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Dreams of Sanetomo: His Portrait in the *Azuma Kagami* and the Legends of Prince Shōtoku¹

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Explanatory Note

Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192-1219) was the third shōgun of the Kamakura period (which lasted from the end of the 12th century to the first half of the 14th century). In this period, which marked a fresh departure from the previous history in the medieval age of Japan, the *bushi* (warrior) class was able to run an independent government for the first time. It should be also noted that this government was located in Kamakura, near to the area now known as Tokyo, several hundred miles east of Kyoto. However, Sanetomo could not avoid being dragged into the fierce power struggles in the early days of the new regime as it consolidated its power and in the end he suffered a tragic death, assassinated at a young age by his nephew, a son of his elder brother Yori'ie, the second shōgun. This series of developments is described in the *Azuma Kagami*, a chronicle of this period which was written under the auspices of the Kamakura government.

However, Sanetomo's attitude toward the old aristocratic government in Kyoto, which had now been deprived of its centuries-long monopoly on sovereignty, was complicated; he had a deep understanding of the ancient traditions of the aristocracy, in particular *waka* poetry, and he had great affection for them. He himself composed many *waka* and was famous as a poet.

Given this background studies about Sanetomo have focused on his *waka*, if one excludes work by authors and literary critics. Consequently, researchers have searched in the *Azuma Kagami* for the portrait of Sanetomo as a poet. In other words, there is a tendency to see Sanetomo as a person who fled into the world of *waka* as a result of the pressure he was under from the Hōjō clan (the family of his mother), who wielded the real power in the government.

In contrast to these studies, the present paper proposes to see Sanetomo placed in the context of folk literature tradition, rather than in the mainstream of *waka* poetry. To this end, it introduces a hypothesis that the legend of Shōtoku-Taishi (Prince Shōtoku) is reflected in the portrait of Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami*. Prince Shōtoku is said to have lived from the end of the 6th century to the first half of the 7th century. He had been an object of admiration for his idealistic policies based on Buddhism, and this legendary figure, like a saint in the West, had a great influence on both the political thought and the literature of Japan. This paper thus tries to see to what extent the description of Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami* overlaps the folklore about Prince Shōtoku.

What emerged as a result of this study is a portrait of Sanetomo as a man who was strongly aware of his role as a policymaker, and who has since been subjected to literary embellishment, which is in contrast to the portrait of Sanetomo painted in previous literary research. The new description of Sanetomo revealed by this paper also matches the picture of him that recent historical research has been revealing based on various *Mandokoro Hakkyū Monjo*, domestic documents issued by the shōgun's court.

As outlined above, the present paper brings a completely new perspective to interpreting Sanetomo, seeing the *Azuma Kagami* as an amalgam of history and literature. In this sense, it makes a great contribution to the study of medieval Japanese literature.

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1. The present article was first published in *Bungakushi Kenkyū (Studies of Literary History)* No.47, Society of Japanese and Japanese Literature, Osaka City University, 2007. The original title is *Sanetomo Densetsu to Shōtoku Taishi – Azuma Kagami ni okeru Minamoto no Sanetomo zo no Haikai (The Sanetomo Legend and Prince Shōtoku: The Background to the Portrait of Minamoto no Sanetomo in the Azuma Kagami)*. For the convenience of English readers, the translated article was fully reviewed; and necessary information about proper names, historical events, and Japanese titles was added.

Introduction

The aim of the present study is to clarify how Minamoto no Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami*² has been treated with literary embellishment. This study considers him to be a statesperson deeply devoted to Buddhism rather than a poet of waka, the image of Sanetomo that has been widespread. In what follows, first we indicate that a predictive dream ascribed to Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami* has the same narrative structure as Buddhist legends based on the notion of the wheel of life. According to these legends, Sanetomo is a reincarnation of a high priest in China, as was Prince Shōtoku. Sanetomo himself was aware of the story about the prince. Like the legends of the prince, the *Azuma Kagami* tells us that he made various predictions, including even one concerning the moment of his death.

It is well known that Sanetomo had built a large oceangoing ship which was exceptionally large in its day, but in the end his desire to travel to China was never realized. This act has been interpreted as one of his escapist dreams as a poet. If we put his aspiration in the above context, however, another interpretation is possible; going to China could have been a means to enhance his power as shōgun and probably it was this idea that led him to identify himself with the legendary figure. Thus, the portrait of Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami* seems to present him not so much as a tragic poet as an ideal statesperson with many characteristics in common with the legendary prince, and there remains evidence that he tried to be fitted into this image because he was in the position of gaining access to the folk literature concerning Prince Shōtoku. As a result of a close examination of the text, it is highly likely that the authors of the *Azuma Kagami* intended to describe Sanetomo as a noble policymaker connected to the legends of the sacred prince.

Chapter 1

Why does the description of Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami* give us the impression that he is covered by the veil of legend? Certainly one of the reasons is the fact that it talks about Sanetomo's worship of Prince Shōtoku.

A good example of this is the scene in which Sanetomo granted an audience with Chin Wakei, the artisan from Song China. Wakei is known to have played a great role in the casting of the Great Buddha of Tōdaiji Temple, Nara, which had been destroyed by war in the preceding age. The above scene seems to concern a mere fact but behind it lies a curious dream. On June 8, in the fourth year of Kenpō (1216), Chin Wakei arrived in Kamakura. It is said that his purpose was to see the "benevolent face" of Sanetomo, who was "a reincarnation of a high priest like an incarnation of the bodhisattva in Buddhism." The meeting of the two men was realized one week later, on June 15. The entry in the *Azuma Kagami* reads as follows.

Sanetomo summoned Chin Wakei to the shōgun's court, and met him there. When he met Sanetomo, Chin Wakei offered a low reverence three times and cried passionately, with tears running down his cheeks. When Sanetomo was taken aback by Chin Wakei's grandiose behavior, Chin Wakei spoke as follows. "A long time ago you were the head priest at A'iku-ōzan [a temple mountain] in China. At that time I was one of your disciples." In fact, at about 2 o'clock in the morning on June 3 in the first year of Kenryaku [1211], Sanetomo had had a dream in which a single high priest made a statement about Sanetomo's previous life. Six years later³ Sanetomo still had not said anything to anyone about that dream, but the statement made by Chin Wakei matched up with the details of the dream perfectly. For this reason, Sanetomo trusted Chin Wakei completely.

Sanetomo was initially slightly perplexed by Wakei's excessive reaction but when he heard Wakei say that in an earlier life Sanetomo and himself had been in the relationship of a chief priest and follower undergoing Buddhist training at the temple mountain in Song China, he believed everything Wakei said immediately. This was because what Wakei said matched up with the pronouncement in the dream Sanetomo had experienced six years earlier, which he had not told anyone about subsequently. Then five months later, on November 24, Sanetomo decided to cross the sea to Song China in order to visit "A'iku-ōzan, where he had lived previously," and he ordered Wakei to build a Chinese-style ship for that purpose. Unfortunately, when the ship-launching ceremony for the Chinese-style ship was held on April 17 the following year it ended in failure, and in the end Sanetomo's scheme to go to Song China was nipped in the bud.

2. The quotation is from the *Shintei Zōho Kokushi Taikēi* (Collection of the Historical Records of Japan, Revised and Enlarged Edition), and I have made some changes to the notation, etc.

3. It was in fact five years later.

It is easy to detect the flavor of the Prince Shōtoku tradition in the above episode concerning Sanetomo and Wakei⁴. According to the *Prince Shōtoku Denryaku* (*The Related Stories of Prince Shōtoku*)⁵, a collection of stories about the prince from ancient times that became the fundamental text for the worship of the prince in the Middle Ages, when the prince met with Nichira (in the entry for the 12th year of the reign of Emperor Bidatsu) and Asataishi (in the entry for the 5th year of the reign of Empress Suiko), two emissaries to the Imperial Court from Kudara in Korea, he was viewed enthusiastically by them as an incarnation of *Kannon* (the bodhisattva associated with compassion) but later the prince himself made clear that the secret behind this was that both the emissaries had been in a master and disciple relationship with the prince himself during their Buddhist training period in China in their earlier life, saying respectively “when I was in China, he was my disciple” and “in my previous life he was my disciple.” Moreover, there is a well-known anecdote related in the *Prince Shōtoku Denryaku* which says that in a later year the prince sent diplomat Ono no Imoko to Mount Kōzan in China, where the prince had undergone Buddhist training previously, to get the Buddhist scriptures of his earlier life (the entry for the 15th year of the reign of Empress Suiko), and when that effort ended in failure, he himself went into a trance-like state, made his soul fly to China, and brought back the Buddhist scriptures in question (the entry for the 16th year of the reign of Empress Suiko). The description of Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami* clearly begins to overlap with the description of the prince in the Prince Shōtoku tradition.

