

# Child Guardian Spirits (*Gohō Dōji*) in the Medieval Japanese Imaginaire

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THE RISE OF THE CULT OF *gohō dōji*, guardian or servant spirits in the form of boys, was a particular medieval Japanese phenomenon vividly captured in both narrative accounts and visual representations.<sup>2</sup> In illustrated scrolls (*emaki*) of this period, we often see strange-looking boys attacking malevolent spirits, acting as mediums in possession and exorcism rites, or appearing as attendants and saviors of monks or other practitioners of Buddhism. Frequently they served as attendant spirits of esoteric deities, such as Acalanātha (Fudō Myōō), Sarasvatī (Benzaiten), and Vaiśravaṇa (Bishamonten). More generally, these child guardian spirits were personally attached to priests and hermits who had acquired power and holiness through their practice of austerities.

Rather than uncovering the origin or development of the cult of itself, this paper will examine the discourse and the symbol of *gohō dōji*.<sup>3</sup> The discourse on *gohō dōji* extended beyond esoteric Buddhist texts to the larger Buddhist literature, such as *Dainihonkoku hokekyōgenki*, *Kokonchomonjū*, and *Konjaku monogatari*, and further on to the broader Japanese literature, such as *Genji monogatari*, *Heike monogatari*, and *Uji shūi monogatari*. Moreover, *gohō dōji* became a symbol that permeated other religious traditions beyond the Tendai and Shingon circles, unifying or organizing the magical beliefs of the medieval Japanese regarding guardian deities or servant spirits. For example, in Onmyōdō (“the way of yin and yang,” that is, Daoism), servant spirits such as *shiki gami* (ritual deities) or *shiki ōji* (ritual princes) came to be identified with *gohō dōji* during the medieval period. In Shugendō, we also find guardian *dōji*, or *ōji*, attending to the needs of *shugenja*, or *yamabushi* (practitioners of Shugendō), and protecting them. Similarly in folk religion, the guardian deity of the household was a child, the *zashiki warashi* (parlor child), who could bring fortune or misfortune to the house in which he or she resided.

Before turning to such discourse, I want to briefly examine how the symbol of *gohō dōji* was created in the medieval Japanese imaginaire. It is a double symbol that drew both from the symbol of the Buddhist protective or guardian deities (*gohō*) and also from the symbol of the child (*dōji*)—as represented by the class of child deities in Japanese religion and as illustrated by the status of the child in medieval Japanese society at large.

## GUARDIAN DEITIES

*Gohō dōji* belonged to the larger family of guardian deities (*gohō zenshin*). These deities were turbulent or fierce deities, who were often local deities or demonic beings such as *yakṣa-s*, *rākṣasa-s*, or *nāga-s*, and were initially opposed to Buddhism but after their conversion became protectors of the dharma. Such deities or beings possessed the ambivalent character of Śaiva and Buddhist tantric deities: the more terrible and dangerous they were, the more powerful were the protection and benefits given to their worshippers. It was the dangerous power of these local deities that was harnessed to protect against and to destroy obstacles, both inner and outer. In addition to protecting the buddhadharma against its enemies and delivering punishments, they also rewarded believers and provided worldly benefits (*genze riyaku*), often becoming deities of happiness and prosperity (*fukujin*).

In general, the iconography of these guardian deities depicted the characteristic quality of the group, which was fierce, grotesque, and wrathful. *Gohō dōji* often appeared as strange-looking boys, otherworldly, and even as demonic spirits, as will be discussed later. They were characterized by ambivalent sacredness, possessing both positivity and negativity; whereas they were dangerous and extremely violent in punishing transgressors of the dharma, they were very loyal and zealous in serving followers of the dharma, attending to their every need, however minute.

## SYMBOL OF THE CHILD

In medieval Japan, it was said that until the age of seven, one did not fully belong to the world of humans. It was not until boys reached fifteen and girls thirteen years of age that they became adults, after going through rites of passage. Thus up to that time they did not yet belong to the human world, but rather were believed to be close to the gods and the demons. In fact, the original meaning the Chinese character *dō* (Ch. *tong*) of *dōji* was "slave," which was tattooed on the forehead of one who was not a complete person or one who had not been initiated. The character signified those who did not belong to the human order, in other words those who were in the world, but not of it. Therefore such an existence made them effective intermediaries and messengers between the visible and the invisible worlds.<sup>4</sup>

Since they had no social status and were not attached to land, children were given freedom of movement. Their mobility and fluidity are attributed, first, to their lack of any social or religious ties, or what Amino Yoshihiko referred to as *muen* (estrangement, lack of ties to secular society), and second, to a sense of "immediacy" since they could be present at a moment's

notice.<sup>5</sup> Since children were not of the world or of society, they were placed or displaced into the margins or boundaries of the Buddhist and social world. This capacity for traversing borders as boundary beings led to a number of protective threshold deities manifesting in the form of children in Japanese religion. For example, the protective deities of the house or the boundary that manifested in the form of a child included the *zashiki warashi* (the child of the parlor, who is about five or six years old), the *kamadogami* (hearth god, who is said to be an ugly child from the Dragon Palace), and *dōsojin* (god of crossroads, who takes the form of a child at times).<sup>6</sup>

However, the freedom and mobility of children were balanced or offset by their dependency. Accordingly, child gods were often lesser gods under the control of a master god, or servants or followers of older gods, or attendants to eminent monks.<sup>7</sup> Tanaka Takako is of the opinion that the origin of *gohō*, referring to child *kami*, belonged in a system of gods based on family relations, that is, *kenzokujin* (family / dependent deities).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Tanaka states that these child *kami* served their parents, performed odd jobs, and were the intermediaries between gods and human beings.<sup>9</sup> *Gohō dōji*, as protectors of the dharma, belonged to the extended family of buddhas, *kami*, monks, practitioners of Buddhist rites, and servants of Buddhist halls, and were on call for all kinds of service. It was owing to their status as children that they could be summoned by “parent deities,” monks, and practitioners in general. Their position was in sharp contrast to other guardians of the dharma, such as the arhats (disciples of the Buddha Śākyamuni who attained awakening).<sup>10</sup> These arhats also served as guides or protectors of practitioners of Buddhism, but they appeared at will, and were not to be summoned like servants, as in the case of the *gohō dōji*. Thus, the form that this particular class of guardian spirits adopted, that of children, or more specifically that of boys, illustrated their dependent, servile, and marginal status in the Buddhist family. Such views of children reflected the attitude toward children in medieval Japanese society at large. Servant spirits taking the form of children were something to which people could easily relate. Their immediacy, accessibility, and willingness to serve made them ideal servants.

During the medieval period, the symbol of the child, or divine child, was particularly important. Many buddhas and bodhisattvas manifested in child form during this time, when belief in the final age of the dharma (*mappō*) was popular. Buddhas and bodhisattvas were supposed to manifest in the form most appropriate to save sentient beings. For example, Kannon (Avalokiteśvara) and Monju (Mañjuśrī) both appeared as children or youths and in such form became very popular among outcasts, women, prostitutes, and homosexuals. This phenomenon was also in line with the Buddhist notion of *upāya*, or skillful means (*hōben*), which allowed the use of any means necessary or appropriate to help sentient beings obtain en-

lightenment. *Kami* (native deities) also appeared in child form, especially those that became protective deities in the Buddhist pantheon, such as the thunder deity, illustrating the relationship between buddhas and *kami* as that of parent and child.<sup>11</sup> Under the combinatory paradigm of *honji suijaku* (original forms of deities and their local traces), *kami* came to be seen as the local traces (*suijaku*) of the original forms (*honji*), that is, the Buddhist divinities.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, during this period the emperor (*tennō*) was often a child, and he represented a very powerful symbol to rally under, even though in reality his powers were marginal.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the symbol of the child came to represent both sacredness and marginality at the same time. The ambiguity of the symbol dissolved the duality and polarization of purity and pollution, sacred and profane, this-worldliness and other-worldliness, obedience and transgression, freedom and dependency, and peacefulness and turbulence. These distinctions were not absolute for the child, but rather represented a continuum of potentialities to be activated or possibilities to be manipulated by external principals, as in the case of *gohō dōji*. The ambiguous potentials of these children were put to use by their principals, namely the master deities upon whom they depended, and the religious specialists who they served.

### GOHŌ DŌJI AS ATTENDANTS

In the *Keiranshūyōshū* (*A Collection of Leaves Gathered on Stormy Streams*), a collection of doctrinal essays and oral transmissions dated to 1348, the chapter on *Gohō no koto* (*Matters Regarding Gohō*) contains several accounts of how dharma protectors took the form of *gohō dōji* in serving eminent monks and saints.<sup>14</sup> One of them relates the origin of Ootogohō (“youngest protector of the dharma”), the youngest son of an Indian king, who came to Japan and became a *gohō*.

