

Article

Japan's Forgotten God: Jūzenji in Medieval Texts and the Visual Arts

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Abstract: This study examines Jūzenji 十禪師, a medieval god worshiped within the Sannō cult at Hie Shrine during the twelfth to sixteenth centuries. The article demonstrates that Tendai thinkers promoted Jūzenji to a supreme ontological status since his liminal and ambivalent character afforded him the unique role of redirecting the sinful desires of the flesh into awakening. Three different figures promoted Jūzenji. First, the Tendai abbot Jien 慈円 (1155–1255) constructed ritual programs that raised Jūzenji to the apogee of the Sannō Shintō pantheon, which combined with *engi* literature concerning Jien's sexuality, permitted the re-envisioning of Jūzenji as a libidinal god. Second, the preceptors of Mt. Hiei (*kaike* 戒家) transformed Jūzenji into an embodiment of the precepts, which enabled Jūzenji to encapsulate morality and thereby render sexual sins null. Third, Tendai Sannō Shintō theologians (*kike* 記家) interweaved Jūzenji with the doctrine of the threefold truth (*santai* 三諦), which became the basis of the Taimitsu sexual initiation known as Chigo Kanjō 児灌頂. As such, this article offers an important case study whereby a subsidiary god outshines its own godhead for the purpose of legitimating sexuality.

Keywords: Jūzenji; gods; kami; Sannō; sexuality; precepts; medieval Japan; Buddhism; Shintō; *chigo*; *chigo kanjō*



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1. Introduction

One might say that, since there are “countless” gods in Japan (*yaoyorozu* 八百万), it is almost impossible to give them all the individual attention they deserve. It is inevitable that many gods will be ignored, and only the most dominant and popular ones will be inscribed into the collective memory. However, there is one forgotten god that enjoyed a considerable degree of worship in the medieval period before falling into oblivion: Jūzenji 十禪師. Jūzenji (lit. “Ten Meditation Masters”) was a deity venerated in what is now known as Hiyoshi Shrine, located at the foot of Mt. Hiei in the town Sakamoto in the Ōmi region of Shiga prefecture. Jūzenji was an important divinity in the elite circles of the most powerful religious institution in the medieval era, Enryakuji 延暦寺 temple, the headquarters of Tendai Buddhism. In medieval times, Jūzenji shrine was affiliated with Hie Grand Shrine (Hie Taisha 日吉大社). This cult of *kami*—the Japanese term for gods—was dedicated to the deity Sannō 山王 (the Mountain King) from the eighth century onward, and scholars refer to the medieval, more-intellectually developed form of the cult as Sannō Shintō 山王神道. Originally imported from China, Sannō became a powerful and wrathful deity, the protector of Tendai Buddhism in Japan.

Jūzenji was worshipped as one of Sannō's seven principal emanations at a sub-shrine (*sessha* 摂社) established in 1109. At the time, the sanctuary was assigned its own portable shrine (*shinyo* 神輿), which carried the spirit of the god. Jūzenji shrine remained an important religious establishment of Hie Shrine for over 450 years. As for its local institutional affiliation, Kageyama Haruki has shown that the medieval Seven Sannō Shrines (*Sannō shichisha* 山王七社) were divided into two separate lineages tracing back to different lines of *kami* (Kageyama 1965). One was Nishi-hongū 西本宮, with its center in Ōmiya Shrine;

the other was Higashi-hongū 東本宮, its center Ni no Miya. Jūzenji belonged to the latter group of Higashi-hongū shrines, which were considered secondary to the Nishi-hongū. In 1571, in an event known as the “Genki disturbance” (*genki no ran* 元龜の乱), the Sengoku daimyo Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582) destroyed both Enryakuji and the entire compound of Hie Shrine, slaughtering everyone he encountered. Shortly after, in 1595, the eviscerated Jūzenji Shrine was resurrected along with other structures in the surrounding Higashi Hongū complex.

But Jūzenji was not just a component of the Sannō divinity—indeed, he was often identified with Sannō (viewed as his double)—he was also deemed by many to be *his superior*. He was a primary focus of many Buddho-Shintō adherents and merited his own cultic attention. In the diverse religious writings of medieval Tendai and Sannō Shintō thinkers, Jūzenji looms large as a transcendent and absolute being that captures both the local and universal aspects of Buddhism and Shintō. Of course, most medieval Shintō texts attempt to show that *their* specific god—whether Ise, Sannō, Miwa, Kasuga, and so on—stands above the others. Scholars have long detailed the fluid and plastic nature of the pantheon, and how different gods not only exchange their subjectivities in different contexts, but also are enthroned and dethroned from their positions of supremacy.¹ And yet, the acts of elevation and glorification directed at Jūzenji were distinctive. I argue that Tendai thinkers promoted Jūzenji because his liminal and ambivalent character afforded him the unique role of redirecting moral transgressions towards awakening—in particular the sinful desires of the flesh and their associated sexual acts. Such a role did not suit the godhead Sannō, especially in that he was aligned with Śākyamuni, the spiritual leader and paradigm of the ascetic monk in Buddhism.

Three different factors precipitated Jūzenji’s rise to prominence in Tendai Buddhism and the Sannō Shintō cult. First, the Tendai abbot Jien 慈円 (1155–1255) constructed ritual programs that promoted Jūzenji to the apogee of the Sannō Shintō pantheon. This allowed for future religious writers to re-envision the relationship between Jūzenji and Jien as far more intimate, inscribing Jūzenji into the template of a libidinal god and setting the stage for his legitimization of moral transgressions. Second, the preceptors of Mt. Hiei (*kaike* 戒家) made a concerted effort to transform Jūzenji into an embodiment of the precepts, a god possessing the ability to transfigure morality into a substance that anyone could acquire through appropriate ordination. This enabled Jūzenji—as well as anyone who embodied him—to transcend the binary opposites of good and evil, purity and impurity, which connected well with his role of sanctifying sex, an act purportedly deemed sinful. Third, Tendai Sannō Shintō theologians (the “chroniclers” or *kike* 記家) subsequently worked to interweave Jūzenji with the most esteemed Tendai doctrine, the threefold truth (*santai* 三諦), which became the basis of deification of acolytes in the Taimitsu sexual rite-of-passage Chigo Kanjō 児灌頂 (fifteenth–sixteenth centuries). Jūzenji’s embodiment of the three truths perpetuated his legacy as a powerful god with an almost unrivaled status within Tendai and Sannō Shintō circles. In short, this article offers an important case study whereby a subsidiary god outshined its own godhead for the purpose of legitimating sexuality.

To follow, we will look at how Jūzenji was conceptualized in both the textual and pictorial landscapes of medieval Japanese religiosity before the shrine was demolished in the sixteenth century. Religious literature, doctrinal texts, and the visual arts from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries reveal a refined picture of Jūzenji’s theological significance during the medieval period.

2. On Sannō

Discussion of the divine matrix from which Jūzenji emerged—the cult of the Sannō god—is helpful for illuminating its subsequent developments in the medieval period. Early on, the term Sannō referred not to a single deity but to a group of gods associated with the mountain. Sannō (“the Mountain King”) was worshipped in Japan within Hie Shrine from the time when Saichō 最澄 (767–822) arrived in the town of Sakamoto in Ōmi province and enshrined him on Mt. Hiei in the eighth century. Although it was long assumed that

the Sannō deity was created within the Hie cult, recent work by Yoshida Kazuhiko has shown that this god originated in Chinese systems of combinatory worship.² While the name “Sannō” (Ch. Shanwang) derives from a title given to the cosmic mountains in the *Lotus Sutra*,³ in the Chinese mainland it referred to a number of entities such as snake fiends and anthropomorphized Daoist divinities. Sannō received several appellations and was first understood as an aggregate of various deities. This tendency was preserved in Japan; as a collective term for many gods, “Sannō” encompassed the Seven Shrines of Hie and especially the three primary deities, who were known as the “Three Sages of Sannō” (*Sannō sanshō* 山王三聖): Ōmiya 大宮 (Ōnamuchi 大己貴神, or Miwa Myōjin 三輪明神); Ni no miya (Ōyamakui no kami 大山咋神); and Shōshinshi 聖真子 (Usa Hachiman 宇佐八幡). Traditional accounts claim that when Saichō established Enryakuji temple in 766, he enshrined those three as protective deities. But there exist earlier records concerning the original deity. The *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) relates that Ōyamakui, a phallic god that is often considered to be the oldest Sannō divinity, was also known as Yamasue no ōnushi no kami 山末之大主神 (“Great Master Mountain Peak”). The *Kojiki* indicates this *kami* bore a humming arrow (*narikabuchi* 鳴籥) presumably used in battle.⁴ The text also claims that the god was enshrined in Mt. Hie 日枝 at Chikatsu Ōmi 近淡海, and that it was in fact the same *kami* enshrined in Matsunoo 松尾 at Kadono 葛野.⁵ The account demonstrates that Ōyamakui was not originally from the Ōmi region, and was probably the god at Matsuo Shrine at the south of Kyoto-Arashiyama area, the *ujigami* (clan god) of the community of Korean immigrants known as the Hata clan.

Sannō grew to designate twenty-one deities, eventually encompassing Jūzenji. The historian Tsuji Zennosuke proposed a foundational theory regarding the breakdown of Sannō deities, but it has been challenged in recent years. It is well known that the original *kami* of Mount Hie, Ōyamakui (“Great Mountain Tip”), had been demoted in favor of Ōnamuchi, the Miwa Deity of Yamato, once the latter was invited to the mountain. Tsuji asserted that the Miwa deity was conjured by Emperor Tenji 天智 (626–672) when he moved to the new capital Ōmi in 667. Tsuji contended that this deity was then renamed Ōbie 大比叡 (“The Greater Hie [deity]”) in Saichō’s time, and eventually renamed again to Ōmiya (“Great Shrine”) (Tsuji [1907] 1983). In turn, the earthly deity Ōyamakui became Obie/Kobie 小比叡 (“The Lesser Hie [deity]”), and then Ni no miya (“Secondary Shrine”) (Yoshida, pp. 19–20). This assumption was perpetuated by Sugahara Shinkai, the renowned scholar of Sannō Shintō (Sugahara 1992). However, recent scholars, such as Fukui Kōjun and Satō Masato, have cast doubt on the authorship of the document that claims Emperor Tenji produced this taxonomic and ontological separation.⁶ According to Satō, the earliest document that can attest to the Tenji legend is the *hiesha gebumi* 日吉社解 from 1081. Therefore, the legend of Tenji—and specifically the separation into Ōbie and Obie—can be traced back no earlier than the Heian period (794–1185). As noted above, others have argued that the founder of Tendai in Japan, Saichō, created this classification. However, Mizukami Fumiyoshi (Mizukami 2017) posits that the division into greater and lesser deities was devised by Enchin 円珍 (814–891). This distinction, which favors greater/Ōmiya over lesser/Ni no miya, proved to be problematic for those priests who wished to glorify the gods belonging to the latter group, among them Jūzenji.

