

Matara: A Dream King Between Insight and Imagination

William M. Bodiford

Résumé

Le présent article examine une divinité appelée Matara qui était à l'origine puissante, mais dont le culte a été réprimé avant de tomber dans l'oubli. Les précédentes études sur cette divinité ayant été influencées par cette répression, elles ont mis l'accent sur son caractère soi-disant hétérogène, « combinatoire », peu orthodoxe ou déviant. Après une brève revue des théories les plus remarquables de ces précédentes études, nous introduisons les ouvrages d'un prêtre Tendai de l'époque Edo, Jōin (1682-1739), qui avait reçu une initiation complète sur les secrets de Matara. Jōin présente Matara comme le roi des rêves, jouant un rôle essentiel dans les pratiques orthodoxes de méditation du bouddhisme de l'Asie orientale. L'exposé de Jōin nous aide à situer ce rôle dans son contexte. Il ne s'agit pas de « pratiques orthodoxes de méditation » dans les spectacles populaires et dans le folklore. Jōin explique également pourquoi Matara en vint à apparaître comme le dieu de la souveraineté pour la famille Tokugawa et pour Tenkai, le maître bouddhiste qui avait établi, selon les rites du Sannō ichijitsu shintō, le culte de Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) à Nikkō Bit en tant que Tōshō Daigongen. Suivant cette explication, Jōin identifie le droit divin de gouvernement comme relevant du « shintō » et affirme que seul ce dernier (et non le bouddhisme) est capable d'assurer la paix et la prospérité du royaume.

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MATARA A DREAM KING BETWEEN INSIGHT AND IMAGINATION

William M. BODIFORD

Le présent article examine une divinité appelée Matara 摩多羅 qui était à l'origine puissante, mais dont le culte a été réprimé avant de tomber dans l'oubli. Les précédentes études sur cette divinité ayant été influencées par cette répression, elles ont mis l'accent sur son caractère soi-disant hétérogène, « combinatoire », peu orthodoxe ou déviant. Après une brève revue des théories les plus remarquables de ces précédentes études, nous introduisons les ouvrages d'un prélat Tendai de l'époque Edo, Jōin 乗因 (1682-1739), qui avait reçu une initiation complète sur les secrets de Matara. Jōin présente Matara comme le roi des rêves, jouant un rôle essentiel dans les pratiques orthodoxes de méditation du bouddhisme de l'Asie orientale. L'exposé de Jōin nous aide à situer ce rôle dans son contexte. Il ne s'agit pas de « pratiques orthodoxes de méditation » dans les spectacles populaires et dans le folklore. Jōin explique également pourquoi Matara en vint à apparaître comme le dieu de la souveraineté pour la famille Tokugawa et pour Tenkai 天海, le maître bouddhiste qui avait établi, selon les rites du Sannō ichijitsu shintō 山王一實神道, le culte de Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1542-1616) à Nikkō 日光 en tant que Tōshō Daigongen 東照大権現. Suivant cette explication, Jōin identifie le droit divin de gouvernement comme relevant du « shintō » et affirme que seul ce dernier (et non le bouddhisme) est capable d'assurer la paix et la prospérité du royaume.

Matara (or Matarajin 摩多羅神) is the name of a god who is no longer worshiped and all but forgotten in modern Japan. During the medieval and early modern periods of Japanese history, however, Matara was one of the most influential gods in Japan. Matara stood in the doorway between religion and government, between universal Buddhist ideal and local religion, and between personal religious realization (insight) and popular entertainment (imagination). As befitting a god of such broad cultural influence, Matara has attracted attention from many diverse commentators, but without producing definitive conclusions or widespread scholarly consensus. Historians and scholars of Japanese religion still find Matara mysterious and undefined. To explain the continuing mystery of Matara it is useful to briefly review previous explanations of Matara. We will begin with Matara's role as a tutelary deity of the Tokugawa family and then recount Matara's better known roles as a patron of theater and performance and as a hybrid deity of confused folklore. Then I will introduce an eighteenth century source that became available only recently which places Matara at the center of Buddhist dream theory and meditative practice. Matara's role as a dream king helps explain not only Matara's multivalent roles within popular entertainment and folklore, but also sheds new light on

how Matara emerged as a god of rulership. Ultimately Matara provides us with a heretofore neglected but important perspective for examining the intellectual and religious role of Shintō in early modern Japan, at a time when the same process by which Matara shed his heretofore Buddhist identity also opened the way for the emergence of modern Shintō.

The Rise and Fall of Matara in Early Modern Japan

Matara reached the height of his power during the period immediately following 1617. That was the year that the Tendai prelate Tenkai 天海 (1536-1643; Jigen 慈眼) enshrined three deities in Nikkō 日光 as the guardians of the Tokugawa military government (Sugahara 1992, 30). These three guardians consisted of Matara (even then an obscure deity), Tōshō 東照 (the deified form of Tokugawa Ieyasu 德川家康, 1542-1616), and Sannō 山王 (the spiritual embodiment of the Tendai Buddhist establishment).¹ According to Tendai lore, these gods functioned as Japanese avatars (*gongen* 權現) of Amitābha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Śākyamuni, respectively, the three buddhas who were responsible for ensuring the prosperity of Japan's ruling families and the peace and stability of the realm.² After 1698, however, Matara began to fall into disrepute because of his association with the Tendai *genshi kimyōdan* 玄旨歸命壇 initiations — secret rites which had been denounced that year as part of a radical effort to reform Japanese Tendai (see Bodiford 2006). Less than half a century later, as early as the 1720s, there exist handwritten notes in the margins of manuscripts by Tendai priests in which they puzzle over the identity of the by then rarely-seen Matara. They note, for example, that the name “Matara” is unknown in Buddhist scriptures outside Japan (see Sonehara 1992: 287). About this same time the Nativist scholar Amano Sadakage 天野信景 (1661-1733) notes in his *Shiojiri* 鹽尻 (*Salt Piles*; fasc. 35; 14.233; a compilation of essays) that Matara rituals are a deviant form of Buddhism. By 1782 the Shingon priest Tainin Myōryū 諦忍妙龍 (1705-1786) dismissed Matara as a false icon created by the stupidest of stupid folks (*Kūge dansō* 空華談叢, fasc. 3; NBZ 94.214b). Significantly, both Amano and Tainin cite as their source of information the *Byakujaben* 闢邪篇 (*Repudiation of*

1. Regarding the deification of Tokugawa Ieyasu, also see Boot 1990 and 2000. For an overview of the ideological and political implications of Nikkō and Ieyasu's deification, see Ooms 1985, 173-186.

2. The trinity of Amitābha (Amida 阿彌陀), Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi 藥師), and Śākyamuni (Shaka 釋迦) constitute the three primary buddhas of Japanese Tendai. Initiation texts identify them with many corresponding triads, such as: the main deities of Yokawa 横川, the East Pagoda (Tō-tō 東塔), and West Pagoda (Sai-tō 西塔) (i.e., the three religious districts of the Tendai establishment on Mount Hiei); the periods of latter dharma, imitation dharma, and true dharma (i.e., the three periods of Buddhist eschatology); the aristocracy, warrior (specifically Minamoto), royal families (i.e., the three ruling houses of Japan). In this last role, they are analogous to (and in competition with) the three shrines in the well-known “oracles of the three shrines” (*sanja takusen* 三社託宣; Bocking 2000): Kasuga 春日 (representing the Fujiwara aristocracy), Iwashimizu Hachiman 岩清水八幡 (representing the Minamoto), and Ise 伊勢 (representing the royal family).

Heresies; 1698) by Reikū Kōken 靈空光謙 (1652-1739). Reikū was the Tendai priest who led the attack against the *genshi kimyōdan* initiations (Bodiford 2006). The comments by Amano and Tainin illustrate the wide influence of Reikū's *Byakujaben* beyond the confines of the Tendai establishment. After it appeared, Matara became an embarrassment and was soon forgotten.

Because of his obscurity Matara seems to have escaped the Japanese cultural revolution occasioned by the separation of gods and buddhas (*shinbutsu bunri* 神佛分離) during the first years of the Meiji period (ca. 1868-1872; see Grapard 1984). In other words, unlike most prominent gods of that time, Matara was not required to receive a Japanese-sounding name or to become associated with the mythos of a geographical place or aristocratic family in Japan. As a result Matara is an anomaly in modern Japan: a god without a clearly defined Japanese cultural identity. He can be identified as neither Buddhist nor Shintō. For this reason, Matara presents modern scholars with a rare example of the kind of multifaceted nature — in which multiple possible identities appear or disappear based on the ritual contingencies of the moment — that once characterized many gods in pre-modern Japan.

Matara and Theatrical Entertainment

Today Matara is perhaps best known among historians of Noh theater. His fame among aficionados of traditional Japanese theater began in 1973 when the literary scholar Hattori Yukio 服部幸雄 identified Matara with the mystical origins of *sarugaku* 猿樂, the medieval forerunner of Noh. Hattori begins by citing an account of the origin of Noh from the *Fūshikaden* 風姿花傳 (*Flower Transmission of Style and Form*; 1400) by the famous actor and playwright Zeami 世阿彌 (1363?-1443?):

While the Buddha was [in India], when Sudatta [Anāthapiṇḍada] established the Jetavana Grove (Gion Shōja 祇園精舎) and was about to donate it, just as Śākyamuni Tathāgata began to preach, Devadatta and 10,000 non-Buddhists hung streamers from the tree limbs and bamboo branches, danced, and shouted so that the offering could not proceed. At a glance, the Buddha bestowed power on Śāriputra, who thereupon arranged drums and flutes at the rear door (*ushirodo* 後). Ānanda with his memory, Śāriputra with his wisdom, and Pūrṇa with his eloquence performed sixty-six rounds of mimicry (*monomane* 物まね), so that upon hearing the sound of flute and drums, the non-Buddhists gathered at the rear door, watched them, and became quiet. During this lull, the *tathāgata* [i.e., buddha] completed the donation service. Thus did our art [of Noh Theater] begin in India. (*Fūshikaden*, sec. 4, “Jingi” [Divine Rites]; reprinted p.38)

Zeami does not mention Matara, but Hattori interprets this passage in light of the historical links between Buddhist New Year Ceremonies (Shushō-e 修正會) and the informal theater performances (*ennen* 延年) that Buddhist priests stage during those ceremonies to praise the buddhas and celebrate the local gods for the purpose of inviting peace, prosperity, and good fortune throughout the new year. Hattori points out that the format of these theatrical pieces is identical to *sarugaku*, except that they are performed at the special meditation (*samādhi*; i.e., absorption) halls (*jōgyōdō* 常行堂) of Tendai temples and that these meditation halls enshrine Matara.