In fact, occasional references to Sanetomo’s worship of the prince can be seen in the *Azuma Kagami*. First, the entry for October 15 in the fourth year of Jōgen (1210) contains the following statement.

Shōgun Sanetomo has been asking questions for some time about the Seventeen-Article Constitution of Prince Shōtoku, as well as about the number and location of the fields confiscated from the territory of the defeated Mononobe no Moriya, a clan head who had been opposed to Prince Shōtoku, and the record of the important treasure, etc. stored in Shitennō-ji Temple and Hōryū-ji Temple. Ōe no Hiromoto carried out a survey of these matters, and had an audience with Sanetomo today.

Sanetomo routinely searched for documentation about the Seventeen-Article Constitution of Prince Shōtoku and the land confiscated from Mononobe no Moriya, the major anti-Buddhist adversary of the prince, and for the record of the important treasure of Shitennō-ji Temple in Naniwa (now Osaka) and Hōryū-ji Temple in Nara. And thanks to the work of Ōe no Hiromoto, his able high official, on this day he could fulfill his wish and obtain this information. Then, the following month, on November 22, he held a dedication for the prince in a temple hall using an image of the prince.

Sanetomo has dedicated a Buddhist image of Prince Shōtoku in a temple hall. Shinchibō Ryusen performed the duties of the presiding priest in the Buddhist memorial service. This was something that Sanetomo had always wished to do.

At this time the image he used of the prince was of the *Namubutsu* prince, in other words an image of the prince at the age of two years. From the fact that this dedication was something Sanetomo “had always wished to do” we can infer that Sanetomo felt very strongly about his worship of the prince. Note also that November 22, the date of the dedication, was the anniversary of death of the prince, but a *shōryō-e*, a special memorial service to commemorate the day Prince Shōtoku died, was conducted on June 22 in the second year of Kenryaku (1212) as well.

As we have seen, there exists a striking similarity between several episodes in the *Azuma Kagami* about Sanetomo and the legends of Prince Shōtoku. In addition, the chronicle indicates that the shōgun himself greatly worshipped the Prince.

Chapter 2

As discussed above, in the entry about the meeting between Sanetomo and Chin Wakei, it was reported that San-

4. This point has already been made by Minahiko Ogino in *Basic Research into the Shōtoku Taishiden Kokon Mokurokushō* (Hōryū-ji Temple, 1937), Katsumi Mori in *Various Problems in Cultural Interactions between Japan and Song China* (Tōkō Shoin, 1950), Takaaki Yoshimoto in *Minamoto no Sanetomo* (Chikuma Shobō, 1971), Mikiya Hayashi in *Emergence and Development of Worship of the Prince* (Hyōronsha, 1972), Mitsuaki Kadoya in *Minamoto no Sanetomo's Worship of Prince Shōtoku: Concerning the Two Portraits of Prince Shōtoku*, and by the Journal of Morioka College, Issue No. 14 (March 1995). Incidentally, the same interpretation is seen in Osamu Dazai's novel *Udaijin Sanetomo* (Minister of the Right Sanetomo) (Kinjō Shuppansha, 1943).

5. The quotation is from *Reproduction and Study of the Version of the “Prince Shōtoku Denryaku” Made in the Twenty-Sixth year of Bunmei, Property of the Todaiji Temple Library*, edited by the Society for Research into the History of Cultural Exchanges between Japan and China (Ōfūsha, 1985).

etomo had a dream late at night on June 3 in the first year of Kenryaku (1211) in which a single high priest told him he had been the chief priest of a temple mountain in Song China in an earlier life. Certainly in the entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for the same day we can see the statement that “Sanetomo heard a truly miraculous pronouncement from the Buddha in a dream.” However, we must be careful here to note the fact that a similar tradition about this dream has also been handed down to us through other literature.

Firstly, let us consider the *Shōzokuin Butsuge Shari Ryakki* or “*A Short History of the Butsuge Shari of Shōzokuin Temple*” which is quoted in the *Zenrin Kokuhōki*⁶, an anthology of diplomatic documents written by Zuikei Shūhō, a distinguished Zen Buddhist of the day, in the second year of Bunmei (1470). This book describes the series of events resulting in the *butsuge shari* (a relic of the Buddha’s tooth) being stored in the *shari-den* (reliquary hall) of Engaku-ji Temple in Kamakura⁷. It also contains the following passage about the vision of Sanetomo.

One night Shōgun Minamoto no Sanetomo of Kamakura in Japan’s Sagami Province had a dream in which he crossed the sea to China. He came to a beautiful temple and when he went inside the head priest was conducting a sermon with many priests gathered around him, and the temple garden was full to overflowing with worshippers. Sanetomo asked the priest next to him the name of the temple. The priest said “Nōninji Temple of the imperial capital.” Next Sanetomo asked who the head priest was. The priest said “it is Nanzansen Risshi, the founder of this temple.” Then Sanetomo said “Nanzansen Risshi has died and is already in heaven. Why is he here now?” The priest said “don’t you know yet? Saints are beyond the understanding of ordinary people like us. For saints there is no distinction between life and death, and they can make an appearance anywhere. Nanzansen Risshi is now reborn in Japan. His new incarnation is shōgun Sanetomo.” Sanetomo asked “who is the head priest’s *jisha* (assistant)?” The priest said “the *jisha* is also now reborn in Japan. He is Ryōshin Sōzu, the priest serving the Tsurugaoka Shrine in Kamakura.” In this way Sanetomo asked questions and received answers for some time in his dream, and when he woke up he actually started feeling strange. Sanetomo immediately sent a messenger to summon Ryōshin Sōzu to the shōgun’s court. In fact Ryōshin Sōzu also had a dream that night, and had set off for the shōgun’s headquarters early in the morning. The messenger met Ryōshin Sōzu going the other way, and they returned to Sanetomo’s court together. Sanetomo firstly asked “why did you come here?” In response Ryōshin Sōzu talked about the dream he had had. Sanetomo said “that is exactly the same as my dream.” Actually, Senkō Zenji, the founder of Jufukuji Temple, also had a dream at that same time. Moreover, there were no discrepancies at all between the dreams of the three men. Then Sanetomo had an epiphany that he himself was a reincarnation of Nanzansen Risshi, and had a strong desire to see, with his own eyes, the place in China with which he had a connection.

In this dream, Sanetomo received a revelation that he was the reincarnation of the chief priest (Nanzan Dōsen Risshi) of the Nōninji Temple in Song China, and he was also told that the priest serving at Tsurugaoka Shrine in Kamakura, Ryōshin Sōzu,⁸ was the reincarnation of the *jisha* (assistant) of the chief priest. And astonishingly, not only did that very same Ryōshin Sōzu have a dream with exactly the same content, but it was revealed that “Senkō Zenji, the founder of Jufukuji Temple,” namely Yōsai, also had the same dream. For this reason Sanetomo became convinced that he himself was a reincarnation of Nanzan Dōsen Risshi, and became eager to go to the sacred place he had seen in his dream and see it with his own eyes.

The above passage continues as follows. Sanetomo, now nursing a desire to cross the sea to Song China, ordered an artisan to build a ship, but the ship completed through engineering by officials did not float, so Sanetomo himself had no choice but to give up on his plan to go to Song China. Instead he dispatched a delegation of twelve people led by Ryōshin Sōzu and Kazurayama Ganshō to Nōninji Temple in Song China. They negotiated hard with the *jishu* (temple officials), were finally able to get permission for the loan of the *butsuge shari*, and returned to Japan. Incidentally, on their way back to Kamakura, they were held up for as long as six months in Kyōto due to the emperor’s desire to see the *shari* for himself. Responding to a request from Sanetomo, Adachi Morinaga went to Kyōto at the head of a large army, directly negotiated with the emperor and got the *shari* back. Sanetomo went to Odawara (near Kamakura) to welcome Morinaga, and when he had received the *shari*, he rode his small palanquin back to Ka-

6. The quotation is from *Zenrinkok hōki/Revised Zenrinkokhōki* edited by Takeo Tanaka (Shūeisha, 1995), and I have made some changes to the notation, etc.

7. The *Mannen-san Shōzokuin Butsuge Shariki* held by the Cabinet Library and the *Mannen-san Shōzokuin Butsuge Shariki* contained in the *Shinpen Kamakurashi (Newly Edited Guide to Kamakura)* also hand down to us a tradition with almost the same content, and the part of the *Shōzokuin Butsuge Shari Ryakki* that is quoted in the *Zenrinkoku Hōki* is equivalent to two-thirds of the content in the first half of the above two documents, and they are “thought to be derived from the same original book.” (In the work quoted in Note 6, footnotes). In addition, a similar tradition is contained in the *Butsuge Shariki (Gunshoruijū)*.