As such, the structure in Hie Shrine known today as Nishi-hongū (Western Main Shrine, formerly known as Ōmiya) was the abode of Ōbie Myōjin, that is, Ōnamuchi. Higashi-hongū (Eastern Main Shrine, formerly Ni no miya) was the dwelling of Obie, the god Ōyamakui. Satō Masatō argues that during the medieval period the god of Ōmiya Shrine was ranked first among the enshrined deities on the site, and that only from the Edo period (1603–1868) did the two shrines share an equal status (Satō 2014, p. 180). However, this study will show that even in the medieval period the Ni no Miya lineage, with which Jūzenji was affiliated, had begun to challenge Ōmiya’s stature. This is demonstrated by the elevation of Jūzenji’s status, which I will discuss extensively. But first I will briefly introduce Jūzenji’s multifarious conceptualization and his altered images in the Japanese pantheon as a backdrop to his subsequent heightened elevation by the Buddhist monk Jien.

3. The Characteristics of Jūzenji

Among the various incarnations of the god Sannō, the deity Jūzenji often assumed the form of a boy (*dōji-gyō* 童子形) or a young monk (*wakasō-gyō* 若僧形), and thereby was regularly depicted as a youthful or child-like male.⁷ Bernard Faure has investigated many other aspects of Jūzenji, ranging from his embryological role as a placenta deity to his identity as an earthly god associated with serpentine beings (such as Ugajin 宇賀神), a companion deity worshipped in astral cults, as well as his being a wild god (*kōjin* 荒神) and a god of male–male sexuality (See Faure 1998, 2013, 2015, 2020, 2021). The last attribute, male–male sex, is related to Jūzenji’s alignment with *chigo* 児 (“temple acolytes”), who were routinely depicted in literature and historical documents as the objects of older monks’ lust and love.⁸ In fact, the youthful character of the god forged a link between Sannō/Jūzenji and these boys who lived within the temple, for which reason iconographic similarities between the two were reinforced. According to the kami-buddha amalgamative paradigm (*honji suijaku* 本地垂迹), Jūzenji was generally understood to be the local manifestation of the bodhisattva Jizō 地藏, another juvenile figure.⁹

Jūzenji has been repeatedly depicted as a celestial being that came from the heavens. The *Fusō meigetsushū* 扶桑明月集, attributed to the prominent scholar Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房 (1041–1111), reports that, during the imperial accession of Emperor Kanmu 桓武 in 783, Jūzenji had “descended from heaven” (*tenkō* 天降) (See Yamamoto 1984, p. 31). The *Jingi senryō* 神祇宣令 (eleventh/twelfth century) and *Gonshinshō* 巖神抄 (1414) claim that Jūzenji was the “manifested trace” (*suijaku* 垂迹) of Ninigi no Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊, the grandson of Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神, the great Sun Goddess and the main deity of Ise Shrine. This suggests that Jūzenji was not only a god of heaven but also a direct descendent of the Sun Goddess. As Yamamoto Hiroko shows, the idea that Jūzenji also assumed the identity of Ninigi emerged from the process of syncretizing Ise Shrine’s cult with Sannō worship—and, more specifically, from identifying Ōmiya with Amaterasu based on the premise that the former was the “divided spirit” (*bunshin* 分身) of the latter (both were conveniently termed “great gods/shrines”) (Yamamoto 1984, p. 32). This empowered Jūzenji’s status, who was now seen as part and parcel of Ise’s pantheon.

Another implication of this move was the association of Jūzenji with childhood—given that Ninigi was understood to be a *young* grandson. The child identity was also buttressed on account of Jūzenji connoting the bodhisattva Jizō who was seen at the time as a child, as noted earlier. These attributes would ultimately lead to Jūzenji’s incorporation into the medieval cult of divine boys (*dōji shinkō* 童子信仰) and the consequential qualitative overlaps with other youthful Dharma-protectors, such as Oto Gohō 乙護法, the local god of Mt. Sefuri in Kyūshū; and the young regent Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子 (574–622).¹⁰ In addition, Jūzenji was also endowed with Buddhist resonance—in part due to his identification with Jizō. A number of texts conceived Jūzenji as a bodhisattva-like being, or as a god with “abundant compassion” (*jīhi kōdai* 慈悲廣大). One of these texts notes: “If you worship him, his compassion will deepen further. If you believe in him, he will bestow blessings on everyone far and wide” (*Yōtenki*, p. 48). Thus, Jūzenji was, on the one hand, seen as a heavenly *kami* affiliated with the Ise lineage; but on the other, he was a benevolent bodhisattva that was receptive to the requests and entreaties of living beings. Finally, as a divine child, he straddled the threshold between the *kami* and buddha realms.

Jūzenji was also an adorist and mediumistic god; in fact, his ability to instill himself in the bodies of people arguably gave way to his anthropomorphized shape and his close proximity to humans. Sannō Shintō texts, the corpus of Shintō knowledge theorized by medieval Tendai chroniclers (*kike* 記家), reveal that from his inception Jūzenji was a god who manifested himself through human agents, often by taking on a person’s form. Even Jūzenji’s etymological origin is based on real people. The name “Jūzenji” derives from an ancient governmental body, “the ten court chaplains and meditation masters” (*naigubu jūzenji* 内供奉十禪師),¹¹ which Emperor Kōnin 光仁 (708–782) inaugurated in 772 to create a niche for ten monks who were to be institutionally independent from the Sōgō 僧綱 bureaucracy (the official priesthood of the state) and were chosen by the government to

oversee the maintenance of Buddhist affairs at the court. One entry in the *Yōtenki* 耀天記 (1223), illuminates the human dimension of Jūzenji and how it received his appellation.

As [Priest] Narinaka explained: “In ancient times, there was among the ten court chaplains one person who stayed at Kōshakuji in Yokawa, who was rich in wisdom and its practices¹² and was a man of high virtue. This person among the meditation masters conveyed the spoken words of Sannō through his body. He had become a ‘manifest deity’ [*arahito gami* 荒人神], and for the first time he was given the name ‘Jūzenji.’”¹³ (*Yōtenki*, p. 48)

This fascinating passage is attributed to Hafuribe no Narinaka 祝部成仲 (1099–1191), a priest (*negi* 禰)¹⁴ who belonged to a lineage of Hie Shrine personnel (*shaji* 社司) (Yamamoto 1984, p. 27). Narinaka reports that one of the government-appointed meditation masters at Kōshakuji (located between the Jingūji path and Yokawa) had a remarkable capacity for channeling the god Sannō to speak through his mouth, and that the god we know today as Jūzenji received its name from this medium’s occupation as a meditation master. The passage refers to a person from the ninth or tenth century who had been possessed by Sannō, emphasizing the anthropomorphization of this god as an *arahito gami*, a category of divinities that materialize in human form.¹⁵

Spiritual possession was also the hallmark of Jūzenji’s frightening and untamed aspects. Although this potent god was a compassionate miracle-worker, Jūzenji was also a malefic and wild god (*kōjin* 荒神/*araburu kami* 荒振神), a fear-inducing divinity that inflicted curses (*jusojin* 呪誼神/*tatari-gami* 祟り神) upon those who had committed offenses or had not carefully propitiated him. In the *Sanke yōryakki* 山家要略記, for example, it is said that once he confers worldly gains to compassionate people he is called “Jūzenji”, but he becomes a fiend that causes calamities when people act on their evil intentions—on which occasion he is called “Soranjin” 麿乱神 (“wild and chaotic god”).¹⁶ Accordingly, Jūzenji is often grouped with two malefic divinities in the Sannō pantheon, Marōdo 客人 and Hachiōji 八王子. As Kageyama Haruki and Satō Masatō claim, most of these gods belong to the Higashi Hongū line of Hie Shrine, gods that deliver oracles by possessing other people through the mediation of shamans. A popular song (*imayō* 今様) in an anthology dubs them as “terrifying.”¹⁷ This trio was historically used to effect one’s will by evoking fear in others. For example, in the warrior narrative *The Tale of the Heike* (*Heike monogatari* 平家物語), on several different occasions Enryakuji monks stage vociferous petitions at the imperial palace. In the face of an unjust government decision, the monks appear at the palace with the portable shrines (*mikoshi* 神輿)—the abodes of these gods—chanting curses and threats.¹⁸ Such petitions promise divine retribution—one that mere mortals defy at their own peril. Jūzenji was thus part of an effectively terrifying entourage.

The Tale of the Heike also offers several instances of Jūzenji taking on the body of a young boy or a youth through possession. One episode tells the story of an unprecedented decision by the emperor to exile the abbot of Enryakuji, Meiun 明雲, to Izu Province. Enraged Enryakuji militant monks (*daishu* 大衆) held a council and set out to free Meiun—but not before making an entreaty to Sannō, seeking assurance of their success at the Jūzenji Shrine. This scene depicts Jūzenji possessing Tsurumaru 鶴丸, a boy servant of the Mudōji 無動寺 monk and preceptor Jōen 乗円. Jūzenji lodges itself into the body of Tsurumaru and speaks through him, warning that if the abbot were taken to another province the god would be stricken by such grief that he would leave the foot of the mountain—which would render the foothill of Mt. Hiei unprotected by an important tutelary *kami*, and thus disrupt the balance between heaven and earth (buddhas and *kami*). Despite the solemnity of the Jūzenji-possessed boy, the monks are skeptical. As a trial, each of five hundred monks throws one of his rosaries to the veranda of the shrine; in turn, the boy is asked to retrieve and return each rosary to its rightful owner, which he completes with a possessed madness (*monogurui* 物狂い) that convinces the abashed doubters. Repeated references of this episode in the Sannō Shintō corpus and in *The Tale of Heike* variants demonstrate how this story was incorporated and enshrined in the lore of medieval Tendai monks.¹⁹

Many other Jūzenji tales and anecdotes describe possession, often of young boys—tales replete with oracular messages, incubatory dreams, and divine revelations (Satō 2003). All of this is to say that Jūzenji was an ambivalent being, perceived as both positive (salvific) and negative (demonic).²⁰ Jūzenji had a propensity to possess boys, especially the temple acolytes known as *chigo*, or other male and female shamans (*miko* 御子) that worked in Jūzenji Shrine. In these cases, the god revealed reality to truth-seekers but also terrified the onlookers. The association between Jūzenji and children connected it to a broader thread of medieval worship, the cult of sacred children (*dōji shinkō*), which spread all over Japan and saw in divine boys essential mediators of the Buddhist teaching in an age of decline of the Dharma.²¹ This connection will prove to be an important theme in the gradual elevation of Jūzenji’s numinous power and its link with sexuality.

4. Jien’s Promotion of Jūzenji

We now shift to a discussion on how the god Jūzenji, already a highly complex and ambivalent subjectivity, was promoted to being a superior god within the Tendai pantheon and beyond. The thirteenth-century Tendai monk Jien, twice a Tendai head of the school, was a devout worshipper of Jūzenji. Especially in his final years, Jien devised various devotional rituals (*kōshiki* 講式 and *raikō* 礼講) dedicated to Jūzenji that elevated the deity to the same status of Sannō, the chief tutelary god of Hie Shrine.

