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Reading the Miraculous Powers of Japanese Poetry

Spells, Truth Acts, and a Medieval Buddhist Poetics of the Supernatural

The supernatural powers of Japanese poetry are widely documented in the literature of Heian and medieval Japan. Twentieth-century scholars have tended to follow Orikuchi Shinobu in interpreting and discussing miraculous verses in terms of ancient (arguably pre-Buddhist and pre-historical) beliefs in *kotodama* 言霊, "the magic spirit power of special words." In this paper, I argue for the application of a more contemporaneous hermeneutical approach to the miraculous poem-stories of late-Heian and medieval Japan: thirteenth-century Japanese "dharani theory," according to which Japanese poetry is capable of supernatural effects because, as the dharani of Japan, it contains "reason" or "truth" (*kotowari*) in a semantic superabundance. In the first section of this article I discuss "dharani theory" as it is articulated in a number of Kamakura- and Muromachi-period sources; in the second, I apply that theory to several Heian and medieval rainmaking poem-tales; and in the third, I argue for a possible connection between the magico-religious technology of Indian "Truth Acts" (*saccakiriyā*, *satyakriyā*), imported to Japan in various sutras and sutra commentaries, and some of the miraculous poems of the late-Heian and medieval periods.

KEYWORDS: *waka* – dharani – *kotodama* – *katoku setsuwa* – rainmaking – Truth Act – *saccakiriyā*, *satyakriyā*

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At some time in or around the fifth year of the Engi era (905), the Japanese court poet Ki no Tsurayuki wrote in his introduction to the anthology *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Poems, Past and Present) that Japanese poetry has the power to "move heaven and earth, stir feeling in unseen demons and gods, soften relations between men and women, and soothe the hearts of fierce warriors."[1] His words are well-founded, for the literature of premodern Japan abounds in tales of poets who have used poetry to a variety of ends, including to inspire love, cure illness, end droughts, exorcise demons, and sometimes even raise the dead. Contemporary scholars refer to such stories as *katoku setsuwa* 歌徳説話, "tales of the wondrous benefits of poetry."[2] Entire sections of twelfth- and thirteenth-century tale anthologies have been devoted to the genre,[3] and the accounts themselves, frequently fantastic, are cited in numerous premodern works as evidence of the truth of Tsurayuki's words.

Despite the large number of such stories surviving from the Heian and medieval periods (ninth through sixteenth centuries), modern scholars have devoted relatively little attention to *katoku setsuwa* as a whole. What research has been done has tended to focus on the boundaries and origins of the genre, rather than the theory or mechanics of the poems themselves.[4] To some extent, investigation

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1. SNKBT 5: 4. Tsurayuki's assertion is modeled on a passage in the *Shijing* 詩経 Major Preface (first century CE), translated in McCullough 1985a, pp. 304–5. In writing about Japanese poetry, Tsurayuki uses the term *waka* 和歌, "Japanese song." In this article, I employ the term *waka* to refer specifically to *tanka* 短歌, Japanese poems composed in a more-or-less thirty-one-syllable format.

2. *Setsuwa* is a genre of anecdotal literature, usually short and often didactic. The term *katoku* is based upon the phrase *uta no toku* 歌の徳 ("the benefits of poetry"), which dates from the late Heian period (*Toshiyori zuinō* 俊頼髄脳 [ca. 1115; NKBZ 50: 82]; *Kohon setsuwa shū* 古本説話集 [twelfth or thirteenth century; 1: 7, SNKBT 42: 414]). As Watanabe Shōichi (1974, p. 110) explains, the *toku* 徳 in *katoku* 歌徳 signifies "marvelous benefit," in the sense of *kudoku* 功徳 and *go-riyaku* 御利益, rather than "morality" or "virtue," as in *dōtoku* 道徳. For definitions of *katoku* and *katoku setsuwa*, see, for example, Kubota 1974, pp. 26–27; Moriyama 1975, p. 1; Izumi 1986, pp. 258–59.

3. *Fukurozōshi* 袋草紙 (ca. 1157–1158) contains a section titled "Poems Provoking Responses in Buddhas and Deities" within the chapter "Kitai no uta" 希代の歌, "Extraordinary Poems" (SNKBT 29: 155–59); *Shasekishū* 沙石集 (ca. 1280) contains a section titled "Deities who were Moved by Poems and Came to People's Aid" (NKBT 85: 226–27).

4. Major studies include Ogawa 1995 and 1999; Watanabe 1988; Kamioka 1986; Moriyama 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977; and Nishimura 1966. Among these, Nishimura is unusual in that he follows the folklorist and ethnologist Yanagita Kunio in referring to miraculous poem-stories as *uta no reigendan* 歌の霊験談, "tales of the divine powers of poems," rather than *katoku setsuwa*.

has been hampered by the theoretical apparatus most commonly applied to the interpretation of the poems and their tales. As Ogawa Toyo'o has observed, studies have tended to founder in the "nebulous world of ancient *kotodama* faith"—the politicized and largely prehistorical Japanese belief in "the magic spirit power of special words," as first fully articulated by the twentieth-century critic and ethnologist Orikuchi Shinobu and his followers.[5] In recent years, a few scholars have contested the relevance of *kotodama* theory to the miraculous poem-stories of the late-Heian and medieval periods. Watanabe Shōgo, for one, has argued that concepts of *kotodama* expressed in the poetic anthology *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves; compiled in the eighth century) are too far removed in time from the *katoku setsuwa* of the twelfth and later centuries to be appropriately employed in their interpretation.[6] While Watanabe may have overstated his case—*kotodama* theory certainly has its uses, both in illuminating ritual contexts and in explaining poetic syntactic conventions traceable to Man'yō poetic practice—as a hermeneutical device, it has been of relatively limited benefit in analyzing magical poems and understanding the ways in which those poems may have been perceived to have functioned by the poets and commentators of the medieval period (ca. 1185–1600).

In the thirteenth century, radical new notions of poetry (some of which were based upon imported principles of Chinese music theory, and others upon esoteric Buddhist thought) came to be articulated in a number of Buddhist and poetic commentaries.[7] One of these ideas—that *waka* (Japanese poems) achieve their supernatural effects because they are the dharani (magical Buddhist incantations) of Japan—went on to enjoy widespread currency in the late medieval period, so much so that it was repeated, axiomatically, in works of popular fiction from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[8] Surprisingly, modern

5. Ogawa 1995, pp. 55–56. The definition of *kotodama* as "magic spirit power of special words" is from Ebersole 1989, p. 14. As a nativist ideology, *kotodama* theory is politicized in that it posits a recognition, among the ancient peoples of Japan, of the superiority of the Japanese language to the languages of foreign lands. For discussions of *kotodama* in English, see Boot 1996; Plutschow 1990, pp. 11–13 and 75–87; Ebersole 1989, pp. 19–23; Konishi 1986, pp. 111–20, and 1984, pp. 100–10 and 203–12; and Miller 1977. Also see Nishimura 1966, pp. 16 and 32–37; Orikuchi 1937 (pp. 134–36), 1943 (pp. 245–52), 1947 (pp. 116-18), 1950 (pp. 268–71), and 1957 (2: 169–170). Plutschow (1990), Konishi (1984), Moriyama (1974), and Nishimura (1966) all identify themselves with either Orikuchi or his thought.

6. Watanabe 1988, pp. 6–7. Kamioka Yūji (1986) and Ogawa Toyo'o (1995) have similarly turned away from *kotodama* theory in their discussions of *katoku setsuwa*. Kamioka posits that the poem-stories proliferated under the influence of the Japanese and Chinese *Kokinshū* prefaces; Ogawa argues that they emerged in response to a perceived decline in the status of *waka* in the late Heian period.

7. Notions of *waka* and music theory are advanced in the Buddhist poetic commentary *Nomori no kagami* 野守鏡 (1295), Kitabatake Chikafusa's *Kokinshū chū* 古今集註 (1347), and various other sources. See Ogawa 1999, pp. 252–63. On *waka* and esoteric Buddhism, see Klein 2002.

8. See, for example, *Kamiyo Komachi* 神代小町 (mjmt 3: 473b) and *Murasaki Shikibu no maki* 紫式部の巻 (in *Ishiyama monogatari* 石山物語, mjmt 2: 243a).

scholars have given little consideration to "dharani theory," as it might be called, in their investigations of *katoku setsuwa*. However, as an alternative to ancient and modern *kotodama* thought,[9] this medieval theoretical approach offers new opportunities for insights into both the miraculous poems of Japan, and inter-Asian influence in the realms of magico-religious practice and belief.

Waka-*Dharani Theory*

Early-medieval poetics, unlike that of the ancient age, tended to be grounded in the principles of Buddhist metaphysics. By the twelfth century, under the influence of the Tendai concept of non-duality, many priests, poets and commentators had begun to equate the Way of Poetry with the Way of Buddhism. In his poetic treatise *Korai fūteishō* (Notes on Styles, Past to Present; completed in 1197), Fujiwara no Toshinari (Shunzei) asserted the concord of *waka* and the Three Truths of Tendai Buddhism; in its subtlety and profundity, Shunzei maintained, the contemplation of poetry was equivalent to the practice of meditation.[10] From around this time, Buddhist-Shintō syncretism (also fundamentally based on the principle of non-duality) led to a new understanding of the powers of verse. Medieval syncretic philosophy maintained that Japanese deities were native manifestations, or "traces," of original Buddhist divinities. Within this ontological paradigm, *waka* came to be seen as the dharani of Japan, evincing all of the magical attributes that such an equation would imply.[11]

Variously referred to as *darani* 陀羅尼 ("dharani"), *shingon* 真言 ("true words"), *myō* 明 ("light"), *ju* 呪 ("spells"), *sōji* 総持/惣持 ("all-encompassing [verses]"), and *mitsugo* 密語 ("secret language"), dharani were well-known and widely employed in Japan as supernatural incantations from at least the early eighth century.[12] In the exoteric Mahāyāna sutras, dharani are most often represented as mnemonic devices for memorizing scriptural passages and as charms for the protection of those who recite the sutras. They often contain indecipherable phonic fragments, and in Chinese translations of the scriptures, they are invariably transliterated (rather than translated) from their original Sanskrit

9. Roy Andrew Miller (1977) follows Itō Haku in drawing distinctions between pre-historical, eighth-century, Tokugawa-period, and modern *kotodama* thought; W. J. Boot (1996) discusses *kotodama* concepts with a similarly historical precision.