8. In the *Tsurugaoka Hachimangu-jigūshō Shidai* (from the Tsurugaoka *Hon’ei’in* published in *Tsurugaoka Hachimangu-jigūshō Shoshiki Shidai* edited by Tatsuto Nuki, and I have adjusted the notation, etc.), the entry about Eijōbō (one of 25 boarding houses for resident monks) mentions the name “Ryōnen” (however some texts say “Ryōshin”) and states that “everyone called him Sōzu of Yukinoshita. He was the son of Konoedainagon Tadayoshi. He was the younger brother of Ryōkaku Hōin. In the fifth year of Kenkyū he was appointed the *gusō* of Tsurugaoka Hachimanguji. He was a noble monk who was highly regarded for his spiritual powers. He was appointed to important posts by Yoritomo and Sanetomo.” Refer to the footnotes in the work quoted in Note 6.

makura, taking the *shari* with him.

According to this story, Sanetomo's feelings for the place with which he had had a relationship in his earlier life were indivisibly connected to the existence of the Buddhist *shari*.

Now let us take a look at the *Kishū Yura Juhō Kaizan Hottō Enmyō Kokushi no Engi* or “*The Legend of how Hottō Kakushin, a great Zen Buddhist, founded the Temple in Yura, Kishū Province.*”⁹ Although this legend was established in the fifteenth year of Eishō (1518), it tells how Yura Saihōji Temple in Kishū Province (now Wakayama) was founded in the early 13th century under the protection of Hōjō Masako, mother of Sanetomo. As a part of its explanation, this document describes the following episode related to *hongan shōnin* (temple founder) Ganshō (Kazurayama Kagetomo).

In a dream he had one night, Sanetomo learned that he himself had undergone Buddhist training at Gantōzan Mountain in Onshū, China in a previous life, and that is why he was able to become the shōgun of Japan in his current life. When he awoke from his dream, Sanetomo wrote the following poem.

Nobody in the world knows. I did not know myself. How incredible that in a previous life I led a life of Buddhist training among the steep mountains of China.

Furthermore, Yōsai also had a dream in which Sanetomo was the reincarnation of Genjō Sanzō.

This story states that Sanetomo learned through a dream that in an earlier life he had undergone Buddhist training at Gantōzan Mountain in Onshū, Song China. Moreover at the same time “Kenninji Temple founder Yōsai had a dream in which Sanetomo was the reincarnation of Genjō Sanzō, a great priest in Tang China in the 7th century. For this reason Sanetomo became keenly aware of the depth of his connection to the Song Dynasty and sent his personal attendant Kazurayama Kagetomo to Song to make a picture of Gantōzan Mountain and bring it back to Japan. However, while Kagetomo was getting a ship in Hakata, Kyūshū, the news of Sanetomo's death reached him, the plan was cancelled, and Kagetomo entered the priesthood, took the name Ganshō, and prayed for the soul of his master at Mount Kōya, one of the Buddhist centers in Japan which is located in Kishū Province. This is how tradition tells the story.

In the *Shōzokuin Butsuge Shari Ryakki* or “*A Short History of the Butsuge Shari Relic of Shōzokuin Temple*”, the place with which Sanetomo has a connection is said to be Nōninji Temple, while in the *Kishū Yura Juhō Kaizan Hottō Enmyōkokushi no Engi*, or “*The Legend of how Hottō Kakushin, a Zen Buddhist, founded the Temple in Yura, Kishū Province*”, the above place is referred to the Gantōzan Mountain, which results in a discrepancy. However, the name of Gantōzan Mountain reminds us of the document entitled *Busshari Sōshōshidai* or “*The Account of Inheritance of the Buddha's Relic*”,¹⁰ dated July in the second year of Bunryaku (1235), which has been handed down to us by Konomiya Shrine in Tagachō, Inugami-gun, Shiga Prefecture. We find in this document the tradition stating that Shirakawa-in (cloistered emperor Shirakawa who reigned in the 11th century) brought back 1000 Buddhist *shari* beads each from “Iku-ōzan” and “Gantō-zan.” Though the place to which “Gantō-zan” refers is not yet identified,¹¹ it is unlikely that the “Gantōzan” in the *Kishū Yura Juhō Kaizan Hottō Enmyōkokushi no Engi* is unrelated to the “Gantō-zan” in the *Busshari Sōshōshidai*. Since they have the same pronunciation (although are written with one different character) we can infer that this place has an image as a holy place connected to Buddhist *shari*.

Conversely, if we turn our eyes once again to the passage in the *Azuma Kagami* about the pronouncement in Sanetomo's dream, there it was said that Sanetomo's earlier life was as “the chief priest of the temple mountain in Song China.” Iōzan, or in other words Iku-ōzan¹² (A'iku-ōzan), was a mecca for Buddhist *shari* worship in the Kamakura period as seen from the fact that it was even listed next to “Gantō-zan” in the *Busshari Sōshōshidai* that we mentioned earlier.

9. The quotation is from the *Yurachōshi* historical materials.

10. Refer to the photograph on the frontispiece of *Research into the Story of the Taira Clan* by Toshihide Akamatsu (Hōzōkan, 1980).

11. Katsumi Mori's *The Link between the Handing Down of the Buddhist Shari and the Interactions between Japan and Song China*, and his work quoted in Note 4 above, suggest that “Daigantō” in Daijionji Temple in Seian City is a more suitable candidate as the place to be identified as “Gantō-zan,” even though there is no firm evidence that it was called Gantō-zan, rather than the “Gantōzan” of Onshū for which there is no evidence of a relationship to the Buddhist *shari*. The Daigantō of Daijionji Temple was built by Genjō Sanzō so undoubtedly the idea that what Sanetomo originally saw in his dream was Daijionji Temple is more in agreement with the content of Yōsai's vision and therefore more suitable. I think there is probably a confused understanding regarding the location of “Gantō-zan” in the tradition of the *Kishū Yura Juhō Kaizan Hottō Enmyōkokushi no Engi*.

12. Katsumi Mori's *Japan-Song China Exchanges and A'iku-ōzan* and his work quoted in Note 2 above point out that at that time the Zen Buddhism reading of “Iku-ōzan” was “Iwauzan” so “Iku-ōzan” could also be written “Iōzan.”

On the other hand, examples in the *Azuma Kagami* also confirm that Sanetomo believed in Buddhist relic or *shari* worship. First, the prince's image mentioned in the previous chapter, an image of the prince at two years old placed in Sanetomo's temple hall, is based on the tradition saying that when two-year-old Prince Shōtoku in spring faced toward the east and chanted with the *namubutsu*, a *shari* appeared from the fist that had been clenched and not open until then, so it is deeply related to *shari* worship. Second, on June 20 in the second year of Kenryaku (1212) in Jufukuji Temple Sanetomo inherited the "three Buddhist *shari* beads" from the "*hōjō*" – in other words, from Yōsai. Third, on October 15 in the second year of Kenpō (1214) in Daijiji Temple, Yōsai conducted a *shari-e* (Buddhist religious service for the *shari*) and in the fifth year of Kenpō (1217) Sanetomo was also in attendance when he held a *shari-e* at Eifukuji Temple. Here, taking into account the traces of the Buddhist *shari* worship tangled up in the pronouncement in Sanetomo's dream in the *Shōzokuin Butsuge Shari Ryakki* and the *Kishū Yura Juhō Kaizan Hottō Enmyōkokushi no Engi*, we can conclude safely that Sanetomo's Buddhist *shari* worship existed behind the passage in question in the *Azuma Kagami*¹³.

In addition, the presence of Yōsai is also a matter of interest, because he was a contemporary of Sanetomo and played a major role in establishing Zen Buddhism in Japan. Both the *Shōzokuin Butsuge Shari Ryakki* and the *Kishū Yura Juhō Kaizan Hottō Enmyōkokushi no Engi* relate that Yōsai's vision was in agreement with Sanetomo's vision, and that is why Sanetomo became convinced of his own rebirth. By the way, Yōsai's vision related to Sanetomo is also noted in the *Juhō Kaizan Hottō Enmyō Kokushi Gyōjitsu Nenpu*, or "*The Chronicle of the Deeds of Great Priest Enmyō Kokushi, the Founder of Juhō Temple*"¹⁴ which is believed to have been established in about the second year of Eitoku (1382). It states "[...] Furthermore the deceased shōgun Sanetomo was a reincarnation of a Buddhist deity so he was no ordinary man. Yōsai, the founder of Kenninji Temple had a dream in which Sanetomo was the reincarnation of Genjō Sanzō." This document also contains the assertion that Yōsai had a dream in which Sanetomo was the reincarnation of Genjō Sanzō of Tang China. This Yōsai is the priest that went on a pilgrimage to Song China twice, and the second time he went he saw the *shari* of Iku-ōzan with his own eyes: "Yōsai went on a pilgrimage to A'iku-ōzan, and while there he saw the Buddhist *shari* (the mortal remains of *Shaka* (Gautama Buddha)) emitting light" (*Genkō Shakusho*)¹⁵. If this is the case, is it possible to suppose that Yōsai was behind Sanetomo's worship of the prince and *shari* worship? In the next chapter the relationship between Sanetomo and Yōsai and his associates will be examined more closely.

