The Shôkyû version of the *Kitano Tenjin engi emaki*:
A brief introduction to its content and function

Sara L. Sumpter
(University of Pittsburgh)

Abstract: *This article examines the political and social atmosphere surrounding the production of the thirteenth-century hand scroll* Kitano Tenjin engi emaki *(Illustrated Legends of the Kitano Shrine), which depicts the life, death and posthumous revenge of the ninth-century courtier Sugawara no Michizane. The article combines an analysis of the content and religious iconography of the scroll, a study of early Japanese beliefs in angry spirits of the dead, and a narration of the actual life of Michizane in an attempt to produce a sketch of the rituals and superstitions of Heian and early Kamakura period Japanese society, and to suggest possible functions of the hand scroll that complement them.*

The hand scroll sets collectively known as the *Kitano Tenjin engi emaki* (Illustrated Legends of the Kitano Shrine) each tell the story of the life and death of the ninth-century courtier and poet, Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), and of the posthumous revenge undertaken by his vengeful spirit (*onryô*). According to the scrolls, Michizane was falsely accused of treason by rivals at the Heian court who were jealous of his astronomical rise to power. He was exiled to Dazaifu on the island of Kyushu in 901 and died there two years later in despair. His spirit persisted in seeking retribution against his enemies and in reclaiming his position and honours. He is said to have stalked his numerous rivals in the form of the thunder god (*raijin*) before ultimately revealing to a frightened court, through a series of intermediaries, the means of his pacification: deification and worship at the Kitano Shrine in Kyoto.[1]

Today the *Kitano Tenjin engi emaki* (hereafter referred to as the *Tenjin* scrolls) number more than thirty extant examples, ranging in date from the early thirteenth century to the nineteenth century.[2] Of these, the Shôkyû version (*Shôkyûbon*), which is generally considered the oldest with an accepted production date of 1219, will serve as the focus of my analysis.[3] In this article, I will examine the use of Buddhist iconography in the

Tenjin scrolls, as well as the political and social atmosphere in the period leading up to their earliest production. Following a discussion of the content and imagery of the Shôkyû version of the *Tenjin* scrolls, I will consider how they may have functioned in the early thirteenth century.

Content of the scrolls

The Shôkyû version is thought to be the earliest of the extant versions of the *Tenjin* scrolls. The scrolls are typically divided into 31 vignettes that tell the story of the life and death of Sugawara no Michizane. The first thirteen episodes cover his life from his miraculous appearance in the household of Sugawara no Koreyoshi as a child of six to his death in exile at the age of 59. The next nine episodes deal with his posthumous revenge and the revelations stemming from the trip of the priest Nichizô (Dôken) through the afterworld. The final nine episodes illustrate the placation of Michizane with the building of the Kitano Shrine, as well as his role as a guardian deity after the placation is successful.

The Shôkyû version is unique among the various sets of *Tenjin* scrolls in several respects. First, it is made up of nine scrolls, rather than three or six as is more common. Second, at 52 cm in breadth, it is much larger than the other examples. Third, the Shôkyû version diverges from the standard narration of Nichizô's trip to the afterworld. Generally, the depiction of Nichizô's trip to the afterworld features various meetings with heavenly deities as well as a visit to hell where he meets Emperor Daigo (who was punished in the afterlife for his involvement in Michizane's downfall) and learns from him how to pacify Michizane's vengeful spirit. Instead, the Shôkyû version depicts the eight major hells and six paths of Buddhist reincarnation, and these illustrations take up the entirety of the seventh and eighth scrolls. Finally, the scroll is unfinished; the drawings for the final nine episodes of Nichizô's trip are collected on the ninth scroll, but are unfinished or possibly preparatory.[4] Accompanying texts that would explain the vibrant depictions of torment and sufferings in the Buddhist hells and paths of reincarnation were never included, with only blocks of space left for that purpose.[5]

