

## 講演 3

# 山の宗教・仏教史の立場から、宗像の祭祀・信仰を考える

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## はじめに

日本仏教は、列島固有の自然文化環境に即して独自に発展したが、同時にアジアに広く流布し定着していった普遍的な宗教の一部でもある。この両面を正當に評価することから、日本仏教の実態が見えてくるだろう。この点を歴史・思想から考える上で、報告者が注目しているのが「山の宗教」である〔菊地 2020〕。仏教と山林修行の関係はインド・中国・朝鮮半島を通じて展開しており、山林修行<sup>1</sup>はけっして日本列島に〈固有〉の文化ではない。それぞれの地域で、山の宗教は多様なバリエーションのもとに展開してきた。その共通する特徴の一つが、習合<sup>2</sup>という現象である。

今回の国際検討会のテーマは、宗像の祭祀・信仰の「歴史的変遷」に注目することである。この意味で、本報告では山の宗教における言説として一般化している「基層信仰論」〔五來 2009〕をいったん措き、さらに「固有の信仰」という概念にもかっこ付きの慎重な姿勢を取りたい。〈固有〉へのこだわりは、神と仏のどちらが列島に〈固有〉の文化であるかという議論を導き出し、二者択一的な結論に固執することになりがちだからである。報告者は、日本列島における神と仏が、歴史的変遷の中で双方が相手を抱きとめる (embracement) 関係と見るのがもっとも実態的であることを提案したい。それはアジアの多くの地域で同様であった。

以上の問題意識に立ち、本報告では宗像社・宗像

神を中心に据えて、最初に報告者の考える「山の宗教」の構造を簡単に紹介したい。そこから、海の神・島の神である宗像神の信仰にアプローチし、宗像信仰の原形と構造について私見を述べる。ついで、10世紀ごろから顕著に見られるようになる、宗像社の仏教化について考え、最後に鎌倉期における大陸交渉と蒙古襲来という歴史的事件の中で、宗像信仰がどのように変容していくのかについて考えてみよう。

なお、宗像社および宗像神については、呼称について多くの歴史的変遷が知られるが、本発表では一般的に三社・三神を一括して呼称する際には、宗像社・宗像神とする。

## 1. 「山の宗教」から「島の宗教」を考える

各地において、山々の山頂には古代の祭祀遺跡が確認されている。報告者もまた、山の頂上が聖地であったことを否定するものではない。しかし、古代の人々があえて山中深くに侵入することはむしろ稀であり、頂上よりもむしろ裾野にこそ関心があったと考えている。山の裾野は薪炭林が広がるとともに木材が生産され (杣)、狩猟・採集の場でもある。このような、いわゆる「里山」<sup>3</sup>の領域は、人間の日常生活領域の周縁にあつて、深山・高山との境界領域であった。里山には多くの神が祀られ、さらにそれらが抱きとめるように神宮寺の建立が進んだ。両者が習合することにより、中世成立期には里山寺院が山の裾野に姿を現すようになる。一般に、山林修

<sup>1</sup> 近年、山岳信仰など深山・高山を強調する「山岳」という用語の使用に慎重な立場が広がっている。筆者もこの指摘に従い、同じ立場に立って本稿では「山林修行」で統一する。後述の「里山寺院」と併せて、〔菊地 2016〕参照。

<sup>2</sup> 近年、吉田一彦氏を中心に「神仏融合」なる新たな呼称が提起されている〔吉田 2024〕。従来の習合論を見直すという意味では支持したい。ただし、吉田氏はキリスト教文化における syncretism を参照系とし、「習合」という言葉を近代において否定的な用例に限定している点には疑問もある。「習」には「慣れる」「親しむ」と言う意味もあり、同じ地理的環境の中で融合していく現象をそれなりに表現していることから、本稿では従来の学術用語に従い、「神仏習合」とする。

<sup>3</sup> 「里山」の形成にも歴史的な段階があり、用語も含めて慎重な検討が必要であるが〔水野 2015〕、本発表ではこの点に深く立ち入らない。

行者は春から秋までの約 75～90 日間を修行の期間とし、あとは里山寺院で過ごす。しかし、里山寺院の成立とともに、これらをベースキャンプとして、より高山・深山にアプローチし、さらには通年を山上で過ごす山林修行者が登場する。このような典型的な「山の宗教」の垂直構造を、つぎに海上の水平構造に展開して、古代中世の宗像信仰に注目している。

宗像社の中で近年とくに注目されてきたのは、沖ノ島においてヤマト王権の強い影響下に形成された、豪華な祭祀遺物を伴う古代の祭祀遺跡であった。しかし、沖ノ島は「山の宗教」の構造から考えると「山頂」にあたり、古代における地域的な祭祀の中心からはるかに外れた周縁的な場所にある。ここに、沖ノ島祭祀の極めて特殊な性格を考えなければならない。もっともこの点は、これまでも諸氏によって検討されてきた。そこで本報告では、むしろ田島と大島に焦点を当てて、「山の宗教」の類型の中で考察する。それぞれの社地の背後には共通して霊山があり、古代以来の祭祀の跡が確認されている。ここから、個別的には「山の宗教」として捉えることも可能である。さらに両者が複合し、沖ノ島の祭祀も含み込んで三宮・三神が成立する変遷過程を仮説的に提示してみたい。

田島は釣川河口部に形成された、浜堤背後の微高地に位置する。その周囲はフカダ（深田）・ムタジリ（牟田尻）など湿地特有の地名に囲まれており、ラグーンに浮かぶ島を原風景としてイメージすることができる [笹生 2024]。田島後背の低山には古墳が点在し、なかでも高宮での祭祀こそ、田島における祭祀の原点であった [花田 2012]。その裾野に、のちの辺津宮へと発展する祭祀の拠点で宗像氏の政治拠点到隣接して形成されたと見たい。つぎに中津宮の鎮座する大島には、島の中央に御嶽山がある。近年の発掘調査により、ここにも古代祭祀遺跡が認められている [宗像市教育委員会 2012]。そこで中津宮の起源を、この山の裾野に設けられた祭祀場に求めることも可能であろう。ただし、山頂付近の御嶽山遺跡からの出土品を見ると、古代の田島・沖ノ島との関連が深い可能性もあり、大島固有の山の祭祀

とも即断できない。

ここで、大島の性格を考えるにあたり参照したいのが、かつて谷川健一によって提唱された「青い島」論である [谷川 1979]。谷川は、地名にアオの付く島、すなわちアオシマ・オウシマなどが古くは埋葬の聖地であったと推定した。これにアワシマ・オオシマを含めて考えてもよいだろう。宗像大島も含め、必ずしも谷川のモデルが普遍的に各地の「オオシマ」に当てはまるわけではない。しかし、古くからすぐ対岸に望むことのできる島にオオシマ・アオシマ・アワシマなどの地名があり、それらが一般的に神聖視されていたという事例は少なくないであろう。ここに、田島が高宮に起源する「山の宗教」の祭祀の拠点であると同時に、海に向かっては大島祭祀の拠点ともなった可能性が浮上してくる。ただし、その祭祀の核となるのは必ずしも御嶽山というわけではなく、それを含みこんだ大島そのものを聖所と見なした可能性がある。なお、宗像大島には古代から人が住み集落が形成されていたが、古く聖所が必ずしも禁足地でなかったことは、近年の研究にもとづき「山の宗教」の立場から報告者が考察したところである。

