

# Multifaceted Divinities in Japan and Beyond

In Memory of Prof. Zwi Werblowsky (1924–2015)

## ABSTRACTS

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## **Keynote Lecture**

**Bernard Faure** (Columbia University, New York): *The Devil's Advocate: Buddhism's Inner Demons*

**Abstract:** Unlike early Buddhism, which seems on the whole unconcerned with the question of evil, much of medieval Japanese Buddhism has to do with exorcizing demons. In other words, premodern Japanese Buddhism was above all a demonology. But who were these demons, and why have they been neglected for so long by Buddhist scholarship? The Western distinction between gods and demons, with its moral connotations, is misleading. Most medieval deities were "demonic (in the Greek sense of daimon) rather than "demoniac" (in the Christian sense). True, Buddhism did contribute to demonize these daemons, while attempting to transform most powerful among them into allies. Yet one could argue that there are no demons, only acts of demonization. Through such acts, Buddhism was perhaps yielding to its own inner demons. A case in point is that of Vināyaka or Shōten, the Buddhist version of the Indian god Ganesa, who needed to be propitiated at the beginning of every ritual. This Janus-faced demon of obstacles, came to be identified with Kōjin (the "wild god") — a paradigmatic deity of the "third kind" (neither Buddha nor kami, neither god or demon, or both). The case of Kōjin, in turn, reveals how, while Buddhism populated the outside world with demons, it also interiorized them — finding evil (yet at the same time deliverance) at the innermost heart of human beings. Demons of obstacles once stood in the way of Awakening and had to be ritually propitiated. Likewise, they stand today in the way of our scholarly understanding of premodern Japanese religion, and have to be paid their dues. The present paper is but a small step in that direction.

## **Panel 1: The Roots of Multivalence: Buddha and Dao**

**Eviatar Shulman** (Hebrew University): *The Divine Historical Buddha*

**Abstract:** In the traditional cultural contexts in which Buddhism flourished in Asia, Buddhism was well integrated with local religions. Buddhism often provided the cosmological framework for a broader religious system, a part of which was an accepted hierarchy between the Buddha and other gods: gods are still implicated in the world of existence; although powerful, they are not free. Therefore a Buddha – the consummation of knowledge, who is utterly beyond desire and self-interest - is a more reliable and creative power, to which the gods are subservient. The

Buddha himself is rarely a one-dimensional figure. Each Buddha arises in his own time and place, but lives the exact same life as all other Buddhas. In certain contexts, the Buddha is best understood in light of ideas familiar from Hindu, particularly Vaisnava, theology: In a manner similar to the logic of *avatāra* ("manifestation"), the Buddha is a "Lord" (*bhagavān*), who arises in the world in order to work for the dharma, and his activity is viewed as divine play (*līlā*). Thus, an "historical" Buddha is an embodiment of the deeper structures of reality; the gods therefore submit to him and participate in facilitating and celebrating its manifestation. Buddhas also come into being after a path that stretches over many lives, thereby generating a densely packed, multi-layered personality, whose main characteristic is comprehensive omniscience. Omniscience refers primarily to an infinite knowledge of karmic conditioning, both in relation to the Buddha himself and in relation to others. The Buddha's knowledge of himself and of reality are thus related like micro-cosmos and macro-cosmos. This talk is designed to work toward a conceptualization of the cosmological, ever-expanding Buddha, which provided the theoretical framework for the integration of Buddhism in the different contexts of Asia, among them in Japan. These ideas will be fleshed out in relation to a number of texts from the Pāli canon, primarily the *Buddha-vaṃsa*, the *Udāna* and the *Jātakas*.

**Gil Raz** (Dartmouth College, New Hampshire): *The Pantheon and Religion of Buddhist-  
Daoist Communities in Medieval China*

**Abstract:** For a century, between the late fifth and late sixth century, new religious communities appeared in the western reaches of the Central Region in north China. These communities erected stelae that combined Buddhist and Daoist images and salvational rhetoric. The donors who erected the stelae identify themselves as Buddhists or Daoists, revealing the joint religious identity of these communities. During this period the traditional heartland of Chinese culture had been under the rule of Turkic peoples for over a two centuries. Along with the socio-political turmoil, religion and culture were also in great flux. The efflorescence of Buddhism was felt by many Han Chinese as an existential threat. Answering the Buddhist challenge was a major motivation for the emergence and development of Daoism. The two religions were in a complex relationship of competition, contestation, and mutual appropriation. This paper focuses on the stelae erected by the religious communities of central north China. What do the joint images of Buddhist and Daoist deities tell us about religious identity of the community, and of their gods? How did these communities envision their pantheon? Can we adopt Bernard Faure's that combines a structural approach and nodal network to explore the relationship between the Daoist and Buddhist elements of the religious identities of these communities?

