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# Mujū Ichien's Shinto-Buddhist Syncretism: *Shasekishū*, Book 1

by ROBERT E. MORRELL

THE INTERACTION between Buddhism and the diverse modes of thought and behavior which it met during its long and colorful history is one of the most impressive adventures of the human spirit. For those to whom nothing human is alien, the story of this adventure needs no justification. For those who define relevance more narrowly, it can be pointed out that although history may not lend itself to the rigid formulations of the exact sciences, it is nonetheless valuable for the clues it may provide for an understanding of our own behavior. Today a solution to the perennial problem of the pluralistic society—mutual respect and tolerance for divergent opinions—increasingly appears to be a condition not only for international harmony, but perhaps even for human survival. It is unlikely that we will all come to accept a common rationalization of human experience, although we do not lack those who would bring this about by imposing their 'truth' on the rest of us. (And in our day the secular faiths, which offer salvation through one or another socio-economic doctrine based on a 'scientific' analysis of experience, are more prone to self-righteousness than the traditional religious systems.) However, if we all cannot come to accept a common ideology, then our only alternative is to learn to accommodate the opinions of others. We can no longer afford the luxury of exclusiveness.

Here the study of Buddhist tolerance and accommodation becomes eminently relevant, if relevance must be defined as immediate applicability to current social problems. Buddhism, like every system of thought and action, has its limitations. But it has to its credit an enviable record of ecumenicalism, broadly conceived, during the course of its spread throughout Asia. Recently a number of works have appeared which throw light on a remarkable phase of Buddhist development in Japan—its accommodation with native Shinto beliefs and practices.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Works referred to frequently in this article include Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India-China-Tibet-Japan* (East-

West Center Press, Honolulu, 1964); Joseph M. Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (Columbia University Press, New York & London, 1966); and Alicia Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation* (Sophia University & Tuttle, Tokyo, 1969). The introduction to\*

It is my hope that this article will add to the investigation by making available a complete and fairly literal translation of an important statement of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism from the mid-Kamakura period—Book 1 of *Shasekishū* (Collection of Sand and Pebbles) by Mujū Ichien (1226–1312).<sup>2</sup>

Although the history of Japan is a story of strife and factionalism as violent as that of any country, it is frequently observed that Japanese society has shown a remarkable tolerance for diverse ideological positions. Moreover, among the competing ideologies the most conciliatory has been Japanese Buddhism, especially in the pre-Kamakura period. Many factors obviously contributed to this phenomenon, and the importance to be attached to one or another is always open to question. Nakamura finds a rational basis for Prince Shōtoku's eclectic view 'that any one of myriad good acts leads to one thing, the attainment of Enlightenment' in a characteristic Japanese way of thinking which he calls 'the acceptance of phenomenalism'.

The tendency to recognize absolute significance in everything phenomenal leads to the acceptance of the justification of any view held in the mundane world, and ends up with the adaptability of any view with the spirit of tolerance and conciliation.<sup>3</sup>

This may partly explain the early mood of accommodation, the outstanding exponent of which is Prince Shōtoku, whose Seventeen Article Constitution (604) is a plea for harmony and an attempt to reconcile the claims of Confucianism, Buddhism and traditional native beliefs. Another factor was certainly simple political expedience. Prince Shōtoku was faced with the problem of unifying the country under the leadership of the imperial clan, and the conciliation of rival factions can be as politically rewarding as subjugation, although perhaps not so popular a strategy. The tolerance of early Japanese Buddhism can also be seen partly as the result of a lack of well-organized opposition as well as of a lack of understanding of doctrinal complexities which would have stimulated sectarian rivalries. (The poetry of *Man'yōshū*, compiled about 759, and other early writings allude only to such general Buddhist themes as the impermanence of life and the doctrine of karma—probable evidence of a lack of doctrinal sophistication.) Finally, the Buddhist doctrine of accommodation (*hōben*,<sup>4</sup> skillful means, expediency) must have made its appearance at the time as a most convenient rationalization for the generally tolerant mood of the society. Accommodation is the dominant theme of the *Lotus Sutra*, on which we have an extant commentary by Prince Shōtoku himself. All in all the early period of Buddhist assimilation in

\*the present article is complemented by the recent informative contribution of Harmut O. Rotermond, 'La conception des kami japonais à l'époque de Kamakura: Notes sur le premier chapitre du "Sasekishū"', in *Revue de*

*l'Histoire des Religions*, CLXXXII, 1 (July 1972), pp. 3–28.

<sup>2</sup> 沙石集, 無住一圓。

<sup>3</sup> Nakamura, p. 386.

<sup>4</sup> 方便

Japan was a time of ideological conciliation, whether the explanation be the influence of a particular religious doctrine, political expedience or simple naiveté. Here are to be found the origins of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, which later developed precise doctrinal formulations.

Two centuries after Prince Shōtoku a new phase in Japanese Buddhism began with the removal of the capital to Kyoto in 794. Heian Buddhism was dominated by Tendai and Shingon, from whose philosophies eventually developed two important theories of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism: *Sannō-ichijitsu shintō* and *Ryōbu shintō*.<sup>5</sup> Tradition held that these theories were systematized by Saichō (767–822) and Kūkai (774–835), the founders of Japanese Tendai and Shingon respectively. Today they are seen as the products of the Kamakura period or later.<sup>6</sup> But however late the systematic formulations of these theories, their practice and transmission as oral traditions can safely be assumed to have developed gradually and continuously from the earliest efforts at unifying the gods and buddhas (*shimbutsu shūgō*).<sup>7</sup> Tendai and Shingon eventually provided the theoretical justification for the movement, but not until it had peaked and a mood of parochialism had swept the new religious developments of the Kamakura period. True, the afterglow of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism continued for centuries until their official disengagement in early Meiji. But already by Kamakura times the eclectic spirit of Heian Buddhism, which had provided the rationale for their cooperative existence, was superseded by the single-minded devotion of the zealot. It is not surprising that the last great advocates of the movement were Tendai and Shingon prelates—Tenkai (1536–1643) and Jiun (1718–1804).

While the new Buddhism of the Kamakura period—Pure Land, Nichiren and Zen—is often praised in our age of democratic ideals for having brought the faith to the common people after it had been little more than a diversion of the ruling classes, we must not overlook the ill effects of its inevitable simplification. Our view of the new trends is dominated by the scholarship of the popular sects which today claim the largest membership, and, hence, the best resources for propaganda.<sup>8</sup> The Buddhism of Nara and Kyoto may indeed have been largely a religion of scholasticism and ritual, serving the fancies of an effete aristocracy and lacking wide popular support (with such notable exceptions as Kūya Shōnin's

<sup>5</sup> 山王一實神道, 兩部神道

<sup>6</sup> Matsunaga, pp. 189–93. The basic works explaining the theory of *Sannō-ichijitsu shintō*, such as *Yōtenki* 耀天記 (written about 1223), *Gonshinshō* 嚴神抄, and *Keiran-shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 (1347), were the products of the Kamakura period. *Reiki-ki* 麗氣記, or *Tenchi Reiki-ki* 天地麗氣記, which describes the *Ryōbu shintō* doctrine of this sect most thoroughly, was attributed to Kūkai, but in reality was written at a much later date, most likely during the late Kamakura period.

<sup>7</sup> 神佛習合

<sup>8</sup> 'Historians tend to overstress the importance of the new schools of the Kamakura period at the expense of the old schools, but we should not overlook such outstanding priests of the old traditions as Jōkei (1155–1213) of the Hossō school; Kōben, better known as Myōye-Shōnin (1173–1232), Sōshō (1202–1292), and Gyōnen (1230–1321) of the Kegon school; and Eizon (1201–90) and Ninshō (1217–1303) of the Shingon-Ritsu school.' Kitagawa, pp. 104–5.

Tendai-oriented Amidism and the popular *shugendō* practices which were assimilated into both sects); and we may justifiably deplore the church's political involvement in secular affairs, including the employment of militant clergy.

But though the great monastic centers of Nara and Kyoto may be faulted on a number of scores, it is to their credit that they fostered an attitude of doctrinal accommodation, which later fell prey to religious zeal and democratic oversimplification. The hierarchical categorizations of doctrine formulated by Tendai, Shingon and Kegon may have been devices to extol the primacy of one or another sectarian position, but they all recognized truth (although partial) in rival positions. Likewise, the attacks by the older clergy against the rising Kamakura sects, although doubtless often motivated by political considerations, were directed not against their practices, but against their claims of exclusiveness. It would appear that much of the vigor of Kamakura Buddhism was purchased at the expense of a fundamental principle of the Mahayana tradition. However impressive the immediate results in terms of spiritual energy—the energy of the zealot and fanatic—the long-range effects have included the fragmentation and parochialization of a faith whose social virtue is its ability to accommodate a wide spectrum of diversity, based on the doctrine of expediency. But this was the doctrine repudiated by the new sects, according to Nakamura.

The Japanese people, because of their aversion to complicated, structural thinking, are inclined to reject the 'doctrine of expediency,' one of the most characteristic doctrines of Buddhism. Buddhism's original standpoint of 'Preach according to each man's nature' permits clergymen to preach different doctrines to different persons—that is, to preach a doctrine suitable to each person. Eminent Buddhists in India were not worried about contradictions among the various doctrines adopted for 'expediency.' Chinese Buddhists conspicuously preserved this expedient standpoint in contrast to the Japanese Buddhists; for example, Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren rejected this doctrine as too complicated. They preached the same simple and consistent doctrine to all. Furthermore, Dōgen explained why he opposed the doctrine of expediency. '... The false doctrine of expediency is really not useful. The final (ultimate) true doctrine alone is useful.'<sup>9</sup>

The 'tendency to recognize absolute significance in everything phenomenal', which was dominant in Shōtoku's thinking, now gives way to a non-rationalistic tendency that ultimately rejects the doctrine of accommodation as too complicated. It is ironic that Nichiren (1222–82), perhaps the most uncompromising of the reformers, should have taken as his basic scripture the *Lotus Sutra*, whose pervasive theme is this very doctrine of expediency. However, he asserted that 'all sūtras except the Hokke Sūtra, preach the doctrine of expediency, and, there-

<sup>9</sup> Nakamura, pp. 562–3; additional examples | pp. 564–73.  
may also be found in the following section,

fore, must be rejected.<sup>10</sup> That is to say, the *Lotus Sutra*'s statements *about* expediency are themselves the final, not an expedient, truth.

In any case, the spirit of the times called for the simplification of doctrines and single-minded devotion. No doubt those who felt the need to codify the Shinto-Buddhist practices which had developed up to that time were aware that something important was being lost as a comprehensive world-view gave way to parochial zeal. It is curious that the systematic formulations of *Sannō-ichijitsu shintō* and *Ryōbu shintō* should appear at the very time that their underlying rationale—accommodation—was being repudiated by the leaders of the Buddhist reformation. At the same time, if the message of *Shasekishū* (1279–83) were to be summed up in a word, that word would be 'accommodation'.

Mujū, however, in spite of his sympathy for the doctrines of Tendai and the other older sects, was no nostalgic antiquarian like Yoshida Kenkō (1283–1350), whose *Tsurezuregusa*<sup>11</sup> (*Essays in Idleness*) looks fondly to an earlier age. In 1261, almost two decades before he began writing *Shasekishū*, at a time when the Zen sect was a novelty not yet a century old in Japan, Mujū became a Rinzaï monk under Enni Bennen<sup>12</sup> (1202–80), founder of Tōfukuji at Kyoto. His concern was always for the happenings of his own time. An unusual feature of *Shasekishū*, indeed, is the frequency with which Mujū tells us either that he witnessed an incident himself, or heard it from someone who had.<sup>13</sup> The postscript specifically states that he had no interest in twice-told tales.

Mujū Ichien (1226–1312) was born in Kamakura and seems to have been a Kajiwara, although his precise relationship to Kagetoki (d. 1200), Yoritomo's spy, is unclear. At the age of twelve he became a page at Jufukuji in Kamakura, and in his eighteenth year (1243) took the tonsure at Hoonji in Hitachi province. Throughout his long life he sympathetically studied every variety of religious teaching and discipline, and this is reflected in his writings. Most biographical sketches identify Mujū as a Rinzaï Zen monk by virtue of his having become a disciple of Enni Bennen. But if we were to judge his primary ideological affiliation simply on the basis of his scriptural citations and doctrinal emphases in *Shasekishū*, we would probably conclude that he belonged to the Tendai sect. In any case his interests were broad and he had little use for the partisanship and doctrinal rivalry characteristic of his time. In 1263, with the support of Hōjō Tokiyori (1227–63), Mujū rebuilt a rural temple in what is now the city of Nagoya, renaming it Chōboji.<sup>14</sup> Here he remained for the next half-century, except for occasional trips to the Ise shrine, Kyoto and Mt Kōya. In his later years he frequently visited a temple called Rengeji<sup>15</sup> in the Kuwana district, not far from Chōboji. Mujū died in 1312, presumably at Chōboji, although modern biographies based on *Honchō Kōsōden*<sup>16</sup> (1712) opt for Rengeji.

<sup>10</sup> Nakamura, p. 563.

<sup>11</sup> 吉田兼好, 徒然草

<sup>12</sup> 圓爾辨圓

<sup>13</sup> E.g., 1:2, 1:3, 1:4, 1:7, 1:10.

<sup>14</sup> 長母寺

<sup>15</sup> 蓮華寺

<sup>16</sup> 本朝高僧傳



The authorship of most collections of *setsuwa*<sup>17</sup> ('tales') is uncertain and the biographical details of known compilers often sketchy, but we have no reason to doubt that Mujū wrote *Shasekishū*. The work was begun in 1279, when Mujū was already in his fifty-fourth year, and tentatively completed in 1283. His revisions during the next quarter of a century, however, have left us with two major recensions—the 'unabridged' (*kōhon*) and the 'abridged' (*ryakuhon*),<sup>18</sup> each with a number of variants (see note 31). In addition to *Shasekishū*, Mujū's works include a second collection of Buddhist *setsuwa*, *Zōtanshū*<sup>19</sup> (Collection of Casual Digressions), completed in 1305; *Shōzaishū*<sup>20</sup> (Collection of Sacred Assets), a doctrinal work composed in 1299; and *Tsuma Kagami*<sup>21</sup> (Mirror for Women), a religious tract written in 1300.

*Collection of Sand and Pebbles* consists of ten books, each illustrating one or two themes (e.g., Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, the dangers of attachment to worldly affairs, poetry, karmic retribution), and each subdivided into chapters ranging from a few lines to a few pages. The work contains few sustained narratives of any length, although the organization of anecdotes and doctrinal discussions is often managed with considerable skill. The selection translated below was chosen to draw attention to Mujū's attitude toward Shinto-Buddhist eclecticism and does not do justice to his folk humor,<sup>22</sup> which is *Shasekishū*'s most engaging literary characteristic, placing it in the tradition of popular literature whose later representatives were the *kyōgen* farces,<sup>23</sup> the plebeian fiction of the Tokugawa period, and the comic monologue (*rakugo*).