このように報告者は、田島・大島では、それぞれ背後の里山の聖所に対する祭祀を含み込みつつ、田島から海に向かって大島に対する祭祀を執行するというのが、宗像における古代祭祀の原型であることを提起してみたい。これに対して、沖ノ島の祭祀をどのように考えたらよいだろうか。4 世紀後半に始まるという沖ノ島の祭祀は、遺跡・遺物の内容から指摘されてきたように、朝鮮半島との競合的關係や通交上の海路の重要性を意識しながら、ヤマト王権の強い関与のもとに大規模に行った境界祭祀の様相をよく伝えている。しかし、その祭祀には宗像氏が在地の有力な豪族として強く介在していたことから、比較的早い時期に田島・大島の二所祭祀にややいびつな形で、沖ノ島の祭祀が包括されることになったであろう [新修宗像市史編集委員会 2022・2023]。先述の大島御嶽山遺跡の調査成果から、大島において沖ノ島と共通するような祭具遺物が確認されていることから、三神の祭祀が直接には宗像氏により

一体のものとして執行されたことは疑いない。しかしながら、御嶽山遺跡は遺物から7世紀以降に形成されたものであり、記紀神話の成立期をさかのぼるものではない。

その記紀神話においては神名に異同があつて、なお三神一体の祭祀が安定していない段階を暗示している。報告者にも確たる私案はないが、ここではまず、『古事記』の説として大島の神をサヨリヒメとしていることに注目したい。「サヨリヒメ」とは「美しい(島に) 憑る女神」で、「カンナビの島」<sup>4</sup>にふさわしい神名である。いっぽう、イチキシマヒメなる神名は『古事記』では大島の神の別名、また『日本書紀』本文では田島の神、第二・第三の書では沖ノ島の神とされており、いずれの島の神にも用いられたごとくである。「イチキシマ」とは「斎(いつ)く島の神」すなわち祭祀を受ける島であるとともに、「島を斎く神」つまり「神宿る島」を祭祀する神をも包括的に表している。いわば宗像神そのものとも考えられるが、あえていえば田島の神こそその名にふさわしい<sup>5</sup>。この意味で、『日本書紀』があえて「イチキシマヒメ」の名を当てている第二・第三の一書を引いているところに、沖ノ島にカンナビの島の性格をシフトさせた律令国家の政治性を読み取ることもできるかもしれない。

中世には、「宗像大菩薩御縁起」に見えるように、宗像三宮への祭神の配当は固定したと思われる。また、「田島宮社頭古図」などから中世の社殿の配置についても推定されているが、古代の社殿については長承元年(1132)に焼失しており(『中右記』長承2年2月8日・同5月28日条)、復元案が提示されている。これについて、報告者は『宗像神社史』の中で、「田島(辺津宮)の古代祭祀は、上高宮・下高宮・中殿(第二宮)・惣社(第一宮)を上から結ぶ線のうちで行われていた」と考察していることに注目している<sup>6</sup> [宗像神社復興期成会 1961・71・下 p13]。

中世の配当では、第一宮が沖ノ島の田切姫、第二

宮が大島の田湍姫、第三宮が田島の市杵島姫となっている。しかし、上記の『宗像神社史』の説明から報告者が大胆に推測すれば、高宮祭祀に起源する惣社の祭神こそがイチキシマヒメ、その間の中殿の祭神は『日本書紀』でタキツヒメとされた大島のサヨリヒメ(『古事記』)というのが、古代に成立した社殿と祭神の原型だったのであり、タゴリヒメとされた沖ノ島の祭神は中軸線からやや東にずれ、遅れて祭祀に加えられたのではないかと推測するのである。

## 2 宗像信仰の仏教化

宗像社が仏教を受け入れた時期やその実像を推定するうえで、天元2年(979)2月14日「太政官符」(『類聚符宣抄』巻1)の記述は興味深い。この文書は、宗像氏能の宗像社大官司補任を認めるものであるが、まず貞元3年(978)に神祇官を通じて提出された氏能および氏人らの解状の引用から始まる。氏能らによれば、宗像社は原初以来「日本之固」であるといい、護国の軍神の性格を強調している。ところが天慶年中、すなわち承平・天慶の乱(935-941)のころまでは官司を置かず神主職が諸事を執行し、年々の祭祀には山海に臨んで「漁獵」を先としていた。しかし、藤原純友の乱が鎮圧された際、(神の武功により)勲位が授けられると、太宰大貳源清平に對してしきりに託宣があり、天皇より「菩薩位」を授かったという。官符によれば以下のように、ここから急に仏教化が始まったかのごとく述べている。

長く獵山漁海の祠祀を停め、法施を登覺の善根に修す。年首・歳末、並びに香花を薫じ、或は五日、或は三夜、僧侶を囑して法味を唱う。彼の田獵の料を移し、此の功德の施に充つ

<sup>4</sup> 「カンナビの島」は沖ノ島の性格を捉えた興味深い指摘である[新修宗像市史編集委員会 2023]。本報告では「カンナビ」については[上野 2015]に従い、美しい円錐形の山体のみならず、聖所一般を指すと理解している。

<sup>5</sup> 神を祀る神、という考え方は、和辻哲郎の説としてよく知られている[和辻 1977]。

<sup>6</sup> なお、その後、花田勝広も詳しい復元案を提示している[花田 2012]。

かつて、八幡神は隼人征伐に協力して多くの殺生を犯した罪に苦しんだ。そこで懺悔により神身離脱を図って八幡大菩薩となり、放生会の執行が八幡宮における重要な仏事となっていく。おなじく純友の乱による殺生を懺悔した宗像神は菩薩となると、山海の狩漁による贄・供御を止め、仏事を行って香華を供え、僧を招いて読経の法味を納受した。興味深いのは、その布施に「田獵」（山谷での狩猟）の料を充てるとしていることである。ここには、殺生禁断の論理が明瞭に表れている。単純に仏教的倫理を実践して領域の殺生を止め、供御に用いないのではなく、いったん自由な狩猟・漁労を制限した上で、それを大宮司の支配下に置くのである。笹生衛は、宗像社のこのような仏教化を、周辺の自然環境の変化と関連づけて考察している [笹生 2024]。ときに降雨の多い年を含みながら、全体としては乾燥化が進む 10 世紀後半に、田島をめぐるそれまでの潟湖が陸地化したため、あらたに西側の津屋崎に汐入干潟が形成され、港湾機能も移動したというのである。そのような地形の変化は、自然環境に依存する狩猟・漁撈にも影響を与えたはずである。田島周辺から供給されていた供御の内容も変化し、また新たな産地を求める必要が生じた結果、殺生禁断という形で収取体系をも変革させていったのではないか。ちなみに、かなり時代は下るが、14 世紀はじめに宗像氏盛が示した事書には、宗像宮の担当者を差し置いて直接使者を遣わし、浦や島において「肴以下御菜等」を責め取ることを堅く停止している（「宗像氏盛条々事書」『宗像辰美文書』鎌 24773）。肴菜とは、宗像神に捧げる供御（という名目の公事）としての海産物を意味していると考えられ、10 世紀以後も宗像氏のコントロール下における“殺生”（漁撈）は継続していた。

官符に戻ると、このときに大貳清平は、宮司に責任を負わせて仏事を勤行させようとしたが、実際には官符も下されないまま在庁官人らがこの職を競望するに任せていた。そのため祭料の手当てもままならず、神宮の雑務は停滞した。ここで氏能らが参照するのが筑後高良社であり、また宗像社と同じ筑前の住吉・香椎・竈門・宮崎の諸宮であった。これら

はみな、官符を蒙り大宮司を置いてから神威を増したという。その傍例に準じて、宗像社に対しても大宮司を補任するよう神祇官に朝廷への申請を依頼し、大宰府を通じて官符を下すよう希望して認められたのがこの文書の内容である。ここに挙げられた北部九州の諸宮は、いずれも三韓征伐神話に登場する神功皇后およびそれに従う諸神を祀った、いわば皇孫を守護する宮々であった。この意味で、このときに宗像社がもっとも意識していたのは、八幡大菩薩を祀る豊後宇佐神宮であろう。こちらの神号が「大」菩薩であるため、宗像社は「菩薩位」を賜ったものと思われる。じつはすでに延長 3 年（925）、筑前国宗像宮は他の諸国四ヶ所の宮々とともに、上宣官符により宮司を補せられることと決していた。同時に、これらとは別格に挙げられているのが宇佐宮で、こちらは奉勅または上宣官符とされている。一段重い扱いになっているが、朝廷として官符により宮司を補せられる宮々の中に、このとき九州から挙げられたのは八幡宮と宗像宮だけであった。ちなみに、これから半世紀後に下された上述の天元 2 年官符は、奉勅官符である。