10. NKBZ 50: 274–75; LaFleur 1983, pp. 90–97; Stone 1999, pp. 43–44. In addition to *Korai fūteishō* 古来風躰抄, the commentaries *Sangoki* 三五記 (ca. 1312–1317) and *Sasamegoto* ささめごと (1463–1464) report that the poet-priest Saigyō 西行 (1118–1190) also maintained that the practice of poetry is a form of Buddhist meditation (NKT 4: 341; NKBT 66: 182).

11. Kikuchi 1995; Yamada 1967. Kikuchi argues that the philosophical foundations of the *waka*-dharani association are traceable to the work of Jien 慈円 (1155–1225), a Tendai poet-priest best known for his authorship of *Gukanshō* 愚管抄. Yamada discusses records of actual uses of *waka* as dharani in religious ceremonies in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

12. The Ritsuryō code of 718, for example, permits the chanting of dharani for medical purposes. Inoue 1976, p. 216; Abe 1999, pp. 161–62.

forms. Their resulting incomprehensibility (for the Chinese and Japanese, in particular) may have lent them an aura of mystery and depth. According to many esoteric sutras and sutra commentaries, the recitation of dharani is an effective means of expunging sin and achieving enlightenment, but for Japanese of the Nara, Heian, and medieval periods, dharani—like *waka*—were often employed for more mundane purposes, including healing, rainmaking, divination, and the like.[13]

In the poetic commentary *Mumyōshō* 無名抄 (Nameless Notes; from between 1211 and 1216), the poet-priest Kamo no Chōmei explains that unlike prose, a poem "possesses the power to move heaven and earth, to calm demons and gods," because, among other attributes, "it contains many truths in a single word" (*hito kotoba ni ōku no kotowari wo kome*).[14] Chōmei's explanation is similar to the priest Kūkai's, some four hundred years earlier, regarding the nature of dharani. In *Hizōki* (Record of the Secret Treasury; ca. 805), Kūkai—founder of the esoteric (Shingon) sect of Japanese Buddhism—notes that "dharani, as the speech of the Tathāgatas, contains only truth (*shinjitsu* 真実)." In *Hokekyō shaku* (Interpretation of the Lotus Sutra; 834), Kūkai writes: "The exoteric is to consume many words to denote one meaning. The esoteric is to unleash countless meanings from within each letter of a word. This is the secret function of dharani."[15] Poetry

13. *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記 (ca. 787), *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (early twelfth century), *Hōbutsushū* 宝物集 (late twelfth century), and *Shasekishū*, among others, contain numerous references to the use of dharani to cure illness, ward off snakes and demons, extend life, pacify spirits, and enact other miracles (Sakaida and Wada 1943, p. 667; also see footnote 29, below). The author of *Nihon ryōiki* cites a passage from the sutra *Senjukyō* 千手経 to the effect that dharani "can bring branches, blossoms, and fruit even to a dead tree" (trans. by Kyoko Nakamura; SNKBT 30: 149 and 272; Nakamura 1973, p. 241). *Gōdanshō* 江談抄 (ca. 1111; GR 27: 551b–52a) contains accounts of four priests who performed rainmaking ceremonies according to the method prescribed in the sutra *Daiunrin seiukyō* 大雲輪請雨経, which includes the chanting of dharani (TSD 19 [989]: 484–92; Kamata 1998, p. 290). Further references to *Daiunrin seiukyō* are contained in *Konjaku monogatari shū* 14: 41 (SNKBT 35: 359); *Kojidan* 古事談 206 (ca. 1215; Kobayashi 1981, 1:221); *Zoku kojidan* 続古事談 (1219; GR 27: 642b); and *Taiheiki* 太平記 (fourteenth century; NKBT 34: 434; McCullough 1959, p. 378).

14. NKBT 65: 88. The larger *Mumyōshō* passage reads:

> In what way does a poem surpass ordinary language? Because it contains many truths in a single word, because it exhausts, without revealing, deepest intent, because it summons forth unseen ages before our eyes, because it employs the ignoble to express the superior, and because it manifests, in seeming foolishness, most mysterious truth—because of this, when the heart cannot reach and words are insufficient, if one should express oneself in verse, the mere thirty-one characters [of a poem] will possess the power to move heaven and earth, to calm demons and gods.

15. Translation of both excerpts by Ryuichi Abe. *Hizōki* 秘蔵記 and *Hokekyō shaku* 法華経釈, in Kōbō Daishi Chosaku Kenkyūkai 1991, 5: 138 and 4: 199; Abe 1999, p. 264. In *Hannya shingyō hiken* 般若心経秘鍵 (818 or 834), Kūkai similarly writes: "Among the sermons of the Tathagata, there are two kinds. One is the exoteric; the other, the esoteric. For those of exoteric caliber he preached lengthy sermons containing many clauses, but for those of esoteric caliber, he preached the dharanis, the words that embrace manifold meanings" (translation by Hakeda). Kōbō Daishi Chosaku Kenkyūkai 1991, 3: 11; Hakeda 1972, p. 274.

is to prose, in Chōmei's understanding, as the esoteric (dharani) is to the exoteric in Kūkai's. Ryuichi Abe explains that Kūkai attached great significance to the ability of dharani to "condense the meanings of a sutra's prose lines into a small number of phrases," and that it was from this "semantic superabundance"—what Abe elsewhere terms a "supereconomy of signification"—that Kūkai believed the powers of dharani were derived (Abe 1999, pp. 264, 6, and 271). Japanese poetry, with its use of puns, pivot-words, pillow-phrases, and various associative and allusive techniques, is characterized by a similar semantic economy. Chōmei seems to have thus equated the origins of *waka*'s miraculous powers with those of dharani as formulated by Kūkai in the early ninth century.

Although Kamo no Chōmei does not explicitly equate *waka* with dharani, the unknown author of the Buddhist and poetic commentary *Nomori no kagami* (Mirror of the Watchman of the Fields; 1295), who reiterates Kūkai's (and later Chōmei's) theory of semantic economy, does.[16] Writing some eighty years after Chōmei, the *Nomori no kagami* author explains:

> Dharani are words selected from the heart of the teachings of the various Buddhas; they are the ultimate distillation of the true principle (*kotowari*) of immediate salvation of sentient beings. This is why although their lines are few, their effects are great. The words of poetry are also many, but the poet chooses from among them in order to compose a verse in thirty-one characters. The same as a dharani, the verse expresses the truth (*makoto* まこと) of the poet's intent. (NKT 4: 87)

In his *setsuwa* anthology *Shasekishū* (A Collection of Sand and Pebbles; ca. 1280), the priest Mujū Ichien professes the identity of *waka* and dharani in terms of medieval syncretic philosophy. His argument, as Kikuchi Hitoshi has observed, shows the influence of both Tendai and Shingon Buddhist thought:[17]

> To fathom the Way of Poetry is to still the disordered trembling of a restless heart. It is to achieve tranquility and peace. The words of a poem are few, but meaning is contained therein. This is the way of all-encompassing verses—that which we call dharani.
>
> The gods of our country are the traces of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. They are each but one of many expedient manifestations. With his "eight-fold fence

16. The identity of the *Nomori no kagami* author remains uncertain. However, Ogawa Toyo'o has recently and persuasively argued that he was a priest by the name of Kujin 公尋, a disciple of Kōkaku 光覚 in the Gyōzan 魚山 school of shōmyō 声明 sutra chanting (Ogawa 1999, pp. 264–70). On *Nomori no kagami* and the conflation of *waka* and Buddhist thought, see Kimbrough 2003.

17. Kikuchi 1995, p. 220. The Tendai and Shingon influence is not readily apparent in the following translated passage, because I have not quoted it in full. Although *Shasekishū* has a complicated textual history, it is not relevant in this particular case. For an alternate translation, see Morrell 1985, pp. 163–64. Gary Ebersole (1983, p. 61) and Konishi Jin'ichi (1986, p. 117) have discussed this passage as well.

