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Saimon Recitations

Two Examples from Oku Mikawa

Saimon are recitations read as part of Onmyōdō or Shugendo rituals. They are of particular interest because their contents are not based on canonical Buddhist or Shinto lore but rather on sources of yin-yang divination like the fourteenth-century *Hoki naiden*. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *saimon* became a central feature of village ritual, both in collective village festivals and in household rites, and as such, they reached the ears of many. This article offers annotated translations of two *saimon* that were used by village ritualists (*tayū*, *negi*) in small mountain settlements in Oku Mikawa (Aichi Prefecture). These translations are based on manuscripts from *tayū* archives and date from the seventeenth century. A textual analysis demonstrates that while these two *saimon* tell the stories of different deities, they display a number of shared motifs and traits. I argue that these commonalities reflect the continued relevance and performance of *saimon* in Oku Mikawa and confound attempts to draw clear historical boundaries between "medieval" and "early modern" religion.

keywords: *saimon*—*hanamatsuri*—*kagura*—Gozu Tennō—*Hoki naiden*—Onmyōdō

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In an edited volume titled *Kagura to saimon no chūsei*, Saitō Hideki and Inoue Takahiro (2016) argue that ritual texts (*saimon* 祭文) recited by folk ritualists around Japan offer a unique window on a world of beliefs that they describe as "medieval." Texts of this kind, which are found in village rituals across the country, revolve around deities that once occupied a prominent place in village life but have since fallen from grace in the process of modernization: the likes of Gozu Tennō 牛頭天王, Daidokujin 大土公神, and Kōjin 荒神. Narratives about these deities have no basis in the classical court chronicles *Kojiki* 古事記 and *Nihon shoki*, nor do they rely on the Buddhist canon; rather, they draw on texts and tales from Onmyōdō 陰陽道, Shugendo, and folk traditions.

The process of marginalizing these deities and their lore had already begun in the nineteenth century, as Kokugaku activists associated with the school of Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843) rewrote *saimon* at multiple sites. The "clarification of buddhas and kami" initiated by the new Meiji government in 1868 intensified this trend. Gozu Tennō was explicitly mentioned in a ban (issued in the third month of that year) against the use of Buddhist names at Shinto shrines, and both Shugendo and Onmyōdō practices were prohibited in 1872. In these years, there were many attempts to reform festivals and strip them of "syncretic" and "superstitious" elements. Gozu Tennō became Susanoo, and traditional *kagura* 神楽 dances were replaced with newly designed ones, typically featuring *kami* like Amaterasu and Susanoo rather than the likes of Gozu Tennō, Daidokujin, and Kōjin. In this process, some *saimon* were rewritten, but most were simply abandoned. At best, they survived in the archives of village ritualists, gathering dust in lofts, outhouses, and forgotten cupboards.

Village *saimon* already attracted the attention of folklorists in the 1920s. An early example of their collection is the *saimon* texts included by Hayakawa Kōtarō (1930a; 1930b) in his study of the *hanamatsuri* 花祭り festivals, performed in the region of Oku Mikawa. Yet, Hayakawa made little use of these *saimon* in his analysis of the festivals that he describes. This may be due in part to the influence of his mentor, Orikuchi Shinobu. Hayakawa and Orikuchi first observed a *hanamatsuri* festival together in 1926. To Orikuchi, the festival appeared as a truly archaic rite with roots in the primeval practices of ancient "mountain men." Yet he also noticed many recent elements, which in his view detracted from the festival's value as an authentic relic of ancient Japanese culture. In particular, he was dismayed to find influences from Onmyōdō and Shugendo lore. The performers he spoke to insisted on explaining their actions by referring to

what Orikuchi described as "obnoxious" theories of obvious Onmyōdō origin (Orikuchi 1930, 22). The *saimon* appeared to Orikuchi as an inauthentic overlay that frustrated his attempts to reconstruct the *hanamatsuri*'s older essence.

This kind of dismissal of "medieval syncretism" as a deplorable corruption of ancient traditions remained commonplace until the 1980s. It was only in that decade that both "Buddhist Shinto" and Onmyōdō became objects of serious study.[1] Around the same time, scholars of folklore became interested in *saimon* as a central ingredient of rural traditions of *kagura* deity dances. A pioneer in this respect was Iwata Masaru (1983; 1990), who actively used *saimon* in his study of the *kagura* traditions of the Hiba district in the inner reaches of Hiroshima Prefecture. Yamamoto Hiroko (1993; 1998b) was the first to analyze *saimon* as sources of a lost "medieval mythology." Her focus was primarily on the *saimon* of Oku Mikawa's *hanamatsuri*, which had been all but ignored by scholars since Hayakawa's publication in 1930.

Inspired by these studies, Saitō and Inoue's *Kagura to saimon no chūsei* expands the study of *saimon* as a hitherto neglected window into a "medieval worldview." Saitō lists three distinct features of this worldview. He points out that it mixes local and Buddhist divinities; displays a cosmology that stretches across the "three lands" of India, China, and Japan; and gives center stage to what Yamamoto (1998a) calls "strange deities" (*ijin* 異神): gods who, like Gozu Tennō, Daidokujin, and Kōjin, are characterized by their non-canonical status, their tendency to behave in violent ways, and their supreme powers to both protect and punish (Saitō and Inoue 2016, 18). Whereas Orikuchi sought traces of pre-medieval, ancient practices, Saitō and Inoue argue that *saimon* can shed light on medieval beliefs that they regard as the original core of *kagura*.

Kagura has a prehistory in the ancient period, as attested by the myth of Ame no Uzume's dance in front of the Rock Cave of Heaven and a classical history at court (notably in the form of the eleventh-century *mikagura* 御神楽). We also know of the existence of medieval *kagura* traditions at Kumano, Ise, and other influential shrines and temples. Village *kagura* seem to have emerged in the fifteenth century and spread across a wide area, from Kyushu to Tohoku, in the sixteenth century. However, most sources documenting their proceedings date from the seventeenth century and later. This also includes *saimon* documents, which as performative texts were subject to much wear and tear. Faced with a paucity of sources on early village *kagura*, Saitō and Inoue (2016, 4) argue that close readings of almost exclusively early modern *saimon* documents are the only way to rediscover their medieval roots.

1. Itō (1980) and Maruyama (1981) were particularly important in the establishment of these new fields of study.

Outside of Japanese scholarship, *saimon* have so far received very little attention. The exceptions are a handful of articles on the use of *saimon* in the Izanagi-ryū tradition in Kōchi Prefecture (Mauclaire 1992; 1994; 1996; 2012; Umeno 2012). This article introduces the reader to the *saimon* genre through two examples from the Oku Mikawa region. The selected *saimon* focus on Gozu Tennō and Daidokujin. This article aims to present these *saimon* in annotated translations and to reflect on the ways in which these texts were used in the setting where the translated manuscripts were produced: Oku Mikawa villages in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While these *saimon* may contain "medieval" elements, we cannot be content with merely assuming that their usage throughout the Edo period was a result of ritual inertia. In Oku Mikawa, generations of *tayū* 太夫 copied, learned, and recited these long and complex texts and chose to use them in a variety of ritual settings. They did so not for historical reasons, but because these *saimon* appeared relevant to their purposes and their circumstances. The concerns that these ritual texts intended to address, such as warding off illness and avoid divine punishment, are perennial. I argue that the continued relevance of *saimon* in Oku Mikawa must make us think twice before we label and interpret them as "medieval" rather than "early modern."

What are Saimon?

Before introducing the two *saimon* from Oku Mikawa that are the main focus of this article, it is useful to take a closer look at the history of *saimon* as a textual genre. In Chinese, this word (read *jiwen*) referred primarily to obituary eulogies, written in either prose or verse. In Japan, it first appeared in the court history *Shoku Nihongi* (16, 393), referring to a text in refined Chinese and composed in 787 for recitation at an equally Chinese ritual for worshiping heaven. The term was not widely used in Buddhist contexts. It overlapped partly with the Buddhist *hyōbyaku* 表白, a liturgical text chanted at the beginning of a ritual to make its intentions explicit. Even more similar are *kōshiki* 講式, a genre of chanted texts that praise an object of veneration and explain its legends and meaning in Japanese, rather than scholarly Chinese (Ambros 2016). In *jingi* 神祇 rituals, an equivalent term was *norito* 祝詞, a recited text in archaic Japanese that addresses the gods directly and appeals to them to fulfill the wishes of the ritual's sponsors.

In Japan, *saimon* first developed into a distinct genre in the context of Onmyōdō rituals. An example is *Honmyō saimon* 本命祭文, written for rites performed on days with the same zodiac signs as the birthday of the ritual's sponsor (Umeda 2016, 48). At court, texts of this nature were written by specialists of the Chinese classics (mostly members of the Sugawara 菅原 family), and they were preferably recited by Onmyōdō ritualists of the Abe 安倍 and Kamo 賀茂

families.[2] *Saimon* were collected for later reference in such works as the fifteenth-century *Shosaimon kojitsu shō* 諸祭文故実抄 and the sixteenth-century *Saimon burui* 祭文部類. The latter, associated with the Tsuchimikado 土御門 house (the court lineage specializing in Onmyōdō knowledge), included *saimon* directed at Kōjin 荒神 and Dokō 土公 (Dokū, Dokujin, later also Daidokujin), deities who would later play central roles in village *kagura*. Perhaps more than *hyōbyaku* and *norito*, these *saimon* were designed to have a direct thaumaturgical effect on the gods that they address.[3] *Saimon* typically seek to charm the gods, threaten them, send them away from the village and back to their "original palace" (*hongū* 本宮), or remind them of vows or promises that they have made in the distant past.

While classical *saimon* at court tended to be brief statements, medieval *saimon* came to include a rich narrative content, perhaps inspired by a felt need to tell villagers about the powers of the invoked deities. The *saimon* translated and discussed here both draw heavily on what was perhaps the most ubiquitous work of this genre: the *Hoki naiden*. This text combines assorted calendrical and astrological knowledge with tales about Gozu Tennō, the deity of the Gionsha 祇園社 (today's Yasaka Jinja 八坂神社 in Kyoto), among others. It is believed that different sections of this work derive from distinct milieus in Kyoto, combined into a single text only later. As a result, the text is loosely organized and remained fluid at least until its first printing in the early seventeenth century. Its popularity is attested by a variety of commentaries (among which *Hoki shō* 簠簋抄 was the most influential), which added even more dramatic tales to the already dazzling lore in the original.[4]

From the sixteenth century onward, the practice of reciting *saimon* was adopted by local ritualists across Japan, notably in rural areas. It was during this period that Shugendo practitioners (*shugenja* 修験者) settled in villages in considerable numbers, due both to a decline of traditional Shugendo centers like Kumano and to an increasing demand among villagers for communal and household rites. Their descendants continued to take pride in their *shugenja* ancestry, but soon evolved into local village ritualists, known as *tayū* (or *dayū*), *hōsha* (or *hosa*) 法者, *negi* 禰宜, and other terms. They used their Buddhist and Onmyōdō expertise to cater to this demand, while adapting performing arts

2. Onmyōdō rites like *kudoku hō* 供土公法 (presenting offerings to Dokū) had already become part of Buddhist practices in the tenth century. Buddhist monks also came to recite *saimon* in rites directed at the stars of the Big Dipper, the Pole Star, and the "deities of the earth" (*chijin* 地神). See Saitō and Inoue (2016, 27), which refers to *Chōya gunsai* 朝野群載 (ca. 1141) as a source of such *saimon*.

3. Iwata Masaru (1990, 182), however, argues that *norito* were also originally used as tools to "force" the gods to subject themselves to the will of the ritualist.

4. Nakamura Shōhachi (2000, 223–329) gives an overview of different versions of the *Hoki naiden* and collates all versions into a single annotated text.

from larger centers to local circumstances. Masked and unmasked dances, offerings of sacralized hot water (*yudate* 湯立), and the manipulation of the spirits of the dead and other roaming spirits were central to their repertoire.

The *saimon* that were read as part of these rituals are long and colorful. They tend to start with origins, at times turning into thrilling fairy tales or collapsing into inscrutable technical jargon. Writing about the *tayū* of Izanagiryū, Umeno Mitsuoki (2008, 153) proposes that they used *saimon* to "build a ritual world through words." When a sacred space is created, the objects used in the ritual are empowered one by one with the help of *saimon* that describe where they originated—often in India—and how they made their way to Japan. Deities and spirits are called upon to listen and treated to long tales about their birth and their exploits, while reminding them of their relationship to the *tayū* and his clients. Deities were said to enjoy hearing these tales. Reciting a deity's *saimon* made it receptive to the ritual procedures and prayers of the sponsor, presented to it by the *tayū*. From another perspective, the *saimon* also helped the people present to grasp the logic of the ritual, the potency of the implements, the character of the deities involved, and the powers of the ritualist.

Saimon, then, were designed to engross their divine and human audiences in grand tales full of striking images, exotic locations, and dramatic events. They often painted on a canvas of cosmic dimensions, starting the narrative with the very origins of our world and stretching across India, China, and Japan, or even across the entire Buddhist universe. We hear of kings and dragons, battles and ghostly armies, magical treasures and supernatural powers. There are endless lists of outlandish names, punctuated by dizzyingly large numbers. In Hiroshima's Hiba district, and other places as well, *saimon* functioned as playscripts for costumed *kagura* dances, while in Kōchi's Izanagiryū, and also in Oku Mikawa, they were recited on their own or as an accompaniment to rites or dances that did not act out the *saimon* tale.

