

# The Adoption of Hindu Divinities in Japan

Saroj Kumar Chaudhuri

---

## Key words

Crown Prince Shōtoku, Asukadera, *Sōgō*, *Genhanryō*, *tokudo*, Gyōgi, *jingūji*, Tado Taisha, *honji suijaku*, *shinbutsu shūgō*, *mappō*

## 1. Introduction

Early Japanese literature abounds in stories of Hindu divinities like Indra, Yama, Lakṣmī and others. A large number of sanctuaries dedicated to Hindu divinities appeared, especially, from around the Japanese middle ages. Practically every locality in Japan has Sarasvatī-affixed place names. The adoption of Hindu gods and goddesses by the Japanese constitutes an important chapter in the religious history of Japan. One interesting fact here is that even some of the dreadful spirits of Hindu mythology were deified. Three of the major factors contributing to the acceptance of Hindu divinities in Japan, viz., state-controlled Buddhism, the association of Shinto deities with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and Japanese manifestations of Indian divinities, will be discussed in this study.

## 2. State-Controlled Buddhism

### 2.1. Arrival of Buddhism

There is a distinct pattern in the proliferation of Buddhism up to China. It is that the missionaries took the initiative in spreading the religion among the masses. Royal patronage came later. Buddhism in Japan, on the other hand, started with royal patronage. *Nihon Shoki*, the first official history of Japan whose compilation was completed in 720, gives a detailed picture of the early development of Buddhism in Japan. It says that in the tenth month of the thirteenth year of the reign of Emperor Kinmei, King Seimeiō of the Korean kingdom of Kudara presented an idol of Śākyamuni and two Buddhist texts, and recommended the acceptance of Buddhism. The year corresponds to A. D. 552.<sup>(1)</sup> The emperor was very happy with the gift, and told his court to discuss the matter. The two most powerful ministers, Soga no Iname and Mononobe no Okoshi, clashed over the issue. Iname advocated acceptance saying that Buddha was worshipped in the countries of the west. Okoshi, on the other hand, insisted rejection, warning that it would invite the wrath of native deities. The idol was entrusted to Iname for worship. He converted one of his houses into a temple and installed the idol there. However, because an epidemic broke out soon after, the idol was thrown into a river and the temple was burnt down.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the ninth month of the thirteenth year of Emperor Bidatsu (584), a stone idol of Maitreya and an idol of Buddha were brought from Kudara. These idols were received by the minister Soga no Umako. A man who had previously been a monk was found in Harima. His name was Koma no Eben.<sup>(3)</sup> This man was reverted to monkhood, and three young girls were made nuns. Umako himself became a Buddhist. He erected a sanctuary in the compound of his house and installed the Maitreya idol there. When a religious service was held, a Buddha's body relic was found in the food offerings. This relic was put on an iron anvil and struck with an iron hammer. The anvil and the hammer broke into pieces, but the relic remained

unharmd. When the relic was put in water, it rose and sank as wished. Soga no Umako built another Buddhist sanctuary in another house of his. Buddhism in Japan started from here. In the second month of the fourteenth year (585), Umako built a stupa, held a Buddhist service, and placed the relic inside the stupa. Presently, Umako fell ill. A fortune teller was consulted who told that it was due to the unhappiness of Buddha whom Umako's father had worshipped. When the emperor was informed of this, Umako was told to worship Buddha whom his father had worshipped. Umako prayed to Maitreya for saving his life. At that time there was an epidemic that killed many people. In the third month of this year, Mononobe no Moriya told the emperor that the Buddhist worship by Soga no Umako had brought about the epidemic. The emperor, thereupon, banned the worship. Moriya burnt down the temple and the stupa. The idols were thrown into a river. The nuns were deprived of their monastic garments and whipped. ... In the sixth month, Umako petitioned to the emperor that his illness won't be cured without the help of Buddha. The emperor granted his request on the condition that he alone would worship Buddha. Others should not follow his example. The three nuns were returned to Umako. Umako built a new temple where the nuns were accommodated.<sup>(4)</sup>

This was the time when all the rulers of the Korean kingdoms were Buddhists. So, also, were the rulers in China. The emperor of Japan was well aware of this. Being the direct descendant of the Sun Goddess, the supreme deity of Japan, he was the custodian of the native deities. The anger of native deities was an important factor to reckon with. Thus, it was difficult for him to accept the foreign religion. But he felt the compulsion to keep pace with the times. So he entrusted the new religion to his willing minister Soga no Umako. At that time there were many Korean migrants settled in Japan. Many of them were Buddhists, but they did not carry out any monastic activities. This is testified to by the fact that Umako, as stated above, could not find a practising monk in Japan.

The above account shows that successive emperors were in favour of the new

religion. This is further corroborated by the fact that when Emperor Yōmei fell ill on the second day of the fourth month of the second year of his reign (586), he expressed his desire to become a Buddhist. As his condition deteriorated, one of his courtiers volunteered to renounce the world and become a Buddhist on his behalf. The courtier promised to make a Buddhist statue and build a temple.<sup>(5)</sup>

## 2.2. Buddhism Spreads among the Clans

The rivalry between the supporters and the opponents of Buddhism came to a head over the question of succession after the death of Emperor Yōmei. Soga no Umako, the most powerful minister took this opportunity to attack his rival Mononobe no Moriya. Among the prominent supporters of Umako, were the next emperor, Sushun, and Prince Umayado. This prince, better known by his posthumous title Crown Prince Shōtoku, played a very crucial role in propagating Buddhism in Japan.<sup>(6)</sup>

When fighting broke out, Prince Umayado, then around thirteen, was in the rear of the forces. He took a stock of the situation and realized that a defeat was also a possibility. Thereupon, he concluded that there could be no victory without a prayer. So he cut a tree, hurriedly made a carving of the four Devarājās, placed it in the hair of his head, and vowed to erect a temple of the four Devarājās if he won. Umako also vowed to erect a temple and to spread Buddhism. Moriya was killed. After the disturbance settled down, Prince Umayado built the Shitennōji Temple. Soga no Umako, on the other hand built Hōkōji Temple, better known by the name Asukadera.<sup>(7)</sup> Asukadera played a very prominent role in the early period of Buddhism.

A question may arise here why, of the many Buddhist divinities, did Prince Umayado choose the four Devarājās. The answer may be found in the *Kon-kō myō-kyō* sutra. The tenth chapter of this sutra is titled “The Four Devarājās” (Heavenly Kings). It says that if a king propagates this sutra, the four Devarājās will protect

him and his people, and bestow prosperity on the nation. Again, on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month of the first year of Empress Kōgyoku (642), Soga no Umako installed idols of Buddha, Bodhisattva and the four Devarājās in the south garden of the big temple (Asukadera Temple), invited a large number of monks and made them read the *Dai-un-gyō* sutra and other texts. On the twentieth day of the eleventh month of the fifth year of his reign (642), Emperor Tenmu sent messengers all over the country and had the *Kon-kō-myō-kyō* and the *Ninn-ō-gyō* sutras recited.<sup>(8)</sup> This shows the importance the rulers attached to the protection of king and country by the four Devarājās.

Emperor Shushun's reign was short-lived. Buddhism spread rapidly among the clans during the reign of Empress Suiko, who ascended the throne next. On the first day of the second month of the second year (594) of her reign, the empress called upon the crown prince and the minister Soga no Umako to promote Buddhism. Thereupon, the ministers and courtiers vied with each other to erect temples. A census taken in the ninth month of the thirty-second year (624) of this empress showed 46 temples, 816 monks and 569 nuns.<sup>(9)</sup> Tiles and foundation stones of temples excavated in different localities suggest that at least around two hundred temples were built by the beginning of the eighth century.<sup>(10)</sup> Needless to say, most of these temples were family chapels of the clans.

