> *There is not just one method for entering the Way,*
> *the causes and conditions for enlightenment being many.*
> *Once a person understands their general significance,*
> *he will see that the purport of the various teachings does not vary.*
> *And when he puts them into practice,*
> *he will find that the goal of the myriad religious practices is the same.*
>
> —Prologue to *Sand and Pebbles* (1278–1283)[1]

# 1

# *Winds of Doctrine: The World of Thought and Feeling in Late Kamakura Japan*

In spite of her family's prominent position in the Kamakura military establishment, we know few details about Lady Horiuchi's life. But since she was raised in harsh times dominated by the Spartan ideals of the newly risen samurai class, we can make some confident inferences about the kind of person she must have been. We should envision neither a court lady of Heian society nor a disenfranchised woman of the merchant or peasant classes of the Edo period. Lady Horiuchi was nurtured in the mores of the samurai class. About the ideas, thoughts, and values that shaped her society—the native "Way of the Gods" (Shintō), Confucian social philosophy, and the maze of Buddhist theory and practice—we have an abundance of facts, but often as many views about how to construe them. Consequently, in order to avoid unnecessary confusion, we begin our story with a brief overview of these traditional religious and ideological underpinnings to Japanese ways of thought and behavior as they appear to us.

## SHINTŌ, THE "WAY OF THE GODS"

No assessment of Japanese thought and values in any period can be complete without taking into account Shintō, Confucianism, Buddhism, and, when possible, that amorphous array of folk beliefs which influenced these three relatively well-defined systems, but cannot be convincingly subsumed under any one of them—shamanism, mountain-worship, *yin-yang* magic (*onyōdō*), and belief in spirits of the dead known as *goryō*—a religious underpinning revealed to us by the great cultural historian Hori

Ichirō (1910–1974), to whose small but informative classic we refer the reader.[2] It is not difficult, of course, to meet Japanese today who vehemently deny any interest, knowledge, or connection with these traditional modes of thought and behavior, but their actions belie this. No society can avoid its past.

We can identify three main characteristics of Shintō: (a) the existence of numerous animistic "gods" (*kami*), (b) the importance of ritual purity/pollution as opposed to moral good/evil, and (c) a-rationalism, that is, the view that reason has limitations. Kakusan-ni and her contemporaries would probably not describe their beliefs quite this way, but their actions would bear them out.

### *Eight Million Gods* **(yaoyorozu no kami)**

The objects of worship in all Shintō cults were known as *kami*, a term for which it is difficult to find a translation. A famous student of Shintō, Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), wrote:

> I do not yet understand the meaning of the term *kami*. Speaking in general, however, it may be said that *kami* signifies, in the first place, the deities of heaven and earth that appear in the ancient records and also the spirits of the shrines where they are worshiped.
>
> It is hardly necessary to say that it includes human beings. It also includes such objects as birds, beasts, trees, plants, seas, mountains, and so forth. In ancient usage, anything whatsoever which was outside the ordinary, which possessed superior power, or which was awe-inspiring was called *kami*. Eminence here does not refer merely to the superiority of nobility, goodness, or meritorious deeds. Evil and mysterious things, if they are extraordinary and dreadful, are called *kami*. It is needless to say that among human beings who are called *kami* the successive generations of sacred emperors are all included. The fact that emperors are also called "distant kami" is because, from the standpoint of common people, they are far-separated, majestic, and worthy of reverence. In a lesser degree we find, in the present as well as in ancient times, human beings who are *kami*. Although they may not be accepted throughout the whole country, yet in each province, each village, and each family there are human beings who are *kami*, each one according to his own proper position. The *kami* of the divine age were for the most part human beings of that time and, because the people of that time were all *kami*, it is called the Age of the Gods (*kami*).[3]

### *Pollution* **(kegare)** *and Ritual Purification* **(misogi)**

Shintō's emphasis on ritual purity and pollution instead of moral good and evil has led some influenced by Western models of characteristic religious behavior to question whether Shintō should even be considered a "religion," rather than a motley collection of national customs. The danger of projecting our own expectations on a foreign context can lead to perplexing conclusions: are *kabuki* and *nō*, for example, to be judged by the standards of Western drama? Did Saikaku write novels, short stories, or what? How do we classify *zuihitsu* ("writings following the brush")? As essays? . . . Nevertheless, however we may classify what has commonly been known as "Shintō," and by whatever name we may call it, the values it preserves have been, and remain, a pervasive influence on Japanese behavior.