The importance of the syncretism theme in Mujū's thought is to be seen in the fact that when, fairly late in life, he began to write, this was the first subject which he chose to elaborate. Most of his arguments and illustrations of this topic are conveniently concentrated in Book 1, which is thus an ideal unit for translation. After the preface and opening chapter, in which Mujū sets forth the general argument for the identity of the gods and buddhas as applied to the Ise shrines, a series of anecdotes interspersed with doctrinal digressions sets the tone of the work. *Shasekishū* is thus classified as Buddhist Tale Literature (*bukkyō setsuwa*), but also occasionally as a Popular Doctrinal Tract (*kana hōgo*).<sup>24</sup> The only major

<sup>17</sup> 説話

<sup>18</sup> 廣本, 略本

<sup>19</sup> 雜談集

<sup>20</sup> 聖財集

<sup>21</sup> 妻鏡

<sup>22</sup> For several of Mujū's humorous anecdotes, see R. E. Morrell, 'Tales from the Collection of Sand and Pebbles', in *Literature East & West*, xiv, 2 (July 1970), pp. 251-63.

<sup>23</sup> *Shasekishū* 8:11, 'The Page Who Ate the Rice-Jelly', is thought to be the inspiration for the *kyōgen* entitled *Busu* 附子. See Donald Keene, ed., *Anthology of Japanese Literature* (Grove Press, New York, 1955), pp. 305-11.

<sup>24</sup> A disciple of the famous Ōbaku monk

Tetsugen (1630-82), who, as editor of a printing of the Tripitaka (*Tetsugen-ban*) was in a position to evaluate the plethora of Buddhist writings produced up to the Tokugawa period, remarks favorably on *Shasekishū*: 'Since the Zen sect was introduced into this country, there have been few other men who have in this fashion presented the essence of it in the Japanese language. The *Shasekishū* by the Zen master Mujū and the *Muchū Mondō-shū* (Dialogue in a Dream) by the master Musō are about the only good books there are; although there are many others, few of them are worth mentioning.' Nakamura, p. 686, n. 25.

item on the syncretism theme not appearing in the first book is Mujū's defense of poetry.

Mujū had a lively interest in *waka*, and his defense of the Way of Poetry as a religious exercise is an extension of his argument for Shinto-Buddhist syncretism. Scattered throughout *Shasekishū* and *Zōtanshū* are *waka* by himself and others, and a separate section of *Shasekishū*—from 5A:9 through 5B:11—is devoted to this theme. The poems are chosen for the most part to illustrate some moral or religious point. Although Mujū mentions a number of poets and works from the earlier court tradition, he was not an antiquarian, as noted earlier. Mujū himself was not an outstanding poet, although of sufficient merit to have prompted a modern scholar to compile eighty-three *waka* gleaned from his works.<sup>25</sup> Of greater interest to us is his defense of *waka*, especially as articulated in *Shasekishū* 5A:12.

For him to have defended the Way of Poetry as a method of religious realization was not unusual for his time—Shunzei (1114–1204) and Teika (1162–1241), among others, having but recently seriously applied Tendai religious ideals to their poetic practice. But Mujū's position is a curious by-product of the *honji-suijaku* movement, and his argument is that of a scholar rather than that of a poet.

When we consider *waka* as a means to religious realization, we see that it has the virtue of serenity and peace, of putting a stop to the distractions and undisciplined movements of the mind. With a few words it encompasses its sentiment. This is the nature of mystic verses, or *dharani*. The gods of Japan are Manifest Traces, Transformation Bodies of the buddhas and bodhisattvas; and the god Susa-no-o initiated composition in thirty-one syllables with the 'Eight-fold Fence of Izumo'.<sup>26</sup>

Japanese poems do not differ from the words of the Buddha. The *dharani* of India are simply the words used by the people of that country which the Buddha took and interpreted as mystic formulas. . . . Had the Buddha appeared in Japan, he would simply have used Japanese for mystic verses. . . . The thirty-one chapters of the *Great Sun Sutra* likewise parallel the thirty-one syllables of *waka*. . . . Though *dharani* employ the ordinary language of India, when the words are used as *dharani*, they have the capacity to destroy wickedness and remove suffering. Though Japanese poetry also uses the ordinary words of the world, when we use *waka* to convey our spiritual intentions, there will surely be a favorable response. And should it embody the spirit of the Buddha's Law, there can be no doubt that it will be a *dharani*.<sup>27</sup>

In her famous defense of the novel in *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki also appeals to the doctrine of accommodation as the rationale for finding the sacred in the profane. Mujū starts from the same premise, but, as a well-educated cleric, could

<sup>25</sup> Kobayashi Tadao 小林忠雄, *Shimpen Mujū Kokushi Kashū* 新編無住國師家集, supplement to *Kyōdo Bunka* 郷土文化, 1950, V:3.

<sup>26</sup> See *Kojiki*, 1:20, and *Nihon Shoki* 1: 53.

<sup>27</sup> *Shasekishū*, 5A:12.



be expected to carry the argument a step further, for better or worse.

*Shasekishū*, Book 1, has its doctrinal elaborations, but on the whole is not a systematic statement of the syncretic philosophy, and lacks the detail of such works as *Yōtenki* (c. 1223). On the other hand, the popular illustrative anecdotes place it in the tradition of *honji-suijaku* literature, on which *Shintōshū* (c. 1353–71) is recognized as a decisive influence.<sup>28</sup> *Shasekishū* preceded *Shintōshū* by almost a century, and textual parallels suggest that it was known to the compiler of the latter work, in spite of stylistic differences.<sup>29</sup>

The Shinto-Buddhist synthesis continued throughout the Tokugawa period in spite of Shinto attacks, which eventually culminated in the official separation of Shinto and Buddhism (*shibutsu bunri*) in early Meiji (1868) and in the subsequent persecution of Buddhism (*haibutsu kishaku*).<sup>30</sup> Japan was to become a modern nation, and one of the casualties to progress was an institution which had succeeded in accommodating a broad spectrum of beliefs and practices for over a millennium. Once again the zealot was to pay a high price for his single-mindedness.

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The text used for this translation is the *bonshunbon*, an ‘unabridged’ (*kōhon*) version copied by the monk Bonshun (1553–1632) in 1597 and published in the Iwanami series, *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikai*, vol. LXXXV.<sup>31</sup> Although it appears to approximate the original version of 1283 and is the best annotated edition of *Shasekishū*, the *bonshunbon* differs considerably from the popular version (*rufubon*), which is an ‘abridged’ variation.

<sup>28</sup> Matsunaga, pp. 268–70. *Honji-suijaku* literature includes *honji-mono*, ‘stories concerning the various vows of the *honji* Buddhas and Japanese gods, the process of manifestation (*suijaku*), or the origin stories of the various Buddhas, bodhisattvas, Indian deva, temples and native shrines.’ These are often treated as a variety of *otogizōshi*, which also includes an additional class of stories expressing the syncretism theme less obviously. *Honji-suijaku* influence can also be found in *noh*, *jōruri-bushi*, *sekkyō-bushi*, the subsequent Edo *jōruri* drama,

popular hymns (*wasan*), and, indeed, in almost every variety of popular literature.

<sup>29</sup> Tsukudo Reikan 筑土鈴寛, *Chūsei Geibun no Kenkyū* 中世芸文の研究, Yūseidō 有精堂, Tokyo, 1966, pp. 285–8, compares a substantial excerpt from *Shasekishū* 1:1, translated below, with a parallel passage from *Shintōshū*.

<sup>30</sup> 神佛分離, 排佛毀釋. See Hideo Kishimoto, *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era* (Ōbunsha 旺文社, Tokyo, 1956), pp. 111–24.

<sup>31</sup> Watanabe Tsunaya 渡邊綱也, ed., *Shasekishū* 沙石集, 日本古典文學大系 85, 岩波書店.

*Shasekishū*  
Collection of Sand and Pebbles

by MUJŪ ICHIEN

*Preface*

COARSE WORDS and refined expressions both proceed from the First Principle,<sup>32</sup> nor are the everyday affairs of life at variance with the True Reality. Through the wanton sport of specious words and profane talk I wish to bring people into the marvelous Way of the Buddha's teaching; and with unpretentious examples taken from the common ordinary affairs of life I should like to illustrate the profound significance of this splendid doctrine. So I rouse myself from the drowsiness of old age, and with an idle hand have assembled at random that which I have seen and heard. I have recorded incidents just as they have come to mind, without selecting the good from the bad.<sup>33</sup>

At a time when he should be aware of the things of impermanence which thought-by-thought obstruct his apprehension of Reality, and when he should be concerned over his step-by-step approach to the nether world, piling up provisions for the long journey to the subterranean regions and preparing the boat to carry him over the deep currents of the troubled seas of life, this old priest is writing down incidents that strike his fancy, and recording frivolous worldly anecdotes. He does not care how he wastes his time in the present, nor does he feel shame at what the wise and learned may say of him later on. But though it may seem useless, for the sake of those foolish people who are not aware of the great benefits of Buddhism, who do not know the profound intent of the gods who

<sup>32</sup> A phrase from the Mahayanist *Nirvana Sutra* (*Daihatsu nehanyō*, T. 374). The 'First Principle' refers to the Ultimate Reality: *nirvana*, *sūnyatā*, etc., the Unconditioned from which all determinate existence proceeds.

<sup>33</sup> Mujū uses two pillow-words (*makurakotoba*) in this sentence—conventional epithets used to modify and amplify certain nouns, usually in poetry, but also in high-flown formal prose. The association between pillow-word and noun is often tenuous and frequently involves word-play. Here, the pillow-word *Naniwae no* 難波

江ノ (of Naniwa Bay) associates by word-play with the second element of *yoshi ashi* ヨシアシ (good and bad), which also means 'reeds'. The pillow-word *moshiogusa* 藻鹽草 (seaweed) associates by word-play with *kakiatsumu* 書キ集 (to compile), from the fact that this seaweed was used to collect (*kakiatsumu*) salt from the sea. Inasmuch as a strained English equivalent would only add unnecessary ambiguity, I have not included these two phrases in the translation.

soften their light,<sup>34</sup> who do not discriminate between wise and foolish, and who do not believe that the operation of moral causality is determined and fixed, he has selected clear passages from the sutras and commentaries and set down the admonitions left by the wise of former times.

There is not just one method<sup>35</sup> for entering the Way, the causes and conditions for enlightenment being many. Once a person understands their general significance, he will see that the purport of the various teachings does not vary. And when he puts them into practice, he will find that the goal of the myriad religious exercises is the same. So from among casual digressions<sup>36</sup> this old monk extracts the sacred teaching, and among humorous anecdotes he points out the theory and practice of Buddhism. May those who have occasion to see it not despise this poorly-written work by means of which they may come to comprehend the significance of Buddhism; nor should they blame the inclusion of extraneous material through which they may come to understand the operation of moral causality. May they use this work as a means by which to leave this village of birth-and-death<sup>37</sup> and as a signpost to reach the great city of Nirvana—such is the hope of this foolish old man.

Those who search for gold extract it from sand; those who take pleasure in jewels gather pebbles and polish them. So I call this book *Collection of Sand and Pebbles*. It consists of ten chapters and includes over a hundred items.

Collected in midsummer in the second year of Kōan<sup>38</sup> by a humble monk in in the grove of letters, Mujū.

<sup>34</sup> *wakō* (*dōjin*) 和光(同塵). The doctrine that the buddhas and bodhisattvas ‘Moderate the light (of their wisdom) and identify with the dust (of the human world),’ i.e., they assume human forms for the sake of benefitting sentient beings. The phrase can be traced to the *Tao Te Ching* IV: ‘. . . we should attemper our brightness, and bring ourselves into agreement with the obscurity of others.’ (Legge, tr.) The phrase frequently appears in Book I of *Shasekishū* and will be consistently translated as ‘the gods who soften their light and identify with the dust.’ Cf., *honji suijaku*, note 70.

<sup>35</sup> *hōben* 方便. The important Mahayana concept of ‘accommodation’ or ‘expedience’,

whose outstanding scriptural formulation is the *Lotus Sutra*. It is one of the major themes of *Shasekishū* and in the translation I have used Suzuki’s expression ‘skillful means’ wherever feasible.

<sup>36</sup> *zōtan* 雜談. In 1305 Mujū compiled a second collection of anecdotes, *Zōtanshū* 雜談集 (Collection of Casual Digressions).

<sup>37</sup> *shōji* 生死. Samsara, the unending cycle of birth-and-death: the phenomenal, illusory world as opposed to nirvana, the ‘real’ world.

<sup>38</sup> 1279. The Epilogue (*jukkai no koto*) states that the work was put aside for several years and not completed until Kōan 6, i.e., 1283. See NKBT *Shasekishū*, pp. 461–2.

1:1

*The Great Shrine at Ise*

WHILE I WAS on a pilgrimage to the Great Shrine during the Kōchō era,<sup>39</sup> an official explained to me why the terminology of the Three Treasures<sup>40</sup> was forbidden at the shrine and why monks could not closely approach the sacred buildings. In antiquity when this province did not yet exist, the deity of the Great Shrine,<sup>41</sup> guided by a seal of the Great Sun Buddha<sup>42</sup> inscribed on the ocean floor, thrust down her august spear. Brine from the spear coagulated like drops of dew, and this was seen from afar by Māra, the Evil One, in the Sixth Heaven of Desire. 'It appears that these drops are forming into a land where Buddhism will be propagated and people will escape from the round of birth-and-death,' he said, and came down to prevent it. Then the deity of the Great Shrine met with the demon king. 'I promise not to utter the names of the Three Treasures, nor will I permit them near my person. Therefore, quickly return back to the heavens.' When she had thus mollified him, he withdrew. Not wishing to violate that august promise, monks to this day do not approach the sacred shrine, and the sutras are not carried openly in its precincts. Things associated with the Three Treasures are referred to obliquely: Buddha is called 'The Cramp-Legged One' [*tachisukumi*]; the sutras, 'colored paper' [*somegami*]; monks, 'longhairs' [*kaminaga*]; and temples, 'incense burners' [*koritaki*], etc.<sup>43</sup> Outwardly the deity is estranged from the Dharma, but inwardly she profoundly supports the Three Treasures. Thus, Japanese Buddhism is under the special protection of the deity of the Great Shrine.

This shrine is father and mother to all the gods of this land. Disgusted at the heavenly improprieties committed by Susa-no-o, Amaterasu closed the Rock Door of Heaven, dwelt there in seclusion, and all the world was in constant darkness. Distressed, the eight hundred myriad deities built a ceremonial fire and performed the sacred dance [*kagura*], that they might coax her forth. When the Sun Goddess, curious at the sport of the divine maidens, narrowly opened the Rock Door and looked out, the world became bright. As all could see the others' faces, they said: 'How delightful!'<sup>44</sup> This was the origin of the expression.

Then the god Tajikara-no-o carried her forth and drew a sacred rope across

<sup>39</sup> 1261–4.