Buddhist iconography and the depiction of Michizane

The Shôkyû and other versions of the *Tenjin* scrolls make use of a number of Buddhist iconographic elements. Miyeko Murase, in her analysis of the *Tenjin* scrolls, notes the various Buddhist stylistic elements that appear throughout. She points out the presence of monstrous sea creatures that often appear in Buddhist paintings. Similar figures can be found in the late twelfth-century *Heike nôkyô* (Heike Sutra) and were popular through the early medieval period, appearing in such works as the *Tôsei eden* (Illustrated History of [Priest Ganjin's] Eastern Journeys) of 1298 and the fourteenth-century *Shôtoku Taishi eden* (Illustrated Biography of Crown Prince Shôtoku). Murase also notes the depiction in the 'Competition between Michizane and Son'i' episode of a lotus pond, which is a symbol with obvious Buddhist overtones.[6] Scenes in the Shôkyû version make use of specific iconographic images associated with supernatural ability. The story of Michizane's early life and ascendancy is patterned on the tales of the life of the historical Buddha that have been used throughout the history of Japanese art to signify supernatural ability associated with divinity.

One of the first stories to utilise the Buddha narrative is the tale of the life of the Crown Prince Shôtoku (573–621), who was a member of the Soga family. He acted as regent for his aunt, the Empress Suiko (592–628), during a foundational period of Japan's history and was actively involved in the reforms of religion and political structure that were a prominent part of the era.[7] Over the years Shôtoku has attained status as one of Japan's great historical figures and has even been called Japan's 'first great hero' by some scholars who have observed the phenomenon of his posthumous veneration.[8] After his death he came to be considered an avatar of Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, and was the subject of widespread cultic activities, particularly at Hôryûji and Shitennôji in present-day Nara and Osaka.[9]

Shôtoku's deification as an avatar of Kannon, like Michizane's later deification, was partly achieved by the propagation of a narrative about his life that drew largely from the life story of the historical Buddha. The biography that most Shôtoku cultic practices drew from was a text thought to have been compiled in the early tenth century, *Shôtoku*

Taishi denryaku (Abbreviated Biography of Crown Prince Shôtoku).[10] It included a number of anecdotes that parallel that of the historical Buddha, such as the divine birth of Shôtoku, which was foretold to his mother through the dream of a golden-skinned monk. The historical Buddha's mother, Queen Maya, also conceived her child after an auspicious dream. In a fourteenth-century version of the *Shôtoku Taishi eden*, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, scenes illustrating the prince's birth, childhood and youth dominate the first of the two hanging scrolls that narrate his life. They illustrate legendary stories that emphasise Shôtoku's extraordinary, super-human talents such as his devotion to Buddhism from infancy and his childhood triumph in battle against a rival clan that opposed the adoption of Buddhism.

Like Shôtoku, Michizane is depicted in the *Tenjin* scrolls as having a divine origin. However instead of a divine birth, Michizane miraculously appears one day in his 'father's' garden. This mode of appearance was perhaps intended to emphasise the lesser status of the Sugawara family. Although of the courtier class, they were a family of little consequence in the Heian court before Michizane's phenomenal rise to power. Regardless of the intention, the episode illustrating the appearance of Michizane draws from divine child (*chigo daishi*) imagery.[11] The divine child is a common figure in many religions, and in the Buddhist tradition it was first associated with the historical Buddha. According to tradition, immediately following his birth the infant Buddha took a step in each direction and announced that he was in his final incarnation. Images of the historical Buddha as a preternaturally aware baby, known as *tanjôbutsu* (the born Buddha) were common in Japan in the seventh and eighth centuries.[12]

The use of a divine child motif is not the only thing in the *Tenjin* scrolls that distinguishes Michizane as a potentially supernatural being. The elements in the story of Michizane's life also mark him with supernatural physical and mental abilities. His early life is shown in the *Tenjin* scrolls to be a series of high points in which he composes poetry and comments on sutras as a youth and shows off his athletic ability in contests as a young man. Since it is largely devoid of distinction, Michizane's middle age is artfully omitted in favour of more exciting events from his life, such as his fiftieth birthday celebration and

his promotion to the office of Minister of the Right (*udaijin*). Similarly, in the illustrated biographies of Shôtoku only the highlights that allude to his divine character are included.[13] In the case of the *Tenjin* scrolls, the emphasis on Michizane's extraordinary abilities probably serves two purposes: first, to reinforce the idea of him as a semi-divine figure, and second, to contrast sharply with his sudden downfall.