It was during Jien’s lifetime that one of the most famous noble poets, Fujiwara Teika 藤原定家 (1162–1241), attended a ritual ceremony using a *Sannō miya mandara* in front of Jūzenji Shrine in 1199 (Arichi 2006, p. 341). Jien went further in the *Jūzenji kōshiki* 十禪師講式 ritual program (1211), the liturgy of which asserts that Jūzenji was the *most* sacred god in the Sannō pantheon. Jien states that Jizō, the original essence from which Jūzenji emanates, outshines any of the bodhisattvas that constitute the original ground (*honji*) of the rest of the Seven Sannō gods. In the same way that Jizō surpasses all of the bodhisattvas, Jien argues, Jūzenji rises above the Sannō deities aligned with such bodhisattvas—namely, the deities Shōshinshi, Hachiōji, Marōdo, and San-no-miya (Guelberg 2016, p. 166). Though Jien did lionize some additional gods in other ritual texts, as was common at the time—such as the *Jinushi Gongen kōshiki* 地主権現講式 (1209)—he never ceased capturing in word his devotion to Jūzenji, from hymns of adoration to the elaborate ritual.

Jien also wrote about his own divine revelations of Jūzenji. These reveal that this god who delivered oracles also communicated sacred messages through dreams. The religious vows Jien authored—*Sannō keibyaku* 山王敬白 (1222), *Ōmiya Jūzenji hyōbyaku* (1223), and *Shōtoku Taishi ganmon* (1224)—all state that Jien received divine messages from Jūzenji in the year 1216. In the *Shōtoku Taishi ganmon*, Jien reports that Shōtoku Taishi came to him in a dream and bestowed upon him a wooden tablet inscribed with a *waka* 和歌 poem, and it was revealed to him that the talisman was in fact the “body of Sannō Shingū 山王新宮” (“the new shrine of Sannō”)—which the text explains unambiguously to be Jūzenji.²² In another one of Jien’s religious vows, the *Ōmiya Jūzenji hyōbyaku*, it is said:

Hail the avatar Sannō Jūzenji!

Afflicted with sickness and old age, am I not still carrying deluded attachments?

Comparing good and bad, have I not again forgotten reason?

Now, during this pilgrimage I had a dream revelation, and I was told I had already accomplished the goal [of the *Lotus Sutra* practitioner] of revealing [the Buddha’s wisdom] and [leading others to] enlightenment and entering the path.²³ (*Ōmiya Jūzenji hyōbyaku*, p. 316)

It is the *kami* Jūzenji who facilitates the insight that Jien, although of old age, achieved the goals of Tendai Buddhism. Without the mediation of Jūzenji, Jien’s fulfillment of Tendai teaching and practice was impossible. In 1224, Jien devised and practiced a combinatory devotional ritual, the *Shinrai haikō* 新礼拝講, in front of Jūzenji’s image. Keep in mind that this is called a “new ritual”, a point that discloses—as Niels Guelberg (2016, p. 167)

observes—the fact that there were other ceremonies for Jūzenji beforehand. As a sort of grand finale to his manifold forms of ceremonial activities, Jien presented a grand ritual to an audience of thirty, followed by one hundred days of making entreaties before the god, and culminating in an elaborate and grandiose program.

The period during which Jien eagerly advanced Jūzenji's role in the Sannō cult also produced works, even from outside Mt. Hiei, that singled out Jūzenji as a primary god—in the Sannō cult as well as in Japan as a whole. Some of these belong to the Agui group of Buddhist preachers. In a thirteenth-century collection of liturgies, Chōken's *Tenpōrin-shō* 転法輪抄, we see a ritual pronouncement (*hyōbyaku* 表白) carried out on behalf of the second-in-command governor of Aki province (modern day Hiroshima), declaring “our country always had divine luminaries (*shinmei* 神明) who inflict curses. In recent years, those of the avatars of the Seven [Sannō] Shrines have been especially severe. Everyone [today] is devoted to Sannō [shrines]. Among them, the superior one is Jūzenji Shrine.”²⁴ Another pronouncement makes a similar assertion: “In the region where the sun shines [Japan], there are over three thousand illuminated gods [*myōjin*]. Among them, the one that is revered the most is Jūzenji.”²⁵ This kind of declaration became a mainstay of Sannō Shintō texts, as seen in the Muromachi period piece *Gonshinshō* (1414): “The Jūzenji avatar is called Japan's peerless sacred shrine, the most illuminated deity in the entire realm.”²⁶ Thus, the declarations that Jūzenji is the utmost god seem to have penetrated outside of Mt. Hiei, which shows that the authority of Jūzenji had begun to transcend locality.

Not long after Jien's promotion of Jūzenji, the curriculum of Mt. Hiei began to shift attention to the god. In the doctrinal debates between a monk and a *chigo*, the questioner expected the debater to know and acknowledge the supremacy of Jūzenji over all other gods of Japan. In the protocols of the doctrinal debate *Chigo tsugai rongi* 児番論議 (“Debate Face-to-Face with *Chigo*”, late fifteenth century), the following discussion is recorded:

Question: Shouldn't we say that the avatar Jūzenji is the most important god in the world?

Answer: You should respond that he is interpreted as the most important god in the world.

Answer: You should respond that he is interpreted to be the most important god among the three dark realms, and that he is a god. Regarding this matter, he protects the deities of heaven and earth and protects the country, and gods and imperial ancestors display their divine majestic power.

Question: Why are you calling the avatar Jūzenji the most important god?

Answer: There are various reasons. You should respond that Jūzenji is the grandson of [Amaterasu], Ame no miya, who received the Central Land of Reed Plains [Ashihara no Nakatsukuni, or Japan] from Tenshō Daijin [Amaterasu], and descended to that land. Wielding the three imperial regalia, he ruled over the four seas and ever since he is considered the greatest god because he is the divine ancestor of the hundred emperors and the origin of all deities. As for the kami who guide along the Buddhist path, in order to help the divine rulers of the realm to convert and educate their subjects, their guidance is in accordance with the beings they endeavor to save.²⁷ (*Chigo tsugai rongi*, unpublished manuscript)

Jūzenji here is understood in two ways: (1) he assumes the identity of Ninigi, the grandson of the Sun Goddess (Tenshō Daijin 天照大神 or Amaterasu) who was given rulership over Japan; and (2) he is framed as a monistic god of the Japanese pantheon. For the first, Jūzenji is the prototype of the Japanese emperor, given that he holds the three sacred regalia and that he had ruled “over the four seas” (*shikai* 四海), a phrase often attributed to a Buddhist monarch or *cakravartin*. He is identified with Ninigi, the first heavenly god that came down to Japan and conquered the land from the earthly gods, initiating the divine imperial lineage that served as a basis for later royal and religious rule. As for the second point, he is no simple emanation, but in fact the originator of all gods.

This is not the only text to describe Jūzenji in primordial terms. The fourteenth-century work known as *Sanke yōryakki* (*Sanke yōryakki*, p. 75), analyzes Jūzenji's etymology and asserts that he is Kuni no Toko Tachi 国常立—that is, the first of the primeval gods that emerged after the separation of heaven and earth according to the mytho-history *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 (712).

Indisputably, shortly after Jien created a separate cultus for the god, the idea that Jūzenji was the godhead of the Japanese pantheon had taken root. Jien's historical worship bolstered the prestige and authority of Jūzenji, which later figures—such as the preceptors, chroniclers, and Esoteric monks of Mt. Hiei—were able to finesse into new narratives about Jūzenji's subjectivity and ontology. One of these central efforts was to endow Jūzenji, the absolute god, with a sexual ethos.

5. Jūzenji as a Libidinal God

Jien's undivided focus on Jūzenji gave way to latter-day legends that provided the god with a sexual significance, specifically that of male–male sexual intimacy. The importance of this aspect lies in the fact that it explains some of the phenomena that I discuss later. One of these is the ascription of Jūzenji with the power to transmute moral vices including sexual desire into awakening; another is the reasoning behind the incorporation of Sannō into the Chigo Kanjō consecration, which involves the sexual apotheosis of temple acolytes. All of these efforts were informed by the most theologically and ritualistically complicated attempts to glorify the authority of the god.

Given both the god's imagery as a child and the fact that boy mediums were particularly receptive to his possessions and oracular activities, it was a natural progression for Jūzenji to become connected to youthful acolytes (*chigo*), who were treated as objects of sexual desire—to the extent that Tendai monks developed a whole ritual apparatus for formalizing male–male sexual relations with their younger underlings (Porath 2019, 2022). Altogether, the alignment of Jūzenji with *chigo* and male–male sexuality can be seen in *engi* literature—records on the origins of shrines and temples, such as *Rō no miko ki* 廊御子記 (1603):

The avatar Jūzenji of Hie Shrine, transformed into a temple acolyte [*chigo*], and went to visit Reverend Jichin [Jien]. The two abandoned behind “the most felicitous thing” in the valley of Mt. Hiei. This thing became their child. Then, one day the god [Jūzenji] travelled from Jūzenji Shrine to Daigyōji Shrine. In the past, there was a corridor between the two shrines, and so, the boy who lived in the valley was picked up by the avatar Jūzenji and then brought into the corridor. Therefore, Jūzenji went every day to Daigyōji Shrine and provided food as divine offerings to the god Since the boy grew up in this corridor, he was called the child of the corridor [*rō no miko*].²⁸ (*Rō no miko ki*, pp. 619–22)

Jūzenji Shrine was populated with male and female shamans belonging to a guild called *Rō no miko* 廊御子 (“children of the corridor”), who were devoted to the Ni no Miya line and who managed the day-to-day details of the shrine. The corridor that is discussed in the passage is the path leading from Jūzenji Shrine to Daigyōji 大行事 Shrine, the latter dedicated to a monkey god closely affiliated with the former (Jūzenji was also often described as a white monkey or aided by monkeys). In the story presented above, Jien and Jūzenji (in the form of a monastic child) leave behind them the “most felicitous thing” (*saiiai no mono* さいあい乃物). This “thing” may be the combined ejaculated semen of the two partners.²⁹ The “thing” then formed into a child who was raised by both Jūzenji and Daigyōji and became the mythological progenitor of Jūzenji Shrine. This is the origin story of the founding of the guild, whose main activities took place in the corridor area, which was largely inhabited by marginal religious functionaries (such as shamans and mediums) and other figures on the fringes of society. But the text also professes that this story serves as the explanation for why monks have been “raising” *chigo* on Mt. Hiei (Abe 1998, p. 228). As Abe contends, it is no exaggeration to say that the sexual component here signifies the liminal nature of sacrality.

A second story from *Rō no miko ki* relates that, whenever Jien was overcome by the tyranny of lust, Jūzenji repeatedly visited him to gratify his needs.

Reverend Jichin [Jien], as he was too deeply immersed in debauchery, found it increasingly difficult to stay on the mountain, and he was thinking of leaving [Hieizan]. Sannō took pity on him and, in order to make him stay for a long time on the mountain, Jūzenji took the form of a *chigo*. Every night, perched on the shoulder of a monkey, he came to comfort the heart of Jichin.³⁰ (*Rō no miko ki*, pp. 619–22)

This is said to have happened for two years. In both narratives, when Jūzenji arrives to satisfy Jien's desires, he appears in the form of a temple acolyte. Though the text is dated to the early modern era, it is probably based on medieval prototypes, in part since it echoes a much earlier medieval tradition and the doctrinal developments that Jien left behind him. Jien himself developed doctrines that affirmed sexuality as a sacred power—for example, in his *Jichin kashō musōki* 慈鎮和尚夢想記, he reports dreaming in 1203 about the sacred regalia, whereby the imperial *cintāmaṇi* jewel transformed into a sheath to enclose the divine sword. In the following year, Jien interpreted this dream to be a sexual union between the Jade-Maiden (imperial consort) and the *cakravartin* (emperor). His elucidation of this oneiric experience as the reproductive basis for enthronement rituals was approved by Emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽 (1180–1239) and had bearing on wider monastic rites that sought to shape the image of the imperial consecration (Abe 1999, pp. 363–67; Faure 2008, p. 206). On another occasion in 1210, as described in *Hikyōshō* 秘経抄, Jien dreamt that he had sex with the youthful Emperor Go-Toba while assuming the form of his consort, what would have been male–male sexual relations if Jien had not transformed into a female. That is, the *Rō no miko ki* employs the general historical knowledge of Jien worshipping Jūzenji, combines it with his legacy of promoting sexual doxa as a foundation for religious praxis, and magnifies that connection through the trope of male–male love (Faure 1998, pp. 255–58; Abe 1998, pp. 228–32).