Hanamatsuri

This article discusses two *saimon* from Oku Mikawa, home to the famous festival of *hanamatsuri*, a form of end-of-year *kagura* (*shimotsuki kagura* 霜月神楽) performed in villages in the municipalities of Toyone, Tōei, and Shitara. *Hanamatsuri* centers on dances performed around a hearth and a cauldron filled with water. The proceedings are led by a priest who is titled *tayū* or *negi*. After the priest has invited all the gods of the realm to the dancing site, which is elaborately decorated with five-colored paper cuttings,[5] dancers of all ages circle the hearth to the rhythm of a drum and flutes. The dances, which continue through-

5. Some villages changed to white paper to match Meiji-period Shinto ritual language.

out the night and into the morning, are interrupted by appearances of masked demons (*oni* 鬼). There are also various intermezzos, including comic relief by clown-like figures and a concluding lion dance (*shishimai* 獅子舞). The festival reaches its climax when hot water from the cauldron is splashed over the participants, soaking them in divine blessings.

Hanamatsuri is thought to have originated in the first decades of the seventeenth century as a simplified version of an even larger festival, known simply as *kagura* or (later) *ōkagura* 大神楽.[6] This festival was led by local *shugenja* and their descendants (the *tayū* or *negi*) at irregular intervals by multiple cooperating villages from the area. It lasted three or more days, culminating in two central events called *umare kiyomari* 生まれ清まり (birth and purification) and *Jōdo iri* 浄土入り (entering the Pure Land). The former transformed children and youngsters into *kamiko* 神子 or *kango* 神護, "children of the gods" who enjoy divine protection against illness and other calamities. *Jōdo iri* secured participants safe entry into Amida's Western Pure Land after death. *Ōkagura* was last performed in 1856; the earliest source attesting to its existence is a list of the ninety-nine rites that made up its procedures, dated 1581 (or possibly 1573).[7]

This earliest source, titled *Mikagura nikki* 御神楽日記, is part of the archive of the Sakakibara 榊原 house of Yamauchi, located in present-day Toyone. Yamauchi was a hamlet of a mere handful of households, subsisting by cultivating swiddens and marginal dry fields, in addition to gathering and hunting; in this, it was similar to all other settlements in the area. The oldest of these settlements appears to have been Sogawa, ten kilometers further south; today, this village lies on the bottom of the New Toyone reservoir. From the fourteenth century onward, the valleys in this remote area served as a hideaway for warriors down on their luck. While the area was far away from anywhere else, it was not completely isolated. The nearby Tenryū River served as a route between the coast in the south and Suwa in the north. This route was frequented by *shugenja* traveling between Kumano or Ise and Suwa. The significance of this is clear from the existence of multiple Kumano and Suwa shrines in the region. It seems likely that *shugenja* had already settled in places like Sogawa by the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.[8]

According to Toyone's register of historical documents, the Sakakibara archive contains no less than 175 documents "related to *saimon*." The Moriya 守屋 of Sogawa had a similar archive, and the priests of neighboring villages, too, had

6. For an introduction in English, see Lee (2006).

7. The date reads Tenshō 天正 1 (1573) or 9 (1581) (Toyonemura Kyōiku Iinkai 1985, 69).

8. The *shugenja* Manzōin 万蔵院 and his disciple Rinzōin 林蔵院 are said to have (re)designed and spread *hanamatsuri*. However, their graves date their deaths to 1703 and 1766. These ascetics (with *ajari* 阿闍梨 and *hōin* 法印 ranks) may have been descendants of local *shugenja* (Takei 1977, 203, n. 20). The Moriya house traces its ancestors to Rinzōin.

large caches of documents, including *saimon* of many kinds. By the last decades of the sixteenth century, *kagura* performances had spread southwards and westwards into what is today Tōei and Shitara; here, too, *tayū* houses have preserved large collections of documents, including numerous *saimon*.[9] Some of these are directly related to *hanamatsuri* or *ōkagura*, designed to be read as part of the proceedings—although this is rarely indicated in the documents themselves. Others, however, are not. After all, the *tayū* priests were involved in rituals of all kinds, including exorcisms, divination, healing rites, and much more. The existence of these large caches of *saimon* documents leaves little doubt that reciting such texts was an important aspect of the ritual activities of the region's *tayū*.

The two *saimon* translated and annotated at the end of this article are particularly well-suited to showcase the mixture of esoteric Buddhist and Onmyōdō lore that characterizes recitations of this kind. They are of interest also because they were among the first to have been collected and published by Japanese folklorists. These texts continue to play a prominent role in the emerging field of *saimon* studies. Below, I analyze them one by one and then discuss the striking communalities between them. I then reflect on their function within local rituals, as well as their influence on local beliefs and practices.

On Gozu Tennō shimawatari saimon

The *Gozu Tennō shimawatari saimon* (hereafter *Shimawatari saimon*) offers an extended version of the legend of Gozu Tennō, the Ox-Headed Deva King who brings illness to his enemies while sparing his friends. It clearly draws on texts about Gozu Tennō from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, notably the Onmyōdō work *Hoki naiden* and a variety of much shorter *Gozu Tennō engi* 牛頭天王縁起, known in many variants from the fifteenth century onward.[10] While details differ, all these texts share the same overall plot, which goes as follows.

Gozu Tennō, King Mutō's son from the land of Bunyō, has trouble finding a bride. He is visited by a bird that tells him about Harisainyo, the third daughter of the Dragon King Shagara. Gozu Tennō departs, accompanied by a large retinue, to ask for her hand. When night falls, he seeks lodging in the palace of the demon king Kotan Daiō (or Kotan Chōja), but he is abused at the gate and turned away. Gozu Tennō then finds the hovel of Somin Shōrai, who is poor but

9. The two *tayū* houses in the hamlet of Kobayashi (Tōei), for example, preserve 191 and 145 "religious documents"; the oldest date to the late sixteenth century (Matsuyama 2015, 655–656).

10. A version of this text (with a good number of printing errors) titled *Gion Gozu Tennō engi* is included in *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, vol. 55. For collections of different versions, see Nishida (1962; 1963a; 1963b). Suzuki (2019) discusses both the *Hoki naiden* and one version of *Gozu Tennō engi* in detail. For a broader overview of Gozu Tennō lore and related practices, see Faure (2021, 107–149).

nevertheless accommodates him and gives him a humble meal of millet. Resuming his travels, Gozu Tennō soon reaches the Dragon Palace, where he asks the Dragon King for Harisainyo's hand. He stays here for eight years, fathering eight sons—or, in some versions, seven sons and one daughter. After eight years, he returns to Japan.

On his way home, Gozu Tennō is determined to destroy Kotan. Kotan puts up sturdy defenses. He has a thousand monks recite great spells and appeal to Taizanfukun (the lord of Mt. Taishan, who judges the dead)—or, in *Gozu Tennō engi*, chant the *Daihannya Sūtra*. However, one of the monks mixes up his chanting, leaving a breach in Kotan's fortifications. Gozu Tennō's footmen enter through this gap and kill Kotan and all in his entourage.

From here, the versions diverge more significantly. In *Hoki naiden*, Gozu Tennō makes an amulet for a girl who belongs to Somin's household, marking her as the only person in Kotan's house who must be spared. He also teaches Somin a secret spell to "subdue Kotan." Gozu Tennō cuts Kotan's corpse into five parts and teaches Somin Shōrai to pacify these by means of five rites on five calendar dates (*gosekku* 五節句); the foodstuffs offered on those days are said to correspond to Kotan's body parts. *Gozu Tennō engi* adds that Gozu Tennō's eight princes promise to protect Somin's descendants against the calendrical deities who are their alter egos, starting with Taisaijin, who is an avatar (*henge* 変化) of the first prince.

Nishida Nagao (1962) gives an overview of *Gozu Tennō engi* texts. He begins by quoting a *saimon* that, like the one translated here, calls down and honors Gozu Tennō and his eight princes. Dated 1550, it goes under the name of *kanjō saimon* 灌頂 (勧請) 祭文, a recitation that calls down certain deities for worship. Nishida notes that this *saimon* was used by Onmyōdō ritualists in the countryside west of Nara. This is one example of how Gozu Tennō's tale became part of the ritual life of villages in the form of *saimon*. In Oku Mikawa, too, there was a variety of *saimon* that drew on the Gozu Tennō narrative, in addition to the version translated here.[11]

Shimawatari saimon is based on this well-known material but stands out for its unusual handling of the plotline. Most strikingly, Gozu Tennō's journey (section 3 of the *saimon*, as indicated in the translation below) is cut loose from his quest for a wife; he merely travels there because he wants to "see the famous

11. *Ontoshitokujin saimon* 御歳徳神祭文 follows largely the same plot, though it stays closer to *Gozu Tennō engi*; here, Gozu Tennō is referred to as Daiō Tennō 大王天王 (Matsuyama 2021, 91–113, 130). On the other hand, *Gozu Tennō saimon* 牛頭天皇祭文 is built around a different narrative: Gozu Tennō searches for a "residence of happiness" in Japan, but he is rejected everywhere because no gods want to expose their people to the 404 pestilences that he brings. In the end, Amaterasu in Ise grants Gozu Tennō the provinces of Echigo, Etchū, and Sado: all far away from Mikawa (Matsuyama 2021, 114–120, 132).

Blood Pond in the Dragon Palace." It is from this pond that the eighth "prince," the female Jadokke 蛇毒気, emerges: she has been "hatched" from the afterbirths deposited there after the births of her seven brothers (section 4). When Gozu Tennō and family travel back to Japan, Jadokke appears to them in the form of a sea serpent. Gozu Tennō's acceptance of Jadokke as his eighth "prince" forms the climax of the first half of the *Shimawatari saimon*. The entire family returns to Japan, where they introduce countless illnesses, without even meeting Somin or Kotan (section 5). The tale of that meeting, ending with Gozu Tennō's annihilation of Kotan and his entourage (section 6), appears only after the tale is quite abruptly restarted, almost as an afterthought.

Another startling feature of *Shimawatari saimon* is Gozu Tennō's encounter with Śākyamuni (section 7). When Śākyamuni confronts Gozu Tennō after he had "tortured even disciples of the Buddha," Gozu Tennō presents himself as a more primordial and powerful buddha than Śākyamuni, who is a mere "human." He challenges Śākyamuni to offer his life for his followers, and when Śākyamuni accepts, he infects him with a lethal disease that soon kills him. The contrast between the merciful (but weak) Śākyamuni and the murderous (but powerful) Gozu Tennō is striking.[12] The underlying message appears to be that while Śākyamuni will give up his own life for the sake of his patrons, even he is susceptible to the terrible illnesses spread by Gozu Tennō. The tangible benefits of following Gozu Tennō (as "descendants" of Somin Shōrai) are therefore much greater.

When Gozu Tennō arrives in Japan, he settles in Tsushima, on the eastern bank of the Kiso River in Owari (west of Nagoya). This detail offers evidence of the influence of traveling dealers in prayer. The Oku Mikawa area was frequented by "pilgrim masters" (*oshi* 御師) from Tsushimasha 津島社, which is dedicated to Gozu Tennō. The influence of these *oshi* is attested by the existence in Oku Mikawa of many small Tsushima shrines dedicated to Gozu Tennō and the eight princes.[13] Copies of *Shimawatari saimon* are sometimes accompanied by ver-

12. Yamamoto (1998a, 550–551) finds a parallel to this story in a text that was sung by *biwa* 琵琶 monks, titled *Bussetsu jishin daidarani kyō* 仏説地神大陀羅尼経. According to this text, Śākyamuni's disciples fail to light the pyre after their master's death because the five Dragon Kings and the earth deity Kenrō Jishin prevent the fire from burning. Śākyamuni, waking up from death, explains that these deities protect the earth and teaches his disciples the ritual to pacify them. While this text links the gods of the earth to Śākyamuni's cremation, it does not ascribe the cause of his death to such deities, let alone allow them to brag about "defeating" Śākyamuni, as *Shimawatari saimon* does.

13. Matsuyama (2021, 89) lists ten such shrines. Hayashi (2008, 42) notes that by 1608 the Tsushima *oshi* Hotta Masasada 堀田正貞 served clients in nineteen provinces, including Mikawa. Tōeichō Shi Henshū Iinkai (2001, 545–546) includes a membership list of a Tsushima *kō* 講 (a pious association) in Kobayashi, dated 1780. Of the eighty-member association, four to six were chosen each year to make a proxy pilgrimage to Tsushima.

sions of another Tsushima text, titled *Gozu Tennō godanshiki* 牛頭天皇五段式.[14] The Sakakibara house in Yamauchi also preserves an undated *Gozu Tennō hō* 牛頭天皇法, a Shugendo-type ritual manual that ends by beseeching "the pestilence deities from Tsushima" to return to their "original palace" (Takei 1996, 208). Matsuyama Yūko (2019) finds that the Sakakibara family head received more ritual texts featuring Gozu Tennō from a Tsushima *oshi* and a fellow local *tayū* in a time when famine-induced diseases were rife. *Shimawatari saimon*, then, belongs to a larger genre of Gozu Tennō texts. Its appearance in Oku Mikawa shows that practices and beliefs around this pestilence deity were spread even to remote mountain villages from such centers as Tsushimasha in Owari and the Gionsha in Kyoto.

