FUDO MYOO'S INDEPENDENT CULT IN JAPAN: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS EVOLUTION AND VALUE.

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a collection of information on the Fudō Myōō cult in Japan and aims to create a diverse and complete historical analysis. Academic works by scholars such as Michael Saso, Adiran Snodgrass, Richard Karl Payne, Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis and Ulrich Mammitzsch are examined and their similarities and misconceptions explored. The aim of this thesis, then, is to create a solid base of understanding of the Fudō cult.

This study begins with an introduction to the history of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan including a serious study of Kukai. Though his introduction of the Taizo-kai and Kongo-kai mandalas, the Godai Myōō became understood in Japan. Also from these mandalas, Fudō Myōō began to develop as an independent Buddhist cult image. The goma fire ritual was established in Japanese Shingon sects and was widely practiced. Thoughout this evolution of Esoteric Buddhism, images of Fudō Myōō remained important.

Referenced images include wooden sculptures as well as paintings. These come from temples such as the To-ji, Todai-ji, Koyasan as well as in foreign collections. One specific piece of interest is the Fudō Myōō in the collection at the Chicago Arts Institute. This thesis provides a brief examination of the work in the context of the Fudō cult.

Fudō Myōō’s image became more prevalent in Japan than anywhere else in the world. His image is still used in much of Japanese society today.
For my parents.
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INTRODUCTION

While there has been extensive research conducted to explore the use of mandalas and individual deities in Japanese Buddhism, there is no body of information to compare the studies. Works on rituals, iconography and philosophy by scholars such as Michael Saso,1 Adrian Snodgrass,2 Richard Karl Payne,3 Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis4 and Ulrich Mammitzsch5 (to name only a few references) have been compiled in this thesis to compare opinions and demonstrate the success of the Fudō Myōō cult in Japan. The hope of this synthesis of information is to provide a thorough understanding of many aspects of Japanese Buddhism. Other studies on Kukai’s life and writings should also be included and examined, such as those by Hakeda6 and Abe.7 These secondary resources will be used to examine the primary methodological system (namely, the dual mandala system [Ryo-bu Mandara] of the Taizo-kai and the Kongo-kai) that underlies the Fudō cult in Japan. The teachings of the Shingon founding priest Kukai will be explored as to his teachings on Fudō Myōō as well and his overwhelming devotion to Mikkyō. There will be an examination of specific images of Fudō Myōō in context and finally a discussion of

1 Michael Saso’s contributions to the field include Homa Rites and Mandala Meditation in Tendai Buddhism. (Delhi: Pradeep Kumar Goel, 1991) and also Tantric Art and Meditation. (Honolulu: Tendai Educational Foundation, 1990).
the seated Fudō image in the collection of the Chicago Art Institute. A list of terms and their corresponding kanji are available in the appendix, along with all figures.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Initially, Buddhism reached Japan in the sixth century, by way of the Korean peninsula, when the religion was already about one thousand years old. When Buddhism entered Japan, the indigenous Shinto religion that focused on the natural world and spirits was already in place and widely practiced by the Japanese people. However, the new religion benefited Japan by bringing a complete and highly developed Chinese writing system in the form of sutras (written Buddhist texts), mantras (spoken Buddhist meditational words) and mandalas (visual Buddhist meditational images), which early Japan adopted as kanji. The high level of acceptance of Buddhism in Japan can also be related to the level of importance it attained in China.\footnote{William Theodore de Bary, The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan (New York: Random House Inc., 1972), 256.} Many issues with Buddhism that were dealt with in China benefited its implementation in Japan.

The Mahavairocana Sutra, one of the key sutras in Esoteric Buddhism, was already widely practiced across south Asia when it was brought to China by an Indian master, Subhakarasimha (637-735) in 716.\footnote{Yoshitoshi Hakeda, trans. Kukai: Major Works. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 27.} This Indian Esoteric master was invited to China by the Emperor Xuanzong (r. 713-755) and traveled from Nalanda through Kasmir and finally to China and translated the sutra from Sanskrit to Chinese by 726. Subhakarasimha carried with him the basic texts of Vairocana cycle Buddhism, the
Mahavairocana sutra, and the teachings of the Vajrasekhara or Sarvathatagata tattva samgraha.

In 720, the highly respected Buddhist master, Vajrabodhi (d. 741), also began the translation of Buddhist texts in China under Imperial patronage. Vajrabodhi’s chosen disciple became Bukong (also known as Amoghavajra, 705-774) whose disciple, in turn, became Huiguo (Jp. Keika, 746-805).¹⁰ In Huiguo’s last days, he wanted earnestly to transmit the teachings to his own disciple, Kukai. This long lineage of Buddhist patriarchs translated a number of very important texts from Sanskrit to Chinese and eventually Japanese.

The eighth century in Japan saw a lull in Buddhist development. There had been activity during the Nara period with the foundation of the six sects of Nara Buddhism, but it was during the Heian period (794-1185) in Japan, that two distinct kinds of Buddhism began to form: Tendai Shu (The teaching from Mount Tian Tai) and Shingon Shu (True Word Buddhism). The Shingon doctrine of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan is based upon two mandalas: the Taizo-kai and the Kongo-kai. These two mandalas are the key meditational objects of Shingon Buddhism. They were brought to Japan by Kukai (774-835, known posthumously as Kobo Daishi), who traveled to China (804-809) and returned to Japan as an initiated master of the Zhenyan (Jp. Shingon) teachings.

After studying Taoism and Confucianism in his Japanese university, Kukai traveled to China in 804 in search of greater study. At the time, Japan had modeled its government after what was efficient in China. Due to his classical education in Chinese and Confucianism, Kukai went with an advanced knowledge of the Chinese language,
and after learning Sanskrit, was at an advantage when numerous sutras were at his disposal. Kukai was competing, to bring back to Japan the next large movement that would, he hoped, become the next court religion. If Kukai was able to make Shingon the next court religion, he would personally gain the emperor’s favor since Buddhism often worked as a political tool in early Japan.

During his trip to China, Kukai found Buddhism at the pentacle of its popularity there. He traveled to the Tang dynasty capital of Cháng'ān (modern Xi’an) where one form of Buddhism he found was influenced by and mutually modeled by Taoism. Kukai was introduced to Huiguo, the lineage holder of the esoteric teachings from Vajrabhodi and Pu-k’ung (Amoghavajra). Kukai learned Sanskrit in China and, with his mastery of the Chinese language, Kukai was introduced to a number of Buddhist texts, in both languages, which he would bring back to Japan. Kukai returned with numbers of texts and art works including the Dainichi-kyo (Skt. Mahavairocana Sutra) and Kongocho-kyo (Skt. Vajrashekhara Sutra) which form the bases for the Taizo-kai (representing the Dharma body of Dainichi) and Kongo-kai or (representing the wisdom of Dainichi).

In 805 Kukai met Master Huiguo (746-805). He studied a great deal under Huiguo’s guidance and eventually returned to Japan as the eighth Patriarch of Esoteric Buddhism. At a time near his death, Kukai’s teacher, Huiguo, gave Kukai his final instructions, as described in Hakeda’s translation:

Now my existence on earth approaches its term, and I cannot long remain. I urge you, therefore, to take the mandalas of both realms and the hundred volumes of the teachings of the Diamond Vehicle, together with the ritual implements and these objects which were left to me by my master. Return to your country and propagate the teachings there.
When you first arrived, I feared I did not have enough time left to teach you everything, but now I have completed teaching you, and the work of copying the sutras and making the images has also been finished. Hasten back to your country, offer these things to the court, and spread the teachings throughout your country to increase the happiness of the people. Then the land will know peace, and people everywhere will be content. In that way you will return thanks to the Buddha and to your teacher. That is also the way to show your devotion to your country and to your family. My disciple I-ming will carry on the teachings here. Your task is to transmit them to the Eastern Land. Do your best! Do your best! 11

With this emphasis placed on the teacher lineage, Kukai became a very important patriarch with the abundantly clear task of transporting Esoteric Buddhism to Japan.

