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## *Sannō Miya Mandara*

### The Iconography of Pure Land on this Earth

The *Sannō miya mandara*, now in the collection of the Nara National Museum, is a well-known image, often mentioned to illustrate the *shinbutsu shūgō* (kami-buddha combination) aspect of the belief in the kami Sannō of the Hie Shrine in the province of Ōmi (the present day Shiga Prefecture). The shrine flourished in close association with the nearby Enryakuji temple on Mount Hiei during the medieval period. The rows of Siddham characters and the figures of twenty-one Buddhist deities with corresponding kami, neatly arranged in three registers at the top of the composition, clearly explain the *honji suijaku* (origin and trace) relationships of the Buddhist deities (*honji*) and the kami Sannō (*suijaku*). The appellation Sannō was a collective term commonly used for the twenty-one kami enshrined at Hie, and the deities were interpreted as the manifestations of buddhas and bodhisattvas in Japan. However, the main subject matter of this *mandara* is not images of Buddhist deities, but the monumental image of the sacred mountain, which occupies the major portion of the picture space. This essay will focus on the iconography of sacred landscape, and considers how the concept of Buddhist Pure Lands was appropriated in the topographical painting of the shrine landscapes, especially in this example from the genre of medieval *miya mandara*.

KEYWORDS: Sannō – Hie Shrine – *miya mandara* – *shinbutsu shūgō* – *honji suijaku* – *han honji suijaku* – *Jojakkōdo*

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EXAMPLES of *miya mandara* 宮曼荼羅 (shrine mandala)<sup>1</sup> survive from four major temple-shrine complexes that flourished during the medieval period: *Kasuga* 春日, *Kumano* 熊野, *Iwashimizu Hachiman* 岩清水八幡, and *Hie* 日吉, as well as some isolated examples such as the *Ikoma* 生駒 *mandara* and the *Fuji mandara*. The painting style of the surviving examples and textual sources suggest that *miya mandara* were made from the late twelfth century onward, and reached their peak of production in the first half of the fourteenth century. The identity of the location in *miya mandara* is usually easily recognizable, as they customarily include architectural and topographical elements that are specifically associated with the particular shrine. But beyond the superficial portrayal of landscape, the study of *miya mandara* presents the challenge of deciphering the medieval way of representing invisible ideas in visual terms. The shrine landscape embodied the concept of sacred space, the presence of kami in nature, and the articulation of the *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 theory, all of which have no concrete form. In order to elucidate the medieval visual language and its symbolic significance, this essay will firstly consider the development of *miya mandara* and the identification of shrine landscape with Buddhist Pure Lands (paradises), before focusing on the iconography of the Nara *Sannō miya mandara*.

One of the earliest textual references to a painting related to a shrine appears in an often quoted passage from *Gyokuyō* [The jewelled leaves], the diary of Kujō Kanezane (1149–1207). In an entry dated to the seventeenth day of the fifth month in the third year of Juei 寿永 (1184), Kanezane mentioned that a scroll painting (*zue* 図絵) depicting the Kasuga Shrine was dedicated by a priest of Nara, and a ritual, including the chanting of the *Heart Sutra*, took place (KUJŌ 1908, vol. 3, 22). Several months later in the same year, Kanezane again mentioned a scroll painting, this time depicting the sacred image of the Hie Shrine:

尊忠僧都持来日吉社御正体図絵一鋪

Monk Sonchū brought a scroll painting depicting the sacred images  
of the Hie Shrine.

(KUJŌ 1908, vol. 3, 54)

It is not clear from this description if the images of *mishōtai* 御正体 was *honji-butsumi* (the Buddhist “origin” of the kami of the Hie Shrine) or *suijaku* (kami in

1. The term *mandara* is a Japanese derivation of the Sanskrit term *maṇḍala*, which denotes a visual representation of Buddhist universe. The author employs the term *mandara* in order to distinguish the images that are created in Japan in contrast to esoteric mandalas which derive from scriptural sources.

FIGURE 1: *Sannō Miya Mandara*, Nanbokuchō period, fourteenth century, hanging scroll, ink, color and gold on silk, 121 x 66.8 cm. Nara National Museum.



their Japanese guise).<sup>2</sup> The use of the term “painting” (*zue*) indicates that the term *mandara* was not employed for paintings related to shrines at the time when these images were mentioned in the late twelfth century, but it is assumed that they were the early examples of what is later called “*Shintō*” *mandara*.<sup>3</sup>

These paintings were visual confirmation of the systematic pairing of kami and Buddhist *honji* in medieval Japan which was explained in the term *wakō dōjin* 和光同塵, literally “softening the light, and mingling with dust,” in literature of the time, explaining that the Buddha concealed his true brightness and manifested in this world (Japan) by blending in with dust (the populace). The dissemination of the idea to the wide strata of society is evident in the popular *imayō* (“modern style”) song below from the *Ryōjin hūshō* [Dust on the beams: Secret book of songs], compiled by the retired emperor Goshirakawa’in 後白河

2. Shrine-related *mandara* can be divided into three basic categories: *honjibutsu mandara*, *suijaku mandara*, and *miya mandara*. The discussion of the first two types is beyond the scope of this present essay.

3. The term “Shinto” *mandara* was coined by Kageyama Haruki in the 1950s (KAGEYAMA 1976, 22) and commonly used until recently. To avoid the term “Shinto” in the context of medieval kami worship, the word *suijakuga* is more frequently employed in Japan. Here the term is used to include all three types of shrine-related *mandaras*.

院 in c. 1169. It conveys the contemporary interpretation of the kami of the Hie Shrine:

佛法弘むとて	The Buddhist Law shall spread	
天台麓に	by the traces	
跡を垂れおわします	at the foot of Tendai mountain.	
光を和らげ	Softening the light	
塵となし	mingling with dust	
東の宮とぞ	He is enshrined	
斎はれおはします	in the Eastern Shrine	(RT: 49)

The song articulates the theory of *honji suijaku* from the Buddhist perspective, interpreting that the kami of the Eastern Shrine at Hie as a trace of the Buddha (Yakushi) who has manifested himself as a kami in order to propagate the Buddhist Law in Japan. The application of the theory of *honji suijaku* to the kami of Hie indicates the decisive influence of Tendai Buddhism with which the shrine was intimately associated since the beginning of the ninth century when Saichō 最澄 established the Japanese Tendai 天台 sect on Mount Hiei 比叡山. The theoretical logic of *honji suijaku* was analogous to the structure of the *Lotus Sutra*, which was divided into the realm of *shakumon* 迹門 (realm of trace) and *honmon* 本門 (realm of origin) according to the interpretation proposed by the Chinese Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi (538–597) (TAMURA 1992, xv). The development of *Hie Sannō mandara*, and in fact all shrine-related *mandara*, therefore reflected the Tendai philosophy and its active affirmation of the idea of *wakō dōjin*, which, in concrete architectural terms, greatly encouraged the flourishing of the temple-shrine complexes.

The demand for images of shrine landscape and sacred deities seem to have increased considerably during the Kamakura period (1185–1333), as Emperor Hanazono (1297–1348) wrote in his diary on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month in the second year of Shōchū 正中 (1325):

This evening in the crown prince's palace, Kiyotsune told us that for the past three or four years, paintings of the Kasuga Shrine has been used to substitute for the rituals at the shrine. The painting depicting a view of the shrine is called *mandara*. Everyone seems to have one these days.

