

Linguistic Cubism

— A Singularity of Pluralism in the Sannō Cult —

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“A text is not a text unless it hides from the first comer, from the first glance, the laws of its composition and the rules of its games.”

[Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 65.]

Generally described as the center of the Tendai school of Buddhism in Japan, Mt. Hiei has also been for much of its history the locus of interactions between Buddhist propositions and the cultural discourse issued from Hie Taisha 日吉大社, the Shinto shrines located at its foot.¹ Toward the middle of the Heian period these interactions gave birth to a system of Shinto-Buddhist combinations known as the Sannō cultic system, which formed one of the philosophical and ritual cores of Mt. Hiei throughout the medieval period, and served as the basis for the deification of the Tokugawa shoguns at Nikkō during the Edo period.²

The purpose of the following presentation is to attempt to throw light onto one corner (*hitosumi wo terasu* 一隅を照らす, as the Tendai saying goes), by postulating that one of the rationales for these combinations was expressed first in linguistic games such as puns and metaphors, and then in graphic puzzles grounded in complex meditational techniques described in several Tendai philosophical texts. I will then show how this rationale found what might be its ideal expression in the composition and structure of the *Hie*

¹ Hie Taisha, also sometimes but improperly known as Hiyoshi Taisha, refers to seven major shrines conceived of as three units and located at the eastern foot of Mt. Hiei, near Sakamoto. The term Taisha indicates that the shrines were the object of imperial sponsorship. Hie is the ancient name of the mountain; it was “sinicized” as Hiei in the ninth century.

² A number of studies on particular aspects of the phenomenon have been made by Japanese scholars, although there is no single systematic historical or phenomenological treatment. See for example Murayama 1973, pp. 303-21; Kageyama 1971, pp. 18-69; Kageyama and Murayama 1970, pp. 129-40; more recently, see Sakamoto 1983, vol. 29, and Kageyama 1983.

hongî 日吉本記, a collection of poems of the Kamakura period (Hanawa 1975, 2, pp. 707-49).

The *Hie hongî* belongs to a large body of writings subsumed under the term *kiroku* 記録 ("documents"), a set of oral transmissions which came to be organized, set into writing, and commented upon during the medieval period by scholarly sacerdotal lineages known globally as *Kike* 記家 ("Chroniclers").³ In investigating the historical/intellectual background which was a precondition for the type of structure discovered by chance as sustaining the *Hie hongî*, it soon became evident that inquiries needed to be made concerning the world of secret oral transmissions (*kuden-hōmon* 口伝法門) pertaining to the doctrine of innate awakening (*hongakuron* 本覚論) which evolved in Mt. Hiei's esoteric circles. Since it became clear that the *Hie hongî*'s framework of interpretation was a crucial matter, the following discussion will develop in three separate but interrelated directions: the combinations between Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples on Mt. Hiei which formed the basis for the development of the Sannō cult; the philosophical framework which sustained meditational techniques of the Tendai tradition; and the notions and practices related to the doctrine of innate awakening which yield the key to the poems of the *Hie hongî* in particular, and to the Sannō cult in general.

The Combinatory Structure of the Sannō Cult

In its Japanese context Tendai Buddhism was not merely a set of propositions issued from Chinese interpretations of the *Lotus Sūtra* and further developed by a variety of Japanese thinkers; it was so quickly pervaded by esotericism that the study of Tendai is, properly, the study of *taimitsu* 台密 (Tendai esotericism as opposed to *tōmitsu* 東密, its Shingon counterpart), and of the various currents which either sustained or opposed it. However, it is less known that Tendai was also genetically linked to various aristocratic lineages and therefore to specific sociopolitical and economic practices and ideology, and it is in that particular context that Shinto shrines came to play a crucial role in the evolution of Tendai as a cultural system. Although people who became monks were supposed to leave the world and shed all secular assumptions and categories, in Japan those who were born in aristocratic lineages retained their status and gained high ecclesiastic positions immediately. Therefore, the notions of lineage tended to supersede doctrinal statements, and the insistence on lineage was reinforced by the socially grounded dimensions of cults in Shinto shrines. This was true of Mt. Hiei, as will be suggested in a few moments, but it was also true of many other a "Tendai"

³ The Kike lineages of Mt. Hiei have been the object of a pioneering study by Kuroda 1985a, pp. 505-23. My translation of this article should appear in the near future in Tanabe 1987, submitted to the University of Hawaii Press.

site of cult, such as Hiko, Dazaifu Tenmangū, Sefuri and Kunisaki in Kyūshū, Kumano in Kii, Nikkō in the Kantō area, and many others (Grapard 1986, 1987b). And it was true, of course, of non-Tendai sites of cult as well.

In opposition to the traditional conception of Mt. Hiei as a sacred mountain seen geographically from Kyoto, it is proper to view the mountain from the east, on the side of Lake Biwa, for it is then and only then that one realizes how Mt. Hiei was really organized and experienced. The Hie Shrines stand at the foot of Mt. Hiei between the sacred hill Ushio and the city of Sakamoto, which used to be the *monzenchō* 門前町 of Mt. Hiei and is still today the location of many Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines directly related to the structure of Mt. Hiei.⁴

The Hie Shrines are dedicated to seven *kami* enshrined in three distinct groups of shrines referred to, sometimes, as the Three Sages, or Seven Upper Shrines of Hie in contradistinction to Seven Middle and Seven Lower Shrines. The first group of four shrines, known as the Eastern Shrine, is dedicated to two *kami*, Ōyamagui-no-mikoto and Kamo-tamayori-hime-no-mikoto, residing in the two shrines at the top of the sacred hill during the winter and in the two shrines set at the foot of the hill in summer. These four shrines apparently form the oldest element of the Hie Shrines. The *Kojinki* states that the *kami* enshrined in the area is a certain Yamasue-no-mikoto, son of Ōtoshigami, itself an important divinity in agriculture (Kurano 1969, p. 110). Kageyama Haruki, a scholar of the history of Mt. Hiei, suggests that Yamasue-no-mikoto is the combination of a male and female aspect worshiped separately under the name of Ōyamagui and Kamo-tamayori (1971, p. 18).