11 Hakeda, 32.
INTRODUCTION OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM INTO JAPAN

When Kukai’s Tantric teachings reached Japan, they were known as Mikkyō shu (密教主), which means the “secret tradition”, and distinguishes this practice from less esoteric sects. The two major sects of Mikkyō in Japan are Shingon ("true word" or “mantric Buddhism”) and Tendai (after the mountain Tien Tai Shan in China on which the Chinese version was formulated) Buddhism. The practices of Shingon Buddhism, the sect under discussion here, are that the secret teachings are revealed only to the most qualified initiates and the ultimate goal of inner realization of the identity of oneself with the Sambhogakaya Buddha, Dainichi Nyorai (Sk. Mahavairocana) who, as sambhogakaya, demonstrates the nature of the Dharmakaya. As discussed by a number of scholars in the field of Japanese Buddhism, some basic characteristics of Shingon include the emphasis placed on ritual, the secret teachings only revealed to qualified initiates, and the ultimate goal of inner realization of oneself as the Buddha Dainichi Nyorai. Japanese Esoteric Buddhism includes practice of the three mysteries (mudra, mantra and meditation or body, speech and mind) and tells that enlightenment can be attained in this lifetime.

Kukai’s teachings of Shingon Buddhism adopted a two mandala, four fold ritual practice in Japan. These rites were necessary to initiate Buddhist priests. This was

12 Snodgrass, 1.
important in Shingon Buddhism (as well as Tendai) because of the desire for interpersonal harmonization with Dainichi through the use of the three mysteries of mudra, mantra and meditation.\textsuperscript{13} Indeed, the Shingon practice was designed to harmonize one’s self with Dainichi’s activity, as already discussed.\textsuperscript{14}

Upon his return, Kukai introduced Japanese Buddhists to texts that he was taught in China as well as art works such as the Taizo-kai and Kongo-kai. Kukai’s return was a turning event in Japanese Buddhist history as this year was also the year of Emperor Kammu’s death. Kammu was a leader of the Tendai sect of Buddhism in the Japanese courts, but following Kukai’s return, Shingon Buddhism, with an emphasis on aestheticism, gained much more support from the courts than the strict moral Tendai teachings\textsuperscript{15}.

Shortly after his return, in 810, Kukai was appointed the administrative head of the Tōdai-ji in Nara. Another ironically fortunate event for Kukai and thus Shingon Buddhism was that in 822, Saicho, Kukai’s rival, died and the following year Kukai was appointed Abbot of the great Buddhist temple the Tō-ji, which commanded the main entrance to the capital\textsuperscript{16}. Also, since Kukai had also studied as an architect and was in the favor of the courts, Emperor Saga (786-824, r. 809-823) gave him full engineering rights over the imperial temple of the Kyōgokoku-ji, better known as the Tō-ji. The project needed a competent engineer, since it remained unfinished from the time Kammu (737-806, r. 781-806) commissioned it. The Tō-ji became the first Esoteric Buddhist

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 173.
\textsuperscript{15} de Bary, 281.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 289.
center in Kyoto with Kukai as the head abbot. This temple would later play an important role in the advancement of the Fudō Myōō cult in Japan.

In 816 Kukai gained permission to build a monastery on Mount Koya, which became the center of the Shingon sect of Buddhism\(^\text{17}\). Specifically, the building at Koyasan known as the Kongōbu-ji became the headquarters of the sect. The area of this mountain was notably important to Kukai, as stated in Kukai’s memorial:

I, Kukai, have heard that where the mountains are high the clouds let fall much rain, thus nourishing vegetation, and that where drops of water accumulate fishes and dragons breed and multiply. Thus it was that the Buddha preached on steep Mount Gridhakuta [in North India] and that Avalokitesvara manifested himself on Mount Potalaka [in South India], whose strange peaks and precipices face the shores. Indeed, these mountains had evoked their presence. Students of meditation fill the five Buddhist temples on Mount Wu-t’ai [in North China], and friends of concentration crowd the temple on Mount T’ien-t’ai. They are treasures of the nation; they are like bridges for the people.

At our imperial court, each generation of emperors has paid special attention to the teachings of the Buddha. Many temples and monasteries, both government and private, have been built, and a number of excellent priests who preach the profound meaning of the Dharama reside in each temple. Buddhism appears to be at its height, and as many temples could be have been built. It is regrettable, however, that only a few priests practice meditation in high mountains, in deep forests, in wide canyons, and in secluded caves. This is because the teaching of meditation has not been transmitted, nor has a suitable place been allocated for the practice of meditation.

According to the meditation sutras, meditation should be practiced preferably on a flat area deep in the mountains. When young, I, Kukai, often walked through mountainous areas and crossed rivers. There is a quiet, open place called Kōya located two days’ walk to the west from a point that is one day’s walk south from Yoshino. I estimate the area to be south of Ito-no-kōri in Kinokuni [Wakayama-ken]. High peaks surround Kōya in all four directions; no human tracks, still less trails, are to be seen there. I should like to clear the wilderness in order to build a

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\(^{17}\) de Bary, 289.
monastery there for the practice of meditation, for the benefit of the nation and of those who desire to discipline themselves.

The sutras say, however, that a mendicant who avails himself of anything without permission is a thief. The rise or fall of the Dharma, indeed, depends on the mind of the emperor. Whether the object is small or large, I dare not make it mine until I have been granted your permission. I earnestly wish that the empty land be granted to me so that I may fulfill my humble desire. If permitted, I shall respond to your generous offer by practicing meditation four times a day. Should His Majesty decide to grant me permission, I should appreciate his forwarding the imperial order to the court. I am afraid that I have taken up this matter haste, causing your Imperial Majesty inconvenience. I, Kukai, present this memorial to the emperor, reverently and with awe.¹⁸

This memorial explains clearly Kukai’s desire and reasoning for wanting to found a temple at Mount Kōya. There have been great Buddhist traditions of mountain temples and secluded meditation. Kukai asked, with eloquent explanation, why he desired the Emperor’s consent so that he could create a temple for the greater use of practitioners.

By the time of Kukai’s death in 835, his last residence at Mount Kōya had become a representation of the dual mandala system containing the Taizo-kai and the Kongo-kai prepared in order to accommodate the goma fire ritual.¹⁹ The Taizo-kai was placed in the East and the Kongo-kai in the West, such as the arrangement is described even today.

With the introduction of the Taizo-kai and Kongo-kai mandalas and their associated rituals, Kukai’s teachings changed the way the Buddhist religion was practiced in Japan. Esoteric Buddhism in Japan became a performance event with elaborate rituals complete with involved offerings and mantras.

¹⁸ Hakeda, 47.
¹⁹ This Buddhist ritual is later discussed at length.
THE MANDALAS

The use of mandalas may be explained by the word itself: "mandala", from Sanskrit, means “circle” and were originally considered a place for deities to locate themselves during ritual. By the time the mandalas reached Japan they had come to be seen as illustrations of the field of deities imagined to be in Akanishta Paradise at the top of the Mount Meru or Sumeru system. In the Japanese tradition, Indian mandalas are conceived of as containing persona (deva), vow symbols (samaya) or syllables (bij). All three forms are understood to be in the same order and in the same mandala and to be inherently present no matter which formal aspect is depicted. These mandalas are interpreted as the essence of the Dharma (Dharmadhatu) as the manifestation of Dainichi.

The two important mandalas in Shingon Buddhism, as mentioned, are the Taizo-kai (Figures 1) and the Kongo-kai (Figure 2). The Sanskrit word “dhatu” (“essence”) was translated in Japanese as “kai”, meaning “world”, “class”, “sphere” or “boundary”. These two mandalas demonstrate the nonduality of the universal: male and female, wisdom and compassion, etc.

The Taizo-kai ("Essence of the Womb" or "Womb World") is unique in its structure since most mandalas are oriented with the West at the top. This mandala in

20 Kasulis, "Reality as Embodiment", 176.
21 Ibid, 176.
22 Snodgrass, 127.
Japan, however, places the West at the bottom. There are similar influences on the mandala from all different reaches of the Buddhist world in Asia. In each country that Buddhism has passed through, changes have been made to deities to localize the practice. Likewise, the deities on the Taizo-kai have changed.

