

## *Honji Suijaku* Faith

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The term *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合 is used when speaking of the early rapprochement of Shinto and Buddhism, while *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 is most often used to refer to a theory according to which the kami were treated as incarnations of the Buddhist deities. This relationship of kami and buddhas is the major characteristic and apparent content of Buddhist/Shinto syncretism and the term *honji suijaku* can be used to refer to fully developed syncretism.

The impression given by most books about either Shinto or Buddhism is that they were separate religions with borders that overlapped thanks to the theory of *honji suijaku*. On the other hand, innocent reading of texts such as *Heike monogatari* and observation of religious practice and religious places today suggest instead that mingled Shinto and Buddhism has been, and in some instances still is, an important system of belief and practice. Further investigation confirms this perception. Institutional mingling was pervasive enough to occasion widespread destruction when the religions were declared separate; and personal devotion was a complicated and effective partaking of both Shinto and Buddhism.

The idea that Shinto can be studied separately from Buddhism, with still separate attention given to *honji suijaku*, is due not to a study of history, but to an overemphasis on doctrine to define religion and to the motives for the strict separation of Shinto and Buddhism, both in fact and in scholarship, from early Meiji until the end of the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> In reaction, it has recently

<sup>1</sup> This is not due just to the attitude of scholars. In Buddhism (as in Catholicism) doctrine and scholarship are presented as the content of the religion, even though most of a monk's or

become popular to deny the independent existence of Shinto before the fifteenth or sixteenth century and to stress its miscellaneous character. This is a correction to the common view that Shinto is a pure, primitive religion native to Japan which has endured to the present day and is a more interesting area of investigation (See KURODA 1981, pp. 1-21; GRAPARD 1984, pp. 240-265; HARDACRE 1986, pp. 29-63; MCMULLIN 1989, pp. 3-40).

My own work has sprung from a desire to understand how a real landscape could be paradise and how considering kami as emanations of buddhas worked as a religion for an individual. Since I have done research on the cult of Kasuga 春日, I will base my article principally on this work. Thus, I am looking at Shinto, the worship of the kami, as it existed at a major shrine. This inevitably places emphasis upon the aristocracy, since Kasuga Shrine was the clan shrine of the Fujiwara, but it should be noted that aristocrats had many quite ordinary concerns.

Shugendo and *honji suijaku* were part of the same religious atmosphere, which reached its full development in the twelfth century. Shugendo practice is based upon an understanding of landscape as sacred that is also found in *honji suijaku*. Therefore, I will begin my paper with a discussion of sacred landscape in the Kasuga cult. I will then advance a hypothesis of the development and nature of *honji suijaku*.

#### *Paradise at Kasuga*

It is particularly as it relates to actual places and landscape that *honji suijaku* is important in Shugendo. As part of the strong interest in the Buddhist paradises that developed in the late Heian period a number of Shinto shrines were rebuilt to suggest Pure Land temples, which in turn were modelled on Chinese palace architecture and on the palaces in paintings of Pure Lands. Iwashimizu Hachiman 石清水八幡, Itsukushima 厳島 and Kasuga are among these shrines (SASAKI et al. 1979, p. 175).

In literature and art it is clear that Kasuga Shrine was, in a

lay person's religious activity may be spent in observances related only distantly or not at all to doctrine. In the study of Japanese religion, and in the study of medieval Christianity, scholars have recently begun to spend more time examining what people actually did. This has resulted in growing interest in popular religion. It has also led to paying more attention to institutional history and to the relationship of Buddhism and Shinto in the history of Japanese religions.

general way, paradise. On a number of Kasuga mandala 曼荼羅 part or all of the following text appears:

In order to protect the true and perfect doctrine, He moved into a *sakaki* and rode forth from Kashima upon a stag. Out of compassion for the three thousand Hossō monks, He tempered His light, manifested His trace, and lodged at the village of Kasuga. This was in the *tsuchinoe-saru* year of Jingo Keiun.

His original substance, Roshana,  
perfectly enlightened for all eternity,  
in order to save sentient beings,  
manifests the Daimyōjin.

Thanks to the truth of the holy teaching, I have fully understood the *yuishiki* teaching. I hereby dedicate to all sentient beings the merit I have thereby acquired, and pray that together with them I shall speedily attain the highest enlightenment (NAGASHIMA 1944, p.71).

This says bluntly that Kasuga Daimyōjin 大明神 emanates directly from Roshana 盧遮那: from, in fact, complete enlightenment. There is no more perfect paradise. The Shrine landscape is the Cosmic Buddha's display, put on to teach men according to their capacity through the Daimyōjin. It is the center of the world, where the gods have descended to earth.

More commonly, the Shrine was known as the paradise of the Buddhist counterparts of the Shinto deities enshrined there: for the first sanctuary (Takemikazuchi) Fukūkenjaku Kannon 不空絹索觀音 or Shaka 釈迦; for the second, (Futsunushi) Yakushi 藥師 or Miroku 彌勒; for the third, (Ame-no-koyane) Jizō 地藏; and for the fourth, (Himegami) Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音 or Dainichi 大日. Usually, the deity of the Wakamiya, Kasuga's most important subsidiary shrine is also included as a major shrine deity. His Buddhist counterpart is Monju 文殊 or Shō Kannon 正觀音. In the twentieth and concluding scroll of *Kasuga Gongen reigen ki* 春日權現靈驗記 (1309) there is a passage which speaks of the presence of Buddhist paradises within the precincts of the Shrine. It says:

Since purity in accordance with the mind is itself the Pure Land, our own Kami are the Buddhas. How could the Shrine not be the Pure Land? Jōruri and Vulture Peak are present within the Shrine fence. Why seek Fudaraku and Shōryōzan beyond the clouds? Surely that is why the venerable Myōe revered the Mountain as Vulture Peak, and why He [the Daimyōjin] told Lord Toshimori that it is the path to enlightenment.