In 715 one of Nakatomi no Kamatari's grandsons, Fujiwara no Muchimaro, established another shrine there, though we do not know which *kami* he dedicated it to. He is also the author of a Chinese poem about Mt. Hiei contained in the *Kaifūsō* anthology (Kojima Noriyuki 1964, p. 168–69), and it seems reasonable to suggest that the shrine in question might be the following one. This second shrine, known as the Western Shrine or “Ōmiya,” is said to have been established when the capital was moved in 667 from the Yamato area to Ōtsu on the shores of Lake Biwa by the future Emperor Tenji and his close aide Nakatomi no Kamatari, and might have been moved to its present location in 715. The *kami* enshrined there is Ōnamuchi-no-mikoto, which is none other than Ōmononushi-no-kami, the *kami* of the Ōmiwa Shrine in Yamato and the son of Susano-wo-no-mikoto. It was worshiped originally in this area by the Kamo lineage whose territory that was; the *kami* of the two

⁴ The term *monzenchō*, meaning literally “gate-front-city” is generally used to refer to communities which developed around major sites of cult in Japan, and which came to be governed at all levels of their existence by the shrines and the temples. Sakamoto is a famous case of the phenomenon, but so were Nara and a few other cities which used to have a sacred status before the Meiji period. See Kawasaki 1980.

Kamo Shrines in Kyoto are therefore directly related to parts of the original structure of Hie. Ōmononushi was worshiped as a protector of imperial residences and, by extension, of the imperial lineage; it was invoked whenever a new imperial residence was constructed. This is what happened in 667, and the shrine might have been moved to Hie in 715 after the Ōtsu capital was abandoned. The event was of importance because it meant that a *kami* of great stature, closely linked to the imperial house, was now enshrined in what had been before simply a small agricultural community. Had it not been for the presence of this shrine, there would have been little possibility that the group of shrines be sponsored during the Heian period by the imperial lineage.⁵ This sponsorship was due in part to the fact that many of the leading prelates of the Buddhist temples of Mt. Hiei were of Fujiwara birth, and to the fact that most emperors were also of Fujiwara blood. It was due also to the fact that a shrine had been established at Hie by a grandson of Nakatomi no Kamatari, the human ancestor of the Fujiwara lineage. In other words, the group of four shrines subsumed under the name "Eastern Shrine" represents the local roots of the cult, whereas the "Western Shrine" represents an elite tradition.

The sixth shrine, called Usa-no-miya, is dedicated to a *kami* called Tagori-hime-no-mikoto, but the name Usa reveals that it is Hachiman that is worshiped there. This Shrine, together with the Eastern and Western Shrines, forms the triple core of the complex cult which developed slowly during the Heian period.

The seventh shrine, Shirayama, is dedicated to the *kami* of Hakusan, Shirayama-hime-no-mikoto. It is unclear why that *kami* came to be enshrined at the foot of Mt. Hiei.

Such are the seven upper shrines of Hie, the focal point of what was to become a vast complex. Indeed, the development of Mt. Hiei's Buddhist institutions above and behind these shrines had direct influence on the importance attached to the shrines not only by the ecclesiastic elite of the Buddhist temples, but by the Kyoto court at large. Grounded in both local and elite native traditions, the Shinto shrines of Hie came to be seen as the protectors of the Buddhist institutions of Mt. Hiei with which they gradually evolved systematic relations at all levels of their existence. They ultimately came to be seen as protectors of the imperial lineage and its surrounding aristocratic houses. As time passed many other shrines were added, and one spoke of the seven upper shrines in contradistinction to the seven middle and seven lower shrines, then in contradistinction to the eighty-seven shrines of Hie, and later to the one-hundred-and-eight inner shrines of Hie and one-hundred-and-

⁵ The Hie Shrines became part of the System of Twenty-two Shrine-temple multiplexes sponsored by the imperial lineage in 1027. On this topic of importance see my "Institution, ritual and ideology: the twenty-two shrines system of Heian Japan," forthcoming in *History of Religions*, University of Chicago Press.

eight outer shrines. An immense ecclesiastic organization developed around those shrines and around the many temples to which they were attached.

In order to penetrate Japanese culture and to be assimilated by it, Buddhism needed to interpret the nature of divinities other than its own in such manner that they might fit its cosmography and cosmology, and that it thus be able to offer a comprehensive interpretation of the world. The *Lotus Sūtra's* theory of hypostasis (*honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹) played a central role in that process of interpretation, with the result that the Japanese soon came to conceive of their own *kami* as local manifestations of buddhas and bodhisattvas (Grapard 1987a). More precisely, each *kami* of a specific shrine — at Hie and other places — was associated with a particular buddha or bodhisattva worshiped in the Buddhist temples located in the vicinity of the shrines, and these associated entities came to be worshiped either separately or jointly.

Meanwhile, the temples on top Mt. Hiei came to be organized under a triple umbrella symbolized by the main objects of cult located in the leading temple of each compound, and the *kami* of the three main shrines of Hie were associated with the buddhas symbolizing these units of Mt. Hiei. Thus, the Western Compound symbolized by Śākyamuni (*Shaka nyorai*) was associated with the *kami* of the Western Shrine, Ōnamuchi. The Eastern Compound symbolized by Bhaiṣajyaguru (*Yakushi-nyorai*) was associated with the four *kami* of the Eastern Shrine. And the Yokawa Compound symbolized by Amitābha (*Amida-nyorai*) was associated with the *kami* of the Usa Shrine. This process of association was slow, and for a long time the *kami* were still thought of as separate. However, as the sacerdotal elites of the temples took control of the shrines, the associations took more importance and the need for a global rationale came to be felt. Toward the end of the Heian period and throughout the following Kamakura and Muromachi periods a number of texts offering this rationale were composed, with the result that the associated *kami* and buddhas came to be seen as a single but complex multi-layered entity, to which the name Sannō (Mountain King) was given. The term Sannō is of Chinese origin and was used to refer to the gods protecting Mt T'ien-t'ai. The reason why the three compounds of Mt. Hiei were symbolized by Shaka, Yakushi, and Amida is that the main temple of Mt T'ien-t'ai, the Kuo-ch'ing ssu 国清寺 (where Saichō studied), is dedicated to this unusual triad (Tokiwa 1938, pp. 439–59).