The *Seburiyama engi* gives: Now in India, southern India, there was a king named Tokuzen Daiō who had fourteen sons. Seven days after birth, the fifteenth was lost. The king asked Nāgārjuna to use his heavenly eye to locate his beloved lost son, who was subsequently found at Seburiyama in Kyūshū, Japan. Overjoyed, the king, leading the fourteen princes along with Nāgārjuna, went to Seburiyama. The king became Sarasvatī (Benzaiten), one of the Sixteen Benevolent Deities (*zenshin*) and Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas. The fifteen princes are his acolytes (*dōji*). The youngest prince is the Sensha Dōji and is also known as Ootogohō. He is also one of Fudō’s *gohō dōji*, Seitaka Dōji.... Among the five hundred eighty thousand *dōji*

of *Saishō-o kyō*, the fifteenth *dōji*, Sensha *Dōji*, is the foremost and is also known as Kisho Myōzō *Dōji*.<sup>15</sup>

This *gohō dōji* was known by different names according to the deities or saints he served. Otogohō, by virtue of his power, was able to protect saints even when he was not physically present, as illustrated by the following story.

When Monk Sōō crossed the bridge at Katsugawa, his rosary fell into the river and was swept away by the current. He threw his single-pronged *vajra* into the water, and ordered it to take the rosary back. The *vajra* caught up with it, and even though it was against the current, the *vajra* drove the rosary in front, just like a snake pursuing a frog. When they came close to the bridge, the *vajra* hung the rosary on itself, and presented it to the monk. It was an unparalleled wonderous deed. This was also the doing of Otogohō.<sup>16</sup>

Thus Otogohō could activate his protective power even from afar, by influencing the *vajra* to go after the rosary and also floating the rosary against the current towards the bridge. However, it was not clear whether his spirit possessed the *vajra*, which then was empowered and saved the rosary. Otogohō was said to have served monks such as Shōkū Shōnin of Shoshazan and Tani no Ajari Kōkei.

In their role as attendants to monks, *gohō dōji* also provided more mundane services such as bringing flowers, fruits, and water; lighting incense; and even drawing baths. For example, the monk Butsuren, a reciter of the *Lotus Sutra*, liked to take a hot bath three times a day. Two beautiful boys appeared and offered to serve him, gathering firewood and heating the water for his baths, bringing him fruits as well. These boys were thought of as *gohō dōji*, whom Butsuren recognized as belonging to two of the converted demons in the *Lotus Sutra*; they vanished forty-nine days after the death of the monk.<sup>17</sup>

Aside from menial duties related to the daily needs and comfort of monks, *gohō dōji* also removed obstacles to their practice. For instance, in the *Kokonchomonjū*, two *gohō dōji* saved the priest Yuirembō from the interference of a *tengu* (goblin).<sup>18</sup> The priest was kept from his copying of the *Lotus Sutra* through the *tengu*'s constant hindrance, and was finally carried off into the mountains by the *tengu*. A *gohō dōji* saved the priest and then reduced the *tengu* to the size of a rat to prevent further trouble.

*Gohō dōji* also monitored the practice of priests, keeping them from excessive austerities. In the *Heike monogatari*, Priest Mongaku practiced painful austerities, for example, letting poisonous insects bite him and standing under the Nachi waterfalls in the thick of winter.<sup>19</sup> Once he submerged himself to the neck under the water for several days. When he was swept away in the current, a handsome youth appeared and pulled him ashore. Not discour-

aged by this setback, Mongaku went back under the waterfall and on the second day, eight youths came to pull him out again, during his recitation of the three hundred thousand Fudō invocations. Despite their efforts, he fought them off and continued his practice. Nevertheless, when he stopped breathing on the third day, two divine youths descended from the summit of the waterfall and revived him by rubbing him down with their fragrant hands, from head to toe. These two boys identified themselves as Kongara and Seitaka, the two main attendant *dōji* attached to Fudō.<sup>20</sup> Another case illustrating the guardian role of the *gohō dōji* was that of Eikō Risshi. In an excess of religious zeal, Eikō Risshi climbed up a cinnamon tree and cast himself down into the valley. He was saved by a *gohō dōji*, who spread out his sleeves and caught him.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, *gohō dōji* would manifest in dreams to deliver the prediction of the practitioner's attainment of buddhahood and to show the correct path when one is lost. In the *Dainihonkoku hokekyōgenki* (*Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan*), we see the following story. The Tendai Priest Chōen of Tsukushi Province had recited the *Lotus Sutra* and worshipped Fudō Myōō since his youth. After many years of ascetic practice, he acquired miraculous powers. One day after fasting for twenty-seven days and reciting the *Lotus Sutra*, he dreamt that the Eight Great Attendants of Fudō Myōō, all equipped with weapons, including swords and iron *vajra*-s, listened to his recitation and said admiringly, "The ascetics who served the Buddha were the same as the Buddha and would attain the supreme enlightenment just as other bodhisattvas!"<sup>22</sup> On another occasion when he lost his way trying to cross Mount Ōmine, he recited the *Lotus Sutra* fervently and a boy appeared in his dream showing him the right way.<sup>23</sup>

*Gohō* were also used in monks' contests of magical powers. For instance, a *genkurabe* or contest in magical powers took place between Jōzō Hōshi, whose *gohō* brought him flowers and water as described in the *Kokonchomonjū*, and the *gohō* of another powerful ascetic called Shun'yū. They sent the *gohō* into a white stone. Jōzō commanded the stone to move, whereupon it began to jump up and down like a football. Shun'yū then commanded the stone to be still, whereupon it at once lay quiet. Next, Jōzō recited a passage from the *Nirvana Sutra* in a voice that echoed among the clouds, and the white stone leapt up and split in half. The two contestants finally got up, bowed to each other, and departed. This type of match attested to the advancement of a monk in his practice. *Gohō dōji* act as a kind of barometer to gauge the practitioner's progress. The more advanced a monk was in his spiritual power, the more powerful his *gohō* would be. Also, the tale showed that the power of the priests was not exercised directly over the stone, but over the *gohō* who acted as an intermediary, through whom the stone was made to move.<sup>24</sup>

Even though the *gohō dōji* were protectors of the dharma, sometimes they would go against the spirit of the dharma in obedience to their master.

We see a description of such behavior in the *Uji shūi monogatari*.<sup>25</sup> The *yama-bushi* Keitōbō was furious that the ferryman ignored his request to board a boat, despite the fact that he had not offered to pay the fee for crossing over. He commanded his *gohō* to turn the boat back. But when there was no response, he threatened to cut himself from the Buddha's three treasures. Thereupon, the boat turned around and headed for the shore. However, this did not assuage his anger and he next ordered the *gohō* to sink the boat. He was finally satisfied when the boat capsized and everyone on board was thrown into the water.<sup>26</sup>

*Gohō dōji* could also be excessively violent in carrying out their duties. In the following excerpt from *Konjaku monogatari shū*, we see this in an account of the *gohō dōji* of Shōkū of Shoshazan:

Shōkū was a reciter of the *Lotus Sutra*. He isolated himself in Kirishima and recited the *Lotus Sutra*, day and night. Subsequently he moved to the mountains and continued to recite the *Lotus Sutra*. Children about ten years of age sat down with him and read with him.... Later, a youth of about seventeen or eighteen years of age with red hair appeared announcing that he would serve Shōkū. Even though the youth was short, he was very strong. He cut wood for Shōkū. Other disciples did not regard this youth as a great treasure, and said to Shōkū, "This child's gaze is frightful and we don't like him." Much later, a youth bigger than the first youth appeared. Over a little matter, the smaller youth got mad and hit the bigger youth on the head. With one punch, he killed him. They poured water on the youth, but failed to revive him. Shōkū told the small youth that he was useless and decided to send him away. The child started to cry, and said that if he were to leave, he would be greatly punished. Yet Shōkū drove him out. The youth cried and repeated that he must serve the saint, otherwise he would be punished by his master. And again he refused to depart. His disciples asked Shōkū what kind of being this youth was. Shōkū said that he had prayed to Bishmonten for someone to serve him and the youth was sent.<sup>27</sup>

From this story we discover that the *gohō dōji* had red hair and had great strength. This *gohō dōji* belonged to Bishamonten's family and was a converted *yakṣa*, thus he was a *yakṣa dōji*. Bishamonten was served by a number of these *yakṣa dōji*. Owing to the fact that they were converted demonic spirits, they could forget the rules and fail to exercise moderation at times, ending up inflicting cruelty and violence when they used their strength during the performance of their assigned duties. Even though they were commanded by *kami*, buddhas, and monks, and served them, they could kill other beings over a mistake, or in anger. *Gohō* were powerful,

dangerous, and turbulent spirits, whose negligence or zeal was sometimes out of control in the fulfillment of an order.