Very simply, the goal of Shinto might be defined as “purity” and the goal of Buddhism as “enlightenment.” The passage above makes it clear that these goals are one and that the Shrine, pure in a Shinto sense, is the Pure Land of Buddhism as well. The journey to Kasuga begins at the first *torii*, which is the entrance to the area sacred to the Shrine. Subsequent *torii* mark greater degrees of purity: if there is some accident it is more serious the closer it is to the actual sanctuaries. Shrine priests’ diaries often mention defilements. People relieved themselves near the Shrine, horses miscarried, deer or dogs died or were wounded, thus defiling the area with blood. Such events required elaborate purification if they occurred on, by or under a shrine building (*Nakatomi Sukeharu ki*, in TAKEUCHI 1979, vol. 3, pp. 233–234).<sup>2</sup>

Jōruri 淨瑠璃 is the paradise of Yakushi; Vulture Peak, of Shaka; Fudaraku 補陀落, of Kannon; and Shōryōzan 清涼山 (another name for Wutai shan 五台山), of Monju. This leaves out the paradise associated with Jizō, who does have his own paradise, but is more often linked with Amida 阿彌陀 as a guide from hell to Gokuraku 極樂, a paradise little mentioned in Kasuga materials.

The passage from *Kasuga Gongen reigen ki* goes on to say that Mikasa-yama 三笠山, the mountain behind the Shrine often identified with the deity, is the pathway to enlightenment. This has to do with one Toshimori 俊盛 whose story is told in the fifth scroll. Toshimori had prospered because of his devotion to Kasuga. Once when on pilgrimage, “he reflected on the vanity of visiting the Shrine in quest of worldly gain.” At this he heard a voice speaking from the Shrine saying, “The path of enlightenment too is the path of my mountain.” Upon his death he achieved rebirth in paradise.

Enlightenment and purity, paradise and the Shrine, the Daimyōjin and the Buddha are, in stories like this, brought into close touch with each other. Also, the role of Mikasa-yama, and the landscape in general, is emphasized.

Since early times Buddhist paradises have been established on mountains. Fudaraku was believed to be an actual mountain in South India which was the home of Kannon. The preaching of the Lotus Sutra was not moved to a distant or nameless location: Shaka’s paradise is a mountain that can be found on a map, Vulture Peak in

<sup>2</sup> For example, the death of a dog right in front of the four main sanctuaries was recorded, along with the ensuing purification, by the priest Nakatomi Sukeharu in his diary under the date Shōō 2 (1289) first month, eleventh day, and subsequent entries.

Rajgir. Monju's paradise was the Chinese mountain Wutaishan. These earthly paradises were established anew in the countries to which Buddhism traveled. In temples, Pure Lands were also made, at times very elaborately. In the Center Kondō 中金堂 of Kōfuku-ji 興福寺 for example, there was a group of sculptures including Miroku and a troupe of music-playing bodhisattvas to show Miroku's paradise; and when Hōjō-ji 法成寺 was dedicated every attempt was made to duplicate the paradise scenes in paintings, even to floating little buddhas on artificial lotuses on the pond (McCULLOUGH and McCULLOUGH 1980, pp. 552-58).

Yet, the man was rare who climbed a sacred mountain understanding it fully as earth and paradise at once. The statement made by the mountain/paradise is one more phrasing of the statement that samsara and nirvana are the same: not a problem that has proved easy to solve. Placing the paradox in the landscape gives a physical urgency to its solution. If mountain and paradise are the same, why then am I not walking in paradise?

Probably very few people, no matter how devout, have believed steadfastly that they themselves would reach paradise, but most Buddhists have believed that paradise exists and can be reached. People will continue to believe that Vulture Peak is Shaka's paradise, even if they have climbed the mountain and seen nothing but the mountain and the view. Tibetan guidebooks to paradises are trusted and meant to be used, physically, not in meditation; but people do not believe that they themselves can take one of the books and travel to paradise (BERNBAUM 1980, p. 30). If you travel all the way from India to Wutai shan and you do not see Monju, it is not because he is not there.

When the Japanese began making Buddhism their own, besides texts and teachers and images, they brought deities and paradises to their country. Thus, Japanese teachers came to be considered the incarnations of Buddhist deities; and earthly paradises, especially Potalaka and Vulture Peak, were moved to Japanese sites. As much as possible, the Japanese brought all of Buddhism to Japan so that Japan too became the Buddhist Holy Land. Syncretism of all sorts made Japan entirely Buddhist (though many parts of the mixture were also something else). By Late Heian it was possible to have a sculpture of Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子 which contained a smaller sculpture of Kannon standing on a mountain resting on a turtle. Thus, Shōtoku Taishi is Kannon, who lives on Fudaraku, which is

Hōrai 蓬萊, which is probably Japan (KURATA 1973, plates 111-112).<sup>3</sup>

The landscape itself spoke the Buddhist Dharma. A passage in *Heike monogatari* tells of Taira Koremori's 平 維盛 (1158-1184) visit to the Kumano 熊野 Shrines:

He looked around the sacred mountains of Kumano. The magnificent sight silenced both mind and tongue. It was there that the Buddha's great wish to save all sentient beings was transformed into the mist rolling over the mountain; his matchless spiritual power to purify every man became manifest in the clear water of the Otonashi River. Unhindered by clouds was the light of the moon, shining over the bank of the river, where people chanted the Lotus Sutra, the most effective sutra for attaining Nirvana . . .