The association of the seven shrines with the compounds of Mt. Hiei is generally attributed to Saichō, but this is highly improbable; another tradition attributing it to Ennin (794–864) seems hardly more plausible, if only because Mt. Hiei did not become a major institution before Ryōgen (912–985). And the Hie Shrines were included into the Twenty-two Multiplexes system in 1023 or 1031, precisely around the time Shinto shrines and Buddhist

temples were conceived of as single semantic and administrative units in various parts of the country. There is no space here to describe the type of vast administration which evolved around Mt. Hiei's shrine-temple multiplex; suffice it to say that by the end of the Heian period both Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples were conceived of as interdependent units at the level of philosophy, politics, and ritual (see McMullin 1985, Kuroda 1980 and 1985b).

This interdependence is well-expressed in the documents of the early Kamakura period, particularly in a text entitled *Yōtenki* 耀天記, dated 1223 (see Okada 1979). According to this text, Śākyamuni dispatched Mahākāśyapa, and the bodhisattvas Sūryaprabha (*Nikkō*, "sunlight") and Candraprabha (*Gakkō*, "moonlight") to China, where they were reborn respectively as Lao-tzu, Confucius, and Hui-hai. Then, Śākyamuni would have said:

I hereby announce my intention to appear in Japan under the form of Sannō at Mt. Hiei in order to relieve the sufferings of all living beings for this lifetime and for all lives to come, and in order to protect the Supreme Teachings of the Global School of Tendai. However, before this may happen I ask of all of you disciples that you appear in Japan in the form of as many *kami*. You will make of Japan a place where transcendence is respected and omnipresent, and instill in everyone faith in and awe of the *kami*. Only then shall I soften my radiance and manifest myself as a *kami*.

Thus, for the first time the Sun of the Buddha appeared and cast its light upon the high peaks, and the sweet nectar of His teaching nourished the roots of potentiality of the Great Awakening for all. Thereupon, directing His steps toward the Deer Park He expounded the *Āgamas*, gave the teachings to the Five Bhikṣus and set in motion the Wheel of the Law, uttering the Four Noble Truths. Thereafter, in different places He turned to the followers of the Four Doctrines, and the sun gradually lit the entire plain (Hanawa 1975, 2, p. 610).

In another section the text offers the following:

It is stated in one of the Chinese Classics that the term *shen* 神 means "essential energy of the sage." In spite of this general use, in our country this term specifically refers to Sannō. The reasons for this are as follows. A long time ago, after this country had been ruled by the Seven Generations of Heavenly *kami* and the Five Generations of Earthly *kami*, the august solar *kami* Amaterasu manifested herself in the two shrines at Ise. Uniting these two shrines she granted her protection to the hundred rulers and to all people of this land. Then, establishing the *kami* of Kamo, Kasuga, Matsuo, and Sumiyoshi, she let them take possession of the land at the four corners and protect the residence of the ruler, thus benefiting everyone. As a consequence, some have become accustomed to think and say that "Japan is a land of *kami*."

People utter such statements but fail to know the original intention of the Buddha. The Tathāgata, endowed with profound compassion . . . knew that, were it not for his formulation of the vow to save all living

beings, no buddha, no bodhisattva, no divine ruler would have been able to mingle their radiance with the dust and take possession of the sacred spaces by erecting jeweled boundaries and thus lead everyone to salvation (2, p. 619).

In other words, the *Yōtenki* suggests that the association of various buddhas and *kami* was in essence a political phenomenon, and so it was indeed. But this is a topic best set aside for the moment; we should turn our attention to the ways in which these associations were expressed. Since the associations' purpose was to suggest an identity of character between apparently dissimilar divine entities and cultural discourses, these associations were expressed through the medium of linguistic associations grounded in puns or metaphors, but also in simple mental associations, as in the following case drawn from the *Yōtenki*:

The Chinese have never been aware of exactly which divinity corresponded to which buddha or bodhisattva. In Japan however, many *kami* in each province and village own the land and protect it, as can be inferred from the establishment of boundaries and the erection of sacred gates. According to the *Procedures of the Engi Era* there are 3122 *kami* in this country. . . . Each is endowed with an Original Nature (*honji*) that is either a buddha or a bodhisattva of the past. We are secure in our knowledge that the Tathāgata Śākyamuni is the Original Nature of the *kami* Ōnamuchi-no-mikoto for the following reason: a long time ago the Reverend Kyōmyō, Abbot of the Daijō-in of Mt. Hiei, addressed this request to Ōnamuchi-no-mikoto: "Reveal your Original Nature!" Whereupon the *kami* answered with the following revelation:

"In this space and for an incommensurable amount of time I shall benefit all living beings."

Now, in the Devadatta chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* we find the following praise of the Buddha's vow to save all living beings:

"O most excellently wise, most courageous and vigorous,
You have converted and conveyed to salvation an incalculable
multitude.

Now this great assembly

And I myself have all seen you

Setting forth the doctrine of the true marks,

Laying open the Dharma of the One Vehicle,

Broadly guiding multitudinous living beings,

And enabling them quickly to achieve bodhi" (see Hurvitz 1976,
p. 199).

If we consider this passage in the light of the revelation uttered by the *kami*, we understand that no other buddha or bodhisattva is endowed with a compassion as large as Śākyamuni's. . . . The Reverend Kyōmyō grasped the hidden relationship between the utterance of the *kami* and this passage of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Consequently the Original Nature was revered in accordance with its elevation, while its hypostasis as a *kami* was more and more exalted (2, p. 610–11).

This technique of association was repeatedly used in the vast majority of texts of the medieval period to demonstrate the fundamental non-twoness of *kami* and buddhas or bodhisattvas, and suggested a need for systematic playful comparison between what might have otherwise been antagonistic cultural systems since a hierarchy was established, at the bottom of which the Shinto *kami* found themselves relegated. As time passed, these plays became ever more intricate; they involved, more than simple association, phonetic and graphic games whose purport was to call for depth-interpretations beyond simple appearances. Here are two other examples taken from the *Yōtenki*:

The Eastern and Western Shrines are Yin and Yang parents who gave birth to the *kami* Tagorihime which is also known as Shōshinji. The name Shōshinji is actually made of three terms: the term *shō* 聖 refers to the essential energy of the Sage, while the terms *shin-ji* 眞子 (true child) are based on the following divine utterance:

The Eastern and Western Shrines descended from Heaven, the first in order to prepare everyone for the realization of buddhahood, and the second in order to cure the ills caused by evil acts and passions. As their Sage True Child (Shōshinji) I shall guide living beings and lead them to the Pure Land.