Concerning pollution (*kegare*) and ritual purification (*misogi*), the distinguished Shintō scholar, Muraoka Tsunetsugu (1884–1946), remarks:

> If we now ask how badness and goodness were conceived in ancient Shinto, in what was later called a "moral sense," the answer is that badness was pollution and goodness was purity. This was a very simple stage of moralistic conception—at that time the word "*tsumi*" (abomination) was identified with pollution (*kegare*). In the frequent appearances of the word "*tsumi*" in the Emperor Chūai chapter of the *Kojiki* [Record of Ancient Matters, 712],[4] and in the Great Purification liturgy (*ōharae no kotoba*)[5] the meaning is roughly the same. According to these references, such *tsumi* as defiling one's mother was something which today would be classified as a moral "sin." But natural disasters such as "disasters from birds on high" (*takatsutori no wazawai*) or "disasters from Kami on high" (*takatsukami no wazawai*)—as well as various physical disfigurements like albinism and skin growths—were also thought of as *tsumi*. Thus *tsumi* was pollution to the senses. On the opposite side of such simple thinking there existed, along with the taboo of pollution, a reverence for that which was pure and bright.
>
> Purification (*harai*) was a means of removing *tsumi*. This was a ritual by which the body was purified and pollution expelled. The ceremony goes back to Izanagi's self-purification at Ahakihara in Tsukushi after returning from Yomi where he came into contact with pollution.[6] It is recorded in the *Kojiki* that as a result of Izanagi's act of purification three august Kami, including the Sun Goddess, were born. Thus the aim of exorcism was to attain purity from pollution: the spirit of the act is identified with *meijō shugi*. [Index definition, xvi: "brightness-purity-ism."][7]

We will have occasion to return to Shintō notions of ritual defilement and the need for lustration, especially as it applies to "blood pollution," menstruation, discharges, childbirth, sexual intercourse (even though legal), and ceremonial impurity in general when we come to the much-discussed issue of women's Five Obstructions (*goshō*) as briefly mentioned in the story of the Daughter of the Dragon King in the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. Meanwhile it is well to remember that such notions as blood pollution are at the very core of Shintō and must be considered in any serious evaluation of Japanese *Buddhist* attitudes.

## *Feeling* (awäre) *vs. Rationalism*

Although all three major Western religions, and several prominent philosophers, like Kant, formally accept the notion that reason has limits and that their God is beyond human comprehension, each is convinced that its own anthropomorphic myth (which, at best, can only *suggest* the ineffable) is somehow "true" to the exclusion of all others. Over the centuries Western nations have been prepared to defend to the death—preferably the death of others—the "truth" of their own logolatry.

Since most Westerners are rationalists to the bone, however loudly we may publicly deny it, Motoori's assertion that human reasoning is quite limited and cannot know the unknowable takes us by surprise.

> The acts of the gods cannot be measured by ordinary human reasoning. Man's intellect, however wise, has its limits. It is small, and what is beyond its confines it cannot know. To the human mind these acts appear to be remote, inaccessible, and difficult of comprehension and belief. Chinese teachings, on the other hand, were established within the reach of human intelligence; thus, to the mind of the listener, they are familiar and intimate and easy of comprehension and belief. The Chinese, because they believe that the wisdom of the Sage [Confucius] was capable of comprehending all the truths of the universe and of its phenomena, pretend to the wisdom of the Sage and insist, despite their small and limited minds, that they know what their minds are really incapable of knowing. But at the same time they refuse to believe in the inscrutability of the truth, for this, they conclude, is irrational. This sounds clever, but on the contrary, it betrays the pettiness of their intelligence. If my objector would rid himself of such a habit and reflect seriously, such a doubt as he has just expressed would disappear of itself . . .
>
> The people of antiquity never attempted to reason out the acts of the gods with their own intelligence, but the people of a later age, influenced by the Chinese, have become addicts of rationalism. Such people appear wise, but in reality are quite foolish in their suspicion and skepticism about the strange happenings of the Divine Age which are quite different from the happenings of the human age . . .
>
> Thus, the universe and all things therein are without a single exception strange and wondrous when examined carefully. Even the Sage [Confucius] would be incapable of explaining these phenomena. Thus, one must acknowledge that human intelligence is limited and puny while the acts of the gods are illimitable and wondrous. But it is indeed amusing that there are people who respect and believe in the Sage as one who had illuminated every truth of the universe and its phenomena, when in fact he explained only those things within the boundaries of his own intelligence.[8]

Shintō in the broadest sense—not to be confused with the recent so-called State Shintō between the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and 1945[9]—was also a part of Kakusan's world, and that of millions of Japanese before and after her. In one way or another it influences Japanese Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, Marxism, nationalism, aesthetics—everything. Somehow it works—and it is hard to imagine Japan without it.

## CONFUCIANISM, THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Since "the early religion is almost entirely deficient in abstract ideas of morality . . . (its code being) not ethical but customary and ceremonial" (see Sansom's earlier comment), and Mahāyāna Buddhism might at best provide broad complementary values such as the altruistic Bodhisattva ideal or the notion of universal codependence to reinforce proper social behavior, it was left to Confucian social philosophy to supply its rationale and day-to-day directives.