[At Shingū]... towered lofty pine trees, which rustled in the mountain winds and awakened men from their illusions . . .

At the top [of the waterfall at Nachi] stood a holy statue of Kannon, which made him think of Mount Potalaka in India. Far below the mist he heard the chanting of the Lotus Sutra, reminding him of the Vulture Peak . . . (KITAGAWA and TSUCHIDA 1975, vol. 2, p. 620)

### *The Cult of Fudaraku*

The shrine precincts of Kasuga formed a paradise because of their essential purity. Kasuga was also the home of the deities of several paradises and shared the attention of their cults. Shaka, Fukūkenjaku, Miroku, Yakushi, Jizō, Jūichimen, and Monju were each for some devotee the most important deity of Kasuga. Yet of all the paradises that the presence of these deities suggests, the most important was Fudaraku, the mountain home of Kannon.

A goodly number of places have been known as Fudaraku and several among these are famous. Kasuga, Nachi 那智, Nikkō 日光 (Futara-san 二荒山) and Otowa-yama 音羽山 (the mountain behind Kiyomizu-dera 清水寺) were all locations of Fudaraku. The landscape of Nachi at Kumano was identified as Fudaraku and the waterfall itself, as Kannon. Nachi was a particularly apt site for this paradise because it was quite near the sea. Near the shore there is a temple

<sup>3</sup> This sculpture was dedicated in Hōan 2 (1121). It shows the Taishi as he was when preaching the *Shōman-gyō* at the age of forty-five. An old gilt bronze Guze Kannon was put on a newly made (c. 1121) Hōrai stand and, along with small format scrolls of the *Lotus Sutra*, *Yuima-gyō* and *Shōman-gyō*, put in a lacquer box, wrapped in silk, and put inside the sculpture.

which marks the place from which small, round, unsteerable boats set out for Fudaraku.

The material existence of all parts of the experience of rebirth in Fudaraku contrasts with the experience of rebirth in Amida's paradise. Holy men achieved rebirth in Amida's paradise at Nachi too, but by the intensity of their devotions or by suicide. Thus, when Koremori and several companions, in despair after the defeat of the Taira, became monks and decided to end their lives, they were hoping to be reborn in Amida's paradise even though they rowed out to sea from Nachi. After some hesitation Koremori jumped into the sea, followed by his men, reciting "Namu Amida Butsu" (KITAGAWA and TSUCHIDA 1974, vol. 2, pp. 623-626).

Nachi and Kasuga are both called Fudaraku. Why then does the devotee have to set off for Fudaraku in a boat, or stand under the waterfall, or die to reach it? Simply because everyone knows that in their waking experience Nachi and Kasuga are not paradise. Unlike Gokuraku, Fudaraku is a paradise that can be reached in the live, waking body. Therefore it can be reached by crossing over the wet, blue sea. Absolute faith in Kannon's power is expressed by the absence of steering mechanism in the boat. Something inconceivable happens out there on that sea, and the other shore is paradise. And paradise is also the place whence the boat sets sail: it is Nachi or Kasuga.

#### *The Nan'en-dō and Fukūkenjaku Kannon*

Although Gedatsu Shōnin 解脱上人 (1155-1212) was intensely interested in Fudaraku and in Kannon (among other focuses of devotion), it does not appear that he was devoted to any particular form of Kannon. As a Fujiwara he should have been particularly interested in Fukūkenjaku Kannon, one of the two possible *honji* of the first shrine, but he appears not to have been. Instead, he is actually known for his choice of Shaka, rather than Fukūkenjaku, as *honji* of the first shrine. This does not seem to have at all disturbed his belief that Kasuga was Fudaraku. Rather, he seems to have believed that Kasuga Daimyōjin as a whole was a manifestation of Kannon (TOMIMURA 1976, pp. 21-32).

For many of the Fujiwara, Fukūkenjaku Kannon was the most important deity at Kasuga and at Kōfuku-ji. They were devoted to

a particular image of Fukūkenjaku, a sculpture enshrined in the Nan'en-dō 南円堂, in some ways the single most important building at Kōfuku-ji. This small, eight-sided hall was built later than the other major buildings. It was consecrated in 813 and enshrined an image of Fukūkenjaku Kannon that had previously been in the Kōdō 講堂, the lecture hall.

*Shun'ya shinki*

Among the halls of Kōfuku-ji the Nan'en-dō has continued to attract special attention from the time of its founding on. A Kasuga Shrine document, *Shun'ya shinki* 春夜神記 (the earliest copy dates from 1437) explains the significance of the Nan'en-dō.<sup>4</sup>

Further, although there are many theories concerning the *honji*, it is to be held a secret truth that all the four sanctuaries are *suijaku* of Kannon. In view of this, at the time of the construction of the Nan'en-dō, Kōbō Daishi and Enomoto Myōjin built the platform together. This is "the building of the platform by the Daishi." Since this is a secret tradition, who could possibly know it? How could one not of the Nakatomi transmit it? Therefore, when in the ancient times of Jingo Keiun the Daimyōjin came from Kashima to Mikasa, the Daimyōjin made a vow to help everyone, thoroughly and completely, on pain of falling into hell. . . . (p. 191)

In the Kōnin period when Saga was Emperor (810-824) the minister of Nagaoka, Uchimaro, and Kōbō Daishi consulted with each other and made a *jōroku* 丈六, three-eyed, eight-armed Fukūkenjaku. Beneath the platform they placed a golden turtle and the Daishi himself took care of the esoteric consecration of the platform. Because it was Fudaraku-san, they made the hall eight-sided, and at each angle they put a jewel. Thus, including the one in the middle, there are nine of these. Fudaraku-san is a mountain of jewel shape with nine peaks. For this reason there are nine jewel forms on the ridge of Hase-dera; and therefore both the halls adopt the *in* 印 of nine peaks. This is called Fudaraku-in. There is an oral tradition concerning this.