The Womb World has also developed and evolved in Japan to different versions of the mandala. The original was brought by Kukai from China and a copy was made in 1191 and was considered to be a copy of the Chinese original.\textsuperscript{23} Only fragments have survived today of this oldest example of the Taizo-kai in Japan. Other copies were made in 1296 and 1693. Since then numerous Womb World mandalas have been produced.

The Taizo-kai mandala consists of four gates, one in each direction, and fields that lead to the central image of Dainichi in dhyana mudra. This mandala may also be created entirely of Sanskrit syllables which are meditated upon instead of deities (Figure 3 and 4). It is also called the Maha Karuna Garbha Dhatu ("Essence of the Womb of Great Compassion") due to its meaning of generating the mediator's compassion. Each figure within the mandala has specific characteristics, including his form, sound syllable (bijā), and mudra, which the practitioner integrates within himself through meditation.\textsuperscript{24} In essence, he realizes himself as the deity by imagination (bhavana). The Taizo-kai is considered to be the metaphysical depiction of the expounding of the Dharma (hosshin seppō).\textsuperscript{25} That is to say that the Taizo-kai reveals the most intimate structures of the universe and is the source of all things.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23} Mammitzsch, 174.
\textsuperscript{24} Kasulis, "Reality as Embodiment", 176.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 176.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, 176.
The second mandala of great importance in Shingon Buddhism is the Kongo-kai (Skt. Vajradhatu), which is often translated as the “Diamond Realm” or “Adamantine State”, but may be better understood as the “Essence of the Adamantine [State]”.27 This mandala represents the wisdom of Dainichi (i. e. Dharmadhatu jnana, “Insight into the Essence of the Dharma”). The development of the nine sections has its roots deep in Chinese culture: the Taoist Luoshu’s magic square had a nine-segmented chart that was modeled after the Chinese temple, walled city and the ancient Taoist sacred dance called “The Steps of Yu”.28

Where the Taizo mandala demonstrates the compassion world of Dainichi, the Kongo mandala depicts the attainment of wisdom or the metapractice world.29 However, whereas the Taizo-kai is studied in a circular motion, with all activity stemming from the central Dainichi, the Kongo-kai’s meditation begins in the lower right with a spiral-shaped path around the outside and finally, to the center. The stages of approach to Dainichi’s area are defined as different stages or levels of the meditator’s mind. For our study of Fudō Myōō, we will focus mostly on the Taizo-kai.

To understand the mandala’s use in practice, first we must understand the iconography and layout of the physical work. While most mandalas are arranged in a series of concentric circles, the Taizo-kai is arranged in rectangular yards surrounding the central square (Figure 5). This square center of the mandala contains and eight-petal lotus with figures on each of the petals and one in the center. The square central field is flanked by two thick yards on the left and right (north and south, respectively). Also

27 John C. Huntington, personal communication.
29 Kasulis, “Reality as Embodiment”, 176-177.
surrounding the central lotus are two smaller fields on the top and bottom (east and west, respectively). These four surrounding fields create a rectangle around the central lotus field. The top and bottom yards are in turn bordered by another pair of fields, making the geometry of areas discussed thus far square once again. This entire area (the central lotus field, the wide north and south fields, the smaller west and east fields and the second pair of west and east fields) is surrounded by a square strip of fields, each independent of the other, but all four forming a square around the center. Beyond these slender yards is a final periphery field that contains protective figures and gates of the outside walls of the square. 30 Each area described contains its own iconography, deities and figures.

This square center of the mandala contains an eight-petal lotus with figures on each of the petals and one in the center. The square central field is flanked by two thick yards on the left and right (north and south, respectively). Also surrounding the central lotus are two smaller fields on the top and bottom (east and west, respectively). These four surrounding fields create a rectangle around the central lotus field. The top and bottom yards are in turn bordered by another pair of fields, making the geometry of areas discussed thus far square once again. This entire area (the central lotus field, the wide north and south fields, the smaller west and east fields and the second pair of west and east fields) is surrounded by a square strip of fields, each independent of the other, but all four forming a square around the center. Beyond these slender yards is a final periphery field that contains protective figures and gates of the outside walls of the square. 31 Each area described contains its own iconography, deities and figures.

30 Saso, 104.
31 Ibid, 104.
The center of the Taizo-kai mandala (Chudaihachiyo-in) contains an eight-petal lotus with Dainichi Nyorai in the center (Figure 5). The entire purpose of the meditation is to become one with this figure, believed to be the source of the entire universe.\(^{32}\) The lotus with eight petals symbolizes the “heart of the universe”.\(^{33}\) Dainichi displays the dhyana (meditational) mudra with both hands placed in the lap with the palms facing up and the thumbs creating a triangle. According to the Shingon tradition, the triangle created by the thumbs is an imitation of the fire which destroys all impurities of the world.\(^{34}\) The two hands connect the world of the Buddha (right hand) and sentient beings (left hand).

Dainichi is surrounded by four Buddhas who control his virtues and four Bodhisattvas that represent his vow to aid all beings.\(^{35}\) In the West, or at the bottom of the mandala, we see Muryojubutsu (Skt. Amitabha), in the South, Kaifuke-o butsu (Skt. Samkusumita-raja), in the East, Hodobutsu (Skt. Ratnaketu) and in the North, Tenkuraionbutsu (Skt. Divyadundubhi-meghanirghosa).\(^{36}\) Muryojubutsu shows dhyana mudra like Dainichi. Kaifuke-o butsu sits in the South with his right palm forward and fingers pointing down in varada (gift-bestowing) mudra. Hodobutsu holds his right hand to the side with the palm facing up in buddhashramana (gesture beyond misery) mudra, showing renunciation. Tenkuraionbutsu touches his right hand to the ground in the bhumisparsha mudra, showing Shakyamuni’s victory over Mara.

\(^{32}\) Ibid, 104.
\(^{35}\) Matasunaga, 186.
\(^{36}\) Ibid, 186.
In the Northwest, to the right of Muryojubutsu, is Monju (Skt. Manjusri), in the Southwest, to the left of Muryojubutsu, is Kannon (Skt. Avalokitesvara), the Southeast holds Miroku (Skt. Maitreya) and the Northeast has Fugen (Skt. Samantabhadra).\textsuperscript{37} Monju holds a book and a vajra displaying both wisdom and the female (with the book) and compassion and the male (with the vajra). Kannon sits in what appears to be vajra (or diamond) fist mudra. This position shows the willingness of the practitioner in pursuing the knowledge of enlightenment.\textsuperscript{38} Miroku displays vitarka (gesture of debate) mudra with his left hand, signifying the teachings of the Buddha. Fugen sits with his right hand to the side, with the palm facing up, like Hodobutsu, however Fugen’s fingers are curled in slightly. Sometimes, Fugen is shown with a sword.

In each of the four corners of this center square is a treasure vase placed on a lotus pillow. These richly decorated gold vases each bear a lotus from the mouth, with each lotus, in turn, holding a three-prong vajra.\textsuperscript{39}

Together, Dainichi, the four Buddhas and four Bodhisattvas represent the nine consciousnesses. They are placed in an eight-petal lotus, showing that they are the enlightenment within the physical body or the eternal process to seek enlightenment.\textsuperscript{40} Each figure provides a separate and unique mudra that the practitioner may use during meditation.

The west side (bottom) of the mandala contains the Yards of Jimyoo-in (Skt. Vidyadharas), of Kokuzo-in (Skt. Akasagargha), and of Soshitsuji-in (Susiddhi). The first yard (Figure 6), closest to the central lotus (Yard of Jimyoo-in or Vidyadhara) shows

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 186.
\textsuperscript{38} Miyata, 16.
\textsuperscript{39} Mammitzsch, 191.
\textsuperscript{40} Matasunaga, 186.
Prajnaparamita surrounded by four Myōō (vidyaraja) (from right to left, with Prajnaparamita in the center): Fudo (Skt. Acalanatha), Gosanze (Skt. Trailokyavijaya), Daiitoku (Skt. Yamantaka) and Shosanze (Skt. Vajrahumkara). These four, all showing anger, “subdue those that are difficult to save”. These angry figures help to persuade those that do not easily accept the teachings of Buddhism. Among other objects, these four angry figures hold objects such as a noose, a club, a sword, and a trident. The Yard of Vidyadhara counters that of Universal Knowledge in the East, which conquers human ignorance, so we see the fields of wisdom and compassion balancing across the central lotus. As described by Mammitzsch, the basic premise of this field is that the ultimate world is the world of sunyata. These Myōō develop as independent from the mandala, especially in Japanese art and aid in the success of Fudō Myōō’s cult.