Confucianism did not, of course, introduce social behavior to Japan; this had already existed for thousands of years. Its role was rather to reinforce and provide a rationale for already existing practice. The Japanese evolved their own varieties of Confucianism—and Buddhism—by selecting and emphasizing those features that were compatible with their indigenous mind-set and ignoring what was not. One technique for defining a society's distinctive "ways of thinking" is simply to compare how it assimilates a system of ideas and values—Buddhism, for example—with how this is done in other societies.[10]

The core of this very practical social philosophy is the Five Constant Virtues (*gojō*)—humanity (*jin*), rightness (*gi*), ritual decorum (*rei*), wisdom (*chi*), and trustworthiness (*shin*)—which people should practice in their behavior toward others if they wish to live in a stable society. We can recognize three major developments in this system: (1) the practical advice of Confucius (551–479 BCE) to civil servants in the feudal states of the Chou period in China; (2) the elaborated Han political system based on the original Confucian principles; and (3) the metaphysical Neo-Confucian philosophy developed from the Sung period on and adopted in Japan as the orthodox political system by the Tokugawa shogunate.[11]

Han Confucianism was the version first introduced into Japan and is conspicuous in the famous *Seventeen-Article Constitution* (Jūshichijō kenpō, 604) of Prince Shōtoku (773–621),[12] the convenient point of departure for our view of Japanese history, as distinguished from the prehistory of most of what is recorded in the *Record of Ancient Matters* (Kojiki, 712), the *Chronicles of Japan* (Nihon shoki, or Nihongi; 720), and what we can infer from anthropological studies of the Jōmon, Yayoi, and tumulus (*kofun*) periods.

In short, Han Confucianism was a major component of the early Japanese ideological mix until the introduction and encouragement of the Neo-Confucianism of Chu-Hsi (1130–1200) by Rinzai Zen's Five Mountains (*gosan*) movement in the Muromachi period, and later articulated by the government-sanctioned Hayashi Razan (1583–1657) school in the early Edo period.

The interaction between Shintō, Confucianism, and Buddhism over the centuries has been too complex to permit our simple disentanglement of one ideological thread from the other two, as we have seen with Shintō issues of ritual impurity and a-rationality in relation to Buddhism. Similarly, Confucianism not only adds a practical social philosophy to the Shintō-Buddhist ideological mix, but its associated judgments on social structure influence the functioning of the whole. Thus, Confucian attitudes toward Buddhist convents as social institutions are for the most part predictable—but perhaps not some of the details.

> Under the *ritsu-ryō*[13] system of government, which was implemented at the beginning of the eighth century, state Buddhism was charged with maintaining the security and peace of the nation. Ultimate responsibility rested with the government-certified nuns and monks, who performed the ceremonies for the nation's welfare. The specific role of nuns is attested to by the *Regulations for Monks and Nuns* (Sōniryō) in the Yōrō Code of 718, which stipulated that monks and nuns had equal status. It is safe to assume that this ide-

> ology encouraged the existence of a large number of convents during the Nara period. By the middle of the eighth century however, Confucian values, which upheld an unequal separation between men and women, had begun to penetrate Buddhist thought. As a result, nuns were prohibited from occupying seats of equal rank with monks at official gatherings and eventually began to be excluded from national religious ceremonies.[14]

Note that as late as the early Nara period the laws specified that "monks and nuns had equal status . . . [until] Confucian values, which upheld an unequal separation between men and women, had begun to penetrate Buddhist thought." Confucianism has its virtues, but it can be a disaster for the rights of women, as is also evident during the Neo-Confucian dominance of the Edo period. Let us not rush to judgment about "Buddhist grievances" toward women until we see who else is playing in the game.

## BUDDHISM: SOME CHANGES, MUCH CONTINUITY

Although the Tōkeiji has been a tangible manifestation of many interacting intellectual and social forces in Japan for more than seven centuries, our task here is to map the convent's specific ideological pattern. Its close institutional (and even geographical) links with Engakuji align it with a major current of Kamakura's relatively eclectic Rinzai Zen movement—in contrast, say, to the exclusivity (*senjaku*) of the emerging sole-practice (*senju nembutsu*) Pure Land schools (Hōnen, Shinran),[15] the followers of the self-assured Nichiren,[16] and the Sōtō Zen of the inflexible Dōgen Kigen (1200–1253).[17]

For decades scholars have reminded us that "Kamakura Buddhism" may have had its roots in the thirteenth century, but it did not really flower until a century or so later.[18] The "old Buddhism" of Tendai, Shingon, and the even older sects of "Nara Buddhism" continued to provide the continuity of religious thought even as they declined. And the major sutra of Tendai, the central sect of "old Buddhism," at least until the destruction of its headquarters at the Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei by Oda Nobunaga in 1571, was the *Lotus Sutra.*