Further indicative of Michizane's semi-divinity is the depiction of his vengeful spirit as a thunder god. In the text of the Shôkyû version of the *Tenjin* scrolls, Michizane's vengeful spirit is referred to in five crucial episodes detailing his posthumous revenge. These are: the magical competition between Michizane and the Tendai abbot Son'i; the first attack on the palace; the flooding of the capital; the death of Fujiwara no Tokihira; and the second attack on the palace. In the episode of competition, Michizane's spirit is referred to as 'the honoured dead Sugawara minister' (*Kan shôjô no kôgyo*). In the episode of the first attack, he is referred to euphemistically as a natural phenomenon: 'the thunder thundered' (*raiden hekireki shite*). In the episode of the flooding of the capital, he is referred to as Tenjin. In the episode of the death of Michizane's great rival, Fujiwara no Tokihira, Michizane is once more referred to as 'the Sugawara minister'. In the episode of the second attack on the palace, he is referred to as both 'the thunder god' (*hekireki kami*) and as the deity Tenman Daijizai Tenjin – the full name of Michizane's deified spirit, whose abbreviation is Tenjin.[14]

The illustrations of the *Tenjin* scrolls do not always follow the text explicitly. This is most noticeable in the episode of the first attack on the palace. Though the incident is described as a thunderstorm and not an action specifically attributed to the thunder god or Michizane, a thunder god figure appears as a bright red, stocky humanoid figure, with an animal-like and demonic face, bulging muscles, gaping maw and pointed horns, riding starkly black clouds that are shot through with gold lightning and clutching two black drumsticks to strike the circular array of flat drums that surround him like a halo. A number of reasons may explain this. The substitution of the thunder god figure for a general storm scene could have been done for the purposes of cohesion. It may also indicate that the extreme and damaging storms attributed to Michizane in the first half of

the tenth century continued to occupy the consciousness of the Japanese people well after their occurrence.

Pacification of the dead in early Japan

From their earliest recorded history, the Japanese have lived in mortal dread of the deceased. In Japan's oldest book, the *Kojiki* (A Record of Ancient Matters) of 712, the creator deity, Izanagi, travels to the underworld seeking his beloved wife, Izanami, who had died in childbirth. Though he meets her in darkness and is instructed not to look upon her, he ignores this command and strikes a light. Upon seeing the horrifying corpse-like form Izanami has assumed, Izanagi flees in terror and must defend himself from the anger of his wife, who pursues him to the borders of the underworld in search of vengeance for his transgression.[15] Much like the mythical Izanagi, the Japanese have long sought to defend themselves from the attacks of angry spirits and volatile gods, who although different in origin were similar in function. The method of dealing with these dangerous spirits that ultimately developed was known as *goryô-e* (spirit ceremony). The first recorded *goryô-e*, noted in the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* (Authentic Account of Three Generations in Japan), took place in 863, but its roots most likely lie in Japan's prehistoric cultic activities.[16]

It is not clear at what point in Japanese prehistory *goryô-e* activities began to be practised. Neil McMullin has tied them to the early cultic activities that were related to the prevention and cessation of plagues and natural disasters, and which were being practised at least as early as the Nara period (710–84) if not earlier.[17] The populace believed that dangerous deities and vengeful spirits of the dead were capable of causing such calamities as droughts, floods and epidemics. Early *goryô-e* attempted to placate them through ritual song and dance, animal sacrifice, and various offerings of food, wine, and other agricultural products.[18] These and other spirit-centric practices, ultimately came to be subsumed under the title of Shinto – a conglomeration of beliefs of non-Buddhist origin that included both continental and Indigenous traditions whose origins and development are largely unknown to us.[19]

Whether *goryô-e* activities first appeared among the upper or lower classes of Japanese society is a matter of debate. By the Heian period (794–1185) commoners were in control of the practice and aristocrats felt the need for a reformulation of *goryô-e* cultic practices. With *goryô-e* proliferating in response to any national crisis, whether of natural or social origins, and possibly inspiring hysteria and lawlessness, judgment of the political elite was probably implied in the practice.[20] In order to contain that threat to political stability, the upper echelons asserted their control through the official pacification of those specific angry spirits who had once lived in the aristocratic world, thereby placing the ability to mediate crisis back within the hands of the upper class.