<sup>40</sup> Buddhism, i.e., the Buddha, the teaching, and the religious order.

<sup>41</sup> The sun-goddess Amaterasu ō mikami ('August Heaven-Shining Deity'), venerated at the Inner Shrine, is the principal Ise deity.

<sup>42</sup> Dainichi Nyorai 大日如來. Mahāvairocana is the 'Great Sun' Buddha, who is thus plausibly seen as the Original Ground (or True

Nature) of the sun-goddess Amaterasu.

<sup>43</sup> *Yōtenki* 耀天記 (c. 1223), a basic work of the Tendai *Sannō-ichijitsu shintō* theory (see Introduction), includes a similar but more extensive list of euphemisms. See Ishida Ichirō 石田一良, ed., *Shintō Shisōshū* 神道思想集, vol. 14 of *Nihon no Shisō* 日本の思想 (Chikuma Shobō 筑摩書房, Tokyo, 1970), p. 127.

<sup>44</sup> *omoshiroshi* 面白, literally, 'faces distinct'.

the Rock Door, asking her not to enter again into the cave. Immediately upon her being brought forth, she became the sun and moon, and illumined the earth—thus, even our being affected by the light of the sun and moon is through the benevolent virtue of this deity. All of this having arisen from the inscription of the Great Sun Buddha on the ocean floor, we have come to identify the deities of the Inner and Outer Shrines<sup>45</sup> with the Great Sun Buddha of the Two-Part Mandala;<sup>46</sup> that which is called the Rock Door of Heaven [*ama no iwato*] is the Tusita Heaven,<sup>47</sup> also known as the High Plain of Heaven [*takama ga hara*].

Events which took place during the Age of the Gods all have their Buddhist interpretation. In the Shingon view, the Tusita Heaven is spoken of as Vairocana's Dharmadhātu Palace<sup>48</sup> of Inner Realization.<sup>49</sup> Vairocana came forth from this Capital of Inner Realization and manifested his traces<sup>50</sup> in the Region of the Sun.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the deity of the Inner Shrine at Ise is the Great Sun of the Matrix World;<sup>52</sup> and patterned after the Four-Tiered Mandala<sup>53</sup> are the various shrine enclosures: *tamagaki*, *mizugaki*, *aragaki*, etc.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, there are nine logs<sup>55</sup> on the roof of the main hall of the Inner Shrine symbolizing the nine Holy Ones of the Matrix World.<sup>56</sup> We are accustomed to identify the deity of the Outer

<sup>45</sup> The Naikū 内宮 and Gekū 外宮, dedicated respectively to the sun-goddess Amaterasu and to Toyoukehime no mikoto, an agricultural deity of fertility.

<sup>46</sup> Vairocana is the central Buddha in both the Matrix (*taizōkai* 胎藏界) and Diamond (*kongōkai* 金剛界) Worlds, often referred to as the Two-Part (*ryōbu* 兩部) Mandala. The Matrix Mandala represents the state of Buddhahood as preached in the *Mahāvairocana Sutra* (J. *Dainichikyō*, T. 848); the Diamond Mandala follows the *Vajrasekhara Sutra* (J. *Kongōchōgyō*, T. 865).

<sup>47</sup> J. *Tosotsuten* 都率天. The fourth desire heaven where all bodhisattvas are reborn before rebirth as buddhas; hence, the abode of Maitreya.

<sup>48</sup> *Hokkaigū* 法界宮. Vairocana's locus in the Matrix World. See note 46.

<sup>49</sup> *naishō* 内證. Inner Realization, in contrast to Outer Function (*geyū* 外用). Cf. *Shasekishū* 1:3.

<sup>50</sup> *ato wo taru* 跡ヲ垂ル. The *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 (True Nature—Trace Manifestation) theory views the native Japanese deities as local accommodations of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, who are their 'original ground' or 'true nature'. See Matsunaga for a detailed explanation.

<sup>51</sup> *jichi iki* 日域, i.e., Japan.

<sup>52</sup> The identification of the Two-Part

(*ryōbu*) Mandala with the Inner and Outer Shrines at Ise is the origin of *Ryōbu shintō*.

<sup>53</sup> The pattern of the 'Four-Tiered' (*shijū* 四重) Mandala differs from the *genzu* 現圖 version of the Matrix World commonly employed in Japan and introduced from China by Kōbō Daishi (Kūkai, 774–835). The basic design of the Four-Tiered Mandala, also referred to as the Three-Tiered Mandala when the central constellation is not counted, is a central square within three squares of increasing size; it approximates the layout of the Naikū more closely than the more complicated standard version. For illustration and explanation, see Oda Tokunō 織田得能, *Bukkyō Daijiten* 佛教大辭典 (Ōkura Shoten, Tokyo, 1927), pp. 448–9 & 743.

<sup>54</sup> The Inner Shrine is surrounded by a series of fences forming rectangular enclosures. Beginning with the innermost fence they are called *mizugaki* 瑞籬, *uchi-tamagaki* 内玉垣, *soto-tamagaki* 外玉垣, and *aragaki* アラ垣. The resulting design might indeed suggest a mandala.

<sup>55</sup> *katsuogi* 鯉木. Cigar-shaped logs lying horizontally at intervals across the ridge of important shrine structures.

<sup>56</sup> The central Vairocana surrounded by eight buddhas and bodhisattvas on an eight-petalled lotus design is the inner constellation of the Matrix World.

Shrine<sup>57</sup> with the Great Sun of the Diamond World, and also with Amida. However, it is doubtless to symbolize the Five Wisdoms<sup>58</sup> of the Diamond World that its design consists of five moon-circles.<sup>59</sup> When the Two-Part Diamond-Matrix Mandala is viewed in the light of the Yin-Yang teaching, wherein the Yin is female and the Yang male, the eight petals of the Matrix parallel the shrine's Eight Maidens;<sup>60</sup> and it is because the Five Wisdoms of the Diamond World are represented by males that there is a group of five male shrine dancers [*kagurōdo*].

Moreover, out of consideration of its burden on the people and its expense to the country, the shrine sanctuaries are thatched simply with miscanthus and it uses ceremonial offerings of thrice-pounded unpolished rice.<sup>61</sup> The crosspieces [*katsuogi*] are straight and the roof beams uncurved—so that the hearts of men may be rectified. Thus, those who with upright hearts consider the effect of their actions on the plight of the people and its expense to the country conform to the will of the gods. One who serves at this shrine quite naturally refrains from the Ten Grave Offenses<sup>62</sup> proscribed by the *Net of Brahma Sutra*.<sup>63</sup> If he murders, he is exiled from his clan<sup>64</sup> for a long period of time, just as a monk is no longer counted among the sons of the Buddha if he commits one of the Ten Grave Offenses. Having struck a man and drawn blood, a Shinto priest is expelled from his office, just as if he had been charged with one of the Lesser Offenses proscribed for the Buddhist clergy.

The taboos observed at Ise differ somewhat from those of other shrines. Childbirth<sup>65</sup> is referred to as 'life-spirit' [*shōki*], and those involved are under a fifty-day pollution; likewise, death is spoken of as 'death-spirit' [*shiki*], and also creates a fifty-day pollution. Death proceeds from life, and life is the beginning of death.

<sup>57</sup> See notes 45 and 52.

<sup>58</sup> *gochi* 五智. The Five Wisdoms, which, according to the esoteric tradition, constitute consciousness. They are identified with the Five Buddhas of the Diamond World.

<sup>59</sup> Which bears no relationship to the ground plan of the Outer Shrine, unlike the correspondence between the Matrix World and the Inner Shrine. The Diamond World Mandala is sometimes referred to as the Moon Disc (*gachirin* 月輪) Mandala, from the design of its central constellation consisting of four circles around Vairocana's central circle. The five major Buddhas of the Diamond World, each the focus of a circle, are correlated with various groups of five: wisdoms, elements, *vajra*, etc.

<sup>60</sup> *yaotome* 八人女. A group of eight vestals whose principal duty is the performance of the sacred *kagura* dance.

<sup>61</sup> A coarse, 'three-pestle rice' (*mikine yone* 三杵米) has traditionally been used in pre-

paring ceremonial offerings to the gods.

<sup>62</sup> The Ten Grave Offenses (*pārājika*), the commission of which is punishable by excommunication from the Buddhist priesthood. See N. Dutt, *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relation to Hīnayāna* (Luzac & Co., London, 1930), pp. 294–5.

<sup>63</sup> *Brahmajāla Sutra*. The *Bomōkyō* 梵網經 (T. 1484) is the basic work describing the rules of discipline for monks belonging to the Mahāyāna. See also *Shasekishū* 1:9.

<sup>64</sup> *uji* 氏. The basic socio-religious unit of Japanese society in antiquity, expulsion from which would make one an outcast.

<sup>65</sup> Literally, *ubuya* 産屋 ('parturition hut'), but Watanabe points out that in this context the act of childbirth is indicated. The taboos against childbirth and death were not peculiar to the Ise Shrine, of course, although the fifty-day pollution period may have been. See also *Shasekishū* 1:4, where the issue is raised with respect to the Atsuta Shrine.



The shrine official informed me that this was handed down as the reason for birth and death to be both taboo.

Now Vairocana is not subject to birth-and-death, and the original purpose of his coming forth from the Inner Realization<sup>66</sup> of the Law Body<sup>67</sup> and manifesting his traces in order to save the ignorant and deluded masses produced through the four forms of birth<sup>68</sup> was to put a stop to the round of birth-and-death and to lead them to the Buddha's Path of eternal life. Thus, to speak of placing both birth and death under a taboo is to say that we do not foolishly create the karma of delusive conduct which causes the painful cycle of birth-and-death, that we wisely practice the marvelous Law of the Buddha, and that we aspire to rebirth in a Pure Land<sup>69</sup> and to enlightenment. While it is entirely in conformity with the will of the deity of the Great Shrine that we should believe in and practice the Way of the Buddha, it is contrary to the divine will for us to concern ourselves with the glories of this life, to pray for prosperity and longevity, to observe the taboos with a heart still deeply attached to the things of the world, and to be devoid of any sense of religious aspiration.

Although the august forms of the Traces Manifest by the Original Ground<sup>70</sup> vary, their purpose is assuredly the same. In order to propagate Buddhism in China, the three bodhisattvas Māṇava,<sup>71</sup> Kāśyapa<sup>72</sup> and Dipamkara<sup>73</sup>—appearing as Confucius, Lao-tzu and Yen Hui<sup>74</sup>—first softened the people's hearts by means of non-Buddhist teachings. Later, when Buddhism was propagated, everyone believed in it.

In Japan the illustrious native deities who soften their light first manifested their traces—the Buddha using this as a skillful means to soften the rough disposition of the people and to lead them to belief in the Dharma. If we rely on the profound efficacy of the Original Ground while believing in the skillful means, close to hand, of gods who soften their light, we will realize our hope for peace and the end of calamities in this life, and attain the eternal enlightenment, not subject to birth-and-death, in the next. Those born in our land should be thoroughly aware of this fact.

<sup>66</sup> See note 49 and the narrative.

<sup>67</sup> *hosshin* 法身. Dharmakāya, the Buddha as Ultimate Reality, whose diversity is phenomena; the basic aspect of the three-fold body of the Buddha. See also *Shasekishū* 1:3.

<sup>68</sup> From womb, egg, moisture, or by metamorphosis.

<sup>69</sup> *jōdo* 淨土. One of several regions inhabited by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, the most popular being Amida's Western Paradise.

<sup>70</sup> *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹. See notes 34 & 50. This is the first appearance of the term in this form in *Shasekishū*. It expresses a systematic application of the Buddhist philosophy of as-

similation, and can be subsumed under the more general category of *shimbutsu shūgō* 神佛習合 (unification of gods and buddhas). See Matsunaga, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Judō 儒童. Sakyamuni's name while he was still a bodhisattva serving his apprenticeship under Dipamkara. See Matsunaga, pp. 101–2, for the origins of this theory to accommodate Confucianism and Taoism to Buddhism; also, *Shasekishū* 1:8.

<sup>72</sup> The sixth of seven Buddhas of the past, Sakyamuni being the seventh.

<sup>73</sup> The first of a series of twenty-five Buddhas, Sakyamuni being the twenty-fifth.

<sup>74</sup> 顏回, Confucius' favorite disciple.

1:2                    *The Venerable Gedatsubō of Kasagi's Pilgrimage  
to the Great Shrine*

A CERTAIN SHRINE OFFICIAL told me that the late holy man of Kasagi<sup>75</sup> once confined himself in the Iwashimizu Hachiman shrine in order to pray for an enlightened mind. 'It is not within my power to arrange this,' he was told in a dream by a revelation of the god. 'Go to the Great Shrine at Ise to make your request.' And he was given explicit instructions about how to get there.

Still in a dream, he presently set forth and before long was traversing the mountain to the south of the Outer Shrine. On the mountain peak he saw a pond full of large and small lotuses, some in bloom and others budding, whose color and fragrance were truly wonderful. Nearby, someone remarked, 'The lotuses in bloom are the priests of this shrine who have already been reborn into a Pure Land. Those yet to attain this are the buds. By the skillful means of the gods who soften their light many are reborn into a Pure Land. The large lotus budding there is a deacon known as Tsunemoto<sup>76</sup> who is to attain *ōjō*.' Gedatsubō then entered the shrine and even heard the sound of Buddhist scriptures being read.

Upon waking he strapped on his implement box<sup>77</sup> forthwith and set out all alone, following the instructions he had received. His course did not deviate from the dream in the slightest, except that there was a wide road winding around the foot of the mountain south of the Outer Shrine, and no trail leading to the summit. But this was the only point of difference, the layout of the mountain being exactly as he had seen it in his dream. Then he called a young layman to him and inquired: 'Is there a deacon living here called Tsunemoto?' 'Truly, that is my own name,' came the reply, 'but although I will eventually become a deacon, I am not one now.' Gedatsubō then took three measures of gold from his implement box, and, presenting them to the man, took lodging at his house and questioned him in detail about the shrine. Tsunemoto told him, 'Not having attained release this time from the round of birth-and-death, I vowed that when I was born again into the human world, I would come as a priest of this shrine and rely on the skillful means of the gods who soften their light.'

Since I heard this from a shrine priest who was close to Tsunemoto, I know it actually happened.

<sup>75</sup> Jōkei 貞慶, or Gedatsubō 解脱房 (1155–1213), was a monk of the Hossō sect. After residing more than twenty years at Kōfukuji, he retired to Kasagidera on the southern border of Kyoto prefecture, near Nara. In 1194 he renovated the temple, which is now administered by the Shingon sect. See *Shasekishū* 1:5;

Kitagawa, pp. 104–5.

<sup>76</sup> Identity uncertain.

<sup>77</sup> *oi* 負 (笈). A religious implement box carried on the back by traveling priests, especially *yamabushi*. See also *Shasekishū* 1:9; Matsunaga, Plate 24.