### *The* Lotus Sutra (*or* Sutra of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Law)

To state the matter as plainly and unambiguously as possible, the *Lotus Sutra* has been the greatest and most influential scripture in the history of mankind for providing a clear rationale not only for the possibility of, but the absolute necessity for, diversity of religious belief. Since the goal of spiritual life is beyond form and beyond the grasp of human rationality (*musō munen*), many expedient metaphors may be employed to direct one's attention to a spiritual goal according to a person's specific needs and capacities. But no single rational formulation can possibly be "true" to the exclusion of all others. This is not relativism in the sense that every belief and practice is just as good as any other: some are *better* than others for different people at different times and places, based on the principle of "Skillful Means" (*upāya*, *fang pien*, *hōben*); and every theoretical position is entitled to define itself in relation to "distinctions between doctrinal aspects" (*kyōsō hanjaku*):[19] Chih-i's "Five Periods" (*wu shih*, *goji*; Hurvitz 1963, 230–245), "Kūkai's Ten Stages of Religious Consciousness,"[20] the Kegon sect's "Five Teachings" (*gokyō*) and "Ten Doctrines" (*jisshū*),[21] and so on.

The "Skillful Means" rationale for ideological diversity as repeatedly proclaimed in the *Lotus Sutra* is supported by the preeminent Mahāyāna philosopher, Nāgārjuna (Ryūju, ca. 150–250 CE):

> All Mādhyamika [*Chūganha*] treatises take the two truths—Paramārtha Satya [*shintai*] and Saṁvṛti Satya [*zokutai*] as vital to the system; some even begin their philosophical disquisitions with the distinction. According to Nāgārjuna, "Those that are unaware of the distinction between these two truths are incapable of grasping the deep significance of the teaching of Buddha." The doctrine is already well developed in the . . . *Prajñāpāramita* texts [e.g., the *Heart Sutra*] besides *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka* [i.e., the *Lotus Sutra*] and similar Mahāyāna Sūtras.
>
> Paramārtha Satya . . . is the knowledge of the real as it is without any distortion . . . Categories of thought and points of view distort the real . . . [Paramārtha Satya] is beyond the scope of discursive thought, language and empirical activity; and conversely the object of these is saṁvṛti satya . . . Saṁvṛti satya is truth so called; truth as conventionally believed in common parlance . . .[22]
>
> The real being truly indeterminate, it is, however, possible to utilise any means appropriate to the person in particular circumstances for leading him to the ultimate truth. There is no limit to the number and nature of the doctrinal devices that may be employed to realise this end. The only consideration is that the device must be suited to the spiritual temperament and needs of beings, like the medicine to the malady. This is the celebrated doctrine of Upaya-kauśalya (excellence in the choice of methods ["skillful means"]). Buddha is compared to a skilled physician who adjusts his remedies conforming to the nature and intensity of the disease of the patients; he does not, like a quack, prescribe one remedy for all . . . According to the nature of the malady to be cured the appropriate teaching could be used.[23]
>
> Not only common notions of the layman, but philosophical viewpoints as embodied in systems of thought can be accorded some status and significance on the Mādhyamika notion of the empirical reality of the saṁvṛti and its transcendent (ultimate) ideality.[24]

The Japanese Tendai sect not only declared its acceptance of the idea of diversity but actually demonstrated its commitment in practice. Under its broad ideological umbrella supported by Skillful Means it encouraged the practice of Amida devotion,[25] meditation, scriptural study and recitation, esoteric ritual, and accommodation with Shintō *kami*—anything that might lead a person to enlightenment. It was intolerant only of intolerance—as in its attack on Hōnen for his insistence on "sole-practice" calling the name of the Buddha Amida, and the denial of the possibility of any other religious activity.

The reader hardly needs to be reminded of the bloody persecutions, inquisitions, crusades, iconoclasm, religious bigotry, the expulsion of entire populations, and even genocide carried out endlessly in the West in the name of a One-and-Only True Something-or-Other: God, faith, practice, race, political creed, or socioeconomic certainty. Japan has certainly had her share of *political* brutality, but rarely, if ever, in the name of a one-and-only *religious* "truth." For this the principle of Skillful Means, accommodation, expediency, supported by such scriptures as the *Lotus Sutra* can surely take much credit.

