

Shinbutsu Shūgō and Jingi Fuhai

By Satō Hirō

Argument:

At this point in time, the influence of Kuroda Toshio's 1975 *kenmitsu taisei* (system of exoteric and esoteric Buddhism) theory on the study of medieval Japanese religious history is beyond mention (1). With this theory, the state of research regarding religion in the medieval period underwent a definitive conversion. From then on, a fierce debate began between those in agreement and those in disagreement with the *kenmitsu taisei* theory. Within this debate, many problems with the theory have been pointed out, not only from opposing perspectives, but also by some who basically agree with the *kenmitsu taisei*.

One point, representative of recent years, and raised by Kamikawa Michio at this research association's 2000 meeting, is that in the *kenmitsu taisei* theory, an external impetus, particularly from East Asia, is not included. He points out that behind the *kenmitsu taisei* theory is a tacit awareness that *kenmitsu* Buddhism matured self-determinedly within the domain of the nation of "Japan" (2). At the following year's meeting in 2001, Yokoi Yasuhito *et. al.* elucidated the creation process of the system of myths and *kami* supporting the royalty, taking as their starting point the empty space in our thinking about medieval religion as a whole opened up by the fact that medieval shrine rites were not absorbed into the machinery of *kenmitsu* Buddhism (3).

Yokoi's points can be seen as particularly pertinent to this paper, which aims to reevaluate the debate on the medieval relationship between Buddhism and Shintō. The *kenmitsu taisei* theory is constructed with Buddhism as its main axis, and *jingi* (native Japanese deities) are relegated to a secondary position. However, with its method of simply elucidating various forms of *jingi* and adding them up, is it likely that the *kenmitsu taisei* theory would be able to answer all of the problems it embraces? I am skeptical on this point because I see the reason the *kenmitsu taisei* theory does not encompass the *jingi* is not simply that the *jingi* are outside of its field of vision, but because methodological weaknesses in the *kenmitsu taisei* theory have become apparent.

So, what are these "methodological weaknesses?" The *kenmitsu taisei* theory is constructed based on a system of powerful houses. Because Kuroda projected this theory of a system of powerful houses, attempting to conceive of the country in the medieval period as made up of alliances and conflicts between the powerful houses, onto the forms of religion, he regards the whole of medieval religion with an eye to understanding powerful temples and sects. This approach necessarily neglects *jingi*, which were not independent enough to stand up to the powerful institutions of *kenmitsu* Buddhism. If it were only that the issue of the *kami* was overlooked, it would be sufficient to append it. However, if it is the case that this is derived from a methodological problem, it is not sufficient merely to compensate for a lack of vigilance, but rather reconsideration of the methods that support the *kenmitsu taisei* theory becomes necessary.

I would like to point out one more problem related to this point. The idea is prevalent among today's scholars that, once *kenmitsu* Buddhism was established, it quickly permeated throughout the land and completely overturned medieval society. In these circumstances, the keywords that are taken to encompass folk beliefs are "shinbutsu shūgō" and "honji suijaku" (4). However, is it really possible that the same logic of *kenmitsu* doctrine and *kenmitsu* Buddhism that unified the powerful religious houses and combined disparate other authorities with royal authority could have permeated all corners of the land to define the spiritual world of the

medieval people? Could “*shinbutsu shūgō*” and “*honji suijaku*” have rallied the common people into *kenmitsu* Buddhism? As far as I have seen, there is no research that proves these claims.

It seems that we have uncritically accepted proposal that *kenmitsu* Buddhism was the orthodox religion of the medieval period, interpreting it broadly, and before anyone knew, and without any proof, *kenmitsu* Buddhism has come to be considered not only a Buddhism of the nation or of powerful houses, but one and the same as the medieval realm of belief. When thinking about medieval Buddhism from the standpoint of the nation and religion, there is no doubt of the great validity of the *kenmitsu taisei* theory. However, when we try to bring out the overall construction of medieval religion, we must be careful about applying the *kenmitsu taisei* theory, which is conceptualized at the level of religious institutions, as it stands.

What must be done first is to clarify a broad realm of beliefs including those of the common people, left out of the original *kenmitsu* Buddhism theory which was based on definite historical materials, and to redefine the contents and special characteristics of an alternate “*kenmitsu* Buddhism.” This would tend to stimulate a functional reevaluation of the concepts of *kenmitsu shugi* and *kenmitsu* Buddhism, and serve as a first step in clarifying the overall form of the medieval religious world from a new point of view.

(1) Kuroda Toshio, “*Chūsei ni okeru kenmitsu taisei tenkai*,” in *Nihon Chūsei no kokka to shūkyō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1975.

(2) Kamikawa Michio, “*Chūsei bukkyō to ‘nihonkoku’*.” *Nihonshi kenkyū* 463, 2001.

(3) Yokoi Yasuhito, “*Chūsei seiritsu ki no jingi to ōken*.” *Nihonshi kenkyū* 475, 2002.

(4) For example, Ueshima Tōru claims that “*kenmitsu* Buddhism developed a new *shinbutsu shūgō*, and enveloped the beliefs of all the people” (“*Chūsei no kokka to jisha*,” in *Nihonshi kōza* vol. 3, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004.

I: *Shinbutsu in kishōmon*

1: Ordering of *kami*

“To clarify a broad realm of beliefs... left out of the original *kenmitsu* Buddhism theory” is, in fact, easier said than done. The biggest problem lies in textual limitations. Most of the texts and materials remaining from the medieval period were created by the controlling class or the intelligentsia, and there are practically none written by ordinary people. But shouldn’t there at least be some materials that demonstrate the realities of the medieval realm of belief common to all people regardless of position or rank? When this issue is brought to a search of the medieval literature, what come to the fore are *kishōmon* (written vows to a deity), representative of the literary style of the medieval period. There is no type of literature that better overcame position and rank to be accepted by the medieval people.

The most important feature of *kishōmon* is their religious content. In *kishōmon*, “the content of the vow was absolutely certain. An addendum was attached to the effect that if there was a mistake (if the vow was broken), the person would submit to punishment by the deity’s supernatural power” (1). For this reason, in the latter section (the *shinmon*) of *kishōmon*, various deities were invoked to enforce the punishment if the vow is

broken. Through analysis of the names and arrangement of the deities that appear there, one should be able to approach an overall picture of the world of deities as created by the people of that time (2).