先述のように、天元 2 年官符ではこの時に宗像宮はいっきよに仏教化を進めたかのようである。しかしすでに 8 世紀以来、宗像社には神前読経が行われており、承和 5 年（838）には遣唐使安全の祈願のため度者も置かれている [宗像神社復興期成会 1961・71・下]。また、12 世紀以降の宗像社（田島）社殿には仏教系の建物が組み込まれている。なかでも宝塔院を中心とする東塔・西塔・弥勒堂は、宇佐八幡宮の神宮寺として最澄による六所宝塔の一が置かれた弥勒寺を強く意識したものであろう。さらに釣川対岸に位置し、宗像社の神宮寺の性格を持つ、13 世紀成立の鎮国寺周辺には、12 世紀以降の紀年銘を持つ板碑や経筒が分布する。また中世には、宗像社およびその摂社、鎮国寺などは大宰府宝満山修験信仰圈に取り込まれていく。しかし、いずれも宗像社が継続的に仏教を受け入れた時期として、11 世紀以前に遡る徴証はない。すると天元 2 年官符の下された 10 世紀後半は、実際に宗像社における神仏習合の黎明期と位置づけてもよいのかもしれない。

### 3. 神仏習合と蒙古襲来

先述のように、12世紀以降には宗像社周辺に仏教を受け入れていったことを示す様々な遺物が残されている。なかでも「宗像第一宮座主」を称し、文治3年（1187）より40年以上をかけて一筆一切経を書写した色定法師良祐（1159-1242）の事績や、大宮司宗像氏国による阿弥陀経石の将来建立などは著名である。ここではまず、鎮国寺に注目してみたい。弘長3年（1263）3月、「鎮国寺宗像大菩薩」に寺領が寄進された。このときの寄進状によると、この地は「峰は八葉の蓮を周らし、山は三古（鈷）形に似る」とある。たしかに鎮国寺所在地の周辺は海拔100メートル前後のピークを持つ里山が取り巻き、寺自身は東側の境界たる垂頭山から三方に伸びる尾根筋に抱かれるように建立されている。これを密教の世界観に擬し、さらに周囲の瑞相を称えている。つぎに、宗像第一宮は大日如来の垂迹であり、ここに「三密瑜伽の道場」を建立すべきである、じつにこの地は真言流布の霊所であり、本地垂迹相応の地であるという。そこで諸尊と両界曼荼羅を安置し、宗像社領の「惣寺」とするからには、面々の給主は崇重すべきである。よって未来際、殺生禁断とするとともに草木の伐採も禁じて万免不輸の地とし、皇鑑を長老に指名してその門弟が継承することとした（「宗像記追考」鎌8940）。

ついで同年6月、皇鑑は請雨経法を修して功験があり、釈迦の請雨経演説像を刻している（「鎮国寺石窟内線刻釈迦如来演説像銘」『宗像市史』）。すでに見たように、この地に寺院を建立して新たに仏教を受け入れ「惣寺」たる神宮寺と見なすに当たり、寺領の寄進者である大宮司宗像長氏は、総社たる第一宮の本地としての大日如来の聖地であることを地勢との必然的な縁として強調している。ここで注目したいのは、上述の請雨経演説像に付属している銘文である。

勸進比丘西蓮

釈迦如来、請雨経を演説し、八大龍王聞法し、化する所の像也。

第二宮本地

（釈迦如来演説像）

鎮国寺石〔口+屈〕

弘長三年（癸亥）六月十二日発願、同十四日降雨

転経沙門皇鑑 願主沙弥浄心

徒衆〈成賢／知賢〉猷慶 絵師僧澄禅

この演説像が刻まれたのは、鎮国寺境内の石窟内壁面である。ここから、皇鑑への寄進により鎮国寺が成立した直後、彼は徒衆（門弟）とともに祈雨法に関わる『請雨経』を転読し、発願（開白）の二日後には功験を顕したことが分かる。とくに興味深いのは、第一にこの像および銘文を、ほかならぬ山中の石窟に刻したこと、もう一点はこの銘文の中で『請雨経』演説の教主釈迦如来にことさらに「第二宮本地」との注記を加えていることである。

一点目に関しては、すでに元永2年（1119）にこの地に阿弥陀如来像板碑が建立され（元永2年11月7日銘「阿弥陀如来坐像板碑銘」『宗像市史』）、保延4年（1138）には埋経が行われるなど（保延4年10月20日銘「鎮国寺経筒銘」『宗像市史』）、この地は12世紀前半から、仏教的な信仰拠点として成立していたことが知られる。報告者は、その核になるのがこの石窟だったのではないかと考える。よく知られているように、密教修法により降雨を祈る際には龍穴が重要な役割を果たしており、大和室生寺の龍穴はとくに有名である。そこには龍神（龍王）が宿るとの信仰から、密教では龍穴に向けて修法・読経を施し、また龍穴の中に龍神の威力を増す宝珠と見なされた舍利を投入する儀礼が行われた。さらに報告者は、埋経に用いられた經典は、決められた作法に従って如法清浄に書写された「如法経」であることが多く、これが舍利と団体と見られていた可能性について論じたことがある〔菊地2011〕。

鎮国寺からは前述のほかにもう一点、埋経筒が発掘されている。こちらは、追刻銘文から二回改納されていることが分かる。最初の銘文は永治元年（1141）で、鎮国寺の仏教拠点化が進んだ時期に一致し、寄進者は宗像郡奴山の大原為行らであるが、埋納地がはっきりしない。しかし、三度目の埋納は鎮国寺境内で、皇鑑らによる請雨経転読修法の前年に当たる弘長二年であった（永治元年11月20日他

銘「鎮国寺奥院経筒銘」『宗像市史』)。のち、文永2年(1265)には太政官符により、改めて鎮国寺の寺領四至が確認されるとともに、この地は殺生禁断とされた。さらにこの文書の中には、皇鑑がこの地に留まることになった経緯が記されている(「太政官符」『鎮国寺文書』鎌9326)。それによれば、彼は出家して密教を学ぼうと、「斗藪の次で、当山に巡礼の処」、この地が密教の世界観に相応しい場であることを見出した。そこは背後に翠松の森が茂り、前には「蒼波漫々」たる海が広がる修行にふさわしい場所でもあったという。つまり彼は、山林修行者としてこの地に至り、仏教的な霊場を見出すと、宗像大宮司と協力して鎮国寺を創建することになった。このような山林修行の霊場の核となるものとして、前述のように山中にあって信仰を集めてきた祈雨の霊窟の存在は決定的な意味を持っただろう。文永2年太政官符によれば、すでにこの石窟内に「古仏尊像」たる「石体等身不動」が祀られており、この石窟が釈迦説法の間たる「霊鷲窟」でもあったといい、霊場化していたことは明らかである。

二点目に関しては先述のとおり、皇鑑の信仰世界の中には、この地が第一宮の本地たる密教教主大日如来の垂迹の地としてふさわしいことを強調する特徴がある。同じく釈迦如来が第二宮の本地であることを強調し、この修法が宗像に縁が深いことを強調したものであろう。だがさらに、もう一步踏み込んでみると、第二宮の本宮である大島への信仰が、古く祈雨と結びついていた可能性がないだろうか。徴証としてはわずかだが、「宗像大菩薩御縁起」には、中御嶋社の末社23社を挙げており、その中に龍神に関すると思われる龍王社・河上社が見えている。前者の性格は龍神であるが、後者はおなじ縁起の中に豊(玉)姫が登場する。神功皇后が龍神に対して「昔親子の契、空しからずんば、乾珠・満珠を遣わして合力すべし」と呼びかけると、「時に龍神、二種の宝珠を捧げると云々、豊姫三箇日を経て、二珠を持ち来たまへり」と、豊姫がこの宝珠を地上に届けることになる。こうして戦の際には、強石將軍こと宗像神が「御手長」(長手)を上下に振ると、それに合わせて竹内宿禰がこの乾珠・満珠を海中に投げ、