The next field to the West, past the Yard of Myōō, is the Yard of Kokuzo (Skt. Akasagrabha), known in Japan as Kokuzo-in (Figure 7). This represents worldly virtue and merit in the form of Kokuzo, who acts as the storehouse of treasures and holds a flaming sword and lotus. The figures surrounding Kokuzo bring the total number of figures in this yard to twenty-eight. The eight figures below Kokuzo are placed in a separate field (Figure 8) called Soshitsuji-in (Skt. Susiddhi) and demonstrate that the virtues of Dainichi benefiting sentient beings have been achieved.

The north side (viewer’s left) of the mandala contains the Yards of Kannon-in (Skt. Avalokiteshvara) and of Jizo-in (Skt. Ksitigarbha). The most central yard is that of

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41 Ibid, 187.
42 Matsunaga, 187.
43 Mammitzsch, 264.
44 Matsunaga, 187.
Kannon, known as Kannon-in in Japan (Figure 9) with twenty-one major figures and fifteen attendants. These thirty-seven figures are housed in a thick yard and include Kannon, symbolizing compassion. The major figures are of normal size and are placed upon individual lotus seats. The attendants are smaller and placed on equally small lotus seats. Most of these figures are kneeling, performing such duties as offering a bowl of flowers or a flaming jewel in a bowl or an incense burner. These figures are again placed across the central lotus from a field symbolizing wisdom, the Yard of Kongosho-in (Skt. Vajrapani). This keeps the constant balance of wisdom and compassion.

The next field out is that of Jizo-in, or Ksitigarbha (Figure 10). This bodhisattva has vowed to save the lives of all beings of the Six Realms of Existence between the death of the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, and Miroku, the Buddha to come. This slim field houses only nine figures, with Jizo in the center.

The east side (top) of the Taizo-kai contains the Yards of Universal Knowledge (Henchin-in), of Sakyamuni (Sakya-in) and of Manjusri (Monju-in). The Yard of Universal Knowledge (Figure 11), as discussed before, counters the Yard of Myōō, showing the symbolic balance of wisdom and compassion. The Yard of Universal Knowledge is symbolic of the Enlightenment of the Tathagata, conquering human ignorance. The burning fire of wisdom, or Sarva tathagata jnana mudra, is shown as a triangle in the center, surrounded by three figures on each side. This triangle is bordered

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46 Ibid, 187.
47 Matsunaga, 187.
48 Ibid, 186.
by three-concentric triangular stripes of color of green red and dark blue on a background of light green.\textsuperscript{49}

Beyond this field to the east is the Sakyamuni Yard (Figure 12) showing the manifestation of Dainichi in the phenomenal world to save all sentient beings.\textsuperscript{50} Sakyamuni is surrounded by a number of his disciples, including Kannon, Upali and Anada, in all totaling thirty-nine figures in the field.\textsuperscript{51} To the right (south) of this fire, we see a miniature Urubilva-Kasyapa dressed in monk’s garb. Next to this figure are Mahavira and the twenty-armed Mahasukhamoghatattvavajra holding items such as a sword, a jewel, a wheel and armor.\textsuperscript{52} To the left (north) of the triangular fire is a miniature Gaya-Kasyapa that mirrors Urubilva-Kasyapa. More to the north are Buddhhalocani and the eighteen-armed Saptakoti-buddha-bhagavati who shows mudras and holds items such as a red lotus, a rope, a conch shell and a flask.\textsuperscript{53}

The outermost field in the east (Figure 13), or top part, of the mandala is that of the Monju, showing dynamic wisdom attained through practice.\textsuperscript{54} He sits in the middle of the eastern gate, surrounded on either side by a number of figures, all totaling twenty-four figures in the field.

The south side (viewer’s right) of the mandala contains the Yards of Kongusho-in (Vajrapani) and of Jogaisho-in (Sarvanivaravanaviskambhin). The Yard of Kongusho-in (Figure 14), as explained earlier, symbolizes wisdom and counters the field to the north of the compassion of Kannon. The centermost figure, closest to the lotus, is Vajrasattva,

\textsuperscript{49} Mammitzsch, 202.
\textsuperscript{50} Matsunaga, 186.
\textsuperscript{51} Many of the terms used in this section of the mandala are most commonly known in Sanskrit, as shown here.
\textsuperscript{52} Mammitzsch, 208.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 207.
\textsuperscript{54} Matsunaga, 186.
who is surrounded by figures totaling twenty-eight: twenty-one major figures and eleven attendants. The attendants in this field are much more active than those that counter in the Yard of Kannon: they stand and sit holding a staff or a vajra, for example.

The most south field (Figure 15) is that of Sarvanivarana-aviskambhin bodhisattva, who eliminates hindrances to enlightenment.55 This also is a slim field with only nine deities and Bhadrapala in the center.

The outermost yard of the mandala (Ge kongobu-in) (Figure 16, 17, 18 and 19) contains 205 deities representing manifestations of Dainichi creating the universe, making the total number of deities in the mandala 414.56 These figures include Indra and Kinnara in the north, Dakini, Asura and Garuda in the South.

A drawing of the Taizo-kai emphasizes the placement of each field and how each has a balancing field assigned by bilateral symmetry within the mandala (Figure 20). Also, by imaging the mandala in a three-dimensional manner, it can be more easily approached by the practitioner (Figure 21). Each field has its own related meditation along with mudras, chants and visualizations.57 These components culminate in a practice lasting up to two hours that elaborately includes offerings, incense, music and possibly dancing. All the while, this presentation is only to show the imagery inside the practitioner’s own heart-mind. The goal of this meditation is to, “empty the heart and mind and thereby achieve oneness with Dainichi, by whose power the attainment of the other absolute shore is realized”.58

55 Matsunaga, 187.
56 Ibid, 188.
57 Saso, 103.
58 Ibid, 106.
THE THREE MYSTERIES

Esoteric (as in Tantric/Vajrayana) Buddhism has long held to the idea of the three mysteries or secrets of body (mudra), speech (mantra) and mind, in other words, a synergistic concentrated meditation on a mandala or one of the figures appearing in it. Kukai’s exploration of these three in his writings such as *The Meaning of Sound, Sign and Reality*, helped practitioners understand the use of mudra, mantra and meditation used in the *goma* fire rituals. In essence, by making a mudra, the practitioner symbolizes to himself and others that he has attained or realized the body of the deity of the meditation. By enunciating the Bija, or mantra, he vivifies the deity as himself and vice versa. By the mind “citta” (i.e., heart-mind of the emotional and cogitative mentation) he becomes aware of himself as the deity through Bhavana (imagination). Thus, the idea of the Three Mysteries is much more involved than simple realizations. The triple unity of the Three Mysteries means that body of the deity, the Dharmic speech of the deity and the mind of the deity has been attained through a transformative meditational process and integrated into the psyche of the practitioner.

As Tantric Buddhism traveled, it developed into the Mikkyō Buddhism adopted by the Japanese in the forms of Shingon and Tendai. One of the meditational objectives of these sects of Buddhism, as aforementioned, is to find one own identity to be the same as Dainichi’s (Skt. Mahavairocana) identity. One of the greatest differences between
Shingon Buddhism and other sects is that, through the practice, “one can learn to read Dainichi’s embodiment language, to see the entire universe as an intimate expression of enlightenment’s act”.  