The Nagaoka Udaijin Uchimaro, though he had the *jōroku* Buddha made, did not live to build the hall. Thereupon his son Fuyutsugu accomplished what his father had wished to do. He consulted with the Daishi, and in Kōnin 4 (813), they built the base on which to put the hall. When they did this two old men (one tradition has just one) came among them and spoke verses. One said,

<sup>4</sup>The name of the document, "Secret record of a spring night" suggests its esoteric content. The "spring night" is a play on "spring day," the meaning of the characters for "Kasuga."



A hall has been built on the southern shore of Fudaraku; the wisteria waves of the north flourish even now.	Fudaraku no minami no kishi ni Dō tatete kita no fujinami ima zo sakayuru
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That was Isagawa Daimyōjin. Another was Enomoto and he said,

The Lord of Fudaraku has his home in the south. Even now they flourish the wisteria waves of the north!	Futaranushi minami no kata ni iei shitsu ima zo sakaen kita no fujinami
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Then they left. They said what they did because on Fudaraku-san the wisteria blooms profusely in all four seasons and because this hall is a transfer of that Mountain. "Kita no fujinami" (the wisteria waves of the north) means that among the four houses the North is especially flourishing and that on the day of dedication of this hall a full six Minamoto died. For this reason, on a day when there is an imperial progress to the Nan'en-dō the Minamoto do not go into the hall. Over his left shoulder Fukūkenjaku wears a deer skin and when Takemikazuchi came to the forest of Mikasa he rode a Kasuga deer. Thus there is a deep connection there.

This hall was built in the southwest part of Kōfuku-ji looking over the pond to the south. When waves rise on the pond they are like the waves on the Southern Ocean. Fukūkenjaku is enshrined in the southwest corner of Makaraita in South India, and he sweeps away all demon disasters so that the realm is at peace and the people prosperous. From this example the hall was built according to the instructions of Kōbō Daishi. Therefore, even though the Fujiwara clan was small, since the dedication of this hall, they have prospered. . . . (pp.193-194)

This text appears to be a compilation of various writings about the Nan'en-dō. As it continues it says more about the identity of the Fukūkenjaku of the Nan'en-dō with Kasuga Daimyōjin. The deities of Kasuga are "only one, a single body divided; and all are without distinction from one another. Therefore, the *honzon* 本尊 of the Nan'en-dō is the *honji* of Kasuga Daimyōjin." (p. 195) This particular thought is not novel, but it is certainly clearly stated (KAWAMURA 1981, p. 92).<sup>5</sup>

The other reasons commonly given for the choice of Fukūkenjaku include the presence of wisteria, the *fujii* of Fujiwara 藤原, on Fudaraku. Although there are references to a white flower on

<sup>5</sup> KAWAMURA quotes passages from *Den reki* and *Gyokuyō* which show the close connection of Kasuga and Fukūkenjaku and the Nan'en-dō.

Fudaraku in texts, there are to my knowledge none to wisteria. However, wisteria definitely appears on Fudaraku in Japanese paintings. The effect of this on people's understanding was rather like going to a place where you had never been and finding an empty house with your own name on the doorplate—it must be yours. Another reason for the connection of Fukūkenjaku with Takemikazuchi is that, while Takemikazuchi's vehicle is a deer, Fukūkenjaku wears a deer skin *kesa* 袈裟 which shows that he loves the Fujiwara and cares for them as a mother deer cares for her fawn. Interestingly, the Nan'en-dō image does not have a deer skin *kesa* (technically it should be an antelope skin), leaving open the possibility that the image was dressed and wore an actual deer skin.

Although these reasons—the wisteria, the deer—seem oddly insufficient, in fact they should explain Fukūkenjaku's relationship with Kasuga. One conclusion possible from the available evidence is that the deer was the totemic animal of the Fujiwara. Takemikazuchi and the deer are, for all intents and purposes, the same deity. Although the Fujiwara, as Nakatomi, claimed Ame-no-koyane as their clan ancestor, they must also have claimed Takemikazuchi as a special patron. Ame-no-koyane too is linked with the deer, as used in divination, over which he and his descendants had authority. Very early, Fukūkenjaku must have been identified with Kasuga and particularly with Takemikazuchi. The antelope skin *kesa* of Fukūkenjaku became a symbol of the exclusive, maternal love held by the Kasuga deity for the Fujiwara.

The legend that six Minamoto died on the day of the consecration of the Nan'en-dō is too comical to take seriously, but the legend was a measure of the magical protection that Fukūkenjaku conferred on the family.

Kōfuku-ji, as a clan temple, and Kasuga, as a clan shrine, promised something special to the Fujiwara. Their preferment and the success of their affairs rested upon the favor of the deity of Kasuga and upon the prayers of Kōfuku-ji. The curse of the deity was no light matter, nor was his blessing.<sup>6</sup> Even if the clan member was not

<sup>6</sup> The deity was believed capable of making someone very ill or very fortunate. In *Kasuga Gongen reigen ki*, scroll 3, the regent Tadazane was made quite ill and the healer he brought in was unable to cure him. Finally the healer apologized for even trying since he had come to understand that the sickness was the curse of the Kasuga deity. Tadazane figured out how he had displeased the deity and remedied the matter. On the other hand, the deity was able to have someone promoted or reappointed to office, as in *Kasuga Gongen reigen ki*, scroll 4.

praying for practical personal advantage, but for the enlightenment of all sentient beings, a grace was assumed to flow from ceremonies at Kasuga and Kōfuku-ji and to help the family. Patronage of Kōfuku-ji and Kasuga gave the Fujiwara an in with heaven. Their fate was tied to Kōfuku-ji and to Kasuga. It was particularly tied to Takemikazuchi and his *honji* Fukūenjaku.