その威力によって潮の満ち引きを自在に操って「異州之軍兵」を滅ぼしたという。この二種の宝珠のエピソードは、三韓征伐神話の中でも最大のクライマックスとなるシーンに、宗像神の威力を強調するうえで抜群の演出効果を添えており、その中で豊姫は重要な役割を果たしている。この豊姫について、同縁起には「龍宮城の昔の御妹の豊姫(今の河上大明神)」と説明している。河上大明神は肥前河上社で、祭神ヨドヒメノミコトは豊玉姫と習合していた。もとより宗像神の基本的性格は海神であり、龍神信仰との習合は一般的に理解しやすい。しかし、ことさら龍王社・河上社を大島中津宮の末社としたことは龍神信仰との特別な結びつきを示唆しており、龍穴と見られる鎮国寺石窟との関係を注意しておきたい。

すでに述べたように、報告者は宗像社が八幡宮を強く意識しながら神仏習合の様相を急にあらわにしていく時期を10世紀後半と考える。しかしながら、「宗像大菩薩御縁起」に語られるような中世神話の影響下に、中世的な宗像三神の信仰が成立する時期は意外に下って鎌倉時代、とくに蒙古襲来以降ではないか。いったん宗像信仰に加わった沖ノ島の神は、中世にいたるまで一貫して三神の一角を占めてはいたものの、同島における古代祭祀が終焉する10世紀以降、いったん後景に退いていくように思われる。これがふたたび三神の第一として脚光を浴びるのが、対外的危機を強く意識した蒙古襲来の時期だったのである。「宗像大菩薩御縁起」の成立や内容については、近年書誌学的検討も踏まえた周到な研究があるのでそちらに譲る[新修宗像市史編集委員会2023]。ここで強調されているのは、三韓征伐神話において宗像神が、八幡神の主力として御長手を巧みに操り勝利を得たことである。その竿を沖ノ島に差ししたところから今も竹が生え続け、これを毎年迎えて中世の「御長手神事」が行われていた。ここに再び、境界の神としての沖ノ島の神が強く意識され、宗像信仰の中心に位置づけられるようになっていった。さきに述べたように、10世紀の段階で宗像神が菩薩位を得るに当たり、殺生の罪を懺悔するきっかけとなったのは藤原純友の乱であった。ところが「宗像大菩薩御縁起」では、乾珠により干上がった海上に異

国の兵を誘い出し、満珠により溺死させたことは、宗像神が御長手を操ったことによると高らかに述べながら、のちに託宣として、「これは国のため民のためとはいえ、殺生罪を犯したものである」として、八幡神にならい般若經書写と放生会による仏教的供養を求めている。

## おわりに

もと山の宗教を含み込みながら、島を齋く地域信仰の中心として最初の神格を表した宗像神は、5～9世紀の東アジアをめぐる国際情勢の中でヤマト王権の強い影響下に沖ノ島の祭祀を取り込み、境界の神たる宗像三神へと変貌する。やがて、10世紀に八幡信仰を強く意識した神仏習合の思想を受け入れるいっぽう、東シナ海への視野はいったんかすみ、列島の内に向かって国土と王権を守護する神へと変容していく。さらに蒙古襲来を機に境界の神としての性格を急激に強めていった。この報告では、本来は特異な性格を持つ沖ノ島の祭祀がどのように宗像の地域信仰に取り込まれ、支えられてきたかを全体として強調した。そのため、古代における三神のとりえ方や大島祭祀について、試論や仮説の域を越えて大胆に踏み込みすぎたかもしれない。この点は、引き続き考察を続けてより学術的なレベルに高めていきたい。古代祭祀の様相をよく保存する沖ノ島の遺跡群や、そこに残された祭祀遺物の際立った豪華さは目を惹くが、むしろ同時に注目しなければならないのは、5世紀以来、宗像の地に継続して展開してきた日常的な地域信仰の姿である。沖ノ島が「神宿る島」として時代を越えた魅力を放ち続けていることは間違いない。しかし、上述のように大きな神格の歴史的変遷などを経ながらも、沖ノ島の神が古代に成立した三神信仰から消え去ることなく、中近世を通じて継続し、現代にまで受け継がれている背景に、このような日常的な地域信仰の存在をしっかりと見据えていかなければならない。

とはいえ、古代以来の宗像社の祭祀を担ってきた宗像氏は、歴代にわたり宗像の地を東シナ海に向かって開き、豊かな対外交流を担ってきた。近年、東

アジア海域史の研究が大きく進展する中で、あらためてこのような宗像の側面が明らかになっている[新修宗像市史編集委員会 2022]。宗像氏が経験したような貿易を中心とした経済交流、また仏教文物を介した文化交流が、この地域にもたらした国際感覚は、日本列島の中でも際立っていただろう。しかしながら、そのような側面からはただちに立ち上がってきそうにない三韓征伐のような古代の神話を、「宗像大菩薩」の活躍する中世神話として語りなおすきっかけを与えるような特殊な経験が、軍事衝突としての蒙古襲来なのであった。

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## Lecture 3

# Considering Munakata's Rituals and Beliefs from the Perspective of Mountain Religion and Buddhist History

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## Introduction

Japanese Buddhism has evolved both independently, due to its unique relationship with nature within an island environment, and also as one part of the wider Buddhist belief that spread all across Asia. By understanding both of these facets of Japanese Buddhism, one can better comprehend its current state. With this idea of the history of the two sides of Japanese Buddhism as a foundation, here I will focus on “Mountain Forest Religion” (Kikuchi, 2020). The relationship between Buddhism and mountain asceticism<sup>1</sup> first developed in India, China and the Korean Peninsula, so it cannot be considered unique only to Japan. Existing across a broad range of regions, mountain religions have developed in a variety of ways. However, one common characteristic shared by mountain religions is syncretism<sup>2</sup>.

The theme of this year's International Review Meeting is the historical transition of rituals and beliefs in Munakata. Thus, here I will disregard widely accepted foundationalist religious theories (Gorai, 2009), as well as take a cautious stance regarding the concept of ‘indigenous belief systems.’ I will do this because debates on the indigeneity of Shinto or Buddhism in the Japanese archipelago most often lead to unyielding either/or conclusions. Instead, I wish to propose that the most precise view of Shinto and Buddhism in Japan is that through a series of historical transitions they have come to ‘embrace’ each other. This

process can be similarly observed in other regions across Asia as well.

With the above in mind, this report puts Munakata's shrines and Shinto deities as its central focus, by first giving a brief introduction to what I conceive to be the basic framework of mountain religions. From there I will approach Munakata's sea- and island-deity centered cults by introducing the roots and framework of its cult system. Throughout this explanation, the period beginning around the 10<sup>th</sup> century will be seen as incredibly crucial, as it is during this period that Munakata's shrines go under a process of “Buddhistization.” Interactions with mainland cultures and the Mongol invasions of Japan during the Kamakura period will also be brought up in considering how Munakata beliefs have transformed throughout history.

Historically the Munakata shrines and deities have been referred to by many different names, but in this report, when I speak of the three shrines and/or three goddesses as one, they will be referred to generally as “the Munakata shrines” and “the Munakata deities.”