Chapter 3

Yōsai had already met Sanetomo's mother Hōjō Masako before he had any relationship with Sanetomo himself¹⁶. The *Azuma Kagami* mentions an encounter with Sanetomo for the first time in the entry for December 18 in the first year of Genkyū (1204). At the occasion of dedication of the *Shichi Kannon* (the seven forms of Avalokitesvara) statue conducted on this day at the request of Masako, held at the Kongō Jufukuji Temple's *hōjō yōjōbō* (the living quarters of the head priest of a Zen temple), Yōsai acted as the presiding priest and Sanetomo also participated in this event. Then the next year, on March 1 in the second year of Genkyū (1205), Sanetomo went to visit the "Jufukuji Temple *hōjō*" (the living quarters of the head priest) and discussed the "Buddhist scriptures" with Yōsai. Of course we have no way of knowing what aspects of Buddhism Yōsai explained to the 14-year-old Sanetomo, but it probably left a deep impression on the young Sanetomo. Two months later, on May 25, a dedication to a "statue of the Monju with Five Hair-Knots" was conducted at the shōgun's headquarters, and of course once again the presiding priest was "Jufukuji Temple chief priest" Yōsai. This statue of Monju was enshrined in Sanetomo's temple hall, and subsequently a dedication was carried out on the 25th day of each month, and we can say that it is highly likely that Yōsai was the person who sowed the seeds of Monju worship in Sanetomo.

At this time, worship of the Monju bodhisattva was indivisibly connected to worship of Mount Godai in China which was considered to be a holy place with a permanent manifestation of Monju. Mr. Katsumi Mori discusses how the worship of the Monju bodhisattva of Mount Godai was theorized at the beginning of the Middle Ages. He argues:¹⁷

The devout thought directed at the Mount Godai Monju bodhisattva that was imported and popularized by Buddhist

13. This prospect has already been discussed in the work by Mr. Minahiko Ogino and Mr. Katsumi Mori quoted in Note 4.

14. The quotation is from the *Zoku-Gunshoruijū*.

15. The quotation is from the *Shintei Zōho Kokushi Taikai*.

16. Refer to *Hōjō Masako and Yōsai* by Masaharu Imai in *Miura Kobunka* No. 41 (June 1986) and *Research into the History of the Establishment of Zen Temples in the Middle Ages* by Masai Hanuki (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1993).

17. Katsumi Mori's *The Link between Japan-Song China Exchanges and the Religious Life in the Age of Dharma Decline*, and his work quoted in Note 4.

monks on pilgrimage in Song China did not end with mere Mount Godai worship; in due course it developed through external connections and internal connections. This development in an external direction was already apparent because after completing the pilgrimage at Mount Godai the priests intended to go on to central India and pray at the holy site of *Shaka* as well, as was stated by the priest Chōnen while still attempting to achieve his objective in Song China. [...] From the end of the Heian Dynasty reverence toward the Buddhist *shari* rapidly increased. Buddhist *shari* were offered to the shrines in the provinces around Kyōto, *shari* ceremonies, etc. were popular, and among the Buddhist monks there were even some who counterfeited Buddhist *shari*. All these facts tell the story of how strong Buddhist *shari* reverence was, and this is no doubt indirectly related to the fact that at this time Buddhist *shari* were frequently taken from central India to Song China. However, the direct cause is undoubtedly that this reverence arose due to the feeling of admiration the people had for the religious leaders of India. [...] Next, I will look at the development of interior connections. At that time a pilgrimage to India was nearly impossible and even a pilgrimage to Mount Godai was not a simple matter, excluding a small number of Buddhist monks. This was even truer for the common people who had to accept that even a pilgrimage to Mount Godai was very unlikely, let alone a pilgrimage to India. Therefore, they had to make up for their feeling of being unfulfilled in some other way. [...] In other words, it was the most natural consequence for people who already revered the great achievements of the religious leaders of India, yearned for the holy sites of India, and by further extension had feelings of attachment for Mount Godai in mainland China, to look back and commemorate the great achievements of a religious leader of their own country, Prince Shōtoku. Thought cherishing the memory of the prince gained currency from about the end of the Heian Dynasty, and the writing of biographies of the prince and vernacular hymns to the prince started to become popular. Particularly noteworthy was the fact that books of prophecy by the prince, in other words forgeries claimed to be texts written by the prince, were discovered frequently.

In this way, Monju worship was closely related to *shari* worship with regards to the point that they both involved yearning for holy places. Moreover, at the end of the Heian period Song China lost the territory containing Mount Godai, a holy place of Monju worship, due to encroachments by the Jīn Dynasty to the north, and so Iku-ōzan in Southern Song territory quickly emerged as a new holy place instead of Mount Godai¹⁸. In this context, the Yōsai who appeared before Sanetomo, as mentioned earlier, was a priest that had been on a pilgrimage to Song China, and a person who had seen the Buddhist *shari* of Iku-ōzan with his own eyes. Surely Yōsai aroused the interest of the young Sanetomo in the holy place in Song China that he had not yet seen.

On the other hand, Mr. Mori also makes the point that yearning for the holy places of Buddhism appeared in Japan in the form of interest in Prince Shōtoku, and this observation seems to be right on the mark in the case of Sanetomo as well. As we have already seen in the quotation given in the first chapter, the entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for October 15 in the fourth year of Jōgen (1210) states that Sanetomo had been able to obtain the Seventeen-Article Constitution and other items with a connection to the prince he had wanted “since some time ago.” This is the first time there is clear evidence showing Sanetomo’s worship of the prince, but the previous month the entry for September 25 contains the following statement.

Sanetomo repeatedly dedicated the statue of the Monju with Five Hair-Knots, an object of worship for him. The presiding priest was Yōsai, the jūji [head priest] of Jufukuji Temple. Sanetomo prayed by performing a dedication to this object of worship 50 times.

According to this entry, it appears that at this time Sanetomo’s Monju worship reached new levels of enthusiasm, but we should understand that this new enthusiasm was probably connected to his active move towards his worship of the prince at the same time. Another fact we should pay attention to here is that the presiding priest at the Monju dedication was “Jufukuji Temple *hōjō* (head priest)” Yōsai.

There exists another similar example; as already mentioned, on June 20 in the second year of Kenryaku (1212), Sanetomo inherited the Buddhist *shari* from Yōsai in Jufukuji Temple.

Sanetomo went to Jufukuji Temple. Then he was handed the three Buddhist *shari* beads from the hand of the jūji.

Then two days later on June 22, Sanetomo conducted a *shōryō-e* (Buddhist memorial service carried out on the day of Prince Shōtoku’s death) for Prince Shōtoku in his temple hall.

18. The academic paper by Mr. Mori quoted in Note 12.

Sanetomo conducted Prince Shōtoku's shōryō-e in the temple hall. Seven priests participated in the Buddhist memorial service, led by Shōgonbō.

The officiating priests included Shōgonbō Gyōyū, a disciple of Yōsai, and six others.

For Sanetomo his worship of Prince Shōtoku and his Monju and *shari* worship were clearly linked in this way, and the shadow of Yōsai is always hovering around the point of juncture between the two¹⁹. It can be inferred that the role played by Yōsai and his associates, including his disciple Gyōyū, in forming Sanetomo's world of worship was extremely large.

Here we will look at the relationship between Gyōyū, a disciple of Yōsai, and Sanetomo a little more. According to the *Azuma Kagami*, the first encounter between Gyōyū and Sanetomo was on October 25 in the third year of Kennin (1203), earlier than Sanetomo's first meeting with Yōsai. At this time Sanetomo was twelve years old and had just ascended to the position of shōgun in the previous month. Gyōyū gave this young Sanetomo his first instruction in the Lotus Sutra. After that, Gyōyū presided over the regular Monju dedication ceremonies in the temple hall and various other Buddhist ceremonies related to Sanetomo, and the close friendship of the two men continued until Sanetomo's final years. The passage that demands attention in relation to the perspective of this paper, however, is the entry for March 30 in the third year of Kenryaku (1213).