Through this type of reexamination of *shinmon*, certain rules can be found in the ordering of the deities that appear therein. I would like to explain these, using *Senbushō hyakushōra renshoki shōmon* (1336, the first year of Engan) as a source. The *shinmon* section is as follows:

“Primary dedication goes to Bonten, Taishaku, and the Shitennō; secondary dedication goes to Enma Hōō, the Godō Daijin, the Great Bodhisattva of the Hachiman Shrine, Kamo, Kasuga, Inari, Kitano, the Seven Shrines of Hiyoshi Sannō; and particularly to Ise Amaterasu Ōmikami, Kumano, Hakusan, the Gongen of the Three Islands of Izu Furune, the Great Bodhisattva of the Tang Nangū Hōshō Shrine, the Great Bodhisattva of the Tōshō Hachiman Shrine, and all of the deities of the great and small shrines of the more than sixty states of Japan, that the 84,000 afflictions of all the people will be ended” (3).

Bonten, Taishaku, and the Shitennō (the Four Heavenly Kings) appear first. These are deities of the heavens, and were seen as guardian deities when Indian deities were adopted into Buddhism. Enma Hōō and the Godō Daijin (the Gods of the Five Paths) were important deities in Daoism, and were believed to govern people’s life and death. When Taisan Fukun and Seishuku, also related to Daoism, were also appealed to, they were also placed here, in the place of assistants to the heavenly deities. The Japanese deities Hachiman, Kamo, and Kasuga finally make their appearance next. Saints, spirits, and other *kami*, such as Kōbō Daishi, Shōtoku Taishi, and others also appear in *kishōmon*.

This form of ordering, heavenly deities – Daoist deities – Japanese deities, is followed closely in all *kishōmon* without exception. In a medieval society driven by a status system, a preeminent position, directly reflecting hierarchical relationships, carried a lot of meaning. If we take this to apply also to the spiritual world, we can suppose that the ordering of deities in *kishōmon* definitively reflects the hierarchical relationships of deities.

In the Buddhist world-view, it was thought that Mount Sumeru stands at the center of this physical world (the *Sahā* world), and the worlds where Taishaku, the Shitennō, and other deities live were arrayed downward from its summit. Furthermore, Bonten was the highest deity, or “master of the *Sahā* world” (from the *Daijōkyō*) (4), who supervised the whole of this world from his place in the sky. In this world-view, Japan was only one of the outlying islands at the furthest boundary, far from the center of the world. Because of this, the Japanese *kami* who held the small island were given their places below the heavenly deities, who looked down on the whole world from heaven.

Following this principle, the fact that Daoist deities come before Japanese *kami* means that they enjoy a place higher in divinity than the Japanese *kami*. This is likely because of the notion that deities such as Enma Ō and Taisan Fukun covered a wider territory than the Japanese *kami*. Enma judged all dead souls, even beyond Japan’s national boundaries. Nevertheless, since *kami* are connected to the ground (or underground) of this *Sahā* world and can not be removed, they could not overcome the heavenly deities who watch over the *Sahā* world from the sky. Among the deities in *kishōmon*, division and order were made by these spatial positions and controlled territories.

2: “Japanese Buddhas”

I have identified heavenly deities, Daoist deities, and Japanese deities as the three main groups of superior beings, or “*kami*,” invoked in the *shinmon* section of *kishōmon*. Additionally, there is one other powerful group of *kami* also found in *kishōmon*. These are Buddhas. Of note is the place these occupy in the *shinmon*.

Bon Ō; Taishaku; the Shitennō; Enma Hōō; the Godō Daijin; Taisan Fukun; and particularly, foremost in Japan, the guardian deities of Kumano, Kinbu, the various *myōō* Ōjō Chinju, the Otera Daibutsu; the *bodhisattva* Hachiman (*Ayabe Jikōji Kishōmon*) (5)

Here, the name “Otera Daibutsu” (“the Great Buddha of the Temple”) appears between “the various *Myōō* Ōjō Chinju” and “the *bodhisattva* Hachiman.” So, of the three groups of deities in *kishōmon* I pointed out earlier, Tōdaiji’s Great Buddha appears in the group of Japanese deities. This is not at all unusual for Buddhas invoked in *kishōmon*.

Buddhas are invoked in *kishōmon* together with *kami*, as beings existing within the limited area of Japan. I must say this is a surprise.

As mentioned before, in Buddhism our physical world is called the “*Sahā* world.” However, in the universe there are also innumerable worlds called the *sanzen daisen sekai* (“Three Thousand Great Thousand Worlds”). Just as the Buddha Shakyamuni appears in our *Sahā* world, one Buddha also appears in each of the other worlds (Pure Lands). The Buddha Amida’s world, called Shihō Gokuraku Jōdo, is an example of this.

In contrast, the Buddhas of *kishōmon* were seen as existing within the limited range of Japan in the *Sahā* world. So why should it be that Buddhas, who were originally residents of realms other than this *Sahā* world, were listed among the Japanese *kami* in *kishōmon*? And why are they ranked below the heavenly deities, who were only guardian deities of the Buddhas?

Looking carefully at the Buddhas who appear in the *shinmon* of *kishōmon* with these questions in mind, some common features can be seen. Buddhas who actually show up in *kishōmon*, such as Todaiji’s Great Buddha (6), Todaiji Nigatsudō’s Daishō Kanjizai (7), Ishiyama Kannon (8), Seiryōji’s Shakyamuni (9), and others are, without exception, enshrined with an image in a particular temple hall in Japan. Further, Buddhas of the afterlife, such as Gokuraku Jōdo’s Amida, never appear. Buddhas invoked in *kishōmon* to mete out punishment and inspire fear are not those who exist in an after-death Pure Land (“the other world”), but are limited to those with visible shape, in carved or painted form, in the *Sahā* world (“this world”). So, once an image was enshrined in a temple hall within the archipelago, it was taken to exist in the same dimension as the Japanese *kami*.