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59 Kasulis, “Reality as Embodiment”, 176.
THE GODAI MYŌŌ

A distinct subset of deities in the two mandalas centered on Dainichi in his angry manifestation as Fudō Myōō (Skt: Acala) and four other deities known, collectively as the Five Kings of Light or the Godai Myōō (Skt. Pancamahāvidyārajās). The deities that accompany Fudō include Gosanze, Daitoku, Gundari and Kongo Yaksha (Skt. Tralokavijaya, Yamantaka, Kindalini and Vajrayaksha, respectively), making the Five Kings of Light (Godai Myōō). The function of the Godai Myōō in the context of the mandalas is to convert and sustain the devotion to Buddhism by those who were difficult to convert. However, they soon became benefactors and protectors of the faithful. From the rituals for these deities, the Japanese developed a distinctive cult devoted to Fudō Myōō.
INTRODUCTION OF FUDŌ MYŌŌ

The Indic form of Acala is a destroyer of obstacles and a defender of Buddhism and the Dharma. While Fudō Myōō and Acala are conceptually identical figures, the discrepancy between the Japanese and Indic worlds should be noted. Acala's representation included bulging muscles, a flame halo, a sword in his right hand and a rope in the left. Yet, he is in a very unusual position, that of kneeling on his left knee and appearing ready to pull himself up with his right leg whereas he is normally seen sitting cross-legged (Figure 22). Images of Fudō are normally placed, standing or sitting, atop a rocky platform. His muscles bulge and his look is ferocious. Fudō looks on with a scowl and his jagged teeth point one upwards and one downwards. He invariably holds a sword in this right hand and a rope in his left hand.
THE MYŌŌ IN SHINGON MANDALAS

In the Taizo-kai, four of the Godai Myōō can be seen just below the central lotus area. This yard shows Hannyaharamitta (Skt. Prajnāpāramitā) in the center attended by Fudō at the viewer's far right; next to him is Gosanze. The first figure to the viewer's left of Hannyaharamitta is Daitoku and at the far left Shosanze, who is unique to the Taizo-kai. These four, all showing anger, "subdue those that are difficult to save". That is to say that these angry figures help to persuade those that do not easily accept the teachings of Buddhism. Among other objects, these four angry figures hold objects such as a noose, a club, a sword, and a trident. Hannyaharamitta is the perfection of Wisdom, and the Myōō or Vidya rajas (kings of [esoteric and thereby mantric] knowledge) expand on her perfection of Wisdom to include powerful convertive and protective mantras and dharanis. As manifestations of the wrath of Dainichi, they destroy ignorance and the passion; these mantra holders are also the embodiment of Dainichi's wisdom.

The Yard of Myōō or Vidyadhara balances that of Universal Knowledge in the East, which conquers human ignorance, so we see the fields of wisdom and compassion balancing across the central lotus. As described by Mammitzsch, the basic premise of this Universal Knowledge field is that the ultimate world is the state of sunyata.

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60 Matsunaga, 187.
61 John. C. Huntington, Personal communication.
62 Mammitzsch, 264.
The angry deities, especially Fudō Myōō, appear in the in the homa ritual, translated as goma in Japanese. The character “go” means “to protect” and “ma” means “to scour, to scrub”, showing that the ritual cleanses away the sins and evils of the practitioner.63 There is a certain amount of attraction to these rites best described by Kasulis:

The sensuality of Shingon ritual continues to attract Japanese pilgrims: the simmering of gold-plated utensils on altars in darkened rooms; the sounding of bells, drums and gongs; the rumbling rhythm of incantations; the precision of mudras; the pungent wafts of incense; the fascinating, terrible power of demonic sculptures; the geometrical intricacy of mandalas hanging from the ceiling or on a wall. Shingon ritual strikes us today as something ancient, mysterious, and magical.64

The goma is one of the important rituals that Kukai brought to Japan (Figures 23 and 24). It became the last of four rituals performed by Shingon priests during their training.65 Performing this ritual signifies that the priest is able to perform rituals for the benefit of others and also is able to give instruction concerning the Shingon practice.66 During the declaration of the goma, the practitioner vows to perform the ritual three times each day for seven days after receiving the teachings.67

Goma rituals can be performed (and are still today) for one of four reasons: protection or prevention from calamities (Skt. santika, Jpn. sokusai-hō), increase of benefits (Skt. paustika, Jpn. zōyaku-hō), subjugation (Skt. abhicaruka, Jpn. chobuko-hō),

63 Snodgrass., 82.
64 Kasulis, “Reality as Embodiment”, 169.
67 Handbook on the Four Stages..., 85.
subordination (Skt. vasikarana, Jpn. keiai-hō) or acquisition or prolongation of life (Skt. ankusa, Jpn. emmei-hō). Each of these practices has a dual sense in that it works on behalf of the practitioner, fighting their human or demon enemies, and also inwardly, fighting the internal, psychological enemies. One of the most common rituals performed is for protection and involves deities such as Dainichi, Fudō and Manjusri. The Susiddhikara Sutra (Ch: Subhakarasimha Sutra) has chapters on performing the santika, paustika and abhicarua goma rituals. Additionally, this sutra contains rule for the goma ritual, including the cleansing preparations. The Susiddhikara Sutra also has a detailed explanation of the goma fire ritual and the consecration of oneself.

Since Tendai (the second sect of the Mikkyo tradition) rites were also studied in the compilation of this information, it is important to note that the Tendai fire rites are more devotional than the Shingon practice. The Kongo-kai is performed first, followed by the Taizo-kai meditation. This is a more powerful, exorcistic form of the fire rite and derives power from the emphasis on the vajra thunderbolt symbol.

The Shingon goma fire ritual is the last of four performed by a priest for his initiation. It is a very rigorous practice and includes a one-hundred day “return the mountain peak” where the monk runs thirty kilometers daily for three months over a seven year period and the monk does not eat or drink for nine days. This is a very similar to the Tendai practice of “One Thousand Days on Mount Hiei”. It is such a strenuous exercise that it normally given only to Ajari masters or those who fully understand

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68 Payne, 489.
70 Giebel, 237-240.
71 Ibid, 253-258.
Mikkyō.\textsuperscript{72} That is to say that only the most practiced of priests are allowed to take initiation with the goma fire ritual.

The rites for the goma are learned by physically performing them. Use of the Three Mysteries (mudra, mantra and mandala/meditation) is imperative. The rites are not secret, per se, but orally transmitted instructions.\textsuperscript{73} The ritual is divided into acts performed before the fire is ignited, during the life of the fire and after it is extinguished. This study will only include a short exploration of the ritual.

The goma ritual is performed with the Kongo-kai in the West and the Taizo-kai in the East (as drawn in Figure 25). However, the top side of the Taizo-kai is the West side of the mandala whereas the top of the Kongo-kai is the East of the mandala.

Once the altar is set with the various incense, woods, grains, etc, it can be rearranged to enter the goma ritual (altar figures 26, 27 and 28). During this elaborate ritual, one of the first steps of the priest is to create a vision of Fudō Myōō. Also, the fifth and final step in such a meditation is to make a fire offering to Fudō.\textsuperscript{74}

Before lighting the fire, a great level of purification and litany is performed\textsuperscript{75} and the practitioner’s heart is emptied in front of Fudō to prove that his desires are sincere.\textsuperscript{76}

A simple request is made at the beginning of the ceremony:

I take refuge in and honor \textit{honzon} worthy, the holy one, the supremely holy, supremely compassionate, Lord Acala. By his power we achieve enlightenment.\textsuperscript{77}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{72}Saso, xii.
\item \textsuperscript{73}Ibid, xiii.
\item \textsuperscript{74}Payne, 505-508.
\item \textsuperscript{75}Saso, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{76}Ibid, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{77}Ibid, 2.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
To build the base of the fire, a simple schematic of a mandala is laid out in wooden sticks: three sticks form a triangle, representing the Buddha, Lotus and Vajra mandala, followed by eight sticks in a square to show the eight directions in the visible world, and finally, three more sticks are made into a triangle to represent the body of the practitioner (the head, chest and belly or intellect, will and intuition) (Figure 29).\textsuperscript{78} The sticks used for this ceremony are sacred (gomagi) and bear religious inscriptions and petitioners’ specific requests that are immolated in the sacred fire. These sticks form the original platform to be burned during the practice. All the time the base is being prepared, chanting to Dainichi and Fudō is common.