Hattori concludes that Matara was a frightening “back door” (*ushirodo* 後戸) deity who obstructs Buddhist ceremonies unless first propitiated by ritualized dramatic performance. Once properly propitiated, however, Matara becomes a guardian of those same dramatic arts (Hattori 1973).

Hattori’s thesis sparked the interest of other scholars not just in theater, but also in literature, history, religion, thought, folklore, and architecture, many of whom responded with their own investigations of Matara (Suzuki 2001, 263-337). Most notably, Omote Akira 表章 (1974, 80-86) argued that the Okina 翁 (old man) mask used for *sarugaku* at Tōnomine 多武峯 in medieval times represents Matara. Tōnomine was the Tendai temple complex sponsored by the powerful Fujiwara family (see Grapard 1984 and 1992). Danzan Jinja 談山神社 (the modern Shintō shrine created out of Tōnomine) owns an old mask of the type now associated with Okina, which is stored in a box labeled “Matara” (Nakamura 1990, 32). If this mask and label date from medieval times and if Matara and Okina originated together, then Matara might help unlock the mysteries of “Okina,” a word that can be a generic term for any “old man” or proper noun that refers to a specific Noh mask, role, song, type of play, and, perhaps, a god. Noh performances usually begin with an Okina segment which centers on a song consisting of incomprehensible words. The ultimate significance of this incomprehensible Okina performance is subject to many disparate interpretations. In contemporary Japan, Okina usually is described as a primitive ritual of apotheosis constituting the very basis of Noh, the original ancient spiritual roots that authenticate Noh’s cultural identity (Rath 2000).

If Okina is in any way related to Matara, then Matara’s importance for understanding Noh cannot be overestimated. But these associations remain speculative. Both textual and architectural evidence demonstrate that from the fourteenth century, if not earlier, Matara was one of the deities enshrined at Tendai temples inside the special meditation halls used for practicing constant-walking *samādhi* (*jōgyō zanmai* 常行三昧), a ritual for visualizing the buddha Amitābha (Shimizu 1992). Indeed, even today a wooden statue of Matara is found inside the meditation hall of the Saitō (West Pagoda) complex of temples on Mount Hiei (Yamamoto 1998, plates 4-5). There is little direct evidence, however, to show that Matara was enshrined in the so-called “back door” (*ushirodo*) area. This rather obscure term seems to refer to the bay (*ken* 間) or room (*shitsu* 室) immediately behind the central buddha image (Hattori 1973, 769; Fukuhara 1995, 491, 496-497). Typically it was divided into two areas, the “spare time” space (*toki beya* 時部屋) where ritualists can take brief rests and the donation space (*goku beya* 御供部屋) where offerings could be placed prior to presentation (Fukuhara 1995, 502, 523). According to medieval architectural diagrams, Matara is enshrined not in these locations but beside the main altar, at the left hand of Amitābha (Fukuhara 1995, 475; Yamamoto 1998, 141). From this location he would be called forth to participate in the New Year Ceremonies at Tōnomine and other Tendai temples. That is, he would be placed in a palanquin and carried to the ritual performances.

The New Year ceremonies, which filled a full week, consisted primarily of standard Buddhist rituals (such as chanting scriptures, confessions, offerings to the Buddhas, scattering flowers, etc.) as well as a few local folk performances (*dengaku*

田樂, *sarugaku*, *sumō* 相撲, etc.). Although present at a few of these ceremonies, neither Okina nor Matara played prominent roles (Fukuhara 1995, 451–454). Ritual manuals from the sixteenth century which detail the ritual program, music, and words for these New Years ceremonies still exist and the contents of some of them have been published (Honda 1987; Fukuhara 1995, 549–725). None of these texts explicitly identify Matara as Okina. Rather than a theater festival, the New Year's Celebration was structured more as an Amitābha repentance rite (*Amida keka hōyō* 阿彌陀悔過法要; Fukuhara 1995, 462), a standard Buddhist ritual in the Tendai school for generating merit and attracting good fortune. Moreover, the very idea that contemporary forms of the Okina segment preserves the original spiritual roots of Noh has been dismissed by recent scholarship as an “invented tradition” dating from after 1945 (Pinnington 1998; Rath 2000, 259–260).

Matara as a Combinative or Confused Deity

Folklorists and art historians have long seen Matara as a combinative (*shūgō* 習合) deity.³ Linguistically the name “Matara” sounds Buddhist and, because it typically is written with the same kinds of CJK glyphs which also transliterate common Sanskrit words, it looks as if it must be of Indic origin.⁴ Visually, however,

3. The term “combinative” as a translation of *shūgō* was first proposed by Allan Grapard (see “Neither Shinto, nor Buddhist, but Combinative” in Grapard 1992, 7–10). In Grapard’s usage (if I understand him correctly) and in Japanese religious history it refers not so much to the mixed origins or precursors of Japanese cultural formations (with roots in Indic, Central Asian, Chinese, Korean, and island cultures) but more specifically to the systematic “rules of combination” that governed associative logic or correlative thinking in premodern Japan. In a message to the “Kuden” e-mail list (kuden-ML@yahoogroups.jp dated 2007.5.17) Grapard explained that in addition to its philological precision, he decided on “combinative” because it suggests the words “combination” (i.e., the secret or esoteric code to unlock a safe) and “combinatorics” — an advanced branch of pure mathematics concerning the inclusion (and exclusion) of objects into defined groups and which makes frequent use of complex graphs and diagrams to illustrate its results. Grapard’s translation advances our understanding of *shūgō* far beyond the usual (though terribly outdated) translation as “syncretism,” which suffers from numerous inadequacies. In common usage “syncretism” almost always implies the disparaging connotations of being unorthodox and heterodox. Moreover, it presumes the prior existence of separate, independent, and opposing systems of practice and belief which are subsequently reconciled or unified — and which can be disentangled from one another. Our current understanding of the history of religion in the Japanese islands no longer admits that model. Finally, in scholarly practice, the term syncretism has been used to refer to so many different sociological processes (linguistic transformation, symbiosis, acculturation, superposition, synthesis, harmonization, absorption, combination, parallelization, amalgamation, identification, etc.) that without further explication it has become a lazy man’s term devoid of analytic signification.

4. Iyanaga (2002: 570) points out that while the god identified as Matara seems unknown outside of Japan, the CJK glyphs used to write that name appear in *Dafangguang pusa zang wenshubili genben yigui jing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經 (*Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*) chapter on *maṇḍala* (“Mannaluo yize pin” 曼拏羅儀則品; T no. 1191, 20.859a) as a transliteration of the Sanskrit word *mātarāḥ* (i.e., the plural form of *mātr*, “mother”). A similar transliteration, *matatsura*

statues and paintings of Matara depict him in Japanese form. Instead of the calm, tranquil expression displayed by buddhas and bodhisattvas, Matara smiles broadly in amusement. Instead of Indic robes draped in folds across his body, he is dressed in the informal garb (*kariginu* 狩衣) of a Japanese aristocrat. His head boasts the black cap (*eboshi* 烏帽子) of a gentleman. Instead of Buddhist implements, he holds a hand drum (*ko tsuzumi* 小鼓) which he appears to be striking as part of a musical performance. In short, his appearance suggests local Japanese origins.

Shintō scholars know this native form of Matara from the account of Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583-1657), the pioneering Confucian scholar and government advisor of the early Tokugawa period. To repudiate what he saw as confused Buddhist distortions of earlier Japanese religious traditions, in 1641 Hayashi compiled *Honchō jinja kō* 本朝神社考, an authoritative survey of the gods worshiped in Japan. Whenever possible Hayashi quotes only non-Buddhist sources (such as histories, diaries, literature, regional gazetteers, etc.) to provide seemingly autochthonous descriptions of the gods. Hayashi discusses Matara in the section of his survey concerning Hiyoshi (or Hie) 日吉, the Mountain King (Sannō 山王) deity on Mount Hiei (northeast of modern Kyōto) who protects the Tendai teachings in Japan. Hayashi suggests that the founder of the Tendai monastery on Mount Hiei, Saichō 最澄 (767-822; Dengyō 傳教), or his followers conflated the Indic deity Kumbhīra (Konpira 金毘羅) with the local Japanese god of Mount Miwa 三輪山 (southwest of Nara). The result of this confusion became known as Matara. Hayashi writes:

When Saichō was about to go to Tang China in search of the Buddha dharma, he visited the altar of the god of Mount Katsuragi 葛城山 [southeast of Nara] and prayed to him. The god announced: “Your request is too grand. It is beyond my powers. Pray to the heavenly gods and terrestrial spirits. But the great god of Miwa (Three Spheres) is the terrestrial master of our realm, and he is worshiped throughout the three kingdoms [India, China, and Japan]. You should visit him and direct your devotions to him.” Saichō returned to Mount Hiei. The mountain has a huge cypress tree on which he saw three lights. To verify the lights, he went to them and recognized the spot. Thereafter, he went to the Green Dragon Monastery (Qinglong si 青龍寺) in Tang China. The spiritual sentinel of that monastery is called Matara. It is also called Kumbhīra. Saichō asked him: “What god are you?” He replied: “I am the Golden Light Miwa.” From this, Saichō first realized that he was the three lights back on Mount Hiei. After returning to our kingdom, he went to that place and erected an altar, which is known as the Hiyoshi Palace. The Green Dragon Monastery on Mount Tiantai is modeled on Vulture Peak in India. Mount Hiei is modeled on Green Dragon Monastery. Long ago when the Buddha was on Vulture Peak, he sacrificed to twelve gods. Among the twelve gods to which he sacrificed, there was Kumbhīra. He is our kingdom’s great bright god of Miwa. Quoted from the *Sange yōryaku* 山家要略.