Takei Shōgu (1996, 203) claims that Gozu Tennō was "the most important roaming deity of the *hanamatsuri* and *ōkagura*," but in fact this deity is hardly mentioned in documents and *saimon* related to those festivals.[15] *Gozu Tennō hō* does not mention *hanamatsuri* or *ōkagura*; instead, it refers to a ritual of "prayer by the village collective" (*sōson kinen* 惣村祈念) at the beginning of the new year, in which pestilence deities were gathered up, placed in a *mikoshi*, carried to the village boundaries, and "returned to Tsushima." The *hanamatsuri* was also performed around this time of the year, but its procedures did not involve such a *mikoshi* procession. *Kamiokuri no honkai* 神送之本戒, another eighteenth-century manuscript from the Sakakibara house of Yamauchi, specifies that *Shimawatari saimon* is to be used for "prayer rites for the sick" (Matsuyama 2021, 125, 134). It would appear that this *saimon* was recited by *tayū* both at a communal ritual of expelling pestilence spirits at the beginning of the year and privately, at the sickbed of ailing villagers. *Shimawatari saimon* ends by explaining to the ritual's sponsor (*ōdanna* 大旦那) that it will dispatch the deities of disease to their original abodes, thus securing the sponsor a long and healthy life (section 9).

Daidokujin kyō

As was the case with the *Shimawatari saimon*, the *saimon* titled *Daidokujin kyō* 大土公神 is a mixture of known plots and unique twists. It begins with a long

14. The original title of this text in Tsushima is *Gozu Tennō kōshiki* 牛頭天皇講式. Matsuyama (2021, 85) introduces seven copies of *Gozu Tennō godanshiki*. All copies present the text as "a secret ritual [text] on the origin of Gozu Tennō, from Tsushima in Owari." Dated copies are from the seventeenth century onward.

15. *Shimawatari saimon* may have been part of *ama no matsuri* 天の祭り, "loft worship" at *hanamatsuri* (Saitō and Inoue 2016, 35). Such worship was conducted in front of wands in the loft above the dancing site by the *tayū* or one of the *myōdo* and then, for the duration of the festival, by a "loft watch" (*ama no ban* 天の番). However, Hoshi Yūya (2020) finds no trace of *Shimawatari saimon* in his study of *ama no matsuri*. Even if it was read there, this was done as one of many recitations, out of earshot of all but the reciter himself.

preamble about the origins of the cosmos, starting with the "time of empty space" (section 1) and ending with a lengthy exploration of Mt. Sumeru, our own continent of Jambudvīpa, and the "three lands" of India, China, and Japan (section 2). The tale of the origin of our world appears to restart multiple times, setting out with the red and white jewel and then introducing in turn the "warrior king of the twelve moons," the buddha Amida, and the giant Ikuba, whose body parts gave rise to time and space. While most of these elements can be found in various older texts, this *saimon* combines them in a unique manner. Ikuba (section 2), for example, draws on tales about a cosmic giant that have ancient Chinese roots and are known in many Japanese variants, but the name Ikuba is unique to this *saimon*.[16]

In fact, this cosmic giant is usually called Bango or Banko 盤固, a figure who enters the tale in section 3, apparently out of the blue. Bango derives ultimately from the Chinese Pangu 盤古, known from the third-century Daoist text *Sanwu liji* 三五歷紀, which also served as the main source for the section about the cosmogony in *Nihon shoki*. *Sanwu liji* describes how Pangu was born from a primordial egg, and how he started the process whereby yin and yang moved apart, separating heaven from earth. This theme was further elaborated upon in numerous texts of medieval Shinto. It can also be found in *Hoki naiden*, which renders Bango as 盤牛, linking this ancient giant to Gozu Tennō by way of the character for ox 牛 (*Hoki naiden*, 40).

In *Daidokujin kyō*, Bango appears as the primordial father who sets the "way of yin and yang" into motion by having intercourse with his wife. Their union produces four sons and one daughter, collectively called the "five princes," who are the protagonists of the rest of the narrative. The motif of the last-born daughter overlaps with *Shimawatari saimon*, where the serpent Jadokke appeared as the eighth and last "prince." In the tale of that *saimon*, however, the question of the daughter's status as a legitimate child is resolved without much conflict and Jadokke plays no major role in the narrative that follows. In *Daidokujin kyō*, in contrast, the daughter fights a bloody battle with her four brothers to claim her portion of Bango's realm, and she proves to be the most powerful of them all (section 5).

16. Ōhashi (1986, 11) proposes that Ikuba derives from Shiki Bonnō 尸棄梵王, a name of Mahābrahmā, the king of the realm of form. In a thirteenth-century text titled *Gotei ryūō kongen* 五帝龍王根源 (quoted in Iwata 1983, 158), Shiki Bonnō features as the father of the five princes. Ogawa Toyoo (2019, 145) points out the many parallels between medieval Shinto texts that feature Shiki Bonnō (for example, *Reikiki* 麗気記) and *Daidokujin kyō*. Iwata (1990, 200) proposes that the Nakashitara manuscript (Hayakawa 1930a, 441–445), which does not mention Ikuba, follows an older pattern than the versions from Misono and Komadate. Ikuba would have been added to the more traditional Bango narrative at a later date.

TABLE 1. The various associations connected to the children of Bango Daiō in *Daidokujin kyō*.

	Directions	Seasons	Colors	Soteriology	Wisdoms
Tarō	East	Spring	green/blue	aspiration	*daienkyōchi*
Jirō	South	Summer	red	practice	*byōdōshōchi*
Saburō	West	Autumn	white	enlightenment	*myōkanzacchi*
Shirō	North	Winter	black	nirvana	*jōshosachi*
Gorō	Center	Doyō	yellow	skillful means	*hokkaitaishōchi*

As the *saimon* embarks on the tale of the battle of the five "princes," the language of the narration shifts abruptly into a different genre. Short sentences that use readily understandable vocabulary make way for convoluted images brimming with Buddhist verbiage. Written in a mixture of kana and *ateji* 当て字 (characters used phonetically, without much attention to their meaning), this section is difficult to interpret even for a translator with access to databases and a library. For a villager who only had one chance to hear the recitation, it must have been impenetrable. Effective storytelling is replaced with an esoteric logic of hidden correlations, accessible only to those who are in the know. The purpose of this section is not to captivate a human audience; rather, it is to empower the space where the *saimon* is being recited by laying out a fivefold mandala. Each prince is plotted into a mandalic grid of associated directions, seasons, and colors—and, beyond those, to phases of practice and attainment, and ultimately to the "five wisdoms" (*gochi* 五智) of buddhas (TABLE 1).

These correlations, all in fives, are ubiquitous in texts of esoteric Buddhism and Shugendo. For example, one can find a paradigm that closely resembles *Daidokujin kyō* in a Kamakura text titled *Gozō mandara waeshaku* 五臓曼荼羅和会釈 analyzed by Fabio Rambelli.[17] I will not enter into the buddhological territory that supports these associations, other than to point out that there is a progression from elementary to advanced, especially in the final two categories, implying that the female Gorō no Himemiya supersedes all her brothers. As Simone MAUCLAIRE (2012, 329) states, Gorō "occupies the center of the spatiotemporal complex depicted in the mandala-like formula." Despite the fact that she is the only daughter among sons and the youngest of them all, she is clearly the most powerful, the most accomplished, and the most important among them.

17. RAMBELLI (2007, 25) mentions that the fifth wisdom is usually associated with Dainichi, *doyō* 土用, the center, and the perfection of skillful means. The list of fives can be further enlarged with many other categories (for example, the five organs).

In the end, it is Monzen Hakase who brokers peace between Gorō and her brothers by giving each of them equal portions of the calendrical year. The four brothers receive the four seasons, while Gorō is given the last eighteen days of each season, in total, seventy-two so-called "earth days" (*doyō* 土用) spread throughout the year (section 6). The tale of this "calendar war" between the five princes and Monzen's mediation has a long history. Its earliest source is a didactic text titled *Chūkōsen*, a compilation of Chinese, Indian, and animal tales from the early twelfth century (Masuo 2021; Iwata 1990, 188–189). Here, an Indian king awarded the spring months and the eastern direction to his first son Tarō, the summer months and the south to Jirō, the autumn months and the west to Saburō, and the winter months and the north to Shirō. Later, a fifth son, Gorō, was born after the king's death. Gorō demanded his part of the inheritance and fought his brothers for it. A minister called Monzen Hakase intervened, urging the four brothers to grant Gorō his fair share of seventy-two days. Gorō thanked the minister by granting his descendants amnesty from divine punishment (*Chūkōsen*, 272–274). Incidentally, the name Monzen refers to *Wen xuan* 文選, a Chinese work compiled in the 520s. Reading the highly cultivated contents of this work was regarded as a great feat of learning. Monzen Hakase, then, originally meant "master of the *Wen xuan*"; but in *Daidokujin kyō*, it has become a personal name, written 門前.

Some versions of *Hoki naiden* include a similar story line to this *saimon*.[18] Here, the five princes are the sons of Bango Daiō, as in *Daidokujin kyō*. In *Hoki naiden*, Bango and his wife produce four princes, who are granted rule over four phases (wood, fire, metal, and water) and the four seasons. Bango prepares a storehouse full of treasures destined for the fifth child, whether a daughter or a son. The fifth child turns out to be a girl, and she is named Tenmon Gyokunyo 天門玉女. She marries the earth deity Kenrō Daijishinnō 堅牢大地神王, and they have forty-eight children. When these children grow up, they desire their own domain and rebel against their uncles: the green, red, white, and black dragon kings. Tenmon Gyokunyo changes her appearance into that of a male and calls herself the yellow dragon king. For seventeen days, the battle colors the Ganges River red with blood. Monzen Hakase mediates, and it is agreed that the final eighteen days of each season will become the domain of the yellow dragon king, who hereby becomes the lord of the seventy-two *doyō* days.

This tale, in many variants, forms the core of all *saimon* related to Bango and the five dragon kings, which appeared in various regions of Japan from the

18. This tale is only found in a few versions of the *Hoki naiden*; the oldest among these are the so-called *Yōken bon* 楊憲本 (1596–1615) and a printed version from 1612. For the original text, see Nakamura (2000, 265). For analysis, see Watanabe (1988, 109–113) and Saitō (2016, 96–97).

mid-sixteenth century onwards.[19] IWATA (1983, 106–109) transcribes an even earlier example from Kami Kubokawa (a village near Hiroshima), dated 1477. The first half of this manuscript is lost, but in the remaining part, describing Monzen's mediation between the five princes, the storyline and much of the vocabulary resemble our version.

It is striking that the role of Daidokujin in these *saimon* is rarely made explicit; in *Daidokujin kyō*, Daidokujin only features in the opening address (section 1), which ends with the phrase "We ask about the original ground of Daidokujin," and once again towards the end, when Monzen and his descendants are granted immunity from Daidokujin's punishments (section 6). Iwata transcribes a *saimon* dated 1679, also from the Hiroshima region, where the five dragon kings are identified as the five earth deities (Dokujin) of the five directions;[20] our own text seems to imply the same association without stating so. Dokujin (or Daidokujin) does not feature in the tale of the warring five brothers in either *Chūkōsen* or *Hoki naiden*. Indeed, classical worship of the five dragon kings (for example, in the Shinsen'en 神泉苑 garden in Kyoto) focused on prayers for rain, rather than in the context of disturbing the soil. What linked the tale of the five dragon kings and Gorō's conquest of the *doyō* days to Dokujin was the use of this *saimon* in rites to pacify Dokujin, rather than some narrative logic.

In what contexts was this *saimon* recited in the Oku Mikawa region? In contrast to *Shimawatari saimon*, we can be quite confident that it did indeed feature in both *ōkagura* and *hanamatsuri*. In *ōkagura*, rites to pacify Daidokujin were part of the process of erecting and taking down the spaces where the festival took place: the dancing arena (*maido* 舞処) with the hearth and cauldron, and the so-called "white hill" (*shirayama* 白山), which was set up next to it for the practice called "entering the Pure Land." The main means of pacification was *henbai* 反閇 (locally called *henbe*), a series of steps performed by one or two masked figures to the accompaniment of a drum. An 1872 text, compiled as a record of the then already defunct *ōkagura*, notes that this *henbai* was accompanied by worship of Dokujin. It is likely that *Daidokujin kyō* would have been used for this purpose (HAYAKAWA 1930b, 63; YAMAZAKI 2012, 132–135).[21] This is rendered even more likely by surviving practices of *henbai* in the region, now only in the con-

19. For examples from different contexts, see KANDA (2016) on versions of this tale as recited by blind *biwa* monks in southern Kyushu and MATSUYAMA (2024) on *Dokujin saimon* used by calendar makers in seventeenth-century Nara.

20. One example is a *saimon* titled *Daidokujin saimon* 大土公神祭文 from 1679 (IWATA 1990, 115–118).

21. The 1872 record is titled *Kagura juntatsu no shidai* 神楽順達之次第 and was compiled by Suzuki Kiyohei 鈴木喜代平 (1831–1900) of Tajika (Toyone) in reaction to the dissolution and prohibition of Shugendo in 1872. This record lists the 140 component rites of *ōkagura*, adding brief explanations of their general nature.

text of *hanamatsuri*. *Henbai* is performed multiple times; the most impressive display is by one of the visiting *oni*, masked demons that interrupt the proceedings at regular intervals. The so-called *sakaki oni* 榊鬼 treads the *henbai* in five directions, while reciting the spell "Banko Daiō, Kenrō Jishin," likely in reference to *Daidokujin kyō*.[22]

A similar rite concludes the *hanamatsuri* after the dancing site has been dismantled. This rite is usually called *shizume* しずめ (pacification), but in some places *Ryūō no mai* 龍王の舞 (the dance of the dragon kings) (Iwata 1990, 203). Hayakawa (1930a, 142, 455) describes a procedure where the dancer performs a *henbai* of five steps, accompanied by the words "Banko 盤古, Daiō 大王, Kenrō 乾良, Jishin 地神, Ō 王."[23] During the *shizume*, *saimon* were recited in front of a wand (*heisoku* 幣束) dedicated to Dokujin (*Dokujin yasume* 土公神やすめ, "pacifying Dokujin"). In the late 1920s, when he carried out his fieldwork, Hayakawa found many different *saimon* in use during this rite. At some stage in the festival's history, *Daidokujin kyō* must have been one of them. As per many other *saimon*, any surviving uses of *Daidokujin kyō* fell victim to the Meiji reforms.