### GOHŌ DŌJI AS MEDIUMS IN EXORCISM

In another capacity *gohō dōji* became mediums for exorcism conducted by priests or other religious specialists, in addition to driving out evil spirits themselves. This development was in line with the general use of child mediums in exorcism.<sup>28</sup> During the medieval period there was a popular notion that illness was caused by evil spirits (*mononoke*), which would have to be exorcised by healing rituals.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes instead of the *gohō dōji* directly driving out an evil spirit from the possessed, a medium (*yorimashi*), usually a child or woman, would be used as an intermediary to entice the *mononoke* to leave the body of the sick and enter the body of the *yorimashi* instead. Thereafter, the *mononoke* would be ousted from the body of the *yorimashi* by the *gohō dōji*.

In the *Uji shūi monogatari*, we see two accounts of *gohō dōji* driving out evil spirits. In one, the Lord Uji (Fujiwara Yorimichi, 992–1074) became ill after falling off a horse, and the high priest Shin'yo was summoned to perform an exorcism. Before the priest arrived, a spirit that possessed one of the ladies-in-waiting revealed that he was responsible for the Lord Uji's illness, and was subsequently driven out by a *gohō dōji* who came ahead of the priest.<sup>30</sup> Here we can again see that the *gohō dōji* could be invoked to carry out a monk's orders from a distance.

Similarly, a *gohō dōji* was also mentioned in a story about the curing of the illness of the prime minister from Horikawa (Fujiwara Mototsune, 836–892), also in the *Uji shūi Monogatari*.

He (the prime minister) said, "While I was asleep, I was just dreaming that fearsome demons were inflicting all manner of tortures on me when a boy with his hair done in a bun on each side and carrying a wand came in the direction of the inner gate and drove the demons off with the wand, till they scattered and ran away. When I asked him who he was, he said, 'A certain priest of the Gokuraku-ji, grieving over your illness, has been beside the inner gate ever since this morning, praying for you by zealously reciting the *Ninnō Sutra*, the scripture he has recited for many years. As a tutelary spirit watching over him, I have driven off these evil demons which were afflicting you.' At that point I woke up, and afterwards felt quite well, just as if I had been wiped clean of an illness."<sup>31</sup>

From the story, it was clear that it was not the sound of the sutra being chanted nor other incantations that acted directly upon the *mononoke*, but



that such sounds acted as catalysts to activate the *gohō* to “possess” the sick person, thus driving out the *mononoke*. Exorcism by *gohō dōji* could be accomplished either by direct possession, or by this kind of double possession. *Gohō* appeared in dreams to those who were ill, as in *Uji shūi monogatari*, and then manifested again in dreams to confirm that the person had been cured.<sup>32</sup>

From the end of the Heian period into the medieval period, *shiki gami* came to be identified with *gohō*. This development is illustrated in the *Naki Fudō emaki*, which tells the story of Chikō, the high priest of Miidera.<sup>33</sup> Shōkū volunteered to be the *yorimashi* in order to cure his teacher, Chikō, of illness. In the rite of exorcism performed by the *onmyōji* Abe no Seimei, he used two *gohō*, who were depicted as two *oni* (demons), instead of *shiki gami* to drive out the *mononoke*, or *yakubyō gami* (epidemic deities), that were causing Chikō’s illness. *Gohō* were *igyō* spirits (strange spirits), and in this case demonic spirits. Here one *gohō* had a long nose and looked more like a human, the other *gohō* had a short nose, more similar to a monkey. They both had the image of warriors with knives fastened to their waists and sticks in their hands.

Finally, one can say that the most memorable image of *gohō dōji* is the sword-*gohō* (Tsurugi no *Gohō* or Ken no *Gohō*) in the illustrated scroll, *Shigisan Engi*.<sup>34</sup> This *engi* or foundation legend described miraculous tales about Myōren, a high priest who devoted his life to the worship of Bishamonten in seclusion at Shigisan in Yamato Province. Scroll one was that of “The Flying Granary” and it told how Myōren sent his bowl flying to obtain alms instead of leaving the mountain itself.<sup>35</sup> In the second scroll, Myōren was summoned to perform a rite of exorcism for the Emperor Daigo. Prior to this, many prayers and rites were performed to cure of the emperor’s illness, but he did not recover. Thus, on someone’s advice, the Imperial Court requested Myōren to travel to the palace to perform an exorcism. Despite the imperial summons to go to the capital, Myōren did not go to the palace, but instead performed the rite at Shigisan. He was asked how the emperor would know whether the rite was effective. Myōren replied that at the end of the rite, he would send his servant spirit, a sword-*gohō*, who would appear in the emperor’s dream as evidence of the efficacy of the rite. The sword-*gohō* did appear in the Tenno’s dream with a *dharmacakra* preceding him or ridden by him, and he carried a sword in his right hand and ropes in his left. He wore a collar from which hung numerous swords.<sup>36</sup>

### GOHŌ DŌJI AND SHIKI GAMI

*Onmyōji* were active not only in performing rites of exorcism like Buddhist priests, but also in performing divination and prayer rituals for the

aristocrats. *Onmyōji* activated servant spirits, which could take the form of children or animals. In *Onmyōdō*, illness was believed to result from a curse of an enemy or from an angry spirit. On the one hand, the *gohō* or *shiki gami* prevented the interference of evil spirits in the practitioners' worship of deities and drove away spirits possessing the sick. They would "return the spirits" who were possessing the ill person, in other words, send the spirits back to the person who originally had put a curse on the ill person. Thereby, in returning a curse, these *shiki gami* took revenge on the original wrongdoer, punishing him or her.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, *shiki gami* could in turn deliver a curse, making the accursed ill, or even causing death.

In the *Uji shūi monogatari*, we see how *gohō* were attached like shadows to their masters. There is a story about an old priest who was accompanied by his *gohō*, two lads of about ten years old, on a trip in an attempt to test Abe no Seimei's skills. Seimei saw through this right away and made the old priest's *gohō* disappear. The old priest, then realizing that Seimei had tremendous power, said, "It is easy to make use of *gohō*, but to make the *gohō* that someone else is using disappear is a feat that is beyond me. From now on I wish to be your pupil."<sup>38</sup> Thereupon Seimei returned the two lads to the old priest.

We can observe how fierce *shiki gami* can be when they are delivering a curse. The following tale relates how Abe no Seimei used his magic powers to protect an archivist minor captain, who had been cursed by a jealous brother-in-law. The *shiki gami*, who was delivering the curse to kill the captain, could not harm him owing to Seimei's protection. In turn, the *onmyōji* who had been employed to put the curse and had sent a *shiki gami* to deliver the curse was struck dead when his curse was sent back to him by Abe no Seimei.

Seimei was once seated in his official place at the Palace, watching the high court nobles arrive with their fine array of outriders, when he saw an elegant and very handsome young archivist minor captain alight from his carriage and enter the palace. Just at that moment, Seimei saw a crow fly over the officer's head and drop its dung on him. Seimei took a careful look at it and thought to himself, "What a shame that such a handsome and very popular young man should have been attacked by an evil spirit! This crow is clearly some diviner's familiar [*gohō* or *shiki gami*]." Evidently it was not the officer's destiny to die yet, for Seimei felt so sorry for him that he went over and asked him, "Are you having an audience of His Majesty? Forgive me if I seem a little presumptuous, but why have you come to the palace? I have seen signs that you will not live through the night. Fate willed that it should be revealed to me. Please come with me and let me see what I can do."... With

the minor captain clasped tightly in his arms, Seimei cast spells to protect him, and all night long, without a moment's sleep, he never once stopped reciting incomprehensible incantations and prayers.

It was a long autumn night, but he concentrated his efforts, and towards dawn there came a knocking at the door. At Seimei's suggestion, someone was sent out to see what it was, and it turned out to be the familiar who had been brought down on the minor captain by his brother-in-law, who had held the archivist's Fifth Rank. They lived in different parts of the same house, and the minor captain's brother-in-law was jealous because their father-in-law had a poor opinion of him, while he was very pleased with the minor captain as a son-in-law and made a great fuss of him. The brother-in-law was so jealous, in fact, that he had engaged a diviner to bring this spirit familiar down onto his rival. The minor captain had thus been close to death when Seimei had observed him, and after Seimei's night-long praying, a messenger had come from the diviner, who had brought down the evil spirit and announced in a loud voice, "Foolishly, and without reason save that I had been commanded to do so, I brought down an evil spirit on you, but you had such strong protection that it has turned back on me and I have now been struck dead, as a result of the awful thing that I did." "Do you hear that, sir?" said Seimei, "If I had not discovered this last night, that is what would have happened to you." The messenger was sent back in the company of a servant, who on inquiry was told that the diviner's death had been instantaneous. The son-in-law who had engaged the diviner to bring down the evil spirit was immediately sent packing by his father-in-law, who was overcome with tears as he thanked Seimei, and was scarcely able to reward him handsomely enough to express his gratitude.<sup>39</sup>