### Honji suijaku

The main sign of *honji suijaku* is the identification of kami with buddhas. *Honji suijaku* is based on an extremely simple concept: that one being may be the incarnation or emanation of another. Treating deities of different religious systems in this way is a natural way of reconciling the existence of different systems.

As is well known, when Buddhism arrived in Japan it already had much experience in dealing with local cults. Although Buddhism proscribes the worship of non-Buddhist gods, from the earliest times it had worked out ways in which such non-Buddhist gods could be converted and brought into the Buddhist fold. Thus Indra and Brahma minister to the newborn Buddha; and in art, figures similar to these gods stand to either side of early figures of the Buddha, holding vajra and lotus, and serve as prototypes for the bodhisattvas. In China, Buddhism was taught using Taoist terminology. In Japan we know little about the way in which Buddhist teachers first explained their ideas or about the position they first gave to the kami, however there was at least one *jingūji* 神宮寺, a temple which served a Shinto shrine, by the late seventh century (TSUJI 1944, p. 439). By the end of the eighth century sutras were read for the kami, and shrines were assigned monks and temples to pray for the kami.

There is some disagreement about the speed with which kami came to be known as Buddhist deities. The majority opinion is like that of Tsuji Zennosuke, who traces slow changes of thought about the kami from the eighth to the twelfth century (TSUJI 1944, pp. 437–489). First, the kami were suffering beings who wanted to hear the Buddhist teachings. They protected the Buddhist teachings and became bodhisattvas. Finally they were seen as the forms the Buddhas and bodhisattvas took in the land of Japan. Tsuji's account is conservative. For example, although he notes that the word *suijaku* is used for the kami of Kamo 加茂 and Kasuga in 859, he does not find that this indicates a concept of continuity between the buddhas

and the kami (TSUJI 1944, p. 453). Although he writes that in a 937 (Jōhei 7) document the continuity of the buddhas as *honji* and the kami as *suijaku* is apparent, he still waits until the early twelfth century to find firm attribution of Buddhist identities to kami (TSUJI 1944, pp. 460-461). He does argue that the beginning of *honji suijaku* thinking, which he places in mid-Heian, shows that Japanese thought and culture were becoming independent (TSUJI 1944, pp. 458).

Some scholars, however, obviously find it difficult to accept the idea that the apparently rather simple process of identifying the kami with buddhas took four centuries (for example, NAGASHIMA 1944, pp. 70-77). I agree with these scholars and will give reasons below.

There is no disagreement that by the late twelfth century, the idea of the essential identity of the kami and buddhas is an accepted fact, which appears quite commonly; and that the idea of the essential identity of the kami and buddhas does not appear commonly before the early twelfth century.

I would like to suggest that: 1) the kami had Buddhist identities very early in Buddhist temples associated with shrines; 2) full acceptance of the idea of the kami as buddhas came in the twelfth century because it was in the late eleventh and early twelfth century that the power of the Buddhist temples reached their peak; and 3) the idea of the identity of the kami and the buddhas was particularly successful, and openly expressed, when the kami were portrayed as able to offer enlightenment and salvation, particularly, salvation from hell and rebirth in paradise.

One of the confusing things about the lists of correspondences of kami and their Buddhist identities, their *honji*, is that there are often several *honji* for one kami. The idea that there was one precise correspondence of kami and buddha is a myth. If this is a sign of the full development of *honji suijaku*, then *honji suijaku* never developed fully. Not only were each of the kami at Kasuga capable of having several identities at the same time, but Kasuga Daimyōjin as a grand whole could have any one of those identities or a number of others. When and how and why were these identifications made? Certainly they were based on dreams and visions which gave them authenticity, but why were the visions and dreams of these particular deities? How old are the identifications?

For the sake of argument, I would like to suggest that some identifications of kami and Buddhist figures were made very early,

and that, for example, the connection of the first sanctuary at Kasuga, Takemikazuchi, with Fukūkenjaku dates from before the consecration of the Nan'en-dō in 813.

The earliest account of the making of an image of a kami is from an 801 compilation, *Tado Jingūji garan shizaichō* 多度神宮寺伽藍資材帳 and refers to an incident which occurred in 763 (KANDA 1985, pp. 11–12; SHIMIZU 1983, p. 2). At that time a Buddhist monk made an image of Amida and practiced. An oracle said that the nearby kami of Tado wanted to leave Shinto and take refuge in Buddhism. The monk put up a small temple, enshrined an image, and called it Tado Daibosatsu. This temple was the *jingūji*. Although it has generally been assumed that this image showed the Shinto form of the kami, in a 1983 article Shimizu Zenzō suggests that the sculpture was Buddhist in form, since it was clearly in a Buddhist hall and it is widely accepted that sculptures in shrines would have shown the Shinto forms of the kami, while *jingūji* would have held the Buddhist forms of the kami. He also wonders whether the image enshrined was actually the Amida the Buddhist monk had already made, and whether this Amida was then the *honji butsu* of Tado. He suggests that images already in *jingūji* may have determined the choice of Buddhist identities for the kami. This seems very likely. He also remarks that most late ninth and early tenth century *honji butsu* are Yakushi, which accords with a widespread cult of this deity from mid-Nara on as the most actively helpful Buddhist figure. Thus Amida was a less likely though possible *honji butsu*; there are some early *honji butsu* who were not Yakushi (SHIMIZU 1983, pp. 2–4).