1:3 *Praying to the Gods for Release from Birth-and-Death*

ABBOT KŌKEN,<sup>78</sup> Superintendent of the Miidera,<sup>79</sup> was a master of both exoteric and esoteric doctrine.<sup>80</sup> He was a man of such renown for sanctity that priest Myōhen<sup>81</sup> of Mt Kōya, having certain doubts about the abbot's religious observances, took counsel with the holy recluse Zen'amidabutsu,<sup>82</sup> who was to go and check up on his behavior. Zen'amidabutsu traveled to the abbot's residence dressed strangely in a hat woven of Kōya cypress strips and a knee-length robe. But when he went into the temple and announced his arrival, the abbot, hearing that he was a holy man from Kōya, toward which he apparently had warm feelings, called Zen'amidabutsu to his humble, low-eaved sitting room. All night long they discussed the affairs of Kōya and stories of the next life. Then in the morning the abbot donned a white Shinto robe,<sup>83</sup> and with Shinto offerings<sup>84</sup> stood before a curtained space between two pillars and performed ritual gestures. To Zen'amidabutsu this appeared to be most irregular; but for three days the abbot's behavior did not vary.

After carefully noting what was done, Zen'amidabutsu inquired: 'Your morning observances appear quite unusual! What kind of ritual is it?'

'Even if you had not brought the matter up, I should like to explain. I am pleased to be asked such a question,' replied the abbot. 'Though I studied the Holy Teachings, overt and secret, determined to enter on the path essential for release from birth-and-death, my own capability<sup>85</sup> was weak, and my capacity for understanding shallow. Take away the power of my exceptional karmic affinities and my hopes for release could not be realized. Consequently, I wrote down the sacred names of the various major and minor deities throughout the entire country of Japan, not only the great and lesser gods spoken of in the capital, but also those I heard about in remote areas and distant provinces. In this two-pillared space I present my petition, reciting the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*<sup>86</sup> thirty

<sup>78</sup> Hongakubō 本覺坊 (1110–93).

<sup>79</sup> Onjōji 園城寺, in Shiga prefecture, east of Kyoto. Being a noted Tendai center, its abbot would naturally be suspect to the priests of Shingon Mt Kōya.

<sup>80</sup> *kemmitsu* 顯密. The overt doctrines (*kengyō*) expressed conceptually in sutras and commentaries, and the secret teachings (*mikkyō*) expressed through symbolic gestures, formulas, graphic representations, and other non-rational media.

<sup>81</sup> Rengedani Sōzu 蓮華谷僧都 (1142–1224).

<sup>82</sup> Identity unknown.

<sup>83</sup> *jōe* 淨衣. Literally, 'pure robe', a garment worn by Shinto priests during ritual perform-

ances.

<sup>84</sup> *hei* 幣. Symbolic offerings of thread, rope, or cut paper.

<sup>85</sup> *jiriki* 自力. 'Self-power', an important concept in Pure Land thought, where it is contrasted with the saving grace of Amida's 'Other-power' (*tariki* 他力). The opening chapter of *Zōtanshū* (see note 36) is entitled 'Self-power and Other-power'. The following sentence presumably refers to the good fortune of having been born with the opportunity to hear and diligently pursue the Buddha's teachings.

<sup>86</sup> *Hannya shingyō* 般若心經 (T. 251).

times a session, as well as performing various incantations to the gods and making offerings of that which is conducive to delight in the Dharma. Aside from earnestly relying on the skillful means of the gods who soften their light to lead me to the path of release from birth-and-death, I perform no other practices.

‘The skillful means of the Blessed One varies according to country and occasion, and has no fixed mode of operation. Just as it is said, “The sage has no mind of his own but makes the mind of the people his mind,”<sup>87</sup> so also has the Law Body<sup>88</sup> no fixed form but takes the myriad forms of the phenomenal world as its body. The ten worlds<sup>89</sup> constituted by the formless Law Body are all the perfect body of Vairocana. To express this in Tendai terms, the karmas conditioning person and environment in the ten worlds, the natures of whose inhabitants are composed of the three thousand dharmas, are all myriad capacities of the Law Body immanent in them. Thus, through action It manifests the ten worlds, in which the natural capacity for good or ill is latent, and saves those deluded natures in the nine worlds<sup>90</sup> by virtue of its assuming a variety of bodies and forms.

‘Moreover, if we use the thought of the esoteric teaching, we may say that the Four-Tiered Mandala<sup>91</sup> is also the ten-fold world constituted by the Law Body. Its Inner Realization<sup>92</sup> reflects the basic assemblage of Its self-nature; Its Outer Function manifests the benefits of Its great compassion. I have worked it out according to both the exoteric and esoteric doctrines: from the Law Body the Buddha manifests bodies in the ten worlds and benefits all sentient beings. The marvelous function [*yū*] which complements the marvelous substance [*tai*] is like the wave which does not exist apart from its water. Apart from the Real [*shinnyo*], no causes arise.

‘Accordingly, long ago in the west—in India—the buddhas and bodhisattvas made their appearance and saved the people of that land. Ours is a country as remote from this center as the small, scattered millet seed, where rough, fierce creatures were unaware of moral causation. For those who did not believe in the Dharma, the impartially outflowing Law Body, acting in accordance with the same spontaneous compassion as elsewhere, employed that which was appropriate to the time and place. Manifesting the shapes of evil demons and wicked spirits and showing forth the forms of poisonous serpents and fierce beasts, it subdued this ferocious and evil lot and thereby brought people to the Way of the Buddha.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>87</sup> *Tao Te Ching* XLIX. This is one of Mujū’s favorite quotations.

<sup>88</sup> *hosshin*. See note 67.

<sup>89</sup> *ji(ppō)kai* 十(法)界. The ten (dharma) worlds, or states of existence: buddhas, bodhisattvas, pratyeka-buddhas, śravakas, gods, men, demons (*asuras*), animals, hungry ghosts, and the hells.

<sup>90</sup> Presumably the nine worlds beneath that of the Buddha in the system of ten worlds (see

previous note). Strictly speaking, however, delusion is to be found only in the six worlds from those of the gods to the hells.

<sup>91</sup> *shijū mandala*. See *Shasekishū* 1:1 and note 53.

<sup>92</sup> See also *Shasekishū* 1:1 and note 49.

<sup>93</sup> Mujū perhaps refers to such legends as *Susa-no-o* and the eight-headed dragon, whose contest can be viewed as an allegory for the triumph of good over evil.

‘Thus, other lands attach importance to those bodies which have an affinity to the Law, and in this country we should not disparage those forms which are appropriate. In our country, as the land of the gods, the provisional manifestations of the Buddha<sup>94</sup> leave their traces. Moreover, we are all their descendants; and it is no trivial fate to share with them a common spirit. If we pray to other blessed beings, their response will be ever so far distant from us. Consequently, there can be nothing so profitable as relying on the skillful means of the gods who soften their light in response to our potential for good, praying to them to lead us to the path essential for release from birth-and-death.

‘When we see an image of man or beast made of gold and pay no attention to the gold, then we say that the image is superior or inferior. But when we pay attention to the gold and neglect the form, it is as though there were no difference between a superior and an inferior image. As the occasion dictates, the Law Body creates the various forms in the ten-fold world of the Four-Tiered Mandala. If we ignore the forms and hold to the essential substance, then what is there that does not participate in the benefits of the Law Body? The gate of Wisdom<sup>95</sup> takes the highest [attainment] to be most excellent; the gate of Compassion takes [benefit to] the lowest to be most wonderful—as when midgets compare heights, the smallest is the winner. The benefit of the great compassion is such that the impartially outflowing Law Body draws near especially to those of feeble capacity, and the compassion which profits those creatures of strong and violent disposition is most excellent. Thus, I trust in the gods who soften their light and identify with the dust as the ultimate in compassion from the various Buddhas; and although my religious practice is unusual in this respect, it has been my custom for many years.’ So spoke the abbot.

Zen’amidatutsu, rejoicing at his truly noble aspiration, returned to Kōya and reported the incident to Myōhen. ‘Because he is a wise man, I knew that he could not be involved in any foolish practices. But now I have the highest admiration for him,’ replied the priest, shedding tears of sympathetic joy.

The holy recluse related this incident to me.

\* \* \*

<sup>94</sup> *daigon* 大權. More commonly, *gongen* 權現 (‘provisional manifestation’), which is roughly equivalent to *suijaku* (‘trace manifestation’). See notes 50 & 70; Matsunaga, p. 219, n. 28.

<sup>95</sup> Wisdom and Compassion, the two complementary virtues of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. The *Diamond Sutra* (J. *Kongōkyō*) defines the platform of the bodhisattva: ‘“As many beings as there are in the universe of beings, . . . all these I must lead to Nirvana,

into that Realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable beings have thus been led to Nirvana, in fact no being at all has been led to Nirvana.” And why? If in a Bodhisattva the notion of a “being” should take place, he would not be called a “Bodhi-being.” In his wisdom the bodhisattva sees no ‘beings’; in his compassion he is resolved to save them. See E. Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1959), p. 164. See also *Shasekishū* 1:5.

The Great Teacher Chih-I<sup>96</sup> explains in the *Great Concentration and Insight*,<sup>97</sup> ‘With respect to concentration and insight, the wise man will act wisely and the foolish man, foolishly.’ Similarly, the wise man will act wisely toward the Manifest Traces, the gods who soften their light. The profound sense of the esoteric doctrine is that since the ten worlds are all the manifestation of the formless Law Body, the body of Emma<sup>98</sup> and that of Vairocana are both constituted by the Law Body of the Four-Tiered Mandala and accompany the five limitless wisdoms<sup>99</sup> of the Buddha. When absorbed in Inner Realization, Emma exhibits the mind of his self-nature, the Law Body, without altering the figures of the demons and animals in the hell over which he presides.

Thus, a virtuous ancient<sup>100</sup> has remarked: ‘The karma of person and place which bring one to the lowest hell are entirely in the very heart of the Blessed One; the karma of person and place of a Vairocana does not exceed a single unenlightened thought.’

Again, when we speak of the three modes of attaining Buddhahood in this very body,<sup>101</sup> we see that according to the ‘wholly noumenal’ viewpoint, all men are Buddhas from the very beginning but this is not apparent to them because of egotistic attachments. The various Buddhas, having attained Buddhahood by their ‘manifest virtue’, freely bestow their benefits. And the ‘conferring and upholding’ attainment of Buddhahood means that we become acquainted with the marvelous usages of the three activities of body, word, and thought of those Buddhas who have already attained their goal, thereby creating favorable affinities and manifesting virtuous results, originating in our own hearts, limitless and exquisite as the sands of the Ganges. When his belief is sincere and his three activities are in conformity with those of the Buddha, the devotee is identical with Him.

It was perhaps during the reign of Emperor Murakami<sup>102</sup> that a Five-Pedestal

<sup>96</sup> 智顛 (538–97). The outstanding philosopher of Chinese T’ien T’ai.

<sup>97</sup> *Mo-ho chih-kuan* 摩訶止觀 (*Maka shikan*, T. 1911). We are told that Mujū studied this work under one Jitsudōbō in 1253. It is frequently cited in *Shasekishū*, where many other works cited appear to follow the wording recorded in this text. See also 1:10.

<sup>98</sup> King of the nether world.

<sup>99</sup> See note 58.

<sup>100</sup> Ching-hsi Chan-jan 荊溪湛然 (Keikei Tannen, 712–82), ninth patriarch of the T’ien T’ai sect and author of the influential *Chin Kang Pei Lun* 金剛鐔論 (T. 1932), where the following phrase appears.

<sup>101</sup> *sokushin jōbutsu* 卽身成佛. (1) The ‘wholly

noumenal’ (*rigu* 理具) attainment, by which we become Buddha by virtue of our original innate capacity for Buddhahood; (2) the ‘manifesting virtue’ (*gentoku* 顯德) attainment, by which our Original Nature is revealed through the practice of the three mysteries of action (body), word, and thought, which are mutually shared by Buddhas and other sentient beings; (3) the attainment through ‘conferring and upholding’ (*kaji* 加持), in which the Buddha’s compassion confers benefits on sentient beings, and, in response to their reliance on Him, manifests their immanent Buddhahood-nature.

<sup>102</sup> Reigned 946–67.



Ceremony<sup>103</sup> was held at the palace with Bishop Jie<sup>104</sup> acting as Esoteric Master at the central platform. The emperor secretly observed the performance, during which he saw Jie assume the form of Fudō, so that there was not the slightest difference between him and the object of worship. Abbot Kanchō<sup>105</sup> performed as Esoteric Master before Gōsanze, at times appearing as the deity and at times as abbot. At seeing this the emperor remarked: 'How unfortunate! Kanchō is troubled by delusive thoughts!' The other priests simply retained their original forms. The scripture<sup>106</sup> says, 'All sentient beings proceed from the womb of the Tathāgata, because the very body of Samantabhadra<sup>107</sup> is everywhere.'

Although it is said that we ourselves are entirely the Law Body, the distinction is made (or not) depending on whether the viewpoint is from delusion or enlightenment. Thus, the *Sutra of Neither Increase Nor Decrease*<sup>108</sup> states: 'On the one hand we speak of the Law Body transmigrating through the Five Paths of existence<sup>109</sup> and call It "sentient beings". Or we assign the name "bodhisattva" to the Law Body's practice of the Six Virtues. Or again, we speak of the Law Body turning back the current of rebirth and exhausting its source [i.e., karma], and we call It "Buddha".' Now when we consider the Manifest Traces, this can be understood as follows: 'The Law Body softens Its light and identifies with the dust, and we give It the name "gods".'

Thus, although the body of the Original Nature and the Manifest Traces are identical, their effects, which vary with the occasion, will sometimes be superior and sometimes inferior. As for its effects in our country, how superlative is the appearance of the Manifest Traces! This is because, in antiquity, when En no Gyōja<sup>110</sup> was practicing austerities on Mt Yoshino and the form of Sakyamuni appeared before him, the ascetic said: 'In this august form it will be difficult to convert the people of this country. You should conceal yourself.' Then the shape of Maitreya<sup>111</sup> appeared to him, but En said: 'This likewise will not do.' However, when the Buddha manifested a fearsome shape as Zaō Gongen,<sup>112</sup> En responded, 'Truly, this is one who can convert our land to Buddhism.' And today the Buddha manifests this Trace.

<sup>103</sup> A tantric rite performed by five Esoteric Masters (*ajari*) before the Five Vidyārāja (Myō-ō): Fudō (central platform), Gōzanze (east platform), Gundari (south platform), Kongō Yasha (north platform), and Daitoku (west platform).

<sup>104</sup> Ryōgen 良源 (912–85). Influential Tendai prelate, the first to employ temple mercenaries (*sōhei*), and the teacher of Genshin (Eshin, 942–1017; see 1:4).

<sup>105</sup> Hirosawa no Daisōjō 廣澤の大僧正 (918–98). Tendai prelate noted for his expertise in Buddhist liturgical music.

<sup>106</sup> Passage from the *Kegonkyōso Engishō* 華嚴經疏演義鈔.