We can also identify iconographic evidence that joins the worship of Jūzenji as a *chigo* with the notion of worldly passions. For example, a fifteenth-century scroll that survives at Enryakuji's Kokuhōden 国宝殿 in Shiga prefecture, depicts a youthful Jūzenji in the form of a *chigo*, as evidenced by his long ponytails, powdered face, and rouge lips. The superscript reads: “Hail Jūzenji in this pure land, a land of silent illumination. With the four deportments of walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, he will rid one of all passionate afflictions” (Figure 1).³¹ The same passage was also used in oracles delivered by Jūzenji (Abe 1998, pp. 235–36). The allusion to sex is not explicit here, but note that Jūzenji, depicted here as holding a fly whisk, plays the role of uprooting the passions much like he does in the *Rō no miko ki*. In the latter, the goal is reached by transmuting desire through male–male sexual acts. Abe Yasurō notes that it is very likely that this image was identical to the Jūzenji scroll hung at Jūzenji Higansho 彼岸所 (equinox hall) and the one in Natsudō 夏堂 (summer hall) of Hie shrine, when Jien held devotional rites before the deity in the early thirteenth century. The icon of the Natsudō was created by Jien himself and bore his own writing: “a painting of [Jūzenji] as a child” (*dō-gyō no ezō* 童形ノ絵像) (Abe 1998, pp. 231, 233). Given the *chigo* figure and the role of passions in the scroll, it is likely that the painting was based on the legends envisioning Jūzenji as an attractive object of sexual desire.

Jien's sincere and devout promotion of Jūzenji laid the foundation for subsequent mythologization of his relationship with Jūzenji as sexual. As Jūzenji was elevated into a libidinal god, doctrinal efforts were also made to allow him to embody the Buddhist precepts, the monastic set of rules that is often used to curb sexuality, not to encourage it. By embodying the precepts, Jūzenji as an object of worship had the potential to sanctify and harness the sexual yearnings of the monastic community and redirect them towards enlightenment.



Figure 1. *Jūzenji as a child*, fifteenth century, hanging scroll, color on silk. Kokuhōden, Enryakuji, Shiga prefecture.

6. Jūzenji and the Buddhist Precepts

One of the striking aspects of Jūzenji is the fact that he was deployed as a means to bypass the Buddhist monastic code. The discourse that was created around Jūzenji regarding the Buddhist precepts consolidated his position as a god that not only embodied the precepts but also was in his essence superior to other divinities—and who functioned as the primordial substrate of reality, coterminous as he was with original enlightenment (*hongaku* 本覚). The purpose, as we shall see, was to assign Jūzenji a redeeming power that would transfigure sinfulness into awakening.

According to Funata Jun'ichi, the potential of Jūzenji to reveal the precepts is rooted in the notion of *kaitai* 戒体 (“precept-substance”), whereby the precepts were understood to be a material force that inheres in the body of the ordinand. The idea of *kaitai* appears in the writing of Zhiyi 智顓 (538–597) both as a mental phenomenon and as a physical component (Groner 2002, pp. 224–27, and note 44 on p. 226). But in medieval Japan it was taken to the extreme. Rather than following a rigorous lifestyle adhering to the monastic code, the recipient was able to absorb the precepts within his own body or achieve *kaitai hottoku* 戒体発得, lit. “gaining the precept-substance within oneself” (Funata 2011, p. 319). As such, a

person endowed with the precept-substance would be able to avoid all wrongdoings and cultivate goodness, no matter how morally decrepit their behavior.

The *vinaya* masters (*kaike* 戒家) of Tendai's Kurodani 黒谷 branch promoted the notion of precept-substance in their liturgy of the "consecration to the precepts" (*kai kanjō* 戒灌頂), an esoteric initiation loosely based on Zhanran's ordination manual, known as the "Bodhisattva Precept Ceremony" (Ju bosatsu kaigi 授菩薩戒儀, T. 2378).³² As Funata points out, the connection between the conferral of inherent precepts and the Sannō divinity was established in certain *kai kanjō* rituals. Note too that the Sannō god was directly worshipped in some of these rituals. For example, in *Chinkoku kanjō shiki* 鎮国灌頂私記, the ritual procedures of *kai kanjō* include the master-preceptor raising a lantern in front of an image of Sannō and giving offering to the *kami*. In the *Kai kan juhō* 戒灌授法, it is said that "If one invites the Sannō avatar, the vow to protect the Perfect [Tendai] lineage deepens."³³ Sannō, as the tutelary *kami* of the Tendai school, was summoned to the transmission-altar of the consecration to act as the defender of the Tendai tradition.

From a humble protector god, Sannō soon encapsulates the ineffable essence of the precepts. Some other texts written by the *vinaya* revivalist of Tendai, Kōen 興円 (1262/1263–1317), elucidate that Sannō was understood as the precept-substance. It is explained in his *Enkai juroku jō* 円戒十六帖, specifically in the section "Sannō isshin sangan no koto 山王一心三觀事" ("Regarding Sannō's Three Contemplations in One Mind"), that inside the body of the practitioner lies the eight-petaled *hṛdaya* (Jp. *hachibun karida shin* 八分カリダ心) or the physical heart. When one is conferred with the precepts, one is awarded with the precept-substance, which is shaped after a moon disc (*gachirin* 月輪). The precept-substance is a material thing that is placed on top of the heart. It is said to be the same as the Ninth Consciousness (*kushiki* 九識) of the heart-mind, and it is also coextensive with the Great Round Mirror of Wisdom (*daienkyōchi* 大円鏡智). Additionally, this precept-substance is none other than the Three Sannō Sages—that is, the three central gods Ōmiya, Ni no miya, and Shōshinshi. The precepts are, then, an intrinsic material whose potency is triggered by precept ordination, after which the practitioner is able to fully manifest the wisdom of a buddha. Not only is it the matter of buddha-nature, but it is also the embodiment of the Sannō gods. In turn, other ideas introduced in texts penned by this lineage include the notion that the Three Sets of Pure Precepts (*sanju jōkai* 三聚淨戒) are the Sannō gods, and that one can bodily transform into Sannō within the precept ordination ritual (Funata 2011, p. 324). Funata shows through textual analysis that the doctrine concerning Sannō's embodiment of the precepts is rooted in original enlightenment thought (*hongaku shisō* 本覚思想) and the conception whereby the Sannō god/s were superior to their Buddha counterparts (Funata 2011, p. 325). In this discourse of Sannō Shintō, we see a tendency to reverse the famous *honji-suijaku* 本地垂跡 paradigm: no longer were *kami* seen as emanations of universal buddhas; rather, they were the fundamental nature of buddhas, their original source. This stance allowed for the implementation of Buddhist ideas as a platform from which to celebrate *kami* for their transcendent powers. It is important to recognize this discursive shift in the latter medieval period, which stands as the backdrop to the development of Jūzenji's absolute ontology.

Tendai preceptors were concerned with the body of precepts as well as the body of the gods more generally. These scholiasts reframed Jūzenji, one of Sannō's primary manifestations, as a bodily aggregate of all gods. This idea is portrayed in the *Keiran shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 of Kōshū 光宗 (1276–1350) in an article (in the section on precepts) describing how Jūzenji acquired his name. It declares: "Therefore, when you visualize Sannō, you practice with Jūzenji as the basis for meditation. Nowadays, not only Sannō, but also the great and small gods of heaven and earth within Japan are all regarded as constituted in their totality by Jūzenji" (Keiran shūyōshū 1990, p. 448).³⁴ This claim suggests that the scholar monks of Mt. Hiei did not conceive of Jūzenji as a mere extension of Sannō, but rather as an all-encompassing god that condenses in its body all of the Sannō deities—as well as the other deities of Japan (Funata 2011, p. 325).

Echoing this understanding, Jūzenji came to be depicted at the center of mandalas—cosmographs that depict the enlightened realm in its entirety. In one mandala from Shinnyo-en (twelfth–fourteenth centuries) (Figure 2a), Jūzenji is drawn as a young Buddhist monk (*wakasō*) seated on a pedestal. His counterpart is depicted above inside a golden halo—the bodhisattva Jizō, who is his original ground (*honji*). But the focus of this mandala is not monopolized by buddhas; it also gives increasing attention to the *kami*, which is a standard framing in the *honji-suijaku* mandalas. This is suggested by the setting and background of a *kami* shrine as well as the figure of a monkey, Sannō’s own emissary, who ascends the stairs leading to Jūzenji’s altar while simultaneously demonstrating obeisance to him as an object of veneration. Even more telling are the seven round objects that hover above Jūzenji alongside Mt. Hiei. These are the Seven Sannō gods. Given their round shape and position high in the heavens, they are meant to be read as the Seven Stars of the Great Dipper, which are a major focal of worship in Sannō Shintō. That is, the images show that Jūzenji is not only at the center of a Buddhist universe—he is at the center of the Sannō cult and its realm of astral and heavenly divinities.



(a)



(b)

Figure 2. (a) *Hie Sannō Jūzenji mandala*, Kamakura period (1185–1333), hanging scroll, color on silk. Shinnyo-en temple, Tachikawa, Tokyo; Reproduced with permission from (Faure 2016b). Copyright 2016 University of Hawai’i Press. (b) *Jūzenji bijā (seed-syllable) mandala*, Muromachi period (1336–1573), hanging scroll, color on silk. Kannon-ji temple, held at Biwako Bunkakan, Shiga prefecture.

Another mandala from Kannon-ji temple, held at Biwako Bunkakan in Shiga, (Figure 2b) is designed in more conspicuous Buddhist contours. The image portrays Jūzenji in his conventional *kami* form, a sacred child. Previous scholarship has shown that there are artistic and semiotic overlapping associations between Jūzenji as a child and Shōtoku Taishi, the first Buddhist regent of Japan, who is often celebrated in medieval legends and didactic tales.³⁵ These similarities are depicted in Jūzenji's juvenile hairstyle and facial features, which provide the image with a strong Buddhist resonance. Jūzenji holds in his right hand the stem of a red lotus flower from which springs forth a jeweled banner (*hōdō* 宝幢), on top of which are three burning jewels. Since in his left hand he holds one burning jewel, these details may represent the Tendai concept of the threefold truth and the single truth that unites them all. In addition to these implements and concepts, a more eye-catching Buddhist feature can be seen in the seed-syllables (Sk. *bījā*, Jp. *shūji* 種子), given that they surround Jūzenji. These golden letters present the multiple Sannō shrines/gods that inhabit the enlightened realm.³⁶ One might venture to claim that this image depicts Jūzenji as encompassing in his body the Buddhist universe altogether. The iconographic and iconological evidence, along with the textual references culled from Tendai sources in the above discussion, attests that the view of Jūzenji as an absolute god became increasingly pervasive in the medieval period.

