王. Guth concludes that the adoption of *gohōjin* from China was part of a strategy employed by Japanese temples and religious groups to establish an unbroken line of spiritual transmission from China.[14] While her research remains speculative, it provides a useful new way of thinking

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[12] There have been about fifteen Japanese articles on Shinra Myōjin. Among them, ten articles are on the iconography of Shinra Myōjin.

[13] Shinra Myōjin has been understood as a "Shintō" god and his wooden statue has been recognized as the earliest example of *shinzō* (statues of *kami*) by Japanese scholars from early on in the 1970s. Kageyama 1973.

[14] Guth 1999: 118-24.

about Shinra Myōjin within the larger tutelary deity tradition found in Buddhism.

Miyake's study views Shinra Myōjin's iconography in relation to Onjōji's Shugendō 修験道. Miyake points out similarities between Shinra Myōjin's iconography and descriptions of En no Gyōja 役行者, the purported founder of Shugendō. Given Onjōji's control of the Mii-Shugen of the time, Miyake argues that the visual presentation of En no Gyōja might have been influenced by images of Shinra Myōjin. He accordingly points out that the earliest image of En no Gyōja dates to the twelfth century at the earliest, while the first image of Shinra Myōjin dates to the eleventh century. However, since the dating of the first image of Shinra Myōjin is still debatable, Miyake's assertion can only be proven once the exact date of the first image of Shinra Myōjin can be verified.

The final category of scholarship deals with the religious and mythological aspects of Shinra Myōjin. Works in this category include Kawamura Minato's (2008) recent study of Matarajin, Miyai Yoshio's (1992) exploration of Shinra Myōjin's relationship with Susanoo, and Misaki Ryōshū's (1992) study of the ritual aspect of Shinra Myōjin through an examination of the Sonjōō 尊星王 ritual as performed at Onjōji. Sonjōō was Onjōji's version of Myōken 妙見, the deification of the North Pole Star as well as the Big Dipper. The image of Sonjōō was extensively developed at Onjōji. The Sonjōō ritual was performed to prevent calamities as one of imperial rites. This ritual came to prominence during the Insei 院政 period (1086-1221), and in this process Shinra Myōjin became identified with Sonjōō.

The two most comprehensive studies of Shinra Myōjin, however, are those by Bernard Faure (2014 forthcoming; 2015 forthcoming) and Yamamoto Hiroko (1998a). Faure's work draws our attention to the medieval Japanese pantheon and especially to the relevant mythological and ritual components. In a chapter on Matarajin, Faure examines Shinra Myōjin

and emphasizes possible links with Korean immigrant groups and the deity's mythological and ritual associations. Faure discusses Shinra Myōjin only to the extent that this deity is relevant to the evolution of Matarajin, his primary focus, and we are thus left wanting a fuller treatment of Shinra Myōjin himself.

Yamamoto's work on Shinra Myōjin centers on his identity as a specifically medieval foreign deity, what Yamamoto terms as *ishin* 異神 (uncanny/strange gods). By identifying Shinra Myōjin as one of those deities that belong neither to the Japanese classical mythology of the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 and *Kojiki* 古事記 nor to the Buddhist cosmology, Yamamoto is able to bring to light Shinra Myōjin's heteromorphic nature and transformations within medieval Japanese mythology. Yamamoto's emphasis on the medieval appearance and character of this deity, however, leads her to ignore the question of why this deity emerged in the medieval period as well as the connection between the medieval Shinra Myōjin and earlier appearances of this deity. Moreover, her research is based almost entirely on Onjōji sources and material representations, which means her discussion of Shinra Myōjin fails to take into account Shinra Myōjin outside the walls of Onjōji.

Except for the works of Bernard Faure and Christine Guth, all previous scholarship has narrowly defined Shinra Myōjin as the tutelary Buddhist deity of Onjōji focusing on the Onjōji records. In addition, by separating the analysis of texts from that of visual images, previous studies failed to understand the deity's full spectrum. Taking my cues from Faure's emphasis on the importance of visual sources in the study of esoteric Buddhism,[15] in the current study I will draw on both textual sources and iconography, keeping in mind that the visual arts often received and preserved ideas and thus reflect an accumulation of transmitted traditions and local

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[15] Faure 1998.

innovations. This feature of the visual arts means that they often tell the history of a tradition more faithfully than the texts that have survived to the present day.

I will also examine the Shinra Myōjin cult in its ritual context, a topic that has been ignored in previous scholarship. At Onjōji, the worship of Shinra Myōjin during the medieval period reached its zenith with the use of this deity as the *honzon* 本尊 of various kinds of esoteric rituals, such as the Sonjōō 尊星王 (Lord of the Worthy Star[s]) ritual. In addition, it is crucial to look at how Shinra Myōjin was worshipped outside of Miidera and how the deity interacted with the popular beliefs of the time. This will require an examination of the Shinra Myōjin *matsuri* as well as popular works of literature, such as the *Aki no yo no naga monogatari* 秋夜長物語 (1377) and the *Shasekishū* 沙石集 (1283).

Methodology

Inspired by Bernard Faure's and Iyanaga Nobumi's methodology, the current study will employ a structural/post-structuralist approach while providing the historical context in which to understand Shinra Myōjin. While Bernard Faure and Iyanaga Nobumi share certain methodological concerns and address similar issues in their respective works on Japanese esoteric deities, for the purpose of explaining my own approach, I will first need to clarify the differences between Faure's and Iyanaga's methodologies.

Faure, who has been influenced not only by Claude Lévi-Strauss but also more recently by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theories concerning so-called rhizomes, points out both the insights and limitations of structuralism with regard to the study of Japanese deities. With this in mind, he advocates Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical approach with the Actor-Network

Theory advocated by Bruno Latour and others.[16] Iyanaga's Buddhist Mythology (Jp. *Bukkyō Shinwa* 仏教神話), on the other hand, is closer to a structuralistic approach, with a slight emphasis on the historical/ideological significance.[17] Another major difference is that Faure takes into account various continental influences in medieval Japan and provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of large networks of non-canonical deities in Japanese. In comparison, Iyanaga tends to stress the influence of Tantrism in medieval Japan, dealing mainly with the myths of Mahākāla (Jp. Dakoku-ten 大黒天) and Avalokiteśvara (Jp. Kannon 観音) in China and Japan.

Acknowledging the methodological efficacy of Buddhist mythology but drawing more on Faure's broader approach to the study of deities, this dissertation will look at various social, cultural, and religious narratives in order to understand the use of the deity in medieval Japan. Unlike Faure's all-encompassing research, though, the current study focuses on one particular deity; accordingly, my aim is not to see the medieval Buddhist-Shintō pantheon as a whole but rather to examine one particular case. That being said, a case study of Shinra Myōjin allows one

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[16] As his theological framework, borrowing Jan Assmann's distinction, Faure argues that there are two types of theology: the explicit and the implicit theology. Explicit theology is a more familiar type of conventional structuralistic approach. Implicit theology is the one, which reveals a deeper structure of reality. Faure argues that only the implicit theology, which has not been recognized well, bespeaks the elusive and resisting nature of medieval deities, which were never entirely tamed in any attempt of formulization or rationalization. Faure's methodology opens up a new way to understand the rhizome-like, fluid, and instable nature of mythic symbols, which express their polysemy and dynamism through the connective images and transpositions of signs. More on this see Faure 2014 (forthcoming); 2015 (forthcoming).

[17] The existence of something called "Buddhist Mythology" is still a moot point. However, according to Iyanaga, certain criteria are possible: 1) Buddhist mythology is about deities that appear in Buddhist texts or are the object of worship by Buddhist followers. 2) The object of study should be not a historical being but a symbolic or cultural entity projected by worshippers. 3) Even if those non-Buddhist deities that came from Hinduism or other various local religions are not Buddhist deities in the strictest sense, they are incorporated in the Buddhist cosmology and ideology. According to Iyanaga, the goal of Buddhist mythology is to analyze the logical relationships between myths and to study the permutations in the structure of mythic images. It also enables scholars to know the culture and thought of Buddhist believers in their respective historical and geographical contexts—thereby operating as an indispensable tool for interpreting the meaning of their cultural and spiritual histories. See Iyanaga 2002: 32-58.

an understanding of the ways in which Silla-related elements were appropriated and operated in the mythic logic and structure of medieval Japanese culture.

To a certain extent, then, this is essentially a study of the way in which certain medieval Japanese actors imagined Silla. In order to understand how Korean elements functioned in the medieval Japanese image of Silla and Silla deities, I plan to draw also on the emerging field of memory studies, as inspired by the work of Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs, who noticed the role of "collective memory" in a sociological context, addressed the issue that collective memory is always selective; in other words, various groups of people have different collective memories, which in turn give rise to different modes of behavior. Yuri M. Lotman went further along this line of thinking and formulated the study on the cultural dimension of memory, or culture as memory. Although Halbwachs did not expand his position into a general cultural theory, this view is valuable in that he sees the peculiar quality of culture as a creative mnemonic mechanism. In the process of constant "restoring" and "(re)inventing," every culture develops a unique paradigm of what should be remembered and what should be forgotten. However, what is interesting here is that "forgetting" does not mean complete erasure from memory. It is a temporary forgetting. In other words, the event is stored somewhere, waiting to be remembered. This is where cultural memory operates. This rediscovering mechanism facilitates constant dialogues between current culture and various texts belonging to the "past."

Chapter Synopsis

This dissertation is comprised of four chapters. The first chapter will explain the background of the emergence of Shinra Myōjin worship by looking at immigrant communities in Ōmi and the network of Silla gods. Looking at Shinra Myōjin's *engi* story and other various texts, which

illuminate the initial process of Shinra Myōjin's association with Onjōji, I argue that the emergence of Shinra Myōjin is best understood in its connection with Silla immigrants and other Shinra shrines and temples. I also argue that Shinra Myōjin, whose name is a reference to Silla gods, was a cultural product that came along with Korean immigrants to Japan. As we will see in this case, however, the process of cultural transmission was not a simple narrative of continental culture traveling to the Japanese archipelago; rather, the actual nodes of transmission formed a multi-centered and interconnected network.

In the second chapter, I turn my attention to the status of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji. This section demonstrates how medieval Onjōji projected its own story onto the deity through legends, rituals, and popular narratives. The scope is grounded in a close reading of Onjōji's temple records, as well as other popular literature, the story of which reveals the vivid images and accumulated memories of this deity outside of its Onjōji home. This chapter serves to explain the multiple directions of this deity's mythological development and historical significance at Onjōji and beyond.

The third chapter examines how the Japanese *imaginaire* of Silla evolved, encoded and affected medieval Japan. In exploring Shinra Myōjin's association with significant gods of pestilence such as Susanoo, Gozu Tennō, and Matarajin, all of whom are related to Silla one way or another, this chapter examines how ambivalent images of Silla were instrumental in facilitating mythic confusion and divergence. It also considers how Shinra Myōjin also came to be perceived as a god of pestilence. Whether the fusion was carefully calculated or purely accidental, the association between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo served as the point at which mythical narratives and historical contentions crossed paths.

The fourth chapter focuses on visual representations of Shinra Myōjin, including the

Kumano honji suijaku mandala, the Maitreya Triad, and the Mii mandala. Throughout the chapter, geographical, visual, and doctrinal aspects of Shinra Myōjin's visual representation as an old man will be discussed. This chapter demonstrates that the Mañjuśrī cult imported from Mt. Wutai was a possible origin for Shinra Myōjin's image and was instrumental in the development of his portrayal. This Mt. Wutai tradition did not stop its transformation at Onjōji but continued to other regions, such as Kumano, through the Shugendō network. Treating visual sources as a window to illustrate a world that cannot be fully explained by the textual sources, the analysis of Shinra Myōjin's iconography will serve as a combinatory platform from which to more clearly view the Shinra Myōjin cult and its significance in the larger East Asian cultic network.

Chapter 1. The Network of Silla Immigrants and Shinra Myōjin

1. Introduction

Shinra Myōjin is a non-canonical deity whose origin remains unknown. He is neither a Shintō deity nor a Buddhist deity, neither a Korean god nor a Japanese *kami*. As Yamamoto Hiroko argues, the best word that epitomizes Shinra Myōjin's character is "*ishin*" 異神 ("uncanny god" or "strange god").[18] In her book *Ishin*, Yamamoto points out how central these "strange gods" were during the medieval period and how much they permeated all levels of medieval religiosity—from mythological thought to ritual activity. Her groundbreaking research deserves more credit than it has been given. That said, within the rigid framework of what she terms "medieval mythology" (Jp. *chūsei shinwa* 中世神話), Yamamoto fails to account for the ways in which Shinra Myōjin emerged and how his cult was related to broader cultural issues in a *longue durée* that extends beyond the medieval period.[19] Furthermore, the concept of "medieval mythology" is in and of itself problematic. It emerged as an attempt to rectify previous generations' views of medieval religiosity as marred by "impure" apocryphal texts. Revisionist scholars—including Yamamoto—have tended to fetishize the medieval world by emphasizing

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[18] Yamamoto Hiroko categorizes Shinra Myōjin as an *ishin*, along with other deities of foreign origin, such as Sekizan Myōjin 赤山明神, Matarajin 摩多羅神, Ugajin 宇賀神, and Gozu tennō 午頭天王. Although all are closely related and each of them deserves a book-length treatment, I will confine my research to each of these deity's associations with Shinra Myōjin. As I discuss in the third chapter, in the Jimon tradition all of these deities are associated with each other via Susanoo.

[19] On Chūsei shinwa, see Itō 1972; Yamamoto 1998b; Saitō 2011. In recent years, "medieval mythology" has been recognized as one of the methodologies most suitable for understanding medieval Japanese religion. For instance, Saitō Hideki asserts that although the term appears to be limited to the study of the medieval period, as a methodology one can apply it to other time periods as well. For more on this, see Saitō 2012.

the unique transformation of ancient mythology that took place during this period.[20] In this way, previous Japanese scholarship fails to explain the dynamics that carried those uncanny deities across religious institutional boundaries.

This dissertation aims to show that Shinra Myōjin is not simply a product of medieval mythology as defined in Japanese scholarship but rather acts as a nodal point that demonstrates different intersections of myth and history in the broader East Asian religious culture. In this chapter, I argue that the complex reality of Shinra Myōjin's cult cannot be grasped without a broader cultural understanding of the immigrant networks of the pre-Nara period. This section, therefore, focuses on the connections between this cult and the networks of Silla immigrants.[21]

What exactly the term "immigrant" meant during this time period is not an easy question to answer, in part because it is difficult for people to hold a distinctive ethnic and cultural identity within a foreign territory. In this study, I use the term "immigrant" as an English equivalent to the Japanese word "*toraijin* 渡来人," which refers to those people from overseas, especially from China and Korea, who settled in early Japan and introduced continental culture to the Japanese.[22] This definition is further complicated when we realize how difficult it is to

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[20] Medieval mythology represents a significant advance in the world of Japanese scholarship in that it rectifies the tendency of a previous generation of scholars to ignore and place a low value on medieval religion and mythology. According to Saitō, the negative assessment of medieval Japanese religion started with Shintō scholars in the Edo period, who were attempting to establish an emperor-centered world order. For those Shintō ideologues, the medieval period was a time full of and tainted by Buddhist ideas and apocryphal texts, which was therefore unworthy of study. In the modern period, even until recent times, people used to think that mythology, by definition, should be something related to the ancient period. This bias towards both the time period and the subject prevented scholars from studying the wide network of medieval religious literature. In this context, medieval mythology emerged as a response to the previous generation of Japanese academics. However, one should be careful to note that as an academic discipline, "mythology" only refers to comparative mythology in Japan. Yamamoto herself claims that she is a scholar in intellectual history, or the "history of ideas" (Jp. *shisōshi* 思想史).

[21] On this discussion of the term, see Ukeda 1988: 582.

[22] In the past, Japanese scholarship used the term "*kikajin* 帰化人 (lit. naturalized citizen)" for these foreign people. However, there was concern that the term, *kikajin*, contained a derogatory nuance toward those who immigrated to

draw a line between the *toraijin* and the "native" Japanese, given that these immigrant groups typically become naturalized and often indistinguishable as non-natives within the space of several generations. While they provide a convenient categorization, the division between "native" and "foreign" (or "indigenous" and "immigrant") raises further questions for modern scholars attempting to distinguish between "Chinese" and "Korean" immigrants.

My study locates Shinra Myōjin within an East Asian maritime culture that was instrumental in establishing a Silla shrine/temple network. This network served as a hub for the immigrant community not only in a cultural sense but also a commercial one. Throughout the chapter, I argue that the emergence of the cult of Shinra Myōjin is best observed in the trade network around the "East Asian Mediterranean" in connection with Silla merchants in the ninth century. The concept of "East Asian Mediterranean," coined by Angela Schottenhammer, provides a useful frame to understand diffusion, interaction, and the density of the network created between different nodal points in China, Korea, Japan, and beyond.[23]

The idea of the "Mediterranean"—*la Méditerranée*— as a conceptual category derives from the theories of the French historian Fernand Braudel.[24] Braudel views the Mediterranean Sea as a major channel promoting economic and cultural communication among surrounding countries. Following Braudel's publications introducing this concept, the term "Mediterranean" has been used to refer to a larger geographic region that is connected by sea, thus emphasizing the connecting rather than separating function of large bodies of water. Reference to an "East

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Japan. Now, the term "*toraijin*," which has a more neutral meaning, is commonly used to refer to immigrants from China and Korea in pre-modern Japan. See Katō 1998: 5-8.

[23] Schottenhammer 2005: 2.

[24] Braudel 1998. Braudel's idea significantly influenced later scholarship. Denys Lombard is another French scholar who developed the idea of comparing insular Southeast Asia and the Asian Seas to the Mediterranean. For more on this, see Lombard and Aubin 2000. François Gipouloux uses the similar idea, "the Asian Mediterranean" on the port cities and trading networks in China, Japan, and South Asia. See Gipouloux 2011.

Asian Mediterranean" is not intended to create another geo-political model or claim that the European Mediterranean and the world of maritime East Asia shared everything in common, but is rather meant as a new angle for reconsidering the neglected study area of East Asian maritime culture with the sea acting not as a barrier but as a "contact zone."[25] The idea of an "East Asian Mediterranean" provides an effective concept to contextualize that it was not only immigrants but also gods that traveled through the complex networks around the East Asian Mediterranean.[26] In this way, my study departs from the static vision of immigrants and immigrant deities. Rather, it focuses on the mobility, fluidity, and hybridity of those people and deities who circumnavigated these waters— including the cult of Shinra Myōjin.

My approach in looking at this East Asian network is transnational. It pays particular attention to the interactions between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese islands. In recent years, scholars have increasingly begun to recognize the significant religious interactions taking place between Korea and Japan in the premodern era.[27] However, the majority of Japanese scholars continue to pay little attention to the Korean transmission of Buddhist culture to Japan as well as to the role that Korean immigrants played in influencing and developing Japanese religion; such scholars tend to characterize these phenomena collectively as "bridges," assigning importance to Korea only insofar as it served as a link between China and Japan. However, as Robert Buswell argues, Korea was a "bastion of Buddhist culture in East Asia" in its own right.[28]

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[25] Schottenhammer 2006: 5.

[26] The East Asian "Mediterranean" here comprises the southern part of the Japanese Sea, the Parhae and the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea and the South China Sea, with the Yellow and East China Seas continuing the core regions of the entire area. Schottenhammer 2006: 6.

[27] See Como 2008 and 2009.

[28] Buswell 2005: 2.

Following Buswell's challenge to the Japan-centric view of Korea as "a bridge for the transmission of Buddhist and Sinitic culture from the Chinese mainland to the islands of Japan,"[29] I intend to illuminate neglected Korean elements in the development of Japanese religion. Even more importantly, I aim to highlight the cultural and religious networks surrounding Shinra Myōjin in the East Asian context.

Shifting the focus from Japan to East Asia further helps us to understand long-standing cultural interactions between Korea and Japan. It is generally assumed that the influx of Korean elements into Japanese religion largely ended sometime during the late Heian period (794–1185). The case of Shinra Myōjin, however, shows that even in the medieval period, central features of Japanese culture were being continuously altered and/or reinforced by religious beliefs, political concepts, and historical situations introduced from Korea and China. Korean influence during this period was indirect and multifaceted, and it permeated Japanese religion largely through mythology and local legends. The medieval career of this deity was determined in large part by conditions that predated the appearance of the name "Shinra Myōjin." This chapter examines the context within which this deity emerged as well as the activities of Silla immigrants in Japan and China in order to show that Shinra Myōjin was not simply a product of the medieval period.

It is important to emphasize that my approach also departs from the traditional, monolithic narrative of linear religious transmission from the continent to the Japanese islands, or from the Japanese court to peripheral areas. Amino Yoshihiko's view of Japan as a region *connected by* the sea (rather than as an isolated archipelago) is relevant to my goal, as his approach illustrates how maritime networks determined the locations of Korean emigrant

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[29] Ibid.

settlements and led to the introduction of various Korean religious elements into Japan.[30] In the past, Japanese historians tended to assume that the court was the immovable center of every level of medieval culture. However, in line with Amino's view of maritime networks characterized by fluidity, the nodal points along the coastlines of each culture should be examined as other centers. To understand the backdrop of the emergence of Shinra Myōjin within this time period and location, it is crucial to consider those nodal points associated with Korean immigrants in China and Japan. As Tansen Sen demonstrated in his study of the way in which seventh-century Sino-Indian trading relations began with Buddhist-dominated exchanges, Buddhism initiated and provided enduring connections and multifaceted exchanges between China, Korea, and Japan.[31] In particular, after the severance of diplomatic relations between Silla and the Yamato court in the eighth century, Japanese Buddhist monks' use of the commercial network created another level of multifaceted exchanges along the trade route. This may have led to the exchanges of spiritual ideas and practices as well.

The significant way in which this study differs from the standard "transmission" model of Korean Buddhism to Japan in that it is not interested in tracing the historical origin of Shinra Myōjin to the Korean kingdom of Silla, although it is still necessary to present the temporal transformation of the Shinra Myōjin cult in Japan in order to establish the historical context. The case of Shinra Myōjin reveals the lingering influence of Korean culture on medieval Japanese religion. Primarily, though, my approach prioritizes the Japanese "medieval conception of Silla"

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[30] Amino 1992. For its English translation see Amino 2012: 31-64. Another significant work is Charlotte von Verschuer's *Across the Perilous Sea*, which illustrates Japanese trade with China and Korea from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries, see Verschuer 2006. Although the study of area does not have an immediate relation with the current study, Tansen Sen's *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade* (2003) is greatly useful to understand the commercial ties between China and India through the network of trade in the Buddhist context. See also Fuqua 2004 on the Japanese missions to Tang China and maritime exchange in East Asia during the 7th–9th centuries.

[31] Sen 2003: 102-41.

as well as the concomitant religious symbolism and significance. Thus, what I mean by "medieval" here is a conceptual framework rather than a historical period, although there is certainly overlap between the two. In this way, this study is interested in explaining how the Japanese medieval conception of Silla was translated into the cult of Shinra Myōjin and how the cult further reinforced the imagination/*imaginaire* of the Korean Peninsula in Japan.[32]

Shinra Myōjin serves as a gate for exploring under-studied facets of "medieval Japanese religiosity" in its complicated associations with the continental religious elements.[33] Before addressing the medieval Shinra Myōjin cult in the following chapters, this chapter establishes the boundaries of the cult: the region (Ōmi province, where Shinra Myōjin made his first appearance in Japan), the network of Silla shrines and temples (beginning with Onjōji, which was better known as Miidera 三井寺), and a community of Silla immigrants in China as documented in the diary of the Tendai master Ennin 圓仁 (794–864). Sekizan Myōjin 赤山明神, a deity supposedly brought to Japan by Ennin, is also key to explaining the background of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji. Drawing primarily on non-sectarian records, this chapter shows that while Ennin invoked Sekizan Myōjin on Mt. Hiei, it was Enchin's 円珍 (814–891) followers who formulated and popularized his cult at Onjōji under a different name: "Shinra Myōjin." The strong immigrant culture around Ōmi, the location of Onjōji, and the network of Shinra shrines and temples were all crucial in the emergence and later transformation of Shinra Myōjin.

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[32] Concerning how I use the concept *imaginaire*, see Ch.3.

[33] What I mean by "medieval" here refers medieval period as a conceptual frame rather than conventional historical periodization, although it partly is driven from historical consciousness. The conventional dates for the Medieval Period in Japan are 1185 to 1600. 1185 marks the end of the Genpei War (1180–1185) and the beginning of military rule; 1600 marks the unification of Japan under the Tokugawa shogunates and the beginning of the Tokugawa period (1600−1868).

This chapter consists of three parts. First, I will introduce the foundation legends (Jp. *engi* 縁起) of Onjōji in which Shinra Myōjin appears, in order to situate the Shinra Myōjin cult in the local context. Next, I will examine Sūfukuji 崇福寺, Onjōji's predecessor, and focus on its connections with the Korean Peninsula in the seventh century. I will thereby demonstrate how Onjōji appropriated much of Sūfukuji's history and religious tradition. The next section focuses on the network of Silla shrines and temples in Ōmi and around Lake Biwa. Various examples of shrines and temples bearing the name "Silla" suggest that Onjōji's Shinra Myōjin cult was part of larger network of Silla shrines and temples. The Shinra Myōjin shrine (Jp. Shinra Myōjin-sha 新羅明神社 or sometimes Shinra-sha 新羅社) was probably the most Buddhist in character, due to its institutional association with the Tendai tradition from the tenth century onward. In the third section, I examine one specific Silla immigrant community in the Shandong 山東 Peninsula in China. In his diary, Ennin hints at the fact that Sekizan Myōjin was the main deity worshipped in a Korean temple in Shandong and that the temple itself was called "Silla Temple." Based on these Silla connections, I argue that the emergence of Shinra Myōjin is closely related to the wider network of Silla immigrants in the East Asian Mediterranean. The network of Silla shrines and temples served to facilitate the circulation and exchange of the latest religious ideas, and the emergence of Shinra Myōjin is best understood within this network.

2. Onjōji and Onjōji Documents

2.1. Brief History of Onjōji

This section provides the historical background from which the Shinra Myōjin cult emerged in order to explain where this deity fits within the larger picture of the medieval Japanese religio-

political milieu. Despite its importance as one of the most powerful Buddhist institutions in the medieval period, Onjōji has not been a subject of book-length study in any language. The beginning of Onjōji and the concurrent emergence of the cult of Shinra Myōjin are significant in that it shows that Tendai was not a monolithic but rather pluralistic institution. This plurality partially came from the continuous influx of continental transmission by early Tendai masters.

Shinra Myōjin can be best understood within this dynamic of plurality, given that he eventually played a pivotal role in efforts made by certain Tendai monks to establish an important center of Tendai learning and practice separate from Mt. Hiei. Shinra Myōjin's power grew drastically due to its rivalry with the Sanmon over securing imperial recognition. Shinra Myōjin developed into the most powerful protector of Onjōji and the temple's *de facto* principal deity. He also became central to the identity of Onjōji monks. The particular institutional history of Onjōji was the fundamental source of Shinra Myōjin's growth in the medieval period. Through creating a powerful divinity like Shinra Myōjin, Onjōji attempted to exercise its political leverage and also elaborate its own myths and rituals. Nevertheless, Shinra Myōjin was not simply a byproduct of the institutional conflict between Tendai siblings. The cultural facet of the Shinra Myōjin cult extends beyond the Tendai institutional boundary and was closely related to more complicated religious, historical and cultural dimensions found in Korea, China, and Japan.

At Onjōji, the initial development took place during the reign of Emperor Seiwa 清和 (r. 858–876).[34] Onjōji's own history starts in 859 when Enchin was appointed as the chief monk.

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[34] The size of Shinra Myōjin statue is modeled after the size of the emperor Seiwa. *Onjōji denki* 59. "During the reign of Jōkan 貞観 (859–877), the founder, Enchin, made a statue of the deity according to the height of the present emperor, Emperor Seiwa."

Seven years later, in 866, the temple officially came to be associated with Tendai.[35] Although the Sanmon-Jimon split did not come about until the end of the tenth century, it was already in the making during the first decades of the ninth century.[36] The schism was caused by multiple factors—the two primary ones being disagreement over control of the Tendai abbotship (Jp. *zasu* 座主) and concerning the creation of an independent ordination platform at Onjōji. It was the eighteenth Tendai *zasu*, Ryōgen 良源 (912–985) who provided the direct cause of the Tendai schism.[37] By the time Ryōgen died in 985, the Tendai community had almost completely separated into two opposing groups. As a consequence, the monks of the Gishin-Enchin line had been expelled (or had fled) from Enryakuji.[38]

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[35] Tachi 2010: 22.

[36] Saichō's equivocal attitude to designate his successor created two lines among his disciples: Saichō-Ennin and Gishin-Enchin line. This immediately led to a succession dispute, and the conflict between Enchō (Saichō's disciple) and Enshū (Gishin's disciple) marked the beginning of the Sanmon-Jimon schism. On June 26, 868, the monk Enchin (Gishin's line) was appointed the fifth *zasu*. By the middle of the tenth century the Saichō-Ennin line had come to be inferior to the Gishin-Enchin line both in the number of monks and in the number and condition of the buildings that it owned. The large size of Enryakuji led departmentalized groups of monks, and those sub-groups had a tie with their personal patronage of the emperor as well as other members of the imperial family and the nobility. In the mid-tenth century, there sometimes were quarrels and fights between bands of armed monks during communal ceremonies and rituals. See McMullin 1984: 83-105; Groner 2002: 233-36.

[37] For the comprehensive study on Ryōgen, see Groner 2002. Whereas in the early Heian period monks were able to attain high office in the monastic communities primarily on the basis of two criteria, namely, character (i.e. virtue and intelligence) and seniority in Buddhist orders, after Ryōgen, blood took precedence over brains; it became much more important for a monk to have the proper family lineage than to have a profound knowledge of the sutras, a reputation for holiness, or seniority in orders.

[38] When Ryōgen came to power as the 18th Tendai *zasu*, he was determined to eradicate this divide by unifying the Saichō-Ennin line under his authority and restoring its supremacy over the Gishin-Enchin line. By rebuilding the Sōjiin, Ryōgen also sought to recover its Taimitsu center, which had been lost by Onjōji. However, his reform created the direct cause for the split between the Sanmon and the Jimon. In 980, Ryōgen expelled several hundred monks of the Gishin-Enchin line from Enryakuji. Although some historians interpret this event as Ryōgen's attempt to get rid of lax, corrupt people who lived at Enryakuji, Hori Daiji, one of the authorities on Tendai history, explains that Ryōgen expelled mostly monks of the Gishin-Enchin line, on account of the fact that he could not make them fit into the model of a unified Tendai community that he was attempting to construct on Mt. Hiei. In 982, Yokei (919–991), a leading member of the Gishin-Enchin line and the administrator (Jp. *chōri* 長吏) of Onjōji since 979, was appointed abbot of the Hosshōji in Kyoto. A serious confrontation developed between Saichō-Ennin monks and Gishin-Enchin monks on Mt. Hiei around the appointment. The tension was soothed when Yokei resigned the position. By the time Ryōgen died in 985, the Tendai community had almost completely divided into two opposed groups. By 985, monks of the Gishin-Enchin line had been expelled, or had fled, from Enryakuji. Ryōgen was

A major fight between the Sanmon and the Jimon occurred in the eight month of 993. At this time, some Jimon followers of Jōsan, a disciple of Shōsan 勝算 (939–1011), destroyed a number of items at the Sekisan Zen'in shrine. Notably, at the time of this first Jimon attack against the Sekizan Myōjin shrine, Sekizan Myōjin, the protective deity of Ennin, had already become a powerful symbol of the Sanmon. Two days later, armed Saichō-Ennin line monks retaliated and attacked the Gishin-Enchin line monks that were still living on Mt. Hiei. They burnt down the latter's residences and drove out about half of the Enryakuji community, who left the mountain. The end result was that over one thousand monks from Enchin's lineage permanently fled to Onjōji, cementing the split between the two branches. Kanshu 勧修 (945–1008) and Shōsan, who left Mt. Hiei in 981, were major figures in the split; eventually, they became leaders of the new Jimon tradition. The branch division soon found powerful supporters among courtiers such as Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 (966–1028). The tie between the new Tendai center and the court strengthened, and Onjōji provided shelter for imperial princes (Jp. *hōshinnō* 法親王) who were appointed to the abbotship of the temple. Having a prince as abbot was an effective strategy for controlling the temple's estates, important religious ceremonies, and armed followers.[39]

The Sanmon and the Jimon factions, however, never made peace after the split.[40]

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succeeded by his disciple Jinzen, son of the powerful Fijiwara no Morosuke. Four years later, Jinzen became *zasu,* and when he resigned the office, the Court appointed Yokei to be his successor as the twentieth Tendai *zasu*. The monks of the Saichō-Ennin line strongly protested the appointment of Yokei, and they rejected the order. Although Yokei assumed the office of Tendai *zasu*, he was unable to function because the Saichō-Ennin line would not cooperate with him. They would not participate in the ceremonies and rituals that he conducted, and they would not take orders from him. Within less than three months, Yokei resigned and went to live at Onjōji, where he died in 991. Yokei was the last Tendai *zasu* of the Gishin-Enchin line to have lived on Mt. Hiei.

[39] Adolphson 2000: 137-38.

[40] Adolphson 2000: 89-91.

Whereas Jimon monks fought to establish their independent status and argued that their tradition represented a purer form of Tendai, the Sanmon maintained that the Jimon was part of Tendai. As such, they claimed that Onjōji should be under the control of Enryakuji but that its monks had no claim to administrative positions such as the Enryakuji abbotship. After Yokei, the court did in fact occasionally attempt to appoint a Jimon monk to the position of *zasu*. However, the Sanmon's protests were so vigorous that such appointments soon became a formal way of honoring eminent Jimon monks without expecting the candidate to actually exercise power.[41]

Written records about Shinra Myōjin and Sekizan Myōjin increased around the time when the Sanmon and the Jimon's conflict grew more severe. There are few written records on Sekizan Myōjin except during the tenth century, the time when Shinra Myōjin's shrine was built. In the thirteenth century, however, we have relatively frequent stories of Sekizan Myōjin, likely because this was the time when the Jimon again tried to establish its own ordination platform. One example dates to 1260, when Onjōji's request to the court was turned down thanks to the lobbying of an Enryakuji monk. Enryakuji monks considered this victory to be due to the help of Sekizan Myōjin. To celebrate their success, the Enryakuji monks carried out a lecture on the *Lotus Sutra* in front of Sekizan Myōjin.[42] In the following year, on the fifth day of the ninth month, Enryakuji monks organized the first ceremony for the deity.[43] The portable shrine, or *mikoshi,* of the god was made around this time, and a large-scale festival for him was organized

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[41] In all, nine Jimon monks were appointed to *zasu*, although their terms were very short. They were able to hold office for only a few days because they were soon forced to resign. For example Myōson, the 29th Tendai *zasu*, held office for three days in 1048, and Kakuen, the thirty-fourth Tendai *zasu* lasted an even shorter period in 1077. The last one was Kōken in 1190. Groner 2002: 234.

[42] Kuroda 2007: 273.

[43] Ibid.

in 1264.[44]

At the end of the twelfth century, the attention of the monks of Mt. Hiei was turned towards a greater conflict: the Genpei 源平 War (1180–1185). The *Gukanshō* 愚管抄, compiled by the Tendai monk Jien 慈円 (1155–1225) in 1220, illuminates Onjōji's involvement in the war. The text begins with the story of Prince Mochihito 以仁王 (1151–1180), the second son of Emperor Go-Shirakawa, who had fled Onjōji. In the text, Shinra Myōjin appears as a powerful god who protects Onjōji.[45] During the fourteenth century, Onjōji once again became a battlefield and served as the military camp for Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–1358). During this time, Ashikaga helped to revive Onjōji. The involvement of Onjōji in the war suggests not only its political power but also its strategic location close to the capital. We also see its significance as a rich cultural and religious center.

Despite this series of destructive events, Onjōji continued to thrive thanks to imperial and aristocratic support. During the eleventh century, several imperial princes (Jp. *shinnō* 新王) took up residence at Onjōji subordinate temples, such as Enman-in 円満院, Shōgo-in 聖護院, and Jissō-in 実相院. These related, smaller temples continued to function as *monzeki* temples, and the imperial devotion associated with this development further helped Onjōji's economic

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[44] Ibid.

[45] The Taira and Minamoto families supported different claimants to the Chrysanthemum Throne, and in June 1180, the Minamoto brought their claimant, Prince Mochihito, to Onjōji in order to flee from Taira warriors. Onjōji asked for aid from Enryakuji but was denied. The monks of Onjōji joined the Minamoto army and fled to Byōdōin, a Fujiwara clan villa that had been converted to a monastery by Onjōji monks. Angered at the Onjōji-Minamoto alliance, Taira no Kiyomori ordered the destruction of Onjōji as well as many of the temples of Nara. The monks of Onjōji figured once more in the Genpei War, fighting alongside Taira sympathizers against Minamoto no Yoshinaka, who invaded Kyōto in 1184, sett fire to the Hōjūjidono Palace, and kidnapped the Emperor Go-Shirakawa.

position.[46] Throughout the medieval period, Onjōji owned a lot of territory around Mt. Nagara and had five subordinate temples (Jp. *bessho* 別所) there: Bizōji 尾蔵寺, Gonshōji 近松寺, Bimyōji 微妙寺, Jōzaiji 常在寺, and Suigannji 水観寺. Another Jimon affiliated temple, Nyoiji 如意寺, was also home for another shrine dedicated to the worship of Shinra Myōjin.[47]

After the last major fire at Onjōji in 1336, the temple was restored with the support of the Ashikaga shogunate. During peacetime, Onjōji was able to reclaim previously held temple estates and compiled several temple chronicles, including the *Onjōji denki,* the *Jimon denki horoku,* and the *Miiderazokutōki* 三井寺続燈記 (Selected Biographies of Eminent Miidera Monks).[48] This last compilation reflects Onjōji's self-awareness as an independent institution, which was reinforced by the continuous string of crises that plagued Onjōji throughout the medieval period. Peace continued until 1595, when Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582) set about destroying everything on and around Mt. Hiei. Since its warrior monks were no matches for Nobunaga's large and well-trained army, much of Onjōji was destroyed at this time. However, with the support of Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598), Onjōji was restored during the Keichō 慶長 era (1596–1615) by the Onjōji monk Dōchō 道澄 (1544–1608), who had won Toyotomi's favor.[49]

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[46] The aristocratization of the high offices could be observed on the Mt. Hiei side as well. At Enryakuji, all abbots after Myōku 明求 (1019) were either sons of the ruling family or from the senior branches of the Fujiwara. See Bowring 2008: 160.

[47] Kageyama 1975: 398.

[48] *Miizokutōki* in *DNBZ* vol.67: 161-230.

[49] Asano 1931: 579-95.

2.2. Onjōji Textual Production: Major Texts for the study of Shinra Myōjin

Onjōji produced its own chronicles containing its origin history and stories of eminent monks, beginning in the Shōan 正安 era (1299–1301).[50] However, due to the several clashes between Onjōji and Enryakuji—which notably resulted in Onjōji being burned to the ground by the warrior monks of Enryakuji four times in the eleventh century alone— most records from that period are not extant. Currently available Onjōji sources are relatively late and date mostly to the Edo period (1603–1868).

Two of the oldest and most important Onjōji textual sources are the *Onjōji denki* 園城寺 伝記 (10 fascicles) and the *Jimon denki horoku* 寺門伝記補録 (20 fascicles).[51] These two texts, both produced at Onjōji and exclusively transmitted within the Onjōji tradition, were part of the temple *engi* literature that emerged in late medieval Japan.[52] Scholars assume that the *Onjōji*

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[50] This time period also witnessed the emergence of narrative picture scrolls (Jp. *engi emaki* 縁起巻き), such as the *Shigisan-engi* 信貴山縁起 (*Legends of Mount Shigi*, 12th C.) or the *Kitano Tenjin engi* 北野天神縁起 (*Illustrated Legends of Kitano Tenjin*, 13th C.). Along similar lines to *engi,* another new literary genre appeared in the Muromachi period, *Honji monogatari* 本地物語, which tell of the apotheosis of local deities and the practical benefits of reading, hearing and distributing the text.

[51] Both the *Onjōji denki* and the *Jimon denki horoku* are contained in *DNBZ* (vol.86). The *yomikudashi* (Japanese reading of the Sino-Japanese) readings of these two texts are found in the *Miidera hōtōki* 三井寺法燈記, published in 1985. In recent years, Onjōji published a collection of Onjōji documents titled the *Onjōji monjo* 園城寺文書 (1998-2004:7 vols.). These documents are mostly from the Tōin 唐院, Onjōji's main archive. They include old documents that Enchin brought from China, eighty-three documents that a research team from Tokyo University discovered in 1886 and in 1909, and materials newly discovered during research organized by Ōtsu City in 1976. For more on the details of the collection, see the *Onjōji monjo* (vol.1): 10-14. Unfortunately, there are no materials directly related to Shinra Myōjin in the collection except for the *Hōhiki* 宝秘記 (*Onjōji monjo*, vol. 7: 94-282), which explains the Sonjōō ritual.

[52] The term, "*engi,*" is the abbreviation of a longer term of Buddhist origin, *innen shōki* 因縁生起 (co-dependent origination, Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*), but by extension it refers to narratives regarding the historical origins and miraculous tales of temples and shrines or the written documents recording such stories. The oldest *engi* in Japan is known as the *Garan engi narabi nirukishizai chō* 伽藍縁起幷流記資財帳 from Hōryūji 法隆寺, Daianji 大安寺, and Gangōji 元興寺, dated 747. *Engi* as a genre, initially referring to the origin stories of temples or shrines, underwent various changes both in meaning and content through time. From the early Heian period, the *engi* genre gradually expanded to include not only the origin story of a particular shrine or temple but also miracle tales related to the temple or shrine in question. At some point in the mid-late Heian period, *engi* collections came to be widely produced. Scholars like Nakano Takeshi explain that the new movement was drawn by the Heian trend of Buddhist

denki was compiled sometime after 1343 because the last entry is a record of that year. The text lacks a coherent theme, but entries concerning Shinra Myōjin are mostly clustered in chapters one, three, and four. The *Jimon denki horoku* is a supplement to the *Onjōji denki* and contains more details and annotations. The Onjōji monk Shikō 志晃 (fl. early fifteenth century) compiled it during the Ōei 応永 era (1394–1424).[53] Being more chronologically organized than the *Onjōji denki*, it spans a period of several centuries, from the first year of Empress Jitō 持統 (r. 686–697) to the fourth year of Ōei (1397). This supplementary text also provides additional information and sections on eminent Onjōji monks not present in the former. Entries on Shinra Myōjin are contained with in the first three chapters.

These two records are similar in a number of areas regarding entries on Shinra Myōjin. Both relate certain aspects of the Shinra Myōjin cult: its original connection with Enchin, the *engi* story of Onjōji, the physical appearance of Shinra Myōjin, ritual records, the sponsorship from the court, devotional texts from aristocrats, eulogies for the deity, and auspicious legends concerning him. Furthermore, both records are deeply influenced by the idea of an autonomous shrine cult as well as by Buddhism. Early Buddhist monks did not doubt the existence of *kami* but viewed them to be inferior to buddhas. However, by the time when the Onjōji chronicles were compiled, we observe a growing importance of *kami* worship by Buddhist monks. In this new configuration between monks and *kami*, Onjōji scholar-monks were actively involved in the

pilgrimage. The contents of the *engi* were more than just keeping a record of a temple's founding story. They covered a wide range of daily monastic life, such as the history of the temple, the origin story of Buddhist statues, stories of eminent monks of the temple, records on the rituals, information on the temple site, miraculous tales around the temple, ritual texts, prayer texts, etc. The compilers of those texts were monks of the temple, but aristocrats also often participated in their production by the request of a temple. The temple *engi* was not limited to the institutional boundary, and it sometimes contained official records such as documents from Daijōkan. See Nakano 1995: 245-47.

[53] There is another view that Shikō is from the Edo period and therefore the text was compiled between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. See *Kokuhō Miideraten* 2008: 271.

production of new knowledge about shrine cults, and, in turn, Shintō rituals were incorporated into Buddhist ceremonies.[54] In both texts, we see the simultaneous influence of the ideology of "original substance, manifest traces" (Jp. *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹) and that of reverse *honji suijaku* (Jp. *han honji suijaku* 反本地垂迹). The below table shows a list of major primary sources related to Shinra Myōjin.

Text Title	Date	Compiler
Onjōji engi 薗城寺縁起 *Onjōji ryūge-e engi* 園城寺龍華会縁起	920 (?) 1062	Rōyō 良勇 Fujiwara no Sanenori 藤原実範
Shinra Myōjin ki 新羅明神記	Early 13th C.	u.n.
Jitokushū 寺徳集	1344	Suishin 水心
Keiran shūyōshū 溪嵐拾葉集	1347	Koshū 光宗
Onjōji denki 園城寺伝記	14th C.	u.n.
Jimon denki horoku 寺門伝記補録	1394–1427	Shikō 志晃
Shinra ryakki 新羅略記	15th C.	u.n. (at Shōgoin 聖護院)
Onjōji engi 園城寺縁起	1596	Enshūin 圓宗院
Shinra no kiroku 新羅之記録	1646	u.n.

[Table. 1. Primary Sources on the Study of Shinra Myōjin]

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[54] The *Nakatomi harae kunge* 中臣祓訓解 is an example of such, marking an important step of the twelfth century in the amalgamation of Shintō thought and practice with Esoteric Buddhism. On the authorship of the text, recent scholarship suggests that Onjōji monks might have produced it. See Matsumoto 2008: 83. For its English translation, see Mark Teeuwen and Hendrik van der Veere 1998.

As can be seen, in addition to the two temple chronicles, there are more records of Shinra Myōjin preserved in the Jimon tradition, such as the *Shinra Myōjin ki* 新羅明神記, the *Shinra ryakki* 新羅略記, and the *Shinra no kiroku* 新羅之記録. The *Shinra Myōjin ki,* compiled in the early thirteenth century, provides one of the main sources for the entries on Shinra Myōjin in the *Onjōji denki*. The only extant manuscript is currently housed in the Tokyo University archives.[55] The text consists of three parts: the first is about Enchin, and the second and the third contain various miracle tales involving Shinra Myōjin. The *Shinra ryakki* is an abridgement of another text, the *Shinra ki* 新羅記, which is no longer extant.[56] The *Shinra no kiroku* was compiled in 1646 by Matsumae Kagehiro 松前景広 (1600–1658), the sixth son of Matsumae Yoshihiro 松前慶広 (1548–1616), who was the first feudal lord (Jp. *hanshu* 藩主) of the domain of Matsumae 松前 in present-day Hokkaidō.[57] This text is the oldest extant local history of Matsumae. It comprises three parts.[58] The first part focuses on the origin of Shinra Myōjin, whose *engi* story was told to Matsumae Kagehiro when he made a trip to Onjōji. The Matsumae clan considers Minomoto no Yoshimitsu 源義光 (1045–1127), popularly known as "Shira Saburō 新羅三郎," to be its ancestor. After Kagehiro's visit to Onjōji, he concluded that the Matsumae are indeed the descendants of Minomoto no Yoshimitsu and therefore Shinra Myōjin is the protective deity

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[55] Kuroda 2001: 75.

[56] Shindo 2005: 21. There are strong textual affinities between the *Shinra Myōjin ki* and the *Shinra ryakki*.

[57] Shindo 2005: 20.

[58] Ibid.

of his clan as well. Thereupon, he became a devotee of Shinra Myōjin.[59]

The *Onjōji denki* and the *Jimon denki horoku* belong to the genre of temple and shrine origin legends known as *jisha engi* 寺社縁起.[60] The rise in the popularity of *engi* and their production by individual temples was related to the collapse of the *ritsuryō* system, a centralized government structure that spanned from the seventh to tenth centuries.[61] In the late Heian period, individual temples were able to escape from the central government's control, and they sought more independent ways of managing their local economies, largely by means of operating their own manors, fundraising for religious rituals, and securing wealthy patrons to fund Buddhist artwork. In this context, creating their own histories and circulating written miracle tales helped these temples to establish and promote their independence. The *engi* literature was particularly important to this endeavor. The two major records of Onjōji were also part of this trend; the primary aim of these texts was to describe the origins and benefits of particular *kami* or buddhas at Onjōji to underscore the temple's singularity and significance. Although there were some exceptions when aristocrat patrons or worshipers produced *engi* as offerings, these texts were primarily produced by Buddhist priests in an attempt to recreate the history of the temple and advertise the powers of the *kami* or buddha enshrined therein.

Onjōji's chronicles lie at the intersection between myth and history, and accordingly they must be approached critically. Stories in the temple chronicles are often presented as historical truth, but the modern mind should be reluctant to accept them as such. As Lévi-Strauss puts it,

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[59] Shindo 2005: 20; Shindo 2009: 28-9.

[60] The term *denki* 傳記 often refers to a record of affairs and transmissions from the past. In the wide range of Japanese Buddhist literatures, it is a less known type of writing, yet one whose nature is worth examining. The closest meanings to *denki* are records (Jp. *kiroku* 記録) or documents (Jp. *monjo* 文書).

[61] Nakano 1995: 246.

the boundaries between myth and history are not always clear, and "a clairvoyant history should admit that it never completely escapes from the nature of myth."[62] *Jisha engi* are neither myth nor history, yet they contain elements of both. They are not pure myth because they are not collectively held narratives about the origins of a particular people or place, and yet they share a concern with *mythos* in explaining how present circumstances came to be. They do not report "history" in our sense of the word because they are ideological documents that contain many mythic elements and seek to create a particular past for Onjōji rather than to produce a neutral account of previous events. However, they are still historical inasmuch as they do explicitly describe and implicitly allude to factual events that led to the circumstances in which the authors or compilers of the texts found themselves.

Temple chronicles initially may appear to be little more than historical fabrications and distortions created by temples bent on establishing institutional legitimacy, political autonomy and economic power by means of claiming spiritual superiority. Because of the nature of the *jisha engi* genre, one needs to be careful in approaching these texts, and the structure of "mythistory" provides a particularly useful insight for understanding their role and usefulness. Mythistory is not a simple combining of myth and history, in part because myth and history are already inseparable in nature. However, sometimes they do have to be separated.

According to Joseph Mali, "Mythistory is concerned with collective experiences and impressions of historical events, and not with the events themselves, it does not—and can not— answer the main historical question of what actually happened."[63] To read between the lines of

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[62] Lévi-Strauss 1966: 47-8.

[63] Mali 1991: 88. The term was first coined by William McNeil (McNeil 1986). Later, Joseph Mail further developed the idea in his book *Mythistory* (Mali 2003).

the *jinsha engi* –whereby it linked its history to a timeless origin and the temple's sanctity - those lines of obvious fabrication need more attention because they are the very loci that reveal the deeper structure of reality. Yet these temple records should not be regarded simply as self-serving, self-promoting narratives. Rather, one should keep in mind that for the producers of these narratives, their mythical-religious construction was related to their perception of reality. At the same time, we must be aware of the specific religious and cultural contexts associated with these texts' production. By doing so, we can thereby more carefully examine and understand the ways in which Onjōji retrospectively utilized the past in narrative form in order to legitimate its present and guarantee its future.

The temple chronicles are pervaded by mythical consciousness. They are not only concerned with specific historical events—potentially complementing historical sources—but are also permeated with a collective consciousness teeming with spirits, gods, and demons. By reading them as mythistory—that is, as neither pure myth nor strict history but rather as something that exhibits characteristics of both—we can better understand how the symbolic schemes and the temple's rationalities operated within this specific genre. To acknowledge mythistory's dual potential is not simply to recognize its paradoxical nature but also to provide a method for more nuanced readings of those written sources. Taking Onjōji temple chronicles as a type of "mythistorical literature" also helps us to understand the contexts in which specific human interactions were imagined, realized, and then transformed into stories without abandoning our distinction between myth and history. In a way, there is no distinctive separation between history and myth because the power of belief, and the will to believe, served as a point of convergence where myth reveals history while history becomes myth.

2.3. Shinra Myōjin's *Engi* Story

From the origin story of Shinra Myōjin we can pull out several crucial points to link the cult of

Silla deity in the ancient period Shinra Myōijn in the medieval period. Starting from examining

the origin story closely, I begin my discussions on these points—Sūfukuji, Maitreya Cult, and

Silla immigrants. The origin story of the deity is preserved in several textual sources. One of the

earliest references to this god is found in a short text, the *Onjōji ryūge-e engi* 園城寺龍華会縁起

written in 1062 by Fujiwara no Sanenori 藤原実範 (d.u.).[64] The origin story tells of the first

encounter between Shinra Myōjin and Enchin:

> During the Jōwa 承和 era (834–848), Master Chishō 智證 [Enchin]
> crossed the sea and entered Tang China in search of the Dharma. He
> waited for wind for safe sailing, but in a seaway the boat reached the
> outskirts of Wanliu 万柳 in China. With the divine protection of the
> Three Treasures from his home temple, the master was at last able to
> reach Qinglong temple 青龍寺 in Chang'an 長安. At the temple he
> learned all the Dharma from his master (Skt. *Ācārya*). One by one, he
> received all the teachings of the exoteric and esoteric traditions, and
> finally received transmission. After the master completed his mission, he
> decided to come back to Japan. On his boat, an old man suddenly
> appeared and declared: "I am a deity (*myōjin*) of the Silla Kingdom. I
> will protect your Dharma until the Buddha Maitreya comes to this
> world." After these words, the old man disappeared.[65]

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[64] *Honchō zoku monzui: kōchū Nihon bungaku taikei* 本朝續文粹: 校註日本文学大系 vol. 24 (Tōkyō: Kokumintosho, 1925-28): 738-41. The *engi* consists of two parts in terms of its contents: the first part (one-third of the *engi*) focuses on the circumstances in which Enchin came to settle down at Onjōji and in which the Maitreya assembly was established at the temple. The *engi* ends with the extolment of the merit of Maitreya cult (two-thirds of the *engi*). The fact that the *engi* story is in the *Honchō zoku monzui* is significant in that the *Honchō zoku monzui* was one of the highest literary achievements during the Heian period on the specific political and literary purpose. I am indebted to David Lurie for this observation. For the whole translation of the text, see Appendix.

[65] *Honchō zoku monzui* 738.

The story above illustrates the crucial character of Shinra Myōjin. The deity, who claims to originate from Silla, initially appears as a god who provides a safe sea crossing. Without his protection, Enchin's journey would not have been possible and therefore there would have been no Onjōji. The narrative structure was duplicated in many different versions but with a twist for its own end. For instance, the same narrative appeared in popular tale collections, such as the *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (ca. 1120), the *Kokon chomonjū* 古今著聞集 (1254), and the *Taiheiki* 太平記 (14th C.). While the general plot—an eminent monk receives protection from a deity on his way back to Japan from China—is maintained, the main character sometimes appears as a different deity. For example, in the *Konjaku Monogatarishū,* the god who appears to Enchin is not Shinra Myōjin but Yellow Fudō Myōō 黄不動明王.[66] In the *Taiheiki*, both Shinra Myōjin and Fudō appear in front of Enchin.[67] Among this same group of *engi* stories, the most noteworthy is the story of Ennin and how he met Sekizan Myōjin. As I shall discuss in more detail below, it uses the very same story, i.e., Enchin's encounter with Shinra Myōjin. Using the same plot, the version in the *Keiran shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 (c. 1347) provides an example of how a story can have its own volition. In that text, we read that it was Matarajin whom Ennin encountered and not Shinra Myōjin. In this way, a story produces another deity and actively contributes to the subsequent self-duplicating narrative structure.

Shinra Myōjin's *engi* is not the first example of the motif of the encounter between an eminent Buddhist monk and a protective deity in the guise of an old man. We find a mirror story of Shinra Myōjin in the story of Shiotsuchi no oji 塩土老翁 (Old man spirit of the tides) in the

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[66] Dykstra 1998: 72-3.

[67] *Taiheiki* vol.1: 413.

Kojiki and the *Nihon shoki*.[68] In the well-known story called, *umi no sachi* and *yama no sachi* (sea luck and mountain luck), Shiotsuchi no oji plays a very similar role as Shinra Myōjin. Shiotsuchi no oji, an old man deity, appears as a god of fishery, navigation, and subsuming all of these, a god of sea.[69]

The story of the monk Gyōzen 行善, as in the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記 (c. 822), may be even relevant here as well.[70] According to that story, Gyōzen was sent to Koguryŏ for study. After the demise of that country by a Silla-Tang alliance, he was forced to wander. When he had no way to cross a river he encountered, he began to meditate upon Kannon. Suddenly, an old man in a boat came along and ferried him to the other side of the river. Since Gyōzen realized that the old man was an incarnation of Kannon, upon reaching Tang China, he made an image of the bodhisattva and worshiped it. In the second year of the era Yōrō (718), he returned to Japan along with the party of a Japanese envoy to China. He lived in Kōfukuji and continued to venerate the Kannon image until he died.

Various elements in the stories of Gyōzen and of Enchin overlap. First, both monks are saved by an old man as they face trouble on water. Second, an ancient Korean kingdom is mentioned in both stories. Third, although one story appears to be about Kannon cult and the other about Shinra Myōjin, both deities were considered to be the same at Onjōji.[71] Thus, Shinra Myōjin's origin story is in fact not unique. It may be the dramatization of a well-known existing

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[68] His name is written differently in different texts: Shiotsuchi no kami 塩椎神 in the *Kojiki*, Shiotsuchi oji 塩土老翁・塩筒老翁 in the *Nihon shoki*, and Shiotsuchi no oji 塩土老翁 in the *Sendai kuji hongi* 先代旧事本紀.

[69] *Nihon shoki*, Aston, 99 ff.

[70] *Nihon ryōiki*, Watson 2013: 25-6.

[71] *Onjōji denki* 59.

setsuwa already available to Japanese Buddhists in the early Heian period. At any rate, one thing stands out in the case of Shinra Myōjin: none of the other deities appearing in the variants achieved the absolute status that Shinra Myōjin did at Onjōji. Actually, unlike the others, Shinra Myōjin's *engi* story does not end here. It continues as follows:

> After the master returned to Japan, the court asked him to present what he learned and collected in China to the Daijōkan 太政官 (the statutory Council of State). At that very time, the same old man from the previous day reappeared and stated: "In Japan there is an auspicious place. You should build a Buddhist temple on that land, and enshrine the teachings that you received." Thereupon, the master arrived at Onjōji in Shiga district 滋賀郡 in Ōmi Province 近江國."[72] He asked monks at the temple as to [the temple's] origins. However, no one knew about them except one old monk named Kyōtai. He came close to the master and told him: "I am 162 years old. This temple was established around 180 years ago. Here lives a descendant of our patron family." The monk called that person, who said: "My ancestor is Ōtomo no Yotaō 大友与多王.[73] He established the temple for Emperor Tenmu 天武. Originally the territory was part of the family land of Prince Ōtomo, the minister of the Daijōkan 大友太政大臣. In obedience to Emperor Tenji's imperial decree, the minister established Sūfukuji at this site. A sixty-foot tall Maitreya statue was installed. At that time, the emperor had a dream vision and received an oracle in his dream. Thereupon the minister rebuilt [the temple]. This is the present Sūfukuji. Ōtomo no Yotaō, following his father [Prince Ōtomo's] will, finished the construction of halls and residential buildings.[74]

As we read above, Shinra Myōjin reappeared to Enchin. While the first part of the *engi* highlights the master's miraculous encounter with the deity, the second half quoted above tells how the deity led Enchin to the site of the future Onjōji and explains the reason behind Enchin's

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[72] *Honchō zoku monzui* 739.

[73] Another reading could be Ōtomo no Yota no Ōmika.