### SHUGENDŌ AND GOHŌ DŌJI

*Gohō dōji* played similar roles in Shugendō as in Buddhism and Onmyōdō. These roles included guiding, attending, and protecting the practitioner (*shugenja*) into the mountain, and also of serving the *shugenja* in obtaining oracles and in rites of possession and exorcism.<sup>40</sup> The *shugenja* often carried small images of a *dōji* or *ōji* as their guardian deities in their ascetic practices in the mountains, and sometimes they enshrined these images at the roadsides.<sup>41</sup> According to the *Diary of Visiting Kumano* ascribed to En no Ozunu (*En no Gyōja no Kumano sankei no nikki*), places where *dōji* or *ōji* were enshrined were believed to be defiled or haunted by evil deities,

and thus purification ceremonies or rituals for the enshrined deities were performed there.<sup>42</sup> For example, in the medieval period pilgrimage to one of the sacred sites, Kumano, started with a visit to the Fushimi Inari Shrine, where each pilgrim was given a *gohō* to accompany and protect him or her. After the completion of the pilgrimage, each pilgrim would again go the shrine in order to return the *gohō*.<sup>43</sup> In particular, the *gohō* “*kongō dōji*” was highly valued in Kumano, where there were a hundred thousand *kongō dōji*, and there was an ascetic rite, the “Kongō Dōjihō,” which should be practiced at Kumano.<sup>44</sup> *Kongō dōji* were popular beyond the Shugendō circle during the medieval period, as they were mainly invoked in calamity-averting or exorcistic rituals.<sup>45</sup> They appeared in many forms and could multiply in number.

*Gohō dōji* also performed the role of mediators, communicating people’s wishes to the deities. In obtaining oracles, *shugenja* would send their *gohō* to possess the mediums, who would then function as mouthpieces or oracles (*kuchiyose*). The mediums or *yorimashi* were selected from boys and girls who were clever and without blemish, from about seven to fifteen years old.<sup>46</sup> The mediums would achieve identification with their *gohō* and would use the power thus acquired to summon the requested spirits. As for rites of exorcism, there were two types.<sup>47</sup> In *tsukimono otoshi* (getting rid of possessing spirits), the *shugenja* would drive out the possessing spirit. In *chōbuku* (subduing the spirits), the *shugenja* would ritually identify with Fudō Myōō, so that the *shugenja* could manipulate the *gohō dōji* of Fudō Myōō, who would in turn drive out the evil possessing spirits. It was clear that for the *chōbuku* more power was needed, since it was employed when the regular *tsukimono otoshi* proved to be ineffective. In the *chōboku*, it was the manipulation by the *shugenja* of Fudō Myōō’s retinue of *gohō dōji* who could then control and defeat the evil deities or spirits. Fudō Myōō’s retinue of servant spirits included Kongara and Seitaka, who were his two main attendant *gohō dōji*, as well as his Eight Great *Gohō Dōji*, and Thirty-six Great *Dōji*.

The founder of Shugendō, En no Ozunu (also known as En no Ubasoku and En no Gyōja) also had his *gohō doji*: two demon attendants whom he had converted, known as Zenki (Front Demon) and Goki (Back Demon), in addition to the Eight Great *Dōji*. In the *Nihon ryōiki*, it was said that in his late forties En no Ozunu went to live in a cave, wore clothing made of vines, drank the dewdrops on pine needles, bathed in pure spring water to rinse away the filth of the world of desire, and learned the “Formula of the Peacock” (*Mahāmāyūrtoidyārājñī*) to attain extraordinary power. Thus, he could employ spirits (*kijin*, demonic spirits) and *kami*.<sup>48</sup> The *Shoku Nihongi* records miracle tales about En no Ozunu: “Popular tradition had it that Ozunu had demonic powers at his beck and call; that he had them draw his water and gather his firewood; and that if they failed to

obey him, he would bind them with spells."<sup>49</sup> The founder of Hakusan Shugendō, Taichō, was attended by two *gohō dōji*, Fuseri Gyōja and Shōjō Gyōja. Shoshazan's Shokū was also attended by two *gohō dōji*, Oto Gohō and Waka Gohō. *Shugenja* used *dōji* as servants or attendants, especially in exorcism and in the rite of the flying bowl (*hihatsuhō*).<sup>50</sup> For example, En no Ozunu was said to have put his mother in his begging bowl and sent it flying to China.<sup>51</sup> Myōren had the services of Tsurugi no Gohō (the sword-*gohō*) and Kūhatsu Gohō (the empty begging bowl *gohō*).

Now let us look at a particular form of *gohō* for the *yamabushi*, the *tengu*, and explore the relationship of *tengu* to *gohō dōji* in Buddhism.

### GOHŌ DŌJI AND TENGU

*Tengu* is a type of long-nosed goblin. In the beginning there was the crow *tengu*, characterized by the beak and wings of a Siberian black kite, the original incarnate form of the creature; sometimes it was embodied as a human with a bird's bill.<sup>52</sup> By the early seventeenth century, the image of the *tengu* had generally become that of a ruddy-faced and long-nosed itinerant monk, symbolizing vainglory. In the *Tengu zōshi*, *tengu* were said to inhabit mountains and to descend to the world of man to cause mischief. It also says that Buddhist monks who forget the true teachings of their faith would turn into *tengu*.<sup>53</sup>

In the Buddhist context, the enemies of *gohō dōji* were the *tengu*, as illustrated in the story of Zegaibō.<sup>54</sup> Zegaibō was a Chinese *tengu* who came to Japan in order to challenge the senior priests of Enryakuji at Mt. Hiei, only to suffer an ignominious defeat. The story is as follows.

In 966, during the reign of Emperor Murakami, Zegaibō, the chief *tengu* of the Empire of China, came to Japan. Meeting Nichiraibō, the Great *Tengu* of Mt. Atago, Zegaibō boasted that he had subjugated all the high priests in China and that the purpose of his visit to Japan was to measure his virtue with monks in Japan, possibly to obstruct their enlightenment. Asked to serve as a guide, the Japanese *tengu* led his Chinese colleague up Mt. Hiei.

Zegaibō turned himself into an old monk while Nichiraibō hid behind a tree in the distance, waiting until monks descended the mountain. Yokei Risshi was riding in a palanquin on his way to the palace and as Zegaibō approached, a burning iron wheel sent him flying, with his wings burned. Nichiraibō laughed and said that this monk believed in Fudō Myōō, and was reciting a mantra of Fudō Myōō—the mantra of the fire realm—which burned

demonic forces. Zegaibō, not discouraged by this thwarted effort, got ready again.

Next came Jinzen(sen), a bishop of Imuro, who was also a believer of Fudō Myōō. Jinzen recited another mantra of Fudō Myōō and suddenly two red-haired boys appeared with raised canes and started to chase Zegaibō, and the *tengu* was severely beaten. Nichiraibō rebuked Zegaibō, and Monzebō, the *tengu* of Mt. Hira, joined in the reprimand. Nichiraibō told Zegaibō that the two boys were the servant spirits of Fudō Myōō: the *gohō dōji* Kongara and Seitaka.

Without any sign of contrition, Zegaibō ran into the party of Ryōgen (Jie Daishi), the august abbot of the Tendai sect, whose young mysterious-looking attendants bound the *tengu* up and gave him a good thrashing, led by Oto Gohō and Waka Gohō. The beaten Zegaibō was carried home by Nichiraibō's *tengu*, who ridiculed him mercilessly.

Zegaibō asked for treatment in a hot spring to ease his pain, but was told that since spas were sacred sites, he would be sure to have another hard time of it there. Then they gave him a hot bath on the banks of the Kamo River and nursed him. Seventeen days later, when he finally recovered, Zegaibō thanked Nichiraibō for his help. Realizing the futility of his extended stay in such a sacred site, he expressed his wish to return to China.<sup>55</sup>

*Tengu* were regarded in Shugendō as servants of *kami*, buddhas, eminent monks, and *yamabushi*, like the servant spirit of *gohō dōji* in Buddhism.<sup>56</sup> In Buddhist tales such as the *Konjaku monogatari shū*, however, these *tengu* were depicted as turbulent mountain deities and were represented as enemies of Buddhism. We see illustrations of this development in *Tengu zōshi* and in the account of Zegaibō, which is different from the development in popular cults of *tengu*. In popular religion, *tengu* were worshipped for preventing fire and robbery. *Tengu* were mountain spirits, deities that were pacified and converted by the *yamabushi*, and in esoteric Buddhism they became identified with Kongō Dōji. Thus the cult of Kongō Dōji, the protective spirit of Shugendō, became influenced by the cult of *tengu*.<sup>57</sup> Ōmine had the Eight Great Kongō Dōji and the Eight *Tengu* as protective spirits.<sup>58</sup> *Tengu* also became deities of happiness/wealth (*fukujin*), owing to the belief that they brought good harvests. For those who mine mountains, *tengu* were regarded as gods of fortune. This brings to mind the fact that other turbulent spirits who were creators of obstacles became protectors of them and also became deities of wealth, such as Dōsojin.