Let us return to Sannō's role as the materialized (or the materially realized) body of the precepts. Since Jūzenji was deemed a collective body of Sannō as the entire universe, he was also understood to embody the precepts—much like Sannō himself. Ejin 惠尋 (d. 1289) dedicates a section to Jūzenji in his *Isshin myōkai shō* 一心妙戒抄, which is labeled "Regarding Jūzenji as the precept-substance." It reads:

First, with regards to the reason for which we call the manifested trace [Jūzenji] in this august name, "Jū" 十 means the "ten realms that are without deficiency." Without deficiency means perfect [*enman* 円満, also "round"]. Round [*en* 円] means sudden [*don* 頓]. Sudden means that all ten realms are the buddha realms. "Zen" 禪 means "to cease [*shi* 止]." The meaning of "to cease" is to restrain evil and uphold goodness. It is the precepts for maintaining restraint, and the precepts for cultivating goodness. "Ji" 師 is for preceptor [*kaishi* 戒師]. The preceptor guides all living beings, which is the precepts of conferring benefits to sentient beings. This is the spirit of a teacher of [prati]mokṣa. Taken together, [Jūzenji] is the substance of the Three Sets of Pure Precepts, and especially the precept-substance of benefitting living beings.³⁷ (*Isshin myōkai shō*, p. 263)

As we can see, Jūzenji's name is construed to stand for the perfect-sudden precepts (*endonkai* 円頓戒) and the precept-substance of the threefold typology of the pure precepts. These pure precepts include the moral code found in Brahma's Net Sutra (Bonmōkyō 梵網經, T. 1484), specifically the ten grave precepts and the forty-eight minor precepts. They are divided into three categories: "precepts for maintaining restraint (*shō ritsugi kai* 撰律儀戒)", "precepts for cultivating goodness (*shō zenhō kai* 撰善法戒)", and "precepts of conferring benefits to sentient beings (*nyōeki ujō kai* 饒益有情戒)." As such, Jūzenji comprehensively captures the essence of the precepts, which was seen to be the ultimate distillation of monastic discipline.

Seen within this light, the summoning of Sannō in rituals such as the likes of the *kai kanjō*, and its resulting discourse on Jūzenji, was meant to bestow on the practitioner the heart and body of a living god, which conferred with it the essence of the precepts. The initiate became both a fully enlightened being and a corporeal double of the *kami* who bodied forth the precepts. The implication was that, through the power of Jūzenji, practitioners transcended the conventional sense of the monastic code, whose rules were otherwise to be followed closely, and were able to manifest them physically—regardless of their behavior theretofore or thereafter. In other words, obtaining the precept-substance resulted in a virtue that could not be lost (*ittoku eifushitsu* 一得永不失). This logic can be discerned in multiple texts in several lineages, works that were written by Zen monks,

Tendai preceptors, and original enlightenment thinkers.³⁸ The idea was grounded in the doctrines of Buddha nature and original enlightenment thought, but its driving force was the body of the *kami* and the understanding that Jūzenji replaced Sannō as an absolute god. This method of employing a Buddhist doctrinal notion to empower the *kami* (and the practitioner) is especially evident in medieval Tendai interpretations of the doctrine of the threefold truth.

7. The “Chigo Adage”: Jūzenji as the Embodiment of the Threefold Truth

That Jūzenji was aligned with doctrines that elevated him to an ontology of supreme godhood (such as encapsulating precept-substance and original enlightenment), and the fact that he was identified with the temple acolytes, set the stage for his articulation as the embodiment of “the threefold truth”—one of Tendai’s most important doctrinal formulations, which thus promoted him further to an absolute state. The chroniclers of Mt. Hiei, who systematized Sannō Shintō thought, formulated a sacred phrase that adopted the threefold truth as a teaching that centers on the primacy of the gods (Satō 1984, p. 49).

The Buddhist notion of the threefold truth (*santai* 三諦) was a concept first codified in China by the Tiantai monk Zhiyi. The threefold truth—that is, the empty, the provisional, and the middle (Swanson 1989)—were epistemological-ontological dimensions that pointed directly to the nature of reality as the convergence of the ultimate and conventional aspects. These truths also possess the meaning of “valid in the sense of conducive to behaviors that lead to the end of suffering” (Ziporyn 2013, pp. 256–57). That is, as Brook Ziporyn upholds, the epistemological component is often downplayed in favor of pragmatics: the threefold truth is understood primarily as a tool to diminish suffering and achieve salvation. The middle truth is the apex of the three; it affirms that reality is empty of independent substantiality with the acknowledgment that the provisional is fully real insofar as it is a temporary designation. According to Paul Swanson, already in Chinese context the concept accorded more importance to phenomenal reality than the noumena (Swanson 1989, pp. 6–7). In a similar way, Japanese Tendai monks promoted their view of an absolute affirmation of this world by using the concept of the threefold truth. Their refashioned version of Zhiyi’s theory confirmed the concept of original enlightenment, which recognized an inherent sacrality in all phenomena. This led monks to value the worldly and the material aspects of existence and, in effect, to sanctify gods that espoused material gains and endorse sexual acts.

In the chroniclers’ writings on the threefold truth we see the concept being reformulated as a statement about the hierarchical nature of *kami*. The first incarnation of this idea does not explicitly mention these three truths. According to the medieval encyclopedia *Keiran shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 of Kōshū 光宗 (1276–1350), when Saichō, the founder of Enryakuji, first climbed Mt. Hiei, he saw two supernatural beings (*kenin* 化人). The first was a heavenly boy (*tendō* 天童); the second was the emanation of the local mountain god Sannō. The text remarks that this event explains why an image of a boy is installed in the hall of Jūzenji Shrine, which suggests that said image is in fact the icon of Jūzenji. The story reveals, then, that the heavenly boy who appeared to Saichō was Jūzenji himself. Referring to this order, we are told, the Tendai priesthood coined a saying: “The *chigo* is foremost, Sannō comes second” (*ichi chigo, ni Sannō* 一兒二山王).³⁹ This phrase, which I call the “*chigo* adage,” soon thereafter came to denote not only that the young acolyte was the first to appear to Saichō, but also that the *chigo* was primary ontologically, a kind of a supreme god. Another medieval reading was that monks tend to fall in love with *chigo* as objects of lust—and only later tend to religious worship. Therefore, this phrase was embedded in a sexual context and connotative of an endorsement of male–male sexuality. These readings together made the *chigo* identical to Jūzenji, and elevated *chigo* as Jūzenji hierarchically above Sannō, his own godhead.

The above describes just one of many texts penned by the chronicles of Mt. Hiei relevant to our discussion. Another, written by Tendai chronicler Gigen 義源 (1289–1351), is the *Sanke yōryakki*, an early fourteenth-century work on the origin, legends, and Tendai

doctrines revolving around the god Sannō that provides an interesting interpretation of the *chigo* adage signifying Jūzenji as a primeval god with many attributes. The discussion here typifies the god in a tripartite structure, which prefigures his unity with the threefold truth. In a subsection titled “Concerning the saying ‘the *chigo* is foremost, Sannō comes second’ in our mountain” (*Tōzan ichi chigo ni Sannō wo nazuku koto* 當山名一兒二山王一事), it offers:

The “Pure Precinct Boundary Chapter” says: “Noble commentary of Enryakuji [masters]. The matter of “*Chigo* is foremost”: on the seventeenth day of the seventh month of the fourth year of Enryaku, after staying at the Jingūji-in, [Saichō] first climbed the high peak of Mt. Hiei; perhaps it happened on the twenty-fourth day. As he wandered the Northern Falcon Forest, he encountered a boy. Saichō asked him: “Who are you, child?” and the child answered: “I am the numinous child who is the warp and woof of heaven and earth. I am a god born simultaneously with sentient beings, whose destiny I oversee. I have three names. My first name is Dōshōten, because I am a deva who is born simultaneously with all sentient beings. My second name is Yūgyōjin, because I am a wandering deity who oversees the destiny of beings. My third name is Jūzenji [ten meditation masters], because I enjoy the bliss of meditation along with sentient beings in the ten directions, and because I am the master who in the future will make sentient beings establish karmic ties and convert them. Therefore, one should recite my formula: If you recite my name even once, your merits will be as abundant as space. I shall make an inexhaustible vow to grant you all that you desire.”⁴⁰ (*Sanke yōryakki*, p. 63)

Jūzenji is thus identified here not just as a deity responsible for bestowing blessings on humanity but, indeed, as a primordial god that weaves together the threads of heaven and earth. Additionally, Jūzenji is identified with a category of astral gods known as “companion gods” (*kushōjin* 俱生神),⁴¹ who control the fate of human beings and subsequently report their deeds to the monarch of the nether realm, King Enma.⁴² In other words, and as we have seen, Jūzenji was envisioned as simultaneously protective and wrathful: though he could bring worldly benefits to those who chant his name just once, as an omnipresent “companion god” he could also hover in the shadows to ensure that those who transgress will be meted with punishment. Here, the formula of three, in this case, three names, will soon become a template for discussing the threefold truth.

Indeed, in other Sannō Shintō texts we see discussion on Jūzenji’s tripartite aspects leading unambiguously into his identification with the threefold truth. This development can be seen in the following passage exploring the etymology of Jūzenji, titled *Jūzenji gomei no koto* 十禪師御名事 (“Concerning the Revered Name of Jūzenji”) in *Sanke yōryakki*:

According to the “Collection on the Mutual Identity of Origin and Traces” [*Honjaku sōsokushū*], a commentary by Eshin that quotes the [*Hokke*] *gengi*, “‘origin’ refers to the ‘root of truth’; that is, the One Ultimate Path. ‘Traces’ refers to the remainder, that is, the fact that all dharmas [*shohō*] are the true aspect of reality [*jissō* 真相]. Other teachings are collectively called ‘traces.’ If one wishes to know [the meaning of] Jizō (Skt. *Kṣitigarbha*, literally Ground-Repository), ‘ground’ means the ground of the One Real Wisdom [*ichijitsu-chi* 一実智]. ‘Repository’ means the Repository of the Tathagatha’s secret principles. Since the most remote past, all of us always abide in this ground, always abide in this repository. Never have we even for a moment rejected the sublime practice of the Lotus One should know that this is the One Ground of revealing and uniting the true aspect of reality and the Great Repository of the Tathāgatha’s secret principles. Now, ‘Jū’ refers to the provisional truth [*ketai*]. ‘Zen’ refers to the empty truth [*kūtai*]. [So] we name him Zen. ‘Ji’ [Master] relates to the middle truth [*chūtai*]. Therefore, we call him Jūzenji.”⁴³ (*Sanke yōryakki*, pp. 37–38)

This passage invokes the notion of both original enlightenment and *honji suijaku* theory to make sense of the syncretic identification between the bodhisattva Jizō and the *kami*

Jūzenji as original essence and manifested traces, respectively. It interprets Jizō based on the Chinese compound that forms his name, as we have seen earlier in the discussion on the precepts. The first character “ground” (*ji* 地) denotes, literally, the ultimate ground of transcendental wisdom. The second character “repository” (*zō* 藏) stands for the secret teachings of the Buddha. Both characters designate an atemporal *topos* that is inhabited by and characterizes all forms of lives, as in original enlightenment thought. The term “revealing and uniting” (*kai'e* 開會) is borrowed directly from the *Lotus Sutra* to refer to the unification of the “Three Vehicles into One Single Vehicle,” a doctrine that was considered the epitome of that scripture. Finally, all of these ideas are brought to bear on Jūzenji and his name divided into three parts. In this case, however, the three characters of his name are arbitrarily construed to signify each of the three truths: the conventional dimensions of reality, emptiness, and middle path. Each of the characters thus stands for one dimension of reality—which, as we shall see, was synonymous with the god Sannō in Tendai scholasticism.