The relative importance accorded to the Asukadera Temple, the family chapel of the Soga clan, also testifies to the clan-based character of Buddhism of this period. It figures more prominently in *Nihon Shoki*, the official history of Japan, than the Shitennōji Temple founded by Crown Prince Shōtoku. For instance, on the first day of the fourth month of the thirteenth year (605), Empress Suiko invited the crown prince and all the ministers, and jointly took a vow to make two Buddha statues, one of copper and the other of cloth. The copper statue was installed in the Asukadera.<sup>(11)</sup> The importance of Asukadera remained intact even after its founder Soga no Umako's son and grandson were killed for treason in 645. This is

corroborated by the decree of the fourth month of the ninth year (680) of Emperor Tenmu saying that only two or three major temples shall be administered by government officials. Only one temple is mentioned in this decree by name, and it is the Asukadera Temple.<sup>(12)</sup>

### 2.3. State Control

Both Empress Suiko and Crown Prince Shōtoku promoted Buddhism enthusiastically. On the first day of the eleventh month of the eleventh year of Empress Suiko (603), the crown prince told all the higher officials that he was a believer in noble Buddhism. On the third day of the fourth month of the twelfth year (604), the crown prince himself prepared the famous Seventeen Article Constitution. Article 2 of the constitution says that the three treasures, viz., Buddha, dharma and saṃgha, shall be respected sincerely. The three treasures are the final goal of all living beings, and the ultimate teaching of the state. The dharma has been respected in all ages by all. Extremely evil people are few in number. If preached well, people, by and large, will follow the dharma. How can evil be corrected without the three treasures? In the seventh month of the fourteenth year (606), the empress requested the crown prince to deliver lectures on the *Shō-man-gyō*. The crown prince completed the lectures in three days. In this year, he also delivered lectures on the *Ho-ke-kyō*.<sup>(13)</sup>

One of the early steps towards state control of Buddhism came in the thirty-second year of the empress's reign (624). In that year, a monk killed his father. The shocked empress appointed two high level monk functionaries, a *sōjō* (bishop) and a *sōzu* (supervisor of monks and nuns), to investigate the conduct of monks and nuns. She also appointed a secular functionary, *hōtō* (supervisor of religion).<sup>(14)</sup>

The state stepped in further in the first year of the Taika era (645). Emperor Kōtoku appointed ten monks to train monks and nuns. Half of these monks were related to the Asukadera Temple. The other half were T'ang returnees.<sup>(15)</sup> The

emperor also appointed *jishi* (temple administrators) and *jishu* (temple heads). He also declared that he would help the temples built by persons up to the rank of *tomo no miyatsuko*, but which were facing financial difficulties.<sup>(16)</sup>

Emperor Tenmu, who ascended the throne in 672, was a committed Buddhist. He had earlier renounced the world for the sake of a previous emperor who had fallen ill. He took a series of steps to consolidate state control over the monastic order. In 679, he issued a decree to investigate the history of the temples having grants of households and land. The proper ones were to be listed up, and the others abolished. The names of temples were fixed on this day. In the same year, a decree was issued setting rules on the behavior of monks and nuns, the colours of their robes, and horses and followers accompanying them during their visits to the countryside and villages. Another decree was issued in the year saying that monks and nuns should always reside in monasteries and worship Buddha. In the case of old and sick monks and nuns, their families and lay believers should build accommodations for them. In 680, a decree was issued saying that temples should not be administered by government officials, except for two or three major ones which were considered to be the temples of the state. However, in the case of temples having grants of households and land, administration by government officials should be limited to a maximum of thirty years in all. For temples already administered for thirty years, the grants should cease. There was no reason why Asukadera Temple should be administered by a temple administrator. It had so far been administrated by a temple administrator because it had been a major temple from the beginning, and had, in addition, rendered glorious service. For these reasons, it would continue to be a temple cared for by a temple administrator. In 684, the emperor appointed a *sōjō*, a *sōzu* and a *risshi* (supervisor of discipline). The emperor issued a decree telling them to administer the monks according to the monastic rules. The emperor did not hesitate to punish the erring monks. In 684, he threw the monk Fukuyō of Asukadera into jail. The monk hanged himself while

incarcerated. In 685, the emperor issued a decree ordering every household of the country to erect a Buddhist chapel at home and to instal an idol of Buddha there. The decree also said that scriptures should be placed there and that the idol should be worshipped.<sup>(17)</sup>

Emperor Tenmu also took steps to align the imperial household totally with Buddhism. In 685, he issued a decree allowing monks and nuns to reside within the imperial palace compound. When he fell ill in this same year, scriptures were read in the temples of Daikandaiji, Kawaradera and Asukadera for three days. A discourse on the *Kon-gō-han-nya-kyō* sutra was held in the palace. A prince and some officials were sent to the Asukadera with a decree ordering the monks to pray for his recovery. One hundred monks were invited to the palace to read the *Kon-kō-myō-kyō* sutra. The princes and ministers made Kannon idols for the emperor. Discourses on the *Kan-ze-on-gyō* sutra were held in the Daikandaiji Temple. One hundred men and women were made to enter the monastic order. One hundred Bodhisattva statues were installed inside the palace. Two hundred rolls of the *Kan-ze-on-gyō* sutra were read. One hundred households each were given to the Hinokumadera, Karudera and Ōkubudera temples for a period of thirty years. Despite all these efforts, Emperor Tenmu passed away in 686.<sup>(18)</sup>

As the number of monks and nuns increased, the question of their discipline arose. In India, the *saṃgha* was an autonomous body, totally independent of the state. The *saṃgha* settled all the issues related to monastic discipline. In China, the state was highly bureaucratic. Monks were exempted from paying taxes, conscription for free labour and military duty. Temple lands were likewise exempted from taxes. This meant loss of revenue. So it became necessary for the state to keep the *saṃgha* under control.<sup>(19)</sup> In north China, the state appointed *seng-chu* (Jp. *sōshu*, bishop), *yüeh-chung* (Jp. *esshū*, manager of monasteries) and *sha-men-t'ung* ( Jp. *shamontō*, supervisor of novice monks ) to supervise the affairs of the *saṃgha* directly. In south China, *seng-cheng* (Jp. *sōjō*, bishop), *seng-cheng* (Jp.



*sōzu*, supervisor of monks and nuns) and *tu-wei-na* (Jp. *tsuina*, office supervisor) were appointed for the purpose, but allowed the *samgha* a certain amount of autonomy.<sup>(20)</sup> The appointment of *sōjō* and *sōzu* by Empress Suiko for managing the *samgha* shows that she adopted the system of south China. The *hōtō* appointed by Empress Suiko probably looked after the finances of the temples.