The *goryô-e* of 863 represents a move by the ruling class to reassert their power over what had become a tool of political critique on the part of the masses, and this intent can be seen clearly in its organisation. Though it borrowed heavily from the folk practices of everyday *goryô-e* and involved the participation of the common folk, it was an event controlled by the government. It took place at the Imperial Shinsen'en gardens, and placated the restless souls of six aristocrats: Fujiwara no Hirotsugu; Emperor Sudô; Prince Iyo; Fujiwara no Yoshiko; Tachibana no Hayanari; and Bunya no Miyatamaro. These aristocrats died after being caught up in political intrigue and, by virtue of their selection, may well have been powerful cult heroes.[21]

Perhaps the most feared of the six was Prince Sawara (740–785), the man who would posthumously become known as Emperor Sudô. Sawara was a crown prince and the younger brother of Emperor Kanmu (737–806). In 785, after the move of the capital from the city of Nara to Nagaoka the previous year, Sawara was implicated in the assassination of Fujiwara no Tanetsugu, a rival courtier. Shortly after the death of Tanetsugu, Sawara was exiled to Awaji but died in transit.[22] After his death, his restless spirit was also implicated in the deaths of farmers in Awaji and in the death of Emperor Kanmu's wife. In 800, in response to the threat posed by his spirit, Sawara was posthumously promoted to the status of emperor and henceforth known as Sudô.[23] Sixty years after that concession, he was apparently still feared enough by the populace to require enshrinement at the Shinsen'en.

The placation of these six figures occurred after a devastating epidemic had caused the deaths of numerous peasants and resulted in heavily decimated crops. [24] The government calmed the populace and restored order by identifying Sawara and his spirit companions (each an aristocratic victim of political intrigue) as the cause of the disturbance, and by conducting an official placation. In this case, the individuals placated at the Shinsen'en were subsumed under a function similar to the devastating plague-bearing deities of the past. These six spirits, who were former enemies, were transformed through the act of placation into protective figures in a trend that reflected the expanding influence of Buddhism in later centuries. No longer individual, uncontrollable or vengeful, they remained honoured spirits whose role was aligned with the preservation of the political and social order, as long as they were appropriately pacified. After his death, Michizane would also find himself enshrined at the Shinsen'en for largely the same reasons, and he too would participate in the process of transforming dangerous spirits/gods into benevolent guardians.

Sugawara no Michizane in life and death

Sugawara no Michizane was born in 845, the son of a low-ranking scholar–aristocrat, Sugawara no Koreyoshi (812–880). Though from a lesser family, Michizane rose through the ranks of the Heian aristocracy and eventually occupied one of the most illustrious positions in the Heian government, that of Minister of the Right (*udaijin*). His political ascendancy attracted the ire of Fujiwara no Tokihira (870–909), the Minister of the Left (*sadaijin*), who conspired with other members of the court to have him demoted and exiled. In 901 Emperor Daigo, convinced that Michizane had plotted to bring about his abdication, forced Michizane to leave the capital and assume a supernumerary governorship in Kyushu. Michizane died there two years later.[25]

After his death, a number of calamities struck the capital and the men who had conspired against him began to die. Tokihira, for example, died in an epidemic only six years after Michizane's death. Debilitating floods, famines and fires occurred as well. It is not clear how soon these incidents were attributed to the wrath of Michizane's spirit. The *Fusô ryakki* (An Abbreviated Account of Japan), written by the monk Kôen in the

twelfth century, asserts that Michizane was immediately known to be the culprit.[26] Other records do not generally mention him in connection with the disasters. The *Nihon kiryaku* (Abbreviated Chronicles of Japan) notes that Michizane was specifically referred to as having been responsible for the death of Emperor Daigo's son in 923.[27] However the author and date of this chronicle, which covers Japanese history from earliest times to the year 1036, are unknown. In 923, Michizane's titles and rank were restored to him by imperial edict, and the desire to calm his anger was the stated reason for such action.[28] This suggested that within at least twenty years, Michizane came to be feared, like Prince Sawara, as a disease-causing deity, and initially he was similarly pacified with the official restoration of titles and enshrinement at the Shinsen'en.[29]