The following episode connects the manifestation of Sannō as a *boy* with the concept of the threefold truth. The prolific Tendai scholar-monk Sonshun 尊舜 (1451–1514) provides in his *Nichō go-shō kenmon* 二帖御抄見聞 (1501) an elaborate treatment of the *chigo* adage. In this work, one can observe a mature articulation of the conflation of the *chigo* adage with the theory of the threefold truth based on a logic of similarity and correspondence. The *Nichō go-shō kenmon* shares how Saichō, on his way back from Tang China, faced a violent storm that turned the rip tide against him, putting him in great danger. However, thanks to his attainment of *bodhicitta*, a child appeared on the bow of the boat. Saichō asked who he was, and the child replied, “I am the tutelary deity of Mt. Tiantai and the divine luminary who protects the Perfect Sect [Tendai]. I was dispatched to allow the gradual dissemination of the Buddha Dharma in the East so that I could reach this land of sages [Japan].” Saichō asks, “What is your name?” to which the boy replies: “I am three vertical strokes connected by a horizontal line, and three horizontal strokes connected by a vertical line.” Recognizing the structure of the Chinese characters that form the name of Sannō 山王, Saichō realizes that Sannō himself stands before him.⁴⁴ This story is also recounted in the *Sanke yōryakki*, but here Sonshun conceives of Sannō’s three brush strokes joined by one stroke to be coextensive with the “Threefold Contemplation in One Mind” (*isshin sangan* 一心三觀), the Tendai method of visualization that secures insight into the threefold truth.⁴⁵ Given the discursive and intertextual understanding that the Sannō child is Jūzenji, in turn elucidates for us that the boy in this episode actually concerns Jūzenji.

In *Nihongi-shō* 日本記抄, a late-Muromachi-period (1336–1573) collection of secret transmissions concerning *kami* matters, a section explaining the *chigo* adage shares that “this phrase is about a beautiful boy that is found in the inner hall of Jūzenji Shrine.”⁴⁶ Another account mentioned in the *Gonshinshō* 嚴神鈔 (1414) and written in roughly the same period directly states that the child god was Jūzenji: when Saichō climbed Mt. Hiei, the *chigo* he saw was the god Jūzenji 十禪師, and the Sannō he saw shortly thereafter referred to Ōmiya Gongen 大宮権現, one of the main deities of the Sannō complex.⁴⁷ According to this interpretation, then, the text creates a hierarchy where Jūzenji (from the Ni no Miya line) displaces Ōmiya (commonly considered the main Sannō line) as the highest god of the Sannō pantheon. The implication is that Jūzenji does not just embody the highest doctrine of Tendai teachings; he even towers above Sannō as a whole. And, the declaration that Jūzenji is a beautiful boy as well as a *chigo* also strengthens the association with male–male sexuality.

This particular sexual connotation rests upon the recognition that the *chigo* was an object of sexual desire in Japanese monastic environment. A formulation of this shared knowledge as part of the threefold truth is evident in the Chigo Kanjō ritual programs and their commentaries. This rite of passage, in which the *chigo* is the initiand and the central ritual agent, was practiced in the Taimitsu lineages of central and eastern Japan from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries. The ritual apotheosized the *chigo* into three divinities: the cosmic buddha Dainichi 大日, the bodhisattva Kannon 觀音, and the *kami* Sannō.

The summoning of Sannō into the ritual space of the consecration results in possession and deification of the boy as the flesh-and-blood body of Sannō. This element is highly suggestive of Jūzenji and his tendency to seize boys. One variant of the Chigo Kanjō procedures found in Jōbodai'in 成菩提院 temple in Shiga provides the following reading:

An oral transmission says: “What is the meaning of the adage ‘ichi chigo, ni Sannō 一兒二山王’ [the chigo is foremost, Sannō comes second]?”

This issue is an important secret matter. ‘Ichi chigo, ni Sannō’ stands for the *chigo* as the Three Truths of the External World 境ノ三諦, and Sannō is the Threefold Contemplation of Wisdom 智三觀. This is because the Threefold Contemplation of Wisdom originates from the Three Truths of the External World. It has been established that the *chigo* is foremost, and the Sannō deity comes second. Because the External World and Wisdom are interconnected, ‘Ichi chigo, ni Sannō’ refers to the performance [*furumai* 振舞] of the concept that the two are non-dual. This is the Three-Thousand [Realms] and the Wisdom of the Threefold Contemplation eternally abiding, complete as they are. The scholar-monks and practicing monks of the Perfect Sect [Tendai] wear a thin black robe to model their shape after Sannō. This is what constitutes learning ‘Ichi chigo, ni Sannō.’ That “the Chigo is foremost, the monk [*hōshi*] comes second” designates the performance [*furumai*] of the Ten Realms interpenetrating”. (*Chigo kanjō shiki*, Jōbodai'in variant)

The *chigo* here is none other than the threefold truth of the external world—an embodiment of the phenomenal world—while Sannō is the threefold contemplation of wisdom or the insight into the realization that the nature of reality is the threefold truth. That is, the *chigo* stands for concrete material reality, while Sannō is the absolute in epistemological terms. And yet, it is not wisdom that supersedes the physical, but the other way around—the *chigo* is primary and Sannō secondary. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, they exist in a non-dual ontological state and are one and the same. The *chigo* adage reveals that a specific performance enacts such non-duality. It is clear here, from the context of a sexual initiation practice,⁴⁸ that this performance is male–male sexual intercourse between the adult monk and the *chigo*. This is even more apparent when we consider the line “the *chigo* is foremost, the monk comes second”—the revelation that the intermingling of *chigo*/Sannō is in fact taking place between the two males and implies a hierarchy. In short, sexual penetration elicits interpenetration between external world (objects) and wisdom, *chigo* and Sannō, as well as the mutual intertwining of all realms of existence.

The [sexual] penetration also gives rise to a new mode of embodiment. The *chigo* attains the substantive body of Sannō and is effectively deified as said god. But the monk also undergoes divinization since, in this equation between *chigo* and Sannō, it is the monk who assumes the god’s form before the melting of differences takes place. It is said that “the scholar-monks and practicing monks of the Perfect Sect [Tendai] wear a thin black robe to model their shape after Sannō.” This is a reference to Jūzenji, given that he is a manifestation of Sannō that takes the shape of a young monk. Also, as demonstrated above, a discussion of the *chigo* adage implies that the *chigo* was himself Jūzenji.⁴⁹ Therefore, what we have here is a combined view of identity and hierarchy simultaneously operating on different levels and influencing the *chigo*’s own body.

The Buddho-Shintō teaching of the *chigo* adage was not limited to Sannō Shintō; it also spread in broader genres of medieval literature such as the noh play *Ōeyama* 大江山 (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries), the poetry collection *Shichijūichiban shokunin utaaawase* 七十一番職人歌合 (early sixteenth century), narrative prose such as *Benkei monogatari* 辨慶物語 (Muromachi period), and the treatise on male-male love known as *Nyakudō no Kanjinchō* 若道之勸進帳 (1482). It was also disseminated as a sacred teaching in the form of initiation documents (*kirigami*) in Tendai transmissions and other rituals in various Shintō lineages, such as Miwa-ryū.⁵⁰ With the dissemination of popular literature and liturgical material, it became widely known to broader audience that the *chigo* adage was about the heightened

sacrality of the *chigo* as Jūzenji/Sannō. But another element, that of male–male sexuality, was also retained in the adage and became dominant in such texts.⁵¹

In his own being, then, the *chigo* as Jūzenji/Sannō personifies the threefold modalities of reality while concurrently embodying all of them as an unconditioned being—by which means he became one of the most powerful *kami* in Tendai Buddhism and its Hie Shrine circles during the twelfth to sixteenth centuries. Armed with the doctrinal support of the gnosis of the threefold truth, as well as the discursive field that inscribed Jūzenji as a libidinal god and a deity that annuls moral transgressions, Tendai monks of various affiliations were able to sanctify sexuality as a religious practice. It is now clear why so much cultic attention was directed to Jūzenji—in order to have sex.

8. Conclusions

Thanks to the medieval-era work of the monk Jien, the preceptors-scholiasts of the Tendai tradition, and the chroniclers of Mt. Hiei, Jūzenji rose from his humble origins to being a supreme deity with unrivaled power and authority in the Tendai pantheon. But eventually Jūzenji was forgotten. Why?

The Jūzenji Shrine, a liminal space that young shamans who communicated portents and oracles shared with the god, was a dark sanctuary with a haunting Buddho-Shintō spirit that was perceived as an untamed sexual and violent force. But these alleged dissident characteristics were not compatible with modern sensibilities. And so on 23 April 1868, under the auspices of the Meiji Restoration, a group of Hie-affiliated priests destroyed every aspect of Buddhism at Hie Shrine. Even Hie Shrine’s own Juge Shigekuni 樹下茂国 (1822–1884), Shōgenji Kiyō 生源寺希瓊 (dates unknown), and other Hie priests—together with an organization of activists and priests from the larger central Japan region (*shin’itai* 神威隊)—wreaked havoc at the Ōmiya and Ni no Miya shrines. Altogether, they destroyed more than 1000 artifacts (Breen 2020, pp. 99–101).

The immediate result of this havoc was that Hie Shrine was institutionally separated from Enryakuji temple, and the Jūzenji subshrine was renamed Konomoto-no-Miya 樹下宮 (or Juge jinja 樹下神社, and later, Juge no miya), “the shrine under the tree.”⁵² Shrine officials then replaced Jūzenji with the deity Tamayori-hime 玉依姫 of the Kamo Shrine—based on a loose interpretation by Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801) of the *Yamashiro kuni fudoki* legend regarding the pregnancy of the goddess Tamayori-hime. In this legend, an arrow impregnated Tamayori and, according to Norinaga’s take, the arrow’s impregnation of her body signifies that she engaged sexually with Sannō’s “humming arrow”—that is, Ōyamakui, who was the original Sannō god. Therefore, heterosexual conjugation lay at the foundation of Juge no miya’s mythology. Meiji nationalists dispensed with Jūzenji’s male–male sexual origins depicted by the Rō no miko guild of shamans.⁵³

Such efforts culminated in the official enactment in 1871 of the policy of “separation of Buddhas and *kami*” (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離), which dictated that all conspicuous Buddhist elements of shrines be expunged, and that thousands of monks be defrocked. Since Jūzenji’s name connotes Buddhist practices (“Zen” signifies *dhyāna* or meditation), and he was doctrinally, ritually, and iconographically framed within Buddhism, his name was obliterated. But it is also very likely that the purists among the Shintō enthusiasts wished to remove evidence of Jūzenji specifically due to his transgressive and sexually charged character. Whatever the case may be, his banishment rose out of nationalist motives to valorize the imagined indigeneity of *kami* over the foreign counterparts of Buddhas and their pantheon.