(HANAZONO TENNŌ 1938, 158)

The emperor's comment is supported by the large number of Kasuga *mandara* that survives today, and testifies to the importance of the cult of Kasuga which developed in close association with the adjacent Kōfukuji temple 興福寺.<sup>4</sup> An example of a fourteenth-century *Kasuga mandara* (FIGURE 2), now in

4. *Kasuga mandara* are most prevalent of all shrine-related *mandara*, and approximately 160 *Kasuga mandara* from the medieval period are known to exist today (GYŌTOKU 2001, 162).

the British Museum provides a clear illustration of the relationship between the kami of Kasuga and their Buddhist *honji*, as it combines the shrine landscape with the images of Buddhist deities. The upper half of the painting follows the established compositional scheme similar to many other examples of *Kasuga miya mandara*, and depicts a bird's-eye view of the Kasuga Shrine complex in predominantly green *Yamato-e*-style (大和絵) landscape.<sup>5</sup> Beyond the cluster of shrine buildings at the uppermost section of the painting, the sacred Mount Mikasa 三笠山 is depicted with the moon just above its left shoulder, and five lunar discs with the seated figures of Buddhist *honji* of the kami of the Kasuga Shrine inside are arranged horizontally in the sky. The vermilion *torii* 鳥居 gates in the center of the composition marks the entrance to the shrine complex, which is dotted with numerous small structures and a pagoda on the left of the first *torii*, all providing a recognizable identification of the location. The beauty of nature is enhanced by the green malachite pigment, which would have been very bright when new.

The lower half of the painting in contrast displays a more schematic structure of *honjibutsu mandara*, which depicts Buddhist deities arranged in orderly rows on a plain background. The hierarchical organization with the most important deity in the center (in this case, Śākyamuni, the *honji* of the First Shrine) conforms to the geometric structural principles of esoteric mandalas, such as the *Ryōkai mandara* introduced to Japan by Saichō and Kūkai in the ninth century. In this image, the physical geography of the shrine landscape is juxtaposed with the metaphysical world of Buddha to convey the idea



FIGURE 2: *Kasuga Mandara*, Kamakura period, fourteenth century, hanging scroll, ink, color and gold on silk, 99.8 x 35 cm. The British Museum.

5. *Yamato-e*-style landscape denotes Japanese scenes painted with thick opaque pigments as opposed to *kara-e* which deals with Chinese themes. The representative example of *Kasuga miya mandara* is in the Yugi Art Museum, Osaka, which has an inscription dated 1300.

of *honji suijaku*, which not only identifies buddhas and bodhisattvas with kami, but led to the identification of the abode of kami with the Buddhist Pure Land.

### *Pure Land on This Earth*

The term “Pure Land” (*jōdo*) is most commonly associated with the Western Paradise of Amida Buddha and its soteriological doctrine. The familiar visual representation of the Western Paradise in the *Taima mandara* 當麻曼荼羅 depicts the blissful land where the golden Buddha resides, surrounded by jewel-clad bodhisattvas and heavenly dancers and musicians.<sup>6</sup> The ethereal beauty of the Western Paradise filled with golden towers, jewelled trees, and lotus flowers, offered a positive encouragement of faith and hope for the afterlife to the medieval Japanese whose perception of the world was shaped by the bleak prospect of the decline of Buddhism in the age of *mappō* 末法. The Pure Land was perceived as a transcendental space where one could reach only after death in the Amidist belief. However, the term *jōdo* encompassed larger spatial and transhistorical dimensions, including the concept of Pure Land on this earth. The rationale behind the identification of certain geographical area of Japan with Buddhist paradises was intimately connected to the *honji suijaku* theory. As Allan Grapard explains, “if a shrine and the area in which it was located were conceived of as the residence of the kami, and if those kami were thought to be hypostases of buddhas and bodhisattvas enshrined in the adjacent temples, then those areas came to be seen as the abodes of those buddhas and bodhisattvas, as Pure Land in this World (*gense jōdo*)” (GRAPARD 1992, 209). The concluding chapter of the *Kasuga Gongen kenki* 春日権現験記 [Miraculous record of the kami of Kasuga] from 1309 confirms thus:

Our realm is a land of kami [*shinkoku* 神国], and over three thousand imperial tombs and shrines, each in their individual ways, are efficacious and miraculous as never seen before. It is true that the noble pine tree appears after a frost, and loyal minister appears at the time of danger. In the Age of the Latter Days [*mappō*], the kami will guide the people with no faith....

Since purity of mind corresponds to the Pure Land, our own kami are the Buddhas. Shrines are none other than the Pure Land. Shining Beryl [Jōruri 淨瑠璃] and Vulture Peak<sup>7</sup> can be found within the fence of the shrine.

(KOMATSU 1991, 78)

6. The depiction of the Western Paradise in *Taima mandara* followed the Chinese precedent that incorporated the scenes from the *Kanmuryōju kyō* 觀無量壽經 (*The Sutra of Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life*) on the borders. The image was called *bien xian* (Jp. *hensōzu* 變相圖) in China and Korea, and the term *mandara* was used only in Japan.

7. Vaidūryanirbhāsa (Jōruri) is the Pure Land of Bhaisajyaguru (Yakushi), the *honji* of the second shrine at Kasuga, and Vulture Peak is the Pure Land of Śākyamuni, the *honji* of the first shrine.

Medieval textual sources indicate that Kasuga was identified with several other Pure Lands as well as Jōruri and Vulture Peak, such as Tuṣita (Jp. Tosotsuten 兜率天), the Future Buddha Miroku's Pure Land. Mount Mikasa was identified with the Pure Land of bodhisattva Kannon, Potalaka (Jp. Fudaraku 補陀落) (TEN GROTHENHUIS 1999, 159) The identification of shrine landscape with a specific Buddhist Pure Land encouraged the practice of pilgrimage to shrines, as well as the development of a confraternity, *Kasuga kō* 春日講, with membership extending to provinces. Elizabeth TEN GROTHENHUIS (1999, 156) suggests that some *Kasuga mandara* were probably commissioned by these *kō* devotees to use as an icon in the rituals.

The projection of Buddhist paradise onto the actual geography offered pilgrims the opportunity to physically experience the “Pure Land” which was often located in the midst of awe-inspiring natural beauty. In particular, the pilgrimage to Kumano, the earthly paradise of Kannon, is a well documented phenomenon, supported by records of frequent imperial pilgrimages from the late Heian period.<sup>8</sup>

However, as already noted the proliferation of shrine-related *mandara* only gathered pace in the second half of the Kamakura period. Visual records such as the fourteenth-century *Kumano mandara* in the Cleveland Museum of Art (FIGURE 3) and a section from *Ippen hijiri-e* (dated 1299) convey to us the popularity of pilgrimage that fulfilled the pious desire in the context of both Buddhist and the worship of kami. The concluding chapter from the aforementioned *Kasuga*



FIGURE 3: *Kumano Mandara*, Kamakura period, fourteenth century, hanging scroll, ink, and color on silk, 134 x 62 cm. Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art.

8. Emperor Goshirakawa (1127–1192) undertook the pilgrimage to Kumano thirty-three times, while his grandson Emperor Gotoba (1180–1239) managed to visit Kumano twenty-nine times.

*Gongen kenki* clearly suggests that the motivation of pilgrims was to physically experience the Buddhist paradise. Yet attention should be drawn to the first part of the passage, where the status of Japan as the land of kami (*shinkoku*) is stressed. Moreover, it states that in the age of *mappō*, the kami is the entity who leads people of lesser ability to the Buddha realm.