The pacification of Michizane's spirit clearly required far more complicated measures than a simple enshrinement at the Shinsen'en. These additional measures were perhaps due the nature of political critique implied in Michizane's widespread popularity among the lower classes. It may also be explained by the apparent guilt felt by the Fujiwara clan over the involvement of their clansman, Tokihira, in Michizane's exile and death.[30]

As already noted, the Heian court appears to have begun to attribute a number of calamities and untimely deaths to the curse of Michizane by the year 923. Michizane's involvement in those calamities supposedly became explicitly known to the court in the year 941, with the report of Dôken, a mountain ascetic (*yamabushi*). Dôken, who came to be known by the name Nichizô, was the son of Miyoshi no Kiyoyuki (847–918), a man who had conspired with Tokihira against Michizane and played a key role in his downfall.[31] According to two ancient records, Dôken passed away after meditating and fasting in a cave for 21 days. There he met with a number of deities in heaven and hell.[32] One of those was Michizane – met by Dôken in heaven along with Śākyamuni – in the guise of a lesser deity. Michizane admitted his involvement in the various disasters that struck the capital after his death, but identified himself not as the thunder god but as the master of the thunder god, and insisted that he would not rest until he was revered as a Buddha. When Dôken was resurrected, thirteen days later, he

described his experiences to the court.[33] As a son of one of Michizane's most adamant rivals, it is easy to view Dôken's personal motivation in the light of fear. By 941 a number of Tokihira's descendents had died prematurely.[34] The sons of Kiyoyuki undoubtedly wished to avoid a similar fate.

Dôken's report to the court was by no means the only way by which Michizane's wishes were made known to the living. One year later, in 942, Michizane's desire for reverence was supposedly revealed to a woman named Tajihi no Ayako, although in this case his desires were slightly different. In this oracle, Michizane reported wanting to be enshrined at Kitano and claimed to now be known as Tenjin. Though Ayako had no money for this, she built a small shrine to him near her home in the capital and by 945 it was attracting large groups of pilgrims.[35]

These two separate responses to Michizane reveal a clear hybridism in Japanese religious practice at this time; Dôken's account places Michizane in a Buddhist tradition while Ayako's sets him firmly within a Shinto one. In Dôken's report to the court, Michizane is represented as a figure that resides in a Buddhist heaven, with control over the Buddhist thunder god, and who desires to become a Buddha. In Ayako's account, Michizane has evolved from non-Buddhist beliefs in pestilence-causing deities, has blended with more nondescript Shinto deities known as *tenjin* (heavenly deities), and seeks the adoration of the masses. This fledgling hybridity is an example of the religious trends that would ultimately lead to what Toshio Kuroda has called the *kenmitsu taisei* (exoteric–esoteric system), a system under which spirit pacification practices were collected and integrated into wider Buddhist activities.[36]

Potential functions of the *Tenjin* scrolls

Michizane was a figure adapted from a Shinto *tenjin* who displayed the calamity-causing powers of earlier pestilence-bearing deities. Yet in the scrolls he is represented in the form of the thunder god who had become associated with the primarily esoteric Buddhist figure of the thousand-armed Kannon. Additionally, the narrative of the scrolls evinces a slant specifically in favour of the Tendai sect, a branch of esoteric Buddhism.

This is most evident in the episode of the magical competition that occurs between Michizane's angry spirit and Son'i. It takes its narrative style from other tales of magical competitions between Buddhists and non-believers, such as the story of the magical competition between Raudrāksha and Śariputra.[37] Michizane and Son'i duel with their powers and Son'i – through his Tendai strength – defeats Michizane in the contest of wills.[38] This emphasis on the power of Tendai Buddhism suggests that the scrolls may have been didactic.