3: The Cosmology of Medieval Deities

How were the two overall categories of supernatural beings (*kami*) – “Buddhas of the other world” or Buddhas who did not appear in *kishōmon*; and “deities of this world” or Buddhas and *kami* who were invoked in *kishōmon* – formed into a unified cosmology?

First, I would like to examine the following text:

The Buddha's disciple puts his hands together in prayer and makes obeisance to the floor in honor of: all Buddhas of the dharma realms of complete emptiness in the three worlds and ten directions, who have gained perfect understanding; the various great *bodhisattva*; *mahasattva*; the various great *myōō*; angry saints; auditors; false Buddhas; Bon Ō; Taishaku; the Shitennō; the Twenty *daiten*; the Twelve *daiten*; the Twenty-Eight *shuku*; the sun, moon, and the five planets; the five calendar periods; the great Daikokuten; the great Benzaiten; the great Kichijōten; the great Shōkangiten; Sanshi Taishō; the twenty-eight *bu*; Kijin Taishō; all guardian deities; heavenly kings; dwellers in heavens; and the various *zenshin'ō*. Further, he makes obeisance to: Dainichi Nyorai of the Kōdō hall of this temple; the compassionate Miroku; Daihi Kannon; Bonshaku; Shiō; all of the guardian saints; Yakushi Nyorai the Konponchūdō; Nikkō; Gekkō; Henjō Bosatsu; Daishō Monju; Bishamonten; the Twelve Generals; all *kaikaishō*; all saints of the Three Treasures in all of the halls of all monasteries of both the east and west *stūpas* of Ryōgonji; the three *sannō*; the royal family; and all the saints who guard the *dharma* in the mountains. Further, to: Kyōkaku Hachiman; Kamo; Matsuo; Inari; Hirano; Ōharano; Kasuga; Sumiyoshi, and the other *myōō*; Gion Tenjin; Tenman Tenjin; and the other *kami* of the five capitals and seven paths; Shichireki Seirei; Kōtai Seirei; and the spirits of all ages and worlds. Further, to the ancient masters of China, Nangaku; Tendai; Shōan; Myōgaku, and the others; Zenmui; Kongōchi; Fukū; Ichigyō; Keika; Hōzen; the founder of this sect Dengyō Daishi; Jikaku Daishi; and the masters who have passed down the exoteric and esoteric transmission. I say this in the three *karmas* and one mind. (*Hokurei shugen gyōja kishōmon*) (10)

This is one part of a text created by a Mt. Hiei ascetic based at Kuzukawa Myōōin. Although *kishōmon* is a part of the name, perhaps it is better called a *keibyakumon* (respectful words presented to a deity). Since it is not a presupposition of a *keibyakumon*, which calls forth a deity upon the making of a vow, that the deity invoked will directly mete out a punishment, it is common for a wider variety of deities to appear than in *kishōmon*.

Here, the deities invoked vary widely, but, looking closely at them, it becomes clear that they can be divided into a number of groups. “All Buddhas of the dharma realms of complete emptiness in the three worlds and ten directions, who have gained perfect understanding” are the Buddhas who are the ultimate ideal of Buddhism. Next is “the various great *bodhisattva*; *mahasattva*,” the *bodhisattva* group. *Bodhisattvas* undertake practices with the goal of all beings becoming Buddhas, as opposed to Buddhas, who have already become enlightened. “The various great *myōō*; angry saints” are *myōō* with an angry aspect, Fudō, Gōzanze, and others are in this group.

“Auditors; false Buddhas” refers to *pratyekabuddhas* and *srāvakas* who have achieved (or aim for) the *hinayāna* enlightenment. These two types of beings are called “the two vehicles,” and, seen in *mahayāna* Buddhism as hoping only for salvation for themselves (self-benefit), are a level below *bodhisattvas*, who strive for salvation for all people (the benefit of others). From “*Bon'ō*; *Taishaku*” to “all guardian deities; heavenly kings; dwellers in heavens; and the various *zenshin'ō*” is the group of heavenly deities, the guardian deities of Buddhism.

To bring some order to the above, the hierarchy: Buddhas – *bodhisattvas* – *myōō* – the two vehicles (*pratyekabuddhas* and *srāvakas*) – heavenly deities, can be seen. This is a ranking completely in line with the Buddhist world-view. Buddhism divides the world into ten levels with the Buddhas at the top, followed by *bodhisattvas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, *srāvakas*, gods, humans, *asuras*, beasts, hungry ghosts, and denizens of hells. From Buddhas down to *sravakas* represent the enlightened world, and are called the “*shishō*” (the “four holies”). The lower six, from gods down, are called the “*rokudō*” (the “six paths”), and make up the world of confusion. It is clear that the ordering in the above *kishōmon* follows this idea of ten realms.

It should be noted that following the group of heavenly gods starting with Bon’ō (Bonten), there is a group of Buddhist images enshrined at various halls of Mt. Hiei – Kōdō, Konponchūdō, and Denpōrindō – invoked. Following these are Hachiman, Kamo, and other representative *kami* of Japan, followed in turn by past masters of China and Japan such as Nangaku and Saishō. From the order following the heavenly gods, it can be supposed that these Buddhist images, Japanese *kami*, and past masters are placed generally in an order corresponding to the ten realms in the overall Buddhist cosmology. That the Japanese Buddhas, who have taken fleshly form in the *Sahā* world, i.e. the Six Paths, are not seen as part of the Buddha group, is also clear here. The deities who mete out penance in *kishōmon*, based on this cosmology, are the heavenly deities and the *kami*, Buddhas, and past masters of the *Sahā* world.

4: *Honji suijaku* according to the medieval people

I have pointed out that the framework of the medieval cosmology is made up of two types of transcendental beings, “Buddhas of the other world,” and “deities of this world.” But what sort of relationship did medieval people perceive between these two groups of deities distinguished by their place of residence? In my opinion, the two groups were tied together by *honji suijaku*.