[74] *Honchō zoku monzui* 739.

decision to settle down at the foot of Mt. Nagara 長等. Significantly, in the former account,

Shinra Myōjin is a god who guarantees safe passage across the sea, whereas in the latter, his

association with the sea completely disappears. In the second passage, he is no longer a sea god

but has rather transformed into a mountain god, thus acquiring the role of a *genius loci*, or

landlord deity (Jp. *jinushi*). The appearance of the old monk Kyōtai 教待 and his mysterious

longevity reinforce the dominant image of landlord deity. Kyōtai's significance in this *engi* is

revealed by his name: awaiting ("*tai*") the teaching ("*kyō*") of Enchin. This association lends

legitimacy to Enchin's engagement with the temple.[75] It is not clear whether Kyōtai was a

historical figure like Enchin and the Ōtomo clan or a purely mythical construct. The *engi* also

avoids answering this question. It provides only a mythic explanation of Kyōtai, telling us that he

is an incarnation of the future buddha Maitreya.[76]

Modern scholars consider the *Onjōji Ryūge-e engi* to be the first Shinra Myōjin *engi*.

However, another *engi* entitled *Onjōji engi* 薗城寺縁起 may actually be earlier. Its colophon

provides the date 920, although the reliability of this date is disputed. Despite its potentially

earlier date, the *Onjōji engi* has not attracted much scholarly attention. Currently available

scholarship on Shinra Myōjin refers solely to the *Onjōji Ryūge-e engi* as the earliest *engi*,

without explaining why the *Onjōji engi* is being ignored. The lack of attention is partially due to

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[75] I am indebted to Bernard Faure for this observation.

[76] Whether Kyōtai was a mythological figure or a real monk from Sūfukuji, later Onjōji monks tried hard to make him real. In Ōtsu, there is a tomb of Kyōtai, as we can see in the gazetteer *Sinchū Omi yochi shiriyaku* 新註近江興地志略 (101 vols.) compiled in 1723 (Kyōhō 享保 8) by Samukawa Tokikiyo. See Samukawa 1976. The landlord of Zeze 膳所 ordered Samukawa Tokikyo (1697–1739) to compile this gazetteer. Samukawa gathered all sorts of legends and historical information around Omi, focusing on remains of famous sites, shrines and temples. The original text is currently exhibited in the Biwako Bunkakan 琵琶湖文化館. The relevant passage on Shinra Myōjin in *Onjōji Ryūge-e engi* ends with the passage quoted above. The following story, two-thirds of the document, aims at explaining Onjōji's association with the Maitreya cult and at promoting the latter.

the fact that the former text was not widely known until the 1950s. It was only in 1958 that the *Onjōji engi* was first presented to the public at an exhibition held by the Archives and Mausolea Department of the Imperial Household Agency (Kunaichō Shoryōbu 宮内庁書陵部).[77] Only one copy of the text (a handwritten manuscript copied during the Kamakura period) is stored in the archives of the Kujō 九条 family branch of the Fujiwara 藤原 clan, derived from Fujiwara no Tadamichi 藤原忠通 (1097–1164).[78]

The *Onjōji engi* is a potentially important document for both Shinra Myōjin and Onjōji. In terms of Shinra Myōjin's origin story itself, the text relates an almost identical story to that found in the *Onjōji ryūge-e engi*. One major difference is that the *Onjōji engi* devotes a good deal of space to the area around Onjōji. The *Onjōji engi* consists of three parts: the declaration of the Onjōji's territory, the *engi* story of Onjōji as stated by Enchin, and two official documents – one from a person of the Ōtomo family 大友村主夜須良麻呂,[79] in which he asks the Daijōkan about the possibility of the clan temple being affiliated with the Tendai school, and the other a reply from the Daijōkan approving the family's request. Shinra Myōjin appears in the second part of the *engi*. The text claims that the Shinra Myōjin *engi* story was directly related by Enchin. First, Enchin told it to one of his disciples named Enbin 圓敏 (d. u.). Thereafter, the eleventh Tendai chief abbot Rōyō 良勇 (d. u.) transcribed the tale.

The story of Enchin's encounter with Shinra Myōjin is the same. Given that earlier date of 920, however, it is tempting to argue that *the Onjōji engi* is the earliest textual record of

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[77] Tachi 2010: 26.

[78] The Kujō family seems to be closely related with Onjōji. For instance, another Onjōji text, the *Hōhiki* (c. 1217) is complied in the Kujō family's place. See Matsumoto 2008: 82. It is also noteworthy that the family was appointed as the Kumano *sanzan* manager in the thirteenth century for several generations.

[79] The last two characters 麻 and 呂 are sometimes written as 麿.

Shinra Myōjin. However, closer scrutiny is required in order to confirm the date, especially since there are several problems associated with it. First of all, the fact that the text credits Enchin with its transmission suggests a polemical intent and therefore, historically speaking, it might be a false attribution. At the same time, though, given the later reception of the text by Enchin's followers, its authorship may not have been a problem at all. The date of the text will be useful to understanding the larger context of Shinra Myōjin's emergence, but it still remains controversial. While determining the textual chronology is beyond the scope of this study, I have introduced this text in order to suggest that the privileging of the *Onjōji ryūge-e engi* over the *Onjōji engi* should be questioned, and also because the *Onjōji engi* appears to have been more influential than the *Onjōji ryūge-e engi* in pre-modern Japanese Tendai history and is thus of particular importance to my study.[80]

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[80] Contrary to the understanding of previous scholars, there are ample reasons not to devalue the *Onjōji engi* over the *Onjōji ryūge-e engi*. Akamatsu Toshihide and Oyamada Kazuo were the first ones to raise the issue of the authenticity of the text. These scholars criticized not only the written date at the end of the document, but also accused the entire text of being a forgery. Akamatsu argues that the *Onjōji engi* must be dated later than the *Onjōji ryūge-e engi*. Akamatsu argues that two passages in the body of the text offer a clue for the compilation date of the *Onjōji engi*. The first passage goes as follows: "It has been two hundred years after the prosperity of Tendai." Akamatsu interprets the line "two hundred years" to mean "two hundred years after Enchin's death." He concludes that one of the possible dates of the compilation date is 1075. The second passage is the passage in which Shinra Myōjin predicts the conflict between Enchin's line and Ennin's line. Since Enchin's followers left Sannō-in due to a disagreement with Ennin's followers in 993, Akamatsu thinks that this text was written sometime after that. He concludes that it was written sometime in the eleventh century, after *Onjōji ryūge-e engi*. Oyamada also thinks that the *engi* is nothing but a fabrication mainly because Onjōji monks produced the text only to make a claim on their temple territory. As evidence, he points out that some names of officials appearing at the end of the *Onjōji engi* do not match with official references. In the *Onjōji engi*, several government official names are inscribed at the end of the text. Oyadama confirms that all the recognizable names served as officials in the late ninth century in Ōmi. However, he finds two cases where the term years of officials do not exactly match with those give in the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三代実録.

However, I do not think that this disagreement regarding the officials' tenure provides any sufficient reason to suspect that the entire *engi* was fabricated. Conversely, Oyadama's findings—the other officials' correct matching—support the notion that the *engi* is in fact based on the actual historical record. If the compiler of the *engi* had attempted to manipulate the entire text by putting the actual names, he would have been more careful with such details as exact appointment dates and status. Thus, the accusation based on the different tenure years does not suffice to judge the entire text as a forgery. Nakamae Masashi suggests that a more careful examination on the issue of dating the *Onjōji engi* is needed. Even if the *Onjōji engi* is not earlier than the *Onjōji ryūge-e engi*, as the two previous scholars argued, at least, it seems fair to say that the former was more widely circulated by both Onjōji monks and Enryakuji monks than the latter. According to Nakamae, the *Onjōji engi* was criticized even before modern scholarship, which confirms the fact that the *engi* retained a monastic audience.

3. Sūfukuji and Early History of Onjōji

3.1. History of Sūfukuji

In understanding Onjōji's early history and its relation with Shinra Myōjin, it is crucial to examine the relationship between Sūfukuji and Onjōji. In previous studies, Shinra Myōjin has been generally understood as being the product of the rivalry between Onjōji and Enryakuji. However, a close examination of sources related to Sūfukuji reveals that the deity also played a vital role in justifying Onjōji's annexation of Sūfukuji through myth. As the *engi* story illustrates, it was Shinra Myōjin who led Enchin to the future Onjōji site (which very possibly was Sūfukuji back then). It was also Shinra Myōjin who decided to reside on the northern field of the temple complex in order to protect Enchin's followers. Therefore, the emergence of the deity is intricately related to the early history of Onjōji, which, in turn, is also closely related to the ending of Sūfukuji.

Sūfukuji (a.k.a. Shigaji 志賀寺, Shiga-zanji 志賀山寺) was a temple that existed at the site of Onjōji prior to the creation of Onjōji.[81] Due to scarcity of records on Sūfukuji, the actual history and the relationship between the two temples largely remains a mystery.[82] Sūfukuji appears in the official historical records such as the *Nihon shōki* and the *Soku Nihongi*, but each

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In fact, the one who first accused the *Onjōji engi* of fabrication, prior to modern scholars, were Enryakuji monks. The *Sanmon sōjō* 山門奏状 (1215), for instance, accuses the *Onjōji engi* of being a fabrication and gives an acerbic critique of the text. Inside the Onjōji tradition, on the other hand, since the *engi* claims its direct transmission from Enchin, its authority was unquestioned. The *Onjōji engi* continued to be cited in various sources including the *Asabashō* 阿娑縛抄 (1275) and the *Tengu zōshi* 天狗草紙 (13th C.). Onjōji monks were aware of Enryakuji's criticism of their *engi* story as well. Texts such as the *Jimon kosōki* 寺門高僧記 and the *Onjōji kaian* 園城寺解案 inform that Onjōji monks refuted those Enryakuji monks who criticized the *Onjōji engi* as a forgery. For more on this discussion, see Akamatsu 1996: 482-95; Oyamada 1990: 138-58; Nakamae 2003: 18-37.

[81] Shiga-ken Bunkazai Hogo Kyōkai ed. 2005: 45.

[82] Yamao 1993: 17.

entry is very terse and does not give much information. According to the *Fusō ryakki* 扶桑略記 (c. 1094), Sūfukuji was built in 668 after Emperor Tenji moved the capital to Ōtsu. Archeological findings reveal that it was located at the southeastern foot of Mt. Hiei (in present-day Ōtsu 大津 City), somewhere between modern-day Enryakuji and Onjōji.[83] However, when the newly built capital was demolished because of the Jinshin 壬申 War in 673, the temple was also completely destroyed.

Later sources and popular literatures seem to provide additional information about the forgotten temple, although this may not be necessarily historically correct. For instance, according to the several legend described in Onjōji records, the *Sanbō ekotoba* 三宝絵詞, and *the Konjaku monogatari*, it was Emperor Tenji who founded Sūfukuji in 668.[84] Onjōji texts give more details. As in the *engi* story of Shinra Myōjin, Emperor Tenmu rebuilt its main hall in 687 with the help of the Ōtomo 大友 clan in honor of Prince Ōtomo 大友皇子, the son of Emperor Tenji.[85] If it was the case, or at least perceived as a true story in the medieval period, the destruction and later revival of Sūfukuji reflects imperial efforts to pacify the spirits of Prince Ōtomo and other war victims. This also explains one of the main reasons why the temple was established and how it was related to the imperial favor although it is still not clear how, historically speaking, the Ōtomo clan and Prince Ōtomo can be connected.

The Ōtomo clan seems to hold the key to understanding not only the establishment of Sūfukuji but also Shinra Myōjin's relationship with Korean immigrants in Ōmi. The temple

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[83] Miyahara 2006: 74.

[84] Nakanishi 2008: 42.

[85] *Sōgō bunin shōshutsu* 120.

name came from the manor "Onjō" 薗城, which was owned by the Ōtomo clan.[86] The clan turned this manor into a temple and continued to support it. This continued affiliation between the temple and the clan can be seen in a text titled "Ōtomo's request," written in 871 (Jōgan 貞観 13). The document refers to a person from the Ōtomo family making an offering at Onjōji and praying in front of the *Lotus Sutra* (Jp. *Hokekyō* 法華経).[87]

The origin of the Ōtomo clan has been a controversial issue in Japanese scholarship.[88] Although Onjōji texts claim that the clan was made up of Prince Ōtomo's descendants, some scholars argue that the Ōtomo were actually an immigrant clan. Tsuji Zennosuke, for example, cites a passage in the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本後紀 (797) where the Ōtomo are referred to as descendants of the Chinese emperor Xian of the Later Han 後漢献帝 (r. 189–220).[89] This reference notwithstanding, there is another reliable source that supports Onjōji's claim that the Ōtomo are descendants of Prince Ōtomo. The *Honchō kōin jōunroku* 本朝皇胤紹運録 (15th C.), an official text on the imperial lineage compiled during the reign of Emperor Go-Komatsu 後小松天皇 (r. 1392–1412), shows a chart displaying the Ōtomo family tree. According to this chart, the Ōtomo family originated from Prince Ōtomo and was continued by Ōtomo no Yotāō 大友与多王, Ōtomo no Tsutomumaro 大友都堵牟麿 and eventually produced the *waka* poet Ōtomo no Kuronushi 大友黒主 (d. u.) in the Heian period. Although the text is relatively late, it is

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[86] It is also noteworthy that the *Onjōji engi* we have discussed above uses the same character.

[87] His name is written as 大友些子. See *Onjōji monjo* (vol. 1): 384.

[88] For the clan lineage, see Hoshino 1997: 168-75.

[89] Tsuji 1931: 219.

noteworthy that a source outside of the Onjōji tradition verifies the temple's claim regarding Prince Ōtomo's connection with the Ōtomo family.

Our main concern is not tracing the entire genealogy of the Ōtomo clan, however. Rather, the question is whether or not the clan originated from the Korean Peninsula, a determination that is relevant to the initial support for Shinra Myōjin at Sūfukuji. One way to potentially resolve this issue is to consider the possibility that the Ōtomo family could have been composed of multiple clans. What the *Shoku Nihongi* refers to is, in fact, one of the sub-groups belonging to this larger group.[90] Some additional studies point out that the Ōtomo comprised different immigrant groups from the Korean Peninsula.[91] For instance, the *Shinsen shōjiroku* 新撰姓氏録 (*New Selection and Record of Hereditary Titles and Family Names*, 815) confirms that one of the Ōtomo clans, Ōtomo no fubito 大友史 was from the Korean kingdom of Paekche 百濟 (18 BCE –660 CE).[92] Ōtomo was closely involved with the Korean Peninsula from early on. In addition, immigrants from the Koguryŏ 高句麗 Kingdom (37 BCE–668 CE) were also included in the Ōtomo clan.[93] All of these pieces of evidence suggest that the name Ōtomo refers to a collective of local clans, some of which appear to have emigrated from the Korean Peninsula. If this was the case, it helps us see the reason why the Ōtomo clan appears in the Shinra Myōjin *engi* story. It also helps us understand the cult of Shinra Myōjin was not just an independent cult of a Silla deity at Onjōji but part of a local cult of Silla deities in the region.

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[90] All the major clans of the area claimed to be descendants of different emperors of the Later Han, which sounds doubtful. Susumu 1984: 66. However, it is noteworthy that, among those immigrants who were collectively called "Shiga Chinese immigrants," there were multiple groups from different parts of the Korean Peninsula. See Ōhashi 1995: 52.

[91] Susumu 1984: 64.

[92] *Shinsen shōjiroku* 854.

[93] Hishino 1997: 169.

3.2. Imperial Support and Sūfukuji as a Maitreya Cultic Site

Examining the history of Sūfukuji provides a better sense of the early history of Onjōji and the cult of Shinra Myōjin. The temple Sūfukuji continuously appears in different literary works from the seventh century until the eleventh century, which suggests its significance status. During the reign of Tenji, it was one of the ten officially recognized temples in the new capital, and it was closely involved in imperial politics during the transition from Emperor Tenji to Emperor Tenmu. Even after Tenmu's demise, imperial favor toward the temple seems to have continued. For instance, according to the *Engishiki* 延喜式 (*Regulations of the Engi Era*, 927), Empress Jitō carried out repentance rituals at Sūfukuji in memory of Emperor Tenji and Prince Kusakabe 草壁 (662–689), her second son with Emperor Tenmu.[94] Several imperial offerings were made as well. The *Sōgō bunin shōshutsu* 僧綱補任抄出 informs us that Emperor Daigo 醍醐 (r. 897–930) made an offering to Sūfukuji in 929 (Enchō 延長 7) and carried out an eye-opening ceremony at the temple.[95] The last entry about the temple is from the *Fusō ryakki* in 1076, when an offering was made to the temple.

The main buddha (Jp. *honzon* 本尊) of Sūfukuji was the future buddha, Maitreya (Jp. Miroku 弥勒).[96] Sūfukuji's association with the Maitreya cult reflects the earlier popularity of this cult in the Ōmi area.[97] In Japan, Maitreya became popular during the mid-seventh century

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[94] Watase 1978: 71-2. Also see Yamao 1993: 23.

[95] *Sōgō bunin shōshutsu* 126.

[96] For more on Maitreya, see Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre eds., 1998.

[97] Nakai Shinkō points out that, in ancient Japan, it is unusual that an imperial temple such as Sūfukuji enshrined Maitreya as its *honzon*, and he points out that, Sūfukuji is therefore a representative example of Maitreya worship in this period. Nakai 1994: 37-9.

along with the buddhas Śākyamuni and Amitābha.[98] Maitreya icons were enshrined at a number of temples in Nara, such as Yakushiji 薬師寺 and Tōshodaiji 唐招提寺. During the early flourishing of the Hossō 法相宗 school (i.e. Yogācāra) in Nara, Maitreya was again one of the main divinities of that school. This primacy was largely due to Maitreya's position as the founder of the Hossō school. Vasubhandu (Jp. Seshin 世親) and Asaṅga (Jp. Muchaku 無著), two brothers revered as patriarchs of the Yogācāra school, are said to have ascended to Tuṣita Heaven and received teachings from the bodhisattva Maitreya.

The early popularity of the Maitreya cult in Japan had parallels in China and Korea.[99] The significance of the Maitreya cult in Japanese Buddhism is that it symbolizes the transmission of Buddhism from Korea to Japan. As the *Nihon shoki* confirms: "In 584 during the reign of Emperor Bidatsu 敏達 (r. 572–586), a stone statue of Maitreya (Kr. Mirŭk) was transmitted from

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[98] The Maitreya cult in Japan is generally interpreted by scholars against the backdrop of the rise of popularity of Amitābha's Pure Land. In the Kamakura period, the Pure Land school became an independent sect and gained huge popularity while the idea of rebirth in Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven lost its vitality. Accordingly, the standard view of the Maitreya cult in Japan is that it gradually began to decline after the Nara period. Shirai 2005: 74. Yet, it seems that the actual situation was much more complicated. For instance, Heian-period aristocratic diaries show that during the Heian period, people began to conflate Amitābha's Pure Land and Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven (See Kumoi 1995: 88). Even after the Kamakura period, major temples in Nara and temples located in other early Buddhist centers such as Kyūshū continued to worship Maitreya as their central buddha and to have faith in his paradise. More importantly, in the medieval Buddhist world, multiple "heavenly realms" coexisted, such as Amitābha' Pure Land, Sukhāvatī (Jp. *gokuraku* 極楽), Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven (Jp. *tosotsuten* 兜率天), Avalokiteśvara's Potalaka (Jp. *Fudaraku-san* 補陀落山), and Shakyamuni's Pure Land of the Eagle Peak (Jp. Ryōzen jōdo).

Consequently, although Amida's Pure Land was seen as the ideal place to go after one's death, this does not mean that it replaced Tuṣita Heaven. Rather, each vision of paradise appealed to different social groups. For instance, Tuṣita Heaven was seen as more appealing for female followers, who were excluded from Amitābha's Pure Land. As Lori Meeks has pointed out, some female courtiers believed that it was not necessary to be reborn in male bodies either in the human realm or in Amitābha's Pure Land in order to be saved. Instead, they could achieve nirvāṇa as women through rebirth in Tuṣita Heaven (See Meeks 2010: 59-90). As another example, a number of leading monks from the Kamakura period, including Jōkei 貞慶 (1155–1213), the famous reformer of the Hossō 法相 school and one of the most influential monks of the time, were devotees of the Buddha Maitreya and wished to be reborn not in Amida's Pure Land but in Tuṣita Heaven. Jōkei held a Dragon Flower Assembly at Kasagidera 笠置寺 and continued to support the Maitreya cult. On Jōkei, see Ford 2006; Luke Thompson, Ph.D. diss., Columbia University (forthcoming).

[99] The cult also prevailed periodically due to numerous messianic rebellions, which invoked the Buddha Maitreya; often the leader of the rebellion himself would claim that he was an incarnation of the Buddha Maitreya.

Paekche."[100] This event is described as the first official transmission of the Maitreya cult to Japan.[101] It is interesting to note that this was used as evidence to connect Onjōji with the Korean Peninsula. According to the *Onjōji denki*, Onjōji was the first Buddhist temple established in Japan on account of the fact that it enshrined that very Maitreya statue:

> Onjōji is the first Buddhist monastery in Japan. Forty-four years after the establishment of Onjōji, Kōfukuji was established. Fifteen years after that temple, Tōdaiji was in turn established. About one hundred years after the establishment of Miidera, Enryakuji was established. Our temple is the first temple in the era of the Buddha. Emperor Tenji strove to build that temple during his reign and he finally enshrined Hokei Miroku as its *honzon*. This is the very Maitreya enshrined there today. Both the *honzon* and the temple are the oldest in Japan.[102]

The above passage shows Onjōji's attempt to link its religious identity and authority back to the Korean Peninsula as a way of strengthening the temple's legitimacy as the bulwark of Tendai authority. By claiming that it possessed the very Maitreya statue that had come from Korea, Onjōji could turn itself into not only the most sacred site of the Maitreya cult—and thereby assert its legitimacy and antiquity—but also into "the oldest Buddhist temple in Japan." This point suggests that the worship of Shinra Myōjin may have emerged along the same lines.

Sūfukuji's Maitreya cult is closely related to those of the Korean Peninsula and of the Korean immigrants who settled down in Ōmi. Both in Paekche and Silla, the Maitreya cult was

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[100] *Nihon shoki*, Aston, 101.

[101] This Maitreya statue is not the first Buddhist statue from Paekche, but it is one of the earliest images that Japan received in the sixth century. According to the *Nihon shoki*, King Sŏng of Paekche sent a gilt bronze image of Śākyamuni to Yamato Japan in 552. Most scholars, however, consider a 538 date to be more accurate, based on other Japanese records. (McCallum 2001: 149-88) The *Nihon shoki* further states that in 577, King Widŏk of Paekche sent another Buddhist image, and, in 584, a stone statue of Maitreya and another image simply identified as a Buddha were sent as part of a diplomatic exchange.

[102] *Onjōji denki* 56.

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supported by the court and enjoyed royal patronage during the Three Kingdoms' period.[103]

Paekche's King Mu 武 (r. 600–641; alternatively, 606–640) was a devotee of Maitreya. He sponsored the Dragon Flower Assembly and also established a Maitreya temple (Kr. Mirŭk-sa) in the capital.[104] The Maitreya temple in Paekche was built on the northwest side of the imperial palace in order to protect the king. In Japan, when Emperor Tenji sponsored the building of Sūfukuji in his new capital, a Maitreya temple was built on the northwest side of the new palace as well. According to Nakai Shirō, this might not be a coincidence since this was also the time when hundreds of Paekche immigrants came to Ōmi seeking asylum. Nakai further argues that these immigrants transmitted Paekche's Maitreya cult and helped Tenji build Sūfukuji.[105]

Onjōji's Maitreya cult seems to reflect the earlier popularity of Maitreya cult in connection with the introduction of Buddhism to Japan and its contemporary significance in the Korean Peninsula. The structural parallelism between a Maitreya story from the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*, 13th C.) —a collection of legends, folktales, and historical accounts relating to the Three Kingdoms of Korea compiled by the monk Ilyŏn 一然 (1206–

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[103] Evidence of the popularity of the Maitreya cult in the Silla kingdoms is exemplified by the Flower Boys (Kr. *hwarang*), a troop of young warriors, usually in their mid-teens, who were organized to supplement the elite units that formed the core of Silla's military forces. They were devotees of Maitreya and the ceremony they performed was called "Followers of the Dragon-flower" (Kr. *Yonghwa hyangdo* 龍華香徒).

The 'Dragon-flower' symbolizes the cult of Maitreya based on the canonical belief that when Maitreya becomes a buddha, 5.6 billion years from now, he will sit under the dragon-flower tree 龍華樹 and preach to a dragon-flower assembly (Jp. *Ryūge-e* 龍華會). The early Maitreya cult was based on the belief that keeping the 'ten wholesome precepts' (Jp. *Jūzenkai* 十善戒) could guarantee a rebirth into Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven. Thus, people who wished to participate in the dragon-flower assembly were expected to keep *vinaya* rules. Along with encouraging observance of the *vinaya* rules, the Maitreya cult from Paekche also emphasized its efficacy in prolonging one's life. This idea was widely accepted in the early stages of Maitreya transmission in Japan.

[104] Kumoi 1995: 88.

[105] Nakai 1994: 39.

1289)—and the origin story of Shinra Myōjin suggests the possible influence of prevalent narrative themes at the time.[106]

In the section on "The Immortal Flower of Maitreya (Kr. Mirŭk sŏnhwa 弥勒仙華), Misirang 未尸郎 and Chinja 眞慈" of the *Samguk Yusa*, we find a miracle tale featuring the future Buddha Maitreya that parallels the *engi* story of Shinra Myōjin.[107] According to that story, King Chinhŭng (r. 540–576) created an elite group of young boys from noble families, who were called "Flower Boys" (Kr. *hwarang* 花郎). At that time, there was a Buddhist monk named Chinja who constantly prayed to encounter Maitreya. One day, he ran into one of these flower boys but only later realized that the youth was actually Maitreya. Chinja learned this from a mountain spirit, who appeared to Chinja as an old man.

The story reminds us of the *engi* story of Shinra Myōjin: the scene in which Enchin encounters Kyōtai, who was also a manifestation of Maitreya, resembles that in which Chinja meets a manifestation of Maitreya.[108] Also, Shinra Myōjin's appearance as an old man reminds us of the mountain spirit who similarly appeared in this form to Chinja. The major characters in both stories can also be paired: Enchin and Chinja, Kyōtai and Maitreya, Shinra Myōjin and the old man. This parallelism suggests that the narrative of Shinra Myōjin and the Maitreya story from the *Samguk yusa* are mythologically very close. Considering Sūfukuji's connections with

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[106] Hakamada argues that the Shinra Myōjin's *engi* story seems to be influenced by the Maitreya cult story in the *Samguk yusa*. See Hakamada 2012.

[107] *Samguk yusa,* Ha and Mintz trans, 207-10.

[108] In the story of the *Samguk yusa*, Maitreya appears as a youth whereas in the *Onjōji ryūge-e engi*, Kyōtai's old age is emphasized. However, in another story about Kyōtai in the *Honchō shinsenden* 本朝神仙伝 (1097), although he himself is not described as a youth, he is closely associated with youth. In that story, Kyōtai is described as a mysterious immortal in Ōmi. We are told that: "He loves young girls and boys, and when he throws fish out of his mouth, the fish turns into lotus leaves." Kawaguchi 1967: 352.

Korean immigrants and the popularity of Maitreya cult, the two stories might even have the same origin.

Unfortunately, there is no textual evidence to show that the Maitreya cult in Paekche and Silla were connected to that of Sūfukuji. However, it is clear that Onjōji's Maitreya cult was inherited from Sūfukuji, and Sūfukuji's connections with the Korean peninsula played a seminal role for Onjōji's self-promotion. Sūfukuji's connection with Korea allowed Onjōji to claim that it enshrined the oldest Maitreya statue from Korea. In this way, Sūfukuji's Maitreya cult was used to ensure Onjōji's spiritual authenticity and political legitimacy.

The Shinra Myōjin *engi* stories associated with Maitreya attest to the ongoing popularity of Maitreya in medieval Japan. This finding challenges the previous view that the Maitreya cult was not very important in the Tendai tradition and was mostly active in Nara. Most examples of the medieval Maitreya cult can be found in temples affiliated with the Hossō school and other longstanding temples in Nara. The Maitreya cult at Sūfukuji/Onjōji, however, reveals that the cult was important in the Tendai tradition and was also popular outside Nara. In the Tendai history, Maitreya cult was particularly crucial to Onjōji's claims to religious superiority vis-à-vis Mt. Hiei.[109] More significantly, Sūfukuji/Onjōji's Maitreya cult reflects the temple's close ties to the Korean Peninsula and its possible connections with Korean immigrants who formed a large part of Ōmi's population.

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[109] The popularity of the Maitreya cult in Nara and Onjōji's Maitreya cult brought the two closer and created a sense of brotherhood as well. When Onjōji had a conflict with Enryakuji on the issue of the establishment of an independent ordination platform, the Maitreya connection strengthened the alliance between Onjōji and Nara temples. From the tenth century onward, Onjōji monks had to go to Tōdaiji 東大寺 to receive the full precepts. (Tachi 2010: 100-101). Enryakuj criticized both Onjōji and Tōdaiji, which caused the ties between Onjōi and Tōdaiji to become stronger. It is noteworthy that one of the first texts in which Shinra Myōjin appears is the text on the Maitreya assembly organized at Onjōji.

3.3. The Legacy of Sūfukuji

Because of the discrepancy between those of Onjōji and other sources, it is not clear when exactly the transition from Sūfukuji to Onjōji occurred. What seems to be the case is that Sūfukuji suffered from several fires (921, 965, and 1022), and, according to the *Miidera zoku tōki* 三井寺続燈記, the temple was merged with Onjōji in 1230.[110] However, we have conflicting information. For instance, as we read the Onjōji's *engi* stories, the transition was made in the ninth century, when Enchin founded Onjōji temple. Also, according to the *Daijōkanchō* 大政官牒, an official document from Daijōkan that was approved in 866, Enchin received authorization from the court to affiliate Sūfukuji with the Tendai School.[111] One possible explanation on the different accounts is that Sūfukuji was not entirely integrated into Enchin's new institution in the ninth century.

Although the historical account of the transition from Sūfukuji to Onjōji is not entirely clear, it is very likely that in their attempt to establish a new powerful Tendai center, Enchin and his followers were eager to appropriate Sūfukuji and Sūfukuji's past. Sūfukuji's imperial connections made the temple particularly attractive. It had enjoyed imperial favor for a long time and was also very possibly a clan temple of the Ōtomo family, one of the powerful immigrant clans in the area. By successfully appropriating Sūfukuji's glorious past, Enchin and his followers not only gained the physical temple but they could also claim a long imperial connection. Onjōji's popular name, "Miidera" 三井寺 (Temple of Three Wells, also written 御井寺 or "Temple of the Imperial Well") is a good example of this. According to the *Onjōji denki*,

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[110] Kajiwara 2002: 98.

[111] Tachi 2010: 22.

this popular title came from the founder Enchin. Through the Sūfukuji connection, Onjōji found a way to be associated with imperial support and claimed that the temple name Miidera originated from the temple's association with three emperors—Tenji, Tenmu, and Jitō.[112] In this way, Onjōji could claim that the temple was associated with all three emperors. It disseminated the legend that when these emperors were born, water from the well of Onjōji was used for their bath, and therefore the temple came to be called Miidera. In this way, historically speaking, although Enchin had nothing to do with those three emperors, the later tradition granted him this honorary imperial connection.

So far, I have examined the history of Sūfukuji as part of the early history of Onjōji. Onjōji's records present the initial establishment of Onjōji as a peaceful process of transmission from Kyōtai and the Ōtomo clan to Enchin. However, this story may only be "true" from the perspective of Onjōji. As I have shown above, other sources related to Sūfukuji have a different history to tell. Although the exact reconstruction of the history of Sūfukuji is beyond the scope of this study, at least we know that Sūfukuji's imperial connection was appealing to Enchin and his followers from the ninth century on. Through the appropriation of Sūfukuji's history, Enchin's followers could similarly claim a connection to the imperial scene and could promote Onjōji's superiority over not only Enryakuji but also all other Buddhist institutions. The specific location of Onjōji was equally crucial, as has been discussed. In the next section, I will explore the strong immigrant culture of Ōmi, where Onjōji was located, in order to connect the immigrant culture of the region with the emergence of Shinra Myōjin in Ōmi.

4. Silla Networks and Shinra Myōjin

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[112] *Onjōji denki* 56.

4.1. Silla Immigrants in Ōmi

Ōmi Province was known as an immigrant stronghold. From the late fourth century to the late seventh century, a large influx of immigrant groups moved to various areas of Japan.[113] The *Shinsen Shōjiroku* 新撰姓氏録 (815) records that one-third of high-ranking officials at the court at the time were immigrants from China or Korea. One of these immigrant groups' major strongholds was Ōmi, where Lake Biwa 琵琶 and Mt. Hiei are located.[114] Countless archeological findings also suggest that a large number of Korean immigrants settled down in the area.[115]

At one time, Ōmi was the capital of Japan. After Emperor Tenji ascended to the throne, he set up a capital in Ōmi with the purpose of creating the foundation for a strong country. There are several explanations for why Tenji chose Ōmi. According to Mizuno Masayoshi, who conducted archeological surveys of the Sūfukuji site, immigrants were the primary force behind the decision to construct the capital in Ōmi.[116] The Shiga and Ōtomo clans were the two major groups involved in building the Ōtsu 大津 palace. The evidence of a Korean style fortress around the Ōtsu palace further supports Mizuno's claim that the area was heavily populated with Korean immigrants and that their fortress-building technology also could have helped in the construction of the new capital at Ōmi.

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[113] According to Katō, there were three phases: from late fourth century to early fifth century, from the second half of the fifth century to late fifth century, and late seventh century. Katō 1998: 8.

[114] Ōhashi and Yoshihiko 2005: ix.

[115] There are several studies that show archeological findings proving that Korean style tumuli are packed in Ōmi. See Susumu 1984: 54- 82.

[116] Mizuno 1969: 77-92.

We find various other vestiges of immigrant culture along Lake Biwa. The area of Onjōji, where modern day Ōtsu is located, has been an important port since the ancient period. The city prospered thanks to its position on Lake Biwa until the Edo period. As a major transportation point located in the vicinity of the capital, it drew immigrants who brought advanced continental culture and technologies with them as they formed villages along the lake.

Ōtsu was therefore not only an important trading post linking manors (Jp. *shōen* 荘園) in central and eastern Japan with the capital area but it was also the administrative and mercantile nexus for the neighboring temple complexes of Enryakuji and Onjōji. Merchants, traders, and artisans lived side by side with monks and administrators who found it more convenient to perform their duties from their residences in the city.[117] Among the temples established along Lake Biwa, some are reminiscent of the ancient Korean kingdoms. Although it is no longer extant, there was a temple called Kōraiji 高麗寺 (Kr. Koryŏ-sa).[118] Another well known temple is Hyakusaiji 百済寺 (or Kudaraji Kr. Paekche-sa), built by the Hata 秦 clan, which was of Silla origin.[119] All of these connections suggest that the area had a strong connection with Korean immigrants. This connection may or may not be directly associated with the emergence of Onjōji's Shinra Myōjin worship. Given the close association with the immigrant culture of the area, however, it is important to note that the Shinra Myōjin of Onjōji was at least partially shaped due to the strong immigrant culture of Ōmi.

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[117] Adolphson 2000: 88-9.

[118] Koguryŏ 高句麗; ancient Japanese often called Koguryŏ "Koryŏ," as we find in the *Nihon shoki.* On Koraiji and Hyakusaiji, see Susumu 1984: 153-58.

[119] According to the *Nihon shoki*, in 664, about four hundred Paekche immigrants came to the Shinzen 神前 area in Ōmi. Not only the name itself but also the fact that Hyakusaiji was built near Shinzen lead scholars, including Imai, to posit that Paekche settlers built Hyakusaji. See *Nihon shoki*, Aston, 282.

Along the shores of Lake Biwa, there are also shrines whose names indicate an association with Silla. For example, the woods behind the Shinra Myōjin shrine (Jp. Shinra zenshindō 新羅善神堂) of Onjōji are called the "Silla forest" (Jp. *Shinra no mori* 新羅の森).[120] It is not clear when this name was first used, but the forest was known as such by at least the Muromachi period (1333–1568), since the name appears in an old Onjōji map from that period.[121] In addition, there was another Shinra shrine on the opposite side of the lake. Although it is no longer extant, a shrine called Shiragizaki jinja 新羅崎神社 was also located on the northern side of the lake. Interestingly, as in the case of Onjōji's Shinra Myōjin shrine, around Shiragizaki shrine there is another location named "Silla forest."

It should be noted, though, that the name of the Shiragizaki shrine is sometimes written as Shiragi Jinja 白木神社 (Shrine of the White Trees), and the forest also was written as "Shiragi 白木 forest."[122] It is significant that in the Japanese phonetic system Shiragi 新羅 is often interchangeable with Shiragi 白木.[123] Even in modern Japan, there are many toponyms written as Shiragi "白木" all over the country. Although not all occurrences of the name "Shiragi" are related to the Korean kingdom of Silla itself, one can presume that they reflect a certain link with "Silla." According to a local tradition, the Shiragizaki shrine was associated with Silla immigrants. In particular, it was connected with Ameno Hiboko 天日槍 (the Heavenly Spear),

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[120] The Silla forest near Shinra zenshindō was destroyed by a typhoon in 1953. Susumu 1984: 122.

[121] The name "Silla forest" could mean either the shrine itself or the actual woods around the shrine. In *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*, c. 7th -8th C.), characters referring to shrines, namely 社 or 森 or 神社, are all pronounced Mori 森.

[122] Susumu 1984: 186-88.

[123] Kobayashi 2006: 151.

the prince from Silla who appears in the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kojiki*. The *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* state that he was the predecessor of the legendary Empress Jingū 神功, who led the Japanese invasion of the Korean Peninsula.[124]

Shinra Myōjin's association with Mio Myōjin 三尾明神 provides further evidence of the area's strong connection with immigrants. The Mio clan was one of the earliest immigrant communities to settle down in Ōmi. The clan became powerful in the region by marrying their daughters to royal families during the reign of Emperor Keitai 継体 (r. 507–531). According to Onjōji chronicles, the Mio clan's god, Mio Myōjin, was the landlord deity prior to Shinra Myōjin (or sometimes one of Shinra Myōjin's acolytes), which reflects the clan's earlier settlement in the region. According to local legends, with the divine protection of Mio Myōjin, a number of their children were safely born and one of them later became Emperor Keitai, the twenty-sixth emperor.[125] Mio Myōjin's association with childbirth and Onjōji's legend of the well suggest that one of the main functions of the temples and shrines established by the immigrant group was to ensure safe childbirth of heirs to the imperial family.

Although only ruins are left, there used to be a shrine dedicated to Mio Myōjin in the Takashima 高島 area, north of Ōtsu along the lakeshore. We also find a shrine dedicated to Mio Myōjin in the Onjōji complex next to the Shinra Myōjin shrine. According to legend, the deity of that shrine was invited over from Takashima. After being incorporated into the Onjōji tradition, Mio Myōjin was regarded as the landlord deity of Mt. Nagara, the mountain behind Onjōji. The Hata clan thus became associated with Onjōji through Miō Myōjin. At Onjōji, the priests who

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[124] I discuss Ame no Hiboko in more detail in Ch.3.

[125] The remains of Miō Myōjin shrine are extant in modern day Takashima 高島 district in Ōmi. Hashimoto 1986 (vol.5): 353-55.

took care of the Mio Myōjin shrine were exclusively from the Hata family.[126] All of these Silla connections around Lake Biwa suggest that the area provided a suitable environment for the emergence of the Shinra deity.

4.2. Networks of Shinra shrine/temples

Onjōji's Shinra Myōjin shrine was one among a number of Shinra shrines and temples. An episode from the *Onjōji denki* informs us that there were multiple Shinra shrines and temples. According to the text Myōdatsu 明達 (877–955), a monk from Onjōji paid a visit to a shrine called Shinra-sha 新羅社, located in Mino Province 美濃国 (in present-day Gifu 岐阜 Prefecture) in order to pray to Shinra Myōjin.[127] He next visited a temple called Shinra-ji 新羅寺 located at Sumiyoshi 住吉 shrine in Settsu 摂津 Province, present-day Ōsaka. The temple was established in 730 (Ten'an 天安 2) as a *jinguji* 神宮寺, or a shrine-temple complex located within the precincts of Sumiyoshi shrine.[128]

Although it is unknown how each individual shrine or temple interacted within the network, envisioning the larger network of Silla shrines and temples allows us to understand how the whole network led to the emergence of a particular form of the deity. Moreover, different

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[126] The clan is also said to be related to the founding of Hiyoshi (Hie) Taisha 日吉太社 at the foot of Mt. Hiei. See Nishida 1978-1979 (vol. 10): 166-67. Hakamada argues that the Maitreya cult in Ōmi might have been brought by the Hata clan. Hakamada 2012:98.

[127] *Onjōji denki* 86.

[128] Although it is a late source, the *Settsu meisho zue* 摂津名所図会, an eighteenth century tourist guide of the Settsu province, confirms the existence of Shinraji in the Sumiyoshi Shrine complex. The document informs us that the temple was located in the northern part of the Sumiyoshi complex. The temple's main deity was Yakushi. In the complex, there was also Jōgyōzanmaidō of the West in the western corner and its main buddha was Amida. In the eastern part there was a Zanmaidō of the East, where a triad of Shaka, Monju and Fugen was enshrined. There were also a two-storied stupa and a bell tower. The chorography in turn states that the reason why the temple was called "Shinraji" is because it enshrined a Buddhist statue from Silla. See *Settsu meisho zue* 摂津名所図会 (vol. 1): 92.

writings of the name "Silla" make this issue even more difficult. The official Chinese written form for Silla is 新羅. Yet, the name of Silla shrines and temples had various transcriptions.[129] For instance, those areas inhabited by Silla immigrants are called Silla (or Shiragi), but the writing of the name Silla changed over time in the following way: 新羅 → 白城 → 今城 → 今庄.[130] These changes demonstrate that there were countless variations in the transcription of 新羅 in Japan. Even if some locations kept the original name 新羅, most of them were forced to change it in the *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈 (Abolish Buddhism and Destroy Shākyamuni) movement of the Meiji period. As we saw in the case of the Shinra Shine on the northern shore of Lake Biwa, one of the most common changes in this period was from Shinra jinja 新羅神社 to Shiragi jinja 白木神社. We can therefore presume that those two characters are interchangeable in some cases.

There are more than one hundred shrines and temples whose names contain characters pertaining to "Silla." We can classify them into two different types: 1) Silla immigrant clan temples, which existed before the introduction of Enchin's Shinra Myōjin, and 2) Shinra shrines that were or are associated with Onjōji's Shinra Myōjin shrine. Most shrines and temples in the former group claim that their main deity is associated with Empress Jingū. This legendary Empress is said to have conquered the southern part of the Korean Peninsula in the third century. Her legend played an instrumental role in producing and reorganizing many different local

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[129] There are several transcriptions such as: 白木, 白城, 白鬼, 信露貴, 志木, 白井, 白石, 白鬚, 白子, 白浜,白磯. See Dewa 2004: 6. Often times the main deity of these Shinra shrines is Susanoo or Gozū Tennō, which happened after the Meiji *shinbutsu bunri*. According to *Kanan chōshi* 河南町誌, a shrine called Gozū Tennō sha 午頭天王社 was forced to change its name into Shiragi Jinja 白木神社. Dewa explains that the shrine must have been called Shiragi Jinja 新羅神社 first, then it was changed to Shiragi Jinja 白木神社, and after that to Gozū Tennō sha 午頭天王社. Dewa 2004: 112.

[130] Dewa 2004: 7.

legends related to Silla. Ame no hiboko, the prince from Silla, is another figure often identified with the main deity of these Shinra shrines and temples. However, it is Susanoo who appears most commonly as the main deity in these Silla shrines. Because of this, at some point in medieval Japan, Susanoo was even thought to be a deity from Silla.[131]

Although the majority of Shinra shrines belong to the first category, there are many examples from the second. The northern coastal area of Fukui 福井 Prefecture in particular has many such shrines. In Nanjō 南条 District in Fukui Prefecture, there is a shrine called Shinra Jinja 新羅神社. Its main deity is also Shinra Myōjin.[132] Interestingly this area is known to have been a stronghold of Silla immigrants, although it is also very possible that this Shinra Myōjin was transmitted from Onjōji. In Shiragi 白木 Village in Fukui, some villagers even claim that their ancestors came from Korea.

More examples related to Silla in Fukui Prefecture confirm the idea that the Fukui area was traditionally part of the Shinra shrine and temple network because Fukui was part of the East Asian Mediterranean. Tsuruga 敦賀 was a major sea channel in connecting the continents and Japan. This was the port where Parhae diplomats arrived, and, from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, Tsuruga thrived as one of the major ports in Japan. The region was also not only geographically but also historically close to Lake Biwa, the Shiga region, and Kyōto.

These above connections partly explain why we have so many Shinra shrines and temples in Fukui and how Lake Biwa functioned as an "inland sea" in facilitating constant travels and exchanges. For instance, the *engi* of Imajō Jinja 今庄神社 explains that its Shinra cult is a direct

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[131] Saitō 2012: 153. For more details on the relationship between Susanoo and Shinra Myōjin, see chapter 3 below.

[132] Kobayashi 2006: 154.

transmission from Onjōji. According to the text titled the *Shinra Jinja engi* 新羅神社縁起, which was transmitted in the shrine, "Shinra Myōjin is the deity of Silla, Paekche, and Koguryŏ… This deity gave an oracle to Master Chishō [Enchin]."[133] Another record also indicates that one local figure, named Wakasa 若狭, was said to be a descendant of Minamoto no Yoshimitsu 源義光 (1045–1127), better known as Shinra Saburō 新羅三郎. Wakasa is said to be the one who invited Onjōji's Shinra Myōjin to the Hachiman 八幡 shrine of Matsumae 松前 Village in Fukui Prefecture.[134]

Afuchi shrine 安布知神社 in modern day Nagano 長野 Prefecture transmits a legend that its Silla deity was directly invited from Onjōji.[135] Shinra Myōjin is worshipped at the shrine along with Hachiman. The transmission of the Shinra Myōjin cult was made through the expansion of the Minanoto clan, as can be seen by the shrine's founder claiming that they are the descendants of Shinra Saburō. Interestingly, the village's name Achi 阿智, where the shrine is located, is reminiscent of the well-known Paekche immigrant Achi (same pronunciation in Korean), who settled down in the Asuka area in the fifth century. These two Achi names might be temporally and geographically distant, but there is enough similarity to draw a hypothesis that even those Shinra temples said to be affiliated with the Minamoto clan could have already been associated with immigrants from the Korean Peninsula, whose distinction between three kingdoms became meaningless after their unification by Silla in the seventh century.

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[133] Dewa 2004: 66.

[134] Dewa 2004: 213-14.

[135] Dewa 2004: 78.

Mimurotoji 三室戸寺, the Jimon temple in Uji 宇治 is another example of a temple that claims that its Shinra Myōjin was a result of direct influence from Onjōji.[136] Enchin is said to be the founder of that temple. However, it was the monk Ryūmei 隆明 from Onjōji who restored the temple during the reign of Emperor Kōwa 康和 (r. 1099–1104). Although it is not known when Shinra Myōjin appeared at the temple, Mimurotoji's case shows how the temple network of the Jimon tradition facilitated the spread of the Shinra Myōjin cult.

Mizotani Jinja 溝谷神社 in Kyōto is a unique example of the mixture of the two above categories. According to its *engi*, when Ōyata no sukune 大矢田宿禰—a general who accompanied Empress Jingū during her invasion of Silla— encountered a storm, he vowed that if he returned home safely he would start worshiping a Silla deity. As the story goes, the general safely returned and thereupon he began to worship the deity. This story is significant in that its narrative is strikingly similar to the story about Enchin's encounter with Shinra Myōjin as promoted by Onjōji, the primary difference being that it presents Empress Jingū as one of its protagonists.

In Kyōto, there is a place where Shinra Myōjin was venerated at one time. The relevant local legend goes back to Enchin's arrival in Heian-kyō. Before returning to Mt. Hiei, Enchin spent several days in the capital's Kōrokan 鴻臚館, a guesthouse for monks and foreigners coming to meet the emperor and his court.[137] In the Kōrokan, the place where Enchin stayed was

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[136] Dewa 2004: 130-31. There is no temple record that tells of the exact origin of Shinra Myōjin shrine at Mimurotoji. However, the inscriptions on the Shira Myōjin *torii* indicate that the deity was invited by Enchin in order to expel epidemics.

[137] Enchin stayed in Kōrokan in Dazaifu as well. Oyamada 1990:133. It seems that Kōrokan was not one fixed place in Kyōto. Yamamoto 1998a: 105, n. 36.

called Izumoji 出雲寺.[138] According to the *Kanekuni hyakushu uta shō* 兼邦百首歌抄, a text compiled by Urabe Kanekuni 卜部兼邦 (d.u.) during the Muromachi period, Shinra Myōjin was venerated here under the name Iwakami 岩神 of Kōrokan, and was sometimes also called the Rock Deity of Kōrokan or Chūsan Daimyōjin 中山大明神. The text claims that after Shinra Myōjin appeared to Enchin on the boat, the next place where the deity manifested himself was not Onjōji but rather Kōrokan in the capital; afterwards, the deity was moved to the northern section (Jp. *hokuin* 北院) of Onjōji and worshipped as Shinra Myōjin. Although the legend seems to have developed later, judging from its apparent awareness of Onjōji's Shinra Myōjin, it still exemplifies the deity's mobility.

The spread of Shinra shrines and temples was facilitated not only by Onjōji's expansion to neighboring areas but also by the temple's association with Shugendō 修験道. Although it is less known, Shōgoin 聖護院 in Kyoto also venerates Shinra Myōjin. Shōgoin is the sub-temple of Onjōji, as well as the headquarters of the Honzanha 本山派 branch of Shugendō. In the garden behind the temple, there is a small shrine for Shinra Myōjin, although nowadays it is not open to the public.[139] The temple also produced several images of Shinra Myōjin.[140] While Shinra Myōjin's association with Shugendō developed relatively late, sometime around the fourteenth century, it is possible that Shinra Myōjin was an important object of worship at Shōgo-in due to the connection with Onjōji. At this point, however, one thing that must be kept in mind is that the word "Silla" did not necessarily refer the Silla kingdom *per se*. The

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[138] Yamamoto 1998a: 69-70.

[139] I am grateful to Ms. Satō 佐藤, a Buddhist nun at Shōgoin, for this information.

[140] For the images of Shinra Myōjin stored at Shōgoin, see the catalog, *Enno gyōja to shugendō no sekai* 1999.

appellation "Silla" was used widely in Japan as a generic term to refer to various Korean kingdoms, just as "Tang" (Jp. *Tō* 唐) could be used to refer to China regardless of the time period.

Finally, the network of Silla shrines and temples in the vicinity of Ōmi reveals that the Shinra Myōjin cult at Onjōji was a product of the particular locality of Ōmi. As for the advance of Korean immigrants into the capital, much has been made of the west-east horizontal movement from Kyūshū to Yamato. However, several examples of Silla shrines and temples from Fukui Prefecture, as well as the early development of Tsuruga as a major port to connect the Korean peninsula and Japan indicate that there was another direction by which immigrants penetrated the capital: the north-south access running from the Sea of Japan (notably, the seashores of Echizen 越前 and Wakasa 若狭) to Lake Biwa. This explains why there are abundant traces of Silla immigrants in Fukui prefecture. It also explains the presence of a strong immigrant culture around Ōmi. Onjōji, being located at the intersection of these two axes, could have provided a favorable environment for the foreign deity.

5. Silla Immigrants at the East Asian Mediterranean Crossroads

5.1. The Mercantile Network of Silla immigrants

If we go back to the moment when Shinra Myōjin and Sekizan Myōjin appear, it was the time when those Tendai masters were interacting with Silla merchants and engaging in the triple trade network that connected China, Japan, and the Korean Peninsula. For this reason, we need to look next at the dynamic roles of mercantile trade networks, which played a significant role in shaping of the cult of a Silla deity within the mercantile networks throughout the East Asian

Mediterranean. These exchanges included not only tangible goods but also ideas and deities. It is especially true with the emergence of Shinra Myōjin in Japan, given the close ties between Ennin and Enchin's travels and Silla merchants and immigrants settlements on both sides. In this sense, Onjōji was also a participant in the maritime network.

In the previous section, I examined the network of Silla shrines and temples near the capital, but this phenomenon was not limited to Japan. As Ennin recorded in his travel diary, the *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡礼行記 (*The Record of a Pilgrimage to Tang in Search of the Law*, ca. 838–847), Silla immigrants were dispersed in greatest numbers along the eastern coast of China. Ennin's record is particularly important because, unlike other later sources tainted by sectarian influences, this travelogue is one of the most relevant sources for understanding the emergence of the Sekizan Myōjin and Shinra Myōjin cults and the relationship between them. Silla communities established along the eastern costal line of China were actively involved in international commercial trade at this time.[141] One of the largest was in Shandong 山東 Peninsula, where Ennin landed.[142]

Due to its geographic advantage, Silla in the eighth century functioned as a traffic hub connecting Tang China, Silla, Parhae, Yamato Japan, and even Southeast Asian kingdoms and Muslim merchants both in and outside of the official tributary channel. Silla merchants actively promoted the triangular trade starting from the sixth century, when the Silla Kingdom occupied the Han River area (in 553), which was the closest port to China and was formally controlled by

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[141] For the Silla communities in China, see Yi, Yujin 2009: 1-20.

[142] The Silla immigrant communities appear in neither Chinese nor Korean historical sources, and so Ennin's diary provides valuable information for understanding Silla immigrants in ninth-century China. Ennin's diary is the first document about China and life therein that was written by a foreigner. He did not write an evaluation of what he saw but rather wrote about religious matters and Chinese life under the Tang dynasty. His diary is a good source on the practice of popular Buddhism in China.

Paekche. In 532, Silla annexed Kaya, a small kingdom located on the south coast between Silla and Paekche.[143] Occupying Kaya gave Silla direct control over another trade hub located along the Nakdong 洛東 River, which thereby allowed the kingdom to develop the area into the major mercantile node connecting China, Korea, and Japan. The *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 story of the purported Silla prince Kim T'aeryŏm 金泰廉 (d.u.) illustrates how the international merchant played conductive roles in transmitting goods and new practices in the eighth century, by means of navigating the East Asian Mediterranean waters.[144]

The eighth century also marked the worst time of diplomatic disputes between Silla and Japan, as can be seen by the fact that the sending of official envoy between the two countries was discontinued in 779. Interestingly, however, the *Samguk sagi* records that several Japanese envoys were sent to Silla even after the official severance of relations. The Japanese envoys to the Tang continued until 839, and since Japanese ships followed the Silla coastline, they sometimes had to seek Korean collaboration in the case of a shipwreck.[145] The cessation of diplomatic relations between Silla and Japan led Silla merchants to settle down in China. The worsening of diplomatic relations actually promoted trade in the private sector, and we see more direct, individualized trade taking place rather than tributary trade.

In particular, Buddhist monks were not constrained by the severance of official relations and so continued to prosper from trade relations. Many Buddhist goods from Silla were popular

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[143] *Samguk sagi* 56.

[144] Although the text describes that Kim came to pay a tribute to Japan, modern scholarship reveals that Kim's visit was for trade. In 752, with 700 attendants, Kim arrived in Dazaifu and further went to the Heian capital to sell goods. The documents, "The purchase record of Silla goods" kept in Shōsōin 正倉院 reveal what items were exchanged, who were engaged in the trades and on which scale, and the nature of the eighth century Silla merchants who actively mediated between China, Silla, and Japan. For further detail, see Tōno 1992:174-78.

[145] Kim, En-sook 2006: 276; Park, Namsu 2011: 253.

among Japanese Buddhist monks. In the ninth century, Silla merchants frequently came to Dazaifu to sell those goods, as we can confirm it in the text, *Anshōji garan engi shizaichō* 安祥寺伽藍縁起資財帳 (867, currently stored at Tōji) composed by the Buddhist monk Eun 恵運 (768–869).[146] However, following massive Silla piracy attacks in Kyūshū in 869, the anti-Silla sentiment rose and Silla merchants tended to stress their Chinese connections, particularly in the case of those actually based in China, in order to continue being able to conduct trade with Japan.[147]

To understand the link between Shinra Myōjin and the Silla community in Dengzhou 登州 on the coast of the Shandong Peninsula, we need to begin by looking at Ennin's relationship to the god of Mt. Chi 赤山 (Jp. Sekizan). Ennin encountered this deity while staying at a Silla temple in Dengzhou. He allegedly invoked Sekizan Myōjin when he traveled to Tang China from 838 to 847, a few years before Enchin (who traveled between 853 and 858).[148] As noted above, Sekizan Myōjin's origin story is almost identical to that of Shinra Myōjin. Therefore, some scholars have suggested that they are the same deity under different names.[149] According to the *Sekizan Daimyōjin engi* 赤山大明神縁起 (948), when Ennin encountered a sea storm during

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[146] Yi, Songsi 1999: 173.

[147] Park, Namsu 2011: 270.

[148] Ennin's and Enchin's trips to Tang China were carried out when the official channel between China and Japan was opened. But by this time Japanese missions to the Tang (Jp. *kentōshi* 遣唐使) were already in decline. The last official from Japan to China was sent in 838, and although Japan planned a *kentōshi* envoy for 894, the court cancelled it after protestation from the ambassador, Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真. For research on *kentōshi*, see Fuqua 2004. In his dissertation, Fuqua argues that *kentōshi* had a commercial role as a force to accelerating a maritime trade network in East Asia.

[149] After Tsuji's first research on Shinra Myōjin, this view was widely accepted by later scholarship. See Tsuji 1931. Miyaji, however, argues that Sekizan Myōjin was the deity came after Shinra Myōjin. Miyaji 1931.

his return trip, Sekizan Myōjin appeared on his boat in the form of an old man, and Ennin was able to return safely to Japan.[150]

What is puzzling is that Sekizan Myōjin seems to be more closely related to Silla immigrants than Shinra Myōjin is. For instance, in the Onjōji temple chronicles, we do not find any mention of Shinra Myōjin's direct association with Silla immigrants. Ennin's association with Sekizan Myōjin, however, seems to be more historically based. This connection goes back to his stay at a Silla temple near Chishan in Shandong peninsula between 839 and 840. Although the name Sekizan Myōjin itself does not appear in Ennin's official biography, the *Jigaku daishi den* 慈覚大師傳 (939), the text mentions that Ennin invoked a deity at the Silla temple Chŏksan Pŏbhwa-wŏn 赤山法華院 (Ch. Chisan Fahuayuan), a temple established by the Silla merchant Chang Pogo 張保皐 (? –841?).[151] We are told that, on the very first night that Ennin stayed at this temple, a deity in the guise of a merchant appeared to him.[152] Afterwards, Ennin made a vow that upon his return to Japan, he would establish a Zen temple and would worship the deity of Mt. Chi that he had encountered.[153] In the story, the fact that the deity appeared as a merchant is significant, as it seems to be an allusion to Chang Pogo.[154]

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[150] This episode, however, does not appear in Ennin's diary. For an English translation and discussion of Ennin's diary, see Reischauer 1955a and 1955b.

[151] Although Chang is the only example of a civilian recorded in the official records of China, Korea, and Japan, he has received little scholarly attention in the western scholarship. According to Ennin's description of the temple, the temple was thriving with some hundred lay followers from local areas and other monks and nuns dispatched from Silla. Pŏbhwawŏn was indeed one of the most active Silla temples in China at the time, providing lodging to Silla monks and travelers. There were about thirty Buddhist monks in residence. Ennin records that for their rituals and ceremonies they followed the customs of Silla. In winter and summer they held lectures, lecturing in winter on the *Lotus Sutra*, and in summer on the eight-scroll *Konkōmyō-kyo* 金光明經. See Reischauer 1955a: 131. For more on Silla-wŏn in other places in China, see Kwŏn, Deuk-yŏng 2006: 143-165.