The term *shinkoku* is often associated with Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293–1354) whose influential text *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記 commenced with the famous sentence “Great Japan is *shinkoku*.” The word was translated as “the divine country” or “the divine realm” in the past, creating an impression that the second Chinese character “koku” was similar to the modern notion of Japan as a nation.<sup>9</sup> However, Kuroda Toshio has argued that the medieval concept of *shinkoku* was strongly associated with the geographical area, the physical “land” itself rather than the abstract idea of Japan as a country (KURODA 1995, 44). Although Kuroda himself acknowledged that there was a conscious effort to create the ideology of “Nihon koku” by the Kamakura bakufu especially after the attempted Mongol invasions in 1274 and 1281, it seems more appropriate to interpret the term as “the physical land” where the kami resided (KURODA 1965, 123). The term itself was already used in the eighth-century *Nihongi*,<sup>10</sup> but it was during the Kamakura period that the concept of Japan as “the land of kami” became an important issue in the writings of Buddhist thinkers. The Tendai monk Kōshū 光宗 (1276–1350) attempted to define Japan as *shinkoku*, “the land of kami” by explaining thus: “India is the birth place of the Buddha, China is the land of all buddhas, Japan is the land of kami, and for that reason the deities will lead the land to prosperity” (KŌSHŪ, 511).

The complexity of the concept of *shinkoku* and its relationship with the religious and political climates of the Kamakura period is beyond the scope of this paper, but in the case of texts concerning the Hie Shrine, a reference to *shinkoku* already appears in one of the earliest surviving texts on the Hie Sannō cult dating from 1223, the *Yōtenki* 耀天記 [The record of bright heaven]. Under the heading “Matters on the Sannō” it states:

Japan is a *shinkoku* since the time of seven generations of Heavenly kami and five generations of Earthly kami, and since the time of Tenshō Daijin’s 天照大神 manifestation at Ise—kami of the four directions have protected palaces and homes of people. (STJ: 73)

The passage directly and simply describes that Japan is the land where kami

9. For example, W. G. ASTON (1993, 230.), Paul VALEY (1980, 49), and Royall TYLER (1990, 290) all use the word “divine.”

10. According to the *Nihongi*, during the Empress Jingū’s expedition to Silla, she was assisted by the Wind God and the Sea God who created a tidal wave for the empress’s ship to reach the interior of the country. The terrified King of Silla uttered “I have heard that in the east there is a *shinkoku* called Nippon” (ASTON 1993, 230).



resided and protected people, rather than to reinforce the ideology of Japan as a divine country. The opening passage of another Hie Sannō text, *Hie Sannō rishōki* 日吉山王利生記 [The record of efficacy of Hie Sannō]<sup>11</sup> also starts with a similar declaration:

Our Akitsushima [Japan] has been constantly respected as *shinkoku*, and since the reign of Emperor Jinmu, generations of human sovereigns have been protected by one hundred kings. The first shrine was established during the reign of Emperor Suijin. Since the time of Tenshō Daijin's descent from the heaven during the reign of Emperor Suinin, there have been a multitude of kami, among them the spiritual power of Hie Sannō brightens the heaven and his efficacy and energy reaches to tens of thousands of people. (STJ: 649)

The acknowledgement of Japan as “the land of kami” in these texts indicates that the discourse on *shinkoku* was increasingly affirming the prominent role of kami in Japan where Buddhism could flourish even in the age of *mappō* under their protection. The development towards the reversal of kami-buddha relationship from the essentially Buddhist-centered view to the *han honji suijaku* 反本地垂迹 theory emphasizing the unique circumstance of Japan was taking place at the time when the demand for shrine-related *mandara* increased.

In comparison to the large number of *Kasuga mandara* that exists today, relatively few examples of *miya mandara* related to the Hie Sannō cult have survived the ravages of time. The most prevalent type of *Hie Sannō mandara* produced during the Kamakura period seems to have been the *suijaku mandara*, which depicted the kami of the shrine as Japanese monks and courtly figures, but even those are not more than ten in number. Fewer examples survive in the case of the *honjibutsu* and *miya mandara*.<sup>12</sup> The rarity of *miya mandara* is partly due to the fact that the Hie Shrine is within easy reach of the capital Heian-kyō, and probably there was no demand for images to serve as substitutes for visits to the shrine. The distance of Kasuga and Kumano from the capital was the main reason for the *miya mandara* as already noted in the comment of Emperor Hanazono. It is also important to remember that the Hie Shrine suffered a catastrophic damage from the burning of Mount Hiei by Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582) in 1571, as well as the effect of the *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈 (anti-Buddhist iconoclasm) movement in the Meiji period (1868–1911). The destruction of Buddhist artifacts was particularly serious at Hie in the late nineteenth century, as one of the shrine priest Juge Shigekuni 樹下茂国 (1822–1884) was

11. The date of *Hie Sannō rishōki* is not certain, but thought to originate from the Kamakura period. Several copies of the text, some under the title *Sannō reigenki* survive in the form of *emaki* with illustrations. The main body of the text contains the stories of the kami Sannō in relation to individual monks of Mount Hiei (STJ: 649–95).

12. The earliest extant *Hie Sannō mandara* is the *honjibutsu* type, which depicts nine Buddhist deities, dates from the thirteenth century and is now kept at Enryakuji.

an ardent supporter of the *shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離 (separation of kami and Buddha) policy, and was responsible for instigating a large-scale destruction of Buddhist materials in 1870.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, it is extremely difficult to study the development of *Hie Sannō mandara* systematically from the small number of examples, yet the high artistic quality of the surviving examples still amply suggests the significant role these *mandara* played in the ritual practices concerning the Hie Sannō belief.

### *The Iconography of Sacred Landscape*

The Nara *Sannō miya mandara* is a large silk hanging scroll that depicts a panoramic view of the entire shrine complex of Hie, which is situated at the foot of Mount Hiei located to the northeast of Kyoto. The Hie Shrine flourished in close association with the Enryakuji 延暦寺, and by the time this image was made, the shrine was a large institution consisting of twenty-one main shrines, subdivided into three groups of seven named the Upper Seven, Middle Seven, and Lower Seven Shrines, as well as an array of subsidiary small shrines. Each of the seven

TABLE 1: The Seven Upper Shrines 上七社 of Hie.

<i>Shrine</i>	<i>Kami</i>	<i>Honji</i>
Ōmiya 大宮	Ōnamuchi no kami 大己神	Shaka Nyorai 釈迦如来
Ni no miya 二宮	Ōyamakui no kami ( <i>nigimitama</i> ) <sup>14</sup> 大山咋神 (和御魂)	Yakushi Nyorai 薬師如来
Shōshinshi 聖真子	Tagori hime no kami 田心姫神	Amida Nyorai 阿弥陀如来
Marōdo 客人	Shirayana hime no kami 白山姫神	Jūichimen Kannon 十一面観音
Jūzenji 十禅師	Kamotamayori hime no kami ( <i>nigimitama</i> ) 鴨玉依姫神 (和御魂)	Jizō Bosatsu 地藏菩薩
Hachiōji 八王子	Ōyamakui no kami ( <i>aramitama</i> ) 大山咋神 (荒御魂)	Senju Kannon 千手観音
San no miya 三宮	Kamotamayori hime no kami ( <i>aramitama</i> ) 鴨玉依姫神 (荒御魂)	Fugen Bosatsu 普賢菩薩

13. It is reported that the bonfire of Buddhist materials belonging to the Hie Shrine burnt for three days during the riot of October 1870 (UCHIKAWA 1983, 338).

14. The spirit of kami was distinguished by two opposing qualities, namely *nigi mitama* 和御魂 (pacified spirit) and *ara mitama* 荒御魂 (rough spirit) which could be enshrined separately as in the case of Hie. The two shrines in the eastern enclosure, Ni no miya and Jūzenji, enshrined the *nigi mitama* of Ōyamakui no kami and Kamotamayori hime no kami respectively, while their *aramitama* were enshrined atop Mount Hachiōji in the Hachōji and San no miya shrines.

principal kami was paired with the Buddhist *honji* in one of the Upper Seven Shrines as is indicated in TABLE 1.