## **Panel 2: Buddhism, Localism and Combinatory Deities**

**Suzuki Masataka** (Keio University, Tokyo): *The Localization of Kumano Gongen Cult and Mountain Worship: From ‘Engi’ to ‘Kagura’* 「熊野権現の地域的展開と山岳信仰—縁起から神楽へ」

**Abstract:** This paper discusses the localization of the Kumano Gongen 熊野権現 cult and its relationship with Japanese mountain worship. It takes into account the development from foundation stories (*engi* 縁起) to ritual dramas and dances (*kagura* 神楽). The Kumano area played a pivotal role in creation of religious discourses focused on mountain worship during the ancient and medieval periods. In the mid-Heian period (794-1185), certain Japanese deities (*kami* 神) came to be regarded as *gongen*, i.e. avatars of Indian Buddhas and bodhisattvas. This was part of the “original ground and traces” (*honji suijaku* 本地垂迹) hermeneutical system. Following the logic of this system, *engi* narratives described the nature of various deities in different mountainous locations. In this presentation I focus on the *Kumano Gongen gosuijaku engi* 熊野権現御垂迹縁起 (1163), which is the oldest text to address the origin of Kumano Gongen at Hongū 本宮, being one of the three sacred sites of Kumano. I develop my analysis through a three-stage process: 1) a comparison of the *engi* textual strategies about Kumano Gongen as representing centrality and Hikosan Gongen 彦山権現 as representing periphery; 2) an analysis of the representations of nature in connection with the veneration of “fierce deities” such as Kōjin 荒神 and “obstacle deities” such as Shōgeshin 障礙神; 3) an interpretation of the religious significance of the deities defined as “princes” (*ōji* 王子), such as Kirime no Ōji 切目王子, an messenger of Kumano Gongen, through the investigation of ox bezoar talismans (*goōhōin* 牛玉宝印), ritual dramas and dances, hot water rituals (*yudate* 湯立), and mountain asceticism (*Shugendō* 修験道). Through this analysis, I hope to highlight the religious shift from discourse to practice, taking into account the movement from *engi* to *kagura*.

**Saitō Hideki** (Buddhist University, Kyoto): *Medieval Kagura of Calendrical Deities* 「曆神たちの中世神楽」

**Abstract:** A variety of “foreign” deities like Gozu Tennō (Tengeishō), Hachiōji, Konjin, Bankō, Daishōgun and Dokōjin, appear in “kagura” that spread throughout the Japanese archipelago during the late Medieval period. The majority of them are closely linked to the *Hoki Naiden* and the *Hokishō*. Among them, the most famous deity is Daidokōjin, seen in the story of Gojin Gorō Ōji. In the *Hoki Naiden* from the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Keichō, the story of Daidokōjin is

published as a variant of that of Kōtei Kōryūō, fifth prince of Bankōō. It is certain that the ritual text “Daidokōjin saimon”, chanted in kagura of different areas, is closely linked to the *Hoki Naiden* and its annotation *Hokishō*. What is important is that Daikōjin has a history as a “calendric deity”. The characteristics of a “calendric deity” are all shared throughout all the deities linked with the *Hoki Naiden*. However, it is worth focusing on how these deities, portrayed in the *Hoki Naiden*, an annotated almanac, and the *Hokishō*, its annotation, have transformed in the “saïmon” chanted in various kagura throughout the land. This paper will explore, among other things, the “Dokō Saïmon” handed down in Yamagata village of Aki country, which bears the “auspicious date of the 14<sup>th</sup> year and 8<sup>th</sup> month of Tenbun (1545), the “Sutra of Daidokōjin” (Jōō 4, 1655) from Okumikawa and the “Daidokūjin Honchi” (Taiyu Handa Bunji). This research will shed a light on the formation of Medieval Japan’s deities as completely distinct from deities formerly seen in Shinbutsu Shūgō and Medieval Shinto, and it will reveal how they were created through the medium of “kagura”.