<sup>107</sup> Fugen 普賢. The idealization of compassion, activity, production. The bodhisattva complements Manjusri (Monju), who symbolizes wisdom. See note 95.

<sup>108</sup> *Fuzōfugengyō* 不增不減經.

<sup>109</sup> See note 89. Here the five worlds are those of the heavenly beings, men, animals, hungry ghosts, and the hells (including the *asuras*).

<sup>110</sup> 役行者, or En no Ozunu 役小角, (634–?), legendary founder of the *shugendō* (mountain ascetic) tradition.

<sup>111</sup> Miroku, the Buddha of the future.

<sup>112</sup> A deity venerated at Yoshino and known primarily because of this appearance to En no Gyōja.

The significance of this fearsome aspect is that as his period of influence is exhausted, Sakyamuni comes as a demon to devour the unconverted and to encourage men to strive for enlightenment. When the devotee venerates this manifestation wholeheartedly with deep faith, he enjoys its benefits. It is the custom in our country that since the gods clearly reveal their decisions for better or worse, people have warm faith and reverence toward them. There are foolish people who seldom place their reliance on the buddhas and bodhisattvas because their benefits are more moderate than those of the skillful means of the gods who soften their light, although there are also benefits from afar to be received from them in accordance with their fundamental essence—the benefits of the various buddhas being especially effective for those in distress. In any case, the skillful means which benefit the foolish masses truly have the color of deep compassion and the form of tender versatility. Just as the blue material is bluer than the indigo plant from which its color derives, so the spiritually-valued is more precious than the Buddha from whom this value proceeds—such is the benefit of the gods who soften their light!

When the ancient men of virtue built a temple, without fail they began by venerating a propitious manifestation of the gods. This is because without the skillful means of the gods who soften their light it is difficult to establish Buddhism. The vows of Abbot Kōken were undertaken in such a spirit, and men of sensitivity will learn from his experience.

1:4

*The Gods Esteem Compassion*

THE VENERABLE Jōgambō<sup>113</sup> of Miwa in Yamato province, a man of compassion, concentrated on the practices of the Shingon sect and was thoroughly initiated in the spells<sup>114</sup> for establishing relationships between man and Buddha [*kechien*]. Once when he was traveling on a pilgrimage to Yoshino,<sup>115</sup> he was moved at finding several children crying by the side of the road. ‘Why are you crying?’ asked Jōgambō. A girl of eleven or twelve replied, her tears flowing ceaselessly. ‘My mother became sick and died, and my father has gone far away and is not here to help us. The neighbors wish to have nothing to do with such nasty, unpleasant business, and so there is no one to look after the burial. I am only a girl, and my little brother is useless. I am so heartbroken that I can only cry.’

Feeling pity in his heart for the children, Jōgambō decided to forgo the pilgrimage and to help them—he could make it to Yoshino some other time. Carry-

<sup>113</sup> Identity uncertain. The anecdote is later reported in *Genkō Shakusho* (1364) and in *Tōkoku Kōsōden* (1687).

<sup>114</sup> *shingon* 眞言 (‘true words’), i.e., *mantra*, the embodiment in sound of a power which can effect spiritual and sometimes temporal

results.

<sup>115</sup> Yoshino is the site of the famous Kimpusenji Temple founded by En no Gyōja (note 110). Since Jōgambō is evidently on a pilgrimage to a shrine, Kimpu Shrine is his likely destination.

ing the corpse to a field conveniently nearby, he set it down, recited some incantations, and quickly buried it. Then, as he was about to return to Miwa, his body became paralyzed and he was unable to move. 'Just as I expected,' he thought fearfully. 'While realizing the importance of strict ritual purity<sup>116</sup> before the Manifest Traces, by acting as I have done I have incurred divine retribution!'

But when he tried to walk in the direction of Yoshino he had not the slightest difficulty. Thinking that perhaps it was the god's wish that he continue, Jōgambō journeyed on without fear. Then suddenly apprehensive, he stopped under a tree some distance from the shrine and recited sutras and spells as homage to the gods. Presently an attendant possessed by the deity<sup>117</sup> danced forth from the shrine and approached him.

'What is the meaning of this, worthy monk?' she inquired. Jōgambō trembled with fear. 'Alas, how short-sighted of me! I should not have come so far, and now I shall be chastised.' 'Why are you late, worthy monk, when I have been expecting you for so long?' asked the deity as she approached. 'I certainly do not abhor what you have done. On the contrary, I respect compassion.' And taking the monk by the sleeve, the deity led him to the Worship Hall.

Jōgambō was overcome with awe and gratitude, so that his black sleeves were soaked with tears. After hearing the Buddhist teachings expounded, he returned from his pilgrimage shedding tears of gratitude.

\* \* \*

Formerly when Priest Eshin<sup>118</sup> was visiting a shrine, the deity revealed itself to him through a vestal virgin. When Eshin spoke concerning doctrinal matters, she responded graciously; and when questioned about Tendai philosophy, she replied with clarity. Then Eshin, having gradually won his way into the god's favor, put a profound doctrinal matter before her. The vestal stood by a pillar and assumed a thoughtful stance with her ankles crossed. 'I have softened the light and identified with the dust for such a long time that I have quite forgotten!' said the deity, looking rather magnificent.

\* \* \*

'I am a manifestation of Kannon,' declared Ishihijiri Kyōjū<sup>119</sup> of Tōdaiji. And, since no one believed him, he drew up a lengthy manifesto. 'You claim to be a manifestation of Kannon,' someone remarked, 'but since no one believes you, you ought to demonstrate some miraculous powers. As for this manifesto, it is simply impertinent!' Replied Ishihijiri, 'I have not assumed the form of Kannon

<sup>116</sup> Mujū earlier notes the taboo against death at the Ise Shrine. See 1:1 and note 65.

<sup>117</sup> Kanayamahiko 金山比古 is enshrined at Kimpū Shrine.

<sup>118</sup> Genshin 源信 (942–1017), Tendai Amidaist philosopher and author of the influential *Ōjōyōshū*, 'The Essentials of Salvation'.

<sup>119</sup> Identity unknown.

for a very long time, and now I have forgotten even how to employ the miraculous powers.’

I find the matter quite an interesting contrast as I turn it over in my mind. Behaving as the occasion dictates in these latter days, even the avatars find it difficult to distinguish between their earlier and present states. And so it was said: ‘You should not evaluate sentient beings with your stupid cow- and goat-like eyes.’<sup>120</sup> This is truly difficult to comprehend.

\* \* \*

An official of the Atsuta Shrine<sup>121</sup> in Owari province tells the story of a holy man called Shōrembō<sup>122</sup> who planned to stop over near the shrine precincts on his way to Mt Kōya with his mother’s ashes. But everyone knew what he carried, and no one would give him lodging. That night, while Shōrembō was keeping vigil by the gate to the south of the main shrine, a shrine official came in a dream to the head priest as a messenger of the august deity.

‘Tonight I have a most important guest,’ said the god. ‘It is my wish that you treat him well.’ The head priest awoke and sent a messenger to the sanctuary to inquire if anyone had arrived during the night. He returned to report that no one had come but Shōrembō; so the head priest invited the monk in. ‘Since I am carrying my mother’s ashes, I cannot enter,’ he replied. Then the head priest said, ‘Where the Great Deity resides, all things are done in accordance with the will of the gods. By virtue of a revelation which I received this night, I am not to consider your presence as tabooed.’ He invited the monk into the shrine precincts, where he entertained him lavishly. Then ordering horse, saddle, and traveling expenses, he sent him on to Kōya. This happened really quite recently.

\* \* \*

Moreover, during the Jōkyū Disturbance<sup>123</sup> the frightened people living in the area assembled within the Atsuta Shrine’s outer mud-wall enclosure. They brought their valuables and various utensils with them, and, crowded together without room to move, one youth preceded his parents to the grave and a young girl was in labor.<sup>124</sup> The officials were unable to restrain the people, and, in order to call

<sup>120</sup> Presumably a reference to Chih-I’s *Fa-hua Hsüan-i* 法華玄義 (*Hokke Gengi*, T. 1716).

<sup>121</sup> Atsuta Shrine, in the present city of Nagoya where Mujū’s Chōboji is also located, is the repository of the sacred sword which is one of the three Imperial Regalia. Hence it is second in importance only to the Ise Shrines. Amaterasu is the major deity among several enshrined.

<sup>122</sup> Identity unknown.

<sup>123</sup> An abortive attempt by Emperor Gotoba

to challenge the military government at Kamakura. The imperial troops were defeated by Hōjō Yasutoki in the summer of 1221. See W.H. McCullough, ‘*Shōkyūki*: An Account of the Shōkyū War of 1221’, in *MN*, xix, 1/2 & 3/4 (1964).

<sup>124</sup> Death and childbirth are both ritually defiling (cf. 1:1; note 65). Confucian teaching also holds that it is unfilial for a child to precede his parents in death, but in this context the important fact is that someone died.

down the Great Deity that they might seek his advice, had sacred dances performed and the god was petitioned by those who shared this concern. Speaking through one of the shrine priests, the deity declared: 'The reason for my coming down from heaven to this land is that I might help the multitude of people. In the light of the present circumstances, these actions are not tabooed.' When he had said this, the people raised their voices in unison and shed tears of joy and sympathetic admiration. A person who was present at the time is alive today and related the incident to me.

Thus, the will of the gods is everywhere the same. If only the heart is pure, the body likewise is not defiled.

### 1:5 *The Gods Esteem Those with Wisdom and Compassion*<sup>125</sup>

'I REGARD MYŌEBŌ<sup>126</sup> and Gedatsubō<sup>127</sup> as my sons,' was the divine utterance of a great deity of Kasuga Shrine.<sup>128</sup> Once when the two men were on a pilgrimage to the great shrine, the deer on Kasuga Plain<sup>129</sup> all bent their knees and knelt out of respect for them. When the venerable Myōe was merely thinking of making a trip to India, the Kasuga deity communicated with him through an oracle at Yuasa and prevented his departure. Indeed, I hear that there is a written record of this communication. The deity explained that he would be sad if they were to be separated by such a distance, and Myōe was touched at the god's having stopped him. 'But if I should decide to go,' he inquired, 'would I reach India safely?' 'How could you, if only I am there to protect you?' replied the deity. At that time he touched the holy man's hand, which is said to have remained fragrant throughout his lifetime.

\* \* \*

When the venerable Gedatsubō, living at Kasagi in a secluded retreat which he called Wisdom Heights, invited the deity for a visit, it assumed the form of a child and rode there on his shoulders. The god composed this verse:

<sup>125</sup> The two complementary virtues of *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* (see note 95) are here shown to be esteemed by the Shinto gods.

<sup>126</sup> Kōben 高辨 (1173–1232). Influential Keron prelate, author of a tract, *Zaijarin* (Smashing the Bad Vehicle), criticizing Hōnen's *Senjakushū*. But Kōben was no bigot. In fact, Mujū's attraction to him was probably his like-minded spirit of eclecticism. See Nakamura, pp. 387–8. *Shasekishū* 3:8 records a lengthy 'Discourse of the Sage of Toga-no-o'.

<sup>127</sup> Jōkei. See note 75.

<sup>128</sup> *Daimyōjin* 大明神. Kasuga Shrine cele-

brates a number of deities. See Matsunaga, pp. 231–3. A convenient list with various *honji* identified according to period based on Kiyohara's *Shintōshi* is included in Kageyama Haruki 景山春樹, *Shintō no Bijutsu* 神道の美術 (Hanawa Shobō 塙書房, Tokyo, 1965), pp. 51–2.

<sup>129</sup> Kasuga Plain is south of Tōdaiji and east of Kōfukuji. See *Shasekishū* 5A:8, 'The Discussion of the Ant and Tick Scholars', for an amusing tale set in the same area; see also 1:5.

I will make my way  
 To Wisdom Heights, and, once there,  
 Will protect it,  
 That the Law of Sakyamuni  
 May be observed.<sup>130</sup>

Once, in a vacant practice hall at Wisdom Heights, the voice of the deity proclaimed:

Understand me!  
 Sakyamuni Buddha having come  
 Into the world,  
 I am the bright moon  
 Which illumines the land.<sup>131</sup>

It is said that the deity constantly discoursed on Buddhist doctrine. Indeed, how fortunate and enviable the experience of those who actually heard what took place when Sakyamuni was in the world.

It is said, 'Those having the light of wisdom accompany those having the light of wisdom.'<sup>132</sup> Internally, the bright wisdom of the gods is unobscured; externally, their compassion is marvelous. If we have wisdom and compassion, we should feel that the gods consider us as their companions. In a certain book it says, 'Fire breaks out where it is dry, and water flows where it is moist.'<sup>133</sup> If we dry up the attachments of the heart, the fire of wisdom will break out; if we have the moisture of sympathy, the water of compassion will issue forth.

### 1:6 *Profound is the Grace of the Gods Who Soften Their Light*

IN NARA a disciple of Gedatsu Shōnin<sup>134</sup> known as the Undersecretary Monk Shōen<sup>135</sup> was a great scholar, but fell into one of the evil paths. His spirit took possession of a woman, and among various things which he said through her was this: 'By virtue of the excellence of this illustrious deity's<sup>136</sup> skillful means, he does not send to other hells those who have shown the least devotion to him, whatever their crimes may be. Rather, he deposits them in the hell directly beneath Kasuga Plain,<sup>137</sup> and early every morning the bodhisattva Jizō from the Third Shrine<sup>138</sup> brings water in a lustration vessel and scatters it with a ritual

<sup>130</sup> *Gyokuyōshū* xx: 2720.

<sup>131</sup> *Shokukokinshū* vii: 691.

<sup>132</sup> Source unknown.

<sup>133</sup> An apparent reference to the Confucian philosopher Hsün Tzu 荀子 (c. 298–c. 238).

<sup>134</sup> See note 75.

<sup>135</sup> One of Gedatsubō's leading disciples, but little is known of him.

<sup>136</sup> One of several venerated at the Kasuga Shrine whose identity subsequently becomes evident. See note 128.

<sup>137</sup> See note 129.

<sup>138</sup> Daisan no goten 第三ノ御殿, i.e., San-nomiya 三ノ宮, whose True Nature is the bodhisattva Jizō.



sprinkler. If a single drop of water reaches the mouth of a sinner, his misery is temporarily relieved. And when for even a short time a man's thoughts dwell on the Truth, the god does not neglect to have him daily hear the exposition of the Mahayana sutras and the chanting of the sacred spells. Through this skillful means, in the end one rises out of hell. The scholars hear discourses on the *Great Wisdom Sutra*<sup>139</sup> held at Kōsen Hall east of Mt Kasuga, and their debates and discussions are the same as those of living men. Scholars in the past, they are all still scholars. And they are most grateful to hear the illustrious deity expounding the Law before their very eyes.'