The monks sent to China for studying Buddhism started coming back only after the death of Empress Suiko. They introduced the *samgha* administration of T'ang China, where ten influential members of the *samgha* were appointed to manage the affairs of the *samgha*. A great political reform known as the Reform of Taika was carried out in Japan in 645. As a part of this reform, the posts of *sōjō* and *sōzu* of Empress Suiko were scrapped, and, following the T'ang system, ten monks were appointed in their stead.<sup>(21)</sup>

The T'ang administration controlled the *samgha* directly through *Ch'ung-hsüan-shu* (Jp. *Sūgensho*, Monastic Affairs Department), a secular office. Since the Japanese rulers respected the autonomy of the *samgha* to a certain extent, they set up a bureau, *Genhanryō* (Monastic Affairs Bureau), to act as a liaison between the government and the *samgha*. In 683, they replaced the T'ang system of ten monks, introduced after the Reform of Taika, with an office called *Sōgō* (Clergy Board). The *Sōgō* board consisted of three officials, *sōjō*, *sōzu* and *risshi*, all monks. They were elected by monks and nuns. Their duty was to supervise the affairs of the major temples and monasteries in the capital region. In 702, monk officials called *kokushi* (provincial monastic supervisors) were established in the provinces to supervise the affairs of the local temples and monasteries.<sup>(22)</sup>

The state tried to keep Buddhism under control by strictly supervising the procedure of ordination into the monastic order. The ordination ceremony was held as a part of the New Year festivities. It took place after the *Gosaie* ceremony, in which the *Sai-shō-ō-kyō* sutra was read from the eighth to the fourteenth day of the first month inside the palace. After ordination, the newly ordained monk submitted

his application for a certificate of monkhood to the *Jibushō* (The Ministry of Civil Affairs). An official of the *Jibushō* checked the application and reported the matter to the *Daijōkan* (The Great Council of State). Next, the official went to the *Minbushō* (The Ministry of Popular Affairs), and checked the family record of the applicant kept there in the presence of an official of that office. (It seems that the applicant's name was struck off his family record at this time.) Three copies of the family record were prepared. Two were sent to the *Daijōkan* and one was kept in the local office. Of the two copies sent to the *Daijōkan*, one was kept in the *Nakatsukasashō* (The Ministry of Central Affairs) and the other was kept in the *Minbushō*. (This procedure was needed because of the tax and other exemptions allowed to the ordained monk and his family.) After this, the certificate of monkhood was prepared on which the monk who ordained the applicant signed his name. Next, the seals of the *Jibushō*, *Genhanryō* and *Sōgō* were stamped on the certificate. Finally the seal of the *Daijōkan* was stamped on the certificate and handed over to the applicant. The same procedure was followed for the newly ordained nuns as well.<sup>(23)</sup> This form of official ordination was known as *tokudo*. It may be mentioned here that *kugen*, a type of personal identity card of monks and nuns, was issued for the first time on the fourth day of the first month of the fourth year of the Yōrō era (720).<sup>(24)</sup>

Severe punishments were prescribed for circumventing the procedure prescribed above. The monk or nun getting ordained without official permission, the monk giving ordination, and the officials approving such ordination were punished. The privately ordained monk or nun, and the monk giving ordination were subjected to one hundred lashes of the cane. The official who struck the name of the offender off the family record was punished by hard labour for one year. The officials of the *Sōgō* and other offices who knew about the incident but did not take any action to stop it were also sentenced to one year of hard labour.<sup>(25)</sup> This form of private nonofficial ordination was known as *shitoku*.

The state supervision of monks and nuns continued even after their official

ordination. Every sixth year, three copies of record giving the date of ordination, number of years passed since ordination, and achievements were prepared for every monk and nun. After affixing the official seals, one copy was kept in the local office and two copies were sent to the *Daijōkan*. Of these two copies one was kept in the *Nakatsukasashō* and the other was kept in the *Jibushō* (*Genhanryō*). This system of six-yearly check-ups was introduced in 710.<sup>(26)</sup>

Strict state supervision like this was exercised because of the special privileges accorded to monks. Privileges of monks like exemption from corvée and military duty in China have been mentioned above. Similar privileges were extended to monks and their families in Japan also. The name of a family member taking tonsure was struck off the family record, and the family got corresponding exemption from tax and other levies. Naturally, there were people who tried to take advantage of this situation by taking nominal tonsure, but remaining at home and carrying on their vocation. The two edicts related to the monk Gyōgi mentioned in the next section strongly suggests such abuse. The following entry in *Shoku Nihongi*, the second official history of Japan compiled in 797, will also give some idea of the problem. In the tenth month of the first year of Jinki era (724), the *Jibushō* submitted a petition to the emperor stating that a scrutiny of the records of monks and nuns revealed many discrepancies. There were many who could not say when they were ordained. In some cases, the temple registers carried the names, but not the *Daijōkan* register. A person did not have any mole on the face although the record mentioned it. Such persons totalled 1,122 in number. According to rules, monk's or nun's certificates had to be issued to them. The emperor was requested to give his verdict. The emperor said that it would be difficult to scrutinise the ordinations that took place between 672 and 686. Besides, there were many omissions in official records also. So, the monks and nuns should be confirmed on the basis of their names, and then official certificates should be issued to them.<sup>(27)</sup> For reference, an extract from a typical family register dated 702 has been shown in

Table (1) below. <sup>(28)</sup>

To sum up, in Japan, Buddhism developed as the religion of the ruling classes in the early stages of its development.

Table 1 : An extract from a family register of 702

|                   | <i>Name</i>             | <i>Age</i> | <i>Category</i>                | <i>Remarks</i>         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Head of the House | Urabe Nomoso            | 49         | Able-bodied male,<br>full age  | Taxable household      |
| Mother            | Kayabe Ishi-me          | 74         | Female, over age               |                        |
| Wife              | Urabe Hoshito-me        | 47         | Female, full age               |                        |
| Son               | Urabe Kuromaro          | 19         | Able-bodied male,<br>under age | Elderst son by wife    |
| Son               | Urabe Wakashi           | 6          | Male child                     | Younger son by<br>wife |
| Daughter          | Urabe Kogara-me         | 16         | Female child                   | Daughter by wife       |
| Daughter          | Urabe Kokagora-me       | 13         | Ditto                          | Ditto                  |
| Brother           | Urabe Katana            | 46         | Able-bodied male,<br>full age  |                        |
| Wife              | Nakatomibe<br>Hitame-me | 37         | Female, full age               |                        |
| Son               | Urabe Kuro              | 17         | Able-bodied male,<br>under age | Son, by wife           |
| Son               | Urabe Akai              | 16         | Male child                     |                        |
| Son               | Urabe Okoji             | 2          | Infant                         |                        |
| Daughter          | Urabe Hisudzu-me        | 18         | Female, under age              |                        |
| Daughter          | Urabe Aka-me            | 13         | Female child                   |                        |
| Daughter          | Urabe Hitsuji-me        | 9          | Ditto                          |                        |
| Daughter          | Urabe Maro-me           | 1          | Infant                         |                        |

In all 16 mouths of which : Exempt ... 12 ; Taxable ... 4

### 3. Association of Shinto Deities with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

#### 3.1. Popular Buddhism

Buddhism slowly percolated down to the common people, and, with the passing of time, developed into the religion of the masses. It was, in a sense, a

revolt against the state control of Buddhism. The first two imperial edicts in this regard recorded in *Shoku Nihongi* show the gravity of the situation and the vehemence of the rulers' disapproval. The first edict, dated the twenty-third day of the fourth month of the first year of Yōrō era (717), says that violating existing regulations, people are shaving off their hair and moustache and putting on monk's garment. They look like monks, but their hearts are filled with the evil designs of thieves. ... At present, that evil monk Gyōgi (668-749) and his disciples are going round the streets, sometimes one at a time and sometimes in small groups, and preaching about sins and virtues without official permission. ... They visit homes and preach in an irresponsible manner. They ask for things other than food as alms. They are misleading people by bluffing that they are preaching the real teachings of Buddhism. Both monks and common people are getting confused by their actions, and people of all classes are abandoning their professions. They are violating not only the teachings of Śākyamuni but also the official regulations.<sup>(29)</sup>

The second edict, issued on the tenth day of the seventh month of the sixth year of the Yōrō era (722), says that, of late, the monks and nuns in the capital, despite their shallow knowledge, are skilfully explaining that sin and happiness are the results of a person's past actions. They are not observing monastic rules, and are misleading the people of the capital. They are defiling the teachings of holy men and damaging the imperial way. They are ordaining housewives as nuns and tattooing their skins. These housewives readily leave their homes. They are not afraid of law, nor do they think about their parents or husbands. Some carry scriptures on their shoulders and beg for food with monk's bowls. Some move about in the countryside preaching false things. Some of them form groups and live together. Although they give an impression of carrying out Buddhist practices, in reality, their's are lawless actions. The harm caused by these activities should be taken into consideration seriously. Such actions should be prohibited. A judge was appointed in each province to punish the violators.<sup>(30)</sup>