Thus this *kami* appeared as the true child of his parents. Moreover, the other children of these Yin and Yang parents are manifestations of the Five Elements which softened their radiance and mingled with the dust in order to save everyone (2, p. 619).

Yet another example of paronomasia based on word-slicing for religious purposes is the following:

Priestesses are called *miko*, a term written in this shrine with graphs meaning August Child, because they serve the function of calling upon the compassion of Śākyamuni and Bhaiṣajyaguru, who appeared originally as Yin and Yang parents. Here is how this developed: in the past, a certain Jichi-in lived on the mountain. His knowledge had no boundaries. One day he gave the following instructions to a woman who lived in Kitsuji:

“Go home and become a servant to Sannō. At the time of making offerings, you will begin an invocation with the catalpa bow which will enable you to guess the thoughts of someone without looking directly at that person. When you sound the string of the bow Amitābha will come from the Pure Land, enter your mouth and tell you the thoughts and requests of those people.”

And so we know that the shrines, priestesses (*miko* 巫) are august children (*mi-ko* 御子) possessed by Amitābha (2, p. 619).

One might be tempted to interpret these games as popular or folk etymology, but there is considerable evidence to warrant more caution not only within the Japanese context and that of Hie in particular, but elsewhere as well. In his interesting study on ritual and writing in the Egyptian context, Carleton

Hodge wrote that “in Arabic literature there arose a disdain for paronomasia similar to that in Western culture. Hamori, who discusses — and defends — an Arabic poet guilty of its use (Abu Tamman), also treats of the decline of the pun. A quotation from him forms a fitting conclusion to our digression on ancient Near Eastern paronomasia: ‘Punning is considered silly or trivial in a culture that is alien to the magical properties of language, because a pun works precisely by linking two unrelated objects of experience by the ostensible logic of their phonetic shapes, the logic of a myth’ ” (Hodge 1975, p. 338). There is little doubt that within the limits of the episteme which dominated medieval Japanese culture, language was thought not only to have magical properties, but to also be structured in such manner that its depth-interpreters were able to reveal the true essences it constantly tried to hide from the first glance. However, as systematic punning evolved in the context of magico-religious texts, less importance was given to phonetic games and growing status was granted to graphic and visual deconstruction. This is clearly the case in the following passage of the *Yōtenki*:

Monkeys closely resemble human beings. That is why five hundred monkeys realized the Mind of Awakening simply because they lived on the Peak of the Numinous Eagle. . . . There is also the case of the monkey who opened the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and chanted it, whereupon a woodcutter took it to an emperor and thus initiated the propagation of esoteric Buddhism. . . . In Japan, the monkey who unearthed a sweet potato in Takao and offered it to Kōbō Daishi is famous enough. . . . These are the reasons why the divine entity Sannō took possession of the monkey and made it its messenger. Monkeys dwell in trees; when adding to the left side of the graph usually read *kami* the element meaning “tree,” the term read *sakaki* 榊 is produced, which explains why that tree is used in rituals and offerings at Mt. Hiei. As long as Sannō is present in the cultic center, the awesome power of all other *kami* will remain manifest. When Sannō decides to extinguish its radiance, it will be time for all other *kami* to return to their respective Pure Lands. As long as the monkeys remain around the shrines, there will be no such danger. When the *kami* leave, so will the monkeys (2, pp. 612–14).

These graphic puns are based on yet another pun; priests of the Hie Shrines, who took care of the sacred monkeys, could not help but infer from the very orthograph of the word *kami* 神 deeper insights into the nature of pre-established harmonies: the graph read *kami* consists of two elements, the left part being a radical meaning altar, and the right part being a graph which, when taken alone, indicates the monkey as a theriomorphic emblem in the zodiac. Thus decoding the mysteries of graphic structures, the Hie priests came to the conclusion that the monkey was indeed a “sign” of the absolutely transcendental character of the *kami* they worshiped; the term *kami* was conceived to be the very name of the divine entity they worshiped at Hie, and

all other *kami* of Japan were seen as its manifestations. This practice unleashed a plethora of associations: the seven shrines were then associated with the seven Buddhas of the past, with the seven stars of Ursa Major, with the seven orifices of the human head and so on, thus suggesting the microcosmic character of Mt. Hiei.

These puzzles are a mere introduction to the elaborate graphic games which are the object of this study. However, before approaching them we still must turn our attention to the Tendai philosophical considerations which form the basis of the *Hie hongji* poems, and this in order to attempt to demonstrate that encoding and decoding practices were closely related to specific discursive meditational techniques.

Philosophical Propositions and Meditational Techniques

One of the fundamental propositions of Tendai philosophy is known as the Triple Truth and refers to three interpretive strategies: the basic demonstration that all dharmas are empty of proper nature (*kū* 空); the demonstration that all dharmas can also be seen from the point of view of temporary existence (*ke* 仮); and a final demonstration to the effect that the first two propositions are identical (*chū* 中: middle). However, Tendai philosophy insists on the fact that these three strategies are conditional upon one another and thus stand in a relation of mutual identity; it therefore refers to these three as a “three (relative) truths (but) one single (absolute) truth” (*sandai ichijitsu* 三諦一実).

A second proposition of consequence is a classic statement known as *ichinen sanzen* 一念三千, the “trichilocosm in a single thought,” which refers to the notion that each and every aspect of thought contains all possible worlds, for the simple reason that all three thousand worlds depend upon thought for their existence and are thus thoroughly interdependent: where there is one, there necessarily is the other (see Hurvitz 1960-62, p. xii).

Chih-i then applied these philosophical propositions to his conception of meditation and unified them in the term *isshin sangan* 一心三觀, the “Single-minded Threefold Contemplation,” which appears in the *Makashikan* 摩訶止觀 (Chn. *Mo ho chih kuan*; T. 46, 1-140) and is further developed in his later commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra* and on the *Vimalakīrti-nirveda Sūtra* (Sekiguchi 1975, pp. 217-52).