> of Izumo," Susano'o-no-mikoto originated the composition of verse in thirty-one syllables.[18] It was no different than the words of the Buddha. The dharani of India are simply in the language of that country's people. Using the language of India, the Buddha expounded dharani. This is why Meditation Master Yi-xing wrote in his Commentary on the Dainichi Sutra that "the words of the various lands are all dharani."[19] If the Buddha were to appear in our country, he would surely expound dharani in Japanese. Fundamentally, dharani have no words; they are expressed in words. (NKBT 85: 222–23)

According to Mujū's linguistic relativism, dharani transcend the spoken or written idiom of any particular people. Language is simply the medium through which they are conveyed. The concept is Benjaminian, one might say, in its suggestion of a Pure Language—an "ultimate essence" within the "linguistic flux"—lurking both beyond and within the multitudinous languages of humankind.[20] Mujū later writes:

> The thirty-one chapters of the Dainichi Sutra naturally correspond to the thirty-one syllables of *waka*. Because *waka* encompass the natural truths (*dōri* 道理) of lay and monastic life in thirty-one syllables, they provoke responses in Buddhas and bodhisattvas and move gods and humans alike. Although dharani are composed in the Indian vernacular, they have the power to expiate transgressions and eliminate suffering in those who take them up. Japanese *waka*, too, are composed in the ordinary language of the land, but if one should express one's feelings in *waka*, there is sure to be a response. Furthermore, in that they contain the essence of the Dharma, there is no doubt that they are dharani. (NKBT 85: 223)

To say that *waka* are capable of miraculous effects because they are the dharani of Japan is not entirely correct (according to Mujū's explanation), although this tended to be the manner in which the powers of poetry were understood in the medieval period. Because *waka* and dharani are the same, to say that *waka* work because they are dharani is to say that *waka* work because they are *waka*. Rather, as Mujū would have us understand, *waka* are effective because, as dharani, they express a "natural truth" that transcends human language. In that

18. According to *Kojiki* (712), the deity Susano'o-no-mikoto composed the very first *waka* when he built a palace for his bride (translation slightly modified from Borgen and Ury 1990, p. 81):

yakumo tatsu	Eight clouds arise—
Izumo yaegaki	the eight-fold fence of Izumo,
tsumagomi ni	to dwell with my wife
yaegaki tsukuru	I make an eight-fold fence;
sono yaegaki wo	oh, that eight-fold fence!

19. *Dainichikyō sho* 大日経疏, by Yixing Chanshi 一行禅師 (Ichigyō Zenji; 683–727).

20. Benjamin 1970, pp. 69–82 ("Ultimate essence" and "linguistic flux" are from pages 79 and 80). Regarding Mujū's (and others') linguistic relativism, see Kikuchi 1995, pp. 218–21.

they necessarily express that truth in "thirty-one syllables"— the standard *waka* format—their power results from both their content and their form.

In explaining the miraculous powers of poetry, Mujū Ichien, Kamo no Chōmei, and the unknown author of *Nomori no kagami* use the terms *kotowari* 理 ("reason," "truth," "universal principle"), *dōri* 道理 ("natural truth," "rightfulness"; a synonym of *kotowari*),[21] and *makoto* 真/実 ("truth," "that which is real"; a synonym of *shinjitsu* 真実, which Kūkai uses to describe dharani). Ryūfuku Yoshitomo has observed that from around the second half of the twelfth century, the concept of "reason," as expressed in the words *kotowari* and *dōri*, came to replace "precedence" as a guiding philosophical principle in the minds of the aristocratic classes (Ryūfuku 1995, p. 13, cited in Ogawa 1999, p. 249). Reason seems to have been identified with poetry from around this time as well. Kamo no Chōmei, for example, asserts in his Buddhist tale anthology *Hosshinshū* (Accounts of Awakenings to Faith; compiled previous to 1216) that "*waka* is the way of *kotowari* in its purest form."[22] Likewise, in judging a poetry contest in 1247, Fujiwara no Tameie writes that "in the past and today, Japanese poetry springs from the human heart and expresses the *kotowari* of the world."[23] The locating of the miraculous powers of *waka* in this *kotowari*—a truth that is expressed, dharani-like, in the semantic superabundance of the Japanese poetic form—is the essence of thirteenth-century *waka*-dharani thought.

In the early sixteenth century, the Tendai scholar-priest Sonshun 尊舜 (1451–1514), author of the Lotus Sutra commentary *Hokekyō jurin shūyōshō* (Gathered Leaves of the Lotus Sutra from a Grove on Eagle Peak), described the link between *waka* and dharani in much the way that Mujū did some two hundred and thirty years before.[24] One of several fifteenth- and sixteenth-century *jikidan* ("straight talk")-type Lotus Sutra commentaries (so named for their self-stated aims of explaining the Lotus Sutra in an unambiguous, straightforward manner),[25] *Jurin shūyōshō* is notable for its pervasive use of *waka* to explicate passages and ideas from the Lotus Sutra. In the "Dharani" (*Darani-hon* 陀羅尼品) chapter of the work, Sonshun explains that "dharani are the sacred words of

21. An inter-linear note in Hosokawa Yūsai's 細川幽斎 poetic commentary *Kokin wakashū kikigaki* 古今和歌集聞書 (1574; quoted in Kamioka 1986, p. 189) defines *kotowari* as *dōri*.

22. *Hosshinshū* 発心集 6: 9, in Miki 1976, p. 276. Iwasaki Reitarō argues (unconvincingly) that for Chōmei, *kotowari* signified the *kotowari* of Tendai Truth (concerning the empty, provisional, and non-dual nature of all phenomena). He identifies five instances in *Mumyōshō* in which Chōmei uses the term (two occur within the quoted passage in footnote 14, above). Iwasaki 1978, pp. 51–63.

23. Cited in Ogawa 1999, p. 245. Tameie makes similar statements in his *Kokinshū* commentary, *Kokin joshō* 古今序抄 (1264). See Ogawa 1999, pp. 242–46, and 250.

24. *Jurin shūyōshō* 鷲林拾葉鈔 was completed at Senmyōji 千妙寺 in Hitachi Province in or around 1512. In his prologue to the work, the priest Jikkai 実海 (a contemporary of Sonshun) gives the year 1510, while in the woodblock-printed manuscript of 1650, Sonshun gives the years 1511 and 1512. Sonshun was a native of Tomobe in the central region of Hitachi.

25. On the *jikidan*-type Lotus Sutra commentaries, see Kimbrough, forthcoming (chapter 5).

the various Buddhas. For this reason, if one chants them as instructed, one will receive benefits without limit."[26] Sonshun later writes:

> Waka are the dharani of Japan. As Master Jichin explains, "Waka are Japanese dharani. When Buddhas appear in this country, naturally they expound dharani as waka. The thirty-one chapters of the Dainichi Sutra, too, take the form of the thirty-one characters of waka."[27] Lord Tsunenobu relates, "Waka are the source of magical powers; they are seeds drawing us to enlightenment. The Eighty Thousand Holy Teachings are contained within their thirty-one characters."[28] It is thus that we chant poems, both in our Buddhist practices and to entertain the gods. The sutras extol the Buddhas' virtues in verse, and among the thirty-seven deities of the Shingon Diamond World [Mandala], Kabosatsu of the Ki, Man, Ka, and Bu [Bodhisattvas] manifests as a deity of poetry.
>
> (*Jurin shūyōshō* 4: 459)

Like the poet-priests of the thirteenth century, Sonshun asserts that Japanese poetry expresses a multiplicity of meanings greater than the sum of its individual words; like dharani, he explains, (mis)quoting Minamoto no Tsunenobu, *waka* contain within their few syllables the entirety of the Buddhist teachings. Sonshun supports his explanation by citing poems attributed to Kūkai and Saichō, progenitors of the Japanese Shingon and Tendai sects, and he recounts a story about how Saichō once pacified two demons with a poem. Unlike *waka*, dharani were widely known in the Heian and medieval periods for their ability to ward off demons,[29] and it was perhaps for this reason that Sonshun chose to include the Saichō story in his discussion of the identity of *waka* and dharani:

26. *Jurin shūyōshō* 1991, 4: 453. The chapters of *Jurin shūyōshō* are titled after the chapters of the Lotus Sutra.

27. Jichin 慈鎮 is the posthumous name of Jien 慈円 (1155–1225). Kikuchi Hitoshi (1995, p. 225) argues that Jien has been confused here (and in a related passage in *Waka shinpishō* 和歌探秘抄 [1493]) with Mujū Ichien.

28. Minamoto no Tsunenobu 源経信 (1016–1097) is the traditionally (and wrongly) attributed author of *Waka chikenshū* 和歌知顕集 (ca. 1265), which contains similar remarks in its opening lines (Katagiri 1969, pp. 97 and 199). Comparable statements are attributed to Tsunenobu in *Sangoki* (NKT 4: 341) and *Sasamegoto* (NKBT 66: 182). On the history and dating of *Waka chikenshū*, see Klein 2002, pp. 108 and 212–25. According to an unrelated story in *Fukurozōshi* (SNKBT 29: 157), Tsunenobu once composed a poem that magically added years to Emperor Shirakawa's life.

29. Fujiwara no Tsuneyuki 藤原常行 (836–875), for example, is reported in various sources to have been saved from demons by the power of the *Sonshō dharani* 尊勝陀羅尼 (*Konjaku monogatari shū* 14: 42; *Kohon setsuwa shū* 2: 51, and so on). A similar story is told about Fujiwara no Morosuke 藤原師輔 (908–960) in *Ōkagami* 大鏡 (ca. 1085–1125; NKBT 21: 127–28; McCullough 1980, p. 136), and about Fujiwara no Takafuji 藤原高藤 (838–900) in *Gōdanshō* (GR 27: 577b–578a). In this same chapter of *Jurin shūyōshō*, Sonshun tells a story of an imperial envoy who drove off demons with a *waka*, in this case by invoking the authority of the Emperor (translated in footnote 52, below). In *Maigetsushō* 毎月抄 (dated 1219), the poet Fujiwara no Teika includes the "demon-crushing style" among his ten styles of poetic composition, but he has little to say about it other than that it is difficult to learn. See NKBT 65: 127; NKBZ 50: 514–15; Brower and Miner 1961, pp. 247–48.