More generally, the five directions and the five colors are central to every step in the *hanamatsuri*. Dance choreographies are built around these directions: most dances are performed five times, once in each direction. The colors are represented in the paper hangings, in five-colored wands used as seats for deities, and much else. In *ōkagura*, the "white hill" was decorated with twelve dragons represented by wooden masks with long streamers of colored cloth (Yamazaki 2012, 155–156, 160). Clearly, the words of the *Daidokujin kyō* resonate with the dances and the design of the ritual sites in both *ōkagura* and *hanamatsuri*.

Shared Features: The Saimon in Context

Although the *saimon* used in Oku Mikawa in the seventeenth century relate to different deities and were used in different ritual settings, they display many structural and thematic similarities. Both operate on a vast scale that stands in stark contrast to the confined village communities where they were recited. Gozu Tennō and Bango Daiō are both figures of cosmic dimensions. Gozu Tennō tells Śākyamuni that his parents are the father and mother of all buddhas and that the "beings of the nine realms" are all under his command; Bango Daiō is the "lord of the land" who created all plants and crops, a mighty deity who enters the "domain of life and death" and knows the fate of every living being. Dragon kings play a major role in both *saimon*. Gozu Tennō visits the

22. This practice can be found (among other places) in Yamauchi (Yamazaki 2012, 133).

23. Hayakawa (1930a, 453–455) includes undated documents titled *Henbei no denpō* 返平之伝法 (Nakanzeki, Tōei) and *Henbai no daiji* 返焙ノ大事 (Shimotsugu, Shitara), which explain this procedure. Neither mentions *Daidokujin kyō*.

eight dragon kings and marries the daughter of one of them; Bango Daiō is the father of the five dragon kings. Then there are the "princes," who are the main protagonists of both *saimon*. Gozu Tennō has seven sons and, to his surprise, an eighth child who is a daughter. Bango Daiō has four sons, and—unbeknownst to him—a fifth child who is a daughter. Gozu Tennō fights a mighty war against his foe, Kotan Chōja, while Bango Daiō's daughter battles against her brothers. Gozu Tennō rewards his helper, Somin Shōrai, and all his descendants with immunity against the punishing diseases that Gozu Tennō visits upon those who offend him; Bango Daiō's princes give a similar reward to the descendants of Monzen Hakase, the intermediator who ended their battle (Mauclaire 2012, 318). In short, both tales relate the exploits of a violent divine king, describe an epic battle, and end with promises of protection.

An even more obvious shared characteristic of these two *saimon* is that they draw on the same source: *Hoki naiden*, that expansive compilation of apparently unrelated texts about Gozu Tennō, calendrical deities and their wanderings, methods of directional and hemerological divination, and much more. *Hoki naiden* appears to be the ultimate source of many features of these *saimon*: the cosmic scale of the narrative, the stress on controlling time and space, the exotic names and settings, and the notion of "roaming deities" (*yugyōshin* 遊行神)—notably divine kings, queens, and princes—who are the creators of our world but also bring calamities and pestilence.

The discourse shared by our two *saimon* and *Hoki naiden* can be contrasted with that of *engi monogatari* 縁起物語, Buddhist etiological tales spread by agents of the great religious centers. Caleb Carter (2022, 7) calls such tales "narratives of place," stories that imbue local places with universal meaning and localize universal truths by rooting them in the landscape. The *saimon* of Oku Mikawa's *tayū* ritualists do not attempt anything of this kind. Rather than pointing to local places as sites of salvific power, they tell of threatening forces from distant places that need to be warded off, expelled, and returned to their "original ground" (*honji*) or "original palace" (*hongū*). The gods of village shrines, the buddhas of local temples, and the deities of nearby mountains are as powerless as Śākyamuni (in *Shimawatari saimon*) when it comes to controlling these roaming deities. It is significant that the *saimon* were read not in shrines or temples where deities are enshrined, but in worldly places, be it the homes of the sick or private houses and yards, where *ōkagura* and *hanamatsuri* performances were held.

The ferocious roaming deities that feature in these two *saimon* come from exotic, unreachable places like India or the Dragon Palace in the southern seas. They have no home in the region; their "original palace" is in some faraway land. *Daidokujin kyō* in particular elaborates on the cosmological universe of these deities at great length. In the setting of a mountain hamlet, where few had traveled even as far as the coast, one imagines that tales of Mt. Sumeru, Jambudvīpa,

India, and even distant parts of Japan must have struck people as unimaginable vistas of otherworldly vastness.

A striking characteristic of both *saimon* is the motif of the youngest sibling as a girl. Rather than celebrating female power, this motif appears to reflect notions of female impurity related to menstruation and childbirth (Meeks 2020). In *Shimawatari saimon*, the eighth "prince," the female serpent from the Blood Pond in the Dragon Palace, appears as a culmination of pestiferous pollution, which is quite the opposite of that other daughter of the Dragon King Shagara, who attained the highest enlightenment.[24] In *Daidokujin kyō*, Bango Daiō and his five sons are the rulers of our world, but they also appear as manifestations of Dokū or Daidokujin, the unforgiving "lords of the soil" who strike at all who disturb the earth, including even those who build temple halls or ritual spaces like the "white hill" of *ōkagura*. Here again, the fifth and most powerful "prince" of them all, Gorō, has become female. Gorō's change of gender would have served to underline the polluting nature and liminal danger of her domain: the *doyō* days at the end of each season, when the lords of the soil are particularly vindictive.[25]

Both *saimon* had the ritual effect of transforming the reciting *tayū* into a figure of power. By voicing the knowledge contained in the *saimon*, the *tayū* entered the realm of the roaming deities and clothed himself in the authority necessary to face them. These texts tell the deities that the *tayū* knows about their world, their past, their potency, and their old promises. In *Shimawatari saimon* the *tayū* poses as Somin Shōrai, while in *Daidokujin kyō* he becomes Monzen, "the master who began saying prayers as… Ikuba Bango Daiō." He knows how to welcome the deities and has the power to bargain with them. Through the performance of their *tayū*, the inhabitants of the village become "descendants" or protégés of Somin Shōrai and Monzen and thus are spared the harsh retribution of the invading forces of the roaming deities and their retinues. In contrast, there are many less lucky places where "the descendants of Kotan Chōja will receive punishment even if they perform good works and collect merit."

In Oku Mikawa, as elsewhere, ritual texts were not primarily meant to convey doctrinal meaning to participants. Were *saimon* treated similarly to the sutras that were also chanted during *ōkagura* and *hanamatsuri*, as performative texts that no spectator was expected to even try to understand? Sections of the

24. According to *Shimawatari saimon*, Gozu Tennō's spouse was "about to reach the age of seven," while according to the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, King Shagara's daughter was eight years old when she heard Mañjuśri's preaching, became a male bodhisattva, and attained enlightenment.

25. Iwata (1990, 198) points out that Gorō takes on a female guise in versions of *Dokujin saimon* in central, eastern, and northern Japan, while he remains male in western Japan. There are, however, also (more recent) versions where the first four princes are female and only Gorō is male (Koike 2012, 249, citing an example from Wakayama).

saimon point in that direction, notably the long lists of names, the clusters of obscure jargon, and the garbled passages. While these inscrutable elements may have heightened the sense of power inherent in the *saimon*, they undermined the reciter's capacity to capture the attention of potential listeners. Moreover, in most cases the setting was hardly adducent to attentive listening. At a bedside rite, the listener might be too ill and afraid to care, and during a festival like the *hanamatsuri*, there was noise, alcohol, sleep deprivation, and plenty of distractions. Today, recitations of *saimon* during the *hanamatsuri* of Kobayashi (Tōei) are consistently drowned out by the sounds of the *taiko* drum and handheld bells.[26] Moreover, the occasions when the *Daidokujin kyō* was read—the preparation of ritual spaces before the crowds arrived and the *shizume* that was performed after the crowds had gone home—were not festival highlights.[27] This stands in contrast to other *kagura* traditions, spread from Tōhoku to Kyushu, that include dances inspired by this *saimon*, a genre Iwata (1983, 96) calls "dances of princes" (*ōji mai* 王子舞). This begs the question of whether villagers in Oku Mikawa could apprehend the general meaning of the texts—or had much of an opportunity to even catch the words—that the *tayū* chanted. It would seem that *saimon* were considered necessary and efficacious regardless of the answer to the question.

A Medieval Worldview?

In the small settlements of Oku Mikawa, agriculture was precarious, floods and landslides were frequent, and famines followed by epidemics were commonplace. Disturbing the soil was a daily occurrence, not only in the cultivation of permanent fields but also, and more dramatically, in the frequent cutting of forests for slash-and-burn agriculture. The *saimon* about roaming deities bespeak a concern with outside forces that regularly invaded the villages from an unknown beyond, threatening all kinds of violent retribution. The *hanamatsuri* festival also played on a fear of such visitations, as the *tayū* welcomes *oni* from the hills and controls their wild temper through dramatic dialogues and dramatized confrontations.[28] These *saimon* found a home in this region because they struck a chord.

26. I witnessed this on 9 November 2024. Today, most villages have done away with *saimon* altogether. In other places they have been replaced with Shinto-style *norito*.

27. In some places, such as Kobayashi, the *shizume* is performed as a secret rite behind closed doors; this seems to have been the case for most *hanamatsuri* in the past. In Kami-Kurokawa and Sakauba, *shizume* has been moved to an earlier, public section of the *hanamatsuri*, but this appears to be a recent development. It is not mentioned by Hayakawa (1930a; 1930b).

28. This is particularly evident in the questioning of the *sakaki oni*, which culminates in a pulling match between the priest and the *oni*, where the *oni* pulls at the *sakaki* branch held by the priest. He loses the match and responds by performing *henbai*.

As I note in the introduction to this article, Saitō (2016, 18) specifies his notion of "medieval" as marked by three characteristics: the merging of deities from different traditions, a worldview that stretches across "three lands" (India, China, and Japan), and a prevalence of "strange," ambivalent deities that may bring both destruction and protection. These elements are indeed central to our two *saimon*, and they can certainly be described as medieval in Saitō's sense of the term. The drawback of describing them as medieval, however, is that such a designation suggests that these *saimon* were out of place in the Edo period, surviving only as remnants of an already defunct world.[29] The narratives in our *saimon* triggered new rites and performances across Japan from the late sixteenth century onwards. Rather than declining as the world became less medieval, they gained momentum in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In most places, practices linked to these *saimon* arrived in an early modern setting, not a medieval one. They were not remnants but new impulses, innovations deliberately chosen by early modern actors.

While the *saimon* translated below clearly represent both a worldview and a set of beliefs, it is not so straightforward to identify the persons who held those beliefs. After all, the *saimon* are built around knowledge and narratives that can easily be traced to such places as Tsushima and Kyoto or (for other *saimon*) Ise, Kumano, and Suwa. We cannot automatically assume that this knowledge reflected or transformed local worldviews and beliefs. The *saimon* analyzed here diverge quite radically from versions passed down in other regions; in their specifics, they are unique. We do not know who composed *Shimawatari saimon* and *Daidokujin kyō*. After their transmission to Oku Mikawa, however, both *saimon* remained practically unchanged until they were eventually abandoned. The *tayū* made a point of reciting these texts as they were handed down to them, retaining even passages that had become corrupted and unintelligible. They did not seek to adapt them to reflect new knowledge (though the "geographical" section of *Daidokujin kyō* may be an exception) or local beliefs. Rather, the *tayū* guarded the *saimon* as snippets of elite culture to which they had privileged access, and they saw it as their task to recite them as correctly as possible.

We saw earlier that Orikuchi Shinobu treated *saimon* and their mythological world as an overlay, brought to Oku Mikawa from other places. To Orikuchi, the *saimon* were little more than a distraction, a hindrance to his quest to excavate ancient beliefs and practices from the *hanamatsuri*. Diachronically, it is unclear whether the *saimon* came first and informed some of the festival's rituals, or whether the rituals came first and the *saimon* were added later. Synchronically,

29. On this point, see also Suzuki (2021, 275–277). Suzuki, however, rejects the broad assumption that (late) medieval *saimon* remained unchanged long into the early modern period. For our two *saimon*, this assumption may well be correct.

it is not obvious to what degree the *saimon*, when they were in use, represented or influenced local beliefs. What, then, can we say with certainty about their influence? At the very least, it is obvious that *tayū* across Oku Mikawa felt that these texts were appropriate to certain settings, and this inspired them to incorporate *saimon* in their ritual repertoire. The reasons why they may have thought so are the known dangers implicit in disturbing the soil, the fear for invading roaming deities, the promise of a covenant with those deities, and, not least, the redefinition of the *tayū* as a stand-in for semi-divine figures like Somin Shōrai or Monzen Hakase. If these ideas had been entirely alien to the patrons of *tayū* rites, the *saimon* would have been abandoned, as indeed they eventually were in the modern period. It is in this sense that these *saimon* can offer us a window into the ritual culture of this region, not as remnants of a medieval past, but as meaningful narratives in early modern village ritual.