The main text describing the philosophical underpinnings of the techniques of meditation proposed by the T'ien-t'ai school is the *Mo ho chih kuan* attributed to Chih-i. This document is the Mahāyāna equivalent of Buddhaghosa's *Path of Purification (Visuddhi-magga)*, which offers the basic techniques used in Buddhism to develop pacification (*samatha*, *shih* 止) and introspection (*vipāśyanā*, *kuan* 觀) on the basis of wisdom. The central

difference between the two documents is the philosophical foundation proper to Mahāyāna Buddhism, i.e., emptiness, which looms large in the *Makashikan*. Although it is an important component of the *Path of Purification*, wisdom receives in the Mahāyāna context the name of “Perfection of Wisdom” and rests upon the logic developed by Nāgārjuna.⁶

An element common to these various Tendai philosophical propositions is the insistence on the unity of three terms. In the case of the Single-minded Threefold Contemplation we are told that the doctrinal issues (*kyōmon* 教門) allow one to penetrate the mysteries of contemplation (*kanmon* 觀門), which in turn allow one to penetrate the realm of wisdom (*chimon* 智門); this in turn offers entry to the abstract world of principle (*rimon* 理門), but this world is said to pervade the others. Therefore, here again it can be proposed that the world of principle unifies three separate perspectives (Sekiguchi 1966, p. 314). This insistence on the unification of three perspectives into a single element in the term *isshin sangan* is treated at length in the *Makashikan*. According to Chih-i “that which is illumined is called the triple truth; that which is produced is the triple contemplation; and that which is contemplated is called the triple wisdom” (Sekiguchi 1975, p. 242). On the basis of this relation between three terms the practitioner, meditating on the inconceivability of the trichilocosm in a single thought, searches for the marvelous principle of the true aspect of all phenomena in order to produce the true mind of awakening and, by transcending the opposition between ignorance and the nature of essence, thus settles in perfect peacefulness. However, in order to reach such exalted state it is still necessary to wipe away all remaining obstacles of attachment that may be produced by these practices, and four new techniques are introduced at this point in the *Makashikan*. The fourth technique is called “removal of obstacles” (*hahōhen* 破法遍) and consists of three stages of which the last one, “verticality and horizontality subsumed in a single thought,” is treated at length in the text. As a matter of fact, it is the most detailed of the ten techniques discussed in the *Makashikan*, and covers as many as 130 of the 690 pages of the modern edition.

The first step of the removal of obstacles consists in a threefold effort called “vertical judgment”; this entails a “penetration of emptiness from the perspective of the temporary character of all dharmas,” a “penetration of the temporary character from the perspective of emptiness,” and thirdly a synthesis of the two whereby one discovers that “this triple contemplation is truly present in a single thought and reveals the oneness of all that is threefold” (Sekiguchi 1966, 2, p.326–3, p. 72).

The second step of the removal of obstacles consists in an eightfold effort called “horizontal judgment;” this entails a systematic application of the eight

⁶ My preferred treatment of the philosophy of emptiness in the East Asian context is Robinson 1967.

negations of Nāgārjuna to all objects of thought. The eight negations are: not-produced, not-destroyed, not-constant, non-inconstant, not-one, not-[not-one], not-coming, and not-going (Sekiguchi 1966, 2, pp. 73-78). Nowhere is it explained why one type of analysis must be called horizontal and the other, vertical; I suspect that this opposition has its origins in ritual.

Having mastered the breadth of the horizontal analysis and the depth of the vertical analysis, the practitioner is then ready to enter the more subtle realm of "non-opposition of verticality and horizontality" (Sekiguchi 1966, 2, pp. 78-84). There all oppositions, including the opposition between opposed and not-opposed, marvelously disappear, and all the painfully gained constructs vanish, finally revealing their original character of emptiness and thus disclosing the nature of truth. Such disclosure "reveals the true body of essence, which is composed of purity and permanent bliss and from which birth, aging, and dying are absent" (Sekiguchi 1966, 2, p. 81).

One way in which the emphasis was laid on the unity of three aspects was to consider the geography of Mt. Hiei as the natural embodiment of such principles and thus provide a sacred geography whose organization reflected a certain type of realization of Tendai doctrine. Although this topic is too complex to be discussed at length here, it is worth mentioning that a text as early as 1260, the *Enryaku-ji gokoku engi*, postulated that the institutional structure of Mt. Hiei was to be conceived of as representing the embodiment of the following principles: the three main Buddhas of the three compounds on top the mountain corresponded to the philosophy of time which dominated at the time; namely, Śākyamuni corresponded to the period of Correct Law (*shōbō* 正法), Bhaiṣajyaguru corresponded to the period of Copied Law (*zōhō* 象法), while Amitābha corresponded to the period of Decline of the Law (*mappō* 末法). It ensued that people were supposed to enter the three centers with a related mind set. Furthermore, each of the three compounds was associated with specific maṇḍalas and with one of the three basic Tendai propositions in the following manner. The eastern compound was related to the Diamond maṇḍala and to the median perspective, while the western compound was related to the Womb maṇḍala and to the temporary perspective. The Yokawa compound was related to the *Susiddhikara Sūtra* and to the perspective of emptiness. Each of these was then associated with one of the three bodies of the Buddha, with past, present and future, with the great trichilocosm, and with the single-minded threefold contemplation. The three main shrines of Hie were associated with the three compounds, and the character of the combined divine entity Sannō evolved such complexity that it could be expressed only in a web of metaphors (Hanawa 1975, 27, pp. 421-26).

The reason why it was necessary to take this short detour through the field of meditative techniques is that horizontality and verticality are integral

and fundamental components not only of the geography of Mt. Hiei and of the hierarchical relationship between Shinto and Buddhism, but of the writing system in China and Japan as well. Furthermore, verticality and horizontality are the essential components of the graphs with which Sannō is written: 山王. This phenomenon finds full expression in the secret oral transmissions related to the doctrine of innate awakening.

The Doctrine of Innate Awakening

The apex of the world of oral transmissions on Mt. Hiei, particularly of those transmissions related to the nature of the associations of various buddhas and bodhisattvas to the *kami*, consisted in philosophical speculations concerning the topic of innate awakening (*hongaku* 本覺). The term appears originally in the *Kongōzanmaikyō* 金剛三昧經 (T. 9, 365–74) and *Ninnōhannyakyō* 仁王般若經 (T. 8, 825–34, 834–45) both apocryphs, but it seems to have started its career in the *Awakening of Faith* (*Daijōkishinron*, T. 32, 575–83, 583–91) attributed to Aśvaghosa, in which the following is stated:

Since the essence of mind is grounded in *dharmakāya*, it is to be called original enlightenment (*hongaku*). Why? Because original enlightenment indicates [the essence of mind (a priori)] in contradistinction to [the essence of mind in] the process of actualization of enlightenment (*shikaku*); this process is none other than [the process of integrating] the identity with original enlightenment (Hakeda 1967, p. 37).