It is well known that the *honji suijaku* theory, in which Buddhas were seen as the *honji* (“original substance”) of the Japanese *kami*, became popular starting in the late Heian period. The *honji suijaku* theory is generally explained as the idea that Buddhas took the form of *kami* and appeared in Japan. However, in my opinion, *honji suijaku* was not limited to the narrow sense of the relationship between *kami* and Buddhas, but was an idea about how “Buddhas of the other world” took form as “deities of this world” in order to save the beings of this world.

In Jōkei’s *Gumei hosshin shū*, the “miraculous deities and Buddhas” (*reishin kenbutsu*) of this world are seen as “Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*” (*butsu bosatsu*) of the realm of enlightenment who “hide their luminance and appear as dust” (*wakō dōjin*), in order to save “us of the five impurities” (*gojoku no warera*) (11). The Buddhist images enshrined in Japan are themselves taken to be *suijaku* (“manifest traces”) along with the *kami*. On the other hand, in the ancient and medieval periods, it was generally accepted to view saints and ancestors of extraordinary power as Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*. In *Senshūshō*, after the explanation that the Shingon monk Kakuban was “Amida Buddha in a living body,” come the explanatory remarks that “Amida Buddha takes on the form of an ordinary man, and creates bonds with that body to lead us to his Annyō Pure Land” (12).

Further, in the *Yūzū nenbutsu rokki* (first fascicle, fifth section), in response to Ryōnin’s *yūzū nenbutsu kanjin*, after it is recorded that various gods, including Bonten, Taishakuten, and Jikokuten, “Nāgārjuna and other great masters of the *sūtras*,” Ise, Usa, Hiyoshi, and other deities, take part in creating bonds, all of those

gods, ancestors, and deities are consolidated as “response bodies hiding their luminance as *suijaku*.” This is in contrast to the Buddhas of “the other side” (*higan*), i.e. “the *nyorai* who are the extremes of *honji*” (13).

Seen in this way, all of the *kami* invoked in *kishōmon*, not only the obvious deities, but others ranging from carved and painted images to gods, ancestors, and spirits, can be said to have Buddhas and *bodhisattva* of the enlightened world backing them up. It was common knowledge for the medieval people that ultimate transcendental beings lay behind the sacred beings of this world (14). *Honji suijaku* thought served not only to bind together Buddhas and *kami* for medieval people. Broadly, it also formed an important connection binding the deities of this world with the Buddhas of the other world.

Still, why was it necessary for the Buddhas of the other world to go to the trouble of taking form as *suijaku* and appear physically in this world? The reason was to save the evil people of *mappō* (the final age) (15).

Along with the establishment of the *honji suijaku* theory, faith in Pure Land Buddhism became widely popular in Japan from the latter half of the Heian period. However, Buddhas in the Pure Lands of the farther shore, who can be neither seen nor experienced directly, were too remote for people living in the defiled world. For this reason, Buddhas appeared as *suijaku*, taking on a provisional form to save people. These could take the shape of carved or painted images, or numerous eminent monks. By strictly employing the carrot and the stick, they attempted to invite people to the world of highest enlightenment.

(1) Satō Shin'ichi, *Kobunshogaku nyūmon*, Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1971, p. 225.

(2) I once tried analyzing *kishōmon* from this perspective (Satō Hirō, “*Ikaru kami to sukū hito*,” in *Kami, butsu, ōken no chūsei*, Hōzōkan, 1997). The below details in this paper are based on these findings.

(3) In *Hakubutsukan no kobunsho*, Tōdaiji Bunsho (Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1990).

(4) *Daihōtō daiju kyō: Getsuzōbun: Shotennō gojibon* 9. Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō: Keshindo kan* and others cite this.

(5) *Kamakura ibun* #21054.

(6) *Kyōkei kishōmon*, *Kamakura ibun* #5239.

(7) *Kaishun kishōmon*, *Kamakura ibun* #9622.

(8) *Sōgensei kishōmon*, *Heian ibun* # 3229.

(9) “*Sanshō tayū*,” *Nihon koten shūsei*, *Sekkyō shū*, p. 28.

(10) *Kuzukawa myōōin shiryō*, #143.

(11) *Nihon shisō taikai: Kamakura kyūbukkyō*, p. 28.

(12) Iwanami Bunkō, “*Senshūshō*,” p. 217.

(13) *Zoku Nihon no Emaki*, “*Yūzū nenbutsu rokki*,” p. 109.

(14) *Honkaku* thought, which takes all of reality to be the manifestation of ultimate truth, or to be truth itself, can also be understood with these types of categories.

(15) Satō Hirō, “*Ikaru kami to sukū hito*,” in *Kami, butsu, ōken no chūsei*, Hōzōkan, 1997.

II: Reconsideration of paradigms

1: Limitations of the “*shinbutsu shūgō*” theory

What sort of questions do the above findings, which take *kishōmon* as their raw material, raise, as opposed to the existing historical and religio-historical research on the medieval period, including the *kenmitsu taisei* theory? First, I would like to point out the limits that the analytical frameworks of “*shinbutsu shūgō*” and “*honji suijaku*” have for evaluating medieval religion.

The radical move from a Buddhism-centered perspective to *shinbutsu shūgō* theories has been a striking trend in recent research on medieval religious history. As I stated above in my “Argument,” in the background of this trend is some regret for the fact that previous research had not sufficiently included *kami*, regardless of the size of any *kami*'s territory. Interest in a disordered religious world with mixed Buddhist and Shintō deities is increasing in fields surrounding Japanese history. Research has progressed in areas such as medieval mythology, theories of medieval Shintō, and medieval *Nihonki*, that extend into both Buddhism and Shintō, and awareness of importance that this holds for study of the medieval spiritual world is becoming common among researchers. (2)

I have pointed out that the Buddhism-centered perspective of previous research has limits for understanding the character and overall picture of the world of beliefs in the medieval period. However, there are also questions as to whether desired goals will be reached by enquiry into *shinbutsu shūgō* and *honji suijaku*. Let's think back on the *kishōmon* cosmology. It was not limited to Buddhas and *kami*, but was made up of a wide variety of “*kami*,” including saints, spirits, and pestilence deities. With this complex world of beliefs before us, the *shinbutsu shūgō* theory, which only brings together the relationships between Buddhas and *kami*, lacks the means to cope.