My evaluation: This is an entry in the *Sange yōryaku* (*Mountain House Essentials*) titled “Secret Writings on Dengyō’s Return.” It refers to Dengyō as the great teacher of the mountain house [i.e., Tendai School]. I cannot know if Dengyō truly regarded Kumbhīra as the bright god of Miwa or if the resident priests merely attributed these words to

摩怛羅, appears in the discussion of *mandala* in the *Ruilingye jing* 蕤呬耶經 (T no. 897, 18.765c) translated by Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空; 705-774). I thank Iyanaga Nobumi for drawing my attention to these passages. In these translations the phrase “mother deity” probably represents another way of saying “goddess.”

him. After all, they make wild assertions such as “Dengyō is Zhiyi 智顛 or Zhanran 湛然 reborn over here.” Can even the exaggerations of the Buddha top that? (*Honchō jinja kō*, fasc. 2; ST 20.91-92)

Leave aside the fact that our extant copies of the *Sange yōryaku* (*Mountain House Essentials*) do not contain an entry titled “Secret Writings on Dengyō’s Return.” Notice that the deities mentioned in Hayashi’s account always act as local gods, whether situated at Mount Katsuragi, Mount Hiei, the mountain site of the Chinese monastery, or Vulture Peak in India. It is only the Buddhists who confuse them with one another. Moreover, both the source cited by Hayashi and his own remarks emphasize a common pattern. The local god of Miwa is revered as if he is Kumbhira of India, Japan’s Mount Hiei is revered as if it is the Green Dragon Monastery of China, and the native son Saichō is revered as if he is a reincarnation of one of the great patriarchs of the Tendai (Tiantai) tradition in China, such as Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顛 (538-597) or Jingxi Zhanran 荆溪湛然 (711-782). Hayashi regards these baseless substitutions as being typical of the fantastic exaggerations and faulty thinking promoted by Buddhists.

The art historian Kageyama Haruki 景山春樹 (1954) follows in Hayashi’s footsteps but attempts to resolve the contradiction between South Asian name and East Asian appearance by locating the birth place of Matara halfway between India and Japan. In other words, he identifies Matara — along with Sekizan *myōjin* 赤山明神 and Shiragi (or Shinra) *myōjin* 新羅明神 — as Chinese deities who were absorbed into Buddhism and brought home by Japanese Buddhist monks who had studied

5. *Sange yōryaku* probably refers to a group of texts more commonly referred to as *Sange yōryakki* 山家要略記. These texts consist of episodes regarding awesome deities and their numinous responses (*gonjin ryōō shō* 嚴神靈應章), which were recorded by clerics on Mount Hiei. An early version of this type of text is said to have been compiled by Kenshin 顯真 (1130-1192), but it is more likely that the genre first assumed its current format at the hand of Gigen 義源 (1289?-1351?) or shortly after his time. From the 1350s until 1868, the *Sange yōryakki* served as the secret scripture for Tendai traditions of Sannō Shintō. Today it exists in many versions, consisting of 9, 7, 5, 3, 2, or 1 fascicle(s). Sugahara (1992, 270-274) lists 45 manuscript versions of the text itself, plus 24 related texts that record similar kinds of information. Only recently have scholars begun to examine these manuscripts. Since variations in their contents reveal important clues regarding the historical transmission of these secrets, recently published versions of the texts attempt to preserve the actual contents of each individual manuscript without editorial correction or emendation. I have been able to examine more than twenty of these published versions (in *DNBZ* vol. 86; *ST* vol. 4; *TZ* vol. 4; and *ZTZ* vol. 15). None of them contain an entry titled “Secret Writings on Dengyō’s Return” (*Dengyō kichō no himon* 傳教歸朝之祕文). In fact, of these 20 versions, I could find only 1 (the Sengakuin 仙居院 manuscript, fasc. 5; *ST* 4.244) that mentions the god Matara at all. Iyanaga (2002, 547, 559-560) discusses a similar story found in a version of the the *Miwa daimyōjin engi* 三輪大明神緣起 (dated 1318). It probably served as Hayashi’s actual source. Significantly, Hayashi’s account of Saichō’s relationship to Matara and Kumbhira is quoted in full in the *Sannō ichijitsu shintō hiroku* 山王一實神道祕錄 (fasc. 1; *TZ* 4.720-721), by the Tendai priest Jikū 慈空 (1714-1798). Jikū compiled his version in an attempt to create a comprehensive and authoritative edition of the *Sange yōryakki*. The fact that he cites Hayashi’s survey for this account indicates that it could not be found in any of the versions of the *Sange yōryakki* that he had been able to consult and which he quotes extensively for other information. Also see Join’s evaluation of Hayashi’s account in note 24 below.

in China. Kageyama points to Taishan *fujun* 泰山府君 as an example of a Chinese god who became incorporated into esoteric Buddhist *maṇḍala* diagrams, where he appears as a *dharmā* protector (*gohō jin* 護法神).⁶ In this esoteric context, some people confused the Indic deity Mahākāla with the Chinese Taishan *fujun* and, as a result, produced a hybrid god of destinies known as Matara. In support of this interpretation, Kageyama cites a secret clarification (*hiketsu* 祕訣) recorded by the Tendai priest Kōshū 光宗 (1276–1350) in his *Keiranshūyōshū* (or *Keiran jūyōshū*) 溪嵐拾葉集 (*Leaves Gathered from Stormy Streams*):

The god Matara in the Constant Walking Samādhi Meditation Hall (*jōgyōdō*)
The instructions say: when the great teacher Jikaku 慈覺 [i.e., Ennin 圓仁] returned from China to transmit to our kingdom the ritual for the extended vocalized buddha recollection (*nenbutsu* 念佛), on his ship he heard a voice in the empty sky. It told him: “My name is Matara. I am an obstructing deity (*shōge jin* 障礙神). Whoever does not worship me will not be able to attain deliverance.” And, thus, Matara was enshrined in the Meditation Hall.

The oral clarification says: the god Matara is Mahākāla (Makakara-ten 摩訶迦羅天). Or, he is one of [Mahākāla’s] *dākinī* (*dakini* 吒枳尼) [demons]. That god’s original vow, as stated in scriptures, says: “Whenever someone is about to expire, I will go to that person and devour the liver of the deceased, by which [that person] obtains the proper thought [leading to deliverance in Amitābha’s Pure Land]. If I do not devour the liver, then that person will not obtain the proper thought and will not be delivered.” This is very secret. No one else knows it. (*Keiranshūyōshū*; T no. 2410, 76.632c–633a)

Jikaku Daishi 慈覺大師 is the posthumous title for Ennin (794–864), who traveled in China from 838 to 847. He introduced to Japan the ritual practice of constant-walking *samādhi* (*jōgyō zanmai*), during which practitioners recollect Amitābha by singing his name. This account first links Ennin to Matara and then identifies Matara as the Great Black god (Daikokuten 大黒天) named Mahākāla or as one of the demons (*dākinī*) who are in Mahākāla’s service. The initiation next alludes to a Buddhist scripture. This passage probably refers to an esoteric commentary by the Chinese Buddhist priest Yixing 一行 (683–727) which explains that these demons can sense six months in advance when a person is approaching death. Thereupon the demons can hasten death by consuming that person’s internal organs.⁷ In the Japanese initiation text, this act of devouring enables Matara to serve as a gatekeeper who either admits or prevents posthumous deliverance (*ōjō* 往生) to Amitābha’s Pure Land.

Note that this account does not mention either Sekizan *myōjin* or Taishan *fujun*. Kageyama (1954) brings them into his explanation because other legends say that Ennin brought back Sekizan, and Sekizan’s iconographic appearance resembles that of Taishan *fujun*. Thus, Ennin is the link that unites Matara with Sekizan,

6. In popular Chinese religion Taishan *fujun* (Japanese, Taizan *fukun* 泰山府君) most often is regarded as a magistrate (*zaizhe* 宰者) of the netherworld (*mingjie* 冥界) who can prolong or shorten the lifespans of the living.

7. *Da Piluzbena chengfo jingshu* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, chapter 4, “Putong zhenyenzang pin” 普通真言藏品 (fasc. 10; T no. 1796, 39.687b–c). Yixing wrote this text in 725 as a commentary on the *Vairocanaḥśambodhi* (T no. 848; i.e., the so-called “Mahā Vairocana Sūtra”).

and through him to Taishan *fujun*. Kageyama further speculates that after Matara arrived in Japan he continued to evolve. Initially on Mount Hiei, he became incorporated into the Tendai esoteric rituals directed to the ruler's birth star (*bonmyō shō* 本命星). Since other Buddhist scriptures state that Mahākāla is accompanied by seven mother goddesses (*shichi bojo ten* 七母女天), Matara evolved into a stellar deity associated with Ursa Major (i.e., the seven stars of the Big Dipper; *bokuto shichi shō* 北斗七星).⁸ This stellar deity eventually developed a split personality. In his public persona he became the Matara, god of good fortune, who is celebrated in popular galas, such as the Ox Festival (*ushi matsuri* 牛祭) at Kōryūji 廣隆寺 in the Uzumasa 太秦 district of Kyōto. His private persona, however, degenerated into the licentious deity of the secret *genshi kimyōdan* initiations which, as I mentioned above, were banned after 1694. In short, Matara has multiple personalities, first as a Chinese-Buddhist hybrid, second as local deity in public festivals, and third as a private deity of secret cults.