In this particular context the term seems to be closely related to the notions of *tathāgata-garbha* 如来藏 (“Matrix of the Thus-Come”) and buddha-nature. However, T’ien-t’ai speculations seem to have been laden with elements issued from the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* and, in the case of Japan, to have been colored by speculations issued from the context of esoteric Buddhism. Indeed, in Japan the term was fully discussed by Kūkai in his treatment of the *Shakumaka’enron* 釈摩訶衍論:

Absolutely all living beings, from the time of no-beginning up to this very moment, are characterized by innate awakening, which is never discarded (Tada 1973, p. 506).

He further discussed the term in his *Jūjūshinron* 十住心論 and in his *Kongōchōkyō kaidai* 金剛頂經開題 in ways such that it is difficult to separate the Tendai interpretations appearing in the early Heian period, such as the *Chū hongaku san* 註本覺讚 attributed to Ryōgen 良源 (912–985), from Kūkai’s views. But the term had the most success in the context of the secret oral transmissions which evolved in various circles on Mt. Hiei, starting in the first half of the 11th century with Shōhan 勝範 (996–1077). Most of these secret oral transmissions were put in writing from the second half of the 12th century onwards, beginning with Shōshin’s 証真 *Endaragishū* 円多羅義集 dated 1165 and attributed to Enchin; these transmissions flourished in the

second half of the fourteenth century.

On the basis of the proposition that passions and awakening are not antinomial, the doctrine of innate awakening declared that people were fully awakened to begin with, and offered formulas such as "Life and death are in fact a marvelous function of mind; being and non-being are the true aspects of Innate Awakening"; "Life and death share the same substance; emptiness and being stand in a relation of non-twoness." Statements such as these sent someone like Dōgen scurrying to China because he could not understand the relationship of that philosophy to the need for practice; but it led others to an ecstasy in which the principle of non-duality was seen as the ultimate message of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

William Lafleur has shown that the doctrine of innate awakening was used with a certain specificity in the Japanese context and provided serious doctrinal weight to the view that the natural world had soteric characteristics (1973). But he did not pay enough attention, perhaps, to the possibility that this doctrine's success was due to the fact that it was held to be but a mere Buddhist, authoritative restatement of notions long held in Japan. Indeed, Japanese scholars agree that one of the main factors responsible for the renewal of interest in the native tradition in the late Heian and early Kamakura period was the spread of that doctrine, and one is bound to misinterpret the Japanese understanding of the doctrine without specific reference to the pre-Buddhist tradition. The term *hongaku* used in scholarly Buddhist circles was quickly translated in related circles as *moto no satori* or *moto no hotoke*; it is unthinkable that terms that did not resonate immediately in the native tradition would have been translated into Japanese. And so it is that Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114-1204) could confidently propose in his *Korai fūtaishō* that "the deep way of poetry is contained in the *Makashikan*" (Minemura 1964, pp. 103-25), probably because he found in Buddhism an adequate rendition of principles that he felt were essentially Japanese. In any case, the doctrine of innate awakening not only led the Japanese to thoroughly reconsider the nature of their *kami*, but also to reconsider and reinterpret the nature of the relation between these *kami* and the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna pantheon. Up until that time, the *kami* had been thought to be lesser manifestations of the buddhas, but after the introduction of the philosophy of innate awakening they were considered to be equal in essence, and even came to be seen as the original nature of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Uttered first in the secrecy of the oral transmissions of Mt. Hiei, these propositions caused remarkable developments in the intellectual history of that mountain, and of Japan in general.⁷

⁷ The philosophical basis of the reformulation of the relative position of *kami* and buddhas as found in the texts of the doctrine of innate awakening is Buddhist and yet was used by Yoshida Kanetomo to show the superiority of Shinto over Buddhism, in his *Myōbōyōshū* 名法要集. My translation of this important medieval text is contained in my *The Protocol of the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History*, submitted to the University of California Press.

It is reported that the documents relating the secret oral transmissions of Mt. Hiei form 20% of all Tendai documents held in the Eizan Library (Kojima Michimasa 1976, p. 284). Most of these oral transmissions concern systematic interpretations of the *Lotus Sūtra* as that scripture might be relevant to the definition of the *kami*. Hazama Jikō has shown that one of the main texts in that body of transmissions, the *Hokekyō bonbon kuden* 法華經品品句伝 separates the *Lotus Sūtra* into the two traditional parts of *honmon* 本門 and *jakumon* 迹門, but that the *jakumon* part, which describes the Buddha as the manifestation of a higher principle, in fact expounds the doctrine of the Single-minded Threefold Contemplation (see Kojima Fumiyasu 1974, p. 202). It is in documents related to the philosophy of innate awakening that the terms Sannō and *isshin sangan* came to be associated in structurally significant manner.

The text presented below is drawn from the *Ichiryū sōden hōmon kenmon* 一流相伝法門見聞, a document attributed to Shinga 心賀 (1329–?), who resided at the Jōraku-in of Awataguchi in Kyoto. The term *ichiryū* (“unique lineage”) is said to correspond to the Eshin-ryū, a lineage of oral transmissions originating with Eshin 惠心 (Genshin, 942–1017), one of Ryōgen’s disciples, and opposed to the Danna-ryū 檀那流 created by Kakuun 覚運, another of Ryōgen’s disciples. The Eshin lineage in time split into four main branches among which the Sugiu lineage, to which Shinga belonged, properly originated with Kōgaku 皇覚 (1135–?) and — as usual in ecclesiastic circles of aristocratic birth — transmitted its doctrine secretly. Furthermore, these teachings were transmitted in that particular lineage only from father to son (*shintei* 真弟, true disciple). This lineage gained ascendancy around the middle of the thirteenth century after it was recognized by Emperor Go-Saga as the main branch of transmission of Tendai teachings because of the following incident. Shinga had been adopted because his master had only a daughter and no son. Soon thereafter a dispute arose concerning the orthodoxy of that lineage, at the end of which Shinga appeared to be victorious, and thus called his lineage “Unique” (*ichi-ryū*). Shinga would have written the following oral transmission for a certain Sonkai who resided in Musashi Province, and who subsequently revitalized Tendai studies in the Kantō region. It is in this writing that he asserted that the term Sannō must be seen in the light of the vertical and horizontal modes of interpretation developed in the *Makashikan*:

It is reported that Ajari Kyōshin 慶深 (1264–?) and others have said: “The Single-minded Threefold Contemplation was transmitted to Hui-ssu and Chih-i by Śākyamuni, (as the contents of the teachings given) in the Jeweled Stūpa with Prabhūtaratna, who achieved awakening in the distant past. The Buddha Śākyamuni now has manifested itself at the foot of Mt. Hiei as a divine entity known as Sannō. The purpose of this divine entity is to grant its protection to the practice of the Single-

minded Threefold Contemplation. The divine entity revealed the following in an oracle to Abbot Kyōmyō:

'My name consists of a horizontal stroke striking three vertical strokes, / and of one vertical stroke striking three horizontal strokes.'

Furthermore, the divinity granted an oral transmission concerning the doctrine of the Single-minded Threefold Contemplation, which is equivalent to the teaching offered in the Jeweled Stūpa. Consequently, the invocation *Namu Sannō* corresponds exactly to the Single-minded Threefold Contemplation whereby one realizes the non-singular, non-plural aspect of Reality, as well as its non-verticality and its non-horizontality.

It furthermore said: 'Absolutely all living beings are and always have been the innate awakening of the fully realized triple body of the Buddha. Reality and Sapience also, from the origins onwards, correspond fully to each other, thus forming naturally the substance of a single moment of consciousness of ours, which is the Single-minded Threefold Contemplation.'

Thus, the sounds raised by the surf, the voice of the winds, the activities of language and silence constantly reveal the actionless activity of principle of original substance. One should realize that all dharmas are nothing but buddha-dharmas, which should be interpreted to signify that this original principle is constantly manifesting itself. That is what is intimated by the oral transmission of the notion according to which there is not a single buddha that does not expound the doctrine of Essence. This doctrine is most abstruse and profound and absolutely secret. This secrecy must be upheld (Kojima Michimasa 1976, p. 202).

Kyōmyō (慶命, 965-1038), abbot of Mt. Hiei, is said to have been an ardent devotee of the *kami* worshiped in the Hie Shrines. The fact that these oral transmissions were given in the context of specific rituals and in absolute secrecy, and only between a master and his son, shows that decoding or transmitting techniques of interpretation leading to a knowledge of liberating character was regarded as a mystical activity surrounded by danger and power; this may explain why it was ritualized (Tada 1973, p. 586). The initiated meditators on the combined *kami* and buddhas of the sacred space of Mt. Hiei thus intuited a sense of the global unity of different divine entities, and transcended their differences by affirming them at the temporary level, by denying them at the empty level, and by neither affirming nor denying them at the median level in perfect anagogical interplay. The term *Sannō* ("Mountain King"), written with three vertical strokes united by a horizontal stroke, and with three horizontal strokes united by a single vertical stroke, served as further demonstration that the associations between apparently dissimilar divine entities were, more than an expedient device, in fact grounded in absolute transcendence, some kind of pre-established harmony. Reality could be seen only from a plurality of perspectives at the same time, a

plurality one might term cubist since it involves a denial of “normal” structured perception.

Henceforth, games involving the affirmation of horizontality and verticality and their ultimate denial became of the essence.

The Hie hongī

The document entitled *Hie hongī* is attributed to a certain Kenchū 謙忠, in all probability one of the Chroniclers specializing in the combinations between Shinto and Buddhism, and might have been composed around the middle of the thirteenth century, though a slightly later date seems more plausible.⁸ It is a set of forty-two “poems” composed, at first glance, in Chinese, each made up of four verses of seven words. The first time I looked at it, quite by chance on a lazy afternoon in my study, I was impressed by the banality of the poems and yet kept being puzzled by something which reminded me of Jean Starobinski’s *Les Mots sous les Mots*, a stunning analysis of Saussure’s study of anagrams in poetry (Starobinski 1971). And then I realized that, though written in the Japanese equivalent of church Latin, all poems might be read in Japanese—in which case they were palindromes: to be read from beginning to end and from end to beginning, vertically. But then it became quickly evident that all the poems might also be read horizontally, in which case what formed the first line turned out to be anagrammatic and so reveal the name of one of the *kami* of the Hie Shrines, whereas what formed the last line turned out to reveal the name of the buddha or bodhisattva associated to that *kami* in the temples at the top of Mt. Hiei. And so it became clear that, while taking quite a few liberties with prosody and syntax, these “poems” were structured according to the rule of verticality and horizontality prescribed in the *Makashikan*, and that the interplay between these two structuring modes was meant to reveal the association between specific *kami* and buddhas or bodhisattvas. However, a subsequent reading of the *Makashikan* leads me to posit that these associations are supposed to be affirmed at the level of temporary existence, denied at the level of emptiness, and that both affirmation and denial are to be transcended at the median level, in which case what is left is the unnamable essence qualified as *fukashigi* 不可思議, “undefinable by (dualistic) thought.” This last point was then confirmed by further readings in the doctrine of innate awakening, whose goal was to precisely affirm the identity of absolute and temporal, of *kami* and buddhas, and of seemingly different cultural systems. What was plural turned out to be singular, and ultimate reality could be neither vertical nor horizontal: it had to be global. These poems are puzzles which, in the very act of affirming the verticality and horizontality of their composition, in

⁸ The *Hie hongī* is available only in the edition of the *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 2. See Hanawa 1975, pp. 708–49.