At the time of his founding of [the Temple on] Mount Hiei, the Master sought out timber to construct the [statue of] Yakushi in the Central Hall. In the north-east, he came upon a camphor tree emitting light from its trunk. Thinking this strange, he approached to have a look. Two demons were standing guard. The Master intoned:

anokutara	You Buddhas
sanmyaku sanbodai no	of Most Perfect
hotoketachi	Enlightened Wisdom—
waga tatsu soma ni	bestow your silent protection
myōga arasetamae	on this forest that I fell!

"We have been guarding this tree since the time of Kuruson Buddha,"[30] the demons said. "We were told that in the Shakyamuni Age of the Imitated Dharma, a Mahāyāna-spreading Teacher of Men would come to this mountain, and that we should give the tree to him. This must be you." Speaking thus, they immediately set off toward the north-east. The Master cut down the tree and reverently carved an image of Yakushi Nyorai. He made this the Principal Image of the Central Hall.[31] As his benediction he chanted, "For having shown his mercy to sentient beings at the dawn of the Age of the Imitated Dharma, he is called Yakushi, Lapis Lazuli Buddha of Light." The Master thus paid his respects, whereupon the wooden Yakushi nodded in plain reply.[32] People say that even now, if you encounter something frightening as you travel the road at night, chant this poem three times and demon spirits will do you no harm.

(*Jurin shūyōshō* 4: 460–61)

The poem that Saichō uses to appease the demons is a famous one.[33] It resembles a dharani not only in its reported effects, both for Saichō and for later travelers who chant it as a spell at night, but also in its incorporation of a transliterated Sanskrit phrase (*anokutara sanmyaku sanbodai*, "Perfect Ultimate Enlightenment"), rather than a Chinese or Japanese translation. Insofar as it comprises thirty-eight syllables, however, Saichō's poem pushes the boundaries of the traditionally thirty-one syllable *waka* form. By comparison, a character in Ki no Tsurayuki's *Tosa nikki* (The Tosa Diary; ca. 935) is said to have composed

30. Krakucchandha, the fourth of six Buddhas to appear in the world before Shakyamuni.

31. Traditional accounts maintain that Saichō dedicated the image in 788. Groner 1984, pp. 30 and 133, note 93.

32. According to *Jinten ainōshō* 塵添壒嚢鈔 (an encyclopedia of 1446, revised and enlarged in 1532), Saichō recited his benediction (identical to the one quoted here) every time he swung his hatchet. Upon completion, the image nodded whenever it was revered. Bussho Kankōkai 1912, p. 413a (17: 4). Yakushi Ruri Kōbutsu 薬師瑠璃光仏 is another name for Yakushi Nyorai 薬師如来.

33. The poem is *Wakan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 602, *Shinkokin wakashū* 新古今和歌集 1920, and *Ryōjin hishō* 梁塵秘抄 565. It is also reproduced in *Fukurozōshi* (snkbt 29: 152), *Korai fūteishō* (nkbz 50: 286), *Toshiyori zuinō* (nkbz 50:69), *Ōgishō* 奥義抄 (nkt 1: 223), etc. According to these works, Saichō composed it when he built the Central Hall on Mt. Hiei.

an impromptu poem with thirty-seven syllables—a slightly lesser offense—and to have been ridiculed as a result.[34]

In his poetic treatise *Ōgishō* (Observations on Deepest Principles; ca. 1135–1144), Fujiwara no Kiyosuke writes:

> The syllables of a Japanese poem have been set at thirty-one since [Susanoʾo-no-mikotoʾs] "Eight Clouds of Izumo." Nevertheless, a verse may be longer when its intent is not easily expressed, and a verse may be shorter when its words are not enough. (NKT 1: 222)

As Kiyosuke explains, the thirty-one-syllable form is an ideal, not a requirement. Many poems comprise thirty-two syllables, and some, thirty-three. Nevertheless, the length of Saichō's verse is extraordinary. Although it would seem to transgress the necessary linguistic condensation from which its power supposedly derives (according to dharani theory, that is), the poem simultaneously suggests that the enlightenment of Buddhas is too vast, even in name, to be contained within a standard thirty-one syllable *waka*. It is perhaps this truth—the *kotowari* of the Buddhas' limitless enlightenment, expressed in the purity of its Sanskrit designation—that lends Saichō's poem its strength, revealing him to be the rightful recipient of the marvelous camphor.

Rainmaking Poems and the Powers of Reason

Miraculous poems—specifically those reported to have been efficacious in moving demons and deities—can generally be divided into two categories: those that function spontaneously, independent of the poet's wishes, and those that are reported to have been crafted by the poet with an intent to produce a supernatural result. Of poems in the former category, most are represented as having been effective because of the emotional response that they inspire: a deity, inadvertently moved by the grief or longing of the poet, typically exercises its powers on the poet's behalf.[35] Poems in the latter category tend to employ a variety of approaches: while many appeal to sentiment, others are composed to flatter, threaten, blackmail, and possibly even confuse.[36] In some cases, simply the presentation

34. SNKBT 24: 16; McCULLOUGH 1985b, p. 276. I am grateful to Gus Heldt for bringing this example to my attention.

35. The dying Koshikibu no Naishi (998?–1025), for example, is reported to have composed a poem so moving that it convinced a deity to save her life. See *Jikkinshō* 十訓抄 10: 14 (1252; SNKBZ 51: 401), *Kokon chomonjū* 古今著聞集 182 (1254; NKBT 84: 167–68), *Shasekishū* (NKBT 85: 227), and so on.

36. There is an Edo-period account of how Izumi Shikibu (in one version of the story, Sei Shōnagon) quieted the Naruto Maelstrom with a poem containing a pun on the name "Naruto." Yanagita Kunio suggests that since the poem is so difficult to understand, it may have succeeded by bewildering the deity into submission (YANAGITA 1962b, p. 419; see also YANAGITA 1962a, pp. 286–87).

of a request in the form of a *waka* at a particular temple or shrine has been known to provoke a divine response.[37]

Among the various miraculous poem-stories of Heian and medieval Japan, many pertain to the ability of famous poets to conjure rain. Few concerns are more fundamental to an agricultural society—indeed, to any society—than the absence or overabundance of rainfall, and in centuries of setsuwa anthologies and related sources, outstanding priests, poets and musicians have been attributed with either the power to summon the rain or else to make it stop.[38] In the poetic commentary *Kokinshū chū* (Commentary on the *Kokinshū*; ca. 1347), Kitabatake Chikafusa writes that "when [Ki no Tsurayuki] speaks of effortlessly moving heaven and earth, stirring feeling in unseen demons and gods, he speaks of the powers of poetry. It is by such powers that we move all deities, causing rain to fall and droughts to cease."[39] One poet who is said to have conjured rain is Ono no Komachi (fl. ca. 833-857); the following verse is from her personal poetic anthology:[40]

> Composed when she was commanded to produce a rainmaking poem during a drought:[41]
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | chihayaburu | Almighty gods, |
> | kami mo mimasaba | if you too can see, |
> | tachisawagi | then rise up shouting |
> | ama no togawa no | and cast open |
> | higuchi aketamae | Heaven's River's gates! |

According to the tale anthology *Tsuki no karu moshū* (A Collection of Duckweed Harvested by the Moon; ca. 1630), the rain fell without cease for three days.[42]

37. Akazome Emon (fl. ca. 976–1041) is widely reported to have saved her ailing son by presenting a poem at Sumiyoshi Shrine requesting to exchange her own life for his. See *Akazome Emon shū* 赤染衛門集 543, *Konjaku monogatari shū* 24: 51, *Jikkinshō* 10: 15, and other sources.

38. *Waka itoku monogatari* 和歌威徳物語 (1689), for example, contains stories of three poets who conjured rain and three poets who caused it to abate (Tachibana 1980, pp. 18–22). Priests are attributed with the power to make it rain in *Konjaku monogatari shū* 7: 11 and 14: 41, *Uji shūi monogatari* 1 :20, *Kokon chomonjū* 60 (NKBT 84: 96), and *Sangoku denki* 三国伝記 5: 9 (1407–1446; Ikegami 1982, vol. 1, pp. 265–66). *Kokon chomonjū* 250 and 17 are accounts of people who produced rain by playing music and by means of an imperial decree (NKBT 84: 204 and 58).

39. ZGR 16:2:544; the passage is quoted in Moriyama 1974, p. 3, and in Kamioka 1986, pp. 185–86.

40. *Komachi shū* 小町集 (Heian Period); SKT 3: 22b, poem 69.

41. According to the Jingū Bunko recension of *Komachi shū* 小町集, the drought occurred during the reign of Emperor Daigo (r. 897–930). Yokota Yukiya, who believes that the poem is by Komachi, dates its composition to the drought of 898 (Yokota 1974, pp. 173–74). Katagiri Yōichi (1975) and Tanaka Kimiharu (1984) argue that the poem is not by Komachi at all.

42. ZGR 33:1:47b. The absence of a statement in *Komachi shū* concerning the poem's effect should not be taken as proof that it was not believed in the Heian and Kamakura periods to have produced rain. As Moriyama Shigeru observes in cases of *katoku setsuwa* poems included in imperially-sponsored poetic anthologies, the miraculous effects of the poems are usually not described (1976, pp. 6–9).