And so, Jūzenji was stripped of his lofty status and was replaced by Tamayori-hime. Since precious few traces of the *kami* Jūzenji can be found in the modern religious landscape of Hie Shrine, we must turn to premodern textual and pictorial sources to try to make sense of this complicated entity. And with the erasure of Jūzenji, we have also lost much of the evidence pertaining to how medieval theologians developed Buddho-Shintō doctrines that glorified his identity, such as the one exhibited by the precept-substance or original enlightenment as a doctrine of *kami* embodiment, and the threefold truth as a

compression of the *chigo* adage. In reformulating Buddhist doctrinal propositions, these ideas enabled the rearrangement of the *kami* pantheon and invested it with new hierarchies. The appointment of Jūzenji as the supreme Sannō god was an important doctrinal assertion, one that both intertwined Shintō thought with Buddhist theory and brought with it the cultural reverberation of Jūzenji himself—the concept of transgression as something that should be harnessed to attain power and protection.

By forgetting Jūzenji, we also risk overlooking the immense fluidity of the Japanese pantheon in the medieval period. Jūzenji serves as a unique case in which the prominent godhead, Sannō, is demoted and overthrown by his own subordinate god in order to legitimate sexual practices between males in Tendai monasteries. This understudied deity deserves further investigation; I hope that the present study will inspire greater attention being paid to Jūzenji, and that his historical role as a libidinal god will again be recognized.

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Abbreviations

DNBZ	<i>Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho</i> 大日本佛教全書. Edited by Bussho kankōkai 仏書刊行会. 151 vols. Tokyo: Bussho kankōkai, 1912–1913.
NST	<i>Nihon shisō taikai</i> 日本思想大系. Edited by Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎 et al. 67 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1970–1982.
SNKBT	<i>Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai</i> 新日本古典文学大系. Edited by Satake Akihiro 佐竹昭広 et al. 100 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1989–2005.
SNKBZ	<i>Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū</i> 新編日本古典文学全集. 88 vols. Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1994–2002.
ST	<i>Shintō taikai</i> 神道大系. Edited by Shintō taikai hensankai 神道大系編纂会. 120 vols. Tokyo: Shintō taikai hensankai, 1977–1994.
T	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i> 大正新修大藏經. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭 et al. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932.
TSZ	<i>Tendaishū zensho</i> 天台宗全書. Edited by Tendai shūten kankōkai 天台宗典刊行会. 25 vols. Tokyo: Daiichi shobō, 1974.
ZTZ	<i>Zoku Tendaishū zensho</i> 続天台宗全書. Edited by Tendai shūten hensanjo 天台宗典編纂所. 35 vols. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1987.

Notes

- ¹ For a monumental multivolume study on the Japanese gods, the fluid pantheon, and the vast network of intersecting identities and roles they occupied, see (Faure 2016a, 2016b, 2021).
- ² On Chinese combinatory systems and the development of the Sannō deity, see (Yoshida 2009, pp. 2–29). On the Esoteric aspects of Sannō, see (Park 2020).
- ³ See T. 262, 9: p. 33b08–10; and (Tsugunari and Yuyama 2007, p. 170).
- ⁴ According to Mark Teeuwen, Ōyamakui was a “threatening and violent force” (Breen and Teeuwen 2010, p. 69).

- 5 This description is not found in the other well-known chronicle of Japanese gods, the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720). Teeuwen and Breen cite the passage from Donald Philippi's translation of the *Kojiki*: "Oyamakui, also named Yamasue-no-Ō nushi: this deity dwells on Mt. Hie in the land of Chika-tsu-Ōmi, and also at Matsunoo in Kazuno. This is the deity who holds the humming arrow." See (Philippi 1968, p. 118; Breen and Teeuwen 2010, p. 70). For the original, see *Kojiki*, pp. 96–97.
- 6 Satō (2014) points out that the so-called "contemporaneous" document, *Hie sha negi kudenshō* 日吉社彌宜口伝抄, is a forgery dated from the Bakumatsu era (1853–1868) that served the purpose of lauding the local deity of Hie and connecting it to the imperial line under the political ideology of *shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離 ("separation of Buddhism and Shintō"). This argument harkens back to the work of Fukui (1990). On this point, see also (Mizukami 2017, p. 228).
- 7 Jūzenji's identification as a boy or a young monk can be traced to the many texts written by the literatus Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房 (1041–1111) that concern the rituals, legends, and beliefs of Hie Shrine, such as *Fusō meigetsushū* 扶桑明月集. For the specific origins of his image as a boy, see (Yamamoto 2003, pp. 42–64).
- 8 For the many literary descriptions of *chigo* as objects of male-male love in literature, see (Schmidt-Hori 2021). For discussions of moral treatises and pedagogical material involving *chigo* in the context of male-male sexual relations, see (Porath 2015; Porath 2017). For historical and socio-religious discussions of such relations, see (Hosokawa [1996] 2000; Tsuchiya 2001; Tanaka [1997] 2004).
- 9 On Jūzenji as the manifestation of Jizō, see *Kongō himitsu Sannō denju daiji* 金剛秘密山王伝授大事 by Chūjin 中尋 (1065–1138). The work is also cited in (Yamamoto 1984, p. 35). There is extensive literature on the *honji suiijaku* paradigm and the combinatory/amalgamative character of the Japanese pantheon, with recent publications challenging the binary structure of the relationship between gods and buddhas. See (Murayama 1957; Matsunaga 1969; Teeuwen and Rambelli 2003; Dolce and Tadashi 2013).
- 10 On Oto Gohō see (Faure 2021, pp. 199–205).
- 11 The Tendai school had expanded its influence on politics through appointing chaplain-meditation masters. While there is no established theory on why and how the deity of Mt. Hiei was named after this courtly rank, it is safe to assume that, because the post was regularly occupied by Tendai masters, Jūzenji, who carried an identical title, pointed to the figures who occupied this role—and as a result was often imagined in the form of a Tendai monk. This may be the most logical explanation as to why the medieval god emanated in human form.
- 12 *Chigyō* 智行, the wisdom of the six *pāramitās* ("perfections of wisdom") and their related practices.
- 13 成仲説云、中古横川ノ香積寺十人供僧中ニ。一人智行兼備高德人在。十禪師中ノ其一人。現身ニ山王ト語言ヲ申通スル人、荒人神ト成給ヘリ。初十禪師ト申ス也。
- 14 *Negi* 彌宜 is a second-in-rank priest of a *kami* shrine.
- 15 Yamamoto Hiroko (Yamamoto 1984, pp. 26–27) argues that this individual was Enshū 延秀, described as one of the governmental meditation masters in the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 (797).
- 16 為慈悲質直之者施利益。是名十禪師。為熾惡邪欲之者、成天怪。是名鹿乱神。(Sanke *yōryakki*, p. 38).
- 17 As the poem of the *Ryōjin hishō* goes, "Aren't the Sannō gods of the Eastern [slope] terrifying? Marōdō, Ni no miya, Gyōji, Taka no miko, Jūzenji, Yamaosa, Isuruki, San no miya, and at the peak, Hachiōji, is especially terrifying." 東の山王恐ろしや、二宮客人の行事の高の王子、十禪師山長石動の三宮、峯には八王子ぞ恐ろしき。See poem 243 of *Ryōjin hishō*, p. 71.
- 18 For example, see *Heike Monogatari*, pp. 84–87. For English, see (McCullough 1988, pp. 52–54).
- 19 See *Heike Monogatari*, pp. 100–1. In English, (McCullough 1988, p. 60).
- 20 Bernard Faure claims that, ultimately, the positive side of Jūzenji prevailed over the negative one, but this was not a smooth process. (Faure 2021, pp. 205–18).
- 21 On this point, see (Koyama 2003).
- 22 只所詮一向可奉念吾十禪師。See (Satō 1984, p. 50; Brown and Ishida 1979, pp. 445–46). Abe Yasurō claims that Sannō Shingū was in fact the newly enshrined Jūzenji spirit that was invited into Yoshimizu at Shōren'in, an important Tendai *monzeki* or imperial temple (Abe 1998, p. 231).
- 23 南無山王十禪師権現、老与病一相ヒ浸ス争カ猶帯妄執乎、全与悪共並ラフ、何亦忘ニ道理哉、今ノ参詣有夢ノ告而既得開示悟入之魚兔。
- 24 是以我国本ヨリ崇ニ神明。近年殊甚訂。... 七社権現。拳一吋世皆帰山王。此ノ中尤勝ハ十禪師ノ宮也。(Tenpōrin-shō, p. 289).
- 25 尋ニ日域明神三千余座。其内専信敬則十禪師也。(Tenpōrin-shō, p. 293).
- 26 十禪師権現トハ、日本無双ノ靈社、天下第一ノ明神ナリト云々。See *Gonshinshō*, p. 104.
- 27 問。十禪師権現ハ天下第一ノ明神ト云うべきや。答え。天下第一ノ明神ト積也答えるべし。答え、天下第一三冥道也ト尺也答えるべし。明神ト積するなり答えるべし。これにつき天神地祇国家を守り、宗廟社稷、神威を振るう。なにぞ十禪師権現を以て、天下第一と称すべき。答え、云々。十禪師権現はすべまごのみこと、天の宮にして、天照大神譲り受けを豊芦原の中津国に下り三重の神祇をもつて、四海を統領せしより、以来百皇の宗廟、諸神の根源なるが故に天下第一と称する也。諸神導道は吾が神治世の行化を助けんがために、隨類の導道を施す也と答えるべし。In *Chigo tsugai rongi*, Eizan bunko archive, unpublished manuscript. I have rendered the original Sino-Japanese into *yomikudashi* (breakdown of literary Chinese into Japanese sentences).