The target of the second edict was obviously Gyōgi and his group. However, the attitude of the authorities towards Gyōgi changed about ten years later. The imperial edict of the seventh day of the eighth month of the third year of Tenpyō era (731) says that among the followers of Gyōgi, there are many upāsakas and upāsikās who observe the practices of Buddhism faithfully. Of them, men above the age of sixty-one and women above the age of fifty-five shall be admitted as members of the *saṃgha*. Apart from them, those found seeking alms on streets shall be arrested.<sup>(31)</sup>

The official policy was further liberalised soon after this, and a number of steps were taken to encourage popular Buddhism. On the fifth day of the sixth month of the seventh year of Tenpyō era (735), an imperial edict to repair the temples in the provinces was issued. Again, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month of the nineteenth year of Tenpyō (747), an imperial edict was issued to the provinces to allow people to erect stupas. These stupas, however, were to be built inside monasteries.<sup>(32)</sup>

The entries of *Shoku Nihongi* mentioned above clearly show that Gyōgi had a strong base of mass support. This is corroborated by the stories of Gyōgi in *Nihon Ryōiki*, the first collection of Japanese folk tales compiled around 822, when Gyōgi's activities were still fresh in memory. Gyōgi has been mentioned in these stories as a great virtuous monk and an incarnation of Buddha. Monks and laity, high and low flocked to hear his sermons.<sup>(33)</sup> During this time, the construction of the new capital at Nara was going on, and people were suffering under the heavy burden of corvée duty for construction. Rumours of exemption of monks from corvée duty must have prompted many to become monks. As the above mentioned edict of 731 suggests, their ordination was a nominal one, and they pursued their vocations as usual while remaining at home.

Another factor that encouraged popular Buddhism was the deepening understanding of Buddhism. A large number of monks had returned home after

studying in China. Whereas Hīnayāna encouraged personal salvation, Mahāyāna emphasised salvation of fellow beings. Mahāyāna was the predominant school in China. The monks who returned from China created an atmosphere favourable for the rulers to accept the Mahāyānic idea of proliferation of Buddhism among the masses. Buddhism penetrated deeper among the masses in such an atmosphere. One important outcome of this propagation of Buddhism was the copying of sutras on a large scale by devout lay believers known by the name *chishiki*. These copyists formed fraternity groups called *chishikiyui* for the purpose.<sup>(34)</sup> This heightened people's awareness of Buddhism, and helped it to become the religion of the nation in a real sense.

### 3.2. Buddhism Takes Over Shintoism

The acceptance of Buddhism by the Japanese masses did not mean that they abandoned their native religion, Shintoism. Buddhism never demanded its believers to give up their ancestral faith. Shintoism was a religion of primitive nature worship. The Buddhists had both a profound philosophy and a strong organisation. Shintoism lacked both. Consequently, it was ripe for a Buddhist take-over. This started with the establishment of *jingūjis*, literally meaning shrine-temples, within shrine precincts or close by, as an integral part of the shrines.

The first mention of *jingūji* appears in an entry dated the twenty-third day of the seventh month of the second year of Tenpyō-jingo era (766) in the official history *Shoku Nihongi*. It says that an idol of Buddha was made on that day in the Ise Jingūji. Following this, historical and other sources mention *jingūjis* in important shrines across the country.<sup>(35)</sup> With the passing of time, these *jingūjis* came under the control of the Tendai Sect and the Shingon Sect. Records of the circumstances leading to the establishment of *jingūjis* have been preserved in a number of cases. They all have a set pattern in which Shinto deities of shrines, through oracles, mention their deep sufferings, and express their desire to seek salvation in Buddhism

by renouncing their divinity. As a result, *jingūjis* were established in shrines. This led to a process known by the name of *shinbutsu shūgō* or association of Shinto deities with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in Japanese religious history. Records preserved in these *jingūjis* throw important light on the process involved in *shinbutsu shūgō*. Two typical examples will be cited here.

According to one, a Shinto priest of Hiko Taisha Shrine, Kisano Ason Akamaro, became a Buddhist ascetic in order to find a way out of epidemic and famine. The deity of the shrine, Hikokami, gave an oracle to this priest saying that the locality was his residence. As a god, he was undergoing a lot of sufferings. So he wanted to renounce his status as a god and become a devotee of Buddha. The disasters would not subside if his wish were not fulfilled. Then he told the priest to carry on Buddhist worship for him. Following the oracle, the priest built a temple, installed a Buddha idol, and devoted himself to Buddhist worship. The epidemic and famine subsided shortly after this.<sup>(36)</sup>

The other example relates to Tado Ōkami, a Shinto god of fertility of the Ise region in Central Japan. *Isenokuni Kuwanagun Tado Jingūji Garan Engi narabini Shiryōchō*, the record of Tado Taisha Shrine completed in 788, says that a Zen monk Mangan erected a small temple near the shrine, installed an Amitābha idol, and started carrying on Buddhist worship there. On the twentieth day of the twelfth month of the seventh year of the Tenpyō-hōji era (763), this god gave an oracle saying that he was God Tado. For a long time he had committed many grievous sins. He would receive appropriate retribution from heaven. He now wanted to renounce his status as a Shinto god for ever and join the order of Buddhism. The monk Mangan, thereupon, built a small hall near the shrine, installed an idol of the god, and named it Great Tado Bodhisattva. Next, people of the locality constructed a copper bell and a stand for the bell. Construction of a three storey pagoda was also taken up. In 780, a messenger from the imperial court accorded the status of monk to four persons. The three storey pagoda was completed shortly after this through



the initiative of a high ranking monk. In 781, a lecture hall, a monks' quarter, and a public bath were constructed. The record of Tado Taisha Shrine shows that it took about eighteen years to complete the construction of the *jingūji* of the shrine.<sup>(37)</sup>

The interesting fact to note here is that the year 763 of the oracle of God Tado was a year of epidemic and famine. The entry of the first day of the ninth month of this year in *Shoku Nihongi* says that many people died due to epidemic. There were floods and droughts. Divine fires had broken out from time to time damaging government properties. These were retributions for not respecting gods by local officials. There were periods of severe droughts and heavy rains tormenting people. These were punishments for not properly employing people for repairing dikes by local officials. ...<sup>(38)</sup> In short, people's desperate search for redress from the calamities came in the form of oracles of Shinto gods all over the country. The Buddhist monks believed that the only answer to the social woes was Buddhism. It is obvious that this social atmosphere provided the background for the oracles.

Following the establishment of *jingūjis* in shrines, the Buddhist monks became more and more involved in shrine affairs. They even took the initiative to establish new shrines. The case of God Hachiman, the first Japanese deity to receive the title of Bodhisattva, will be examined here, as much evidence is available in the form of shrine records, the official history *Sandai Jitsuroku* (completed in 901), and other writings.