Sanetomo went to Jufukuji Temple and listened to sermons, interpreted Buddhist texts, etc. Moreover, he took possession of Japan's Daishi Den-e [the achievements of four high priests that went to study in China presented in the form of a picture scroll] which was donated to the temple by Tomomitsu [Yūki Tomomitsu] the previous year, and showed it to Gyōyū Risshi. It is said that when Gyōyū saw the scenes of the high priests studying in China he made corrections to the scroll, such as fixing errors in place names, etc.

When Sanetomo listened to sermons at Jufukuji Temple he took with him "*Wagacho no Daishi Den-e*" or "*The Illustrated Biographies of the Great Priests of Our Country*" and got Gyōyū to correct mistakes in the names of the holy sites in Song China that appeared on the picture scroll. Although we have no firm evidence about whether or not Gyōyū had any experience of pilgrimage in Song China²⁰, there can be no doubt that he also, along with his master Yōsai, was a person who aroused the interest of Sanetomo in the holy places.

So we have seen that the master and disciple pair of Yōsai and Gyōyū were deeply involved in Sanetomo's Monju and *shari* worship and his worship of the prince, but if this is so then there is a suspicion that this pair have some kind of involvement behind the scenes of the dramatic meeting between Sanetomo and Chin Wakei described in the *Azuma Kagami*. The name "Chin Wakei" appears for the last time in the passage of April 17 in the fifth year of Kenpō (1217), which describes the failed attempt to launch the Chinese-style ship, and it disappears from the *Azuma Kagami* after that. The reason for the subsequent disappearance of Chin Wakei cannot be known with any certainty. However, after the death of Sanetomo Kongō Sanmai'in Temple was built on Mount Kōya, Shingon Buddhism headquarters in Kishū Province, for the repose of his soul and Gyōyū became the founding head priest of the temple. The *Kongō Sanmai'in Jūji Shidai*²¹ or "*The Account of the Head Priests of Kongō Sanmai'in*" is a document that contains descriptions of all of the historical *jūji* at this temple. It describes the achievements of "Gyōyū Shōgonbōhōin who founded Kongō Sanmai'in Temple" and then continues on to the following passage.

The chief priest was Myōkanbō, formerly named Sonjōbō, and he was the son of Chin Wakei, a Chinese person.

According to this, at the time of the chief priest Gyōyū, the child of Chin Wakei, Myōkanbō, was in the position of head of Kongō Sanmai'in Temple. This Myōkanbō was probably a disciple of Gyōyū. If so, we can reasonably expect that Gyōyū had met Myōkanbō's father Chin Wakei. If we suppose that there really was a meeting similar to the episode between Sanetomo and Chin Wakei described in the *Azuma Kagami*, it seems that we can conclude that

19. Incidentally, the entry in the *Kūge Nichiyō Kufū Ryakushū* for February 26 in the third year of Ōan (1370) also records the tradition which says there was a deep relationship between Sanetomo and Yōsai via the *shari*, saying that "Yōsai, the founder of Kenninji Temple, and Sanetomo were in the relationship to each other of master and disciple across many lives [as they were reborn repeatedly]. Yōsai, having received an order from Sanetomo, went to China and brought back the *butsuge shari* [the teeth and bones of the *Shaka*]. There is a record of this in the *kaisantō* [tower built at the gravesite of the founder] of Kenninji Temple. The *butsuge shari* now at Shōzokuin Shrine is the one Yōsai brought back" (from a Taiyōsha volume edited by Zennosuke Tsuji). Furthermore, the entry in *Shinmeikyō* for Emperor Tsuchimikado-in, the 83rd emperor of Japan, records the tradition that during the Kenkyū era Yōsai went to China with Myōe and brought back "the *butsuge shari* they obtained at the time when Dōsen Risshi was still alive," and also relates that "Minister Sanetomo is the reincarnation of Dōsen" (from the *Zoku-Gunshorujū*).

20. *The Legend and History of Zen Buddhism in Japan* by Ryōshin Nakao (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2005) points out the possibility that Gyōyū went to Song China.

21. Published in the "Kongō Sanmai'in Monjo" in the fifth volume of *The Mount Koya Monjo*.

an encounter with Gyōyū was an essential precondition for Chin Wakei to obtain information about Sanetomo's worship in advance, but it also seems that the possibility that this condition was satisfied was not necessarily small.

Chapter 4

In the previous chapter, we saw that Sanetomo's worship of the prince was closely related to his Monju and *shari* worship, and behind it was his feeling of yearning for the holy places on the mainland. However, this does not mean that we have explained everything about the essential character of Sanetomo's worship of the prince. It seems that Sanetomo, being the Kamakura shōgun, sought to find a role model in the prince as a policymaker, by way of his worship. Perhaps this was the reason why Sanetomo asked Ōe no Hiromoto, a competent bureaucrat of the Kamakura government who came from the low aristocracy of Kyōto, to get the Seventeen-Article Constitution of the prince. As the Seventeen-Article Constitution contains "a section directly explaining worldly politics", it is thought that "as a type of royal education it had many aspects that were beneficial to Sanetomo."²²

In addition, here we should probably detect the influence of the father he respected, Yoritomo. On November 23 in the first year of Genryaku (1184) Yoritomo received an official notice from influential Onjōji Temple in Ohmi Province: it asked him to donate to the temple the territory he had confiscated from the Taira clan, the former power ruined by him. This notice contained the following passage.

Thinking carefully about previous cases, after Prince Shōtoku forced the surrender of Mononobe no Moriya, he converted the house and surrounding land of Moriya into a temple, and donated his fields to the temple. After that there was peace in the kingdom and a flourishing of Buddhism. We should follow that example even now.

This passage emphasizes that after Prince Shōtoku had defeated Mononobe no Moriya, the major anti-Buddhist adversary of the prince, he donated Moriya's home and fields to a temple, and as a result there was "peace in the kingdom and a flourishing of Buddhism," and it recommends that Yoritomo follow the example of the prince by donating the territory he had confiscated from the Taira clan to Onjōji Temple. Mr. Takashi Nabata points that this part of the narration is based on the *Shitennō-ji Temple Goshu'in Engi* (an historical document about the prince preserved in the Shitennō-ji Temple) and then infers that "since it was Ōe no Hiromoto who read out to Yoritomo the official notice from Onjōji Temple, it is not unreasonable to infer that when Yoritomo heard the explanation by Hiromoto he learned the purpose of the *Goshu'in Engi* and therefore deepened his understanding of the prince."²³ Incidentally, more than ten years after this, on May 20 in the sixth year of Kenkyū (1195), on the occasion of his second visit to Kyōto, Yoritomo went on a pilgrimage to Shitennō-ji Temple with his wife Masako and saw the "important treasure, etc. in the temple" with his own eyes.

It is highly likely that Sanetomo was aware of these actions by his father. The entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for May 19 in the first year of Genkyū (1204) records that the thirteen-year-old Sanetomo acted in the following way:

The other day Sanetomo was asking about documents written by his late father Minamoto no Yoritomo so now a large number of people possessing these documents have shown them to Sanetomo. Of these people, Oyama Tomomasa, Yūki Tomomitsu and Chiba Shigetane have each presented dozens of documents. The other people had one, two or three documents, but Sanetomo made copies of all of these documents. Sanetomo did this so that he would know how politics was conducted in the era of Yoritomo. Ōe no Hiromoto carried out the work related to this matter.

Sanetomo, who had only just become the shōgun in the previous year, collected from his vassals some documents written by his father Yoritomo in order to know "how politics was conducted" by Yoritomo, in the hope of using him as a role model for his own political approach. For Sanetomo, worship of the prince was undoubtedly one important aspect of his father's life that he should continue himself. In the entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for October 15 in the fourth year of Jōgen quoted in the first chapter, along with the Seventeen-Article Constitution Sanetomo had his men search for "the number and location of the fields confiscated from the territory of the defeated Mononobe no Mori-

22. *The Life of Adversity of Minamoto no Sanetomo* by Shirō Shimura (Shintensha, 1990).

23. *Development and Structure of Perceptions of the Prince* by Takashi Nabata in *The Journal of the History of Buddhism*, Volume 18, No. 2 (March 1976).

ya.” We can conclude that this probably refers to the *Shitennō-ji Temple Gosho'in Engi*,²⁴ and this document was probably described in that form because Sanetomo had in mind his father's actions discussed above. The same nuance can be detected in the fact that Sanetomo sought “the record of the important treasure, etc.” in Shitennō-ji Temple which his father had seen with his own eyes. Moreover, in this case, we have to consider Sanetomo's worship of the prince to be his action as a policymaker aiming for “peace in the kingdom and a flourishing of Buddhism,” just as it was for his father.