A temple like Kōfuku-ji was rather more than a *jingūji* for Kasuga, but perhaps something similar to what happened at Tado happened at Kōfuku-ji. After all, the temple and shrine had an implicit parallel relationship as the clan temple and clan shrine of the Fujiwara. There are two different stories about the making of the Fukūkenjaku Kannon in the Nan'en-dō at Kōfuku-ji. The more plausible is that it was made in around 745 for the Kōdō, the lecture hall, and moved to the Nan'en-dō in 813 (*Kōfuku-ji Engi*, in *Daimihon bukkyō zensho*, vol. 84, doc. 668, p. 238).<sup>7</sup> If this story is correct, and the image of Fukūkenjaku was in the Kōdō, why was it moved to the Nan'en-dō and why did it receive so much special attention? Is it not possible that a monk was practicing in front of the image and received an

<sup>7</sup> There is another story which puts the making of the sculpture near 813, but Fukūkenjaku was a more popular deity in the 740's than in the early 9th c.

oracle from the deity of Kasuga, perhaps stressing his desire to hear the Buddhist teachings? If monks were donated to pray for kami, what would they have prayed to? How would they have been successful in their prayers without some appearance or word from the deity in response? If this happened, the link between the Kasuga kami and Fukūkenjaku would have been made automatically. By 813, sufficient evidence would have accumulated to make it desirable to enshrine the Fukūkenjaku image, with its special connection with Kasuga, in a new building. The same process could have been occurring with other images, such as the Shaka of the Central Kondō, the Miroku of the Hoku'en-dō 北円堂, the Yakushi of the East Kondō 東金堂, and so on. The connection of the kami with particular images of the Buddhist deities is well supported by Kamakura and Muromachi documents, paintings and sculptures. Connections of the halls and images (and their kami forms) with Fujiwara ancestors are also possible. However, in most cases, it does not seem that the dedications were followed by recorded activity which clearly links a particular family member with the deity.

It seems likely that there were many competing identities for the kami and that precise identifications, of Miroku and Yakushi with the second sanctuary, for example, were worked out as time went on. This process was never really finished. Since the kami are usually vague in identity, there must have been only rare cases when there was an obvious link between a kami and a buddha such as the rather slender link which tied Fukūkenjaku and the deity of the first sanctuary at Kasuga. Takemikazuchi is intimately linked with the deer, for he rode a deer to Kasuga and the deer is his sacred animal, while Fukūkenjaku wears a deer skin *kesa*. The link between Takemikazuchi and Shaka would seem to be just as reasonable, since Shaka preached in the deer park, but neither this reason nor any other is given for this identification.

The Fujiwara treated the Nan'en-dō Fukūkenjaku as a form of their *ujigami* 氏神. There are many examples of Fujiwara devotion to Fukūkenjaku as the *honji* of the Kasuga kami. As recorded in his diary *Den reki*, Eikyū 1 (1113) 7. 10, Fujiwara Tadazane 忠実 (1078-1162) was offering a pagoda to Kasuga Shrine. On the fifth of the month Tadazane had sent his son Tadamichi 忠通 to Kasuga Shrine to pray for the coming erection of the heart pillar. On the tenth the heart pillar was put up. Tadazane again sent Tadamichi. On that day he says that there had been a "shaking" when offerings had

been made on the fifth and that therefore he was having a painting of Fukūkenjaku dedicated and also copying out the *Fukūkenjaku-kyō* 不空絹索經 (probably a short version of the text, such as the *Fukūkenjaku-jinshushin-gyō* 神咒心經). He was offering the painting to Kasuga but was having a monk dedicate it. He had divination performed by a yin-yang master on the fifteenth and finally had divination performed with the hexagrams and found that the shaking was because the Daimyōjin was happy. Thus it was a good omen.

This is an interesting account because it so clearly shows the identity of the Daimyōjin with the Fujiwara *ujigami* as well as illustrating the degree to which Tadazane, a fairly suspicious man, covered all his religious bases.

Special concern with the images known as *honji butsu* of Kasuga would have benefited the monks, giving their temple added importance and influence with the Fujiwara at court. It also seems possible that although monks were donated to shrines along with *jingūji* and images, they were not, at an early time, allowed free access to the shrines because of fears of pollution. And, if they were allowed to read sutras for the kami in a special pavilion, they may not, as good Buddhists, have been allowed to pray to the kami. However, it is likely that they would have been allowed to pray to a kami installed as a protector of their temple on their temple grounds, and they would have been allowed to pray to a *honji butsu*. They would thus have had political and religious reasons to identify the kami with Buddhist deities at an early time.

NAGASHIMA Fukutarō has suggested that the Kōfuku-ji monks were not allowed to participate in the Kasuga Festival and that the Wakamiya Shrine was established at Kasuga by Kōfuku-ji in order to strengthen the temple's hold on Kasuga Shrine. Kōfuku-ji made the Wakamiya Festival, the *onmatsuri*, which began the year after the deity was moved to his own shrine in 1135, the festival of Yamato Province, which it controlled by this time. If the monks were not allowed access to the Kasuga Festival in the twelfth century, their situation must have been at least as difficult in the ninth century (1959, p. 9; MIYAI 1978, pp. 90–91).<sup>8</sup>

In its struggles for power with the government, Kōfuku-ji used the threat of the displeasure of the Kasuga deity. By ignoring the

<sup>8</sup> Miyai quotes *Den reki* for Kōwa 2 (1100) 2. 10, which says that the purification for the Kasuga festival required that Tadazane avoid Buddhist monks and nuns; and Kajō 1 (1106) 2. 1, which says that monks and nuns could not come to the Kasuga festival.

displeasure of the god, the nobles risked bad luck, sickness and death. By the time the power of the temple monks reached a decisive point in the closing years of the eleventh century, the higher ranking monks of Kōfuku-ji were the sons of high ranking nobles. The temple had an army, extensive land holdings, high income, and power to rule the province of Yamato.