The circumstances of Komachi's purported recitation of her poem are unknown; with its straightforward syntax, it constitutes little more than a ritualized demand. How, then, might it be understood to have achieved its effect? Ritual/*kotodama* theory (in one of its twentieth-century articulations) would suggest that because of *waka*'s inherent order (comprised as *waka* usually are of five lines of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7 syllables [in this case 5, 7, 5, 7, 8]), such poems are capable, when appropriately inveighed, of restoring order to a disrupted natural environment (PLUTSCHOW 1990, pp. 31–32). In considering *kotodama* theory, we might also look to the word *chihayaburu* ("almighty"), a pillow-word (*makura kotoba*) modifying kami ("gods"). Konishi Jin'ichi has argued that pillow-words (*makura kotoba*) and prefaces (*jo*), both of which he describes as "guide phrases," were employed in ancient Japanese poetry for their apparently mystical powers. He writes that "the *kotodama* possessed by the guide phrase could be transmitted into the essence of the poem,"[43] which, in the case of the preceding verse, might account for its success. Medieval dharani theory, on the other hand, begs the question, "what is the *kotowari* within the *waka* that allows it its effect?" The answer may lie in the poem's conditional construction: if the gods can see the drought below, then how, in truth, can they not make it rain? Continued drought would fly in the face of reason.

In *Jurin shūyōshō*, Sonshun—our sixteenth-century advocate of thirteenth-century *waka*-dharani theory—cites two rainmaking stories concerning the Heian woman poet Izumi Shikibu, who in several late-medieval sources is said to have been of the "lineage" of Komachi.[44] Following his account of Saichō's *anokutara* poem in the "Dharani" chapter of the work, Sonshun writes that "poems are also used to achieve prayer-requests." As his second example, he cites the following account of Izumi Shikibu's salvation of the land from a drought. Her technique is one of manipulation by shame:

> Again, at that time [in the past] there was once a drought throughout the land. Izumi Shikibu journeyed to Kitano [Shrine], where she composed:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | hazukashi ya | How shameful! |
> | igaki no ume mo | Even the plum at the sacred fence |
> | karenikeri | is withered. |

43. KONISHI 1984, p. 211. Konishi follows Orikuchi in his conception of *makura kotoba*. See ORIKUCHI 1946, pp. 174 and 191.

44. Izumi Shikibu 和泉式部 served in the salon of Empress Shōshi in the court of Emperor Ichijō (r. 986–1011). She is known today primarily for her poetry and poetic diary, *Izumi Shikibu nikki*. According to *Koshikibu* 小式部, a work of fiction from around the sixteenth century, she was of the line of Sotoorihime, Lady Ise, and Ono no Komachi (MJMT 5: 21; KIMBROUGH, forthcoming). According to *Tōden gyōhitsu* 榻鳴暁筆 (mid fifteenth century), the ghost of Ono no Komachi bestowed her poetic powers on Izumi Shikibu for having rescued her skull from a field (ICHIKO 1992, pp. 197–98; KIMBROUGH, forthcoming [chapter 1]).

ama no kami to wa	How can we call you
ikade iubeki	a god of the heavens—a god of rain?

People say that the sky suddenly clouded over and it poured with rain.[45]

Calling attention to the withered plum tree at the deity's shrine fence and punning on the phrase *ama no kami* (in this case both "god of the heavens" and "god of rain"), Izumi Shikibu questions the deity's provenance in the absence of rainfall. Rather than simply invoking a name (*ama no kami*), Izumi Shikibu uses a pun—producing a dharani-like multiplicity of meaning—to challenge the validity of the god's appellation. How, in reason, can it allow a drought if it is a god of the heavens/a god of rain? Confronted with Izumi Shikibu's semantic manipulation and its own dying tree, the deity is compelled to make it rain.[46] Although Sonshun provides no explanation for how he understood this particular poem to have worked, in an account in his "Medicine King" (*Yakuō Bosatsu honji-hon* 薬王菩薩本事品) chapter in which an imperial envoy is said to have composed a similar sort of verse and thereby caused a wooden image of Jizō to smile, Sonshun remarks that "it is interesting how [the poet] employed truth [to make the statue grin]" (*makoto o motte omoshiro nari*).[47]

Because she is a poet, it is natural that Izumi Shikibu beseeches the deity with a poem. For many others, however, *waka* was not preferred. In the fifteenth century, the monks of Kōfukuji in Nara recited sutras and conducted lectures for the sake of rain, while lay people danced, prayed, and even put on performances of *sarugaku*, noh, and sumo wrestling to bring an end to their droughts.[48] Although

45. *Jurin shūyōshō* 1991, 4: 461. A similar story is contained in the Lotus Sutra commentary *Ichijō shūgyokushō* 一乗拾玉抄 (Gathered Jewels of the Single Vehicle; 1488), according to which Izumi Shikibu rapped on the shrine fence before reciting her poem. *Ichijō shūgyokushō* 1998, p. 723.

46. Incidentally, because puns tend to be specific to individual languages, they are usually untranslatable. In its use of wordplay to establish a coercive *kotowari*, Izumi Shikibu's poem relies upon the particular homonymic possibilities of the Japanese language. It would thus seem to contradict Mujū's assertion that the powers of *waka* and dharani stem from statements of "natural truth" that transcend the languages in which they are expressed.

47. *Jurin shūyōshō* 1991, 4: 257–58. The envoy is said to have taken shelter from the rain in a small Buddha hall near the Sunomata river in Mino Province. He was told that the Jizō image there had been carved from an old wooden bridge-pillar dredged up from the river bed. The envoy composed the following verse, whereupon the Jizō image smiled:

kuchinokoru	The bridge pillar
masago no shita no	half-rotted
hashi hashira	beneath the sand
mata sama kaete	has again changed its form,
hito watasu nari	still leading to the Other Shore.

The poem is similar to Izumi Shikibu's rainmaking verse insofar as it uses a pun (in this case, on the verb *watasu*, "to convey [across the river]" and "to convey [to enlightenment]") to state a truthful observation regarding the nature of its referent (the bridge pillar/Jizō image). The story is also contained in *Hokekyō jikidanshō* (ca. 1546; in *Jikidanshō* 1979, 3: 361–62).

48. Morisue 1941, pp. 429–34. On the ritual aspects of sumo, particularly as *kami-asobi* (entertainment for the gods), see Plutschow 1990, p. 59. On the history of Japanese Buddhist rainmaking, see Ruppert 2002.

Izumi Shikibu's poem is abrasive—it reads as if it were composed in an attempt to provoke the deity by humiliating it—compared to other rainmaking practices, it is not exceptionally so. Desperate times call for desperate measures, which is why the ancient Japanese are believed to have thrown animal carcasses and other polluting matter into sacred springs and ponds as a means of arousing resident water deities.[49] Even the eminent poet and statesman Sugawara no Michizane (845–902) is reported to have thwarted a drought in 888 by threatening a deity with abandonment if it did not produce rain (NKBT 72: 534–35; BORGEN 1986, pp. 165–66).

The second *Jurin shūyōshō* Izumi Shikibu rainmaking account is one of several rainmaking tales cited in the "Parable of Medicinal Herbs" (*Yakusōyu-hon* 薬草喩品) chapter of Sonshun's work (*Jurin shūyōshō* 1991, 2: 472–74). In one of these stories, the Sui priest Jizang 吉藏 (Kichizō; 549–623) is said to have conjured rain by reciting the "Parable of Medicinal Herbs" chapter of the Lotus Sutra; Kūkai, by presenting food offerings and beseeching a dragon deity at Shinsennen Pond; the priest Chōken (in the fourth month of 1174), by reciting a formal prayer-proclamation; and Izumi Shikibu, by composing a *waka*:

> During the reign of Emperor Murakami, Izumi Shikibu was once commanded to compose a poem praying for rain:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | hi no moto no | Though surely it shines |
> | na ni ou tote ya | in accord with our name— |
> | terasuran | "Japan: Origin of the Sun"— |
> | furazaraba mata | if it does not rain, how are we |
> | ame ga shita ka wa | "beneath the heavens—beneath the rain"? |

According to the commentary *Hokekyō jikidanshō* (Straight Talk on the Lotus Sutra; ca. 1546), when Izumi Shikibu finished reciting her poem, "the sky clouded over and rain suddenly began to fall."[50]

Similar to her previous verse, Izumi Shikibu's poem puns on the phrase *ame ga shita*, "beneath the heavens" and "beneath the rain." The conceit is not original to her,[51] but its effect is clear. Unlike her earlier poem, directed at a specific deity at a particular shrine, this one is addressed to the universe at large. Izumi Shikibu proposes that because the name Japan (Nihon 日本) is written with the characters "origin of the sun," it is natural that the sun would shine. However, as Japan is "beneath the heavens," it must also—by a coincidence of sound—be

49. TYLER 1992, p. 108; NAKAMURA 1986, p. 46c; HERBERT 1967, p. 483. Tyler points to a reference in *Kojidan* 358 (ca. 1212; KOBAYASHI 1981, 2: 93–94) to a rainmaking dragon who was relocated in the Nara period (710–784) from one pond to another by throwing a dead body into its waters.

50. *Jikidanshō* 1979, 2: 233; NAKANO 1998, p. 193. Also see the related account in *Ichijō shūgyokushō*, cited in NAKANO 1998, p. 194.

51. *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 4122, a rainmaking *chōka* 長歌 attributed to Ōtomo no Yakamochi (718–785), contains an analogous use of the phrase *ame no shita*. See the translation in DOE 1982, p. 182.