**Carina Roth Al-Eid** (University of Geneva): *Encounterings at the Borders: En no Gyōja and Mountain Deities*

**Abstract:** En no Gyōja 役行者, "En the Practitioner", is a charismatic religious figure said to have lived around the 7th c. AD. Known for his special powers acquired through ascetic practice in the mountains, he was chosen as a founder by Shugendō 修験道, the "Way to powers through practice", a Japanese religious movement centering on mountain asceticism. This paper will show that the medieval period was seminal in the constructing of this figure both ambivalent and powerful, at the crossroads between man, idealized ancestor and divinity. En no Gyōja may be himself depicted as a manifestation of an Indian royal figure or the mountain god of Katsuragi 葛城, but one of his most important roles is that of "revelator" of the true origins of mountain deities. By establishing them in their authority and also showing their function in human society, En no Gyōja acts as a go-between between the realm of the Buddhas and thekami, and the human world. Partaking of both, he singularly embodies and highlights the workings of the *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 ("original grounds and manifested traces") paradigm.

**Yagi Morris** (SOAS, London): *The Spirituality of the Kami and the Materiality of Enlightenment in the Kinpusen Cult of Zaō gongen*

**Abstract:** The presentation will discuss multiple combinatory structures pertaining to the deity Zaō gongen in the *Kinpusen himitsuden*, a text written by Monkan Kōshin in 1337. The first structure stems from a legend regarding the manifestation of Zaō gongen, the mountain divinity of Kinpusen, before En no gyōja atop a rock on the summit of the mountain. The manifestation

of the *kami* was anteceded by the descent of three Buddhas – Śākyamuni, Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, deemed too gentle for the task of saving human beings. In the *Kinpusen himitsuden* the three Buddhas are identified as the three *honji* of Zaō gongen. However, as often is the case, the association between the Buddhas and the *kami* does not end in a fixed *honji-suijaku* scheme, but rather brings to a change in the very nature of the divinities. Articulated in the *himitsuden* as the Three Times, the Three Mysteries or the Three Buddha Bodies, the three *honji* Buddhas serve to re-conceptualize the *kami* in esoteric Buddhist terms.

This idea becomes more conspicuous when we examine a second combinatory structure, which associates Zaō gongen with the Uṣṇīṣa Buddha Sonshō butchō. In early medieval Japanese ritual practices the Uṣṇīṣa Buddhas became intrinsically linked to esoteric Buddhist notions of supreme attainment as well as to notions of imperial sovereignty, and were linked to Dainichi nyorai through the symbolism of the *stūpa* and the jewel. In the *Kinpusen himitsuden*, the association of Zaō gongen with Sonshō butchō served to centralize the mountain *kami* of Kinpusen in the esoteric Buddhist universe and to integrate the *kami* in an innovative and performative esoteric Buddhist discourse on the enlightened mind and in the symbolic and ritual structure of legitimacy of the imperial court. Rather than an earthly manifestation of the Buddhas, the association with the Uṣṇīṣa transformed the mountain *kami* into a consummation of the sacred power entrenched in the esoteric Buddhist universe. As such, the Kinpusen divinity is also positioned between the two great mandalas of esoteric Buddhism and is articulated as an embodiment of their unification in a third element, the *soshitsuji*. Surprisingly, a similar triadic construction is projected upon another divinity within the mountains, Tenkawa Benzaiten, the metamorphoses of the Hindu goddess Sarasvati, who is identified in the text as the *soshitsuji* and the wish-fulfilling jewel. The juxtaposition of Zaō gongen and Tenkawa Benzaiten, a peripheral deity in the Buddhist universe, attests to the importance given to the locality of divinities in the text, whether or not they are defined as *kami*. While the *kami* as well as peripheral divinities within the Buddhist pantheon acceded to the divine realm of the Buddhas and attained a new soteriological and cosmological dimension, they also embraced a distinct feature of their own - a connection to the land, in terms of both nature and territory. This feature of local divinities assumed great importance during the Nanbokuchō period. The wars transformed the unified realm under imperial sovereignty, imagined as a materialized Buddhist universe, into fragmented territories of dispute, each associated with a local deity (*kami* or other) and articulated as a site of explosive divine energy. The presentation will explore the rock-body of Zaō gongen as one such site, where the esoteric Buddhist universe as well as the Buddhist path to attainment are rearticulated in territorial and material terms with the divinity bridging the local and trans-local in its multiple identities and transformations.