TRANSLATIONS

Gozu Tennō shimawatari saimon 牛頭天王嶋渡り祭文

This *saimon* is included in HAYAKAWA's *Hanamatsuri* (1930b, 472–481); the source was a version kept by the Suzuki 鈴木 house in Komadate (Sogawa, Toyone), dated 1814. MATSUYAMA (2021) includes four different versions derived from the Moriya house of Komadate (1621), the Hanayama 花山 house of Ōnyū (Tōei, 1633), the Tanokuchi 田ノ口 house of Kobayashi (Tōei, 1671), and the Muramatsu 村松 house of Kami-Kurokawa (Toyone, undated). I will refer to these as the Komadate, Ōnyū, Kobayashi, and Kami-Kurokawa manuscripts. FIGURE 1 shows the 1633 version from Ōnyū. YAMAMOTO Hiroko (1998a, 513–559) merges various versions into a single text, which she analyzes in great detail. The following translation mostly follows Yamamoto's version and checks it against the four manuscripts in MATSUYAMA (2021). In what follows, I will refer to this *saimon* as *Shimawatari saimon*.

Most *saimon* manuscripts are written in a mixture of kana and *ateji*. This indicates that the surviving texts were used to facilitate fluent recitation, where correct pronunciation was more important than correct notation. For this reason, I will not always add characters to Japanese names and terms in my translation. As texts were copied and recopied by each new generation of *tayū*, some sections became garbled, and the original meaning is not always retrievable. In a few places I have had to limit myself to quoting the main variants without attempt at translation.

ADDRESS

Having determined that this day, in [this] month of [this] year, is propitious, we have prepared delicious foods and offered various wands. Now we speak. Our merit is deeper than the ocean, and our will is higher than Brahma Heaven. If there are any deities of pestilence in this place, make your appearance! Listen and pay attention [to our words]. We worship you and humbly address you.

In the east, the south, the west, the north, and the center, Gozu Tennō's entourage of eighty-four thousand deities make their appearance; we humbly address them all.

GOZU TENNŌ'S BIRTH

Halfway up the mountain of Sumeru is the land of Bunyū. The king of this land was called Tōmu Tennō, and his wife was Arujibunyo from the land of Saitan; both were buddhas. They came together as husband and wife, and in a manner similar to the clear waters of the great Daibatsu River[30] running forth into its

FIGURE 1. The Ōnyū manuscript, dated 1633 and titled *Gozu Tennō shimawatari*. This is a rare example of a *saimon* manuscript in the form of a scroll. Reproduced with permission from the Education Board of Tōei; photograph courtesy of Nagoya City Museum.

30. This name may derive from Batsudaiga 跋提河, the river on the bank of which Śākyamuni is said to have attained enlightenment.

pond, Arujibunyo gave birth to five children. Their names were Hyakki, Yagyō, Nagyō, Tosajin, and Harisainyo.[31] After this, she gave birth to twelve princes. Their names were Mimei, Kakei, Jūke, Tensō, Shōsen, Shōkichi, Daiitsu, Tenkō, Daiku, Kōsō, Daikichi, and Jingo.[32]

After this, she gave birth to one prince. His name was Gozu Tennō. He was more than nine feet tall and carried seven red horns on his head. He held a lapis lazuli bowl in his left hand and a *hyakushu no sanju*[33] in his right. He is an emanation of the buddha Yakushi.

GOZU TENNŌ'S JOURNEY TO THE DRAGON PALACE

Gozu Tennō went to see his father, King Tōmu,[34] and said: "I would like to see the famous Blood Pond in the Dragon Palace." King Tōmu answered: "That is an easy matter." Gozu Tennō turned into an evil wind and soon reached the Dragon Palace in the southern seas. On the bottom of the ocean was a mountain. As he stood at the foot of this mountain, he saw a moat of 8 *chō* 町 [c. 10 acres] square. There was a horse-riding ground of 4 *chō*, a wall built of white gold, and a gate of yellow gold. Inside, he saw a single house, covered in coral, standing on a foundation of [crystals?][35] and giving off a fragrance of sandal wood and exotic incense.

Gozu Tennō said: "I am a pestilence deity from Japan who has traveled to this island. Whose house is this?" The Dragon King Shagara[36] replied: "This is the Pure Land of the Dragon Palace. It is the dwelling of a buddha, and it is not a place where a deva king (*tennō*) can stay." Gozu Tennō said: "[I am an emanation of the buddha Yakushi.] If this is the dwelling of a buddha, I ask you to

31. *Hyakki yagyō* 百鬼夜行, the night parade of a hundred demons, is here counted as two names. Meeting this parade was said to be lethal; its occurrence was linked to the calendar (for example, in the tenth-century *Kuchizusami* 口遊). Nagyō 那行 and Tosajin 都佐神 feature in Kōjin rites as two deities that are born together with each human being, report on their behavior, and at times punish evil deeds (Yamamoto 1998a, 544–545). Harisainyo is the name of Gozu Tennō's spouse.

32. These are names of the twelve moon generals (*jūni gasshō* 十二月将): 微明, 河魁, 従魁, 伝送, 勝光, 小吉, 太一, 天罡, 太衝, 功曹, 大吉, and 神后. The manuscripts use mostly kana. These deities represent the twelve placements of the moon and figure on the *chokuban* 式盤 astrolabe used for Onmyōdō divination (Hayek 2021, 65–66).

33. The meaning of this phrase is unclear.

34. This name (in kana) is otherwise unknown; it may be related to Mutō Tennō 武答天王, mentioned as an alter ego of Gozu Tennō in numerous sources (Suzuki 2019, 118–120; Teeuwen 2023, 76–78).

35. The text reads ヲヽイクワコノウツハリ, the meaning of which is unclear.

36. Shagara (Sāgara, meaning "ocean") is one of eight dragon kings that feature in the *Lotus Sūtra* as protectors of the Dharma. Shagara was well-known as the father of the eight-year-old dragon girl who attained enlightenment in the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

let me stay here for one night." The eight dragon kings—Nanda, Batsunanda, Shagara, Washukitsu, Tokusaka, Anabadatta, Manasu, and Ubatsura[37]—[gathered and] asked: "If you are indeed Yakushi, show us your lapis lazuli bowl."[38] Gozu Tennō said, "That is an easy matter," and he handed over the bowl. Seeing this, the dragon kings allowed him to stay.

The Dragon King Shagara had a daughter called Bibakanyo, who was about to reach the age of seven. Gozu Tennō lost his heart to her, and he remained in the Dragon Palace for seven years. In those years, Bibakanyo gave birth to seven princes. The first was called Sōkō Tennō, the second Maō Tennō, the third Gumora Tennō, the fourth Tokudatsu Tennō, the fifth Rōji Tennō, the sixth Danikan Tennō, and the seventh Jishin Sōkō Tennō.[39]

GOZU TENNŌ'S SERPENT DAUGHTER

After those years, Gozu Tennō declared that he wanted to return to Japan. He made a ship out of mulberry wood and ordered his entourage of eighty-four thousand deities to embark. As he was sailing towards Japan, a red serpent came swimming from the direction of Chikura Island. Pines and maple trees seemed to sprout from the serpent's head. It flicked its crimson tongue, staring out of eyes as bright as the sun and moon. It spotted Gozu Tennō's one-leaf ship and slithered onto the bow pulpit. When Gozu Tennō saw this, he drew his Blood Pond sword: "You, serpent, floating on the waves—are you a messenger from a great Dragon King or from a small Dragon King? I am the son-in-law of the Dragon King Shagara, and my name is Gozu Tennō. I am sailing to Japan with Jakattanyo[40] and our seven princes." He was surprised to see this serpent suddenly raising the waves, in a sea that had been so calm.

The serpent answered: "I too am your child. You are taking the seven princes to Japan while leaving me behind on this island, all alone. That is why I have followed you to this place."

Gozu Tennō passed on these words to Jakattanyo. She said: "I doubt that this is right. This serpent that was floating on the waves and that has now slithered onto the bow pulpit says that it is my child. How strange! You came to the Dragon Palace and stayed for seven years. We had seven children in those years. I find it strange that [this serpent too] should be one of our children."

37. This list coincides with that in the introductory chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

38. Yakushi is usually depicted holding a bowl for making medicine in his left hand. Yakushi is said to save sentient beings from illness and suffering by emitting "lapis lazuli light" (*rurikō* 瑠璃光).

39. These names correspond closely to those listed in various *Gozu Tennō engi*. For similar lists in *Hoki naiden* and another source on Gozu Tennō, the *Shinzō emaki* 神像絵巻 kept at Myōhōin, see Endō (2021, 130).

40. Jakattanyo is presumably another name for Bibakanyo.

The serpent replied: "Your words are foolish indeed. When you gave birth to your seven children, you left the afterbirths in the famous Blood Pond of the Dragon Palace. Those afterbirths hatched to produce this serpent. I too used to dwell in my father's body. I am truly a child of Gozu Tennō."

Jakattanyo said: "Did those [afterbirths] truly hatch to produce a serpent? You say that you are my child. I need to see proof of that." She stroked her coral breasts, pushed them together and forced milk from them. Both the seven princes and the serpent felt a taste of nectar in their mouths, which turned into an elixir of eternal youth and immortality. Then Jakattanyo said: "There can be no more doubts. Show us your original ground." The red serpent now appeared as the Eleven-Headed Kannon, one foot and four inches tall, standing on top of the waves. Jakattanyo said: "There are no more doubts!" and lifted the serpent into the ship.

Since this was the eighth prince, their children were now called the eight princes. The eighth prince was also called Takusōjin Tennō or Jadokke Jinnō.[41] Gozu Tennō continued his journey to Japan with his eight princes. Hail to them all.

GOZU TENNŌ AND HIS PRINCES BRING ILLNESSES TO JAPAN

The ship landed in Hakozaki Bay in Ise Province. As he disembarked, Gozu Tennō said: "My residence is in Tsushima, on the Kazuma estate in Kaisai District, Owari Province. There is no shrine there, so I will hide my body in a large rock. Gods, you can visit me here on the sixteenth day of the first month; I will receive you then."[42] He disappeared like a light that is snuffed out. The eight princes stayed in Hakozaki Bay into the new year.

Soon, the sixteenth day approached. The eight princes rejoiced at the prospect of meeting their parents.

The first prince, Sōkō Tennō, created the illness caused by curses.

The second prince, Maō Tennō, created the hot illness.

The third prince, Gumora Tennō, created pestilence.

The fourth prince, Tokudatsujin Tennō, created the coughing illness.

The fifth prince, Rōji Tennō, created the red-belly illness.

The sixth prince, Danikan Tennō, created the great illness.

41. Jadokke or Jadokkeshin 蛇毒気神 (deity of poisonous serpent *qi*) features as the name of the eighth prince in both *Hoki naiden* and *Gozu Tennō engi*. *Hoki shō* likewise explains that "the deity Jadokke arose from the Blood Pond (Ketsugyaku no Ike 血逆ノ池) in the Dragon Palace, into which the placentas and the blood from [the births of] the seven princes had been deposited" (dl.ndl.go.jp/en/pid/2544460/1/31; YAMAMOTO 1998a, 523).

42. This section relates to Tsushimasha (today Tsushima Jinja), situated in the location mentioned here. The sixteenth day of the first month was the day of the *busha* 奉射 ritual, in which priests shoot arrows to dispel harmful spirits.

The seventh prince, Chishin Sōkō Tennō, created the water illness.

The eighth prince, Takusōjin Tennō, created pox.[43]

In this manner, they created a multitude of *ingen* illnesses.[44] They stored them away in sixteen *jōbon* chests.[45] Eight yellow oxen pulled these chests as they headed for the Kazuma estate in Owari Province. They arrived there on the sixteenth day of the first month.

Gozu Tennō saw them and said: "The eight princes are arriving to pay their respects in the new year." He ordered Hyakki [and] Yagyō to join the princes, and soon the princes presented their chests to them. Gozu Tennō inspected the lids of the chests and had Nagyō and Tosajin open them. He looked at the treasures one by one: they were a deity without eyes, a deity without ears, a deity without arms, a deity without legs, a deity without a body, a deity without a nose, and a deity without a mouth—there was no end to the myriad demons.

Seeing this, Gozu Tennō smiled and took on the form of a green god. He gave the gods seasonal parting gifts and returned each of them to their original shrine. He gave sight to the deity without eyes and sent him back to his original palace. He gave smell to the deity without a nose and sent him back to his original palace. He gave hearing to the deity without ears and sent him back to his original palace. He gave speech to the deity without a mouth and sent him back to his original palace. He gave the ability to grasp to the deity without arms and sent him back to his original palace. He gave limbs to the deity without a body and sent him back to his original palace. He gave the ability to walk to the deity without legs and sent him back to his original palace. He returned the green deity to the east. He returned the red deity to the south. He returned the white deity to the west. He returned the black deity to the north. He returned the yellow deity to the center. He returned the deities of five colors to the five directions.[46]

These are the deities that remained [in Japan]: 77,010 shrines of the deity without eyes; 107,010 shrines of the deity without a nose; 88,010 shrines of the deity without ears; 77,010 shrines of the deity without a mouth; 66,010 shrines of

43. The pox is identified as *imohashika* and written as 痘疹 in the Kobayashi manuscript.

44. The meaning of *ingen* is unclear. The Ōnyū manuscript renders it as 院眼, while the others use katakana. It is tempting to associate the word with the Buddhist term 因源 ("the origin of karma"), which would imply that these illnesses have karmic causes; but that term is perhaps too specific to a particular context.

45. *Jōbon* is rendered as 上品 in the Ōnyū and Kobayashi manuscripts. Generally, this term refers to matters of a high rank or quality. In particular, it often refers to the three highest ranks of rebirth in the Pure Land (*kuhon ōjō* 九品往生), granting maximum proximity to Amida to those who have accumulated the most merit. *Jōbon* features in other Oku Mikawa *saimon* in this meaning.

46. These colors and directions are associated with each other in this manner in both Buddhist and Onmyōdō theories, as explained in the analysis of *Daidokujin kyō* above.

the deity without legs; and 50,303 shrines of the deity without a body. The *ingen* deity was sent to the great land of India. He turned into an evil wind and crossed the sea to India. Hail to them all.