The total number of shrines amounted to 108 inner shrines within the Shrine complex and 108 outer shrines in vicinity, which enshrined multitude of local kami and “guest” kami solicited from other locations.<sup>15</sup> The numerous buildings nestling at the foot of the sacred mountain depicted in the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* testify the prosperous state of the shrine at the time. This *mandara* is often reproduced to illustrate the nature of *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合 at this location, but the study of the image itself has not been extended beyond catalogue description in the past. In order to more fully elucidate the iconography of sacred landscape, the following sections will firstly consider the date of production, analyze the composition and painting style, and then discuss the possible function of *miya mandara*.

#### DATE

Scholars’ opinions on the date of this *mandara* have been divided in the past, ranging from the late Kamakura to Muromachi periods.<sup>16</sup> Shrine-related *mandara* are not inscribed with dates in general, and the dating of works is based on the stylistic comparison with the few examples of dated painting such as the *Ippen hijirie* 一遍聖絵 (1299), the *Kasuga mandara* from the Yugi Art Institute 湯木美術館 (1300) and the *Kasuga Gongen kenki* 春日権現験記 (1309). The discrepancy among dates for the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* highlights the difficulty of dating paintings on purely stylistic grounds. Although this *mandara* is inscribed in ink with some dates on the back, interpreting inscriptions on medieval paintings can present problems as they were often added much later, most likely at the time of repair. The inscription is dated from the year corresponding to 1626 (the third year of Kan’ei), stating that the dedication ceremony was conducted by the seventy-five years old monk Chōyu of the Nichirin’in temple. It also states that the painting was done in the dates 1447 (the fourth year of Bun’an) and was repaired and lined in 1574 (the second year of Tenshō).

山王廿一社  
 文安四年甲子卯月日書之 自西塔西谷相  
 伝之天正二年甲戌十月十九日修幅裏付  
 開眼師法印長喩七十五歳  
 日輪院  
 寛永三丙寅天求之法印山海内供奉

15. The number 108 is indicative of the strong Buddhist influence on the development of the Hie Sannō cult, as it corresponds to the number of impediments to be overcome to attain enlightenment.

16. KAGEYAMA (1976, 96) has dated the work to the late Kamakura period, while the Cleveland Museum exhibition catalogue dates it to the fifteenth century (CUNNINGHAM 1998, 164).



FIGURE 4: *Hie Sannōsha kozu*, Muromachi period, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 52.9 x 71.8 cm. Enryakuji.

It has been noted that the calendrical cycle's Chinese character combination for the first date 1447 is incorrect and the word "Saitō" 西塔 (Western Pagoda) may be a mistake for "Tōto" 東塔 (Eastern Pagoda).<sup>17</sup> (BIWAKO BUNKAKAN 1991, 33). As it was quite common for medieval paintings to be attributed to a certain painter or to a certain date during the Edo period, long after its actual creation, it is hazardous to accept the dates mentioned in the inscription as a reliable record. Therefore the dating of the *mandara* needs to be addressed from several angles.

Firstly the examination of the painting style, especially that of mist which is painted in horizontal bands, indicates a date earlier than the fifteenth century. Examples of Muromachi period painting such as the *Fuji mandara* or the picture scroll *Sannō reigenki* 山王靈驗記 display a distinctive style of blue mist that is contained in rounded edged cloud shapes, clearly outlined in white. In comparison to such a stylized depiction of mist, the edge of mist in the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* disappears behind the mountain, or merges softly into the landscape without making an unnatural edge. Similar depiction of mist can be observed in the fourteenth-century *Kumano mandara* in the Cleveland Museum of Art, mentioned earlier, indicating a similar date for the Nara *Sannō miya mandara*.

Secondly, the treatment of space in this *mandara* attempts to incorporate

17. "Tōto" refers to the eastern area of Mount Hiei where the Konpon Chūdō (the Principal Hall) is situated, and "Saitō" refers to the western area where the Shakadō (Śākyamuni Hall) is situated.

a perspective which creates an impression of smooth progression from the detailed shrine landscape in the foreground to the more stylized mountain range in the distance. The overlapping hillocks are skilfully arranged to give a volume to the central mountain, and the irregular grouping of trees interspersed by mist creates an effect of the lower slope of the mountain projecting forward. Such a formula to convey the depth of space is in contrast to the more schematic depiction of mountains seen in the early-fourteenth-century *Kasuga mandara* or in the *Kasuga Gongen kenki*. The semi-circular mountains in these images are filled with colorful stylized trees which make a fish-scale like pattern, and give an impression of relief rather than three-dimensionality. The complex placement of hills and trees in the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* indicates the development of a more sophisticated spatial awareness than the decorative convention of the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Finally, a close inspection of buildings in the shrine complex reveals one structure missing in this *mandara*. Paintings of the Hie Shrine from the Muromachi period, such as *Hie Sannōsha kozu* 日吉山王社古図<sup>18</sup> (FIGURE 4) in the collection of Enryakuji or *Sannō Himitsu mandara* 山王秘密曼荼羅 in the Hie Shrine, all include a seven-storey pagoda on the left of the Ōmiya Shrine to the extreme left of the painting. If the pagoda existed at the time Nara *Sannō miya mandara* was painted, it is odd to omit such a conspicuous landmark. The possibility of the painting having been trimmed at the time of repair is not feasible as the border of this *mandara* is not a textile mount, but painted on the same piece of silk. The date of the construction of the seven storey pagoda is uncertain, but an illustrated scroll *Hie Sannō sansha shidai* 日吉山王參社次第 [The procedure of visit to the Hie Shrine] dated 1576 includes a drawing of the pagoda with an inscription stating “Pagoda commissioned by Emperor Godaigo” 後醍醐天皇 (MIYAJI 1942, 75). The close association of Emperor Godaigo (1288–1339) with Enryakuji suggests that he may indeed have paid respect to the Hie Sannō belief by commissioning the pagoda.<sup>19</sup> The pagoda may not have been constructed, or finished during the emperor’s life time, but if not, possibly not a long after his death. The record dated 1330 on a visit by Emperor Godaigo to the Hie Shrine mentions that the earlier pagoda was destroyed by fire in 1309, and indeed the emperor might have vowed to replace the lost pagoda (SAGAI 1992, 116) For the above reasons, the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* was probably painted in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, after 1309 when the pagoda was destroyed, but before its reconstruction. This coincides with the time when

18. *Hie Sannōsha kozu* is thought to have been made to record the view of the shrine before the fire of 1571. An inscription in ink dated 1582 states that this image was shown to the emperor since the social unrest has prevented him from visiting the shrine in person (BIWAKO BUNKAKAN 1991, 154). A similar image *Sannō Himitsu mandara* is preserved in the Hie Shrine.

19. Emperor Godaigo’s sons, Morinaga (1308–1335) and Muneyoshi (1311–1385) both held the position of the Tendai Abbot and provided the emperor with support (ADOLPHSON 2000, 308–309).

Emperor Hanazono observed that the production of shrine related images was at its height of popularity.

#### MOUNTAIN AS AN ICON

The painting is dominated by the triangular mass of the *shintai san* 神体山 (sacred mountain), Mount Hachiōji 八王子 in the Hie Shrine complex, which occupies the major part of the central space. The shrine architecture and numerous other structures in the complex are depicted accurately in realistic geographical relationships at the foot of the mountain. The entrance to the shrine complex is marked by a vermilion *torii* gate at the lower right corner, and viewers are invited to admire the sacred mountain from the south side of Ōmiya River, which demarcated the shrine complex from the profane outside world. Above the landscape, there are three registers of neatly arranged figures, meticulously painted in bright colors on a dark blue background. In each row, twenty-one kami of the Hie Shrine are depicted in three different forms: as Sanskrit seed syllables (*shuji*) in lunar disks in the top row, as seated Buddhist figures (*honjibutsu*) in the middle row, and as corresponding figures of Japanese kami in the bottom row. The white rectangular cartouche above each figure identifies the name of each deity, and the *honji suijaku* pairing between the twenty-one Buddhist deities and kami is clearly revealed.