Furthermore, if we consider the fact that Sanetomo's worship of the prince was linked to his *shari* worship, presumably we can reach the same conclusion about his *shari* worship. This was surely not grounded only on his yearning for holy places. The *Mannen-san Shōzokuin Butsuge Shariki*,²⁵ or “*The Memorandum of the Butsuge Shari Relic of Shōzokuin Temple of the Mount Mannen-san*”, an historical document which has handed down almost the same tradition as the *Shōzokuin Butsuge Shari Ryakki* quoted earlier, states that the Buddhist *shari* brought across from Song China were enshrined in Kamakura, and then goes on to say the following:

In Kamakura there is the following proverb. “The land is at peace and the power of the shōgunate has endured for a long time and this is all because the shōgun worships the Buddhist shari with all his heart and thus is able to receive strong spiritual energy from it.”

The *shari* described here is the *shari* as “the symbol of the [monarchy] closely linked to the school of thought that the secular law and Buddhism were interconnected” indicated by Ms. Takako Tanaka²⁶, and they could be said to be the objects that “guarantee that the rulers that possess them govern a particular region peacefully.” It can be concluded that as a policymaker Sanetomo had such expectations of the *shari* because they had this political function. Therefore, the true intention of Sanetomo hidden in the episode about his failed attempted to cross the sea to Song China conveyed to us by the *Azuma Kagami* was not necessarily to escape from the reality in Japan at the time, as has often been claimed in the past. Rather, could it have been because he wanted to obtain the Buddhist *shari* from the holy place Iku-ōzan in order to consolidate his own position as shōgun?

Our interpretation is supported by the recent research of Mr. Fumihiko Gomi²⁷ whose work has attracted attention in the study of Japanese Medieval Age. As a result of a close analysis of *mandokoro hakkyū monjo* (domestic documents issued by the shōgun's court) contained in the *Kamakura Ibum* (an historical document), Mr. Gomi thinks that Sanetomo's era can be divided into three periods: Period I (from the first year of Ken'ei (1206) to the third year of Jōgen (1209)), Period II (from the third year of Jōgen (1209) to the fourth year of Kenpō (1216)) and Period III (from the fourth year of Kenpō (1216) to the seventh year of Kenpō (1219)). Here we will only touch on Period II and Period III, the periods relevant to the topic of this paper.

First, Mr. Gomi designates the first half of Period II as the time in which Sanetomo, who had opened the *mandokoro* (a governing body) in the third year of Jōgen (1209) and had begun to exercise his authority as shōgun, formed an alliance with Wada Yoshimori, an influential vassal in the government, and “actively developed policies as a sovereign.” In this period Sanetomo studied the *Jōgan Seiyō* (an historical document about the rule of Emperor Taizong of Tang) from July 4 to November 20 in the first year of Kenryaku (1211), which suggests that Sanetomo's awareness of his role as a policymaker was increasing. Here we should pay attention to the fact that the passages in the *Azuma Kagami* about Sanetomo's worship of the prince and his Monju and *shari* worship which we discussed earlier are concentrated in the fourth year of Jōgen (1210) and the second year of Kenryaku (1212); consequently they overlap the time classified by Mr. Gomi.

This Period II straddles the Wada Rebellion (a sectarian struggle instigated by the Hōjō clan – Sanetomo's mother's clan– which led to the ruin of the Wada clan) in May of the third year of Kenryaku (1213); this was an event which marked a sharp turning point for Sanetomo. After losing Wada Yoshimori, Sanetomo sank into the depths of despair but Mr. Gomi states that “even as these events took place, Sanetomo was exploring new directions for the shōgun's authority centered on the *mandokoro*” and, based on an analysis of *monjo* about the *ōbanyaku* (officials responsible for imperial security) dated June of the second year of Kenpō (1214) and October of the third year of Kenpō (1215), he infers that “after the *mandokoro* suffered a blow due to the Wada Rebellion, it began to rebuild

24. This point is made in the academic paper by Mr. Nabata quoted in Note 23, the academic paper by Mr. Kadoya quoted in Note 4, and *Shitennō-ji Temple at the Beginning of the Middle Ages* by Kōkyō Kawagishi in *Shitennō-ji “International Buddhist University Journal,”* No. 32 (April 2000).

25. Published in the third volume of the *Shinpen Kamakurashi*. The quotation is from *Shinpen Kamakurashi (Edition from the Second Year of Jōkyō (1685)) Copy, Annotation and Index* by Shiraiishi Tsutomu (Kyūko Shoin, 2003).

26. *Handing Down of the Buddhist Shari and Women – with the Focus on the Busshari Sōshōshidai of Konomiya Shrine and the Geshari Bunpu Hachiryū of Raigōji Temple* by Takako Tanaka in *Gehō to Aihō no Chūsei* (Sunagoya Shobō, 1993).

27. *Minamoto no Sanetomo: The Collapse of the Shōgun's authority* by Gomi Fumihiko in *Supplement: The Methods of the Azuma Kagami* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2000).

its power by strengthening its involvement with the Imperial Court in Kyōto.” Probably Sanetomo also began to gradually recover from his despair at this time. The entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for June 3 in the second year of Kenpō contains the following statement.

All of the feudal domains of Japan were suffering from a drought. For this reason when Shōgun Sanetomo invited Yōsai, he prayed for rain himself, observed the hassaikai [the eight precepts observed by lay worshippers], and read the Lotus Sutra out loud. Led by Hōjō Yoshitoki, priests and laypeople, aristocratic and common people throughout Kamakura read the Hannyashingyō [the Heart of Perfect Wisdom Sutra] out loud, and prayed sincerely.

In response to the serious drought situation, Sanetomo invited Yōsai in order to pray for rain, and he himself performed a *tendoku* (reading) of the Lotus Sutra. This effort was rewarded when the long-awaited rainfall was seen on June 5.

Today blessed rain fell to water our crops. This is entirely thanks to the fact that Shōgun Sanetomo prayed from the bottom of his heart. Formerly the world was afflicted by drought in July of the first year of the reign of Empress Kōgyoku. Prayers were offered in many places but they had no effect. The Minister Soga no Umako himself took an incense burner in his hands and prayed but still rain did not fall. The following month, August, the empress made a royal visit to the headwaters of a river, and offered prayers in all four directions. As she did so, suddenly there was the sound of thunder, rain began to fall, and it did not stop for five days. It is said that as a result grain crops began to grow in abundance throughout the country. Even though their position are different, with one a ruler and the other a subject, perhaps we can say that Empress Kōgyoku and Shōgun Sanetomo were people with the same aspirations?

As can also be deduced from the fact that the *Azuma Kagami* praises Sanetomo’s actions at that time based on the model of the ancient event involving Empress Kōgyoku of the 7th century, we have to conclude that Sanetomo was once again regaining his desire as a policymaker.

Taking into account the events of this time, Mr. Gomi understands Period III to be the time when “the shōgun’s power was at its height.” He says Sanetomo increased the number of *mandokoro bettō* (court officials) to nine in order to advance “the shōgun’s authority and active command of legal proceedings” and aimed to form a superior-subordinate relationship by adding members of the Minamoto clan to the *bettō*. As a result “power and position isolated from the clan became necessary” so Sanetomo began to seek high-ranking posts in the Imperial Court. Mr. Gomi also reaches the conclusion that a feature of this time was that “Sanetomo aimed to maintain his connections with the Imperial Court while at the same time trying to gather the various political forces under his own leadership in order to expand the shōgun’s power.” Focusing once again on the matters relevant to the focus of this paper, the description in the *Azuma Kagami* from the meeting between Sanetomo and Chin Wakei to the subsequent failure of Sanetomo’s plan to cross the sea to Song China covers precisely this time, that is from the fourth year to the fifth year of Kenpō (1216-1217).

These matchups cannot be considered to be a matter of mere coincidence. At the time when Sanetomo showed increased awareness of his role as a policymaker, his worship of the prince and *shari* also became stronger. Therefore, repeating my point from above, we can infer that Sanetomo’s true reason for wanting to cross the sea to Song China was to get the Buddhist *shari* of Iku-ōzan, and he wanted to do that to achieve the same objective he was trying to achieve with the demands to Kyōto for imperial posts that he was making at the same time.

Chapter 5

In Chapter 4 we saw that Sanetomo’s awareness of his role as a policymaker was strongly reflected in his worship of the prince. This problem involves another question; did Sanetomo consciously identify himself with Prince Shōtoku? In those days it was common to state that power-holders such as Emperor Shōmu of the 8th century or Fujiwara no Michinaga of the 11th century were reincarnations of Prince Shōtoku. Moreover, the description of Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami* presents discernible similarities to Prince Shōtoku in many aspects.