It is in the early years of the twelfth century that the kami begin to appear in records commonly as the manifestations of particular buddhas. This may have been a result of the power of the temples to press their ideas more effectively and thus to gain still more control over the power felt to lie in the kami. Perhaps then, when the men in major temples and the men in the capital were close relatives, ideas and practices familiar in the temples became widely known outside. The paintings called Kasuga mandala, for example, were probably used at Kōfuku-ji before they were used by the aristocracy. In 1184, Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実 (1149-1207) recorded his devotions before a painting of the scenery of Kasuga Shrine. He had received the painting and, presumably, instructions on its use, from his brother Shin'en 信円 (1153-1224), abbot of Kōfuku-ji.

The magic of *honji suijaku* in the twelfth century was that the kami were able to offer salvation. All that the kami were normally concerned with, even mundane interest in the promotion of devoted clan members, was given greater dignity as the skillful means of a Buddha dedicated to the eventual enlightenment of all beings. The great devotees of Kasuga—Kanezane, Gedatsu and Myōe 明恵 (1103-1232)—were not “Shintoists,” but practicing Buddhists, who, by including the kami in their devotions, gave the kami a greater range of power within their essentially Buddhist practice.

This was a continuation of a natural process of extending the Buddha nature to all things. Adding Shinto to Japanese Buddhism as it was already practiced meant adding another level of access to the Buddhist teachings and to the Buddhist goals of enlightenment and rebirth in paradise. If you were able to manage almost nothing, still, surely you could manage contact with the lowest rung on the ladder of access, the kami, and in this way actually make contact with the Buddhist pantheon. Buddhism extended more deeply into the world, gaining even greater intimacy with the people, and this world was offered a new grace: Buddhism was not somehow made worldly in the process.

Minor conflict had existed between Buddhist and Shinto require-



ments. Buddhist practice was considered wrong in certain Shinto settings, while the exclusive worship of kami could be considered wrong from a Buddhist viewpoint. Both the Ise and the Kamo priestesses in *Genji monogatari* needed to atone for the sin of having avoided anything Buddhist during their shrine service (SEIDENSTICKER 1978, pp. 359, 619).

Conflict between what was proper behavior toward the kami and toward the buddhas did not go away when the kami were seen as the manifestations of the buddhas. Until the Meiji period the tension between Buddhism and Shinto did not surface in religious persecutions such as those in China. However, in earlier times friction between the religions did exist. The story told in *Kasuga Gongen reigen ki*, scroll 10, of a Kōfuku-ji abbot forbidding music at Kasuga Shrine is a small example. The music disturbed his meditation and he had the will and the power to stop it. When the deity rebuked him, music which was proper to a shrine, if not to a meditation hall, sounded again at Kasuga.

There are also many instances of small disagreements over rituals and precedence that make it clear that the affairs of kami and buddhas were in certain realms to be kept distinct. An instance of such disagreement appears in the diary of Retired Emperor Hanazono, *Hanazono-in shinki* 花園院宸記, for the twenty-fifth of the twelfth month of Shōchū 2 (1325) when he was visited by Fujiwara Kiyotsune. Kiyotsune had for three or four years been imitating Shrine rites with a Kasuga mandala when he received an oracle that declared his treatment of the painting as the god of Kasuga wrong because Kiyotsune was living near a temple and because both temple monks and a layman's house were occasionally polluted. The oracle went on to say that Kiyotsune was also behaving like a monk, which was improper since he was actually a layman. Kiyotsune responded that he had been very devoted and that he was too poor to make many pilgrimages to the Shrine. He offered to move away from the temple, but the oracle told him to stop observing the Shrine rites and to put the painting away. It was at this point that he went to ask whether the Retired Emperor thought the oracle was genuine. The Emperor said yes, and that although there is at the highest level no distinction between pure and impure, in practice these distinctions do exist, and it is the kami's right to decide what they are and when they must be observed (NAGASHIMA 1944, pp. 226-227)

The religions were not entirely merged: it is only with a certain

amount of tension between them that their coordination would have made good soteriological sense. When, in the *Kasuga Gongen reigen ki*, scroll 8, the Daimyōjin instructs a woman devotee through a medium to worship the Shaka at Saga instead of himself, there is a surprise and energy in that offer that would not exist if the gods and buddhas were flatly the same. This energy was a force in propelling the person into deeper involvement with his religion and in thus leading him to enlightenment and salvation. I believe it is an emotional use of logic (and the denial of its conventionally logical result) much like that in a Zen kōan or in other Buddhist discourse in which you are told that you are already enlightened or that samsara and nirvana are identical. The obvious answer, that you can then stop trying, is not the accurate answer. The accurate answer is to *cut through*, to accept the challenge to make an effort. In this respect, as well as in the subordination of the kami to the buddhas and in the goal of enlightenment or rebirth in paradise, *honji suijaku* is a variety of Buddhism, occurring, so to speak, in Shinto territory.