One more important point regarding the limits of the *shinbutsu shūgō* theory as an analytical framework is that the medieval cosmology was not fundamentally divided into “*kami*” and “Buddhas.”

In the previous section, I pointed out “the other world” and “this world” – a distinction between completely different dimensions of types of *kami* and Buddhas – as seen in *kishōmon*. Of course, there was also a distinction between *kami* and Buddhas. But the distinction between “deities of the other world” who were not invoked in *kishōmon*, and “deities of this world,” who show up there, was much more important. The results of an analysis of *kishōmon* show that these concepts were common to all people regardless of class or social standing. The *shinbutsu shūgō* theory of the past, with its dichotomy between Buddhas and *kami*, was limited in its ability to clarify a world of belief with this construction.

In looking back once more on the medieval religious world based on the above considerations, it is necessary to keep in mind that an academic discussion that takes Buddhas and *kami* as privileged and examines relationships between the two was not at all general to society at that time. In the middle ages, when various types of deities shared space, limiting discussion to Buddhas and *kami* in the narrow sense to create an argument had political and ideological meaning itself.

2: Reexamining control ideology theory

A second result of an analysis of *kishōmon* cosmology is to bring out a serious deficiency in past research into control ideology.

The role of *shinbutsu shūgō* and *honji suijaku* in the *shōen* (feudal manor) system of control of the medieval period has attracted attention in the field of Japanese history. Kuroda Toshio claims that *honji suijaku*

thought reflected the projection of control from the center to the provinces and the subsequent centralized form of intercourse in the *shōen* system, and had a role in lending it religious legitimacy (3). There are also many others besides Kuroda who reference *honji suijaku* and *shinbutsu shūgō* from the standpoint of the *shōen* system's control ideology (4).

Whether taking the function of Buddhism as control ideology or seeing it as an intellectual basis for resistance, the object of past research has always been tied up with individual deities such as Todaiji's *daibutsu* or village guardian deities, or else particular congregations or ceremonies such as the *hōjōe* (ceremony of releasing animals) or *shushōe* (society for praying for the prosperity of the nation). In considerations of *honji suijaku*, the main point is fixed as the relationship between the deities invoked in the *shōen* and their *honji*. In other words, in past research into ideology the object has been "deities of this world," i.e. the deities invoked in *kishōmon*, and a spotlight has been on the one-to-one interactive relationship in *honji suijaku* between Buddhas and *kami* in the narrow sense.

However, as I argued in the first part of this paper, the medieval world of deities was not made up only of those enshrined in temple halls. In the background, there was another vast world of Buddhas of the other shore, whom people were not normally able to see. These occupied the vast majority of the medieval world of belief as the *honji* of the deities of this world, and further as the ultimate saviors of humanity.

Looking back from this standpoint, it must be said that past research on ideology only picked and discussed the function of one part of the medieval cosmology. Self-reflective examinations of the relationships and construction of individual deities and their coexistent particular ceremonies, together with the Buddhas of the other shore who stand behind them and regulate their functions, have almost never been done. To put it frankly, past research on ideology has done no more than to take the medieval world of deities as two-dimensional, flat, and limited to this world. Analysis of *kishōmon* suggests to us the necessity of a reevaluation of it as something three-dimensional, solid, and with depth.

In the medieval period, the ultimate beings behind this real world were given overwhelming weight. Both the control side and the resistance side strove for a bond with the fundamental existence, and bringing its authority to themselves was an indispensable task.

Using these conditions as a basis, it becomes possible to understand why Amaterasu Ōmikami was unable to gain conclusive religious authority, but needed Dainichi Nyorai as a *honji*. Attempts to bring *kami* up to the level of *honji* were also attempts to answer the same problem. Further, a reason can be found here for the emperor becoming a transformation of the ultimate being Dainichi Nyorai, surpassing all Japanese *kami*, during the *sokui kanjō* ceremony.

3: Reconsideration of the "kenmitsu taisei" theory

The third problem raised by analysis of *kishōmon* cosmology is the need for a reevaluation of Kuroda's *kenmitsu taisei* theory itself.

The controlling premise of the research world for a long time after World War II was "medieval religion = Kamakura 'new' Buddhism." It was a common expectation of most researchers that "new" Buddhism was representative of medieval religion, and that if only one would analyze it, the character and achievements of thought would become clear (6).

Kuroda Toshio raised direct objections to this ‘new’-Buddhism-centered research on medieval religion. He named the system by which powerful temples solidified the form of religion – fixed to national authority and based on *kenmitsu* principles (of exoteric and esoteric Buddhism) – the “*kenmitsu taisei*,” asserting that this system was the “orthodox” in medieval Buddhism, and that it occupied a controlling position. Further, he placed the series of revolutionary Buddhist movements that formed in opposition to this controlling *kenmitsu* Buddhism in the late 12th century (the so-called “new” Buddhism) as “reform” or “heretical” movements, expressing the various epochal and societal contradictions it created (7).

In my “argument” section, I pointed out that the *kenmitsu taisei* theory is an argument based on a Buddhism of powerful houses, and the danger of superimposing it onto the medieval religious world overall. *Kishōmon* cosmology allows us to take a peek at the framework of the medieval spiritual world at a really basic level not seen in past research on Buddhism, and hard to see as the same as Buddhism at the level of the powerful houses.

This necessarily urges us to a reexamination of the concepts of “*kenmitsu taisei*” and “*kenmitsu shugi*.” These concepts, forwarded by Kuroda himself, while not having lost the original strict definitions given to them by Kuroda, have had various semantic contents appended to them as they began to take on lives of their own within the field. Just to pick out a few notable examples, *kenmitsu* Buddhism has been called “logic pertaining to the various *kenmitsu* sects,” “logic of the union of the nation and Buddhism,” “the Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment,” “the popular view of Buddhism,” and “the world of sorcery.” In short, almost all of the religious objects in the medieval world that are examined today have been uncritically understood within the categories of *kenmitsu* Buddhism.