The distinct division between the landscape and the figures of deities at the top of the composition indicates the artist's intention to treat the location as a realistic landscape. There is no human figure in the shrine complex, and the landscape is enveloped in lush green trees and a tranquil air. The main subject matter of the painting is clearly Mount Hachiōji in the center, with two small shrines, Hachiōji and San no miya 三宮 perched near the summit. In comparison to the gentle slope of the real mountain (FIGURE 5), the height of the painted mountain is exaggerated in order to emphasize the role of the mountain as the



FIGURE 5: Mount Hachiōji, Hie Shrine. Photo by author.

main icon. The prominent depiction of the mountain indicates that the focus of veneration was the location itself, and not the anthropomorphic figures of Buddha or kami. As the veneration of mountains was a widespread practice from ancient times in Japan, the image of the mountain as an icon awakens memories of pre-Buddhist religious belief. The word *shintaisan*, literally “the mountain as the kami’s body,” appropriately expresses the religious interpretation of geography in which the physical presence of mountain provided a focal point. In the case of Hie, archaeological evidence suggests that primitive rituals were performed at the large *iwakura* 巖 (sacred rock) near the summit of Mount Hachijōji long before the introduction of Buddhism to Japan (MURAYAMA 1994, 5). The sacred rock was revered as the *kogane no iwakura* 黄金の巖 (golden sacred rock), since the large flat surface of the rock facing the direction of south-east reflected the rising sun, and created an impression of the rock emitting a golden light. It is easy to imagine the feeling of awe the golden rock generated in the mind of ancient people. The existence of numerous *kofun* 古墳 (burial mounds) on the slope of the mountain also indicates that this location was a focus of local religious activities in connection to ancestor worship.<sup>20</sup>

The significance of the shrine, however, took an important turn when the kami of Hie were solicited by Saichō as the tutelary deities of Enryakuji. The association with the temple was a major driving force for the development of the Hie Sannō cult, which cultivated the systematic pairing of the kami of Hie with Buddhist *honji*. Saichō is also credited with adopting the appellation Sannō 山王 (Mountain King), originating in China, as the collective name of the kami of the Hie Shrine. According to the *Sanke yōryakki* 山家要略記 [A history of the mountain home], the late-thirteenth-century magnum opus on the Sannō cult, the protective deity of Mount Tiantai manifested as a boy (童子) when the ship on which Saichō was returning from China encountered a storm. The deity assisted a safe journey of the ship in order to ensure the transmission of Buddhist Law to the east. The passage explains that the name of the deity 山王 consists from a first character with three vertical strokes joined by a horizontal line, and a second character with three horizontal strokes joined by a vertical line (STR: 7).<sup>21</sup> Furthermore in the text *Hiesha Shinto himitsiki* 日吉社神道秘密記 [The secret history of Hie shrine], Sannō was considered as the protector of the three sacred mountains of Buddhism, the Vulture Peak, Mount Tiantai, and Mount Hiei (STJ: 331). The Chinese origin of Sannō is also explained by Allan

20. Sagai mentions that approximately seventy *kofun* have been found in the Hie Shrine complex by the Ōtsu city archaeological research project in 1979 (SAGAI 1992, 261).

21. This section of the *Sanke yōryakki* draws information from the *Sanpō hokōki* 三寶輔行記 attributed to Ennin 円仁, the authenticity of which is questionable (STR: 16). As no record from Saichō’s time exists, it is not possible to confirm the attribution of Sannō to Saichō, but traditionally he is associated with the naming.

Grapard who points out that the main temple of Mount Tiantai was dedicated to the triad of Shaka, Yakushi, and Amida (GRAPARD 1987, 215).

By the early thirteenth century when the *Yōtenki* (dated 1223) was written, Ōnamuchi no kami 大巳神 of the principal shrine Ōmiya was firmly identified with Śākyamuni Buddha, while the Ni no miya was identified with Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi), and the Shōshinshi with Amitābha (Amida) (STJ: 73–88). These three buddhas were closely associated with the three main areas of Mount Hiei: Shaka with the Saitō (the Western Pagoda), Yakushi with the Tōtō (the Eastern Pagoda), and Amida with the Yokawa 横川 area.<sup>22</sup> The appellation “Sannō sansei” (the “Three Sacred Bodies of Sannō”) appears frequently in texts such as the *Sanke yōryakki*, indicating a particular significance designated to the trio. The association with the buddhas consolidated the Buddhist influence that identified the shrine complex with the Buddhist paradises, and the sacred Mount Hachiōji was interpreted as the Vulture Peak. An *imayō* song from the aforementioned *Ryōjin hishō* explicitly conveys that the identification was a widespread belief:

大宮権現は	The kami of Ōmiya	
思え教主の釈迦ぞかし	is our lord Śākyamuni	
一度も此の地を	Once you visit this land	
踏む人は	a bond is tied	
霊山界会の友とせん	with the Vulture Peak	(RT: 73)

I suggest that the identification of Mount Hachiōji with the Vulture Peak was no doubt responsible for the exaggerated height of the mountain in the *mandara*. The artist’s intention was not simply to depict the physical shape of the mountain, but to superimpose the transcendental idea of the Vulture Peak onto the topography. The image of Mount Hachiōji in the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* embodied the ideal of a sacred mountain both in the Buddha world and on this earth.

#### BIRD’S-EYE VIEW

The use of the bird’s-eye view is a common characteristic of *miya mandara*, which can be observed in abundant examples from Kasuga, Kumano, and Iwashimizu Hachiman. The high viewpoint offered artists the possibility to incorporate the geographical features and architectural details that are not easily visible from the ground level. This characteristic was particularly noticeable in the case of shrine enclosures, which are depicted as parallelograms, and give views of both the interior and exterior of the enclosure. In the case of Nara *Sannō miya mandara*, the Ōmiya (the Principal Shrine) can be seen in the parallelogram to the

22. Allan GRAPARD (1987, 222) has discussed the relationships between a sacred geography of Mount Hiei and the Tendai interpretation of Buddhist time, as well as the projection of *mandara* onto the physical geography.



left, and Ni no miya (Second Shrine) in the enclosure to the right of the picture. Attention should be drawn to several structures scattered in between the two main enclosures. The most conspicuous among them are Buddhist structures, the *tahōtō* 多宝塔 (pagoda of [the Buddha] Many Jewels), bell tower, and *kondō* 金堂 (Golden Hall), some of them clearly labelled in the cartouche. As these structures were destroyed in the fire of 1571, and never rebuilt afterwards, this image serves as a valuable reminder of the physical organization of the temple-shrine complex in the medieval period.

The high viewpoint also allowed the distance and orientation of buildings to be shown fairly accurately, providing an easy-to-read ground plan of the site. These characteristics are sometimes described as “map-like”, but a comparison between *miya mandara* and *echizu* (picture map) reveals a fundamental difference in viewpoint. The map of Kōzanji 高山寺, dated 1230, is a representative example of a medieval map made for a practical purpose (FIGURE 6). It records the territorial boundaries of the Kōzanji temple, as officially verified by the Dajōkan 太政官 after the land was granted to the priest Myōe 明恵 (1173–1232) by Emperor Gotoba 後鳥羽 (1180–1239) in 1206 (SHIMOSAKA 2003, 428). The boundary is shown in red with a few black *bōji* 勝示 (markers) attached to the line, and the four cardinal directions are inscribed in the four corners of the map. The temple halls and a pagoda are shown in the center, each labelled underneath,



FIGURE 6: Kōzanji map, 1230, ink and color on paper, 164.7 x 164.4 cm. Jingoji, Kyoto.

and they are surrounded by tree-covered mountains. The composition is horizontally divided into two halves by the meandering river in the centre, and the lower half is depicted upside down while the mountains to the right and to the left are depicted sideways, giving the impression that the painter stood at the temple gate and looked all the way around him in each different direction. The principle of *echizu* is essentially a homocentric view from the ground level, and although there is a certain degree of attempt to depict mountains in naturalistic manner, the practical information takes precedence over artistic merit.