### **Panel 3: Changing Identities of Medieval Deities**

**Abe Yasurō** (Nagoya University): *The Multi-Complex of the Sacred as Seen in Medieval Dreams and Oracles* 「中世の夢と託宣にあらわれた<聖なるもの>の多元複合」

**Abstract:** The third year of Ken'nin (1203) stood at the center of Medieval Japanese histories of mentalités as a period that constituted a major transitional phase in the conceptualization of divinities. In this year, the eminent monks Jien, Shinran, and Myōe received messages from the beyond in dreams, revelatory visions, and oracles. These miracles marked a crucial turning point in the lives of each of these priests. By analyzing the texts that the monks left behind, this paper will illuminate and interpret the different revelations of deities, as well as explore various aspects of the monks' miraculous experiences. The paper examines how monastics grappled with the notion of the sacred when it manifested itself as gods and Buddhas. It argues that there was a shared conceptualization of the sacred in these separate encounters. In other words, there was an *ideal objet* in the form of a constantly shifting sacrality, which was deeply etched in both body and mind of the monks.

**Or Porath** (University of California, Santa Barbara): *Acolytes among Gods: The Apotheosis of Children in Medieval Sexual Ritualism*

**Abstract:** In medieval Japan (12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries) sacred children, known as *chigo* or *dōji*, were important cultural icons celebrated for their protective and potent power in didactic tales, illustrated scrolls and legends. However, these youths were also undergoing apotheosis as gods and Buddhas through less public means. That is, initiation rituals that involved sexual activity with monks. One of these is the *chigo kanjō* (15<sup>th</sup> century), a Tendai ritual consecration that was disseminated to various Buddhist institutions including Mt. Hiei and Jobodai-in in Shiga prefecture, whose symbolic influence extended to Shingon establishments such as Daigoji. The ritual opened a sacred space where child acolytes (*chigo*) were identified with various divinities in a vast web of associations including the Bodhisattva Kannon and Sannō gongen, who make manifest important doctrinal notions from the Lotus Sutra and the Sanno-Shinto tradition respectively. I shall demonstrate that the two divinities become central to the ritual because of their close affinity to youths and the sexual subject matter in other medieval texts. Utilizing Bernard Faure's research on Japanese gods, I will also consider how a "de-centered" network of Buddho-Shinto deities nonetheless possessed a symbolical "center" in the form of Sannō, arguing that through the identification with Sannō the *chigo* functioned as a "macro-sign," a signifier of endless significations.

## **Panel 4: New Voices- Short Presentations by Emerging Israeli Scholars**

**Eitan Bolokan** (Tel-Aviv University): *Emptying Reason: Eihei Dōgen Moses and Maimonides on the Non-Instrumental Nature of Religious Practice*

**Abstract:** The comparative study of Buddhist philosophy and Jewish thought reveals the possibility for a fruitful dialogue between these two traditions. Such can be found in the inspection of the thought of the 12th and 13th century innovators Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) and Eihei Dogen (1200-53). We can detect a striking resemblance in the manners by which the two described religious practice in terms of a non-instrumental action; rather than in terms of a means towards an end. Yet the reasoning that stand at the basis for this similarity, and which led to its prominence in their respective writings, is quite different. For Maimonides, the non-instrumental approach (Heb. *leshma*) originated mainly from his method of negative theology (Heb. *shlilat tearim*) aimed at the eradication of idolatry (Heb. *elilut*). For Dogen, practice (Jp. *shugyo*) is understood through the dialectical interpretation of emptiness, and the nondual conception of practice and its realization (Jp. *shusho funi*). Comparing these two thinkers' arguments for a non-instrumental essence of practice leads to a deeper appreciation of basic assumptions that stand at the heart of the two traditions; that is the concepts of suchness (Skt. *tathatā*) and truth (Heb. *emet*).

**Naama Eisenstein** (SOAS, London): *Visiting the Naga Palace: Taira Spirits in Edo Imagery*

**Abstract:** On the third month of 1185 the Taira met the Minamoto at Dannoura. Seeing that they have no hope to win, the Imperial Grandmother took the child Emperor, Antoku, the sacred jewel and sword of the Imperial Regalia and leaped into the sea, followed by numerous Taira warriors who sank under the waves. The notion that the spirits of the fallen Taira clan came to the underwater palace of the Dragon King was well known already in the thirteenth century, and appears in several texts. However, visual representations of the Taira at the Dragon King palace appear much later. In this talk I will explore the core iconography of these images and question their meaning in their historical context.