[152] *Jikaku daishi den,* Enshin Saitō trans*,* 43.

[153] In his diary, Ennin mentions several Silla monks who practiced Ch'an meditation. By that time, there were also a number of zen meditation centers in Japan such as Heijō ukyo zen'in 平城右京禅院 at Gangōji 元興寺 and

The Silla temple Chŏksan Pŏbhwa-wŏn was named after the mountain behind the temple, Mt. Chi (Kr. Chŏksan, Jp. Sekizan). The temple was popularly known as Silla-wŏn 新羅院. Along the Eastern costal area of China, Silla immigrants built sizable immigrant communities and enjoyed relative autonomy thanks to the Tang dynasty's liberal policies regarding foreign residents at the time. Due to the strong presence of Silla immigrants on the peninsula, many local institutions in the area also used the term "Silla" in their names. For instance, Silla communities were called Silla Village (Kr. Silla-bang 新羅坊). There were many Silla immigrants spread out over the Shandong and Jiangsu 江蘇 area, and within this area several Silla-bang are identifiable. The administrative institutions of the Silla villages were called Silla Office (Kr. Silla-so 新羅所). There was also a local institution called Silla Lodging (Kr. Silla-gwan 新羅館).[155] It was located in Penglai 蓬萊 Village in Dengzhou, and it was established by Silla immigrants as lodging for official envoys and other visitors from Silla. When Silla envoys arrived from the Korean Peninsula, they stayed in Silla Lodging before heading to their final destination, Chang'an 長安.

Ennin's worship of Sekizan Myōjin seems to be closely related to Chang Pogo. One of the most successful Silla merchants, Chang Pogo achieved a near monopoly on sea trade in the

Hōzen'in 法禅院 in Yamashiro 山城. According to the current Sekizan zen'in priest, "Zen" referred not to the Chan tradition, but to the *shan* 禪 of *fengshan* 封禪 ritual. However, this explanation seems to be a later pretext to create a firm connection between Sekizan Myōjin and Taizan Fukun as the *fengshan* ritual is a unique courtesy of Mt. Tai, where Taizan Fukun supposed to dwell.

[154] His name crops up several times in the histories of China and Japan as well as those of Korea. In China, his name is written as 張保皐. In Silla, his alternative name is "弓福 (or 弓巴)." In Japanese sources his name is also written 張寶高. For more about Chang Pogo, see Reischauer 1955a: 100-101. Ennin's various references to Chang Pogo are extensively discussed in Okada 1933: 303-30.

[155] Parhae also set up their independent local institution for the same purpose, called Parhaegwan 渤海館 (C. Bohaiguan).

Yellow Sea by the early ninth century, the time when Ennin traveled to Tang China.[156] With his

maritime knowledge and navigation skills, Chang Pogo was involved with international

commercial trade linking Chinese, Korean, and Japanese markets around the Yellow Sea.[157] By

the ninth century, he was known as one of the most successful merchants in Tang, Silla, and

Heian Japan. Before Chang Pogo, the commercial trade between Silla and Japan was not yet

officially recognized. Moreover, piracy was rampant between the two countries, due in part to

the lack of maritime rules and powerlessness to control the marauding. It was Chang Pogo who

organized individual merchants from both China and Silla and started a triangular international

trade connecting Chishan in China, Ch'onghaejin 清海鎭 on the Korean Peninsula, and Dazaifu

太宰府 in Japan. Chang Pogo's rise also incited the Japanese court to organize its first

commercial legislation in Dazaifu in 831.[158] However, after Chang Pogo's untimely death in 846,

that legislation was abolished and the trade between Silla and Japan was reduced again to

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[156] Although Chang was from a low class in the bone rank system of Silla, he began to establish himself first as a commander for the Chinese army in China. (The ancient Korean kingdom of Silla used the aristocratic bone rank system to segregate society, particularly the layers of the aristocracy. The bone rank determined the basis of their hereditary proximity to the throne and their level of authority.) Later in the early ninth century he resigned from the commander position and transformed himself into a successful merchant. He established his base in Shandong Peninsula, the closest point of the sea route between Silla and China.

[157] With his economical and military power, Chang Pogo exercised great political power in Silla. He was deeply involved with the succession to the throne in Silla, which eventually led to his untimely death. Yŏm Jang, who once was one of his loyal subordinates, assassinated Chang on order of the court in 841. For Chang Pogo, see *Samguk sagi* 177; 183-85.

[158] The legislation aimed at enforcing state control over international trade. According to the order sent by the court to the officials of Dazaifu, when a trading ship of Silla arrived at Dazaifu, officials were to examine all the goods it carried in order to decide which of them should be sent to the court in Kyōto. All the remaining goods were permitted for trade. Tanaka 2007: 141.

exchange between private parties.[159] Ch'onghaejin, the trade hub of Silla, was abolished in 851 and since then, it was never recovered.[160]

According to his diary, Ennin knew of Chang Pogo even before his arrival in China. The head official of Chikuzen Province (Jp. Chikuzen daishu 筑前大守) knew Chang Pogo and wrote a letter of introduction for Ennin's convenience during his trip, although Ennin lost the letter and failed to present it to Chang Pogo.[161] Based on Ennin's relationship with Chang Pogo and the latter's influence during this period, Korean scholars such as Kim, Mun-kyŏng and Lee, Byŏng-ro have suggested that the deity's granting of aid to Ennin indicates that Sekizan Myōjin might possibly be a manifestation of Chang Pogo.[162] For Ennin, as his diary affirms, the help of Chang Pogo and the Silla community in the Shandong peninsula were indispensable to the success of his mission in China. Most Japanese student-monks like Ennin who traveled to China with *kentōshi* 遣唐使 in the eighth and ninth centuries had to rely on commercial ships owned by Silla merchants. This was largely due to the fact that Japan had not yet fully developed the technology to build ships capable of long distance travel.[163]

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[159] Tanaka 2007: 141-42.

[160] *Samguk sagi* 184-85.

[161] Hakamada thinks that the head official of Chikuzen at that time was Onono Suetsuku 小野末陶. Hakamada 2012: 197.

[162] There are a couple of articles on Shinra Myōjin in Korean scholarship. Kim Munkyŏng 1987 (in Japanese, Kim Munkyŏng 2001); Lee Byŏng-ro 2006: 319-41 (in Japanese, Lee Byŏng-ro, 2012).

[163] Scholars have agreed that Japanese navigation skills were insufficient for travel to Tang China. For instance, the Japanese sailors who manned the *kentōshi* vessels lacked sufficient knowledge regarding how to utilize seasonal winds and how best to avoid typhoons. See Mozai 1984: 89 and Sudō 1981: 71. Thus, it was common practice for Japanese student-monks to travel on the vessels of Korean merchants. Japanese sailors of the time also were not accustomed to sailing the open sea. Among those Japanese who hoped to travel to China, thus, most were bound to following the southern costal lines of the Korean Peninsula where they could depart from the northwestern part of Kyūshū, the closest point between the straits. See Iida 1980: 14.

Ennin used one of these Silla ships for his trip between Japan and China, and he received help from Silla people during his stay in China.[164] Upon his arrival in China, he faced a serious problem: he failed to receive official permission from the Tang government and at one point considered going back to Japan. It was Chang Yŏng 張詠 (d.u.), one of the merchants in Chang Pogo's group, who helped him. Chang Yŏng was extremely close to Chang Pogo, and he ran the Silla temple together with him. With Chang Yŏng's help, Ennin was able to receive permission to stay in China as a student-monk.[165] He received this permission in 840, during his second year at the Silla temple. His stay at this temple and the advice he received from resident monks caused him to abandon his initial plan and instead adapted a new course for his journey. Initially, Ennin had intended to travel to Mt. Tiantai 天台, but he was advised by the Silla monk Sŏngrim 聖林 that it would be better to go to Mt. Wutai 五台.[166] As Ennin mentioned later in his diary, even during his trip to Mt. Wutai, a number of Silla people helped him along the way. His close relationship with Silla people is epitomized in his letter to Chang Pogo, wherein he expressed his gratitude toward the latter before leaving from the Silla temple in 840:

> I, Ennin, have stayed in the mountain cloister, passing the year with much good luck. I have received the warm kindness of the monks, which has greatly consoled my worries as a traveler. This is all the Guard Officer's kind doing. Your protection has been extensive. How can I, insignificant man that I am, repay you… Our return home depends solely

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[164] It was the same thing for Enchin. For more on Enchin's connections with Silla merchants, see Kagamiyama 1972: 806-7.

[165] Chang Yŏng also helped Ennin embark on his boat when the latter was preparing to return to Japan, but eventually, for some reason, Ennin was unable to take Chang Yŏng's boat. See Mori 1964: 44.

[166] Mori 1964: 41-2.

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on your great assistance, and we shall be overwhelmed with gratitude to you.[167]

Ennin's relationship with Chang Pogo's people and Silla immigrants in the village continued right up until he completed his trip back to Japan. Upon his departure, Ennin was allowed to depart from Chishan pu 赤山浦 (the port of Mt. Chi) at the very eastern tip of the peninsula, which was under the control of Chang Pogo. In his diary, Ennin records that he was able to return to Japan with the help of Silla people and set sail to Japan on a Silla trade boat.

All of the stories depicting the relationship between Ennin and the Silla community in Tang suggest that he greatly appreciated the help that he received from the Silla community. After his return to Japan, he endeavored to build a shrine for the Silla god he had encountered to thank him for his safe journey, as he had promised on Mt. Chi. The shrine's construction, however, did not happen during Ennin's lifetime. According to the *Sekizan Myōjin engi,* Ennin instructed his disciples to build a shrine for the deity. Accordingly, Ennin's disciples obtained some land on the western slope of Mt. Hiei, Nishi Sakamoto 西坂本, and built the shrine there.[168] Significantly, the land on which Sekizan zen'in was built had originally belonged to Minabuchi no Toshina 南淵年名 (808–877), an administrator who used to serve in Kyūshū. Minabuchi and his son were also involved in international trade with Chang Pogo and other Silla merchants in China.[169] In 888, the construction of Sekizan zen'in was finished.[170]

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[167] For the whole letter, see Reischauer 1955a: 166-67.

[168] *Sekizan Myōjin engi,* in *Shintō Taikei* (Ronsetsu hen 4): 624.

[169] Lee, Byŏng-ro 2006: 328.

[170] According to the *engi* story, there were three stages in completing the construction. In 864, a building called "zen'in" was constructed after Ennin's will. In 868, Anne 安惠 built a shrine for the deity. The temple was

The shrine was initially built in the Nishi Sakamoto area on the western slope of the mountain, opposite the shrine of the autochthonous deity of Mt. Hiei, Sannō.[171] With the invitation of Sekizan Myōjin, the eastern side of Mt. Hiei (represented as Higashi hongū 東本宮) and the western side of the mountain (Nishi hongū 西本宮) were ensured greater spiritual protection. Inviting a god with an obvious foreign background and turning him into a local *kami* was not perceived as a contradictory practice because it was seen to increase the power of the native god by means of creating a kind of resonance between the two.[172] Owing to that logic, Sekizan Myōjin was successfully transferred to Mt. Hiei. Throughout the medieval period, however, the spiritual authority of this foreign deity never surpassed that of Sannō, the protective deity of the entire Mt. Hiei, whereas Shinra Myōjin perceived as the most significant deity in the Jimon school. In the following section, I explain why this was the case.

5.2. Doubling Identity: Sekizan Myōjin and Shinra Myōjin

There has been no scholarly consensus on the origin of Sekizan Myōjin and his relation to Shinra Myōjin. The relationship between the two is so intertwined that the process through which the two Tendai schools ended up venerating nearly identical deities has become clouded in mystery. Some argue that Shinra Myōjin came into being first, whereas others claim that he was a copy of Sekizan Myōjin.[173] Some scholars have even suggested that they are two different names for the

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destroyed at one point and reconstructed in 888 by Sōō 相応 (831–918). See Kikuchi 2008: 49 and Siozawa 2008: 28-47.

[171] Kageyama 1973: 243.

[172] Masao 1979: 369.

[173] Miyaji 1931; Kawamura 2008.

same deity.[174] The intense rivalry between the followers of Ennin and Enchin has been responsible for polemical attacks and the production of similar mythological narratives and iconographic representations from the ninth century onward. Consequently, for Ennin's followers, the god that Ennin invoked was Sekizan Myōjin, whereas for Enchin's followers it was Shinra Myōjin who protected their master *en route* and helped him find the site of Onjōji.

Neither of these partial explanations provides a comprehensive narrative. But it is highly possible that the two deities are, in fact, identical. Each is fundamentally "a deity of Silla," but once this deity was worshiped by different groups, it ended up receiving two different names: Shinra Myōjin and Sekizan Myōjin. The name Sekizan Myōjin first appears in 888. The name "Shinra Myōjin," however, does not appear until 891. But Enchin's followers appropriated and further popularized the cult of this Silla deity through various legends, rituals, and iconography in the Onjōji network under the alias of Shinra Myōjin. Even the controversy surrounding the two deities between the Sanmon and the Jimon was likely due to the fact that the two deities are essentially the same. The advent of Shinra Myōjin was a highly important step for Onjōji monks toward the creation of a new, independent Tendai center. Adopting the name "Silla" for the deity probably helped them become more engaged with the strong Silla immigrant culture in the Ōmi area.

As Ennin's diary indicates, while staying at the Silla temple in Dengzhou, he heard about a mountain god who ensured safe sea travel, and he himself prayed to the god for his own safety. After his arrival on Mt. Hiei, he tried to continue worshiping the deity of Mt. Chi, or the deity worshipped at the Chŏksan Pobhwa-wŏn. He died in 864, before being able to construct a shrine for the deity. After Enchin's appointment as the fifth Tendai *zasu* in 868, a fierce rivalry

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[174] Kageyama 1973: 245.

developed between his followers and those of Ennin at Enryakuji.[175] The building of the shrine

for Ennin's deity was completed in 888, during Enchin's tenure as Tendai *zasu* on Mt. Hiei.

Thus, it was not entirely incorrect for Enchin's followers to assert that Ennin's protective deity

was in fact Enchin's deity, given the fact that it took time for both deities to receive individual

names. Enchin's followers were seeking not only an independent institution but also divine

justification for their departure from Mt. Hiei. Shinra Myōjin provided this for them and also

functioned as a powerful spiritual force for their new home. It was within this context that the

story of Enchin's encounter with the deity appeared. Later on, Ennin's followers re-appropriated

the story to claim that the god had originally appeared to Ennin and not Enchin.

For scholars of Japanese religions, encountering a differently-named duplicate of a

Buddhist deity is hardly problematic, and the case of Shinra Myōjin is no different. In all

likelihood, Sekizan Myōjin would not have been known if his "double" Shinra Myōjin had not

existed. Only with Shinra Myōjin's growth did Sekizan Myōjin become more visible from the

tenth century onward. Enchin's followers were also more tactful than Ennin's followers in

lobbying the court. According to the *Sōgōbuin shōshutsu*, Shinra Myōjin was awarded an official

rank— the Senior Fourth Rank, Upper Grade (*shōshiijō* 正四位上)— from the court in 971.[176] In

response to this, Ennin's followers petitioned for the promotion of Sekizan Myōjin. As a result,

the latter was raised from the Junior Fifth Rank, Lower Grade (*jūgōi ka* 従五位下), to the Junior

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[175] On the historical background and the development of the schism, see McMullin1984: 83-105.

[176] *Sōgō bunin shōshutsu*: 127. The text provides a record of an official post to which members of the Buddhist clergy were appointed from Empress Suiko to Emperor Rokujō 六条 in chronological manner. The text is invaluable in that the record was made outside Onjōji circles. It is a commentary on *Sōgō bunin*, which is no longer extant, and it is dated sometime between the 12th and 13th century. See Oyamada 1987: 13-20.
  The petition was initiated Yokei, the abbot of Enryakuji, and the reason why Ennin's side asked was to appease the Enchin faction during the period of growing tensions with Ennin's followers. Guth 1999: 115.

Fourth Rank, Lower Grade (*jūshiika* 従四位下) in 993. This event suggests that the veneration

of Sekizan Myōjin preceded that of Shinra Myōjin, although Shinra Myōjin achieved a higher

position in the court ranking system in 971.[177] The date 993 is important in that a major fight

between the Sanmon and Jimon factions occurred in the eighth month of this year, when some of

Enchin's followers destroyed the Sekizan Myōjin statue and a number of items at the Sekizan

zen'in.[178]

Once each deity had been established as an individual figure, Sekizan Myōjin and Shinra

Myōjin began to develop along different trajectories. Yet their fundamental nature was never

erased and it often resurfaced. For example, the initial tie between Ennin's Sekizan Myōjin and

merchants reappeared in the Edo period. At that time, Sekizan zen'in was a popular place for

merchants to go because they believed that its main deity would guarantee commercial

prosperity. Sekizan Myōjin's worship date is on the fifth day of each month, and the Japanese

custom of paying debts on the fifth and tenth days of the month (Jp. *goto barai* 五十払い) is said

to be originally associated with Sekizan zen'in, which was also known as one of Kyoto's Seven

Deities of Good Luck (Jp. *miyako shichifukujin* 都七福神).[179] In the case of Shinra Myōjin, one

of his distinctive medieval transformations is that he came to be associated with a paradigmatic

Shintō deity, Susanoo.

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[177] The Japanese official ranking system, *ikai* 位階, adopted from China within the *ritsuryo* system represents individual's rank in the whole governmental system and often was awarded to retribute someone's contribution to the government. The system was started in 603, and, from 673 onwards, the ranking was awarded to kami or shrines as well. Those rankings for kami are called *shinkai* 神階.

[178] Groner 2002: 233-36.

[179] Among the seven temples, Sekizan zen'in is associated with Fukurokuju 福禄寿 (Deity of Wealth and Longevity), and the association seems to come from Sekizan Myōjin's origin story, the deity being an old man. For more on this, see Tanaka 1990.

While sharing the same symbolic field, Sekizan Myōjin and Shinra Myōjin eventually diverged to become two different gods. In the medieval period, Shinra Myōjin became the central deity of the Jimon, whereas Sekizan Myōjin remained a secondary tutelary deity for the Sanmon. Although both deities started their careers as minor tutelary deities, their roles in the history of Japanese religion were more significant than one might think. As I will illustrate in the next chapter, the medieval transformation of Shinra Myōjin played a central role in shaping Onjōji's identity. Paradoxically, his association with Silla was a significant factor in securing Onjōji's legitimacy within the Tendai tradition.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the network of Silla immigrants in China, Japan, and the Korean Peninsula in order to contextualize Shinra Myōjin's emergence in the Jimon tradition. All of the temple/shrine networks as well as the maritime network suggest at early Onjōji's associations with Silla immigrants or immigrants' cultic practices, which we could find all the hints from the Shinra Myōjin's *engi* story. Onjōji's specific location provides a crucial piece of the puzzle: the Ōmi area was, in fact, a stronghold of Korean immigrants, as archeological findings and toponyms containing the word "Silla" convincingly suggest. Moreover, upon closer examination of various shrines and temples whose names contain the word "Silla," we can see that the shrine where Shinra Myōjin was enshrined was part of the Silla shrine and temple network formed around the East Asian sea. This network resonates with the network of immigrants from Silla who settled down in Japan and kept their religious identities until they were eventually assimilated into the local population.

Further exploration of Silla immigrants in China allows us to understand the process through which Shinra Myōjin transformed from being a generic "deity of Silla" into the individualized deity of Onjōji. This network of Korean immigrants was essential in the emergence of the cult of Shinra Myōjin. To borrow Bruno Latour's term, these immigrants functioned as "mediators."[180] The immigrants, who were neither Korean nor Japanese, had their own symbolic kingdom. Whether they intended it or not, their new religious culture created something that had not existed previously, exemplified by Shinra Myōjin as well as other immigrant deities. In this way, they were not just transmitters, but also transformers. This development will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The current chapter argued that Shinra Myōjin did not simply emerge out of a sectarian conflict between the Sanmon and the Jimon branches of Tendai but rather is a god whose initial cult can be connected with the Silla immigrants in China and Japan, who were closely linked along the East Asian Mediterranean. Ironically, although Enchin often gets credit for initiating the worship of Shinra Myōjin, it helps us understand that his Shinra Myōjin was none other than a mythological translation of Ennin's connection with Silla people and religious culture. It was Jimon monks, however, who articulated this cult with narratives that promoted their own religious and political interests in order to adapt to the immigrant community living around Mt. Hiei. Enchin and his followers further formulated and popularized the cult from the ninth century onward under a new, individualized name: Shinra Myōjin. Thus, the emergence of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji can be best understood against the larger backdrop that I have just described, i.e., the network of Silla immigrants.

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[180] Latour 2005: 39.

Ch2. The Medieval Transformation of Shinra Myōjin

1. Introduction

This chapter explores the medieval transformation of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji in order to explain the ways in which the deity came to be interwoven with Onjōji's history as its most significant divinity. The previous chapter looked at the role that the network of Silla immigrants within the area around the temple played in the emergence of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji, a process that began in pre-Nara times and culminated in the early Heian period. This chapter starts where the last one left off by examining the cult of Shinra Myōjin from the late Heian period through the early Muromachi period, a time during which both the cult of Shinra Myōjin and the power of Onjōji were at their zenith.

Although Shinra Myōjin's function as a protector of those traveling by sea persisted, this medieval period witnessed a new emphasis on the god's association with mountains. His transformation into a mountain deity of Mt. Hiei developed alongside the notion of his being a *jinushi*, or landlord deity. This particular emphasis on the land became more significant when the followers of Enchin fled from Mt. Hiei and decided to establish a new Tendai center within the vicinity of the mountain. This was when Shinra Myōjin came to be highlighted. The promotion of Shinra Myōjin was a product of the Sanmon (Enryakuji)–Jimon (Onjōji) rivalry, in which the latter needed a powerful, archaic mountain deity as part of its struggle to establish itself as the older, and thus more authentic, of the two traditions. However, this sectarian analysis is limited in that it does not fully explain why Shinra Myōjin was chosen and how the deity was perceived within medieval Buddhist mythology. This chapter, therefore, aims at telling a more complete story of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji in the medieval period.

There are three reasons why Shinra Myōjin's transformation from a seafaring deity to a mountain god is important in understanding his cult's significance to the Onjōji clergy in the medieval period. First, the process by which Shinra Myōjin was shifted from sea to mountain is linked to Japanese beliefs in the sacredness of mountains. Second, by emphasizing the deity's chthonian and local-specific aspects, Onjōji monks were able to establish a new, powerful Tendai center. Third, this transformation allowed Shinra Myōjin to become the *de facto* deity of Onjōji, and his presence ensured the political legitimacy, ritual efficacy, and spiritual superiority of Onjōji's monks.

With these three points in mind, I argue that it is misleading to confine Shinra Myōjin to the role of dharma protector (Jp. *gohōji*) or *kami* of the temple/shrine (Jp. *garanjin* 伽藍神), which is what scholars such as Tsuji and Miyaji (as well as those who have uncritically accepted their opinion) have done. In previous understanding, Shinra Myōjin was understood as a god who confirms the greatness of Enchin. In opposition to this view, I demonstrate that during the medieval period, Shinra Myōjin developed as a central deity and infiltrated nearly every dimension—political, institutional, and ritual—of Onjōji. This chapter, thus, investigates how Shinra Myōjin became the main deity of Onjōji, and how important this action was in shaping the religious landscape of the temple. The fact that the growth of Onjōji and Shinra Myōjin paralleled and reinforced one other is confirmed by the fact that the god was eventually perceived to be an alter ego of Onjōji monks. In this way, by the time when the power struggle between the Jimon and the Sanmon reached a crescendo in the mid-eleventh century, Shinra Myōjin had become the central deity of Onjōji and was identified with the entire Jimon tradition.

This chapter is divided into six sections: 1) I examine the redefinition of Shinra Myōjin as a mountain god as well as his relationship with some of the Sanmon's major mountain gods,

such as Sannō Gongen and Sekizan Myōjin. 2) I explain the background of the association between the Minamoto 源 warrior clan and Onjōji. The Minamoto clan was one of the major patrons of Onjōji; it played a crucial role in the rise of the cult of Shinra Myōjin, and it further helped to spread the cult beyond Onjōji. The popular image of Shinra Myōjin can also be examined in a fourteenth century tale entitled *A Long Tale for an Autumn Night* (*Aki no yo nagamonogatari* 秋夜長物語, 1377). 3) I explore the political and institutional role that the cult of Shinra Myōjin played. The cult of this deity gained momentum in connection with Onjōji monks' attempt to establish an independent ordination platform at the temple. Onjōji monks' aspirations and anxieties seeped into the popular imagiation, and in popular liteary works Shinra Myōjin was presented as a fearsome, punishing (Jp. *tatari* 祟り) deity and yet simultaneously benevolent toward his devotees. 4) I consider performative aspects of Shinra Myōjin's cult by looking at rituals, annual festivals (Jp. *matsuri* 祭り), and miracle tales in order to understand his centrality in the Jimon tradition. 5) I highlight the centrality of Shinra Myōjin by examining his association with other deities from Onjōji's Buddhist pantheon and also by looking at ritual efficacy and the offerings most commonly given to him. 6) I will explain Sonjōō 尊星王, who is identified with Shinra Myōjin in the ritual realm. As the most secret object of worship in Onjōji's star rituals, Sonjōō enjoyed wide popularity during the Insei period, the time when Shinra Myōjin's power grew the most. The ritual and mythological identification of Shinra Myōjin with Sonjōō further confirms that the growth of Onjōji and that of Shinra Myōjin's cult were parallel.

2. *Sedentarization* of Shinra Myōjin

2.1. Between Sea and Mountain

Shinra Myōjin first emerged as a deity capable of ensuring safe sea travel, as seen in the *engi* story discussed in the previous chapter. This aspect strengthens the hypothesis that Shinra Myōjin was related to the migration of people from the Korean Peninsula. Indeed, most major sea-related deities in the Japanese pantheon are connected to Korea in some way. In many cases, these sea gods first appeared and became popular in the northern part of Kyūshū, where the first contacts between Japan and the peninsula occurred. As with any culture in constant contact with the ocean, in Japan anxiety related to the perilous sea was crystallized in the religious form of worshipping a sea deity.[181] Some examples include Myōken 妙見, the *kami* Sumiyoshi 住吉, Hachiman 八幡, Kawara 香春, Munakata 宗像, all of whose cults emerged in Kyūshū. These figures were all worshipped within the context of seafaring and their myths had clear Korean connections.

Prior to a sea voyage, one typically would pray to a sea god in order to secure safe passage. However, a mountain god was also often invoked on such occasions. As has been widely discussed in Japanese folklore studies, the sea god and the mountain god are functionally related, and at times they constituted two sides of the same coin.[182] We can observe this mutual

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[181] As to those cultic practices aimed at safe sea travel, one of the ancient practices in Japan is found in the *Record of Three Kingdoms* (Ch. *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, ca. 297), a third century Chinese historical text. According to this record, when the Japanese (the *wa* 和 people) cross the sea, a person called *jisai* 持衰 is chosen. Once chosen as *jisai, jisai* has to go through a sort of incubating process to accumulate sacred power before the voyage. As in the case of a person in mourning, several taboos applied to *jisai* for a certain period: he was not supposed to have any contact with people, and should not comb his hair to get rid of his lice. He was not allowed to wash his clothes and eat meat or have sexual intercourse with his wife before the voyage. If the ship came back safely, *jisai* would be entitled to a reward, but if anything misfortunate happened, he would be killed. See Ishihara 1975: 16-17.

[182] We often divide deities into mountain gods and sea gods. However, the realm of each deity cannot be categorized clearly because there are many gray areas. As fields can be seen as an extension (also a division at times) of the mountain, and the river as an extension of the sea, the mountain deity is closely associated with the field god (mountain gods transforms into the field gods in spring and summer), and the sea deity is associated with the river deity. See Ōmori 1990: 151-52.

permeability in the rituals performed to appease the gods of both realms. This is particularly apparent in the fact that sea gods were thought to favor animals from the mountains as offerings, whereas mountain gods preferred sea creatures.[183] The sea and the mountain form a polarized territory. However, they also exchange qualities as a cosmic pair. In this dual association, the sea was not perceived as a territory separate from land but rather as a link between this world and the other. In this sense, crossing the sea was seen as entering into a liminal stage. Praying to both the sea god and the mountain god before sea travel provided a powerful means of securing bidirectional protection.

Praying to a mountain god for safe sea travel throughout the voyage was a critical duty of Buddhist monks on board a ship. From the seventh to the ninth century, many Buddhist masters went to Tang China with Japanese emissaries known as *kentōshi* 遣唐使.[184] It is said that while Saichō 最澄 was waiting to depart from Kyūshū (803–804), he visited the mountains in northern Kyūshū to pray to several gods, including the "god of Silla" at Mt. Kawara 香春.[185] It remains uncertain why Saichō prayed to this god of Silla before his sea trip. It may be that he was attempting to please the sea deity on the Silla side or the deity that would be encountered *en route*. This could also have been a local custom of northern Kyūshū, as many Silla immigrants had settled around Mt. Kawara by this time. The main point is that, like the *kentōshi*, Saichō invoked a mountain god for safe sea travel, and his successors followed in his footsteps. After Saichō, Ennin and Enchin also prayed to the deity at the Kawara shrine before embarking for

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[183] Ōmori 1990: 148-49.

[184] For the historical background and the biographical information of those Japanese student-monks of the seventh and early eighth centuries, see Bingenheimer 2001.

[185] Ōwa 1993:188.

China.[186] All these examples suggest that early Tendai masters who went to China had close mythological ties with Silla deities and that those deities were believed to have the power to guarantee safe sea travel.

2.2. Shinra Myōjin as Landlord Deity

The way Onjōji monks promoted Shinra Myōjin as a mountain deity is intriguing. They made the ambitious ideological claim that he was an old-man god, namely, the *jinushi gami* 地主神 (landlord deity) of the mountain where Onjōji is located, Mt. Nagara 長等山 in Ōmi. In this way, Shinra Myōjin was effectively transformed into a mountain deity and thus secured his legitimate position at Onjōji. The notion of *jinushigami* is associated with the opening of new land. This means either obtaining permission from the resident *kami* to reside there or confining the *kami* to the land. Traditionally, the *jinushigami* was thought to assert its authority over a specific tract of land but often conceded that right by handing the land over to a foreign deity. This pattern is common in Japanese Buddhist stories: a *jinushigami* appears to an eminent monk and gives the land over which he has jurisdiction to a foreign deity who has been invited to Japan by the monk. The same trope was used in the case of Shinra Myōjin.[187]

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[186] Kagamiyama 1972: 780.

[187] Okada 1966: 19-20. Okada gives two examples: the *Katsuragawa engi* 葛川縁起 (c. Kamakura period) and the *Daigoji engi* 醍醐寺縁起 (c. late Heian). According to the *Katsuragawa engi*, the monk Sōō 相応 (831–919), the founder of *kaihōgyō* 回峰行 practice, encountered an old man during his ascetic practices. This old man, who was actually the god Shikobuchi Myōjin 志古淵明神, handed over his land to Sōō, who built Myōō-in on that site. The deity was incorporated into the temple as a *jinushi*. In the *Daigoji engi*, an old man named Yokoo Myōjin 横尾明神, (actually the mountain god of Mt. Daigo) appears to Shōbō 聖宝 (832–909) and transfers the land to him. Shōbo worshipped Seiryū gongen 清滝権現 as a manifestation of Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪観音.

Several similar stories of *jinushi* can be found around the Onjōji area, all of which are related to Shinra Myōjin. In the *Konjaku monogatarishū*, we find a story in which Enchin meets an old fisherman near Lake Biwa who claims to be the *jinushi* of the region.[188] In the *Fusō kogo ryōishū* 扶桑古語霊異集 (c. late Kamakura), a man meets an old man during an excursion along Lake Biwa. Here, too, the old man turns out to be a *jinushi* deity named Shirahige Myōjin. Another story in the *Tale of the Soga Brothers* (*Soga Monogatari* 曽我物語, c. 14th C.) also features Shirahige Myōjin as a *jinushi* of Shiga 滋賀 who reluctantly relinquishes his land to Śākyamuni.[189] As we saw in the previous chapter, Shirahige Myōjin is closely related to Shinra Myōjin. The significance of these stories is that the old-man imagery overlaps with the image of Shinra Myōjin. All of these stories justify the primordial status of Shinra Myōjin— a deity who was depicted as an old man—by indicating that the same motif served as a platform to produce similar stories and ideas, particularly in Ōmi.[190] In all these stories, the *jinushi* provides a convenient means to legitimize the Buddhist appropriation of new territory.

The redefinition of Shinra Myōjin as an autochthonous deity, however, is part of the same old trick. In fact, he himself replaced the previous *jinushi* of the area, a god known as Mio Myōjin 三尾明神. When Shinra Myōjin deprived him of his *jinushi* status, Mio Myōjin was demoted to the status of Shinra Myōjin's auxiliary. This displacement process constitutes one of the common techniques for subduing symbols of previous authority in order to establish a new

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[188] For the *engi* of Shirahige Myōjin, see *Shintō taikei: Jinja-hen, Ōmi no kuni*, vol. 23: 529-45.

[189] Cogan 1987: 168-70.

[190] *Ishiyamadera engi* in the *Sanbō ekotoba* 三宝絵詞 is contains another variant of an old man fishing by the lake. For the English translation, see Kamens 1988: 328-29. This theme seems to invoke the Daoist ideal of immortal hermits, and it reminds us of a story in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. By applying the Daoist theme to the Japanese setting, the old man can be equated with a Daoist immortal, which fits well with the nature of *jinushi* and its foreign character. In this Daoist setting, fishing becomes a symbolic act expressing timelessness.

order. As Onjōji's temple chronicles suggest, however, in the medieval period the neglected story of Mio Myōjin received a certain amount of attention, and it developed new mythic associations. Onjōji sources claim that Mio Myōjin is associated with the sun-goddess Amaterasu. As proof of his secret identity, the *Onjōji denki* relates, "The name Mio is said to derive from the three long belts (red, white, and black, whose names are Akao 赤尾, Shiroo 白尾, and Kuroo 黒尾 respectively) hanging from Amaterasu Ōmikami's waist."[191] In this way, Mio Myōjin came to be equated with Amaterasu, who was the highest figure in the nascent Shintō tradition. This connection also alludes to his authority over Susanoo (and thereby Shinra Myōjin). The fact that Mio Myōjin was seen as a manifestation of Amaterasu suggests that the imperial goddess played a certain role in promoting the antiquity and thus prestige of the temple, even though Susanoo was more favored given his connection to Silla through Shinra Myōjin.

2.3. Sannō, Another Mountain deity at Onjōji

The transformation of Shinra Myōjin into the *jinushigami* of Onjōji was an ideological response to the Tendai cult of Sannō 山王 (Mountain King). Sannō, whose cult was likely started by Saichō on Mt. Hiei, is the most prominent deity of the Japanese Tendai tradition.[192] Since Sannō was the *sine qua non* deity for all Tendai monks from early on, he remained significant for

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[191] *Onjōji denki* 60.

[192] The appellation Sannō came from the name of the tutelary deity "Shanwang Yuanbi Zhenjun" (Perfected Lord, Mountain King Yuanbi) of Guoqingsi, the Tiantai headquarters in China. The Sannō cult began at Hie (Hiyoshi) 日吉 shrine at the foot of Mt. Hiei. As the protective deity of Tendai temples and of Enryakuji's and Hie's land holdings, Sannō's cult spread throughout Japan. Because Hie shrine is located to the northeast of Kyōto, Sannō came to be regarded as a guardian against the evil spirits entering the capital from "demon gate" (Jp. *kimon* 鬼門), i.e., the northeastern direction. As David Bialock has noted, Hieizan was not only the sacred site that protected the demon gate, but also became a demon-gate itself and developed the capacity to "provoke dangerous demonic obstructions." See Bialock 2007: 401.

Onjōji monks even after the full-scale schism in the eleventh century. Thus, he was worshipped as one of the main protective deities of Onjōji, although this elevated position did not necessarily mean that his status was higher than that of Shinra Myōjin. Onjōji monks, who were attempting to create a new and independent Tendai headquarters, needed another divine power that would protect only them. Sannō proved as useful for this purpose as Shinra Myōjin.

Although all three deities—Sannō, Shinra Myōjin, and Sekizan Myōjin—shared a similar function as mountain deities, their individual relationships with one another differed. The relationship between Shinra Myōjin and Sannō, on the one hand, and Sekizan Myōjin and Sannō on the other, were clearly different from the beginning. In the Sanmon tradition, Sekizan Myōjin was a secondary deity under the dominant Sannō cult on Mt. Hiei, whereas Sannō's status was typically higher than that of Shinra Myōjin.[193] However, due in part to Enchin's double associations with Enryakuji and Onjōji, these hierarchical determinations were sometimes a moot point.

Enchin was both the Tendai *zasu* of Enryakuji and the founding father of Onjōji. As such, he was associated with both Sannō and Shinra Myōjin. The Sanmon tradition, however, did not leave any textual traces to indicate Enchin's association with Shinra Myōjin; this, in turn, has led some scholars to argue that Shinra Myōjin was the invention of Enchin's followers at Onjōji. For example, the fragmented official record of Enchin, known as the *Commentaries on* [*Enchin's*] *life* (Jp. *Gyōrekishō* 行歴抄; 859) is silent on this matter. The importance of Sannō in Enchin's

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[193] At Onjōji, in order to distinguish him from the Enryakuji deity, Sannō was sometimes called New Sannō (Jp. Shin-Sannō 新山王). *Jimondenki horoku* 140.

life had been promoted in the Jimon tradition because Enchin's association with Sannō underscored the legitimacy of the Jimon.[194]

Enchin was closely associated with Sannō even before his association with the Jimon. However, precisely because of this, Enchin's followers could claim that both Sannō and Shinra Myōjin were their protective deities. During his tenure as *zasu* on Mt. Hiei, Enchin himself was called Sannō-in 山王院 after the name of the residential hall where he stayed until he left for Onjōji.[195] The *Onjōji engi* claims that it was Sannō who gave Enchin an oracle that told him to go to Tang China, but that it was Shinra Myōjin who appeared to Enchin, telling him where to build Onjōji and how to worship him.[196] The text states that both Shinra Myōjin and Sannō guided Enchin to the future Onjōji site. After this, Sannō returned to Enryakuji alone, whereas Shinra Myōjin remained there. This story reveals Shinra Myōjin's taking over of the position of *jinushi* at Onjōji. This close connection between Sannō and Enchin continued even after the latter's death. Enchin's relics were enshrined in two locations: at Sannōin in Enryakuji and at Tōin 唐院 in Onjōji, symbolizing the divergence of his lineage.[197] With the spiritual growth of Shinra Myōjin and, in parallel, the growth of Onjōji's institutional power, Shinra Myōjin's prestige came to exceed Sannō's. During the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, Shinra Myōjin

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[194] However, Sannō is not the only deity who competed with Shinra Myōjin for the status of tutelary deity of Enchin. For instance, in the *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin oshōden,* the deity who appeared to Enchin was Yellow Fudō Myōō (Jp. Ki Fudō Myōō 黄不動明王).

[195] Yet at one point, after Enchin brought a statue of Kannon 観音 (Skt. Avalokiteśvara) back from his trip to China, the residence hall also started to be called Senju-in 千手院. It is said that in the hall, Enchin stored not only the Kannon statue but also other collections from his trip to Tang China.

[196] Sannō's association with Enchin is confirmed by Enchin's biography, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin oshōden* 天台宗延暦寺座主珍和尚伝, a text complied in 902 by Miyoshi Kiyoyuki 三善清行 (847-918), a literatus of the Heian period. According to the text, the master's descision to go to China was due to an oracle that he received from Sannō in a dream he had in Kashō 嘉祥 3 (850).

[197] Take 2008: 216.

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came to be seen as the central deity of Onjōji and the exclusive protector of the temple and its

clergy.

2.4. Sekizan Myōjin and Shinra Myōjin in Chinese Sacred Geography

Shinra Myōjin's development into a mountain god reflects his sectarian competition with

Sekizan Myōjin, his counterpart at Enryakuji. The latter had an even stronger mythological tie

with the mountain god cult in China. Shinra Myōjin was associated with the god of Mt. Song 嵩

山, whereas Sekizan Myōjin was identified with the god of Mt. Tai 泰山, both of which are

significant Chinese mountains. Ancient Chinese believed that the Five Sacred Mountains (Ch.

wuyue 五嶽) of China had their own divine power, with which they also protected the capital.[198]

The Zhou (周 ca. 1046–256 BCE) rulers associated themselves with the Central Peak, Mt. Song,

although by the Han 漢 period (206 BCE–220 CE), the Eastern Peak of Mt. Tai had emerged as

the paramount mountain god, who was ruler of not only his paradise but also of the prisons of the

underworld.[199] As Confucian bureaucratic notions came to pervade the religious sphere, Mt. Tai

also came to be known as the place where all the records of people's deeds are kept.

The Chinese vision of sacred mountains was transmitted to Japan, and it continued to

appeal to the Japanese audience. During the Kamakura period, however, Tendai monks began to

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[198] Naquin 1992: 338. The grouping of the five mountains appeared during the Warring States Period. The Five Great Mountains are: Mt. Tai 泰山 (East), Mt. Hua 華山 (West), Mt. Heng 衡山 (South), Mt. Heng 恆山 (North) and Mt. Song 嵩山 (Center). For a study of the Southern Peak, see Robson 2009.

[199] Von Glahn 2004: 87. Édouard Chavannes (1910)'s research on Mt. Tai remains the major work in western languages.

identify Taizan Fukun with Sekizan Myōjin, a new ideological invention.[200] In this slanted

Japanese Tendai myth, Mt. Tai was not only associated with Taizan Fukun 泰山府君 (Ch.

Taishan Fujun), but also with Sekizan Myōjin. This connection entailed a new set of textual

legends and visual representations.[201] While Sekizan Myōjin was associated with Mt. Tai, the

Eastern Mountain, in medieval Tendai imagination, Shinra Myōjin was connected with Mt.

Song, the Central Peak. Linking Shinra Myōjin with Mt. Song was a strategic decision that made

this deity more central and therefore superior to all other mountain gods.

This connection reflects how Tendai elites envisioned the Japanese terrain. The

directional disposition of the two deities in the Five Sacred Mountains scheme meant projecting

Chinese sacred geography onto Japanese topography. Sekizan Myōjin represents the East, a

direction that corresponds to Mt. Hiei, while Shinra Myōjin corresponds to the center, and

thereby the direction Onjōji lies in. As Rolf Stein pointed out, the underlying structure of a set of

beliefs may fully emerge only as it evolves through transmissions across time and space.[202] In

this sense, the medieval transformation of Shinra Myōjin and Sekizan Myōjin into mountain

gods illustrates the ways in which the Chinese sacred vision reemerged on Japanese soil.

The identification of Taizan Fukun with Sekizan Myōjin allows us to observe a common

pattern in the open-ended process of equivalencies between indigenous deities, invented deities,

and major Buddhist deities in medieval Japanese mythology. Whether the association between

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[200] The *Record of Efficacy of Hie Sannō* (*Hie Sannō rishōki* 日吉山王利生記, c. 13th C.) and the *Genpei Jōsuiki* 源 平盛衰記 (mid-late Kamakura) are among of the earliest textual evidences that connect Sekizan Myōjin and Taizan Fukun.

[201] The term Fujun is a term originally used for county governors from the Han dynasty and it was later accepted as a general term for the dead, which was often used on one's tombstone.

[202] Stein 1993: 119-21.

individual deities was purely incidental or carefully designed, the new pairings led to new ideas and practices. In these exchanges and assimilations, one side often received more benefits than the other. At times, the pairing allowed each side to reinforce its own qualities. At other times, it created an unexpected new aspect. In the case of Sekizan Myōjin and Taizan Fukun, since Taizan Fukun was already part of well-established Chinese mythic tradition, it was Sekizan Myōjin who gained more through the association.[203] The case of Sekizan Myōjin is unique in that although the cult seems to have started on the Chinese peninsula of Shandong, the name and cult of this deity only emerged later in Japan. And yet, compared to Shinra Myōjin, Sekizan Myōjin remained a minor divinity; his identity was determined primarily by his Chinese extension, Taishan Fujun, whereas Shinra Myōjin became the main deity of Onjōji.

Taizan Fukun enjoyed a wide degree of popularity among the nobility from the Heian throughout the medieval period. The Taizan Fukun ritual (Jp. *Taizan Fukun sai* 泰山府君際) was popular at the court. It is said that it was Abe no Seimei 安倍晴明 (921–1005) who performed the first Taizan Fukun ritual. Since then the ritual was monopolized by the Abe lineage and carried out until the Edo period.[204] This court ritual aimed at securing the longevity of the sovereign and protecting the state by warding off evil spirits.

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[203] Kawamura 2008: 94.

[204] Abe no Nakamaro 阿倍仲麻呂 (698−770) and Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 (695−775) are said to be the two persons who brought Taizan Fukun cult to Japan, although it is not historically correct. The legend says that Abe no Nakamaro could not leave China, and he asked Kibi no Makibi to transmit the teachings to Japan. Once introduced, the tradition was supposedly continued by Abe no Seimei. Taizan Fukun also played an instrumental role in creating a stronger tie between the political authority and Onmyōdō. The Abe lineage monopolized the ritual, and therefore, Taizan Fukun emerged as a prominent deity in the Onmyōdo tradition, in particular in the Abe lineage. For instance, the Taizan Fukun sai was favored by political leaders such as Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358−1408) and Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604−1651). Saitō 2007: 62-3.

At the popular level, Taizan Fukun was a god whose power could resurrect a dead person.[205] When the Taizan Fukun ritual was performed, esoteric rituals for Emmaō 焰魔王 were included.[206] The efficacy of this ritual was at one time thought to exceed that of Buddhist esoteric rituals. When an Onjōji monk was in critical condition, he was cured through the Taizan Fukun ritual performed by Abe no Seimei, not by Buddhist rituals.[207] A Taizan Fukun ritual was performed in 1217 at Sekizan Zen'in, which was Sekizan Myōjin's shrine. The location confirms that the association between Sekizan Myōjin and Taizan Fukun was established by this time.

The close association between Taizan Fukun/the Ten Kings and Sekizan Myōjin is confirmed by visual representations. The Japanese art historian Kageyama Haruki suggests that Sekizan Myōjin's representation was a modification of that of the Ten Kings. However, Kageyama's view is misleading in part because it suggests that Sekizan Myōjin's visual depiction was fixed, which is not the case. While the practice of representing Shinra Myōjin as an elderly man in the attire of a Tang official became standard, visual representations of Sekizan Myōjin were far more varied.

One typical visual representation of Sekizan Myōjin is that of an old man in a red robe, headgear similar to that of the Ten Kings, and a bow, as described in the *Sannō rishōki*. In another case, however, he is dressed in Tang official attire and holds a wooden wand (Jp. *gohei*

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[205] As to the offerings in the ritual, stationary such as ink-slab, brush, and muck were offered to change one's fate written on the record. The ritual guaranteed that one prolongs one's life by changing the record through the ritual efficacy. An example of prayer texts (Jp. *saimon* 祭文), called Tojō 都状 in the Onmyōdō tradition (the earliest Tojō dates from 1050) shows that the ritual aimed to appeal to all the deities in the underworld god including Taizan Fukun. In the Kamakura period the Taizan Fukun sai was still carried out among the Heian nobility, but the ritual was mostly performed together with other rituals. Saitō 2007: 88.

[206] Saitō 2007: 73.

[207] And his disciple, who would have been died as the master's substitute body during the ritual, was also magically saved. Saitō 2007: 63-64.

[Fig.1. Sekizan Myōjin, 1852, Myōōin, Shiga]   [Fig. 2. Sekizan Myōjin, Sekizan Zenin, Kyōto]

御幣), as seen in the Hie Sannō Mandala. This depiction is strikingly similar to the image of Shinra Myōjin.[208] In yet other cases, Sekizan Myōjin is described as a general fully equipped in armor –an image calling to mind that of Bishamonten 毘沙門天.

The spread and often unconscious acceptance the Daoist ideas in medieval Japan was one of the major forces that facilitated the assimilation between Sekizan Myōjin and Taizan Fukun. Sekizan Myōjin's association with King Yama (Jp. Emmaten 閻魔天 or Emmaō), the King of

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[208] Among the various gods of the Sannō mandala, Sekizan Myōjin is represented in Tang official attire.

Hell, illustrates this point. Under continental influence, Sekizan Myōjin came to be associated with another major Hindu/Buddhist deity, King Yama.[209] Although the cult of Sekizan Myōjin did not develop as much as those of Taizan Fukun and Emmaten in the medieval period, the three of them shared close functional affinities. All three were identified as the god who watches over human deeds and controls human destiny.

3. The Spread of Shinra Myōjin Beyond Onjōji

3.1. Shinra Myōjin and the Minamoto clan

Once Shinra Myōjin was established as the mountain deity of Onjōji, he received more attention in the region, particularly from the Seiwa 清和 branch of the powerful Minamoto 源 clan.[210] A powerful warrior clan first based in Ōmi province, the Minamoto clan was Onjōji's main patron from the eleventh to the early fourteenth centuries.[211] Before the Minamoto, however, the Ōtomo clan was the main sponsor of the temple. In the early history of Onjōji, this clan was closely related to the cult of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji. For instance, the first priest of the shrine was a

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[209] The relationship between King Yama and Taizan Fukun is ambiguous because these two shared many functions and characteristics. Eventually, however, King Yama took over Taizan Fukun's position. For instance, Taizan Fukun is presented as one of the acolytes in the Emmaō mandala. For more on the development of Yama and Ten Kings in China, see Teiser 1988; Faure 2014: 46-60.

[210] There seems to be no direct connection between Emperor Seiwa and Seiwa Genji. However, the *Onjōji denki* tells us that "Enchin made a statue of Shinra Myōjin, modeled after Emperor Seiwa (*Onjōji denki* 59)" and this imperial association seems to play a certain role in the Seiwa Minamoto's claim that they are direct descendants of Emperor Seiwa. The progenitor of Seiwa Genji is the imperial prince Tsunemoto 經基 (? −961?), who was the son of Sadazumi Shin'ō 貞純親王 (873−916), the sixth son of Emperor Seiwa. The Kawachi Genji 河内源氏 were members of a family line within the Seiwa Genji, which in turn was one of several branches of the Minamoto clan. For more on Seiwa and Onjōji, see Tachi 2010: 122-41.

[211] In the Kamakura period, the Hōjō 北条 clan became more prominent at Onjōji with the appointment of Henben 顕弁, a member of the Hōjō clan, as Onjōji's abbot in 1327. The Hōjō clan became the main supporter from this point on until the end of the Kamkura bakufu. Nagai 2006: 285.

man from the Ōtomo family named Kiyomura 清村.[212] From that time on, the priestly lineage of the Shinra Myōjin shrine consisted exclusively of Ōtomo clan members from the tenth through the fifteenth centuries.[213] The colophon of the *Shinra Myōjin ki* 新羅明神記 (1413) confirms that it was the Ōtomo family who kept the secret transmission of the deity.[214] The relationship between the Ōtomo family and the Minamoto clan is not entirely clear, especially after the Minamoto became the main patron of the temple in the eleventh century. But it seems safe to say that the Ōtomo clan's function in the priesthood of the Shinra Myōjin shrine was mostly maintained.

The Minamoto's patronage of Onjōji goes back to Minamoto no Yoriyoshi 源頼義 (988–1075). During the Former Nine Years' War (Zenkunen no eki 前九年の役, 1051–1062), in northern Mutsu Province 陸奥国, Yoriyoshi vowed at the shrine of Shinra Myōjin that if his military campaign was successful, he would dedicate one of his sons to Onjōji.[215] He won the battle. Accordingly, he celebrated the coming of age rites (Jp. *genpuku* 元服) of his third son Yoshimitsu 源義光 (1045–1127) at the shrine of Shinra Myōjin. After that, Minamoto no

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[212] *Onjōji denki* 95. See the balance sheet of the Ōtomo lineage of Shinra Myōjin shrine priesthood, Kuroda 2001: 81-80.

[213] On the lineage of the Shinra Myōjin shrine priesthood, see Kuroda 2001: 80-81.

[214] Kuroda 2001: 75.

[215] Nakamura 1931: 387. Onjōji chronicles tell a slightly different story about Yoriyoshi's connection with Onjōji. In the *Onjōji denhō kanjō ketsumyaku fu* 園城寺伝法血脈普, as well as the *Azuma kagami* 吾妻鏡 (ca.13th C.), Yoriyoshi prays at Shinra shrine before his campaign, and after his victory, he makes his first son a monk later known as Kaiyo. The *Onjōji denki* presents a slightly different version: Yoriyoshi's third son, Minamoto no Yoshimitsu 源義光 (1045–1127), takes his *genpuku*, or coming-of-age ceremony, in front of Shinra Myōjin. Yoriyoshi's first son, Minamoto no Yoshiie 源義家 (1039–1106) is known as Hachiman Tarō, his second son as Kamo Shirō, and his third son as Shinra Saburō.

Yoshimitsu became a devotee of Shinra Myōjin and was popularly known as Shinra Saburō 新羅 三郎.[216]

Once this association was established, Yoshimitsu and his descendants maintained close ties with Onjōji. Kaiyo 快誉 (1036–1112), Yoriyoshi's son by his concubine, was another important Minamoto connection at Onjōji. Yoshimitsu himself provided the funds for the construction of Konkōin 金光院, a sub-temple in the Onjōji temple complex near Shinra Myōjin shrine. Shinra Saburō's son Kakugi 覚義 was appointed as the first abbot of Konkōin.[217] Shinra Myōjin's association with Shinra Saburō was the beginning of the Shinra Myōjin cult's spread outside the Kansai region, which was largely due to the Minamoto clan's military campaigns.[218]

Shinra Saburō's association with Shinra Myōjin is also mentioned in a seventeenth-century historical document, the *Shinra no kiroku* 新羅之記録.[219] In this text, the Matsumae clan from the Matsumae 松前藩 region (modern-day Matsue 松江 Prefecture, Hokkaidō) claims that Shinra Saburō is its ancestor. Matsumae Kagehiro 松前景広 (fl. seventeenth c.) was a member of the Matsumae clan who visited Onjōji and wrote about Shinra Myōjin's legends he heard there.[220] Because Shinra Myōjin was the protector of Shinra Saburō, it is highly possible that he

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[216] Shinra Saburō's tomb is still extant behind the Shinra Myōjin shrine. He is also known as the founder of the Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjtsu 大東流合気柔術, a school of Japanese martial arts. The school became widely known in the early twentieth century because of its headmaster Takeda Sokaku, who is also known as the teacher of Morihei Ueshiba 植芝盛平 (1883−1969), the founder of Aikidō 合気道. The Daitō-ryū claims that its tradition starts with Shinra Saburō and that the name Daitō-ryū itself is from the mansion in Ōmi Province in which Shinra Saburō lived as a child. Hwang, Chu, and Kim 2012: 4-5.

[217] *Onjōji denki* 67.

[218] Dewa 2004: 59.

[219] Shindō 2005; 2009.

[220] Shindō 2005: 19-28; Shindō 2009.

became a prominent deity among the Matsumae clan. Because of this Minamoto connection, Shinra Myōjin's cult spread to Hokkaidō after he was rediscovered in the seventeenth century.

The Minamoto family, however, promoted another deity as well. Hachiman 八幡 is another Silla-related deity whose cult developed in connection with Shinra Myōjin.[221] Because many warrior clans were devotees of Hachiman, the Minamoto's spiritual tie with Hachiman does not seem strange at a first glance. However, the affiliation becomes more puzzling when one realizes that, in fact, Shinra Myōjin is incompatible with Hachiman. Shinra Myōjin was the god of Silla, and Hachiman was the sworn enemy of Silla.

According to his origin story, Hachiman is the god who ordered Empress Jingū to destroy the Silla kingdom.[222] Although the two deities are antagonistic at the mythological level, their association with Minamoto no Yoriyoshi's two sons—Hachiman Tarō and Shinra Saburō—led to this peculiar cohabitation at Onjōji. Since then, major Hachiman shrines built by the Minamoto clan, such as the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine 石清水八幡宮 and the Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine 鶴岡八幡宮, had close institutional ties with Onjōji. This connection further contributed to bringing the two divinities together. Monks at Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine were predominantly from Onjōji.[223] Many Onjōji monks held dual posts at both the shrine and at Onjōji. It remains unclear whether or not the Minamoto found the apparent incompatibility between the two gods to be problematic. However, what is certain is that in both cases, the

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[221] Hachiman is the *kami* who helped Empress Jingū conquer Silla in Japanese mythology. For more on the Hachiman cult in the earlier period, see Guth (Kanda) 1985.

[222] For more on Hachiman, see Bender 1982. For a discussion on the close association between images of Hachiman and the Healing Buddha in the early Heian period, see Morse 2013 (unpublished paper).

[223] Guth (Kanda) 1985: 44.

perception of Silla played an important role in this clan's views and worship of these two deities; it is likely that the Silla connection is what brought the two deities together.

The connection between Hachiman and Onjōji goes back to Minamoto no Yorinobu's (968–1048) association with Hachiman. Yorinobu initially worshipped Hachiman as his family ancestor. He attributed his father's military success to the protection of that deity. In 1063, Yoriyoshi founded a shrine dedicated to Hachiman in Yuigahama, near present-day Kamakura. This was the first of a vast network of shrines founded by the Minamoto clan and its retainers, extending from Kyūshū to the northern reaches of Honshū.

The connection between this clan and Hachiman starts with Yoriyoshi's son, Minamoto no Yoshiie 源義家 (1041–1108). In 1048 Yoshiie had his coming-of-age ceremony at Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine. From then on, he was known as Hachiman Tarō 八幡太郎.[224] Like his brother Shinra Saburō, he was a devotee of Onjōji. Thus, when his first daughter suffered from an eye disease, Yoshiie prayed for her recovery at Onjōji.[225] The founder of the Kamakura shogunate, Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–1199) of the Kawachi Genji line (sub-branch of the Seiwa Genji), further sustained the clan's tie with Hachiman.[226] He moved the Hachiman shrine from Yuigahama 由比ヶ浜海岸 to Tsurugaoka. In 1180, he established the Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine, thereby shifting the cultic center closer to the headquarters of his military government.[227] The patronage of the Minamoto family enhanced general belief in Hachiman's far-reaching powers, and it allowed the dissemination of both deities' cults beyond

[224] Kanda 1985: 44.

[225] Ōmori 2010: 62.

[226] Nakamura 1931: 385-416.

[227] Ooms 2009: 205.

the so-called "*miyako* Tendai" that was centered in Ōmi province, the birthplace of both Shinra Myōjin and the Minamoto clan.

3.2. Shinra Myōjin in the Popular Imagination

The cult of Shinra Myōjin spread beyond Onjōji alongside the Minamoto's expansion. Concrete evidence of Shinra Myōjin's popularity is found in popular literature. In the history of Onjōji, the most traumatic moment was the bloody fight between the Jimon and the Sanmon. Although the hundred-year long clash between the Tendai siblings caused incredible damage to Onjōji, it had a silver lining; the destruction of the monastery triggered artistic inspiration and imagination. A case in point is *A Long Tale for an Autumn Night* (Jp. *Akino yono naga monogatari*), the oldest known *chigo monogatari* 稚児物語 (love stories about young boys).[228] The tale seems to be very likely written by a man who either saw or heard about the last burning of Onjōji in 1319 and who wrote the story while the memory of the battles held between the Sanmon and Jimon denominations was still fresh in the minds of people in the area.[229] The text is invaluable not only because it includes a detailed story of the Sanmon-Jimon battle (sections 13–15) as well as a faithful description of historical events and figures but also because it provides us with an example of how those outside of the monastery viewed Shinra Myōjin.[230] Picture scrolls based

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[228] On the issue of the date of the piece, see Childs 1980: 129.