In contrast to this human view employed for maps, the bird's-eye view of *miya mandara* is an imaginary view. In reality, the southeast side of the Hie Shrine complex sloped down towards Lake Biwa, and there was no high ground available for looking down onto the entire shrine complex. No human could have obtained such an aerial view shown in this *mandara* before the age of flight, yet the viewers accepted it as *jikkei* (実景, the "real view"), reconstructing the physical experience in their imagination. The bird's-eye view presented the shrine landscape as a mental map in which the earthly abode of kami was viewed from high above the human world.

#### POETIC REFERENCE

The development of landscape painting in Japan was intimately connected to poetry from the Heian period. The genres of *uta-e* 歌絵 (poem pictures) and *meisho-e* 名所絵 (pictures of famous places) are in general discussed in the context of secular painting, but the distinction between the religious and secular is blurred in *miya mandara*, which aimed to depict the timeless beauty of nature. The poetic reference to the moon depicted above Mount Mikasa in *Kasuga mandara* was an integral aspect of a Japanese aesthetic culture in which the accumulation of literary memories enhanced the appreciation of images. The well known poem by the eighth century official Abe no Nakamaro 阿倍仲麻呂 (c. 700–770) below established the visual vocabulary that firmly associated the moon with Mount Mikasa:

天の原	As I gaze out, far
ふりさけ見れば	across the plain of heaven
春日なる	ah, at Kasuga
三笠の山に	from behind Mount Mikasa
出し月かも	it's the same moon that come out then.

(*Kokinshū* 古今集, KT 9: 406; translation by Joshua Mostow 1996, 161)

The established poetic iconography of landscape, which may be regarded as purely secular in origin, must not be ignored. Small details of landscape may not seem to have any religious significance, yet references to the canon

of anthologies were an integral part of the appreciation of visual images and greatly enhanced the sacred nature of the location.

The literary association with location in the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* is evident in the snow-capped mountains in the far distance, which signified the high peaks of the Hira 比良 mountain range to the north of Mount Hiei. These remote mountains were a part of ascetic training ground for the monks of the Enryakuji who sought an even more isolated location than Mount Hiei itself. The name of Hira was also an established *utamakura* 歌枕 (“pillow” word for poems) for the province of Ōmi in classical poetry, associated with snow that lingered in spring and the bitterly cold wind. The poem below by Saigyō 西行 (1118–1190) is but one of many poems that allude to the snow of Hira.

大原は	This place Ōhara
比良の高嶺に	is so close
近ければ	to the peaks of Hira;
雪降るほどを	imagine how heavy
思いこそ知れ	snowfalls can be

(*Shinchokusen shū* 新勅撰集, KT 1: 267)

The artist and the contemporary audience would have been familiar with the visual language that conveyed elements of traditional *yamato-e* subjects, *shiki-e* 四季絵 (painting of four seasons) and *meisho-e* associated with the location.

The association of Hira with the cold wind and snow was a recurrent theme that was firmly established in the iconography of the *meisho-e* tradition. Two more poems below which were made for the Emperor Gotoba’s project of sliding door paintings in the theme of *meisho* for the temple Saishō Shitennō’in in 1207 confirm the association with snow.<sup>23</sup>

みねさむき	The mountain wind of Hira
ひらの山風	from the cold peak
雪散りて	scatters snow
汀こぼれる	on the waves
しがのうら浪	to the shore of Shiga

Courtier Masatsune 雅経朝臣, *Saishō shitennō’in waka* 最勝四天王院和歌

遠近や	The mountain wind of Hira
ひらの山風	brings snow to
雪ふれば	far and near
はらひわびたる	old pine tree
しがの浦松	on the shore of Shiga.

23. The detail on the Saishō Shitennō’in project of *meisho-e* decoration is recorded by Fujiwara Teika in his diary *Meigatsuki* (FUJIWARA Teika 1911, 23–28). The paintings on sliding doors were destroyed with the temple only twelve years after the construction, but the collection of poems made for the project by ten selected poets remain as *Saishō shitennō’in waka* (KT 5: 896–905).

Minamoto Tomochika 源具親, *Saishō shitenmō'in waka*

(KT 5: 902)

The snow on the peaks of Hira usually lingered well into spring, and the image of snow-capped mountain not only signified the location of Hira, but acted as a reminder of the celebrated poems from the past. In any case whether the painting was religious or secular, the medieval visual language was impregnated with literary associations, and added layers of feelings stemming from a sensibility that recognized the sacredness in the beauty of nature. The sacredness symbolized by the snow-capped mountains also suggests a close similarity with paintings of Śākyamuni's sermon at Vulture Peak, which usually included the white peaks, adding yet another layer to the medieval visual vocabulary.

The close relationship between the worship of kami and the nature meant that the poems celebrating the beauty of nature were interpreted indeed as an expression of religious feelings towards the sublime. The dedication of *waka* poems to shrines by the eminent Buddhist monks such as Saigyō and the Tendai Abbot Jien 慈円 (1155–1225) highlights the widespread practice that encouraged the identification of *waka* with Buddhist *dharani* 陀羅尼. Jien in particular was an ardent devotee of Hie Sannō, who dedicated his collection of poems *Jichin oshō uta-awase* 慈鎮和尚歌合 [A poetry match with oneself by Priest Jichin (Jien), c. 1198] to the Hie Shrine.<sup>24</sup> The majority of poems included in the collection expressed Jien's feelings in relation to the nature and the seasons, and did not refer directly to the kami of Hie, yet the dedication to the shrine indicates that Jien regarded his poetry as a religious act. A passage from the thirteenth century *Shasekishū* [A collection of sand and pebbles] by Mujū (1226–1312) explains the logic behind the identification of poetry with *dharani* as below:

The way of poetry has an effect of calming the disorderly heart and brings about calmness and serenity. A few words can express the richness of mind and deliver the correct conduct. The correct conduct corresponds to *dharani*. The kami of our country are the manifestation of buddhas and bodhisattvas, and they are one and the same. Susanoō no Mikoto within the eight-layered fence of Izumo initiated the thirty-one-syllable poetry that is no different from Buddha's words. Dharani of India is the language of that land, and the Buddha preached the Law with it. (MUJŪ 1966, 222–23)<sup>25</sup>

The application of *honji suijaku* theory had a pervasive implication that poems which seem secular on the surface could contain a deep religious sentiment.

24. The collection *Jichin oshō uta-awase* was structured from seven sets of fifteen pairs of poems, and each set was dedicated to the seven principal shrines of Hie (KT 5: 333–40). Saigyō towards the end of his life dedicated two compilations of his poems, *Mimosusogawa uta-awase* and *Miyagawa uta-awase* to the Inner and Outer Shrines of Ise.

25. For further discussion of the poetry/*dharani* identification, see "Waka soku daranikan no tenkai" 和歌即陀羅尼觀の展開 (YAMADA 1989, 101–108).