"beneath the rain." In its success, her poem thus represents a triumph of reason. Moreover, it suggests that the medieval Japanese universe (as represented within the Lotus Sutra commentary *Jurin shūyōshō*) was an inherently rational place; if it were not, it would not have been swayed by the logic of her wordplay.[52]

The context of the Izumi Shikibu poem-story—the manner of its citation within the "Parable of Medicinal Herbs" chapter of Sonshun's commentary—lends it more significance than one might at first suppose. According to the central metaphor of the corresponding Lotus Sutra chapter, the Buddha bestows his beneficence on all sentient beings, regardless of their stations or abilities, much in the way that the rain falls equally on all plants—lowly grasses and mighty trees alike. The rain represents the beneficence of the Buddha, both within the Lotus Sutra and (sometimes) within the literature of Heian and medieval Japan.[53] Within *Jurin shūyōshō*, Izumi Shikibu's poem has a metaphoric effect

52. Helen McCullough has rightly observed that the "reasoning technique" is a characteristic of the Chinese Six Dynasties and ninth-century Japanese *Kokinshū* poetic styles (McCullough 1985, pp. 68 and 71). Nevertheless, it should be noted that while most poems that employ reasoning are not said to have produced miraculous effects, many purportedly miraculous *waka* do employ the technique. *Jurin shūyōshō*, for example, contains an additional verse in its "Dharani" chapter that employs logic (a kind of *kotowari*) to achieve its desired result:

> In the past, there were demons on Mount Suzuka in Ise Province. They were forever abducting and eating people, causing terrible grief. An imperial envoy approached the mountain and recited,
>
> kusa mo ki mo — Even the grasses
> waga ōkimi no — and trees
> kuni nareba — are within our Emperor's realm—
> izuku ka oni no — where, then,
> sumika narubeki — ought demons to make their home?
>
> The demons immediately departed and the land was safe.
>
> (*Jurin shūyōshō* 1991, 4: 461–62)

The poet's question is rhetorical. Since all the land is ruled by the Emperor, there is no place for demons to call their own. According to a version of the tale cited in the poetic commentary *Kokin wakashū jo kikigaki sanryūshō* 古今和歌集序聞書三流抄 (ca. 1286), the demons served the renegade general Fujiwara no Chikata 藤原千方 in his defiance of the Emperor. The imperial envoy (Ki no Tomo'o 紀朝雄) reasoned that because "demons and gods are exceptionally forthright" (*kiwamete jiki naru mono*), they can be moved if shown the error of their ways. Indeed, upon hearing the poem, "the demons realized the evil of Chikata's deeds, abandoned him and disappeared." Quoted in Kamioka 1986, pp. 194–95, and in Tokuda 1988, p. 448. The story is contained in numerous sources, including at least six medieval *Kokinshū* commentaries, *Taiheiki*, the Keiō University Library manuscript of *Shuten Dōji*, and *Waka itoku monogatari* (Kamioka 1986, pp. 195–96; NKBT 35: 167–68; MJMT 3: 144b–45a; and Tachibana 1980, pp. 42–43, respectively).

53. *Konjaku monogatari shū* 1: 2 (SNKBT 33: 7), for example, explains that when the Buddha Shakyamuni appeared in this world, he "caused the rain of the Dharma to fall, extinguishing the fires of hell and granting sentient beings the joys of peace and tranquility." According to *Ippen hijiri e* 一遍聖絵, an illustrated biography of the priest Ippen composed in 1299, a "Dharma rain" fell upon the Mandala Hall of Taima Temple during an attack by the Taira (in the Jishō 治承 era [1177–1180]), saving it from fire while all the surrounding buildings burned. Kadokawa Shoten Henshūbu 1960, p. 75b.

far greater than that of simply ending a drought: it calls forth the non-discriminatory compassion of the Buddha, leading all beings to enlightenment. That it should do so is to be expected, perhaps, considering that *waka*, according to Sonshun, contain within their thirty-one syllables the entirety of the Buddhist teachings.

One of the most frequently cited rainmaking poem-stories in Heian and medieval literature concerns the poet-priest Nōin Hōshi (988-1050?). The following version is from the twelfth-century poetic anthology *Kinyō wakashū* (Golden Leaves of *Waka*; 1127):[54]

> When Nōin accompanied Lord Norikuni to Iyo Province, it had not rained a drop in the three or four months since the new year. Unable to prepare the rice-seedling beds, the people raised a clamor. Their many prayers had not the least effect, and the situation became difficult to bear. The governor asked Nōin to compose a poem and visit the leading shrine to pray. Nōin visited the shrine and composed:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | ama no gawa | If indeed you are a god |
> | nawashiro mizu ni | come down from heaven— |
> | sekikudase | a god who gives us rain— |
> | ama kudarimasu | then dam up Heaven's River |
> | kami naraba kami | to water our rice-seedling beds! |
>
> The deity was moved and a great rain fell. As we can see from Nōin's private anthology, the rain did not cease for three days and three nights.

Like Izumi Shikibu, Nōin uses wordplay (the phrase *ama kudarimasu kami*, both "a god come down from heaven" and "a god who gives us rain") to oblige the deity to make it rain.[55] Through linking the truth of the deity's origins (that it is a god come down from heaven) with the conjecture that it is a deity who

54. SNKBT 9: 184–85, poem 625. The story is also contained in *Nōin shū* 能因集 (SNKBT 28: 433, poem 211), *Fukurozōshi* (SNKBT 29: 157), *Toshiyori zuinō* (NKBZ 50: 75–76), *Jikkinshō* 10:10 (SNKBZ 51: 397), *Kokon chomonjū* 171 (NKBT 84: 158), *Tōsai zuihitsu* 東斎随筆 (KUBOTA 1979, p. 198), *Waka itoku monogatari* (TACHIBANA 1980, pp. 19–20), and at least four medieval *Kokinshū* commentaries (KAMIOKA 1986, pp. 182 and 192–93).

55. *Jikkinshō* 4: 6 (SNKBZ 51: 162) contains a poem that similarly invokes the *kotowari* of a deity's nature (although without wordplay) in order to effect a result. The priest Ninshun 仁俊 is said to have recited it at Kitano Shrine as a means of clearing his name of a malicious slander:

aware to mo	Pity you must feel,
kamigami naraba	if gods you be,
omouramu	for one whose path
hito koso hito no	a stranger
michi tatsu to mo	would disrupt.

The opening lines, *aware to mo kamigami naraba omouramu* ("pity you must feel, if gods you be"), are not unlike the final lines of Nōin's verse, *ama kudarimasu kami naraba kami* ("if indeed you are a god come down from heaven/a god who gives us rain").

bestows rain, Nōin creates a situation in which the deity cannot deny Nōin's one statement without denying the other. Thus, because it is indeed a deity from heaven, it is bound by the *kotowari* of Nōin's verse to produce rain. While *kotodama* theory might locate the poem's power in its ritual recitation at a shrine (or in the use of the words *ama kudarimasu* as a kind of rain-inducing pillow-phrase for kami), dharani theory suggests that it was the poem's expression of reason, within the semantic superabundance of the *waka* form, that gave it its effect. Simply put, in the way that Izumi Shikibu manipulates the universe through the logic of her previous poem, Nōin coerces the god by punning on a statement of truth.

Indian Truth Acts and Japanese Power Poetry

Among the various miracle-producing techniques ascribed to the poets of Heian and medieval Japan, one of the most common seems to have been the composition of *waka* (like Nōin's rainmaking poem) that either contain or themselves constitute declarations of truth. According to this method, the poet constructs a statement of logic so compelling that it forces supernatural beings to act on the poet's request. The procedure, which is often achieved through clever uses of wordplay, is not unlike that of the ancient Indian "Truth Act" (*saccakiriyā*/*satyakriyā*), a ritual declaration of fact of such profundity that it is imbued with the power to overcome natural laws.[56] As we have seen, an intrinsic characteristic of dharani (and of *waka*, according to some thirteenth-century commentators) is that they express truth. The Truth Act, like the dharani, was a potent instrument in the magico-religious technology of Indian Buddhism, and it seems to have been adopted—albeit in somewhat condensed form—for use in a number of the miraculous poems of Japan.

Truth Acts are exceedingly common in the Pali and Sanskrit Buddhist canon, especially in the *jātaka* tales of the former lives of Shakyamuni, transmitted to Japan in a variety of sutras and Buddhist commentaries.[57] Men, women, and

56. E. W. Burlingame (1917, p. 429) defines the Truth Act as "a formal declaration of fact, accompanied by a command or resolution or prayer that the purpose of the agent shall be accomplished." W. Norman Brown (1968, 1963, 1940) cites several early examples from the *Rig Veda*, composed from around 1500 BCE, and he notes that Truth Acts are "common in post-Vedic literature, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain" (Brown 1963, p. 8). Burlingame argues that the Pali term *saccakiriyā*, a compound of *sacca* ("truth") and *kiriyā* ("any kind of act, operation or performance") is preferable to the Sanskrit *satyakriyā*, which he says does not actually occur in Sanskrit texts (Burlingame 1917, pp. 433–34). Bruce Sullivan maintains that the Sanskrit term is in fact employed in Buddhist (although not Hindu) literature in Sanskrit (personal communication, June 2003). Nakamura Hajime includes "*sacca-kiriyā*" within his second definition of *jitsugo* 実語, which he describes as a "vow of truth" (真実の誓) and a synonym of dharani (真言すなわち呪語). Nakamura 1975, 1: 597c.

57. The *jātaka*s were widely known in Japan through such sutras as *Rokudo jūkkyō* 六道集経, *Shōkyō* 生経, *Bussetsu bosatsu hongyōkyō* 仏説菩薩本行経, *Daihōbenbutsu hōongyō* 大方便仏報恩経, and the commentary *Daichidoron* 大智度論. *Jātaka* stories from these works were reproduced in

animals are reported in these accounts to have performed Acts of Truth to bring rain, calm storms, heal wounds, turn back fires, prove guilt or innocence, restore severed limbs, cause a river to flow backward, enact sexual transformation, obtain release from captivity, and even attain Buddhahood (Burlingame 1917, pp. 439–61). A paradigmatic Truth Act is recounted in the *jātaka* tale of King Sibi, who, having given both of his eyes to a blind beggar, has his sight restored by pronouncing a statement of truth. The king vows: "Whatsoever sort or kind of beggar comes to me is dear to my heart. If this be true, let one of my eyes be restored." Upon speaking these words, one of his eyes is restored. The king then makes a second, similar vow, and his other eye is healed as well.[58] It is because the gods—the very universe—cannot abide the promulgation of an untruth in this ritualized context that the king's declaration has its effect.