[229] Sawada 1976: 25. Paul Atkins is another scholar who draws attention to the fact that the story deploys actual practices and historical incidents. Atkins 2008: 953-54.

[230] The text of *Aki no yo no naga monogatari* is found in Ichiko Teiji ed., *Otogi Zōshi* 御伽草子 (*NKBT* 38) 1965: 460-85.

on the narrative were produced as well, a testimony to the popularity of the story and its wide circulation.[231]
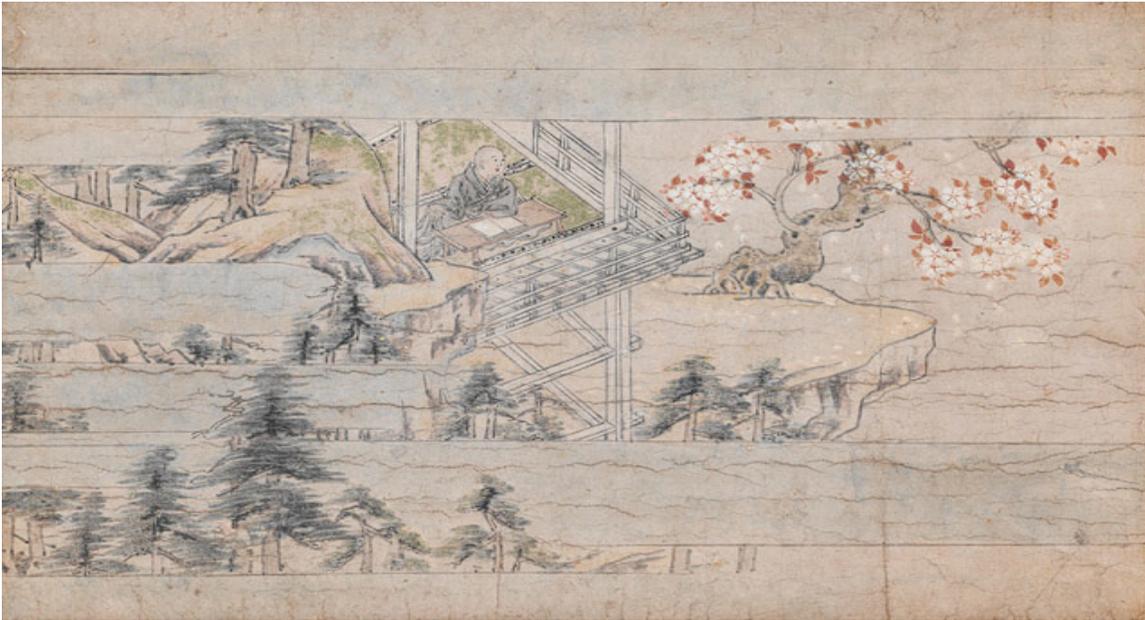
[Fig. 3. Fragment from *A Long Tale for an Autumn Night*, Nanbokuchō period (1136–92), Ink and color on paper, 12X18 1/4 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art]

The story is about the love between Keikai 桂海, a monk at Onjōji, and a *chigo,* or boy servant.

The love story turns into a disaster when a *tengu* 天狗 kidnaps the boy, and the priests of Onjōji

blame the monks of Mt. Hiei. The subsequent destruction of Onjōji by the Enryakuji monks

arouses a shared appreciation of transience, and the young boy's suicide triggers Keikai's

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[231] In 2002, the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired a fragment of an *emaki* from the Nanbokuchō period; it was displayed there the following year. There are also several examples of chigo *emakimono* such as the *Hōnen Shōnin eden* 法然上人絵伝 (*Narrative Painting of the Life of Saint Hōnen*) (続日本絵巻大成; v. 1-3, thirteenth c.); *Chigo Kannon engi* 稚児観音縁起 (*Narrative Painting of the Origin of Chigo Kannon*) (日本絵巻大成; v. 24, the early fourteenth c.); *Ashibiki-e* 芦引絵 (*Narrative Painting of a Love Story of Chigo*) (続日本の絵巻; v. 20, date unknown, medieval period). *Ashibiki-e* is a love story between the Enryakuji priest Gen'i 玄怡 and a young *chigo* in Kyōto.

religious awakening. At the end of the story, the whole affair is attributed to the Kannon of Ishiyama-dera 石山寺, as the boy turns out to be a manifestation of Kannon.[232]

Although it is a didactic story that focuses on the salvation of a Buddhist monk, Shinra Myōjin's role as a protector of Onjōji is given a prominent place in the narrative.[233] The tale depicts several scenes in which Sensai, an Onjōji monk, prays to Shinra Myōjin before carrying out important tasks. The most intriguing part is section 23, in which the god walks out of his shrine and gives a dharma talk to the dispirited Jimon monks in order to encourage them following the destruction of their temple by the Sanmon monks. He essentially tells then that he and Sekizan Myōjin are actually good friends.[234] At another point, when Onjōji monks prepare to leave their wasted temple, they witness Shinra Myōjin greeting Sannō, the mountain god of Mt. Hiei. The climax of the scene occurs when the two gods hold a joyful banquet. After Sannō returns to Mt. Hiei, the Onjōji monks ask Shinra Myōjin why he was so welcoming to Sannō, the protector of their enemy, and Shinra Myōjin replies that humans cannot understand the divine will, but the destruction of the temple will allow monks to accumulate karmic merit through recopying the sutras and rebuilding the temple.

It seems that the portrayal of Shinra Myōjin as the source of the monks' inspiration was being widely circulated by the thirteenth century.[235] The Buddhist tale collection, *Sand and*

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[232] Childs 1980: 129.

[233] The story seems to reflect actual Tendai practices. In fact, Tendai monks developed elaborate initiation rituals for *chigo* in which the boys were depicted as avatars of Kannon (Abe 1984: 52). The medieval popularity of *chigo* is attested to in the popular saying: "[Worship] the *chigō* first, then Sannō (Jp. *ichi ji ni sannō* 一兒二山王). On this see Abe 1984: 50-51. The same motif of a *chigo* being depicted as a reincarnation of Kannon is also found in the *Chigo Kannon engi*, a story set at Kōfuji.

[234] Sawada 1976: 89-90.

[235] In the *Kojidan* 古事談, an early thirteenth century *setsuwa* collection, we find a similar story. *Kojidan* 111. Also see *Onjōji denki* 72.

Pebbles (Jp. *Shaseki-shū* 沙石集, 1279–1283), compiled by the monk Mujū Ichien 無住一円 (1227–1312), also focuses on this aspect of Shinra Myōjin.[236]

> Long ago Miidera was burned down by monks from Enryakuji, and nothing remained of halls and pagodas, monks' quarters, Buddhist images, or sutras. The monks were dispersed through the fields and mountains, and the Miidera became a completely uninhabited temple.[237] One of the monks made a pilgrimage to the shrine of the illustrious god Shinra and there spent the night. In a dream he saw the bright deity push open the doors of the shrine. Because the god appeared to be in a very good humor, the monk in his dream made bold to address him. "When I consider your august vow to protect the Buddhist teachings of this temple and think how profound must be your sorrow at what has been completely lost, why is this not reflected on your countenance?" "How could I not feel grieved?" replied the god. "But even so, it pleases me that this incident should give rise to a genuine desire for enlightenment in a single monk. One can always restore the halls, pagodas, images and sutras if one has the money. But it is the man aspiring to Buddhahood, though one in ten million, who is to be valued highly." It is related that the monk awoke from his dream pondering how wondrous was the divine will, and developed a sincere desire for enlightenment.[238]

In the story above, Shinra Myōjin is presented as being unconcerned with worldly matters, almost like a sage or bodhisattva. He urges Onjōji monks to turn the destruction of the temple into an opportunity to reach enlightenment. To the monk who complains about Shinra Myōjin's inability to protect Onjōjifrom destruction, the god replies that he does not protect every monk at the temple but only those who are determined to reach enlightenment.[239] This image of Shinra

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[236] The *Shasekishū* took its motif from an earlier text, the *Hosshin-shū* 発心集 by Kamo no chōmei 鴨長明 (1155–1216). Watanabe 1981:270. Variations on the same story can be also found in several *setsuwa* tales such as *Ruijūkigen-shō* 類聚既験抄 (c.13th C.) and another tale collection by Mujū, the *Shōzai-shū* 聖財集 (c. 14th C.).

[237] This is referring to an incident that occurred in 1081.

[238] Morrell 87-88; 153-54.

[239] *Onjōji denki* 72-3.

Myōjin is drastically different from the fearful image of him in the story of Raigō, to which I now turn.

4. Shinra Myōjin, the Cursing Deity

4.1. The Story of Raigō and Shinra Myōjin

The rise of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji is intimately related to the politico-religious nature of the Insei period.[240] The transformation of Shinra Myōjin into a symbol of Onjōji's identity was a result of the articulation of the conflict and collaboration between imperial law (Jp. *ōbō* 王法) and Buddhist law (Jp. *buppō* 仏法), a new configuration that emerged during that period.[241] By that time, the mutual dependence between the major temples and the court was not simply a relationship between two major powers, sacred and secular, but was based on a broader interpretation of Buddhism as the constituting principle for national order. For a time, Enryakuji was the primary Tendai institution within this context, but from the tenth century on, Onjōji tried

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[240] The term "Insei" refers to the system of government in which decisions of state were made by the abdicated sovereign. The system was conceived by Emperor Go-Sanjō as a means to curtail the power of the Fujiwara regents and reassert the power of the imperial house. Since Go-Sanjō died before realizing his plan, it was his his son Shirakawa who established the system upon his abdication in 1086. Hurst 1976: 3.

[241] According to Kuroda Toshio, the doctrine of the mutual dependence of the imperial law and the Buddhist law (Jp. *ōbō buppō sōiron* 王法仏法相依論) emerged toward the latter part of the eleventh century, in connection with the development of the estate system (Jp. *shōen seido*) of land tenure. Although Kuroda's theory is still useful to examine the structural deployment of Buddhism in Japan, his characterization of the relations between Buddhism and the state in East Asian country—Chinese and Korean Buddhism as *gokoku bukkyō* 護国仏教, protecting merely the state and the ruler (国家＝皇帝), and Japanese Buddhism as *chingo kokka* 鎮護国家, protecting not just the state but the whole country and its people (国家=皇帝+国土＋民衆)— is highly problematic because it is not based on careful examination of the facts, but on a superficial contrast that seems to fit his Marxist view. Kuroda 1983: 9-12. Kuroda 1975; in English, Kuroda 1989; Dobbins 1996 (*JJRS* vol.23 No. 3/4); Rambelli 1996.

to gain recognition as a new but legitimate power broker in this relationship between the court and Buddhism.

In order to establish a separate religious institution, the Jimon had to achieve two things: (1) an equal access to the appointment of Tendai *zasu,* and (2) the establishment of an independent ordination platform (Jp. *kaidan* 戒壇). The confrontation over the Tendai *zasu* appointment intensified after aristocratic political power intervened. In 1038 (Chōryaku 長暦 2), Fujiwara no Yorimichi 藤原頼通 (992–1074), the eldest son of Fujiwara no Michinaga, supported the promotion of Onjōji monk Myōson 明尊 (971–1063) to the rank of *zasu* of Tendai. However, Myōson's abbacy lasted only three days on account of Enryakuji's resistance. After the Myōson incident, monks from the Sanmon were appointed to the Tendai *zasu* post. Even if Onjōji monks won a nomination, their tenure did not last long.

In this atmosphere of growing antagonism, the need to establish an independent ordination platform at Onjōji became an urgent matter. Onjōji's attempt to acquire its independence can be seen in a series of petitions to the court. However, the court could not satisfy Onjōji without incurring Enryakuji's opposition. Enryakuji monks claimed that a single school—Tendai—could not have two ordination platforms. Onjōji monks responded by arguing that since the temples were already separate, they should have distinct ordination platforms. Caught between these warring factions, the court continually postponed its decision, thus leading to increased discord and a rise of violence between the Sanmon and the Jimon. Warrior monks of Enryakuji burnt Onjōji to the ground four times in the eleventh century alone. As the Jimon monks grew increasingly angered by the court's indecision, their anger found expressed in the production of tales in which the court was attacked by the Jimon.

The issue of the ordination platform resurfaced in 1074, when Emperor Shirakawa 白川 (1053–1129; r. 1072–1086) again declined Onjōji's request, this time made by the priest Raigō 頼豪 (1004–1084).[242] According to a popular version of the story, Shirakawa had been praying for a male heir by his Fujiwara consort for many years. Upon the emperor's request, his spiritual advisor Raigō prayed for a son. Soon, Prince Atsuhumi (Atsuhumi shinnō 敦文親王, 1075–1077) was born. As a reward, Raigō asked the emperor to grant Onjōji an ordination platform.[243] However, foreseeing Enryakuji monks' opposition, the emperor was afraid to do. Dispirited by Shirakawa's disapproval, Raigō starved himself to death and returned as a vengeful spirit (Jp. *onryō* 怨霊). Prince Atsuhumi died soon afterwards, and it was believed that his death was caused by Raigō's curse.

The legend also blames Raigō's angry ghost for the premature death of Shirakawa's daughter.[244] The Onjōji attack on imperial power did not stop here, however. The *Heikei monogatari* states that Raigō's vengeful spirit changed into a thousand rats, which infested Enryakuji and caused great damage, including destroying the Emperor's sacred texts.[245] The Raigō story was repeated in various visual forms throughout the medieval period.[246] The image of Raigō as a rat, however, covers two different perceptions: first, an overall fear of Raigō's

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[242] The dramatization of Raigō's curse is found in several literary works such as the *Gukanshō*, the *Heikei monogatari*, and the *Taiheiki*.

[243] Prince Atsuhumi died in 1077 while Raigō died in 1084. Thus, the claim that Raigō died right after the birth of the Prince is anachronistic. For more discussion on this, Sakaguchi 1998.

[244] Yamamoto 1998a: 33.

[245] *Enkyōbon Heikei monogatari* (vol. 3): 61-5.

[246] Raigō became popular in ghost stories later in the Edo period as well. In the *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* 画図百鬼夜行 (The Illustrated Night Parade of a Hundred Demons, 1776), he came to be known as Iron Rat or Tesso 鉄鼠.

powerful angry spirit, and second, the derision of a Buddhist priest who not only failed to attain enlightenment but also returned to this world in animal form to take revenge.

The story of Raigō inspired another tale that reveals the tension between the Sanmon and the Jimon. In the *Hiyoshi sannō riseiki* 日吉山王利生記 and the *Genpei jōsuiki,* Sekizan Myōjin threatens Shirakawa to dissuade him from granting a separate ordination platform to Onjōji.[247] As the story goes, sometime after promising to build the platform, Shirakawa had a dream in which an old man in a red dress, holding a bow and arrows, appeared to him. The god introduced himself as Sekizan Myōjin, and warned the emperor not to grant Onjōji's wish.[248] After awaking, the emperor decided not to authorize Raigō's request. His decision caused Raigō to withdraw to Onjōji and fast to death, ultimately returning as an angry spirit.[249]

As Yamamoto Hiroko points out, Raigō's hidden identity is Shinra Myōjin. In other words, Shinra Myōjin retained the character of a typical *tatarigami,* "a deity who not only bestows blessings, but also lays curses when offended."[250] Satō Hiroo notes that Amaterasu's perceived *tatarigami* character in the ancient period was one of the major limitations in her being raised to the status of supreme ancestor of a divine imperial dynasty, and, accordingly, it was erased in her medieval transformation. By comparison, Shinra Myōjin's role as a *tatarigami* reached its peak during and after the Kamakura period. When Raigō's vengeful spirit appears in the form of an old man carrying a staff, his appearance is a clue to his identity as Shinra

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[247] *Genpei jōsuiki* 123; For the *Hiyoshi Sannō riseiki* see *Myōhōin shiryō* vol.5: 45.

[248] Nanami Hiroaki (1984: 84) and Sakaguchi Kōtaro (1998: 64) note that the Sekizan Myōjin story is a later variation inspired by the Shinra Myōjin's *tatari* story.

[249] *The Future and the Past* 1979: 83-4.

[250] Teeuwen and Rambelli 2003: 115.

Myōjin.[251] Emperor Go-Sanjō's death was attributed to Shinra Myōjin's curse, which was caused

by his failure to support the ordination platform at Onjōji.[252] Although a prayer was addressed to

Shinra Myōjin for the recovery of Go-Sanjō's illness, it was too late to placate the deity's

wrath.[253]

Shinra Myōjin's *tatari* activities continued with Emperor Nijō (1143–1165; r. 1158–

1165). After the latter sided with the Sanmon, he suddenly became ill. He was said to have been

possessed on his deathbed by Hannya 般若, one of Shinra Myōjin's acolytes, and by Kuroo

Myōjin, one of the manifestations (or acolytes) of Mio Myōjin. Shinra Myōjin thus manifested

himself in the form of his acolytes to the emperor. He then revealed his anger through the mouth

of the emperor, saying, "I cannot forget that you smiled in the direction of Mt. Nyoi 如意 when

Miidera was burnt down."[254] The acolytes then touched Nijō with a staff (Jp. *shakujō* 錫杖), and

the emperor died several months later.[255] Theses stories suggest that the threat of *tatari* was very

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[251] Yamamoto 1998a: 31-4.

[252] *Jimon denki horoku* 120. Another account is found in the *Gukanshō* 愚管抄. According to this text, "Retired Emperor Shirakawa had been extremely fond of his daughter, an Imperial Lady known as Yūhō-mon In, but the vengeful soul of Raigō attached itself to her and cursed her. Although Zōyō and Ryūmei of Miidera prayed that the curse be removed, their prayers were not answered. So Shirakawa called in Ryōshin of Mt. Hiei, who arrived at the palace with 20 priests who had resided at the Central Hall of Mt. Hiei for long periods of time. They prayed earnestly that the curse be removed; their prayers were answered. Retired Emperor Shirakawa was delighted. But then his daughter suddenly died in 1096. Astounded and saddened by her death, Shirakawa entered the Buddhist priesthood that same year." *The Future and the Past* 1979: 87.

[253] According to the *Fusō ryakki*, there is a prayer text addressed in front of Shinra Myojin's hall by Go-Sanjo praying for speedy recovery. *Fusō ryakki* 315.

[254] *Jimon denki* 120. Mt. Nyoi was the gate that connected Kyoto and Onjōji in Ōtsu. The route thus means the direction to Onjōji. Sakaguchi 1998: 62.

[255] *Jimon denki* 120.

real for emperors. During this time, a divination ritual called *Gotaigoboku* 御体御卜 was performed to foretell whether or not deities or vengeful spirits would curse the emperor.[256]

4.2. The Ordination Platform and Shinra Myōjin

From the eleventh century onward, Onjōji monks no longer received precepts on Mt. Hiei but rather went to Nara to be ordained.[257] This was a way for them to protest against Enryakuji and also to keep their own tradition separate from that of the Sanmon. Enryakuji could not accept this, however. Enryakuji monks attacked Kakuchū, a Tendai *zasu* from the Onjōji line, by claiming that he had been ordained in Nara. They dismissed Nara ordinations as being based on Hīnayāna teachings and thereby insufficient.[258] In 1163, Enryakuji monks petitioned the court to prohibit Onjōji monks from being ordained in Nara.[259] Although Go-Shirakawa personally favored Onjōji, the court approved Enryakuji's petition and proclaimed that only a monk ordained on Enryakuji's platform could be appointed head abbot of Tendai.[260] Onjōji monks

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[256] Saitō 1996: 213-50.

[257] Tachi 2010: 100-108.

[258] The issue around having the ordination platform was not only a question of securing institutional autonomy, but also was part of a wider issue at the time, namely, how to interpret precepts in Tendai Buddhism. The dispute over the independent ordination platform seems to suggest that although the ordination was not actively carried out at Enryakuji, Buddhist precepts still played a significant role in upholding religious authority.

[259] Adolphson 2000: 140.

[260] Go-Shirakawa was more favorable to Onjōji than to Enryakuji. The most direct expression of the emperor's favoritism was to become a disciple of the Onjōji line in 1169, ten years after his retirement. The emperor's favoritism threatened Enryakuji's privileged status vis-à-vis the court and the Kyoto elites. Adolphson 2000: 138.

were deeply dissatisfied with the court's decision. However, the monks ignored this stipulation and secretly continued the practice of going to Nara for ordination.[261]

Eventually, Onjōji established the Samaya 三昧耶 precepts platform without official approval.[262] According to legend, Shinra Myōjin became an essential medium in justifying the legitimacy of the Samaya precepts by linking the practice with the Chinese Vinaya master Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), who was the founder of the Nanshan Vinaya School. According to the *Onjōji denki*:

> Shinra Myōjin received the precepts from [the Vinaya master] Daoxuan on Mt. Zhongnan 終南山.[263] The sanmaya precepts 三昧耶戒 that Enchin brought back to Japan are fundamentally based on Doaxuan's vinaya teachings. As an opening, the *sanmaya* precepts are performed and the *abhiṣeka samaya* 灌頂三昧耶戒 precepts follow. Thus, it is said that Shinra Myōjin manifests himself to protect the precepts. When Shinra Myōjin resided in the kingdom of Silla, he received the methods of the three attainments (*Sanshu shitchi hō* 三種悉地法)[264] from the

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[261] *Tsunetoshi kyōki* 経俊卿記, a diary of Yoshida Tsunetoshi 吉田経俊 (1214–76), confirms that Onjōji monks ordained at Tōdaiji in 1257.

[262] *Jimondenki horoku* 142. The Samaya precepts were not unique to Onjōji since Mt. Hiei also performed them. They are said to have been transmitted by Kūkai, who had received them from Huiguo 惠果 (Jp. Keika, 746–806) at Qinglong-si in Chang'an. In the Shingon context, they are the rules to be observed before full ordination, *kanjō* (*abhiṣeka*), the consecration ritual. The Tendai view is different, however. In Tendai there were two different positions: the interpretation of Zengen 全玄 (1113–1193) and Onjōji's interpretation. Zengen thought that they were additional precepts, supplementing the ten major precepts 十重戒 and forty-eight minor precepts 四十八輕戒 of the apocryphal *Brahma net Sutra* 梵網經. Thus, only after *kanjō* were monks able to receive the Samaya precepts. On the contrary, Onjōji monks interpreted the precepts in a broader context. They prioritized them, claiming that anyone, even without receiving *kanjō*, could receive them. Compared to the "Hinayana" precepts used in Nara Buddhism and Saichō's Mahayana precepts, Onjōji's Samaya precepts interpreted monastic morality somewhat loosely. Onjōji's defensive position regarding the precepts is recorded in the *Onjōji kaidan kitsunan tō* 園城寺戒壇詰難答. See Tachi 2010: 107-12.

[263] *Onjōji denki* 59. Mt. Zhongnan is also a sacred mountain for the Buddhist and Daoist, and also a center of star worship based on Daoist texts.

[264] This seems to refer to an esoteric ritual based on the *Sanshu shitchi hajigoku ten gosshō shutsu sangai himitsu daranihō* 三種悉地破地獄轉業障出三界祕密陀羅尼法 (*Secret Dhāraṇi Method of Three Attainments which Destroy Hell and Reverse Karmic Hindrances in the Three Worlds*). This Dhāraṇi text is attributed to Śubhakarasiṃha. It includes passages correlating the five syllables 五字 and the five families 五部 of Buddhist

Silla preceptor (Skt. *ācārya*), Hyǒnch'o 玄招. The teaching was exclusively transmitted to our lineage. Thus, the master Enchin said in his commentary that: "I transmit the *Sanshu shitchi hō* and protect the whole world." In order to protect the teaching, [Shinra Myōjin] manifested himself. Because of this karmic connection, the mantra of the *sanshu shitchi* is recited [in front of the deity]."[265]

Shinra Myōjin is a symbol of Onjōji's aspiration to install an independent ordination platform. In the above passage, it is also intriguing to note that Hyǒnch'o and Shinra Myōjin's Korean origins are emphasized, giving rise to further mythological associations.[266] The obvious foreignness of the deity and of the master provided a way to connect the precepts to the continent, which also guaranteed their authority. The self-conducted ordinations continued unofficially for a while at Onjōji. With the growing power of Onjōji in the Kamakura region, the Onjōji monk Ryūben 隆弁 (1208–1283) even organized an army in Kamakura in 1259, and pressed the court to accept Onjōji's request for an official ordination platform. After severe attacks by Enryakuji monks, however, Onjōji had to abandon the *sanmaya* precepts in 1264. However, even into the fourteenth century, Onjōji monks continually and unsuccessfully petitioned for the official ordination platform.[267]

Although the attempt to establish a separate ordination platform failed, by the eleventh century Onjōji had become a powerful Tendai institution in its own right, and it was equipped

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esotericism with the theory of Five Agents 五行説, and it has been widely cited as an example of Sino-Indian syncretic thought. However, Chen Jinhua suggests that this is the first of three apocryphal texts (T. 905, 906, and 907) fabricated in the inner circles of Japanese Tendai, perhaps by Annen 安然 (841–880), to bolster the esoteric credentials of Saichō. See Chen 1998: 21-76.

[265] *Onjōji denki* 58-9.

[266] Hyǒnch'o was a Korean disciple of Śubhakarasiṃha (Ch. Shanwuwei 善無畏 637–735). He had Huiguo 惠果 (746–806) as his disciple, and Kūkai (774–835) studied under Huiguo.

[267] The monk who requested the ordination platform in the fourth century was Henben 顕弁 (1269–1331). Nagai 2006: 484-85.

with its own set of cultic practices, legends, rituals, and political ties to the court. Its attempts to divorce itself from Enryakuji can therefore be seen as a success, even though Onjōji did not come out of the conflict unscarred. Nonetheless, Shinra Myōjin's presence had been a critical factor throughout the separation process. With the return of peace to Onjōji, the deity continued to develop and transformed into the main god of performing arts, including *waka*, *ennen*, and *matsuri*. I turn to these in the following section.

5. Shinra Myōjin in the Performative Tradition of Onjōji

5.1. Shinra Myōjin: The *waka* deity of Onjōji

By the late Heian period, aristocrats had taken over a majority of the important ecclesiastical positions in Buddhist institutions. Many high-ranking monks were from the imperial family or the aristocracy. As literary accomplishment increasingly became the basis for recognition and advancement at court, composing Japanese poems (Jp. *waka* 和歌) became an important and commonly cultivated skill. Aristocratic culture accordingly infiltrated the Buddhist temple, and *waka* competitions involving both monks and aristocrats became a familiar scene in Buddhist temples. It was not, however, a direct or easy process. As Mujū explains in the chapter "The profound reason for the way of poetry" in his *Shasekishū, waka* was perceived as a means to reveal one's religious realization.[268] Although participation in poetic composition or other artistic performances by monks and nuns was criticized as ensnaring them in the realm of the senses and the worldly quest for literary fame, these activities were also seen as being compatible with the

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[268] Morrell 1985: 163.

Tendai School's teachings about non-duality. As such, poetry, literature, and performing arts were also recognized as paths leading towards spiritual attainment. It was the same at Onjōji.

Among the various art forms, *waka* poetry was the ultimate expression of sacred words in the regulated exchange between the visible and invisible worlds. Because of the esoteric Buddhist emphasis on the power of language, *waka* were widely accepted by the early Kamakura period in connection with Esoteric Buddhism.[269] At Onjōji, Shinra Myōjin was transformed into the patron deity of *waka*, ensuring one's spiritual inspiration and success at temple competitions. This new development suggests that the deity's efficacy extended to the world of literature. Shinra Myōjin's shrine began to serve as a *waka* competition venue as well. Onjōji's temple chronicles preserve examples of *waka* poems that were presented at the competition held on the fifteenth day of the eighth month in 1176 (Jōho 承保 3).[270] Even outside the temple compounds, Onjōji was famous for its *waka* poets. For example, Gyōson 行尊 (1057–1135), the Tendai *zasu* of Onjōji, was well known as both a *waka* poet and a devotee of Shinra Myōjin.[271] In fact, the god had a double role in the *waka* practices at Onjōji: he was the patron of *waka* and a *waka* poet himself. Shinra Myōjin was not only the *waka* patron deity at Onjōji, he was also purported to use *waka* as a way of delivering his divine messages to his devotees and answering monks' prayers in poetic form.[272]

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[269] Klein 2002. For a discussion of poems as valued and prestigious items of writing, see Lurie 2011: 254-311.

[270] Fujiwara Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114−1201), one of the most influential *waka* poets of the time also attended the competition as a judge. On the *waka* competition at the Shinra shrine and the body of *waka* presented at the competition, see *Jimon denki horoku* 126-32. Also see *Shinra ryakki* 337-39.

[271] *Onjōji denki* 95.

[272] *Jimon denki horoku* 119.

Although Shinra Myōjin was the *waka* deity at Onjōji, Sumiyoshi Myōjin 住吉明神 has traditionally been better known as the patron deity of *waka*. One of the reasons for Shinra Myōjin becoming a *waka* deity at Onjōji may his portrayal as an old man. This attribute can be seen in the story where the monk Kaikaku 快學 (d.u.) dreamed that Shinra Myōjin appeared as an old man and gave him guidance in anticipation of a competition in 1076 that he went on to win.[273] This resulted in Shinra Myōjin receiving the byname "Poetic Immortal of Miidera (Mii no kassen 三井の歌仙)."[274] There is also evidence that Sumiyoshi and Shinra Myōjin merged (or were conflated) at some point. In the *Kokon chōmonjū* 古今著聞集, for instance, the old man with a white beard whom Enchin meets on his way back from China to Japan is identified as Sumiyoshi Myōjin, not Shinra Myōjin.[275] Both being seafaring deities and appearing as old men, Shinra Myōjin and Sumiyoshi might have been perceived as interchangeable in the Onjōji tradition.[276]

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[273] *Jimon denki horoku* 125-32.

[274] *Onjōji denki* 92.

[275] The deity also appears in the *Genpei jōsuiki*, again as an old man dressed in a red robe. In the *Akoneura kuden* 阿古根浦口伝, Sumiyoshi appears as an 80-year-old man in a red robe. In another text, the *Sangoki* 三五記, the deity appears wearing a red color silk hat. His acolyte is often described wearing a red robe. The color red symbolizes something very auspicious, which has an exorcistic effect against evil spirits or contamination. See Kim, Hyŏn-uk 2008: 51-2.

[276] Christine Guth speculates that Shinra Myōjin's portrayal as a Chinese literatus in the typical visual representation of the deity is related to his role as the *waka* deity of Onjōji. She further thinks that Shinra Myōjin's personification of a Chinese literatus was parallel to or even was influenced by other deities, such as Kitano Tenjin 北野天神, the deified form of Fujiwara no Michizane, who also came to be identified as a patron saint of poetry and was represented in the guise of a Chinese scholar. How the association was made is not clear but his image as both a Chinese literatus and an immortal must have helped shaping his new role as a *waka* deity at Onjōji. Guth 1999: 116-18.

The *waka* deity aspect of Shinra Myōjin was related to a broader reinterpretation of *waka* in esoteric Buddhist circles that began in the late Heian period with the *waka-dhāraṇī* theory.[277] As shown in the preface of the *Kokin waka shū* 古今和歌集 (*Collection of Waka, Old and New*; 905), a Heian period imperial collection of poetry, *waka* poetics initially contained a nativist discourse that stressed the inherent value of things that were uniquely Japanese and they promoted its purported divine origins. However, the idea that *waka* were the Japanese equivalent of Buddhist *dhāraṇī* gained widespread currency in medieval Japan.[278] The backdrop of this interpretation involved a larger discourse among religious elites trying to explain the origin/creation of Japan—and the inherent issues related to royal authority and legitimacy—with various theories and mythological discourses within the context of a Shinto-Buddhist vision.[279] At the intersection of the literary and religious realms, *waka* poetry was understood as a uniquely Japanese expression of the universal Buddhist teaching. The *waka-dhāraṇī* theory started with the inquiry into the origin of *waka* in Japan during the Insei period, as found for instance in the *Nihongi kyōen waka* 日本紀竟宴和歌 (943).[280] By the thirteenth century, the idea had been elaborated on using the principles of Chinese music theory and esoteric Buddhist doctrines related to medieval Buddhist-Shinto syncretism.

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[277] For more on *waka-dharani* theory, see Kimbrough 2005: 4-11

[278] *Dhāraṇī* were widely employed in Japan at least by the early eighth century. The Ritsuryō code of 718, for example, permits the chanting of *dhāraṇī* for medical purposes. See Abé 1999: 161-62. In the Heian and medieval periods, *dhāraṇī* were reputed for their ability to ward of demons. *Dhāraṇī* consist of indecipherable phonic fragments, and are invariably transliterated from the Sanskrit. Their incomprehensibility allowed *dharani* to alter into superlative signs, that express the spiritual power contained within words, but it also refers to the notion that spiritual power can be manifested through the intonation of words.

[279] Iyanaga 1998 (vol. 105): 36.

[280] After the lectures on the *Nihon shoki* (Jp. *nihongi kōen* 日本紀講筵) at court, poems related to the *Nihon shoki* were composed around topics such as kami, kings, aristocrats, etc. Some of them were compiled and titled '*Nihongi kyōen waka.*'

The *waka-dhāraṇī* theory was closely related to a growing proto-nationalistic tendency based on the notion that Japan was the divine country (Jp. *shinkoku* 神国) and the theory of a Buddhist transmission through the Three Kingdoms (Jp. *sangoku bukkyō shikan* 三国仏教史観). The prevalent worldview formed within Japan at this time insidiously disrupted the historical order of Buddhism's transmission, and skillfully erased both Silla's role in the process as well as any Buddhist elements that had been imported from the Korean Peninsula. In this context, Susanoo's Korean connections were forgotten and he was reimagined as being a particularly archetypical Japanese deity. As such, he was identified as the creator of this fundamental expression of Japanese culture, the *waka*. This idea can be seen in the *Shasekishū*. Mujū, who was a member of a monastic lineage originating at Onjōji, writes that in the *Kojiki* Susanoo composed a poem when he built a palace for his bride Princess Kushinada 奇稲田姫 and that this poem came to be understood as the first *waka*. According to the *Shasekishū*:

> The gods of our country are the traces of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. They are each but one of many expedient manifestations. With his 'eight-fold fence of Izumo,' Susano'o-no-mikoto originated the composition of verse in thirty-one syllables. It was no different than the words of the Buddha. The *dhāraṇī* of India are simply in the language of that country's people. Using the language of India, the Buddha expounded *dhāraṇī*. This is why the Master Yixing wrote in his Commentary on the *Dainich Sūtra* that: "The words of the various lands are all *dhāraṇī*." If the Buddha were to appear in our country, he would surely expound *dhāraṇī* in Japanese.[281]

This identification of Susanoo as the first *waka* composer is significant because Shinra Myōjin is identified as Susanoo at Onjōji. As stated previously, both have clear connections with *waka* poetry: Susanoo as the first *waka* composer and Shinra Myōjin as the patron deity of *waka*. While there were a number of aspects involved with the association between the cults of Shinra

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[281] *NKBT* 85:222-23. See Morrell 1985:163-64.

Myōjin and Susanoo, this particular *waka* connection demonstrates how one mythic association creates a new mythic account. We also see how those associations are translated into the tangible form of a cult.

Shinra Myōjin's new identity as patron deity of *waka* developed in parallel with the development of the *waka-dhāraṇī* theory. This theory was influenced by a growing Japan-centered consciousness and further reinforced by the prevalent eschatological concern that the world was in an age of decline (Jp. *mappō* 末法), a notion easily supported by the political havoc surrounding both the capital and temple complexes. Interestingly, although Japan's origin story claims that the country was specially chosen by the *kami*, the very notion of *shinkoku* paradoxically reveals that medieval theorists could not extricate themselves from a deeply-rooted anxiety and a sense of peripherality. In this regard, the rise of Shinra Myōjin and his association with Susanoo was one way to respond to this growing anxiety. Shinra Myōjin's transformation into a *waka* deity reveals the paradoxical nature of a deity caught between the foreign (Silla) and the local (Japan) as well as the tension caused by the attempt to promote the foreign elements as the heart of an innate Japanese culture.

5.2. Other Major Performances at the Shinra Shrine

Several events were held either inside or in front of the Shinra Myōjin shrine in order to demonstrate the power and efficacy of this god. Onjōji set up a series of doctrinal debates (Jp. *banrongi* 番論義) between monks as well as a lecture series on several Buddhist texts.[282] The

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[282] Matsuo 1997: 35-6.

assembly on the *Daihannya-kyō* 大般若経 (Skt. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*) was particularly

important, and it was held four times a year. All Onjōji monks gathered together to recite the

sūtra aloud. Given the fact that Shinra Myōjin's *honji*, Monju, is the bodhisattva of wisdom and

that one of Shinra Myōjin's acolytes is also called Hannya 般若, it is not difficult to imagine that

the *Daihannya-kyō* assembly must have been a significant event for the Shinra Myōjin devotees.

Other gatherings held at the Shinra shrine include the Equinox Assemblies (Jp. *Higan-e* 彼岸会)

and the Thirty Lectures of the Shinra Shrine (Jp. *Shinra sanjūkō* 新羅三十講).[283] This lecture

series was initiated in 1202 by Onjōji student monks. An invocation ritual called *Shinra nenbutsu*

新羅念仏 was also carried out from 1109 onward.[284] Although the details of the ritual are not

known, it is very possible that it consisted of the recitation of the name of Shinra Myōjin in order

to invoke the deity's secret power.[285]

Shinra Myōjin's shrine also served as a major ritual ground for the *ennen* 延年, a ritual

performance (Jp. *geinō* 芸能) popularly performed in the Kamakura period.[286] The ritual first

appears in the Heian period, often at temples in Nara such as Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji. By the

Kamakura period, Onjōji had become one of the major sites for the *ennen* performance.

Originally, *ennen* had been a reception held after several temple events and lectures, such as the

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[283] The etymology of *higan* is "the other shore (of Sanzu River)," which is a common euphemism used in Buddhist literature to refer to Enlightenment. It is unknown when the assembly was held at Onjōji; it is usually it is held during both the spring and autumnal equinoxes in nearly every sect of Japanese Buddhism.

[284] *Jimon denki horoku* 121.

[285] This could be the recitation (Jp. *nenbutsu*) of Amitāba as practiced at the Jōgyō zanmaidō 常行三昧堂 at Enryakuji. At Onjōji, however, there was also a Jōgyō zanmaidō. This Shinra *nenbutsu* is possibly related to *himitsu nenbutsu* 秘密念仏 given the contemporary popularity of the practice in the Shingon tradition. On the secret *nenbutsu* of Kakuban and his *Amida hishaku*, see Sanford 2003: 120-38.

[286] More discussion on *ennen*, see Matsuo 1997.

Yuima-e 維摩会 of Kōfukuji and the Seshin-kō 世親講 of Tōdaiji 東大寺. Student monks organized and participated in these *ennen*.[287] Compared to the *ennen* performed in Nara, though, the *ennen* ritual at Onjōji was a more elevated affair. Rather than being a reception after lectures, it was performed at a celebration ceremony for the inauguration of an abbot (Jp. *chōri* 長吏) and as part of an esoteric master's consecration ceremony. For example, Onjōji chronicles confirm that an *ennen* of magnificent scale was carried out at the *chōri* inauguration ceremony for Ninjo 仁助 (1214–1262) in 1246.[288]

[Fig. 4. Shinra Myōjin shrine in the Onjōji old map, 14th C., Onjōji, Shiga]

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[287] Matsuo 1989: 9.

[288] Matsuo 1997: 393.

At Onjōji, the *ennen* was frequently performed at the Shinra shrine, and the numbers of *ennen* rituals performed at that shrine greatly outnumbered rituals done at other places.[289] This suggests that Shinra Myōjin played the role of protector of both the ritual and *geinō* at Onjōji. However, it is noteworthy that those rituals' performance was highly politicized as well. They provided an opportunity to exhibit the power of the monks and also functioned as political demonstrations. This latter aspect was particularly true in the case of Enryakuji monks regarding the conflict between the Sanmon and the Jimon over the establishment of an independent ordination platform at Onjōji. In protest to the court, the Sanmon monks marched into the capital carrying their *mikoshi*. The Jimon also displayed their military might by deploying armed monks in an *ennen* performance in order to protect Go-Shirakawa during an attempted visit to Onjōji in 1161.[290]

Shinra Myōjin's role as guardian for Onjōji's *ennen* further illuminates how Onjōji's political and institutional ties with the major temples in Nara were translated into mythological ideas and ritual practices. For instance, according to the *Jitokushū* (1344), three figures are mentioned as being Shinra Myōjin's *honji*: Monju, Yuima, and Sonjōō. Referring to Yuima, the text explains, "If the statue of Shinra Myōjin was lost, one should make one modeling Kamatari's representation to replace it."[291] Kuroda Satoshi argues that the association between Shinra Myōjin and Kamatari reflects a close institutional tie between Onjōji and Kōfukuji during the Kamakura period.[292] To compete with the Sanmon, Onjōji sought alliances with major

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[289] Matsuo 1997: 395.

[290] Matsuo 1997: 168-69.

[291] *Jitokushū* 18.

[292] Satoshi 2007: 278-82.

temples in Nara such as Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji. Shinra Myōjin's new role as an *ennen* deity at Onjōji could therefore be best understood as part of this network connecting Onjōji, Kōfukuji, and Tōdaiji; Shinra Myōjin's growth can also be seen as part of Onjōji's strategic development of its own identity in competition and collaboration with these temples.

5.2.1. The Shinra Myōjin Festival

The annual festival of Shinra Myōjin (Jp. Shinra Myōjin *matsuri* or *sairei* 祭礼) was one of the largest-scale public rituals occurring between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries at Onjōji.[293] The Onjōji abbot Myōson 明尊 (971–1063) of Enman'in 円満院 first organized the ceremony in 1052 (Eishō 永承 7).[294] The parade included gaudily dressed *chigo* and a portable shrine (Jp. *mikoshi* 神輿). At the ceremony, one thousand swords were offered to the deity. It is not clear why one thousand swords became an offering to the deity. But the number and the sword represent how powerful the deity was.

The *Onjōji denki* and the *Jimon denki horoku* provide a different description of this affair, though. In the former, the offering is described as following the custom of an unspecified foreign country—possibly meaning Silla. In the latter, the compiler Shikō 志晃 reasons that the ritual was not necessarily of foreign origin, given that there was already a Japanese precedent for offering swords to a deity.[295] In this case, the giving of swords to Shinra Myōjin may have

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[293] In 1052, 1125, 1154, and 1210. For the full description of the 1210 *matsuri*, see *Jimon denki horoku* 117-118. There is no record of matsuri after 1210. However, from the late-thirteenth century onward, a ritual for Hachiman was restored. Matsuo 1997: 396-97.

[294] *Onjōji denki* 95; *Jimon denki horoku* 117.

[295] Ibid.

developed on account of his association with Susanoo. The shift of interpretation between the two temple chronicles is significant in that Shinra Myōjin's foreignness becomes more neutral between the eleventh century and the fifteenth centuries, while his internalization as a Japanese deity is emphasized by linking him with Susanoo.

While rituals for Shinra Myōjin were initially limited to a small number of high-ranking monks, audiences eventually came to include a variety of social groups spanning from eminent clerics to Onjōji's lay neighbors. The *matsuri*'s importance as a public event indicates the growing popularity and recognition of Shinra Myōjin in the medieval period, both among Onjōji monks and outside of the monastery. The ceremony held in 1210 was particularly ostentatious and included eleven portable shrines. It was organized by the Onjōji *chōri*, Kōin 公胤 (1145–1216) of Myōō-in 明王院. People wearing lion masks proceeded at the head of the parade, followed by two groups of eight *chigo* impersonating Princess Kushinada and Susanoo, respectively. The *chigo* dressed as Princess Kushinada wore red pants (*hakama* 袴), and their hair was adorned in the Tang style with a sacred comb (*yutsutsumagushi* 湯津爪櫛) as a crown ornament on the top. The other *chigo* dressed as Susanoo wore ceremonial dress (Jp. *suikan* 水干),[296] a black-lacquered headpiece (*kazaori* 風折), and carried a sword in their belt. That sword was supposed to be Susanoo's Totsuka no tsurugi 十握剣 (sometimes written as 十拳剣). Next, the Onjōji *chōri* followed the parade along with other high-ranking officials. After them came the *mikoshi*, then dignitaries, followed by five hundred monks and hundreds of servants of the

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[296] This is a kind of *kariginu* 狩衣, an informal cloth worn by the nobility from the Heian period onwards. See the visual example of *dōji* in *suikan* in the *Illustrated Biography of Hōnen Shonin* (Jp. *Hōnen Shōnin e-den* 法然上人絵伝).

high officials. The *matsuri* of that year was held for two days. On the second day, a ceremony started with the dance of *dōji* in front of the Shinra shrine. It was believed that Shinra Myōjin, being greatly pleased, gave an oracle to reciprocate.[297] Although the *matsuri* served religious functions, the grand scale of the parade was certainly also intended to be a display of power that would assure the shrine's religio-political authority.

5.2.2. *Dōji* of the Shinra Myōjin *Matsuri*

In the Shinra Myōjin *matsuri* of 1210, "the most magnificent spectacle was that of the flashily decorated *dōji*."[298] The *dōji* dancers (Jp. *budō* 舞童) who participated in that year's *matsuri* became so famous that they were later invited to a similar ceremony at Kōfukuji.[299] *Dōji* played an essential role in various temple events including *matsuri*, artistic performances, and rituals. Their prominence was connected to a long-standing religious tradition shared by both Buddhism and Daoism, based on a belief in "divinely inspired children."[300] The *dōji* appearance was one of the popular forms that *kami* borrowed in order to manifest themselves in this world.[301] *Dōji*, along with women and old men, were socially marginal beings.[302] Yet, this very view of

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[297] *Jimon denki horoku* 118.

[298] *Onjōji denki* 95.

[299] Matsuo 1997: 396.

[300] Strickmann 2002: 227.

[301] Tanaka 1995: 205.

[302] It is also noteworthy that there were weveral sub-categories of child or "*dō* 童" in medieval society, differentiated by role. On this, see Niunoya 1997: 463-64. For more on *dōji*, see Niunoya 1997: 481-82.

otherness imposed by the complete humans (the male adults) allowed the youth to function as intermediary beings linking *kami* and humans.

The significance of *dōji* in the procession of the Shinra Myōjin *matsuri* lies in their role as mediums between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo. A close examination of the *matsuri* reveals the exchange and extension of identities between Shinra Myōjin and his *dōji*. The female and male youths in the *matsuri* parade suggests that the two *dōji* of Shinra Myōjin, Hannya 般若 and Shukuō 宿王, at one time may have been perceived as male and female, respectively.[303] Different explanations on the two coexist. In one account, the two are said to have accompanied Shinra Myōjin from the kingdom of Silla.[304] In another place, they are said to have been born from Susanoo's halberd, given to him by Amaterasu.[305] Regardless of which story carried greater currency, the two *dōji* played a significant role as protectors of Onjōji and its monks. According to the *Shinra ryakki*, Shinra Myōjin makes sure that his emissaries Hannya and Shukuō protect those who enter (or who will enter) Miidera and become disciples of Enchin from the point of conception in the womb.[306] The idea that *dōji* protect even anticipatory monks was a powerful notion because it suggests that Shinra Myōjin's hidden but crucial role as a *kushōjin* 倶生神, a

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[303] The two are also interpreted as Buddhist ideals. There are two *dōji* on [the deity's] right and left side. [One of them], Hannya or Wisdom, has Mañjuśrī as *honji*. [The other] Shukuō, or Correct Virtue, has Samantabhadra as *honji*. Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī correspond to meditation and wisdom respectively. It is for that reason that Kongō Hanya (diamond *prajñā*) corresponds to Mañjuśrī's wisdom, whereas Hannya haramitsuzō (*prajñā pāramitāgarbha*) corersponds to Mañjuśrī's assembly. *Onjōji denki* 59.

[304] *Shinra ryakki* 324.

[305] *Shinra ryakki* 325.

[306] *Onjōji denki* 72; *Shinra Myōjin ryakki* 325.

deity who is born at the same time as the individual.[307] Based on their primordial tie, the identities of the *dōji* and monks could be interchangeable due in part to their shared roles as servant and protector of the temple's main divinity.

The spiritual ties between Shinra Myōjin and his two *dōji* were further translated into the sacred topography of Onjōji. As we can confirm from an old map of the temple dated to the fourteenth century, in the northern quarter of the Onjōji complex, two oratories dedicated to Hannya and Shukuō flank the deity's shrine. As with the deity's painted representation, the shrines of Hannya and Shukuō are respectively on the eastern and western sides of Shinra Myōjin's shrine.

6. Orthodoxy, Efficacy, and Centrality

6.1. From the Non-canonical to the Canonical Deity

It is important to note that Shinra Myōjin is not what we might call a "canonical deity," since he is not mentioned in fundamental or foundational Buddhist texts. Although he could not be given the status of *kami* or Buddhist protective deity, his Onjōji followers were interested in incorporating him into the Buddhist network. In the medieval *honji suijaku* framework, Shinra Myōjin came to be associated with other powerful Buddhist divinities that were particularly treasured in the Tendai tradition, such as Mañjuśri and Benzaiten. The *Onjōji denki* states that

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[307] For instance, Kasuga Myōjin 春日明神 told in an oracle to Myōe 明恵: "I have been protecting you since you were in your mother's womb." Tyler, 1990:122-23. For more on the discussion on *kushōjin* see Faure 2015 (forthcoming).

the *honji* of Shinra Myōjin is Monju 文殊 (Skt. Mañjuśrī).[308] This is significant because this

Buddhist association allowed Shinra Myōjin to transform into an orthodox Buddhist deity. It was

arguably Ennin who first invoked Mañjuśri at Mt. Wutai 五台 in China, and who introduced the

esoteric cult of Mañjuśri to Japan.[309] However, Onjōji sources assert that it was not Ennin but

rather Enchin who did these things, arguing that Enchin was the one who brought the "authentic"

Mañjuśri cult back to Japan.[310] Shinra Myōjin's association with Mañjuśri in fact resulted from

Onjōji's attempt to appropriate the cult of Mañjuśri in order to prove its own authenticity.

In the esotericization of Tendai Buddhism, Mañjuśri conferred Buddhist legitimacy to

other deities in the esoteric Buddhist pantheon. For example, Mañjuśri was also worshipped as

the *honji* of Dakiniten 荼枳尼天.[311] Although it is very possible that this Mañjuśri connection is

what brought Dakiniten and Shinra Myōjin together, the *Keiran shūyōshū,* a Hieizan source, also

links Shinra Myōjin with Dakiniten.[312] Both Dakiniten and Shinra Myōjin were secret objects of

worship at Onjōji because their rituals developed around the protection of kingship. The

Dakiniten ritual was a heterodox ritual used in enthronement ceremonies, and the ritual of

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[308] *Onjōji denki* 72.

[309] Among the new rituals Ennin brought back from Tang China were the 'Eight-syllable rite for Mañjuśrī (*Monju hachiji hō* 八字法), first used in Japan when Ninmyō Tennō fell ill in 850; it became the central Tendai rite for protection of the ruler and the state.

[310] For instance, the *Onjōji denki* explains the strong relation between Enchin and Monju. "The Sutra [*the Monju senbachi kyō*] was transmitted from the Indian master, Chierin 智恵輪 when the great patriarch [Enchin] went to Tang China (858). When the master was returning to Japan, at the place where he stayed, he had to return before finishing the translation. When Jōnin ajari (1011–1081) went to Tang China, he knew the intention of master Enchin, and brought the sutra, Senbachikyō (in ten scrolls) to Tōin at Miidera, as well as other sutras such as the *Gotaizan-ki*, the *Daruma kechimyaku-ron* 達磨血脈論, and the *Kōshinkyō fukujōi.*" *Onjoji denki* 58.

[311] However, as Yamamoto pointed out, this assimilation with Dakini is not found in the Onjōji records, and even in the names or *kenzoku* of Shinra Myōjin, we cannot find the name "Shinko 辰狐." This is probably because it was seen as a heterodox belief, which was quickly excluded and forgotten, and its fragment only remained in Hieizan sources. Yamamoto 1998a: 84.

[312] T. 76, 2410: 853.

Sonjōō—a deity identified with Shinra Myōjin—was an astral ritual performed for the protection of the sovereign; this latter ritual thrived during the Insei period.[313]

Another significant Buddhist development around Shinra Myōjin is his association with the dragon-goddess Benzaiten 弁財天, which points to Shinra Myōjin's ophidian nature. Given the Tendai interest in the cult of Benzaiten, this association is not surprising. However, what is interesting is the way in which Shinra Myōjin joined the network of canonical and popular divinities in the esoteric pantheon. As we see below, Itsukushima Myōjin 厳島明神, who is none other than Benzaiten, gave an oracle confirming her blood ties with Shinra Myōjin.[314]

> I am Toyotama hime 豊玉姫, the second princess daughter of the king Sāgara. My *honji* is Dainichi 大日 of the Taizōkai 胎藏界 (the Womb Realm). I am also the older sister of Shōjō kōsei bosatsu 清浄光世菩薩. In the Devadatta chapter of the *Lotus sutra*, I became a Buddha in this very body immediately in the world of purity. I was called 'Fugen Nyorai 普賢如来.' My younger brother came here to protect the dharma of Miidera. His name is Shinra Myōjin.[315]

The two deities were closely connected and, at one point, even merged into one. Another passage from the *Onjōji denki* notes that: "Benzaiten is one of the manifestations of Shinra Myōjin when he resided in India as a protector of Buddhist monasteries (Jp. *garan* 伽藍) during Śākyamuni's time."[316] The cult of Benzaiten, as popularized on Mt. Hiei, was important at Onjōji. This is

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[313] Note that Sumiyoshi's *honji* is also Monju.

[314] The main deities at the Itsukushima shrine are three goddesses of Munakata (Jp. 宗像三女神 Munakata sanjojin). As in the *Kojiki*, these three goddesses are also said to be the three daughters of Susanoo. In the medieval period, the three deities came to be associated with Benzaiten.

[315] *Onjōji denki* 58-59.

[316] *Onjōji denki* 59.

demonstrated by the fact that Onjōji was a home for the blind-monk (Jp. *mōsō* 盲僧) cult of Benzaiten.[317]

According to the Onjōji tradition, Shinra Myōjin is the third son of King Sāgara 娑竭羅 (Skt. *Sāgaranāgarāja*), which makes him the brother of the *nāga*-girl of the *Lotus Sutra* and reinforces his association with Benzaiten.[318] Although the pairing of eminent monks (in Shinra Myōjin's case, Enchin) with dragons as their protectors is a relatively common motif, it is not clear under what circumstances and when the dragon association was originally made.[319] And yet, King Sāgara still constitutes an important mythic element in the later evolvement of Shinra Myōjin. We can see its significance in particular in reference to Gōzu Tennō, who later was identified with Shinra Myōjin and who was said to have married the daughter of King Sāgara. The most distant yet obvious association between Shinra Myōjin and Benzaiten is found in the legend of the Tendai master Enchin:

> While Enchin was in Tang China, he visited Mt. Song. When he prayed at the Shinra Myōjin shrine, all the trees suddenly collapsed under torrential rain and a windstorm, streams flew backward, and lightening flashed in the sky. In this impenetrable darkness, a strange-looking being— with the body of a snake and a human head— suddenly appeared to the master. Pursuing him, the furious looking creature called out to the master. … In time, the wind and rain stopped, and the mountain became calm again. The angry creature transformed itself into…an old man with white hear and a wrinkled face, holding a staff.[320]

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[317] Ōmori 2010: 62-82; Faure 2013: 171-94.

[318] *Shinra Myōjinki* 84.

[319] One possible answer is that dragon cults ensured the safe sea travel of eminent monks. As Ennin's record exemplifies, Buddhist monks' major role as passengers on boats was to secure the power of the dragon, and dragons as companions to eminent monks travelling to China was a well-known theme in medieval Japan, as in Myōe's worship of Zenmyō 善妙. For more on Myōe's Zennyō cult, see Faure 2007.

[320] *Jimon denki horoku* 109.

In this story, a peculiar creature reminiscent of Ugajin 宇賀神, an ophidian deity associated with Benzaiten, turns out to be an avatar of Shinra Myōjin. Although the focus of the legend is on the eccentric appearance of the deity and his old man aspect, the usual representation of Ugajin—with the body of a snake and the head of a bearded old man—clearly suggests that Shinra Myōjin is none other than Ugajin. This connection once again confirms his kinship with Benzaiten (in her form known as Uga Benzaiten.[321]

6.2. Ritual Efficacy of Shinra Myōjin

Miracle stories about Shinra Myōjin attest to this deity's popularity and perceived power. The story of Taira no Masakado 平将門 (? −940) is a good example. When the rebellion occurred, Myōtatsu 明達 (877−955) performed a quelling rite at the court's request. Afterward, he went to pray at the Shinra Myōjin shrine. Myōtatsu's prayer was answered the very same day: Masakado was caught, and his rebellion faltered.[322]

At Onjōji, Shinra Myōjin was perceived as a multifaceted deity who guaranteed tangible benefits to his followers, including the birth of a son, longevity, safe passage to China, and good harvests. All of these benefits are described in the *Abbreviated Record of Silla* (Jp. *Shinra ryakki* 新羅略記). Significantly, in these accounts the deity communicates with his devotee through dream visions. For instance, a story tells of a Fujiwara woman who became pregnant when she dreamed that she received a sword from Shinra Myōjin's two *dōji*.[323] Another story further

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[321] For more on Ugajin and Uga Benzaiten, see Faure 2014 (forthcoming).

[322] *Onjōji denki* 86.

[323] *Shinra ryakki* 347.

confirm the deity's association with bestowing a son, as well as his function as a deity of the placenta. One day a woman of the Ōtomo family dreamed about the deity. In her dream, the deity put a sword into her mouth and the woman became pregnant. After her child grew up, he became the priest of the shrine.[324]

Many of Shinra Myōjin's miracle stories concern his bestowal of benefits on Onjōji monks, which confirms his inseparable tie with Onjōji clerics. Bōkaku's 房覚 story is a good example. After the monk visited the Shinra shrine and offered flowers in 1153, he dreamed of receiving a gold coin from the deity. Sure enough, Bōkaku eventually became the chief abbot.[325] There are several other examples of monks who achieved longevity by paying visits to Shinra Myōjin: Myōchi 明智, Nōchin 能珍, and Ensō 円総, all of whom had dream visions wherein Shinra Myōjin promised them longevity.[326] Another example is the Onjōji monk Jōjin 成尋, whose prayers to Shinra Myōjin are said to have allowed him to safely make a journey to China.

Conversely, Shinra Myōjin could also cause sickness, as we saw in the stories about Emperors Shirakawa and Nijō. At the same time, though, he could cure these diseases, and this led to the circulation of legends about his healing power.[327] For instance, when the emperor fell sick in 1184, Shinra Myōjin expelled all the disease demons. In another example, Zen'in 禅仁 cured the son of Hyakusaibō 百災房 with the help of Shinra Myōjin's two acolytes, Hannya and Shukō. Again, when the daughter of a minister who lived in the Shirakawa 白川 area was

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[324] *Shinra ryakki* 348.

[325] *Onjōji denki* 74.

[326] Myōchi lived up to 82, and Nōchin died at the age of 88.