**Irit Weinberg** (Tel-Aviv University): *Breaking out of National Myth: Imagining New Mythical Space in the Works of Shono Yoriko*

**Abstract:** Japanese literature, both classical and modern, is abundant with gods, divinities and supernatural beings. Implementation of mythical tropes and images has been used to various

ends and effects in Japanese modern fiction. For instance, Faye Yuan Kleeman has shown that it was used as a narrative technique that helped the writers to break out of naturalistic mode of writing and Susan Napier demonstrated it was also instrumental in dealing with anxieties raised by various aspects of modernity and post-modernity in Japan. In this talk I will discuss the works of contemporary writer Shōno Yoriko (1956- ), who actively engages with figures of Japanese imperial mythology and with the imperial hegemonic narrative as well as with relatively minor divinities and medieval syncretic deities. By doing so, Shōno unleashes a harsh criticism of contemporary Japanese society, including such issues as emperor system, neo-liberalism and gender inequality. In this talk I will focus mainly on the gender aspect and will show that by engaging the various deities and re-imagining ancient narratives, Shōno is able to open up new imaginative spaces for female existence, while at the same time interrogating the very notion of “femaleness”.

**Shalmit Bejarano** (Hebrew University and Tel-Aviv University): *Was the yamai-no-sōshi (Scroll of Illnesses) a Buddhist Scroll?*

**Abstract:** Originated in late Heian period, the renowned *Scroll of Illnesses* (病の草紙) comprises illustrations of deformed or sick persons accompanied by short explanations. The selection of ailments is unusual by any measure, and attracted much attention from both scholars of the history of medicine and of scholars of Buddhist studies. It is commonly argued (although not accepted by all scholars), that the *Scroll of Illnesses* should be classified among the *rokudō-e* as the human form of reincarnation, because the miscellaneous illnesses portray the consequence of sins committed in former life. In my talk, I argue that although *karmatic* thought was indeed basic to this scroll, the scroll’s main message is narrating the place of the marginal and outsider within the contemporaneous Heian-kyō. I demonstrate that the short written texts focus on the bodily deformations of the sick (without referring directly to former lives), and that the painted illustrations focus on the attitude of the caregivers to the ill. These attitudes include mainly mockery and finger pointing which are analyzed in themselves as a sort of punishment. I thus conclude that the scroll can be read as an expression of fears and loss that are linked to societal decomposition and hierarchical changes occurring during the decay of Heian regime.

**Liad Horowitz** (Tel-Aviv University): *The Esoteric Buddhist Initiation Reborn in Modern Reiki*

**Abstract:** Reiki is a holistic healing method founded in early 20th century Japan, and is currently popular in the west. Practitioners of Reiki believe the system is original and unique, though it is based on Esoteric Buddhist elements. My work focuses on the initiation rituals in Reiki traditions, claiming that these are modern versions of the *kanjō*, the Esoteric Buddhist

initiation ritual. The continuity between the esoteric *kanjō* and the modern Reiki initiation, marks the latter as a unique version of *kanjō* which crosses oceans and cultures, and millions of Reiki practitioners all over the world as unknowingly breathing life into a thousand year old tradition of initiation.

## **Panel 5: Polyvalent Kami in Medieval Japan**

**Fabio Rambelli** (University of California, Santa Barbara): *Of Matter, Spirits, and Places: Japanese Discourses on the Bodies of the Shinto Divinities (Kami)*

**Abstract:** One of the striking aspects of Shinto is the vagueness and multiplicity that characterize descriptions of the gods (*kami*). The general understanding today is that *kami* are spiritual (immaterial) entities that attach themselves to particular things (rocks, trees, mountains, etc.); however, there are also beliefs that natural objects are divine in themselves. In addition, human beings can, in certain cases, be deified as well. The notion of *kami* also shares some semantic elements with concepts such as *mono* (entity endowed with supernatural powers), *tama* (spirit), and *kokoro* (mind). In this paper, I present some aspects of premodern Japanese discussions on the body of the *kami* (*shintai*), with their multiplicity and ultimate irreducibility, with special emphasis on medieval doctrinal texts and early modern philosophical treatments by Confucians and Nativists. I will suggest that a shared feature of the theology of the *kami* throughout history is a constant oscillation (and indecision) between materiality and spirituality, a structural oscillation that is responsible for both the constancy of certain themes and religious innovation.