Kageyama is not alone in relying on a multiple-personality approach to explain Matara. It is the normative method in all the books and articles I have surveyed regarding Matara. This theory of multiple personalities appears as early as 1918 in a study by the pioneering cultural historian Kita Sadakichi 喜田貞吉 (1871-1939). In his extremely influential analysis of Matara (“Matarajin kō” 摩多羅神考), Kita carefully avoids arriving at any single interpretation of Matara. Instead, he writes:

Finally, since the god Matara originally was worshiped as an awesome spirit whose fundamental nature is unknown, I end this essay unable to sum up his characteristics. I suppose that as this god of unknown nature was worshiped, subsequent generations of people devised various theories so that his identity continually mutated. (Kita 1918: 288)

Kita thus acknowledges that the key characteristics of any deity arise in relation to its audience, ritual setting, and cultural context.

Although Kita was writing about worshipers of the past, he just as well could have been discussing scholars of the future. Just as worshipers generate deities who serve their needs, the methodologies of scholars likewise define the objects of their study. With each new scholarly method, a new split-personality seems to emerge. Certainly there is some basis for most if not all of these versions of Matara. The ever-multiplying versions of this god, however, raise a bigger question: Why Matara? Why should Matara of all gods have assumed so many different roles? Is it just historical accident, what Bernard Faure calls the “serendipity of Japanese Religion”? Or is there a link or ritual logic that unites these various incarnations? I believe the answer to this question must lie, at least in part, in ritual logic. The link lies in Buddhist dream techniques and in Matara's function as a dream king (*muō* 夢王).

8. Regarding the seven mother goddesses, see: *Renwang huguo jing* 仁王護國經 (Sūtra on Humane Kings), chapter 5 “Huguo pin” 護國品 (fasc. 2; T no. 246, 8.840b).

Matara as a Dream King

The interpretation of Matara as a god of Buddhist dream techniques comes from what might seem to be an unlikely source: a collection of Shintō documents related to the Togakushi Shintō Shrine 戸隠神社 in Nagano Ken 長野縣 (or Prefecture; see Shillony 1990, 303-304) first published in 2001. On second thought, though, the idea that Shintō documents contain information on Buddhist ritual practice should not be surprising. Before 1868 Togakushi, like so many other historically important Shintō shrines, was a Buddhist complex, administered by Buddhist prelates, where priests worshiped gods and cultivated religious powers within an esoteric Buddhist framework. Within this esoteric context, Shintō constituted the ultimate Buddhist enterprise (Sueki 1993, 8). During the Tokugawa period Togakushi was Kenkōji 顯光寺 temple, a major training center for Tendai and the administrative liaison (*furegashira* 觸頭) for all Tendai establishments in Echigo and Shinano Provinces (Sonehara 2001, 1.4-5). The Tendai priest who identifies Matara as a dream king is Jōin 乗因 (1682-1739), a leading exponent of Sannō Ichijitsu Shintō 山王一實神道 (Mountain King One Reality Shintō) and the chief supervisor (*bettō* 別當) of Togakushi from 1727 to 1738. Jōin died in disgrace and exile. In the early twentieth century Japanese scholars linked Jōin's exile to his Shintō teachings, which they labeled as heretical (see Sonehara 1991 and 1996). As a result, until recently his teachings have been ignored. Since Jōin will be unknown to most people, before introducing his explanation of Matara, I wish to briefly review his position within the Tendai establishment and its Shintō traditions.

Prior to his exile, Jōin enjoyed an illustrious career within the highest circles of political and ecclesiastical power. He entered the priesthood at Kan'eiji 寛永寺, the so-called Eastern Mount Hiei (Tō Eizan 東叡山) in Edo in 1694 — the same year when Reikū Kōken began writing his *Byakujaben*. The course of Jōin's priestly education, however, seems to have been untouched by Reikū's reforms. Jōin went to Mount Hiei where he became a disciple of Denbō Senson 傳法宣存 (1639-1708) — the former chief administrator (*shuttō* 執當) of Kan'eiji, abbot of Sensōji 淺草寺 in Edo, supervisor of the Tōshōgū 東照宮 at Momijiyama 紅葉山 inside Edo castle, and current abbot of Kyōōin 教王院 on Mount Hiei. Under Senson's supervision Jōin was initiated into the traditions of Tendai Shintō and the secret initiations of *genshi kimyōdan*. In 1705 he became abbot of Hōshakuin 寶積院 on Mount Hiei. In 1708 he became the tutor (*shiban* 師範) for the royal prince Dōnin *hōshinnō* 道仁法親王 (1676-1733), who had been installed at the royal temple (*monzeki* 門跡) Ennyūin 圓融院 in Kajii 梶井. The following year, in 1709, Dōnin served as executive abbot (*zasu* 座主) of all the temples on Mount Hiei. Three years later, in 1712, Jōin officiated at the memorial service at the palace for the late Gomizunoo 後水尾 *tennō* 天皇 (1596-1680; reigned 1611-1629) and thereupon was promoted to the ecclesiastical rank of *gon daisōzu* 權大僧都. Two years later, in 1714, Jōin returned to Kan'eiji in Edo where he served successive terms as abbot at three of its cloisters: Enjuin 圓珠院, Kanzen'in 勧善院, and Tōzen'in 東漸院. At Kan'eiji he officiated at the memorial services for Tenkai 天海 (?1536-1643), the founder of the temple. Finally, in 1727 Jōin was appointed supervisor (*bettō* 別當) of the Kenkōji temple

complex at Mount Togakushi and promoted to the rank of *daisōzu*.

Around the same time as Jōin received his promotion to *daisōzu*, he was asked by Kōgan *hōshinnō* 公寛法親王 (1697-1738), the abbot of Kan'eiji and supreme pontiff (*issbū sōryō* 一宗總領) of the Tendai school, to present a written explanation of the Sannō Ichijitsu Shintō 山王一實神道 that Tenkai had taught to Tokugawa Ieyasu. He responded by presenting Kōgan with two short essays and two heirlooms: the *Tenrin jōō shō* 轉輪聖王章 (*Noble Wheel-Turning King*, 1 fasc.; *TZ* 12.261-277), in which he argues that Sannō Ichijitsu Shintō enabled Ieyasu to rule Japan as a universal *cakravartin* monarch; and the *Sannō ichijitsu shintō kuju gosōshō hiki* 山王一實神道口授御相承祕記 (*Secret Outline of Oral Initiations in Sannō Ichijitsu Shintō*, 1 fasc.; *TZ* 12.253-259) which describes the Shintō that Tenkai had taught to Ieyasu; Senso's handwritten explanation of the deities enshrined by Tenkai at Kan'eiji with comments in red ink added by Jōin (*Tō Eizan engi* 東叡山縁起, 1 fasc.; *ZST* Togakushi 2.25-48); and a box that had been handed down from Tenkai to Daiyūin 大猷院 (i.e., Ieyasu's grandson, Tokugawa Iemitsu 家光), to Gen'yūin 嚴有院 (Iemitsu's son, Tokugawa Ietsuna 家綱), and then to Jōin (see *TZ* 12.258b).⁹

In his *Secret Outline of Oral Initiations* Jōin states that his knowledge of Shintō (and of the *genshi kimyōdan*) had been passed down from Tenkai to Sen'yū 宣祐 (the former abbot of Tōzen'in at Kan'eiji), from Sen'yū to Senso, and from Senso to Jōin (*TZ* 12.253b-154a). He included the manuscript by Senso and the box from Tokugawa Ietsuna to provide physical evidence of his personal connection to Tenkai's lineage. They indirectly indicate that Jōin actually possessed the knowledge of which he wrote. Since Kōgan *hōshinnō* accepted these objects — the authenticity of which could be easily tested — it is safe to assume that Kōgan accepted Jōin as an authority on Sannō Ichijitsu Shintō. At the very least, Jōin possesses the proper religious and political connections. It is very likely that he was one of the very last high-ranking prelates fully initiated into the secret Tendai teachings of the *genshi kimyōdan*.

While serving as abbot at Togakushi, Jōin wrote several other accounts of his secret initiations, two of which I will quote in the discussion that follows. These texts are: *Tenrin jōō shō naiden* 轉輪聖王章内傳 (*Inner Commentary on the Noble Wheel-Turning King*, 1 fasc.; *TZ* 12.279-307) and *Kongōtō* 金剛幢 (*Vajra Banner*, 3 fasc.; *ZST* Togakushi 1.235-327). Shortly after Jōin completed the latter text, in 1738 the resident clerics (*shuto* 衆徒) at Togakushi accused him of violating government regulations regarding the awarding of colored robes, the bestowing of esoteric initiation (*kanjo* 灌頂), and daily ritual services (Sonehara 1991, 20). In 1739 Jōin was investigated by the Agency of Temples and Shines (Jisha bugyō 寺社奉行), found guilty, and sent into exile on a coastal island where he soon died. Today it is impossible to know the true nature of the crimes for which he was found guilty.

It might (or might not) be true, as scholars in the early twentieth century alleged, that his transgressions were somehow related to what they judged to be his heretical (*itan* 異端) Shintō teachings. "Heresy," however, was not one of the

9. Senso's *Tō Eizan engi* forms the basis for the subsequent text titled *Tō Eizan shodō konryū ki* 東叡山諸堂建立記, 1 fasc.; *NBZ* no. 780, 86.1-4. See the "Kaidai" 解題, *DNBZ* 99.187b.

charges.¹⁰ What we can know for certain is that the political climate had changed in 1738. That was the year that Kōjun *hōshinnō* 公遵法親王 (1722-1788) became abbot of Kan'eiji and, as such, the supreme pontiff of the Tendai school. Kōjun implemented new policies designed to strictly enforce the reform agenda of Reikū Kōken. Many Tendai priests who had opposed these reforms were driven off Mount Hiei or defrocked (Ishida 1986, 471-477). Jōin's name does not appear among the lists of priests who opposed Reikū's reforms. Nonetheless, his devotion to Matara and his endorsement of the *genshi kimyōdan* initiations would have placed him in this group. Kōjun and the other reformers, no doubt, would have been pleased by Jōin's downfall.