[327] For the more discussions on the epidemic god aspect of Shinra Myōjin in relation to his foreign identity, see chapter 3.

afflicted with a severe skin disease (Jp. *kasa* 瘡 or pustule), she was cured after following Shinra Myōjin's instructions. The god manifested himself to her and advised her to use the water from the Onjōji well to be healed. When Jigobō 慈護房 fell sick in 1234, he was cured after his visit to the Shinra Myōjin shrine. Sometimes auspicious offerings were made to Shinra Myōjin to please him. An example of this is a blue bird and a horse that were offered to the god when the brother of Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–1358) fell ill. Following this offering, he was miraculously cured.

These miracle tales as well as Shinra Myōjin's connections with major Tendai Buddhist deities indicate how central this deity was to Onjōji. A close examination of the ritual offerings to Shinra Myōjin reinforces this point. According to the *Onjōji denki*, along with flowers, two dishes cooked on a pure fire (Jp. *jōka* 浄火) were offered at the altar of Shinra Myōjin. Other deities at Onjōji received only one dish. These deities, which appear in the Mii Mandala 三井曼荼羅, include Shinra Myōjin's two acolytes (Hannya and Shukuō), Chishō daishi (Enchin), Sannō, Takebe 建部 (the highest ranking shrine or *Ichi no miya* 一宮 in Ōmi),[328] Itsukushima 厳島 (Shinra Myōjin's sister, Benzaiten), Hiroda 広田 (King Sagara, the father of Shinra Myōjin and of the Itsukushima deity), and Hi no miko 火御子.[329]

The fact that Shinra Myōjin received more ritual care than Enchin, the temple's founder, on the ritual altar at Onjōji shows how important the deity was perceived to be. Other than Shinra

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[328] The Takebe shrine received imperial patronage during the early Heian period. This shrine was also associated with the Minamoto clan after Minamoto no Yoritomo's visit. Yoritomo's prayer for the revival of the Minamoto clan was eventually fulfilled and the shrine received more recognition in the Kamakura period, although it failed to prosper during the Sengoku period.

[329] *Shinra ryaki* 327-30.

Myōjin and those minor deities listed above, Enchin arguably initiated other Onjōji-specialized

cults, such as those of the Golden Fudō (Jp. Ki-Fudō 黄不動) and Sonjōō. And yet, no other

deity was as powerful and as important as Shinra Myōjin.

7. Another "Double": Sonjōō and Shinra Myōjin

7.1. Onjōji's Star Deity

In both the *Onjōjidenki* and the *Shinra Myōjin mondō shō yō kunsho* (1344), Shinra Myōjin is

said to have come to Japan to protect the Sonjōō ritual brought to Miidera by Enchin.[330] In the

Asabashō, Retired Emperor Toba had an offering to Myōken performed at Byōdōin by Uji

Nyūdō in order to cure an eye disease. At first, Shōshō from Enryakuji performed the rite, but

half-way through the emperor replaced it with a Sonjōō ritual conducted by a Onjōji monk. The

Sonjōō ritual was the most successful ritual invention in the history of Onjōji, and Shinra

Myōjin, while being identified with Sonjōō, also acted as the protector of the Sonjōō ritual.[331]

Shinra Myōjin's ritual identification with Sonjōō was an expression of his expansive

growth at Onjōji. The Onjōji monk Keiso prayed for Go-sanjō's recovery by offering an image

of Sonjōō and he also played an active role in promoting Shinra Myōjin. In fact, Sonjōō's rites

were secret rites of Onjōji and they were enacted for many different levels of protections and

healings: for protection of the state, for the cure of eye disease, and for easy childbirth. This

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[330] For a more detailed discussion of Sonjōō at Onjōji, see Misaki 1992: 226-61.

[331] For a more comprehensive study on Myōken see Faure 2014 (forthcoming). On the survey of studies on Myōken in Japanese scholarship, see Hirase 2014: 32, no. 1. Among the scholarship on Myōken, Chiba Myōken has been mostly studied since the 1970s. On the survey of the scholarship see Hirase 2014: 34, no. 37. The most recent and comprehensive study on the Chiba Myōken, see Marui 2013.

association helped both deities assume ultimate authority through mutual promotion.

During the late Heian period, when sub-branches or different sub-traditions of esoteric Buddhism began to flourish, new forms of divinities emerged in order to exhibit their superiority or uniqueness within the esoteric rituals. The Sonjōō ritual was one of them. The cult of the deity seems to have started in the tenth century. The earliest reference to the Sonjōō ritual dates from 1026, although the ritual came to prominence during the Insei period (1086–1192).[332] By the mid-eleventh century, even among other schools of Buddhism, the Sonjōō ritual was known as a unique Myōken ritual specific to Onjōji.[333] It became one of the new imperial rites, particularly efficient in preventing calamities and assuring longevity. In this ritual, Sonjōō represents not just the Pole Star but also the entire cosmos; the rite, accordingly, combines a multitude of celestial deities into a single visualization of Sonjōō.[334]

In the Buddho-Daoist macrocosmic and microcosmic worldview, astrological signs appearing in heaven had an organic relationship with human destiny and they governed one's entire life. In the imperial discourse, rites of the Northern Dipper (Jp. *hokuto* 北斗) corresponded to those of the *tennō*, and the star was venerated as being the *tennō* of the heavens. Thus, major esoteric institutions such as Onjōji and Enryakuji were vying for imperial support by demonstrating that they could control longevity. In this way, the rivalries between the Sanmon and the Jimon as well as between Tendai and Shingon were partially responsible for the emergence of Sonjōō at Onjōji. The Onjōji monk Yokei (or Yogyō 余慶 919–991) is said to have created the Sonjōō ritual, likely in opposition to the Sanmon tradition's stellar cult, the

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[332] Yamamoto 1998a: 83. Another periodization for the Insei period is 1050-1180. See Totman 2000: 87.

[333] Misaki 1992: 232.

[334] See the Sonjōō ritual offerings and arrangements, *Kakuzensho* T. Zuzō 5: 399.

Ritual of Blazing Lights (Jp. *shijōkō-hō* 熾盛光法).[335]

Misaki Ryōshū and other Japanese scholars suggest that the Sonjōō text and the name itself are Japanese inventions. Indeed, Sonjōō appears exclusively in the Onjōji tradition, and his iconographic depiction is unique compared to other star deities and mandalas. But, as part of Myōken cult, Onjōji's Sonjōō ritual points to a mythological connection to the Korean peninsula. The Myōken cult transmitted at the shrine in modern day Yatsushiro 八代 in Kumamoto 熊本 Prefecture in Kyūshū is a good example of this. It is not clear since when, but Yatsushiro Shrine claims that its Myōken deity was brought by a Paekche prince named Imsŏng 琳聖 (d.u.). This prince, very possibly the third son of King Sŏng 聖王 (r. 523–554), is also said to have brought another cult centered on the Daoist deity Chintaku Reifujin 鎮宅霊符神 to Japan.[336] Chintaku Reifujin is closely associated with seventy-two kinds of specific talismans closely connected to the stellar cult. Myōken and Chintaku Reifujin eventually merged.[337]

No historical records can confirm the story of the Paekche prince. In addition, the legend is only transmitted in the records of the Ōuchi 大内 clan, one of the clans powerful during the reign of the Ashikaga shogunate during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.[338] The clan's domain, ruled from the castle town of Yamaguchi 山口, comprised six provinces at the height of the family's power, and the Ōuchi played a major role in supporting the Ashikaga in the

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[335] The *Shijōkō hō* was designed to challenge the status of Kūkai's *Go shichinichi mishihō*.

[336] Prince Imsŏng has been venerated as the ancestral founder in the Ōuchi family, and there are several examples of his images left in Yamaguchi area. Hirase Naoki argues that the cult of Chintaku Reifujin started after the thirteenth century when Daoist ideas were reintroduced to Japan. Hirase 2014: 27.

[337] Yamagiwa 2007: 143-48.

[338] Note that it is also the Ashikaga shogunate who sponsored Onjōji during this time period.

Nanbokuchō wars against the imperial court. As for the clan's ancestor, they believed that after the prince settled in Japan, he received a Japanese family name from the court, Ōuchi. A Korean historical source confirms the clan's claim of the time. For instance, in 1453, Ōuchi people visited the Chosŏn court in search of their roots, and asked the court whether there were any written records of the prince's departure to Japan.[339]

This association between the Myōken cult and the Korean peninsula, although it is not directly related to Sonjōō, suggests that Sonjōō can be best understood in the wider cross-cultural context.[340] Although there are certain indigenous additions to his creation, the wider context of Sonjōō's emergence and his relations with Shinra Myōjin lead many to posit that, as with Shinra Myōjin, Sonjōō also helped Onjōji legitimize its position as the center of Tendai Esotericism. By actively adopting continental knowledge, Onjōji monks were able to invent a state-of-the-art imperial ritual.

Sonjōō is Onjōji's own version of an esoteric deity named Myōken, but its rituals created a highly complex combination of Buddhist and yin-yang technologies of longevity. According to the *Onjōji denki*:

> According to the [*Lotus*] *Sutra*, it says that Senju Kannon entered the ocean. The bodhisattva preached to the nāga girl and named her Bodhisattva Suisei 水精. The secret mantra of the Bodhisattva Suisei is (This is the very mantra of Kudokuten [i.e., Kichijōten]. This is also the mantra of Sonjōō): "Maka shiri-ei chiri-bei sowaka." The deity [Shinra Myōjin]'s *honji* is Mañjuśrī. He is the third prince of the nāga king Sāgara 娑竭羅, as well as the brother of the nāga-girl. This explains why Shinra Myōjin manifests him in the ritual of Sonjōō. It is for that reason that the master Enchin transmitted the ritual of Sonjōō…..

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[339] *Tanjong sillok* 6: 601. In 2012, the wooden statue of Prince Imsŏng from the Ōuchi family collection was first exhibited at the Kitakyushu Museum of Natural History and Human History, Japan.

[340] Misaki 1992: 230-31.

According to the opening chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is none other than the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. These two deities correspond to Shinra Myōjin and Sonjōō. When Shinra Myōjin and Sonjōō are together, Sonjōō becomes Kichijōten.[341] When [the two deities] are put back to back, the former corresponds to Senju Kannon and the latter corresponds to Bodhisattva Ten bōrin. Therefore the backside *mudrā* [for the deity] is the *mudrā* of the thousand hands. Since Shinra Myōjin holds a staff in his hand and Sonjōō, when it was put backside of Shinra Myōjin, it holds a staff as well.[342]

Shinra Myōjin was involved with the star worship on different levels, and his main role was that of a protective deity of the Sonjōō ritual. The *honzon* of the Sonjōō secret ritual is the Pole Star, whereas in other star rituals, such as the ritual of the Seven Stars (Jp. *hokuto gu* 北斗供), the *honzon* is one's own birth star (Jp. *honmyōshō* 本命星). The origin for this connection with the Pole Star remains unclear, and the Onjōji tradition attributes the ritual to Enchin, claiming that he brought it from Tang China. It was widely known in the medieval period that Enchin transmitted Sonjōō's ritual.

With the retired emperor's interests and attention, as well as the effort of Onjōji monks, the cult of Sonjōō became significant. We can identify at least two Sonjōō shrines at Onjōji. The first is the Hokuin no dō (the shrine of the Northern Quarter), which was founded in 1080 by Ryūmyō 隆明 (1020–1104) as the *goganji* of Shirakawa. The second is the Sonjōō hall in the

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[341] Śrī or Laksmi is the consort of Vishnu (Viṣṇu) in Hindu myths, the wife or sister of Bishamonten in Buddhist myths. In Japan, under the name, Kichijōten 吉祥天, she is worshiped as a goddess of fertility, fortune, luck, beauty, and merit; among some Japanese sects she was the central deity, but since the fifteenth or sixteenth century she has been largely supplanted by Benzaiten. In the *Konkōmyō saishōōkyō* 金光明最勝王経, she is associated with wealth and virtue. Japanese belief in Kichijōten spread during the Nara period, and her images —such as the sculptures at Tōdaiji 東大寺 (746), Saidaiji 西大寺, Houryūji 法隆寺 (748), and the painted portrait at Yakushiji 薬師寺 (ca.771)— were the main object of worship in the *kisshō keka* 吉祥悔過, or New Year's ceremony for welcoming good luck and sweeping out bad. In the Matrix Mandala (Taizōkai mandala 胎蔵界曼荼羅), Kichijōten appears as an attendant of Senju Kannon 千手観音 along with Basūsen 婆薮仙, and the *Darani Shūkyō* 陀羅尼集経 describes a Kichijōten mandala 吉祥天曼荼羅 which was used in an Esoteric Buddhist ritual to promote earthly happiness and welfare. Kichijōten is usually represented as a Tang-period court lady, wearing a richly embroidered gown and an elaborately jeweled head; dress. In the Onjōji tradition, Kichijōten is equated with Myōken as well.

[342] *Onjōji denki* 59.

Byōdōin 平等院, which was founded by order of Emperor Toba 鳥羽 (r. 1107–1123) at the Middle quarter (Jp. *chūin* 中院) in the temple complex. As with the Onjōji monk Raigo, Ryūmyō was also actively involved in promoting the issue of Onjōji's independent platform, and he was deeply involved with worship of Shinra Myōjin. Emperor Go-Shirakawa (r. 1155–1158) was a devotee of Onjōji, and, during a visit to the temple in 1161, he was noted to have prayed to the Sonjōō statue located in the Byōdōin after the building's restoration.

The first Sonjōō ritual was performed in 945 by the Tendai *zasu* Gikai 義海 (871–946), and it thrived during the eleventh century.[343] The princely priest En'e of Onjōji carried out the Sonjōō ritual sometime before the 1183 battle between the forces of Yoshinaka and Go-Shirakawa.[344] While the Shingon sect worshiped the bodhisattva Myōken, the esoteric tradition of Tendai combined the Pole Star and the buddha Ichiji kinrin 一字金輪 into the Sonjōō ritual. The Myōken section of the *Asabashō* explains that the ritual was affiliated with Onjōji. Regarding the relationship between the Northern Dipper and Sonjōō, we read in the *Onjōji denki,* "The Great Dipper is Sonjōō's lid. It circumambulates the Sonjō (the Pole star), not other stars; there is the sun, the moon and the star. They are called the Three Seals. The upper seal is Sonjōō. The middle is the sun, and the lower is the moon."[345] This ritual for the Pole Star, the king of the stars, not only affects an individual's fortune but also protects the nation.

The popularity of Shinra Myōjin and Sonjōō grew rapidly during the Insei period. The Onjōji monk Keiso, who prayed for Go-sanjō's recovery by offering an image of Sonjōō, played

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[343] Yamamoto 1998a: 82.

[344] *The Future and the Past* 139.

[345] *Onjōji denki* 79.

an active role in promoting Shinra Myōjin during this period. The Onjōji abbot Shinyo 心誉

(917–1029 Jissōbō 実相房) was a key proponent of the two cults. He was fundamental to the

Sonjōō cult's formation at Onjōji. According to the explanation preserved in the *Kakuzenshō,*

Sonjōō's visual depiction in Jissōbō's text was as follows: "The deity stands on a dragon and is

surrounded by a five-colored cloud."[346] This description corresponds with the image at Onjōji

now. The five-colored cloud—a significant Buddhist image—is particularly important here, as

its presence typically signifies longevity. As has been mentioned previously, longevity was the

primary objective of the Sonjōō ritual.

The *Secret Record of Treasure* (Jp. The *Hōhiki* 宝秘記; early Kamakura) is a significant

text on the Sonjōō ritual.[347] The text was compiled by Keihan 慶範 (1155–1221) and contains

the secret transmission of Sonjōō at Onjōji.[348] Keihan was originally from the Taira 平 clan, and

he was the first to establish an institutional tie between Onjōji and Nyōiji 如意寺.[349] This text is

important not only for its account of and references to the Sonjōō ritual but also because it

demonstrates that the Kujō family maintained a close relationship with Onjōji. The *Onjōji engi,*

discussed in the first chapter, was also found in the Kujō family archive. The fact that the Kujō

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[346] *Kakuzenshō*, T. Zuzō 5: 398.

[347] *Onjōji monjo* (vol. 7): 94-282.

[348] He appears in the *Jimon denki* as well. There is another Keihan 慶範 (997–1061) in Tendai, who is also known as Enjūbō 円融房. His master was Keimyō 慶明 of Enryakuji. He is also known as a *waka* poet. This later Keihan of Onjōji, however, was also a prominent monk. He transcribed another important text, the *Denshibyō kuden* 傳屍病口伝, or *Oral Transmission on Corpse-Vector Disease*, transcribed in 1173 (Shōan 承安 3). Keihan copied the text of Jōjōbō 乗乗房, also known as Raikaku 賴覺. The latter was an Onjōji monk, whose name appears on several colophons of late Heian period texts. On the study of this text, see Andrew Macomber, unpublished paper.

[349] After his and his successor's tenure as *bettō*, Nyōji became a sub-temple of Onjōji. (His successor was Enyi 円意.) Tachi argues that during the Kenpo era, when Onjōji was burnt down by Enryakuji monks, Keihan performed a *kanjō* ceremony at Nyōji, and this suggests that the temple replaced Onjōji for a while after the latter's destruction. Tachi 2010: 520-21.

family had the *engi* copied further links it to Onjoji. In 1218, Kōen 公縁 (1174–1261)—who became the Onjōji abbot in 1241—copied the text with the support of empresses from the Kujō family. One copy was placed within the palace of Kujō Ninshi 九条任子 (1173–1238), the wife of Emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽 (r. 1183–1198). Others were put in the palace of Kujō Ryūshi 九条立子 (1192–1248), the wife of Emperor Juntoku 順徳 (r. 1210–1221).[350]

About seventy-five entries on Sonjōō are found in the *Hōhiki.* The compiler Keihan wrote down the secret oral transmission from his own master Shin'en 真圓, and he also provides the latter's comments.[351] Most references on the Sonjōō ritual were recorded between 1185 and 1195. Already around the early-eleventh century, Sonjōō was known as Onjōji's patented divinity, although the details of the ritual remained secret due to the nature of the esoteric rituals.[352] By the mid-thirteenth century, the Sonjōō ritual was widely known. Both the Shingon and the Sanmon schools were aware that Sonjōō's ritual was unique to Onjōji. We see reference to the secret Sonjōō ritual in the *Myōken zasshū* 妙見雑集 section of a Shingon text, the *Commentaries of White Treasures* (Jp. *Byakuhōshō* 白寶抄), compiled in 1284 by Chōen 澄円 (1290–1371) at Kongōbuji 金剛峯寺.

> According to Keihan: "Someone says that every school has its own secret rituals. Each one has a secret oral transmission and secret mudras. But why do the followers of this particular ritual [of Sonjōō] claim that it is superior to others?"…. "I [Keihan] am the one who inherited the ritual that the master Enchin transmitted. Other sects do not know it and therefore this is the secret ritual of the [Jimon] school. First of all, Sonjōō is Myōken. Since Myōken illuminates the four cardinal directions of the capital, it is enshrined. …. As for Myōken, he appears as Sonjōō in heaven, and as

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[350] Matsumoto 2008: 82-3.

[351] Contemporary esoteric texts from other sects were widely cited in the text. Matsumoto 2008: 83.

[352] Misaki 1992: 232.

Myōken on earth…. While the master Enchin was traveling in Tang China he learned about Sonjōō. However, it is a secret matter. This is why the Sonjōō ritual surpasses other school's [rituals]. Sonjōō means that the deity is the Revered King among all stars: the Seven Stars, the Nine Luminaries, the Twenty Eight Lunar Mansions, and the Twelve Zodiacal Constellations. Or it is called "Sonjōō" because it includes every star. When they appear in the sky, they are stars, but when they appear on the earth, they exist as the Five Elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. The Sixty Deities of the sexagenary cycle and the Four [Cardinal] Deities (the Blue Dragon, the White Tiger, etc.) are all Sonjōō. When one performs that ritual, one experiences the Four Deities, the Sixty Deities, and so on, in one's body, they become the manifestations of Sonjōō. This is the reason why the deity is flanked by the White Tiger on the right, and the Blue Dragon on the left side, and his standing on a Tortoise indicates this.[353]

In this text, we find Keihan's oral explanation as to why the Sonjōō ritual is a superior astral ritual. According to him, it is preferable to other Myōken rituals because Enchin was the only one who mastered it while staying in China. Later, Onjōji monks claimed that this ritual is more powerful than any other star rituals based in part upon the power of its secrecy and the fact that it was orally (Jp. *kuden* 口伝) transmitted to Enchin only.[354]

The *Asabashō* 阿娑縛抄 (c. 1279), a Tendai ritual text, also notes that the ritual is unique to Onjōji. The *Asabashō* provides an important clue as to how the ritual was perceived: "There is a secret ritual of Miidera known as the Sonjōō ritual…. It is not performed in Shingon. Its technique relies on the Onmyōdō school 陰陽家."[355] According to that passage, we can see that the Sonjōō ritual was perceived as a unique esoteric ritual at Onjōji and that Daoist or Onmyōdō knowledge was one of the major elements that distinguished it from other esoteric star rituals. It is not clear what kind of technological advancement was applied to the Sonjōō ritual. But given

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[353] *Myōkenzōshū*, T. Zuzō 10: 1160.

[354] Matsumoto 2008: 84.

[355] *Asabashō*, T. Zuzō 9: 462.

the distinctive iconographic representations of Sonjōō—in particular, his ritual steps known as *uho* 禹歩—Onmyōdō practices were one of the major elements to increase its ritual power. I will return to the discussion of the ritual steps below.

7.2. The Ritual of Sonjōō: Guardian of Safe Delivery

The Sonjōō ritual was known for its efficacy in preventing all sorts of disasters and protecting the nation.[356] This also explains why at Onjōji Sonjōō was associated with Monju, whose role was preventing disasters and protecting the nation as well. However, a close examination also suggests that the main focus of the esoteric Sonjōō ritual was longevity and safe childbirth, especially for court members. To secure longevity meant a variety of things, though, and often other wishes were combined with this request during the ritual. For example, the ritual was performed for an empress' safe delivery both in hopes of securing her life and ensuring a male heir. The *Sanchōki* 三長記, the diary of Fujiwara no Nagakane 藤原長兼 (d.u), provides a record from 1195 noting that the Sonjōō ritual was performed along with other sutra readings[357] and esoteric rituals such as the Godan hō 五壇法 (the ritual for the Five Myōō 五大明王), the Shichi butsu Yakushi hō 七仏薬師法 (the ritual for the Seven Medicine Buddha, a speciality of the Sanmon), the Aizen-ō hō 愛染王法 (the ritual for Aizen), the Nyohō Aizen-hō 如法愛染王法 (ritual for Aizen and the wish-fulfilling jewel), and the Kujaku-kyō hō 孔雀經法 (the ritual for the *Kujaku-kyō*).[358] These various rituals were all performed by Onjōji ritual specialists for

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[356] *Onjōji denki* 64.

[357] The *Heart Sutra* and the *Sutra on the Comparison of Life Spans* (*Kakuryōjumyōkyō* 較量壽命經, Skt. *Āyuṣparyanta-sūtra*).

[358] Kakuzen explains the colors red and white of Aizen and why the Aizen ritual was performed for safe childbirth.

the safe delivery of Kujō Ninshi, Go-Toba's consort. In the *Hōhiki*, we find an additional

explanation regarding the Sonjōō ritual and its performance for Kujō Ninshi's safe delivery in

the form of a discussion between Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実 (1149–1207) and Shin'en, the Onjōji

master who performed the ritual for the Empress's safe delivery in 1195.

> Concerning the Sonjōō ritual to pray for the Empress's safe delivery on the 25th day
> of the seventh month of the sixth year of the Kenkyū 建久 era (1195):
> Question from Kanezane: "What kind of bodhisattva is Sonjōō?" Answer from
> master Shin'en: "It is Kannon." Question: "Why Kannon?" ….
> Question: "Why is the deity also known as Fukūkensaku 不空羂索?"
> Answer: "It is because Sonjōō wears a deer-crown. It matches perfectly with
> Fukūkensaku who wears the skin of deer."
> [Kanezane] was deeply satisfied. Thus, he said: "The reason why the *dhāraṇī* of
> [Fukūkensaku] Kannon is used is because Fukūkensaku is there for the Fujiwara
> family…"[359]

Here, Sonjōō is associated with Fukūkensaku Kannon when he is evoked for safe delivery. On

the basis of this association, Shin'en mentions the deer connection. The deer is a symbolic

manifestation of the Kasuga deity. The deer crown of Sonjōō symbolizes that the ritual was

tailor-made for the Fujiwara family. Fukūkensaku Kannon was well known to be the protective

deity of the Fujiwara family and was enshrined in the Nan'endō 南円堂 of Kōfukuji. Thus, the

dhāraṇī of Fukūkensaku Kannon was added to the Sonjōō ritual.[360] The deer's association with

Sonjōō is significant in that it suggests that the Sonjōō ritual functioned as a device to develop

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He says that the essential white of the deity transforms into red to signify compassion in the form of the blood of
childbirth. Ruppert 2002: 15.

[359] *Hōhiki* 171.

[360] Matsumoto 2008: 86.

religio-political ties between Onjōji and the Fujiwara clan.[361] The Fujiwara clan also promoted Fukūkensaku Kannon's association with the *kami* of the nearby Kasuga Shrine. Since the deer is the clan symbol for the Fujiwara and Fukūkensaku is said to love all beings like a doe loves her fawn, the deity is often pictured seated on a deer or with a deerskin covering its shoulders in the same manner as a monk's *kesa*.[362]

Considering the political milieu of the time, the fact that Sonjōō was invoked for safe childbirth of the Fujiwara clan is significant. In the same way that Onjōji claimed that Shinra Myōjin protected future Onjōji monks from the moment of conception, Sonjōō was said to protect the future ruler from the moment of his birth. Since the mother's body was the link between the current and the future ruler, protecting her body was equivalent to securing the clan's political status as regent as well as protecting the imperial lineage. We can see then why prayers for safe delivery were so popular during the Sekkan and Insei periods. The earliest reference to the Sonjōō–childbirth link dates to the Fujiwara empress's delivery of the future Go-ichijō in 1026.[363] Sonjōō had been invoked for national protection earlier on when Shirakawa and Toba established the Sonjōō shrine, near the personal quarters for Shirakawa at Onjōji. After the Insei period, his invocation was carried out by monks from the imperial family known as *hōshinnō* 法親王 or princely priest, and Sonjōō became the deity for easy childbirths in the imperial line. Thus, we know that princesses and *hōshinnō* groups played a significant role in transmitting this particular perception of Sonjōō.

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[361] But the deer was not always the only animal. Most extant iconography depicts deer, but sometimes we see a boar as well. This seems to suggest that the iconography was modified depending on the ritual sponsor's clan background. In this way, Onjōji's selection of deities was tailored for the patron clan.

[362] Tyler 1992: 91.

[363] Matsumoto 2008: 87.

The Sonjōō ritual was exclusively developed for the Fujiwara family, particularly to ensure the newborn son's longevity and prosperity. The liturgical text of Tōgū 東宮 Sonjōō, composed in 1140 (Hōen 保延 6), is a case in point. It is addressed to Konoe Tennō 近衛 (1139–1155; r. 1142–1155), the 76th emperor, and the prince of Toba-in 鳥羽院. The text identifies Sonjōō as the deity who guarantees longevity and wards off misfortune. The text also provides a correct ritual protocol, largely consisting of picking an auspicious date, selecting offerings, determining the ritual's duration, and describing its efficacy.

Konoe's mother was Bifukumon'in 美福門院 (1117–1160, i.e., Fujiwara no Nariko 藤原得子), the daughter of Fujiwara no Nagazane 藤原長実 (1075–1133). It is noteworthy that exactly one year after Konoe's birth, a Sonjōō ritual was performed for the newborn baby. This could mean that the Sonjōō ritual was offered not only prior to delivery or for the first year ceremony but also immediately after the birth. If so, it was likely due to the high rate of infant mortality.[364]

Sonjōō's significant role as a guardian deity of safe delivery seems to have led to the deity's acquiring a feminine aspect later on, although visually speaking the deity was usually represented as a male. The Shingon *Kakuzenshō* 覚禅鈔 (1198) states, "Sonjōō is a female deity (Jp. *nyoten* 女天). Therefore, a mirror and musk are offered to the deity."[365] While having musk as an offering implies another ritual link between Sonjōō and the deer depicted on the top of the god's head, it is intriguing to note that the offerings clearly suggests the female nature of the deity, or indicates that women were the main sponsors of the ritual. This feminine identity of

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[364] See the whole text in the *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei* 17: 325.

[365] T. Zuzō 10: 1160.

Sonjōō is further described in the *Myōken zakki* (in the *Byakuhōshō*), in which we see Sonjōō simultaneously equated with Kannon and Kichijōten (or Kudokuten).[366]

It would appear that Sonjōō's association with Kannon was not accidental, as Onjōji monks paid a great attention to the promotion of the cult of Kannon around the same time period. Currently, the temple is mostly known as the fourteenth temple in the pilgrimage of thirty-three temples devoted to Kannon in the Kansai area. This association however has a long history. From the tenth century onwards, Kannon pilgrimages had become a prominent element in Japanese Buddhism, and Onjōji monks played a dominant role in the creation of a pilgrimage circuit for Kannon in the Saikoku 西国 area. In fact, the first mention of the pilgrimage is found in the records of Onjōji, with an account of a pilgrimage made between 1093 and 1094 by Gyōson, an Onjōji monk. We find another record of Kakuchū who made the pilgrimage visiting thirty-three Kannon temples that had close links with Onjōji. This record is considered to be the first historically accurate record of the Saikoku pilgrimage.[367]

At the center of the pilgrimage, Onjōji has Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪観音.The Nyoirin Kannon statue stored in the Kannon hall is the secret Buddha from the tenth century.[368] In connection with the popularity of the Kannon cult, Sonjōō also found its mythological and functional link to Kannon. Sonjōō's female aspect further helps us broaden our understanding of the double nature of stellar deities, being represented as both male and female, as in the case of Myōken. Myōken embodied both female and male qualities, and while female representations

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[366] Misaki 1992: 238.

[367] Reader 2014: 65-6.

[368] On Nyoirin Kannon, see Fremerman 2008. Also for more discussions on Nyoirin Kannon as a jewel deity, see Faure 2014 (forthcoming).

are rare, the two could coexist.[369]

7.3. Iconography of Sonjōō

Due to the nature of esoteric Buddhist rituals, we do not exactly how the ritual was performed. However, Sonjōō's visual representations allow us to look at the major elements involved in the ritual. Although Onjōji claims that Enchin acquired the first statue of Sonjōō from Faquan 法全 at Qinglongsi in China, brought it back to Japan, and stored it in the Tōin at Onjōji, this assertion should not be taken at face value.[370] It is also said to have been created by Yogyō at Onjōji. For instance, Tsuda argues that when Yogyō invented Sonjōō's depiction, he may have copied it from a Chinese model.[371]

Several images of the deity exist, and visual analysis of the image of Sonjōō provides a partial picture of the most secret ritual of the Insei period. A twelfth-century monochrome drawing of the Sonjōō Mandala 尊星王曼荼羅 from the *Besson Zakki* 別尊雑記 is the oldest extant example of the Sonjōō mandala.[372] The most developed, complex iconography of Sonjōō is a piece from the Kamakura period.

There are two types of Sonjōō. One of them is an image of Sonjōō performing ritual steps known as *uho*. The deity holds the sun and the moon, as well as a staff and a trident. Another visual representation of is that of Sonjōō holding a pen and a sheet of paper, which suggests his

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[369] A visual reference to Myōken as a female from the Muromachi period supports this point too. Myōken is also sometimes represented as a *chigo*. On Myōken as a female, see the catalogue, "Bushōga sugatta shinbutsu tachi," 2013: 45.

[370] *Jimon denki horoku* 233-34.

[371] Tsuda 1998a.

[372] Izumi 1990: 3.

role as a god who controls the lifespan of humans. In the latter representation, Sonjōō's posture is either that of Zaō gongen, or s/he is shown performing *uho* steps.[373] This latter image of Sonjōō keeping a record seems to be the extension of the astral deity's major function as a god of destiny who controls the lifespan of individuals based on their good and bad deeds.

[Fig. 5. Myōken (Sonjōō) in the *Zuzōshō*, 13-14th C., Kanazawa Bunko, Yokohama]

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[373] For instance, one Muromachi period piece from Mimurutoji 三室戸寺, a Jimon sect temple located in modern day Kyoto Prefecture, is a good example of the deity holding a brush and a sheet of paper with the same posture as that of Zaō gongen. We also have one example from the *Zuzōshō* 図像抄 from the Kamakura period, currently stored at the Kanazawa bunko 金沢文庫, in which Sonjōō also holds a pen and paper, although his leg are in the position of the *uho* steps.

[Fig. 6. Sonjōō, Kamakura period, Onjōji, Shiga]

Sonjōō's image from the Kamakura period stored at Onjōji is a four-armed, golden figure wearing a crown, as his name 'King' signifies. In his four hands, the deity holds a sun disk with a three-legged black crow inside, a moon disk with a rabbit and frog inside, a trident (Jp. *gekihoko* 戟鉾), and a staff with metal rings (Jp. *shakujō* 錫杖). He stands on a moon disk and on a dragon, which seems to emphasize its imperial connection. The shape of the dragon also calls to mind the Great Dipper, and Sonjōō as the Pole star at the center of the mandala.

Various stars and constellations appear in three concentric circles around him. A monster-like creature (Jp. *makatsu* 摩竭) appears atop the deity's head, notably in the oldest example in the *Besson Zakki,* as well as in the example in the *Myōken bosatsu zuzō* 妙見菩薩図像 dated from the late thirteenth century stored at Daigoji;[374] however, in most other portrayals the animal atop Myōken's head is a deer, which is said to be Myōken's messenger or manifestation.
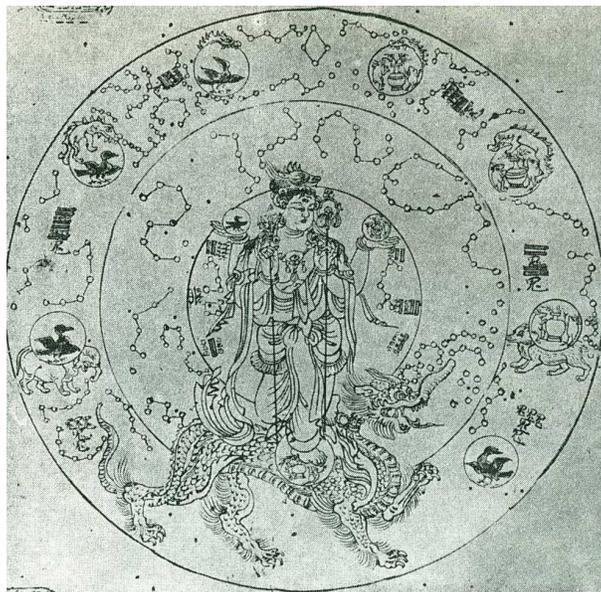
[Fig. 7. Sonjōō, *Besson Zakki*, late Heian, Ninnaji, Kyōto]

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[374] *Butsuzō hantō* 2013: 108 (no.51).

Around the deity, various creatures appear, including an elephant, a white fox, and numerous three-legged black crows. Each one is paired with either the sun disk (with three-legged crow) or the moon disk (with three rabbits), in all eight disks. In the *Besson zakki* representation, there are also six talismans in the inner circle and six larger talismans in the outer circle. Considering Onjōji's interests in the cult of Chintaku reifujin, the astral deity who was also said to transmit 72 astral talismans, the talisman incorporated in the image of Sonjōō suggests the mutual influences between the cult of Sonjōō and that of Chintaku reifujin.[375]

The meaning of the animals on the outer rim has been described as a riddle, but there are some indications suggesting their meaning. First, a horned deer appears on both the head of Sonjōō as well as above the upper sun and moon. This deer may be a reference to the Fujiwara, whose clan shrine, Kasuga shrine, has a deer as its messenger. Kasuga Shrine was a major patron of Onjōji and the Fujiwara had the Sonjōō rite performed to protect Fujiwara empresses during childbirth. Another explanation is that the deer was associated with the Daoist quest for immortality. One of the ways to achieve that goal was to obtain the mushroom of immortality, the Marvelous Fungus (Ch. *lingzhi* 靈芝), which can take all kinds of extraordinary forms.[376] Also another important connection is offered in tales collected in the *Nihon Ryōiki*.[377] In the

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[375] Izumi 1991: 1-4.

[376] Schipper 1993: 174. The Marvelous Fungus is closely associated with the deer, both physically and symbolically. Its shape resembles deer antlers, and probably this association led their shared symbolism of longevity. The deer became almost identical with the practitioner, as it was believed that it alone could find the object of the practitioner's desire, the Marvelous Fungus.

[377] Marui sees the deer as a symbol of metallurgic technology brought by Korean immigrants. He argues that the deerskin was used to increase the temperature for the refinement of metals. And many of these technicians were also ritual specialists of the Myōken cult. See Marui 2013: 77.

Nihon Ryōiki there are three tales about Myōken, and in the two of them, Myōken transforms himself into a deer.

Other than deer, the Onjōji painting also includes other animals, such as a tiger and a panther (or leopard), as well as an elephant and a white fox. The panther (*kisuihyō*), the tiger (*bikakō*), and the fox (*shingekkō*) are associated with three constellations that protect the northeast— commonly referred to as the demon gate — and so may be regarded as guardians of the direction from which the most harmful influences come.[378] This Chinese belief was transmitted to Japan and many Japanese similarly believed that foxes are particularly adept at protecting the northeast from evil influences. The elephant may represent the bodhisattva Fugen, a deity of long life, who is invoked in the mantra known as Enmei Fugen 延命普賢 (Long Life Fugen) during the Sonjōō ritual.[379] The concentric circles are stylizations of what appears in the *Kakuzenshō* drawing, and within the standard star mandala we see the Nine Luminaries, the Twelve Celestial Mansions, and the Twenty-Eight Constellations.[380] However, above all, the most distinctive and most secret iconographic feature of the Sonjōō ritual seems to be his steps: standing on one leg on the moon carried by a dragon. In the following section, I examine this unique posture of Sonjōō by locating the cult in a comparative and cross-cultural framework.

7.4. The Ritual Dance of Sonjōō

The Chinese influence on Sonjōō's creation seems to be undeniable, as we see that the name

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[378] Sekimori 2006: 238.

[379] Ibid.

[380] Ibid.

Sonjō (Ch. *zunxing* 尊星) appears in stellar rituals in China.[381] The map in which we find Zunxing depicts Daoist ritual dances for treading on the stars of the Northern Dipper (Ch. *bugang tadou* 步罡踏斗).[382] In the diagram, we find nine stars: seven visible ones (the Northern Dipper) and two invisible ones—the Imperial or Auxiliary Star (Ch. *dixing* 帝星, *fu* 輔) and the Honorable Star (Ch. *zunxing*, also known as *bi* 弼). The invisible stars seem to have been perceived as more powerful in the esoteric tradition as they were the hidden source for longevity. The knowledge was transmitted to Japan as well. In the *Kakuzenshō*, we read that "If one can see the Auxiliary star 輔星, it is possible to know when the person dies."[383] A similar idea is found in a Chinese text, which was composed a century earlier. According to the *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (*Seven Tablets in a Cloudy Satchel*, circa. 1029), if one sees one of these stars, one may live for 300 more years; if one sees both, this number could be doubled.[384] Although it is difficult to trace back how Sonjōō came to Japan, the astral notions and ritual technology developed in Chinese Daoist tradition were clearly one of the major sources in the creation of Sonjōō at Onjōji.

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[381] Although this example is relatively late (1445), it nonetheless seems quite possible that Sonjō or the King of the Worthy Star (Ch. *zunxing*) already existed in the Chinese Daoist tradition.

[382] Due to its symbolic role as the axis mundi and its position as the bridge between the sun and the moon, the Northern Dipper has played a significant role in medieval Daoist rituals and visualizations as well. More on the discussion in the Daoist tradition, see Huang 2012: 40-85.

[383] T. Zuzō 9: 463.

[384] *Yunji qiqian,* vol.2 :547-48; 563; vol. 3: 256.
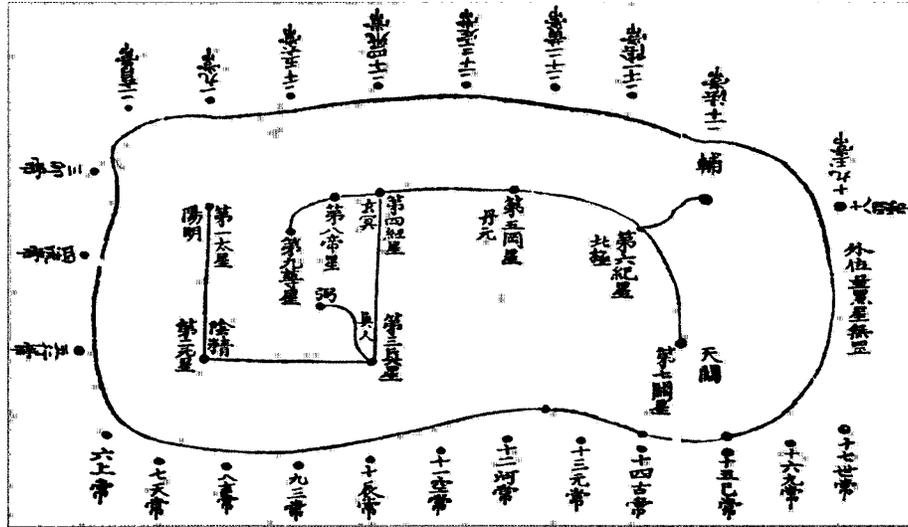
[Fig. 8. Choreography for the Dance of the Dipper Stars, d. 1445, *Daozang*]
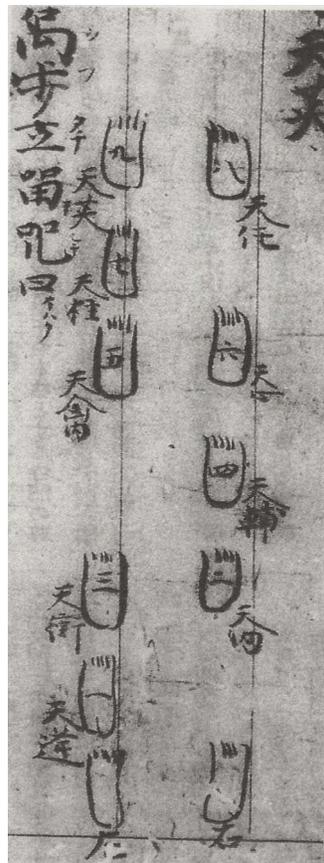
[Fig. 9. *Uho, Shō henbai sahō narabini goshinhō* 小反閇作法并護身法, 1154]

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The Sonjōō ritual was different from other star rituals, especially because of its incorporation of ritual steps known as the Pace of Yu or, in the Onmyōdō tradition, as *henbai* 反閇.[385] The *Asabashō* confirms that Sonjōō's leg posture is from the Onmyōdō practice.[386] The transformation of the practitioner's body into a locus of contact with, and merging into, the otherworldly realm of the Dao is a key element here, and the ritual steps served to effect this transformation. The Sonjōō ritual reflects the Onjōji's effort to incorporate ancient Chinese Daoist techniques for improving ritual efficacy.[387] The practitioner stands on one leg, with the right foot raised behind the opposite knee, forming the numeral four.

Sonjōō's particular leg posture calls to mind that of Rokuji Myōō 六字明王, another esoteric Buddhist deity worshiped in Shingon.[388] The cult of Rokuji Myōō was established in the late eleventh century by Hanjun 範俊 (1038–1112), the founder of the Ono 小野 branch of Shingon. Given the visual parallelism between the two gods, it is highly possible that Sonjōō's image influenced the creation of Rokuji Myōō.[389]

Both Sonjōō and Rokuji Myōō's peculiar leg postures draw our attention to the role of legs and feet in rituals.[390] The ritual was designed as an exorcism, as the term *henbai*—trampling the ground to drive off evil—indicates. The term *uho* (Ch. *yubu*) can be traced back to the

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[385] In the Onmyōdō tradition, *uho* is called *henbai*. Hirase 2014: 33 (no.27).

[386] T. Zuzō 9: 462.

[387] Daoist rituals constitute a large, unexplored territory for modern scholars. Many of these rituals developed through interactions with Buddhism—but it is important to note that Buddhist rituals, too, adpated to Daoist methods.

[388] On the Rokuji Myōō and the Six-syllable ritual, see Tsuda 1998a; Tsuda 1998b; Lomi 2011: 110-68.

[389] Tsuda 1998a: 27-54.

[390] Tsuda 1998b: 75-83.

legendary Chinese ruler, Yu the great (Ch. *dayu* 大禹) of the Xia Dynasty (夏朝 c. 2070–c. 1600 BCE). Yu was credited with taming a flood, and he may originally have been an aquatic creature.[391] Mark Lewis, for instance, suggests that Yu is closely associated with a dragon or that he himself was a dragon.[392] The glyph that represented his name is derived from the character for a type of dragon. Also, several texts recount stories in which dragons assisted Yu either by dredging out river channels with their tails or by carrying him across rivers. His association with dragons epitomizes his capacity as the founder of the altar of the soil, a role derived from his restoration of the dry land.[393] During the battle wherein he tamed the flood, Yu was "paralyzed on one side (Ch. *pianku* 偏枯)," and he consequently was only able to move with a strange, hopping gait. The hopping gait played a crucial role in the myths about Yu, and it underlays the performance of the "Pace of Yu" that was enacted as a central element in many rituals performed to protect travelers and cure diseases.[394] Considering the steps' exorcistic and healing power, the Pace of Yu and Sonjōō's ritual steps may seem temporarily distant but ritually and functionally they are very close.

This point is further attested by another example showing how ritual ideas involving Yu were incorporated in the main purpose of the Sonjōō ritual, the ritual for safe child delivery. In China, a method called Yuzang 禹藏 (Yu's placenta burial method) was developed around the myth of Yu. The method involved the burial of the placenta according to a certain direction, so that the child would lead a long life. This idea is confirmed by a text discovered in the early

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[391] Lewis 2006: 102-106.

[392] Lewis 2006: 104.

[393] Ibid.

[394] Lewis 2006: 141-43; Schipper 1993: 173-74; Granet 1953: 245-49.

Western Han Mawangdui 馬王堆 (King Ma's Mound), which includes a diagram of the various possible positions for burying placentas and a special explanatory text.[395] Since the placenta was seen as a double of the child, if it was secured in the soil in accord with the appropriate direction, the life of the child was protected by the related constellation.[396]

So far I have shown that the ritual of Sonjōō incorporates several symbols associated with Yu, the legendary ruler of China, along with Daoist knowledge and ritual technology. This may have even affected the visual representation of Sonjōō, his posture, and the astral knowledge encoded in the Sonjōō mandala. Thinking about Yu's association with a dragon may even help us understand why Sonjōō rides on a dragon.

From the mid-Heian period onwards, we observe a trend towards the privatization and individualization of esoteric rites by Heian aristocrats. Complicated calendrical and directional computations were increasingly incorporated into the network of esoteric knowledge. To the Onjōji theorists, who sought to establish a separate esoteric center in opposition to the Tendai headquarters at Enryakuji, those Chinese Ying-Yang practices must have been greatly appealing. They were also compatible with the esoteric ritual trend of the time, the star cult. Although it had started as a means for acquiring longevity, the star cult eventually encompassed almost all imaginable aspects of spiritual protection. In the Jimon tradition, this star cult was exclusively developed under the "brand new" figure of Sonjōō, who is also identified with Shinra Myōjin in the ritual sphere. Shinra Myōjin was not only the protector of the Sonjōō ritual; he was also identified with Sonjōō in the ritual. This association brings Sonjōō to the apex of Shinra Myōjin's career. It is important to note that the key element in the popularization of Sonjōō's

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[395] Pu 1998: 136.

[396] Pu 1998: 139.

cult among court members was a rediscovery of its continental origin regarding ritual technology and its rich cultural symbolism.

8. Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the medieval transformation of Shinra Myōjin in connection with the institutional growth of Onjōji. I have argued that Shinra Myōjin remained Onjōji's central deity throughout the medieval period and was not simply one of its tutelary deities, as has been argued in previous scholarship. At first a mountain deity, Shinra Myōjin acquired new functions and characteristics as he grew more central at Onjōji. In the devastating institutional conflict with the Sanmon, Shinra Myōjin represented the entire Jimon community, particularly when it came to the issue of establishing an independent ordination platform. Once Onjōji established a strong relationship with the powerful Minamoto clan, the Shinra Myōjin cult lost its local-specific character and spread to eastern Japan along with the military successes of the clan. Sporadic but numerous descriptions from the Onjōji chronicles and other sources allow us to conclude that Shinra Myōjin functioned as the main deity in several rituals and temple events at Onjōji. His festival marks the apogee of Onjōji. Miracle tales about him and rituals centered on him were popular not only at Onjōji but also outside of the monastery.

Onjōji's attempt to establish an independent Tendai tradition was the major cause for the immediate growth of Shinra Myōjin during the Insei period. During this period, the deity also developed his ambivalent image—a mixture of the demonic and the sage—and an extension of this portrayal can be found in the popular literature and public imagination of the late medieval period. For the Onjōji clergy and the laity alike, Shinra Myōjin symbolized Jimon identity. However, his exalted status at Onjōji was not solely a product of Jimon-Sanmon sectarian

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conflict. Rather, as we saw with the example of Sonjōō, esoteric Buddhist deities and their rituals indicate that medieval Onjōji monks constantly participated in the larger religious network available to them. Although sectarian rivalry did provide an impetus for the growth of Shinra Myōjin, throughout his development this god was nourished with religious symbolism connected to Silla and China.

Shinra Myōjin crystalizes the medieval Onjōji monks' conception of the historical Silla and their recreation of this Silla god. While gods of continental origin were worshipped as ancestral gods in the context of immigrant religious practices up to the early Heian period, we witness a sudden emergence of the Silla god network in the late Heian; that network remained important throughout the medieval period. Within the Silla connection a significant connection was that between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo. As in the Shinra Myōjin *matsuri*, Shinra Myōjin came to be identified with Susanoo, a paradigmatic Shinto god who is supposed to have gone to Silla, according to mythical narratives. In the following chapter, I will turn to that specific issue— the association between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo — to explain how the imagery related to "Silla" was projected onto and incorporated into the cult of Shinra Myōjin, specifically with regard to Shinra Myōjin's major function as a god of pestilence.

Ch3. Medieval Perceptions of Silla: Susanoo and Shinra Myōjin

1. Introduction

This chapter considers negative facets of maritime exchange in the East Asian Mediterranean, namely, epidemics. This chapter focusesin particular on the medieval development of Shinra Myōjin as a god of pestilence. This association between Shinra Myōjin and pestilence was crystalized sometime during the Kamakura period by the Onjōji elite monks and was firmly established by the thirteenth century. In this chapter, I examine how the imagination became a subverting force regarding this figure. How do different layers of mythological narrative invent, appropriate, and contest the historical "reality"? And how do they then construct another "true" story?

Shinra Myōjin's power to expel epidemics was posited as one of his most significant features, and it was a factor in the cult's perpetuation in the medieval Buddhist world. I argue that by means of being identified with the paradigmatic Shinto deity Susanoo, Shinra Myōjin was identified with the most established god of pestilence in premodern Japan, Gozu Tennō 牛頭天王. These individual associations take on added significance when we consider that, from early on in the history of epidemiology, the Japanese perceived Silla as the country from which pestilence came. This might have been a historically proven one, particularly considering international trade's role in spreading illness and epidemics between the peninsula and the archipelago. Shinra Myōjin's major function as a pestilence deity was largely shaped by the perception of Silla as the country from where pestilence came. Throughout the chapter, I examine how Silla's perceived status as the origin of epidemics was deeply inscribed into the medieval perception of Shinra Myōjin, and how Shinra Myōjin grew as a god of pestilence

through the Tendai network—both the network of institutions and that of deities, such as Susanoo, Gozu Tennō, and Matarajin.

To understand Shinra Myōjin's medieval development, we must first consider how the Japanese image of Silla evolved, became encoded with, and affected the medieval religiosity around the cult of this Silla deity. Building upon Bernard Faure's conceptualization of *imaginaire* as "the way beliefs are rendered into images,"[397] I here define *imaginaire* as a larger network of images, comprised of two modalities that vacillated between resilient images and the fluid perceptions. This *imaginaire* is, however, not simply unreal. On the contrary, it can have very real effects in the world, such that one might say that gods can be more real than reality as we normally think of it. Shinra Myōjin emerged from this fluid, imagined perception of Silla, complete with its associated ambiguous and contradictory perceptions. This "imagined image" of Silla played a dominant role in identifying deities from Silla as gods of pestilence. On the one hand these Silla-associated deities had healing powers; but they were also perceived as beings that need to be pacified and tamed.

The way in which Shinra Myōjin came to be associated with pestilence is also intriguing because it reflects how Buddhist mythology interacts with cultural imagination. In the history of religion, Buddhism functioned as a cultural repository. Buddhist mythology preserves not only specific Buddhist ideas or practices, but also provides a wider scope for the evolution of cultural imagination, and this is the context in which the cult of Shinra Myōjin as a pestilence deity emerged in the Tendai tradition.

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[397] Faure 1996: 3.

The assimilation between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo was established through a variety of media, including text, ritual, festival, and, most significantly, mythology.[398] Shinra Myōjin's indentification as Susanoo exemplifies how Japanese Buddhist authors attempted to fit Buddhist mythology into their conception of the past in the medieval Japanese Buddhist worldview. By illustrating how the Silla-related deities were widely associated with the epidemics in the medieval Japanese perception, I argue that Shinra Myōjin's role as a god of pestilence is greatly significant in medieval mythological accounts, which had a deep impact upon the growth of Tendai, as well as Japanese religious practices dealing with pestilence.

Shinra Myōjin's identification with Susanoo seems to have developed within Jimon ideology, whose major concern was to establish a legitimate Tendai center through mythological knowledge and esoteric rituals. Shinra Myōjin's pairing with Susanoo was carefully designed by elite Jimon monks, who were interested in creating new configurations and connections between buddhas and *kami*. By connecting its main protective deity, Shinra Myōjin, to one of the most rambunctious and powerful deities in traditional Japanese mythology, the Jimon tradition thereby provided Shinra Myōjin with another strong foothold in the Japanese pantheon as an autochthonous deity. Moreover, they established him as a trans-local divinity manifesting himself in all Buddhist kingdoms to exercise his power. All of these developments of Shinra Myōjin were built upon the Japanese perception of Silla in one way or another, and the deity's identification with Susanoo was an indispensable part of the reemergence of an antagonistic conception of Silla in the medieval Japanese imagination.

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[398] Although textual evidence demonstrates that these deities' integration extended beyond the Jimon circle, the association between the two was maintained primarily within Onjōji as a sort of esoteric knowledge. This secrecy explains why we do not find any references to this mythic association between Susanoo and Shinra Myōjin in, for instance, the Izumo area, rich with Susanoo-related myths.

Shinra Myōjin's association with Susanoo is of particular interest in deepening our understanding of Shinra Myōjin in medieval Japan because both of these deities are identified with Silla— as having come from or, returned to, or appeared there. There are three main ways in which Shinra Myōjin's medieval association with Susanoo is significant. First, through this association, Japanese animosity towards Silla was used to internalize the view that Japan is "the land of the *kami*" (Jp. *shinkoku* 神国). This perception developed in connection with a proto-nationalistic ideology that culminated in the thirteenth century following the attempted invasions by the Mongols. This view of Japan as "the land of the *kami*" served not only to imbue Japan with an innate sacredness, but also portrayed Japan as politically and culturally superior to neighboring kingdoms. Second, with the reemergence of anti-Silla imagery and sentiment, Shinra Myōjin came to be perceived as a god of pestilence— a perception that was fueled by the common belief that pestilent demons came from the Korean peninsula. Third, the connection with Susanoo further allowed Shinra Myōjin to be linked with Gozu Tennō, the representative demon of pestilence in Japan. The myths involving this figure developed independently from approximately the eighth century, but they also had a close association with Silla.

The pervasiveness of the three kingdoms model (Jp. *sankoku* 三国) in medieval mythic accounts produced at temples and shrines is indicative of the dominant Japanese worldview and its cultural imaginations with regard to its position vis-à-vis neighboring nations. The model is crucial in analyzing Japan's view of Silla, a kingdom that is not included in this original model. Ironically, though, the model in fact allowed Shinra Myōjin to play with its framework. Even before the adoption of the three kingdoms model, most divinities in the *honji suijaku* paradigm already manifested themselves within all of the three kingdoms in question: India, China, and

Japan.[399] What is noteworthy in the account of Shinra Myōjin is that Silla is also included with these other countries. Just how it was included is particularly curious. According to the *Onjōji denki*: "Shinra Myōjin became a king of Silla to wield Japanese power all over the world."[400] Because the conversion of Shinra Myōjin's homeland from Silla to Japan was permitted by Shinra Myōjin's identity being overlaid with Susanoo as "the god of Silla," Susanoo played a crucial role in Silla's inclusion within the three kingdoms model. While the three kingdoms model supported the legitimacy of Shinra Myōjin and provided him with transnational power, the ideological twist highlighted Shinra Myōjin's position as a "Japanese" power.

The fact that a seemingly foreign deity like Shinra Myōjin became an advocate of Japan's sacred power is not external to the logic of esoteric Buddhism, in which the tamer and the tamed are indistinguishable. The subversion, however, was largely derived from the longstanding antagonism and negative perception associated with Silla, which was reinforced by Shinra Myōjin's demonic power and his role as a god of pestilence.

There are several multi-layered reasons for a Silla deity to become associated with pestilence in the Japanese mind. Shinra Myōjin's identification with Gozu Tennō is part of the complex web of historical consciousness and cultural imagination that was formed through the ambivalent relationships between Silla and Japan from early on. For Shinra Myōjin, though, the organized worship of a god from Silla, as well as Susanoo's identification with Gozu Tennō, reinforced one other in the triangular mythological transactions taking place among Shinra Myōjin, Susanoo, and Gozu Tennō, all of whom are connected to the perception of Silla as a land of pestilence.

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[399] Teeuwen and Rambelli 2002: 2.

[400] *Onjōji denki* 65.

Historically, the Silla kingdom had disappeared by the tenth century, but even afterwards, the Japanese used the name to refer to the entirety of Korea and its kingdoms, just as "Tang" meant "China" to the Japanese.[401] After the demise of Silla, memories of that kingdom were collected and inscribed in the arena of myth and religious practices. At the intersection of history and myth, on the one hand, and memory and oblivion, on the other, all of the boundaries conveniently merged and were sometimes reaffirmed depending upon the ideological needs of the moment. In this fusion and confusion, Shinra Myōjin was encoded into different visions of religious and ideological identity.

In decoding the complicated relationship between Shinra Myōjin and the place of Silla in the Japanese perception, studies on cultural memory and particularly on cultural imagination provide valuable insight.[402] Cultural imagination is a recent concept, derived from the notion of cultural memory.[403] While Jan Assmann's treatment of cultural memory theory deals with actual vestiges and historical dimensions of memory, an invented/imagined deity like Shinra Myōjin requires us to look at another dimension of memory, namely, the *imaginaire* in the collective and

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[401] Silla was still perceived as Silla even after its demise in the tenth century. As in the earliest Japanese world map, a fourteenth century work stored at the Kanazawa Bunko, Silla is listed as the country name of the Korean peninsula . Although Koryo is mentioned in the map as a way to explain the Mongol, Silla is the name of the Korean peninsula in the map. See Murai 2010: 26-7.