Once the fire is ignited, the practitioner envisions the heart mantra seed syllable “ah” that turns into a lute with “kam” above it. This seed syllable becomes a sword that, along with the lute, then turns into Fudō Myōō.\textsuperscript{79} The symbolism of the lute and the sword demonstrates the main principle Fudō: angry compassion. After food offerings are made, the practitioner enters a symbolic version of Fudō Myōō by reciting:

\begin{quote}
In the name of all Buddhas and Bodhisattva! By the power of thy ordination (Acala) may compassion blossom in all sentient beings everywhere. Svaha!\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

At this point, the practitioner performs the extensive meditation of the Kongo-kai and Taizo-kai.

The focus of the goma meditation on the Vajra Mandala is placed on Vajrasattva, the vajra holder. This meditation also includes focusing on an image of Fudō Myōō as it

\textsuperscript{78}Saso, xv.
\textsuperscript{79}Ibid, 10.
\textsuperscript{80}Ibid, 14.
is alive and moving. A great deal of imagination (Skt. bhavana) is used, but the entire practice is very serious.

During the Womb World meditation, the practitioner again "puts on" the paraphernalia of Fudō and invites the deities into the mandala. The role of Fudō remains important because he is the mediator between the practitioner and the deities.

A level of importance is placed on Fudō in this ritual because he has such a large role in the mandala and the meditation. During a later part of the goma meditation, a vision of a fire produces a sword and finally a black Fudō Myōō. His flames become a lotus that allows the practitioner to see their body as part of the universal. Fudō and the practitioner become one and the same in order to sincerely meditate upon the mandalas of Shingon.

The goma ritual can now be considered one of the most important in the Shingon tradition. In fact, it is the last ritual a priest learns due to its dangerous content and elaborate ceremony. For centuries, Fudō Myōō has helped practitioners cut their attachments to the illusory world and see the things clearly. It is because of these many benefits that the Fudō Myōō cult has become popular in Japan.

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81 Saso, 36.
THE FUDO MYÖÖ CULT IN JAPAN

Fudo Myōō’s image is common in Buddhist mandalas, as we have already studied. Uniquely Japanese mandalas have also been created to include Fudo such as the Sonshō mandala. This mandala preserves the inner realm of Dainichi from the Taizo-kai and includes only Fudo Myōō and Gōsanze Myōō. One example of this mandala is that housed in the Gokoku-ji in Tokyo and is considered the Mandala of the Honored One Victory (Figure 30). Fudo, at the bottom left, is paired with Gōsanze (Skt. Trailokyavijaya; conqueror of the three worlds of desire, form and formlessness) on the right. Between the two is an offering platform, marked as sacred space by a red border, and contains offering implements of fruit and vases. The Miroku mandala operates in the same manner, only with Fudo and Gōsanze on opposite sides (Figure 31). This, however, is unusual iconography.82 The Miroku mandala can be seen at the Tendai Buddhist temple, the Onjō-in, in the Shiga prefecture.

Another example of a distinctively Japanese mandala is the Kumano mandala, designed for kami worship (Figure 32). In this mandala, Fudo appears along side Sakyamuni in the lowest line of deities.83 The Boston Museum of Fine Arts also houses an example of this mandala.

82 Grotenhuis, Japanese Mandalas, 106
83 Grotenhuis, Japanese Mandalas, 171.
While Fudo is often paired with other figures to compliment one another’s abilities, he is very often seen with Aizen Myōō, the fierce manifestation of the bodhisattva Kongōsatta. The pairing of these two, as explained by Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, demonstrates the notion that carnal passion can be converted into energy fueling the quest for enlightenment.84

Due to this great meditative and protective power, it is easy to see how an independent Fudo Myōō Buddhist cult developed in Japan. The kanji for Fudo Myōō’s name make his appeal clear: *ju* means “without” and *do* means “movement”.85 He is unshakable and immovable in his quest to clear the mind of illusions. We have already seen that Fudo is a manifestation of Dainichi and is therefore a key deity in the goma ritual. In the Maha-Vairocana-Uttara-Tantra, there is a section explaining the goma Ritual and Fierce Actions.86 In this section, it explains,

Then having taken possession of it with most powerful Acala, he should make himself into Vairocana with his letter and *mudra*.87

A great deal of importance is placed on the ideas of Dainichi and Fudo being one and the same. Indeed, if Dainichi is Sambhogakaya manifesting a reminder of the Dharmakaya, then all other Buddhas are him and he is all other buddhas as well. Fudo can therefore be seen as an entrance to Dainichi where a practitioner cleanses himself of earthly illusions. This duty was set forth by Dainichi in the *Taisho shinshu Daizokyo*:

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87 Ibid, 409.
Obstacles derive from one’s own mind, following from past parsimonious actions. In order to rid oneself of the causes, meditate on the bodhicitta, eliminating false distinctions arising from one’s own thoughts. Recall and hold the thought of enlightenment (bodhicitta), and the adept will leave behind the whole past. Often one should think of Acala Mahasattva, and, making his secret mudra, one can do away with all obstructions.  

The same text later states:

Next I should explain how to put a stop to all obstructions. Meditate on the dharani of great fierceness, that of Acala-Mahabala. Reside (one’s mind) in his original mandala. It is as if the adept himself was in the center or else sees this image [of Acala]... these obstacles will be destroyed; having been stopped they will not be produced.  

With the powerful ability to destroy obstacles and sever attachments, Fudō Myōō’s popularity in Japanese Buddhism is well founded.

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89 Ibid, 152.
ICONOGRAPHY OF FUDO MYŌŌ

As far as Fudo Myōō’s iconographic features, he holds a sword to cut through illusions to a clear reality and a rope to either bind hindrances and to anchor him against change.⁹⁰ Adrian Snodgrass describes Fudo’s attributes as follows:

In his right hand Acalanatha holds the Sword of Wisdom, which cuts away the two hindrances of passion and false knowledge. His left hand holds a noose, which is the Right Way he uses to draw in beings to Awakening. He sits within the flames of Wisdom that burn away passion, and he sits upon the rock to represent his rising above the heavy weight of hindrances.⁹¹

Fudo’s noose seems like a very versatile tool indeed, used to save, bind and anchor depending on his present need. Fudo Myōō subdues obstacles through both wrathful imagery (bulging eyes, fang-like teeth, sword and rope) and milder servant attributes (pudgy, childlike body and hair plaited to one side).⁹² This combination makes his more accessible: both powerful and helpful. He is considered a great protector of his practitioners:

[Acala] guards and protects the practiser at all times and bestows on him long life, recovering from him, as offering, food that is left over. He is the god who completes the bodhi of the practiser. His partaking of the food which is left over signifies the extinction of all defilements.⁹³

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⁹⁰ Lowry, 61.
⁹¹ Snodgrass, 270-1.
⁹³ Linrothe, 153.
It is possible that Kukai once envisioned Fudo Myōō during his trip to China in the early ninth century (Figure 33).

While Fudo’s cult does protect the individual practitioner, it probably became popular and maintained long-term because of the power Fudo has to protect the state. Indeed, the esoteric School’s claim to greatest effectiveness is in protecting the state.94 Rituals associated with Fudo Myōō played a role in the personal training of esoteric initiates. At the same time, Fudo Myōō was often supplicated to employ his power to protect his followers and, especially, to protect the state and destroy its enemies.95 As has been seen before, this is a common adoption of religions when used to help politically or militarily. Today the goma ritual is used, among other things, to ask for safety regarding traffic, trips to sea, successful entry to school and even to protect against roundworm.96

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95 Ibid, 92.
IMAGES OF FUDÔ MYÔÔ

Japanese Buddhist developments demonstrated a boom of Fudô iconography, new styles and the founding of an independent cult. Numbers of wooden sculptures of ubiquitous Fudô Myôô images appeared everywhere. Fudô's cult in Japan also saw the addition of his two attendants: youthful Konkara (Skt. Kinkara) and elderly Seitaka (Skt. Chaitaka). These attendants, of course, could have been present in earlier sources, but perhaps only became popular in Japanese depictions of Fudô. Sometimes he can be seen with a small dragon, Kurikara (Skt. Kaurikara) that is believed to represent either the subjugating power of Fudô or the human passions which are controlled by the sword around which it is coiled.97 One excellent example of this iconography is a painting currently housed at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Figure 34).