**Mark Teeuwen** (Oslo University): *Amaterasu: Kami Fluidity in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Ise*

**Abstract:** In his book chapter, Bernard Faure appraises various perspectives on the fluidity of divine beings: in terms of structure (symbolical systems), history (human agency), and existential reality (“real drama, not just ideas and beliefs”). In this talk, I will seek to apply these various perspectives on the transformations of Amaterasu in three periods, roughly around 700, 1200-1300, and 1600. I will argue that while fluidity itself is a constant, it takes on very different guises as the historical setting changes. Rather than sketching the specifics of Amaterasu’s various makeovers, I will reflect on the particular characteristics of the “logic” (structural, historical, and “real”) that generated fluidity, or imposed limits on it, in these

different periods. Faure's three perspectives will be helpful in analysing the dynamics of fluidity in these distinct historical contexts, pointing beyond medieval esoteric discourse.

**Kadoya Atsushi** (Iwaki Meisei University, Fukushima and Waseda University, Tokyo): *The Role of Sendai-Kujihongi in the Systematization and Theorization of Medieval Shinto* 「中世神道の理論化と体系化における『先代旧事本紀』の役割」

**Abstract:** "Sendai-Kujihongi " being in the status which is equal to the "Kojiki "and "Nihon-shoki" as the oldest Japanese history until the modern time beginning. In addition to it, when the time Shinto in the Middle Ages intended a theorization and systematizing, it was specifically thought as the theoretical basis. I want to attempt to think about the role and the meaning which "Sendai-Kujihongi" accomplished. In the Shinto theory in the Middle Ages, 天讓日天狹霧國禪月國狹霧尊 (あめゆずるひあまのさぎりくにゆずるつきくにさぎりのみこと ) is put on the heaven Messrs. which is integrate 天御中主神 and 国常立尊, each of them are the first deity of " Kojiki " and " Nihon-shoki" into one system. 天讓日天狹霧國禪月國狹霧尊 is appeared in "Sendai-Kujihongi" as the first deity. There is a suggestion, which constructs the pantheon of the deities in the middle Ages in "Sendai-Kujihongi ".

『先代旧事本紀』は近世初頭まで日本最古の歴史書として『古事記』『日本書紀』と同等の地位だけでなく、中世の一時期神道が理論化と体系化を志向した際には特に重視された。『先代旧事本紀』の果たした役割と、その意義について考えてみたい。

## **Panel 6: Maturation and Deconstruction: Multifaceted Divinities from Edo to Meiji**

**Evgeny Steiner** (NRU, Moscow and SOAS, London): *Iconographic Ambiguities: Artist's Whims and Stellar Mist - Hokusai's rendering of Star Gods in Hokusai Manga*

**Abstract:** The subject of my paper is polymorphic iconography of celestial beings as depicted in popular picture-books in Tokugawa epoch. In the center of this talk is a group of Japanese divinities of Chinese origin (Buddhist and Daoist), who represent various star gods and embodiments of whole constellations, from the Polar Star to Canopus to the Ursa Magna. In Japanese popular beliefs and sectarian ritual practices, these personages became in charge of multiple duties, sometimes quite dissimilar with their continental prototypes. Some of them bear variable iconographic features, which differ from each other when represented by different

artists. As a material for the case study, the images from Hokusai Manga (seen against the backdrop of other representations) are chosen. Among the figures analyzed there will be: Bunsho-teikun (Ch. Wenchang-dijun), a constellation near the Big Dipper; Jurojin (a version of Shouxing or the Old Man of the South Pole); Kaisei (Ch. Kuixing), a star in the Big Dipper; Kakushigi (Ch. Guo Ziyi) a Christian himself, deified as one of Three Stars (sanxing); Tobosaku (Ch. Dongfang Shuo), a posthumous personification of the Gold Star (Venus), and others. The close reading of iconographic attributes of these divinities as depicted by Hokusai, a worshipper of the Polar Star himself (and the bearer of its name – Hoku[to]sai 北[斗]斎) will elucidate their polyvalent characters and the process of their adaptation in Japan. Besides anthropomorphic or mixanthropic images, there are examples of schematic representations of various constellations in Hokusai Manga. The discussion of the panoply of their religious attributes makes another facet of this paper.