The *Byakujaben* (1698) by Reikū Kōken does not discuss the god Matara directly. Instead, it denounces a series of thirteen *kōan* 公案 (ritualized questions and answers) taught as part of the *genshi kimyōdan* initiations. It quotes each question and answer and then explains why the answer is inadequate. Jōin's *Vajra Banner* (*Kongōtō*, 1737) presents explanations of an almost identical set of thirteen *kōan* (only two differ), but with a twist. Whereas Reikū had attacked them as false teachings, Jōin presents them as essential Buddhist insights. As we shall see, the god Matara plays a key role in conveying these insights to humans.

The key *kōan* involving Matara concerns the Tendai practice of "three discernments in one mind" (*isshin sankan* 一心三觀).¹¹ This concept summarizes the entire Chinese Tiantai Buddhist system in so far as it refers both to doctrinal formulations (*kyō* 教) and to ritual cultivations (*kan* 觀). That is, this concept describes both the goal — simultaneously discerning the three truths (*santai* 三諦) of emptiness (*kū* 空), provisionality (*ke* 假), and the middle (*chū* 中) in all things — and the method for achieving it — via a complex system of *samādhi* (*sanmai* 三昧; absorption) rituals. We will begin with Reikū's repudiation of this *kōan*. His remarks consist of two parts. First he cites the main question and answer of the *kōan*. Next he criticizes it deviating from orthodox Buddhism:

9. Drumming Three Discernments

Question: The image of the deity beating a drum (*shinsō gekko* 神相擊鼓) reveals three discernments in one mind. Try to explain!

Answer by saying: Mind fundamentally is not existing, therefore it penetrates the ten directions.

Denunciation: This explanation is so extremely crude that it does not approach the meaning of three discernments in one mind. The truth of emptiness concerns intrinsic infinity (*sbōryō* 性量), which definitely spans all expanse. The truth of provisionality concerns intrinsic participation (*sbōgu* 性具), in which all dharmas are entailed. The truth of the

10. Jōin's so-called heretical ideas mainly consist of Daoist vocabulary, much of which has a long history in Japan and already appears in the two essays (*Tenrin jōō shō*, TZ 12.261-277; and *Sannō ichijitsu shintō kuden go sōshō biki*; TZ 12.253-259) which he presented to Kōgan *hōshinnō* in 1728. If his Shintō teachings were heretical, then he should have been charged with crimes at that time. Since that did not occur, it is more likely that the 1738 charges against him originated elsewhere.

11. Wherever possible for technical terms associated with the Tiantai/Tendai tradition I will use the translation vocabulary found in Donner and Stevenson 1993. Readers interested in the topic of Tendai meditation rituals should consult that book as well as Stevenson 1986.

middle concerns intrinsic embodiment (*shōtai* 性體), in which there is neither monism nor differentiation. These three are always one, the one is always threefold, so that one and three both disappear into the inconceivable and inexpressible. In terms of dharmanness (*shō* 性), they are called the three truths and, in terms of cultivation, they are called the three discernments. Because actor and patient are not two, object and discernment both vanish. This is the Tendai School's ultimate discourse.

The *Genshi kimyōdan* statement that “mind fundamentally is not existing, therefore it penetrates the ten directions,” merely refers to intrinsic infinity. Since they know nothing of the intrinsic participation or intrinsic embodiment aspects of three discernments in one mind, how could their answer be sufficient? (*Byakujihen*, leaves 13b-14a)

Reikū analyzes this *kōan* as if it is a doctrinal treatise and judges the answer to be incomplete. By focusing on the fundamental nonexistence of the mind, it ignores two of the three discernments it should be addressing. Worse, it suggests nihilism and antinomianism. By rejecting the necessity for discipline and self cultivation, it also rejects moral and political restraints. The result can only be a degenerate religion that harms society. The Tendai doctrines of intrinsic participation and intrinsic embodiment reveal just the opposite. It is precisely the emptiness of things that enable them to participate in the diverse appearances of the world (*shinkū myōu* 真空妙有).

Jōin's explanation of this *kōan* also emphasizes the diverse appearances of the world, but from a completely different direction. Rather than Tendai doctrine, he situates this *kōan* in the context of Tendai meditation rituals. Significantly for our topic, he suggests that Matara plays a key role in these rituals. Before discussing that role, first we should read Jōin's comments. As is the case with Reikū, Jōin's explanation also consists of two parts: the main question and answer followed by an explanation:

Beating a Drum, Three Discernments

Question: Faith Appearance's beating drum (*Shinsō gekko* 信相擊鼓) reveals three discernments in one mind. What is the meaning of this?

Answer: Mind fundamentally is not existing, therefore the sound of the drum pervades the ten directions.

This is a question about the image of the god Matara that is enshrined in the Hall for Constant Walking Samādhi (*jōgyōdō*). The halls for constant walking samādhi and for Lotus Repentance are the ritual sites for the *genshi kimyōdan* initiations. The chapter on “Repentance” in the *Golden Light Sūtra* says:

“At that time Faith Appearance Bodhisattva (*Shinsō bosatsu* 信相菩薩) dreamed that he saw a golden drum. It was very broad and its light shone everywhere like the rays of the sun. Within this light he saw throughout the limitless ten directions the infinite buddhas and lords, each one sitting on a lapis lazuli throne beneath jeweled trees together with infinite hundreds of thousands of companions surrounding them and for whom they preach the dharma. He saw there a [shaman] man, resembling a brahmin, who was beating that drum so that it produced a loud sound. That sound formed the preaching of the verses of repentance.”¹²

It also says: “See the brahmin beat his drum.”¹³

12. Chapter 3, “Chanhui pin” 懺悔品 (Repentance), *Jingguangming jing* 金光明經 (Golden Light Sūtra), fasc. 1; *T* no. 663, 16.336 b11-16. Also see Emmerick 1970, 8-9.

13. Chapter 3, “Chanhui pin,” *Jingguangming jing*, fasc. 1; *T* no. 663, 16.336 b27-28.

In the section on half-walking and half sitting *samādhi* in the *Mahāyāna Calming and Contemplation* [by the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi] where it explains the ritual procedure for *vaipulya samādhi*, it says:

“The vaipulya [repentance] is most exalted and must not be treated causally. If one wishes to practice it, the [guardian] spirit must grant confirmation. Thus first you must seek a vision of the dream king (*muō* 夢王). If you succeed in obtaining one, [it is a sign that] you are permitted to undertake the repentance.”¹⁴

Because the brahmin seen in a dream by the bodhisattva Faith Appearance is the dream king described in the *Golden Light Sūtra*, he [Mātara] is enshrined in the Hall for Constant Walking Samādhi. The words “Faith Appearance’s beating drum” (*Shinsō gekko* 信相擊鼓) refer to the beating drum seen by Faith Appearance in his dream. Sometimes it is worded as “deity image beating a drum” (*shinsō gekko* 神相擊鼓).¹⁵ Regardless of how the teacher asks the question, simply answer without worry. Regarding the words, “reveals three discernments in one mind,” you should read the commentary on the *Golden Light Sūtra* by Tiantai Zhiyi. His commentary says:

“Dharma-ness is mutually identical to the golden drum. The golden drum’s body is perfectly round and its emptiness reverberates. Roundness is mutually identical to the dharma body, emptiness is mutually identical to *prajñā* [wisdom], and reverberation is mutually identical to liberation.”¹⁶

It also says: “If one cognizes the middle way, then this is mutually identical to three wisdoms in one mind while cognizing three truths as one truth.”¹⁷ (*Kongōtō*, fasc. 3; *ZST* Togakushi 2.308-309)

Since Jōin wrote this commentary to instruct his students in the *genshi kimyōdan* initiations, his explanation is much richer than is Reikū’s short denunciation. To fully appreciate the significance of the details provided by Jōin, we must briefly summarize the *Golden Light Sūtra* (*Jinguangming jing* 金光明經, Japanese: *Konkōmyō kyō*; T no. 663) and its role in East Asian Buddhist ritual.

The *Golden Light Sūtra* (Sanskrit, *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra*) was extremely well-known throughout all segments of pre-modern Japanese society, since it plays a key role in Buddhist rituals to legitimate the ruling elite (*chingo kokka* 鎮護國家). From the earliest period of Japanese civilization it was the focus of a week-long New Year celebration at the royal palace (Gosai-e 御齋會) and chanted daily at government sponsored Provincial Temples (*kokubunji* 國分寺). In this scripture the Buddha addresses a sermon to an audience of gods, goddesses, and demons (*nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kimnaras*, *maboragas*, humans and non-humans) lead by the four heavenly kings (*shi tennō* 四天王) who guard the

14. *Mabe zhiyuan* 摩訶止觀, fasc. 1; T no. 1911, 46.13 a29-b1. My translation of this quotation is based on Donner and Stevenson 1993, 249-250. For a detailed description of the *vaipulya samādhi* — also known as the *vaipulya* (*bōtō* 方等; *fangdeng*) repentance — see Stevenson 1986, 61-67.

15. This is the wording found in the *Byakujaben* by Reikū Kōken. See the translation from Reikū’s text above.

16. Chapter 3, “Shi Chanhui pin” 釋懺悔品 (Explanation of the Chapter on Repentance), in *Jinguangming jing wenju* 金光明經文句 (Words and Phrases of the Golden Light Sūtra), fasc. 3; T no. 1785, 39.61 a16-17.