As for the Dragon Girl issue in the Devadatta chapter (chap. 12), we are among the many who totally agree with Professor Watson's pithy summation:

> Asked if there were any among his listeners who succeeded in gaining enlightenment, Manjushri mentions the daughter of the dragon king Sagara, a girl just turned eight, who was able to master the teachings. The questioner expresses understandable skepticism, pointing out that even Shakyamuni himself required many eons of religious practice before he could achieve enlightenment.
>
> The girl herself then appears and before the astonished assembly performs various acts that demonstrate she has in fact achieved the highest level of understanding and can "in an instant" attain Buddhahood. Earlier Buddhism had asserted that women were gravely hampered in their endeavors by "five obstacles," one of which is that they could never hope to attain Buddhahood. But all such assertions are here in the Lotus Sutra unequivocally thrust aside. The child is a dragon, a nonhuman being, she is of the female sex, and she has barely turned eight, yet she reaches the highest goal in the space of a moment. Once again the Lotus Sutra reveals that its revolutionary doctrines operate in a realm transcending all petty distinctions of sex or species, instant or eon.[26]

Perhaps not surprisingly, the *Lotus Sutra* is still under attack from opponents today—sometimes overtly, and sometimes implicitly by simply ignoring its philosophical and historical importance. While academic "objectivity" remains an ideal well worth cultivating as a public facade, it is no secret that economic and social pressures shape the direction, methodology, and conclusions of scholarly research far more than quiet reflection and simple reasoning with integrity. Today's scholarship on Japanese Buddhism is dominated by the exclusivists, and the *Lotus Sutra* has few fashionable supporters. This is ultimately what determines its "truth" for our generation, not its genuine historical contributions to Japanese society nor its intrinsic religiophilosophical insights.

In his pivotal article on "The Enlightenment of the Dragon King's Daughter in the *Lotus Sutra*"[27]—pivotal because it introduces the reader to the *Lotus Sutra*, especially the story of the Dragon King's Daughter in respect to the issue of the Five Obstructions (*goshō*), which are central to many other articles of the collection—Professor Yoshida Kazuhiko concludes his overview by stating that "in effect the text [of the *Lotus Sutra*] does nothing more than assert the value of the sutra by means of dazzling examples. I conclude, therefore, that *The Lotus Sutra* teaches that 'The *Lotus Sutra* is a most wonderful sutra'." In the next paragraph he dismisses conflicting views by Professors Tamura Yoshirō and Kino Kazuyoshi for "arbitrarily identifying concepts that meet present-day standards of logic to serve as the teachings of *The Lotus Sutra*."[28]

As an example of Edo philosophers who do not follow these "present-day standards of logic" Professor Yoshida first cites the home-grown "Eighteenth-Century Rationalist" Tominaga Nakamoto (1716–1746), critic of Shintō, Buddhism, Confucianism, and then, creator of his own religion of humanity, "the religion of true fact" (*makoto no oshie*). Professor Yoshida quotes Tominaga on the *Lotus Sutra*: "*The Lotus Sutra* is, beginning to end, praise for the Buddha. There is nothing that constitutes doctrine and it should never have been called a sutra. *The Lotus Sutra* is nothing but a eulogy."[29]

Professor Yoshida's next authority is Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843),[30] perhaps the most rabid of Shintō National Learning scholars, who argued that "all twenty-eight chapters of *The Lotus Sutra* are nothing but boasts. There is nothing useful in it. If this angers anyone, let them show me what is useful about it."[31] Atsutane would probably be the last person in the world to understand what is "useful" about recognizing that the opinions of others might be just as valid as his own—or even more so. He was the quintessential exclusivist True Believer.

### *Doctrinal Lineage of the Tōkeiji*

Whatever doctrinal and sectarian movements may have had their beginnings in the Kamakura period, it is clear that they were grounded in the scriptures, practices, and philosophies of the "old" sects of Nara and Heiankyō (especially Tendai, Shingon, Kegon, and Ritsu)—but also in the less systematic but pervasive influences of Shintō, and the adopted Confucian rationalizations of ancient social behavior.

We gradually come to understand more about these influences, how they share perspectives or differ from each other, and how they interact. In an attempt to sketch an ideological profile of an individual (or series of individuals)—in this case, Kakusan Shidō and her spiritual descendants through seven centuries—we can begin by identifying the obvious sectarian lines of influence, extrapolating specific factual items which may shade or color the picture as we progress. Chart A, "Zen Lineage from Śākyamuni to the Tōkeiji," may help to define the line of transmission through a muddle of details, claims, and counterclaims.

But identifying the obvious sectarian lines of influence is easier said than done. When one is citing the work of some authority in order to clarify a difference of opinion, it is often difficult to avoid the appearance of an "attack" on the individual writer or perhaps some prominent religious leader. On the other hand, if one does not support a difference of opinion with chapter and verse, he runs the equally dangerous risk of being charged with fabricating an imaginary distinction.