The story of Zegaibō takes the perspective of the eminent monks of Hieizan, emphasizing the miraculous powers of Fudō Myōō and *gohō dōji* against the evil power of the *tengu*. In Tendai *mikkyō*, the *tengu* symbolized

the Buddhist concept of evil, later turned into a path of rebirth, and finally were regarded as enemies of Buddhism. Haruko N. Wakabayashi stated that *tengu* are enemies of Buddhism, demonic creatures that defy Buddhism, and constituted the antithesis to the ideal of the Buddhist order.<sup>59</sup> Thus, these *tengu* are very similar to “*ma*” (*māra*).

An illustration of how *tengu* could be saved from the evil path and also be reborn as a monk with the help of *gohō dōji* is as follows.

A *tengu* from India was on his way to China, heard the water of the ocean chanting a phrase of the “*Daihannyakyō*,” and decided to prevent such chanting and looked for its source. Thus following the sound of the chanting, he passed over China and arrived at Japan. Tracing it to a river flowing from Mt. Hiei, he saw the Four Heavenly Kings and other protectors of the dharma guarding the water. He went toward a heavenly child (*tendō*), here a *gohō dōji*, guarding the river and asked why the water was chanting the sutra. The *gohō dōji* replied that it was owing to the fact that the source of the flow starts from the privy of the learned monks of Hieizan. The *tengu* was so taken by the account that he forgot his thought of putting a stop to the chanting and instead upon promising to become a monk at Hieizan disappeared. He kept his word and later was reborn as the monk Myōgu.<sup>60</sup>

Here we see *gohō dōji* guarding a river that chanted sutra and originated from a privy at Hieizan. And we also see that the *tengu* was so moved by the *gohō dōji*'s account that he was converted to Buddhism and later reborn as a monk.

In Buddhist tales, *tengu* were viewed as obstacles to the followers of the dharma. They were even known to possess people, but were in turn exorcised, like *mononoke* or evil spirits. Despite their trouble-making, we find that they were rendered powerless when they encountered the protectors of the dharma, and sometimes were even converted by the *gohō zenshin*. In contrast to this Buddhist outlook, *tengu* continued to be worshipped as gods of fortune and even gods of fertility in popular religion.

### GOHŌ DŌJI AND YŌKAI

While the enemies of Tendai *mikkyō* were the *tengu*, we find that the *yōkai* (ghosts, goblins) were the enemies in Shingon and Onmyōdō. *Gohō dōji* would protect against *yōkai* attacks and could even convert such *yōkai*. Following the Shingon doctrines of *sokushin jōbutsu* (attainment of buddhahood in this very body) and of *hijō jōbutsu* (plants and other

nonsentient beings' ability to attain buddhahood), even *yōkai* could attain buddhahood. In the Muromachi period, the representatives of the *yōkai* were the *utsuwa no yōkai* (tool goblins), also called *tsukumogami* (ghosts of old objects).

In *Tsukumogami-ki* (*Record of the Ghosts of Old Objects*), an *otogizōshi* of the late fifteenth century, we see the following account.<sup>61</sup> The text begins by quoting the *Onmyō zakkī* (*Miscellaneous Records Concerning the Yin and Yang*), which states that *utsuwa mono* (tools) obtain spirit or *tama* after hundreds of years.<sup>62</sup> People used to welcome spring by throwing away old tools in the street; this custom was known as *susuharai*. As a result new tools, furniture, and clothing were brought into the house as the old ones were tossed out or discarded into the streets. During the Kenpō era (964–968), there was a rebellion of old tools. They were angry about being discarded after having provided years of service. Thus, these tools transformed from inanimate to animate beings, became ghosts of tools (*utsuwa yōkai*) on the first day of spring (*setsubun*), and sought revenge on human beings by killing them and their animals. These *yōkai* organized themselves and made a procession along First Street in Kyōto. The Emperor summoned a Shingon high priest to perform the great rite of the “Supreme Dhāraṇī” (*sonshō darani*) for seven days and seven nights. On the evening of the sixth day, a light was seen—the light of the Seven Heavenly Boys, who were on their way to the north of Kyōto to fight these *utsuwa yōkai*. These Seven Heavenly Boys, *gohō dōji* of *myōō* such as Fudō Myōō, appeared to the *utsuwa yōkai* and said that if they would take refuge in the Three Jewels and arouse the desire to attain enlightenment, their lives would be spared; otherwise, they would be killed. The *yōkai* were terrified and as a result asked for instructions in Buddhist teachings, and converted to Buddhism. One day, while they were being instructed about Shingon teachings and their miraculous power, such as *sokushin jōbutsu*, several of the *utsuwa yōkai* were said to have “become buddha in their very bodies” (*sokushin jōbutsu*).

Finally let us turn to household servant spirits in folk religion, the *zashiki warashi*, or literally, children of the parlor or the drawing room.

#### CHILD SERVANT SPIRITS OF HOUSES: THE ZASHIKI WARASHI

*Zashiki warashi* were child servant spirits who were attached to a specific house. They were children aged from five or six, up to twelve or thirteen years old. These children were usually boys, although there were also some rare instances of girls. According to the folklorist Chiba Toku, usually one could not see *zashiki warashi*, who were said to have red faces



with long, flowing hair. However, one could trace their whereabouts by following the footprints that they left behind.<sup>63</sup> Having *zashiki warashi* reside in one's house would bring good fortune, while their departure would bring misfortune.<sup>64</sup> There were many names for *zashiki warashi*, which varied according to locale: *zashiki bokko*, *kurawarashi*, *kurabokko*, *notabariko*, *ushitsukiko*. These servant spirits represented a type of *tsukimono* (possessing spirits), since they possessed the house in which they lived. In medieval Japan, people attributed sudden increases or decreases in wealth to possession by animals, animal deities, humans, or plant spirits. It was believed that whereas possession by spirits that were lower than the human existence (e.g., foxes or dogs) would bring malevolence, possession by spirits higher than the human form (e.g., *kami*) would bring benefits.<sup>65</sup>

In Yanagita Kunio's *Tōno monogatari* (*The Legends of Tōno*) there were several accounts of *zashiki warashi*.

Among the older households there are quite a few houses that have the spirit *zashiki warashi* (parlor child). At the oldest this *kami* is twelve or thirteen years old. From time to time it reveals itself to people. At Iide in Tsuchibuchi village, Kanjūrō Imabuchi's daughter, who goes to a girls' high school, recently returned home for vacation. One day in the dark corridor all of a sudden she bumped into a *zashiki warashi* and was badly shocked. This *zashiki warashi* was definitely a male child.

At Yamaguchi in the same village the mother of Mr. Sasaki was sewing alone one day when she heard the sound of paper rustling in the next room. That room was only for the master of the house, but he was in Tokyo. Thinking it strange, she opened the wooden door and looked in, but no one was there. After having been seated a short time, again there was the sound of someone sniffing. She concluded that it must be *zashiki warashi*. It had been rumored for some time that *zashiki warashi* resided in this house. The house that this *kami* lives in is said to become rich and prestigious.<sup>66</sup>

*Zashiki warashi* could also be a girl child as we see in the following account.

It has been traditionally said that there are two girl *kami* in the house of Magozaemon Yamaguchi, also an old house in Yamaguchi. One year a certain man from the village was on his way back from town and near Tomeba bridge when he met two lovely girls whom he had never seen before. They were walking pensively towards him.

"Where did you come from?" he asked.

"We have come from Magozaemon's in Yamaguchi," they replied.

“Where are you headed now?” he inquired.

“To a certain house in another village,” was the reply.

That certain household in a somewhat distant village is now wealthy and the people live well. Hearing this the man conjectured that Magozaemon was headed for ruin, and it was not too long after that twenty or so people in the family died in one day from mushroom poisoning. Only one seven-year-old girl did not die. She merely grew old without having any children, and recently died of an illness.<sup>67</sup>

Chiba identified the *zashiki warashi* with Okunai-sama, the household deity that looked after the fate of the family. He also connected *zashiki warashi* with the small child or *kozō* from the Dragon Palace, and to Hanatare Kozō (translated by Komatsu Kazuhiko as “Snotty-nosed Brat”), whose stay in one’s house was tied to the fortune of the house.<sup>68</sup> The story of Hanatare Kozō is as follows.