17. Chapter 1 “Xu pin” 序品 (Preface), in *Jinguangming jing wenju* 金光明經文句, fasc. 1; T no. 1785, 39.49 b4-5.

cardinal directions. He teaches the rituals of repentance and purification, which he illustrates by telling the story of a bodhisattva named Faith Appearance (Shinsō *bosatsu* 信相菩薩; Ruciraketu), his two sons, and his father — the king Powerful Reverence (Rikisonsō 力尊相; Balendraketu).¹⁸ Faith Appearance dreams of a shaman (in the form of a brahmin) who beats a golden drum.¹⁹ The drum beats reverberate as waves of sound which constitute the constant chanting of the verses of repentance. These verses purify the senses so that one can see the buddhas face-to-face. Thus, the drum beats also reverberate as waves of golden light which reveal infinite buddha lands, each one of which is adorned with every splendor: food, drink, musical instruments, songs, and dancers. Whoever hears this drumbeat will attain similar purification and spiritual visions. At the same time, they will learn that the sense objects seen in these visions lack any basis in reality. Thus, they also attain religious insight into the emptiness of all things. The gods are delighted by this teaching and promise to protect all kings who follow the example of Powerful Reverence and Faith Appearance by promoting the repentance and purification rituals of this scripture.²⁰

In East Asia the cultivation of dream visions through techniques such as the shamanistic drumming depicted in this scripture became an integral part of Buddhist meditative rituals. Monastic regulations, for example, cite the *Golden Light Sūtra* to justify the presence of drums in meditation halls (e.g., *Baizhang qinggui zhengyi ji* 百丈清規證義記, fasc. 9; 〳 2.16.431a). The most detailed description of these practices, though, can be found in the numerous meditation manuals attributed to Zhiyi (538–597) — the de facto founder of the Tiantai (Tendai) school — especially his the *Mahāyāna Calming and Contemplation* (*Mabe zhiquan* 摩訶止觀; T no. 1911). This text presents a complex ritual program in which various tangible aids, especially icons of Amitābha, are used to help induce supernatural visions which are held in the mind as the object of absorption. Ultimately, though, the eidetic

18. The sons of Faith Appearance are named Golden Dragon (Konryū 金龍; Kanakabhujendra) and Golden Light (Konkō 金光; Kanakaprabha). Also note that my renditions of the proper names are based on the Chinese glyphs in the translation by Dharmakṣema (Tanwuchen 曇無讖; T no. 663). They do not, therefore, necessarily correspond to the Sanskrit names, which come from Emmerick (1970).

19. The word “shaman” is my interpolation. I interpret this passage of the *Golden Light Sūtra* as a description of a shamanic performance in which the beating drum and other dramatic (or theatrical) elements serve to induce visions of an alternative reality. While Buddhists in Asian countries where shamans still exist frequently draw a sharp distinction between orthodox Buddhism and shamanic practices, for an analysis of the role of shamanic elements within mainstream Buddhism, see Samuel 1993. The standard works on shamanism in Japan are Averbuch 1995, Blacker 1975, and Lowell 1990. For an important note on the Buddhist roots of *kagura* 神樂 (Japanese ceremonial dances usually identified with Shintō rites of spirit possession), see Lancashire 2001–2002. Finally, for a refutation of the Indic origins of the word “shaman,” see Laufer 1917.

20. This summary is based on the translation by Dharmakṣema (T no. 663), which consists of 19 chapters in 4 fascicles, completed ca. 414–421. This is the text quoted by Zhiyi (538–597) and other early Chinese Tiantai patriarchs. It is very similar in content and structure to the Sanskrit manuscript translated by Emmerick (1970). The 703 translation by Yijing 義淨 (635–713), which consists of 32 chapters in 10 fascicles, obviously is much more elaborate. Nonetheless, the main narrative themes are the same in all versions.

image dissolves as the process for producing it becomes the basis for insight into the noetic act itself (Stevenson 1986, 59). The section of this text quoted by Jōin, links the *Golden Light Sūtra* to a story in another scripture, the *Mahā Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (*Da fangdeng tuoluoni jing* 大方等陀羅尼經; T no. 1339), wherein a Buddhist mendicant (*bhikṣu*) named Sound of Thunder (Raion 雷音) uses a magical spell (*dhāraṇī*) to subdue demons and convert them into dream kings who will aid the practice of Buddhist meditation.²¹ The *Mahāyāna Calming and Contemplation* (fasc. 2; p. 13b) also refers the reader to the regulations for Zhiyi's monastery for instructions on enshrining the dream kings in the halls where the ritual meditation is performed. These regulations stipulate a complex ritual program, beginning with bathing, other physical purifications rituals, and the Golden Light Repentance before any meditation practice.²² As part of this procedure, the practitioner invokes the presence not just of the dream kings but of all the other gods, goddess, and demons (*Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄, fasc. 1; T no. 1934, 46.796 a-b). It is the favor of these gods that allows the practitioner to imagine supernatural visions (i.e., the truth of provisionality), and it is the dissolving of these visions that allows the practitioner to gain insight into the truth of emptiness. In other words, it is precisely the emptiness of things that allows the sound of the dream king's beating drum to pervade all existence. The ritual program of absorption (*samādhi*) brings these two moments together (i.e., the truth of the middle). This process constitutes the Tendai practice of three discernments in one mind.

This traditional Tendai ritual program provides Jōin with all the context he needs to explain the presence of Matara in Tendai meditation halls. His account does not rely on historical precedents. There is no combinative confusion of Kumbhīra and Miwa as suggested by Hayashi Razan, nor of Taishan *fujun* and Mahākāla as suggested by Kageyama Haruki. Matara is simply the dream king seen by Faith Appearance in the *Golden Light Sūtra*. The two boys depicted in some paintings of Matara are simply the two sons of Faith Appearance.

At the same time, though, Matara could just as well be any of the gods suggested by Hayashi, Kageyama, or other scholars. The *bhikṣu* Thunder Sound has already supplied the *dhāraṇī* that will enable any god, goddess, or demon to be harnessed as a new dream king. The word "Matara," thus, is more of a title than a proper name.²³ Seen from this perspective, it is possible that this dream king might also be the elusive Okina of Japanese Noh theater. Just as the dream king provides supernatural visions in shamanistic trance for practitioners of medita-

21. See Donner and Stevenson 1993, 250 note 141. Also see *Da fangdeng tuoluoni jing* 大方等陀羅尼經 (*Mahā Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra*), fasc. 1 (T no. 1339, 21.641c-642a).

22. Regarding the important role played by Buddhism in the popularization of bathing in early Japanese history, see Williams 2004.

23. In his essay on the *Noble Wheel-Turning King*, Jōin cites the *Shittan shō* 悉曇鈔 to argue that *mata* 摩多 is Sanskrit root (i.e., *mātr*) and that *matara* is simply a more ornate form of the same word just as when the short form *shari* 舍利 (*śarī*) is used for *sharira* 舍利羅 (*śarīra*): 悉曇鈔云。摩多羅者摩多羅具梵語也。如舍利云舍利羅也。摩多羅此云莊嚴。See TZ 12.273b. In other words, it functions like a Sanskrit vowel (*mātrkā*; matrix) as the basis for the production of a variety of other syllabic forms.

tion, his presence (as Okina) could provide an occasion for imaginative visions presented as theatrical performances before an audience of ordinary people. The interpretation of the Okina Noh play as a shamanistic rite of apotheosis seems to be of modern origin (according to Pennington 1998; and Rath 2000). Nonetheless, it is an interpretation that would have seemed sensible to Jōin. At the very least, his interpretation of Matara as a dream king provides a more tangible connection to these other contexts than do the mere historical accidents suggested by previous scholarship. Moreover, it does not rely on confused thinking or Buddhist exaggerations to explain the existence of combinative deities.²⁴

Matara as a Shintō God of Rulership

The fact that Jōin's explanation of Matara cites the roles of gods, goddesses, and demons in Buddhist scriptures from India and ritual manuals from China serves to remind us that Buddhism in all parts of Asia has never been unconcerned with the spirit world. Indeed, the universal buddhas and bodhisattvas require the active involvement of localized or autochthonous deities to anchor them within human societies. For Jōin and for Tenkai — if Jōin's account is to be believed — Matara is not simply a Buddhist deity. In his other writings Jōin also describes Matara as a Shintō god of rulership. We will see below what "Shintō" means for Jōin and Tenkai. It is this Shintō role that justified Matara's enshrinement at Nikkō along with the Tōshō avatar, Tokugawa Ieyasu. Jōin's interpretation of Shintō and of the relationship between Buddhism and Shintō sheds new light on the process by which Japanese Buddhists of the Tokugawa period contributed to the development of non-Buddhist forms of Shintō.

Jōin identifies the Tendai attainment of three discernments in one mind as the obscure quintessence (*genshi* 玄旨) revealed by the Buddha. This hidden quintessence is the unchanging truth of Buddhism. Nonetheless it must be explained in various ways to suit the temperament of each time and place. Jōin saw his own Tendai lineage as an example of this process of evolution. Thus, Jōin asserts that when people could no longer understand the Buddha's message, the Indian patriarch Nāgārjuna rendered it accessible in his *Verses on the Middle Way* (*Madhyamaka kārikā*). When people could no longer understand Nāgārjuna, then the Chinese patriarch Zhiyi (538-597) explained it in his *Mahāyāna Calming and Contemplation*. And the process continued: Zhanran (711-782) explained it in his *Vajra Inscription* (*Jingan bei* 金剛碑); Saichō (767-822) explained it in his *Annotations on the Vajra Inscription* (*Chū Kongō bei* 註金剛碑); Ryōgen 良源 (912-985) explained it in his *Anthology on*

24. In his *Sannō ichijitsu shintō kuden go sōshō hiki* (TZ 12.255a-b) Jōin briefly summarizes the information in Hayashi Razan's account quoted earlier (which identifies Matara as a hybrid of Kumbhira and the god of Mount Miwa) and labels it as deviant theory (*isetsu* 異説). Six years later in his *Tenrin jōō shō naiden* Jōin asserts that Hayashi never read nor saw the *Sange yōryaku*. His entire account is simply false speculation (TZ 12.282a). Also see his discussion of this text in *Tenrin jōō shō* (TZ 12.273a-b).