[402] Maurice Halbwachs's notion of "collective memory" seeks to explain how memory can be translated into myth and rituals in the religious tradition. Halbwachs, who first opened up the sociological study of memory, explores the principal locations of memory from the religious to the domestic sphere, from memory in the area of stratification to various other group memories. (Halbwachs 1992). Inspired by Halbwachs, Jan Assmann reinvigorated the study of collective memory, and developed the notion of cultural memory. Assmann distinguishes various types of social memory. "Communicative memory" is the social aspect of individual memory, by which individual, autobiographical memories are transmitted between individuals. "Collective memory" refers to shared memories whose task is to transmit a collective identity, and this is particularly susceptible to political interference. "Cultural memory" is a step beyond collective memory, and refers to shared memories that become part of a tradition, beyond the three-generation cycle of communicative memory. Cultural memory, emphasizing the social and cultural dimension of memory, explains how memory is inscribed and continued through practices repeated regularly in a communal form. Entangling the practices is one crucial way to understand how a certain group of people interacted with the fusion and the confusion along with myth, ritual, and identity. See Assmann 2006: 3-8.

[403] See Huhndorf 2001 and Smyth 2001.

cultural sense. Recent studies in cultural anthropology have focused on the role of *imaginaire* in diverse social and cultural contexts—from the intimate arenas of subjective experience to the more encompassing vistas of cosmological contemplation. Along the same lines, the imaginative dimensions of a study of mythology can shed new light on the role of *imaginaire* —particularly its engagement with an individual devotee's association with the deity—and collective production and consumption of the myths both at the micro- and macro-levels.[404]

Using cultural memory-based insights as a working definition, I take cultural *imaginaire* as a conceptual tool used to reveal the persistent image of a specific culture vis-à-vis another cultural world over a long period of time. I also see it as being a vital force in transforming cultural symbols into other forms, such as myths and legends. Taking this into account, in the following sections I explain how the Japanese understanding of Silla led to the cult of Shinra Myōjin as a god of pestilence. I focus on how this cult operated as a coupling medium, connecting prominent Silla-related deities, namely, Susanoo, Gozu Tennō, and Matarajin.

2. Silla in the Medieval Japanese Buddhist Context

2.1. Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo in the Three Kingdoms model

To understand where Shinra Myōjin fits into the medieval Japanese religious landscape, first we need to understand the dominant worldviews within medieval Japanese Buddhism. Related to idea of the Final Dharma Age (Jp. *mappō* 末法), the "Buddhist transmission in the three kingdoms" (Jp. *Sangoku bukkyō shikan* 三国仏教史観) functioned as one of the dominant

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[404] As a good example of this see Faure 2014: 46-60.

worldviews in medieval Japan.[405] Reflecting a new kind of historical or religio-historical consciousness, the idea became one of the most influential notions in medieval Japan. By the Kamakura period, the three kingdoms model of the Buddhist world had been recognized as the authoritative multinational Buddhist worldview, and it explicitly identified the three sacred Buddhist lands: India, China, and Japan.[406] According to this transnational yet still Japan-centric view, the world is divided into three main areas—Japan (Jp. *honchō* 本朝); the Chinese cultural sphere, including Korea (Jp. 振旦 *shintan*); and the rest, which originally comprised of only India (Jp. *tenjiku* 天竺) but later also referred to the world outside the Sino-Japanese universe.[407]

The earliest known written work with *sangoku* in its title was the *Sangoku dentōki* 三国 傳燈記, written by the Kōfukuji monk Kakuken 覚憲 (1131–1213) in 1173. The three country construct was formulated by several leading Buddhist figures, but it was largely promoted by the monk Gyōnen 凝然 (1240–1321). While Gyōnen was aware of the transmission of Korean Buddhism to Japan, he accepted this idea as the three kingdoms framework for Buddhist histories.[408] Even though contemporary Japanese Buddhist intellectuals, including Gyōnen, were aware of the significance of Silla in Buddhism's transmission, Silla was no longer recognized as being a major Buddhist kingdom in this three kingdoms model. It was either considered to be part of China or was simply neglected.

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[405] Blum 2006: 32-34.

[406] Blum 2006: 32.

[407] Souyri 2001: 140.

[408] Blum 2006: 32. Gyōnen mentions Korea, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, and some Central Asian regions.

The marginalization of Silla in a medieval Buddhist literature is key to understanding the ambivalent character of Shinra Myōjin. As Max Moerman has shown, the construction of Japanese identity during its medieval period relied upon the mapping of the marginal as expressed in Japanese Buddhist literary and visual culture and involved geographical and cultural awareness.[409] The exclusion of Silla or the Korean Peninsula in general within the three kingdoms model was a carefully made decision, since by intentionally eliminating Silla, Japan could position itself at the apex of Buddhism's development and secure a position of greater legitimacy. The adaptation of this model was, in fact, both a result of and a response to the tensions involved in overcoming the psychological complex that resulted from exisintg at the geographical margins vis-à-vis both India, the original land of Buddhism, and China, the center of civilization in the sinosphere.[410]

From the latter half of the Heian period onward, Japanese Buddhists tended toward a pessimistic understanding of Japan as being distant in both time and space from Buddhism's source, the historical Buddha who had lived in India. By the Kamakura period, it became widely accepted that Japan was a marginal country on the outskirts of the Buddhist world. Whereas India and China were neatly defined in the three kingdoms model, Silla and the other Korean kingdoms were not. However, in this way, Silla was both a problem and a solution. By folding Silla into the Sinitic world, Japan could not only skip the physical and temporal gap but also forget the earlier cultural connection in which the Japanese had been recipients from Silla of

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[409] Moerman 2009: 351-80.

[410] But interestingly, this complex was not only limited to Japan. The same logic can be found in the worldview of Chinese monks with regard to attitudes toward India. Thus, Tansen Sen describes the Chinese anxiety over India's perfection as a "borderland complex." Sen 2003: 11. Whereas most Chinese assumed that China, the "Middle Kingdom" (Ch. *zhongguo* 中國), was the center of the world, Chinese monks often reserved the term for India. See Mair 2014: xiii.

Buddhism and continental culture. Furthermore, this adjustment further allowed Japan to be depicted as the orthodox recepieint of Buddhism's center. As such, they vacillated between being "equal" and "superior" to China and India. With their comprehensive knowledge about the transmission of Buddhism and about the world in general, elite Buddhist monks were quite active in promoting this idea from a relatively early period, as is evident in the writings of the monk Gomyō 護命 (750–834) from the Hata clan and those of the Tendai priest Annen 安然 (841–?).[411]

The three kingdoms model was widely used not only in the quasi-historical writings of elite monks but also in the realm of mythology in connection with the *honji suijaku* ideology. The formula "manifestations of three kingdoms" found its most effective use in explaining the origin story of foreign deities by anachronistically dissolving the temporal and spatial territories. Through linking the story of a Japanese deity with India and China, this model canonized the legitimate status of that deity in the Buddhist world. In this process, the mythological boundary between the foreign and the indigenous were created but also could be conveniently blurred and even merged if necessary, as in the case of Shinra Myōjin. An idea key to the transformation of a seemingly foreign deity (Jp. *ikoku no kami* 異国の神) into a native deity was the concept of "landlord deity (Jp. *jinushi* 地主)."[412] In this ideological twist, gods of seemingly foreign origin, such as Shinra Myōjin, became landlord deities who had in fact been in Japan from time immemorial. They had simply traveled or temporarily manifested themselves in other foreign

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[411] Blum 2006: 34-8.

[412] *Jinushi*, a being born from the soil, is an autochthonous deity associated with a particular area or piece of land. Because of its strong tie with a particular location, it would make sense that *jinushi* would be local deities. But in Japanese religion, we see a lot of cases in which a deity of foreign origin becomes the land deity of a certain place either in the form of a replacement or an upgrade.

countries like Silla. According to this logic, Shinra Myōjin—who fundamentally does not fit in the three kingdoms model—becomes a legitimate Japanese deity who traveled to Silla just as Susanoo went there to "exercise Japanese power."[413]

However, the account of the various manifestations of Shinra Myōjin still incorporates Silla, which breaks the "traditional" three kingdoms model. This suggests that Shinra Myōjin's association with Silla must have been a dilemma for the Onjōji theorists. To solve that dilemma, it was necessary for them to first explain why Shinra Myōjin contained "Silla" in his name. Therefore, in the first chapter of the *Jimon denki horoku*, where the text inquires about the origins of the deity and of his name, we find an intriguing passage explaining the description of a map of Silla. After the text gives a detailed explanation of Shinra Myōjin's association with Susanoo and his different names, it states that Silla is the country from which Shinra Myōjin came and gives more details about Silla:

> Silla is the name of a vassal country (Jp. *hankoku* 藩国). It is located to the northwest of Japan. It is one of the Three Han States, Jin Han 辰韓…. Among the three Han states, there is Ma Han 馬韓 located in the West, consisting of 54 tribes. On the Northern frontier, it adjoins Nang'rang 樂浪, and it borders Japan on the South. The other one is Jin Han located on the Eastern side. It consists of 12 tribes. Its Northern side borders Yemek 濊貊. It is also called Jin Han 秦韓, because Jin 秦 (Jp. Hata) people fled to Silla and were integrated. The last one is Pyŏnhan 辨韓. This state is next to Jin Han, and it consists of twelve tribes. Its Southern part borders Japan… Silla used to be Jin Han.[414]

The passage above, which is very possibly excerpted from another historical work, either from a Korean or a Chinese source, seems to be conversant with the history and geography of the

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[413] *Onjōji denki* 65.

[414] *Jimon denki horoku* 109.

Korean kingdoms, given that its description of them is quite accurate. However, the above passage reveals the mixed feelings medieval Japanese (or perhaps specifically Jimon monks) had about Silla. On the one hand, it is the country from which their supreme god came. On the other hand, though, in the Japanocentric worldview that developed in the eighth century *ritsuryo* system, Silla was a vassal country (Jp. *hankoku* 藩国), a term which denotes its inferior status. Overcoming Silla was one of the goals that the Japanese state pursued in the eighth century. The Japanocentric worldview was established as an ideology of cultural superiority over Silla, and it created the historical grounds needed to justify the Japanese perception of Silla as a subordinate state.

The dual image of Silla, however, was relativized when the deity was discussed in variants of the three countries model. In other words, the notion of the triple-kingdom allowed Tendai Jimon Buddhists the opportunity to add new narratives to a deity in the name of revelation, and it was crucial for them to add Silla in this model. In the world of medieval mythology, a typical way to integrate a new quality to a god is to introduce another name. In the Onjōji chronicles apart from his usual name, "Shinra Myōjin," the deity has five (sometimes four) other names that reveal his hidden identity. These secret names are: Sūgoku 崧嶽(var. Sūkaku takaki), Sūshisu 菘崧, Shusan'ō 朱山王, Shitenfujin 四天夫人(or 天夫人), and Suhatsu hoshikashi 素髪ホシカシ.[415]

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[415] *Onjōji denki* 59. In another passage, the *Onjōji denki* reveals a secret transmission saying that "According to a document: "When the deity Shinra Myōjin resided in its homeland, its name was Homikami Myōjin. This is deeply secret, deeply secret." *Onjōji denki* 60. Although the *Onjōji denki* provides two different readings, "Hoshikami" and "Homikami," as Kawamura Minato has noted, Hoshikami seems to make sense since it can then be connected with one of Shinra Myōjin's traits as a stellar deity. Kawamura 2008: 98.

Concerning the five different names of Shinra Myōjin, the *Jimondenki horoku* further notes, "The name Sūgoku was the name of the deity when it resided at Mt. Song in China, and Sūshisu was its name when it resided in Silla (Jp. *kankoku* 韓國). As for the peculiar name Shitenfujin, it corresponds to the name Mikō 未考 (Kr. Migo) and the deity was called by this name when it was in Silla. Finally, the deity was called Suhatsu when it appeared at sea and that as such the deity was in fact a *suijaku* or provisional manifestation of Susanoo."[416] The passage does not include Shinra Myōjin in India. However, another passage of the *Onjōji denki* recounts that Shinra Myōjin appeared in India in the guise of Benzaiten.[417] Also, significantly, although the Onjōji chronicles claim that each name is associated with the different countries in which the deity manifested himself, Shinra Myōjin's different names are all phonetic variations on Susanoo—that is, semiotic operations to establish a strong mythological connection between

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[416] *Jimon denki horoku* 113. Among those five names, the name Shitenfujin does not fit into the clustering of mountain god names. This name provides a link between Shinra Myōjin and the goddess Mago 痲姑 of Korean mythology. Although there are several different transmissions and stories concerning Mago, Mago is identified as the goddess of Mt. Ch'ŏnt'ae 天台 (Jp. Tendai) in Korean folk literature. Of even greater importance with regard to the name Shitenfujin is an account from the *Pudoji* 符都誌, a purportedly fifth-century text, which Pak Chae-sang 朴堤上(363–419?) wrote in the Silla kingdom. Although the text is regarded as being of questionable authenticity by modern scholarship, it is a potentially invaluable source because it is not only earlier than the story of Tan'gun 檀君, the mythological progenitor of the Korean people in the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事, but it also contains a unique cosmogony and ethno-genesis. In the *Pudoji*, we find a reference to Four Heavenly Maidens (Kr. Sach'ŏn'nyŏ 四天女). The four heavenly maiden found in this story bring to mind Shitenfujin, the four heavenly ladies. Although their role as mountain goddesses is not elaborated further in the *Pudoji*, if the Miko in the *Jimondenki horoku* are meant to be the goddess Mago of Silla, then Miko's other name, i.e., Shitenfujin, fits with Mago's story. There is no direct proof that the two are identical, and the phonetic association is still too far to make a connection. However, the Mago story supports the presumption that the various names of Shinra Myōjin provide another link with Silla and one of the names Shinra Myōjin's lies at the intersection between Silla mythology and medieval Japanese mythology. Mago in the Korean mythology seems to be originated from the Chinese cult of Magu 麻姑, the Hemp Lady. In her mythology, she was allegedly born under Emperor Ming of the Han (r. 57–55 C.E.). She attained immortality and traveled widely through the cosmos. Cultic records appear first in the Tang dynasty in Wu prefecture in modern Jiangxi. See Catherine Despeux and Livia Kohn 2003: 94-8. The *Pudoji* has been translated into English. See Thomas Yoon 2002.

[417] *Onjōji denki* 49; 78.

Susanoo and Shinra Myōjin, which creates another firm connection between the two, using the variant of the three-kingdoms model.

2.2. From 'A god of Silla' to 'A god who conquers Silla'

Japan's ambivalent attitude toward continental culture, Silla's in particular, can best be described as an oscillation between reverence and reaction. Throughout the medieval period, Silla remained the "closest other" in Japanese historical consciousness from as early as the emergence of legends of Empress Jingū's invasion of Silla. In contrast to this, Paekche, another contemporary Korean kingdom and a political rival of Silla, was an ally of the Yamato court.[418] Silla's conquest of Paekche in 660, and Yamato's failure to aid them, further aggravated the tension between the now-unified Korean Peninsula and the Yamato court.[419] Japan's aversion toward Silla was not only politically motivated but was also partially culturally grounded. After absorbing continental civilization and advanced technologies transmitted through Paekche, Japan faced a fundamental issue in establishing its own political authority and cultural identity in order to survive among its strong continental neighbors.

The ninth century was a turning point in fixing the image of Silla as a place of both desire and anxiety in the Japanese perception. During this period, the unified Silla kingdom started to crumble, and the Korean Peninsula entered a new transitional period known as the Later Three Kingdoms (892–936). Because of the internal unrest of the country, Silla pirates flourished, and

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[418] On the history of this period, see Farris 2009: 27-52. When Silla and Tang allied to defeat Paekche in 660, Most of the Paekche royal house fell into the hands of the alliance, but some escaped to Japan. Farris 2009: 29.

[419] In 661, the Yamato court sent flotillas of small vessels to join Paekche guerillas. By 663, more than twenty-five thousand Yamato troops were on erstwhile Paekche soil. The Tang navy and Silla army crushed the Yamato troops and Paekche partisans at the Battle of the Paekch'on River. It was one of the most decisive engagements in Japanese history. Farris 2009: 29.

piracy on the Japanese coast—particularly in the northern Kyūshū— reached a pinnacle. The ninth century therefore was marked by an increasing animosity of the Japanese towards Silla pirates. A series of events, such as a Silla immigrants' uprising in 820 and an attempt to attack Tsushima by Silla, exacerbated the negative perception of Silla as well.[420] At that time, Japan stopped any type of formal foreign relations with Silla. A series of epidemics that broke out after contact with Silla merchants was another major factor that led to the cessation of a diplomatic relationship with Silla and to the negative image of Silla.[421] Japan further blamed Silla for calamities. Ongoing natural disasters such as earthquakes came to be linked with Silla piracy, and the Silla pirates were even blamed for volcanic activity.[422] In this way, foreign threats were placed in the same class of phenomena as natural calamities, and both were viewed as being dangerous eruptions of chaos.

Japanese anti-Silla sentiment, which hit its stride in the ninth century, reemerged on an enlarged scale in a new form in the thirteenth century. War experiences with Yuan China—the Battle of Bun'ei (Jp. *Bun'ei no eki* 文永の役) in 1274 and the Battle of Kōan (Jp. *Kōan no eki* 弘安の役) in 1281, provided the impetus for Japan to tighten its vigilance and reaffirm its collective resentments towards foreign invaders.[423] This war was initiated by the Mongols, but

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[420] Yamasaki 2000: 1-13.

[421] Verschuer 2006.

[422] This particular memory from the calamity resurfaced in the medieval period in the form of performance. In the *Taketori monogatari* 竹取物語 (or the *Fujisan* 富士山 in the Noh theatre), the story of finding pills of immorality at Mt. Fuji was performed against the backdrop of the volcanic activities in the ninth century. Matsumoto 2012: 148.

[423] The Battle of Bun'ei was the first attempt by the Mongols to invade Japan. After conquering the Japanese settlements on Tsushima and Iki islands, Kublai Khan's fleet moved on to Japan proper and landed at Hakata Bay, a short distance from Kyūshū's administrative capital of Dazaifu. The Yuan troops withdrew and took refuge on their ships after only one day of fighting. A typhoon that night, said to be divinely conjured wind, threatened their ships, persuading them to return to Korea. Many of the returning ships sank that night due to the storm. The Battle of Kōan was the second attempt by the Mongols to invade Japan after seven years of the Battle of Bun'ei. After inconclusive

since the Koryŏ dynasty of Korea was under the control of the Mongols and the Korean navy forces were mobilized against Japan at this time, the Korean kingdom was perceived as threatening the divine kingdom (Jp. *shinkoku* 神国) of Japan and became their enemy.

The very *shinkoku* idea, which first surfaced during the early Heian period and matured in the medieval period, proclaims that Japan is a sacred land and its inhabitants share the divine nature of both their emperor and the *kami* protecting the country. The term *shinkoku* starts appearing as an attribute of the word "Nippon" in the Insei period.[424] Silla played a pivotal role in the formation of the *shinkoku* ideology because the earliest reference to the idea is a story of Japan's victory over Silla.

The initial idea of Japan being the land of *kami* goes back to the reign of Emperor Seiwa (r. 858–76), when two ships from Silla landed in Kyūshū and sacked areas of the island. Envoys were dispatched by the emperor to Ise 伊勢, Iwashimizu 岩清水, and Usa Hachiman to petition the deities to restore peace to the country. In these prayers, expressions referring to Japan as the divine nation with the gods' protection (Jp. *shinmei no kuni* 神明の国) appear.[425] This suggests that the idea of Japan being the land of the *kami* may have been formed initially against a backdrop of the fear and antagonism towards Silla. It is also noteworthy that Emperor Seiwa's reign was the time period when Enchin came back from Tang China and supposedly begun the worship of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji. This possibly suggests that the logic behind the worship of Shinra Myōjin was to redirect the foreign deity's power and protect the country.

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fighting the invasion fleet was destroyed by a storm and the Yuan withdrew; the Japanese called the storm, which chased away their invaders *kamikaze* or divine wind.

[424] Rambelli 1996: 393.

[425] Ibid.

Although the medieval *shinkoku* idea was slightly different from that which appeared in the *Nihon shoki*, this self-conceit of emphasizing Japan's uniqueness was further highlighted in the medieval period as a political ideology, and it permeated every corner of Japanese culture.[426] According to Kuroda Toshio, the *shinkoku* discourse developed within the exo-esoteric system, the dominant politico-religious ethos of medieval Japan, as a way to protect the ruling power of the ruling elites.[427] At the same time, the ideology permeated every level of medieval Japan. For instance, the *shinkoku* concept was expressed in the growing acceptance of written Japanese (Jp. *wabun* 和文) in popular narratives or even philosophical and doctrinal writings, such as the *Konjaku monogatarishū* and the *Shōbōgenzō*, which "manifests another face of nationalism or at least national consciousness."[428]

With the rise of this *shinkoku* ideology in mind, it seems contradictory that a deity of Silla would be found at the center of Japanese Buddhism. How can we make sense of this? And what did it mean to worship Shinra Myōjin? Medieval Japanese Buddhists were inspired by Silla and much as they were haunted by it. Inspired because Silla was closer to the sacred land of the Buddha and to Chinese civilization, both geographically and culturally; haunted because this country inflicted actual harm on the Japanese, politically and epidemiologically. It would have been very possible that Shinra Myōjin could not avoid negative connotations because of its ties with Silla, even after establishing its status as a secret deity among the Jimon followers. However, the very same association with Silla allowed Tendai masters to avoid dealing with the

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[426] Inoue 1998: 113-14.

[427] Rambelli 1996: 393.

[428] Blum 2006:34.

problem. Like Susanoo and Empress Jingū, Shinra Myōjin visited Silla only temporarily, and did

so in order to exercise Japan's power. According to the *Onjōji denki*:

> Concerning Shinra Myōjin's becoming the king of a foreign country to display Japan's power: The first human emperor, Emperor Jinmu 神武, transmitted three swords and three mirrors… One thousand years later, Emperor Jinmu was reborn as the great King of Silla. Why is it so? It is because Japanese is the land of *kami* (Jp. *shinkoku* 神国), and is superior to other countries.[429]

As seen above, Shinra Myōjin is no longer a deity associated with Silla immigrants. Like past

emperors, he is the god who is qualified to conquer Silla. This point was further consolidated by

the wide reception of the legend of Empress Jingū and the antagonistic image of Silla in Japanese

historical consciousness.

The very transformation of Shinra Myōjin from a god of/from Silla to a god who

conquers Silla resonates with the myth of Empress Jingū (Jp. Jingū kōgō 神功皇后), who is said

to have conquered Silla.[430] The legend of Empress Jingū, a story used as historical evidence to

support the idea that Silla had once paid tribute to Japan, was based on political ideology. This

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[429] *Onjōji denki* 65.

[430] Empress Jingū's successful invasion of Silla epitomized the aversion to Silla. According to the traditional Japanese mythology, Empress Jingū was a consort of Emperor Chūai 仲哀 and she also served as Regent from the time of her husband's death in 201 until her son Emperor Ōjin 応神 acceded to the throne in 269. The *Nihon shoki* tells us that with the aid of a pair of divine jewels that allowed her to control the tides, she led an army in an invasion of Korea and returned to Japan victorious after a three-year battle. At the time of her embarkation, she was pregnant, but postponed the birth of her royal son Ōjin, who was later deified as Hachiman, by blocking her birth canal with stones until the end of the war.
  Hachiman is considered to be the spirit of Emperor Ōjin although the origin of Hachiman cult still remains a mystery. There are several theories regarding its origins. Among them, the most comprehensive study is is Nahano Hatayoshi, *Hachiman Shinkōshi no kenkyū*, 1967. Nakano believes that the Hachiman cult did not originate exclusively at Usa, but was the result of a process of amalgamation of the ujigami beliefs of various clans, which found its center at Usa. In spite of his popularity from the Nara period onward, Hachiman does not appear in *the Kojiki* or *the Nihon shoki*. The first reference to Usa Hachiman shrine 宇佐八幡宮, one of the oldest Hachiman shrine, is dated 737.

theme was already to be found in the eighth century in places such as the Usa Hachiman shrine in Buzen province. Regardless of the historicity of that story, the semi-legendary figure's victory over Silla was continuously reproduced throughout the medieval period.[431] The Empress was a cultural symbol exhibiting the most powerful self-image of Japan, and we see the same narrative involved with Shinra Myōjin, whose dominant rhetoric of worship overlapped with that of Jingū.

The legend of Empress Jingū functioned as a rhetoric tool for regaining confidence, superiority, and cultural identity. It is supported by the fact that the legend reemerged during the thirteenth century with the two Mongol invasions and was reproduced through various means such as *setsuwa* collections and temple/shrine chronicles (Jp. *jisha engi*).[432] Owing to the expanded reproduction of the myth, the most popular passage popularized was as follows: "The kings of three Han Korean Kingdoms (or sometimes Silla) are the dogs of the Japanese," a sentence that appears in a fourteenth century text, the *Hachiman gudōkun* 八幡愚童訓.[433] According to the text, after defeating Silla, Empress Jingū ordered the following sentence to be inscribed on a rock: "The King of Silla is Japan's dog."[434]

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[431] She is also said to be a descendant of Ame no Hiboko 天日槍, the Silla prince. Ame no Hiboko appears in various textual sources such as the *Nihonshoki*, the *Kojiki*, and the *Harima Fudoki*, and legends and local cults in shrines. In the *Kojiki*, he appears in the section of Emperor Ojin. Whereas the *Fudoki* 風土記 describes Ame no Hiboko as a figure who brought advanced culture and power from the Korean peninsular, in the *Kojiki* (here his name is written 天日之矛), the narrative focuses on the reason why Ame no Hiboko crossed the sea and settled in Japan. After he settled down in Tajima, his descendants thrived, and interestingly enough, Empress Jingū's mother is depicted as one of Ame no Hiboko's descendants. See Setodani 1992: 142. Several scholars both Koreans and Japanese have pointed out the parallel between Ame no Hiboko in the *Kojiki* and some Korean myths. Michael Como also discusses Ame no Hiboko as part of cowherd deities from Silla. Como 2009: 43-5.

[432] Inoue 2009: 65.

[433] Choi 1999: 183.

[434] *Hachiman gudōkun* 176.

Once the story was made and came into circulation, it gained further plausible details. After the story was reproduced in the *Taiheiki* 太平記 (late 14th C.), the authority and popularity of the text established the phrase's legitimacy. The defensive tone also continued. The myth of Empress Jingū provided an internal justification for Toyotomi Hideyoshi's 豊臣秀吉 Chosŏn invasion during the sixteenth century. In the continuous reproduction of the story through various types of literature, including an encyclopedic text from the seventeenth century known as the *Shiojiri* 塩尻, the sentence came to be one of the most frequently used phrases for epitomizing how the Japanese perceived and imagined the Korean kingdoms even into modern times.[435] The ideological nature of Empress Jingū's legend and its continuous reproduction of the story throughout the medieval period suggest that Silla was perceived as a hostile enemy and a territory to be subjugated.

Empress Jingū's myth as it appears in several medieval texts suggest that Shinra Myōjin's association with pestilence emerged in this context. As confirmed by Shinra Myōjin's *engi* story in which Onjōji's Silla connection is highlighted, Shinra Myōjin's initial conspicuous foreign origin was a source of inspiration and power. In the continued hostile interactions with

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[435] The *Shiojiri*, an encyclopedic work from the Edo period, attempts to add another layer of myths. It says that a Japanese general had seen Empress Jingū's inscription with the details, such as the exact place and the size of inscription. *Shiojiri*, vol.53: 76.

The pejorative narrative further inspired popular writings in the Edo period as well as in one of the Jōruri 浄瑠璃, or narrative music, titled "*Yamashiro no kuni chikushō zuka* 山城の国畜生塚" composed by Chikamatsu Hanji (近松半二 1725−1783). The story is about an attempted revenge by Moku sokan 木曾官, a Chosŏn official whose Korean name was Kim Shimin. Kim Shimin was a Chosŏn general and he won the battle of Chinju castle during the Imjin war. Putting the distorted phrase in the historical setting, the music narrative revives the same rhetoric and appropriates it. The story tells us that Moku sokan, who was greatly resentful of Japan, came over to Japan for revenge. He disguises himself as a Japanese and approaches Mashiba Hisatsuku (refers to Toyotomi Hidetsugu 豊臣秀次 1568−1595), the nephew and retainer of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. He asks Hisatsugu to submit a paper on which the Chinese character "大" (big, or great) is written after putting one dot. Hisatsugu puts one dot on the right upper part, which makes the character "犬 (dog)" and then kills himself, admitting his affair with the wife of Hideyoshi. Mokuso finally reveals his own identity—as Chosŏn general. He says he came to Japan to revenge Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasion and in the litany of his revenge reasons, one of the resentments he repeats is the humiliating phrase about the Korean king being Japan's dog.

Silla and the rise of proto-national identity during the Mongol invasions, however, Shinra Myōjin evolved from being a deity who came from Silla to being a Japanese deity who went to Silla in order to exhibit Japanese power; this is the same rhetoric found in the legend of Empress Jingū popularized in the medieval period. In the mythological narrative of Shinra Myōjin and that of Empress Jingu, Silla represented a space where desire and fear intersect. It seems to have fulfilled a desire for another world outside of Japan's cultural sphere, and also provided a way to dispel the fear of otherness. This is the context into where Shinra Myōjin plunged and emerged as a pestilence deity.

3. Shinra Myōjin as a Pestilence Deity

3.1. Silla: the Direction from which Epidemics Come

The idea of a "boundary" as being an open space becomes more useful than that of "territory" when it comes to understanding how the ancient Japanese perceived demarcating the space they lived in with the space where "others" lived. How the Japanese perceived their territorial boundaries is subject to change, and we see the concept shift between the ancient and medieval periods.[436] The conceptualization of national boundaries in ancient Japan, specifically during the ninth century, is relevant for my discussion. The ninth century was when the Heian court attempted to create a centralized government and it also coincided with a series of epidemics that swept through Japan. For the elite Japanese, the pure space, where Japan was located, had to be protected from the polluted outer spaces, which included Silla. This idea explains why one of the earliest Buddhist cults in Japan, that of the Shitennō 四天王 (Four Heavenly Kings), was initially

[436] For the discussion of the medieval Japanese conceptualization of the Japanese boundary, see Kuroda 2003.

thought to be a powerful means for preventing pestilence from Silla, among the many other protective powers of the deities.[437]

Likewise, the idea of disease or, more specifically, pollution was understood within a spatial sense, i.e., the frame of the "inside" versus "the outside." Diseases were a large-scale sign of pollution, which either came from the "outside" or were caused by the mistreatment of a god. As Denis Twitchett has shown, China exported epidemics to Korea and Japan in the Tang period.[438] In Korea, China, and particularly the Jiang-nan 江南 area of China (south of the Yangzi river), was blamed as being the directional source of epidemics. The reflected the actual climate and epidemiology, and as Chinese historical records confirm, the southern part of China is a sub-tropical climate zone where epidemic outbreaks continuously occurred.[439] For the Japanese islanders, however, the Korean peninsula was singled out for blame and was perceived as being the source of epidemics.

There are concrete examples of pestilence arriving from the Korean Peninsula as well. One of the most fatal diseases in premodern Japan was smallpox (Jp. *entōsō* or *mogasa* are the terms used in the *Shoku Nihongi*), often caused by migration across the Korean-Japanese strait.[440] Smallpox was notorious for having inflicted a high mortality rate, and thus was seen as being the most powerful punishment from gods of epidemics. Accordingly, it required proper rituals and other apotropaic technologies to treat it.

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[437] Hong 2012: 10.

[438] Fairbank and Twichett 1979.

[439] Katz1995: 41; Goldschmidt 2007: 56.

[440] Smallpox is an endemic (restricted to a particular region over an extended period of time) disease, but it could become epidemic (afflicting many individuals within a community during a brief time span). A pandemic is the combination of the two, which occurs over a wide area and afflicts a high proportion of the populace. Katz 1995: 40.

In fact, the first outbreak of smallpox in Japan was probably brought from the Korean Peninsula. The Paekche envoys were accused of bringing it to Kyūshū in 552.[441] The outbreaks continued, and the Japanese greatly suffered from the Great Smallpox Epidemic during the Tempyō era (729–749).[442] It started in Kyūshū, the major contact point between the continent and the Japanese Islands. A fragment from a medical text compiled about seventy years after the initial outbreak records that a Japanese fisherman who ran afoul of an infected "barbarian" was responsible for the introduction of the disease.[443] However, it was medieval historians who identified the "barbarian" as being from Silla. For instance, a story in the *Zoku kojidan* 続古事談 (thirteenth-century compilation) explains that a fisherman from Kyūshū ran aground on the Korean Peninsula, where he became infected with the disease.[444] This same view is confirmed in the *Ainōshō* 壒嚢鈔 (1446), an encyclopedic miscellaneousness containing various Buddhist tales and medieval transmissions written by a Buddhist monk, Gyōyo 行誉. Although the historical credibility of these accounts is questionable, the point at stake is that Japanese historians attributed the disease to Silla and this was part of the enduring scapegoating of Silla.[445]

Silla's association with epidemics was formed over a several centuries starting from the eighth century. The port city of Dazaifu was the first victim of the fatal epidemic. The great smallpox epidemics of 735–737 had a devastating effect. Initially it was people in Daizaifu who

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[441] Farris 2009: 35.

[442] Farris 1985: 53-59.

[443] *Daidō ryijū hō*, cited in *Iryō uta haisai* (2 vols, 1772) composed by Furuhayashi Kenchō. A late Heian text differs slightly, mentioning that a contaminated "barbarian ship" transmitted the virus. *Honchō seki,* cited in Fujikawa 1969: 101.

[444] *Zoku Kojidan* in *SNKBT* 41.

[445] Fujikawa Yū 1969 [1904]: 290-91. Parhae was also blamed for this. Inoue 2009: 68.

suffered from a smallpox outbreak. It then spread to the north and east, finally reaching the capital in 737. The smallpox epidemic killed an estimated one-third to one-fourth of the population, and therefore caused death and terror among aristocrats of the time.[446] Although Chinese and Korean sources do not record any epidemics for the 730s, smallpox was a leading cause of death in the Unified Silla period around this time as well.[447] Given the frequent contact between Silla and Japan at the time, it is not surprising to observe almost simultaneous outbreaks of smallpox in Silla and Japan. Between 993 and 995, a smallpox epidemic coming from abroad killed twenty to twenty-five percent of the aristocratic class in Kyoto. The continuous outbreaks of smallpox did not help to assuage the negative perceptions of Silla. The association between Silla and pestilence seem to be more stabilized by the tenth century. If we look at the *Engi shiki* 延喜式 (*Regulations and Laws of the Engi Era*, 927), it tells us that the same offerings (such as skins of cow, bear, deer, and wild boar) were made during rites of warding off the pestilence deity and rites for Silla-related deities.[448] All of these examples suggest that epidemics did in fact come from outside and Silla was the one who was mostly blamed for the outbreaks.

The perception of Silla as a "demonic other" seems to have helped to create a clearer sense of spatial boundaries and order, and thus contributed to establishing cultural unity. Demarcating boundaries and demonizing Silla operated within the spiritual realm as well. For the highly pollution-conscious Japanese, an invasion of a foreign pestilence god was the most polluting possibility, and it created a chaotic situation. Shinra Myōjin's medieval transformation as a

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[446] Farris 2009: 66.

[447] Yi, Hyonsuk 2003.

[448] The offerings used in the ritual seem not to be inspired by Buddhists ideas, which might suggest the continuation of ancient local practices. Inoue 2009: 68.

pestilence god therefore seems to have been shaped within this context. Shinra Myōjin's generic name, "the deity of Silla," carried the most negative image possible—an association with the land of the disease—but precisely because of this association, he became a powerful god capable of warding off disease once he receives proper worship. Shinra Myōjin was a deity who both needed to be tamed and who controlled epidemics; as such, he simultaneously played the dual roles of conqueror and conquered.

3.2. Shinra Myōjin as a pestilence god

Epidemic gods were often perceived as being both the cause of and cure for epidemics. It is probably a very modern idea to separate the two. One of the primary roots of the pestilence deity cult is the ancient belief that epidemic disease is caused by disease-divinities (Jp. *ekijin* 疫神). As disease-causing agents, the *ekijin* were fearsome beings who caused but also prevented people from contracting disease. It was same with Shinra Myōjin. In the *Onjōji denki,* we find a passage about how Shinra Myōjin was imagined as a god of pestilence:

> During the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, Shinra Myōjin made a vow that he would appear as Myō'on 妙音 to protect Buddhist teachings and Buddhist halls. This is the reason why all the temples in India and China venerate him. In Mt. Tiantai, China, he manifested himself as Shusan'ō 朱山王 to protect the sovereign and to expel pestilence deities. At times he appeared on Mt. Song, at other times, he appeared on Mt. Tai 太山. Likewise, he protected every nook and cranny of the land. In Japan, he manifested himself as Susanoo 素戔鳴尊. From the Hi River 簸川 in Izumo, he went to Soshimori 曽尸茂梨 in Silla. There he protected kingship and also preached to both the monks and the laity. Afterwards, in the twelfth year of the Tang Emperor Dazhong 大中's reign (857), the deity appeared to Enchin on the boat during his return trip to Japan and eventually became a tutelary deity of Miidera.[449]

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[449] *Onjōji denki* 78.

In this passage, Shinra Myōjin's career, before he manifested himself to Enchin, is located at the intersection between Chinese sacred Buddhist geography and Japanese mythological narratives. Although it is noteworthy that the manifestation of Shinra Myōjin includes Silla in his connection with Susanoo. What is significant here is Shinra Myōjin's connection with Mt. Song in the Chinese sacred landscape as imagined by the Japanese medieval audience.

The centrality and therefore superiority of Mt. Song (as the Central Peak of the Five Peaks in China) is one way of indicating Shinra Myōjin's spiritual superiority over other deities.[450] Onjōji records claim that Shinra Myōjin's shrine is located in a cave on Mt. Song.[451] Because of this connection, Shinra Myōjin's other name is "King of Mt. Song." It is unknown how and when the association between Shinra Myōjin and Mt. Song was established. However, a mythological development around Bodhidharma and his association with smallpox in Edo Japan seems to resonate with the medieval Shinra Myōjin and his role as the king of Mt. Song. Mt. Song is the very site where Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of Chinese Chan/Zen, allegedly sat for nine years in meditation. As Bernard Faure points out, the association between Bodhidharma's Mt. Song and his later transformation as the god of smallpox in Edo Japan is not a coincidence, as the imagery of Mt. Song as the dwelling-place of the god of pestilence is already found in the medieval period.[452] The *Jimon denki horoku* makes a reference to the fact that Mt. Song is the sacred place of Bodhidharma.[453] Through this Bodhidharma connection, Mt. Song transforms into an incubative locus for nurturing this foreign pestilence power. This is also

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[450] Mt. Song has been considered the central of the five peaks (Ch. *wuyue*) since the late Zhou period. The mountain has always been predominantly Buddhist.

[451] *Onjōji denki* 71; *Jimon denki horoku* 109.

[452] Faure 2004: 524-25; Faure 2011: 59.

[453] *Jimon denki horoku* 109.

a good example of how the reconfiguration of sacred geography helped Japanese Buddhists create a new mythic connection by rearranging sacred topology to suit its own religious context.

Shinra Myōjin's main feature as a god who expels pestilence demons is found in another passage from the *Onjōji denki*:

> In the eight year of Kenkyū (1197), the abbot of Shōgoin 聖護院 visited (the *Lotus Sutra*) lecturer, Nōchin 能珍 (a.k.a. Myōchi 明智), who had just finished his lecture: "The auspicious power of Shinra Myōjin must be praised. When people suffer from twenty-five kinds of disease, if they visit the deity or pray to the deity in front of his images, the god mysteriously appears in their dreams, although how it possibly happens is unknown. Once, the deity came to a sick person and said: 'promoting Dharma and helping people live is what I have vowed, whereas by eliminating disease, prolonging your life is what you wish. From tomorrow onward, to be healed from diseases, you should keep your mind and body clean, and vow to cultivate yourself ardently.'"[454]

The above passage confirms that by the twelfth century, at Onjōji Shinra Myōjin was perceived as being a healing deity. Onjōji's practitioners visited his hall to pray to the god, and he often cured patrons through dream visions. This characterization of Shinra Myōjin as a deity of healing also fits well with his other avatar, the star deity Sonjōō—Onjōji's version of Myōken—since Sonjōō was also a deity of longevity.

Numerous legends in the *Jimon denki horoku* depict Shinra Myōjin as a god who expels pestilence. And, not surprisingly, he threatened people because he could cause pestilence as well. Most notably, Shinra Myōjin exercised his pestilence power against the emperors who sided with Enryakuji, the rival of Onjōji. For instance, Emperor Go-Sanjō 後三条 (r. 1068–1073) purportedly died due to Shinra Myōjin's curse when he failed to support the ordination platform

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[454] *Onjōji denki* 103.

at Onjōji. Prior to this fateful event, Go-Sanjō had paid a visit to Shinra Myōjin shrine to pray for his recovery.[455] Emperor Nijō 二条 (r. 1158–1165) also suffered from Shinra Myōjin's curse. He is even said to have been possessed on his deathbed by Shinra Myōjin's two acolytes.[456]

Shinra Myōjin's power over pestilence was in line with his demonic side. Related to the aforementioned epidemic of 1084, a text entitled *Shinra Myōjin Baizō ki* 新羅明神倍増記 (d.u.) gives an account that reveals this side of Shinra Myōjin, who brought disease even to the Onjōji monks.

> During the reign of Emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽, in the year 1084 (Genryaku 元暦 1), a terrible epidemic broke out and as a result, a great number of people died. At that time, there was a priest named Jigōbō 慈護坊 Daiho 大輔 who lived in the northern quarter of Onjōji….One day he visited the Shinra Myōjin shrine and prayed to the god. On the following night, he dreamed of Shinra Myōjin. In the dream, one demon was roaming above the garden, saying: "No one can escape from this disease. Then, how about giving it to the monks?" So the priest said that: "Stop, you cannot do this."…At the temple, there was a monk, Shikibu 式部 who not only hated learning but was also sycophantic, arrogant, and merciless. When the demon was about to haul Shikibu in his fire cart, the two acolytes of Shinra Myōjin appeared and said to him: "We cannot let you fall into the bottom of other demons' Hell. We will take you to our Hell." Then, they pulled the fire cart to the 'valley of Hell', and soon disappeared in the forest. After this dream, Shikibu suddenly died of an illness.[457]

The last part of this legend emphasizes Shinra Myōjin's demonic aspect, and indicates that he even had his own hell. His demonic aspect was extended to the Forest of Silla, where his shrine is located, and it was thought to contain the gate to Shinra Myōjin's hell. The idea of Shinra Myōjin having his own hell reminds us of his association with Mt. Tai and the King of Hell who lived there, Taizan fukun (although, the role of judge is largely missing in this context).

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[455] Mitsuhashi 2000: 106.

[456] *Jimon denki horoku* 120.

[457] *Shinra Myōjin Baizō ki* in Eizan Bunko collections.

Shinra Myōjin's identification as a pestilence god in turn helps explain his connection with Gozu Tennō. The cult of Gozu Tennō emerged early on in Japan. As can be discerned from a 2001 archeological discovery of a wooden tablet (Jp. *mokkan* 木簡) bearing the name of Somin Shōrai, which was found at an excavation site at the Nagaoka 長岡 capital, the legend of Somin Shōrai and the cult of a pestilence deity certainly predates the Heian period.[458] According to the fragment of the *Bingo no kuni no Fudoki* 備後国風土記 (ca. 8th C.) excerpted from the *Shaku nihongi*:

> Once upon a time, the god Mutō who resided on the northern sea, made a trip to marry the daughter of the god of the southern sea. The sun declined. And there were two brothers whose surname was Somin Shōrai. The elder brother was very poor whereas the younger brother had hundreds of houses. The god asked the younger brother for shelter but was rejected. The elder brother, however, provided shelter and offered millet for food. Later on, when Mutō retuned with his eight children, he said: "I want to reward you. Do your children live in your place?" Somin Shōrai replied: "I have a wife and a daughter." The god said: "Make a *chinowa* 茅の輪 and hang it at their waist." Somin Shōrai immediately did so and on that night, the deity killed everyone except the daughter. Then, the deity said: "I am Susanoo (Hayasusa no 速須佐雄). Later, whenever there are epidemics, they should state that they are your descendants. Those who wear *chinowa* Nihon around their waist will be spared."[459]

The story above is known as the earliest legend of Somin Shōrai, as well as the standard origin story of a pestilence god in Japan. The cult of Gozu Tennō was connected early on with the cult of *goryō*, angry spirits who were believed to cause epidemics and calamities.[460] In the early tenth century, a Tenjin Hall was founded at Gion Shrine in Kyōto for one of the most famous *goryō*, Tenjin. Gion Shrine originally developed from a temple hall linked to a temple named Gionji or

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[458] *Gion shinkō jiten* 2002: 109. Before this, scholars were suspicious of the earliest record, *Bingo no kuni no fudoki*.

[459] *Shaku nihongi* 172.

[460] On Gion cult and the explanation on the concept of *goryō* as one of the main roots of the cult, see McMullin 1988.

Kankeiji 観慶寺 (c. 876) to a *miyadera* defined as a subtemple (or a detached cloister, Jp. *betsuin* 別院) of Enryakuji in 970.[461]

Throughout the medieval period, Gozu Tennō was a paradigmatic pestilence deity due to the popularity of the Gion cult. Gion Shrine is the best known cultic center of Gozu Tennō, but there are three other major centers: Tennō Shrine 天皇神社 in Hiromine 広峯, Tsushima Shrine 津島神社 in Owari, and Daihō Shrine 大宝神社 in Ōmi. Concerning the origin of the Gozu Tennō cult at Gion Shrine, it is said that in the eighteenth year of Jogan, after receiving an oracle from Gozu Tennō, the Buddhist priest Juzen Ennyo transferred the spirit of the Gozu Tennō of Hiromine in Harima 播磨 (present day Hyōgo prefecture) to Kyōto and enshrined it there.[462]

By the thirteenth century, Susanoo came to be identified with Gozu Tennō in the Yoshida Shinto circle. Because of the circulation of this idea, in the Jimon tradition Susanoo came to be further identified with Shinra Myōjin. Thus, according to *the Jimon denki horoku*, during the epidemic of 1084, the court decided to pray to Shinra Myōjin. When a prayer was addressed to the god, the epidemic immediately stopped. On this occasion, Shikō, the compiler of the text, notes: "Shinra Myōjin is none other than Susanoo. Therefore, the talisman of 'Somin Shōrai' 蘇民將來 originated at the Shinra Myōjin shrine."[463] This passage suggests that the mythological association between Shinra Myōjin and Gozu Tennō was well established in the Jimon tradition, and it may also have led to the production of a certain kind of talisman for public use.

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[461] For a discussion of the relationship between the Enryakuji and the Gion shrine, see McMullin 1987.

[462] Harima region has a unique transmission of Gozu Tennō. According to the *Hiromine engi,* when Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 (695–775), the well-known Japanese scholar returned from Tang China in 733, he stayed one night on Mt. Hiromine. In a dream he had that night, he encountered Gozu Tennō, and since then, the place has been sacred spot of Gozu Tennō. Inoue 2009: 67.

[463] *Jimon denki horoku* 119-20.

4. Pestilence gods from Silla

4.1. Susanoo in the Tendai Context

In the medieval transformation of Shinra Myōjin, Susanoo played an instrumental role, since the association between these two gods paved the way for the latter's development into a deity of pestilence, particularly in connection with Gozu Tennō. Susanoo is a key player who established the association between Shinra Myōjin and Gozu Tennō and further played the role of the axis of all Silla-associated deities in the late medieval period, especially within the Tendai tradition.[464] In order to understand the context within which Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo came to be merged in the medieval Onjōji tradition, I first of all clarify Susanoo's position within Tendai. The institutional merger between Gion shrine and Enryakuji seems to have helped the integration of Susanoo under the Tendai rubric. Tendai's doctrinal emphasis on original enlightenment (Jp. *hongaku* 本覚) theory further produced a new Susanoo in the medieval period.[465]

Susanoo is a complex deity, who exhibits great ambiguity in different texts over a long time period. Susanoo represents both an evil power and a great hero. He is contrasted with his sister Amaterasu, but he is also the one who expels the greater evil, represented by the eight-forked serpent, Yamata no Orochi 八岐の大蛇. In the medieval period, particularly around the thirteenth century when the *Shaku nihongi* 釈日本紀 was compiled (which was between 1274 and 1301, by Yoshida Kanekata 卜部兼方), Susanoo was perceived as a deity who transcends both evil and good with the help of the powerful *hongaku* ideology, which also posited that the

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[464] Saitō 2012.

[465] For more on the in-depth discussion of *hongaku* in medieval Japanese Buddhism, see Stone 1999.

"identity of good and evil are the same" (Jp. *zen-aku issho* 善悪一緒).[466] This transformation suggests that in the thirteenth century, when *hongaku* theory was pervaded all of Japanese religion and myth, interpretation of evil became more complex than it had previously been. The affirmation of evil (Jp. *aku* 悪) through the notion of the ultimate unity of opposites enabled the evil gods to be interpreted positively and vice versa.[467]

Apart from the Gion Shrine, Gakuenji 鰐淵寺, a Tendai temple in Izumo, is another institution where Susanoo was co-opted into the Tendai system. Izumo transmits a distinctive mythological tradition and ritual practice regarding Susanoo, one that is different from the standard textual traditions found in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. As Saitō Hideki has shown, in the medieval period Susanoo became the most prominent divinity, and the Izumo tradition even recognized him as the ruler of Japan.[468] Because of his prominence, the supreme Sun Goddess Amaterasu was even perceived as being his daughter in the Izumo tradition. Although he was later replaced by Ōnamuchi and became forgotten during the early modern period, Susanoo's strong presence in the Izumo region and its Tendai association help us understand that the Tendai network was essential to spreading the cultic practices of this pestilence deity.

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[466] Kwŏn 2013: 241-71.

[467] The positive image of Ryōgen as Maō is another such example. See Wakabayashi 1999: 501.

[468] Saitō 2012: 94-96.

[Fig.10. Seated Gozu Tennō, wooden statue, 12th C., Gakuenji, Shimane]

Especially in the medieval period, Gakuenji was the center of the reconfiguration of the Susanoo cult. According to the Gakuenji's *engi* story, the temple was established in 594 by Chishun 智春. It flourished from the late Heian to the Insei period. It was the first branch-temple (Jp. *matsuji* 末寺）of Enryakuji, established as a result of the extension of the *kaihōgyō* 回峰行 practice of Mt. Hiei ascetics.[469] Because of this earlier Shugendō connection, the temple later became one of the sacred places for Shugendō practitioners. The temple's influence grew even more powerful during the Kamakura period, when it became the *betto* temple of Izumo

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[469] Saitō 2012: 101.

Taisha 出雲太社. Monks from Gakuenji seized power at Izumo Taisha, and their involvement in

Izumo Taisha's administration continued until the early Edo period.[470]

Given the strong presence of the cult around Susanoo in Izumo, this institutional tie

brought a mythical fusion and confusion around Susanoo into the Buddhist realm. Through the

influence of Enryakuji's Matarajin cult, Matarajin was worshiped at Gakuenji's Jōgyōdō as well.

Like Shinra Myōjin, Matarajin has been known as a secret Buddha (Jp. *hibutsu* 秘仏) in

Tendai.[471] Although Gakuenji's Matarajin was from Enryakuji, the local legend of Gakuenji's

Matarajin makes the deity different from Enryakuji's Matarajin. A legend transmitted at

Gakuenji recounts that Susanoo is buried at the temple, and that the dead Susanoo was deified as

Matarajin there.[472]

At Gakuenji, perhaps due to its Tendai esoteric knowledge gained through the

institutional network, the cult of Gozu Tennō is also conspicuous, notably through visual

examples. Gakuenji has preserved several wooden statues of Gozu Tennō from the Heian period.

This suggests the significance of the Gozu Tennō cult at the temple, although the details are not

known.[473] Although Shinra Myōjin is totally absent in the legends produced at Gakuenji due to

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[470] Saitō 2012: 102.

[471] There are a large number of *hibutsu* or hidden Buddha scattered throughout Japan. Some are never on display, and are called *zettai hibutsu* (e.g., Amida at Zenkōji, arguably the first Buddhist image to arrive in Japan in 552, and Kannon at Sensōji), even to the Buddhist priests in charge of their rituals. Other images are displayed only once or twice a generation or in a lifetime. As Rambelli points out, however, it should be also noted that most *hibutsu* are not always or completely secret. (Rambelli 2002: 274) In the case of Shinra Myōjin, Onjōji priests can access it but public access is prohibited. The latest public opening was in 2008 during the Osaka and Tokyo exhibitions.

[472] Saitō 2012: 107.

[473] In the Izumo Taisha exhibition held at the Kyoto National Museum in 2012, a large number of images from Gakuenji were exhibited, including the aforementioned Matarajin and Gozu Tennō statues. As for Matarajin, the oldest exemplar is the one preserved at Kiyomizudera in the Izumo area. In the 2012 exhibition, two examples titled "Seated Male deity (Danshin zazō, no. 159, twelfth c.)" and Seated Aged Deity (Nōsōshin zazō, no. 147, tenth–eleventh c.) deserve our attention since they exhibit a striking resemblance to that of Shinra Myōjin. See *Izumo Taisha den* 2012: 153; 163.

the temple's institutional tie with Enryakuji, Susanoo merged with Matarajin, and Susanoo seems to have been the central agent of the myth-making process in Onjōji's effort to establish the identification between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo.

4.2. Susanoo and Shinra Myōjin

Festivals were integral parts of institutional life at temples and shrines. Because of their integral powers, they attracted worshippers and pilgrims, and they inspired viewers to make material contributions that helped sustain them. At Onjōji, the festival for Shinra Myōjin served this purpose. Although it remains uncertain how and when the association began, by at least the early thirteenth century, the connection between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo seems to have been widely recognized through Tendai. Onjōji's description of the Shinra Myōjin festival and its organizational framework around the main theme of Susanoo confirms this very point.

The *Onjōji denki* provides a detailed description of the festival of Shinra Myōjin (Jp. *Shinra Myōjin sai* 新羅明神祭). In this description, we find the full ritualization of the mythological connection between the two deities. If we look at the Shinra Myōjin festival organized at Onjōji in 1210, for instance, the parade of young children impersonating Princess Kushinada, Susanoo's bride, and Susanoo marked the climax of the festival. The *Jimon denki horoku* provides more details on this association. The opening of the text provides the following explanation:

> Shinra Myōjin, the son of Izanami 伊弉册, is none other than Susanoo. Once upon a time, his parents expelled him to the underworld (Jp. *ne no kuni* 根の国). But he

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went to Heaven. After meeting his sister, the Sun-goddess, he went to Soshimori in Silla with his fifty sons.[474]

Here the name of Shinra Myōjin replaces that of Susanoo, in what is a rewriting of the myth from the *Nihon shoki*. In the Age of the Gods section of the *Nihon shoki,* one account states that Sosanoo went to Silla after he was expelled from the Plain of High Heaven (Takama-ga-hara 高天原): "In one writing it is said that Susanoo no Mikoto's behavior was unmmanerly. A punishment was imposed on him by all the Gods of a thousand tables, and he was driven into banishment. At this time, Sosanoo accompanied by his son Iso takeru no kami, descended to the Land of Silla, where dwelt at Soshimori. There he lifted up his voice and said: 'I will not dwell in this land.' He at length took clay and made of it a boat, in which he embarked, and crossed over eastwards until he arrived at Mt. Torikamu no take, which is by the upper waters of the river Hi in Izumo."[475] This passage became the *locus classicus* for the connection between Susanoo and Silla in the later mythological literature. The initial connection between the two might have started with a toponymic confusion—both being referred to as a god of "Silla" or a god who returned from "Soshimori of Silla," respectively. Once the association was made, however, Susanoo and Shinra Myōjin grew to be indistinguishable.

Although the links between Shinra Myōjin, Susanoo, Gozu Tennō were primarily established in the Onjōji tradition, the idea was also found outside of the temple. The Urabe 卜部 clan and Yoshida Shintō 吉田神道, which was developed by a branch of the Urabe, seem to be responsible for the circulation of that knowledge. In the *Kanekuni Hyakushu utashō* 兼邦百首歌

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[474] *Jimondenki horoku* 108.

[475] *Nihon shoki*, Aston (translation slightly modified), 57.

抄 (1486), compiled by Urabe Kanekuni 卜部兼邦, we find that the Urabe's explanation of Shinra Myōjin is identical with that of Susanoo.[476]

As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, if we accept that Onjōji's records of the Shinra Myōjin festival are historically accurate, at least at Onjōji, then Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo came to be perceived as being the same deity some time before 1210. Two different threads of assimilation seem to have evolved around the two epidemic gods, and these eventually brought them together. One of these threads is Susanoo's association with Gozu Tennō, and the other is Shinra Myōjin's association with Susanoo, as shown in the *Onjōji* temple chronicles. In either case, the common denominator between Shinra Myōjin and Gozu is that both are connected to Susanoo.

A key text that identifies Susanno with Gozu Tennō is the *Shaku nihongi*, which was compiled by Urabe Kanekata. Herein, we find a passage where Urabe Kanekata quotes the interpretation of his own father, Urabe Kanefumi 卜部兼文. In this passage, we find the reason why Susanoo came to be associated with Silla as well as with Gozu Tennō:

> [Kanekata's] Question: is the main deity of Gion Shrine a foreign deity?
> [Kanefumi's] Answer: the details regarding how Susanoo first crossed the sea and went to Silla and came back to Japan are recorded in this text, the *Nihon shoki*. Because of this, there was a theory that Susanoo is a foreign deity. The main deity of Gion is the god of pestilence, whose name is also known as Mutō Tenjin 武塔天神. Thus, when he [Mutō] says: "I am Susanoo," we know that this is the deity's real name.[477]

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[476] Yamamoto 1998a: 151.

[477] *Shaku nihongi* 172-73.

What is significant about the passage above is the way in which Susanno's association with Silla resurfaced in connection with Gozu Tennō. According to the text, as it is found in the Onjōji chronicles, in the case of Shinra Myōjin, Susanoo's Silla association is justified as being his temporary manifestation. Because Gozu Tennō and Shinra Myōjin were skillful means for Susanoo to exercise Japanese power over Silla, these Silla-associated deities are in reality all manifestations of Susanoo.

The association between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo was in part an ideological expansion of Shinto theories, which later solidified as Yoshida Shintō. Yoshida Shintō is a prominent branch of Shintō that arose during the Sengoku period (1467–1568) through the teachings and works of Yoshida Kanetomo. In Yoshida Shintō's attempt to place Shinto as the highest religion, it affirmed the so-called "reverse *honji suijaku*," theory promoted at the Outer Shrine of Ise. Here, the claim was that Buddhist deities are manifestations of the Shintō *kami*, not the other way around, as it had been previously thought.[478] As Kuroda Toshio and others have argued, in the beginning the reverse *honji suijaku* theory did not necessarily indicate nascent consciousness of a metahistorical Japanese "nation" or "Shinto" as an indigenous tradition, because it was mostly used by the older sects as a means of criticizing the new *nembutsu* and other single-practice sects' refusal to show devotion to native *kami* as Buddhist avatars.[479] But to the Yoshida Shintō, the theory was used as a polemical tool, asserting that Shintō was the primal religion of the world, and that it, in turn, gave rise to Buddhism and Confucianism.

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[478] Before the war, Japanese scholars tended to give much credit to Yoshida Shintō. However, a new generation of scholars have tried to newly assess Yoshida Shinto. See *Nihon shisōshi kōza* (chūsei) 2012: 303-4.

[479] Paul Swanson and Clark Chilson eds. 2006: 25.

According to Yoshida Kanetomo, all Silla-related deities boiled down to Susanoo's manifestations. In Yoshida Kanetomo's commentary on the *Nihon shoki*, titled the *Nihon shoki jindai no maki shō* 日本書紀神代券抄, we find a passage where he explains why Shinra Myōjin is none other than Susanoo.