This child was given to an old man in Higo who sold firewood. He had prayed to the Dragon God and thrown his unsold firewood into the water. A beautiful woman appeared and gave him a child with the admonition that since this child was a gift from the Dragon God, the child would grant any wish of the old man, but in return, he must offer the child a shrimp a day. The old man put the child beside his altar and went into town to buy a shrimp to offer to the child every day. The child produced everything the old man asked for, and in no time, he became very rich. One day, however, he got tired of going into town to buy a shrimp for the *hanatare kozō* so he told the child to go back to the Dragon Palace. Upon the child’s departure, his house and wealth vanished.<sup>69</sup>

The child who was worshipped every day brought fortune, and in this respect is a child of good fortune. In contrast, the child who was neglected or expelled brought misfortune, and in this respect is a disaster-causing child. Furthermore, this child is strange (*irui igyō*)—in most versions of the tale of the Dragon Palace Child he is depicted as being physically ugly, or mentally abnormal. This reminds us of other strange children (*idō*), such as the *onigo*, or demon child. Such *onigo* include Benkei, who was black in color, and Kintoki, who was red in color, both of whom could also bring both benefit and harm to the human community. Such strange children were both desired and feared at the same time. Their turbulent and unpredictable nature needed to be “well-managed” by their master. Only in this way could their oscillation between bringing wealth and bringing calamity be brought under control, and benefit those around them.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The *gohō dōji* was a double symbol combining both the symbol of the guardian deity and the symbol of the child. Guardian deities were originally demonic spirits and local deities opposed to Buddhism. Their turbulent or fierce propensities were not eliminated, but rather were kept intact, and placed under the management of buddhas and bodhisattvas in the service of Buddhism. These deities were violent and merciless in punishing the transgressors of the dharma, but benevolent and compassionate in rewarding the followers of the dharma. Like other guardians of the dharma, *gohō dōji* were also characterized by the same dual propensities of malevolence and benevolence in protecting the followers of Buddhism. But while their duty to protect the dharma was similar to that of other guardians, since they were also children, they had to be supervised or directed by adult principals, in this case master deities or religious specialists. Furthermore, because they were children they could perform more mundane tasks or odd jobs. *Gohō dōji* not only followed the orders of their masters and delivered their messages, but also attended to their every need, no matter how menial or trivial. However, since they were children, their actions were not always predictable, as they might at times be overzealous in carrying out their orders. The changeability supposedly characteristic of children—oscillating between benevolence and malevolence, peacefulness and turbulence, compassion and cruelty, freedom and dependency—was put to use by the adult principals. As double-edged swords, able to bring blessings or calamities at the command of their masters, *gohō dōji* became very popular and effective servants. In Buddhist circles and beyond, accounts of these child servant spirits soared in the medieval Japanese imaginaire, as these children took on different names or forms in the ever-expanding discourse about them.

## NOTES

1. I am very grateful to Iyanaga Nobumi for his valuable comments, corrections, and encouragement. As always, I am thankful for Paul Harrison's criticism and support. An earlier version of this paper was presented at a workshop which I held on "Images and Concepts of Childhood" at Stanford Humanities Center and Stanford Center for Buddhist Studies, Stanford University, December 2000.

2. I have not been able to find an equivalent for the symbol of *gohō dōji* in medieval Chinese discourse. In medieval Chinese hagiography, there are references to monks being served or attended by spirits or ghosts, but no mention of child servant deities in particular. In the *Song gaoseng zhuan* deities (*shen*) and spirits appear as evidence of the resonance (*ganying*) eminent monks inspire. On this issue, see John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1997). For instance, we find spirits who assist monks in sweeping roads, lighting lamps, replenishing incense, drawing water, bringing fruit and wood, causing floodwaters to recede, and in punishing those who abuse monks. See for example, *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, vol. 50, 25.17 (870b23–24) and 22.2 (850a9–11). The one specific instance I came across of such a guardian child spirit is the heavenly youth who attended Daoxuan, identified as Nuocha or Nacha, the son of Vaiśravaṇa (Bishamonten). See *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2061, 14.1 (791a9–13). Daoxuan is also served by Weituo, a youthful deity who can be viewed as another *gohō dōji* type, and Weituo's servants. See *Daoxuan lüshi ganlong lu*, T. 2107, vol. 52 (435c1–6). There are, of course, acolytes who attend bodhisattvas, for example Guanyin's two acolytes, Shan Tongzi (Virgin Lad [Keeping Track] of Good Deeds) and E Tongzi (Virgin Lad [Keeping Track] of Evil Deeds). These two Virgin Lads are the subject of an extensive study by Michel Soymié, "Notes d'iconographie chinoise: les acolytes de Ti-tsang (I)," *Arts asiatiques* 14 (1966): pp. 141–170. However, these acolytes do not become a unique symbol like *gohō dōji* in medieval Japanese discourse.

3. Carmen Blacker and Christine Guth have both written general surveys on the subject of divine boys, in the context of Japanese Buddhism and Japanese art respectively. See Carmen Blacker, "The Divine Boy in Japanese Buddhism," *Asian Folklore Studies* 22 (1963): pp. 77–88 (also in Carmen Blacker, *Collected Writings of Carmen Blacker* [Tokyo, Tokyo Library Japan, 2000], pp. 101–109) and Christine Guth, "Divine Boy in Japanese Art," *Monumenta Nipponica* 42, no. 1 (1987): pp. 1–23. Whereas Blacker defines the "divine boy" in terms of *gohō dōji* in Buddhism specifically, Guth represents the "divine boy" as a religious archetype, such as the infant

Buddha or Shitta Taishi, the infant Prince Shōtoku or Nambutsu Taishi, the boy Kōbō Daishi or Chigo Daishi, the boy Monju or Chigo Monju and the adolescent Monju or Nawa Monju, and the child Kannon or Chigo Kannon. Yanagita Kunio has also written a short article on the subject. He stresses the point that these heavenly children (*tendō*) who protect the buddhadharma are also demonic spirits and are used as mediums in exorcism. Yanagita Kunio, "Gohō dōji," *Kyōdo kenkyū* 2, no. 11 (1915): pp. 641–654. More recently Koyama Satoko, a Ph.D. candidate working on the *gohō dōji*, has published a number of articles on her research. See for example, Koyama, "Chūsei zenki no Shōren'in monzeki ni okeru gohō dōji shinkō no juyō," *Nihon shūkyō bungakushi kenkyū* 4, no. 1 (2000): pp. 38–62; Koyama, "Dainihonkoku hokekyōgenki ni miru gohō dōji," *Setsuwabungaku kenkyū* 35 (July 2000): pp. 105–117; Koyama, "Gohō dōji no zuzōteki sekai," *Setsuwa* 10 (February 2000): pp. 41–68; Koyama, "Chūsei zenki ni okeru dōji shinkō no ryūsei to mappō shisō," *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 43, no. 1 (2000): pp. 45–69. She examines the possible origins and the development of the cult of *gohō dōji*. Some of her main points are as follows. The popularity of *dōji* in the early medieval period can be seen as a result of the belief in the final age of the dharma (*mappō*), in which buddhas and bodhisattvas will manifest in the most appropriate form to save sentient beings, i.e., in the form of children. Furthermore, the cult of *dōji* originated from the *Lotus Sutra*, and as a result the earliest form of *dōji* are the *tendō*, who protect those who recite the *Lotus Sutra*. These *tendō* later came to be identified with the *dōji* of Fudō Myōō, in particular, Kongara and Seitaka, in addition to the *kongō dōji* who vowed to protect sentient beings during *mappō* as *gohō*. Thus by the latter part of the medieval period, the cult of *gohō dōji* developed as the amalgamation of the cults of *tendō* and *gohō*, to encompass the servant spirits of esoteric deities such as Fudō Myōō and Benzaiten, and in this way the *gohō dōji*'s protection extended well beyond the reciters of the *Lotus Sutra* to the followers of the dharma. The actual term *gohō dōji* came to be used during the latter part of the Muromachi period even though in the mid-Heian period there were expressions such as *gohō* or *tendō*. On the art history front, there have recently been two special exhibitions on children in Japanese art at the Hikone Castle Museum in 2000 and at the Tokyo National Museum in 2001. The respective catalogues from the exhibitions are *Bijutsu no naka no dōji*, compiled by Hikonejō hakubutsukan, 2000, and *Bijutsu no naka no kodomotachi*, compiled by Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2001. Furthermore there is a journal issue devoted to the forms of children in the medieval period. See Tsuda Tetsuei, ed., "Chūsei no dōji-gyō," *Nihon no bijutsu* 2003, no. 442 (March). I am indebted to Iyanaga Nobumi for this reference.

4. The *vidyā rāja* Acala (Fudō Myōō) is also a youth, at times appearing as a child, and is a messenger. See, for example, *Asabashō*, T. zuzōbu 9,

324b23–25. In Daoism, we see that messenger deities often took the form of children, e.g., the Azure Lad and the Jade Maiden. For a study on the Azure Lad, see Paul Kroll, “In the Halls of the Azure Lad,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105, no. 1 (January–March 1985): pp. 75–94. We can also compare such child deities with other Western messenger deities, such as the Greek Hermes, who is often represented as a young deity and is a god of communication, and Eros, another young deity who is a god of communication between men and women. I am indebted to Iyanaga Nobumi for bringing this comparison to my attention and also for the following reference. See Laurence Kahn, *Hermes passe, ou, Les ambiguïtés de la communication* [collection Textes à l’appui] (Paris: F. Maspero, 1978).