Resolving Doubts (*Ichidai ketsugi shū* 一代決疑集). Eventually Tenkai (1536-1643) mastered it when he received the *genshi kimyōdan* initiations (*Kongōtō*, fasc. 2; *ZST* Togakushi 2.287-292). With Tenkai, moreover, the methods of conveying this truth evolved again. Jōin explains:

When [the traditional methods of] compassion and wisdom could no longer educate and benefit people during Tenkai's time, he reformulated them as One Reality Shintō. The methods of propagating the scriptures differ during the true, imitation, and latter dharma ages. Why should the methods of [teaching] the religious tenets of the three discernments in one mind not also differ? (*Kongōtō*, fasc. 2; *ZST* Togakushi 2.292)

This passage seems to suggest that Tenkai's Ichijitsu (One Reality) Shintō is strictly a Buddhist teaching. But that is not necessarily the case. Jōin's writings on Ichijitsu Shintō, at least, imply otherwise.²⁵ In these texts, Jōin describes Buddhism as an otherworldly teaching, without practical value for governing human society. His essay on the *Noble Wheel-Turning King*, for example, begins:

Bodhisattvas who appear in provisional existence to benefit human beings have three varieties of dharma bliss. First is the worldly [secular] dharma. Second is the [religious] dharma that transcends the world. Third is the dharma that goes beyond transcending the world. Because the latter two forms of dharma bliss are methods for escaping from the world, they have no benefit for the world. Now for the purpose of securing the ruling families and benefiting the masses, we discard the two transcendental dharmas and solely focus on worldly dharma bliss. (*Tenrin jōō shō* ; *TZ* 12.261a)

Jōin goes on to explain that this choice has practical consequences for rulers and their families:

The transcendental dharma bliss is superior, but it is not a teaching that can secure protection for the ruling families or bring wealth and pleasure to the masses. It is just like the cases of King Wu of the Liang Kingdom and Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty. They were attracted only to the transcendental dharma and completely unconcerned with worldly dharma bliss. As a result eventually they lost their lives and their kingdoms were destroyed. (*Tenrin jōō shō* ; *TZ* 12.274a)

Both King Wu (Liang Wu *di* 梁武帝; 464-549) and Emperor Yang (Sui Yang *di* 隋煬帝; 569-618) were Chinese sovereigns who became famous for their Buddhist devotion and patronage, and in both cases their kingdoms were overthrown and their relations killed. Faced with life-or-death consequences for oneself and one's family, a realistic ruler has no other option but to choose the worldly dharma techniques.

Jōin's *Secret Outline of Oral Initiations* explains how the worldly dharma techniques were actually implemented. It begins by noting that:

The great teacher Jigen [Tenkai] taught Ichijitsu Shintō to the avatar [Tokugawa Ieyasu] primarily with the intent of ensuring that Ieyasu's descendants will flourish. . . . Many Buddhist scriptures describe how wheel-turning kings use Shintō as their method of ruling. For this reason since ancient times the god Matara has been enshrined at Danzan [Tōnomine]. That god is the main deity of the *Golden Light Sūtra*. The chapter "Righteous

25. My interpretation of these works is indebted to Sonehara 1991 and 1996, although I am not necessarily always in agreement with him.

Discourse” in that scripture is devoted entirely to the dharma bliss that wheel-turning kings provide the world and the powerful virtue of former kings. (*Sannō ichijitsu shintō kuden go soshō hiki*; TZ 12.254a-b)

This passage brings us back to the *Golden Light Sūtra* and Jōin’s assertion that in this scripture Matara appears in a dream as a shaman who beats the golden drum. As mentioned above, the audience of gods, goddesses, and demons in the *Golden Light Sūtra* all promise to protect all kings who promote the techniques of this scripture. These gods, goddesses, and demons include the *kami* of Japan. In chapter twelve, “Righteous Discourse” (Shōron 正論; i.e., Proper Ideology), the king Powerful Reverence informs his son Faith Appearance that all successful kings have a righteous discourse for ruling their kingdoms. As long as the king rules by this righteous discourse, then even though he is born as a human being, he will be regarded as an offspring of the heavenly gods (*tenshi* 天兒; T 16.347a; also see Emmerick 1970, 58). In other words, Shintō refers to the ideology by which the king claims descent from the gods and rules by divine right.

Jōin notes that the Fujiwara family prospered throughout Japanese history because they enshrined their ancestor Fujiwara no Kamatari 藤原鎌足 (Nakatomi no Kamatari, 614-669) as a god at Tōnomine (see Grapard 1984 and especially 1992, 237-241). He then explains that all the same ritual procedures — including the god Matara — employed by the Fujiwara at Tōnomine were followed by Tenkai at Nikkō. This is what Jōin means when he writes in *Noble Wheel-Turning King* that: “Our Ichijitsu Shintō is the righteous discourse that the King Powerful Reverence and Faith Appearance used to rule the world; it is the old method of former kings” (*Tenrin jōō shō* ; TZ 12.262b).²⁶

This old method of former kings is discussed in Buddhist scriptures, but according to Jōin the righteous discourse of rule by divine right predates Buddhism. His *Inner Commentary* cites the Chinese classics to demonstrate that, “The three sovereigns and five emperors [of Chinese prehistory] all used Shintō to ensure that their ruling families long endured” (*Tenrin jōō shō naiden*, TZ 12.293a). Similarly, he cites Buddhist accounts of kings in India to argue that, “The ten moral rules [of the righteous discourse] are the teaching of the heavenly wheel-turning kings, which have always existed as worldly morality even prior to the Buddha” (*ibid.*, TZ 12.299b). Therefore, “Mountain King (Sannō) Shintō is not limited to Japan, but is the same Shintō that is used throughout the three kingdoms [of India, China, and Japan]” (*ibid.*, TZ 12.286b). Nonetheless, it is Japan where rule by divine right has been most successful. Jōin traces the lineage of this ideology from Jinmu 神武 (the legendary first ruler of Japan and founder of the royal dynasty) to Fujiwara no Kamatari (the semi-legendary founder of the Fujiwara House) to Tokugawa Ieyasu. His *Inner Commentary* explains:

To insure the prosperity of his descendants the Great Coronet (*tai shokkan* 大織冠; i.e., Fujiwara no Kamatari) ascended to Tusita Heaven [as a god]. The Great Coronet’s Shintō was identical to the Shintō of the Heavenly Sovereign Jinmu. Because he ruled the realm through Shintō [i.e., *jindō*] and martial arts (*budō* 武道) he was named Jinmu. The *Book*

26. In this passage I have corrected 力尊相生 to 力尊相王.

of *Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) refers to this where it says: “[only] the ancients of bright wits and penetrating knowledge, who use divine martial power without killing” [could accomplish such feats]. (*Tenrin jōō shō naiden*; TZ 12.301a)

Thus, Jinmu was so named because he ruled by divine right (*jindō* or Shintō) and subdued his enemies militarily (*mu* or *bu*) without killing them as advocated in the *Book of Changes*.²⁷ Fujiwara no Kamatari followed this example to ensure the success of the Fujiwara House when he was enshrined as a god at Tōnomine (regarding which, see Grapard 1992, 237-241). Tokugawa Ieyasu likewise used military power to subdue his enemies and religion to rule his subjects. Jōin explains that Ieyasu thought to himself as follows:

But from the time of the Hōgen 保元 and Heiji 平治 wars [ca. mid-12th cent.] the kingly way began to decline. For more than 280 years after the Genkō 元弘 Disturbance (ca. 1333), there was not a single day of peace. Now that military good fortune has finally enabled me to restore peace and stability, I wish to establish an unchanging Great Way based on the example of Heavenly Sovereign Jinmu. I will become a protective deity, coeval with heaven and earth, to ensure the prosperity of my descendants as well as the wealth and happiness of the masses. (*Tenrin jōō shō naiden*; TZ 12.300b-301a)

To implement this ambition, Ieyasu relied on the ritual techniques performed by Tenkai, and thereby was able to assert his rule by divine right. Jōin justifies this accomplishment:

The divine ruler (*shinkun* 神君) [Tokugawa Ieyasu] made every use of the powerful virtue of three sovereigns and five emperors [of ancient China] to take possession of all under heaven. He was not [born as] a king, but so what? The *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) says: “Noble men use Shintō to expound their teachings and all under heaven submit to them.” (*Tenrin jōō shō*; TZ 12.271b)²⁸

27. Regarding the pronunciation *jindō* for “Shintō,” see Teeuwen 2007. The quotation from the *Book of Changes* appears in appendix 3, *Xici chuan* 繫辭傳 (or *Dachuan* 大傳), A11: [其孰能與於此哉] 古之聰明睿知、神武而不殺者夫。The standard English translations of the *Yijing* provide little help with this line, rendering it only in the abstract terms of Confucian self-cultivation. Legge (1964, 372) gives: “Who could be able to accomplish all this? (Only our) ancient sages, quick in apprehension and clear in discernment, of far-reaching intelligence, and all-embracing knowledge, and with a majesty, going spirit-like to its objects; it was only they who could do so.” Similarly, Wilhelm (trans. Baynes 1967, 317) has: “Who is it that can do all this? Only the reason and clear-mindedness of the ancients, their knowledge and wisdom, their unremitting divine power.” In Japan, though, the phrase *shinbu ni shite fusetsu* 神武而不殺 appears repeatedly in reference to spiritual martial power (or martial arts) that subdues enemies without killing them (see, e.g., Friday 1997, 64).