For these reasons, images of Fudô Myôô began to emerge from the mandalas and were seen as their own cult images. Sculptures such as the wooden Fudô at the To-ji (Figure 35 and 36) became very popular. Paintings such as the Blue Fudô (Figure 37) introduce the idea of attendants to Fudô, instead of his guarding others. Another Japanese painting of the Yellow Fudô (Figure 38) demonstrates the individual power of Fudô, independent of the other deities.

It has been mentioned that the Fudō Myōō cult has maintained in Japan while other Buddhist deities have been nearly forgotten. While this is true, the introduction of Zen Buddhism did mean a decline in Esoteric Shingon Buddhism. Kamakura (thirteenth century) paintings of Fudō demonstrated the last of such Buddhist art before the increasing interest in secular paintings and rise of Zen sect art.98 After this period, images such as bird and flower paintings were more often seen. However, the goma ritual is still used today as means of exorcism, prayer for blessing and a form of disciplined devotion.99

The advent of Shingon Esoteric teachings in Japan tied much more meaning to Fudō’s physical appearance than was originally. The rock that Fudō sits atop of can be argued to represent his steadfastness and the fact that he is immovable. It also symbolizes the hindrances that a Buddhist practitioner must overcome. Fudō’s seven hair knots, as described by Aridan Snodgrass, represent the seven divisions of awakening: discrimination of the true and false, exertion, joy, elimination of the heaviness of the body and mind, recollection, power of undivided mental concentration and elimination of all mental disturbances.100 Also, Snodgrass explains, Fudō’s right tooth protrudes upwards symbolizing his knowledge and compassion and promotes fear in demons who dwell above the earth, while his left fang points downwards showing this compassion that draws beings in the lower realm.

Fudō Myōō’s sword is the topic of much discussion in the Buddhist art world. It is said to cut thought hindrances including passion and false knowledge. These

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99 Saso, xii.
100 Snodgrass, 273-4.
hindrances cause the practitioner to cling to the substantial existence of things; the ethereal world. The noose that Fudō holds would be used to either draw beings in to awakening or bind demons. His flame halo, of course, burns away passions. In Japan, at least, Fudō is almost always blue-black (symbolizing the conquest of demons) or yellow-red (demonstrating knowledge and principle).¹⁰¹

Many paintings were created with Fudō Myōō as the main figure. One example of a Heian period Red Fudō with his attendants is that found at Mount Koya (Figure 39). A later, eleventh century Heian period Blue Fudō can still be found in Kyoto’s Shoren-in (Figure 37). One unique and particularly menacing image of a Yellow Fudō can still be found in Kyoto’s Manshu-in, also from the Heian period (Figure 38). These images have become very popular among the study of Fudō Myōō and show that his cult developed well and prospered in Japan. Not only were images commissioned of Fudō, but they were maintained well enough that they are still in good condition to this day.

One of the most famous wooden images of Fudō is located at the Tō-ji in Kyoto, once run by Kukai in the ninth century (Figure 35 and 36). This sculpture is dated to the Heian period (ninth to tenth century) and could therefore fall near a time when Kukai was active there. Upon viewing the image, it is obvious why Fudō became so popular in Japan: his presence is demanding in his images. The large flame halo and common iconography are fierce and persuasive to those difficult to convert.

The later Kamakura period also showed popularity of Fudō’s art images. The seated Fudō from Kyoto’s Daikaku-ji (Figure 40) shows a great deal of stylistic change from the Heian period, but still perpetuates the same iconography. However, another

¹⁰¹ References to Fudō’s attributes can be found in Snodgrass, 270-1.
Kamakura image in the Todai-ji in Nara (Figure 41, 42 and 43) shows a different style completely. This image of Fudō is located, still today, in a temple dedicated to Dainichi (Vairocana Buddha). It would only be fitting to display Fudō here, since he is a manifestation of Dainichi and serves to divest practitioners of egoistic cravings before they meditate on the more major deity. This Fudō image is found in the Todai-ji’s Hokke-dō building which houses the Hokke mandala.

While seated wooden images were prolific in Japan, there was also a number of standing wooden images. The Heian period image at the Nan-in in Wakayama shows simple devotion to the single deity (Figure 44). This Fudō image is not accompanied by his attendants and has no flame halo. Conversely, another Heian standing Fudō (Figure 45) shows great detail devoted to rendering his attendants as well to his elaborate fire body halo. This elaborate style seemed to continue into the Kamakura period as seen in the Ganjoju-in (Figure 46). Here, Fudō’s attendants become larger in size and great attention to realism is seen.
THE FUDO MYŌō IMAGE AT THE CHICAGO INSTITUTE OF ART

Considering these examples of images of Fudō Myōō, we can now turn to examine the seated Fudō image located currently at The Chicago Art Institute (Figure 47 through 58). The museum’s files tell that the sculpture’s ink inscription dates it to the Muromachi period, 1519. It also reads that the monk Yugen commissioned the work. This inscription, however, could be a later addition to an earlier sculpture. This piece is wooden with gesso, color and gilt bronze accessories, as noted by the museum information card. It was a gift from the Joseph and Helen Regenstien Foundation and had been received by the museum in 1958, according to the museum’s notes and accession number (1958.321).

This image of Fudō Myōō measures nearly 16.5 inches tall (24.125 with the base), nearly 14 inches wide at the ends of the knees. The image is dressed with a skirt-like garment (Figure 56 and 57) covering the legs and upper body with the exception of the right shoulder, chest and belly. The figure wears an intricate gilt bronze breastplate or necklace with a flame and vajra motif (Figure 49). This jewelry has a few hanging beads of unknown material, but are probably glass, by observation. The jewelry also includes bracelets on each wrist (Figure 53, 58) and an armlet on the upper left arm (Figure 54). Remnants of a matching arm band remain on the right arm as well (Figure 55).
Simple and plain woodcarving was a very popular media in the ninth century in Japan. It was less expensive than metal or lacquered wood and was produced in abundance in the temperate climate of Japan. Normally, in the Indic world, Buddhist sculpture would have been made from sandalwood, but since there is no population of this tree in Japan, camphor may have been chosen as a substitute based on its scent.

This image, like most other wooden images in Japan, has a hollow interior. This is for two reasons: to reduce the chance of cracking from the center out and to reduce the overall weight of the work. Like other Muromachi period images, the Chicago Fudō has a fuller body and thicker drapery with complex folds. The drapery is decorated with layered gesso in intricate designs, though much of it has begun to flake off (Figure 56 and 57). Much of the work is currently covered in smoke and incense oils. Fudō’s eyes in this sculpture are glass, a sometimes common addition at this time.

This Fudō’s jewelry, however, could be considered to be from a later period. The sword he is photographed with may not be the original sword, but possibly a later addition that is currently in storage at the Art Institute. This sword was too heavy to be displayed with the figure and, to avoid risking damage to the wood, was removed from the display. This is a good decision on another level, since it may not be the original sword and could be misleading when dating the image. The rope Fudō can be seen holding on display now is a modern addition, since the original fibrous material has probably been long destroyed by humidity and insects. The base on which Fudō is

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103 Hiromitsu, 136.
currently seated should also not be considered in dating the image, since it was probably not originally intended for the sculpture.

The irregularity of the wood in the Chicago Fudō has led some, noted by the museum files, to speculate that it was made of a leftover cross-section of some kind of crossbeams. These opinions are unpublished, since further examination such as a fiber optic examination of the interior of the head could be necessary.