5. For discussion of the notion of *muen*, see Amino Yoshihiko, *Muen, kugai, raku: Nihon chūsei no jiyū to heiwa*, Heibonsha sensho 58 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1978) and Amino Yoshihiko and Abe Kinya, [*Taidan*] *Chūsei no saihakken: ichi, zōyo, en kai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1994).

6. See Iijima Yoshiharu, “Folk Culture and the Liminality of Children,” *Current Anthropology* 28, no. 4 (1987): pp. 41–47. This also brings to mind two Indian threshold deities or guardians of the door: Skanda, who appears as a handsome young man (Kumāra) or sometimes even as a boy (*dōji*), and Gaṇeśa, a god of obstacles who is an ugly dwarf with a pot-belly and an elephant head with a single tusk. For a discussion of these guardian deities, see R.A. Stein, “The Guardian of the Gate: An Example of Buddhist Mythology, From Indian to Japan,” in *Asian Mythologies*, ed. Yves Bonnefoy (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 112–136. On the birth stories of Gaṇeśa and Skanda, see Iyanaga Nobumi, *Kannon hen’yōtan*, Bukkyō shinwagaku II (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2002), pp. 11–31. Skanda later becomes Weituo in China and his form is very similar to that of *gohō dōji*. Weituo is known to have served the monk Daoxuan, bringing him food from the heavenly kitchen every day (Iyanaga, *Kannon hen’yōtan*, pp. 117–121). He is also known to be able to send a begging bowl flying. For more details on this issue, see note 35. Weituo not only becomes the guardian of the monastery gate in China from the seventh century onwards, but later also becomes the guardian of the kitchen in Chan and Zen monasteries to ensure plentiful food supply for the sangha. Mañjuśrī, another young man type, is also known as the keeper of the refectory. Stein, “The Guardian of the Gate,” pp. 125–127.

7. Iijima, “Folk Culture and Liminality of Children,” p. 42, and Nakano Chizuru, “Gohō dōji to dōdōji,” *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 27, no. 1 (1984): pp. 23–62.

8. Tanaka Takako, “Torai suru kami to dochaku suru kami,” in *Nihon no kami, vol. 1: kami no shigen*, ed. Yamaori Tetsuo (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1995), pp. 174–208.

9. Tanaka, "Torai suru *kami* to dochaku suru *kami*," p. 206.
10. For studies of the cult of arhats see Michibata Ryōshū, *Rakan shinkōshi* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1983) and Sylvain Lévi and Edouard Chavannes, "Les seize Arhat protecteurs de la Loi," *Journal asiatique* 8 (1916): pp. 5–48, 189–304.
11. I have discussed this issue elsewhere. See Irene H. Lin, "From Thunder Child to Dharma-protector: Dōjō hōshi and the Buddhist Appropriation of Japanese Local Deities," in *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, eds. Teeuwen and Rambelli (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 54–76.
12. On *honji suijaku*, see Teeuwen and Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*.
13. I have examined this issue elsewhere. See Lin, "The Ideology of Imagination: The Tale of Shuten Dōji as a Kenmon Discourse," in *Buddhist Priests, Kings, and Marginals: Studies on Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, eds. Bernard Faure and François Lachaud, *Cahiers d'Extrême Asie* 13 (2002–2003): pp. 379–410.
14. *T. 76*, 2410, 782–784. For an introduction to the *Keiranshūyōshū*, see Allan Grapard, "Keiranshūyōshū: A Different Perspective on Mt. Hiei in the Medieval Period," in *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 55–69.
15. *T. 76*, 2410, 783a and b. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Benzaiten is given as having fifteen or sixteen sons who are incarnations of various Buddhist deities symbolizing various crafts of which she is a patron. See Louis Frédéric, *Buddhism: Flammarion Iconographic Guides* (New York: Flammarion, 1995). Sensha Dōji is an incarnation of Yakujo Bosatsu. Seitaka Dōji, who serves Fudō Myōō, is often paired with Kongara as the two acolytes most often represented with him. He can have two, eight, thirty-six, or forty-eight child acolytes.
16. *T. 76*, 2140, 783c. Iyanaga Nobumi kindly edited my translation of this story and pointed to the fact that this single-pronged *vajra* had been transmitted to the Monk Sōo from the monarchical rector (*sōjō*) Ryōkai of Imuro and is still in Mt. Hiei.
17. *Konjaku monogatari-shū*, fasc. 13, no. 23. *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 24, ed. Takagi Ichinosuke et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1957–1968), pp. 239–240.
18. *Kokonchomonjū*, fasc. 17, no. 600, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 84, pp. 461–462.
19. Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *The Tale of Heike* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 178–179.
20. In the *Asabashō*, the chapter on Fudō Myōō contains a section describing the two attendants of the deity, Kongara Dōji and Seitaka Dōji. *Asabashō*, *T. zuzōbu* 9, 325a19–20. The text states that Kongara Dōji is very careful and

respectable, whereas Seitaka is hard to deal with and has a malevolent character.

21. Hanawa Hokiichi, compiler, *Gunsho Ruiju* (Tokyo: Nagai Shoseki, 1928–1937), book 487.

22. Yoshiko Dykstra, trans., *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan: The Dainihonkoku hokekyōkenki of Priest Chingen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), pp. 114–115. Usually the text is read *Dainihonkoku hokekyōgenki*, not *hokekyōkenki* as Dykstra reads it. Thus in the paper I refer to the text in the conventional way.

23. Yoshiko Dykstra, *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan*, p. 115.

24. *Kokonchomonjū*, fasc. 2, no. 46, *Nihon koten bungaku Taikei* 84, pp. 81–83. Another magical contest involving a *gohō* is found in *Ōkagami* fasc. 3, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 21, pp. 148–149; Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *Ōkagami: The Great Mirror Fujiwara Michinaga (996–1027) and His Times, A Study and Translation* (Princeton and Tokyo: Princeton University Press and University of Tokyo Press, 1988), p. 150.

25. D. E. Mills, trans., *A Collection of Tales from Uji: A Study and Translation of Uji Shūi Monogatari* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

26. Mills, *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, pp. 193–194.

27. *Konjaku monogatari* fasc. 12, no. 34, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 24, pp. 185–186.

28. For a discussion of the use of child-mediums in possession and exorcism, see Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 194–227.

29. For a study of such exorcistic rituals, see Komatsu Kazuhiko, *Hyōrei shinkoron* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1994).

30. Mills, *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, p. 146.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 425–426.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

33. There is a variation of this story in the *Soga monogatari*. See Thomas J. Cogan, trans., *The Tale of the Soga Brothers* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1987), pp. 189–193.

34. *Nihon emaki taisei 4: Shigisan engi* (Tokyo: Chūōkoronsha, 1977).

35. Scroll one tells of how Myōren sends his bowl flying to the foot of the mountain, where there lived a rich landlord, for the purpose of obtaining food. One day, people in the squire's house were taking rice out of the granary when Myōren's bowl came flying into a corner of the granary. Later, having forgotten that the bowl was still inside the storehouse, the



workers closed the door. Suddenly the granary began to shake and rose into the air. The door opened, the bowl came out of the granary, and the bowl carried the building in flight to Shigisan. The squire later apologized for his negligence and begged Myōren to return the rice. Myōren said that the granary had to stay there, but the rice would be sent back. A noteworthy factor of this account is that one of the supernormal powers that could be acquired through meditation was the ability to fly (*rddhi*-s, which belong to higher knowledges or *abhijñā*-s). Here, Myōren's ability to send his bowl flying was indicative of his advanced state of practice that gave him the power of flight, which extended to his begging bowl. This brings to mind a similar account, Jietaisi of the flying bowl, which gets filled with jewels owing to the miraculous power of Skanda or Weituo. See Stein, "The Guardian of the Gate," p. 127 and Iyanaga, *Kannon hen'youtan*, pp. 84–86. Another point worthy of mention here is that Myōren's worship of Bishamonten may have also given him and objects associated with him powers of flight. In the *Bishamontennōkyō*, it states that when a practitioner recites the sutra and makes offerings to Bishamon, the deity will manifest in the form of a *dōji* or a layperson, according to the wish of the practitioner. See *T.* 21, 1244: 215–216, 216a. Furthermore, the sutra continues by saying that "those who recite the sutra will obtain the ability to fly about freely." Art historians Miya Tsugio and Sawa Takaaki have suggested that the sword-*gohō* is the fifth servant spirit of Bishamonten, which is evident from the similarity of images of the *dōji* with that of this fifth servant spirit (an adult wearing a similar sword suit). Miya Tsugio, "Shigisan engi kyojitsu zakkō," in *Bukkyō setsuwa-e no kenkyū*, ed. Kameda Tsutomu (Tokyo: Tokyo bijitsu, 1979), pp. 129–146. For the image, see *Taishō zuzōbu* 7, 551; Sawa Takaaki, "Shigisan engi to Toba sōjō Kakuyū-kō," in *Nihon emaki taisei 4: Shigisan engi* (Tokyo: Chūōkoronsha, 1977).