God Hachiman was a local deity of the northern Kyushu area. Later on, his shrine, known by the name Usa Hachimangū Shrine, somehow, came to be associated with Emperor Ōjin, the fifteenth ruler of Japan. It was believed that the soul of the emperor was enshrined here. Consequently, it gained importance and was listed as an official shrine in 725. In the same year, its *jingūji*, known by the name Mirokuji, was also built. At the New Year time of 731, offerings were made to the deity on behalf of the government. The shrine also took steps to foster close relations with the government. When Emperor Shōmu decided to build the Great

Buddha of Nara, the shrine sent money for construction in 745. Further, as construction started, in 749, God Hachiman gave an oracle that he would mobilise all the gods of heaven and earth to ensure successful construction (of the Great Buddha). Liquid copper would flow like water, and he won't mind turning his body into grass, wood and earth to prevent any obstruction. In the same year, the emperor received God Hachiman in the capital, Nara, and built a new shrine for him. The chapter titled Old Accounts in Temples of *Tōhōki*, a record of the famous Shingon Temple Tōji written in the middle of the fourteenth century, contains an interesting oracle of God Hachiman. In this oracle, dated the eighteenth day of the fifth month of the eighth year of the Hōki era (777), God Hachiman says that he would become a śramaṇa on the next day in the hour of dragon (around 8 a. m.), dedicate himself to the three treasures, and observe the five commandments. From that day on, there shouldn't be any killings. Those who try to harm the state would not be spared. It is suspected that this oracle was a fabrication made towards the end of the ninth century. He was the first Shinto deity to receive the title of Bodhisattva in the year 781.<sup>(39)</sup>

### 3.3. Buddhists Establish Shinto Shrines

Saichō, the founder of the Tendai Sect of Japan visited the Usa Hachiman Shrine in 803 while going to China. Saichō visited the shrine again in 814 and gave lectures on the *Myō-hō-ren-ge-kyō* sutra. The belief in this sutra as interpreted by the Tendai Sect became the basic tenet of this shrine. About twenty years later, while offering prayers in the shrine, a Tendai monk Konki received an oracle telling him to build an affiliated shrine in Yusuhara in Bungo, the present day Ōita Prefecture. The shrine was built in 827 with both Hachiman and Buddha idols installed in it.<sup>(40)</sup>

The Usa Hachiman Shrine was one of the most important shrines of the state. The Shingon Sect was not very happy with the Tendai dominance of this important shrine. In 859, God Hachiman of this shrine gave an oracle to a visiting Shingon

Sect monk Gyōkyō that he wanted to move near the capital Kyoto in order to better protect the country. The monk received the same oracle once again one night on his way back to the capital. In it, God Hachiman told the monk to establish his shrine on a hill in Iwashimizu. When the monk looked in that direction he saw a light descending onto the top of a hill. Next day he climbed the hill and offered prayers for three days and three nights. The monk reported the matter to the emperor. Around the same time, the emperor and a few other members of the imperial family also had dreamt of a purple cloud rising from the hill and enveloping the capital. So the emperor immediately ordered the construction of Iwashimizu Hachimangū Shrine. Fifteen monks were attached to the shrine to offer prayers. Thus, the Shingon Sect established a rival of Usa Hachiman Shrine near the capital.<sup>(41)</sup>

The Buddhist monks also accorded the status of *chinju* (deities protecting Buddhism) to Shinto deities, and erected their sanctuaries in temples. An early instance of such an installation took place at the Daianji Temple of Nara in 807. God Hachiman was installed here. In 896, he was installed as the protecting deity in the Yakushiji Temple of Nara. Similar installation of Hachiman took place in other temples also. Other Shinto deities were also installed in this manner, for instance, Kasuga Myōjin in the Kōfukuji Temple of Nara, Niomyōjin in the Kōyasan Temple, the head temple of the Shingon Sect, and so on.<sup>(42)</sup>

This set the stage for the Japanese gods and goddesses to become the incarnations of Indian divinities.

## 4. Japanese Manifestations of Indian Divinities

### 4.1 *Honji Suijaku*

The third stage in the adoption of Indian divinities started from around the eleventh century. During this time, a new hypothesis, known by the name *honji suiaku*, arose in the religious world, according to which the native Japanese Shinto

deities were assumed to be the provisional manifestations of various Buddhist divinities. Literally, the word *honji* means “original home”, and *suijaku* means “the spot of descent”. The hypothesis implied that the Buddhist divinities left their original abodes and descended on Japan as Shinto deities. From this, *honji* acquired the popular meaning of the “Buddhist originals of Shinto deities”, and *suijaku* that of the “Shinto incarnations of Buddhist divinities”. Since the Buddhists had adopted many Hindu divinities, they also became the originals of Shinto deities. In this way, many Shinto deities became the incarnations of Hindu divinities. It may be mentioned here that the expression *honji suijaku* appears in the Juryōbon chapter of the *Myō-hō-ren-ge-kyō* sutra. It says that the ideal Buddha, who is absolute and eternal, is the original form. He descended on this earth as the historical Śākya, his incarnation.<sup>(43)</sup>

As discussed earlier, the Buddhists established *jingūjis* in the native Shinto shrines, a step that can be interpreted as virtual acquisition of the native faith. After the incorporation of Shintoism, the necessity arose to provide a philosophical framework. As discussed in the next section, the social scare of *mappō* came around this time. Since the monks insisted that in the age of *mappō*, Buddhism was the only succour, it became necessary to regularise the position of Shinto deities, who were worshipped widely. This problem was solved by the *honji suijaku* hypothesis which made the Shinto deities the incarnations of Buddhist divinities. As the Shinto deities became the incarnations of Buddhist divinities, it also became necessary to reinterpret the whole gamut of native myths recorded in *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* from the Buddhist theological viewpoint.

An early record on *suijaku* or provisional Shinto manifestation of a Buddhist deity is preserved in the Iwashimizu Hachimangū Shrine. Bearing the date of the fifth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of the Enkyū era (1072), this record says that in 1023, a village in the Tanba province was struck by drought and epidemic. When the villagers prayed to the local gods for succour, Bodhisattva

Hachiman sent an oracle saying that he was a *suijaku* or provisional manifestation, and had come down to the local shrine. He had caused these troubles because the villagers were not worshipping him. The surprised villagers built a separate sanctuary, installed an idol of Bodhisattva Hachiman, and worshipped him. Soon there were bumper harvests and peace returned. *Tōdaiji Jitsuroku*, compiled in the twelfth century, quotes an interesting incident from the diary of an official of Ise Jingū, the ancestral shrine of the imperial family. In the year 742, an imperial messenger informed the Ise Jingū Shrine that the emperor was thinking of building a *jingūji* there. After a while, Amaterasu or the Sun Goddess, the presiding deity of the shrine, gave an oracle saying that Japan was the country of gods, and that the people should worship the Sun Goddess. She herself was the Sun Goddess, and her *honji* or original form was the Vairocana Buddha. People should know this truth, and adopt Buddhism.<sup>(44)</sup> It is generally assumed that this oracle was a fabrication of the late eleventh century. Even then, it shows that the *honji suiaku* had become an acceptable hypothesis by that time.

A more reliable record is the diary *Chōshūki* of Minamoto no Morotoki, a courtier of the cloistered Emperor Toba. When he made a pilgrimage to the three sanctuaries in the Kumano Shrine with the cloistered emperor in 1134, he asked the shrine officials whose incarnations the deities of the three sanctuaries were. The officials replied that they were the incarnations of Amitābha Buddha, One Thousand Hand Avalokiteśvara and Vaiṣaṇyaguru.<sup>(45)</sup>

The anthology *Ryōjin Hishō* compiled by the cloistered Emperor Goshirakawa in the latter half of the twelfth century, records many contemporary poems. In it, there are poems on original Buddhist divinities and their Shinto incarnations. Three poems of the collection which show the deep-rooted faith of common people in these Buddhist divinities are given below.<sup>(46)</sup>

- (a) Avalokiteśvara is he originally,    On the hill of Potalaka he lives,  
       For common people,                      He has appeared (here) as a (Shinto) deity.
- (b) God Ōmiiya Gongen                      Is none other than Śākya, the founder (of Buddhism),  
       Whoever steps here once,              Joins the congregation of the Gr̥dhrakūṭa sermon.
- (c) For spreading the law of Buddha  
       They (Buddhas and Bodhisattvas) have come down (to the twenty-one shrines) at the  
               foot of Mount Hiei,  
       They behumbled themselves by softening their light (of wisdom for guiding people),  
       And are worshipped (as Shinto gods) in the shrines in the east (of Kyoto).