This Fudō image is just one example of many that helped to launch the popularity of the deity in Japan. It can be considered typical of a Muromachi period wooden image. The Chicago Art Institute’s image joins a cannon of Fudō images that demonstrates the popularity and prosperity of his cult in Japan.
THE SUCCESS OF FUDO TODAY

Fudo has been and is still seen in Japan as a protective deity and is encircled with stories of people recovering from blindness and illness and also allowing people (by becoming Fudo) to walk on hot coals, immerse themselves in boiling water and climb ladders of swords (Figure 59).\footnote{Cannen Blacker. The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1975).} As discussed by Martin Collcutt, Fudo Myōō is often the object of prayer by women after a death. One example is of Hojo Masako, a Japanese nun, who held an offering ceremony to Fudo after her husband's death and the death of most of her children.\footnote{Essay by Martin Collcutt, "'Nun-Shogun': Politics and Religion in the Life of Hojo Masako (1157-1225)" in Barbara Rush. Engendering Faith: Women in Buddhism in Premodern Japan. Michigan: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2002.}

Fudo Myōō's image is still used in popular culture and religion today in Japan. Examples of popular art images include Edo period prints, comics and other pop culture items. A print by Utagawa Yoshitaki (1841-1899) was made for the play Naritasan ki Fuda no Yurai (Figure 60). It shows Arashi Rikan as Lady Kakesara on the right and Otani Tomoemon as Tenmoku on the left. Between the two of them, on the horizon of the water, stands Fudo Myōō. Here, Fudo was still seen as a protector, perhaps a protector of women or of water travel. In any case, his image was still in high use during the Edo period. Additionally, kabuki theaters still enact productions of Saint Narukami
and the God Fudō (Narukami Fudō Kitayama Zakura), a popular play from the Edo period.\textsuperscript{106}

More currently, we see a kind of pop culture use in comics. Fudō Myōō appears as the immovable hero in a comic novel by Sachiya Hiro, entitled Ofudō-san.\textsuperscript{107} He is an example for the novel's characters regarding his steadfastness and purity.

Fudō Myōō's shrines are also still widely used by a large variety of people daily in Japan. Ian Reader explains:

\begin{quote}
At the heart of Minami, a bustling nightlife area of bars, eating houses, strip clubs and other places of raucous entertainment in the great business city of Osaka, is a small temple dedicated to the popular Buddhist figure Fudō. Many of the people going in and out of the bars and clubs around it pray, make a small offering or light a stick of incense as they go on their way, while those working at and running the bars around help in the support and upkeep of the temple, and Fudō is here venerated as a guardian and protector of the entertainment business. No one appears to find it anomalous that the religious place should be so integrated into an area devoted to apparently non-religious ends.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

This example demonstrates the ubiquity of Fudō in contemporary Japanese society.

While other religions and icons have faded over time, Fudō has remained visible.

There were a number of factors that have made Fudō Myōō such a popular image in Japan. His exaltation by Kukai in the early ninth century caused the goma fire ritual to become very popular among the Shingon sect, as it remains today. Though it is a delicate media, many wooden Fudō sculptures have remained intact, speaking to the ubiquity of

his image. This critical history should serve as a solid base of understanding from which such image can be explored further.


*Handbook on the Four Stages of Prayoga Chuin Branch of Shingon Tradition*. Vol. 1-5 Osaka,


APPENDIX A

LIST OF TERMS
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<tr>
<th>English Text</th>
<th>Japanese Text</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amida Nyorai</td>
<td>阿弥陀如来</td>
<td>Amida, the Buddha of the West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukong</td>
<td>不空</td>
<td>Chinese monk, Amoghavajra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chang'an</td>
<td>長安</td>
<td>Ancient capital of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chudaihachiyo-in</td>
<td>中台八葉院</td>
<td>Center of Taizo-kai mandala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daiitoku</td>
<td>大威徳</td>
<td>Yamantaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daikaku-ji</td>
<td>大槻寺</td>
<td>Temple location of seated wooden Fudo image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dainichi Nyorai</td>
<td>大日如来可能</td>
<td>Mahavairocana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dainichi-kyo</td>
<td>大日居</td>
<td>The Mahavairocana Sutra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daitoku</td>
<td>大威徳</td>
<td>One of the Godai Myōō, Yamantaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fudō Myōō</td>
<td>不動明王</td>
<td>Acalanatha, Immovable One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fugen bosatsu</td>
<td>普賢菩薩</td>
<td>Samantabhadra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ge kongobu-in</td>
<td>外金剛部院</td>
<td>Outermost yard of Taizo-kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godai Myōō</td>
<td>五大明王</td>
<td>Five Kings of Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goma</td>
<td>護摩</td>
<td>Esoteric fire ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gomagi</td>
<td>胡麻儀</td>
<td>Sacred sticks used for Goma ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosanze</td>
<td>降三世</td>
<td>One of the Godai Myōō, Trailokyavijaya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gundari</td>
<td>軍荼利</td>
<td>One of the Godai Myōō, Kindalini</td>
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<td>Henchi-in</td>
<td>遍知院</td>
<td>Yard of Universal Knowledge in Taizo-kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodobusu</td>
<td>宝幢仏</td>
<td>Ratnaketu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokke-dō</td>
<td>法華堂</td>
<td>Building at Todai-ji with wooden Fudo image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huiguwo</td>
<td>恵果</td>
<td>Kukai’s Shingon teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui-kuo (Keika)</td>
<td>恵果</td>
<td>Kukai’s teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimyoo-in</td>
<td>持明院</td>
<td>Yard of Vidyadharas in Taizo-kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jizo-in</td>
<td>地蔵院</td>
<td>Yard of Ksitigarbha in Taizo-kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogaisho-in</td>
<td>除蓋障院</td>
<td>Yard of Sarvanivaranaaviskambhin in Taizo-kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaifuke-o butsu</td>
<td>開敷華王仏</td>
<td>Samkusumita-raja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kami</td>
<td>神</td>
<td>Object of worship of indigenous Japanese religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannon</td>
<td>観音</td>
<td>Avalokiteshvara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobodaisi</td>
<td>弘法大師</td>
<td>Japanese Shingon priest (posthumous name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokuzo-in</td>
<td>虚空蔵院</td>
<td>Yard of Akasagarbha in Taizo-kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kongo Yaksha</td>
<td>金剛夜叉</td>
<td>One of the Godai Myōō, Vajrayaksha</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kongobu-ji</td>
<td>金剛寺</td>
<td>Building at Koyasan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kongo-kai</td>
<td>金剛界曼荼羅</td>
<td>The Diamond Realm Mandala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kongoshu-in</td>
<td>金剛手院</td>
<td>Yard of Vajrapani in Taizo-kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konkara douji</td>
<td>矜羯羅童子</td>
<td>One of Fudo’s attendants, Kinkara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koyasan</td>
<td>高野山</td>
<td>Area of Kukai’s Shingon center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kukai</td>
<td>空海</td>
<td>Japanese Shingon priest</td>
</tr>
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<td>Manshu-in</td>
<td>院</td>
<td>Temple location of yellow Fudo painting</td>
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<td>Mikkyō</td>
<td>密教</td>
<td>Esoteric Buddhism in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Pinyin</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miroku</td>
<td>弥勒</td>
<td>Maitreya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monju</td>
<td>文殊</td>
<td>Manjusri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muryojubutsu</td>
<td>無量寿仏</td>
<td>Amida, the Buddha of the West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryo-bu Mandara</td>
<td>両部</td>
<td>Dual Mandala system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakya-in</td>
<td>塵迦院</td>
<td>Yard of Sakyamuni in Taizo-kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seita douji</td>
<td>制陀迦童子</td>
<td>One of Fudō’s attendants, Chaitaka</td>
</tr>
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<td>Shingon</td>
<td>真言</td>
<td>A branch of esoteric Buddhism in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoren-in</td>
<td>青蓮院</td>
<td>Temple location of blue Fudō painting, Kyoto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soshitsuji-in</td>
<td>蘇悉地院</td>
<td>Yard of Susiddhi in Taizo-kai</td>
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<td>Taizo-kai</td>
<td>胎蔵界曼茶羅</td>
<td>The Womb World Mandala</td>
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<td>Tendai</td>
<td>天台</td>
<td>Buddhist teachings from Mt. Tien Tai</td>
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<td>Tendai</td>
<td>天台</td>
<td>A branch of esoteric Buddhism in Japan.</td>
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<td>Tenkuraionbutsu</td>
<td>天鼓雷音仏</td>
<td>Divyadundubhi-meghanirghosa</td>
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<td>Todai-ji</td>
<td>東大寺</td>
<td>Buddhist temple in Nara</td>
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<td>Tō-ji (Kyōgokoku-ji)</td>
<td>東寺</td>
<td>Buddhist temple in Nara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xi'an</td>
<td>西安</td>
<td>Modern day Chang’an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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