The *kishōmon* cosmology, made up as it is from a variety of “*kami*” – and thus negating the *kami*-Buddha dichotomy – by being accepted by the majority of medieval people on a basic level, sometimes had the role of regulating the constructed ideological and historical function of *kenmitsu* Buddhism while becoming a common ground that included *kenmitsu* Buddhism. Kuroda, in contrast to the former “medieval religion = New Buddhism” theory, reevaluated the role occupied by the so-called Old Buddhism, and created a picture of medieval religion in rivalry and conflict between *kenmitsu* Buddhism and heresies. Because of his work, the medieval religious world rapidly came to be understood as something rich and extensive. However, in my opinion this only represents one part of the medieval religious world. I believe that it is necessary to posit a cosmology common to both of their backgrounds, and to understand medieval religion more three-dimensionally within the mutual relationships formed between all three of these.

(1) For example, Yoshie Akao’s *Shinbutsu shūgō*, (Iwanami Shinsho, 1996) or notes (3) and (4) from the “Argument” section.

(2) Yamamoto Hiroko’s *Chūsei shinwa*, (Iwanami Shinsho, 1998) and others are representative of research in this direction. As for the history of this field of study, there are the summaries of Itō Satoshi (*Shinbutsu shūgō* in *Nihon bukkyō no kenkyūhō*, Hōzōkan, 2000) and Hara Katsuaki (‘*Chūsei nihonki*’ *kenkyūshi* in *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 4-3, 1999).

(3) Kuroda Toshio, *Ikkō senju to honji suijaku* in *Nihon chūsei no kokka to shūkyō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1975.

(4) Shimada Eiji, *Hōkensei keiseiki no ideorogī*, in *Kōza nihonshi*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1970; Kawane Yoshiyasu, *Ōdo shisō to shinbutsu shūgō* in *Chūsei hōken shakai no shuto to nōson*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1984.

(5) There is a wealth of research on Amaterasu Ōmikami and Dainichi Nyorai, as well as *sokui kanjō*. For the time being, I will highlight Kamikawa Michio's *Chūsei no sokui girei to bukkō* (*Nihonshi kenkyū* 300, 1984) and Yamamoto Hiroko's *Henseifu* (Shunjūsha, 1993).

(6) Representative of research from this standpoint are Ienaga Saburō's *Chūsei bukkō shisōshi kenkyū* (Hōzōkan, 1947) and Inoue Mitsusada's *Nihon jōdokyō seiritsushi no kenkyū* (Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1956).

(7) Kuroda Toshio, *Chūsei ni okeru kenmitsu taisei no tenkai* (see above).

III: The significance of *jingi fuhai*

1: The basis of *jingi fuhai*

In part I, I pointed out the existence and particular qualities of a medieval cosmology, as seen in *kishōmon*, in which a wide variety of deities coexisted. However, deities did not always live in harmony in the medieval period. Particularly in the so-called New Buddhism or heretical sects such as *senju nenbutsu* or Nichiren, teachings specifically rejected reverence toward *jingi*, and movements to actually remove the *kami* from the realm of belief could be found.

In the previous section, I brought up the need for a reevaluation of *kenmitsu shugi* and *kenmitsu* Buddhism from the standpoint of a cosmological theory. In this section, placing the *jingi fuhai* movement in *senju nenbutsu* within its historical context, I will examine the role played by a cosmological theory in the elucidation of the intellectual historical significance and historical place of the so-called New Buddhism and heretical sects, while cross-referencing *kishōmon* cosmology.

In 1205 (Genkyū 2), the *Kōfukuji soujou*, presented to the imperial court by the eight sects of Old Buddhism centered at Kōfukuji, petitioning for the prohibition of Hōnen's *senju nenbutsu*, among an enumeration of the errors of *nenbutsu*, strongly criticized *nenbutsu* practitioners for carrying out a practice that slighted the *jingi*, tantamount to *jingi fuhai* (failure to pay reverence to the *jingi*), charging “the fault of betraying the deities (*reijin ni somoku shitsu*)” in its fifth part (1). Similar argument in criticizing *nenbutsu* can be seen in the assertions of Kōfukuji's rival, Enryakuji at Mt. Hiei (2). The *jingi fuhai* practice of *nenbutsu* was naturally taken to be one part of a deeper societal problem by the *kenmitsu* Buddhism side.

Old Buddhism's criticism of *senju nenbutsu* was not so much against Hōnen's thought itself as the speech and conduct of his disciples. However, a rejection of direct worship of ancestor deities can be found in the words “those who ask for relief with belief in the *nenbutsu*, particularly in order to get rid of demons, should pray to all Buddhas and *kami*, and should not be abstemious of any thing,” from *Jōdoshū ryakushō*, attributed to Hōnen (3). *Jingi fuhai* was clearer in the case of Shinran. In the *Keshin* fascicle of *Kyōgyō shinshō*, he raises a number of criticisms of refuge in and worship of evil spirits taken from Buddhist scripture and the classics, particularly “if one takes refuge in the Buddha, it is not then necessary to take refuge in various other deities” from the *Nehangyō* (4).

What reason could Hōnen and Shinran have both had in the same era to exclude the *suijaku*, or *kami*, whom they believed to fulfill an indispensable role in the process of salvation, from the objects of worship?

Hōnen's refusal to accept the doctrine of *honji suijaku* is often pointed out as a main characteristic of his thought (5). His advocacy of *jingi fuhai* is also taken to be based on his rejection of *honji suijaku*. To be sure, he does not clearly discuss *honji suijaku* thought in his teachings. However, he does state that all of the saints are incarnations of the Buddha. In *Sentaku hongan nenbutsushū*, Hōnen states that since a good instructor is a manifestation of Amida, his teachings are "direct teachings of Amida" (6).

Shōtoku Taishi was special for Shinran. Shinran's opportunity to join Hōnen's school came because he went into seclusion at Shinaga, where Shōtoku Taishi's grave was, and received a revelation directly from the Taishi. He arranged the Taishi's transmission into the *Byōkutsuge*, creating the *gemon* (a kind of Buddhist poem) "*Sankotsu ichibyōmon*" (7). Because of this, he claimed that Shōtoku Taishi, his wife, and mother were *suijaku* of Amida and his two attendants.