Our ideological profile of Kakusan and Tōkeiji's Rinzai Zen rests on distinctions recognized by several prominent contemporary scholars. The first is between the "new Buddhism" (*shin Bukkyō*) of the Kamakura innovators as opposed to the medieval "old Buddhism" (*kyū Bukkyō*) of Tendai, Shingon, and the Nara sects. In her brilliant work on *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Professor Stone discusses "Trends in Interpreting Kamakura Buddhism":

> This [postwar] approach has regarded these new sectarian movements as a significant departure from the Buddhism of earlier times and therefore speaks of them collectively as the "new Buddhism" (*shin Bukkyō*). This category has in turn demanded the construction of its opposite—"old Buddhism" (*kyū Bukkyō*)—a term that replaced the older and less wieldy though more neutral expression *nanto hokurei* (i.e., the Buddhism of the temples of Nara and Mt. Hiei) . . . The opposition of *shin* and *kyū* in modern studies of Kamakura Buddhism has supported a number of academic stereotypes about a democratic, reformist "new Buddhism" arising in reaction to an elitist, degenerate, and outmoded "old Buddhism." These clichés have become enshrined in a number of basic reference sources, such as the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, which asserts that founders such as Hōnen and Shinran were moved to seek new directions in faith because they "had become disillusioned by the empty ceremonialism, scholasticism and moral corruption that characterized the monastic life of their times."[32]

These clichés are often encountered in current accounts of Japanese Buddhism and need no further examples in illustration. However, it is certainly possible to evaluate them quite differently than has been done until recently.

The second distinction that we need for our tentative ideological profile is between sects which emphasize "sole-practice," "exclusive choice" (*senchaku* or *senju*), the rejection of the plurality of available Buddhist practices in favor of a single form, which thereby acquires absolute status, and those "inclusive" sects which accommodate diversity of theory and practice, as taught by the *Lotus Sutra* with its doctrine of "Skillful Means," *upāya*, *hōben*. The rejection of the plurality of available Buddhist practices in favor of a single form is a frontal attack on the central doctrine of traditional Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Since our interests have always focused on concrete expressions of Japanese religion (Buddhism in popular literature, for example), rather than on its theoretical subtleties, we must rely on the work of dedicated Buddhologists to validate our comments on doctrine. We did not coin the distinctions between "new" and "old" Buddhism nor between "exclusivity" and "inclusivity," although we have on occasion been taken to task for mentioning them. And so we feel that our best strategy at this point would be to introduce comments by Professor Bielefeldt, a recognized authority on Sōtō Zen's Dōgen (1200–1253):

> Dōgen was an uncompromising exponent of pure Zen, who focussed almost exclusively on the lineage of Bodhidharma and had little use for the competing forms of Buddhism

> that surrounded him in Japan; yet this very exclusivity expresses an approach to religion common to many of his contemporaries in the other Buddhist movements of the Kamakura reformation . . .
>
> Despite their obvious differences, in very broad terms, the ideologies of all three of these famous religious thinkers [Dōgen, Shinran, Nichiren] can be seen as an attempt to define the true practice of the Tendai Buddha vehicle—a sudden practice to be based solely on the absolute truth of Buddhahood itself, not on the *upāya* of the relative teachings and gradual practices . . .
>
> The spirit of the new Kamakura schools is often summarized by the expression "selective" (*senjaku*) Buddhism. This term, taken especially from Pure Land theology, refers first to the selection from a multiplicity of spiritual exercises (*shogyō*) of one practice for exclusive cultivation (*senju*). In Pure Land itself, of course, this practice was the recitation of Amitābha's name (*nenbutsu*); for Nichiren, it was "discerning the mind" (*kanjin*), understood now in its esoteric sense as the recitation of the title of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*daimoku*). For Dōgen, it was just sitting. In one obvious sense the selection can be seen as a simplification of Buddhism and a reduction of its practice to a single, uncomplicated exercise accessible to all. Historically speaking, such simplification was no doubt linked to the new social conditions of Kamakura Buddhism and served as an important factor in the subsequent popularity of the new schools. Yet this historical view should not blind us to the fact that, for the founders of these schools themselves, the practices they selected were not merely easy ways to salvation but the only true ways to express the highest teaching of the one vehicle. As such, they were not merely *upāya*—expedient exercises based on man's imperfection—but sudden practices derived from the principle of a higher perfection . . .
>
> This radically sudden approach to Buddhist practice stands at the ideological heart of the exclusivity and sectarianism that we find in Dōgen and other Kamakura reformers. Their selection of the one practice was not merely a decision to specialize in a particular religious exercise but a commitment to the highest vehicle alone and a rejection of all other teachings as incompatible with it. Thus unlike classical Tendai—which sought to justify and embrace all versions of Buddhism as the expedient expressions of the one Buddha vehicle—Shinran, Nichiren, and Dōgen, like the Ch'an reformers of the T'ang before them, tended to see the one vehicle as exclusive: the highest *dharma* alone was true; all else was false (or at least religiously irrelevant) and was to be abandoned.[33]

The exclusive group would include Hōnen (1133–1212), Shinran (1173–1262), Nichiren (1222–1282), Ippen (1239–1289),[34] and Dōgen (1200–1253); the inclusive group would comprise the sects of "old" Buddhism—mainly Tendai, Shingon, Kegon, and Ritsu—as well as most members of the Rinzai Zen tradition, including Eisai (Yōsai, 1141–1215), Wu-hsüeh Tsu-yüan (1226–1286), Enni Ben'en (1201–1280), Mujū Ichien (1226–1312), and the majority of those later in the tradition, which was quickly able to establish its administrative autonomy without feeling the need to declare its special meditation methods to be the one-and-only means to enlightenment.