法花云濟通力如是於阿僧祇劫常在摩訶山及餘諸住處

日吉本記

上七第一

載華文最神
法宿日吉字

叡山沙門謙忠

現 <small>イハレト</small>	權 <small>イハレト</small>	宮 <small>ミヤ</small>	大 <small>オホ</small>
彰 <small>イハレト</small>	化 <small>イハレト</small>	社 <small>ヤシロ</small>	裁 <small>イハレト</small>
日 <small>イハレト</small>	風 <small>イハレト</small>	最 <small>イハレト</small>	明 <small>イハレト</small>
吉 <small>イハレト</small>	涼 <small>イハレト</small>	神 <small>イハレト</small>	德 <small>イハレト</small>
照 <small>イハレト</small>	法 <small>イハレト</small>	實 <small>イハレト</small>	花 <small>イハレト</small>
遺 <small>イハレト</small>	宿 <small>イハレト</small>	我 <small>イハレト</small>	文 <small>イハレト</small>
跡 <small>イハレト</small>	應 <small>イハレト</small>	尊 <small>イハレト</small>	釋 <small>イハレト</small>

法花云我滅度後於末法中現大明神廣度衆生

fact deny them and leave the reader with a vertigo-like sensation. Vertigo is, precisely, a strong sensation in which the verticality and horizontality of the body are dangerously questioned. The same may be said of all Chinese graphs, which are combinations of horizontal and vertical strokes, the purest form of which can be found in the term Sannō, whose ideal graphic representation at the level of neither verticality nor horizontality might be a circle, as is indeed often enough the case in the Zen tradition.

To read those poems, then, is to think the intervals both within and between the words, and to think of their geometrical constructs as both existent and non-existent. Each graph and each poem, like any thought at the level of dualistic operation, is based on a geometry that is immanent to the language they use in space, a spatial organization of language which corresponds to the spatial organization of the Hiei temples vis-à-vis the Hie shrines. Each is a semiograph in the sense that it is posited, yet it is also thoroughly transparent, affirmed and yet denied. At the end of the contemplative poetical process the flux of dualistic operations is curbed, and in the ebb and flow of horizontality and verticality a vertigo heaving motionlessly upon the ocean of mind rushes forth.

As might be readily understood, these poems are thoroughly untranslatable in such manner as to reveal the anagogy induced by anagrams and palindromes; however, it may be worth providing below, for the sake of information, a word-to-word rendition of the first poem. I provide first the normal vertical reading, second the palindromic reading of the same, and finally the horizontal anagrammatic reading of the characters forming the top and bottom lines. Each of these steps is “directional” and it is only after their formal cancellation that the directions are transcended and that one is thrown beyond language (see illustration).

Vertical:

Magnificent teaching of the bright Scripture of the Lotus!
In this shrine resides the ultimate *kami* truly our own.
Hōshuku’s manifestation arouses a fresh breeze to pacify us,
Its brilliant hierophany as the *kami* of Hie reveals its traces.

Palindrome:

Remaining behind in order to reveal itself it took human form.
Dwelling in the *dharmā*, its fresh style of conversion is evident.
This revered, true and penultimate lord resides in this shrine.
The virtues of the *Lotus Sūtra* are now clear, ah how marvelous!

Top line: (from right to left)

Avatar of the Great Shrine. (*Ō-miya gongen*)

Bottom line:

Manifestation of the Revered Śākyamuni. (*Shakuson ō-jaku*).

The first seven poems of the collection are structured in the same manner; the remaining poems follow the same pattern but are not all palindromes.

Concluding Remarks

According to the *Makashikan*, Reality is actualized when the fundamental components of dualistic operations are lifted and then reasserted, but in such manner that the experience be one of anagogy. Since language is based on binary oppositions, it is the denial of language that leads to the nature of essence which is beyond all oppositions. However, such denial may occur only after the basic components have been thoroughly affirmed and analyzed in such manner as to provoke an ecstasy of appreciation of pure form. Thus language is posited as something that is at once limited by binary oppositions and yet pregnant with the power to subvert itself through point-to-point cancellation of its own constructing modes, which is not unlike what is suggested by the drawings of M.C. Escher. And the opacity of language then becomes by dialectic a transparence making Reality visible.

In a parallel manner the nature of transcendence was posited as something limited by Shinto and Buddhism, which are also pregnant with the power to lift the mind beyond all aspects, characters, and attributes. And it is only insofar as they are able to go beyond themselves that they can be affirmed. Or so, at least, do I interpret these serious games.

I would like to take this opportunity to suggest that the composition of the *Hie hongji* appears to be structurally similar to that of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Indeed, one of the reasons for which this scripture fascinated people all over East Asia for so many centuries might be based on this very fact. For the *Lotus Sūtra* is constantly promised in the text, but apparently never delivered: the Buddha is always about to preach the marvelous doctrine of the *Lotus Sūtra*, but he never gets to it. And yet we are told that the *Lotus Sūtra* has been fully expounded! Might it be that the composition of the *Lotus Sūtra* obeys one of the definitions of myth proposed by Claude Lévi-Strauss: "a virtual object projecting a real shadow"? Or that it manifests both in its structure and in the history of its interpretation what Michel Foucault has called the principle of rarefaction of discourse? Foucault wrote in *The Discourse on Language*:

I suppose, though I am not altogether sure, there is barely a society without its major narratives, told, retold and varied; formulae, texts, ritualized texts to be spoken in well-defined circumstances; things said once, and conserved because people suspect some hidden secret or wealth buried within. . . . For the time being, I would like to limit myself to pointing out that, in what we generally refer to as commentary, the difference between primary text and secondary text plays two interdependent roles. On the one hand, it permits us to create new discourses ad infinitum: the top-heaviness of the original text, its permanence, its status as discourse ever capable of being brought up to date, the multiple or hidden meanings with which it is credited, the reticence and wealth it is believed to contain, all this creates an open

possibility for discussion. On the other hand, whatever the techniques employed, commentary's only role is to say finally, what has silently been articulated deep down. It must—and the paradox is ever-changing yet inescapable—say, for the first time, what has already been said, and repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said (Foucault 1972, pp. 220–21).

The *Lotus Sūtra's* presence is therefore in its absence: it calls ceaselessly for repetition of what it hid in dimensions of its geometry. It might be proposed that it is the commentaries of the *Lotus Sūtra*, in whatever shape they took, that form the real *Lotus Sūtra*, because they all claim to say what the sūtra truly said without saying it.

The *Hie hongī* is, I believe, one commentary which suggests what the real meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra* might be. And the only commentary possible of the *Hie hongī* is one that claims to say what the poems tried to hide and at the same time reveal, *in the laws of their composition, the rules of their games*.

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