The Truth Act, which Peter Khoroche describes as "something between an oath and a magical charm,"[59] consists of a vow pronounced upon a declaration of fact. In the "Medicine King" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, for example, the bodhisattva "Gladly Seen by All Living Beings" performs a Truth Act to restore his scorched arms when he proclaims, "I have cast away both my arms. I am certain to attain the golden body of a Buddha. If this is true and not false, then may my two arms become as they were before!"[60] In Japan, a saintly young nun by the name of Chūjōhime is also said to have invoked the certitude of her future enlightenment—much like Gladly Seen by All Living Beings—as her means of performing a Truth Act. In a work of late-medieval fiction titled *Chūjōhime no honji* (Chūjōhime in Her Original Form), Chūjōhime's Truth Act is identified as a "great prayer-vow" (*daiseigan* 大誓願): "If it is true that I am to attain rebirth in the Pure Land, then within seven days I shall venerate the living Amida Buddha before my very eyes. If I do not, then from this day forward I shall never set

Sanbōe 三宝絵 (984), *Konjaku monogatari shū*, *Uji shūi monogatari*, and a number of other Heian and medieval sources (Kamata 1998, pp. 41c and 868; Nakamura 1975, 1: 504b). *Konjaku monogatari shū* reproduces at least two *jātaka*s containing explicit Acts of Truth. In the first (*Konjaku* 5: 7), a prince heals himself by declaring the fact of his future enlightenment and proclaiming, "If I speak falsely about this, then my body shall not be cured. But if I speak the truth, my body will be as it was before." In the second (*Konjaku* 5: 9), a king saves himself by announcing his unwavering desire for enlightenment and vowing, "If my words be untrue—if they mislead Taishaku—then may my thousand lacerations never heal. But if they are true, then may my blood become milk and my thousand wounds, cured." SNKBT 33: 415 and 420; Dykstra 1986, pp. 191 and 195.

58. Burlingame 1917, p. 430; Khoroche 1989, pp. 10–17. Translation of the vow by Burlingame. The story of King Sibi was known in Japan through the sutra *Senjū hyakuenkyō* 撰集百縁経 (TSD 4 [200]: 218). A different tale of King Sibi is contained in *Sanbōe* 1: 1, and in that, too, the king performs a Truth Act based upon his perfection of generosity (SNKBT 31: 13; Kamens 1988, p. 108).

59. Khoroche 1989, p. 258, note 6. For a further discussion of the Truth Act, see Thompson 1998, 125–53, and Paul 1985, pp. 176–78.

60. Translation by Burton Watson. TSD 9 [262]: 54a; Watson 1993, p. 285; Hurvitz 1976, pp. 297–98.

foot outside these temple gates!" As the tale is told, on the sixth evening, Amida appeared before her as an apparitional nun.[61]

The similarity between Indian Truth Acts and the miraculous poems of Japan is most conspicuous in the case of *waka* that begin with the phrase *kotowari ya*, "true indeed."[62] One such verse is attributed to Ono no Komachi in a rainmaking account within the farcical "Narihira mochi" (Narihira's Sticky Rice; ca. 1605), a *kyōgen* play about the ninth-century poet Ariwara no Narihira and his shameless attempt to eat *mochi* for free:

> One year there was a drought throughout the land. Not a drop of rain would fall. The peasants lost their planting seed, so they were particularly distressed. Hearing of the situation, the Emperor spoke to his nobles, and he commanded the finest and most distinguished of priests to conduct prayer services. However, they did not have the least effect. The Emperor summoned Ono no Komachi, daughter of Ono no Yoshizane and a poet of world renown, and he ordered her to compose a rainmaking song. She traveled to Shinsennen Pond, where she intoned:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | kotowari ya | True indeed |
> | hi no moto nareba | that the sun should shine, |
> | teri mo seme | this being "Japan: Origin of the Sun." |
> | sari tote wa mata | Yet are we not also |
> | ame ga shita ka wa | "beneath the heavens—beneath the rain?" |
>
> By the power of her poem rain immediately began to fall. The crops were spared, and the people were marvelously saved.[63]

In its overall conception and wordplay, Ono no Komachi's poem is nearly identical to the earlier rainmaking verse attributed to Izumi Shikibu in the "Parable

61. MJMT 9: 282a and 295b; translation (by Kimbrough) in SHIRANE 2005. The Truth Act is most often described in premodern Japanese sources as a "vow" (*chikai* 誓), or "prayer-vow" (*seigan* 誓願). Like Chūjōhime, a blind priest in *Seiryōji engi* 清涼寺縁起 (ca. 1515) is said to have performed a Truth Act during the reign of Emperor Horikawa (r. 1086–1107) based upon the fact of his future rebirth in the Pure Land, thus compelling the Seiryōji Shakyamuni to restore his sight (ZGR 27: 1: 403b–404a). In the Buddhist *setsuwa* anthology *Sangoku denki* (Tales of Three Countries; ca. 1407–1446), the poet-priest Saigyō (1118–1190) is said to have performed an Act of Truth concerning the spiritual significance of poetry. He declares: "If it be true that by the Way of Poetry one may attain release from the cycle of birth and death, then I shall meet the venerable [poet] Hitomaro. However, if poetry is of no benefit—if it is but a meaningless discourse of fanciful words—then I shall not." Saigyō is reported to have later encountered the ghost of Hitomaro (fl. ca. 680–700) in the guise of a white-haired old man. *Sangoku denki* 6: 21 ("How the Priest Saigyō Met Hitomaro"), in IKEGAMI 1982, 1: 339.

62. The combination of *kotowari* and the emphatic particle *ya* might also be translated, "it indeed stands to reason," or "reasonable indeed." Sonja Arntzen translates, "How true it is!" in a *kotowari ya* poem in *Kagerō nikki* 蜻蛉日記 (late tenth century; ARNTZEN 1997, p. 317).

63. NKBT 43: 437. In *Tsuki no karu moshū* 月刈藻集 (ca. 1630), the poem is attributed to Izumi Shikibu. ZGR 33: 1 : 47b.

FIGURE 1: Ono no Komachi composing her poem at Shinsennen pond, from *Waka itoku monogatari* (1689). Reproduced with kind permission from Koten Bunko.

of Medicinal Herbs" chapter of *Jurin shūyōshō*. However, by its initial declaration ("True indeed!"), it explicitly affirms its own *kotowari* (that in a land called "Origin of the Sun," the sun should shine), formalizing its function as a seemingly abbreviated, poetic Act of Truth. Having established that by the fact of its name, Japan is prone to sunshine, Komachi questions the meaning of *ame ga shita*, "beneath the heavens" and "beneath the rain." The gods, confronted with the contradiction raised in her verse, are obliged to make it rain. The ceremonial

context of Komachi's supplication is moreover significant, for in that she recites her poem before Shinsennen Pond, where Kūkai himself is said to have summoned rain,[64] her feat is reminiscent, in its formality, of the ritual Truth Acts described in the Pali and Sanskrit literature of India.

Kotowari ya-type poems are relatively rare in Japanese literature, but their effects are frequently profound. In *Koshikibu*, a work of late-medieval fiction, Izumi Shikibu's daughter Koshikibu no Naishi is said to have brought a dying tree back to life with a *kotowari ya* poem.[65] According to *Kohon setsuwa shū* (An Old Anthology of Tales; twelfth or thirteenth century), Izumi Shikibu once used a *kotowari ya* poem to convince her second husband, Fujiwara no Yasumasa, to call off a hunt and thereby save the life of a deer:

> When Izumi Shikibu had accompanied Yasumasa to Tango Province, she once heard that there was to be a hunt on the following day. A deer cried pitifully in the night while the hunters were assembling. "Ah, how sad," Izumi Shikibu lamented. "It cries out so because it will surely die tomorrow." Yasumasa replied: "If that is what you think, then I'll call off the hunt. Now give me a good poem." [Izumi Shikibu composed:]
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | kotowari ya | In honest truth, |
> | ikade ka shika no | how might the deer |
> | nakazaran | not cry out, |

64. Accounts of Kūkai producing rain at Shinsennen Pond (in the second month of 824, according to *Kojidan*) are contained in *Konjaku monogatari shū* 14: 41 (SNKBT 35: 359–60), *Gōdanshō* (GR 27: 551b), *Kojidan* (KOBAYASHI 1981, 1: 221–22), *Taiheiki* (NKBT 34: 420–24; MCCULLOUGH 1959, pp. 374–79), and other sources. Kūkai is said to have followed the method described in the sutra *Daiunrin seiukyō*, which includes the chanting of dharani (see footnote 13, above). Rainmaking ceremonies were commonly held at Shinsennen Pond in the Heian and medieval periods; according to *Zoku kojidan* (GR 27: 642b), a two-story gate at the southern end of the pond once collapsed as a result of a ceremony performed there.