GOZU TENNŌ KILLS KOTAN CHŌJA

When [Gozu Tennō] crossed to India, he came to a mountain called Dairokuzan.[47] Looking up from the foot of this mountain, he saw a house. "Whose house is this?" he asked. "This is the house of Kotan Chōja, unrivaled in all of India," came the reply. Gozu Tennō asked for lodgings for one night, but Kotan Chōja answered: "This is the home of the five hundred arhats, the disciples of the buddha Śākyamuni. You must find lodgings elsewhere."

Gozu Tennō said: "The mind of the past is ungraspable; the mind of the present is ungraspable; and the mind of the future is also ungraspable. In the past and the present, those who are close to the gods must lend them lodgings, even in the house of a buddha. You must be someone who does not have any affection for the gods." To show quickly that this was indeed so, Gozu Tennō snapped his fingers and took the road that led to the northeast.[48]

Soon, he saw another house. He asked, "Whose house is this?" Someone replied: "This is the house of Somin Shōrai, famous throughout India—the house of a pauper." Gozu Tennō said: "I am a pestilence deity from Japan. I have traveled here to see India. Grant me lodgings for the night." Somin Shōrai agreed, replying: "Please wait for a moment. I will prepare lodgings so that you can stay here tonight." He sent five men, called Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water, to the Senju Field[49] to cut bamboo grass and weave eight mats for the eight princes. He let the other gods [in Gozu Tennō's company] spend the night on blades of *chigaya* grass.

Gozu Tennō called Hyakki [and] Yagyō. He ordered them to run to Kotan Chōja's house and survey its layout. Kotan Chōja, however, was a clever man, and that night he dreamt about seven blades of *chigaya* grass. When Śākyamuni heard about this, he said: "That dream foretells your death."

Quickly, the five hundred arhats sat down along Kotan Chōja's outer wall and recited the 1,500 chapters of the golden *Daihannya* [*Sūtra*] in just one hour.[50] The

47. Dairokuzan 大六山 is perhaps a reference to Dairokuten 第六天, the Sixth Heaven of Desire from where King Māra (Maō 魔王) rules over our world.

48. The snapping of the fingers is called *danshi no hō* (written 弾指法 in the Ōnyū manuscript); it refers to a method to expel demons and avoid impurity. The northeast is the most inauspicious direction.

49. Senju Field is given as *Senju ga no*, written in katakana in all manuscripts. The meaning is unknown.

50. One hour on the traditional Japanese clock lasted about two hours as we know them.

sixteen deities who protect the Dharma[51] stood around Kotan Chōja and built an iron wall, 16 *jō* [c. 48 m] high. Myōon Bosatsu[52] rose up to Heaven and spread an iron net [over the house], also covering any holes in the fence. There was no way for the pestilence deities to enter.

When Gozu Tennō heard this, he summoned Nagyō and Tosajin and gave them orders. Nagyō and Tosajin took on the form of green gods and looked into the house through a crack above the lintel. One buddha, about thirty years old, seated in the upper eighth seat, was rubbing his left eye, letting his eyelids droop, and soon he dozed off. Sometimes he skipped a character [of the *Daihannya Sūtra*], and this created a hole in the fence. Hyakki, Yagyō, Nagyō, and Tosajin unleashed the twelve great vows.[53] Carrying halberds, they destroyed the fence, scattering it in all four directions. They cut the iron net into eight pieces, which they threw away in eight directions. Then, the eighty-four thousand pestilence deities crashed into Kotan Chōja's house. They took the heads of Kotan Chōja and his wives and stuck them into the ground. They humbled and tortured a thousand people, pinching their flesh and cutting their veins, crushing their bones and wringing out their blood. This is the karma of birth and death.

Somin Shōrai had watched vigilantly as this unfolded, and now he appeared before Gozu Tennō, saying: "A girl who is staying in Kotan Chōja's house is my daughter. She was to be married to Kotan Chōja. While you punish Kotan Chōja, I beg you to save my daughter." Gozu Tennō led his eighty-four thousand subordinates into the house to save Somin's daughter. He found that she was a servant who carried hot and cold water for Kotan Chōja and his wives. Out of the thousand people [in the house], only one was saved: Somin Shōrai's daughter.

GOZU TENNŌ KILLS THE BUDDHA

Śākyamuni asked: "What kind of demon king or deity is this? I am shocked to see how he is torturing even the disciples of the Buddha." Śākyamuni donned the robe of compassion and humility, the robe of boundless mercy; he put on the shoes of True Reality and True Suchness; he held the rosary of 108 delusions; and he carried the stick that symbolizes the unity of the three realms of existence (desire, form, and non-form). Thus he entered the house of Kotan Chōja, where he met Gozu Tennō eye to eye.

51. This refers to the sixteen deities who protect Buddhism (*jūroku zenshin* 十六善神), as told in the *Daihannya Sūtra*.

52. The *Lotus Sūtra* dedicates chapter twenty-four to Myōon Bosatsu, relating how this bodhisattva visits the Sahā world to offer music to Śākyamuni. Why Myōon appears here is unclear to me, other than the fact that the *Lotus Sūtra* describes him as a giant figure; or perhaps Myōon here personifies the "wondrous sound" of the sutra recitation.

53. This refers to the twelve vows of Yakushi Nyorai, Gozu Tennō's "original ground." Yakushi has vowed to bring salvation and healing to all sentient beings.

He asked: "What deity are you?" Gozu Tennō countered: "And who are you?" "I am the buddha Śākyamuni, famous throughout India." Gozu Tennō said: "Then you must be the son of King Jōbon and his wife Maya, incarnated in a human body. I was born in the land of Bunyū halfway up the slopes of Mt. Sumeru, as the son of two buddhas: King Tōmu and his wife Harisainyo. They are the father and mother of all buddhas of past, present, and future. The beings of the nine realms, [hell dwellers, hungry ghosts, beasts, *asura*s, humans, gods, *śrāvaka*s, *pratyekabuddha*s, and bodhisattvas,] are all part of my retinue. If you consider yourself a buddha in front of me, I challenge you to offer yourself in exchange for the lives of a thousand of your patrons (*danna*)!"

Hearing this, Śākyamuni replied: "In that case, let me offer myself in order to save a thousand of my patrons." On the first day of the second month of the first year of Shōhei,[54] [Gozu Tennō's illness] entered his left finger. If one is affected by this illness for one day, two days, three days, four days, or seven days, it is caused by a curse; but after ten days, it had reached all ten of Śākyamuni's fingers. From there it spread to his five viscera and six organs. No buddha can withstand such a disease. On the fifteenth day of the second month, Śākyamuni died as the rooster crowed.

The fifty-two kinds of beasts and the five hundred arhats all lamented his passing. Then Śākyamuni spoke his last words: "Even though I have lost my body, I still have life. On the eighth day of the fourth month [Śākyamuni's birthday], you will see what I mean."

As they cremated him at the foot of a red sandal tree, the smoke rose to heaven, turning into scarlet clouds that floated like mist. Plants shot up, blooming in all colors. His four bones became twenty-five bodhisattvas.[55] By his death, Śākyamuni saved all sentient beings, without exception. When Gozu Tennō saw this, he said: "Now I have even taken the life of a buddha." He decided that the time had come to return to Japan, and he set off together with his eighty-four thousand subordinates.

GOZU TENNŌ PROTECTS SOMIN SHŌRAI'S DESCENDANTS

Somin Shōrai followed Gozu Tennō to the Senju Field. Seeing him, Gozu Tennō said: "Is that Somin Shōrai? You should return home quickly." Somin Shōrai said: "I came here to ask you for a pass, promising that henceforth my descendants will not be punished with pestilence in the three lands." "That is an easy matter,"

54. This would correspond to 1346 if this is the Japanese year period Shōhei 正平 or 451 if the Northern Wei period Shengping is meant. Neither of these dates bears any relation to traditional dates for Śākyamuni's death.

55. The twenty-five bodhisattvas protect the faithful who call upon Amida and descend to escort them to Amida's Western Pure Land upon their death.

Gozu Tennō said. He descended to the heaven of Mahābrahmā and sat down on a large rock. He rubbed his inkstone and wetted his brush. "My eighty-four thousand gods, listen to my words. No pestilence deity may punish any descendant of Somin Shōrai." He cut a four-inch slice of wood from a willow tree and made it into a pass. "Although Hyakki, Yagyō, Nagyō, Tosajin, and Taisaijin 太歳神[56] may show you mercy now, there will be no succor for those who kill their lord or their parents, who set fire to Buddhist halls and temples, who burn gods or buddhas, or who commit any of the ten evil acts and five perfidies.[57] Even if you are a descendant of Somin Shōrai, you will not be treated with mercy if you fail to make offerings from the deity paddies to the gods and buddhas and to the three treasures.[58] Those who neglect doing this will be reborn into poverty."

FINAL WORDS TO THE SPONSORS

Great sponsors (*ōdanna*), who are showing your faith today, [we call upon] the Dharma name of Gozu Tennō. Praying that you may live for 120 years, we prepare wands of white flowers, offer foodstuffs of a hundred flavors, and return [the gods] to their original ground and original seat. If we say our prayers now, they will hear and accept them. The descendants of Kotan Chōja will receive punishment even if they perform good works and collect merit. Gozu Tennō said: "I will return to Japan. All descendants of Somin Shōrai will escape the suffering of pestilence in China, in India, and in our country." With that, he led his entourage of eighty-four thousand gods back to Japan. Hail to them all.

May all disasters be averted, may you live long, and may all your wishes be granted. Karoku 嘉禄 2 (1226), first month, first day. Homage to the Eleven-Headed Kannon of Mt. Fudaraku, the deity of the Mountain of Living Spirits (*shōryōzan* 生霊山). May he extinguish all diseases.[59]

56. Taisaijin is one of the "eight generals" (*hasshōjin* 八将神), often associated with the eight princes of Gozu Tennō. Taisaijin is identified with the first of these princes in *Gozu Tennō engi*, and with Gozu Tennō himself in *Shinzō emaki*.

57. *Jūaku gogyaku* 十悪五逆. The ten evil acts are: killing; stealing; sexual misconduct; lying; harsh speech; slander; gossip; covetousness; malice; and wrong views. The five perfidies are killing one's mother, one's father, or an arhat, and harming a buddha or the sangha. However, lists differ among sources.

58. The proceeds from such paddies and fields (*jinden kōden* 神田香田) were used to fund shrines, temples, and ritual costs.

59. This final section (from "Great sponsors" onwards) differs considerably among manuscripts. I follow the Komadate manuscript. The final phrase ("May he extinguish all diseases") is followed by the word *svāhā* in Siddhaṃ characters, identifying it as a mantra or spell. The date 1226 suggests that this phrase derives from a Shugendo ritual manual.

Daidokujin kyō 大土公神

This *saimon* is represented in the archives of most *tayū* in Oku Mikawa. The oldest version, dated 1653, is from Misono (Tōei), from the archive of the Omoteya Obayashi 表屋尾林 house. Transcribed versions can be found in KITASHITARA HANAMATSURI HOZONKAI (1980, 102–108) and TAKEI (2010, 212–227); it is also included in ŌHASHI (1986, 18–21). Two other versions are published in the second volume of Hayakawa's *Hanamatsuri*. The first is an undated manuscript from Komadate (437–449) that closely resembles the Misono version, while the second from Nakashitara (dated 1700, 449–455) is much shorter. FIGURE 2 shows a previously unpublished manuscript from Kobayashi, dated 1671.

This translation is based on the Misono manuscript, which refers to this *saimon* as *Daidokujin kyō*. The Misono manuscript uses more correct kanji than the *Shimawatari saimon* manuscripts translated above, and I will include kanji here where it is useful.

ORIGINS: UCHŪ HEAVEN

I pray that the 900,043,490 gods who are the subordinates of Daidokujin may appear and gather at this place. (*This phrase is repeated in five directions*,

FIGURE 2. An *oribon* 折本 (concertina binding) titled *Daidokō*, dated Kanbun 寛文 11 (1671). Tanokuchi house, Kobayashi. Reproduced with permission from the current head of the Tanokuchi house; photograph courtesy of Hanamatsuri no Mirai o Kangaeru Jikkō Iinkai.

facing south, *west*, *north*, *east*, *and towards the center*.) We ask about the original ground of Daidokujin.

A long time ago, this world had no heaven and no earth. Neither the sentient beings nor the trees and plants were settled. Then a red and white jewel appeared from the heaven of Uchū.[60] Its shape was like the egg of a bird. It split in two, and the clear matter in the egg became heaven while the turbid matter became earth. It split into four parts, which became the four seasons and the four directions. Running downwards, it became the sea. The yellow is revered as the buddhas; the red as the gods; the white settled as humans; the black as beasts; and the green as trees and plants.[61]

In the midst of all this arose the warrior king of the twelve moons.[62] He founded this world. All was empty and silent, and it was impossible to know what was east, west, south, or north, above or below.

Then a wind began to blow from within that jewel, and five-colored clouds appeared. Those clouds turned into rain, pelting down in a great downpour. A gale arose…[63] and the water that fell on the earth gathered in clouds. The mountains collapsed and became flat land. A wheel of fire (*karin* 火輪) rose up towards heaven. Rain, wind, and water were welded together into a golden wheel (*konrin* 金輪). The rays of light emitted by the golden wheel coalesced to become the earth. It was at this time that earth, water, wind, fire, and space began.