Jizō occupies one of the four sites of the Kasuga Shrine, and his grace is said to be truly efficacious. He is the bodhisattva who leads and is entrusted [with mankind during the interval between the death of Sakyamuni and the coming of Maitreya], when there is no Buddha in the world. His True Nature and Trace Manifestations are equally to be relied on; consequently, the benefits of the gods who soften their light are everywhere identical. A number of monks from Enryakuji who had been turned into goblins [*tengu*] somewhere behind the great shrine of the Hiyoshi deity<sup>140</sup> were restored by the skillful means of this god who softened his light. There, too, among the various shrines, the god Jūzenji<sup>141</sup> frequently manifests himself, his True Nature being the bodhisattva Jizō.

When we consider that somehow or other we have had the good fortune to have received a human form in this life, we should aspire for release by employing the skillful means of a single method if we are to succeed in meeting the Law of the Buddha. 'It is important to place reliance on the skillful means of a single buddha and a single bodhisattva,' says the *Sutra on Contemplating Mind*.<sup>142</sup> Inwardly, we should rely on the fact that our Buddha-nature provides us with the condition for eternal life; outwardly, we should rely on the compassion and skillful means of the True Natures who Manifest their Traces, centering our thoughts deeply on the way of release from birth-and-death.

The fiery pit of the three ill destinies lies just beneath our feet; we have not yet awakened from the long night's dream of rebirth into the six paths of phenomenal existence.<sup>143</sup> If we return to our old haunts in the three ill destinies, having once had the exceptional good fortune to have received a human body and to have heard the Buddha's teaching,<sup>144</sup> of what avail will be a thousand regrets and a

<sup>139</sup> *Daihannya (haramittakyō)* 大般若 (波羅密多經), T. 220. A collection of sixteen sutras in six hundred fascicles on the doctrine of 'Perfect Wisdom' translated by Hsüan-chuang (600-64).

<sup>140</sup> The Hiyoshi 日吉 god, later identified with Sannō Gongen 山王權現, is the protector of Enryakuji. Sakyamuni is considered to be the True Nature. See also *Shasekishū* 1:7.

<sup>141</sup> Jūzenji 十禪寺, a deity of one of the seven shrines protecting Enryakuji. The bodhisattva

Jizō is considered to be Jūzenji's True Nature.

<sup>142</sup> *Shinjūkangyō* 心地觀經, T. 159. However, Watanabe notes that the phrase does not appear in this sutra.

<sup>143</sup> See note 89. The six states of existence from the gods to the hells, the 'three ill destinies' being the three lowest states: animals, hungry ghosts, and the hells.

<sup>144</sup> *sōjō no ninjin wo uke, udon no buppō ni ai . . .* 爪上ノ人身ヲ請ケ優曇ノ佛法ニ逢。Two common but awkward-to-translate metaphors in which\*

hundred laments? During many lives it is rare to float up into the human world, and we encounter the Buddha's teaching once in a hundred million aeons. Do not waste the days vainly following your whims. Time waits for no one, and we cannot know when death will come. Let us seriously exert ourselves.

1:7 *The Native Gods Esteem the Sincere Desire for Enlightenment*

IN NARA lived a scholar known as the priest Eichō.<sup>145</sup> The fruits of his diligence having accumulated during years of serious study, he had a reputation for being a great scholar. Now it happened that he confined himself in the great Kasuga shrine for prayer, and, in a dream, a deity<sup>146</sup> held discourse with him. Eichō questioned him about the doctrines of the *Treatise on Yoga* and the *Completion of Mere Ideation*<sup>147</sup> and was vouchsafed a reply. However, the monk did not see the august countenance. 'I have devoted myself to the way of learning,' he said in his dream, 'and I have studied for many years, carrying on the Idealistic [*yuishiki*] tradition which is the light of the Law, and offering up those Buddhist rites in which the gods delight. As a result, I have been vouchsafed the sight of your august form before my very eyes and the sound of your sublime words. My ingrained habits of selfish thought have led me to delight in considering that this is the result of good karma from a former life; and if I could likewise view your noble countenance, how deeply would my heart rejoice.' 'Because the merit of your pursuit of learning is indeed gratefully admired,' came the reply, 'I have thus held discourse with you. But inasmuch as you have no sincere desire for enlightenment, I do not wish to meet you face-to-face.'

Eichō woke from his dream overwhelmed with compunction. Indeed, the doctrines of Buddhism—whatever the sect—are for the purpose of liberation from the cycle of birth-and-death; one should not think of fame and profit. The conduct of the scholars in the seminaries of Nara and Kyoto has only fame and profit as its objective, and the pursuit of enlightenment is outside its province. To fall into heresy and sink into the lower realms of existence because of this would be most regrettable. With this in mind, Eichō forthwith became a hermit, and, with singleness of purpose, devoted himself to the way of release.

\* \* \*

\*the likelihood of being born in human form is compared to the dirt on a toe-nail as against that of the entire world (*Nirvana Sutra*), and the opportunity to encounter the teaching of the Buddha is said to be rarer than the appearance of the flower of the Udumbara tree, which blossoms only once in three thousand years (*Lotus Sutra*).

<sup>145</sup> Eichō 永超 (1014–95).

<sup>146</sup> See note 128.

<sup>147</sup> The *Yugaron* 瑜伽論 (T. 1579) and *Jōyūshikiron* 成唯識論 (T. 1585), translations of idealist treatises by Asanga (c. 410–500) and Dharmapāla (VI century). Both are basic works of the Hossō school, whose Kōfukuji is the tutelary temple of the Fujiwara clan, just as Kasuga is its shrine.

Long ago<sup>148</sup> the Miidera<sup>149</sup> 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. One of the monks made a pilgrimage to the shrine of the illustrious god Shinra<sup>150</sup> 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 could always restore the halls, pagodas, images and sutras if one had 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. The divine will, which delights in men awakening the desire for enlightenment and entering upon the True Way, does not vary regardless of the deity. Nor does it seem to be in conformity with the will of the gods for us to pray for the things of this life—poverty and prosperity being determined by one's actions in former lives. It is shameful simply to petition the gods and buddhas for good fortune in this world; in fact, it is stupid. One ought to direct this same amount of merit from religious practice toward the attainment of perfect wisdom. And even if he receives no sign from the gods, he should continue to pray for a genuine desire for enlightenment.

\* \* \*

A poor monk at Enryakuji living in the East Pagoda's<sup>151</sup> Northern Valley made a hundred-day pilgrimage to the Hiyoshi shrine<sup>152</sup> in order to improve his lot. He was vouchsafed a revelation in which the god informed him that he would make suitable arrangements. Then, while happily passing the time in anticipation, he was evicted for some trifling reason from the quarters where he had lived for many years. As there was nowhere else for him to go, the monk took identical lodgings in the West Pagoda's Southern Valley. After having received his revelation, he had waited expectantly. Now not only was there no such good fortune

<sup>148</sup> In 1081, according to Watanabe. The temple was attacked a number of times by the monks from Mt Hiei.

<sup>149</sup> Or Onjōji. See note 79.

<sup>150</sup> Shinra 新羅, the protector god of Miidera, was a Korean deity (the characters may

also be pronounced 'Shiragi') who appeared to the temple's founder, Enchin, during his return from study in China.

<sup>151</sup> The Komponchūdō 根本中堂 on Mt Hiei.

<sup>152</sup> See note 140.

as he had anticipated, but he was even expelled from his quarters by the superintendent. With a feeling of embarrassment he again confined himself in the shrine and prayed to the god. Once again he was vouchsafed a revelation.

‘Because there is not the slightest chance of good fortune for you in this life by virtue of your bad karma from former lives,’ explained the god, ‘I have simply moved you to warm quarters in the West Pagoda’s Southern Valley since it is cold in the East Pagoda’s Northern Valley—and I consider even this a bit of a concession! Aside from this it is not within my power to affect your fortunes.’

After receiving this pronouncement, the monk resigned himself and did not press the matter further. Thus it has been said, ‘Even the power of the gods cannot overcome the force of karma.’<sup>153</sup>

\* \* \*

At the time of the Buddha, five hundred of his kinsmen were attacked by Prince Virūdhaka, and the Buddha was unable to help them. People conjectured, ‘Since they are relatives of Blessed Sakyamuni, he will surely employ some miraculous power to save them.’ In order to resolve their doubts, Sakyamuni placed one of his kinsmen in his begging bowl and hid it in the heavens. But on the day when the other kinsmen were attacked, the man died spontaneously in the holy bowl. The Buddha then explained the causes underlying the incident. ‘These five hundred kinsmen long ago were five hundred fishermen who pulled out a large fish from the sea and killed it. That large fish was today’s Prince Virūdhaka. At that time I was a child and stroked the fish’s head with a blade of grass, and, as a result, today I have a headache.’ On that day even the Buddha was afflicted. How then as ordinary men can we avoid the law of moral causation?

\* \* \*

Although the bhikkhu Rigunshi was a virtuous arhat, he was destitute. Although he went out to beg, he obtained no food. Whenever he swept the dirt from the stupa where the Buddha discoursed, on that day he would receive alms. On one occasion Rigunshi overslept and Sariputra swept the platform. Later when Rigunshi went begging, he received nothing. And with no food but sand and water for seven days, he died of hunger. The Buddha explained the reason for this as follows. ‘In the past Rigunshi was unfilial toward his mother, and, when she was hungry and begged for something to eat, he told her to eat sand and drink water. For seven days he gave her no food, and this finally killed her. For such bad karma, though he is a virtuous monk, he is still punished.’

Because of such karma, poverty and low social position, the difficulties we encounter and the hardships of life, are all the result of past transgressions. We should envy neither society nor individuals but simply examine our own hearts

<sup>153</sup> A remark perhaps attributable to Jōgaku 聖覺 (1167–1235), who appears in *Shasekishū* 6:15.

with compunction and seek the Pure Land of Enlightenment, blameless and without fault. Perhaps this is the thought expressed by Nijō no In no Sanuki<sup>154</sup> in her verse:

If I will not see  
That my present unhappiness  
Is rooted in the past,  
Then how can I continue  
To feel bitter toward the world?

Generally speaking, the response of the gods and buddhas operates with little effect on practical affairs. How could it be concerned with the glories of the dream world of this present life? It is in conformity with the divine will that we pray for enlightenment in the next life, even if we receive no auspicious omen.

\* \* \*

Priest Kanshun<sup>155</sup> was a monk of Enryakuji. Destitute, he confined himself in the Hiyoshi shrine<sup>156</sup> for prayer, but the time was spent in vain as he received no auspicious sign from the god. So with bitterness toward the Sannō deity,<sup>157</sup> he left Mt Hiei and traveled to the Inari shrine,<sup>158</sup> where he presented his petition. Before long he was delighted in a dream to see the god press to his forehead a token for a thousand measures of rice. But later Inari addressed him as follows: 'In accordance with the injunction of Hiyoshi Daimyōjin, I must take back the token that I gave you earlier.' 'The Hiyoshi deity has no intention of helping me himself,' said Kanshun in his dream, 'and he even has an injunction against my receiving favors elsewhere. I don't understand.' Again the deity spoke. 'I am just a minor god and it is not for me to decide. Hiyoshi is an illustrious deity and has informed me, "This time Kanshun will escape from the cycle of birth-and-death. His material prosperity would become an obstacle to his spiritual progress, and he would find it difficult to attain release. Consequently, I do not comply with any request whatever, and I grant him nothing." So I must take back the token.'

At this the monk recognized the great compassion of the deity, and, still in a dream, was filled with gratitude. Upon waking he immediately returned to Enryakuji, where, according to one report, after devoting himself exclusively to religious rites for enlightenment in the next life, he attained rebirth in paradise. Thus, even if we are refused a favorable omen, it is not futile to pray to the gods

<sup>154</sup> 二條ノ院ノ讃岐. Twelfth-century poetess. The verse appears in *Shinkokinshū* (xx: 1966).

<sup>155</sup> 桓舜, 978–1057.

<sup>156</sup> See note 140.

<sup>157</sup> Sannō Daishi 山王大師, another name for Hiyoshi. *Sannō-ichijitsu shintō* 山王一實神道 is the Tendai version of Shinto-Buddhist syn-

cretism. See Matsunaga, pp. 189–92.

<sup>158</sup> Inari 稻荷. The shrine, in Fushimi ward in southern Kyoto, is dedicated to the gods Uka no mitama 倉稻魂, Saruta hiko 猿田彦, and Ōmiya no me 大宮女, and is the central shrine of the popular Inari cult.

and buddhas. This may be part of the divine plan! We should simply keep the faith, persevere in practice, and rely on their mysterious grace.

\* \* \*

In a dream Seal of the Law Hōchibō no Shōshin<sup>159</sup> met the god Jūzenji<sup>160</sup> coming up Mt Hiei from West Sakamoto. The god rode in a small palanquin with his attendants in stately array, and Shōshin, wishing to use the occasion to make some request, recalled the poverty of his aged mother and asked the deity to provide for her support. The god's countenance had been truly gracious and he appeared to be in a pleasant mood. But on hearing this request, he looked dejected and tired, and a pensiveness came over him. Shōshin then reconsidered: it certainly was not in conformity with the divine will for him to have asked for the things of this world. 'Since my aged mother is not long for this world, anything will suffice. But how is she to attain enlightenment in the next life? Please give her your earnest help.' At this the monk saw the god's countenance resume its original appearance; in a happy frame of mind again he smiled and nodded his assent. Gradually the hue of the mother's desire for enlightenment deepened and her end was auspicious.

It is utterly foolish to pray to the gods and buddhas with our thoughts only on worldly affairs. The intention of the gods who soften their light is to lead people into the Way of the Buddha. Worldly prosperity is only an occasional skillful means to this end. This incident was related to me by students of Shōshin's disciples. It is a true story.

### 1:8 *The Dubious Custom of Presenting the Gods with Offerings of Living Beings*

IT HAS BECOME a tradition for people to visit the Itsukushima shrine<sup>161</sup> in Aki province to pray for the religious conviction to pursue enlightenment. Some have attributed this to the fact that long ago Kōbō Daishi<sup>162</sup> made a pilgrimage here. Having discoursed on the profundities of Buddhism, he was apprised by the deities that he would receive in recompense whatever he might request. 'For myself I want nothing,' he replied, 'but should any in these degenerate times pray for the resolve to pursue enlightenment, please grant them religious determination.' 'We have heard your request,' was the reply. And from that day to this

<sup>159</sup> 實地房ノ謔眞, late twelfth-century scholar of Enryakuji.

<sup>160</sup> See note 140.

<sup>161</sup> Shrine in Hiroshima prefecture dedicated to three daughters of Susa-no-o, the first two by the sun-goddess Amaterasu: Ichiki-

shima-hime 市杵島姫 (later identified with Benzaiten), Tagori-hime 田心姫, and Tagitsu-hime 湍津姫. This was the tutelary shrine of the Taira clan.

<sup>162</sup> Kūkai 空海 (774–835), founder of Japanese Shingon.



even men of considerable religious attainment have constantly paid their respects to the shrine.

While inspecting the premises, a certain venerable priest who had confined himself to the shrine on retreat saw countless numbers of fish from the sea donated as offerings to the gods. Now the True Natures of the gods who soften their light are the buddhas and bodhisattvas, who, placing compassion before all else, admonish men not to take life. This custom of making offerings of fish was so utterly questionable that the monk prayed to the gods especially that they might resolve his doubts about the matter.