Considering Hōnen and Shinran made these explicit references to the saints = *suijaku* doctrine, it is hard to believe they could have rejected only the idea of Japanese *kami* as *suijaku*, or that they gave particular meaning to doing so. The epoch-making significance of Hōnen and Shinran was not found in a rejection of *honji suijaku* thought.

2: Variation in constructions of salvation

So, where was Hōnen's and Shinran's basis for extolling *jingi fuhai* to be found? In their particular theories of salvation.

It was commonly accepted in the medieval period that Japan was in the dark era of *mappō*. Further, geographically speaking Japan was far distant from the Buddha's birthplace in India, no more than a tiny island like a grain of sand in a remote region. It was not easy for the poor creatures of the outlying island of Japan to believe in Buddhas of the other world whom they could not perceive. So those Buddhas would take on forms appropriate to Japan to appear there. Those forms were *kami*, saints, and Buddhist images.

Therefore, it was necessary for *suijaku* to be something whose existence and appearance could be really felt. Further, in order to make a connection and lead people in distress to the Buddha's world, it was desirable that they sometimes use strict punishment and rewards. The role of the *suijaku* was to use the proverbial stick and carrot to bring people to a connection with the original Buddha. Therefore, it was thought that the people of Japan should first take refuge in a *suijaku*, and aim at ultimate salvation through that indirect route (8).

In medieval literature, *suijaku* are seen more than *honji* as welcome beings who take the trouble to appear in an appropriate form in this polluted world. Also, examples of people praying to *kami* for release are common. Keeping in mind the *kamis'* function as *suijaku*, this is not at all a strange phenomenon. There are also cases where the precincts of certain Shintō shrines were seen as Buddhist Pure Lands (*shasō jōdo*) (9). By visiting these shrines, which were Pure Lands in this world, and praying to the *kami*, who were *suijaku*, people believed that they could ultimately be reborn in the Pure Lands of the other world. Even if they aimed for the *gokuraku jōdo* of the other world, beings in the *mappō* age had to first go through *suijaku*. *Kenmitsu* Buddhism was the thing that tried to move the people toward temples and shrines, by thoroughly emphasizing this concept.

On the other hand, the major characteristic of Hōnen and Shinran is that they created a discourse that completely removed the *suijaku*, who were believed to play an indispensable role in salvation, from the system of salvation. In Hōnen's main work on this topic, *Senshō hongan nenbutsu shū*, he taught that in order to save the peoples of the *mappō* age, Amida gave us the "easy practice" (*igyō*) of *shōmyō nenbutsu*, as opposed to "difficult practices" (*nangyō*) such as *sazen* ("creating good" through making Buddhist images, copying *sūtras*, etc.), *gakumon* (scholastic study), and *kairitsu* (vows and rules). Hōnen's fundamental standpoint was that "nenbutsu is not beyond us because it is easy. Other practices are beyond us because they are difficult" (10). Therefore, regardless of status or class, we can all rely on Amida's vows and reside in his Pure Land by reciting the *nenbutsu*.

It can be said that, opposed to the *kenmitsu* Buddhist soteriological theory in which *suijaku* were indispensable intermediaries in the *honji – suijaku – shūjō* cosmology, Hōnen presented a model emphasizing that *shūjō* can skip over the *suijaku* to take refuge directly in the *honji*. The *jingi fuhai* of the *senshū nenbutsu* practitioners was the inevitable conclusion. However, this only applies to ultimate salvation, and there were ways in which the roles of *suijaku* were confirmed, such as protection of *nenbutsu* practitioners, and this-worldly benefits.

3: The reason for rejecting *suijaku*

Even so, why did Hōnen and Shinran need to go so far as to abandon the common soteriological logic of their time? It was because faith in *suijaku* had become a breeding ground for discrimination, putting salvation on a basis other than devotion.

As I have already mentioned, the idea that the space of the *suijaku* was a Pure Land in this world was widely spread from the latter Heian period. Since the places called *shadan jōdo* or *reijo* were at the same time believed to be paths to the faraway Pure Lands of the other shore, they drew many worshippers desiring release (11). However, there were major restrictions on these sacred places, which at first glance appeared to be open to all people. One example is the ban on women. This system, widely spread during the beginning of the medieval period, excluded some people from sacred places based only on gender difference. In the medieval period, when making a connection with *suijaku* was believed to be an indispensable first step toward ultimate salvation, this was a decisive handicap to women in the world of faith. Menstruating women were prohibited from visiting shrines.

Women were not the only ones excluded from sacred places. *Hinin* ("non-humans") and lepers are often portrayed hanging around in front of temples and shrines in medieval *emaki* such as *Ippen hijiri e*, but they were also prohibited from everything from monasteries to any sacred precincts (12). Although it was usual for the common people, it was not the case that anyone who wished to visit a sacred place could actually realize their wish. Inasmuch as *suijaku* were seen as intermediaries, mundane differentiations such as gender, status, and class were reflected in discrimination in salvation.

One more area where belief in *suijaku* was rife was related to property and money. The stress on *suijaku* as a circuit to the other side produced an attitude toward faith that necessarily esteemed *suijaku* for their construction and impressiveness. Especially stressed was the production of Buddhist images. In the medieval period, it was generally accepted that that period was the *mappō* period. Disappearance of Buddhist images was

one of the main phenomena of *mappō*, and there was no way to overcome this but to create more images than those that were lost. This is the reason why people made Buddhist images and temple buildings like they were in a race (13). However, this brought the mundane conditions of money to the world of faith, and necessarily strengthened dependence on the authority of the means of production. The common people, who could not fulfill the condition of creation of Buddhist images, were further alienated from true salvation.

Hōnen problematized these conditions in his contemporary religious world. In Hōnen's work *Muryōjukyō shaku*, he wrote that women were loathed at "the highest sacred areas, and miraculous places," such as Mt. Hiei and Mt. Kōya, and he asked himself how, if "even at this befouled mountain of rubble and thorns there are obstacles such as images of the Buddha in mud and wood," one could hope to meet with the ultimate Buddha there (14). The main reason for subjecting entrance to salvation to mundane material conditions was the existence of *suijaku*, and a form of belief that sought a path to the other shore through them.