Beginning by at least the twelfth century, painted scrolls were used to promote the Buddhist faith by performances known as *etoki* (picture explaining). Performances of picture scrolls took place in private homes, temples and public spaces like marketplaces and roadsides. A variety of scrolls and paintings in other formats were performed and not all were of the Buddhist type as many *etoki* were secular performances.[39] It has been suggested that the *Tenjin* scrolls were part of didactic performances, but only in the context of recitation – not of viewing.[40] Nevertheless, this didactic demand may be yet another reason for the widespread copying of the *Tenjin* scrolls.[41] Ikumi Kaminishi has studied the *etoki* phenomenon in great detail. Though her study mainly focuses on hanging scrolls and wall paintings, she notes the use of hand scrolls for *etoki* performance, for example, the *Yûzû Nenbutsu engi emaki* (Illustrated Legends of the Yûzû Nenbutsu) hand scrolls of 1314 and the *Dôjôji engi emaki* (Illustrated Legend of Dôjôji), which is still performed today at the Dôjôji.[42] From these examples, it seems clear that members of the aristocratic class might have been able to the view the *Tenjin* scrolls in the private setting of a temple or in their own home through the services of a priest or nun. Since one of the ways in which the Shôkyû version differed from other versions of the *Tenjin* scrolls was its extraordinary size, this suggestion becomes all the more plausible.

Another possibility, considering the Buddhist overtones of the *Tenjin* scrolls and the early Japanese fear of pestilence-causing deities, is that the scrolls fulfilled a placatory function. The dedication of painted scrolls to the placation of angry spirits may have had their origins in early pacification rituals, which often included the copying and recitation

of sutras.[43] Painted scrolls, particularly those with Buddhist thematic content, may have come to occupy a similar role. In addition to these precedents, the narrative of the *Tenjin* scrolls also hints that it potentially had a placatory role. The scrolls, with the exception of the Shôkyû version's incomplete final episodes, actually depict the placation of Michizane's spirit by the court. They further show how these efforts benefit the everyday believer and the obvious drawbacks of not properly reverencing Michizane.

Conclusion

This examination of the *Tenjin* scrolls, and the historical circumstances leading up to the production of the Shôkyû version, has attempted to demonstrate the complexity of the scrolls' design and to hint at the intricacy of their role in early medieval Japanese religious and social life. The scrolls were likely produced in the early thirteenth century and drew on iconographic Buddhist imagery to convey a story that probably had didactic overtones. The Japanese fear of death, which laid the groundwork for Michizane's deification as Tenjin, may also have led to the production of the *Tenjin* scrolls for placatory purposes.

Many questions about the scrolls still remain. Absent from this study is an examination of both the potential political functions of the scrolls in the early thirteenth century and of why the creators of the *Tenjin* scrolls elected to portray Michizane as they did. As is well known, the end of the Heian period and the beginning of the Kamakura period (the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries) was an extremely unstable period in Japanese history. It is therefore entirely possible that the anxieties arising from this precarious era may have influenced the narrative and appearance of the *Tenjin* scrolls. Robert Borgen has noted that the perception of Sugawara no Michizane underwent rehabilitation in the mid-Heian period, in which he was viewed as a benevolent god of poetry and learning, with no reference to his vengeful practices.[44] Whether the use of thunder god imagery in the *Tenjin* scrolls therefore indicates an ongoing or resurgent perception of Michizane remains unclear. Given this, a more thorough examination of why the story of Michizane's revenge came to be depicted at the beginning of the Kamakura period may be crucial to a final understanding of the scrolls' overall design and purpose.

[1] Robert Borgen has noted that the word Tenjin that is commonly used today to describe Michizane originally had no meaning other than 'heavenly deities' and was used to describe a variety of Japanese gods in the years before the Michizane legend became widespread. For more on this see Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1994, p. 309.