This is what the deities revealed to him: 'Indeed, it is a strange business! Unaware of the nature of moral causality, wantonly taking life and unable to rid themselves of delusion, there are those who hope to serve us by offerings of living beings. Because we transfer the responsibility for this to ourselves, their guilt is light. The creatures whom they kill use this as a skillful means to enter into the Way of the Buddha, since their lives are wantonly cast away and offered up to us, their days numbered by past karma now being exhausted. Accordingly, we gather to us those fish whose numbered days of retribution are spent.' When he had heard this, the priest's doubts were immediately resolved.

This is perhaps the reason that offerings of deer and birds are made at Suwa in Nagano province, and at Utsunomiya in Tochigi province, where there is much hunting. Ordinary people cannot understand the skillful means of the provisional manifestations of the buddha.<sup>163</sup> So also is it with the practice of using sacred formulas<sup>164</sup> to subdue one's opponent. For the sake of society and for the sake of others, the exorcist, abiding in a resolve to show compassion and benefit sentient beings, subjugates the violent individual who is their enemy. It is said that this individual will then surely abide in compassion, put an end to evil thoughts, and in a future life will attain enlightenment. Were the exorcist to act simply with the thought that the man was his enemy, this would be contrary to the spirit of his religious discipline and clearly a misdeed to hinder his spiritual progress. In any case the method would not work under these circumstances. Thus, the skillful means of the gods will accord with this principle. Indeed, to refrain from killing, to observe the commandments as taught by Buddhism, and to devote oneself to the nectar of the Law—this truly conforms to the will of the gods!

So, concerning the fact that Confucianism and Taoism were first disseminated in Han China,<sup>165</sup> and filial rites were performed using cows and goats, an ancient sage remarked: 'It is not easy to spread the Law of the Buddha. Accordingly, the Indian bodhisattvas were born into the land of the Han and in the beginning promulgated non-Buddhist scriptures, acquainted the people with the notion that their fathers and mothers were divine spirits, and taught the

<sup>163</sup> *daigon*. See note 94.

<sup>164</sup> *shingon*. See note 114.

<sup>165</sup> See *Shasekishū* 1:1 and notes 71-4.

disposition of filial piety—all as skillful means of the Dharma.<sup>166</sup> Therefore we speak of the non-Buddhist scriptures as ‘provisional teachings’ [*gonkyō*]: they are not the strict teaching of the Buddha. After Buddhism became widespread, those who followed the teachings of Sakyamuni revised these native ceremonies, converting them into Buddhist rites of filial devotion.

If we consider the matter in this way, we find that in the days when our own country had neither seen nor heard the name of Buddhism and was not acquainted with the principle of moral causation, as a skillful means to serve the Buddha and advance the Dharma, the bodhisattvas taught people what are known as Shinto ceremonies, gradually employing them as skillful means for the propagation of Buddhism. Had the strict Buddhist teaching reflecting the mind of the True Nature of these deities become widespread, people would have abandoned the ancient customs and devoted themselves to the nectar of the Law; and this would certainly have been in conformity with the will of the gods. However, since the mind of man finds it difficult to abandon deeply-entrenched customs and hard to forget what has been dyed into one’s thinking, this would have been poor strategy. People would have continued to observe the taboos and to make much of the native ceremonies, while their reverence for Buddhism would have been minimal.

To observe the Buddhist regulations in the presence of the gods who soften their light is surely compatible with the will of the gods. And to make pilgrimages to places such as Kumano<sup>167</sup> does not violate the Buddhist precepts. The teaching and practice of Buddhism at various miraculous shrines from medieval times being in accord with their True Natures, the prestige of the gods who soften their light is likewise to be gratefully maintained.

\* \* \*

At the foot of a certain mountain in China was a shrine with miraculous powers which the people of the country venerated with offerings of cattle, sheep, fish and birds. The shrine deity was only an old pot. Now it happened that a Zen master came and struck the pot, saying, ‘Whence comes the deity? Where are the miraculous spirits?’ And he completely demolished it.

Then a layman in a plain blue robe appeared, tipped his hat, and bowed respectfully to the Zen master. ‘I have suffered many afflictions here. Now, by virtue of your discoursing on the doctrine of no-rebirth in the cycle of transmigration, I am suddenly released from my painful karma and have been born into the heavens. I cannot repay your kindness.’ Having said this, he departed.

<sup>166</sup> The source of this quotation has not been established.

<sup>167</sup> The three major shrines at Kumano are the Hongū 本宮, Shingū 新宮 and Nachi 那智, respectively enshrining the native deities Ketsumi-no-Miko-no-ōkami 家都美御子大神,

Hayatama-no-o 速玉之男, and Izanami 伊邪那美. Buddhist syncretic thought identified their ‘true natures’ as Amida, Kannon and Seishi. Shingū and Nachi came to be referred to as the ‘two manifestations sites’ (*ryōsho gongen* 兩所權現). See also *Shasekishū* 1:9.

It has been stated that when the gods receive offerings of slain creatures, their lot is pain; but when the pure nectar of the Law is offered up in profound discourse, then they experience happiness. Bearing this in mind, we should make guiltless offerings to the gods and revere the miraculous nectar of Buddhism.

1:9 *Delusion Checked by the Skillful Means of the Gods  
Who Soften their Light*

THE LAND STEWARD OF TAKATAKI<sup>168</sup> in Kazusa province made his yearly<sup>169</sup> pilgrimage to Kumano.<sup>170</sup> Cherishing his one and only daughter and feeling, moreover, that the experience would benefit her, he took her along with him on the trip. The daughter was exceptionally beautiful, and in the quarters of the Kumano priests lived a young monk from Kyoto called Ajari<sup>171</sup> Something-or-other. On seeing the girl the monk was troubled at heart and longed unbearably for her. But having undertaken the practice of Buddhism at this miraculous shrine and resolved to observe the pure discipline, he was chagrined at having met such an unhappy fate and at being unable to clear his mind of delusive thoughts. He prayed both to the principal deity and to the provisional manifestations [*gongen*] to put an end to his troubled state of mind, but as the days passed the vision of her loveliness would not leave him and he could think of nothing else. Unable to endure the torment any longer and hoping to divert his mind, he strapped on his implement box<sup>172</sup> and set out vacantly for Kazusa province. He passed Kamakura, and, at a place called Mutsura,<sup>173</sup> lay down on the beach while waiting for a favorable boat that would take him across the bay to Kazusa. Tired from his travels, he dozed off.

In his dream he made his way by ship to Kazusa and inquired until he came to Takataki. The Land Steward came to greet him and asked why he had travelled so far. 'I wanted to visit Kamakura and I made a trip to perform certain austerities,' replied the Ajari. 'Having heard that your house was nearby, I have come to visit you.' The Land Steward entertained him lavishly and when the Ajari remarked that he was about to be on his way, the man detained him with an invitation to spend some time getting acquainted with life in the country.

This had been the Ajari's plan from the beginning and he stayed on, calling on the girl at various times and visiting her stealthily. As their mutual affection

<sup>168</sup> 高瀬, an old manor at the upper reaches of the Yōrō river, in what is now central Chiba prefecture.

<sup>169</sup> Or possibly, according to Watanabe, a pilgrimage made to counteract the dangers of certain 'unlucky years' (*yakudoshi*) according to Yin Yang beliefs. In general, these were the 25th and 42nd years for men, and the 19th and 33rd years for women.

<sup>170</sup> See note 167.

<sup>171</sup> Ajari 阿闍梨. Clerical rank used in the Tendai and Shingon sects, those most closely associated with the ascetic (*shugendō*) practices, for which Kumano was and continues to be a major center.

<sup>172</sup> See note 77.

<sup>173</sup> At present part of Kanazawa ward, Yokohama.

deepened, a baby boy was born to them, to the great annoyance of the girl's parents. She was immediately disinherited as an unfilial child, and the two lovers went into hiding, staying at the house of a relative in Kamakura. As the months and years passed, the girl's parents finally relented: 'She is our only daughter; and besides, there is nothing we can do to change matters.' The priest, in addition to being an average young man of pleasant appearance, was quick-witted and excelled in calligraphy and like accomplishments. Accordingly, the girl's parents decided to accept him as their son-in-law, and her father sent him to Kamakura as his representative to inform the authorities. Since the grandson likewise was quite well behaved, the grandparents entertained and pampered him. In time, several children were born to the couple.

In their son's thirteenth year they went up to Kamakura for his Coming-of-Age Ceremony. The luggage was put in order and a number of ships were outfitted. But just as they were crossing the bay, a strong wind came up and the waves ran high. The child was at the gunwale looking out and accidentally tumbled into the sea. Crying for help, he sank into the waves and was seen no more. . . .

The Ajari woke from his dream heartbroken and in great distress. During the space of a short nap he had reviewed in detail the events of thirteen years. Even if his plan were to succeed and he attained happiness and prosperity, they would be but the dream of a moment; and though there might be pleasure, there would also be misery. Considering the futility of his plan, the Ajari immediately set out and returned to Kumano. Truly, the dream was a skillful device of the gods who soften their light.<sup>174</sup>

During Chuang Chou's short nap long ago, he dreamed that he became a butterfly and frolicked in a garden of flowers for a hundred years. Upon waking he found that only a short time had elapsed. The *Chuang Tzu* comments: 'Did Chuang Chou in a dream become a butterfly; or did a butterfly in a dream become Chuang Chou?'

Indeed, although we consider things to be real, they are figments of a dream; and it is because they are figments of a dream that they are difficult to distinguish as such. Transmigration in the Three Realms [of desire, form, and pure spirit] and the transformations through the four kinds of living beings<sup>175</sup> are all a delusive dream occurring during our nap of ignorance. So the *Sutra on Perfect Enlightenment*<sup>176</sup> explains, 'When we first realize that all sentient beings have been Buddha from the very beginning, then "birth-and-death" and "nirvana" are both as figments of a dream.' When we open our minds to true understanding,

<sup>174</sup> A local adaptation of the famous Hantan 邯鄲 (Kantan) theme, which had its origins in China and India and a number of variations in Japanese literature, including the noh, *Kantan* 邯鄲, by Zeami (1363–1443), and *Kin-*

*kin Sensei Eiga no Yume* 金々先生榮華夢 ('Kin-kin Sensei's Dream of Glory') by Koikawa Harumachi (1744–89).

<sup>175</sup> See note 68.

<sup>176</sup> *Engakukyō* 圓覺經 (T. 842).

we see that the beginningless cycle of birth-and-death and the nirvana of attainment [*shigaku*] are both manifest in the short nap of ignorance. Only the unborn substratum of mind which is Original Enlightenment [*hongaku*] is the True Mind that knows no napping and no dreaming.

An ancient has said, 'There is no difference between yesterday's reality and today's dream. When one has not crossed over to the land of enlightenment, experience is like a dream in which even the figments of a dream, depending on circumstances, resemble enlightenment. But what man of understanding will think that "dream" and "enlightenment" are distinguishable?'<sup>177</sup> The profound reason of things is difficult to comprehend. But the thoughtful man must not entertain any doubts about the illusory things of the world.

Po<sup>178</sup> says, 'Things that flourish and wither pass away, and all become as a dream. To put aside both grief and delight at this is zen.' It is not only because things pass away that they are empty. It is because they have no self-nature, even when present in time, that things are Void—which thus is involved in the created while being itself uncreated. When we know all phenomena to be in fact a dream, and, with neither pleasure nor grief, maintain a serene heart, we will then quite naturally be in conformity with the Gate of Emptiness (which leads to spiritual realization).

Again Po says, 'The efficacy of zen is known to the individual but is not apparent to others—so that even at times when he is expected to grieve, he does not grieve . . .' The meaning of this statement is as follows: 'The figments of a dream are so inconsequential that pleasure and grief should not occupy the mind. The things of the world that we are wont to think of as "*satori*" are all a dream. To take pleasure in life, to grieve at death, to delight at meeting and to feel regret at parting is to have a heart which does not realize that they are all a dream. But the man whose heart is unmoved by all these things is one who enters the Gate of Emptiness. That which is spoken by the mouth we should not call "zen", but rather, the serenity after having set aside all thoughts from the mind.' The *Chuang Tzu* says: 'Dogs that bark well are said not to be good; men who speak cleverly are said not to be wise.'

Accordingly, he who does not rid his heart of the desire for fame and profit and the objects of the five senses is far from the Gate of Emptiness, though he may discourse eloquently on the doctrines of Buddhism. The *Net of Brahma*<sup>179</sup> says, 'Though he explain Emptiness with his mouth, his actions are in the phenomenal world. . . .' Those with true wisdom and religious conviction are rare in these Latter Days, and though a man may explain the Law with his mouth, he does not follow the Way with his heart. As he believes the figments of a dream to be reality, his attachment is deep and his craving strong. In the *Completion of Mere*

<sup>177</sup> The source of this passage has not been identified. | (772–846).

<sup>179</sup> *Bommōkyō*. See note 63.

<sup>178</sup> Rakuten 樂天, i.e., Po Chü-I 白居易

*Ideation*<sup>180</sup> it is said, 'When one has not yet attained true enlightenment, he constantly lives in a dream. For this reason the Buddha describes birth-and-death as a long night.' The Great Teacher Tz'u En<sup>181</sup> comments, 'When the Law is external to the mind, we transmigrate through birth-and-death; but when we realize the One Mind as enlightenment, we cast birth-and-death aside forever.' This is because we are constantly reborn by virtue of the erroneous state in which we experience the unrelieved darkness of the long night of birth-and-death and view the Law as something external. It is said that by our not seeing the Law as external to the mind, the Law becomes mind and the mind becomes the Law, and we will leave the cycle of birth-and-death. The thoughtful man, realizing the One Mind as the source of all phenomena, must awaken from his nap in the Three Realms [of desire, form, and beyond form].

1:10

*A Pure Land Devotee Punished for Slighting the Gods*

IN CHINZEI [Kyūshū] lived a lay scholar of the Pure Land sect who conducted a survey of the shrine lands under his jurisdiction as Land Steward. After he had appropriated certain property as in excess of what was registered, the priests and monks<sup>182</sup> attached to the shrine expressed their resentment and made an appeal to the government in Kamakura. 'As for the appropriation of excess lands, what the Land Steward decides has the authority of his office,' was the reply. Since Kamakura would take no action, the shrine officials argued at length with the Land Steward, but he would not give in. When they threatened to put a curse on him, he simply ridiculed them. 'I'm not the least bit frightened. Curse away! What does a Pure Land devotee care about the gods? How can even the gods inflict punishment on a devotee who is to receive the bright light of Amida accepting him into the Pure Land?'