## 1 Considering “Island Religion” from the Framework of “Mountain Religion”

Remains from ancient religious rituals have been discovered on mountaintops across the world, and I cannot deny that such peaks have historically been sites for

<sup>1</sup> In recent years, studies on the various forms of mountain worship (*sangaku shinkou*, 山岳信仰) that emphasize “deep” and “tall” mountains have taken a cautious stance on use of the word *sangaku* for mountain. I take a similar position in this text by referring to all such beliefs with the umbrella term ‘mountain asceticism’ (*sanrin shūgyō*, 山林修行). Please refer to the later introduced *satoyama* temple and (Kikuchi, 2016) for more details.

<sup>2</sup> Scholars such as Kazuhiko Yoshida have recently reinterpreting previous discussions on syncretism (習合 *shūgō*) and begun to use the word 融合 (*yūgō*) to refer to the syncretism of Shintoism and Buddhism existing in Japan (Yoshida, 2024). However, Yoshida turns to syncretism in Christian-based cultures in his analyses, and his criticisms of the use of the word 習合 are based in modern examples. The Chinese character 習 in 習合 means “becoming used to,” “becoming familiar with,” and this text wishes to hold onto those nuances when referring to belief systems that have become syncretic due to development in close geographical proximities. Thus, this research uses the original academic Japanese word for syncretism, 習合.

pilgrimage. However, I believe that as a whole it was rare for ancient people to venture deep into the mountains. Rather than steep mountaintops, foothills were more important. Foothill forests served as sources of timber and firewood and were also sites of hunting and gathering. In *satoyama* regions, such foothills were at the peripheries of people's everyday lives and marked the border between the quotidian and "deep" or "tall" mountains. As deities were increasingly worshipped in the *satoyama*<sup>3</sup>, the building of places of worship dedicated to these deities progressed. With the syncretization of Shinto and Buddhism, the medieval period saw the appearance of Buddhist *satoyama* temples in foothill regions. Generally, mountain ascetics dedicate 75~90 days between spring and autumn to ascetic practices and spend the rest of their time in *satoyama* temples. However, *satoyama* temples became also able to serve as base camps for treks deeper into the mountains, bringing upon the emergence of mountain ascetics who would spend entire years on mountain peaks. I will now expand the vertical framework of mountain forest religions to include the horizontal, sea-level frameworks of ancient to Middle Age Munakata religions.

The discovery of extravagant ritual objects and sites that were created under the influence of the Yamato kingship on Okinoshima have been the center of attention in discussions about the Munakata shrines. However, viewing Okinoshima from the perspective of the previously introduced mountain forest religion framework, Okinoshima would be considered a 'mountain peak' that was very distant from centers where ancient rituals actually took place. Thus, it is necessary to regard Okinoshima rituals as being very unique in character. This has been discussed by numerous researchers before, so this report will focus more specifically on Tashima and Oshima, viewing their position within the category of 'mountain forest religions.' Both Tashima and Oshima's shrines are located in front of sacred mountains and have archaeological remains that prove the existence of ancient

rituals, making it possible to consider them as mountain forest religions. Here I will discuss the two in relation to the rituals of Okinoshima, to explain my hypothesis regarding the transitions that led to the development of the three shrines and three goddesses.

Tashima is located in the estuary of the Tsurikawa River, slightly elevated above a beach embankment. The area has many place names unique to wetlands, such as Fukada (深田) and Mutajiri (牟田尻), and can be imagined as a series of islands floating in a lagoon (Sasou, 2024). Mounded tombs (*kofun*) have been discovered in the low mountains behind Tashima, and it is said that the rituals that took place in *Takamiya* in these mountains are the origin of what became Tashima's rituals (Hanada, 2012). In these same foothills, the ritual ground that would then develop into Hetsu-miya Shrine was located adjacent to the political ground of the Munakata clan. Next, Oshima, the island that enshrines Nakatsu-miya Shrine, has Mt. Mitake in its center. Recent excavations have discovered ancient ritual remains here as well (Munakata City Board of Education, 2012). Thus, it is possible to accept that the ritual grounds in the foothills of Mt. Mitake were the historic origin point of Nakatsu-miya Shrine. However, artifacts unearthed near the peak of Mt. Mitake demonstrate the likelihood of deep connections to ancient Tashima and Okinoshima, so it is not possible to categorically say that the rituals held in Oshima were unique only to Oshima.

Here, in order to consider the character of Oshima, I will reference the "Blue Island Theory" proposed by Kenichi Tanigawa (Tanigawa, 1979). According to Tanigawa, names for islands that include the word *ao* (blue) in them, such as Aoshima, Oushima etc., signify that the location was previously a holy burial site. Awashima and Oshima can also be considered in this category. It cannot be assumed that *every* place called Oshima, including Oshima in Munakata, can fit into Tanigawa's categories. However, places from which one can see and pray to an opposing shore have long had names such as Oshima, Aoshima or

<sup>3</sup> The structure of *satoyama* also evolved across multiple stages historically, and the terminology used to refer to it requires deep consideration (Mizuno, 2015), but this report will not go deep into such deliberations.

Awashima, and many of these such-named islands are considered holy sites. Here it is possible to consider that Tashima was both a center of the mountain religion rituals that originated from Taka-miya, and a center for Oshima rituals practiced by worshipping in the direction of the sea. However, it is also possible that the focus of sea-facing rituals that took place in Tashima might not have necessarily been in reverence of solely Mt. Mitake, but rather Oshima as a holy site in its entirety. There have been settlements of people living in Oshima since ancient times, which traditionally might discourage the idea that the entire island could have been a holy site, but recent mountain forest religion research has shown that in the past not all holy sites necessarily barred people from entry.

Thus, I would like to propose that Tashima and Oshima shrines' rituals devoted to *satoyama* holy sites, in combination with sea-facing rituals held in Tashima in worship of the entire island of Oshima, are the prototype of the ancient rituals held in Munakata. Under such a proposal, how would it be possible to conceive of Okinoshima's rituals? Based on archaeological remains and artifacts, the rituals of Okinoshima are considered an example of one of the many boundary rituals that occurred with participation from the Yamato kingship. Said to have begun in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, these rituals developed within a competitive relationship with the Korean peninsula, as well as with an awareness of the importance of sea trade. However, the powerful existence of the Munakata clan and their involvement in the ritual, would have likely linked the rituals of Tashima and Oshima together with the rituals of Okinoshima in a peculiar way from an early stage (New History of Munakata City Editorial Committee, 2022, 2023). Results from surveys at the previously mentioned archaeological sites on Mt. Mitake have shown that similar ritual objects were used on Oshima and Okinoshima, and there is no doubt that the rituals of the Three Shrines were unified by the Munakata

clan. However, artifacts from the Mt. Mitake archaeological site are from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and do not extend back to origin myths mentioned in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*.

There are both similarities and differences in the deity names written in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, which implies they were written during a period where the rituals of the Three Shrines had not yet unified or settled as one. I also do not have a concrete theory regarding this, but here I want to first focus on how the *Kojiki* refers to the goddess of Oshima as *Sayorihime*. The name *Sayorihime* signifies “a goddess who belongs to a beautiful (island),” which is an appropriate name for a goddess residing in a *kannabi* island<sup>4</sup>. However, the *Kojiki* also refers to the goddess of Oshima as *Ichikishimahime* (イチキシマヒメ). The name *Ichikishimahime* is also mentioned multiple times in the *Nihon Shoki*, however it is in reference to the goddess of Tashima, and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> volume, to the goddess of Okinoshima. Thus, each of the three goddesses has been called *Ichikishimahime* at some point. The name *Ichikishimahime* means “goddess of the island of worship,” implying both an island that receives religious rites and a goddess that worships an island. Though these meanings make it an applicable name for any of the three Munakata goddesses, it is most appropriate for the goddess of Tashima<sup>5</sup>. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> volumes of the *Nihon Shoki*, the reference of Okinoshima's goddess as *Ichikishimahime* can be interpreted as a shift to viewing Okinoshima as a *kannabi* island, which would have taken place as part of the political state of the Ritsuryo-based national system of the period.