As the deities of famous shrines all over the country started acquiring the status of incarnations of Buddhist divinities, various types of books started appearing on the subject. One of the works treating the subject very systematically is *Shoshin Honkaishū* of the monk Zonkaku written in 1324. For instance, he gives the following picture for the Kashima Jinja Shrine.<sup>(47)</sup>

The original form of the god Kashima Daimyōjin is Avalokiteśvara with eleven faces. He has softened his divine wisdom so that people can understand it. His benevolence cast a shadow that covers every thing. He shines in the heaven. His blessings and compassion reach the distant four seas. So, those who aspire, achieve fulfillment in this world as well as in the future world. The original form of the deity of the inner shrine (the most important of the secondary sanctuaries in Kashima Shrine) is Amoghapāśa. That of the eight dragon deities nearby is Fudō Bishamon (Acalavaiśravaṇa). These dragon deities fulfil the wishes of the worshippers. Saving people from the sea of misery and leading them to enlightenment are not actions that go in vain. The god (of Kashima) appears as Kasuga Daimyōjin in Nara and as Sumiyoshi Daimyōjin in Naniwa. In Kyoto, he is worshipped as Ōarano Daimyōjin and Yoshida Daimyōjin. They bestow benefits to people and perform miracles. The main shrines and the local shrines affiliated with them bestow benefits, and provide relief to all, both inside and outside the capital city. The deity of Komori sanctuary appears as the deity of the inner shrine of Kashima, and also as the deity of the five shrines of Kasuga. Amaterasu Ōmikami is the Sun Goddess, and is the incarnation of Kannon. (Her brother) Susa no Ō no Mikoto is the Moon god, and is the incarnation of

Mahāstāmaprāpta.<sup>(48)</sup> These two Bodhisattvas represent the compassion and wisdom of Tathāgata Amitābha. So, these two shrines are the exclusive shrines of Tathāgata Amitābha. Amitābha extends his hand of salvation to all shrines without exception.

In this way, the monk Zonkaku refers in his book to the Buddhist originals of the Shinto deities of the important shrines of Japan in his book. As the *honji suijaku* hypothesis became widely accepted, the local Shinto deities became the incarnations of one Buddhist divinity or the other.

#### 4.2. Reinterpreting Japanese History and Myths

The *honji suijaku* hypothesis created an atmosphere where not only monks, but even Shinto priests took an active part in infusing a strong Buddhist overtones to Japanese historical incidents. For example, there took place an unsuccessful attempt to steal the holy sword of the Atsuta Shrine by a Korean monk in the year 668. *Nihon Shoki* records this incident by saying that, in that year, the monk Dōgyō stole the sword Kusanagi no Tsurugi, and tried to run away to (the Korean Kingdom of) Shiragi. On the way, he met with wind and rain, and was forced to return.<sup>(49)</sup> *Hakozakigūki*, the diary of a minor official recording the events between 1097 and 1106, gives the following account of this incident as told to him by the priests and monks attached to the Hakozaki Hachimangū Shrine.<sup>(50)</sup>

The Shiragi monk Dōgyō intruded into Japan, tied all the gods down and forced them inside a jar. The god Atsuta Myōjin transformed himself into the sword Ame-no-murakumo-no-tsurugi that was presented long ago by Susa no O no Mikoto and tried to run away. Dōgyō wrapped the sword and other gods with his monk's robe and tried to lock them up in the Usa Hachimangū Shrine. The sword, however, rose into the sky, and the monk could not stop it. When the monk came to Bingo (Hiroshima region) he was kicked to death by God Hachiman of Usa. Following this, all the gods came out of the jar, and regained their previous forms. All these events happened because of the protection accorded by Tathāgata Amitābha, the original form of God Hachiman.

As already stated in the preceding section, God Hachiman of Usa was the first

Japanese god to receive the title of Bodhisattva. This narration demonstrates the general belief of the period that even native deities had to rely on Buddhist divinities for getting out of trouble. The paramount position of Buddhism is more vividly painted in the scene of death of the child Emperor Antoku in the famous Japanese epic *Heike Monogatari*. At that time, the Tairas and the Minamotos were fighting for supremacy. Antoku was put on throne at the age of two by the Tairas in the year 1180. But five years later, in 1185, the Tairas were defeated, and the child emperor ended his life by jumping into the sea in the arms of his maternal grandmother. Before jumping into the sea, the grandmother told the child emperor that he had been born to rule because he had observed the ten good precepts in his previous life. But, because of some ill luck, his life was coming to an end. The grandmother then told the emperor to face east and take leave of Sun Goddess of the Ise Shrine. Next, she told him to face west and chant *nenbutsu* for going to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas living in the Western Paradise. Japan was a small country full of misery. So she would take him along to the Western Paradise, a place full of blissss. <sup>(51)</sup> The thing to note here is that, at the time of his death, the child emperor turned not to the Sun Goddess, the ancestral deity of the imperial household, but to Buddha for salvation.

The social acceptance of the *honji suijaku* hypothesis lead to rewriting of the Japanese myths also. One, relating to the creation of Japan, which appears in *Jingikan Shiki*, written by a member of the Atsuta Shrine, is given below in brief. <sup>(52)</sup>

Long long ago, God Izanagi and Goddess Izanami churned the sea with the heavenly spear. When they lifted the spear up, brine dripping from the tip of the spear turned into a rock. This rock became the nucleus of Ashiwara of Japan. The two deities thought of giving a name to this country. They saw that Tathāgata Vairocana was sitting there. They were very pleased, realising that Buddhism would prosper in the country they created. With a view that Buddhism should be propagated here by any means, they named the country Great Nippon meaning that it was the country of Vairocana.



Their offspring Goddess Amaterasu (Tathāgata Vairocana), descended on Takamagahara as the ruler of our country, and ruled South Jambudvīpa (Japan). People started worshipping Amaterasu during the reign of the eleventh Emperor Suinin, when she appeared at Ise and performed religious rites in the water of the river Isuzu. She has been ruling over the gods and goddesses of the sixty odd provinces of Japan ever since. The Ise Shrine has an inner sanctuary and an outer sanctuary which correspond to garbhadhātu and vajradhātu of Tathāgata Vairocana.

#### 4.3. *The Age of Mappō*

Before ending this study, a word must be said about the widespread belief of the Japanese masses in *mappō*, which, by and large, overlapped with the permeation of the hypothesis of *honji suijaku*. The Buddhists believed that, after the death of *Śākyamuni*, the world entered the period of *shōjō* lasting 500 years (according to some, 1,000 years), during which the Buddhist doctrine was maintained in its correct form. This was followed by the period of *shōhō* lasting 1,000 years, when some semblance of correct doctrine was maintained. The next 10,000 years was the period of *mappō*, an era of slow decay and termination of Buddhism. In Sanskrit, these three terms are known as *saddharma*, *saddharma-pratirūpaka* and *saddharma-vipralopa*, respectively.<sup>(53)</sup>

Towards the end of the eleventh century, the power of the ruling aristocracy started declining, and a fight for supremacy broke out between two warrior clans, the Tairas and the Minamotos. In many cases monks, also took up arms instead of pursuing religious practices. Ancient temples were burnt down without any hesitation. Widespread disorder and consequent destructions presented a picture as if the doomsday of *mappō* was fast approaching. Around 1150, the monk Kōen wrote in his *Fusō Ryakuki* that the world had entered the era of *mappō* in the year 1052.<sup>(54)</sup> The suffering masses were desperately looking for relief. The monk Hōnen (1133-1212) found an answer to this yearning in the *Mu-ryō-ju-kyō* sutra, which said that one could be born in paradise by chanting *nenbutsu*, the name of Amitābha Buddha.