The scene of Sanetomo’s meeting with Chin Wakei has been already mentioned in the first chapter. If we assume that this meeting really took place and that Sanetomo was familiar with the Prince Shōtoku tradition, then naturally he would have had no other choice but to identify himself with the prince. So there is nothing mysterious about the fact that when Sanetomo became convinced that he himself had been a chief priest at Iku-ōzan in an earlier life, he

wanted to obtain the Buddhist *shari* from Iku-ōzan with which he had a connection from his previous life, just as the prince, who had spent his earlier life at Mount Heng in China, brought back the Buddhist scriptures (Lotus Sutra) from his previous life.

Next we will see the episode related to the prescience of Sanetomo. The entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for November 24 in the fourth year of Jōgen (1210) is shown below.

Manari Daimyōjin, the god of the village shrine at Takyōji Temple in Suruga Province, gave a divine revelation to a child at about 6 o'clock in the morning on November 21. The divine revelation stated that "a rebellion will occur in the year of the rooster." The bettō and Shintō priests of Takyōji Temple quickly reported this matter to the shōgunate. Today that report arrived in Kamakura and Hōjō Yoshitoki revealed the content of the report. At this point Ōe no Hiromoto suggested to Shōgun Sanetomo that perhaps they should carry out a divination but Sanetomo replied "I also had a dream about a rebellion at dawn on the 21st and received the same kind of pronouncement. It is not a dream without foundation. Given that this is the case, there is no need to perform a divination." Sanetomo then offered his sword to Manari Daimyōjin.

Manari Daimyōjin (the grand deity of "horse neighing" in Shintoism) of Suruga Province gave a divine revelation that there would be a rebellion in the coming year of the rooster. That news arrived in Kamakura and there was a debate about what to do, but the plausibility of the divine revelation was guaranteed by the fact that Sanetomo had received the same pronouncement in a dream three days before. This is an episode about Sanetomo's dream predicting the Wada Rebellion that would occur in the year of the rooster three years later. Now I will quote one more passage, from April 7 in the third year of Kenryaku (1213).

Shōgun Sanetomo gathered together the female servants at the shōgun's headquarters and held a banquet. At that time, Yamanouchi Saemon-no-jō and Chikugo Shirōhyōe-no-jō were hanging about near the heichūmon [double-gated entranceway]. Sanetomo saw this from behind the misu [bamboo blind], invited the two men to his veranda, poured sake [rice wine] into their cups, and made the following remark. "You two will surely lose your lives before long. One of you will become my enemy and one of you will be loyal to the shōgunate." The two men were afraid, put their cups in their pockets, and hastily left the shōgun's headquarters.

This episode occurred less than one month before the outbreak of the Wada Rebellion. During a banquet Sanetomo spoke to two warriors he happened to notice, and predicted that before long one of them would be an enemy and one an ally, and furthermore that they would both lose their lives. In fact, the list of casualties from the rebellion in the entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for May 6 of the same year includes Yamanouchi on the Wada side and Chikugo on the side of the shōgunate, so Sanetomo's prophecy hit the mark.

As is known, there are numerous passages about the predictions and prophecies of the prince sprinkled throughout the Prince Shōtoku tradition. For example, according to the *Prince Shōtoku Denryaku*, or the Related stories of Prince Shōtoku, immediately after his meeting with Nichira that we learned about in the first chapter, the prince prophesied the death of Nichira, saying "your life is almost over," and this proved to be exactly correct. As for the *Azuma Kagami*, there are two passages about the prophecies of Sanetomo. By using the era classifications of Mr. Gomi, we find that both of them refer to the first half of Period II, the time when Sanetomo's awareness of his own role as a policymaker was increasing. In particular the passage for November 24 in the fourth year of Jōgen (1210) states that Sanetomo experienced his dream pronouncement "at dawn on the 21st." However, Sanetomo performed the dedication of the statue of Prince Shōtoku, "something that [he] had always wished to do," on November 22. Moreover, just the previous month Sanetomo had seen the long-desired Seventeen-Article Constitution and *Shitennō-ji Temple Goshu'in Engi* with his own eyes for the first time. I think that if we assume that events close to the predictions recorded in the *Azuma Kagami* actually occurred, then we cannot definitively state that the prince tradition had no influence on the actions of Sanetomo at this time.

Furthermore, let us look at the passage for September 20 in the fourth year of Kenpō (1216). Ōe no Hiromoto consulted with Hōjō Yoshitoki, the head of the Hōjō clan, and then on this day he went as far as giving a warning to Sanetomo in an attempt to persuade him to stop his repeated requests to the Imperial Court for official posts. Sanetomo's reply to this warning was as follows.

I think your advice is truly reasonable but the legitimate bloodline of the Minamoto clan is about to die out. My descendants will definitely not continue on after me. This is why I want to get the highest official post that I can in order to raise up the family name.

At that time the twenty-five-year-old Sanetomo was already talking as if he had been prepared for the extinction of his descendents. Moreover, this reference to the extinction of his descendents immediately recalls an anecdote about Prince Shōtoku. In the entry for December in the twenty-sixth year of Empress Suiko in the *Prince Shōtoku Denryaku*, the prince has his own grave built on the land of Shinaga of Kawachi Province (now in Osaka) but when he is supervising the construction site he gives the following order to the grave-builder:

Be sure to fill in this part, and be sure to fill in that part too. This is because I think I will not leave any descendents.

This part is also quoted in the 6th passage of the famous *Tsurezuregusa (Essays in Idleness)* of the 14th century and has become widely known, but the prince's emphatic expression of intention regarding the extinction of his descendents undoubtedly has made a particularly strong impression on the hearts of people with no children. It seems that if Sanetomo had encountered the prince tradition, he would have had no choice but to think about this passage in terms of his own situation.

The one fact that must be mentioned here is the famous scene in which Sanetomo behaved and spoke as if he had predicted his own death on the very day that he was felled by the sword of his nephew, Kugyō, at Tsurugaoka Shrine. The entry for January in the seventh year of Kenpō (1219) states that "there had been a variety of ominous signs regarding the terrible event today" and as it lists many ominous signs such as the tears shed by Ōe no Hiromoto, etc., it includes the following passage.

Furthermore, when Kunai Kimiujī was working with Sanetomo in his role as the shōgun's hairdresser, Sanetomo removed a single hair from one of his own sideburns, said it was a memento, and gave it to Kimiujī. Next, Sanetomo looked at the plum trees in the garden and wrote the following waka with its ominous content.

"When I am gone away,
Masterless my dwelling
Though it become –
Oh! plum tree by the eaves,
Forget not thou the spring." (Translation by William George Aston)

Just before attending a ceremony to celebrate his appointment to the position of *udajjin* (Minister of the Right, the second highest rank in the aristocracy), Sanetomo pulled out one strand of his hair from one of his sideburns and gave it to his hairdresser Kunai Kimiujī, saying it was a "memento." When he turned his eyes to the plum trees in the garden, he wrote the "inauspicious *waka*" foreshadowing his death, in which he said that he would never return here again. Given the prescience of Sanetomo that we saw described in the *Azuma Kagami* earlier, it was probably quite natural that he had a premonition about his own death. However, Prince Shōtoku preceded Sanetomo regarding this point as well. In the entry for February in the twenty-ninth year of Empress Suiko in the *Prince Shōtoku Denryaku*, the prince tells his princess "I will leave this world tonight. I want you to come with me," and events then unfolded just as he had said.

As we have seen, the actions of Sanetomo seem to duplicate those of Prince Shōtoku in many points. Considering the facts that Sanetomo certainly worshipped Prince Shōtoku, and that this worship was connected to Sanetomo's strong ambitions as a policymaker, it is not surprising to see that Sanetomo identified with the prince when thinking about his own life. However, the problem here is to identify which tradition of the prince was available to Sanetomo. No passages can be found in the *Azuma Kagami* stating that Sanetomo read the *Prince Shōtoku Denryaku* or any other historical record about the prince. Nonetheless, Sanetomo showed enough enthusiasm about the prince to go to the trouble of obtaining and reading the Seventeen-Article Constitution and the *Shitennō-ji Temple Goshu'in Engi* so it is difficult to think that he had no involvement with the prince tradition. There can be no doubt that Sanetomo also had contact with the Prince Shōtoku tradition through Yōsai and Gyōyū.²⁸ We do have to acknowledge the possibility that Sanetomo identified himself with the prince.

28. Details about Yōsai and Gyōyū's worship of the prince are not known but I have previously discussed this issue with reference to the passages related to the prince in the *Shasekishū* (in my book *The Influence over Medieval Japanese "Setuwasyū" of Their Cultural Basis* (Izumi Shoin, 2004), Part I, Chapter 6: *The Shasekishū and Prince Shōtoku*). Incidentally, the academic paper by Mr. Nabata quoted in Note 23 and the academic paper by Mr. Kadoya quoted in Note 4 suggest the name of Ōe no Hiromoto as a person who may have had an influence on Sanetomo's worship of the prince.