**Gaynor Sekimori** (SOAS, London): *Deconstructing Divinity: Old Identities Obscured, New identities Constructed*

**Abstract:** In April 1868 (Keiō 4.3.28) the Dajōkan, under pressure from nativist scholars who had power of influence in the new government, legislated to “clarify” the boundaries of kami worship. Shrines could no longer use Buddhist designations, such as “Gongen” or “Gozu Tennō” to refer to their deities. Furthermore, they could not be shown to have any relationship with Buddhism at all – if the *shintai* was a Buddhist statue it had to be changed, and if Buddhist statues were enshrined as the original form (*honji*) of the kami they had to be removed. This had an almost immediate impact on the visual culture of Japanese religion, and this impact can be seen particularly well in the printed images of deities (*osugata, mie*; “ofuda”) that were issued by shrines before and after the early years of the Meiji period. In this paper I will discuss examples of Edo and Meiji period religious representation that illustrate the reconfiguration of deity that resulted from the legislation taken from a number of collections of “ofuda” that date from this period. I will look briefly at the type of changes imposed on shrines when Buddhist designations could no longer be used, highlighting how old identities were obscured (but sometimes suggested) and new identities constructed. My main focus will be on various sites around Dewa Sanzan, an area whose checkered history of opposition and compromise to the new order is well reflected in its popular iconographic material.

## **Panel 7: Beyond Japan: Asian Multifaceted Divinities**

**Ehud Halperin** (Tel-Aviv University): *The Goddess of Many Faces: The Complex Nature of the Western Himalayan Hadimba Devi*

**Abstract:** Nowadays, the goddess Hadimba of the Western Himalayan Kullu Valley (Himachal Pradesh, India) is identified as a character from the Mahabharata epic. Yet, a close examination of orally transmitted narratives and ritual practices associated with Hadimba, as well as of the sociopolitical contexts in which her identity has been forged, reveal a much more complex figure. As I will show in this paper, this complexity of the divine is not lost on practitioners. This is nicely revealed by the institution of the palanquins – the ritually constructed material vehicles through which deities in the region manifest.

**Meir Shahar** (Tel-Aviv University): *Equine Deities across Boundaries: The Horse-Headed Avalokiteśvara, the Daoist Horse Marshal, and the Chinese Horse King*

**Abstract:** Deriving from the ancient Indian lore of the underwater fire-emanating mare, the Horse-Headed Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara has had a deep and lasting impact upon Chinese religion. Arriving in China during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the Buddhist divinity was incorporated into the pantheons of the popular religion and the organized Daoist faith. Serving as the tutelary deity of horses, donkeys, and mules, the equine divinity played a major role in the agricultural, economic, and military spheres. In Chinese villages it was referred to as the Horse King, whereas Daoist clerics dubbed it the Horse Marshal. This essay charts the diverse facets of the equine god across the boundaries of Buddhism, Daoism, and folk religion.

**Sujung Kim** (DePauw University, Indiana): *From the Son of Śiva to the God of Shaman: The Transformations of Skanda in East Asian Buddhism*

**Abstract:** This paper examines the transformations of Skanda 韋馱天 (Skt. Kārtikeya)'s image in East Asian Buddhism with a particular focus on the paintings from the late Chosŏn period (1392-1910) in Korea. Originally, a Hindu warrior deity or better known as the son of Śiva, Skanda had been incorporated into the Chinese Buddhist pantheon at least from the sixth century on as a deity who protects relics, sutras, monasteries, and monks. Whereas in India Skanda was depicted as a six-headed god holding various weapons and riding a peacock, in China his iconography became a young man in full armor, with the headgear of a Chinese general. During the Song period in China (960-1279), the image of Skanda as a Chinese general traveled to Korea and Japan, where it continued to flourish, in particular, in the Chan/Zen tradition. The deity continued his transformation in Korea as a shamanic god, where he gained new legends

and identities. By making connections with other visual examples of Skanda from India, China, and Japan, I will seek to explain how the Korean Buddhist tradition developed a different pairing and arrangement of the Skanda image, and how the subtle visual changes this involved led to the creation of new cultural meanings and local traditions. In this way, I suggest that Skanda's image functioned as both a convergent force linking a diversity of religious ideas and a point of divergence into heterogeneous cultural meanings.



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