> Shinra Myōjin is none other than Susanoo….Furthermore, the one who is called King Banko 盤古 in China is also Susanoo…. When Chishō Daishi [Enchin] of Miidera returned from *Silla*, the deity appeared in front of the master. Because the deity was a protective deity of Qinglong temple, the master invited the deity and worshipped. This deity is also Susanoo. [480]

In this way, Yoshida Shintō is not shy in claiming that the highest being of China and Korea is the Japanese god Susanoo. By reshaping Susanoo into not only a primordial god but also as an omnipresent god in the entire Buddhist world, it gives the ultimate place of power to Susanoo.

This link between the Silla deities and Susanoo was reflected in the thought of Shinto nativists as late as the fifteenth century and it promoted Shintō nativist ideology. Shintō nativists favored Susanoo, the classical mythological hero, over Gozu Tennō, who was "tainted" with his foreign and Buddhist origins. This nativist movement further helped to erase Gozu Tennō and replace him with Susanoo, as happened to Gozu Tennō's main cultic site, Gion Shrine (for some reason, though, this did not effect Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji). In 1871, during the Meiji Restoration, the main deity was changed from a Buddhist deity, Gozu Tennō, to a "purely Shintō deity," Susanoo. Moreover, the name of the temple was changed to Yasaka 八坂, and it was made into a shrine.[481] In this anti-Buddhist and pro-Shinto fervor, a great number of temples whose names formerly included a reference to Korean kingdoms like Silla were forced to

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[480] *Nihon shoki jindai no maki* 209. (emphasis mine)

[481] Susanoo's association with the Jimon tradition may also have been an institutional and spiritual response to the tie between Sannō at Mt. Hiei and Amaterasu, which was in evidence during the fourteenth century.

changed their names, and their main deities were also changed to the "Shintō Susanoo." This was not just the result of an abstract mythological connection with Silla, but rather reflects the more complicated relationship with Silla and Silla-related deities during the long course of historical conflicts. During the Meiji Restoration, all Silla-named shrines and temples were forced to change their names to Shiragi and use different Chinese characters; here too, the main deity was replaced with "Shintō Susanoo." Although the Meiji government considered Susanoo to be the most appropriate natal god for the Silla shrines and temples, ironically it emphasizes the medieval amalgamation and even the earlier connection between the Silla-related shrines and the networks of Silla immigrants. It further helps us understand the importance of Susanoo in the medieval *imaginaire* and the complex interactions between buddhas and *kami*.

5. Matarajin, Shinra Myōjin, and the Ox Connections

5.1. Matarajin and Gozu Tennō

The Ox Festival around Matarajin at Kōryūji 広隆寺 suggests another connection to pestilence among the Silla deities. It further helps us recognize widespread mythological conceptions and how they were performed in ritual space. Because festivals are an integrated form of communal activity aimed at reconciling the oppositions of thought and action, this festival, centered around epidemic gods, creates both risk and safety. Pestilence deities such as Gozu Tennō, Shinra Myōjin, and Matarajin, all of whom were associated with Silla, were invited, entertained, and properly treated as separate figures. By these repeated forms of public action, those deities were recognized and their mutual associations were reinforced, in this case, through the intimate,

symbolic relationship created between the ox and epidemics. Before examining the festival of Matarajin at Kōryūji, I discuss Matarajin in order to explain his connection with Shinra Myōjin.

Matarajin is a complex deity.[482] Probably the best way to describe him is to not use the singular form but rather the plural. In the Tendai tradition, Matarajin is identified with Shinra Myōjin and Sekizan Myōjin, and he shares myths with both. According to the *Keiran shūyōshū,* Matarajin appeared to Ennin on his return trip from China and blackmailed him, saying: "I am Matarajin, a god of obstacles (Jp. *shōgejin* 障碍神). Those who do not worship me will not be able to attain rebirth [in the Pure Land]."[483] Because of this *engi* story, Matarajin was considered to be a foreign deity brought to Japan by Ennin, and he became the protector deity of the Amida cult in Tendai Esotericism from the Heian period onward. He was enshrined at the back door, (Jp. *ushirodo* 後戸) of the Jōgyōsannmaidō 常行三昧堂 (Constant walking Samādhi hall). On the ritual ground, Matarajin was the main deity in some secret heterodox rituals of the Tendai, such as *genshi kimyōdan* 玄旨帰命壇.[484] During the Genroku period (1688–1704), however, these rituals were abolished on Mt. Hiei and most of the statues have been destroyed.

Matarajin was primarily venerated throughout the Tendai network, although his worship extended to other religious traditions and other parts of cultural sphere, such as the performing

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[482] For a more complete picture of Matarajin, see Faure 2014 (forthcoming), also Yamamoto 1998a.

[483] T. 76, 2410: 632.

[484] The ritual refers to two initiation rituals, the *genshidan* and *kimyōdan*, possibly twined with the sexual elements in the ritual, which eventually caused its ban on Mt. Hiei. Kageyama 1973: 247-50. Kawamura 2008: 174-80.

arts (Jp. *geinō* 芸能). The Tendai temple Shinnyodō 真如堂 in Kyōto upheld the cult of Matarajin and continues even now to observe it in its ritual calendar.[485]

[Fig. 11. Matarajin, wooden statue, 18th C., Shinnyodō, Kyoto]

The Tendai temple Mōtsuji 毛越寺 in Hiraizumi, which was supposedly founded by Ennin, is also well known for its unique cult centered on Matarajin. Gakuenji in Izumo is another important place for the medieval development of Matarajin within the Tendai network. In Nikkō, the Tendai monk Tenkai 天海 (1536–1643) revived the cult of Matarajin in a modified form, as the protective deity of the deified Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616).[486] At Nikkō Tōshō-gū 日光東照宮, Matarajin was venerated as one of the acolytes of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and he was

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[485] The temple enshrines a dancing Matarajin wooden statue dates from Enkyō 延享 Period (1744–1747). I am grateful to Mr. Takeuchi Junshō 竹内純照 at Shinnyōdō who provided me explanations and a picture of the statue when I visited the temple in 2011.

[486] Bodiford 2006-2007: 233-62.

also seen as a manifestation of Tayi 太一 (Jp. *taiitsu*), the Pole Star. Matarajin's association with the performing arts is also seen in these Tendai temple networks. Matarajin's association with *geinō* strengthens the parallel evolvement between Shinra Myōjin and himself as part of the widespread Okina cult in the performing theater.[487] The fact that so many of these Matarajin centers were located within the Tendai movement sheds light on Shinra Myōjin's close association with Matarajin, as well as the significance of epidemic deities in the Tendai network.

Matarajin's association with pestilence reflects Tendai's concern with epidemics. On the question of how Matarajin, who was originally a protector of the Jōgyōdō in Tendai monasteries, came to be associated with pestilence other than through his mythic associations with Gozu Tennō (Susanoo), Yamamoto Hiroko suggests that Matarajin's epidemic aspect was probably developed outside of Mt. Hiei, in other Tendai monasteries such as Mōtsuji in Hiraizumi, Tōnomine, and Nikkō.[488] Beyond the Tendai network, Matarajin's epidemic aspect is already present in his etymology, possibly because Matarajin may have been named after the *matara* (from Sanskrit *matrika*, Mothers), which were Indian pestilence deities akin to the female demons known as *ḍākinī*s.[489]

Matarajin's association with Okina is mirrored by Shinra Myōjin's association with the same figure. Matarajin's major development was his fusion with the figure of Okina in the *sarugaku* tradition, as observed in rituals such as the Shushō-e 修正会 festival at New Year.

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[487] However, unlike his doubles, Matarajin made his way beyond Tendai. By the eleventh century, he played the role of a protective deity known as the Yaksa of Tōji 東寺, combining in one figure the three devas Benzaiten, Shōten, and Dakiniten. He also played a significant role as a god of pestilence at another Shingon temple, Kōryūji, to which we will turn below.

[488] Yamamoto 1998a: 154.

[489] For more on the discussion, see Faure 2014 (forthcoming).

Matarajin's merging with Okina takes us back to the Silla connection, Hata no Kawakatsu 秦河勝 (also known as Hata no Kōkatsu, fl. seventh c.), the ancestor of the Hata clan, as well as a figure who appears in several legends of Shōtoku Taishi. He is responsible for developing the silkworm industry and civil engineering in Japan. In the performing arts tradition, he is said to be the founder of the *sarugaku*. In the *Meishuku shū* 明宿集, for instance, Konparu Zenchiku 金春禅竹 (1405–1470?) claims to have inherited the mask given by Shōtoku Taishi to Hata no Kawakatsu.[490] All of this suggests that Matarajin is part of the Okina cult. The medieval development of the deity as a deity of performing arts may appear to be a new career for him. But in fact, Matarajin developed due to his associations with Silla immigrants and the Okina cult, which is part of the network of Silla gods.

Matarajin's connection with the Hata takes us back to the Ox festival at Kōryūji, one of the oldest temples in Kyoto. Kōryūji is said to have been constructed in 603 by Hata no Kawakatsu, and it became one of the most important places in the development of the Shōtoku cult.[491] The fact that the temple was part of the Hata network, and therefore the Silla network, is crucial for our purposes. As Michael Como has shown, during the Nara and early Heian periods, the cultic horizons of the court were in many ways shaped by gods associated with immigrant lineages such as the Hata.[492] The Hata were familiar with continental culture and with technologies developed in China and Korea for the pacification of evil spirits. If, as Como

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[490] Hattori 2009.

[491] More on the early history of Kōryūji and the discussions on the two major Maitreya statues at Kōryūji, see Im, 2003. Im also shows how the main Buddha of the temple was changed from Maitreya to Yakushi with the effort of the Kōryūji abbot, Dōshō 道昌 (798–875). Im argues that Dōshō's effort to change Kōryūji's main Buddha to Yakushi was aimed at promoting the temple as one of the major healing places in the capital. For more on this, see Im 2003: 133-56.

[492] Como 2009: 22.

argues, Japanese rulers embraced such deities not from a "position of strength but rather in fear and weakness," the pestilence deities must have been at the core of this fear. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that the Silla deities had a close association with the pestilence deity. As in a Möbius strip, we observe the non-orientable and never-ending associations between Silla, Silla-associated deities, and pestilence.

5.2. The Ox festival of Matarajin at Kōryūji

At Kōryūji, Matarajin was notably a pestilence deity.[493] Although Kōryūji was affiliated with the Shingon school, it was through the Tendai network that the cult of Matarajin was introduced and sustained. Kōryūji's origin story explains that the Tendai priest Genshin worshiped an Amida image from the same temple in a dream, and ended up carving himself a copy of that image. In 1012, on the occasion of a *nenbutsu* assembly, Genshin enshrined Matarajin as protector at the back door of the temple.

Other than the Ox festival of Kōryūji, the annual Gion Festival of Kyoto, held in the summer, is one of the best-known examples of Japanese pestilence festivals. This festival originated during the outbreak in 869, when people prayed to the deity of Gion, Gozu Tennō. There is, however, another festival dedicated to another pestilence deity on the other side of Kyoto, in the district of Uzumasa. This festival is known as the Uzumasa Ox festival (Jp. Uzumasa no ushi matsuri 太秦の牛祭) of Kōryūji. Every year, on the twelfth day of the ninth month (by the lunar calendar), in the middle of the night, the festival is carried out.[494]

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[493] According to the *Shinmonshū* 真聞集 in the Kōzanji 高山寺 collection, the Kegon monk Myōe is said to have learned a Madarijin 摩怛利神 ritual that was efficacious during an epidemic in 1206 (Ken'ei 1). Kageyama 1973: 246.

[494] Yamamoto 1998a: 153.

[Fig.12. Iyamiya yasurai matsuri, Uzumasa matsuri byōbu, Edo period, Hosomi Museum, Kyōto]

The main deity of the Uzumasa Ox Festival is Matarajin. On the festival night, starting from the Jōgyōdō, Matarajin, dressed in white and wearing a caricatural mask that reminds us of the white face of Shinra Myōjin, appears riding a black ox. He is accompanied by four *oni* wearing red and green masks, which symbolize the four heavenly kings (Jp. Shitennō 四天王).[495] The structure of the festival is simple, although it is still considered to be one of the strangest festivals in Japan, in part because of the queer appearance of its *hibutsu* Matarajin and his riding an ox. In the middle of the festival, the deity reads a ritual text.[496] The *saimon* addresses about fifteen diseases that

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[495] Kawamura 2008: 12-3; 22-4.

[496] For the whole *saimon* text written in 1402 attributed to Genshin, see Kawamura 2008: 24-25.

need to be pacified and tamed by the apotropaic power of Matarajin combined with that of the ox.[497] After that, it disappears into the Jōgyōdō hall.

Matarajin's festival at Kōryūji is significant for our discussion. As the deity's *saimon* reflects, the nature of the festival is a public ritual to ward off demons of pestilence with the apotropaic power of Matarajin. Matarajin's association with an ox is not accidental either.[498] The conspicuous presence of the ox reminds us of Gozu Tennō, another major festival organized to expel epidemics. If the Tendai religious practices centered on protective deities also worked to disseminate practices dealing with epidemics, it does not seem to be an accident that the festival of the Bull-headed king at Gion and the Ox festival at Kōryūji were addressed to similar Tendai deities. Since the ninth century, the Gion festival was repeated whenever an epidemic outbreak occurred. Although the Uzumasa Festival requires further examination, given the identification of Matarajin as Shinra Myōjin, and therefore Gozu Tennō, the Ox festival at Kōryūji seems to be identical in nature with the Gion festival.[499] All of these connections suggest that Tendai played a central role in creating and developing pestilence deities from very early on, and the rich symbolism and ritual knowledge extended to the public's *imaginare*.

6. Conclusion

Focusing on the association between Shinra Myōjin and Susanoo, in this chapter I have explained how the Japanese *imaginaire* of Silla, the source of which lies at the intersection of

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[497] Hattori 1971: 297-301.

[498] Several Japanese esoteric Buddhist deities who ride oxen, buffalos, or bulls, such as Daiitoku Myōō 大威徳明王, Enmaten 閻魔天, as well as the bull-headed Gozu Tennō can be compared with one another in order to understand the symbolism of Matarajin's riding an ox.

[499] Kawamura 2008:23.

history and mythology, led to Shinra Myōjin being perceived as a god of pestilence in medieval Japan; the crystallization of Japanese disdain and aversion toward Silla was found not only in the historical space but also in major ideologies and myths, such as the three kingdom ideology and the legend of Empress Jingū. Shinra Myōjin's identification with Susanoo provided an essential rationale in this process, which further transformed Shinra Myōjin from a deity worshipped by immigrants from Silla into the deity who subjugates Silla in medieval mythology. The aversion toward Silla and the demonization of a deity from Silla as a god of pestilence, however, is by no means a simple ideological twist. Rather, it reveals how much the perception of Silla was pervasive and powerful in creation of a new character of a Silla deity.

The way in which Silla, together with Shinra Myōjin, was perceived in the medieval Tendai circle can be best described with the notion of "imagined geographies." This idea initially evolved out of Edward Said's critique on Orientalism. In this concept, "imagined" does not mean "false" or "made-up" but rather "perceived." As a form of social constructionism on par with Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined communities, the very idea of imagined geographies refers to the perception of space created through certain images, texts, or discourses.

While imagined geographies are often seen as being a tool or means of controlling and subordinating areas in a postcolonial context, what I mean here by "imagined geographies" is not as a political critique but rather as an integral part of cultural imagination. In the case of Shinra Myōjin, this deity was not only the object of imagination and recreation; he also provided the medium for the medieval imagining of Silla within the Japanese mind. Through the text, myth, and cult of Shinra Myōjin in medieval Japan, the imagined geography of Silla was actively imagined as being the land of the Silla deity as well as the land of pestilence. Shinra Myōjin's association with Susanoo highlights the interactions between historical perception, religious

imagination, and actual practices. It thereby shows how the medieval Japanese perception of Silla was encoded into the Japanese religious landscape and how far the image of Silla penetrated both the Onjōji clergy and beyond.

The medieval perception of Silla as the land from which epidemics came played a key role in creating mythic links among Shinra Myōjin, Gozu Tennō, and Matarajin, whose cult culminated in the medieval period. Although the myth of Shinra Myōjin prospered mostly in the Jimon tradition, through the Tendai network and his association with Gozu Tennō, the Silla god enjoyed a wide range of popularity across the country, thus underlying the continental gods' presence and significance. The mythological narrative of Gozu Tennō and its affinity with stories that remain in Silla allow us to explore how the two, geographically proximate cultures might have influenced each other on the mythological plane. Mythology is not just imagination or wild fables. It indirectly reflects actual associations, practices, people, and places. The inseparable mythic associations among Shinra Myōjin, Susanoo, Gozu Tennō, and Matarajin were noticeable in the temple records, visual representations, and public festivals. Throughout the medieval period, these deities played a central role in the growth of the Tendai tradition, and at the same time, they reflect one of the most prominent ways that Tendai engaged with pestilence and pestilence gods.

Ch.4 Shinra Myōjin and the Old-man Deity

1. Introduction: The Korean Network

This chapter investigates the visual structure of Shinra Myōjin, focusing on the deity's dominant representation as an old man, and discusses its broader cultural implications in the East Asian maritime network. Shinra Myōjin is a non-canonical deity, whose written sources are mostly found not in the Buddhist canon, or even in the official biography of Enchin, but in the Onjōji tradition. Because of this, relying solely on textual evidence gives us only a limited understanding of where Shinra Myōjin fits in within a wider religious network of deities that appear as old men. However, by looking at visual representations we can better put together the puzzle and understand why Shinra Myōjin was depicted as an old man, and how the tradition of old man deities was both shaped by and shaped the larger medieval Japanese religious landscape, and what cultural values these deities conveyed in the cross-cultural context.

Geographical, visual, and doctrinal connections converge to become three crucial points for my analysis of the network of the old man looking deities in this chapter. These should not be considered as three separate viewpoints, but as closely related points by which we can understand the larger trans-cultural implications of the old man deity in East Asian religious traditions. Geographically, Shinra Myōjin's visual representation reflects Tendai Buddhist monks' interests in the cult of Mañjuśrī cult on Mt. Wutai in China. As I try to demonstrate below, the old man image of Shinra Myōjin shows Tendai monks' attempt to localize the Mañjuśrī cult in a Japanese context. Even after its relocation from China to Japan, the deity continued its journey and we can observe the extension of its cult in the Kumano region.

As the visual evidence of Shinra Myōjin from the Kumano honji suijaku mandala suggests, the cult of Shinra Myōjin continued to be circulated during the medieval period by Kumano pilgrims as well as by Shugendō practitioners. Shinra Myōjin, the powerful guardian deity of Onjōji Shugen, not only helped the Jimon tradition retain imperial favor but also created a wide network for the deity, connecting the ancient capital, Ōmi, and the Kumano region. Through this continuous *sedentarization* and migration, the cult of Shinra Myōjin lay at the center of the medieval cult of buddhas and *kami*. Without the visual connections between Mañjuśrī and Shinra Myōjin, it would otherwise be impossible to link the old man cult on Mt. Wutai and the same cult in the Kumano region.

Doctrinal connections provide another crucial aspect — the rich symbolism and complexity of the elderly god at the crossroads of different religious traditions. Here, the Buddhist cult of Piṇḍola becomes significant for my discussion. Piṇḍola enjoyed wide popularity as an individual deity in the Buddhist tradition. Piṇḍola is a paradigmatic example of the old man cult. In China, Piṇḍola was closely related to the cult of Mañjuśrī on Mt. Wutai. In Japan, the old man deity cult of Mt. Wutai became prominent through the early Tendai masters' interests in the cult of Mañjuśrī, and this is the reason why Shinra Myōjin's image was modeled after that of Taishō rōnin, one of the Mañjuśrī's acolytes. In the *honji suijaku* relationship, Mañjuśrī becomes an important doctrinal link for Shinra Myōjin by which he transforms himself into the canonical Tendai deity.

One possible origin of the old-man deity tradition can be found in Daoist ideas of longevity. Daoist influence, however, is not the only continental component enriching the cultural symbolism of the old man. In Buddhism there was also an old-man cult that started with the cult of the arhats, formed at the beginning of the history of Buddhism. Looking at the cult of

the arhats allows us to discern a mythological parallelism between Piṇḍola and Shinra Myōjin. The two old-man looking deities may appear to be distant historically, but they are extremely close in mythological terms given each one's relations to the cult of Maitreya and the cult of Mañjuśrī.

The symbolism of "white" also explains why seemingly unrelated deities are in fact linked, as we see in the cases of *oshirasama* (Great White deity) and Shinra Myōjin. The *shira* in *oshirasama* reveals the twofold significance of the color white: first, the old man, and, second, the white color of the product of sericulture, the technology associated with early Korean immigrants. The *oshirasama* of popular Japanese religion are another significant venue for our discussion of Shinra Myōjin and the old man deity.[500] The *oshirasama* cult is still present in northeastern Japan, in the Tōhoku 東北 region. It is closely connected to that of Hakusan 白山 and the Eleven-faced Kannon. The *oshirasama* is regarded as a protector of the house and of silkworms (Jp. *kaikogami* 蚕神).

Because of the silkworm connection, *oshirasama* are also related to Memyō Bosatsu (the bodhisattva "Horse-neigh"), a horse-riding deity sometimes identified with Amaterasu.[501] The connections between *oshirasama* and Shinra Myōjin were established by the Hata clan. As Michael Como has shown, the Hata, who originally immigrated from Silla, were responsible for the introduction and diffusion of the technologies of weaving and sericulture.[502] Because it was Silla immigrants who brought sericulture, the deities of silkworms were part of early Korean

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[500] Kimura 1991: 87-91. On the Oshira cult, see Yanagita 1990a: 201-419.

[501] Dolce 2006-7: 119-50.

[502] Como 2009: 136-92.

immigrant culture.[503] Kimura Hiro also observes that Shinra Myōjin's "Shinra" is homophonous with "shira" meaning "white," indicating a possible connection with the *oshirasama*.[504] Bernard Faure also suggests that *oshirasama* is part of a network of "white" deities, Shinra Myōjin being but one example.[505]

Pilgrims to Kumano and the Onjōji Shugen tradition played a major role in the circulation of related cults and ideas, including the semiotic exchanges between "Shinra" and "shira." By the twelfth century, the Kumano area had become a center for Shugendō religious practice. Kumano was closely associated with the Onjōji tradition, largely because of the Jimon tradition's control over the system of guides (Jp. *sendatsu* 先達) of the imperial pilgrims to the Kumano.[506] The institutionalization of the Shugendō of the Jimon branch in Kumano was critical to the creation of channels through which cultic practices circulated between Kumano and Onjōji's networks, especially its sub-temple Shōgoin in Kyoto. Within this network the role of Kumano Buddhist nuns was significant, as they were the ones who most actively circulated cultic knowledge and practices.[507] The legend of the "white" nuns (Jp. *Shira bikuni* or *Shiro bikuni*) who achieved longevity in the Kumano *bikuni* tradition is an example.[508] The legend spread beyond Kumano with these traveling nuns and made it as far as the Tōhoku region. The

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[503] In this sense, it is intriguing to note similar visual representations between the iconography of Tokai Monju and that of the Memyō Bosatsu 馬鳴菩薩, a deity of sericulture. Usually Memyō bosatsu rides on a white horse and is accompanied by either three female attendants bearing offerings associated with sericulture or male figures.

[504] Kimura 1991: 87-91.

[505] Faure 2014 (forthcoming).

[506] Moerman 2005: 18-21.

[507] Shōgoin was one of the major patrons of the Shōgoin miya mandala. On the iconographical studies on the Shōgoin mandala, see Zitterbart 2008: 36-82.

[508] Faure 2003: 253-54.

oshirasama puppets used by female shamans in Tōhoku were introduced by the Kumano *bikuni*; this further clarifies the link between the notion "white" and the development of the *oshirasama* cult.[509] Although this link might seem only indirectly related to the old-man imagery of Shinra Myōjin, it helps us understand the larger implications and symbolic field around Shinra and *shira*.

All these points help us see a broader East Asian network centered on the old man deity. Shinra Myōjin was part of a network of Korean immigrants' deities in premodern Japan. The old man imagery of Shinra Myōjin is suggestive when viewed within the context of the East Asian network. In Japan it developed largely through interaction with Korean immigrants. The individual Silla gods that made up this network are almost all depicted as old men, some examples being the *kami* Inari Myōjin 稲荷明神, Sekizan Myōjin 赤山明神, Matarajin, and Shirahige Myōjin 白髭明神. I do not wish to argue that all the old man looking deities came to Japan with Korean immigrants or through interactions with Korean religious traditions. But based on concrete visual examples and analyses, I would like to point out that all of these deities are connected with the Korean peninsula in one way or another.

This chapter consists of four parts. At the beginning I explore the iconography of Shinra Myōjin. While Shinra Myojin's peculiar visual representation has attracted the attention of a number of Japanese art historians, the roots and significance of this iconography have remained obscure. By explaining its relationship to Mañjuśrī in the next section, I argue that the particular image of Shinra Myōjin that was created in late Heian or early Kamakura-period Japan is an adoption of one of the acolytes of the Mañjuśrī Pentad (also known as "Mañjuśrī Crossing the

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[509] Glassman 2001: 145-46.

Sea"), which developed within the Mt. Wutai 五台 tradition in China. In the following section, I show that Shinra Myōjin's mythological and doctrinal connections with Piṇḍola and Mañjuśrī also allow us to understand the reason why Shinra Myōjin was depicted as an old layman. Finally, by identifying this shared imagery (of an old man) and thinking about this rich symbolism in a comparative cultural framework, I demonstrate that Shinra Myōjin's visual representation, as part of the broader network of Korea-related gods, lies at the intersection of various religious traditions. This particular representation of Shinra Myōjin was therefore not only a local variation developed by the Onjōji tradition, but also a response to the historical circumstances that the Jimon faced in the process of becoming one of the major centers of Tendai esotericism. In this way, a visual analysis of Shinra Myōjin helps us see how the deity came to be visualized through an accommodation of the existing visual traditions and how this new visual form reflected deep-rooted cultural symbolism that enriched the landscape of medieval Japanese religions and beyond.

2. Shinra Myōjin and Piṇḍola

2.1. Piṇḍola

Shinra Myōjin's representation as an old man can be best understood at the intersection of different religious traditions, which carried a similar mythological structure and yet slightly different cultural symbolism. In the Buddhist context there is a structural similarity between Shinra Myōjin and Piṇḍola, who is perhaps one of the earliest examples of the old man type in

the Buddhist tradition.[510] At first glance Piṇḍola and Shinra Myōjin appear to be unrelated or to share only some superficial, iconographic similarities. But the two are closely connected through mythological structure, in particular with regard to their associations with the cult of Maitreya. This point serves as yet more evidence for the old man deity's association with longevity, immortality, overcoming death, and therefore with powerful gods; Shinra Myōjin represents all of these.

Piṇḍola's typical representation as an elder comes from his main role as an arhat.[511] Scholars agree that Piṇḍola was probably the first arhat to become the object of an individual worship in Buddhism.[512] He then became one of the four principal arhats, and later one of the sixteen or eighteen, as well as the five hundred arhats.[513] Arhats are generally depicted as old men. Various Mahayana sutras tell us that the Buddha Śakyamuni, concerned about the fate of the Buddha-Dharma after his *parinirvaṇa*, commanded sixteen of his disciples to prolong their life span and stay in this world as guardians of faithful Buddhists until the arrival of the next Buddha, Maitreya. Piṇḍola's age is emphasized even more. According to his legend, the Buddha once rebuked him for showing off his supernatural powers. During a festival in Rājagrha, Piṇḍola ascended into the air to retrieve a sandalwood bowl that had been placed on top of a high pole. To punish him for his transgressive behavior, the Buddha condemned him to stay in this

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[510] For more details on Piṇḍola, see Visser 1923: 69-78. His full name is Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, whose name can be translated as "alms go-getter." Strong 1979: 61.

[511] On visual studies on the medieval Chinese arhat cult, see Joo 2007.

[512] Strong 1979:54.

[513] The Indian tradition name four arhats, Mahakasyapa, Kundopadhaniya, Pindola and Rahula as the "Four Great Sravakas" who waits the advent of Maitreya. See Fong 1958: 31.

world till the advent of Maitreya.[514] He is therefore portrayed as very old, with distinctive long, white eyebrows.

Piṇḍola was widely worshipped by both monastics and lay people. Like the sweet-loving Gaṇeśa, the elephant-god of Indian mythology, the way to please the gluttonous Piṇḍola is through food offerings. Because of this, in China and later in Japan, Piṇḍola (Jp. Binzuru) became the patron saint of monastic refectories, a tradition that can be traced back to the time of the Chinese monk Daoan 道安 (314–385).[515] The details of the ritual offering were fixed in the middle of the fifth century when Huijian 惠簡 (fl. 457) compiled the *Method for Inviting Piṇḍola* (Ch. *Qing Binduluo fa* 請賓度羅法). This text, the earliest extant scripture on the arhat cult written in Chinese, provides a description of the proper way to invite Piṇḍola, the "field of merit for sentient beings," and how to offer him a bath and food.[516] What is intriguing is that in this text Piṇḍola is rejected by the gatekeepers at a rich man's banquet because of his old age. In other words, the arhat's old man appearance is key to explaining how to re-invite him. Although in this story his appearance is seen as negative and causes him to be the object of discrimination, it was also the reason why he came to be perceived as a Daoist immortal. For instance, in Daoan's diary, Piṇḍola is referred to as an "Indian man of Dao".[517] This identification suggests

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[514] For more on the different versions of the story in the Buddhist canon, see Visser 1923: 69. Strong, however, argues that Piṇḍola is in fact the ideal monk who stays in this world to do good and quells doubts in people's minds.

[515] See Lévi and Chavannes 1916: 6-24; 205-75.

[516] T. 32, 1689: 784b-c. For a French translation, see Lévi and Chavannes 216 ff. For an English translation see Shih 1969. According to the story, Piṇḍola is rejected three times by the guard because he is old and wears worn-out clothes. The end of the text explains that the presence of Piṇḍola can be confirmed only after the ritual from the traces he left. The ritual once enjoyed great popularity in China. Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 502–549) of the Liang dynasty (502–557) even gave official support to this custom when he was cured from an illness after offering food to Piṇḍola. See Strong 1979: 56.

[517] Link 1958: 35.

that to early Chinese Buddhists like Daoan, the idea of Daoist immortals was a useful comparative concept allowing them to connect the cult of arhats with their native cults.[518]

2.2. Piṇḍola and Mañjuśrī

Piṇḍola's primary role is that of a guardian deity of refectories in Buddhist monasteries. In several stories he appears as a gluttonous figure who initially joined the Buddhist order because he thought that Buddhist monks receive a lot of food.[519] Daoan played a central role in linking the cult of Piṇḍola with monastic refectories in China. Yet, Piṇḍola was eventually superseded by Mañjuśrī as the deity of the refectory. For instance, Ennin, who traveled to Tang China in the ninth century, shows his surprise at finding Mañjuśrī in the refectory when he visited the Tingdian Common Cloister 停點普通院 on Mt. Wutai in 840: "At noon we went to dining hall for our forenoon meal. We saw an image of Mañjuśri placed in the seat of the head monk but did not see Binzuru [Piṇḍola] in any seat. Surprised at this we asked the monks, and they said the various paintings in the mountain were like this."[520]

The above story tells us a few important points in relation to Piṇḍola and Mañjuśrī in China and later in Japan. In the early history of Buddhism in China, whereas non-Mahayana

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[518] The initial lack of understanding and later rivalry between the two eventually came to an end in the twelfth century. But to many Chinese, the distinction was often difficult to made. Daoist appropriation of Buddhist deities found its extension in the long-standing tradition of Chinese hagiographies of saints as in the case of the eccentric Tiantai characters, Hanshan and Shide. On this, see Paramita 2009: 199-210.

[519] The Tibetans translated the name of Piṇḍola as "seeker of alms" (beggar, pindāra) and the Chinese as "immobile" (Skt. *acala*). According to S. Levi, it means "food leftovers." (pindoli). Because of this food connection, Rolf Stein, for instance, analyzes Piṇḍola as one example of the pot-bellied type deity who has taken the place of Gaṇeśa as opposed to Skandha, his handsome young twin brother. Various accounts illustrate his connection with abundant food, but there are also references to his intelligence and knowledge. He learns the three *Vedas* and excels in triumphing over heretics in controversies, which is why his statue is also placed in the preaching room. Stein 1993: 130.

[520] Reischauer 1955a: 226-27.

temples were inclined to worship Piṇḍola as the highest-ranking seat of an assembly, Mahāyāna temples preferred Mañjuśrī. Indeed, the popularity of Piṇḍola in China was a relatively short-lived one, mostly from the fifth century till the seventh century. In Mahayana monasteries, a statue or the picture of Mañjuśrī was enshrined in monastic refectories because Chinese monks preferred bodhisattvas to arhats.[521] This change was also a direct response to a petition by the Tantric master Amoghavajra (704–774), who is largely responsible for the development of the Mañjuśrī cult on Mt. Wutai and in China itself.[522] In 769 Amoghavajra petitioned Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779), requesting that he be allowed to install an image of Mañjuśrī in the refectory, replacing the usual image of Piṇḍola.[523] Amoghavajra's petition had an immediate impact on the practices at the temples on Mt. Wutai and this is the reason why Ennin could not find the statue of Piṇḍola in the refectory on Mt. Wutai. However, as Ennin's surprise indicates, replacing Piṇḍola with Mañjuśrī in the refectory was not a uniformly applied practice at that time. In other temples, Piṇḍola remained a major divine figure for the Buddhist refectory. On the functional level, there was often no change at all. Thus, according to Rolf Stein, the association between Mañjuśrī and Piṇḍola is similar to another structural coupling of a handsome young boy and an ugly (and sometimes old) glutton: Skanda and Gaṇeśa.[524]

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[521] De Visser 1923: 74-75.

[522] Cartelli 2013: 34-35.

[523] Strong 1979: 56. In 770, Daizong also agreed to Amoghavajra's request to build a national shrine to Mañjuśrī at Da xingshan temple in the capital, which was called the Pavilion of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī to Protect the Nation (Ch. Dasheng Wenshu zhenguo zhi ge). In 772, the emperor further consented to establish shrines to Mañjuśrī in every Buddhist monastery in China. Cartelli 2013: 34-5.

[524] Stein 1993: 126-30. "This role does not occur accidentally. Mañjuśrī, another figure of the type of the young man (though distanced from this role, as an important Bodhisattva of wisdom), was also placed in the refectory. And, as might be expected, in this role he was soon associated with a type of old glutton, the famous arhat (saint) Piṇḍola, whom we shall discuss later."

2.3. Mañjuśrī and Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji

The Mañjuśrī cult was transmitted to Japan by early Tendai masters such as Saichō, Ennin and Enchin.[525] Tendai records show that both Saichō and Ennin were devotees of Mañjuśrī (Jp. Monju). Mañjuśrī is mentioned prominently in the *Lotus Sutra*, and plays a major role in the *Fanwang* 梵網 ordination ceremony.[526] According to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (Jp. *Kegongyō* 華厳経), Mañjuśrī resides on a mountain in the northeast, identified in China as Mt. Wutai. Although Mañjuśrī is often depicted as a young boy, as I will discuss later, several examples from miracle tales and visual sources confirm that he was often represented as an old man, especially in the Mt. Wutai tradition. This particular cult was then introduced to Japan by Ennin, who visited the mountain during his travels in China (838–47). After his return, Ennin commissioned a group of statues representing Mañjuśri with his attendants and installed them in a newly built building on Mt. Hiei: the pavilion of Mañjuśrī (Jp. Monjurō 文殊樓). After the establishment of the building, Ennin is said to have performed the Eight-letter ritual dedicated to Mañjuśri in the palace in order to avert disasters and promote good fortune.[527] Ennin also bought several images of Mañjuśrī during his trip, and one of them is said to be the Mañjuśrī Pentad.[528]

Ennin's familiarity with the Mañjuśrī tradition on Mt. Wutai was crucial for the formation of the bodhisattva's cult on Mt. Hiei. But it was equally important for later Jimon monks who, by establishing the same cult at Onjōji, sought institutional legitimacy after their

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[525] Groner 2002: 180.

[526] Groner 2000: 139 (note 111).

[527] The tower was closely related to Ennin and his lineage. Ennin had constructed it in 861 and after a fire in 966, the tower was rebuilt with help from the nobility. Groner 2000:180.

[528] Scholars suggest several theories. Wu explains that the Pentad was introduced to Japan by either Ennin or Chōnen 奝然 (938－1016), or both. Wu 2002: 81.

schism from Mt. Hiei. In short, just as Shinra Myōjin was a duplication of Sekizan Myōjin, Onjōji's emphasis on the Mañjuśri cult was very likely an adaptation of Mt. Hiei's cult as it developed after Ennin's return from China. Thinking along these lines, it becomes clear why Shinra Myōjin's "original ground" (Jp. *honji*) is said to be Mañjuśrī and why the cults of the two figures developed side by side. Once the association was made, Shinra Myōjin came to be placed in the middle of the miracle legends between Mt. Wutai and Tendai circles in Japan. Jōjin 成尋 (1011–1081) at Daiunji is a case in point. He was a devotee of Shinra Myōjin, and he invited the deity to Daiunji 大雲寺 in Kyōto.[529] He also traveled to Mt. Wutai and Mt. Tiantai from 1072 to 1074, and in his travel diary, the *San Tendai Gozan ki* 參天台五臺山記, he recounts how he met an old man begging for food at the refectory, and immediately recognized him as a manifestation of Mañjuśrī.[530]

So far I have shown that Shinra Myōjin is closely connected with Piṇḍola and Mañjuśrī. Although Mañjuśrī does not always appear as an old man, if we consider the influence of his cult on Mt. Wutai, their appearance as old men makes evident the affinity between these three deities.

3. The Iconography of Shinra Myōjin

The various studies on Shinra Myōjin's iconography have failed to shed light on its origins and significance. About thirty-six visual images of Shinra Myōjin are extant, and currently only seven of them are stored at Onjōji. There are two wooden statues and thirty-four painted representations of Shinra Myōjin, two examples of the Maitreya Triad, five pieces of the Mii

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[529] *Onjōjidenki* 98.

[530] *San Tendai Gozan ki* 59.

mandala, and most of them (twenty-one) appear in the Kumano honji suijaku mandala. Of the two statues, the one representing a seated Shinra Myōjin is supposedly the oldest surviving image of a Buddhist protector deity in Japan, although its date is still debated. It is stored in the shrine of Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji and is well-known as a "secret buddha" (Jp. *hibutsu*), that is, a statue that is kept hidden from the public because of its uncanny powers.[531] This statue is only accessible to ordained monks of Onjōji.

Before I discuss the possible origin of the Shinra Myōjin image, I introduce several visual examples of the god. I examine the representation of Shinra Myōjin not as an independent figure but as part of a group. Several types of Shinra Myōjin images—such as that found in the Kumano honji suijaku mandala, the Maitreya Triad, and the Mii mandala—will be discussed to help clarify the cultic contexts in which Shinra Myōjin was visualized and venerated.

3.1. Shinra Myōjin in the Kumano honji suijaku mandala

The most common appearance of Shinra Myōjin is that found in the Kumano honji suijaku mandala (J. 熊野本地垂迹曼荼羅, hereafter "Kumano mandala"). Many of these mandalas were in fact commissioned or made at Shōgoin 聖護院, a sub-temple of Onjōji in Kyoto. In the Kumano mandalas, Shinra Myōjin appears along with other deities and the monastery's founder Enchin. These examples tell us that the cult of Shinra Myōjin traveled to Kumano with imperial pilgrims, Onjōji monks, and *shugenja* groups.

The Onjōji Shugendō network played a significant role in the production and dissemination of Shinra Myōjin's image among the Jimon network and beyond. The tradition

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[531] For more on the discussion of *hibutsu*, see Rambelli 2002: 271-307.

goes back to the time when Onjōji monks were associated with the imperial pilgrimages to Kumano. In 1090, Retired Emperor Shirakawa established the new office of "overseer of the three Kumano shrines" (Jp. *Kimano sanzan kengyō*). The first Kumano *sanzan kengyō* was an Onjōji monk named Zōyo 増誉 (1032–1116). He was a Fujiwara and acted as "protecting monk" (Jp. *gojisō* 護持僧 or 御持僧) and guide during Shirakawa's first Kumano pilgrimage in 1090. In the same year, Shirakawa elevated Zōyo to the abbacy of Onjōji and from that time onward, the majority of priests who served as abbots of Onjōji also served as overseers of the three Kumano shrines.[532] Shortly after this, Shirakawa also awarded Zōyo with the abbacy of Shōgoin.

Starting with Zōyo, Shōgoin received imperial patronage and it became increasingly tied to government authorities, continuing to thrive throughout the medieval period. Onjōji created the Shōgoin *monzeki* during the Ōei 応永 era (1394–1428) for better control of the Kumano *sanzan* pilgrimage. In the fourteenth century, Shōgoin became the official headquarters for the Honzan branch of Shugendō, whose followers practiced in the three mountain ranges of Kumano, Ōmine, and Yoshino. During this time, the power of Onjōji grew and extended all the way to the imperial palace. While staying in the palace, *gojisō* monks offered prayers for the health and the well being of the emperor. The fact that only monks from Tōji, Enryakuji, and Onjōji could be selected as *gojisō* gives us an idea of the power Onjōji wielded through the Kumano pilgrimage. In this context, a number of Kumano mandalas were created and circulated, and Enchin and Shinra Myōjin began to appear in these mandalas.

Only in two examples do we find a Buddhist monk that is clearly identifiable as Enchin. These two mandalas were possibly created at Shōgoin, where they are currently stored. Since

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[532] Moerman 2005: 49.

Enchin was the founder of the Jimon school, it is not surprising to find him depicted in the Kumano mandalas.[533] His presence there also explains how Shinra Myōjin came to be depicted in these mandalas.
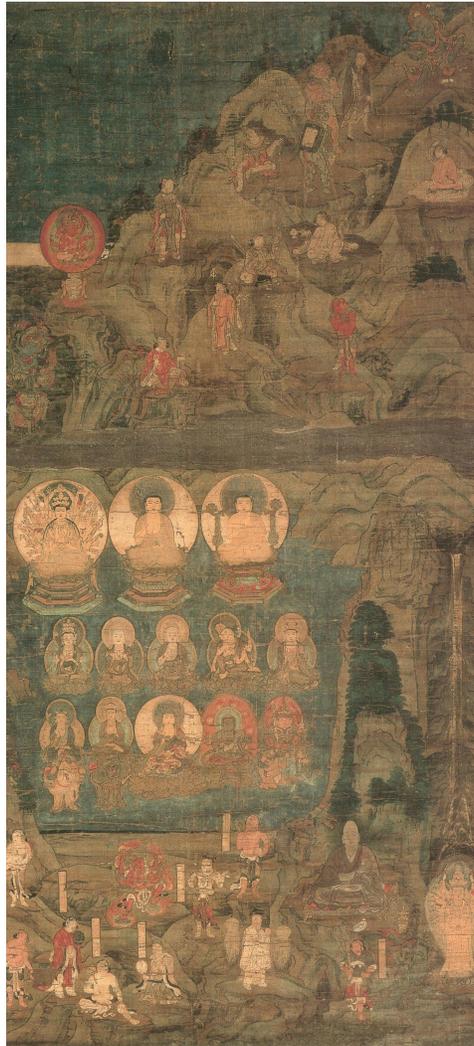
[Fig.13. Enchin in the Kumano mandala, Kamakura period, Shōgoin, Kyōto]

The appearance of Onjōji's major divinities in the Kumano mandalas suggests several important points. First, it shows that Shōgoin was an active participant in the promotion of the Shinra Myōjin cult. Second, through the Kumano pilgrimage, not only Enchin, but also Shinra Myōjin,

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[533] Nakano 2005:16.

came to be worshipped by a large range of social and religious groups, including imperial pilgrims, aristocrats, Shugendō practitioners, and a number of other groups positioned between Kyoto and Kumano. Third, the travel route to Kumano was the main physical channel through which stories and images of Shinra Myōjin in his connection with Enchin were spread, and the Kumano pilgrimage was one of the important channels for disseminating the cult of Shinra Myōjin to a wide audience.

[Fig. 14. Shinra Myōjin in the Kumano mandala, Tōsen shrine, Hyōgo]

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The above Kumano mandala is stored at Tōsen 湯泉 shrine in modern day Hyōgo prefecture. Shinra Myōjin appears at the bottom against a background of mountains, which seems to emphasize his role as a mountain deity as well as the most powerful protector of Jimon monks. He is depicted here as an old man seated on a high chair, wearing a hat and holding a staff. This image echoes that of the founder of Shugendō, En no Gyōja (En the Ascetic, also known as En no Ozunu; ca. 7th C.), who is also depicted as an old man wearing a hat and holding a staff.

On the relationship between En no Gyōja and Shinra Myōjin, Miyake Hitoshi argues that this image is related to Onjōji's interests in controlling the Kumano region. According to him, visual representations of En no Gyōja appear only after the Kamakura period; given the visual similarities between Shinra Myōjin and En no Gyōja, this suggests that Shinra Myōjin influenced medieval representations of En no Gyōja.[534] Intriguingly, some Kumano mandalas have En no Gyōja while others have Shinra Myōjin, suggesting that the two were perceived as interchangeable or that they were sometimes confused because of their iconographic similarity.[535] Although we cannot be entirely sure about the exact origin of the image of Shinra Myōjin, it is clear that once the image was created, it was actively circulated and appropriated by the Shugendō tradition. Also it seems highly possible that Shinra Myōjin's major role as the mountain deity of the headquarters of the Jimon further created another tie between Shinra Myōjin and En no Gyōja in the mind of the ascetic practitioners of the mountain.

### 3.2. Shinra Myōjin in the Maitreya Triad

[534] Miyake 2002: 1-33.

[535] See the catalogue for various examples of the Kumano mandala where En no Gyōja or Shinra Myōjin appears. *En no Gyōja to Shugendo no sekai* 1999: 104 ff. We have more examples of En no Gyōja (fig. 186; 190; 191; 194; 195; 196), whereas only two examples (fig.193; 198) are Shinra Myōjin.

Apart from the Kumano mandala, Shinra Myōjin appears in two other formats: the Maitreya Triad and the Mii mandala. The Maitreya Triad deserves our attention first because the Mii mandala seems to derive from it. So far only two examples of the Maitreya Triad are known: one from the thirteenth century currently preserved at the Kyōto National Museum and another at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In the first example, the bodhisattva Maitreya is seated in the lotus posture at the center and flanked by two attendants: a seated image of Shinra Myojin on the right side and a seated monk on the left side.[536] Here, the monk is clearly Enchin. This observation is based on the distinctive shape of his head and the fact that this figure is identical with the typical portrayal of Enchin in meditation.

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[536] *Kokuho Miidera ten* 2008: 80.

[Fig. 15. (left) Miroku and two attendents, 13th C., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston]
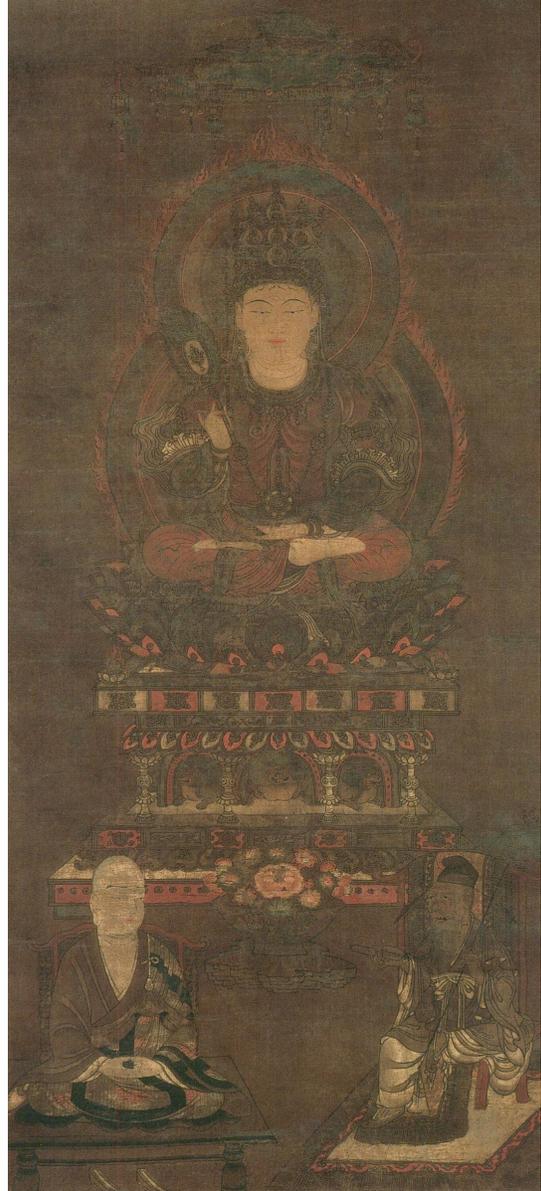
[Fig. 16. (right) Miroku bosatsu zō, 13th C., Kyoto National Museum]

The second example of the Maitreya Triad is also dated to the thirteenth century. These representations can be contrasted in several ways. While the former depicts Maitreya as a bodhisattva who wears the Five Wisdom Jewel Crown (Jp. *gochihōkan* 五智宝冠) on his head, and holds a Chinese style fan in his right hand and a *dharmacakra* in his left hand, the latter

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describes Maitreya as a buddha. While in the former all figures are in a seated position, in the latter they are all standing. In the second triad, the Buddha form of Maitreya is standing on a lotus in the middle while Shinra Myōjin stands on the right side and a monk on the left side. In this case, it is difficult to determine the identity of the monk. Not only is his head not typically egg-shaped like Enchin's, but also the latter is almost never depicted in a standing posture. Kameda Tsutomu suggests that this monk might be Kyōtai.[537] As we may recall, in Shinra Myōjin's origin story, Kyōtai is an old monk (162 years old) who appears to greet Shinra Myōjin and Enchin. In the same way that Mahākāśyapa is said to be waiting for Maitreya, Kyōtai waited for Enchin and bequeathed Onjōji to him as the sacred site of Maitreya. While this monk may indeed be Kyōtai, the problem is that he does not appear to be an old man. His identity is not so important for our purposes here; whether it is Enchin or Kyōtai, the iconography is nevertheless clearly linked to the origin story of Shinra Myōjin. The Maitreya Triad also strongly suggests that Shinra Myōjin's connection with Maitreya was one of the major concerns for the Onjōji monks who produced these visual representations, and Shinra Myōjin was essential in the Onjōji's Maitreya cult.[538]

As briefly explained in the first chapter, Onjōji inherited this Maitreya cult from Sūfukuji. Since the late seventh century, when Sūfukuji was founded, the area had been the sacred abode of Maitreya and Onjōji in turn became the center of the Maitreya cult. Because of several fires, especially during the eleventh-century fighting with the Sanmon, the Maitreya statues were destroyed and replaced with new ones.[539] More traditional Maitreya triad statues

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[537] Kameda 1973: 98.

[538] *Kokuho Miidera ten* 2008: 263.

[539] Kameda 1973: 98.

were also commissioned throughout the medieval period at Onjōji with the support of the imperial family. In 1122, for instance, the Maitreya statue, along with its two attendants, Asaṅga (Jp. Mujaku) and Vasubandhu (Jp. Seshin), was installed at Onjōji for the quick recovery of sickness of Emperor Toba's consort.[540]

The Maitreya Triad in which Shinra Myōjin appears certainly emerged after the canonical set of the Maitreya Triad. At Onjōji, this new configuration was created as a way to promote the cult of Shinra Myōjin in connection with that of Maitreya. This is suggested from the visual reference to the *engi* story of Shinra Myōjin. As already mentioned, in that story the deity appears to Enchin on the boat, and promises to protect him until the time of Maitreya's descent. Here Shinra Myōjin is an attendant of Maitreya, or an auspicious old man mediating between Enchin/Kyōtai and Maitreya. Although only two examples are extant, the Maitreya Triad is significant in that it is not only one of the examples that confirm the strong connection between Maitreya and Shinra Myōjin, but also because it influenced the production of the Mii mandala.

3.3. The Mii Mandala

Shinra Myōjin also appears in the Mii mandala 三井曼荼羅, five examples of which are extant: the earliest (private collection) dates from the fourteenth century, while the others (all stored at Onjōji) are from the Edo period.[541] The Mii mandala depicts all the protective deities and worthies of Miidera as a set. In the earliest example, we find three divinities in the middle column: Sonjōō on the top, Maitreya as a bodhisattva at the center and Maitreya as a buddha at

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[540] Kameda 1973: 98.

[541] Ōmori 2010: 64.

the bottom. Below Sonjōō, in a clockwise direction, we have: Hārītī, Shinra Myōjin, Yellow Fudō, Enchin, Mio Myōjin, and Bishamonten.
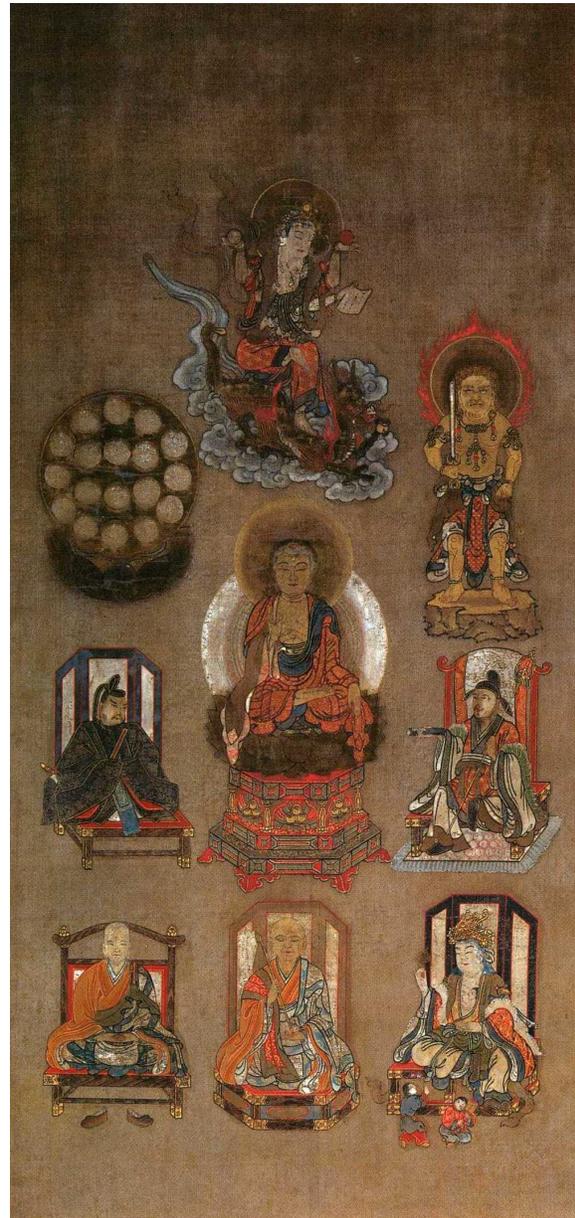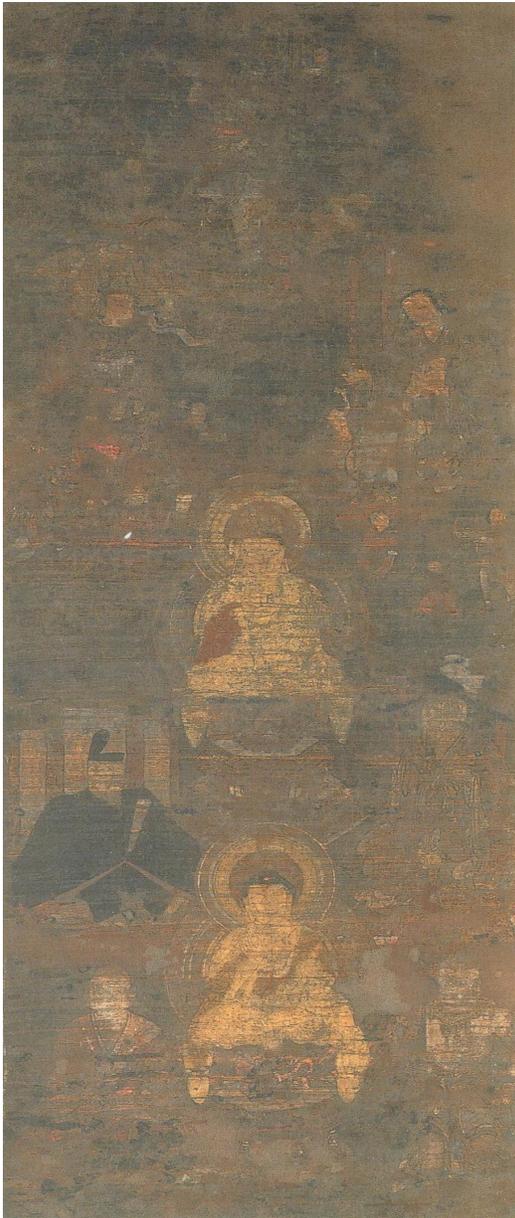
[Fig.17. Mii Mandala, Nanbokuchō period, Onjōji] [Fig. 18. Mii mandala, Edo period, Onjōji]

In the other mandalas, the main deity changes (either Maitreya or Yellow Fudō), and the configuration of each deity differs, except for the permanent members: Maitreya, Shinra Myōjin,

Enchin, Hārītī, Yellow Fudō, and Mio Myōjin. In the variations from the Edo period, we find the

seed-syllables of the eighteen divinities (in other examples we find a seed-letter in each circle),

which create another bigger, circular mandala, the Sannō deity (in the form of a monk), or

Saichō.

The Mii mandala seems to have developed from the Maitreya Triad in which Maitreya is

depicted with Enchin and Shinra Myōjin. Not only do we have earlier examples of the Maitreya

Triad, but also Maitreya, Enchin, and Shinra Myōjin are permanent members of the Mii mandala.

The Mii mandala provides the viewer with a mandalic vision of the important divinities of Onjōji

and it increases the sacredness of Maitreya's sacred site by introducing a host of powerful

deities.

Other than the obvious ritual reason for creating a mandala, what might be the major

motivations for Onjōji to produce this new type mandala in a relatively late period? Despite the

uniqueness of the Onjōji deities represented in the Mii mandala, it seems that the production of

the mandala was motivated by the large-scale production on Mt. Hiei of a Hie Sanno mandala 比

叡山王曼荼羅 where all the significant deities of the mountain, including Sekizan Myōjin, were

laid out. If we consider that the sectarian influences could have extended to the visual arena, we

come to understand why Sekizan Myōjin's depiction in the Hie Sannō mandala and Shinra

Myōjin's depiction in the Mii mandala are almost identical: an old man in the robe of Tang

officials, wearing a hat, seated on a chair, one leg crossed, and holding a staff.[542] The dates of

production of these two types of mandala also support this interpretation. Most extant examples

of the Hie Sannō mandala are from the Kamakura period, and the earliest example of the Mii

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[542] *Shinbutsu imasu Omi* 2011: 331 (fig. 51); 334 (fig. 56). Most Hie Sannō mandalas are from the Kamakura period.

mandala, in which Shinra Myōjin appears as part a group, also comes from this period. Regardless of whether the two representations developed independently or in the context of institutional competition, this helps us explain how important Shinra Myōjin was, not only in the institutional history of Onjōji, but also in the production of visual artifacts. In the following section I explore in more detail the connections between the cult of Mañjuśrī at Mt. Wutai and the iconographic development of Shinra Myōjin.