Certain distinctions between realms—of what was proper to kami and to buddhas—could be broken down, releasing considerable energy. Purity, for example, was the concern of kami, and a man was expected to be free of pollution when he participated in a Shinto ceremony. Even being in the company of monks and nuns could be considered polluting. A story in *Hosshinshū* 発心集 (early 13th c.), scroll 4, no. 10 tells of a monk who was making a series of one hundred pilgrimages from Kyoto to Hie 日吉 Shrine (TYLER 1987). On his way home on the eightieth day he took pity on a woman who had to dispose of her mother's corpse and helped her carry it. Afterwards he was sorry to have wasted eighty pilgrimages because he was now polluted. He decided to visit the shrine anyway, even though he was frightened, and was spoken to by the kami through a medium. The kami praised the monk for his kindness, and explained that pollution rules were the skillful means of a basically Buddhist deity. However, the monk was not to tell anyone lest they misunderstand and assume that the rules were unimportant. The monk was deeply moved and from then on performed acts of kindness. Thus the kami offered a special dispensation: pollution rules still ordinarily mattered, even though the kami had a Buddhist identity, but the monk was forgiven and even praised because he had "sinned" out of compassion. The monk had known that the kami was a manifestation of a buddha, but had not presumed to disregard

his nature as a kami. It was not up to him to judge his own actions. Calling things that are obviously different the same, does not make them the same: it sets up an uneasy state which acknowledges differences at an obvious level and proclaims identity at another, normally inaccessible, level.

The circumstances of the making of one painting of the Wakamiya illustrate the character of the religious experience of the connection between the Wakamiya and Monju, and between other *suijaku* and *honji*. This painting is the frontispiece for a *Kongō-kyō* 金剛經 found inside a statue of Monju-riding-a-lion that was made for Kōfuku-ji. In the scroll there is a colophon which says that the Kōfuku-ji monk Kyōgen had a sculpture of Monju made. When it was finished, in the eighth month of 1273, he copied the sutra and placed a relic in the spindle. In another prayer written on the scroll it is recorded that before Kyōgen conceived the idea of having an image made he was a devotee of Kasuga Daimyōjin. When he prayed for the speedy completion of the image he dreamt that on Kasuga Plain, which was covered with blooming cherry trees, he saw a *dōji* 童子, a youth. So, in the fullness of his joy at the forming of this karmic relationship, he ordered a painting made (NARA KOKURITSU HAKUBUTSUKAN 1964, pp. 32–33, Plate 25; KAGEYAMA 1962, pp. 91–94).

There is no apparent relationship between the content of the sutra and its frontispiece, apart from the association of Monju with wisdom. However, the relationship of the image in the painting to that of the sculpture in which it was found is that of *suijaku* to *honji*. The monk's interest in having an image of Monju made is not said to rest on the knowledge that Monju was a *honji* of the Wakamiya, yet his dedication to the making of the image and his devotion to Kasuga were sealed by his dream. This emotional experience of benediction conferred by the vision of the Wakamiya upon Kyōgen and his enterprise seems to be an essential part of the religious content of *honji suijaku*. The brightness and beauty of the landscape of this little painting, and the expressions of the figures, suggest the elation of the perception that the Daimyōjin himself is there to help Kyōgen on the path to salvation.

The Japanese had already accepted the twin practice of esoteric and exoteric Buddhism, *kenmitsu bukkyō* 顯密仏教. In the case of Kōfuku-ji this meant the practice of Shingon esotericism and Hossō. At a certain point they added to this another facet which was Shinto. It seems possible that Shinto was confirmed in a sort of archaic

simplicity precisely because this was in contrast to Buddhism. It was contrast and tension that interested people, not some mixing which deprived distinct matters of their identity. Shinto became a sort of alternate Buddhist practice, and then, gradually, *honji suijaku* became commonplace.

Adding new manifestations of Buddhist deities did not simply provide more Buddhist deities: the kami were different. They were manifestations and thus lower than the Buddhist deities. They dealt with practical matters. They were part of the land itself. And, the kami were concerned, as least as kami, with what one might call special interest groups. They were like people concerned first of all with the success of their own children and grand-children, not, like the Buddhist deities, with the salvation of all. Shinto was something that one did, with automatic obligations, according to one's birth and position. Kanezane, for example was born a Fujiwara and had, automatically, a special relationship with the Kasuga kami. Jien 慈円 (1155-1225), his brother and abbot of Mt. Hiei, formed a connection with Sannō 山王 because he entered Mt. Hiei. In return the kami took care of his own against outside forces.

With the full intermingling of Shinto with Buddhism, this concern for the welfare of a particular group against any other group was transcended. For example, Fukūkenjaku Kannon appears more often early on as a *honji butsu* of the first sanctuary at Kasuga than does Shaka, while Shaka appears more often later and is of unrivalled importance in *Kasuga Gongen reigen ki*. The donor of the *emaki*, Fujiwara Kinpira 衡平 (1264-1315), did not neglect Fukūkenjaku Kannon, so the reason was not personal devotion (KONDŌ 1952). The concentration on Shaka may have occurred because Fukūkenjaku, with known concern for the success of the Northern house of the Fujiwara, was inappropriate as a public form of the Kasuga kami. After all, on the day of the consecration of the Nan'en-dō at least six Minamoto died! How could you present this deity as the god of Kasuga for general worship? In addition, Fukūkenjaku was not a popular deity, while worship of Shaka was part of renewed emphasis on traditional Buddhism that flourished in contrast to new teachings about the Amida *nenbutsu*. Thus, Shaka was presented as the main deity of Kasuga. In this way Buddhism gained a new degree of intimacy—Shaka was now present right at Kasuga Shrine; and a new energy derived from forcefully declaring the identity of deities who were and who remained quite obviously different. It was

some time before this declaration of identity lost its freshness and its power to challenge the mind and heart.

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