[2] For a complete discussion of the scrolls' genealogical relationship to one another, see Miyeko Murase, 'The Tenjin Engi Scrolls: A Study of Their Genealogical Relationship', unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1962.

[3] The designation 'Shôkyû version' is derived from the era name in which the hand scroll set is thought to have been produced: the Jôkyû 承久 era (1219–21). In Japanese, the character 承 can be read as either *shô* or *jô*, and while the era name uses the latter pronunciation, the English title for the hand scroll has conventionally used the former. To avoid confusion, I have maintained that convention for this article.

[4] Scholars are divided on whether or not they believe a completed version of the Shôkyû version ever existed. See Miyeko Murase, 'The Tenjin Engi Scrolls', p. 84, n. 1.

[5] Murase refers to these blocks of space as *shikishi* (coloured papers), which were pasted onto a scroll rather than drawn on. It is not clear if these blank blocks of space are true *shikishi* or merely drawn onto the scroll. Miyeko Murase, 'The Tenjin Engi Scrolls', p. 108.

[6] Miyeko Murase, 'The Tenjin Engi Scrolls', pp. 152–153 and p. 153, n. 2.

[7] For an overview of Shôtoku's involvement in the implementation of foreign religious practices and political structures, see Chapter 3 of Wm. Theodore de Bary (ed.), *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, Columbia University Press, New York, 2001, pp. 40–62.

[8] Alexander C. Soper, 'The Pictorial Biography of Prince Shotoku', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, Vol. 25, No. 5, January 1967, pp. 197–198.

[9] Alexander C. Soper, 'The Pictorial Biography of Prince Shotoku', p. 201. For a specific description of some of the cultic activities associated with Shôtoku at Shitennôji, see Barbara Ruch, 'Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature', in John Hall et al. (eds), *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977, p. 296.

[10] Alexander C. Soper, 'The Pictorial Biography of Prince Shotoku', p. 201.

[11] In her discussion of divine boy imagery, Christine M. E. Guth identifies the terms *chigo* (child), *dôji* (boy), and *wakamiya* (young imperial prince) as being used to signify a divine child. She reserves the term *chigo daishi* for her discussion of images of the priest Kûkai. See Christine M. E. Guth, 'The Divine Boy in Japanese Art', *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 42, No. 1, Spring 1987, pp. 1–6.

[12] Christine M. E. Guth, 'The Divine Boy in Japanese Art', p. 8.

[13] Karen M. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power: Art and Early Tokugawa Authority*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1999, pp. 123–133.

[14] *Kitano Tenjin engi emaki*, in Shigemi Komatsu (ed.), Zoku Nihon no Emaki, Vol. 15, Chûô Kôronsha, Tokyo, 1995, pp. 108–109. This progression from the use of Michizane's title and general terminology

such as 'the thunder thundered' to the specific honourific terminology of Tenjin and 'the thunder god' seems to emphasise the earlier story arch of Michizane's rise to power, and the thunder god figure is likely meant to represent this power of Michizane's either directly or via proxy.

[15] This story is translated in its entirety in Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki*, University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1967, pp. 55–67.

[16] Cited in Toshio Kuroda, 'The World of Spirit Pacification: Issues of State and Religion', Allan Grapard (trans.), *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3–4, 1996, p. 323.

[17] Neil McMullin, 'On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace: The Case of the Gion Goryō Cult', *History of Religions*, Vol. 27, No. 3, February 1988, pp. 271–273.

[18] Neil McMullin, 'On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace', pp. 275–276.

[19] As Japan's first written histories date to the eighth century, after the introduction of Buddhism from the continent, it is virtually impossible to determine what religious practice might have been like before that importation.

[20] Neil McMullin, 'On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace', p. 273.

[21] Toshio Kuroda, 'The World of Spirit Pacification', pp. 327–330; Neil McMullin, 'On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace', pp. 287–289; Herbert Plutschow, 'Fujiwara Politics and Religion: *Goryô* Cult and the *Kitano Tenjin Engi* and *Kitano Tenjin Engi Emakî*', in Bjarke Frellevig et al. (eds), *Florilegium Japonicum: Studies Presented to Olof G. Lidin on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, Akademisk Forlag, Copenhagen, 1996, pp. 216–217.