The spirit of inclusiveness among some members of the "new" Buddhism's Rinzai Zen sect is interpreted by some modern historians as a sign of moral deficiency, weakness of will, or philosophic confusion.

> For him [Eisai] Rinzai meant the "quintessence of all teachings and the summation of the Buddha-Dharma." Yet despite his convictions, Eisai lacked both the ability and the will to carry out his dream of founding an independent Japanese Rinzai school. He was hindered not only by his outward and inward ties to Tendai, but also by his propensity to syncretize and harmonize, which became more of an obstacle as he advanced in years . . . In a word, his life's work resulted in important, indeed pioneering achievements, but failed to accomplish the final breakthrough.[35]

Historians of religion tend to favor the single-minded, self-righteous extremist who not only has found "truth" for himself, but who insists that his is the *only* "truth," which everyone else must follow. To believe that one's own is "best"—certainly for oneself, and possibly for all mankind—is one thing; to insist that it is the "sole" means to religious enlightenment/salvation—the one-and-only true and possible belief for everyone—is quite another. By this criterion, Hōnen, Nichiren, Shinran, and Dōgen make the grade—but Eisai and Enni do not.

The syncretic Enni Ben'en (1201–1280), we are told, also "made room for the teachings of Zen, mikkyō, and Tendai, but . . . they were ranked vertically, with Zen—let it be stressed—at the top . . . and although Enni, who taught the Zen of his Chinese master Wu-chun [also the mentor of Engakuji's Wu-hsüeh Tsu-yüan], did not himself actually establish a fully independent Zen school in Japan, he did "set Zen firmly on its way to full independence."[36] Apparently Enni may have been an improvement over Eisai, but he was still lacking.

Perhaps . . . but he was also enormously successful with the establishment of the Tōfukuji and "the Shōichi lineage [which] flourished as one of the two most numerous and powerful of the *gozan* schools." On his return from training in China, Enni introduced to Japan the monumental, syncretic *Mirror of Sectarian Differences* (Sugyōroku, T 2016, v. 48: 415–957)[37] as well as the first books on Sung Neo-Confucianism to reach Japan.

Enni's syncretism grew out of confident conviction rather than indecisiveness, fear of social pressures, or intellectual muddle. While committed to his own version of Zen as the "best" religious practice, he saw no reason to insist that his way was the "only" way to enlightenment. The *Lotus Sutra* provided him with a sound rationale for appreciating, not just tolerating, the entire spectrum of beliefs—including Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and, had he been aware of them, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The conscious emphasis on such syncretism evidently had a long history in China. It is implicit in the *Mirror of Sectarian Differences* compiled in the tenth century by Yen-shou, but even much earlier in the *Lotus Sutra*. The theme of the Unity of the Three Creeds (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) was a prominent painting motif (*sankyō-zu*) in Rinzai Zen's Five Mountains (*gosan;* or *gozan*) movement of the Muromachi period, and into the Edo period with another Rinzai master, Sengai Gibon (1750–1837).[38] Professor Rosenfield provides us with an excellent example of the theme that brings together several principals in our story: Wu-chun-

Shih fan, bearer of the Chinese Rinzai Zen tradition to both Engakuji's Wu-hsüeh (Mugaku, spiritual guide of nuns Kakusan and Mugai), and Enni (spiritual guide of Mugai and monk Mujū):

> Most early poems and inscriptions on the subject have a positive air and stress that the unity of the three creeds is greater than the sum of the parts. An important example is the prose-poem written on a lost painting of the theme by Wu-chun Shih-fan (1177–1249). As the abbot of the Wan-shou-ssu near Hangchou, Wu-chun was perhaps the most important single figure in the flowering of the Southern Sung Ch'an community; a painter and calligrapher, he was a strong supporter of the concept of the Unity of the Three Creeds as seen in this translation:
>
> The one is three.  
> The three are one.  
> The three are one.  
> The one is three.  
> Apart, they cannot be separated.  
> Together, they cannot form a group.  
> Now, as in the past,  
> they join together  
> In silence,  
> For the simple reason  
> That within the creeds  
> Are many vessels.
>
> Two disciples of Wu-chun undoubtedly helped to implant the doctrine of the Unity of the Three Creeds in Japan. The Japanese priest En'i Ben'en (1202–1280), later known as Shōichi Kokushi, studied with Wu-chun and after returning to Japan founded Tōfukuji. Records show that in 1275 he lectured to the Retired Emperor Kameyama on the subject. The other disciple was Wu-hsüeh Tsu-yüan (1226–1286), a Chinese monk who traveled to Japan and founded the great Kamakura monastery of Engakuji.[39]