In the time of empty space, the very Beginning was called the Buddha of sun, moon, and stars or, by another name, Amida Nyorai. Because Amida transforms his immortal body, he is also called "the twelve moons." However, he did not manifest himself in the form of the [actual] sun, moon, and stars, and still everything was dark as night. Then Amida sent for bodhisattvas, first the Manifestation (Onjaku 御迹) Bodhisattva and then the Auspicious (Kichijō 吉祥) Bodhisattva.[64] Upon consulting with these bodhisattvas, he went to the seventh

60. The phrase "heaven of Uchū" (Uchūten 宇宙天) is not found in any other source; I thank Iyanaga Nobumi for help in searching for it. Likely, it derives from Uchōten 有頂天, the highest heaven of the three realms of non-form, form, and desire. Red and white typically refer to female and male substances in esoteric texts (Rambelli 2013, 164–165); here, the focus is on gods versus humans as well as the "black" beasts, rather than yin and yang.

61. There are obvious traces here of medieval rereadings of the cosmogony as described in classical texts like *Nihon shoki*, which ultimately draw on Chinese Daoist sources (Teeuwen and Breen 2017, 83–89). However, the details do not align with any other source.

62. *Jūnigatsu no shōō* 十二月の将王. This is clearly meant to refer to a single cosmogonic "person" (*onhito* 御人), different from the twelve moon generals that we encountered in *Shimawatari saimon*.

63. There is an unintelligible passage here: デンサケ、ムコ、イシモ、千リンサクニツウス、ソノ時天上デ眼（マナ）ゴトナル.

64. These are not standard bodhisattva names. Onjaku means "trace" or "manifestation," referring to the *honji suijaku* paradigm that combines a buddha's "original ground" with his

heaven, took the seven treasures that are kept there, and brought them to this world. He divided [these treasures] to become the sun, moon, and stars, so that the earth would be illuminated.

THE COSMIC GIANT IKUBA

From the heaven and earth of Uchū appeared [a giant], wearing a crown made from a seed tree (*shuki* 種木), holding a fire jewel in his left hand, wearing shoes of gold on his feet, and holding a water jewel in his right hand. His name was Ikuba. Ikuba's mouth was full of soft grass (*nansō* 軟草). He lay down, using the east as his pillow and stretching out towards the west. Because he wore a wooden crown, the east is called *kō otsu* 甲乙.[65] Because he held a fire jewel in his left hand, the south is called *hei tei* 丙丁. Because he wore golden shoes on his feet, the west is called *kō shin* 庚辛. Because he held a water jewel in his right hand, the north is called *jin ki* 壬癸. The Sunlight (Nikkō) Bodhisattva arose in his left hand, and the Moonlight (Gekkō) Bodhisattva in his right;[66] therefore, the center is called *bo ki* 戊巳.

Ikuba's body contained [twelve] large and [three-hundred sixty] small bones. Based on his bones, Ikuba decided that one year would have twelve months and three-hundred sixty days. His breath was the origin of the clouds, fog, mist, and wind. He fashioned the sentient beings and the trees and plants from the hairs on his body. From his navel rose a lotus that flowered with a thousand petals. These petals scattered and became the lands of the world. He gave birth to the hundred myriad [beings] of Mt. Sumeru; the hundred myriad of Brahma Heaven; the hundred myriad of sun and moon; the hundred myriad of the Iron Mountains; the hundred myriad of the [hell of] karmic fire; the great and small deities; and the thirty-three devas.[67]

"manifestations" in the form of various kinds of beings in our own world. Kichijō means "prosperity" or "an auspicious sign."

65. The paraphernalia of Ikuba here are associated with the "ten celestial stems" (*jikkan* 十干), a system with roots in ancient China. The ten celestial stems are combined with the twelve signs of the zodiac (*jūnishi* 十二支) to indicate both time and space. The stems *kō* and *otsu* are associated with the phase of wood as the "elder and younger brother of wood" (*kinoe* and *kinoto*). They stand for the east, the color green, and the season of spring. *Hei* and *tei* are the elder and younger brother of fire, standing for the south, the color red, and summer; *kō* and *shin* are metal, west, white, and autumn; *jin* and *ki* are water, north, black, and winter; and, finally, *bo and ki* are earth, center, yellow, and the periods called *doyō*, corresponding to the final eighteen days of each season.

66. Usually, Nikkō and Gekkō Bosatsu accompany Yakushi Nyorai, rather than Amida, whose standard companions are Seishi and Kannon.

67. The thirty-three devas live in Tōriten (Trāyastriṃśa Heaven), the abode of Taishakuten (Indra) above the summit of Mt. Sumeru.

Mt. Sumeru extends eighty thousand *yojana* below the sea and has a total height of sixteen *yojana*. The highest four *yojana* form Sumeru's summit.[68] This is the empty space (*kū* 空) of the four deva kings. It is here that the sun, moon, and stars dwell. The size of the sun disc is fifteen *yojana*, and that of the moon disc is fifty *yojana*. There are seven hundred large stars, five hundred medium stars, and one hundred and twenty small stars. The space above this heaven extends for four hundred *yojana*; above this is the heaven of Tōriten, also called [the heaven of] the thirty-three devas. There are eight stars in each of the four directions. In the residence of Taishaku Tennō, the deity of the Kikenjō Palace tries to keep the *asura* at bay.[69]

Mt. Sumeru has four great lands. To the east is the land of Tōjōkoku 東勝国. The people who live here have faces formed like the half moon, and their lifespan is two-hundred fifty years. The people who live on the western slope of the mountain have faces shaped like the full moon; their life span is five hundred years. The faces of the people in the north are square, and they live for a thousand years. The land to the south of Mt. Sumeru is called "the land of fertile reed plains" in the southern continent of Jambudvīpa.[70] The faces of its people are like bodhisattvas, but their life span is not settled. These are called the "four great lands."

One Mt. Sumeru with one sun and moon is regarded as one world. One thousand such worlds make up one small chiliocosm; and one thousand small chiliocosms make up one long (*chō* 長) chiliocosm. One thousand long chiliocosms make up one great chiliocosm. One thousand great chiliocosms make up the triple great chiliocosm.

[In Jambudvīpa] there are sixteen great lands, five hundred medium lands, one thousand small lands, and countless [even smaller] lands scattered like grains of millet. Foremost among all lands are China, India, and Japan. Heaven is more than 378,000 *yojana* high, and the earth is 59,049 *ri* thick. China stretches forty-eight thousand *ri* from east to west, and seventy-eight thousand *ri* from north to south.[71] Our own realm, Japan, is three-thousand eight-hundred *ri* from east to west and five-hundred twenty *ri* from north to south. It

68. "Top" is here an inadequate translation of the unclear phrase ban *fuku kashira* 鑁吹く頭 (the mountain top—or chief?—that blows the seed syllable *vaṃ*?). The length of 1 *yojana* differs greatly between sources.

69. Taishakuten, who lives in the Kikenjō 喜見城 Palace, is the king of Tōriten. There are eight devas (here, stars) in each of the four directions. Thus, the thirty-three devas are Taishakuten and the thirty-two devas in the four directions. The higher heavens are listed in the *saimon* without commentary; I skip this list in my translation.

70. "The land of fertile reed plains" (Toyoashiharakoku 豊葦原国) is a phrase from classical court mythology.

71. One *ri* equals 3.93 km. Japan's size is therefore given as about 15,000 by 2,000 km.

has eight-thousand eight districts and 18,000 villages. There were 3,900,094,121 men and 5,900,094,121 women.

BANGO DAIŌ AND HIS FIVE "PRINCES"

At that time, a yellow prince appeared from the southwest.[72] His name was Bango Daiō.[73] From the northeast appeared a red woman called Sensaifukuyo-nyo.[74] As skilled performers of the dance of three and three,[75] they became man and wife. As the lords of this land, they created the five grains and other crops, as well as all kinds of trees and plants, from pines to bamboo. Joining together in accord with the way of yin and yang, they gave life to four sons. Tarō was known as the god of wood, and he received the lands in the east. Jirō was known as the god of fire, and he received the lands in the south. Saburō was known as the god of metal, and he received the lands in the west. Shirō was known as the god of water, and he received the lands in the north. In this manner, they shared out all lands among their four sons.[76]

Their father, Bango Daiō, temporarily entered the domain of life and death[77] to divine [the fate of] the sentient beings of that place. At that time, his queen became pregnant. Even when she entered the seventh month, Bango Daiō was still hidden. Stamping her feet on a rock and holding a sword in her hands, she gave birth to the child. She lifted it up and examined it, and it was a princess. She named her Gorō no Himemiya.[78]

72. Here and in what follows, directions are given in terms of the twelve signs of the zodiac. The direction in this case is *hitsuji saru* 未申.

73. The Nakashitara manuscript renders Bango Daiō as 番古, while the Komadate has Bangon ばんごん.

74. Written 千歳福与女 (perhaps meaning, "the woman who grants good fortune of a thousand years"), this name does not appear in *Sanwu liji* or other sources. The Nakashitara manuscript has Fukusainyo 福才女, and the Komadate manuscript has Chisaibukunyo ちさいぶく女. Fukusainyo features in *Hoki naiden* as one of Bango's wives (Iwata 1990, 185).

75. *San no san no migoto wazaogi to shite* 三ノ三ノ見事俳優トシテ. *Wazaogi* (written with these same characters) is used in the *Nihon shoki* (67: 112) to describe Ame no Uzume's dancing in front of the Rock Cave of Heaven. The Komadate manuscript has *San no mikoto wazōgi to shite* 三の命はさうぎとして, "As three divine performers" (Hayakawa 1930b, 440); but this may be a creative reinterpretation, since there is no third protagonist in the tale at this point. The meaning of this phrase appears to be lost.

76. The sons' names mean "first," "second," "third," and "fourth" son. The phases and directions follow the same standard scheme as in the tale of Ikuba: wood is east, fire is south, metal is west, and water is north. The directions are indicated using both the cardinal directions and the ten stems, such as "the east, *kō otsu*."

77. "The domain of life and death" translates to *shōji no michi* 生死ノ道.

78. Gorō, meaning "fifth son," is a male name, while Himemiya means "princess." In what follows, I treat the word "prince" as gender neutral. Like "prince," the Japanese *ōji* refers only to males, but in this *saimon* it is also applied to the female Gorō, who thus carries both a male name and title.

BANGO DAIŌ'S DAUGHTER, GORŌ

When Gorō no Himemiya had grown up, she went to her mother, Banmotsunyo,[79] and asked: "My four brothers rule over the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Why have I not received even a small domain? Am I not a child of my father, [Bango] Daiō?" Her mother, Banmotsunyo, replied: "There is no doubting that you are indeed his child. However, your father was hidden when you were in my womb, and that is why you have not received even a small domain."

"To the east of here, there is a land called Hikiō.[80] There is a gate of black metal; if you open it and enter, you will find a gate of red metal. Open it and you will come upon a gate of white metal. When you open it, you will encounter a gate of gold. Inside that gate are three divine treasures. The first is the jewel of divine wisdom, the second is the treasure sword, and the third is the mirror called *Nanshidokoro*.[81] This mirror allows you to see all the worlds of the triple great chiliocosm in one day. With the jewel you can turn a sea into a mountain, or a mountain into a sea. If you pull the sword out of its scabbard by a single inch, all the oceans within a distance of 10,000 *ri* will disappear and turn into a wave that contains all the waters of the four seas. If you pull it out by two inches, all dead trees within 20,000 *ri* will blossom. If you pull it out by three inches, all your enemies within 30,000 *ri* will be destroyed. If you pull it out by four inches, all demons within 40,000 *ri* will be cleansed away. If you pull it out by three feet and six inches, it will turn the land into a realm of fertility."[82] Gorō no Himemiya rejoiced and rode her carriage of living spirits[83] [to the land of Hikiō]. She [took] the three treasures and never went anywhere without them.

She asked her brothers, the princes: "How can it be that each of you rules a land in one of the four directions, while I do not own even a small domain?" The four brothers answered: "You are not even an adopted child, let alone a real child of our father. That is why he did not give you even a small domain." Furious,

79. This would appear to be another name for Sensaifukuyonyo. It is written 万物女 (Misono) or ばんもつ女 (Komadate)—the "woman (mother?) of the myriad things." The Nakashitara manuscript does not include this name.

80. Hikiō is written as ヒキヲウ in Misono and Komadate; the Nakashitara manuscript offers a quite different narrative.

81. These three treasures (*sanshu no jinpō* 三種の神宝) are modeled after the three imperial regalia (*sanshu no jinki* 三種の神器), which feature prominently in numerous texts and initiations of medieval Shinto lineages. The mirror, in particular, was commonly referred to as the *naishidokoro* 内侍所, after the quarters of court ladies where it was once kept. The Misono manuscript calls it *nanshidokoro* 難視處 ("the mirror for [seeing] places that are hard to discern"); the Komadate manuscript has なんしどころ.

82. The Komadate manuscript calls this the land of Bunyū ぶにう, as in *Shimawatari saimon*. The Misono manuscript has Fuyū 富裕.

83. *Ikiryōsha* 生霊車. *Ikiryō* (or *shōryō*) are roaming spirits of the living.

Gorō no Himemiya said: "Without heaven, no rain will fall. Without earth, no grass will grow. Without a father, there is no seed. What seed could there be without the Yang of a father? Without a mother, nothing can be born. What can be born without inheriting the act of a father?[84] You must all join hands and offer me a small domain that I may rule." With this, she returned to her palace.