[22] Atsushi Ooe, 'Sawara shinno no rei: "tatari" ninshiki no tenkai', *Shien*, Vol. 1, March 2000, pp. 2–3.

[23] Neil McMullin, 'On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace', p. 288. For the story of the death of the empress, see Herbert Plutschow, *Chaos and Cosmos: Ritual in Early and Medieval Japanese Literature*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1990, p. 208.

[24] Toshio Kuroda, 'The World of Spirit Pacification', pp. 323–324.

[25] For a comprehensive biography of Michizane, see Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*.

[26] A list of incidents attributed to Michizane's spirit in *Fusô Ryakki* appears in Herbert Plutschow, 'Tragic Victims in Japanese Religion, Politics, and the Arts', *Anthropoetics*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Fall 2000/Winter 2001, http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0602/japan.htm, Accessed January 25, 2008.

[27] Cited in Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*, p. 314.

[28] Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*, p. 314.

[29] Michizane's enshrinement at the Shinsen'en has not been as closely examined as the initial enshrinement that took place during the *goryô-e* of 863 and the circumstances under which it occurred are unclear. Both Robert Borgen and Herbert Plutschow mention the enshrinement, however neither give particulars about the ceremony itself – which was an enshrinement not just of Michizane but of another courtier, Kibi no Makibi (693–775) – nor do they provide a date for it. Borgen mentions the enshrinement in connection with the attribution of more benevolent characteristics to Michizane in 986, such as his

patronage of poetry and poets, indicating that his enshrinement at the Shinsen'en occurred sometime before that. See Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*, pp. 310, 324, and Herbert Plutschow, 'Tragic Victims in Japanese Religion, Politics, and the Arts'.

[30] Toyomune Minamoto has suggested that guilt felt by the Fujiwara clan was a major factor in the ascendancy of the *Tenjin* cult, see Toyomune Minamoto, 'Kitano Tenjin Engi Emaki', in Toyomune Minamoto (ed.), *Kitano Tenjin engi*, Kadokawa Shoten, Tokyo, Shôwa 52 (1977), p. 2.

[31] Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*, pp. 270–289.

[32] Dôken's report to the court survives in two records: *Nichizô muki* (An Account of Nichizô's Dream) and *Dôken shônin meidoki* (An Account of Priest Dôken in the Underworld). See Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*, p. 373, n. 8.

[33] Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*, pp. 314–319. For a detailed description of Dôken's journeys to both heaven and hell, see Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*, 2nd edition, G. Allen & Unwin, London, 1986, pp. 191, 194–196.

[34] Herbert Plutshow, 'Tragic Victims in Japanese Religion, Politics, and the Arts'.

[35] Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*, pp. 319–320.

[36] Toshio Kuroda, 'The World of Spirit Pacfication', p. 347. For a complete breakdown of Kuroda's *kenmitsu taisei* theory, see Toshio Kuroda, 'The Development of the *Kenmitsu Taisei* System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy', James C. Dobbins (trans.), *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. 23, No. 3–4, 1996, pp. 233–269.

[37] For more on this Buddhist story, see Sarah E. Fraser, *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618–960*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2004, pp. 79–84.

[38] Robert Borgen notes in his discussion of the account of Dôken (also an esoteric Buddhist) that Michizane claims to have been pacified by the power of esoteric Buddhism and was subsequently convinced not to destroy Japan. See Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*, p. 318.

[39] Barbara Ruch, 'Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature', pp. 294–304.

[40] Miyeko Murase, 'The Tenjin Engi Scrolls', p. 5, n. 2.

[41] Miyeko Murase, 'The Tenjin Engi Scrolls', p. 5.

[42] Ikumi Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoki Storytelling in Japan*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2006, pp. 85–90, 119.

[43] Toshio Kuroda, 'The World of Spirit Pacification', p. 324; Neil McMullin, 'On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace', p. 289.

[44] Robert Borgen, 'Ōe no Masafusa and the Spirit of Michizane', *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 50, No.3, Autumn 1995, pp. 357–384.