## THE GOLDEN LAND OF BUDDHA

The landscape of Hie in the *mandara* is filled with a gentle glowing light, but unlike many examples of *Kasuga mandara*, no moon (or sun) is depicted. Instead of an obvious light source in the natural world, the land of Hie itself seems to emit a golden light. Viewers are reminded of the ancient belief that the sacred rock on Mount Hachiōji was venerated as the golden rock. The use of gold pigment in some areas of mist and ground in this image precedes the abundant use of stylized golden clouds in Momoyama screens. The harsh scalloped-edged clouds commonly used in the Momoyama period (1573–1615) act as a decorative device to frame the composition or to hide spatial ambiguity, and to provide vignettes for separate scenes. In sharp contrast to the Momoyama-style's delineation of clouds, the golden mist and ground in the *mandara* effortlessly blends into the landscape. Gold is used as one of the colors, and infuses the landscape with a gentle glow, enhancing the precious nature of the location. Metallic pigments such as gold and mica were abundantly employed also in many examples of *Kasuga mandara* to embellish the shrine approach. Painting the shrine ground with precious pigment, which creates an ethereal effect, seems to contradict the idea of a realistic depiction of the shrine landscape, but the shimmering landscape conveyed to viewers the symbolic significance of the location.

The significance of a golden land is evident in Buddhist art, especially in the belief in Amida Buddha. The abode of Amida, the Western Paradise, was described in the *Amida-kyō* (*Sukhavatīvyūha sūtra*) as a magnificent land of golden ground, filled with jewelled trees, towers, lotus flowers, and ponds (MORI 1959, 72). Copies of the *Taima mandara* reproduced in the Kamakura period are richly ornamented with gold pigment and *kirigane* (cut gold) decoration, which symbolized the transcendental status of the Pure Land beside the decorative effect. Just as the body of Buddha was characterized by his golden complexion, the ideal of the Pure Land was the land illuminated with shimmering light. The identification of shrine landscape with Buddhist paradise naturally encouraged artists to embellish the painting in the manner of *shōgon* 莊嚴, the Buddhist concept of adorning the icon in the best possible way. The generous use of gold pigment seen in the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* suggests the interpretation of the Hie Shrine complex as the Pure Land on this earth. The extraordinary quality invested in the landscape as the notion of Pure Land on this earth is expressed in the term *jōjakkōdo* 常寂光土, literally “the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light”, which signified one of the Four Buddha Lands in the Tendai theory proposed by Zhiyi, and defined as a kind of generic Pure Land where all buddhas reside.

The use of metallic pigment such as silver and mica as well as gold in landscapes characterized the shrine-related *mandara*, and distinguishes them from the secular paintings in the Kamakura period. The shimmering shrine approach

in the center of the malachite green landscape seen in the representative example of *Kasuga mandara* (dated 1300, now in the Yugi Art Institute) clearly indicates that the association of gold with sacredness was a part of an established visual language. The trace of gold, though very much worn, is also visible on the rocky cliff depicted in the famous painting of the Nachi waterfall 那智瀧図, now in the Nezu Institute of Art, Tokyo. This awesome 130-meter-high waterfall in the Kumano region was venerated as the *shintai* from the ancient times, just as Mount Hachiōji at Hie was regarded as the “body of kami.” The simple painting of the waterfall may, at first, give an impression of a pure landscape, but the larger than life moon and the cliff embellished in gold indicate that the image was an icon for the Kumano cult. Therefore the gold pigment used for the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* symbolized the idea of the buddha land filled with an ethereal light, and conveyed the sacredness of the shrine landscape in visible terms.

An example of textual reference to the projection of the Buddhist land onto the physical geography of the Hie Shrine appears in the *Sanke yōryakki*, which clearly identifies the sacred mountain with the *jōjakkōdo* (STR, 348).<sup>26</sup> This positive affirmation of the phenomenal world as the Buddha land within the framework of *honji suijaku* reflected the Tendai philosophy of *hongaku shisō* 本覚思想 (the theory of original enlightenment), which encouraged the shift in emphasis on “the role of kami within esoteric Buddhist discourse” (TEUWEN 2000, 96). By the time the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* was created in the fourteenth century, Japanese kami had become increasingly elevated as the “embodiment of universal enlightenment” in the climate of the *han honji suijaku* theory. The positive affirmation of this earthly realm and the acknowledgement of the Buddha nature in every sentient being down to the trees and grass is certainly expressed in the words of *Sannō wasan* 和賛, a colloquial verse explicating the teaching of sutras:

谷より流るる春の水、峰より下す秋の風  
一切衆生ことごとく、仏性ありとぞ唱えける  
叢茂る草木も、毘盧の身土に異ならず  
険暈る巖石も、常寂光土に隔たりなし

Flowing water in the spring valley,  
sweeping wind in the autumn mountain,  
chant to us

“all living things possess Buddha nature.”

Flourishing trees and grass are  
none other than the body of Vairocana;  
steep cliff and rocks are  
none other than the True Land of Eternally Tranquil Light.

26. The identification of the Buddhist Pure Land with shrine landscapes, *shatō jōdo kan* 社頭浄土観, is further discussed in relation to Kasuga by GYŌTOKU (1996, 31–36).

(TAKEISHI 1976, 145)

It has been suggested that this *wasan* was recited in front of the *mandara* by participants in the Hie Sannō cult ritual (GYŌTOKU 1996, 33). The similarity of the *wasan*'s words and the Tendai philosophy of *sansen sōmoku shikkai jōbutsu* 山川草木悉皆成仏 (mountains and rivers, trees and grass, all can attain Buddhahood) certainly are compatible, and the identification of trees and grass with the body of Vairocana reflects the influence of the *hongaku shisō*, which placed a strong focus on the universal Buddha Dainichi (Vairocana). By the mid fourteenth century, there were Tendai monk scholars, such as Kōshū, the author of *Keiran shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 who identified the kami of Hie, and indeed all kami (*shinmei* 神明), with Dainichi (TEEUWEN 2000, 96). However, the origin and the date of such *wasan* are extremely difficult to trace, and moreover the words of the *wasan* do not specifically make reference to Hie. It is applicable to any location, evincing that the idea of shrine landscape as *jōjakkōdo* was a pervasive development in medieval religiosity.

## FUNCTION OF MIYA MANDARA

As already noted in the Kujo Kanezane's diary, the painting of Kasuga Shrine was used in a ritual, during which the *Heart Sutra* was chanted. In another early textual reference, almost contemporary to Kanezane's remark, Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241) gives valuable information about the ritual function of the painting of the sacred image of the Hie Shrine. In an entry for the fourth day of the eighth month in the tenth year of Kenkyū 建久 (1199), he recorded in his diary *Meigetsuki* (The record of the bright moon):

I left the capital for Hie around the time of the evening bell.... After visiting the various shrines, I joined to attend the service. The ritual space was made in the south-east corner of the prayer hall in front of the Jūzenji Shrine by hanging shades and placing screens. The leading monk sat in the south side and the two monks responding sat in the north.

A mirror with ten sacred images [*mishōtai*] welded on and a Buddhist hanging scroll with images of twelve *mishōtai* were displayed. Copies of *Jizō Darani-kyō* and offerings of flowers were placed on two temporary stands.

(FUJIWARA Teika 1911, 107)

The description indicates that although the ritual took place at the shrine, the service was conducted by Buddhist monks. Teika's description, "a Buddhist hanging scroll with images of twelve *mishōtai*" indicates that the painting was a *honjibutsu mandara* that depicted the kami in the form of Buddhist *honji*. The surviving examples of *Hie Sannō honjibutsu mandara* include varied number of deities, as seen in the example from the Tokyo National Museum which depicts eleven Buddhist deities, or in the example from the Enryakuji with nine deities.

The number twelve mentioned by Teika most likely included the images of *honji* of the Upper Seven Shrines, two usual guardian deities (Fudō 不動 and Bishamon 毘沙門天), and three other *honji* figures.