As can be observed in *The Origin Story of the Great Bodhisattva of Munakata*, the domain of each goddess worshipped in the Three Shrines was established by the medieval period. In addition, the distribution of shrine buildings in the medieval period can also be understood from documents such as the *Ancient Layout of Tashima*

<sup>4</sup> *Kannabi* island is an interesting perspective that captures the character of Okinoshima (New History of Munakata City Editorial Committee, 2023). Here *kannabi* is understood following Ueno's (2015) conception, referring to the entire holy island, not just the island's beautiful, conical mountain.

<sup>5</sup> Generally the notion of “a deity who worships deities” is widely known as Tetsurō Watsuji's theory (Watsuji, 1977).

*Shrine*. Shrine buildings before this period were lost in a fire in 1132 CE (1<sup>st</sup> year of the *Chōshō* era; according to inscriptions in the *Chūyūki* from February 8<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1133 CE), but there are hypothesized recreations of the original layout. Regarding this, I will focus on a passage from the *History of Munakata Shrine* which states, “The ancient ritual of Tashima (Hetsu-miya) took place between the *Kamitakamiya*, *Shimotakamiya*, *chūden (ninomiya)*, and *soja (ichinomiya)*, straitly linking one to the other as the ritual progressed” (Munakata Shrine Revival Association, 1961-71, 13)<sup>6</sup>.

In the Middle Age division of domains, the goddess of highest rank in the region was Okinoshima’s *Tagorihime* (田切姫), second highest rank was Oshima’s *Tagitsuhime* (田湍姫), and finally came Tashima’s *Ichikishimahime*. However, to reach a broad conclusion from the explanation in the aforementioned *History of Munakata Shrine*, the prototype of the ancient domains of the Three Goddesses can be seen in the *soja* rituals worshipping *Ichikishimahime* (that originated in the rituals of Takamiya), with the rituals of the Oshima Goddess (referred to as *Tagitsuhime* in the *Nihon Shoki* and as *Sayorihime* in the *Kojiki*) serving as an intermediary. *Tagorihime*, the goddess worshipped in Okinoshima’s rituals, was originally slightly disregarded, not being added to central rituals until later on. The *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki* turned the spotlight onto the goddess of Okinoshima, and the influence of these texts brought her into the position of central deity in the region, a position that was previously held by the goddess of Tashima.

## 2 Buddhistization of Munakata Religion

A record in the *Documents of the Daijō-kan (Grand Council of State)* dated February 14<sup>th</sup>, 979 CE (2<sup>nd</sup> year of the *Tengen* era; *Ruijūfusenshō*, Chapter 1) gives a glimpse into the period, and the way in which the Munakata shrines accepted Buddhism. These documents confer the title of *Daigūji* (high priest) of Munakata Shrine to Munakata

Ujiyoshi, while also citing Ujiyoshi and his fellow clan members’ activities in the Department of Shinto Affairs in 978 CE (3<sup>rd</sup> year of the *Teigen* era). According to Ujiyoshi and his contemporaries, Munakata Shrine was the defenses of Japan from the beginning of time, emphasizing the deities’ existence as protectors of the state. Until the Tengen Rebellion (935-941), the shrine did not have a chief priest but leading priests carried out miscellaneous works occasionally, and yearly rituals always followed fishing and hunting sprees in the surrounding oceans and mountain forests. However, it was said that when Fujiwara no Sumitomo’s revolts were suppressed, Munaka deities received the divine Order by their military recognition and the Dazai no daini (vice minister to Dazaifu) Minamoto no Kiyohira experienced a series of divine revelations, which led the Emperor to give the title of “Bodhisattva” to Munakata deities. As demonstrated in the following quotes from the *Documents of the Daijō-kan*, this then brought a rapid spread of Buddhism in the country:

Halting long-standing rituals of hunting in the mountain forests and fishing in the sea and instead cultivating virtue for the sake of enlightenment. At the beginning and end of the year, monks offer incense and flowers as well as chanting for five days or three nights. Relinquishing the expenses for the hunting, Munakata priests instead used them as alms to show his merit.

It is said that the Shinto deity Hachiman suffered from the sin of killing countless people when he participated in the conquest of the Hayato people. Through repenting his sins and turning to Buddhism, he was able to escape the endless cycle of reincarnation and became the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, after which Life Release rituals became an important event at the Hachiman Shrine. The deity of Munakata, who similarly suffered from the sin of all the killing that took place during Sumitomo’s uprising, also became a Bodhisattva, after which he suspended hunting for sacrificial offerings, and instead introduced

<sup>6</sup> Katsuhiko Hanada also proposes a detailed recreation of the original layout (Hanada, 2012).

Buddhist services that involved the burning of incense and inviting monks to chant sutras. What is interesting is that they used hunting fees (in the valleys and mountain forests) as alms. This is evidently connected to the Buddhist ideology of the prohibition of killing, but rather than stopping all killing in the territory in its entirety, they placed measures to control hunting and fishing and put the *Daigūji* in charge of these measures. Mamoru Sasou connects this Buddhist shift in Munakata to changes in the shrines' natural environment (Sasou, 2024). Though there were occasional years with more rainfall, the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century was exceptionally dry, causing the lagoons around Tashima to dry up and leading trading port functions to shift to the tidal flats of Tsuyazaki, located at the Western side of Tashima. Such a topographical change is bound to have influenced hunting and fishing in the region. The forms of alms that the people of the Tashima region could offer, as well as the need to find new hunting and fishing regions, likely led to the change to alms-collecting through controls on killing of animals. Much later, in the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, according to Munakata Ujimori's Clauses, Ujimori prohibited people to bypass leaders of the Munakata shrines and directly dispatched messengers for the seizure of "food and other dishes" from the harbors and islands ("Munakata Ujimori Clauses" in *The Munakata Tatsumi Articles, Kamakura Ibun*, No. 24773). Here the word used for "food" (肴菜) is considered to refer specifically to seafood that was given as offerings, and this displays how the Munakata clan continued to control "killing" (fishing) even into the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Returning to the *Documents of the Daijō-kan*, in this period, Daini Kiyohira tried to make shrine priests responsible for performing Buddhist ceremonies. However, this was never officially issued, and residing local bureaucrats instead competed for the responsibility of leading such ceremonies. As a result, it was difficult to provide the necessary funds for Buddhist rituals, and even Shinto shrines' routine work came to a standstill. Here, Ujijoshi took example from the Kōra Shrine in the

Chikugo Province, and the Sumiyoshi, Kashii, Kamado and Hakozaiki Shrines located in the Chikuzen Province (the same Province as the Munakata shrines). The divine power of all of these shrines was said to have increased when a chief priest was appointed. Following this precedent, the *Documents of the Daijō-kan* states that a request was sent to the Department of Divinities to seek that the Imperial Court appoints a *Daigūji* to Munakata shrines, and that eventually this request was approved and issued through Dazaifu. The aforementioned Northern Kyushu shrines with chief priests all worship Empress Jingū or other deities who appear in the story of the *sankan seibatsu* (legendary 3<sup>rd</sup> century invasion of the Korean peninsula), and are shrines meant to protect the imperial family. Not fitting into this category, the Munakata shrines were likely considered most equivalent to the Bungo Province's Usa Shrine, which was devoted to the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman. Since Hachiman was bestowed the title of 'Great' Bodhisattva, the Munakata shrines were considered to have been granted 'Bodhisattva rank.' As early as 925 CE (3<sup>rd</sup> year of the *Enchō* era), it was decided that the Munakata shrines in Chikuzen Province, along with four other shrines in various provinces across Japan, would be appointed with a chief priest by official decree. Usa Shrine was also granted a chief priest, but it was listed separately, and this was done via official decree or imperial edict. The Usa Hachiman Shrine and Munakata shrines were the only shrines in Kyushu bestowed with chief priests by official order from the Imperial Court. The official order from the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of *Tengen* that appointed Munakata Ujijoshi as *Daigūji*, was issued half a century later, and was an official order issued by imperial decree.