36. There is a version of this story in the *Uji shūi monogatari*, which reveals more about the sword-*gohō* and his relation to Bishamonten. Mills, *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, pp. 286–291.

37. For a study of *shikigami*, see Komatsu, *Hyōrei shinkōron*, pp. 145–228. Izanagiryū, a folk religion with Onmyōdō influence, also used servant spirits known as *shiki ōji*. These servant spirits were summoned by prayers, and they would get rid of the curse causing the illness of the person who was wronged. For a study of *shiki ōji*, see Saitō Hideki, *Izanagiryū: shiki ōji* (Tokyo: Shinkigensha, 2000).

38. Mills., *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, pp. 339–340.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 175–176.

40. For a detailed study of these rituals, see Miyake Hitoshi, *Shugendō girei no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1985). For a summary of such rites, see Miyake Hitoshi, "Religious Rituals in Shugendō: A Summary," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 16, nos. 2–3 (1989): pp. 101–116.

41. Miyake Hitoshi, "Kumano Gongen: The Idea of Deity in Shugendō," in *Shugendō: Essays on the Structure of Japanese Folk Religion* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2001), pp. 36–59.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 48
44. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
45. For example, women were believed to be especially susceptible to possession by evil spirits during the time of childbirth. Thus, when the daughter of Taira no Kiyomori, the Empress Kenreimon'in, was giving birth, a number of eminent monks were summoned to perform esoteric rituals to ensure safe delivery, and the Kongō Dōji ritual was one of these rites. Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *The Taiheiki: A Chronicle of Medieval Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 12 and McCullough, *The Tale of Heikei*, pp. 100–101.
46. Miyake, *Shugendō girei no kenkyū*, p. 349.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 445–474.
48. Kyoko M. Nakamura, trans., *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon ryōiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), pp. 140–142.
49. Gorai Shigeru, "Shugendo Lore," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 16, nos. 2–3 (1989): pp. 117–142.
50. For the rite of the flying bowl, *Nyōi hōju tenrin himitsu genshin jōbutsu konrinjuōkyō*, see T. 19, 961: 330–324, 330c–331a and Iyanaga, *Kannon hen'youtan*, pp. 83–99.
51. *Shugendō no hon: kami to butsu ga yūgō yamagai no mandara*, Collection Bukkusū Esoterika 8 (Tokyo: Gakushū kenkyūsha, 1993), pp. 34–40.
52. For a detailed study of the *tengu*, refer to the pioneering work of M.W. de Visser, "The Tengu," *Transactions Asiatic Journal* 36, no. 2 (1908): pp. 1–159.
53. *Tengu zōshi*, in vol. 27 of *Shinshū Nihon Emakimono Zenshū*, ed. Umezu Jirō (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1978).
54. *Ibid.*
55. Zegaibō-e in vol. 27 of *Shinshū Nihon Emakimono Zenshū*, ed. Umezu Jirō (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1978). Compare this story to the following tale, which I have also translated. According to Komatsu Kazuhiko, the former story is based on the latter account. Komatsu Kazuhiko, *Nihon Yōkai ibunroku* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1995), p. 90.

There was a powerful *tengu* who lived in China, named Chira Eiju. He came to Japan and upon meeting Japanese *tengu* said that in his country, even though there were virtuous monks, the *tengu*

were free in their actions. Hearing that there were also practicing monks in Japan, he wanted to compare the monks of the two countries and challenge the Japanese monks. Together they went to Hieizan's Ishi sotoba at Ōtake, and the Japanese *tengu* said that since his face was already known, he would hide, and advised the *tengu* from China to transform himself into an old monk and wait for passersby. Yokei then approached, sitting in a palanquin on his way to the capital. The Japanese *tengu*, who was anxious to see what tricks the Chinese *tengu* would play, instead saw the priest's procession pass by. Surprised at the turnout, he found Eiju hiding in a valley. Eiju explained that when he went near, he did not see the priest, but saw flames on top of the palanquin. Afraid to be burned, he hid himself in the valley. His next attempt was on Priest Jinzen. However, an attendant of the priest, a child with short hair (*gohō dōji*) swinging a stick, preceded the monk, saw Eiju, and chased him away. Then a group of people was seen descending the mountain. It was the Priest Jie surrounded by a group of boys, about twenty or thirty of them, holding whips. One of them said, "There is something suspicious nearby," and another said, "This is the place where the old monk hides," and others said, "Let's bind him ... don't let him escape." About ten of them approached and pulled him out, and started to whip him, asking his identity. The old monk replied that he was a *tengu* from China and recounted the whole story: how when Yokei (Jikaku daishi) came by, he chanted the mantra of Fudō Myōō, and then a big blaze appeared on top of his palanquin, thus he had to run away to escape the flame. Then when Jinzen came and read the mantra of Fudō Myōō, Seitaka Dōji came and, holding an iron cane, chased him away. Hearing this, the group of boys then each took a turn and trampled on him. Thus beaten, the Japanese *tengu* took Eiju to a hot spring before sending him back to China (*Konjaku monogatari-shū* 4, pp. 145–49).

56. Gorai, "Tengu to minkan shinkō," in *Tengu zōshi*, vol. 27 of *Shinshū Nihon Emakimono Zenshū*, ed. Umezu Jirō (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1978), pp. 35–38.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45. *Tengu* are turbulent spirits: *onryō* or *kijin* on one side and protective deities on the other side.

59. Haruko Nishioka Wakabayashi, "Tengu: Images of the Buddhist Concepts of Evil in Medieval Japan" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1995).

60. *Konjaku monogatari-shū*, vol. 4, in *Iwanami koten bungaku taikei*, vol. 25 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1962), pp. 144–145. Iyanaga brings to my

attention that this tale represents a type of religious nationalism: a *tengu* from India comes to Japan via China, following the chanting of a phrase of the *Daihannyakyō*, traced to Mt. Hiei. Thus, the source of the sutra chanting originates in Japan and reaches India via China, representing a “reverse flow” of the dharma. Nichiren had a similar idea that in the age of *mappō*, the dharma flows from the East to the West. This brings to mind other kinds of religious nationalism, for instance the reverse *honji-suijaku* of later Shinto and the ideas of Hirata Atsutane in the Edo period.

61. *Tsukumogami-ki*, in Yokoyama Shigeru and Matsumoto Takanobu, eds., *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei 9* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1981). Komatsu has studied this text; see *Nihon Yōkai ibunroku*, pp. 195–202.

62. This text is cited in *Tsukumogami-ki*, 417–425. Fabio Rambelli discussed this text at length in “Objects, Rituals, Tradition: A Genealogy of the Memorial Services (*kuyō*) for Objects in Japan,” work in progress, pp. 24–29. Komatsu Kazuhiko also discussed this story in *Hyōrei shinkōron*, pp. 336–338 and *Nihon Yōkai ibunroku*, pp. 188–202. Also see accounts of such parade of *yōkai*, or the *Hyakki yagyō*, e.g., Tanaka Takako, *Hyakki yagyō no mieru toshi* (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 1994) and Tanaka Takako, Hanada Kiyoteru, Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, and Komatsu Kazuhiko, *Zusetsu Hyakki yagyō emaki o yomu* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 1999).

63. Chiba Toku, “Zashiki warashi,” in *Minzokugaku kenkyū* 3 (1952): pp. 61–84.

64. We also see mention of *zashiki warashi* in Yanagita Kunio’s “Momotarō no tanjō,” 1933 and Orikuchi Shinobu’s *Tabi to densetsu* 7: 1 and *Minkan densetsu* 12: pp. 3, 6.

65. Komatsu, *Hyōrei shinkōron*, pp. 26–27.

66. Kunio Yanagita, *The Legends of Tōno*, trans. Ronald A. Morse (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1975), p. 22.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.

68. Chiba, “Zashiki warashi,” pp. 8–9. Similarly, there are dog spirits that possess houses, *inugami tsuki*. If these *inugami* are satisfied, the house will be wealthy. If they are neglected, calamity will befall the house.

69. Komatsu has studied this Dragon Palace Child. Komatsu Kazuhiko, “The Dragon Palace Child: An Anthropological and Sociohistorical Approach,” *Current Anthropology* 28, no. 4 (August–October 1987): pp. 31–39. The story can be found in Seki Keigo, *Mukashibanashi no rekishi* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1966), pp. 8–22. We can view the Dragon Palace Child as a type of wish-fulfilling child (*nyōi-dōji*), a transformation of the wish-fulfilling jewel (*nyoi hōju*) of the Dragon Palace. We recall that the possessor of the *nyoi hōju* is granted any wish and thus becomes a great king, as in the case of Daishokkan Kamatari. On this subject, see Abe Yasurō, “Daishokkan no seritsu,” *Kōwakamai kyoku kenkyū* 4 (Tokyo: Miyai shoten, 1986), pp. 80–195.