In his *Sand and Pebbles* (3:8) Mujū tells us that once when his mentor Enni reproved him for excessive hospitality during a trip (in 1264?), Enni supported his remarks with a reference to the *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*, by the preeminent T'ien-t'ai philosopher, Chih-i.[40] Enni became abbot of Kyoto's Tōfukuji in 1255 and by 1264 was a well-established and respected figure in Buddhism. Had he wished, he could easily have found a reference other than Chih-i and the *Lotus Sutra*. But he did not. New practices were introduced, but the solid accommodating substratum of Mahāyāna Buddhism continued, unapologetic, at least in Rinzai Zen—the tradition of Wu-hsüeh's Engakuji, Enni's Tōfukuji, Kakusan's Tōkeiji, and Mujū's Chōboji.

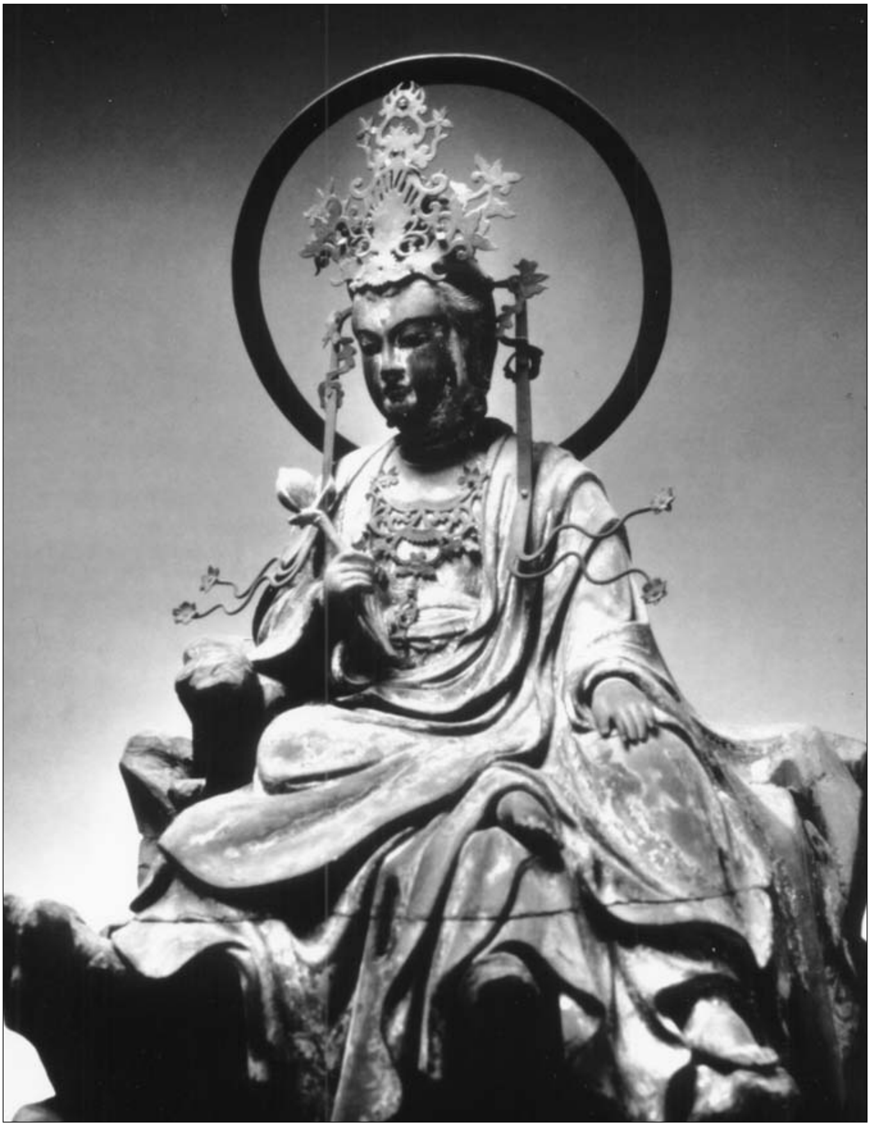

FIGURE 1. Suigetsu Kannon ("Kannon Viewing the Reflection of the Moon on Water"), Muromachi period. Kanagawa Prefecture designated Important Cultural Property (Jūyō bunkazai). (Tōkeiji Collection)