As mentioned above, upon the decree in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of *Tengen*, the Munakata shrines went through a sudden process of becoming Buddhist. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhist sutra reading in front of Shinto deities was already being practiced, and by 838 CE (the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the *Jōwa* era) novice Buddhist monks were also stationed at the Munakata shrines to pray for the safety of Japanese missions to Tang China (Munakata Shrine Revival

Association, 1961-71). But from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhist practices became more engrained within the shrines, as evidenced in Munakata shrines' (Tashima) layout including buildings dedicated to Buddhist practice. Among these, the East Pagoda, West Pagoda and Maitreya-nātha Hall that surround the Treasure Pagoda, were likely to have been inspired by Usa Hachiman Shrine's Miroku-ji Temple, where one of the six pagodas built by Saichō was erected. Additionally, the grounds of Chinkoku-ji Temple, which was established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century on the opposite bank of the Tsurikawa River in connection to the Munakata shrines, have stone tablets and sutra containers bearing inscriptions from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Further, Munakata Shrine, its sub-shrines and Chinkoku-ji Temple, were included into the Dazaifu Mt. Hōman Shugendō region. There is no evidence that the Munakata shrines continuously accepted Buddhist teachings into their own active practice before the 11<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, with the official decree in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of *Tengen*, may be considered the dawn of the syncretism of Shinto and Buddhism at the Munakata shrines.

### 3 Shinto and Buddhist Syncretism and The Mongol Invasion

As mentioned above, a variety of artifacts have been unearthed in the areas surrounding the Munakata shrines that prove Buddhism had been accepted in the region from the 12<sup>th</sup> century on. Especially famous among these are the Buddhist Sutras of Tripitaka transcribed by Priest Shikijo, or Ryōyū (1159-1242) alone over a span of 40 years beginning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the *Bunji* era, as well as the Amida Sutra Stone placed by *Daigūji* Munakata Ujikuni. Here, I would like to first focus on Chinkoku-ji Temple. The temple's land was first donated to "The Chinkoku-ji Temple Bodhisattva Munakata" in March of 1263 CE (the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the *Kōchō* era). According to donation records, the "circumference of the peak resembles an eight-petaled lotus, and the mountain resembles the shape of a three-

pronged Vajra pestle." Indeed, the land of Chinkoku-ji Temple includes a peak that lies at about 100 meters above sea level, and the temple itself is embraced by three ridges that stretch out from the mountain. In this way it is modeled to the worldview of esoteric Buddhism and was thought to bring prosperity to the area. Next, the records state that the *Ichinomiya* of the Munakata shrines is the manifestation of Vairocana and is where a "Training Hall for Three Mysteries" should be built, because it is a sacred place for the propagation of Shingon Buddhism, making it a suitable place for further manifestation of *honji suijaku*. Since various Buddhist deities and the Mandala of the Two Realms are enshrined here, it should be highly revered by the various donors. Thus, the killing of living beings and the cutting down of plant life was prohibited, making the area a place exempt from all forms of slaughter. Finally, Kōkan was to be appointed as the elder of the temple and his disciples would succeed him (*Munakataki Tsuiko, Kamakura Ibun*, No. 8940).

In June of the same year, Kōkan successfully practiced the Prayer for the Rain Sutra, record of which remains in the form of a statue of the Shakyamuni Buddha preaching the sutra (according to an inscription on the incised icon of the Shakyamuni located inside the Chinkoku-ji Temple cave, *History of Munakata City*). As mentioned, when this temple was built as the *Sōji* temple of the region's now-accepted Buddhist faith, the *Daigūji* Munakata Nagauji, who donated the temple land, emphasized the site's location as the sacred ground of Vairocana, and stated that this was inevitably connected to the topography of the area. Here I would like to highlight an inscription that accompanies a depiction of the *Shaka Nyorai* preaching the Prayer for Rain Sutra.

*Kanjin Bhikkhu Sairen*

Shakyamuni Buddha, preaching the Prayer for Rain Sutra, the Eight Great Dragon Kings listening to the teachings, in a state of enlightenment.

(Corresponding to) the manifestation of the *Ninomiya* (Incised Icon of Shakyamuni Buddha preaching)

Chinkoku-ji Temple

3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Kōchō era (60<sup>th</sup> Sexagenary cycle) June 12<sup>th</sup> recital, June 14<sup>th</sup> rain.

Sutra Reciter Shamon Kōkan    Petitioner Shami Jōshin  
Followers Seiken 成賢, Chiken 知賢, Yukei 猷慶, Painter-monk Chozen

This depiction is carved into the walls of a cave within the temple grounds of Chinkoku-ji. From this, it is understood that directly after the donation of land that led to the establishment of Chinkoku-ji, Kōkan and his followers (disciples) recited the Prayer for Rain Sutra, and within two days of the beginning of their chanting (*kaibyaku*) their prayer was fulfilled. Two especially interesting points here are that this figure and inscription are located in a cave in the mountain forests, and that according to the inscription, the Shakyamuni who preached the Rain Sutra is noted to be the manifestation of the deity in the *Ninomiya*.

In regard to the first point, an *itabi* stone tablet with an image of the *Amida* Buddha had been erected in 1119 CE (inscribed November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the *Genei* era, according to "Inscription on the Seated *Amida Nyorai Itabi*," *History of Munakata City*). Shortly later, a sutra burial took place in 1138 CE (inscribed October 20<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> year of the *Hoen* era, according to "Inscription on the Chinkoku-ji Sutra Container," *History of Munakata City*). It is clear that this area grew as a center for Buddhist cults from the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but I believe that the epicenter for these cults was the cave within which this inscription was written. As is well known, according to esoteric Buddhist beliefs, the dragon vein fulfills an important role in the prayers for rain (of which the dragon vein in Murō-ji Temple is especially famous). Since it is believed that the Dragon God (Dragon King) resides in the dragon vein, esoteric Buddhist rituals and sutras are performed facing the dragon vein. Likewise, rituals are also held in which relics, such as jewels thought to increase the power of the Dragon God, are thrown into the dragon vein. I have previously discussed the possibility that the sutras used in sutra burying rituals were more often the *Nyohō-kyō* sutras, copied in a pure manner according

to established procedures, that have the same ability to increase the power of the Dragon God (Kikuchi 2011).

As briefly mentioned, a sutra container was excavated in Chinkoku-ji. Based on the inscription on the container, it can be understood that it was previously intentionally unearthed twice. The first inscription is from 1141 CE (1<sup>st</sup> year of the *Eiji* era), which coincides with the period when the role of Chinkoku-ji as a Buddhist center would have been well established. This inscription clarifies that the donors for the container's burial were Ohara Tameyuki and others from the Nuyama region of Munakata, but its exact burial site is unclear. The inscription also clarifies that the third burial took place in the grounds of Chinkoku-ji Temple in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Kōchō era, the year before the Prayer for Rain Sutra recitation ritual by Kōkan and others (inscription dated November 20, the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the *Eiji* era, "Inscription on the Sutra Container in the *Okunoin* of Chinkoku-ji Temple," *History of Munakata City*). Later, in 1265 CE (2<sup>nd</sup> year of the *Bunei* era), a *Daijō-kan* document reaffirmed the four boundaries of Chinkokuji Temple's grounds, and a prohibition against killing living beings was set within these boundaries. This document also records the circumstances under which Kōkan came to reside in the temple ("Daijō-kan Document," *Chinkoku-ji Documents, Kamakuraibun*, No. 9326). According to the document, after Kōkan left his home to study esoteric Buddhism, "this mountain was the next place to pilgrimage after *dhūta* practice," and during his pilgrimage he discovered that this location was well-suited to the esoteric worldview. He said it was a suitable place for training, with a lush green pine forest behind it and the vast blue waves of the sea stretching out before it. In other words, Kōkan came to this area as a mountain ascetic, discovered it was a Buddhist sacred site, and then worked with the *Daigūji* Munakata to establish Chinkoku-ji Temple. The existence of sacred caves to be used to pray for rain would have been crucial in deciding that this area was sacred and appropriate for ascetic training. According to a document issued by the *Daijō-kan* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the *Bunei* era, a "life-sized stone statue of *Fudō-myōō*" of an "ancient Buddha" was already enshrined

within the cave, and the cave was believed to be the equivalent of the Vulture Peak where the Shakyamuni Buddha had preached. This is clear evidence that the cave had become a sacred place.