The priests of the shrine were deeply angered and placed a curse on him, so that presently he was afflicted with a grave illness and began to rave. The Land Steward's mother, a nun, was greatly alarmed and pleaded with him in tears, 'Consider your filial obligations to me. Return the shrine lands and tell them you have made a mistake.' But all to no avail. As the sickness became progressively worse and there appeared to be little hope for the man's recovery, his mother, unable to stand the strain any longer, called upon the god, who sent a messenger to the sick man's house. 'The shrine lands must be restored at all costs! Say there has been an error and return the property to the shrine.' But the sick man shook his head with an air of madness. 'I pay no attention to the gods,' he replied, and would not relent in the slightest.

<sup>180</sup> *Jōyūshikiron*. See note 147.

<sup>181</sup> K'uei Chi 窺基 (632–82), founder of the Fa-hsiang (Hossō) sect in China.

<sup>182</sup> *shasō* 社僧. Another expression of the

intermingling of Shinto and Buddhism was the practice of having Buddhist priests officially attached to shrines. See Kitagawa, p. 69.



After the messenger secretly reported to the Land Steward's mother what had happened, the god finally took possession of a vestal and held discourse with the woman, who tried to placate him. 'The sick man declares that he will return the shrine lands,' said the nun, 'please spare his life this time.' 'He is one who shakes his head and says, "I pay no attention to the gods!"' replied the vestal, laughing outright. 'O what a defiled mind! I am a Transformation Body of the Eleven-Faced Kannon.<sup>183</sup> If one relies on the Original Vow of Amida, my primordial form, and calls upon his name with an upright heart, how endearing do I consider this, how precious! But how can such a dirty, defiled, and unrighteous mind be worthy of the Original Vow?' The vestal rubbed her fingers in irritation and her tears fell quietly, so that those who heard it all wept profusely.

In the end the Land Steward did not recover from his head shaking and he expired. In his final hour his teacher and religious mentor of many years came to encourage him to say the *nembutsu*. 'Impertinent fellow!' was his response, striking his teacher with a pillow; and the man struck him back on the head. Indeed, he seems to have had a peculiar life.

Then his mother, the nun, also fell ill and called down Hakusan Gongen<sup>184</sup> to pray for recovery. 'Inasmuch as I commanded him to stop behaving as he did, I do not feel that I have done anything blameworthy in the sight of the gods.' Replied the deity: 'Even though you commanded him to stop, it displeases me that in your heart you felt ill-will toward me out of sympathy for your child.' In the end the nun also passed away.

Soon after his son succeeded the Land Steward as head of the house, a heron came to roost on the ridgepole of the house, and this was interpreted as an admonition from the gods. 'What punishment can the gods inflict? I can contain it,' declared a resident soothsayer.<sup>185</sup> A cup still in his hands, the man's fingers were bent backwards as though bound by cords, and crouching over, he died on the spot. The soothsayer's descendants are living today and tell people of the incident, which, since it happened in our own times, is known to many. With the man's descendants and relations alive today, I hesitate to relate the matter. However, my purpose is not to carry gossip, but simply to let people know why they should not belittle the majesty of the gods.

The *nembutsu* sects are an important gateway to salvation appropriate to this defiled world, and provide the common man with a direct route to release from birth-and-death. But though they are indeed most excellent, there are those who pass judgment on other practices, other ways of acquiring merit. They go as far

<sup>183</sup> See Matsunaga, pp. 123-4. In Tantrism Kannon is an emanation of Amida.

<sup>184</sup> Mts Hakusan, Fuji, and Tateyama constitute the 'three sacred mountains' of Japan. Hakusan 白山, east of Fukui, enshrines, among others, Shirayama-hime no Mikoto 白山比咩

命, whose True Nature is the Eleven-Faced Kannon of our story.

<sup>185</sup> *on'yōji* 陰陽師. Originally, an official rank in the Bureau of Divination (*On'yōryō*), but later loosely applied to popular diviners.

as to make light of the other buddhas, bodhisattvas, and divinities, and to ridicule the various teachings of the Mahayana. These commonplace people have a way of thinking which does not admit that other disciplines also lead to paradise; understanding nothing outside their own beliefs, they disparage the other buddhas and bodhisattvas. The schools of the *nembutsu* sects are numerous, but if we discuss the issue in the light of their common basic principles, we find that in general their sutras and commentaries do not contest the attainment of paradise through other disciplines. The *Sutra of Meditation on Amida Buddha*<sup>186</sup> states: 'Reciting the scriptures of the Mahayana, expounding their fundamental principle, showing filial devotion to one's parents, observing five, or eight, of the Buddhist commandments, or even the five social virtues of Confucianism—one will still transfer the merit of his actions to others and attain rebirth in paradise.'

In the *Larger Pure Land Sutra*<sup>187</sup> it is said: 'Among my forty-eight vows, the eighteenth is for those who make a special practice of the *nembutsu*; by the nineteenth, I vow to meet on their deathbeds those who devote themselves to meritorious virtues; and in accordance with the twentieth vow, those who accrue merit and collect their thoughts will be reborn in paradise.'

Thus, the *nembutsu*, being especially selected from among the various practices and established on a single vow, is primary, fundamental; but the other practices, based on the entire set of productive vows, are secondary, complementary. If one admits as much, then how can he say that the other practices do not lead to rebirth in paradise?

In the commentary of Shan-tao<sup>188</sup> it is stated, 'Because they devote themselves to the myriad practices, they all can go to paradise.' It thus appears that if one devotes himself to any of the myriad disciplines and virtuous activities, he will attain rebirth in paradise. In a commentary<sup>189</sup> on miscellaneous practices it is said, 'Although we grant that rebirth in paradise can be attained by applying these methods, they are all called indiscriminate practices.' But though it applies the terms 'distant' and 'familiar', it does not appear to say that rebirth in paradise cannot be attained through them.

Even more to the point are the many examples from India, China, and Japan based on the writings and biographies of those who achieved their objective of rebirth in paradise through recitation of the *Lotus Sutra* and the chanting of sacred formulas. We should not lose the efficacy of the Mahayana by curbing it, nor disparage and neglect the benefits of the other teachings. Thus, while respecting and relying solely on Amida's Vow and diligently seeking benefit from

<sup>186</sup> *Kammuryōjūkyō* 觀無量壽經 (T. 365), the *Amīṭāyus-dhyāna-sūtra*. This sutra, the *Muryōjūkyō* (see following note), and the *Amidakyō* are the three basic scriptures of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism.

<sup>187</sup> *Sōkangyō* 雙觀經, i.e., the *Muryōjūkyō* 無量壽經 (T. 360).

<sup>188</sup> 善導 *Zendō* (613–81), third of the five patriarchs of the Pure Land tradition. The quotation is from his hymn, the *Hanjusan* (T. 1981).

<sup>189</sup> Watanabe identifies the source as *Sanzei* 歡善義, a commentary by Shan-tao.

the *nembutsu*, we should not disparage other disciplines nor make light of other buddhas, bodhisattvas, and deities. The consequences of this offense can be seen in the final moments of the Land Steward, related above. The capsizing of the vehicle in front is a warning to those that follow—those who truly desire rebirth in the Pure Land should bear in mind the significance of this incident.

To speak in such a way is itself certainly a severe criticism,<sup>190</sup> but I have tried to illustrate a certain way of thinking. The attitude which denies the attainments of paradise to other disciplines seems to do homage to Amida; actually, it disparages him. This is because Amida, with widespread compassion, also welcomes into his Pure Land those who cultivate the myriad disciplines and virtuous actions. The boundaries of his paradise are limitless and will encompass those groups which follow other teachings and other sects. Amida excels the other buddhas, his Pure Land surpasses theirs, his forty-eight world-transcending vows are reliable, and his great, limitless paradise is most splendid. So if one rejects the non-*nembutsu* disciplines and doctrines and denies their efficacy for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land, he minimizes the Buddha's compassion and treats his paradise as if it had narrow boundaries.

This reminds me of a certain wet-nurse who wished to praise the little princess in her charge. 'The princess I take care of has a most beautiful appearance. Her eyes are narrow and pretty.' Then someone mentioned to her that narrow eyes were a defect. 'Indeed? Well, one of her eyes is quite big!' Similarly, some people try unsuccessfully to praise Amida. Moreover, even among those who would deny the attainment of paradise to the other disciplines there are various viewpoints. 'Those who say that other practices do not lead to the Pure Land are not in possession of the three attitudes<sup>191</sup> for reaching it,' explains a certain master. 'When one has the three attitudes, he sees that the other disciplines all become as the *nembutsu*, and *ōjō* will be attained. But if one lacks the three attitudes, he will not attain *ōjō*, though he recite the Buddha's name.'

If this is true, then we should not doubt that the other disciplines also lead to rebirth in paradise. If one utterly lacks these three attitudes, then he will not attain *ōjō*, though he may say the *nembutsu*. Between the *nembutsu* and other practices there is absolutely no difference. The earlier Pure Land scholars spoke in a similar vein while propagating their sect as circumstances permitted; there is nothing to blame in this attitude. Later scholars and householders, hearing only the words [but not understanding the meaning of the doctrine], disparage other practices.

Not long ago when the *nembutsu* doctrine was becoming widespread, certain people threw copies of the *Lotus Sutra* into the river and others rubbed Jizō's head with smartweed,<sup>192</sup> saying that the non-Amidist buddhas and scriptures were

<sup>190</sup> Mujū is always conscious of the apparent inconsistency of criticizing criticism, being intolerant of intolerance, etc. See *Shasekishū* 4:1.

<sup>191</sup> *sanshin* 三心. Perfect sincerity, profound resolve for it, and the resolve to transfer one's merits to others. The source of the quotation has not been identified.

useless. In one village the serving girls were discussing the affairs of a neighboring household: 'They've already crushed smartweed on the neighbor's Jizō down as far as his eyes!' What shameful behavior! During a ceremony honoring the bodhisattva Jizō a certain priest of the Pure Land sect, because he felt the service was improper, took down a statue of Amida which was standing beside the Jizō. Another individual remarked, 'Those who believe in Jizō will fall into hell, because Jizō resides in hell.' If this is the case, then by virtue of their skillful means to benefit sentient beings and having vowed out of their great compassion vicariously to bear the sufferings of others, both Amida and Kannon are, of their own accord, also in hell! Why limit it to Jizō? Because the mind of discrimination is deeply attached to the things of this world, none of these people understands the basis of the appearances of the Buddha.

In a northern province lived a sutra-chanter<sup>193</sup> who performed the Thousand-part Sutra Recitation,<sup>194</sup> but joined an Amidist sect at the urging of a *nembutsu* devotee. 'Those who recite the *Lotus Sutra* will certainly fall into hell; it is a grave error. Those who hope for rebirth in the Pure Land other than through the *nembutsu* are foolish indeed!' The man trusted the words of the devotee. In all that he did, his heart and mouth had no peace, as he kept repeating, 'How wretched and miserable I am for having chanted the sutras these many years, and not once having recited the *nembutsu*.' The man became seriously ill—a result, no doubt, of such a perverted notion—and fell into a frenzy. 'Oh, how I regret having chanted the sutras,' he droned monotonously. Finally, the man gnawed off his tongue and lips, and, smeared with blood, died raving. The monk who had encouraged him then remarked, 'Having repented of the sin of reciting the *Lotus Sutra* and biting off his tongue and lips in retribution, he has atoned for his crime and has certainly been reborn in the Pure Land.'

When the *nembutsu* doctrine became popular in the capital some time ago, a mandala was painted to express the assertion that the wicked will attain *ōjō*, but not those who observe the commandments and recite the sutras.<sup>195</sup> It depicted the celestial light of salvation falling on a murderer, but not on a distinguished-looking monk chanting the sutras. The work became a sensation, and a letter of protest was sent to the Court from Nara, which said in part: 'Those who see the traditional pictures of hell will repent of having done evil, and those who venerate this mandala will deplore having performed good works.'

When we interpret things according to the four terms of differentiation,<sup>196</sup>

<sup>192</sup> *tade* 藜. The significance of this disrespectful action is not clearly understood.

<sup>193</sup> *jigyōsha* 持經者. An itinerant who specialized in reciting the sutras, especially the *Lotus Sutra*; prominent during the Heian and Kamakura periods.

<sup>194</sup> A recitation at which a sutra was parcelled out and chanted by a thousand monks. The recitation could also be performed by a

single individual.

<sup>195</sup> This calls to mind Shinran's famous statement, 'Even a good man is reborn into the Pure Land, and how much more so with the wicked man!' See Nakamura, pp. 386 & 515.

<sup>196</sup> *shiku* 四句. Existing, not existing, both, neither.

we find that the good man has evil propensities. Although on the surface he resembles a good man, he is not so in reality because of his desire for fame and profit. Moreover, the evil man has good roots of merit from prior existences, and though on the surface he appears to be wicked, yet in the depths of his being exists an upright heart and a desire to follow the Buddha's teachings. From such premises ignorant priests and laymen, their hearts biased and proud, criticize and slander the man who observes the commandments and cultivates the good—'He is an evil man, his religious practice is unorthodox, and he will not be reborn in the Pure Land.' And of the man who does evil rather than good they say, 'He is a good man, the light of salvation will shine upon him, and his rebirth in the Pure Land is assured.'

These fixed delusions are a serious error. They are rare among those who have studied the Holy Teachings and become acquainted with their senior brethren in the faith, but one now and then hears of such peculiarities among laymen in remote areas. In the outlying reaches of remote provinces there are many distorted schools of thought, not only in the *nembutsu* tradition, but in Tendai, Shingon, Zen, and the rest. Accordingly, we should exert every effort to become intimate with a man of wisdom, make the Holy Teachings our own, and thus avoid entering the forest of erroneous views.

For this reason the sutra<sup>197</sup> tells us, 'It is not difficult to realize Enlightenment, the marvelous fruit of religious practice; but the opportunity of meeting a genuine spiritual adviser is very uncertain.' And an ancient sage has remarked, 'When we have not met an outstanding teacher who has made his appearance in the world, we drink down a distorted version of the sacred medicine of the Mahayana.' According to the Tendai patriarch,<sup>198</sup> 'A wise man of non-Buddhist persuasion converts falsity into truth, heterodoxy into the True Law. A dull Buddhist takes the truth and turns it into falsity, making heresy of the True Law.' The Sixth Zen Patriarch<sup>199</sup> states, 'When the man of false views explains the True Law, the True Law becomes heterodoxy; when the man of true understanding interprets heterodoxy, then heterodoxy becomes True Law.'

Nowadays those able to view things correctly are rare, and there are those who adapt the Buddha's truth to their own erroneous views, leading themselves and others into the path of error. When a cow drinks water, it becomes milk; with a serpent, it becomes poison. Though the Dharma has a single taste, the truth or falsity of its application depends on men. Understand this well, and, avoiding the error of false views, enter into the True Path.

<sup>197</sup> *Shinjikangyō* 心地觀經 (T. 159).

<sup>198</sup> Chih-I. The phrase appears in the *Mo-ho Chih-kuan*. See notes 96 & 97.

<sup>199</sup> Hui-neng 慧能 (638–713), whose spiritual biography is recorded in the famous 'Platform Sutra', the *Liu-tsu t'an-ching*.