How was this problem to be overcome? While Hōnen was probing these issues, he came across Amida's original vows. He became confident that the *nenbutsu*, given to living beings by the Buddha "in order to give release to all living beings impartially" (*Sentaku hongan nenbutsu shū*), was the only path to bring all beings equally to the Pure Land. Any person could receive the Buddha's salvation by a direct connection with Amida through the *nenbutsu* without the intermediary sacred beings of this world, or *suijaku* (16).

When looking back on reality from this viewpoint, *suijaku* are not only useless, but in fact could prevent people from properly keeping their eyes fixed on the Pure Land. Faith in *jingi*, which was particularly influential in peoples' everyday lives, was a serious issue. This awareness was in the background of Hōnen and Shinran obstinately admonishing adherence to *jingi* in the *nenbutsu* practitioners.

This move broke the spell of *suijaku*, or "deities of *this* world," who regulated the spiritual world and daily lives of the people of this world, instead advocating a connection with the original Buddha. That is to say, it inserted a direct connection, which dismantled the authority of *kenmitsu* Buddhism, into the foundation of *suijaku*. The reason why *jingi fuhai* and the destruction of Buddhist images and scriptures can be considered as overcoming problems on the religious dimension and rebelling against national control itself can be found here (17).

(1) *Nihon shisō taikēi: Kamakura kyūbukkyō*, p. 313.

(2) "Enryakuji taishūkai," in *Kamakura ibun*, #3234.

(3) *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū*, p. 604.

(4) *Teihon Shinran shōnin zenshū*, p. 327-80.

(5) Sasaki Kei, "Chūsei bukkyō no mittsu no shisō kūkan," in *Chūsei bukkyō to Kamakura bakufu*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1997.

(6) *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū*, p. 349.

(7) *Teihon Shinran shōnin zenshū*, fasc. 6.

(8) Satō Hirō, "Amaterasu no henbō," ch. 2, Hōzōkan, 2000.

(9) Kawamura Tomoyuki (*Kasuga jōdo to kasuga mandara, Bijutsushi kenkyū* 17, 1970) and Abe Yasurō (*Shinō mandara no kōzō to shōchō*, in *Kami to hotoke*, Shunjūsha, 1985) are references on *shadan jōdo*.

(10) *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū*, p. 320.

(11) Satō Hirō, *Chūsei ōshū no reijo to takaikan*, in *Kamakura-Muromachi jidai no ōshū*, Kōshi Shoin, 2002.

(12) Kuroda Hideo, *Shiryō toshite no emakimono to chūsei mibunsei*, in *Kyōkai no chūsei: shōchō no chūsei*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1986.

(13) Taira Masayuki, *Mappō-matsudaikan no rekishiteki igi*, in *Nihon chūsei no shakai to buppō*, Hanawa Shobō, 1992.

(14) *Shōwa shinshū Hōnen shōnin zenshū*, p. 99.

(15) *ibid.*, p. 320.

(16) This theory of salvation via *suijaku* can also be found in Nichiren (Satō Hirō, *Nichiren no jingikan*, in *Kamakura bukkyō no shisō to bunka*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2002).

(17) Regarding *senshū nenbutsu* as ideology, there is research such as Taira Masayuki's *Senshū bukkyō no rekishiteki igi* (in *Nihon chūsei no shakai to buppō*, Hanawa Shobō, 1992) and Satō Hirō's *Habutsu hashin no rekishiteki igi* (in *Kami, hotoke, ōken no chūsei*, 1997).

Conclusion:

Finally, I will bring some order to the arguments in this paper.

Research on medieval religious history is moving toward an attempt to represent an overall picture of a religious world that includes the *kami*, while at the same time accepting changes in societal construction and political process into its field of vision. However, in order to blaze a trail into this diverse, unknown area, cultivation of the approach itself is necessary. Merely expanding the field without a clear self-consciousness may not provide anything new, and could even end in a diffusion of the image. In this paper, first of all I pointed out, as a concrete example of the problems I am confronting, the limits of the existing focus on *honji suijaku* and *shinbutsu shūgō*, seen as the dominant method of encompassing various beliefs.

In my opinion, what is needed now is the establishment of a coordinate axis for positioning the various religious objects of the medieval period. So-called New Buddhism has filled the role of a coordinate axis in postwar medieval intellectual history. In contrast to this, Kuroda Toshio's "*kenmitsu taisei* theory" presented a new coordinate axis called *kenmitsu* Buddhism in its place. Because of this, New Buddhism, which had been seen as the core of medieval religion, was completely changed into a "heresy." Further, a variety of phenomena, such as the activities of *hijiri* (ascetics) and *jikyōsha* (*sūtra* reciters), *hongaku shisō*, and Ise Shintō, could be included in the overall sketch of religious history.

However, progress in individual research and the excavation of new materials, which have no limits, have come to demand a reexamination of the *kenmitsu taisei* theory itself. The most serious issue is a reconstruction of the concept of *kenmitsu* Buddhism, which is on the brink of rigidization and crisis. Secondly in this paper, I pointed out the seriousness of this problem. Further, I pointed out the cosmology that regulated the form of thought of the medieval people on the most fundamental level, as a new coordinate axis that can objectify both *kenmitsu* Buddhism and the heretical sects. This was also an attempt to read into and reconstruct the world-view of the medieval people as seen in ancient documents, which has almost never been reflected upon in past intellectual research.

As my third point, I considered the need to investigate the validity of the cosmological theory, and the particular intellectual characteristics of the *senshū nenbutsu* in contrast to it, and the meaning and significance of medieval *jingi fuhai*.

Both *kenmitsu* Buddhism and the heretical sects had the *honji – suijaku* cosmology as a premise. On top of this, *kenmitsu* Buddhism emphasized that making a connection with *suijaku* was an indispensable step toward ultimate salvation. In response to this, Hōnen and Shinran advocated an original soteriology that did not go through *suijaku*. Although based in the common cosmology of their time, they broke away from others on the point of how to interpret it based on one's own interests and beliefs.

This paper is a very unsystematic presentation of some problems in the status quo of medieval religious history. I hope in the future to have a chance to discuss problems such as how the medieval cosmology was formed, and how *kenmitsu* Buddhism and the heretical sects interacted.