The Buddhist nature of rituals conducted at the Hie Shrine can also be observed from a scene in the *Hōnen shōnin eden* 法然上人絵伝 (c. 1307) which shows the monks of the Enryakuji participating in the ritual. The illustration provides a valuable visual record of rituals held inside the *haiden* in front of one of the Hie Shrine. Although no painting is depicted in this particular scene, Teika's description suggests that a *honjibutsu mandara* was used on a similar occasion. While the *honjibutsu* and *suijaku mandara* placed the emphasis on the anthropomorphic images of deities, *miya mandara* was fundamentally different in character because of its definite focus on landscape. The distinctive subject matter naturally indicates a different purpose, and it has been suggested in the past that the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* was "in regular use as an instructional tool, as was the *Taima mandara*" (CUNNINGHAM 1998, 164). Certainly the easy-to-understand organization of the twenty-one Buddhist deities (*honji*) and the kami (*suijaku*) indicates the didactic possibility, yet no textual reference or visual record for the performance of popular *etoki* 絵解き (picture explication performance) remains in relation to the Hie Sannō belief. No example of *Sankei mandara* 参詣曼荼羅 (pilgrimage *mandara*) intended to educate the lay community, exists either in relation to Hie Sannō, which suggests that the rituals involving images such as the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* took place within the exclusive community on Mount Hiei and were not intended for the general public.<sup>27</sup>

The strong Buddhist connection of the *mandara* is evident in the inscription already mentioned, which states that the dedication ceremony of the painting was conducted by a monk of the Nichirin'in on Mount Hiei. The owner of the *mandara* can be traced in the early-Edo-period writing of the monk Gokan 豪観, *Hie Sannō Gongen chishinki* 日吉山王権現知新記, which includes a set of iconographical drawings of the twenty-one kami of Hie that match exactly the images of *suijaku* figures in the *mandara*.<sup>28</sup> Gokan states that the drawings were copied from a *mandara* in the possession of the monk Genkaku 嚴覚 of the Keitō'in 鷄頭院 in the Yokawa area of Mount Hiei, and he also transcribed the inscription on the back of the painting that is identical to the one on the Nara *Sannō miya mandara*. This no doubt indicates that Genkaku's *mandara* and the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* were one and the same. A strong Buddhist connection is also clear in the design of painted borders which incorporate motifs of

27. In contrast to the lack of records for Hie, various visual evidence survives for the *etoki* practice by itinerant nuns in relation to the Kumano cult (KAMINISHI 2006, 137–64).

28. The *Hie Sannō Gongen Chishinki* contains three separate sets of iconographical drawings, indicating that there were some variations to the images of kami, particularly those of the Lower Seven Shrines (STJ: 478–504).



esoteric Buddhist ritual instruments, and suggests that the *mandara* was used by Buddhist monks in rituals involving the worship of Sannō.

The worship of the kami Sannō was fully integrated into the monastic life on Mount Hiei, as evinced in the case of Tendai *zasu* 座主 (abbot) Jien who dedicated his poems to the Hie Shrine. Earlier still, the monk Sōō 相応 (831–919), the founder of the *kaihōgyō* 回峰行 ascetic practice, was well known for his devotion to Sannō. The route of the punishing training of *kaihōgyō* encompassed the three areas of Mount Hiei (Tōtō, Saitō, Yokawa) as well as the Hie Shrine, and the practitioners paid respect not only to the main Buddhist halls but to numerous sacred landmarks associated with the kami such as trees, rocks, springs, and shrines. For the practitioners of the *kaihōgyō*, the physical movement in the geography was analogous to the mental progress towards enlightenment. By the fourteenth century, the *kaihōgyō* was a well established practice at the institutional level with several groups each based in various areas of Mount Hiei. The development of simplified version of pilgrimage focusing exclusively on the Hie Shrine complex was initiated by the members of the *Sannō kō* 山王講, a confraternity of monks and local shrine workers (*jinin* 神人) from around the fourteenth century. The so-called “secret pilgrimage” (*himitsu shasan* 秘密社參) seems to have flourished during the following centuries (SAGAI 1979, 27). The distinctive characteristics of the *Sannō kō* were, as the word confraternity suggests, exclusive group activities such as the secret pilgrimage which took place at night. The participants, in white identical attires, would walk in silence, led by a leader through the dark shrine complex, holding torches, experiencing the mysterious spiritual energy. The white attires symbolized death, suggesting that the pilgrimage was a symbolic journey to the Buddha-land in the afterlife.<sup>29</sup> The route of the secret pilgrimage and locations of stops are well documented by participants in instructional manuals, such as the *Hie gyōdōki* 日吉行道記 [A record of training route at Hie] (STJ: 285), and the *Hie Sannō sansha shidai*, indicating clearly the nature of pilgrimage which combined the worship of kami with Buddhist practices.

Other activities of the *kō* members are recorded in the Edo-period manuscript *Hie gosairei no shidai* 日吉御祭礼次第 [The procedures of the Sannō festivals], which provides valuable hints about the function of *mandara* in connection to the ritual practice of the *kō*. According to this text, the *kō* was organized from six separate groups, each with own elders (*rō* 老), and “since long ago” they held regular meeting in the first, fifth, and ninth month in their own meeting place where they hung an antique sacred painting of Sannō Gongen and recited the *Heart Sutra* (STJ: 223–37). As the activities of the *kō* members such as the secret pilgrimage were closely connected to the landscape of Hie, an

29. Visual evidence, such as the depictions of pilgrims in the *Kumano mandara* and the *Fuji mandara*, indicate that it was customary for pilgrims to wear white, suggesting that the pilgrimage was interpreted as their journey to the Buddha land after death.

image of the shrine complex such as the Nara *Sannō miya mandara* would have served as a perfect icon.

### Conclusion

The identification of shrine landscape with the Buddhist Pure Lands in medieval Japan can be confirmed from abundant textual sources, and the surviving examples of shrine *mandara* offer visual testimony to the way medieval artists strived to overcome the difficulty of depicting the invisible world of sacredness. *Miya mandara* are often described as *jikkei*, a “real” scene, as if the artist’s primary concern was the physical likeness, but the luminous landscape of Hie aimed to convey the ideology that identified the abode of kami with Buddhist *jōjakkōdo*. The Buddhist concept of *shōgon* (to embellish the icon with precious materials) was clearly a major motivation behind the depiction of the golden landscapes. These *mandara* were originally a product of the theory of *honji suijaku* which reflected the interpretation of kami as the manifestations of the Indian deities in Japan from the Buddhist perspective. I would suggest, however, that the true driving force behind the proliferation of shrine-related *mandara* around the beginning of the fourteenth century was the development of the theory of *han honji suijaku*, which prompted the reversal of the kami-buddha hierarchy and promoted instead the active role of kami in the Buddhist view of the phenomenal world. The notion of Japan as “the land of kami” ensured the flourishing of Buddhism in the age of *mappō*.

The shrine-related *mandara* were categorized in the past using the term *Shintō mandara*, which invited confusing assumptions that they were employed in rituals at shrines in the context of “Shinto.” In this essay I have drawn upon examples of textual and visual sources to stress the Buddhist context in which the worship of kami took place in the medieval period. The Nara *Sannō miya mandara* provides a case study of the visual representation that reflected the complex shift in kami-buddha relationship, and epitomizes the theoretical and cultural conditions that formed the concept of sacred landscape in medieval Japan.

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- RT *Ryōjin hishō* 梁塵秘抄, ed. Sasaki Nobutsuna 佐々木信綱. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995.
- STJ *Shinto taikai* 神道体系, *Jinja-hen* 神社編 29, Hie 日吉. Tokyo: Shinto Taikai Hensankai, 1983.

- STR *Shinto taikei, Ronsetsu-hen* 論説編 4, Tendai Shinto 天台神道. Tokyo: Shinto Taikei Hensankai, 1993.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡邊海旭, vol. 76. Tokyo: Issaikyō Kankōkai and Daizō Shuppan, 1990.

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