Reflecting the ethos of the time, the anthology *Ryōjin Hishō* mentioned earlier, records many poems with a strong *mappō* undertone in them.<sup>(55)</sup>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (a) Vow to Amitābha,                            | We should make repeatedly and sincerely,       |
| If we chant his name once,                      | We are sure to attain Buddhahood, they say.    |
| (b) The compassion of Avalokiteśvara is a boat, | It floats on the Sea of Potalaka,              |
| Those who do pious deeds,                       | It will carry them to paradise.                |
| (c) With the <i>Han-nya-kyō</i> as the boat,    | The eight-volume <i>Ho-ke-kyō</i> as the sail, |
| The scripture roll as the mast, <sup>(56)</sup> | And the yakṣas and Acalanātha as the helmsmen, |
| Receive us, the sinners (in paradise).          |  |

## 5. Concluding Remarks

*Shinbutsu shūgō* and *honji suijaku*, the two major developments in the religious history of Japan, played a major role in introducing the Hindu divinities to the Japanese. The background for this was prepared by the state control of Buddhism. The unstable social conditions from around the eleventh century created an atmosphere for people to seek the protection of supernatural powers. The Buddhist monks believed that in the era of *mappō* only Buddhist divinities could provide the succour that people were looking for. The oracles of the native Shinto deities seeking salvation in Buddhism symbolically reflect this social ethos. People sincerely believed in the hypothesis of *honji suijaku*, which the Buddhists advocated. The Buddhist monks, in such an environment, produced works like *Asabashō*, *Kakuzenshō* and others, prescribing elaborate rituals for worshipping Hindu divinities like Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Yama, Hāritī and others. These works vouched benefits of diverse types to people worshipping these divinities. Some of these divinities were accorded the status of *honji* or originals of Japanese deities.<sup>(57)</sup> The Japanese have produced a considerable volume of literature through ages on these divinities, which attests to their great popularity among the masses.

## References

- (1) In China, Japan and Korea, the new year, according to the traditional calendar, starts around the seventh of February.
- (2) Kojima, Noriyuki et al. Tr., *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2, Shōgakkan, Tokyo, 1996, pp. 416-419, 小島憲之他校注訳, 日本書紀 (2)
- (3) The name suggests that he was a Korean from the kingdom of Kōkuri. This record tends to show that there was no systematic missionary activities among the common people in Japan.
- (4) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2. pp. 487-495
- (5) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2 pp. 505-507
- (6) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2 p. 511
- (7) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2, pp. 513-515
- (8) Kojima, Noriyuki et al. Tr., *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 3, Shōgakkan, Tokyo, 1998, pp. 64-65, 375, 小島憲之他校注訳, 日本書紀 (3)
- (9) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2, pp. 533, 585-587
- (10) Weinstein, Stanley, "Aristocratic Buddhism", Shivley, Donald H. and McCullough, William H., Ed., *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 2, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 449
- (11) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2 pp. 551-552
- (12) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 3, p. 397
- (13) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2, pp. 541-543, 554-555
- (14) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 2, pp. 585-587
- (15) Sonoda, Kōyū "Kokka Bukkyō to Shakai Seikatsu", *Iwanami Kōza Nihon Rekishi*, Kodai 4, Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1976, p. 359, 蘭田香融, 国家仏教と社会生活, 岩波講座日本歴史古代 4
- (16) *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 3, p. 123
- (17) *Nihon Shoki*. Vol. 3, pp. 387, 393, 397, 427, 437, 445
- (18) *Nihon Shoki*. Vol. 3, pp. 447, 451, 453, 461, 463, 465, 466
- (19) Contemporary records show that people promptly took advantage of the privileges extended by the rulers to the monastic order for promoting Buddhism. For instance, the monk Fa-lin (Jp. Hōrin) (572-640) mentions in his *Pien-cheng-lun* (Jp. *Ben-shō-ron*) that there were thirty-thousand temples and two million monks and nuns in the

kingdom of Northern Wei (386-534). It is obvious that people became monks and nuns and organised temples just to escape taxes, conscription from free labour and military duty. This will give a fair idea of the losses suffered by the state. (*Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, Vol. 52, p. 502, 大正新修大藏經)

- (20) Sonoda, pp. 358-359
  - (21) Sonoda, p. 359
  - (22) Sonoda, pp. 360-361
  - (23) Sonoda, pp. 368-369
  - (24) Naoki, Kōjirō Tr., *Shoku Nihongi*, Vol. 1, Heibonsha, Tokyo, 1989, p. 214, 直木孝次郎 訳, 続日本紀 (1)
  - (25) Sonoda, p. 368
  - (26) Sonoda, p. 369
  - (27) *Shoku Nihongi*, Vol. 1, pp. 267-268
  - (28) Sansom, G. B., *Japan: A Short Cultural History*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1978, p. 100
  - (29) *Shoku Nihongi*, Vol. 1, pp. 186-187 ; Sonoda, p. 372
  - (30) *Shoku Nihongi*, Vol. 1, p. 251 ; Sonoda, p. 374
  - (31) *Shoku Nihongi*, Vol. 2, p. 5 ; Sonoda, pp. 374-375
- The upāsakas and upāsikās in this case were nonofficially ordained monks and nuns. Since they were nonofficially ordained, they remained at home.
- (32) *Shoku Nihongi* Vol. 2, p. 34,160 ; Kawane, p. 375
  - (33) Nakada, Norio Tr., *Nihon Ryōiki*, Chū, Story Nos. 29,30, Shōgakkan, Tokyo, 1995, 中田祝夫訳, 日本靈異記, 小学館
  - (34) Sonoda, p. 380
  - (35) Kawane, Yoshiyasu, “*Ōdo Shisō to Shinbutsu Shūgō*”, Iwanami Kōza Nihon Rekishi, 4, Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1976, pp. 272-273, 河音能平, 王土思想と神仏習合, 岩波講座日本歴史 4
  - (36) Kawane, pp. 274-275
  - (37) Yoshie, Akio, *Shinbutsu Shūgō*, Iwanami Shinsho, Tokyo, 1998, pp. 11,14-16, 義江彰夫, 神仏習合, 岩波新書
  - (38) Kawane, p. 276
  - (39) Murayama, Shūichi, *Honchi Suijaku*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, Tokyo, 1995, pp. 52-60, 村山修一, 本地垂迹, 吉川弘文館

*Shoku Nihongi* Vol. 2, pp. 94,182 ; Kawane, p. 280

The three treasures are the Buddha, dharma and *saṃgha*.

The five commandments are not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to tell lies, and not to drink intoxicating liquor.

(40) Murayama, pp. 61-62

(41) Murayama, pp. 62-65 ; Kawane, p. 280

(42) Murayama, p. 66

(43) Murayama, p. 1

(44) Yoshie, pp. 170-171

(45) Yoshie, p. 172

(46) Goshirakawain Ed., Shinma, Shin'ichi and Tonomura, Natsuko Tr., *Ryōjin Hishō*, Kanyaku Nihon no Koten, 34, Shōgakkan, Tokyo, 1988, pp. 36-37,224-225,142-143, 後白河院編, 新聞進一と外村南都子訳, 梁塵秘抄, 完訳日本の古典, 小学館

(47) Yoshie, pp. 176-177

(48) Bodhisattvas Mahāstāmaprāpta and Kannon are the assistants of Tathāgata Amitābha.