65. MJMT 5: 37a; KIMBROUGH, forthcoming. The account is also contained in *Waka itoku monogatari* (1689; TACHIBANA 1980, pp. 77–78). The *Koshikibu* passage reads:

> One of the Emperor's beloved young pines suddenly withered, and His Majesty was filled with deepest sorrow. "Even gods and plants bend to the Way of Poetry," he declared. "Send for Izumi Shikibu and have her compose a poem in prayer for my tree!" But as Izumi Shikibu was in the province of Tango, which was very far away, Koshikibu no Naishi suggested that she first compose a poem instead. "Very well then, do it quickly," the Emperor agreed, and Koshikibu intoned:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | kotowari ya | How right that |
> | karete wa ika ni | you should wither, |
> | himekomatsu | you dear little pine, |
> | chiyo wo ba kimi ni | if you think to leave His Highness |
> | yuzuru to omoeba | your one thousand years! |
>
> The pine trembled violently, and within moments it was thriving again. The Emperor was deeply impressed, and he granted Koshikibu numerous robes.

koyoi bakari no knowing that tonight
inochi to omoeba will be its last?

Thus the hunt was cancelled.[66]

Although Izumi Shikibu's poem has no particularly miraculous effect—it merely helps to persuade her husband to call off the hunt—according to a version of the story cited in *Soga monogatari* (The Tale of the Soga; ca. fourteenth century) it provokes a wondrous, spontaneous spiritual awakening in Yasumasa and his men. "Swayed by the truth (*kotowari*) of her poem," the *Soga monogatari* narrator explains, "a desire for Buddhahood sprang up within Yasumasa. His three hundred retainers' hearts were also turned to the Way [of the Buddha]."[67] The metaphorical effect of Izumi Shikibu's rainmaking poem in the "Parable of Medicinal Herbs" chapter of *Jurin shūyōshō* is here literalized. By the emphatic invocation of the *kotowari* of her verse—that the deer ought to cry out, this night being its last (which in turn suggests a far deeper truth: the tragic impermanence of all sentient beings)—Izumi Shikibu calls down the figurative rain of the Buddha's beneficence, causing Yasumasa and all his three hundred men to turn to Buddhism. As Mujū Ichien explains in *Shasekishū*, "it is because *waka* comes from a pure heart, has few words, and contains *kotowari* that it awakens in us the desire for Buddhahood."[68]

Conclusion

The eighteenth-century nativist scholar Moto'ori Norinaga wrote in his *Ashiwake obune* 排蘆小船 (A Small Boat Through the Reeds; ca. 1759) that Japanese poetry is sometimes capable of miraculous effects because it appropriately combines literary craftsmanship and honesty of intent. Sincerity (*jitsujō* 実情, literally "true feeling") is itself a kind of truth, and Norinaga's explanation that some poems are effective because they balance sincerity with poetic artifice—content with form—is not unlike Mujū's explanation in *Shasekishū* that *waka* are effective because they "encompass the natural truths of lay and monastic life (content) in thirty-one syllables (form)."[69] Employing a question-and-answer-type format, Norinaga writes:

66. SNKBT 42: 413. The poem is also contained in the poetic anthology *Goshūi wakashū* 後拾遺和歌集 (compiled in 1086), SNKBT 8: 322, poem 999.

67. NKBT 88: 209–210; COGAN 1987, p. 124. The account is also contained in *Waka itoku monogatari* (TACHIBANA 1980, pp. 91–92).

68. NKBT 85: 222; MORRELL (1985) provides a summary of this passage on p. 163.

69. See above. Norinaga's identification of honesty and artifice as the two essential aspects of miraculous poems is reminiscent of Ki no Tsurayuki's distinction in *Kokin wakashū* between *kokoro* and *kotoba* (content and form), and the traditional *zhi*/*wen* dichotomy in *Shijing* and other Chinese sources. MCCULLOUGH 1985, pp. 303 and 314.

Question:

In the composition of poetry, if one should put aside truth (*makoto* 実) and concentrate solely on the crafting of ornate language, is it not the case that however fine a poem one might produce, that poem will fail to stir emotion in demons and gods?

Answer:

To move heaven and earth and stir emotion in demons and gods requires both deep feeling and good poetry. However deep one's feelings might be, if one should write, "How sad, how sad," demons and gods are not likely to be moved. But if a poem is born of an earnest heart and is but skillfully wrought, supernatural beings are sure to be moved of their own accord. Likewise, however elegant the language of a poem, should that poem lack feeling, demons and gods are unlikely to respond. But when people hear a poem that is both profound in sentiment and gracefully crafted, their hearts are naturally touched. So too heaven and earth are moved and demons and gods are affected.

Take for example Komachi's poem,

kotowari ya	True indeed
hi no moto nareba	that the sun should shine,
teri mo seme	this being "Japan: Origin of the Sun."
sari tote mo mata	Yet are we not also
ame ga shita to wa	"beneath the heavens—beneath the rain"?

In terms of sentiment, it is not entirely sincere, for although the reader is not such a child as to believe that *ame*, "rain," is the same as *ame*, "heaven," upon reading *ame ga shita*, "beneath heaven," the reader perceives *ame ga shita*, "beneath the rain." This is a result of artifice. Such is the poem's intent, however, and the gods were moved and it rained. In the case of Nōin's *ama no gawa nawashiro mizu ni sekikudase*, "dam up Heaven's River to water our rice-seedling beds," although the poet knew there was no water in the "River of Heaven" (the Milky Way), he still said "give us some rain." This too is artifice, but it moved heaven and caused rain to fall. Neither of these poems are absolutely sincere, but as they were composed in earnest longing for rain, one should understand that heaven was naturally stirred. The poem that Lord Tsurayuki presented to the deity of Aridōshi Shrine was composed in the honesty of Tsurayuki's heart, so although his language shows affectation, the deity was moved. His poem is interesting in the part that reads *ari to hoshi wo ba* ("Aridōshi"/"the presence of stars"), but his words are not entirely sincere.[70]

(NKT 7: 243)

70. The personal poetic anthology of Ki no Tsurayuki (fl. ca. 901–945) contains the following poem and explanatory account (SKT 3: 71–72, poem 830):

Norinaga was not alone in the eighteenth century in his belief in the importance of sincerity to the composition of miraculous verse. In the poetic commentary *Shirin shūyō* (Gathered Leaves from a Grove of Words; 1739), the poet-priest Jiun writes of a woman who used a poem to clear her name after she was falsely accused of stealing a robe. "Her poem is nothing special," Jiun explains, "but because it contains true feeling (*jitsujō* 実情), there is no doubt that it moved the gods."[71] Sincerity was considered an important factor in prayer in earlier centuries as well. The author of *Kohon setsuwa shū* (twelfth or thirteenth century) notes that "whether reverent or base, people's prayers are effective when they are most heartfelt."[72] As these disparate sources suggest, it is through an emotional truth that poems and prayers may achieve their effect.

As a scholar of so-called "national learning," Norinaga rejected the prevailing Shinto-Buddhist syncretism of the medieval period, according to which miraculous poems "work" because they are the dharani of Japan. In his refusal to privilege content over form, however, Norinaga's words echo the Tendai principle of non-duality, the foundational concept upon which medieval syncretic thought was based. Norinaga may have disagreed with Kamo no Chōmei, Mujū Ichien, Sonshun, and others as to why or how Ono no Komachi's and Nōin's rainmaking poems conjured rain, but in emphasizing the importance of earnestness—

When Ki no Tsurayuki was on his way back to the capital from Kii Province, his horse fell suddenly ill as if to die. Some passing travelers stopped and spoke: "The deity here must have done this. There hasn't been a shrine or a marker here for years, but he's an extremely terrible god, and he used to make people sick like this before. You had better pray." Tsurayuki had nothing to offer, so there was little he could do. He washed his hands and knelt facing the deity's mountain, deserted though it appeared.

"Now, who is this god?" he inquired.

"He's called the Aritohoshi (Aridōshi) Deity," someone said.

Taking in these words, Tsurayuki offered the following verse. His horse was cured as a result:

kakikumori	Covered by clouds,
ayame mo shiranu	the sky was lost to my eyes.
ōzora ni	Still, I ought to have recalled
ari to hoshi o ba	the presence of stars—
omoubeshi ya wa	the presence of Aridōshi.

Tsurayuki's poem contains a pun on the name of the deity, "Aridōshi" ("Aritohoshi") and *ari to hoshi* (*hoshi ari*), "the presence of stars." Tsurayuki's wordplay is not entirely successful; in order to make sense of the double meaning, one would need to change the word order from "*ōzora ni ari to hoshi o ba omoubeshi*" to "*ōzora ni hoshi [o ba] ari to omoubeshi*." Nishimura Tōru has suggested that Tsurayuki's verse is not a particularly good one, and that if the deity found it moving, "it did not have much of an eye for poetry" (1966, pp. 7–8). Drawing upon *kotodama* theory, Nishimura proposes that it was Tsurayuki's incorporation of the deity's name within the poem that gave it its power, and he cites further examples of poets said to have bid responses from deities by revealing or simply articulating their names (1966, pp. 8–11).

71. NKT 6: 429. *Shirin shūyō* 詞林拾葉 (1739) is based upon the oral instruction that Jiun 似雲 (1673–1753) received from *Mushanokōji Sanekage* 武者小路実陰 in 1713.

72. SNKBT 42: 463. "*Hito no inori wa, toutoki mo kitanaki mo, tada yoku kokoro ni iritaru ga gen aru nari.*"

truthful intent—his views are in accord with those of the medieval Buddhist scholars. And in that many of Japan's miraculous poems do indeed resemble the magico-religious formulas of ancient India (whether in their "semantic super-abundance," or their seemingly ritual invocations of truth), in stating that *waka* are the dharani of Japan, the thirteenth-century poet-priests do not appear to have been far off the mark.

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NKBZ *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集. 51 vols. Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1970–1976.

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