- 28 日吉十禪師權現、兒ト変シ給テ、慈鎮和尚へ御通ひ被レ成候。其間ノさいあひ乃物を、比叡山の谷へ捨をかせられ候。それか則、子ト成申候。然レハ、十禪師權現ノ社ヨリ大行事權現ノ社迄、神之御通ひ被レ成候。其間に昔ハ廊下御座つる。然レハ、其谷ナル子ヲ、十禪師權現之御取上被レ成、廊下ニヲカセラレ候而、大行事權現へ毎日參候御神供を、食物ニアテカヒ被レ成候(中略) 則、廊下ニ生立ニよつて、廊ノ御子ト申候。
- 29 Bernard Faure claims that the term *saiiai no mono* “seems to refer to semen” (Faure 1998, p. 255). Abe Yasurō also suggests that the said substance was semen. See (Abe 1998, p. 228), and note 17 on p. 372. At the same time, Abe provides a different reading for *saiiai* (“felicitous”) by replacing the phonetic Japanese syllables with the Chinese logographic compound *saiiai* 最愛, which together with *no mono*, may be translated as “the most beloved thing”, or alternatively, “the substance of the greatest love.” The argument for the semen reading seems to have been made originally by Yamamoto Hajime (Yamamoto 1995, p. 23). However, John Breen and Mark Teeuwen provide a different interpretation of *mono*: “According to legend, ‘spirits of love’ (*saiiai no mono*) were born from their sexual encounters.” The *mono* here does not refer to a thing or a substance, but rather to spiritual beings. See (Breen and Teeuwen 2010, p. 81).
- 30 慈鎮和尚は、あまり荒淫に御座候故ニ、山上之住居も難レ成おほしめし、離山の御志もましますゆへに、山王おしみ給て、永ク山にとめん為に、十禪師權現、兒とげんし、毎夜々、猿の肩に乗り、大乘院ニ通ひ、慈鎮之御心にしたかい給ふ。ある時、慈鎮、戸を開てね入給ふ。Translated to English by Bernard Faure, with my revisions. See Faure’s discussion in (Faure 1998, pp. 255–58; Abe 1998, pp. 228–32).
- 31 帰命頂礼十禪師、此土清浄寂光土、行住座臥四威儀、断除一切煩惱焰。See Figure 1 and also (Abe 1998, p. 232).
- 32 On the *kai kanjō*, see (Groner 2010). For the argument that the *kai kanjō* was primarily an attempt to create an exoteric consecration, see (Groner 2022).
- 33 奉勸請山王權現者、円宗擁護誓深。(Funata 2011, p. 322).
- 34 故観心山王者以十禪師為本習由。今非山王、日本国中大小神祇皆以十禪師為總体也、故神道約者十禪師主給也。
- 35 For the iconographic similarities between Shōtoku Taishi and Jūzenji, see (Tsuda 1992).
- 36 Bernard Faure has explained the seed syllables and their various meanings in this painting: “The six letters above symbolize the six upper shrines of Hie (Jūzenji’s shrine being the seventh), the seven on the left the seven middle shrines, the seven on the right the seven lower shrines. The last three letters may symbolize the ternary nature of the Sannō deity. In other words, the painting is a Sannō mandara centered on Jūzenji.” (Faure 2021, p. 212)
- 37 先就垂迹御名申者、十者十界無欠減之義也。無欠減者円満義也。円者頓義、頓者十界皆仏界義也。禪者止義也。止者遮惡持善義也。攝律儀攝善法戒也。師者戒師也。戒師引導一切衆生、即饒益有情戒也。所謂木叉為師云此心也。若爾者十禪師者円頓戒師也。惣者三聚浄戒体、別者利衆生戒体也。御名言付願給也。
- 38 See for example Eisai’s 栄西 *Kōzen gokoku ron* 興禪護国論 (T. 2543), his Tendai tract *Endonsanju isshin kai* 円頓三聚一心戒 (Taga 1961), and the *hongaku* inspired treatise *Shinnyo kan* 真如觀 (Shinnyo kan 1973; Stone 1999).
- 39 問。付山王ニ一兒二山王ト云事如何。答。山門ノ記録説日。高祖大師最初御登山ノ之時。二人化人ニ値給フ。先ハ現天童。次山王影向シ給。故ニ一兒二山王ト云也。又云。十禪師ノ寶殿ノ内ニ童子形御座其義也云云因ミ物語ニ云。See T. 2410, 76: p. 518b20–24.
- 40 淨利結界章日、山家御釋。一兒事。延曆四年歲次乙丑夷則朔丙寅十七日壬午。忽於二神宮寺院一始登叡山高峯乃至二十四日。北(カタ)巒(ラン)林ヲ行ハ、一童ニ逢リ。最澄問日。童子何人。童子答日。我是天地經緯ノ靈童。衆生本命ノ同生神也。我則有二三名一。一名二同生天ト一。一切衆ノ同生天ノ故。二名二遊行神一。衆生本命ノ遊行神ナル故ニ。三名十禪師一。十方衆生ニ與二禪悅食一。當來ニ結縁能化師ナル故ニ。則唱二一偈一言。一稱二名號一者。功德如二虚空。我誓二無盡願。所願成圓滿已上。
- 41 For an extended discussion on *kushōjin*, see (Faure 2006, 2014, 2015).
- 42 Indeed, as can be seen in the doctrinal elaborations within medieval astral worship, there were amalgamative attempts to intertwine Hachioji (a god and also the small mountain where parts of Hie Shrine are located, often associated with Jūzenji) with the astral deity Kōjin. This combinatory attempt probably resulted in Jūzenji being assigned the identity of a “companion god”, since both belong to the same Higashi Hongū lineage. Another reason for this association of Jūzenji was the often connection made between the two acolytes that flank Jizō, considered the original ground of Jūzenji in Sannō faith, and the two companion gods that perch on a person’s shoulders. Needless to say, the imagery of childhood is quite conspicuous in this web of association and is undoubtedly informed by the cult of sacred children (*dōji shinkō*) (Yamamoto 1998).
- 43 本迹相即集日 恵心御釋 引玄義日。本者謂本即是一究竟道。迹者除其餘諸法実相。種種皆名爲迹文。知地藏者。地謂一実智地。藏謂如來祕要之藏也。是以吾等久遠已來。常住此地、常在此藏。未曾暫廢法華妙行。... 誠知。開會実相之一地。如來祕要之大藏也。開會実相之一地。如來祕要之大藏也。凡十謂假諦名之爲十。禪謂空諦名之爲禪。師者中道。名之爲師。故名十禪師。
- 44 See (Nichō *go-shō kenmon* 1973, pp. 208–9). The text adds that this designation of Sannō was the same as the one given to “the inherent Śākyamuni” that stood in the stupa of Many Jewels, the Buddha that achieved enlightenment since inconceivable time in the *Lotus sutra*. Saichō realized that Sannō was a manifested Buddha that appeared before him since he recites a vow that was borrowed from the twenty-first chapter of the *Lotus sutra* recognizing this: “The buddhas, world-inspirers, abiding in their great transcendent powers, manifest this immeasurable power in order to gladden sentient beings.” 諸佛救世者 住於大神通 爲悅衆生 故 現無量神力。See T. 262, 9: p. 52a29–52b01; (Tsugunari and Yuyama 2007, p. 273).

- 45 A passage attributed to the text *Sanbō bugyōki* 三寶輔行記 adopts a famous variation of the *chigo* adage wherein Saichō travels by boat on his way back from Tang China. This version describes not only the supernatural revelation of Sannō as a divine child—and thereby the implication that the god is Jūzenji—but also Saichō’s encounter with the god as the embodied presence of the “Threefold truth.”
- 46 十禪師ノ内陣ニ端巖童子御座ス事也ト云々。See (Makino 2009, pp. 396–97).
- 47 “When the fundamental master [Saichō] climbed for the first time on the mountain, he first met a *chigo*, then Sannō. ‘First a *chigo*’ means Jūzenji, ‘then Sannō’ means Ōmiya Gongen. This passage deals with the ‘great event’ of the Chronicles, the arcana of the *kanjō*, and I cannot say more.” Translated by (Bernard Faure 1998, p. 254 n9). For the Japanese: 根本大師、最初御登山時、一兒二山王値玉フ。先ノ一兒ト申スハ十禪師、後の二山王ト申スハ大宮権現ノ御事也。於此一段、記録最極大事、濯頂深秘ナルガ故ニ、不能申述ルニ。(Gonshinshō 巖神鈔, p. 101). This reference to a *kanjō* likely alludes to the sexual initiation *chigo kanjō*, discussed below. Another medieval oral transmission, which is attributed to the priest Sōō 相応 (831–918), explains similarly that the *chigo adage* refers to the first appearance of the god in the boyish form of Jūzenji, and the second appearance being Sannō. (Komine 1988, p. 227).
- 48 The non-dual “performance” in this text is a reference to the sexual act that takes place between the *chigo* and the monk, for two obvious reasons. First, earlier parts and other variants of the Chigo Kanjō ritual already explain in careful detail the meaning of common gestures and ritual actions such as mudras, mantras, and movements along mandalized spaces, together with the transformative soteriological states that they bring about. Therefore, this section has no further need to explain these types of ritual actions; and second, the Chigo Kanjō ritual manuals and commentaries are suffused with explicit exhortations to commit sexual acts (*okasu* 犯す) which are important to the ritual. The burning question is the timing of the sex. The *kanjō* procedures warn that monks must consecrate a *chigo* before having sexual acts with him, and the commentaries suggest that the chosen *chigo* for the ritual were those with whom monks were infatuated or already found in a romantic/sexual relationship. However, the commentaries also show clearly that the goal of the ritual was to normalize sexual acts that took place later, on an ongoing basis. This could either mean that the sexual act happened right after consecration in the ritual space, or much later in private quarters. The timing that emerges from this information is unclear. Therefore, I uphold that sexual acts might have taken place before, during, or after the ritual, and that accordingly, the consecration should be labeled a “sexual initiation.” For a more extensive discussion, see (Porath 2019, 2022; Tsuji 2021).
- 49 See also note 47 above which includes a primary source that directly alludes to the *chigo* adage, Jūzenji, and a certain secret *kanjō*.
- 50 See (Kobayashi 2009, p. 71); (*Shichijūichiban shokunin utawase* 1993, p. 139); (*Benkei monogatari* 1990, p. 207); and (Porath 2015, p. 260). For an example of the *chigo* adage in a Miwa lineage transmission, see the entry “ware no yama ni ‘ichi chigo, ni Sannō’ no koto 我山一兒二山王事” in (*Nihongi Miwa-ryū* 1999, p. 483).
- 51 A contrast to the view according to which the *chigo* adage points to sexual intimacy with *chigo* can be found in the fourteenth-century *Sanmon hijiri no ki* 山門聖之記. The text reads that the phrase “‘the *chigo* is foremost, the Sannō god comes second’ is not about society constantly admiring *chigo*. [Rather,] there is a profound secret” (以一兒二山王申事ハ世常ニ兒ヲ賞翫セン為ニ非ス。甚深ノ秘事有リ。). This statement constitutes a denial of the erotic significance of the term, and instead holds that there is a religious aspect undergirding it. The subsequent lines discuss Sannō as the protector deity of the Tendai school. *Sanmon hijiri no ki* 山門聖之記, p. 191.
- 52 Though Meiji politicians wished to erase the identity of the shrine, this appellation was not an invention of the Meiji regime and still preserves Buddhist nuances. During medieval times, the Buddhist priests that managed Jūzenji shrine were called *juge sō* 樹下僧, “the monks under the tree.” This is because medieval Tendai Buddhism and the Sannō Shintō cult conceptualized Mt. Hiei as Vulture Peak, where the Buddha carried his sermon of the *Lotus Sutra*; while the foot of the mountain, the location of Jūzenji shrine, was the realm under the bodhi tree, where Sakyamuni attained his awakening. See for example poem 417 from *Ryōjin Hishō*: 大宮靈鷲山、東の麓は菩提樹下とか、両所三所は釈迦薬師、さては応じは観世音。(Ryōjin Hishō, p. 297). The *Juge* appellation also became the family name of Jūzenji shrine’s hereditary priesthood.
- 53 See (Breen 2020, pp. 101–4). Breen’s excellent discussion explores the manner in which Ōyamakui was re-enshrined in Hie Shrine during the late nineteenth century rather than the reasons for which Jūzenji was eliminated.

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