Turning to the second point from the inscription, as mentioned above, Kōkan emphasized that this was a suitable place for Vairocana, the founder of esoteric Buddhism, to manifest as the deity of the *Ichinomiya*. He also believed that the Shakyamuni Buddha was the original form of the deity of the *Ninomiya* (Oshima), creating a deep connection between the Rain Sutra practice and Munakata. Going a step further, would it be possible to say that worship of the *Ninomiya* (Oshima), was once connected to prayers for rain? Although there is little evidence to support this, the *Origin Story of the Great Bodhisattva of Munakata* lists 23 subordinate shrines of Nakanomishima Shrine 中御嶋社 (the Ōshima Shrine), among which are Ryūō Shrine 龍王社 and Kawakami Shrine, which are thought to be related to the Dragon deity. The identity of Ryūō Shrine is The Dragon deity, and the whereabouts of Kawakami Shrine are explained in further detail in the same *Origin Story of the Great Bodhisattva of Munakata* through the appearance of Toyo(tama)-hime. The story tells of Empress *Jingu*, who appealed to the Dragon deity, saying, "If the promise between parent and child from long ago is not null and void, please join forces with us and send us the *Kanju* (lit. parched jewel) and *Manju* (lit. filled jewel)." The Dragon deity offered his aid by sending the two requested jewels, which *Toyo-hime* delivered to earth three days later. During battle, when the General Gōseki, the Great Bodhisattva of Munakata shook his "*mitenaga*" (*minagate*, pole wrapped with red and white fabric) up and down as a signal, *Takeuchi no Sukune* threw the *Kanju* and *Manju* into the sea. With the force of these jewels, he was able to freely control the tides and destroy the "foreign army." This episode involving the two jewels adds a remarkable dramatic effect to the climax of the myth of the *sankan seibatsu*, emphasizing the power of the Munakata Bodhisattva, and important role played by *Toyo-hime*. The same *Origin Story of the Great*

*Bodhisattva of Munakata* also explains that *Toyo-hime* is "the former younger sister of *Ryūgū-jō* Castle (present-day *Kawakami Daimyōjin*)." "*Kawakami Daimyōjin*" refers to Hizen's Kawakami Shrine, whose enshrined deity *Yodohime-no-Mikoto* is syncretized with *Toyotama-hime*. The Munakata Goddesses are goddesses of the sea, so their assimilation with Dragon deity cult is easy to grasp. However, the fact that Ryūzu Shrine and Kawakami Shrine are subordinate shrines of Oshima *Nakatsu-miya* suggests a special connection with the cult in the Dragon deity, and it is important to note their relationship with the Chinkoku-ji caves, which are considered to be dragon veins.

As mentioned above, I believe that in latter half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, as the Munakata shrines began to practice syncretism with Shinto and Buddhism, they were considered equals to the Hachiman Shrine. Considering the influence of Middle Age myths such as those told in the *Origin Story of the Great Bodhisattva of Munakata*, it is possible that connected belief of the Three Munakata Goddesses was established much later than expected, maybe even as late as during the Kamakura period (especially after the Mongol invasion). Once incorporated into the Munakata religious system, the Goddess of Okinoshima consistently occupied a position among the Three Goddesses until the medieval period. When the ancient rituals on the island came to an end after the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the importance of the goddesses temporarily receded into the background. They were brought back into the limelight during the Mongol invasion, when there was a strong sense of external danger. Thorough research has taken place in recent years regarding the creation and content of the *Origin Story of the Great Bodhisattva of Munakata*, which has also taken into account bibliographical studies (New History of Munakata City Editorial Committee 2023). Emphasized in this research is that in the myth of the *sankan seibatsu*, the Munakata deity, battling as the main force of Hachiman, skillfully manipulated the *minagate* to achieve victory. After the battle the *minagate* pole was thrust into Okinoshima (bamboo even continues to grow from the spot where it is

said to have been placed), and a “Minagate ritual” was held every year in the medieval period to mark this occasion. Due to this legend, the Goddess of Okinoshima was further recognized as a boundary deity, positioning her at the center of Munakata religion. As mentioned earlier, the trigger for the Munakata deity to repent for his crimes of killing and to receive Bodhisattva status in the 10<sup>th</sup> century was the Fujiwara no Sumitomo Rebellion. In the *Origin Story of the Great Bodhisattva of Munakata*, it is proclaimed that the Munakata Bodhisattva manipulated the *minagate* to lure foreign soldiers out onto the sea that had dried up due to the *Kanju* and then drowned them by suddenly refilling the sea with water due to the power of the *Manju*, however in a further passage it states that “even though this was for the sake of the country and its people, it was a crime of killing,” and calls for Buddhist memorial services to be held in the style of Hachiman, including the copying of the Hannya Sutra and the Life Release rituals.

## Conclusion

Originally a part of a mountain forest religion that transitioned into a local island-worshipping cult, the Munakata Goddesses came under the strong influence of the Yamato kingship amidst international relations in East Asia in the 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The influence of the Yamato kingship incorporated the then-separate rituals of Okinoshima and transformed the Three Goddesses of Munakata into deities conceived as protecting the state’s boundaries. Eventually, in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, syncretism between Shinto and Buddhism strongly influenced by Hachiman cult was adopted, and focus turned away from East China Sea and towards the mainland of Japan, transforming the Goddesses into those who protected the archipelago and its royal authority. The Mongol invasion further strengthened the deities’ character as border protectors. Overall, this paper emphasized how the rituals of Okinoshima, which were originally unique in character, were incorporated into and supported by the local cult of Munakata. I may have ventured too eagerly forward with

tentative theses regarding ancient understandings of the Three Goddesses and the rituals on Oshima, so I would like to continue these studies and raise the hypotheses to a more academic level. The archaeological sites of Okinoshima do a great job of preserving the island’s ancient ritual practices alongside the eye-catching and remarkable splendor of the unearthed ritual artifacts, but what should also be noted is the everyday local cult that has continued to unfold in the Munakata region since the 5<sup>th</sup> century. There is no doubt that Okinoshima continues to exude timeless charm as a “sacred island.” However, as mentioned above, despite major historical changes, the deity of Okinoshima has not disappeared from the Three-Goddess cult that was established in ancient times. Instead, cults in the Okinoshima Goddess have held their place through medieval and early modern periods and have been passed down to the present day. To understand this, we must therefore have a firm awareness of the existence of the everyday local faith that supports this phenomenon.

The Munakata clan, who have been responsible for the rituals of Munakata Shrine since ancient times, have opened up the land of Munakata to the East China Sea over successive generations and have been responsible for rich international exchange. In recent years, as research into East Asian maritime history has made great progress, this aspect of Munakata has come to light once again (New History of Munakata City Editorial Committee, 2022). The trade-based economic exchanges that the Munakata clan experienced, in addition to cultural exchanges through Buddhist artifacts, brought an international sensibility to this region that would have been outstanding even within the Japanese archipelago. However, the Mongol invasion as a military conflict was a unique experience that provided an opportunity to re-tell ancient myths such as the *sankan seibatsu* as a medieval myth that features the Great Munakata Bodhisattva, who otherwise would not have been incorporated into the legend in such a way.

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