(49) *Nihon Shoki* Vol. 3, p. 279

(50) Yoshie, p. 179

(51) Ichiko, Teiji, Tr., *Heike Monogatari*, Vol. 2, Shinpen Nippon Koten Bungaku Zenshū 46, Shōgakkan, Tokyo, 1994, pp. 381-382, 市古貞次訳, 平家物語 2, 新編日本古典文学全集 46, 小学館

(52) Yoshie, pp. 184-185

(53) Kazue, p. 11

(54) Ozawa, Tomio, *Mappō to Masse no Shisō*, Yūzankaku Shuppan, Tokyo, 1974, pp. 132-133, 小沢富夫, 末法と末世の思想, 雄山閣

(55) Goshirakawain, pp. 32-33,36-37,230-231

(56) The scriptures were written on long rolls of paper of narrow width. They were then rolled up and wrapped with string. They look like short, fat sticks.

(57) For instance, Sarasvatī became associated with Ugakami, the deity of the famous Chikubushima Shrine near Kyoto.

## A. Names of Sutras used in the text

*Dai-un-gyō* : *Mahāmegha-sūtra*

*Ho-ke-kyō : Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*  
*Kon-gō-han-nya-kyō : Vajrachedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*  
*Kon-kō-myō-kyō : Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*  
*Kan-ze-on-gyō : ?*  
*Mu-ryō-ju-kyō : Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra*  
*Myō-hō-ren-ge-kyō : Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*  
*Ninn-ō-gyō : ?*  
*Shō-man-gyō : Srīmālādevi-siṃhanāda-sūtra*

## B. Chinese characters of the Japanese, and Chinese expressions

Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大神 Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi 天叢雲劍 Antoku, emperor  
 安德 Asabashō 阿娑縛鈔 Ashiwara 葦原 Asukadera 飛鳥寺 Atsuta Myōjin 熱田明神  
 Ben-shō ron 辯正論 Bidatsu, emperor 敏達 Bingo 備後 Bungo 豐後 Chikubushima 竹生  
 島 chinju 鎮守 chishiki 知識 chishikiyui 知識結 Chōshūki 長秋記 Ch'ung-hsüan-shu 崇  
 玄署 Daianji 大安寺 Daijōkan 太政官 Daikandaiji 大官大寺 Dai-un-gyō 大雲經 Dōgyō,  
 monk 道行 Enkyū, era 延久 esshū 悅衆 Fa-lin, monk 法琳 Fudō Bishamon 不動毘沙門  
 Fukuyō, monk 福揚 Fusō Ryakuki 扶桑略記 Genhanryō 玄蕃寮 Gosaie 御齋會  
 Goshirakawa, cloistered emperor 後白河 Gyōgi, monk 行基 Hakozakigūki 管崎宮記  
 Hakozaki Hachimangū 管崎八幡宮 Harima 播磨 Heike Monogatari 平家物語 Hikokami  
 比古神 Hiko Taisha 比古大社 Hinokumadera 檜隈寺 Hōki, era 宝龜 Hōkōji 法興寺  
 Hōnen, monk 法然 honji 本地 honji suijaku 本地垂迹 Hōrin, monk 法琳 hōtō 法頭 Ise  
 伊勢 Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮 Ise Jingūji 伊勢神宮寺 Isenokuni Kuwanagun Tado Jingūji Garan  
 Engi narabini Shiryōchō 伊勢国桑名郡多度神宮寺伽藍縁起并資財帳 Isuzu 五十鈴  
 Iwashimizu 石清水 Iwashimizu Hachimangū Shrine 石清水八幡宮 Izanagi 伊弉諾 Izanami  
 伊弉冉 Jibushō 治部省 jingūji 神宮寺 Jinki, era 神龜 jishi 寺司 jishu 寺主 Juryōbon  
 寿量品 Kannon 觀音 Kan-ze-on-gyō 觀世音經 Karudera 輕寺 Kashima Daimyōjin 鹿島  
 大明神 Kashima Jinja 鹿島神社 Kasuga 春日 Kasuga Daimyōjin 春日大明神 Kasuga  
 Myōjin 春日明神 Kawaradera 川原寺 Kakuzenshō 覺座鈔 Kinmei, empress 欽明 Kisano  
 Ason Akamaro 私朝臣赤磨 Kōen, monk 皇円 Kōfukuji 興福寺 Kōgyoku, empress 皇極  
 Kojiki 古事記 Kōkuri 高句麗 kokushi 国師 Koma no Eben 高麗の恵便 Komori 子守  
 Kon-gō-han-nya-kyō 金剛般若經 Konki, monk 金龜 Kon-kō-myō-kyō 金光明經 Kōyasan,  
 temple 高野山 Kudara 百濟 kugen 公驗 Kumano 熊野 Kusanagi no Tsurugi 草薙劍

Mangan, monk 満願 *mappō* 末法 Minamoto 源 Minamoto no Morotoki 源師時 *Minbushō*  
 民部省 Mirokuji 彌勒寺 Mononobe no Moriya 物部の守屋 Mononobe no Okoshi 物部尾  
 興 *Mu-ryō-ju-kyō* 無量寿經 *Myō-hō-ren-ge-kyō* 妙法蓮華經 *Nakatsukasashō* 中務省  
*nenbutsu* 念佛 *Nihon Ryōiki* 日本靈異記 *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 *Ninn-ō-gyō* 仁王經  
 Niumyōjin 丹生明神 Ōjin, emperor 応神天皇 Ōkubudera 大窪寺 Ōharano Daimyōjin 大  
 原野大明神 *Pien-cheng-lun* 辯正論 *risshi* 律師 *Ryōjin Hishō* 梁塵秘抄 Saichō, monk 最  
 澄 *Sai-shō-ō-kyō* 最勝王經 *Sandai Jitsuroku* 三代実録 Seimeiō, king 聖明王 *seng-cheng*  
 僧正 *seng-chu* 僧主 *seng-tu* 僧都 *sha-men-t'ung* 沙門統 *shamontō* 沙門統 *shinbutsu shūgō*  
 神仏習合 Shingon, sect 真言宗 Shiragi 新羅 Shitennōji 四天王寺 *shitoku* 私得 *shōjō* 正  
 法 *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 Shōmu, emperor 聖武 *Shoshin Honkaishū* 諸神本懷集  
 Shōtoku, crown prince 聖德 Soga no Iname 蘇我稻 Soga no Umako 蘇我馬子 *Sōgō* 僧  
 綱 *sōjō* 僧正 *sōshu* 僧主 *sōzu* 僧都 *Sūgensho* 崇玄署 *suijaku* 垂迹 Suiko, empress 推  
 古 Suinin, emperor 垂仁 Sumiyoshi Daimyōjin 住吉大明神 Susa no O no Mikoto 素盞鳥  
 尊 Sushun, emperor 崇峻 Tado Ōkami 多度大神 Tado Taisha 多度大社 Taika 大化 Taira  
 平 Takamagahara 高天原 Tanba 丹波国 T'ang 唐 Tendai, sect 天台宗 Tenmu, emperor  
 天武 Tenpyō, era 天平 Tenpyōhōji, era 天平宝字 Tenpyōjingo, era 天平神護 Toba,  
 cloistered emperor 鳥羽 *Tōdaiji Jitsuroku* 東大寺実録 *Tōhōki* 東宝記 Tōji 東寺 *tokudo*  
 得度 *tomo no miyatsuko* 伴造 *tsuina* 都維那 *tu-wei-na* 都維那 Ugakami 宇賀神 Umayado,  
 prince 厩戸 Usa Hachimangū 宇佐八幡宮 Yakushiji 薬師寺 Yōmei, emperor 用明 Yōrō,  
 era 養老 Yoshida Daimyōjin 吉田大明神 *yüeh-chung* 悦衆 Yusuvara 由原 *shōhō* 像法  
 Zonkaku, monk 存覚