28. The passage quoted by Jōin is the *locus classicus* for the word *shintō* (*jindō*). It appears in the *Yijing*, appendix 1, *Tuanzhuàn* 象傳, regarding ䷓, hexagram no. 20, *guan* 觀. The hexagram statement (*guaci* 卦辭) says: “*Guan* (contemplating): Washing hands without making offering, there is capturing (*fu* 孚) with head held up” 觀、盥而不薦、有孚顛若 (see Legge 1964, 99). The *Tuanzhuàn* comments on this statement, saying: “That which [is the object of] great contemplation resides in the upper [half of the hexagram], which consists of the docile [trigram] *xun* 巽 (☴) and which, because its middle [line (—)] is appropriate (zheng 正), is contemplated by all under heaven. [The hexagram statement,] ‘Washing hands without making offering, there is trustworthiness (*fu* 孚) with head held up,’ [means that] those below who contemplate [it] are thereby transformed [i.e., civilized]. [In other words:] In contemplating the godly way (*shengdao*

Jōin cites this final passage from the *Book of Changes* as further evidence that the Shintō of Japan “is not different from the Shintō of China” (*Sannō ichijitsu shintō kuden go sōshō hiki*, TZ 12.257a). He also notes that when diplomatic envoys “from Korea visit our kingdom, and worship [before Ieyasu’s Tōshōgū Shrine] at Nikkō, they write poems with the same feeling as when at shrines in their own land” (*ibid.*; also see Ooms 1985, 182). Nonetheless, because the local gods of each place are unique, the actual content of the Shintō differs in each kingdom. Jōin quotes Tenkai to assert that Sannō Shintō is not a combinative (*shūgō*) system, unlike other Shintō teachings (such as Yoshida Shintō or Ryōbu Shintō).²⁹ For this reason Jōin also asserts that:

Ichijitsu Shintō is not simply a Tiantai doctrine from a foreign land. . . . the foreign Tiantai [of China] has its two lineages of Buddhism and Shintō, and [the Japanese Tendai on] Mount Hiei has its two lineages of Buddhism and Shintō. (*Tenrin jōō shō naiden*; TZ 12.303b)

Moreover, “even though Shintō is practiced throughout the three kingdoms, because Japan is a uniquely divine land, Japanese should regard Shintō as fundamental” (*Tenrin jōō shō naiden*, TZ 12.287a). Why is Japan an especially divine land? Jōin answers as follows: “As a divine land, in Japan because the great god Tenshō 天照 [Amaterasu, the ancestor of the royal family] also is a golden wheel-turning king, our sons of heaven (*tenshi* 天兒; sovereigns), generation after generation, all have been the offspring of this golden wheel turning king” (*Tenrin jōō shō naiden*, TZ 12.299b).

Not only is Shintō especially well-suited to the divine land of Japan, but Buddhism cannot offer an effective alternative. Along the same lines as the opening passage of his essay on the *Noble Wheel-Turning King*, quoted above, in his *Secret Outline of Oral Initiations* Jōin chastises the mainstream Buddhist teachings in Japan:

The various schools of exoteric, esoteric, and Zen Buddhism each rely on their own scriptures to expound their profound principles, but the main intent of all these schools is to escape from *samsāra*. When it comes to doctrines for the peace of ruling families and the prosperity of descendants, none of them offers much in the way of tangible results. (*Sannō ichijitsu shintō kuden go sōshō hiki*; TZ 12.256b)

One can detect in this criticism an early formulation of the refrain that will become ever more often repeated in the modern period, namely that Buddhism

神道), [one sees that] the four seasons are without irregularities. [Therefore,] the noble men use the godly way to expound their teachings, and all under heaven submit [to them]” 大觀在上、順而巽、中正以觀天下。觀、盥而不薦、有孚顛若、下觀而化也。觀天之神道而四時不忒。聖人以神道設教、而天下服矣 (cf. Legge 1964, 229–230). In this passage, the term “godly way” (*shengdao* 神道; Japanese: *jindō*, *shintō*) probably suggested to Chinese readers something like the cosmic order of alternating *yin* and *yang*, which insures the invariability of the four seasons. Legge (p. 230) translates it in non-theistic terms as “the spirit-like way of Heaven.”

29. Jōin specifically rejects the Yoshida 吉田 family categories of Single Unity (*yūitsu* 唯一) Shintō, Basis and Traces (*bonji suijaku* 本地垂迹) Shintō, and Dual Maṇḍala Combinative (*ryōbu shūgō* 兩部習合) Shintō (*Tenrin jōō shō*; TZ 12.263b).

is only for the afterlife while Shintō addresses the needs of this world. With his focus on present-day society, Jōin forcefully rejects any suggestion that Shintō is somehow inferior or less important than Buddhism. He writes:

How could Ichijitsu Shintō, a teaching as enduring as Heaven and Earth, be a shallow or inferior method? Today already more than 2,500 years have passed since the Lord Śākyamuni entered *nirvāṇa*. People's faculties have become dull. The age is very corrupt. How then can someone now hope to be like the people during the previous true and imitation dharma ages who vigorously persevered in cultivating discipline, meditation, and wisdom and who escaped from the triple world by authenticating untainted *bodhi*? (*Tenrin jōō shō*; TZ 12.254a-b)

Here we see a stark contrast between the everlasting vitality of the gods versus the Buddhist doctrine of the inevitable decline of the Dharma. As the Buddha has disappeared into the past, both the power of his teachings and the spiritual abilities of his would-be followers have dissipated. Now the only hope for lasting peace and security lies in Shintō, the unchanging great way established by the powerful grace of the divine ruler Tōshō (*Tenrin jōō shō naiden*, TZ 12.300b).

Final Reflections

By situating the god Matara within the context of the *Golden Light Sūtra* and Tiantai dream cultivation techniques, Jōin has provided us with a new vista from which to survey many unsettled and unsettling aspects of Japanese religious history. Instead of being the product (or victim) of random acts of confusion, Matara emerges as a central figure in a single matrix (pun intended) of related practices. As a dream king he presents visions and inspiration to priests (who wish to attain insight through Buddhist rituals of *samādhi*; absorption), to entertainers (who wish to excite imagination with their theatrical enactments), and to rulers (who wish to meld popular sentiments to a fixed set of socially prescribed norms). At the same time, Matara and Jōin raise several questions that demand more attention than they have thus far received.

Much recent scholarship has highlighted the importance of dreams and spiritual revelations in Japanese Buddhism (e.g., Bodiford 1993, 1999a, and 1999b; Faure 1996; Yamabe 2005). Nonetheless, we still know very little about the ritual techniques of dream incubation, the types of icons used, and the larger social context of these meditative practices (to name only a few of the more obvious aspects). Jōin's writings place a dream king, a shaman with a drum, at the center of mainstream institutionalized Buddhism and at the heart of several of the most important political developments in Japanese history (i.e., the apotheosis of the founders of major ruling families). A wealth of detailed information regarding these practices survives in the form of Buddhist ritual manuals. There has been little effort, however, to examine these manuals in light of the larger contexts of either Buddhist doctrinal theory or social practices.

At the same time Jōin highlights the role of the *Golden Light Sūtra* on Japanese society and politics. Scholars have long known that the vocabulary, concepts, and

imagery (even entire passages) of the *Golden Light Sūtra* can be found in the *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), the two early chronicles that promoted the royal family's rule by divine right.³⁰ Most accounts of the history of Buddhism in early Japan describe the importance of the *Golden Light Sūtra* solely in terms of its being chanted for the protection of the ruling elite without examining it as it as source of political ideology (for an exception, see Tamura 1986, 232–233). Moreover, the role of the *Golden Light Sūtra* in subsequent Japanese political discourse, especially in the subsequent apotheosis of Fujiwara no Kamatari or Tokugawa Ieyasu, awaits further research. We need to more carefully examine the Buddhist contributions to Japanese notions of divine kingship and rule by divine right.

Finally, Jōin's writings reveal some of the intellectual developments within Tokugawa-period Buddhist thought that eventually resulted in the disestablishment of Buddhism at the beginning (ca. 1868–1872) of the Meiji period. Certainly many Buddhist leaders resisted the anti-Buddhist discourse by Confucians, leaders of new religious movements, and Nativists (for an overview of this discourse, see Ketelaar 1990, 14–42). At the same time, though, developments within Buddhist circles helped create a new intellectual climate within which alternatives to Buddhism could take root. Both Reikū Kōken and Jōin, for example, clearly contributed to this process. At first glance these two Buddhists might seem like polar opposites. Reikū was the staunch reformer. His *Byakujaben* and his denunciation of the *genshi kimyōdan* aimed to restore the intellectual vitality of Buddhism. He repudiated occult lore in favor of sound scholarship and philosophically rigorous doctrine (Bodiford 2006). Dream kings like Matara had no place in his Buddhism. Jōin, in contrast, was the crusty traditionalist who insisted that his occult lore constitutes the quintessence of Buddhism. He defended the *genshi kimyōdan* initiations and advocated the importance of the gods. In social terms, however, the net result of both positions was oddly similar. The occult spiritualism eliminated by Reikū provided an empty space to be filled by non-Buddhist forms of Shintō. Meanwhile, the Buddhist Shintō advocated by Jōin denied its own origins and looked to Japanese history for precedents. When it came to Japanese history, though, Buddhists were ill prepared to compete with Nativist scholars. Thus, both Reikū and Jōin helped prepare the way for the destruction of traditional Buddhism when the Tokugawa regime collapsed. One can almost say, ironically, that erasing Matara's Buddhist identity helped in part to erase Buddhism from Japan's modern national identity.

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30. The scholarship on this topic is too extensive to survey here. I will cite only a few examples readily at hand: Sueki 2006, 28; Ueda 1996, 219; and Watanabe 1991, 13–18.

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