4. Shinra Myōjin and the Mañjuśrī Pentad

4.1. Wooden Statue of Shinra Myōjin

The visual representation of Shinra Myōjin as an old man serves to confirm his identification with Mañjuśrī. This modified apprehension and representation might have been Onjōji's response to the lineage of Ennin, the master who promoted the Mañjuśrī cult at Enryakuji. In this section I juxtapose the image of Shinra Myōjin with that of an old man found in the Mañjuśrī Pentad (Jp. Monju gosonzō 文殊五尊像), a type of representation of Mañjuśrī that flourished during the Kamakura period, in order to demonstrate that this image has a strong affinity with that of the two old men appearing in the Mañjuśrī Pentad.

As noted above, the best-known Shinra Myōjin icon is a wooden statue said to be the oldest extant image of a dharma protector deity in Japan. So far, the study of Shinra Myōjin has largely centered on this particular statue. Yet the image remains a mystery, largely due to a lack of sources and studies on Onjōji.

[Fig. 19. Shinra Myōjin, Wooden statue, ca. 11th C, Onjōji, Shiga]

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There have been some studies on the similarities between Shinra Myōjin and other images, but these studies suffer from their simplistic comparative approach.[543] In the accounts of the imagery of Shinra Myōjin in the *Onjōji denki*, we find a description of the first image of Shinra Myōjin, attributed to Enchin.[544]

> The master Enchin first made [the statue of Shinra Myōjin] during the Jōgan 貞観 period (859–879), of the same height as Emperor Seiwa 清和 (r. 858–876). Why is it so? From the seven generations of heavenly gods until the last one of the myriads of generations of human emperors, there has been a ritual of contemplation on the purity of Dainichi Buddha. This is why the master introduced the image.[545]

Keeping in mind the tendency to give all the credit to the founder of a tradition, in this case Enchin, it is hard to pinpoint when the image of Shinra Myōjin was first made at Onjōji. What is intriguing in this passage, however, is that the height of the statue is said to be the same as Emperor Seiwa's height. Whether we take this at face value or not, it is puzzling, since there is no mention of the emperor's relation to the cult of Shinra Myōjin. However, it is noteworthy that Enchin returned to Japan in 858, the year that the emperor ascended the throne, and this probably

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[543] Itō 1996: 7-18. Itō Shirō finds a similarity between Shinra Myōjin with Fudō Myōō 不動明王 at Dōjūin 同聚院 based on his study of the carving techniques used in both cases. Another study by Kuroda Satoshi finds a resemblance between Shinra Myōjin and Fujiwara no Kamatari. See Kuroda 1998: 15-33.

[544] Even if this story is true, it is not clear how similar this first statue is to the extant Shinra Myōjin statue, which was supposedly made two or three centuries later. As for the extant statue, although chronicles do not specifically mention the dedication of a statue in 1052, several Japanese art historians believe that the dedication is likely to have coincided with the first ceremony honoring the deity, which was held that year. Guth, however, challenges this view, arguing that, judging from the carving technique, the statue was not carved until after the twelfth century. Guth 1999: 112.

[545] *Onjōji denki* 59.

was the rationale for Enchin's followers' claim that the deity was related to Emperor Seiwa. They were clearly hoping to attract imperial patronage.

While to the modern viewer the statue's strikingly white face may seem mysterious, the semiotic metaphysics of the Tendai tradition provides the rationale by which we might connect every small detail about this deity in a symbolic way. As we see above, the triple-pointed cap atop his head is said to allude not only to Mt. Hiei's main deity, Sannō 山王 and the first character of his name, "*san*"山, but also clearly to Tendai's favorite number: three "三." The following is another interpretation of how the deity's appearance can be decoded, creating another symbolic meaning and function. According to this interpretation, each feature of the statue is a manifestation of the deity's higher reality, and it is deeply intertwined with the sacred locus, Onjōji.

> On the forehead [of the deity] there are five wrinkles, referring tothe letter Five 五. On each cheek, there are four wrinkles, referring to the letter Eight 八. Five [times] Eight (Gohachi 五八 [meaning, Shijū 四十] refers to the name of the well. If you break the character "井," there will be four "十." If the four "十" are aggregated, they become "井." Thus, [the deity] dwells in this well.[546]

The painted image of Shinra Myōjin that gives the most detail is a painting from the Kamakura period. This painting is also unique in that it depicts the god's two acolytes. The *Onjōji denki* allows us to identify the latter: "In the east: Hannya 般若 Bosatsu (Bodhisattva Hannya). In the west: Shukuō 宿王 Bosatsu (Bodhisattva Stellar King), and Hi no miko 火御子 (August Child of

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[546] *Onjōji denki* 59.

Fire).”[547] Shukuō and Hannya are the two usual acolytes of Shinra Myōjin. Hi no miko, who appears on the opposite side of the two *dōji* 童子, is a protective earth-deity (Jp. *jinushi*).

[Fig. 20. Shinra Myōjin Hanging scroll, 13th C., Onjōji, Shiga]

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[547] *Onjōji denki* 58.

Not much is known about the kind of rituals that were performed for this deity or about the ritual use the image.[548] What is interesting, however, is that we find a direct translation of the configuration of this particular painting in the configuration of shrine halls in a map of Onjōji from the Kamakura period. Thus it may have been that this particular painting functioned as a sacred map as well in a ritual setting.

4.2. Shinra Myojin as Monju, Monju as Shinra Myojin

In the painting of Shinra Myōjin above, Mañjuśrī is depicted in a golden halo above him, which suggests his higher status. The relationship between Shinra Myōjin and Mañjuśrī is crucial for our discussion. According to the *Onjōji denki*, Monju is the *honji* of Shinra Myōjin.[549] Traditionally, Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of wisdom, is depicted as a princely male or as a young boy. The portrayal of Mañjuśri as an infant (Jp. *chigo* 稚児) became popular in the Kamakura period. However, as we will discuss later, Mañjuśrī has another important appearance: as an old man.

Shinra Myōjin and Mañjuśrī are also closely related in their iconographic details. One of the usual attributes of Mañjuśrī is a scepter (Jp. *rui* 如意). Sometimes it looks like a staff, symbolizing the bodhisattva's eloquence, and Mañjuśrī often holds a Buddhist sutra in his other

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[548] *Onjōji denki* notes that Shinra Myōjin's *saimon* 祭文 is in the *Shinra Myōjinki* 新羅明神記, a temple record of Onjōji compiled around the thirteenth century. Currently, the Bureau of Historiography at Tokyo University owns the text, the only extant edition. See Kuroda 2001: 75-98.

[549] *Onjōji denki* 72. Shinra Myōjin's status within the *honji sujaku* paradigm is quite complicated. In several Onjōji texts, Monju is the Buddhist deity most frequently connected with Shinra Myōjin. However, a few other deities are also described as his *honji*. For instance, Sonjōō and Dakiniten in the *Keiran shūyōshū*; Monju, Sonjōō, Vimalakīrti, and Sekizan Myōjin in the *Jitokushū*; Monju, Sekizan Myōjin, and Susanoo in the *Onjōji denki*; Monju, Shakyamuni, Fudō, Sonjōō, and Vimalakīrti in the *Jimon denki horoku*. See Kuroda 2007: 271.

hand.[550] These attributes are the same as those of Shinra Myōjin, as we see in the image above. It is interesting to note that Piṇḍola also carries a staff in his left hand. Perhaps, however, the most immediate connection is found in Mt. Wutai's Mañjuśrī, who appears as an old man carrying a staff. In the *Onjōji denki* these two attributes—a staff and a sutra—are explained in the following way.

> Shinra Myōjin is the god of meditation and wisdom, which are expressed by two *mudra*s of his right and left hands: the hand of meditation holds a staff, and the hand of wisdom holds a *sutra*. Meditation and wisdom are non-dual. *Śamatha* (cessation) and *vipaśyanā* (observation) are of a single essence. There are two *dōji* on [the deity's] right and left side. [One of them,] Hannya, signifies wisdom and he has Mañjuśrī as his *honji*. [The other one], Shukuō, signifies the correct virtue and he has Samantabhadra as his *honji*. Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī respectively correspond to meditation and wisdom.[551]

Mañjuśrī plays an important role in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutra*. The association between Shinra Myōjin and Mañjuśri is further strengthened by Shinra Myōjin's acolyte, Hannya. Hannya is the Japanese pronunciation of *Prajñā,* and it is very possible that this *dōji* was named after the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutra*. In another place, the *Onjōji denki* emphasizes that both Hannya and Shukuō are incarnations of Mañjuśrī, strengthening the identification between Shinra Myōjin and Mañjuśrī.[552] According to tradition, Shinra Myōjin replaced the previous *jinushi*, Mio Myōjin 三尾明神, who is also identified with Hi no miko in the bottom left of the above painting. Concerning Mio Myōjin, the Onjōji texts claim that this deity is none other than the

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[550] Davidson 1950: 242. For a more detailed discussion of the *ruyi* in Buddhist context, see Kieschnick 2003: 138-56.

[551] *Onjōji denki* 59.

[552] *Onjōji denki* 72.

manifestation of the Bodhisattva Fugen 普賢 (Skt. Samantabhadra), further confirming the identification of Shinra Myōjin with Mañjuśrī.[553]

As discussed in the chapter two, Shinra Myōjin is closely related to Vimalakīrti (J. Yuima 維摩). In the *Jitokushū*, for instance, Vimalakīrti is listed as one of the three *honji* of Shinra Myōjin along with Mañjuśrī and Sonjōō.[554] Whereas Sonjōō and Mañjuśrī have numerous textual explanations on their doctrinal relationship with Shinra Myōjin, there is no direct narrative that explains how the layman Vimalakīrti can be related to Shinra Myōjin. Given the strong ties between Shinra Myōjin and Mañjuśrī, it seems that through the association with Mañjuśrī, Vimalakīrti came to be incorporated into the Onjōji tradition. Notably, Vimalakīrti is the well-known lay bodhisattva, the main protagonist of the *Vimalakīrti sutra*. In the text, Mañjuśri appears as Vimalakīrti's main interlocutor and engages in a debate with him.[555]

Although Vimalakīrti was not venerated to any significant degree at Onjōji, Onjōji monks deliberately tried to make a doctrinal connection between Vimalakīrti and Shinra Myōjin. In the *Onjōji denki*, for instance, we find: "The master said that 'If the body [statue] of Shinra Myōjin gets lost, you can replace it with that of Vimalakīrti.'"[556] The text does not provide the reason why but it is highly possible that the two are visually connected as lay elders. But more significantly, the association between Shinra Myōjin and Vimalakīrti could be established because of the former's *honji suijaku* relationship with Mañjuśri. The above passage, thus, underscores the shifting identities among Shinra Myōjin, Vimalakīrti, and Mañjuśri.

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[553] *Onjōji denki* 72.

[554] *Jitokushū* 18.

[555] For the textual sources on Mañjuśrī and his origin, see Hirakawa 1983: 12-33; see also Lamotte 1960: 1-96.

[556] *Onjōji denki* 59; *Jimon denki horoku* 112.

At Onjōji the cult of Mañjuśri seems to have been popularized not through a direct cult of the bodhisattva, but more indirectly, through that of Shinra Myōjin. In other words, Mañjuśri and Vimalakīrti were necessary as a way to embellish Shinra Myōjin's auspiciousness. Therefore, in the *Onjōji denki*, most discussions related to Mañjuśri are cast through an association with Shinra Myōjin. For instance, we have the following story of an eleventh-century Onjōji monk in *the Jimon denki horoku*:

> Master Keiso 慶祚 (955–1019) was about to renovate the shrine of Shinra Myōjin, and before undertaking the work, he performed a ritual for the earth deity and buried four *vajra*, which he had got from Shinra Myōjin, underneath the structure. On that night, a lion appeared in his dream and it was lying on the *vajra*. When Keiso woke up he went to the spot that he had seen in his dream, and there was a stone that looked just like a lion. So the master saw this as an auspicious sign from Monju.[557]

As the above legend suggests, Shinra Myōjin is protected by Mañjuśri and vice versa. Given the inseparable nature of the two, I would argue that the Tendai cult of Mañjuśri and the worship of Shinra Myōjin reinforced each other. Also noteworthy in this account is the fact that the four *vajra* and the lion signal an obvious connection with one of the most significant visual representations of Mañjuśri, i.e., the Mañjuśri Pentad. In order to confirm this thesis, in the next section I incorporate more references from visual evidence into my discussion, which will direct us to additional stories about Shinra Myōjin and the Mañjuśri cult in Tendai.

4.3. Attributes and Symbolism of Shinra Myōjin

Basu sennin (Skt. Vasu) 婆薮仙人 is another example of a deity portrayed as an old man. The most famous example of this can be found at Sanjūsangendō 三十三間堂 in Kyōto. As his name

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[557] *Jimon denki horoku* 115.

implies, Basu sennin is an Indian ascetic depicted as a Daoist immortal. He appears with Kichijōten 吉祥天 as one of the two acolytes of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (Jp. Senju Kannon 千手観音) in the Taizōkai mandala 胎蔵界曼荼羅. He is usually included among the *Nijūhachibushū* 二十八部衆, the twenty-eight attendants of Senju Kannon. Strikingly similar to Shinra Myōjin, he also holds a staff and carries a scroll, which is often identified as the *Prajñāpāramitā* text.

The most intriguing image is that of Mañjuśri's two acolytes in the aforementioned Mañjuśri Pentad—an old man holding a staff and a monk with a monk's staff (Jp. *shakujō* 錫丈)—whose combination is strikingly similar to the image of Shinra Myōjin.[558] In a variant known as "Mañjuśrī crossing the sea" (Jp. *Tokai Monju* 渡海文殊), Mañjuśrī and his entourage are depicted crossing the sea on clouds, supposedly in the direction of Mt. Wutai. The earliest such image dates back to the Tang period and many examples have been found at Dunhuang.[559] This format was popular until the Song period in China. It enjoyed wide popularity in Central Asia, in particular among the Xixia 西夏. In Japan, this type first appeared during the late Heian period and it became popular during the Kamakura period, especially in the Nara area. This is also the time period when the cult of Shinra Myōjin flourished. All the extant images of Shinra Myōjin produced at Onjōji date from this period.

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[558] There are ten sets of Monju Pentad statues and seven paintings extant today in Japan. For detailed explanation and the list, see Wu, 76-81. There have been several articles on the Monju Pentad as well. Among them, see Asanuma 2008: 30-44; Kojima 1995: 43-59.

[559] On the art historical study on the Mañjuśri Pentad, See Wu 2002.

In the Mañjuśri Pentad, Mañjuśrī usually has four acolytes (Jp. *kenzoku* 眷屬).[560] There is no scriptural basis for this combination. Rather, it reflects an amalgamation of different traditions related to Mañjuśri. Among the acolytes, the first, usually in the front, is the youth Sudhana (Jp. Zenzai Dōji 善財童子), whose pilgrimage in search of the Law is described in the *Kegonkyō*. The next figure is the king of Khotan, Udayana (Jp. Utennō 優填王), who is credited for commissioning the first image of the Buddha. The other two were added later, around the ninth century; they are the monk Buddhapāli (var. Buddhapāla, Buddhapālita, Jp. Butsudahari 仏陀波利) and an elderly figure known as Taishō rōnin 大聖老人 (var. Saishō rōnin 最勝老人).[561] This character, Buddhapāli, deserves special attention because I would argue that he served as a visual reference for the first Japanese image of Shinra Myōjin.

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[560] However, the number is not definite. For instance, an entry in the *Asabashō* 阿娑縛抄 makes this issue more complicated. This entry says that it has five attendants. The four listed here are same but Nanta dōji 難陀童子 is added. Wu 2002: 88.

[561] The Mañjuśri Triad, including Mañjuśri riding on a lion, a child and a groom with a Central Asian appearance, enjoyed popularity earlier than the Mañjuśri Pentad, and it was no later than the late-eighth century that this iconographical grouping of the Mañjuśri Triad was established at Mt. Wutai. Wu 2002: 88-9. During the Heian period, a popular custom witnessed the installation of an icon of Mañjuśri in the guise of a monk (or in a Chinese robe in the Tang fashion) in the kitchens of places of residence, in order to symbolize the wisdom and discipline. Frédéric 1995: 193.

[Fig. 21. Kishi Monju, Nanboku-chō period, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio]

First, the monk Buddhapāli is a relatively well-known figure.[562] According to legend, this

Northern Indian monk, possibly from Kashmir, hoping to encounter Mañjuśrī, went on a

pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai. When he arrived there in 676, he met an old man who asked him

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[562] For further of Budhapāli on Mount Wutai, see Kroll 2001: 41-4.

whether he had brought the sutra, titled the *Sutra of the Supreme Dharani From The Buddha's Head Crown* (Skt. *Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, Ch. *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經) with him. Then the old man disappeared, and Buddhapāli realized that he had just seen a manifestation of Mañjuśrī.[563] This story is found in the *dharani* text of the same title, which uses it by way of self-promotion, and it is well-known in the Mt. Wutai tradition. Faith in this text flourished from the mid-eighth century onward in China, and the text also circulated widely in Japan via Ennin.[564] The earliest known reference regarding a visual representation of the monk and the old man is found in Ennin's diary, the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡礼行記 (9th C.). When Ennin visited Mt. Wutai in 840, he saw at Zhulinsi 竹林寺, a painting that depicted the scene in which Buddhapāli and the old man meet on Mt. Wutai.[565] What is clear from the evidence is that on Mt. Wutai Mañjuśrī was often depicted as an old pilgrim.[566]

The identity of Taishō rōnin (or Saishō rōnin), whose image is strikingly similar to that of Shinra Myōjin, remains ambiguous. However, there is no Saishō or Taishō in Chinese sources, but only 'old man' (Ch. *laoren* 老人), and Manjusri's full name is given in Chinese as 'Dasheng Wenshu shili 大聖文殊師利.' All of this suggests that Taishō rōnin in fact refers to one of the manifestations of Mañjuśrī as an old man, namely, as in the story of the *dharani* text mentioned

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[563] The story first appears in the preface of the *Sutra of The Supreme Sacrosanct Dharani From The Buddha's Summit,* translated in the 680s, and Ennin briefly relates the whole legend in his diary. The belief in the *dharani* text flourished from the mid-eighth century onward, and the illustration of this legend is seen in the late-Tang Dunhuang sketch in the Paris National Library, the Musée Guimet Mañjuśrī painting, and a mural from Dunhuang Cave 61. See Wu 2002: 104.

[564] Mochizuki 4: 3170.

[565] Reischauer 1955a: 217.

[566] Birnbaum 1983. For detailed discussions on the individual story of Mañjuśrī being appeared as an old man in the *Song gaoseng zhuan,* see Susan Andrews, "How a Young God Became an Old One: Representations of Wenshu in Zanning's Song gaoseng zhuan." Unpublished paper. Also see Andrews, Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2013.

above. The visual similarity between the Taishō rōnin in the Cleveland Museum painting and the thirteenth-century image of Shinra Myōjin with his acolytes seems to confirm this point.

Although further research is necessary, the iconography discussed here and Tendai monks' interest in the cult of Mañjuśri suggest that the image of Shinra Myōjin might be the modified representation of an old man who is supposed to signify Mañjuśri. More specifically, it is possible that Shinra Myōjin's appearance was based on the image of Taishō rōnin in the Mañjuśri Pentad. Enchin and his followers at Onjōji must have known about the Mañjuśri Pentad from relatively early on, possibly shortly after Ennin's return from China. If so, they were likely to have been familiar with the association between an old man and Mañjuśri and to have been aware of Ennin's effort to promote Mt. Wutai's version of the Mañjuśrī cult on Mt. Hiei. For Enchin's followers, who sought to promote Onjōji as the new Tendai center by any means necessary, appropriating Mt. Hiei's Mañjuśrī cult solved a big problem by positioning Shinra Myōjin as their major deity. Shinra Myōjin had no canonical status in the Buddhist tradition. But with the Mañjuśrī connection in the *honji suijaku* relationship, he could hold a position of authority within the Buddhist pantheon, thus helping to create a strong Tendai center.

As a stranger and traveler who came from afar, Taishō rōnin, the old man who crossed the sea with Mañjuśri and like Shinra Myōjin, exhibits not only a visual similarity to these two but also a functional affinity. While the image of an old man with a staff might be very general, I would suggest that the old man appearance of Shinra Myōjin tells us more than meets the eye. It seems that the iconography of Shinra Myōjin shares many features with the Mañjuśri Pentad, especially with regard to the imagery of the old layman, Taishō rōnin, who is not only one of the acolytes of Mañjuśrī but also one of the manifestations of the bodhisattva. Thus, it is highly possible that the image of Shinra Myōjin was not a totally new formulation at Onjōji, but rather a

faithful adaptation of an available tradition: the image of the Mañjuśri Pentad from the Mt. Wutai tradition in China. In short, the creation of the Shinra Myōjin image based on the image of Taishō rōnin from the Mañjuśri Pentad suggests that this is Onjōji's attempt to appropriate the cult of Mañjuśri, and constitutes a response to the Mañjuśri images known at the Tendai headquarters of the time.

5. The Network of Korean Immigrants' Deities in Japan

5. 1. The Korean Connections

Although tracing the history of the development of old-man deities in Japan is beyond the scope of this study, if we consider the circulation of goods and gods between Japan and the Asian mainland, it is easy to see that old-man looking deities are not an isolated, local phenomenon, but rather a shared tradition. For instance, we find in the *Samguk yusa* the legend of a Silla prince who travels to Tang China and encounters an old man. The story's mythological structure and themes greatly resemble that of Shinra Myōjin.

> The Queen Chinsong (r. 888–898) sent Prince Yangpae as her envoy to the Tang court in China. The voyage was a difficult one, for the sea-passage was blocked by the rebels of Later Paekje. Yangpae was therefore obliged to take fifty bowmen with him to repel any attacks on the party. When Yangpae's ship reached Kokto Island a storm began to rage at sea, and the party was unable to continue its journey for some ten days. Worried about the delay, Yangpae consulted a fortune-teller, who told him there was a dragon pool on the island and sacrifice must be offered to the dragon. When this was done the blue water of the pool leaped ten feet unto the air.
>   That night an old man with a long beard appeared to Prince Yangpae in a dream and said, "if you leave a good bowman behind on this island you will be blessed with a favorable wind." When the prince awoke he called the men together and told them of his dream. They agreed that each man should carve his name on a piece of wood. When these were cast into the sea, the one which sank would designate the man who

would stay. When this was done only the name of the bowman Kotaji sank to the bottom.

Obedient to his prince's orders the good bowman took his stand upon the shore and sadly watched the ship sail off across the calm sea toward China. As he was choking back his tears the same white-bearded old man who had appeared in the prince's dream emerged from the dragon pool and spoke to him. "I am a spirit of the Western Sea," the old man said. "Every morning at sunrise for some time now a grotesque Buddhist monk has descended from heaven and chanted a *dharani* which obliges me and my wife and children to rise to the surface of the water. He has pulled out and eaten one by one the livers of my children until now only I and my wife and one daughter are left. Please shoot down this monster."

"Shooting arrows is my pride," Kotaji answered….Kotaji sped an arrow swift and true into his heart, and he changed into an aged fox and fell dead. Soon the old man reappeared. "You have saved my life, "he said. "In gratitude I offer you my lovely daughter as your wife."…Then the old man instructed him: "I will change my daughter into a flower which you will clasp in your bosom, and I will command two dragons to carry you to the Silla ship on which the envoy is sailing, These dragons will then convoy the ship to the shores of the T'ang empire."[567]

The above story focuses on the saving power of the dragon king and the exorcistic power of the Buddhist monk, both of whom assist the successful sea travel of a Silla prince between Korea and China. However, thinking back to the origin story of Shinra Myōjin, we see that the two narratives have much in common: not only are they both linked to Silla, but also in both cases the old man is a god who guarantees safe sea travel to Tang China. We also know that the old man in the story is none other than a manifestation of the dragon king, and as in the Onjōji temple chronicles, Shinra Myōjin is said to be the son of the dragon king.

In the medieval Japanese pantheon, old-man deities such as Shinra Myōjin, Inari Myōjin, and Shirahige Myōjin were related in one way or another to the well-known Silla immigrant group known as the Hata 秦. A recent study of Nō has shown that the old-man deity tradition in medieval Japanese religion developed as part of the cults of immigrants' gods (Jp. *toraijin*

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[567] *Samguk yusa*, Ha and Mintz trans, 110-12.

渡来神).[568] However, there are several old-man deities that may not be related to Silla immigrants and their mythological tradition. For instance, we do have several examples in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* of local Japanese deities who appear in the form of an old man, such as Shiotsutsu no oji 塩土老翁 and Sumiyoshi 住吉. The mythological significance of these deities in the earliest Japanese textual tradition seem to indicate that old-man deities were important from very early on and were one of the archetypes of the gods in the Japanese mythological accounts.

This trans-local popularity of the old-man deity story was particularly prominent during the medieval period in Japan, the time when we observe a blooming of the Japanese pantheon. Shinra Myōjin is representative of this development. Although this does not mean that all Korean immigrants' ancestral deities appeared as old men, the association between Shinra Myōjin and the old-man cult was not an accidental one, but was based on a longstanding and shared tradition. This is further confirmed when we turn to the medieval connection between the Okina cult and the Hata clan. In medieval mythology, the Hata are closely related to the Okina cult. As Yanagita Kunio pointed out, most *kami* had their origin in the figure of the divine ancestor, whose prototype is the beaming figure of the Okina.[569] In the fragmentary work *Meishuku shū* 明宿集 by the Nō playwright Konparu Zenchiku 金春禅竹 (1405–1468), Okina, an important figure in

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[568] Kim, Hyŏn-uk 2008.

[569] Blacker 1992: 37.

the development of performing arts, is presented as the source of all gods and buddhas, connecting all the phenomena of the universe as a primordial god.[570]

The association between the Hata and an old man is further confirmed by the fact that the Konparu family identifies as its ancestor Hata no Kawakatsu (var. Hata no Kōkatsu) 秦河勝 (fl. 6th–7th C.). In Zenchiku's narrative, Okina arose at the beginning of the age of the gods to protect the Japanese throne and benefit the Japanese people, and was then embodied in Kawakatsu, who performed *okina sarugaku* 翁猿楽 at the command of Prince Shōtoku 聖徳太子 (574–622) with the intention of establishing peace in the realm. This connection between the Hata and Okina suggests that the Hata were at the center of producing and disseminating the discourse around the "old man," and this might reflect the diffusion of continental religious culture and its successful dissemination to the popular domain in Japanese culture.[571]

Thus it is not surprising that Madarajin (var. Matarajin), whose origin story is basically the same as that of Shinra Myōjin, is also a deity representative of the performing arts (Jp. *geinō* 芸能) in medieval Japan. In *sarugaku* theater the backstage was addressed to Madarajin, whose spirit was believed to dwell in a sacred and secret area behind the Jōgyō Hall of Tendai temples. Already in the eleventh century Shinto shrines reserved sacred spaces—hidden behind the hall or beneath its floor—to certain deities. The statue faced the dangerous northeastern direction (Jp. *ushitora*) that since early times was believed to be the "demon gate" (Jp. *kimon*), the entrance through which demons entered into the capital. Hattori Yukio also argues that *sarugaku* actors

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[570] On this question, see the recent work of Takahashi 2014. Also this aspect of Okina suggests Okina's main function is none other than kōjin 荒神 (*araburu kami*), one of the most prevalent features of esoteric deities in medieval Japanese religions. On the discussion of kōjin and its significance see Faure 2015 (forthcoming).

[571] For the discussion of Okina, Pinnington 1998: 508-10.

performed a series of dances in front of the divine statue of Madarajin.[572] Yamaji Kōzō reaches

the same conclusion, acknowledging the fact that the dances performed for Madarajin belonged

to the old-man type—a congratulatory dance and an invocation for the deity to come and guard

the sacred performance—a type that is still staged today.[573] Further evidence for the derivation of

Nō from backstage *sarugaku* comes from the presence of an "old man mask" in the Jōgyō Hall;

this is the small mask that actors use today to impersonate an elderly character.

The importance of Madarajin in the performing arts and its divine representation as

Okina brings its cult and that of Shinra Myōjin one step closer, since, as we saw in chapter two,

Shinra Myōjin was also the guardian deity of the performing arts in the Jimon tradition. In

addition, the two also shared strong ties through the cult of Mañjuśrī. In the case of Matarajin,

the deity's mask was often understood as a representation of Mañjuśrī, and Shinra Myōjin was

also closely related to Mañjuśrī both doctrinally and visually, as I explain later in this chapter.

For example, Eison 叡尊 (1201–1290), the founder of the Shingon Ritsu school, and other

medieval elite monks believed that Mañjuśrī practices were particularly appropriate in the

interval between Śākyamuni's nirvana and the appearance of the next buddha Maitreya. Since

the mid-Kamakura period the aforementioned mask of Madarajin was worshiped as the guardian

of outcasts (Jp. *hinin* 非人) and the protector of their shelters. Symbolizing Madarajin, it also

stood as a representation of Mañjuśrī, a deity worshiped by lepers and other victims of exclusion

due to their sickness, deformity, poverty, or their involvement in unconventional activities,

especially in Nara. Mañjuśrī and the *okina* mask were objects of worship at Hannyaji 般若寺 on

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[572] Hattori 2009.

[573] Marra 1993: 58.

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Narazaka, a temple at the center of the religious activities of Eison, who spent his life among outcasts.[574]

Shirahige Myōjin 白鬚明神 (White Bearded Bright Deity) is another example of the infiltration of Korean beliefs in Ōmi, a stronghold of Korean immigrants. Some scholars have argued that Shinra Myōjin was homophonous with *shira* 白, meaning "white," and that the god was therefore related to a network of "white" deities, including "old men" looking deities such as Shirahige Myōjin and Sumiyoshi. Yanagita Kunio also suggests that Shinrahige Myōjin is a god from Silla.[575] Indeed, not only does the deity's white beard remind us of Shinra Myōjin's representation as an old man, but also, as Kim Hyŏn-uk argues, the image of the old man in Japan seems to indicate possible Korean influence.[576] The Shirahige shrine in Ōmi is the best known within a wide network of Shirahige shrines extending throughout Japan. Although officially this shrine is dedicated to Sarutahiko, the famous god who greets Ninigi-no-Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊 on his descent to earth in the *Kojiki*, the association seems to have been established later in the medieval period. The deity, similar to Shinra Myōjin, was originally associated with sea travel. For instance, at Suginomori Shirahige 杉杜白髭 shrine in present-day Fukui Prefecture the deity is still venerated as a deity of a safe sea travel.

Phonetic similarities in the gods' names are crucial in that they imply a close association between them, reflecting the way beliefs were rendered in sound. Shirahige is phonetically similar to Shiragi or Shinra, and so one might wonder whether Shirahige Myōjin is also

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[574] Groner 2001: 136. More about Eison, see Quinter 2007. Also, see Meeks 2010: 117-55.

[575] Yanagita 1990: 154.

[576] Kim, Hyŏn-uk 2008: iii-iv.

associated with Silla. In modern day Hitaka 日高 city (in the former Koma-gun 高麗郡 or Koma County), there is a shrine called Koma shrine 高麗神社. This shrine was built for descendants of the people who immigrated en masse from Koguryŏ after the country's demise in 668. The *Shoku Nihongi* records that in 716 Koguryŏ descendants who lived around the Kanto area were all forced to resettle in the remote area called Musashi no kuni 武蔵国, which was later renamed Koma-gun.[577]

The case of Koma-gun leads us to look at another variation of Shirahige Myōjin. As the *Nihon shoki* tells us, a son of the Koguryŏ ruler King Pojang 寶臧 (r. 642–668), whose name was Jakkō 若光 (Kor. Yak'gwang), visited Japan as an official envoy in 666.[578] After Koguryŏ's fall, Jakkō, unable to return to his country, settled down in Sagami Province 相模国 (modern-day Ōiso 大磯 in Kanagawa 神奈川 Prefecture). He was appointed to the head of the Koma-gun. With his charismatic leadership, Koguryŏ immigrants were able to resettle in the region relatively quickly. According to a legend of the Koma shrine, Jakkō exerted so much effort in trying to stabilize the livelihood of the Koguryŏ people that his hair and beard grew white. People of the Koma-gun thus called him "Jakkō Shirahige." After his death they worshipped him as Koma Myōjin, later to be worshipped together with Shirahige Myōjin by building the Koma shrine. Even today there are more than forty Shirahige shrines in this region, which suggests the strong connections between the cult of Shirahige Myōjin and the early Korean immigrants.[579]

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[577] *Shoku Nihongi* (vol.2): 14.

[578] *Nihon shoki*, Aston trans., 285.

[579] The Koma shrine established for Jakkō also transmitted Kangiten 歡喜天 (alias Shōten) worship from Koguryŏ. A Koguryŏ monk named Sŭngrak 勝樂, who came along with Jakkō, is said to have established Shōten-in 聖天 and a Buddhist temple, Shōrakuji (Kr. Sŭngrakji 勝樂寺), in which enshrined a statue of Shoten. The temple later turned

5.2. The Network of the Old Man

The term "old man" lacks specificity, and it is therefore necessary to grasp what exactly is meant by "old" in the cult of the old man. First, we should keep in mind that what we mean by that term is quite different from what it might have meant to premodern Japanese, due to the large gap between the life expectancies in the modern and premodern periods. In pre-Nara and Nara-period Japan it was very rare for people to reach an advanced age. It appears that anyone who reached forty was considered old. This idea that old age began at forty was widely shared in East Asia.[580] This may have been due not only to understandings of the human body at that time, but also to the fact that forty was regarded as an omen for a long life. Considering the life expectancy of the time period, it is safe to imagine that the image of an old man would be perceived as that of a godlike figure who had achieved longevity. Thus, the old-man appearance was a common form taken by gods in ancient Japanese mythology.

The Daoist immortal is commonly depicted as an elderly man. In her study of the iconography of Shinra Myōjin, Christine Guth argues that the deity's appearance "may have been inspired by a figure of Taoist origins."[581] The connection between the old man and the Daoist immortal was clear to some premodern viewers. For instance, in the *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釈書 (ca. 1322),[582] a fourteenth-century Buddhist historical record by the Zen monk Kokan

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into Koma shrine, so that since then the Shōten at the temple is known as Koma Shōten 高麗聖天. See Kim, Imjung 2006: 211-14.

[580] For example the *Huangdi neijing su wen* 皇帝內經素問 (circa. 400 B.C. E.–260 C.E.), a classic of Chinese medicine, had already taught how the vital energies begin to decline from the age of 40 onward. See Formanek 1988: 11-13. On the study of the text and especially on the compliation date, see Unschuld 2003: 1-3.

[581] Guth 1985: 70.

[582] *Genkō shakusho*, compiled in the second year of the Genkō era (1321–1324), contains the biographies of some four hundred eminent priests who lived during the seven hundred years or so following the introduction of Buddhism to Japan. It also contains chronological tables of Japanese Buddhist history from 540 to 1221.

Shiren 虎関師錬 (1278–1347), Shinra Myōjin is listed under the category of the Daoist immortals (Jp. *shinsen* 神仙), which clearly suggests that Shinra Myōjin's dominant image overlapped with that of Daoist immortals.[583] The Korean mountain spirit (Kr. *sanshin* 山神) is another instructive example of a fusion between Daoist influence and local practices: in Korean Buddhism as well as in Korean folk traditions, mountain deities are typically depicted as old men.[584] This point is intriguing, for Shinra Myōjin, the Silla deity, is also a mountain deity in the Jimon tradition in Japan.

In the Buddhist context divine figures appearing as old men often functioned as landlord deities (Jp. *jinushi*) whose role is bequeathing auspicious land to Buddhist divinities or monks. Considering the role of *jinushi* that was bestowed on Shinra Myōjin at Onjōji, his representation as an old man fits exactly into this long and widespread tradition of representing the landlord deity as an elderly figure. This elderly figure is often indentified as Shirahige Myōjin. The old man on Lake Biwa was one of the significant motifs, which can be found from various legends in Hie shintō texts such as the *Shintōshū* and the *Shintō zōzōshū*, as well as literary works, such as the *Taiheiki* and the *Soga monogatari*. Shirahige Myōjin appears in the Taiheiki and Sogamonogatari in the legend of the foundation of Mt. Hiei. The storyline begins with an old fisherman who lives at the foot of Mt. Hiei. He is 6,000 years old, and *jinushi* of the place. When Śākyamuni asked for the land, the fisherman refuses because it was his fishing spot. When Śākyamuni was about to return to Tuṣita Heaven, the Medicine Buddha appears, informing the fisherman that he is an even older *jinushi*, who lived there since the time when people's lives

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[583] *Genkō shakusho* vol.1: 417. See also Yamaori 1991: 216, n.75

[584] Mason 1999.

were 20,000 years.[585] In this story, which emphasizes the authority of Yakushi being the first *jinushi* of the region, we can see the spiritual competition over local cults on the part of Buddhism. But the point is that the motif of the bequeathing of the land by an old man with a white beard was popular in the Hiei Shinto tradition, and so was also in the Jimon tradition.

Shinra Myōjin's role transcends that of a traditional *jinushi*. The deity, initially being a seafaring deity, represents the tension between locality and trans-locality. In his discussion of different legends and transmissions related to the Okina tradition, Yamaori Tetsuo points out that Shinra Myōjin is a typical example of sea god, who first appears on the sea and then becomes a protector of a specific location on land.[586] This representation of Shinra Myōjin as *jinushi* of Mt. Nagara where Onjōji is located explains the combined cult of Maitreya Buddha and Shinra Myōjin in the Jimon tradition. In this way, Shinra Myōjin represents not only the elderly men who await the advent of the future Buddha Maitreya, but also a landlord deity, who also transcends locality.

Interestingly, it is in the Ōmi region that the old-man god tradition developed, largely in connection with the cult of the future Buddha Maitreya. For instance, in the tenth-century *Three Jewels* (Jp. *Sanbōe* 三宝絵) by Minamoto Tamenori 源為憲, we find the story of an old-man deity in Ōmi:

> The sovereign Shōmu 聖武 asked Zaō Gongen 蔵王権現, the deity of Mt. Kimpu 金峰山, to let him have some the gold of the mountain for the completion of his cherished project [i.e., the Great Buddha of Tōdaiji]. Zaō responded with a revelation: …'I cannot give [this gold] you. On the shore of the river in Shiga District in Ōmi Province lies a stone fished out by an old man many years ago. Make an image of the Wish-Granting Kannon, place it on this rock, and worship it.'[587]

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[585] Matsuoka 1999: 38-44.

[586] Yamaori 1991: 216.

[587] *The Three Jewels*, Kamens trans. 1998: 328.

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Zaō Gongen, the central deity of Shugendō, is also believed to be a manifestation of Maitreya.[588]

Mt. Kimpu, therefore, was perceived as the heaven of Maitreya. The image of the old man fishing on the shore of Lake Biwa echoes that of Shinra Myōjin as a landlord deity waiting for Maitreya. The above story does not explicitly refer to Shinra Myōjin, but it seems to indicate that the tale of the old-man deity in Ōmi was well known and alive in popular imagination. For example, in the *Daianji engi* 大安寺縁起, we find the story of Rōben 良弁 (689–773), who was originally from Ōmi and also had close ties with the Huayan (Kr. Hwaŏm) tradition of Silla. According to this story, Rōben once met a white-haired old man who showed him where to build a temple for Fudō.[589] Although the object of worship has been changed in this story, we see that this was one of the common motifs of popular legends.

As the story of Rōben suggests, the old man often functions as a protector, yet he is also protected by the power of these eminent monks. In addition, the old man deity was also trans-local and trans-sectarian in nature, especially when he was paired with eminent monks in the hagiographic tradition. A case in point is the encounter of another Kegon monk, Myōe 明恵 (1173–1232), with an old-man looking deity. This tale calls to mind the topos of the Japanese monk who receives instruction from an old man while traveling by sea. When Myōe paid a visit to the Kasuga deity to pray for a safe sea trip to China, a deity in the form of an old man appeared before him. The deity objected to Myōe's plans, stating that the Buddha used to reside in India, but that today he resides on Mt. Mikasa in the form of a *kami* in order to save all

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[588] Fremerman 2008: 88-89. On the Mt. Kimpu cult during the Heian period, see Blair 2008.

[589] *Daianji engi* in *Shugendō shiryōshū* 1:305.

sentient beings.[590] Another example is that of Inari Myōjin, who manifested himself as an old man to the Shingon master Kūkai, and later to the Zen master Dōgen, and protected these eminent monks during their trip to China.[591]

The figure of the white-haired old-man god, however, is not limited to the Japanese context. Rather it seems to be part of a larger cross-cultural cultic phenomenon. For instance, Walther Heissig explores various central and East Asian parallels to the "white old man" who rules "the length and shortness of men's lives."[592] There seems to be a complex problem here, for sometimes Fukurokuju 福禄寿 (the god of long life) is linked or even identified with Jurōjin 寿老人, one of the Seven Gods of Fortune, suggesting a connection with the stars (specifically the seven stars of Ursa major).[593] All of this suggest that the image of an old man with thick eyebrows, white face and beard, holding a stick, circulated widely within East Asia.

6. Conclusion: Contextualizing Visual Connections

How can we situate the use of images within the larger context of the religious activities of a specific society, in this case, medieval Japan? This chapter began with this question as a way to emphasize that images are more than static pictorial representations. As the image of Shinra Myōjin demonstrates, images are not isolated phenomena, but part of an interactive reality— images shape socio-historical conditions, even as they are shaped by them.

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[590] This story pervaded the popular imagination and can be seen in the Nō play "Kasuga Ryūjin 春日竜神 (The Dragon Deity of Kasuga)." See Grapard 1992: 212.

[591] As to Kūkai's association with Inari, see *Inari shinkō jiten* 1999. In its relation to Dōgen, see Williams 2005. Inari Myōjin's association with the Onjōji tradition is an intriguing one because the deity is depicted with Enchin in the Kumano mandala.

[592] Heissig 1980:76-79.

[593] Pye 2004: 27.

In this chapter I have highlighted the importance of combining both textual and visual analysis in the study of deities such as Shinra Myōjin. Challenging previous interpretations, which saw Shinra Myōjin simply as a Daoist figure, I explored various examples of the old-man deity. Throughout the chapter, I emphasized the important role that these old-man deities played in the rich mythological development of medieval Japanese religion and their interactions with historical actors, events, and religious phenomena. Examining Shinra Myōjin as representative of the deities who appear as old men, I argued that the image of the old man is a recurring theme in the origin stories of Silla-related deities, and Shinra Myōjin's distinctive visual representation provides another link with Korean religious elements found in Japanese religion; this is further evidence for my overarching argument. At the same time, this chapter demonstrated that we can understand the old man appearance of Shinra Myōjin only when we locate it within the complex cultural intersections of different nodal points, Daoist and Buddhists well as Japanese, and both local and trans-local.

At first glance, the image of an old man comes across as generic at best. Yet, this seemingly bland appearance in fact tells us more than we would expect once we start connecting geographical, visual, and doctrinal nodes. In this chapter, I argued that the old man deity is best understood by looking at the intersections of various cultic practices. Shinra Myōjin was part of the network of Silla related deities, whose tradition emphasized an old-man deity as the most god-like figure. As for the emergence of Shinra Myōjin as an individuated deity, based on considerable connections between Shinra Myōjin and Mañjuśri, I argued that Shinra Myōjin's image was deeply influenced by the image of Taisho rōnin in the Mañjuśrī Pentad, which reflects Onjōji's attempt to appropriate the Mañjuśrī cult so important to the Tendai Buddhist tradition of the time. But above all, this chapter has hopefully shown that at Onjōji the image of the old-man

deity was objectified through the cult of Shinra Myōjin, and that Shinra Myōjin was only part of the larger network of the old-man deity, which enjoyed great popularity and gained significant cross-cultural meanings in and beyond Japan.

Conclusion

This dissertation has been about Shinra Myōjin, a god of Silla that was worshipped in medieval Japanese Buddhism. It is not, however, a monolithic story of Shinra Myōjin. Rather, it has analyzed the various networks with which the deity was involved, namely, networks of Silla immigrants, shrines and temples, and a variety of gods. Through examining the worship of Shinra Myōjin from several different angles—historical (ch.1), institutional (ch.2), mythological (ch.3), and visual (ch. 4)— I have argued that the emergence of Shinra Myōjin's cult can be more fully understood when viewed within the context of the "East Asian Mediterranean" trade network, in which Silla merchants, immigrants, and Buddhist monks played a prominent role. These Silla immigrants settled along the costal areas between the various nodal points in the East Asian Mediterranean. Analyzing this maritime network allows us to explore the diversity and density of a cultic network that spread through a large number of nodal points located in China, Korea, and Japan. This maritime network further helps us to understand the circulation of people, ideas, and gods— Shinra Myōjin being one of the most representative examples.

My approach in framing the cult of Shinra Myōjin within the context of the East Asian maritime network challenges two predominant models currently used within contemporary scholarship on Japanese Buddhism: 1) it shifts the paradigm from a land-centered vision to a sea-centered vision, and 2) it provides a transcultural approach in the study of Japanese religion.

First, focusing upon the sea network radically changes our perspective from a static to a dynamic view of medieval Japanese religion. By looking at the sea as a contact zone, we can see that nodal points along each country's coastlines tell us neglected histories of the networks connected by the sea. This approach departs from the linear narrative that traces religious

transmission from the continent to the Japanese archipelago, and, from there, from the Japanese court and capital to the provinces. Moving away from a land-centric view, as well as a capital-centric view, it becomes clear that these seemingly peripheral areas along the coasts and the lakes were in fact real centers for new religious cults due to their constant contact with other cultures and continental technologies as well as with the immigrants and travelers who circulated through all of these. Thus, we come to understand that these immigrants, merchants, and travelers were not passive transmitters but rather active transformers, and the nodal points along the coastlines of each culture were centers within these networks.

Second, the East Asian framework that I utilized in this study provides a broader vision for a more nuanced understanding of international relations in the premodern period, and it also permits us to overcome the more commonplace Japan-centric vision toward medieval Japanese religion. Because of this Japan-centered view, the majority of prior scholarship on medieval Japanese religion has been based on the interactions only between China and Japan. In previous Japanese scholarship, for instance, Shinra Myōjin was merely one of the protector deities of Onjōji. However, in my transcultural approach, I challenged this old model and performed a long overdue reevaluation of it. Throughout my dissertation, I showed that the cult of Shinra Myōjin goes well beyond the institutional history of Onjōji in Japan, particularly as he was also connected with Silla immigrants in China as well as other old-man deities related to the Korean Peninsula in one way or another. This transcultural, comparative angle not only allows us to go beyond our modern concept of national boundaries but also helps us arrive at a new understanding, namely, that the world of medieval Japan religions was a far more dynamic, connected space than is usually thought. The conceptual framework provided by the notion of the East Asian Mediterranean has the potential to transform the ways we view spaces, study East

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Asian religions, and think about history in general.

Onjōji's location offered the optimal conditions to develop a transformed Silla god. In this study, we have also seen that the international sea connections extend far beyond the well-known ports in Kyūshū, stretching far inland. Lake Biwa functioned as an inland sea, participating in the East Asian Mediterranean Sea. Lake Biwa in Ōmi, where Onjōji is located, is of particular importance, as it was the home for both Silla immigrants and Silla deities from the pre-Nara era. Ōmi was a major port connecting all other nodal points along the lake. It is also the place where the major outlet of the lake flows into Kyōto, the ancient capital; this suggests that a constant circulation was taking place between the capital and Lake Biwa communities through inland waterways. Immigrants from Silla continued to worship their ancestral deities within their settlements along the lake. These local networks provided a ready environment for the later emergence of Shinra Myōjin's cult in the region. However, it was Tendai monks who most contributed to the direct materialization of the myths, rituals, and icons of the deity following their trips to Tang China. In this network of shrines and temples, and people, Onjōji's Shinra Myōjin shrine suggests that Shinra Myōjin was the individualized form of a god that emerged and circulated in this network.

As I examined Onjōji's institutional history in this work, I also highlighted the fact that Shinra Myōjin became a *de facto* deity for the entirety of the Jimon tradition. The Jimon monastery Onjōji became a major esoteric Buddhist center, and Shinra Myōjin played a significant role in the sect's growth throughout its history. The Jimon tradition developed its institutional power in conjunction with that of Shinra Myōjin, particularly through continued sectarian rivalry with its rival, the Sanmon tradition. During this process, Shinra Myōjin's cult was a key element in shaping medieval Tendai identity. The promotion of Shinra Myōjin cultic

practices at Onjōji was central to the dispute between the Tendai siblings, as it helped to promote Jimon's spiritual superiority and legitimate the monastery's institutional autonomy. Since the Jimon was highly concerned with retaining its own identity in order to differentiate itself from the Sanmon, Shinra Myōjin was strategically chosen to meet this purpose. To that end, what was initially a sea-faring deity came to be transformed into a mountain deity charged with protecting a specific space. In this way, Shinra Myōjin, as the *de facto* deity of the Jimon, successfully performed this new role while also keeping his powerful "foreign" identity. The sectarian milieu between the two factions was certainly central to the growth of Shinra Myōjin and his cult's popularity. Yet sectarian conflict was not the only reason of the deity's growth.

Alongside sectarian rivalry, medieval Japanese conceptions of Silla as well as the religious symbolism and meanings associated with this perception were also crucial in my explanation of how Shinra Myōjin functioned as a god of pestilence. All mythological accounts of Shinra Myōjin from Onjōji's chronicles and popular tales confirm that Shinra Myōjin's major function was that of a god who inflicts disease but can also prevent it. Shinra Myōjin's mythological development as a god of pestilence suggests that the deity's character was partially determined by the ways in which Silla was imagined in medieval Japan. In examples recorded in official historical accounts and temple records, Silla was perceived as not only a hostile country but also a harmful space from which pestilence comes. These antagonistic views of Silla further helped develop this Silla-related god into a god of pestilence in Japan although it is not clear whether this affiliation was a cause or result. The collective resentment against Silla further led Shinra Myōjin to be identified with Susanoo and then with Gozu Tennō, the paradigmatic pestilence deity in Japanese religion, ambivalent in nature, being a god who creates pestilence and yet one who also prevents it.

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Shinra Myōjin's peculiar image has also been an enigma for art historians, and I tried to explain its broader significance as well as its possible iconographic origin. The elderly appearance of Shinra Myōjin, although it may come across as rather a generic feature, links the deity with the network of other gods who similarly appeared as old men. In addition to visual evidence, we also see textual sources support the point that old-man deities in the Japanese pantheon are related to immigrants from Silla in one way or the other. By examining the elderly aspect of Shinra Myōjin within this larger religious context, I highlighted the fact that Shinra Myōjin is best understood when we consider him in this network of other Silla-related deities.

After I drew upon a number of textual and visual connections of Mt. Wutai's Mañjuśrī depiction as an old man, I hope to have demonstrated that Shinra Myōjin's image was modeled after that of Taisho rōnin in the Mañjuśrī Pentad—who is none other than one of the manifestations of Mañjuśrī. By investigating textual and visual sources that connect Shinra Myōjin's iconography to that of Taisho rōnin in the Mañjuśrī Pentad, as well as to the old-man deities in the Japanese Buddhist pantheon, I have shown that the image of Shinra Myōjin reflects Onjōji's attempt to appropriate the Mañjuśrī cult that was so important to Tendai Buddhism at that time. In this way, Shinra Myōjin, who seems at first to be a peripheral figure, actually came to play a significant role in the formation of Tendai identity and also in planting continental religious elements and ritual technology in Japanese soil.

The examination of Shinra Myōjin's cult from an interdisciplinary angle serves as a gateway for exploring other understudied associations between medieval Japanese religiosity and those religious ideas and practices that were either continental in origin or were at least perceived to be so by medieval Japanese. My findings from this interdisciplinary research contribute to elucidating those connections that traverse the boundaries of religion, history, mythology,

literature, and visual culture. In addition to historical chronicles, popular literatures, and temple records, I also made extensive use of visual materials in order to contextualize the deity's particular religious and cultural significances.

This trans-cultural and interdisciplinary research on Shinra Myōjin is only the first step of a broader exploration of the interactions between Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Buddhist cults in the premodern religious world. As the cult of Shinra Myōjin illustrates, in contrast to current academic discourse according to which the ancient period was followed by the decline of Korean religious and cultural influence in Japanese culture, we can see that such interactions persisted throughout the medieval period and beyond through the East Asian network. In this way, my dissertation on Shinra Myōjin presents a cogent and compelling perspective on Japanese esoteric Buddhism and its connections to broader dynamics within East Asian religion.

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Appendix: *The Origin Story of the Dragon Flower Assembly at the Onjōji*

Onjōji ryūge-e engi 園城寺龍華會緣起[594]

<div style="text-align: right;">Court councilor, Fujiwara no Sanenori 藤原実範</div>

During the Jōwa 承和 era (834–848), Master Chishō 智證 [Enchin] crossed the sea and entered Tang China in search of the Dharma. He waited for wind for safe sailing, but in a seaway the boat reached the outskirts of Wanliu 万柳 in China. With the divine protection of the Three Treasures from his home temple, the master was at last able to reach Qinglong temple 青龍寺 in Chang'an 長安. At the temple he learned all the Dharma from his master. One by one, he received all the teachings of the exoteric and esoteric traditions, and finally received transmission. After the master completed his mission, he decided to come back to Japan. On his boat, an old man suddenly appeared and declared: "I am a deity (*myōjin*) of the Silla Kingdom. I will protect your Dharma until the Buddha Maitreya comes to this world." The old man promised to come to this world as the Buddha Maitreya, and upon these words he disappeared.

After the master returned to Japan, the court asked him to present what he learned and collected in China to the Daijōkan 太政官 (the statutory Council of State). At that very time, the same old man from the previous day reappeared and stated: "In Japan there is an auspicious place. You should build a Buddhist temple on that land, and enshrine the teachings that you received." Thereupon, the master arrived at Onjōji in Shiga district 滋賀郡 in Ōmi Province 近江國." He asked monks at the temple as to [the temple's] origins. However, no one knew about

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[594] Kokushi Taikei Henshūkai 國史大系編修會 ed., *Honchō zoku monzui* 本朝續文粹: *Shintei zōho Kokushi Taikei* 新訂 増補 國史大系 (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999), vol. 29: 186-88.

them except one old monk named Kyōtai. He came close to the master and told him: "I am 162 years old. This temple was established around 180 years ago. Here lives a descendant of our patron family." The monk called that person, who said: "My ancestor is Ōtomo no Yotaō 大友与多王. He established the temple for Emperor Tenmu 天武. Originally the territory was part of the family land of Prince Ōtomo, the minister of the Daijōkan 大友太政大臣. In obedience to Emperor Tenji's imperial decree, the minister established Sūfukuji at this site. A sixty-foot tall Maitreya statue was installed. At that time, the emperor had a dream vision and received an oracle in his dream. Thereupon the minister rebuilt the temple. This is the present Sūfukuji 崇福寺. Ōtomo no Yotaō, following his father's [Prince Ōtomo] will, finished the construction of halls and residential buildings.

Because of this, Kyōtai always said that the abbot position must be appointed to the temple clan's lineage, and in doing so, [devotees] will gradually return. This is why now he waited for people's coming, and bestowed the temple to the master Enchin. After the bestowment, Shinra Myōjin was enshrined in the northern part of the temple. So the old monk, Kyōtai, visited the deity to pay his respect, and was delighted to meet the deity. But then [the monk] disappeared and could not be found. The master asked Shinra Myōjin: "Why did that old monk disappear all of sudden, and who is he?" The Myōjin answered: "He was the Buddha Maitreya. In order to protect the dharma, he had stayed at this temple."

After the master went back to the temple [from the Shinra Myōjin shrine], he asked what Kyōtai usually did. People answered that for many years, Kyōtai ate nothing but fish, and drank nothing but wine. By taking fish and turtles he made them offerings. Even now the remains are in his dwelling place. But several years later, all those fish and turtles were turned into the petals and roots of lotus flowers. Because of this the master realized that Kyōtai was a manifestation of

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Maitreya. While understanding that it was Kyōtai who established the foundation of this auspicious temple, he recollected the time when Kyōtai was an abbot. With his blessed feet, he crossed all the stone bridges from one end to the other end [of the temple], and with his blessed fingers, he closed and opened all the windows and doors from one end to the other. Because of all his efforts, people could live in this place a long time. Being grateful for that, the master walked around the remains of the Buddha Maitreya. Feeling happy with it, he entered Kyōtai's living quarters. The master showed the greatest respect to the Golden Hall, and realized that the whole temple was none other than [Maitreya's] forty-nine-story jewel palace.[595] While gazing at the crystal clear lake, he also realized that the lake was like the Lotus Pond with eight attributes.

All the people gathered strength and discussed as follows: At Kōfukuji in Nara, there is the Assembly of Permanent Joy (*jōraku-e* 常樂會). At Mt. Hiei in Kyōto, there is the Assembly of Śārīra (*shari-e* 舍利會). These are all to repay the Buddha, as well as to continue the Buddha's dharma. This is the reason why monks carry out the assembly every year, unremittedly. Then, our temple must initiate the assembly of the Dragon Flower (*ryūge-e* 龍華會). To invoke the Buddha Maitreya, all joined their palms. The decision was finally made and everyone agreed to begin the assembly. Those people who wished to receive benefits from the assembly, regardless their status, offered flowers and incense.

According to *the Sūtra on the Contemplation of the Mind Ground* 心地觀經: "During Maitreya's dragon flower assembly, we hope to attain enlightenment in the final stage of the dharma. Those who donate their frugal meal to other sentient beings will create good karma, and

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[595] The maṇi, or pearl palace of forty-nine stories above the Tuṣita heaven is described in the *Sūtra of Maitreya's Ascension* 彌勒上生經.

they will meet the Buddha Maitreya. They will also attain the ultimate path of enlightenment."[596] These are the words of the Tathāgata. One must rejoice and follow the teaching of the Buddha.

At that moment, Heaven and Earth were harmonized, and the sun and the stars were attuned. When the right time arrived, the assembly commenced. Colorful banners and canopies were shining brightly and people's eyes were mesmerized by the brilliant decorations at the maṇi hall. Following the beautiful sound of the flutes and strings, people experienced the realm of Tuṣita Heaven. While watching and hearing it, people were so impressed that they were all in tears.

Although our virtue is not as good as that of the wise men of old times, and our wisdom does not match that of the ancient sages, today's assembly is truly unprecedented. All the details of the ceremony—how to decorate all the buildings of the temple, the number of monks, the dignified ritual methods, the correct sequence of music performance—will be recorded in detail on a separate sheet of paper and this will be well preserved at the temple for transmission. The assembly will be set as the most important ceremony of the temple forever. In doing so, we envision a bright future for the assembly and plan to create an association among the three aseemblies [*jōraku-e*, *shari-e*, and *ryūge-e*]. However, when if it proves difficult to determine the assembly date, if a natural disaster occurs, or the temple finds itself in financial straights, one can adjust the date as long as the time is in harmony with Heaven.

May all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of all directions in the three periods be our witnesses and help us promote the assembly. Although people may fall into the hell of swords in the three destinies, they will be able to be saved from the ferocious fire as long as they believe in

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[596] *Daijō honshōshinchikan kyō* 大乘本生心地觀經: "我今弟子付彌勒 龍華會中得解脱 於末法中善男子 一搏之食施眾生 以是善根見彌勒 當得菩提究竟道." (CBETA, T03, no. 159, p. 306, a5-7)

the power [of Maitreya]. Therefore, the first thing we do in the assembly is to pray to the Buddha Maitreya. Heavenly beings, wheel-turning kings, nobles, scholars, farmers, or even wanderers—anyone who believes in the benefits of the assembly should attend and pay homage at the assembly. All those who believe in the power of chanting the Buddha's name will be reborn in the Pure Land. Together with countless Bodhisattvas and other sacred being, they will ascend to the lotus pedestal made of the seven treasures, and emit a bright light. They can then come down from their lotus pedestal and bow their head to the feet of the Buddha Maitreya.

Recorded on the eighteenth day of the eighth month of the fifth year of Kōhei 康平 (1062).