Chapter 6

Finally, one more problem remains to be discussed; did the writers of the *Azuma Kagami* intend to identify Sanetomo with Prince Shōtoku when they wrote it? Skipping to the conclusion, we believe this is highly likely.

Regarding omens of Sanetomo's death, as mentioned earlier, various strange occurrences were reported in addition to Sanetomo's own premonition, and it is obvious that there is embellishment by the writers as they attempt to present Sanetomo's death in a mystical way. However, when examining the intention of the writers, it is actually the series of passages concerned with the meeting between Sanetomo and Chin Wakei that provide the most effective material.

The entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for June 8 in the fourth year of Kenpō (1216) records the fact that Chin Wakei arrived in Kamakura a week before his meeting with Sanetomo, as follows:

Chin Wakei arrived in Kamakura. He is the Chinese person who made the Great Buddha of Tōdaiji Temple. On the day of the dedication of the Tōdaiji Great Buddha, Minamoto no Yoritomo attended the dedication and he took this opportunity to issue repeated orders to set up a meeting with Chin Wakei. But Chin Wakei said "you have killed many people, which is a terrible crime. I am afraid I cannot meet with you," and in the end did not have an audience with Yoritomo. However, this time Chin Wakei made the pronouncement that "Shōgun Sanetomo is a reincarnation of a high priest like an incarnation of a Shinto or Buddhist deity. I came here to see his compassion-filled face." Then Sanetomo chose the home of Hata Tomoshige as a place to accommodate him. Sanetomo firstly asked Chin Wakei about his situation through Ōe no Hiromoto.

This passage begins by presenting the episode in which Chin Wakei refused a meeting with Yoritomo on the occasion of the dedication of the Tōdaiji Great Buddha. He said his reason for refusing the meeting was that he was repelled by the depth of the sin of Yoritomo, who had murdered many people. Actually, the entry in the *Azuma Kagami* for March 13 in the sixth year of Kenkyū (1195) had already discussed this incident in some detail.

Shōgun Yoritomo went to the Tōdaiji Great Buddha Hall. By the way, Chin Wakei, as a guest from China, had helped cast the Great Buddha together with Japan's highly-skilled carpenters, and when Yoritomo saw the beautiful workmanship of this Great Buddha he said that Chin Wakei was almost a reincarnation of Bishukatsumaten [the god in the Buddhist world who rules over architecture and sculpture], and truly not only a person. So Yoritomo sent a messenger, Chōgen Shōnin, to invite Chin Wakei to a meeting but Chin Wakei firmly and repeatedly turned down this request, saying "I cannot have an audience with you because you killed many people when you got rid of your national enemy [the Taira clan] and this is an extremely serious crime." Yoritomo held back his tears and sent Chin Wakei the body armor he had worn when he conquered the Ōshū Fujiwara-shi [the Northern Fujiwara clan], three horses with saddles, and gold and silver, etc. Chin Wakei donated the body armor he received from Yoritomo to the temple to cover the cost of the nails necessary for building the temple, donated one of the saddles for use as a saddle for a horse used in the Tegai-e [a festival at Tamukeyama Shrine], and said that he "could not accept" the fine horses and other gifts, returning them all to Yoritomo.

In this passage, Chin Wakei is considered "not only a person" and is even called a "reincarnation of Bishukatsumaten (the god in the Buddhist world who rules over architecture and sculpture)." It also says that when Chin Wakei firmly refused a meeting with Yoritomo because the latter was guilty of an "extremely serious crime," unexpectedly Yoritomo was impressed by this so he sent Wakei many presents. Then Chin Wakei returned all of the presents except some that he gave to cover the cost of nails for building a temple, etc. To the eyes of modern people, there is something suspicious about the melodramatic words and actions of Wakei in the scene of the meeting with Sanetomo and in fact we are told that he had some trouble when engaged in the construction of Tōdaiji Temple because of the strength of his character,²⁹ but the *Azuma Kagami* trusts Wakei completely and even describes him as a person who is truly close to being a Buddhist deity. We should also note that the *Azuma Kagami* puts emphasis on the personality of Wakei by quoting the episode with Yoritomo a second time immediately before the meeting with Sanetomo.

The writers of the *Azuma Kagami* clearly intended to describe the meeting between Sanetomo and Wakei as a meeting between "a reincarnation of a high priest like an incarnation of the bodhisattva in Buddhism" and "a reincarnation of Bishukatsumaten." This description takes a similar form to that in the prince tradition which describes

29. *The Story of Chin Wakei, the Carpenter from Song China* by Jōji Okazaki in *Bijutsushi*, No. 30 (September 1958).

a meeting between Prince Shōtoku, an incarnation of Kannon, and “saint”³⁰ Nichira, so we have sufficient reason to believe that it is possible that the writers attempted the “sanctification”³¹ of Sanetomo with this background in mind.

However, even if the *Azuma Kagami* was written to identify Sanetomo with Prince Shōtoku, it does not mention at all the core element hidden in this episode, namely Sanetomo’s strong obsession with the Buddhist *shari* of Iku-ōzan. This element was kept quiet and not discussed because it was an indicator of Sanetomo’s true intentions, which were extremely dangerous for the Hōjō clan.³² Even though at this time “the shōgun’s power was at its height”³³ and it seems as if Sanetomo’s awareness of his role as a policymaker was strengthening, we often get an impression from the passages in the *Azuma Kagami* that is different to the actual situation.³⁴ This is probably due to the deliberate distortions introduced by its writers.

Conclusion

Previous studies about Sanetomo have focused on his *waka*, if one excludes work by writers and literary critics. Consequently, it cannot be denied that the portrait of Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami* has tended to focus on the fact that “the works he left to us (*waka* and a *kashū* [poetry anthology]) are outstanding and for this reason,” and to that extent, “his duties as shōgun were neglected excessively, and a portrait of Sanetomo suffering agony as a result of these circumstances emerges.”³⁵

In recent years, however, the research of Mr. Fumihiko Gomi from an historical perspective³⁶ has made clear that Sanetomo was actually travelling fast “along the road of expanding the shōgun’s power.” The new portrait of Sanetomo presented through this research was in direct opposition to the non-political portrait of Sanetomo that we have previously known through literary research.³⁷

In contrast to these studies, the present paper has adopted the perspective of research into the folk literature tradition and has applied an analysis mainly focused on the aspects of the portrait of Sanetomo in the *Azuma Kagami* that overlap with the Prince Shōtoku tradition. What emerged from the veil of legend as a result of this study is not the portrait of Sanetomo in previous literary research but rather the portrait of Sanetomo as a man who was strongly aware of his role as a policymaker that has been revealed by the research of Mr. Gomi. Although parts of the truth of some aspects of this portrait are difficult to discern because of the filter added by the writers of the *Azuma Kagami*, it can be seen from the text that at least Sanetomo’s attitude was largely consistent throughout.

It seems that in order to bring out the true intentions of Sanetomo himself from the portrait of Sanetomo enveloped in legend, it is of great importance to explain his actions by becoming more familiar with his worship.

Editor's note

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30. The entry in *Prince Shōtoku Denryaku* for December in the twelfth year of Emperor Bidatsu.

31. In the work by Mr. Yoshimoto quoted in Note 4.

32. In relation to this, we are reminded of the fact that the name of Kazurayama Kagetomo (Ganshō), who was active in the traditional world as Sanetomo’s personal attendant, does not appear in the *Azuma Kagami* at all.

33. The academic paper by Mr. Gomi quoted in Note 27.

34. *The Fragility of True and Falsehood: From the Poems about Plum Blossoms by Sanetomo to the Narrative Method of the Azuma Kagami* by Tomomi Yoshino in *Meigetsuki Kenkyū*, No. 9 (December 2004) discusses this point.

35. *The Time and Place of the Kinkai Wakashū: The Sequential Organization of the Version of Fujiwara no Teika* by Toshiko Imazeki (Izumi Shoin, 2000).

36. The academic paper by Mr. Gomi quoted in Note 27.

37. In a response to this research by Mr. Gomi from the literary research side, *An Essay on Shōgun Minamoto no Sanetomo and Waka* by Yoshiko Asahara in *Kokubun Meiji* No. 33 (January 1994) presented the new perspective that for Sanetomo the creation of *waka* was something that “he was consciously aware of as essential to him as a shōgun and as a ruler” and that “the creation of *waka* was nothing other than taking the high road of ruling through grace rather than ruling through force.”