GORŌ FIGHTS HER BROTHERS

The princes were shocked. Prince Tarō headed for the gate of aspiration (*hosshinmon* 発心門). The spring haze of the wisdom of the great round mirror (*daienkyōchi* 大円鏡智) drifted among the branches of the trees. Prince Tarō set up nine green banners. He donned the green armor and helmet of enlightenment (*anottara sanmyakusanbodai* 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提). He notched the arrow of [the buddha's] image (*tōjin* 等身) on the bowstring of the perfection of giving (*dan haramitsu* 檀波羅蜜) and summoned 99,000 soldiers. He rode a green dragon. Saying that also the sun, moon, and stars search for faith in the east, he defended the gate of the double wheel (*sōrinmon* 双輪門).[85]

Prince Jirō headed for the gate of practice (*shugyōmon* 修行門). In the heaven called the wisdom of recognizing the essential identity of all Dharmas in emptiness (*byōdōshōchi* 平等性智), he raised the seven red banners that represent the indestructible nature of true wisdom (*shōchichū fumetsu* 正智宙不滅).[86] He wore the red armor and helmet that bring peace to the sentient beings in their present life. Carrying the halberd of great compassion, he brought 77,000 subordinates. He rode a red dragon. Searching for faith from the south, he defended the gate of the wheel of space (*kūrinmon* 空輪門).

Prince Saburō headed for the gate of the wind of enlightenment (*bodaifūmon* 菩提風門). The autumn moon of the wisdom of wondrous perception (*myōkanzacchi* 妙観察智), [the moon] of the thousand doctrines that teach us to escape from the cycle of birth and death (*senbōrishō* 千法離生), may be hidden in the mist of illusory thoughts, but the wind of thusness and original enlightenment (*shinnyo hongaku* 真如本覚) will sweep away the clouds of denial. Prince Saburō raised the eight white banners that display the divine blessings and the love of recognizing the essential identity of all Dharmas in emptiness. He donned the white armor and helmet that manifest the untainted gate of purity (*jōmon muro*

84. "Inheriting the act" translates *gyō o tsugu* 行を継ぐ.

85. The descriptions of the battle preparations of the four princes follow a standard scheme of associations, linking colors to directions, stages of Buddhist practice, buddha wisdoms, and so forth, effectively turning the princes into champions of a Buddhist path towards enlightenment. Of the terms used in this passage about Prince Tarō, *tōjin* and *sōrinmon* deviate from established Buddhist terminology.

86. This is not a canonical Buddhist term.

浄門無漏), which gave him supernatural powers (*sanmyō rokutsū* 三明六通).[87] He carried the sword of the ten perfections (*hannya haramitsu tō no ken* 般若波羅蜜十ノ剣) and led an army of 88,000 subordinates. Riding a white dragon from the west, he defended the gate of enlightenment (*bodaimon* 菩提門).

Prince Shirō headed for the gate of nirvana (*nehanmon* 涅槃門). The winter snow of the wisdom of carrying out what needs doing (*jōshosachi* 成所作智), which destroys all enemies, fell from the gate of the way of water (*suidōmon* 水道門). The meditation that leads to extinction, sweet as nectar, swept away all delusions. [The snow] melted into the waterfall of the scriptures and precepts of the one mind.[88] This is the real merit of the eternally abiding. Prince Shirō raised six black banners, wearing the black armor of adamantine absorption (*kongōzanmai* 金剛三昧) and the helmet of ignorance and black karma (*mumyō kokugō* 無明黒業).[89] He led an army of 66,000 subordinates. Riding a black dragon from the north, he defended the gate of the way of water.

Princess Gorō no Himemiya closed the gate of the deity Hachiman and opened the gate of Hachiman's beneficence. The foundation of the wisdom of the original nature of the Dharma realm (*hokkaitaishōchi* 法界体性智) is the rapid transformation of delusions into enlightenment, the identity of birth-and-death with nirvana. Leading the sentient beings who are free from karmic bonds, she realized their liberation. Raising five yellow banners, she wore the yellow armor and helmet of all skillful means—showing that in the buddha lands of the ten directions there is only one vehicle, and never two nor three.[90] Holding a sword, a halberd, a Dharma wheel, a five-pronged vajra, a three-pronged vajra, and a single-pronged vajra, she made heaven and earth rumble.

Lifting her left hand, she called down the seven stars of the Northern Dipper, the twenty-eight lunar mansions, the evil stars, the evil deities, and the evil demons. Leading them as her subordinates, she descended from heaven. By putting down her right hand in a thousand circles, she called up [the earth deity] Kenrō Jishin, the thirty-six beasts of the earth,[91] and the eight dragon kings of

87. *Sanmyō* refers to knowledge of past, present, and future; *rokutsū* refers to the supernatural abilities to move to any place one wants, hear any sound, read others' minds, see the past lives of oneself and others, see all future rebirths of oneself and others, and move beyond all delusions and escape from the cycle of death and rebirth.

88. The "scriptures and precepts of the one mind" is written as *Isshin kyōkai* 一心経戒. *Isshin kyō* is unclear; *isshin kai* refers to the *Brahma Net Sūtra* bodhisattva precepts.

89. Black karma is alternative term for negative karma. This sentence is followed by an inscrutable line, which I am unable to translate: *Nyakuna nyakushin nyakuna nyotōkoku* 若那若身若那如当国 (Misono manuscript) or *Nyakuma nyakushin akuma nyotōkoku mankoku* にやくまにやくしん悪まによとう黒まん国 (Komadate).

90. The "one vehicle" refers to the vehicle that leads all sentient beings to full buddhahood.

91. The thirty-six animals (or "decans") guard the twelve zodiac signs, twelve hours of the day, or twelve months of the year.

the eight seas. These led a hundred thousand subordinates to defend [Gorō no] Himemiya. Riding a yellow dragon, she left her original palace.

The river that flows from Mt. Sumeru from the northeast to the east is called the Yōtoku River. The river that flows from the southeast to the south is called the Ryūzō River. The river that flows from the southwest to the west is called the Ama River. The river that flows from the northwest to the north is called the Gonga River.[92] For seven days and seven nights, the princes did battle along upper reaches of that last river, at the Golden Hill by the Screen Bay. Heaven shuddered, and the waters of the Gonga River took on five colors.

MONZEN'S MEDIATION

Bonten and Taishaku (Brahma and Indra) were appalled and called upon Master Monzen.[93] Monzen performed divination and said: "The five children of Bango Daiō, the lord of the realm of the three worlds, are fighting over the territories that he has bequeathed to them. Their battle is taking place above the water, causing these colors to appear. The blood of the warriors of Prince Tarō is green; that of Prince Jirō's warriors is red; the warriors of Prince Saburō shed white blood; the warriors of Prince Shirō have black blood; and the blood of the warriors of Gorō no Himemiya is yellow." Bonten and Taishaku were horrified and ordered Monzen to pacify them.

Monzen clad himself in armor and placed a wooden crown on his head. On his feet he wore golden shoes, and in his hands he carried wands. He climbed the Golden Hill above the Gonga River and saw the raging battle. Monzen announced: "I have come as an envoy of Bonten and Taishaku. I am the master who first began saying prayers as the King of the Twelve Moons, as Ikuba Monzen, and as Ikuba Bango Daiō. I ask you to pause your fighting and listen to my words." The five princes paused their battle and listened.

Monzen said: "All the myriad things that are born have Life as their mother. The children of Bango Daiō, too, both are and are not his children. As *rinchū*, *unchū*, *mōchū*, and *gōchū*, you are all sentient beings that appeared, earlier or later, as children of Banmotsunyo.[94] The lands that Bango Daiō has bestowed upon you, and also the lands that he has not bestowed upon you, are all empty and non-existent. Why are you fighting for something that is non-existent? Ultimately, you

92. The river names listed here are not standard. In most versions the Gaṅgā, Sindhu, Vakṣu, and Sītā as the four great rivers of Jambudvīpa. In most other versions of the *Dokujin saimon*, Gonga 金河 is written as Gōga 恒河, the Gaṅgā (Ganges) River.

93. Bonten and Taishaku appear here as the deva kings who rule over the Realm of Desire from their abode in the lowest heaven of the Realm of Form.

94. This is a tentative translation. The Misono manuscript reads: *Rinchū*, *unchū*, *mōchū*, *gōchū*, *mina kore gosen no shujō naru*, *Banmotsunyojin [no] ko to shite arawaruru mono naru* リンチウ、ウンチウ、マウチウ、ガウチウ、皆コレ後先ノ衆生ナル、万物女神子トシテ顕ワルルモノナル.

must follow Monzen's teaching. The order of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, the form of Mt. Sumeru surrounded by the four continents, the colors green, yellow, red, white, and black—they are all present in the five limbs of our own bodies. [All things arise] in the single mind of Vijayā due to the five causes.[95] Green, yellow, red, white, and black are like five eldest sons. Which among them is not both earlier (older) and later (younger) at the same time? As five sibling princes, you must all share the lands in the four directions."

The princes listened and agreed. Monzen rejoiced and said: "Prince Tarō rules the ninety days of the three months of spring. His official appears as a green dragon king. He governs over the eastern direction and over seventy-two days, leaving aside eighteen days; these are called the earth days (*doyō* 土用) of spring.[96] During those days, he returns to his original palace.

Prince Jirō rules the ninety days of the three months of summer. His official appears as a red dragon king. He governs over the southern direction and over seventy-two days, leaving aside eighteen days; these are called the earth days of summer. During those days, he returns to his original palace.

Prince Saburō rules the nintey days of the three months of autumn. His official appears as a white dragon king. He governs over the western direction and over seventy-two days, leaving aside eighteen days; these are called the earth days of autumn. During those days, he returns to his original palace.

Prince Shirō rules the ninety days of the three months of winter. His official appears as a black dragon king. He governs over the northern direction and over seventy-two days, leaving aside eighteen days; these are called the earth days of winter. During those days, he returns to his original palace.

If we add up the days that are left aside in the four seasons—the four periods of earth days—they amount to seventy-two days. This is the domain of Gorō no Himemiya. Her official is called the yellow dragon king, and he gives the color yellow to the four periods of earth days. [At other times] she returns to her original palace. In every year there are six periods of eight monopolized days (*hassen* 八専).[97] These you must give to Banmotsunyo, the mother [of the five princes]."

95. Vijayā 微誓耶 is the wife, or in some cases a female manifestation, of Dainichi. The five causes, as explained in *Kusharon*, are the producing cause (where the four elements combine to produce a new being), the supporting cause (where all beings depend on the four elements), the upholding cause (where the four elements allow a being to exist), the maintaining cause (where the four elements maintain this existence over time), and the nourishing cause (where the four elements provide nourishment for further expansion).

96. The term *doyō* refers to the periods when seasons change: the final eighteen days of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. While these seasons are associated with the phases of wood, fire, metal, and water, the *doyō* days are marked by the phase of earth. During the four *doyō* periods, it is unpropitious to disturb the soil, such as by digging.

97. *Hassen* are periods of twelve days, out of which eight are regarded as unlucky for the reason that their stems and zodiac signs belong to the same phase (wood, fire, and so on).

Gorō no Himemiya protested: "Although you say that I will govern seventy-two days, all those days are at the end of different months. There is not a single month that is all mine." Monzen replied: "Due to the waxing and waning of the moon, some days are lacking, so that there are not enough days. Therefore, I will insert an intercalary month once every three years. That month will be governed by Gorō no Himemiya."

The five princes were delighted with this arrangement. They asked for the seven treasures of heaven, which they wanted to give to Monzen. Monzen said: "It will not please me to receive the seven treasures. In these latter days, the sentient beings are full of delusions, and few are enlightened. Therefore, I will rather ask Daidokujin to spare my descendants from punishment." The princes all agreed that this could be arranged. They swore an oath that Monzen's descendants will not suffer the punishments of the latter days of the Dharma (*masse* 末世) even if they [disturb the earth by] building a temple hall or stupa, digging a well, setting up a birthing hut and spilling birthing blood, constructing a gate, opening up new wet or dry fields, flattening a hill, blocking a stream, improving paddies, or neglecting to worship Daidokujin.[98] Monzen was pleased with this outcome and expressed his joy.

At this, the princes fostered children. Tarō had ten children: the ten stems. Jirō had twelve children: the twelve zodiac signs. Saburō had twelve children: the twelve verticalities.[99] Shirō had nine children: the nine patterns.[100] Gorō no Himemiya had seventy-five children.[101]

FINAL WORDS TO THE SPONSORS

In a household of faith, these things must be cleansed away: may heavenly and earthly impurity, inner and outer evil, accidental fire, violence by knife or stick, and raids by bandits be swept 1,000 *ri* away. May you enjoy a long and quiet life, flourishing and widely acclaimed; and may you be as free of illness and incident

98. All the activities mentioned here involve disturbing the earth (*bondo* 犯土) and may therefore trigger retribution from Daidokujin.

99. The twelve verticalities (*choku* 直) are points in the calendar marked by the position of the "tail" of the Big Dipper (the outermost three stars of the chariot) as it revolves around the Pole Star. The tail comes full circle after twelve days. Each day comes with a particular set of lucky or unlucky activities. I thank Matthias Hayek for teaching me about this term.

100. The nine patterns (*kyūzu* 九図), which refer to the process by which the five phases originated, are listed in *Hoki naiden* in the same order as in this passage.

101. *Hoki naiden* features a similar narrative about the birth of the ten stems, twelve zodiac signs, twelve verticals, and nine patterns; but these are fostered not by the five princes but by the five dragon kings, who are the children of Bango Daiō and his five wives. In *Hoki naiden*, the fifth (yellow) dragon king has forty-eight children. This list partly overlaps with the list of seventy-five children in the *Dodokujin kyō*. Many of the names are (partly) in kana and cannot easily be identified.

as the miraculous Jīvaka.[102] May you be rich in descendants and untouched by the ravages of war. May there be no stumbling in the morning, no scares in the evening, and no commotion during the day. May you be contented and well protected.

I scatter offerings and bow with reverence.

Jōō 承応 2 (1653), propitious day
Jizōin 地蔵院

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102. Jīvaka (Kiba Henja 耆婆変者) was a disciple of Śākyamuni and legendary physician.

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